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The Diocese of Tyler wants to make clear, that as Catholics, we are opposed to procedures that violate the dignity of the human person, and we do not cooperate in this being done to others. As Americans, we should enjoy the religious liberty to have no part in their provision. These are far from new concerns. In his statement on Health Dignity, Conscience and Health Care, in December 2008, Bishop Corrada said:

"As a bishop, it is my duty to remind Catholics of our evangelical obligation to defend human dignity, which obligation cannot be altered by appeals to erroneous theological opinions or unjust legislation. I call upon every Catholic to act in defense of human dignity with a conscience formed in accord with the Gospel and request that they contact their legislators to support freedom of conscience for those providing healthcare. I also ask the civil community to join us in defending human dignity and the right of conscience in this matter." Bishop Alvaro Corrada, SJ (#3)

Recently, the Administration (through HHS) abandoned respect for conscience with its mandate that all healthcare plans include contraception, sterilization, and abortion causing medications. These drugs and procedures contradict the love of God, the gift of life, and offend against the nature and dignity of human sexuality and harm, rather than heal, the body. It is a violation to the sacred dignity of the human person. The shocking decision of the Obama Administration that conscience would not be respected is contrary to the foundation of liberty in this great country. Even social service institutions that hold deep and long standing objections to such services will be forced to provide funds for services against the dignity of the human person.

The Administration has made a token allowance for conscience of groups that are religious and serve few outside of their community. This narrow exemption does not insure protection of the integrity of conscience for Catholic employers and the many religious based charitable organizations, healthcare facilities and educational institutions. Many Catholic institutions are amongst those religious based entities that will be affected as the regulations currently stand. How in conscience can a Catholic hospital system take funds currently being used for service of the poor and spend them on increased insurance premiums to pay for services contrary to the dignity of the human person? How can a Catholic employer be expected to provide procedures that violate his employee's human dignity?

Bishop Corrada again asks: How is it, that in the United States, with its rich history of religious freedom and of religious service to the community, consideration could be given to enacting civil or criminal laws that would rule against the obligations of our Christian life, our consciences, and our faith-based provision of health care? Certainly, the civil community cannot expect that Catholics would violate the Gospel and human dignity because the law mandated such a violation. Faced with unjust legislation of this sort, we would vigorously seek to protect the human dignity of the patient and the right of conscience for health care workers and institutions. We would, in that situation, answer with the Apostles: "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).