



Focus on Religious Freedom

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2023 - A year for Faith and A Year for Concern for Religious Liberty

"Eucharistic Revival: My Flesh for the Life of the World"

This 3-year grassroots revival was proposed by the Bishops of the United States (USCCB) to revive devotion and belief in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Launched on June 19, 2022, the Feast of Corpus Christi, the theme for the current year through June 2023, is the "Year for Diocesan Renewal", offering events to promote and inspire understanding of the Eucharist.

"According to Pew Research Center, only 31% of Catholics even believe in the True Presence of Christ in the Eucharist." ⁽¹⁾ The Revival vision is to inspire Catholics who are healed, converted, formed, and unified through encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist to share this relationship "for the life of the world." ⁽²⁾

Misnamed "Respect for Marriage Act" Rejects Meaning of Marriage and Jeopardizes Religious Freedom

The so-called "Respect for Marriage Act," signed into law on Dec. 13, 2022, overturns the 1996 Clinton era "Defense of Marriage Act" that said marriage is between one man and one woman. The legislation also codifies same-sex marriage by reinforcing the 2015 Supreme Court ruling making same-sex marriage legal. The Catholic Church is one of several Christian denominations and religions (Orthodox Jewish, Muslim, etc.) that only recognize marriage as a union of one man and one woman. The authors of the newly signed bill claim that it provides protections for religious freedom, but most faith leaders dispute this claim.

The USCCB criticized the Respect for Marriage Act as being contrary to the common good. "The bill fails to include clear, comprehensive, and affirmative conscience protections for religious organizations and individuals who uphold the sanctity of traditional marriage that are needed," said Bishop Robert Barron, chairman of the USCCB committee on laity, marriage, family life and youth. ⁽³⁾ This concern is not unfounded since there have been dozens of instances of government persecution of religious practice in America over the past few years.

"In recent years, the list of parties with religious objections to same-sex marriage who have lost their court battles include Catholic adoption agencies, Jewish universities, and Christian wedding vendors," wrote The Washington Stand. ⁽⁴⁾ This bill would only multiply the occasions whereby people and organizations of faith could be discriminated against or sued.

"Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." Ephesians 6:13

(nationaleucharisticrevival.com (1)(2); ncregister.com, 12/13/22(3); washingtonstand.com, 11/28/22(4))