



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Bishop William F. Murphy, Defender of Religious Freedom

Bishop William F. Murphy, who died on March 26, 2026, was a powerful voice for religious freedom, locally, nationally, and internationally.

Bishop Murphy was a member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, appointed by President George W. Bush in 2001, working to identify religious persecution around the world, and recommend U.S. responses. He spoke for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in challenging government mandates that infringed on the religious freedom and moral prerogatives of faith-based ministries. **Read the letter here:** <https://tinyurl.com/2ks46c6r>

As Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, he consistently defended religious liberty in his preaching, Long Island Catholic newspaper columns, diocesan Telecare TV appearances, public witness at rallies and prayer events, and in leading the diocese's active involvement in the U.S. Bishops' Fortnight for Freedom initiative. That annual two-week national campaign (2012-2018) focused on challenges to religious liberty and conscience rights.

On Long Island, Bishop Murphy enthusiastically embraced Catholics For Freedom of Religion (CFFOR), actively fulfilling his commitment to help us in any way he could:

- connecting CFFOR with diocesan leaders and ministries who helped publicize our efforts to educate about religious liberty and defend this fundamental right;
- being the driving force behind our first Rally for Religious Freedom where, as the main speaker, he inspired the thousand attendees;
- inviting CFFOR to rally in front of Good Samaritan Hospital to dramatize the threat to Catholic Healthcare from the government's HHS Mandate. The rally concluded with a moving public witness rosary along the busy road outside the hospital;
- introducing our efforts to a wide audience by initiating an amazing working relationship with Msgr. Jim Vlaun and the Catholic Faith Network;
- introducing CFFOR to the Bishops of New York State at the annual Catholics to the Capitol public policy forum in Albany;

May Bishop Murphy rest in God's eternal embrace, and may his witness inspire renewed commitment to the defense of religious freedom as we remember his call to "Never give up. Never give in."