



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Suppression of Religious Speech on Marriage and Sexual Difference Poses a Threat to Religious Liberty Warns Bishops' Report on the "State of Religious Liberty in the United States."

The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Critical to the practice of every faith is the 1st amendment freedom of speech: the freedom to pray alone or in groups, to discuss and evangelize religious beliefs, and to speak those beliefs openly at home, in school and in the vast public square of ideas and national policies. Speech has been defined by Supreme Court decisions to include more than the spoken word and to cover actions such as burning the flag and the artistic products of web designers.

For example, In the case of *303 Creative v. Elenis*, the Supreme Court's Opinion was that speech, in the form of designing a unique, creative and specific website celebrating behavior in opposition to the artist's personal beliefs, could not be forced by the state because it violated the designer's freedom of speech.

This right to be able to say what one believes to be true and the right not to be forced to say or confirm the opposite is basic to our political and social life in America. The USCCB has resources to help Catholics as we navigate these social pressures while holding to the truth of our faith. For information and guidance, go to the USCCB site at: www.lovemeansmore.org

Another resource, the USCCB Committee on Doctrine, explains that: "The human person, body and soul, man or woman, has a fundamental order and finality whose integrity must be respected. Because of this order and finality, neither patients nor physicians nor researchers nor any other persons have unlimited rights over the body; they must respect the order and finality inscribed in the embodied person."

Read more at <https://tinyurl.com/4cc8t8nz>