



MOST REVEREND
MICHAEL R. COTE, D.D.

Diocese of Norwich
Office of the Bishop
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March 6, 2009

Dear Father,

On Thursday, March 5, 2009, legislation entitled, "An Act Modifying Corporate Law Relating To Certain Religious Corporations" (Senate Bill 1098) was introduced in the Senate by State Senator Andrew McDonald.

This bill is a legislative attack on the governance of the Catholic Church in Connecticut. No other religious organization in the State is mentioned in this bill. It will do irreparable harm to the Church.

Your assistance is urgently needed. Please help defeat this very harmful repeal of current Connecticut General Statutes.

- 1) Read at all Masses this weekend (March 7 and 8, 2009) the attached Statement issued by the Catholic Bishops in Connecticut.
- 2) Copy and distributed this Statement to all parishioners - both reading and distributing the Statement are necessary to help parishioners to understand the seriousness of this issue.
- 3) Pastors are encouraged to ask at least three to four parishioners to attend the hearing on this bill on Wednesday, March 11, 2009, at the Legislative Office Building at the State Capitol. We must show strong opposition to this attempt to interfere in the governance of the Church.
- 4) Urge parishioners to ask their legislators to reject this unconstitutional assault on the Catholic Church.

Together on this Second Sunday of Lent, we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to rebuff attacks on the Church and its leadership so that we may continue to do the Lord's work by which we give praise to God our Father.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Bishop of Norwich

Enclosure

An Urgent message from the Bishops of Connecticut

This past Thursday, the Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut State Legislature, which is chaired by Sen. Andrew McDonald of Stamford and Rep. Michael Lawlor of East Haven, introduced a bill that directly attacks the Roman Catholic Church and our Faith.

This bill violates the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. It forces a radical reorganization of the legal, financial, and administrative structure of our parishes. This is contrary to the Apostolic nature of the Catholic Church because it disconnects parishes from their Pastors and their Bishop. Parishes would be run by boards from which Pastors and the Bishop would be effectively excluded.

We urge you to call and e-mail Sen. McDonald and Rep. Lawlor – contact information is as follows: Senator Andrew McDonald, telephone 1-800-842-1420 or e-mail McDonald@senatedems.ct.gov and Representative Lawlor, telephone 1-800-842-8267 or e-mail MLawlor99@juno.com. We also ask you to come to Hartford this Wednesday, March 11, at Noon to be present at the public hearing which will be held in Room 2C of the Executive Office Building.