



Diocese of Worcester  
Office of the Bishop  
49 Elm Street  
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

June 3, 2021

Dear Monsignor/Father/Deacon,

From June 22 through June 29, we will join Catholics nationwide in observing *Religious Freedom Week*. This year's theme is "Solidarity in Freedom". This week-long observance provides a focused period of time to concentrate our attention on the importance of courageously standing up for our first freedom in an increasingly secularized culture where people of faith are facing persecution for living out their Christian beliefs.

I would like to ask your particular assistance in actively promoting Religious Freedom Week in your parish. This will be especially effective by dedicating your homilies to the subject of religious freedom and including special intentions in the Prayer of the Faithful at Masses. Many of the scripture readings and significant feasts of saints and martyrs who actively bore witness to religious liberty - including Saints Thomas More and John Fisher (June 22), the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (June 24), and Saints Peter and Paul (June 29) - lend themselves well to the subject at hand. We encourage you to promote the message of Religious Freedom Week through parish websites, emails to parishioners, and social media platforms.

There are many religious liberty issues with which we must be concerned. Conscience protection for healthcare providers and Christian business owners, the religious freedom issues surrounding adoption and foster care services, and the dangerous Equality Act remain particularly grave concerns. The assistance of all our parishes in promoting and preaching about the Religious Freedom Week initiative will help to educate our Catholic faithful, raise the awareness needed, and foster increased prayer and action on these pivotal issues that all may strive to preserve and protect the essential right of religious freedom for both present and future generations, for Catholics and for all people of faith.

The USCCB Office of Religious Liberty has developed some excellent resources to assist our parishes in observing Religious Freedom Week which are available at [www.usccb.org/ReligiousFreedomWeek](http://www.usccb.org/ReligiousFreedomWeek) and additional resources can be found at [www.worcesterdiocese.org/religiousfreedomweek](http://www.worcesterdiocese.org/religiousfreedomweek). Should you have any questions or need additional information please contact our diocesan Respect Life Office.

I am most grateful for your pastoral assistance in calling attention to these serious concerns among the faithful, so that all may pray fervently and work with zeal for the protection of our fundamental right to religious freedom.

With every prayerful best wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus, DD, STD  
Bishop of Worcester