

## **In the Heartland**

### **July 1, Independence Celebration Walk & Picnic**

On Sunday, July 1, the Diocese of Des Moines joined by people of other faiths and the general public will anticipate the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration with an Independence Celebration Walk and Picnic.

As Americans we are proud and grateful for the legacy of freedoms that we have inherited from our country's founders. On Memorial Day we paid tribute to those who sacrificed their lives to maintain the liberties we enjoy. On July 4<sup>th</sup>, we appropriately recognize the privilege of living in "America Home of the Free and Land of the Brave."

At the same time, we recognize that we have the responsibility to protect and sustain those liberties that are at the heart of our national character. One challenge to our freedoms which has emerged in the course of the last year has become known as the "HHS Mandates." In shorthand, the specific threat is overriding religious liberty, a freedom wisely guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The mandates which when effective will carry the force of law and negate religious liberty on two grounds:

- 1) The mandate requires medical provisions in health insurance that are against long-standing beliefs of the Catholic faith and further requires they be paid for directly or indirectly by Church employers. Such would necessitate a violation of conscience on the part of the Catholic Church and this, in fact, is government intrusion in Church affairs.
- 2) The mandate also narrows the category of what constitutes church activities – in terms of both the players and the recipients. Again this represents intrusion into religious affairs by government especially in healthcare, education and Catholic charity services of the Church.

In order to protect our freedoms and be educated about them and yet at the same time witness to the fact that we are fully patriotic and loyally supportive of our country, we undertake this walk and gather for this picnic to witness to our responsibility to preserve the freedoms for our children and grandchildren.

We will be joined by our fellow believers and others – Lutheran, Methodists, Christians of every stripe as well as Jewish, Mormon, Muslim and others who too, want to preserve the cornerstone of our constitutional freedoms – religious liberty.

Come after your parish Masses to the Cathedral for the walk at 12:00 Noon or join us directly at the East Capitol grounds for the picnic. Each generation is called to exercise its responsibility so that coming generations might enjoy, "One Nation, Under God, with liberty and justice for all."

## **Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa to be launched on July 1<sup>st</sup>**

With the beginning of the fiscal year July 1<sup>st</sup>, the Diocese of Des Moines will establish a separately incorporated entity known as “The Catholic Foundation of Southwest Iowa.”

This new initiative is designed to organize the different endowments of the diocese into one foundation with specific funds to support education, ministry outreach – seminarians and medical and retirement provisions for diocesan priests, Catholic Charities and other social programs serving seniors and our Hispanic population as well as the operations of the Diocese itself.

The Catholic Foundation will also provide services for our parishes and institutions in the form of agency accounts by which they will be able to take advantage of the benefits that will be available.

In addition, through various services such as Donor Advised Funds, individuals will be able to organize and manage their charitable giving long-term with minimal organization and structure on their part.

Catholic Foundations have been established by many dioceses throughout the United States. Their investments have proven to generate strong returns based on the expert participation of community leaders along with heightened security and oversight.

The Catholic Foundation is fortunate to be able to benefit from the operational services of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines as it begins. This organization which has a stellar reputation will provide, under contract, the computer generated operation and other organizational assistance services for the Catholic Foundation so vital to an undertaking such as this.

This new development, I am confident, will serve well the charitable, organizational and fiscal structure of the Catholic Community in the 23 counties of Southwest Iowa. Heartfelt gratitude is certainly merited by all those who have been involved in its conception and have been instrumental in its launching.