



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2017

Contact:

Annalise Laumeyer, director of communications

Phone: 616-551-5629 | 616-307-3474 cell

Email: alaumeyer@dioceseofgrandrapids.org

The Diocese of Grand Rapids' Office of Communications relays the following statement from Bishop David J. Walkowiak in response to the Trump administration's announcement to provide religious and moral exemptions from the HHS Mandate.

"Along with bishops across the United States, I applaud the actions taken by President Trump and his administration in providing exemptions to faith-based and other organizations from the Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate. This mandate violated the religious freedom we hold dear and did not allow us to provide insurance coverage that was consistent with our Catholic faith.

As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) stated, 'The Administration's decision to provide a broad religious and moral exemption to the HHS mandate recognizes that the full range of faith-based and mission-driven organizations, as well as the people who run them, have deeply held religious and moral beliefs that the law must respect.'

'The regulations are also good news for all Americans. A government mandate that coerces people to make an impossible choice between obeying their consciences and obeying the call to serve the poor is harmful not only to Catholics but to the common good. Religious freedom is a fundamental right for all, so when it is threatened for some, it is threatened for all.'"

The Diocese of Grand Rapids serves more than 191,000 Catholics, 81 parishes and 30 schools in an 11-county area of West Michigan. For additional information visit our website www.dioceseofgrandrapids.org. Connect with the diocese on [Facebook](#) (Diocese of Grand Rapids) and [Twitter](#) (@GRDiocese).

###