JACKSON HOLY TRINITY CELEBRATES YEAR OF FAITH
The season has taken a big turn this week. We have passed the autumnal equinox, nights are getting longer, days are getting shorter. The air has taken on quite a chill, especially at night, and it feels like many days ago with a splendid full moon – the harvest moon.

Harvest time was very significant for our ancestors. This was the time for the payoff of the year’s hard labor. Crops were ready to be brought in and stored or sold. It was a time of reflection and rest, we had done with our resources over the past year and hopefully celebrated some of the accomplishments.

The Church has lost much of that natural rhythm. Except for the relatively small number of us who work in agriculture, our calendar is no longer tied to a seasonal harvest. But we do still need to occasionally take a serious look at how we are doing with our resources over the past year and to gauge how well we had done with them. Whatever labor we are involved in we should be harvesting as well. The goal should be to develop, increase, or maintain whatever it is that has been given to us, for his honor and glory.

This inevitably involves taking risks. It means not letting the fear of failure and ridicule stop us from pursuing success. Faithfulness to God means having the courage to take bold initiatives, in pastoral life, family life, and business, to be creative, even entrepreneurial, in expressing our gratitude to God for all that he has given us so that we may be making it. It means using every resource, every willingness to accommend our vocation to bring more souls to Jesus, to fight against injustice, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the sick and welcome the stranger. You have been entrusted with much. How is your harvest?

One place where we can see a good harvest for the Lord is in the Holy Trinity parish in the beautiful rural hill coun-

Pope Francis greets a child as he arrives to lead his general aud-

 Pope Francis speaks to doctors about the Gospel of Life

Speaking to a group of gynaecologists and obstetric-

Pope Francis says doctors should act as midwives, doctors must care for patients.

The Holy Father asked doctors “who are called to be called doctors” not to “be excessively concerned with the professional and technical aspects of human health” but to “always keep in mind the ultimate purpose of every medical act, which is the care of the sick and the restoration of health.”

Pope Francis emphasized that in the process of providing health care “there is no place for discrimination based on race, gender, social status, or income.”

The Pope’s message was warmly welcomed by the doctors, who thanked him for his “clear message” and asked that an open letter to doctors be released so that “all can reflect on the importance of this message.”

The letter from Pope Francis to doctors is expected to be released in the near future.
WESTERNER SEMINARISTS

Twin Columbus Bishop Watterson High School seniors Matt and Megan Nacy have been selected as National Westerner Seminarians for their exceptional academic ability and potential for success in college.

Approximately 16,000 Westerners were selected nationwide, based on their scores on the 2012 Preliminary SAT (P-SAT) National Norm Test. They have an opportunity to continue in the competition for a $2,000 Westerner National Scholarship, worth approximately $3,800 National Westerner Scholarships, worth approximately $3,800,000,000, that will be offered next spring.

Matt plans to major in math and theoretical computer science, a program at one of the nation’s leading universities in computer science. He plans to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He will be involved in the Catholic Student Association and the president and owner of his own app development firm.

Megan plans to major in biology and English at The Ohio State University. She is vice president of fundraising for the Catholic Student Association, the second church is part of the parish event in honor of the yarns and the Stations of the Cross from the first church. The new building was dedicated in 2011. In the 100 years since its establishment, the parish and the community has flourished to become the largest in the Diocese of Columbus, with permanent white boards, a SMART board, two flat-screen televisions, a high-speed wireless Internet, a conference room, a stock ticker, and an innovative work tables designed for collaboration.

Our practical challenge this week is to choose one of the items we discuss over the past few weeks and bring it to our families at home—a hands-off prayer. I pray you over one rosary this week and hope that I can continue to do so. It is a striking change of pace to be in the spiritual mindset of the rosary, to reflect on the feelings of anxiety, anger, impatience, that making sure other car is not going to get in front of me, and so on. We discussed fascinating from a study that may show an alarming trend for Catholic women. Their declining role as true anchors of our Faith is especially true in the U.S. We must have considered about her role in the Second Vatican Council, and how much she has done in the change of our Catholic Faith in every one of us. Keep a regular prayer of the rosary, especially as we approach October, which is both the month of the Holy Rosary and Respect Life Month.

Resilience

Did you pray at least one rosary this past week? I found it very relaxing and spiritually to pray to the rosary for the first time and again for the second time, but this was a striking change of pace to be in the spiritual mindset of the rosary, to reflect on the feelings of anxiety, anger, impatience, that making sure other car is not going to get in front of me, and so on. We discussed fascinating from a study that may show an alarming trend for Catholic women. Their declining role as true anchors of our Faith is especially true in the U.S. We must have considered about her role in the Second Vatican Council, and how much she has done in the change of our Catholic Faith in every one of us. Keep a regular prayer of the rosary, especially as we approach October, which is both the month of the Holy Rosary and Respect Life Month.

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Resilience
A shorter program, for first- through fifth-graders, will begin at 3 p.m. Oct. 19 at the auditorium of the Museum of Science, 6700 N. Grant Blvd. Columbus. It will conclude at 4:30 p.m. on the Columbus Museum of Science flagship, the Santa Maria, at Marconi Boulevard and West Broad Street. The theme of the program is “Discovering Columbus.” Among other things, participants will learn about Columbus and the impact of his faith on his achievements. The program began by the 1992 celebration of the 500th anniversary of the first landing in the New World, which brought the Catholic faith to the Americas. Each cruiser member will experience the personal challenge and reward of climbing on board. Columbus’ Family Park participants will conclude at 6:45 p.m. on board the replica Columbus flagship, the Santa Maria, at Marconi Boulevard and West Broad Street. Women’s Retreat The Columbus Catholic Parish Renewal 27th annual women’s retreat will take place from Friday, Oct. 11 to Sunday, Oct. 13 at the Retreat Center, 572177 Broad St., Columbus. For more information, contact the Catholic Parish Renewal at (614) 707-808 or e-mail info@cprrcolumbus.org.

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Catholic college students. It strives to provide meaningful evangelization opportunities, a strong enough foundation to keep them engaged, and a network of friends and family on campus that can help them continue to attend Mass when they go off campus. A Buckeye Awakening retreat is designed to foster an awakening to one’s faith through future generations. If you wish to attend, but struggle with the financial costs of the program, for example, consider making a contribution to help the Newman Center’s most successful and impactful evangelization effort. More than 800 students have participated since the program began in 2009, and nearly every Catholic college in the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe, and Asia has participated. All Catholic students are invited to select one member of the junior class to be honored with the Rensselaer Medal, which makes the student eligible for a scholarship at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y.

The Buckeye Awakening is a great opportunity for students of all faith backgrounds who wish to learn more about the Catholic faith. It is sponsored by the Ohio State University Newman Center. The Buckeye Awakening is the Newman Center’s most successful and impactful evangelization effort. More than 800 students have participated since the program began in 2009, and nearly every Catholic college in the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe, and Asia has participated. All Catholic students are invited to select one member of the junior class to be honored with the Rensselaer Medal, which makes the student eligible for a scholarship at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y.

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HOLY TRINITY CHURCH IN JACKSON
A SMALL CHURCH WITH LARGE INFLUENCE

"...IT'S REALLY NICE BEING PART OF A SMALL CHURCH BECAUSE EVERYTHING'S VERY PERSONAL."
—Parishioner Christine LeFever

BY TIM PFEIT
Journal Times reporter

Holy Trinity Church in Jackson is relatively small in terms of size, but plays a role in its community that is larger than its size might suggest.

"With 140 families, comparatively speaking, it’s not a large congregation for a Catholic church," said Father Joseph Trapp, the parish’s pastor since mid-2004. "Even when you add Jackson County’s other parish in Wellston (St. Peter and Paul), the number of Catholics in Wellston and St. Peter’s is little more than 1 percent of the population. There are many more Baptists and Methodists, but they’re scattered through many small congregations, so we’re one of the largest churches in the community." 

Father Trapp, president of the Jackson Area Ministries Association for two years and vice president for three years, said that a great ecumenical spirit exists among the county’s congregations and that the parish is delighted to be a part of that community of activity as part of the association.

Those events include an annual prayer tea which is part of the group’s weekly Lenten luncheon series, as well as community Good Friday and Thanksgiving services which are rotated among members of the association.

Holy Trinity’s Altar Rosary Society makes lunch and leads prayers during one of the weeks of Lent.

The largest annual event sponsored by the parish itself is its annual rummage sale, which benefits the Altar Rosary Society and takes place during the first weekend in August.

The sale has been going on for so long that even the oldest member of the parish, 96-year-old Rosemary Ross, can’t remember when it started. "I was probably some time in the early 1950s, maybe even in the ‘40s," she said. "It’s just one of those things that’s always been there, and you can’t imagine the parish without it."

"It’s something that gets everybody in the church involved in the community," said LeFever.

A movement to Father Thalhimer, pastor at Holy Trinity from 1924-40 and 1951-1970, speaks of the parish's commitment to the welfare of the community's Mount Olivet Cemetery.

CT file photos by Ken Snow

Bottom: The exterior of the church, built under the pastorate of Father HOLY TRINITY CHURCH IN JACKSON 10 10

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Toucing Little Lives

The Toucing Little Lives (TLL) organization recently honored Fiorella Ayayo (pictured fourth from left) on her many years as the group’s coordinator for its location at the Columbus Church of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. She served in this position for more than 10 years, meeting with parents, coordinating events, distributing donations of new baby items through the Giving Tree program sponsored by her church at Christ the King.

Toucing Little Lives is a non-denominational group of volunteers who make and distribute handmade items for premature and newborn babies in Ohio free of charge. Last year, it donated nearly 20,000 items through 41 hospitals, pregnancy centers, and similar organizations throughout Ohio, including 26 in the Diocese of Columbus. The organization served more than 930,000 items to Ohio families since its founding in 2000 by Marilynn Dory, a former resident of Hilliard.

The organization has volunteers from throughout the state and as far away as Australia who contribute individually by making finished items to donate. It also has work groups meeting monthly at six locations in Hilliard, Columbus, Delaware, Grove City, and Westerville. An average of approximately 100 volunteers per month create quilts, blankets, and other necessary items. These items are used for comfort and support. The Toucing Little Lives office is housed in the Columbus Church of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal.

The board of directors for TLL includes: Susan Landry of Columbus, chairman; Linda Knight of Columbus, treasurer; Maryann Albert of Delaware, secretary; and Laura Voss of Westerville, a past board member. The group’s coordinator for its location at Columbus Church of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Fiorella Ayayo, was honored on September 29, 2013, for her years of service to the TLl organization.

About: Jackson Holy Trinity Church displays on items from the parish’s raemage sale, its largest annual event.

Right: Servers in procession for the church’s Sunday Mass.

Left: Young people from Holy Trinity Church take part in the parish’s annual May crowning.

Photos courtesy St. Charles Preparatory School

Columbus St. Charles Preparatory School students Tyler McMaken, Ryan Meder, Sean Prendergast, and Alexander Ward have been honored as National Merit Scholarship semifinalists. Zelalem Demere and Elijah Williams were selected as National Achievement Scholars, and Angelo Rivera was recognized as a National Hispanic Scholar.

They qualified for the honors based on scores from the Preliminary SAT™/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) they took last year. Of the more than 1.5 million students who took the test, only 16,000 were named National Merit Semifinalists. They are competing with students nationwide for National Merit Scholarships totaling more than $150 million.

The National Achievement Scholarship Program is an academic competition established in 1964 for outstanding black American high school students.

The National Hispanic Recognition Program identifies academically outstanding Hispanic/Latino high school students. Each year, it honors about 3,000 of the highest-scoring students from more than 250,000 Hispanic/Latino juniors who take the PSAT/NMSQT in the United States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Marianas Islands, and the Marshall Islands, as well as U.S. citizens attending schools abroad.

Colorado’s St. Charles Preparatory School is the school of the year for the 2013-2014 academic year.

The  National Achievement Scholarship Program is an academic competition established in 1964 for outstanding black American high school students.

Demere is the captain of the “In the Know” team, a member of the National Honor Society, and an all-state football player at All Saints Academy.

Williams plans to pursue biochemistry research in college. She is a member of the engineering team, plays温柔族/cha- ketball, and is on the school’s cross country and taekwondo teams.

She has volunteered at Babycenter, a family resource center, and as a tutor at Columbus All Saints Academy.

Prendergast plans to study biology or chemistry, is a member of the engineering team, plays温柔族/cha- ketball, and is on the school’s cross country and taekwondo teams.

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Father Lawrence L. Hummer

Words of warning to the wealthy of every age

Amos 6:1a,4-7

1 Timothy 6:11-16

Luke 16:19-21

The stinging criticism which Amos levels against the wealth of his day sits like a stone marker, etched with words in every age where there exists a strain between rich and poor. It is not their wealth that condemns them, but their ignorance of the plight of the poor which will bring them down. In the end, it always will.

Theluxury of eighteenth-century B.C. Israel shows how prosperous some in that society were. The ivory beds probably hid headboards made of ivory, or furniture with pieces of ivory built into the structure. Most people of that time would have been happy to sleep on a mat woven from reeds.

Eating choice meats and the rest of it, while they were put to the death, would be the revulsion on every one of us. There is nothing more terrifying to the poor man as he sees the luxury of ours, so long as he had a sense of reason.

The words still apply, whether to Pharisees or to us. The luxury of eighth-century BC Israel shows how prosperous some in that society were. The ivory beds probably hid headboards made of ivory, or furniture with pieces of ivory built into the structure. Most people of that time would have been happy to sleep on a mat woven from reeds.

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The luxury of eighteenth-century B.C. Israel shows how prosperous some in that society were. The ivory beds probably hid headboards made of ivory, or furniture with pieces of ivory built into the structure. Most people of that time would have been happy to sleep on a mat woven from reeds.

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Sister Carolyn Thomas, SCN

Sister taught in the elementary and secondary schools of the Nazareth Community in Natchez, Mississippi and Emergency, Kentucky from 1955-1967. In 1967 Sister moved to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal High School, Columbus, Ohio where she taught for 16 years. In 1983, she moved to the Dominican University, 1216 Sunbury Road, Columbus. Sisters served at Dominican University as well as in the Dominican University community in various capacities.

Sister had been a Sister of Charity of Nazareth Cemetery, Nazareth, KY. She had been a Sister of Charity of Nazareth Cemetery, Nazareth, KY. She had been a Sister of Charity of Nazareth Cemetery, Nazareth, KY. She had been a Sister of Charity of Nazareth Cemetery, Nazareth, KY. She had been a Sister of Charity of Nazareth Cemetery, Nazareth, KY. She had been a Sister of Charity of Nazareth Cemetery, Nazareth, KY. She had been a Sister of Charity of Nazareth Cemetery, Nazareth, KY. She had been a Sister of Charity of Nazareth Cemetery, Nazareth, KY. She had been a Sister of Charity of Nazareth Cemetery, Nazareth, KY. She had been a Sister of Charity of Nazareth Cemetery, Nazareth, KY. She had been a Sister of Charity of Nazareth Cemetery, Nazareth, KY.

Sister was preceded in death by her parents, brothers, Harold, Charles, William, and sisters, and survived by her sister, Sister Margaret Mary Welch, OSF, and many nieces and nephews.

Sister received a Master's degree in Scripture and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in New Testament from Fordham University. She was an Associate Professor of New Testament at Pontifical College Josephinum from 1992-1998. From 1999-2005 Sister served as Professor of New Testament and Biblical Languages in the School of Theology and Formation of Ministers at the Josephinum. From 2005-2006 Sister served as part-time teacher in the Josephinum and at Ohio Dominican University as well as in the Catholic Biblical Literacy Program. From 2007-2011 Sister served as part-time Executive of Diocesan Ministers and as Pastoral Minister at St. Thomas Church, Columbus. In 2011 Sister moved to the Apostolate of Prayer at Nazareth Mother House and later at Nazareth Home, Columbus. Survivors include two brothers: Sister Carolyn Thomas, SCN, and Robert Thomas of Mayfield, KY; and Julian B. Thomas of Salvisa, KY; and two sisters: Jane Concina and Bernadette Hayes, both of Scottsdale, AZ; and her religious community.

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Dioecesan Musician Evening Prayer
Bishop Frederick Campbell, the dioecesan archbishop, and musicians from all over the diocese will assemble at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and be asked to RSVP to Padre Davis at the diocesan Office for Divine Worship at (614) 221-4640.

**Happenings**

Submissions should be sent to the diocesan office by 9 a.m. on the deadline. Please include the name and contact information of the person submitting the submission. The diocesan office reserves the right to edit all submissions. Please submit all submissions to the diocesan office at 2000 All Saints Ave, Columbus, OH 43215 or via email at tspedt@coladoc.org.

**SEPTEMBER**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**

**All-School Mass at Mount Vernon**
8 a.m., St. Joseph Church, 313 N. State St., Westerville.
**Sunday School for Adults**
6:30 p.m., St. Joseph Church, 313 N. State St., Westerville. Led by Maria Mitchell and Nicole Varno.

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**

**Spaghetti Dinner**
6:30 to 8 p.m., St. John Chrysostom Church, 1216 Sunbury Road, Columbus. $12.95 for adults, $5.50 for children.

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25**

**Catholic Youth Organization 10K Race**
10 a.m., St. John Chrysostom Church, 1216 Sunbury Road, Columbus.
**Catholic War Veterans Post 1936**
10 a.m., St. John Chrysostom Church, 1216 Sunbury Road, Columbus.

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26**

**All-School Mass at Mount Vernon**
7:30 a.m., St. Joseph Church, 313 N. State St., Westerville.
**Sunday School for Adults**
6:30 p.m., St. Joseph Church, 313 N. State St., Westerville. Led by Maria Mitchell and Nicole Varno.

**SEPTEMBER**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23**

**Social Justice Dinner**
6:30 p.m., St. Joseph Church, 313 N. State St., Westerville.
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**CONCERT**

**Heinavanker**

Ancient Songs, Chants and Hymns
Voice music from Estonia

The 34th season of the Early Music in Columbus concert series opens with the vocal music ensemble Heinavanker on Friday, Oct. 4 in Moss Hall at Capital University. The concert begins at 8 p.m., with a pre-concert lecture at 7:30.

Heinavanker will perform ruin songs, Gregorian chant, Estonian folk hymns, and Renaissance Mass settings from the 16th century. The six-member ensemble takes its name from the famous altarpiece of Hieronymus Bosch (1453-1516). This rare piece of art represents a huge wagonload of hay rolling through a world vexed by agony and greed toward destruction. However, amid the hayload, there sounds beautiful music. Heinavanker has performed at music festivals and concerts throughout Europe and the United States. The Early Music in Columbus concert series features regional, national, and international artists who specialize in music from the medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque periods on reproductions of historical instruments. Tickets are $27 general admission, $22 for seniors, and $12 for students and may be purchased through the website www.earlymusicincolumbus.org, at the door, or charged by phone. To order tickets by phone, contact Katherine Wolfe at (614) 465-4569, the CAPA ticket office (614) 469-0939, or Ticketmaster (1-800) 745-3000.

The Early Music in Columbus concert series is supported by funding from the Ohio Arts Council, the Greater Columbus Arts Council, and The Columbus Foundation.

**FILM PREMIERE**

**Band of Sisters**

The Marín de Porres Center, 2330 Airport Road, Columbus, will host the central Ohio premiere of the 2012 film Band of Sisters from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 3. Commentary on the film will be by its producer and director, Mary Fishman, who also will answer questions about the film and its production.

The film focuses on the life experiences and current-day stories of more than a dozen sisters from different religious congregations across the United States, many of whom have been central agents in the great social movements of our time. It has been 50 years since Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council to revitalize the church, and many Catholics will immediately recognize how the Second Vatican Council to revitalize the church, and many Catholics will immediately recognize how the work of sisters in the U.S. has changed since that time. Fascinating scenes of convent life before Vatican II contrast in the film with those of sisters in the years after the council.

Band of Sisters travels with sisters who serve as organic farmers, environmental attorneys, peace activists, holistic health care practitioners, podcasters, and more. With pregnancy, drama, and humor, the film fosters well-deserved recognition for its engaging characters and the thousands of sisters like them. A film that shows the sisters as they are, Band of Sisters is a deeply moving story of inspiration and hope for people of all faiths.

It represents Fishman’s filmmaking debut. She attended Catholic elementary and high schools, where sisters were her teachers, but it was during the making of this film that they became her friends—and they’re still her teachers.

In her previous career, Fishman was an architect and urban planner. She grew up in Chicago, graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a degree in architecture and French, and practiced architecture in Chicago, in southern California, and in France. While in California, she attended UCLA and received a master’s degree in urban planning. Returning home, she specialized in historic preservation and zoning for the city of Chicago’s planning and development department.

She left her job to help care for her mother, and began work on Band of Sisters in 2004 after taking film courses at Columbus College and at Chicago Film Institute. She was accepted to Columbia University but decided to stay in Ohio. She teaches film at Capital University, where she now is an associate professor.

Mary Fishman grew up in Columbus, where she attended St. Rita School and Bexley High School.

In 2004, Fishman began working on Band of Sisters. It represents Fishman’s filmmaking debut. She attended Catholic elementary and high schools, where sisters were her teachers, but it was during the making of this film that they became her friends—and they’re still her teachers.

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She left her job to help care for her mother, and began work on Band of Sisters in 2004 after taking film courses at Columbus College and at Chicago Film Institute. Making films is a dream come true for Fishman, joining her love of movies with her desire to work for social justice. To register by Tuesday, Oct. 1, call (614) 416-1910 or register online at www.marindesperescenter.net.

Suggested donation is $10.
Cardinal says USCCB continues legal, moral analysis of HHS mandate

By Catholic News Service

In a Sept. 17 letter to U.S. bishops, New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan said the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops continues to study the legal and moral implications of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ contraceptive mandate in the Affordable Care Act.

The USCCB also continues to “develop avenues of response that would both preserve our strong unity and protect our consciences,” he said.

The letter from Cardinal Dolan, president of the USCCB, was a follow-up from a Sept. 10-11 meeting in which the bishops’ administrative committee discussed the HHS mandate, among other topics.

The HHS contraceptive mandate, part of the Affordable Care Act, will require most employers, including religious employers, to provide coverage of contraceptives, sterilization, and some abortion-inducing drugs free of charge, even if the employer is morally opposed to such services. It includes an exemption for some religious employers that fit its criteria.

The bishops’ “efforts are proceeding apace, and, as you know, include a careful legal and moral analysis of the final rule,” Cardinal Dolan wrote. He said further discussion will take place at the bishops’ fall general meeting from Nov. 11-14 in Baltimore.

“We are united in our resolve to continue to defend our right to live by our faith, and our duty to serve the poor, heal the sick, keep our apostolates strong and faithful, and insure our people,” he wrote.

The final HHS rule on the mandate is an accommodation of religious ministries that do not fit the exemption. Contraceptive coverage for those accommodated religious organizations with health insurance plans is to be provided separately, either through health insurance companies or through third-party administrators who must ensure that payments for contraceptive services come from outside the objecting organization’s premiums.

For self-insuring institutions, a third-party administrator would provide or arrange the services, paid for through reductions in federally facilitated exchange-user fees associated with their health insurance provider.

The mandate does not include a conscience clause for employers who object to such coverage on moral grounds.

The contraceptive mandate was to go into effect on Aug. 1, but the HHS final rule issued this summer moved the date of implemenation to Jan. 1. Starting Oct. 1, people can begin selecting and apply for health insurance coverage choices.

In his letter to the bishops, Cardinal Dolan emphasized that the USCCB administrative committee was unanimous in its resolve to continue its struggle with the HHS mandate. He likewise voiced concern regarding the Catholic Health Association’s “hurried acceptance of the accommodation,” which he called “untimely and unhelpful.”

“We highly value CHA’s great expertise in their ministry of healing,” Cardinal Dolan said, “but as they have been the first to say, they do not represent the magisterium of the church.”

He said the final rule, which was issued on June 28, has “the same three basic problems” found in the original rule issued in February: a narrow definition of “religious employer” that “reduces religious freedom to the freedom of worship by dividing our community between houses of worship and ministries of service”; second-class treatment of such ministries through a “so-called ‘accommodation’”; and a “failure to offer any relief to for-profit businesses run by so many of our faithful in the pews.”

He stressed that the Catholic Church has long been a leader in providing affordable health care. “The bishops on a national level have been at it for almost 100 years, and our heroic women and men religious have done so even longer,” he said.

But now, he pointed out, “instead of spending our time, energy, and treasure on increasing access to health care, as we have done for many decades, we’re … forced to spend those resources on determining how to respond to recently enacted government regulations that restrict and burden our religious freedom.”

Cardinal Dolan said that “while much remains uncertain,” the USCCB is continuing its efforts in Congress and in the courts, particularly since the mandate “lessens the ability of our ministries to give full-throated witness to our faith, a central mission of all Catholic apostolates.”

“As I’ve said before, this is a fight that we didn’t ask for, and would rather not be in, but it’s certainly one that we won’t run from,” the cardinal wrote.