



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WEEKLY  
from  
**Americans for Freedom of Religion**

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Catholic Hospital System Told to Extinguish Their Sanctuary Candle  
or Lose Their Ability to Help the Poor Through Medicaid, Medicare or CHIP

St. Francis, non-profit Health System in Oklahoma is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest hospital in the country and serves over 400,000 patients each year and has provided over 650 million in free health services over the last five years. For 63 years a sanctuary candle has burned without a problem in the chapel at Saint Francis Hospital Yale Campus where vital healthcare is provided for the elderly, poor and disabled in Oklahoma. The fire marshal and government never complained about the candle until now. The hospital's attorneys from the Beckett Fund point out that the candle is far from medical equipment and shielded by glass holders and a brass top.

Health and Human Services has mandated the extinguishing of the candle even though the hospital has applied four times for an exemption. Now they are working with the Beckett Fund attorneys to protect the hospital system's right to maintain the living flame in accordance with their 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment right to religious expression and in keeping with Canon Law which states that when the Eucharist is present, a lamp must shine continuously. If the hospital is forced to extinguish the candle, they will have to remove the Eucharist from the chapel.

**[Read more at bit.ly/3LYRdwk](http://bit.ly/3LYRdwk)**; **[bit.ly/3HHEDiR](http://bit.ly/3HHEDiR)**

**[Psalm 30:2](#) *"O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me."***