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RESPECT LIFE NEWSLETTER

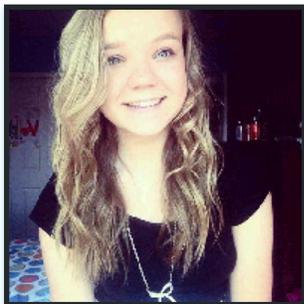


Working together to spread the Gospel of Life across the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Being Pro Life: New Life Through Death

By: Bob Wurzelbacher

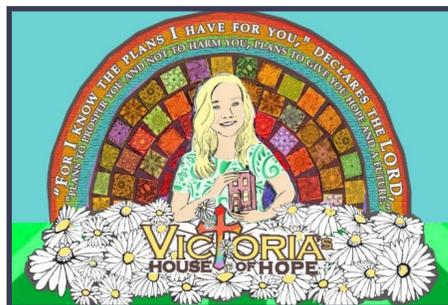
Victoria was a beautiful 15 year old high school girl who loved volleyball, games, selfies and arm-wrestling her brother. Just two weeks after her 15th birthday she woke-up with a headache and passed out. She had suffered a stroke, but the actual cause was not determined until months later, when she was suddenly diagnosed with a malignant form of brain cancer known as Glioblastoma. That disease would take her life over the next 14 months, but it never stopped her spirit. She always found joy in helping others, so in the midst of her sickness, in her last months of her life, Victoria would spend every Thursday in Over-the-Rhine passing out food, until she was no longer able. When the Make-a-Wish Foundation came knocking to ask what wish they could grant for her, rather than a trip to Disneyland or some such thing for herself, she asked if there



was a way they could help her continue to serve the homeless and working poor. They granted her wish, with the help of a local Lutheran Church and many volunteers, by remodeling an apartment building into transitional housing for families in need, now called **Victoria's House of Hope**. While it was easy to see what was so wonderful about Victoria while she was healthy, it was in death that what was most beautiful about Victoria was made so apparent. When brain cancer whittled away at so many of her abilities, what was never taken away was her immense sense of gratitude, her love of family and friends,

her faith, and her concern for the good of others who are most in need.

This is just one of four stories on death and new life being shared in our Being Pro Life podcast series this month. I also talk with Maria Lees Dunlap on the loss of her infant daughter, with Sheila Munafo-Kanoza on the loss of her young husband, and Fr. Paul Koetter on his terminal diagnosis of ALS. All dealt with the grief of their loss in heroic ways, embraced the cross of Christ through the journey, and found new life on the other side. Let your Easter journey include reflecting on these inspirational stories. **CLICK HERE** to check out our Being Pro-Life Podcast or **CLICK HERE** to watch the videos on our YouTube Channel.





Welcome

Thank you for your openness to God's call to foster respect for human life at all its stages, from conception to natural death. We live in a time when so many in our culture promote values contrary to human life itself. These include life issues such as abortion and euthanasia, and issues of human dignity such as advocacy for those with disabilities or victims of violent crime. It is a monumental task, but one worth pursuing. What is needed is people of love and humility, devoted to God, immersed in the Sacraments of Jesus Christ, and open to the direction of the Holy Spirit in helping others bring a greater respect for all human life to the lives of all.

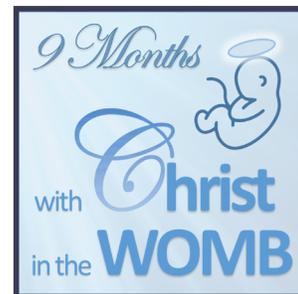
May God bless you in this work. Know that I am truly grateful to work with you in this. Together, let us build a culture of life here in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati!

Director, Office for Respect Life Ministries

A Prayer of Anticipation

By: Kara Ross

Just before Holy Week, we celebrated the feast of the Annunciation, the feast of the greatest pregnancy our world has ever seen. Mary's fiat--her yes to life--gives us everlasting life through Christ. In nine months, we will celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas, but between then and now we have a unique opportunity. We are invited to pray with Mary throughout her pregnancy. As she experiences the development of Christ from tiny embryo to a fully-developed child, she is the Ark of the New Covenant, and we can journey with her. We can contemplate the unborn Christ and ask His beautiful Mother to pray for all unborn children. The Office for Respect Life Ministries offers resources for 9 Months with Christ in the Womb. There are weekly and monthly reflections that can be used in parish bulletins, apps, and on social media. You can also order prayer cards or use the app! For more information or to order the resources, contact Kara Ross at respectlife@catholicaoc.org. Please join us in this pilgrimage to the manger. May the unborn Christ live in all our hearts.



APRIL Holy Thursday

01

On Holy Thursday we remember our call to become servants to one another through the act of washing one another's feet. We are reminded that we must live our lives for others to truly embrace the mission of Jesus. May we keep the vulnerable in mind as we contemplate ways to serve others.

Good Friday

02

On Good Friday in 1991, Pope St. John Paul II celebrated a variation of the traditional Stations of the Cross. [CLICK HERE](#) to see this reflection known as the Stations for Life. The USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities incorporated the titles and Scriptural readings he used and added the prayers following each Scriptural reading.

Coordinator's Corner

This section is dedicated to providing seasonal resources for Parish Respect Life Coordinators. If there is a resource that you believe would be useful to include, please contact us at respectlife@catholicaoc.org.

- 01- Word of Life & Pray for Life
- 02- Divine Mercy Action Guide
- 03- Oppose the Equality Act
- 04- Roe v. Wade the Movie



Respect Life Coordinator Resources

- 01 The month's Word of Life includes resources for Divine Mercy Sunday including a Divine Mercy Action Guide. (PDF: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)) You can also find the [PRAY FOR LIFE](#) page that includes monthly prayers for moms in need written in both English and Spanish.
- 02 The Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities has created a Divine Mercy Action Guide that focuses around healing for people who have experienced abortion. Many inaccurately feel that abortion is "the unforgivable sin." They need to hear that God forgives every sin of a repentant heart, even the sin of abortion. This Action Guide includes a sample timeline, simple steps, sample announcements, and an activity to help you bring Christ's message of mercy to your parish community. Project Rachel resources are also always available through our office. Contact us at projectrachel@catholicaoc.org.
- 03 The Equality Act has passed the United State House of Representatives and is being actively considered by the Senate. If passed into law, this act would force religious institutions to go against their moral teachings on biological sex, marriage, and abortion. This law poses a serious threat to religious liberty, one of the founding tenets of our nation. [CLICK HERE](#) to take action now and ask your Senator to oppose this dangerous legislation.
- 04 Archbishop Joseph Naumann, the chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities, has issued a statement regarding the anniversary of the launch of [Walking with Moms in Need](#). In this statement, he highly encourages more parishes to engage in this initiative to better support mothers and children in need in the midst of some of the more recent pro-choice legislation. [CLICK HERE](#) to read his full letter.

Divine Mercy Reflection

By: Kara Ross

The Sunday after Easter is the Sunday of Divine Mercy. One week after we joyfully celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord that brings us new life, we consciously remember that it is by His grace and mercy that we are healed and redeemed. We read the Gospel account of Saint Thomas, who could not believe it when his friends told him that Christ had risen. He could not accept the truth of redemption because of how lost he felt in his grief over his friend, Jesus. But Jesus did not leave Thomas in the midst of his sadness and grief. Jesus met Thomas where he was and blessed him. How often have you been Thomas? How often have you doubted God's greatness or mercy? Perhaps surrounded by a deep sin or past wound, you have lost sight of the Father's loving gaze. Even when we look away, He never loses sight of us.

Saint Faustina, the saint of Divine Mercy, reminds us to "have great confidence; God is always our Father, even when He sends us trials". Our whole lives cannot be lived beside the empty tomb. Christ asks us to go forth and spread His good news. Along the way, we will stumble, fall, and fail. But His loving mercy is always there for us. As we celebrate the Second Sunday of Easter with Saint Thomas, ask for a renewal of sustaining mercy in your heart and ask that others seeking healing will find it in God's embrace.

Watch the *Roe v. Wade* Movie!

The long-awaited film *Roe v. Wade* which tells the true story of perhaps the most tragic event in American history, is now ready to appear in theaters in late April. The film features veteran Hollywood actors such as Jon Voight and Robert Davi and provides credible portrayals of such figures as Chief Justice Warren Berger, Gloria Steinem, Norma McCorvey and others. You can now view the film in your own home at your convenience. Dayton Right to Life is hosting the film as a virtual showing for you and your entire family at a cost, paid to the distributor, of \$12.99 plus a handling fee of \$1.25. Just go to <https://daytonlife.org> and follow the "Sneak Preview" prompt for the movie on the home page. You will also have the opportunity to make a donation (optional) to Dayton Right to Life to support its mission and defray its expenses for sponsoring the film. The website includes a list of FAQs and a live chat function to resolve any technical issues on streaming.

Pro-Life Poster Contest

It is time for the Cincinnati Right to Life Pro-Life Poster Contest! Students from kindergarten to 8th grade are welcome to submit posters for cash prizes! This is a great way to get kids involved in the prolife movement. Past winners have highlighted the lives of unborn children, the dignity of those with disabilities, and the goal of our Church to spread love through the Gospel of Life. **CLICK HERE** for full rules and forms. Please share in church bulletins as well! Posters are due by **April 16th**.

APRIL Easter Sunday

04

Lord Jesus Christ, You are the Author of Life, who died and now lives forevermore. May we who work and pray that children in the womb may be protected always draw strength, confidence, and joy from Your victory over death, for you are Lord forever and ever. Amen.

(Prayer courtesy of Priests for Life)

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Sunday of Divine Mercy

On the Second Sunday of Easter, the Church celebrates the Sunday of Divine Mercy. It provides an important opportunity to share Christ's message of mercy, especially with those who have been wounded by participation in abortion. Learn more about the **Divine Mercy Action Guide** in Coordinator's Corner.

I Shall Give Half

A Local Campaign for Life

As many are aware, the United States Congress has passed the American Recovery Act, which does provide economic stimulus to Americans who qualify. However, the Hyde Amendment has been removed from the Act, which means that funds in this act can be used to pay for abortion.

In response to this troubling truth, we must take a prayerful approach to accepting the stimulus payments, if your family is eligible for the relief. Bishop Christensen of Bosie, Idaho has recently started a campaign in his diocese called "I Shall Give Half" from the Gospel story of Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus promised Jesus that in repatriation for his prior life of greed, he would give half of his possessions to the poor. Bishop Christensen has challenged the people of his diocese to give half, or as much as they are able, of their stimulus payments to National Right to Life. **CLICK HERE** to see his letter to his diocese.

We are asking you to make a similar sacrifice. This pandemic has hit us all in different ways and many of us are hurting financially; however, if you are blessed enough to not need your stimulus money, consider making a gift to **National Right to Life, Cincinnati Right to Life, Dayton Right to Life**, or any local pregnancy care center listed on our website. The Hyde amendment would be unnecessary in a world where women find the hope and support they need to keep their babies. As the prolife movement faces a difficult time of opposition, let us show our legislatures that we believe in life and in life saving ministries.

Many of us were unable to participate in our 40 Days for Life campaigns this past year due to issue related to COVID. However, we can still stand for life by storing our treasure in heaven. Even if it is one package of diapers donated to your local pregnancy center, that is one mother supported and loved in her choice to choose life. Please consider what you can give to the poor. Please consider what you can give to those most in need.

By: Kara Ross

Being Pro-Life

The Ethics of the Current COVID Vaccines

Do you want more clarity on the connection between abortion and the current COVID vaccines, especially the difference between Pfizer, Moderna and the newly released Johnson & Johnson vaccine? On a recent podcast, Bob talked with Dr. Ann Moell, who conducts research for one of the current vaccines,

on the differences, the Bishops' take, and the seriousness of the pandemic vs. taking the vaccine. **CLICK HERE**

to listen to the full podcast, or watch the video interview on our Being Pro-Life **YouTube Channel**.



CRS Collection

By: Sara Seligmann

The Catholic Relief Services Collection will be held in our Archdiocese on the weekend of April 17 and 18. This annual, national collection helps support the work of six organizations: Catholic Relief Services, the USCCB Department of Migration and Refugee Services, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., the USCCB Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church, the USCCB Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development and the Holy Father's Relief fund.

Support is needed from the pulpit, in bulletins, newsletters, and social media to contribute to the collection's success and to an enhanced global solidarity among our parishes.



Resources for the collection include: a **letter from the Archbishop**, **bulletin announcements**, a **bulletin insert**, a **bulletin cover**, a **Parish Appeal**, and a **Parish Resource Guide**. For questions, contact Sara at 513-546-3143 or sseligmann@catholicaoc.org.

CLICK HERE for more information about Catholic Relief Services.

belonging



Ministry with Persons with Disabilities

The Office for Persons with Disabilities works to establish a culture of inclusion and meaningful participation for persons with disabilities and their families in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. If you have any questions or need any assistance, you can contact our office at opd@catholicaoc.org.

April is Autism Awareness Month. During this month we celebrate neurodiversity and take time to grow in our awareness of persons with autism and the many gifts that they bring to our Church. Autism is often called the "Invisible Disorder," because persons with autism have no distinguishing physical characteristics, but may have a variety of sensory issues and intellectual and developmental delays. Sometimes it is easy to assume that a child is simply acting out during Mass when, in fact, he/she is overstimulated. Persons with autism need our support. It may be difficult for a person with autism to attend Mass due to overstimulation, and **Sensory-Friendly Liturgies** are a great solution for this issue. Our office is hoping to work with parishes to reinstitute these **Sensory-Friendly Masses** across the Archdiocese to better support persons with Autism and their families. These liturgies require a few adaptations, but the biggest part of implementing a **Sensory-Friendly Mass** is to create a stigma-free environment. If your parish is interested in hosting these Masses regularly, please contact us at the above listed email address.

MAY Marian Pilgrimage

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The **Marian Pilgrimage** begins Sunday, May 16, 2021 with a Mass at the Our Lady of Fatima Shrine in Russells Point in the Northern area of the Archdiocese and will travel all the way to the Cathedral Basilica for a final Mass with the Archbishop on June 19. For more information about this exciting opportunity, **CLICK HERE**.

MAY Project Rachel Retreat (Dayton)

21-23

The **Project Rachel Retreat** is designed for mothers affected by an abortion experience. These retreats are a way to grow in one's healing journey with other women who have shared a similar experience. The weekend offers a loving and confidential environment where participants can experience the love and mercy of God.



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Mother's Day Flower Sale

After missing 2020 because of the pandemic, Dayton Right to Life is resuming its annual flower sale at churches for Mother's Day, May 9. You can place your order for your church of roses and/or carnations with Tom Pfahler at 937-212-5575 or 937-461-3625. You can also order online at https://daytonlife.org/About/upcoming_events.php. Proceeds from your sale will help benefit Dayton Right to Life. Deadline for bulk order of flowers is Friday, April 23.



Do you have something that you would like to share in our upcoming issue?
Contact us at respectlife@catholicaoc.org or (937)281-4128.