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RESPECT LIFE NEWSLETTER



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

Abortion and Capital Punishment

By: Bob Wurzelbacher

Two big life issues are going to be legislative battles in Ohio in 2023, abortion and capital punishment. While not morally equivalent, they are both life issues the Church teaches against.

Abortion, of course, is considered intrinsically evil in all circumstances. The Catechism teaches that “[s]ince the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion” and that “[t]his teaching...remains unchangeable” (2271). Basically, there can never be a circumstance in which willfully and directly causing the death of an unborn child can be considered morally acceptable. Many people object to abortion restriction citing concerns about miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or life of the mother, but see **THIS ARTICLE** easily debunking those concerns.

One of the bills that will be in front of the Ohio legislature related to abortion in 2023 is House Bill 598, the Human Life Protection Act. This legislation makes abortion illegal at every stage of development, including the abortion pill. It identifies the physician and/or seller of abortion drugs, but protects the woman from any criminal prosecution. The Ohio Catholic Conference **SUPPORTS THIS BILL** and encourages everyone



to contact their legislator to vote for it. On the other side of the aisle, abortion supporters will simultaneously be working to protect abortion access through a **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT** that may come to voters before the end of 2023.

Another big life issue in 2023 will be capital punishment. In 2018, Pope Francis called the death penalty “inadmissible”, but did not declare that it is always and everywhere an immoral choice. Citing more effective systems of detention as well as the dignity of the human person, the Church nonetheless teaches that we should “work[s] with determination for its abolition worldwide” (2267).

Senate Bill 103 and House Bill 183 are identical bills that would ban the death penalty in Ohio. It would make the strongest penalty for crime in Ohio a sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of parole. Some of the primary secular reasons for abolishing the death penalty are that it unequally affects the poor and minorities, it costs a massive amount of tax dollars, it isn't shown to deter violent crime, and there are a shocking percentage of wrongful convictions. For more information on that, see a **REPORT HERE**, or watch a video podcast interview with author Tessie Castillo **HERE**.

Most readers of this newsletter probably know how to get involved in the Respect Life movement. From participating with your local right to life organization, in **40 DAYS FOR LIFE VIGILS** or helping at your **LOCAL PREGNANCY CENTER**, there are many ways to get involved. If you want to stay aware of legislative efforts, sign up for action alerts with the **OHIO CATHOLIC CONFERENCE**, or nationally at **HUMANLIFEACTION.ORG**. If you would like to get more involved in efforts to abolish the death penalty in Ohio in the new year, head to the website **NODEATHPENALTYOH.COM**, which is fully supported by the Ohio Catholic Conference.



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!

Bishop Wolfgang

Director, Office for Respect Life Ministries

All Night Exposition

This year, for the National Prayer Vigil for Life, join Archbishop Schnurr for a Pro-Life Rosary and Holy Hour on Thursday evening, January 19 at 7PM. Please plan to come to the Cathedral Basilica in downtown Cincinnati for this special prayer for the rights of the unborn, and healing for all those affected by abortion.



This holy hour will be immediately followed by Exposition all night until concluding with Holy Mass the following morning, January 20, at 7AM. We need adorers to accompany Our Lord all night, so please share the word with all your parishioners and sign up for whatever hours you can cover [HERE](#) (access code 1111).

These holy hours will be happening across the country, and the program happening at the National Basilica in Washington, DC will be televised by [EWTN](#). Our liturgy will be livestreamed on our [FACEBOOK PAGE](#).

Let us pray for the millions of lives lost to abortion, as well as the countless women and men who are suffering from the consequences of their choice. Let us work ardently to create a culture grounded in respect for life and justice.

January

Eucharistic Revival

08

Each Sunday for six weeks from January 8 until February 12, Archbishop Schnurr will email participants his own brief insights along with a 25-minute episode from Word on Fire's *The Mass*. Register for free [HERE!](#)

17-18

Mental Health Ministry

Deacon Ed Schoener, President of The Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers will host a workshop on how to start a Mental Health Ministry in your parish. Two dates and location options. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

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
- 02- Parish Action Guide
- 03- 9 Days for Life Novena
- 04- The Truth About Abortion



Respect Life Coordinator Resources

- 01 The month's **WORD OF LIFE** includes intercessions for life to be used each week, and a reflection on **LIVING OUT CHRISTMAS IN THE NEAR YEAR** for your bulletin. As always, there is also a **SPANISH VERSION** available.
- 02 January can be a big month for respect life efforts at your parish. Check out this month's **PARISH ACTION GUIDE** for sample bulletin announcements, pulpit announcements, and even Homily Helps for your pastor for January 22. The anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* falls on Sunday this year, so the official **DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE LEGAL PROTECTION OF UNBORN CHILDREN** is celebrated on Monday, January 23. Please encourage your pastor to utilize the optional readings on this day and Homily Helps on this day.
- 03 The **9 DAYS FOR LIFE NOVENA** is starting this month! This is a chance to prayerfully enter into the week that precedes the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* and the March for Life in Washington, DC. The program includes intentions and suggestions for fasts each day as we continue to pray for our state governments. Follow our **FACEBOOK PAGE** for daily updates as well!
- 04 If you haven't already, check out the USCCB's one-pager called **THE TRUTH ABOUT ABORTION & WOMEN'S HEALTH**. This is a simple flyer designed to be put in your parish bulletin to educate your parishioners on some of the most common objections to outlawing abortion, such as the need for treatment for miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, or other life-saving treatment.

A Cincinnati Saint

By: Becky Schoenfeld



Sister Blandina Segale emigrated to Cincinnati with her family when she was just 4 years old. She joined the Sisters of Charity when she was 16 and went on to teach in Dayton and Steubenville. Her life was nothing short of extraordinary. She assisted building schools, hospitals, and convents. She was an inspirer and a doer when it came to helping those most in need. In 1897 she helped found the Santa Maria Institute as a way to assist the poor immigrant families of Cincinnati. She was a remarkably

brave woman and once stopped an angry mob from lynching a man by facilitating reconciliation between the man and his accuser. As of today, there are 29 miracles attributed to her intercession, one of them being a local Cincinnati woman, Pamela Kent, who received a terminal diagnosis from her doctors in 2014. Two Sisters of Charity began praying to Sister Blandina for Kent's intention. Once Kent heard of the prayers she began a devotion to Sister Blandina as well. In 2016, her scans were clear and her doctors had no explanation for why or how her condition went away. Read more about Blessed Sister Blandina and Pam Kent's story [HERE!](#)

Beacons Roundtable Returns!

Join other parish leaders – priests, deacons, lay staff, and others – for the first session in our Beacons Roundtable series on Tuesday, January 17th from 1:30-3:00pm online. The Spring 2023 series will focus on leading change in a Family of Parishes. In particular, we'll look at the importance of vision and the role that leaders play in creating and communicating vision. We'll also focus on the importance of spiritual, physical, and mental health for parish leaders. Each 90 minutes online session will also include updates to the Pathway platform, support for planning efforts, and information about upcoming events for parish leaders. Our January 17th session will focus on new approaches to Lent and Holy Week: Family Style! We'll also talk about the upcoming Visio Days in March. For more info and to register, click [HERE](#).



January

Holy Hour for Life

19

On the eve of the March for Life, Archbishop Schnurr will lead us in a Pro-Life Rosary & Holy Hour at The Cathedral Basilica St. Peter in Chains at 7:00pm. Exposition will continue through the night until 8am January 20th. Sign up for an hour [HERE](#) (code 1111).

19-27

9 Days for Life Novena

9 Days for Life is a novena for the protection of human life. Each day's intention is accompanied by a short reflection and suggested actions to help build a culture of life. You can participate as an individual or a parish. To learn more, [CLICK HERE](#).

Advocating for Life, Dignity and Justice



Every year at the end of January, the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering (CSMG) brings together diocesan, parish, and community leaders to pray for, deepen their understanding of, and advocate for multiple issues of peace and justice. Organized by the USCCB Department of Justice, Peace, and

Human Development, hundreds of people convene in Washington D.C. to address issues such as the dignity of work and workers, people with disabilities, peacemaking, global solidarity, empowering women and children, climate change, food insecurity, gun violence, abortion and domestic violence, immigration and refugee resettlement, and racial justice. For three days, subject-matter leaders from around the world share information to form and educate attendees, equipping them to bring their learning back to their communities and spread the knowledge. On the fourth day, after a sending Mass and breakfast (for spiritual and bodily strength), attendees visit elected officials to strongly encourage them to direct their efforts and votes towards policies that reflect our Catholic values of life, dignity, and justice. If you are interested in registering, click [HERE](#).

Please include during your prayers this month all of those Catholic leaders who will be participating in CSMG – that their minds and hearts will be open and their advocacy efforts will fall on fertile soil and grow into policies that support all life, from womb to tomb.

Being Pro-Life Sex Trafficking

When cops busted up a drugs/prostitution ring, they found a 17 year old girl being sex-trafficked, carrying a stuffed animal. She was given drugs to make her dependent on pimps, and had been severely sexually traumatized. At her hearing, due to a poor understanding of how trafficking works, she was sent to jail for being a runaway and doing drugs.



This is just one story told by Tonya Folks, Human Trafficking Liaison for Montgomery County. Because this girl wasn't held captive or forced by gunpoint, she was viewed as one who chose a life of crime; however, she was coerced as a minor, given drugs to keep her compliant, and had no real control over her circumstances. Stories like hers happen right here in Ohio, but we can help change that. To watch the video [CLICK HERE](#)

Our New Year's Gift

By: Lisa Averion



On December 30th, our daughter will celebrate her 16th birthday. Unlike most 16-year-old girls, she will not be anticipating driving to the mall or to school because she has Down syndrome. My husband and I chose to not have prenatal testing for all five children because all children are a gift from God. When Gianna was born in 2006, we were not prepared for her diagnosis; however, through the grace of God we have been her advocate, and we celebrate her extra chromosome daily.

Through our research over the years, we have learned about the staggering statistic regarding termination of children with Down syndrome. According to Life Institute, in Britain, 90% of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted. In Denmark, an average of 98% of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted each year and in Iceland, almost 100% of babies with Down syndrome are aborted, because the take-up for screening is very high. According to official statistics reported in the Icelandic Parliament in the period from 2008-2012, all babies diagnosed with Down syndrome in Iceland were aborted. I will never understand why babies with Down syndrome are considered a burden or less of a person. The joy Gianna has given to our family is a blessing. God chose us to receive her as a gift and for that I am thankful.

OPD Updates

By: Lisa Averion



On January 17th at Our Lady of Sorrows, Monroe and January 18th at St. Monica-St George, Cincinnati, the Office for Persons with Disabilities will host Deacon Ed Shoener, President of the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers. Deacon Ed will present on how to start a Mental Health Ministry in your parish and Mental Health First Aid strategies (not Mental Health First Aid Certification). Please consider registering for this event.

Did you know...

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-14

*National Alliance of Mental Illness

For more information or to register, go to our website [HERE](#) or contact Lisa Averion at laverion@catholicaoc.org.

January Rosary Procession City Hall

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The Cincinnati Pro Life Committee is organizing their 39th Annual Pro-Life Rosary Procession, starting at 11am at City Hall and processing to Fountain Square for a noon rally. For more details go to click CINCINNATIPROLIFE.ORG.

Day of Prayer for the Unborn

23

Because January 22 falls on a Sunday this year, the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children is moved to January 23rd. Let your pastor know he can find everything he needs (homily helps, prayers, etc.) to celebrate this day in the [JANUARY ACTION GUIDE](#).



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Project Rachel Ministry

The ministry of Project Rachel arose in response to the stories women told about the hurt they experienced after their abortion. The following is a testimonial from women expressing, in her own words, the grief she experienced after abortion and how Project Rachel helped her accept forgiveness and begin her healing journey.

"I had an abortion 25 years ago, at a time in my life when I felt the only person or thing I could rely on was myself. I was afraid, could not see how I could possibly cope with a child, I felt I had no place to turn. Because I was so angry at how my life had turned out, I had no relationship with God, so I saw only one way out... abortion. For 25 years I have suffered the pain of regret, shame and guilt. I could not read the word in the newspaper without crying so I avoided any mention of it as much as possible. Eventually, I believe I had put it behind me. Then I attended a Project Rachel retreat and for the first time, I realized I was not alone in my pain. That weekend we experienced the healing power of God's forgiveness and love. The shame and guilt were lifted, and as a result, I have come to appreciate what a freedom it is to be free of pain. I thank God, the Church and Project Rachel for reaching out to the women like me."

Project Rachel Ministry will host a Day of Reflection on March 4, 2023 and a Weekend Retreat March 24-26, 2023.

A Day of Reflection is designed for ANY PERSON affected by an abortion experience. All are welcome: mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents, and friends. Anyone mourning the loss of a child to abortion can find hope and healing.

Our weekend retreat is designed for mothers affected by an abortion experience. The retreat is a way to grow in their 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 in a personal way.

*If you would like the Project Rachel Ministry to come and speak at your school or parish, please contact **BECKY SCHOENFELD**. Feel free to contact us at: (513) 784-0531 or visit ProjectRachelOhio.org*