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# RESPECT LIFE NEWSLETTER



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

## The Abortion Ballot Initiative: We Must Not Remain Silent By: Bob Wurzelbacher

Last month, I mentioned the initiative pro-abortion groups are attempting to instill in our constitution, with deliberately vague language that would nullify even reasonable abortion restrictions the vast majority of people agree with (such as parental notification laws, safety standards and abortion for reasons of disability) and replace it with essentially abortion on demand for any reason. These groups have already begun collecting the over 400,000 signatures they will need to successfully get this on the ballot in November.



Since then, a coalition of life and family leaders (including the Ohio Catholic Conference and our local right-to-life organizations) have joined the Center for Christian Virtue to launch the new website [ProtectWomenOhio.com](http://ProtectWomenOhio.com), focused on defeating this initiative. There, you can watch the **FIRST COMMERCIAL** aimed at educating the public on the dangers of this

extreme amendment. If you want more details on the truth behind that commercial, please check out the **video** or **podcast** versions of my latest **BEING PRO LIFE** interview with Peter Range, Executive Director of Ohio Right to Life, where we go through the actual text of the amendment to explain how the language is deliberately nebulous to create a situation where laws that attempt to limit abortion could easily be interpreted as unconstitutional.

So what can we do? First of all, we invite everyone to say a quick prayer with your family every day at 7:14 (AM and PM). That time is based on 2 Chronicles 7:14: "if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." You should also make specific commitments of fasting related to this issue, even during

the Easter Season. You can also get directly involved in efforts to stop people from signing the initiative so it never gets on the ballot. In our area, learn about Decline to Sign events through **CINCINNATI RIGHT TO LIFE** or **DAYTON RIGHT TO LIFE**.

As I shared last month, the Catholic Conference of Ohio already disseminated a **LETTER** to all pastors, warning the faithful about the coming initiative. A lot more will be coming from the Conference in the upcoming weeks and months, including resources on prayer, educational materials to hand out, and homily helps for pastors. In the meantime, continue directing people to my **BEING PRO LIFE** page, [ProtectWomenOhio.com](http://ProtectWomenOhio.com), and our local Stop the Sign initiatives. May our voices be one as we pray:

*God our loving Father, grant wisdom to those who govern us, compassion and courage to those who work to defend human life, and safety and care to every human being. For you alone who formed us in our mothers' wombs, and who call us home to heaven, are God, for ever and ever. Amen*



# 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 we need are 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 William W. Wurzelbacher*

Director, Office for Respect Life Ministries

## Death Penalty Bill Update

The Ohio Senate bill calling for an end to capital punishment in Ohio has been filed and features more robust bipartisan support than ever before. This year, the bill is co-sponsored by all seven Senate Democrats and five Senate Republicans. If passed, this bill would repeal the death penalty, replacing it with a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. This is an exciting moment for the anti-death penalty movement and the **NO DEATH PENALTY OHIO COALITION** (fully supported by the Catholic Conference of Ohio) as we continue to make history in the efforts to repeal Ohio's death penalty. Join the community the coalition is building to support the dignity of all humans beings. Continue to check the campaign website for ways to get involved during this legislative session at **NODEATHPENALTYOH.COM**. You can also support efforts for death penalty repeal today by thanking all of the bill co-sponsors using the link **HERE**. Together, we can make a difference to create a more just society for all.



### April 40 Days Closing Rally

# 02

Join fellow pro-life warriors at 2:00 PM as we peacefully pray in **CINCINNATI**, where Laura Strietmann, Director of Cincinnati Right to Life, will update us on issues at hand in Ohio, and in **DAYTON**, where Representative Candice Keller will discuss the Ohio legislature. To find a vigil near you click **HERE**.

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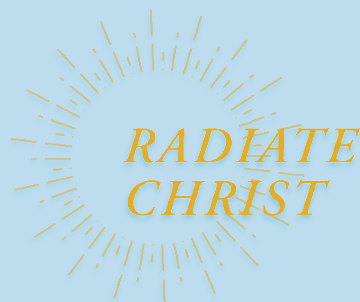
### Heartbeats for Life 5K

Sponsored by Cincinnati Right to Life and Cincinnati Life Runners, this 5K Run/Walk brings the pro-life community together for a family-friendly day of fun, fellowship, and life. Proceeds go toward pro-life efforts to affect culture and public policy. For more information or to register, click **HERE**.

## 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](mailto:respectlife@catholicaoc.org).

- 01- Word of Life
- 02- Divine Mercy Sunday Action Guide
- 03- Contraception Mandate
- 04- Action Alerts



## Respect Life Coordinator Resources

- 01 The month's **WORD OF LIFE** focuses on healing after an abortion. As always, this includes bulletin quotes and images, and intercessions for life designed for each Sunday of the month you can share with your pastor or liturgical leaders. Also available in **SPANISH**.
- 02 The Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities has created a **DIVINE MERCY ACTION GUIDE** featuring a simple timeline, sample announcements, and an activity to help you bring Christ's message of mercy to your parish communities, homily helps for Divine Mercy Sunday, intercessions, announcements, and even a sample **PRAYER SERVICE FOR FORGIVENESS AND HEALING**. Also, pass along to your pastor this resource called **HOMILY CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING HEALING AFTER AN ABORTION**.
- 03 The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services is proposing yet another version of its contraceptive mandate, requiring most employers' health insurance plans to cover contraception, sterilization, and some abortion-causing drugs for free for employees and their dependents. Check out the USCCB's comments on this new mandate **HERE**. To help stop this from going into effect, sign up at **TAKE ACTION NOW**.
- 04 In addition to the contraceptive mandate, the Department of Justice often attempts to issue mandates that hamper Christian ministries by requiring them to go against long-held beliefs about things such as gender, marriage and religious liberty. To sign up to for alerts on when to take action as these come up, sign up at the **USCCB ACTION CENTER** today!

# Spotlight on Roger Bacon HS



At Roger Bacon High School, we take seriously the Catholic Social Teaching of respecting the life and dignity of the human person. This call to respect life is answered in multiple ways through the Roger Bacon spiritual life ministries. We try, through various activities, to communicate and engage students with a “consistent ethic of life” approach. The various ways in which we do this are:

engaging in Adoration to pray for all life, attending the March for Life in D.C. each year, however, for the 2023-24 school year we will march on the state level, in Columbus, on October 6. We engage in feeding the hungry through salvation sandwiches, caring for the elderly through our monthly BINGO engagements, reaching out to those in prison through Writing Hope, bringing awareness to mental health and suicide prevention through our service learning initiatives, helping to empower and engage with students who may be “at risk” through our Bacon Buddies program, decorating and putting together care packages that give the sick and dying hope for the journey through suffering, and so much more! We also have our own St. Vincent de Paul chapter, engaging students in systemic changes to end homelessness, and address issues of poverty.

# Beacons of Light



## Beacons Roundtable is April 25

Join other parish leaders – priests, deacons, lay staff, and others – for Beacons Roundtable on Tuesday, April 25th from 1:30-3:00 PM online. We'll continue focusing on leading change, creating and communicating vision, and self-care for parish ministers. We'll explore further how to lead from our strengths, and look closely at the annual planning report each Family of Parishes will submit this year. For more info and to RSVP, click [HERE](#).

April

## Divine Mercy Sunday

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On the Sunday after Easter, we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday. It provides an important opportunity to share Christ's message of mercy, including those who have been wounded by participation in abortion. Learn more about the **DIVINE MERCY ACTION GUIDE** in the Coordinator's Corner.

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## NET Retreat for Special Needs

The Office for Persons with Disabilities is working with NET Ministries to offer a half-day retreat from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM especially for adults 18+ with special needs, at St. Albert the Great church in Kettering. For more information and to register, visit our webpage [HERE](#).

# Catholics at the State Capitol



The Respect Life Office is part of the Department of Life, Human Dignity, and Charity, whose work is grounded in the respect for the dignity of every human person and our subsequent commitment to protect all life at all stages, especially the lives of those who are marginalized, forgotten, or oppressed. There are many direct service, charitable ways we can do that work, but it's also critical that we engage our elected officials to use their power and position to care for those most in need. To that end, we have created this great opportunity to engage in these efforts.

After several years away, we're finally bringing Catholics from across Ohio back to Columbus to meet with our elected officials and advocate for policies that respect life, focus on the poor and vulnerable, and recognize families as the central institution of our society. The gathering will happen on **Wednesday, April 26, starting at 9:00 AM**. Organized by the Catholic Conference of Ohio and the dioceses of Ohio, our advocacy day will focus primarily on provisions in the proposed state budget, including but not limited to legislation in support for families, education, care for creation, health care, and seniors.

If you are interested in joining us, please register here. There's no cost to attend, lunch will be provided, and - if we have enough people interested - we'll provide transportation. (If we're a smaller number, we'll arrange carpooling.) If you have any questions, please email [TAMMIE MERS](#) our department administrative assistant.

# Being Pro-Life

## Recognizing Spousal Loss

The Easter season is a time not only to reflect on the joy of Christ's resurrection, but also to recall that Jesus walks with us in the trials and sufferings of this life, helping us find new life when we put our trust in Him. Sheila Munafo-Kanoza lost her husband, Vince, to brain cancer when she was only in her thirties, with her children still living at home. She then chose to walk away from a lucrative position for a large firm, and instead founded an organization called



**COMPANIONS ON A JOURNEY** to provide ongoing support that helps others deal with grief and loss in their lives. Watch the inspiring video interview of her sharing her story on this **BEING PRO LIFE EPISODE FROM MARCH OF 2021**.

# Special Needs Reconciliation Service

By: Lisa Averion

On March 23rd at Incarnation Parish in Centerville, our office hosted reconciliation for families with special needs. Fr. Brian Phelps and Fr. Ignatius Madanu brought the sacrament to those who were nonverbal, verbal, and individuals with intellectual disabilities using Loyola Press Adaptive Catechesis. Some of our families used an adapted version of the Act of Contrition which allows individuals with special needs to acknowledge sins, ask God for forgiveness and express a desire to repent. The Good Choice/Bad Choice Cards were also used and helps individuals recognize good and bad choices in categories such as self, others, and God's creation.



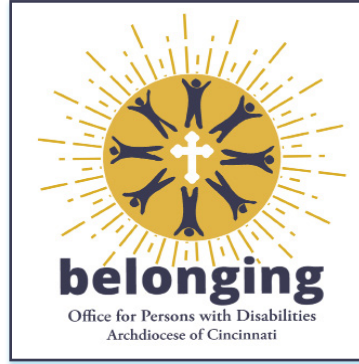
Our office is thankful for this opportunity to offer this sacrament in a way that meets the needs of families and helps to bring all in communion with the Lord during this Lenten season.

# OPD Updates

By: Lisa Averion

On April 22nd at St. Albert the Great in Kettering, the Office for Persons with Disabilities will be hosting an adult with special needs retreat from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM with a Family Mass at 12 noon with Fr. Kyle Schnippel. The cost is \$25.00 and registration is required. Families can register on our website at **ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS RETREAT - ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI**.

NET (National Evangelization Team) Ministries will be planning and implementing this adaptive retreat for our adults. We are so excited to offer this amazing opportunity in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. For questions please contact Lisa L. Averion, Associate Director, Office for Persons with Disabilities at **LAVERION@CATHOLICAOC.ORG**



*"We are all one family in the world. Building a community that empowers everyone to attain their full potential through each of us respecting each other's dignity, rights and responsibilities makes the world a better place to live." -St. John Paul II*

## April Deaf Mass with Fr. Mike

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Join Fr. Mike Depcik for a Deaf Mass (3:00 PM) and Reconciliation (1:00 PM) at St. Christopher parish in Vandalia. Please know the hearing community is also welcome to attend this Mass and celebrate the liturgy in such a beautiful way! For more details please contact **LISA AVERION**.

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## NET Ministries DOR

This retreat offered by NET Ministries especially for those who work with young people in ministry, will reflect on the importance of having a life in Christ—being a reservoir—in order to pour out to others in ministry. ASL interpretation will be provided for those who need it. For more information or to register, click **HERE**.



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## Contact Us

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# HEALING AND PEACE

What will you do in this new year for yourself? Consider reaching out to Project Rachel for free and confidential help after an abortion experience.



**PROJECT RACHEL**

FAITH | HOPE | HEALING

Call/ Text our confidential helpline at (513) 784-0531 or visit [ProjectRachelOhio.org](http://ProjectRachelOhio.org)