

RESPECT LIFE MONTH



St. Joseph, defender of life, pray for us!

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RESPECT LIFE NEWSLETTER



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

Ending the Death Penalty

By: Bob Wurzelbacher

Kwame was just 17 years old when he, along with his older brother and another childhood friend, was sentenced to death for the robbery and murder of a man outside a convenience store in Cleveland, OH. The three had no criminal records, no physical evidence against them was found, and credible eye-witnesses testified it could not have been them. The sole evidence in their convictions was the testimony of a 12-year old boy, Edward Vernon. Thirty-nine years later, Edward came forward to admit that police detectives coerced him to testify falsely under threat of putting his mother in jail. That evidence was also uncovered by the Ohio Innocence Project in their re-investigation of the case, and that evidence was never turned over to the defense attorneys prior to the original trial. The case was finally overturned and the three men exonerated in 2014.

On the other side of the aisle, Rev. Dr. Crystal Walker stands with those who have lost loved ones to violent crime. When she was in the seminary, she was expressing her position against the death penalty when the professor told her she would feel differently about it if one of her family

members was killed. Years later, her son, Eddie, was killed by gun violence, when his daughter was only 2 years old. Meeting with family members of prisoners on death row, she realized that taking another life would not make things better. For her own heart, she chooses forgiveness over death.

Tessie Castillo is a journalist and author whose book, *Crimson Letters: Voices from Death Row*, offers a searing portrait of men on North Carolina's death row and the broken systems that put them there. She talks of incredible imbalance of money



"40 years after his initial sentence, Kwame hears he is exonerated."

and power in prosecution offices vs. defense, the lack of consistency in what crimes are given death sentences, and the legality of highly incentivizing witnesses to testify.

All three of these give reason to abolish the death penalty, and there are identical bills currently going through the Ohio House and Senate to accomplish just that. The Catholic Conference of Ohio is supporting the campaign to pass this legislation, and we encourage you to get your parish involved. You can participate through bulletin announcements, holding an education event or prayer service, sharing posts on social media, or even organizing a letter writing night at your parish to local legislators. [CLICK HERE](#) to get other ideas and educate yourself on this topic.

To hear the stories of Kwame, Crystal, Tessie and others, head to our [BEING PRO LIFE WEBPAGE](#), or just check out podcast at Being Pro Life ([buzzsprout.com](#)) or the video channel at [BEING PRO LIFE - YOUTUBE](#). Educate yourself on the issues, and get involved in helping to end the death penalty here in Ohio!



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!

Bill Wunglbach

Director, Office for Respect Life Ministries

Celebrate Respect Life Month!

The USCCB designates the first Sunday of October as Respect Life Sunday and the entire Month of October as Respect Life Month. We are asked to deeply reflect on our call as a people entrusted with the Gospel of Life. There are many ways that we can respect life this weekend and this month as parishes, families, and individuals.

Parishes have many opportunities for pro life dialogue this month! The USCCB created a **RESPECT LIFE MONTH ACTION GUIDE** with many ways parishes can take part in celebrating life. With this being the Year of Saint Joseph, we specifically look at the ways Joseph defended the lives of Jesus and Mary within the Holy Family. You can also consider sharing resources in your community about the **SANCTUARY CITY FOR THE UNBORN** efforts taking place around Ohio. You can plan a showing of the film **GOSNELL** or **UNPLANNED** and discuss advocating for an end to abortion.

Families can also take special care this month to encourage pro life **DIALOGUE AROUND THE DINNER TABLE** asking your children questions about vulnerable communities and how they would help their neighbours.

Most importantly, we can pray. Check out the USCCB's **ROSARIES FOR LIFE** you can pray all month long! Get involved in the 40 Days for Life Campaigns. Take time to intentionally consider donating to the **RESPECT LIFE FUND**. Help us spread the culture of life!

OCTOBER Life Chain

03

This Sunday, thousands will gather to stand and pray for life at 2 PM. There are Life Chains all around the Archdiocese. Some in city centers near legislative bodies, others in front of abortion clinics, and others at churches. All serve as witness to the dignity of the unborn. **HERE IS A LIST** of local events this weekend!

Now & At the Hour...

05 & 06

It is never too early to begin planning for our own funeral, end of life care, and who will be making decisions for us at that time. Please join us either online or in person for a seminar with the Divine Worship Office for End of Life preparation. See **THE EVENT** for more details.

Coordinator's Corner

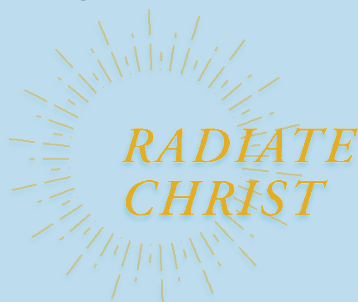
This section is dedicated to providing seasonal resources for Parish Respect Life Coordinators. If there is a resource that you believe would be useful to include, please contact us at respectlife@catholicaoc.org.

01- Word of Life

02- Respect Life Fund Collection

03- Walking with Moms in Need

04- Pro Vida Congress



Respect Life Coordinator Resources

01 This month's **WORD OF LIFE** includes resources for Respect Life Month focused around Saint Joseph as a defender of life. Also included are a sample intercession for each Sunday of the month, bulletin quotes and artwork. There is also a Spanish version available **HERE**.

02 Is your parish holding the **RESPECT LIFE FUND COLLECTION** on Respect Life Sunday, the first weekend of October? This is not a mandated collection, but it is highly encouraged. A small portion is used to sustain Archdiocesan Respect Life programs, and the balance is designated for Respect Life Grants, which are given to non-profit agencies here in this Archdiocese who do Respect Life work, such as area pregnancy care centers. **CLICK HERE** to learn more and encourage your pastor to participate!

03 More and more resources are being added to the Walking with Moms in Need year of service initiative. Locally, Saint Ignatius in Cincinnati has taken the first steps to begin a year of intentionally serving mothers in their community. This ministry begins with prayer & grows into a beautiful opportunity for parishes to support their local neighborhoods. **CLICK HERE** to find out more and make the pledge.

04 Join staff of the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities Thursday, October 7 (2PM in Spanish / 3PM in English) as they provide background information on the Congreso Pro Vida and how you can participate at home or in your parish. This webinar is for parish staff, volunteers, and anyone else interested in building a culture of life within the Hispanic/Latino Catholic community. Register here: **ENGLISH** | **EN ESPAÑOL**

40 Days for Life Needs You!

The Fall 40 Days for Life Campaigns are underway in Cincinnati and in Dayton. Outside the two remaining surgical abortion facilities, prayer warriors are changing hearts and minds every day. During these campaigns, we never know how many lives are saved, but we do know that they are.

Remember, though, hearts and minds cannot be changed if there are no witnesses at the clinic. Recently, a woman who is trying to heal from her abortion experience at the Planned Parenthood in Cincinnati through Project Rachel shared that no one was outside the clinic on the day of her appointment to end her pregnancy. However, there were women praying when she returned for her follow up appointment. The young woman shared that had they been there on her appointment day, she never would have walked into the clinic. The women had care packages and resources that this woman needed as well as being reminded that her baby was a person. Our presence shows families that there are people who care about them and about their unborn child. We have to show up for these men, women, and children in order to save lives.

Please take part in the 40 Days for Life Campaign. While praying outside the clinics can seem intimidating, there is nothing to fear! We stand for truth. Check out our **BEING PRO-LIFE EPISODES** on 40 Days for more information about what the prayer experiences, and sign up for hours on the **WEBPAGE**.

A Legacy of Love

The Dayton Community has lost an important leader and innovator in the area of special education and ministry with persons with disabilities. Judi MacLeod, the founder and director of the Cuvilly Program at Chaminade Julianne High School, passed away on Tuesday, September 28 leaving behind an incredible legacy. Judi worked tirelessly to provide Catholic School Education for High School students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and has been a pillar of the CJ Community for over 20 years. She was a humble servant of the Lord and gave generously of her time and energy to make the Catholic faith more accessible to all of God's children in the Dayton Area.



Judi was an invaluable member of the Archdiocesan Belonging Task Force. She helped to implement Sensory-Friendly Liturgies across the Dayton Area and was a pivotal volunteer at the recent Marian Pilgrimage working to provide more accessible options for persons with disabilities and their families. The impact that Judi has had on the Dayton Area Catholic Community is immeasurable; she was a true example of living the Gospel of Life that we are all called to embrace. May we all learn from her example and live our lives to honor the legacy that she has left behind.

OCTOBER Death Penalty Abolition Week

08-17

Join together with other people of faith in Ohio as we stand against injustice in our penal system. Many innocent people have spent years on death row for a crime they did not commit. Please support the cause by spreading awareness and supporting legislation to abolish the Death Penalty in Ohio. **CLICK HERE** for more info.

09

Project Rachel Day of Reflection

An abortion experience has lasting effects on many lives. Many mourn the loss of the child they never got to meet. Project Rachel offers Days of Reflection for all mourning the loss of a child through abortion. **CLICK HERE** to register for our Dayton Day of Reflection.

March for Life 2022



The Office for Respect Life Ministries is excited to announce a new type of March for Life trip for the youth of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati! We have partnered with the Center for the New Evangelization to develop a pilgrimage that will give young people a chance to not only join the March for Life but also have other prayer experiences in the D. C. area that will encourage a full faith journey for the participants as they consider what it means to protect and honor life from conception to natural death. The trip will leave the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Wednesday January 19th and will return Saturday January 22nd. You can see the **FULL SCHEDULE HERE**. The cost of the trip is \$325 a person and includes most meals as well as accommodations.

The **YOUTH RALLY AND MASS FOR LIFE** in Washington, DC takes place this year on Friday, January 21, 2022. While it has historically been a free event, the Archdiocese of Washington this year is charging \$5 for each ticket, to help cover the cost of holding this event along with the speakers and musicians. If you are planning your own trip and need tickets for this Mass, please order them **ON OUR WEBSITE** no later than October 14th.

If you are unable to attend the national March for Life in D. C. but still want to participate in praying for an end to abortion, check out the resources we have available for your youth ministry or school program **HERE**. It will continue to be updated in the coming months with other local events as well as they are organized.

Respect Life Award

"In our service of charity, we must be inspired and distinguished by a specific attitude: we must care for the other as a person for whom God has made us responsible. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to become neighbors to everyone (cf. Lk 10:29-37), and to show special favor to those who are poorest, most alone and most in need" (Evangelium Vitae #87).

Who in your parish community embodies this call to care for those most vulnerable? Every year, the Respect Life Award honors someone in the Archdiocese that demonstrates how we all must spread the Gospel of Life. Last month, our Being Pro Life podcast highlighted our most recent winner. Vivian Koob, is the founder of the Women's Center of Ohio network as well as an active parish respect life coordinator. Do you know someone who similarly defends life? Laity and clergy can be nominated for the award.

All those nominated will be honored at the Respect Life Mass on January 16th 2022. The deadline to nominate is November 5th. Please visit our **WEBSITE** to share the great pro life work you see every day!

Make Your Voice Heard

Issues in the Respect Life Arena continue to be at the forefront of national and local politics. We are thankful for the recent Supreme Court ruling that upheld the Texas Heartbeat Law and has made abortion illegal in Texas after 8 weeks of pregnancy. We are also thankful that the Supreme Court has the Mississippi Gestational Age Act on the docket for December 1st. This law, blocked by two courts already, bans abortion after 15 weeks except for medical emergency. There is hope that the SCOTUS will use this case to change our laws to match what is known by medical science already--that a new life deserving of protection and dignity begins at conception.

However, not all of the news is good. While our judicial system tries to uphold the dignity of life, Congress is trying to pass pro choice legislation. The House of Representatives has now passed the Women's Health Protection Act, HR 3755, which allows abortion on demand in every state and bans state level pro life legislation. We must speak against this radical bill as it moves to the Senate. Please **SEND AN EMAIL** today to make sure that this proposed law is stopped. Help our law makers understand that women deserve real protection and resources, not abortion.

On a **LOCAL LEVEL**, our legislators continue to pursue pro life bills including work on End of Life issues, Death Penalty abolition, and more. Many of our allies are advocating for a **LIFE AT CONCEPTION ACT**. Overall, we must pray and take action to ensure that life is protected.

Beacons: Families

Archbishop Dennis M. Schnurr released a letter to the faithful about the Beacons of Light open comment period, which will take place October 1-20. During that time the draft of the Families of Parishes will be viewable for public comment at the **BEACONS OF LIGHT WEBSITE**.

In-part, Archbishop Schnurr writes in the letter, "Your thoughtful feedback at this stage of the planning process would be most valuable."

After the conclusion of the public comment period, all of the input provided by priests, deacons, school leaders and lay faithful will be considered in order to finalize the Families of Parishes. The recommended Families of Parishes will then be presented to Archbishop Schnurr by those who have guided the Beacons of Light process. The final recommendation will be the product of more than eight months of consultative work and numerous iterations.

Upon the approval of the Families of Parishes the plan will be announced. The announcement is expected by the end of November.



OCTOBER

Mass for Life Tickets

14

If you need Mass for Life Tickets for your March for Life trip independent of the Archdiocese Youth Pilgrimage, the deadline to order is October 14th. Remember that each ticket is now \$5. **CLICK HERE** to place your order now!

NOVEMBER

Respect Life Award Deadline

05

NOMINATE NOW! Nominating someone not only honors the great work they do for life, but also shares the stories of those on the front lines of the Pro Life Movement around us. This is a chance to radiate Christ to a world so needing His light!



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Pannel Discussion on End of Life

By: Steve Wirick

Dayton Right to Life is presenting a seminar November 7 2021, 2:00PM at St Christopher Church, Vandalia. This is a panel discussion to help you get started in the process of thinking and planning for our natural end. This seminar is offered free of charge. Short Q & A will follow the discussion. Light refreshments will be served. Panelists include: Margie Christie, Executive Director, Dayton Right to Life, an attorney, and a nurse. Unable to attend? Join the seminar via **LIVE-STREAM**. For those who register and attend, a handout packet will be available. **REGISTER NOW**.



Do you have something that you would like to share in our upcoming issue?

Contact us at respectlife@catholicaoc.org or (937)281-4128.