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RESPECT LIFE NEWSLETTER



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

The Abortion on Demand Act

By: Bob Wurzelbacher

The Women's Health Protection Act passed the House last September, and just came up for a vote in the Senate on Monday, February 28. Deceptively named, it has nothing to do with women's health, and everything to do with calling access to abortion a "fundamental right" that deserves to be protected in every state through federal statute. Not only would it allow abortion on demand at every stage of pregnancy, but the WHPA would also eliminate popular pro-life restrictions—including things like parental notification laws, bans on late-term abortions once a baby can feel pain, and safety regulations specific to abortion facilities. It would effectively nullify any state's ability to restrict abortion and open up allocating tax dollars to pay for it here and abroad.

The U.S. Conference of Bishops **WROTE A LETTER** to the U.S. Senate last week in advance of the Senate vote. Penned by Archbishop William Lori, Chairman of the Committee of Pro-Life Activities, and Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty, they wrote, "Abortion is the opposite of

women's health care, and is an extreme violation of human rights...Answering the needs of women by promoting taxpayer-funded elective abortion, as this bill would do, is a failure to love and serve women. Offering free or low-cost abortions, instead of the resources needed to care for her child, is not 'choice' but coercion. It communicates to a mother in need that there is no hope for her or her child and perpetuates injustices that drive mothers to end the lives of their children."

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer announced the vote last week, going so far as to call the right to abortion "sacred" when he said, "We are here to...affirm five sacred words: Abortion is a fundamental right." There was no real concern the motion to vote would actually reach the 60 vote threshold necessary to avoid the filibuster, and that motion did fail in the Senate 46-48. While it is not clear why Schumer decided to

force the vote now, it would appear he wanted to shore up support from his base prior to the upcoming decision in Dobbs, one which many believe is likely to overturn the 1973 Roe decision, returning to individual states the ability to restrict abortion. The other thing this accomplished was that it forced Senators to go on record on the issue, which may effect key Senate races at mid-term elections. You can go online yourself—see how your representative voted **HERE**, and how your senator voted here—and use that information as part of your discernment with your own voting choices as well. In the words of our bishops, we need "to put the energy and resources behind policies that fully recognize and support both mothers and their children." Let us continue to urge our legislators to heed that call in our work on the local and national levels.





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 Wungblachen

Director, Office for Respect Life Ministries

Reviv- A Ministry of Support

By: Maria Dunlap

When we choose life, we expect to be choosing a sweet, happy and healthy baby. But what happens when that baby is not healthy? We know that all life is sacred, but this reality can be incredibly scary and uncertain. *I know.*

My first child, Vivian, was born on July 4, 2012 and died a short 59 days later on September 21, 2012. She seemed absolutely perfect on the outside, but her 20 week ultrasound revealed that her heart was broken. All too quickly my husband and I realized our presence and the support we received during our hospital stay with Viv was the exception. Children and babies cried alone all day. We would hear parents share their fear and anxiety about their child's future as they were already drowning in the reality of life outside the hospital.

Leaving the hospital without Vivian, my arms were empty. But in this new vocation of motherhood, my heart was full with a need to do something to be a support for other families. Shortly after Vivi died, **Reviv** was born. The mission of **Reviv** is to build a community of care around families who have a child with medical complexities and to help bridge gaps between hospital and home.

Following our unique Family Support Model, **Reviv** is able to create a personalized practical support plan for families that meets their specific needs. Whether it be light house work, encouraging phone check-ins or activities for siblings, **Reviv** builds a community of love that supports families with medically complex kiddos as they choose life everyday.

MARCH Day of Reflection (Cincinnati)

05

Project Rachel invites anyone affected by an abortion experience to a day of healing and hope. This event is open to men and women. Please **REGISTER HERE** today.

Novena to St. Joseph

10-18

Join us in a novena for those who choose adoption! Use these sample **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GRAPHICS** to invite parishioners to sign up for a novena March 10-18 asking St. Joseph's intercession for all who travel upon the path of adoption.

Coordinator's Corner

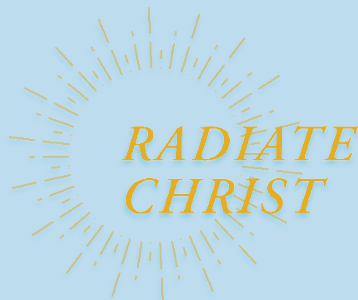
This section is dedicated to providing seasonal resources for Parish Respect Life Coordinators. If there is a resource that you believe would be useful to include, please contact us at respectlife@catholicaoc.org.

01- Word of Life & Pray for Life

02- March Action Guide

03- Study Guide on Evangelium Vitae

04- Complete the Survey



Respect Life Coordinator Resources

01 The month's Word of Life includes the March Action Guide for the **SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION** which will take place March 25. (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 **MARCH ACTION GUIDE** for the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord on March 25 contains many simple, ready-to-use resources for helping parishes highlight the gift of human life. You can also watch USCCB staff walk through the website and resources available in **THIS RECORDING** of last year's introductory webinar.

03 Celebrate the anniversary of Pope John Paul II's papal encyclical **Evangelium vitae** (The Gospel of Life) on March 25 by starting this **SIX-WEEK STUDY GUIDE**. Other **RESOURCES**, including a **SHORT** and **LONGER** summary of the encyclical, are also available.

04 The Office for Respect Life Ministry is asking all Respect Life Coordinators to complete this **BRIEF SURVEY** to assist us in planning some future efforts here in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. If you are a Parish Respect Life Coordinator, please take a moment to fill it out!

A Pro-Life Lent

By: Bob Wurzelbacher

Lent starts this week! On Ash Wednesday, we receive ashes on our foreheads to remind us of our mortality and need for repentance. In addition, we offer sacrifices or perhaps take on more positive activities during the entire season of Lent to help us grow closer to God. Below are some ideas on what you could do to make 2022 a Pro-Life Lent for you and your family:

1. Sign up for a shift at 40DaysforLife.com in either **CINCINNATI** or **Dayton**.
2. Instead of your typical rosary, pray the **USCCB ROSARY FOR LIFE**.
3. **SPIRITUALLY ADOPT A CHILD** in danger of abortion. If you have younger children, Holy Heroes has a free 9-month prayer adventure for you! Sign up online at <https://holyyheroesspiritualadoption.com/>.
4. Donate items to your **LOCAL PREGNANCY CARE CENTER** or to other social agencies that provide direct assistance to women in difficult situations.
5. **SUPPORT PROJECT RACHEL** to help fund advertising and keep retreat costs down for post-abortive women.
6. Donate non-perishable items to your local food pantry, or otherwise support other social agencies that help children and families after birth.
7. Contact your representative on important legislative issues in Ohio, such as **opposing** the **DEATH PENALTY** and **supporting** the **HUMAN LIFE PROTECTION ACT**.
8. Take some time to volunteer with our **PRISON MINISTRIES**.

Cross the Bridge for Life Returns

By: Bob Wurzelbacher

After a two-year hiatus, please plan to join us on **Sunday, June 5th, 2022** for our annual Cross the Bridge for Life celebration! Canceled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, we hope to come back bigger than ever this year, perhaps even celebrating a favorable decision in the Dobbs case. Formed in collaborative effort between the Diocese of Covington and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, and sponsored by life-affirming organizations and businesses from Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, we seek to:

- 1) Inspire those involved in the pro-life movement to continue to be a witness to the sanctity of life,
- 2) Inform the public of the many life-affirming services in the area for women, children and families; and
- 3) Fill the Purple People Bridge with the joy of life!

We plan to gather at 1PM for family-friendly fun at Festival Park Riverfront Row in Covington with live music, free t-shirts, face-painting and balloons for kids of all ages. A short program with speakers will begin at 2PM, followed by a walk across the Purple People Bridge. Archbishop Schnurr of Cincinnati and Bishop Iffert of Covington are expected to lead the walk alongside priests, seminarians, Knights of Columbus and Hibernians. Mark your calendars and bring the whole family to help us celebrate life again in 2022!

MARCH Fighting Assisted Suicide

11

The Patients' Rights Action Fund (PRAF) is hosting a webinar on March 11 at 4pm EST on the subject of assisted suicide. **REGISTER HERE** to attend for a complete update on the fight against the legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia on all fronts.

19

ASL Reconciliation & Mass

Fr. Mike Depcik, a Deaf priest from the Archdiocese of Detroit, will be offering an ASL Mass and Reconciliation at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Centerville on Saturday, March 19. Reconciliation will begin at 1:30pm for the Deaf Community with Mass to follow at 3:00pm. All are welcome to attend this liturgy!

Bring Lent to Life with CRS Rice Bowl

By: Sara Seligmann

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was founded during WWII, answering the call to serve migrants and refugees. For almost 80 years since, they have carried out the commitment of the U.S. bishops to assist the poor and vulnerable overseas, seeking always to protect human dignity and the sacredness of life and foster charity and justice. Through all of their many programs and ministries, they act to promote human development abroad and serve Catholics in the U.S. as they live their faith in solidarity with their sisters and brothers around the world.

Perhaps the best known collection of resources shared by CRS is the **LENTEN RICE BOWL**. Through the tenants of Lent – prayer, fasting, and almsgiving – we are strengthened for the challenges ahead and brought closer to God. With the wonderful resources offered by **CRS'S RICE BOWL**, we are able to deepen our faith and our connection to whole of the human family. **CRS RICE BOWL** offers online prayers and reflections which families, schools, and parishes can use to support Lenten spirituality and reflection in your school, parish, or home. And of course engaging in **CRS RICE BOWL** this Lenten season provides for those in great need. You can find ideas for online giving and activities **HERE**, and you can contact **SARA SELIGMANN** with any questions. Thank you for your compassionate participation, and have a most blessed Lent.

On a related note, the Catholic Relief Services Collection will be taken up in our Archdiocese the weekend of April 30/May 1. We encourage you to use the resources below to promote this important collection in your parish.

- **THE ARCHBISHOP'S LETTER**
- **BULLETIN INSERT**
- **PARISH RESOURCE GUIDE**
- **POSTERS AND SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT**

Being Pro-Life

Pregnancy Loss

Pregnancy loss is real loss. If the excitement of life is real prior to birth, so is the pain of death, yet our indifference causes so many to suffer in silence.

To better support them, we must acknowledge the grief. Ask how they are feeling. Rather than thinking that the shorter the life the less there is to grieve, recognize that grief also includes what could have been. Be prepared to minister to a family just as you would the death of an older child. Offer a memorial service. If your parish has a cemetery, designate a space for families to bury remains.

Check out our **VIDEO PODCAST** to hear personal stories, and get more ideas on how to reach out to someone who has experienced pregnancy loss or still birth.



World Down Syndrome Day

By: Ann Poirier

Every year on March 21, people celebrate World Down Syndrome Day. The significance of the date 3/21 is that people with Down syndrome have three copies of the 21st chromosome, whereas people without Down syndrome have the typical two.

For the vast majority of my life, I didn't know that World Down Syndrome Day existed. And if you would have told me that thousands of people around the world celebrated Down syndrome, I would have said you were crazy. But four years ago, that all changed when I gave birth to my second child—and she was **born** with Down syndrome.

Alice entered the world bright and early on St. Patrick's Day in 2018. When she was about an hour old, my husband and I received her Down syndrome diagnosis. We cried a lot. I thought my life was over.

As time went on, we saw firsthand that Down syndrome was nothing to fear and actually so much to embrace. Alice's differences made her beautiful. Her **unique** gifts made her **stand out**. Her **presence** swiftly changed me into a better version of myself. And my life was far from over—in fact, it had really just begun.

Four years ago on World Down Syndrome Day, I sat in a hospital room crying because my four-day-old daughter had Down syndrome. This year on World Down Syndrome Day, I will hug my daughter tightly, kiss her gently and celebrate every single thing about the beautiful reality of Down syndrome.

Developmental Disabilities Awareness

By: Noelle Collis-DeVito



March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month which is a wonderful opportunity for parishes to recognize the importance of persons with developmental disabilities in parish life. In his message at the 2019 International Day for Persons with Disabilities, Pope Francis stated: "We are called to recognize in every person with disabilities, even complex and serious disabilities, a unique contribution to the common good through their original life stories. ...and to recognize them as persons of equal dignity, as brothers and sisters in humanity." Parishes can help to spread this message by promoting awareness this month in a variety of ways. The National Council on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the NCPD has created a **RESOURCE PAGE** that includes some sample bulletin announcements and prayers of the faithful that could easily be incorporated into your parish bulletin and at Mass. There is also a printable **BULLETIN INSERT** with wonderful facts and information about developmental disabilities. Finally, if you have active parish Social Media pages, follow the **OFFICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES** and share some of our upcoming posts to highlight persons with developmental disabilities in our very own Archdiocese of Cincinnati! The first step towards creating a culture of inclusion and meaningful participation in our Church is to provide opportunities for awareness and understanding. Let us all work together to establish a sense of belonging in our parishes, Archdiocese, and universal Church.

MARCH Feast of the Annunciation

25

The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord commemorates the visit of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary to inform her that she was to be the mother of our Savior. It is also a perfect opportunity to highlight the sanctity of human life. Check Coordinator's Corner for information about the Annunciation Action Guide.

APRIL 40 Days Closing Rally

10

On Sunday, April 10 in both **DAYTON** and **CINCINNATI**, 40 Days for Life will have a rally to close the prayer campaign for an end to abortion. Both events will take place at 2:00pm and each will feature a speaker, music, and prayer. Join us for one of these rallies as we lift our voices in prayer. Click the location above for more info.



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CINCINNATI

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Project Rachel

By: Becky Schoenfeld

Since the pandemic began, much of our outreach with Project Rachel was put on hold. This past January we were finally able to get back out in the community and start visiting high schools in-person again! We spent two days at Moeller High School where we visited the entire Junior class. The students learned about Project Rachel and the impact abortion can have on a person's life. Teacher and coach, Jerry DiCristoforo, left us with a wonderful reflection on how our presentation impacted his students:

"We have enthusiastically welcomed Project Rachel into our religion classes the last few years because it is a wonderful example of who the Church is Called to be! Project Rachel embodies how the Church is Called to be pastoral and ministerial, while challenging the faithful to find Christ in their lives-especially during our greatest struggles. The Project Rachel presentation respects and promotes the Catholic Church teaching that abortion is morally wrong and sinful, but also humanizes the issue so that the students realize that each person involved is a human being that is in need of healing, forgiveness, and to be embraced-not rejected- by the Church. The witness story shared by Project Rachel challenges us to try to understand those who make the decision to have an abortion, rather than to simply judge them. Our students have been deeply touched by these presentations, and have grown in their desire to respond to those who are hurting and in need."

I would encourage every high school to bring Project Rachel into the classroom. I am confident that their students will benefit from the experience."

-Jerry DiCristoforo, Faculty at Moeller High School

If you would like the Project Rachel Ministry to come and speak at your school or parish, please contact **BECKY SCHOENFELD**.