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RESPECT LIFE NEWSLETTER



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

November and Abortion Pill Access

By: Bob Wurzelbacher

You probably recall the cases related to the abortion drug, mifepristone, last Spring, when a judge ordered to revoke the drug's FDA approval. The US Supreme Court ultimately returned everything to the way it was before the legal battles, sending it back to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals to proceed with oral arguments. We now wait for its final ruling, which could have a direct impact on Ohio, if the abortion amendment passes in November.



the FDA, and that is the case here in Ohio, where you cannot receive abortion medication by mail without an in-person visit. However, if the court allows the modification to continue, and the abortion amendment passes in Ohio, the in-person requirement will be considered a "burden" to access, and that law will go away.

Putting aside the other dangers to women of the abortion pill regimen, why should the court minimally re-instate the in-person visit requirements? We can start with three very good reasons:

Doctors can't screen for ectopic pregnancy

The symptoms for a ruptured ectopic pregnancy are the same as expected side-effects of the abortion pill. So, women in this circumstance will stay at home and not seek care. When care is delayed, the woman will likely die. Additionally, telemedicine visits are more common the further away the patient is from a hospital, thus increasing the chances of a woman not receiving life-saving care in time.

Doctors can't determine gestational age

Mifepristone was initially restricted to 7 weeks for good reason. The greater the gestational age, the less effective and the higher the risk for serious complications. PCC workers tell me clients are notorious for underestimating gestational age. When you simply trust a woman's word, especially when she feels desperate to be eligible for the pills, you increase the chances of serious medical consequences.

Remote prescription assists abusers

Through a computer screen, one can never be sure the woman is alone or being told what to say. An in-person visit is often the best opportunity for a trafficking victim (or anyone being coerced) to get alone time with a health care provider to expose the situation. There is a strong association between abortion and intimate partner violence. Removing the in-person requirement decreases the opportunity to identify victims of sexual abuse.

In addition to defeating the abortion ballot amendment this November, let us also pray the courts advocate better for women than the FDA has regarding mifepristone.

One of the issues is whether women should be required to have an in-person examination to ensure pregnancy, determine gestational age and rule out any medical concerns that would indicate one should not take the pill. The removal of those requirements is obviously detrimental to women's health and safety; nonetheless, they were modified during the 2020 pandemic, allowing mifepristone to be mailed after a virtual meeting with a physician. States are free to regulate more strictly than



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!

Bp. Wurzelbacher

Director, Office for Respect Life Ministries

Archbishop's Statement on Issue 1

Last month's main article was on the Ohio Bishop's neutral stance on Issue 1, such that parishes should not be telling people how to vote on Issue 1 either in their bulletins or while serving in an official capacity at a parish. One can, however, educate people on the results of voting "yes" or "no". Below is the official statement from the Archbishop that can be put in bulletins, on voter registration tables, or even read at Mass:



Issue 1 will increase the threshold required for any proposed amendment to the Constitution of Ohio from a simple majority vote to at least a 60% majority vote in order to pass. Therefore, a "yes" vote on issue 1 will make it more difficult to pass any future amendment to the Constitution of Ohio, including this November's ballot initiative seeking an abortion rights constitutional amendment that expands and enshrines abortion at the expense of protections of preborn children and women. A "no" vote on issue 1 will maintain the current threshold, making it easier to pass an amendment to Ohio's constitution, including the one coming this November on the abortion expansion amendment.

July

Independence Day

04

Happy Birthday, America! Thank you to all who serve and work to preserve our freedom in this country. Reach out and thank a veteran today!

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Voter Registration Deadline

Don't forget to make sure you and everyone you know is registered to vote by July 10 for the special August 8th election. It just takes seconds to check at VOTEOHIO.GOV. The next day people can be encouraged to start early in-person voting!

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- Sts. Ann and Joachim Novena
- 03- Voter Registration Guide
- 04- August Election Resources



Respect Life Coordinator Resources

- 01 This month's **WORD OF LIFE** contains information on **NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING AWARENESS WEEK** from July 23rd to July 29th. Posters, articles, testimonies, and more can be found **HERE**. There are also bulletin inserts, graphics, and intercessions for life for the month of July. Also available in **SPANISH**.
- 02 The Feast of Saints Ann and Joachim is celebrated on July 26th. As the grandparents of Our Lord, Sts. Ann and Joachim are powerful intercessors for all married couples, expectant mothers, and married couples who are having difficulty conceiving, as well as those who are aging. Download the Novena in **ENGLISH** or **SPANISH**!
- 03 Is your parish holding a voter registration drive? Continue encouraging the members in your parish to VOTE. Check out the **VOTER REGISTRATION EVENT GUIDE** which has all the information you need to help folks register or find out if they are registered. Your parishioners can look up their registration **HERE**. It's also very easy to request an **ABSENTEE BALLOT**!
- 04 For more clarity on the August election and the language of the ballot, click **HERE**. You can also find an explanation of Issue 1 **HERE**. Check out additional **RESOURCES** from the CCO about holding non-partisan voter registration drives!

The SAFE Act

By: Bob Wurzelbacher



Be an advocate for children's safety by helping to enact the Saving Adolescents from Experimentation (**SAFE**) **ACT** in Ohio. The Safe Act, supported by the **CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO**, would ban gender transition drugs and surgeries for anyone under the age of 18 in the state of Ohio. It also disallows courts when allocating parental rights or ruling on parental time disputes to negatively consider any parent's decisions to raise a child in accordance with the child's biological sex.

Additionally, language from the Save Women's Sports Act was added to it, effectively banning biological males from competing in women's sports in schools, including at both the high school and college levels. The SAFE Act was voted out of the Ohio House of Representatives on June 21st, and is now headed to the Senate. Contact your **SENATOR** and ask him or her to support the SAFE Act today!

Mental Wellness Ministry

By: Lisa Averion

On June 14, 2023, The Office for Persons with Disabilities and Catholic Charities was awarded a \$30,000 grant through The Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers to develop Mental Wellness Ministry for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. We are deeply grateful for this opportunity from ACMHM to serve members of our community through this ministry.

Mental Wellness Ministry educates parishioners on the importance of mental health and wellness, helping erase the stigma often attached to it. It also provides non-clinical, faith-based support to parishioners suffering with mental health needs and their family members. It is not intended to replace professional mental health counseling. Rather, Mental Wellness Ministry provides a prayerful and listening ear in a safe place within the Catholic faith, assuring participants they are not walking their journey alone. It may supplement existing professional mental health therapy, or serve as a bridge to recognizing the need for mental health professionals who can provide appropriate, clinical care.

This ministry will be piloted in two parishes in the Archdiocese in 2023-2024. Please pray for the success of this new ministry!

July

Coffee and Conversation

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Meet with the Office for Persons with Disabilities to learn more about how your parish can create belonging for all! This session will be held at St. Ignatius (5222 North Bend Rd, Cincinnati, Ohio) from 9:00am-11:30am.

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Deaf Mass and Meeting

Join us on at 5:00pm for a Deaf Mass and meeting! at St. Christopher Church (435 E. National Rd., Vandalia, Ohio). ASL interpreters will be interpreting Mass, followed by a meeting and fellowship.

Catholic Rural Life

By: Andrew Musgrave



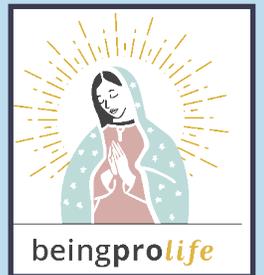
Did you know that our department – Life, Human Dignity, and Charity – has a program focused specifically on supporting the needs of our rural communities, both in the northern and southeastern parts of our archdiocese? These two committees, the Northern and Southeast Rural Life Conferences, meet regularly to discuss how to best support the spiritual and physical needs of the people in these areas, many of whom are members of Catholic families who have been living and working in those counties for generations. Organized through the Catholic Social Action Office, these conferences educate and assist parishes and parishioners about rural life concerns by identifying needs, providing resources, and advocating a moral perspective.

Their most public events each year are the Rural-Urban Farm Masses. These events take place on Catholic farms and combine mass and fellowship (usually food, conversations, and fun). This year, the northern Farm Mass will take place on Thursday, July 20, at 7:00pm on the Siefring Farm (3578 State Route 705 in New Weston), and the southeastern Farm Mass will take place on Friday, September 8, at 7:00pm on the Moran Farm (5565 Moran Dr in Ripley). For more information, check out **THIS WEBSITE** or contact **TAMMIE MERS**. All are welcome!

Being Pro-Life

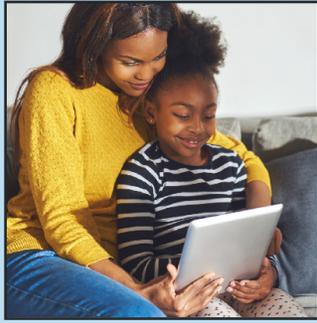
Birth Control

This month is NFP Awareness week, so this is a great time to check out my interview with Dr. DiAnn Ecret of the National Bioethics Center about artificial birth control. During the interview, she discusses Pope Paul VI's prophetic social predictions in *Humanae Vitae*, as well as the negative health issues related to artificial birth control, including heart disease, loss of bone density, and even infertility after stopping its use. She also discusses the unseen emotional side effects such as depression and lack of attraction to your spouse. The modern world downplays these risks, comparing them to the concern of tolerable side effects for a drug designed to cure a fatal illness, as if pregnancy is comparable to death. Check out the video **HERE**.



Protecting Children Online

By: Becky Schoenfeld



Children growing up in today's society have the world at their fingertips, quite literally. Many have smartphones or access to one, and many homes have a computer or tablet of some kind. While technology has progressed rapidly over the years, so has the threat to safety online. According to **COMMON SENSE MEDIA**, 15% of children are exposed to pornography by the time they are just 10 years old. This could happen because they might innocently search the definition of a new word they heard, or maybe stumble upon something on a computer or phone that doesn't belong to them. In addition to being exposed to pornography and violence, the online world does make it easier for child predators and traffickers to gain access to unsuspecting victims. The USCCB states in their letter to Congress: "Legislation should respect the family as the central social institution of society and buttress the authority and ability of parents to protect their children online, by ensuring that they have the tools necessary to monitor their children's online activity. It should also seek the common good and well-being of all, especially those who are vulnerable." Please take a moment and click **HERE** to urge Congress to protect our children!

Coffee & Conversation

By: Lisa Averion



In June, the Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD) hosted **Coffee & Conversation** with Catholic community members in the central (Our Lady of Sorrows, Monroe) and northern (Sacred Heart, Anna) locations in the Archdiocese. There was a brief presentation highlighting the mission of OPD, events held in the past 11 months, upcoming events, and goals for the ministry. Those in attendance were members of our Deaf Community, special needs parents, educators, professionals, and advocates. We discussed the needs and wants to grow in union with our Lord. Our next meeting will be held at St. Ignatius Church (southern location) in Cincinnati on July 15, 2023 from 9:00-11:30 AM. Everyone is welcome to attend as we work to create belonging for all in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Click **HERE** to register. **Coffee & Conversation** events will be held quarterly at these locations. Fall meeting dates and times will be announced next month. For more information, please contact **Lisa Averion**.

July NFP Awareness Week

23-29

Natural Family Planning Awareness week is a national education campaign, highlighting the anniversary of the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. The Natural Family Planning program of the USCCB develops a poster and basic supportive materials. Click **HERE** for more info.

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40 Days for Life

Please join us on the last Friday of each month in front of Planned Parenthood on Auburn Ave. in Cincinnati at 7:00pm for our monthly interim prayer vigil. The focus of prayer in the coming months is on our upcoming August and November elections.



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Project Rachel Corner

The Reproductive Rights Amendment Bill will be on the ballot in November. With the media coverage and the discussions of the Bill, there will be some mixed emotions among the women who have had abortions in the past. There are two victims of an abortion: the baby, and the mother. It is important that the message we deliver about abortion is also a message of compassion to women who need healing from her abortion experience. When we talk about abortion in our churches, we must remember that there are women in our congregation that are post-abortive and need to know they are cared about just as the unborn. Many who have had an abortion believe they have committed the "unforgivable sin". In fact, many priests have told women that. The guilt and shame a woman carries from having an abortion is tremendous. When she hears a priest talk about abortion as gravely sinful, she feels she is not wanted in the church community. It is vital to also mention how broken the post-abortive woman is and needs the support and acceptance of the Church to know she is forgiven and can reconcile with God.

Our Archdiocese has a wonderful ministry called Project Rachel. Many women have said it has saved their lives, renewed their faith in God, and made them a better person. Take time to mention it and encourage your pastors to mention it in their homilies, include it in the bulletin and have brochures available.

As Pope Francis stated in the Year of Mercy, "The forgiveness of God cannot be denied to one who has repented." All of us are sinners. Pope Francis calls mercy a "bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness" (MV2).

When a post-abortive woman begins her healing journey, she then becomes an advocate for all life, and can help others receive God's forgiveness.