

# ST. PETER CLAVER

September 9th



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# RESPECT LIFE NEWSLETTER



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

## Pastor to the Incarcerated

*By: Bob Wurzelbacher*

Fr. Tom McQuillen was a seminarian studying in DC, doing some apostolic work with a homebound elderly couple when they mentioned they had a grandson in prison. They couldn't visit him, so they asked the young seminarian if he would do it. Tom started doing that regularly, and word spread among the couple's friends as well as other inmates. Before long, he was visiting 4 or 5 incarcerated men in DC. When assigned as a priest to Cincinnati, he contacted then Director of Prison Ministries Christine Shamrock, and began offering Mass, Reconciliation, and an RCIA class for inmates. Fr. Tom particularly remembers an inmate, John, who was trying to take classes but could not read. Fr. Tom was able to arrange one-on-one meetings between him and a seminarian to learn material that other inmates could read on their own, without anyone else becoming aware of his disability.

Fr. Tom also volunteered for Summit Behavioral Healthcare Center, a recovery center for adults with mental illness, offering community Masses as well as personal visits. Many of the residents were sent there to be evaluated for their mental

state after committing a crime. He met with many people struggling with depression, bipolar, anxiety and other issues. He realized then how helpful it would be to bring seminarians there to visit, knowing they would find people who struggle with these same issues, and their family members, sitting in the pews at our parishes. When asked where he most often saw God in this mental health institution, he said it was in how the inmates treated one another. They had these moments of patience and compassion that they commonly showed one another, often reminding him of when Simon helped Jesus carry the Cross.

This month's Being Pro Life podcast highlights some past winners of the Respect Life Award, including Fr. Tom. **PLEASE CHECK OUT THE PODCAST** or **WATCH THE VIDEOS HERE** and listen to their stories of how they responded to the call of God in their own lives.



If you know someone you would like to nominate for our 2021 award, please do so **HERE ON THE WEBSITE**, before the end of October. If you have nominated someone in the past who was not chosen, please feel free to nominate him or her again! Many of our past winners had been nominated multiple times. Above all, be attentive to the call of God in your own life and do your part in this movement. As Jesus said in Matthew's gospel, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Mt 9:37). May we all be generous with the gifts our Lord has given us.

### September Being Pro Life Podcasts:

- Sep 7: Vivian Koob (2020)
- Sep 14: Mary Ann Boyd (2019)
- Sep 21: Fr. Tom McQuillen (2018)
- Sep 28: Susan Willke Enouen (2014)

Sept 2021

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Issue 18



# 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.

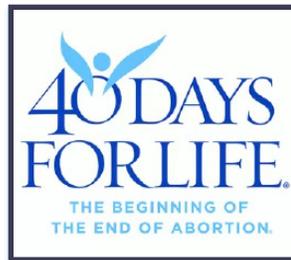
May God bless you in this work. Know that I am truly grateful to work with you in this. Together, let us build a culture of life here in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati!

Director, Office for Respect Life Ministries

## 40 Days Fall Campaigns

### The Beginning of the End of Abortion

Beginning on **September 22**, people across the world will gather outside abortion facilities to lift their voices in prayer for the women and men who enter, the workers who provide abortion services, and the innocent lives lost. Those who commit to these 40 days of prayer and fasting, do so peacefully in the hope that someday we will see a world where the killing of unborn children is unthinkable.



As the Fall Campaign for 40 Days for Life approaches, I encourage you to get involved. If you have never prayed outside of an abortion clinic, attend one of the upcoming vigils and sign up for an hour or two. If you have volunteered before, consider becoming a day captain and help recruit others to fill needed slots. And don't forget the fasting portion. Like we all do during Lent, commit to a specific sacrifice during the 40 Days vigil, such as giving up phone games or sweetener in your morning cup of coffee.

If you are unable to physically join the vigil, you can still join us in prayer. Offer a rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet each day, or a daily Mass each week. The battle to end abortion begins with changing hearts, and prayer is our best weapon. Sign up for a local vigil at [www.40daysforlife.com](http://www.40daysforlife.com).

## SEPTEMBER Day of Prayer for Peace

# 09

The feast of St. Peter Claver is an opportunity to highlight the connection between racism and various attacks on human life. Join people from around our nation in a day of prayer for peace in our communities. For resources from the USCCB on how to organize a prayer service, [CLICK HERE](#).

# 11, 25

## ASL Masses

Fr. Mike Depcik, one of very few culturally deaf priests in the world, is coming to each region of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati to offer Mass and Reconciliation in ASL. Masses are open to the public with a speaking interpreter. See the article on page 4 for more information.

## 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- Respect Life Fund Collection
- 03- Life Chain Prayer Events
- 04- Respect Life Resources 2021



## Respect Life Coordinator Resources

- 01 This month's **WORD OF LIFE** includes resources for the Memorial of St. Peter Claver, which is the National Day of Prayer for Peace. 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. Learn more [HERE](#) and encourage your pastor to participate!
- 03 Life Chain prayer events are being organized throughout the Archdiocese on Respect Life Sunday, October 3. They are typically organized in **DAYTON, TROY, SPRINGFIELD, HAMILTON, CHAMPAIGN COUNTY** and **CLERMONT COUNTY**. Click on a location for a flyer on more information.
- 04 The 2021 Respect Life Mailing was sent out in mid-August. Each pastor and registered **RESPECT LIFE COORDINATOR** should have received the mailing, which included a letter, poster, prayer cards and a web address where you can find all of the new resources for the upcoming year. Find all the 2021 resources at [www.respectlife.org](http://www.respectlife.org)

# Now & at the Hour of Our Death

## Catholic Medical & Funeral Planning for End of Life

It's never too soon to begin thinking about our own funeral, end-of-life care, and who will be making those decisions if we become incapacitated. Join us to learn about how to get started on planning a Catholic funeral and what the Church teaches on key end-of-life issues. Bob Wurzelbacher of the Respect Life Office, Jeremy Helmes from the Office of Divine Worship and Sacraments, and Tom Jordan, Director of Catholic Cemeteries, will be offering two free workshops: a live session at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Cincinnati on Tuesday October 5 at 7PM, and an online virtual session on Wednesday October 6 at 1:30PM. Topics include: Pre-planning the three stages of the Catholic funeral; what the Church really teaches about cremation; and how to approach difficult end-of-life decisions with your loved ones from a Catholic perspective. For more information and to register [CLICK HERE](#).



# Beacons of Light

“The status quo can have no place in our vocabulary”

It may seem that every time you read an email from a Pastoral Center office or communication from a parish, Beacons of Light is featured. You may be familiar with Beacons of Light or you may wish you knew more about this process of planning for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. No matter how informed you are about Beacons of Light, now is the time to sign up for regular Beacons communications, if you have not already done so. The most recent **BEACONS UPDATE INCLUDED A BRIEF VIDEO FROM ARCHBISHOP SCHNURR** talking about Beacons of Light, a description of the evangelizing communities that are the goal of Beacons, a glossary of terms, and a response to one of the most frequently asked questions about Beacons of Light. **SIGN UP HERE** for Beacons of Light communications.



## SEPTEMBER Day of Remembrance

# 18

Join your fellow community members on this day as we set aside time to pray in remembrance of all our brothers and sisters lost to abortion. There are services scheduled in **DAYTON** and **CINCINNATI**, or look for another close to you at [nationaldayofremembrance.org](http://nationaldayofremembrance.org).

# 19

## 40 Days Campaign Kick-off

Each year, the 40 Days Fall Campaign starts with a prayer service the Sunday prior to the start of the in-person vigil. This year, both the **DAYTON** and **CINCINNATI** vigils begin at 2 PM. Find details of your local event at [www.40daysforlife.com](http://www.40daysforlife.com) and join us!

# Vatican Initiates *Laudato Si* Action Platform

By: Sr. Christine Pratt



Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, announced the creation of a Laudato Si Action Platform. It is a unique collaboration between the Vatican, an international coalition of Catholic organizations and "all men and women of good will". (LS3) As storms increase in intensity, seas rise and droughts turn once fertile land into deserts, the human family faces even higher risks of hunger, sickness, and conflict. It is the most vulnerable of our sisters and brothers who face the worst consequences. In 2010 Pope Benedict the XVI, also known as the Green Pope said, "How can we separate, or even set at odds the protection of the environment and the protection of human life, including the life of the unborn?"

The Laudato Si Action Platform takes the 2015 encyclical and envisions a response that engages every corner of the earth. The Platform is being launched in stages throughout 2021 and 2022. It is a 7-year journey toward global sustainability and will engage in stages families, parishes and dioceses, educational institutions, healthcare, lay organizations, the economic sector, and religious communities,

The Archdiocesan Care for Creation Task Force is exploring ways to engage the local Catholic community in this important challenge. The Platform and its resources are available at [laudatosiplatform.org](http://laudatosiplatform.org). Check out more from the Social Action newsletter [HERE](#).

# Death Penalty Abolition



The Catholic Conference of Ohio is supporting a campaign to end the death penalty in Ohio, and I encourage you to involve your parish in this campaign during Respect Life

Month. The week will take place from **October 8th through 17th**. This week is in place in particular to support two bills going through the Ohio House and Senate aimed to abolish the death penalty in Ohio. You can participate through bulletin announcements, holding an education event or prayer service, sharing posts on your social media pages, or even organizing a letter writing night at your parish to local legislators. Find out more information and download the Toolkit for Faith Communities at [nodeathpenaltyoh.com](http://nodeathpenaltyoh.com).

# Morgan's Place Cemetery

By: Molly Verdier



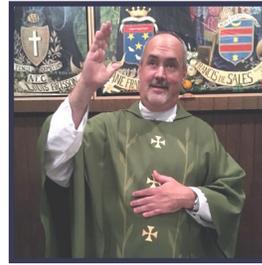
Experiencing the loss of an unborn child is a hidden grief. Morgan's Place in Sidney offers a unique way for families to commemorate the loss of a child they never got to meet. The cemetery is open to children who have died due to miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion. All children deserve a dignified burial and Morgan's Place provides a haven for any who are mourning. Morgan's place was founded by Nathan and Mollie Verdier who lost their daughter, Morgan, after only a few weeks in the womb in 2018. They then lost a triplet, Marion. Mollie shared: "Everyone in the family grieves. Those who leave the hospital with empty arms suffer a loss so unique and hidden. It's a love story really, but it takes time to be able to share. I share my love story of my babies because they deserve to be acknowledged. The picture in my mind of my beautiful family includes not only my nine children who run, but the two who fly."

Morgan's Place is working in a state-wide network to advocate that medical facilities use their facilities, and others like them, to provide all children, regardless of gestational age, a respectful burial. This work is especially needed in response to the Fetal Remains Bill (SB27) currently tied up in the courts. Morgan's Place, through the generosity of local funeral homes and casket makers, provides burial at no charge. However, tax-deductible gifts are welcome to help with other aspects of the ministry. Please visit their website at [www.morgansplacecemetery.org](http://www.morgansplacecemetery.org).

# belonging



Ministry with Persons with Disabilities



Fr. Michael Depcik, OSFS, is among fewer than a handful of culturally Deaf priests worldwide. Fr. MD, as he is known, was ordained a priest in 2000 in the congregation of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales. He currently ministers to Deaf Catholics in the Archdiocese of Detroit, and is a graduate of St. Rita School for the Deaf in our very own Archdiocese. We are fortunate to welcome Fr. MD to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati in September as he offers Mass and

Reconciliation in ASL for the Deaf community. On **Saturday, September 11**, Fr. MD will be coming to **ST. MICHAEL PARISH IN SHARONVILLE**, offering Reconciliation from 1:30PM – 2:30PM with Mass at 3PM, and will then offer a Mass at 6:30PM at **ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH IN CENTERVILLE** with Reconciliation to follow. Fr. Mike will return to the northern part of our Archdiocese on **Saturday, September 25 to IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH IN BRADFORD** to offer Reconciliation from 1:30PM – 2:30PM and Mass at 3PM in that region. While these liturgies are being offered predominately for the Deaf Community, hearing people are also encouraged to attend the Mass. There will be an interpreter available for the hearing at these liturgies. All are welcome!

## SEPTEMBER Project Rachel Retreat (Cinci)

# 24-26

The **PROJECT RACHEL RETREAT** is designed for mothers affected by an abortion experience. These retreats are a way to grow in one's 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.

## OCTOBER Respect Life Sunday

# 03

Respect Life Sunday is the beginning of Respect Life Month, a month dedicated to educating your parish about the dignity of life from conception to natural death. See the Coordinator's Corner for more information on our annual mailing on preparing for this day.



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**H:O:P:E**  
AFTER ABORTION  
project rachel  
Peace starts here  
[www.catholiccincinnati.org/project-rachel/](http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/project-rachel/)  
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Do you have something that you would like to share in our upcoming issue?

Contact us at [respectlife@catholicaoc.org](mailto:respectlife@catholicaoc.org) or (937)281-4128.