



— ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI —
**CATHOLIC SOCIAL
ACTION OFFICE**



LOVE IN ACTION

A Principle of Beacons of Light

APRIL 2025 NEWSLETTER

Easter is upon us

Welcome to April! The showers have already gotten here - and so have many of the beautiful flowers.

We're over halfway through Lent, less than two weeks from Palm Sunday and the start of Holy Week. We pray that you've had a spiritually nourishing Lenten journey, and - I've said it before and I'll say it again - it's never too late to start (or restart).

Speaking of (re)starting, we hope that you've been utilizing all of the [great resources](#) from CRS and their Rice Bowl campaign. Don't forget all of the great work CRS does in the name of the US Catholic Church around the world (and the challenges they've been facing), and be sure to stand up for global solidarity and support CRS. (You can continue to utilize your Rice Bowl during Lent, and our annual CRS collection is coming the weekend of May 3-4.)

In case you didn't hear (though I'm not sure how you wouldn't have), we're getting a new archbishop! Praise God! Most Reverend Robert Casey (from Chicago) will be installed as the Tenth Metropolitan Archbishop of Cincinnati this Thursday, April 3, at 2pm (with prelude music starting at 1:30pm). All are invited to watch the livestream of the event [here](#).

There continues to be much concern regarding some of the orders coming out of Washington, D.C., especially those that affect the lives and dignity of our immigrant and refugee sisters and brothers (including the defending and holding sacred "protected areas"). You can keep up to date with the Church's response to these actions and find opportunities for advocacy by checking [here](#) (USCCB Press Releases, Action Alerts, and Informational Materials).

Speaking of advocacy, the annual Catholics at the Capitol event occurred on Tuesday, March 25. It was another successful event. Read below for a recap of the days activities.

We humbly ask that you continue to pray for us. 2025 continues to be a challenging year, and your prayers - and engagement! - will make our success possible. God help us!

If there's anything that we can do to support the work happening in your community, please let us know. We're trying to be more present to families of parishes, especially during the Beacons of Light process, and we'd love to (re)connect with you and work to build up God's kingdom of peace, justice, and kinship in your corner of the kingdom.

We will continue to send out Regional Updates with time-sensitive reminders and Action Alerts encouraging everyone to bring their voice and power to bear on important issues.

We wish you a wonderful end of Lent and start of the Easter season, and - as always - we look forward to seeing you soon as we continue to stand up for justice, solidarity, and equity.

Peace and all good,
Tammie, Sr. Christine, Jill, Glen, & Andrew



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Representatives from the Archdiocese attending Catholics at the Capitol 2025

Catholics at the Capitol

Activate Your Faithful Citizenship

There are those who argue that the Church should not get involved in politics. They suggest that the Church should concern itself with sacramental and evangelizing matters within the parish and leave advocacy and engagement with elected officials to others. People often site 'separation of church and state' as justification for these views.

For some folks, this may ring true. For many (including myself), it does not. As people of faith, we are always seeking to build up God's kingdom on Earth, to ensure that the God-given dignity of every single person is respected and honored. There are so many ways that we can work on these goals, and one of the best is to reach out to our elected officials. We can encourage them to support legislation and spending that honors these values - and stand against that which does not. We believe that a governmental budget - whether local, state, or national - is a moral document, as it prescribes on which priorities money will be

spent. With finite resources, it must be decided if and how much money will flow towards different programs. Similarly, our laws must seek to build more just, equitable, compassionate, and peaceful communities, and take special care of those who are in poverty or have been marginalized.

Every two years, the state of Ohio goes through its budget making process, and – with the Catholic Conference of Ohio (CCO) coordinating – we speak with our elected officials while this work is in process, urging them to allocate money to programs that line up with our values. To that end, on Tuesday, March 25, Catholics from across the state met in Columbus for Catholics at the Capitol. Prior to the gathering, the CCO reviewed current legislation and the draft budget, and they chose three key issues on which we could advocate. Tuesday morning, after opening with prayer and welcome, the CCO staff walked through these priorities, explaining why they were chosen and what we hoped to have happen. The group then left the CCO's offices and spent the rest of the day moving between meetings with our representatives and senators, advocating for:

1. Support for HB 72 and SB 134 which protect state dollars from funding abortion, assisted suicide, and capital punishment; and end the death penalty in Ohio
2. Supporting young families and pregnant women through a Child Tax Credit and dollars for maternity homes (including money for both in the state budget)
3. Protecting medically vulnerable people, preventing the possibility of over 700,000 Ohioans losing their health insurance

Over the course of the day, we met with dozens of lawmakers and their staffs, and every one of them heard the same message: we promote a consistent ethic of life, and we want our laws and state budget to reflect this value.

We are grateful to all of those who participated, and we encourage everyone to stay connected with their elected official throughout the year, reminding them that you are watching and expecting them to represent you and your values in the statehouse.





This Lent is the 50th Anniversary of Catholic Relief Services' Rice Bowl. Journey with members of our human family around the world and commit our Lenten prayers, fasting, and almsgiving to deepening our faith and serving those in need. There is something to deepen everyone's Lenten journey with CRS Rice Bowl. Explore www.csricebowl.org for highlighted stories from Guatemala, Nigeria, and Bangladesh. Find lessons and prayers for all ages, videos, reflections, Stations of the Cross, and meatless Lenten recipes to share as a community or a family. Communicate easily using CRS' premade materials such as these bulletin entries for each week.

Visit www.csricebowl.org or contact Jillian Foster jfoster@catholicaoc.org for more information.



Stories from the Heart: *Voices of Refugees and Immigrants*



Catholic Charities of Southwestern Ohio has started the Voices Project to tell the stories of refugees and immigrants who have settled in our community. Here are a few examples of what participants have said after meeting our new neighbors and listening to their actual stories:

- “I was riveted to every word. He opened my eyes to the humanity of refugees and immigrants.”
- “Very touching, so informative.”
- “Healing for the storyteller; understanding and connection for the listener. He was so captivating.”
- “A personal experience makes the story much more impactful. His story was so personal, not abstract information. It was a privilege to be here to hear it.”

If you want to get beyond the media spin and shrill politics, this interactive presentation is for you and your congregation or organization. If you want to really understand the ordeal refugees and immigrants go through and appreciate the character of the people who are coming to us, scheduling this 90-minute experience will be life-changing and inspirational for participants. To learn more or schedule a meeting, please contact Paul Bergman at paulbergman@live.com.

“I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” – Matthew 25:35



Planting Season Prayer **Spring 2025**

As planting season begins this year, we are acutely aware of the many challenges facing farmers in our archdiocese, state, nation, and world. Droughts, floods, fires, severe weather, and recent public policy decisions around immigration and tariffs

are making for an uncertain future within the agriculture communities at home and worldwide. In particular, the northwest counties in our archdiocese are experiencing devastating results of the avian flu outbreak as poultry producers are forced to destroy millions of birds. The result of these issues will have lasting effects on the personal and economic wellbeing of farmers, farmworkers, and consumers.

With this in mind, we ask that all may pray for those affected by these serious challenges.

Creator God, we come to you in a time of great need for our rural community. We ask that you fill us with renewed hope in you and trust in one another as we face the challenges so evident to us this year. Comfort the hearts of those who are distressed and concerned by actions and events beyond their control. Bless the families of parishes that together pastors and parishioners may be communities of Love in Action, carrying words of comfort, healing, and hope as visible signs of the continuing care of the Creator for the lives of all. May the Holy Spirit inspire leaders of nations to work toward policies that are just in support of family farms, farmworkers, good stewardship of all creation, nutrition, and anti-hunger efforts that there may be food for all. We ask this in the name of Jesus who fed the multitudes and shared our very flesh and blood to teach us the Law of Love, through his death and resurrection. Amen.





Polarization Impact

Thursday, April 4, 7:00-8:30pm, St. Charles, Carthage

Democrats, Republicans and Independents seemingly **live in separate and divided worlds** and the pandemic has deepened this divide. But political disagreements are important for a healthy democracy.

The problem is that the **political divisions are limiting our ability to function effectively as a country.** People tend to trust and associate only with people on their side which has intensified the division between the two parties.

A Pew Research Study in October 2019 found a majority of respondents wanted less divisiveness and more cooperation. Both Trump (86%) and Biden (89%) supporters said that their preferred candidate, if elected, should focus on addressing the needs of all Americans, *“even if it meant disappointing some of his supporters.”*

Seminar Content:

- Polarization has increased over the last 40+ years
- Key Sources Contributing to it
- What We Can Do

For more information, contact Jillian Foster at jfoster@catholicaoc.org

Learn more about Braver Angels at <https://braverangels.org/>



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI
CATHOLIC SOCIAL
ACTION OFFICE



Job Description: Executive Director

Position Title: Executive Director (Part-Time) | **Organization:** EquaSion
Location: Cincinnati, Ohio | **Reports To:** Board of Directors

About EquaSion: EquaSion is a nonpartisan civic organization founded upon interfaith dialogue. We work to develop educational and community service programming to foster greater understanding, respect, compassion, inclusion, and engagement for all people and faith communities in Greater Cincinnati and beyond. EquaSion's signature program is the Festival of Faiths, a celebration of the religious diversity in our community.

Position Summary: EquaSion is seeking a dynamic and visionary leader to serve as its part-time Executive Director. The Executive Director will be responsible for overseeing the administration, programs, and strategic planning of the organization. Key duties include program development and management, fundraising and financial management, marketing, and community engagement and advocacy, and volunteer management. The position reports directly to the Board of Directors.

Key Responsibilities:

Leadership and Management

- Provide strategic direction and leadership to the organization.
- Oversee day-to-day operations, ensuring efficient and effective management of resources.
- Collaborate with the Board of Directors to develop and execute the organization's strategic plan.
- Direct and guide other professionals providing services to EquaSion.

Fundraising and Financial Management

- Develop and implement fundraising strategies to secure financial support from individuals, foundations, and corporations.
- Prepare and manage the annual budget, ensuring financial stability and accountability.
- Maintain accurate financial records and provide regular reports to the Board of Directors.

Community Engagement and Advocacy

- Build and strengthen relationships with community partners, stakeholders, and faith-based organizations.
- Represent the organization at public events, meetings, and in the media to promote its mission and programs.
- Advocate for social justice, equity, and inclusion in our community.

Program Development and Evaluation

- Working with stakeholders, design and implement programs that address social justice issues and promote diversity and inclusion, while generating funding in alignment with meeting community needs.
- Coordinate evaluation efforts with stakeholders, community and funding entities, making adjustments as needed to achieve desired outcomes.
- Prepare reports and presentations on program activities and impact for the Board of Directors and funders.

Volunteer Management

- Recruit, train, and manage volunteers to support the organization's programs and initiatives.
- Foster a positive and inclusive volunteer culture that aligns with the organization's values.

Qualifications

- Proven experience in nonprofit leadership, management, and fundraising, including grant writing.
- Strong commitment to social justice, equity, inclusion, and diversity.
- Excellent communication, interpersonal, and public speaking skills.
- Ability to embrace and manage change.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively with diverse groups.
- Experience in program development, implementation, and evaluation.
- Financial management skills, including budgeting and financial reporting.
- Bachelor's degree in a related field.

Compensation

- This is a part-time position with a salary commensurate with experience.

Application Process: Interested candidates should submit a resume and cover letter to Michael Hawkins, Board President, hawkeyeuk47@gmail.com.





A Vision for Love in Action: Becoming Communities of Salt & Light

Is your family of parishes ready to take your visioning for Love in Action to the next level? The Department of Life, Dignity, & Charity is offering a 3-part series **Love in Action** opportunity to help your parish family Love in Action team understand why this vision is important, how this vision has developed in the history of the Church, what are the larger and small local organizations with which your parish can cooperate, and how to build on what you already have going on in your parishes (along with your resources of time, talent, and treasure) to create a growing vision of Love in Action in your parish family. This series is only offered on the deanery level so we invite you to ask your pastor if he is interested in bringing this series to your deanery and how he might work with the other pastors and families in his deanery to bring it to fruition. If you would like more information about the series, please contact Mary Anne Bressler at mbressler@ccswoh.org.



Eucharistic Year of Mission

Inspired by the Christ in the Eucharist and following the Eucharistic Congress, we are celebrating a Eucharistic Year of Mission. To showcase the amazing work of Catholics in the Archdiocese, we launched a webpage, www.catholicaoc.org/yearofmission, to promote several events, programs, and stories of mission and action. For this Year of Mission, we are:

- Relaunching the 2015 Food for All Campaign, which includes a year-long food drive and letter-writing opportunity to promote the Farm Bill
- Promoting Parish Ministry Fairs and the Love in Action principle of Beacons of Light
- Year of Mission stories in the *Catholic Telegraph*
- Celebrating a Year of Mission Mass, an occasion for a plenary indulgence for the Jubilee Year of Hope, on Ascension Sunday, June 1st



Advocacy Opportunities



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Tell Congress to Prioritize Families and Protect Safety Net Programs in Budget Reconciliation

“Those services which society offers to its citizens are not a type of alms, but rather a genuine ‘social debt’ with respect to the institution of the family, which is foundational and which contributes to the common good.” – Pope Francis

Congress is working on a budget deal called a reconciliation package. The package will include tax policies and other economic policies that affect everyone, including families. Later today, the House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on a budget resolution that could set the reconciliation process in motion. Deep cuts are being proposed to Medicaid, SNAP, and other important social safety net programs as Members of Congress debate how to pay for the package.

Please urge your Representative to oppose cuts to SNAP and Medicaid, keeping in mind how budget and tax decisions will impact families, especially the most vulnerable families, and to use budget reconciliation to support the needs of children and families experiencing poverty. Essential safety net programs that serve those most in need, including SNAP and Medicaid, must be protected. Changes to these programs that result in the loss of access to life-affirming healthcare and proper nutrition, including for millions of children, are unacceptable. Legislators must avoid creating a situation in which cuts to programs for the poor will be made to seem inevitable and necessary, whether in the short- or longer-term, in order to make tax cuts possible.

We encourage you to add your own personal story about how families are struggling in your community and why ensuring they have the support they need to thrive is important to you.

You could also share why any the following policies that could be included in a reconciliation package are important to you:

- *Strengthening the Child Tax Credit so its benefits are targeted to the poorest children and continuing to provide the credit to all children with a SSN,*

regardless of their parents' immigration status.

- *Protecting Medicaid and SNAP for families and individuals in need.*
- *Ensuring taxes raise adequate revenue for programs that meet the needs of the poor.*
- *Expanding the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC), Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), and Adoption Tax Credit and ensuring their benefits better serve low-income families and individuals.*
- *Incentivizing and assisting charitable giving at all income levels through the charitable tax deduction.*

You can read the recent USCCB letter advocating to prioritize vulnerable families in the budget reconciliation process [here](#).

Take Action Now

Proposed Legislation to Prohibit State-Funded Death: HB 72 & SB 134

Legislation has been introduced into both Ohio chambers which would prohibit state funding of intentional termination of human life at any stage and circumstance in Ohio. This first-of-its-kind legislation reinforces current law banning state funding for abortion, abolishes the death penalty, and expands protections against assisted suicide by linking these prohibitions together in Ohio Revised Code.

Click the bill numbers below for summaries and status updates on each bill:

- **House Bill 72:** sponsored by [Representative Adam Mathews](#) (R-Lebanon) and [Representative Jean Schmidt](#) (R-Loveland)
- **Senate Bill 134:** sponsored by [Minority Leader Nickie Antonio](#) (D-Lakewood) and [Senator Steve Huffman](#) (R-Tipp City)

Click [here](#) to read the letter from the OH bishops to all OH legislators advocating for support for these bills.

Reach out to your legislators and encourage them to support these bills!

Support Our Sisters and Brothers World-wide

Tell Congress to Protect International Assistance

[Urge Congress](#) to ensure the highest funding levels possible for hunger-reducing international humanitarian and development assistance in the fiscal year 2025

budget.

Help Communities Affected by Climate Change

Urge Congress to support the Green Climate Fund and Development Assistance.

Urge Congress to address the impact of climate change by providing robust funding for poverty-reducing international assistance programs in the fiscal year 2024 budget, especially for the Green Climate Fund and Development Assistance.

Protect the Persecuted

Ask your members of Congress to lift up their voice in support of upholding our nation's bipartisan legacy of refugee resettlement.

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)—communicates the importance of responding to the needs of those forced to flee their homes because they are persecuted on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

The Reception & Placement (R&P) Program provides crucial assistance to refugees and Afghan special immigrant visa holders during their first three months in the United States to support their successful integration and help them to achieve self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. Tell Congress to immediately resume these programs.

Protect Dreamers and Mixed Status Families

Dreamers have made critical contributions to our communities and our nation. For most, the United States is the only home they know.

Urge Congress to support legislation that will provide Dreamers, especially DACA recipients and those who are part of mixed-status families, with access to permanent legal status and a pathway to citizenship.

Protect at-risk Pregnant Moms and babies Abroad

The lives of he lives of thousands of pregnant women and their children face a new risk from starvation and lack of basic health services.

Ask Congress to ensure that the promised, lifesaving nutrition and basic health assistance are able to reach vulnerable young mothers and babies.

Prioritize Families and Protect Safety Net Programs in Budget Reconciliation

Oppose cuts to Medicaid and SNAP, and use Budget Reconciliation Process to Support the Needs of Children and Families Experiencing Poverty.

Act Now!



From the Respect Life Office

Emily Branscum, Assoc. Director of Respect Life Ministries

Reason Women Choose Abortion

Abortion presents two significant challenges. First, there is the act of abortion itself, which is objectively and gravely evil. Second, there are the women who have had abortions—many of whom face complex and difficult circumstances that shape their decisions. As pro-life advocates, our mission is twofold. We must teach the world about the intrinsic evil of abortion while showing compassion to post-abortive individuals.

Since the first point is often emphasized, I want to focus on the second—understanding why women choose abortion. By addressing these reasons, we can better prevent future abortions and provide meaningful support to those suffering in its aftermath.

In 2004, the Guttmacher Institute conducted a survey asking post-abortive women why they chose abortion. The findings were revealing:

- **74%** said having a child would interfere with their education, work, or ability to care for other children.
- **73%** cited financial instability.
- **48%** did not want to be a single mother or faced relationship turmoil due to the pregnancy.

Despite claims that abortion is a “free” choice, these statistics show that external pressures heavily influence the decision. Some may see these women as ambitious or independent, but the reality is often different. Many feel hopeless, unsupported, and alone.

The Lozier Institute supports this conclusion. A study published in the *Cureus* medical journal found that nearly **70% of abortions** are coerced, unwanted, or inconsistent with a woman’s true preference. Additionally, **60% of post-abortive women** reported feeling “high levels of pressure to abort from one or more sources.”

Financial instability, job loss, and relationship breakdowns create overwhelming stress. These pressures do not empower women; they push them toward a choice

they may not have freely made. Society treats the baby as the problem rather than addressing the amendable circumstances surrounding the pregnancy. I have witnessed first-hand how these pressures affect women. Story after story confirms that few truly want an abortion. Fear, lack of support, and abandonment often drive the decision.

One young woman I met discovered she was unexpectedly pregnant and turned to her family for guidance. The most common response she received was, **“Well... it’s your choice.”** She later told me how unhelpful that statement was. She already felt uncertain, and hearing those words made her feel even more alone. What she needed was someone to listen, acknowledge her fears, and help her find real, compassionate solutions. Autonomy was not what she needed—she needed community.

These statistics reveal that abortion is neither free nor empowering. As pro-life advocates, we must address the underlying challenges of unplanned pregnancies. Our role is to offer truth, encouragement, and love in these difficult situations. When we meet post-abortive women, our first response should not be judgment. Instead, we must listen, love, and guide them toward spiritual and psychological healing. Together, we can help them untangle the complicated factors that led to their decision.

Above all, whether we work to prevent abortion or help heal its wounds, we must surrender everything to Christ.



From the Office for Persons with Disabilities

Lisa Averion, Associate Director of Office for Persons with Disabilities

Jubilee of Persons with Disabilities

The Holy See has designated Jubilee Days throughout 2025 to recognize and celebrate different groups of people and various ministries in the Church. Pope Francis’ message to people with disabilities at the 2022 International Day of Persons with Disabilities: “We come to realize that we exist as an *us* and not a *them* whenever disability, whether temporary or due to natural aging, affects ourselves or someone for whom we care. Then we begin to look at reality with new eyes and we see the need to break down even those barriers that at first seemed insignificant. Nothing, however, can detract from our certainty that no disability – temporary, acquired or permanent – can change the fact that we are all children of the one Father and enjoy the same dignity. The Lord loves us all with the same tender, fatherly and unconditional love.”

The Jubilee of People with Disabilities is celebrated on Monday, April 28 and Tuesday, April 29. To kick off the Jubilee, our office will host a Mass on Sunday, April 27th with our Chaplain for the Deaf Community, Fr. Charles at [St. Rita School for the Deaf](#) chapel at 11 AM. Light refreshments will follow. On Tuesday, April 29th we will join St. Michael the Archangel Family of Parishes at [St. Luke, Beavercreek](#) for Adoration and Benediction starting at 6 PM. Please join our community for light refreshments following in Kramer Hall. All are welcome to attend Mass and Adoration to give thanks for all our blessings and celebrate our friends with disabilities.

Would you like to host an event at your Family of Parishes? Click [here](#) to learn more.

Prayer for Persons with Disabilities

(Diocese of Green Bay)

God our Father, who created all people in your image: give persons with physical, cognitive, or emotional disabilities opportunities to do all that they are able to, and strengthen them to overcome challenges.

Jesus, who showed great compassion for those who suffer: comfort all who feel like their gifts are not used or that their value is not understood, so that they might take courage in your affection.

Holy Spirit, who fills believers with all good gifts: help me to reach out to persons with disabilities through friendship, care, and working to be sure that our church includes them in everything that we do and to break down barriers to inclusion in society.

We ask this in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.



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