

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



LOVE IN ACTION

A Principle of Beacons of Light

AUGUST 2025 NEWSLETTER

Getting ready to return

We hope you're having a great summer, and we hope all is going well with your preparations for back to school and back to normal parish life.

It's been a tough summer - the heat and humidity have been intense, our migrant sisters and brothers continue to be in danger, the federal government has passed several policies that adversely affect the poor and vulnerable, and the U.S.'s efforts to protect creation are under serious threat. There has been - and continues to be - a LOT to do.

On a positive note:

- On July 8, the Social Action Commission had a wonderful meeting with Archbishop Casey; we're excited to work with him on his vision for charity, justice, and peace.
- The Bread of Life Family organized a walk to support immigrants, and over 400 people showed up (!!).

- Jill and Andrew had a great opportunity to connect with Catholic Social Action people from across the country: there are lots of wonderful projects, all being led by the Holy Spirit and working to build God's kingdom.

Coming up this month:

- **Local CCHD grant recognition ceremony (Th., 8/7, 4:30pm, Church of the Resurrection, Cincinnati)**

- **Northern Area Farm Mass (Wed., 8/13, 7:00pm, 8183 Hoying Rd., Anna, OH).**

We've also got several things coming in September; see below for information!

Thanks in advance for your prayers and support!

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 Action Alerts encouraging everyone to bring their voice and power to bear on important issues.

We wish you a wonderful August 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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CATHOLIC
CAMPAIGN FOR
HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT



CCHD and CRS grants

The Catholic Social Action office is proud to announce the **2025-2026 Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) local grants.**

CCHD: Churches Active In Northside (CAIN), Cross Over Community Development, El Puente Educational Center, Mission of Mary Cooperative, Oasis House, Robert O'Neal Multicultural Arts Center, and St. Leo the Great Church.

CRS: Caring Kitchen, Catholic Social Services of Miami Valley, Franciscan Ministries Community Garden, Hope Emergency Program, Mission of Mary Cooperative, Nexus Community Garden and Urban Farm, Rustic Hope, and St. Vincent de Paul Social Services (Dayton).

For more information, check out the [CCHD](#) and [CRS](#) pages, or contact [Glen](#).



PILGRIMAGES OF HOPE FOR CREATION

Join the **Archdiocese of Cincinnati** as Pilgrims of Hope for Creation! Catholic communities across the U.S. are organizing local pilgrimages as sacred opportunities to pray for the grace to encounter Christ in Creation and renew our relationships with God, the Earth, and one another.



SAT
SEPT 06
9 AM

Cincinnati Virtual Pilgrimage
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
701 E Columbia Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45215

SAT
SEPT 13
9 AM

Dayton NW Pilgrimage
Aullwood Audubon Nature Center
1000 Aullwood Rd, Dayton, OH 45414

SAT
SEPT 27
9 AM

Cincinnati Pilgrimage
Mill Creek and Lick Run Greenway
Exact location TBD

SAT
OCT 04
9 AM

Dayton East Pilgrimage
Mount Saint John
4435 E. Patterson Rd, Beavercreek, OH 45430

SAT
OCT 11
9 AM - 4 PM

Laudato Si' Conference
Xavier University, Health United Building
1723 Cleneay Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45212



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

For more on Pilgrimages of Hope go to
www.catholicpilgrimagesofhope.org

[Registration and
Information Here:](#)

*these pilgrimages will
not be on foot



Southeastern Catholic Rural Life Retreat Day

Catholic Rural Life, St. Mary Deanery, and the Catholic Social Action Office are offering a day long retreat **"Mass-Misa-Mission: The Eucharist as the**

Source of all Mission” on Saturday, September 13th
from **9:30am-4:00pm.**

The retreat will be held at **The Dragonfly Village** (previously known as Chatfield Edge or the Ursulines of Brown County) 20918 St. Rte.251, St Martin, OH 45118. Fr. Steve Pawelk of Glenmary Home Missioners will lead the retreat. The deadline to register is Friday, 9/5. Cost is \$10.

Register and learn more here:
<https://resources.catholicaoc.org/event/crl-2025-retreat-day> - or contact [Sr. Christine](#).



Business Canvassing for Immigrant Rights

If you're interested in being proactive in supporting our immigrant and refugee community members, here's an opportunity.

Folks will be trained to go out into the community and encourage small and medium businesses to stand in solidarity - in legal ways - with their refugee and migrant employees, customers, and neighbors.

- Mon., 8/11, 6:00pm, OTR, Peaslee Community Center. [RSVP here](#).
- Wed., 8/20, 7:00pm, Mt Healthy, Trinity Lutheran Church. [RSVP here](#).
- Another training will be offered in Sept. (details still to come).

After the training, we'll encourage people to sign up in pairs for a specific place to canvas - either one you already know or one we've identified as most useful.

If you have any questions, please contact [Andrew](#).

Save the Dates!

Interfaith Immigrant Solidarity Prayer Services

In honor of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (Sun., 9/28), we will be holding two interfaith prayers services:

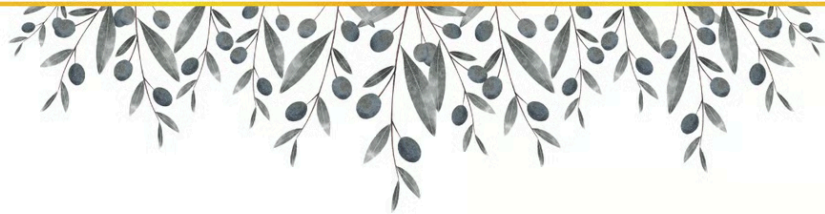
- **in Springfield on Thursday, 9/25, in the evening**
- **in Cincinnati on Sunday, 9/28, in the afternoon**

Exact times and locations have not yet been decided; we will send out a separate email with details as soon as they're determined.



The Archdiocese of Cincinnati presents

Creating a Hope-filled Future Together A Laudato Si' Conference



Join us for a day of connection, education, and creating a more hopeful future for our Earth.

Saturday October 11, 2025

9:00am-4:30pm



Keynote:
Gail Worcelo, SEC

Xavier University,
Health United Building
1723 Cleneay Ave, Cincinnati



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



Sisters of Charity
of Cincinnati

GLENMARY
HOME MISSIONERS



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI
CATHOLIC SOCIAL
ACTION OFFICE

Sisters of
Mercy



Hermanas de la
Misericordia

[Click here](#) to sign up for updates or [here](#) to get 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



DEEPENING COMMUNION IN A POLARIZED WORLD

November 4-6, 2025 | St. Meinrad, IN

Designed for Catholic theologians, students of theology, and Church leaders, this convocation brings together recognized leaders from differing perspectives to model healthy discourse, seek common ground, and make recommendations for how to build unity in a deeply divided Church.

[Click here for more information.](#)



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.

Our next offering will be on Saturday, August 23, at St. Luke's in Beaver creek. [Click here](#) for more information and to register.

If you would like more information, 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*

Please visit www.catholicaoc.org/yearofmission for more details and information. Contact Jillian Foster at jfoster@catholicaoc.org with any questions.



Advocacy Opportunities

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 Religious Workers and the Communities They Serve

An increasing number of priests, religious sisters and brothers, and others serving the Church throughout the United States will be forced to abandon their ministries if policymakers do not act soon. Unfortunately, many parishes, schools, and other Catholic institutions have already had to part with men and women who served them for years because of challenges with the Religious Worker Visa Program.

The bipartisan [Religious Workforce Protection Act \(RWPA\)](#) (S. 1298/H.R. 2672), recently introduced in both chambers of Congress, would provide relief for religious workers in this situation and further the free exercise of religion in the United States for the benefit of all Americans.

[Act now!!](#)

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.



From the Respect Life Office

Emily Branscum, Associate Director of Respect Life Ministries

Catholic Social Doctrine and our Pro-Life Mission

This summer, as we rejoice in the historic gift of a newly elected American Pope, many are reflecting on the roots and purpose of Catholic Social Doctrine, especially in light of Cardinal Prevost's chosen name: Pope Leo XIV. His name is no coincidence. It echoes the legacy of Pope Leo XIII, the father of modern social teaching, and invites us to look again at what the Church teaches about justice, society, and the human person. Catholic Social Doctrine is not just a set of policies or rules. It is the Church's moral vision for society, grounded in the Gospel and rooted in our deepest understanding of the human person. It is how we live out our faith in the public square, in our families, and in our ministries.

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII released *Rerum Novarum*, a groundbreaking encyclical that responded to the turmoil of the Industrial Revolution. He confronted the injustices of the time by reminding the world of a timeless truth: every person is made in the image and likeness of God, and society must be structured to honor and protect that dignity. Perhaps Pope Leo XIV sees that our generation faces a new kind of revolution.

Technology threatens human dignity in ways Pope Leo XIII could not have imagined. This moment demands that we, as Catholics, become re-committed to the principles of Catholic Social Doctrine and learning how to apply them in our ministries and lives.

At its heart, Catholic Social Doctrine is built on four main principles: the dignity of the human person, solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good.

- **Dignity** reminds us that every person is sacred. Our dignity is based not on what we can do but in who we are. Every human person from the moment of conception is imbued with this ontological, unchanging dignity by virtue of their existence. It is from this dignity that we realize we are made for communion, and that is where solidarity comes into play.

- **Solidarity** is the affirmation of the principle that man was not made to be alone. We are called to live in communion with one another and, ultimately, God. When problems arise in society we then call upon the principles of **subsidiarity** which urges us to handle such problems at the smallest level possible (the family, the church, the city and so on).

- Finally, we have the **common good**, our goal. The common good is what we aim to achieve in upholding these principles; it is the good for all with detracting from none. The common good wants human beings to flourish, and we know that ultimately that flourishing comes when we order our lives toward God.

These teachings come alive in ministry. Consider the Walking with Moms in Need initiative. I was recently meeting with a number of our WWMIN ministers, and I couldn't help but rejoice in the way this program so naturally lives out these principles. The program acknowledges the dignity of human persons, born and unborn, then it encourages ministers to stand in solidarity with pregnant and parenting mothers. The act of accompaniment is solidarity lived out. To stand beside someone who is struggling in ways we cannot imagine and do not understand, but to be with them nonetheless, is the ultimate expression of solidarity. Also, WWMIN as a whole works to solve problems at the smallest scale possible. When women find themselves in crisis pregnancies or overwhelming parenting situations, they don't have to surrender themselves to a corporate or bloated entity that deals with these issues on the macro scale. Instead, by activating these ministries at the parish level, we have the opportunity to cut out waste and meet women where they are. This initiative is a lived expression of solidarity. We do not just speak for vulnerable mothers; we walk with them. We listen. We support. We accompany. This is Catholic Social Doctrine in action. It is not just policy or preaching, but presence.

In the Respect Life movement, we are not only defending life, but we are also proclaiming a vision for human flourishing, one that sees the face of Christ in the vulnerable and bends low to wash the feet of the suffering.

Pope Leo XIII helped the Church face the modern world with clarity and courage. May Pope Leo XIV's name remind us to do the same. Let us continue this legacy in every maternity home, every parish bulletin, every sidewalk, and every heart.



From the Office for Persons with Disabilities

Fr. Charles Onumaegbu, Chaplain for Deaf Ministry

Can a Deaf Become a Priest? ...Yes!

Each time I tell my hearing friends that I work with and for the Deaf, one of the questions I do expect from them is “can a Deaf become a priest”? Well, the question of a Deaf becoming a priest is a fascinating one, particularly in the context of how the Church includes and acknowledges individuals with disabilities in her ministerial roles. The sacrament of Holy Orders, which includes the ordination of deacons, priests, and bishops, is one of the key sacraments in the Catholic Church. It confers the grace necessary to carry out the duties of ministry, including preaching, administering sacraments, and providing pastoral care.

From the theological and canonical perspective on the Deaf becoming a priest, the primary concern for the Deaf, like any other person seeking to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders, is whether they meet the necessary requirements as established by canon law and the Church's understanding of ministry. Canon law (specifically Canon 1024) requires that for someone to be validly ordained, he must be a baptized male. Beyond that, the person must have the necessary human and spiritual qualities, which include a vocation, commitment to celibacy, and the ability to carry out the ministry required of priests or deacons.

For the Deaf, the issue typically revolves around their ability to communicate effectively and perform the essential duties of the priesthood, which include preaching and leading liturgical celebrations (especially the Eucharist). The Church has considered this issue in different ways over time. Some of these practical considerations revolve around the following:

Communication: One of the challenges for Deaf candidates for Holy Orders is their ability to preach the Gospel and communicate effectively in the liturgy. Deaf individuals may rely on sign language, which poses a particular challenge for those who are called to the pastoral role of preaching to a congregation. However, in modern times, many dioceses have taken steps to include sign language interpreters in their liturgy, and in some cases, the Deaf themselves may serve as interpreters or ministers.

Education and Formation: The Seminary formation for Deaf individuals might be adjusted to accommodate their needs. This could include providing specialized sign language classes, sign language interpreters so as to adapt to the theological and pastoral training of the needs of the Deaf and ensuring that they can understand and participate fully in the intellectual and spiritual formation necessary for ordination.

Spiritual Life and Ministry: Beyond communication, there are also questions regarding the person's ability to engage in the sacramental and pastoral duties required of priests. A Deaf person, like any other candidate, would be expected to lead and guide their parish, but adjustments might be made on how this is carried out. For example, they may have different means of leading homilies (through sign language, writing, or the assistance of an interpreter), but this would not necessarily disqualify them from ordination.

On the historical context of a Deaf becoming a priest, the Catholic Church, particularly in recent decades, has become more inclusive regarding the participation of people with disabilities in the ministry. For example, there are now Deaf individuals who serve as deacons and priests across the globe, and there have been increasing calls for inclusion of the Deaf community in the larger life of the Church.

However, the question of ordaining a Deaf person to the priesthood (especially to lead a congregation) has not been fully adopted in some dioceses. While no explicit canonical law excludes Deaf persons from the sacrament of Holy Orders, the practical aspects of ordination and ministry in the Church may create significant hurdles, particularly regarding the proclamation of the Gospel in a way that is accessible to all parishioners.

With regards to what the Church documents say about a deaf person becoming a priest, there isn't a specific, widely circulated document from the Vatican directly addressing the Deaf and Holy Orders in detail. Still, documents from Vatican II, such as *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, emphasize the need for the Church to be inclusive and to ensure that all people, regardless of ability, are able to fully participate in the life of the Church. The Church has also issued documents emphasizing the need to welcome people with disabilities into the life of the Church, including their involvement in the ministry, though there are no specific rulings on ordination for the Deaf.

Be that as it may, my joy is that some dioceses and communities have taken positive steps to include the Deaf in the sacrament of Holy Orders, for example: the creation of formation programs specifically designed for Deaf seminarians, training of interpreters for Mass and other sacramental liturgies, and the ordination of Deaf individuals to the diaconate and priesthood through a significant preparation and adaptation to the unique needs of the candidates.

While the sacrament of Holy Orders is available to all Catholics, the question of the Deaf and ordination is a complex one, shaped by both theological considerations and practical concerns. The Church has been moving toward greater inclusivity, and the ordination of Deaf persons, while not the norm, is not entirely outside the realm of possibility, provided that the person is able to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of the ordained ministry. This would require flexibility and creativity in how the sacrament is administered and how ministry is carried out.



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