



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



## **LOVE IN ACTION**

*A Principle of Beacons of Light*

## **DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER**

### **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

Advent is upon us - a season of anticipation, celebration, and miracle. It's also a great time for reflection. It has been a challenging year - locally, domestically, and internationally - and we are so grateful for the many, many partners with whom we have been able to work for dignity, solidarity, and justice. Thank you for over and over again standing up for the poor and marginalized. Thank you honoring the dignity of every single person, no matter any characteristic, history, or other factor. Thank you for being your authentic, faithful selves; loving God; loving your neighbors; and loving yourself.

Regarding Issue 1: while the votes did not go the way we had hoped and prayed, we must continue the work to care for women, children, and families. There is a never a shortage of legislation that can help (or harm) mothers and their families,

and there is always more we can do to support them. We will continue to work diligently to walk with moms, children, and all those seeking to enjoy God's blessing and have every opportunity to live and thrive.

Thanks to all who contributed our [annual CCHD collection](#). If you didn't have a chance to contribute, you can still do so [here](#). And thanks to Glen for all of his great work on publicity and communication.

Thanks also to all those who attended and/or shopped at our Fair Trade Sale, and thanks Jill for your great work on your first big project with the CSA team!

We humbly ask that you continue to pray for us. There's a lot going on this year, and while we're excited to keep things moving, your prayers - and engagement! - will make our success all the more likely. 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 Advent, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Christmas, and start to the new year, 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



**Advent Resources**

There are of course many resources for your Advent journey, and our own Catholic Telegraph has a great many for you to consider. From daily reflections for AoC staff and partners to an article on how to live Advent more intentionally, there are many offerings to consider. If you follow this [link](#), you'll find everything connected to Advent from the CT. And don't forget to check back regularly because additional resources will be added throughout the season.



## 30th Anniversary of Salt and Light

On November 17, the Catholic Church in the United States celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the statement "[Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish.](#)" This landmark statement continues to serve as the guiding document for parish social ministry in the United States. It was approved by the Catholic bishops of the United States at their General Meeting in November 1993.

The CSA office has for years utilized this document in our work with parishes to form social action committees/ministries, and we're now using it as we work through the Beacons of Light process to help families of parishes form Love in Action committees.

If you have some time over the holidays, give it a look. There's some great information and guidance that's just as relevant today as it was 30 years ago.



# Just Faith Co-facilitator Needed

Hopefully you're familiar with the gospel justice formation program, [Just Faith](#). Over 20 years ago, Just Faith was started as a sort of mirror of RCIA but with a focus on Catholic Social Teaching. St. Columban Parish in Loveland will be running the program in 2024, and they are looking for an experienced co-facilitator to work with them. The first meeting will be on Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024.

If you are interested, please contact Jay Porcaro - [jayporcaro@aol.com](mailto:jayporcaro@aol.com). Thanks in advance for prayerfully considering this opportunity to form and educate our sisters and brothers.



## Peace in the Holy Land



We have all been devastated by the war going on in the Holy Land. The loss of life, trauma, and violence have been horrific; and we pray ardently for an end to the fighting and the safety for all people.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued two statements since the conflict started in October, and we wanted to share a bit of their words.

From their [Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> statement](#):

*The world is once again shocked and horrified by the outbreak of ferocious violence in the Holy Land... (We) join with Pope Francis in his call for peace and his condemnation of this widespread outbreak of violence... May all who love the Holy Land seek to bring about among all the parties engaged in the fighting a cessation of violence, respect for civilian populations and the release of hostages.*

From their [Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> statement](#):

*As Pope Francis reminds the world, 'War is always a defeat; it is a destruction of human fraternity.' We continue to pray for the victims caught in this cycle of violence as well as the regional and international actors who are being drawn into the conflict.*

*We must not grow weary of offering our prayers and support for peace and justice for all concerned. A lasting solution respecting the rights, needs, and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians remains essential to these ends.*

Finally, we would like to share a few words from a local perspective. EquaSion, a strong, local partner in the Cincinnati interfaith world and the parent organization of the Festival of Faiths, has issued a statement:

*Even though this is all happening thousands of miles away, it is as local as it can be and is impacting us directly... We are neighbors. We work together. We break bread together. Our children go to school together. We must recognize the humanity in one another and will continue to fight antisemitism and Islamophobia right here in our own community. Despite our differences, we keep the lines of communication open, and we listen.*

*The war is so far away. We feel helpless, not sure what we can do that's constructive... As individuals, we can reach out to our neighbors who are feeling the pain of this conflict to let them know we're thinking of them with words of love and support.*

Please keep all of those affected by this awful situation in your prayers, and please do all you can do to bring peace into the world and into the lives of our neighbors.



## Advocacy Opportunities

### Afghan Adjustment Act



### Stand in Solidarity with Our Afghan Neighbors

Help answer Pope Francis' call for us to "welcome, protect, promote, and integrate" these newcomers by [completing this action alert](#) in support of the Afghan Adjustment Act.

### Protect Vulnerable Immigrant Youth Act

## **Urge Congress to Safeguard Children in Need and Ensure Communities Have Access to Religious Workers**

Help ensure vulnerable youth receive the protections they deserve and American communities can benefit from the contributions of religious workers by [completing this action alert](#) in support of the Protect Vulnerable Immigrant Youth Act.

## **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.

## **Pass Funding Measures to Support People in Ukraine and Gaza**

### **Fund vital humanitarian assistance for people caught in these brutal conflicts.**

The lives and safety of millions of our sisters and brothers in Gaza and Ukraine are at stake. Our faith calls us to [act quickly](#) and decisively in the face of these humanitarian emergencies to avoid further suffering.

## **Support Women and Families in Need**

### **Tell Congress to Fund WIC for All Families in Need.**

[Tell Congress](#) to continue its long history of bipartisan support for WIC by providing the program with adequate resources to serve all eligible participants with food that meets their nutrition needs, including the current benefit for fruits and vegetables. Supporting WIC is one way we can help build a society that welcomes new life and is oriented toward helping children and their parents, especially those who are most vulnerable.

**Food for EVERYONE**

## Support the RESTORE Act! End the SNAP benefit ban for people with drug-related felony convictions.

This ban does nothing to advance public safety and is counterproductive, preventing returning citizens from fully reintegrating into society. Instead of continuing to punish persons who have paid their debt to society and their families, we should offer the necessary tools – including food – to help them lead a more productive life. [Ask Congress](#) to end this inhumane ban.



LET'S DISCUSS

If you're wondering how your family of parishes might go about engaging in the Love in Action principle, we encourage you to check out the Love in Action page on the Pathways platform - <https://pathway.catholicaoc.org/love-in-action>. There you'll find a great introductory video, as well as further explanation of the breadth of the principle. Over time, you'll find more resources and support, and of course you know you can always reach out to our office for support. If you're looking for the first tool we created - the parish inventory - you can find it here (along with the inventories from the other principles) - <https://pathway.catholicaoc.org/pathway-tools>. If you work for a parish or are involved in parish leadership, we'd love to talk with you through the Forums. Don't hesitate to reach out!



**From the Respect Life Office**



# DEFEAT

## Ohio's Proposed Abortion Amendment

### **Moving Forward After Issue 1 Passes**

***Bob Wurzelbacher, Director of Respect Life Ministries***

Issue 1, *The Right to Reproductive Freedom*, passed last month, about 57% to 43%. It is in many ways heartbreaking, especially of course for the lives that will be lost and the women who will continue to be misled to believe that abortion is their best and only choice, but we have no other option as Catholics than to get back up again and continue to spread the good news of the culture of life. If you have not yet seen it, please check out the video response from Archbishop Schnurr [here](#).

As a Church, we will continue to support mothers and families in need in countless ways, not only with our words, but also through our actions in charity and justice. Check out our website at [www.catholicaoc.org/forlife](http://www.catholicaoc.org/forlife) to learn about many of them, including the dozens of centers within our Archdiocese who offer a broad range of services for women facing unexpected pregnancies. On the justice side, the Ohio Catholic Conference has successfully advocated for a number of things that are in the current Ohio budget such as: eliminating sales tax for baby products; investing more in housing for vulnerable pregnant women; extending Ohio Works First cash assistance eligibility for the full duration of pregnancy; a new doula program to address infant and maternal mortality rates, especially among minorities; supporting pregnancy resource centers; expanding Medicaid for pregnant women; reforming Ohio adoption law; and increasing the child tax credit.

I spoke to Peter Range, Executive Director of Ohio Right to Life, more specifically about this loss and what it means for us [in my latest podcast](#). One of the most significant statistics that he pointed out to me was that when you look at the age breakdown in this last election, among 18-29 year olds we lost 82% to 18%. We clearly have a lot of work to do to re-evangelize our youth not only on the dignity of all life, but also to be able to answer the tough questions on sexual assault and fetal abnormality, which the other side exploited so successfully in the closing weeks of the campaign. I will be working with the Catholic Schools Office and Students for Life to try to re-engage the high schools through their pro-life clubs, ensuring our young people are ready and equipped to answer those tougher questions we know they will encounter later in high school and in college.

What should all of us be doing as a result of this election? First of all, don't stop praying. It may seem like all of our prayers related to defeating Issue 1 did

nothing. We know, however, that we have a loving God who walks with us during trials and who will conquer evil in the end. One of the ways you can engage your parish in continued prayer is through our 9 Months With Christ in the Womb program; contact us at [Respectlife@catholicaoc.org](mailto:Respectlife@catholicaoc.org) to learn more. Secondly, get involved in efforts to help women in need by actively working to bring [Walking with Moms in Need](#) to your parish family. Third, get to know your neighbors. This is Catholic evangelization 101. Develop relationships with people who ought to be in your sphere of influence. It takes time, but they will ask what you do in your spare time, and the Holy Spirit will lead you to the conversations you need to have with them. Once you are friends, you have a better chance of educating them on all we do to support life, influencing them about better respecting life at all stages, and reducing the vitriol so many who supported Issue 1 have toward us.

I will echo Archbishop Schnurr's words as he closed out his video message on the passage of Issue 1: "May the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ, graciously help us build a culture of life and a civilization of love, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator of all."



## From the Office for Persons with Disabilities

### Pope's Prayer Intention for December

***Lisa Averion, Associate Director of Office for Persons with Disabilities***

Every morning I listen to Sacred Heart Radio to catch up on the news around the world, and - on November 29, 2023 - Pope Francis' prayer for December included the most vulnerable populations our office serves. The Pope invited us to overcome discrimination. His hope is *"every Christian community will be open to the presence of our brothers and sisters with disabilities and ensure that they are always welcomed and fully included."* Pope Francis concluded his message by stating... *"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."*

As each month slips away, I reflect on how our office is serving the archdiocese. What can I do to build a culture of belonging in each parish family? I pray for all the ministries I am called to serve, and with your help and advocacy for the most vulnerable we can create a culture of belonging. Please email Lisa Averion, [laverion@catholicaoc.org](mailto:laverion@catholicaoc.org), to learn more about the Office for Persons with Disabilities.

# Who We Are

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