



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



LOVE IN ACTION

A Principle of Beacons of Light

SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Welcome fall!

The heat has finally broken, and we're welcoming fall with open arms. School is in session, parish life is humming, and all things pumpkin, apple, and Oktoberfest have returned.

We offer prayers for all those who work in farming. We pray for good weather to finish up the growing season and a good harvest. St. Isidore, prayer for us!

There are only two months left until the election (Thank God!), and only God knows how things will turn out. Despite calls for greater unity and more peaceful language, the vitriolic, divisive language continues, and we as the Church have a moral obligation to seek understanding, compassion, and

peace (while of course remaining true to our Catholic values). As we previously shared, we've gathered our election year (and beyond) work under one project name - '[Our Eucharistic Mission in a Polarized World.](#)' You'll find information below about our series with Fr. Aaron Wessman (*next session is on Wed. 9/11 at 7:00pm at Immaculate Conception in Dayton*), the re-launch of [iVoteCatholic](#), a new [Voting Resource page](#), and other resources.

In October, we've got our event with the [Ohio Innocence Project](#) coming up on Wed. 10/2 and our [Global Solidarity Conference](#) on Sat. Oct. 12. Check out the information below!

Two additional dates to note this month:

- **September 27 is the Feast of St. Vincent de Paul.** We not only thank God for his commitment to service and the poor but also the work he (and Blessed Frederick Ozanam) inspired and is now lived out through the St. Vincent de Paul Society. If you're looking to get involved in great work for the community, check out the SVdP in your area.

[Cincinnati](#) | [Dayton](#) | [Middletown](#) | [Milford](#) | [Springfield](#)

- **September 28 is the World Day for Migrants and Refugees.** You can find the [Pope's message for the day here](#), the [Vatican's broader page for resources](#) here, and the USCCB's Justice for Immigrants [resource page for National Migration Week here](#) (9/23-29).

We humbly ask that you continue to pray for us. This continues to be an exciting and 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 month, 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

In this issue...

Election year

Ohio Innocence
Project

Global Solidarity
Conference

Farm Bill

Rural Mass

What We Have Seen
& Heard

Love in Action

Advocacy

Respect Life

Persons w/ Disabilities



Our Eucharistic Mission in a Polarized World

In January of 2012, Pope Benedict XVI stated that "The Church's witness, then, is of its nature public: she seeks to convince by proposing rational arguments in the public square. The legitimate separation of Church and State cannot be taken to mean that the Church must be silent on certain issues, nor that the State may choose not to engage, or be engaged by, the voices of committed believers in determining the values which will shape the future of the nation."

In September of 2013, Pope Francis emphasized this sentiment: "We need to participate for the common good. Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern."

The US Catholic Bishops, in Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, reinforces this call: "The obligation to participate in political life is rooted in our baptismal

commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, "It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person." (#1913-1915)" (#13)

As we can see above, both on the global and national level we are called to engage in the political sphere and to do so guided by our faith and acting with grace and mercy. In the coming year (and beyond), we will face tremendous tumult and myriad challenges when it comes to politics, and our office will do our best to support you in this work by offering resources and guidance. To better highlight this support, we will be sharing these resources under the theme Our Eucharistic Mission in a Polarized World. We invite you to engage with these resources and share them within your family of parishes and broader community.

To access any of these resources - current and forthcoming - please visit www.catholicaoc.org/faithfulcitizenship.

The Church's Mission in a Polarized World

The first four parts of our six-part series featuring Fr. Aaron Wessman, PhD, Glenmary Home Missioners have gone wonderfully. Thanks for all who attended in person and virtually! Fr. Aaron wrote a book titled The Church's Mission in a Polarized World, and over the course of the series he will be exploring six themes in the book and connecting them to the blessed sacrament. You can definitely attend the next session(s) even if you missed the sessions.

All events will be hybrid - offered both in person and streamed over Zoom.

If possible, we'd love to have as many people as possible join us in person so we can have a more engaging Q&A and discussion at the conclusion of the talks.

<https://zoom.us/j/99177580089> | Meeting ID: 991 7758 0089 | Dial in: 312 626 6799

Please contact [Jill](#) with any questions about the series.

[Download the flyer here.](#) Please share it far and wide!

The recordings of the talks can be found [here](#).

OUR EUCHARISTIC MISSION IN A POLARIZED WORLD

A series with Fr. Aaron Wessman, Glenmary Home Missioners, based off his book [The Church's Mission in a Polarized World](#). Christ heals the divisions in our churches, our communities, and among our family, especially along political lines.

Join us in person or online (link at the bottom)

All presentations will be recorded and found here: <https://tinyurl.com/434yh3bn>

**THURS, MAY 23
7:00 PM**

Cathedral Basilica of Saint Peter in Chains, Synod Hall

**THE EUCHARIST: AN
ANTIDOTE TO POLARIZATION**

**THURS, JUNE 20
7:00 PM**

Bellarmino Chapel, Xavier University

**AN OVERVIEW OF
POLARIZATION IN THE U.S.**

In collaboration with Xavier University and Bellarmine Chapel

**WED, JULY 24
AFTER 7PM MASS**

St. Michael, Spinner Ave, Sharonville

**POLARIZED REPUGNANCE OR
EUCHARISTIC PRESENCE**

In collaboration with the Liturgy Office

**THURS, AUG 8
7:00 PM**

St. Bernard, Derby Ave, Cincinnati

**POLARIZED EXCLUSION OR
EUCHARISTIC FELLOWSHIP**

In collaboration with the Respect Life Office

**WED, SEPT. 11
7:00 PM**

Immaculate Conception, S Smithville Rd, Dayton

**POLARIZED DOMINATION OR
EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE**

**THURS, OCT. 24
7:00 PM**

St. Maximilian Kolbe, Hamilton Mason Rd, Liberty Township

**POLARIZED DESPAIR OR
EUCHARISTIC HOPE**

In collaboration with the Mission Office and Glenmary Home Missioners



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*For more on this series and Faithful Citizenship:
www.catholicaoc.org/faithfulcitizenship*

LIVESTREAM LINK at
<https://zoom.us/j/99177580089>

Meeting ID: 991 7758 0089

Dial in: 312 626 6799



OUR EUCHARISTIC MISSION IN A POLARIZED WORLD

+ Depolarizing Within

Monday, Sept. 16th, 7:00 - 8:30pm

Clocktower Lounge of GSC, Xavier University

This workshop helps participants look within to see how we regard and talk in polarizing terms about large groups of ordinary people on the other side of the political aisle.

Goals:

Develop strategies for **engaging in political discussion** without demonizing the other side

Recognize and lessen the effects of polarization when encountered within political conversations with your like-minded social circles

Two
FREE
workshops!

+ Skills for Disagreeing Better

Monday, Oct. 14th, 7:00 - 8:30pm

Clocktower Lounge of GSC, Xavier University

This workshop helps participants understand the values and concerns of those who differ from them politically. It teaches essential skills for communicating across differences and finding common ground.

Goals:

Understand the values and concerns of people across the aisle

Develop skills for listening in a way that the other person feels heard

Practice skills for **sharing viewpoints** in a way the other person might hear



RSVP here:
tinyurl.com/BraverAngels
-fall2024



OUR EUCHARISTIC MISSION IN A POLARIZED WORLD

Depolarizing Within

This workshop helps participants look within to see how they are engaging or in polarizing ways. "Polarization" does not refer to healthy disagreements over issues or philosophy. It is how we regard and talk in polarizing terms about large groups of ordinary people on the other side of the political aisle.

Monday, Sept. 9th

7:00-9:30pm

Bainbridge Hall, Dayton

Goals

- Develop strategies for **engaging in political discussion** without demonizing the other side
- Constructively **intervene in social conversations** with likeminded peers
- **Recognize and lessen the effects of polarization** when encountered within political conversations with your like-minded circle

RSVP for both free workshops here!
<https://tinyurl.com/bddshn5v>



Skills for

Disagreeing Better

This free workshop helps participants understand the values and concerns of those who differ from them politically, and it teaches essential skills for communicating across differences and finding common ground.

Monday, Sept. 23rd

7:00-9:00pm

St. Charles Borromeo, Kettering

Goals

- More **understanding** of the values and concerns of people who differ from you politically
- Better skills for **listening** in a way the other person feels heard
- Better skills for **sharing viewpoints** in a way the other person might hear even if they disagree.

 **Braver Angels**
www.BraverAngels.org



— ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI —
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www.CatholicAOC.org/FaithfulCitizenship

iVoteCatholic

iVoteCatholic is back!!

We again find ourselves in an election year where the country is deeply divided and unable to find common ground, and neither party (nor any candidate) fully represents

our Catholic commitment to life and dignity.

Thankfully, we don't have to rely on a party platform to tell us how to vote; in fact, we aren't called to vote Democrat or Republican. We are called to vote **Catholic**, and the archdiocese has a resource to help you do that: iVoteCatholic.org. On this website, you'll find information about key issues – the life and dignity of the human person, care for creation, love for people who are poor and vulnerable, etc. – as well as resources to use in liturgies, meetings, classrooms, and homes.

We've recently created a couple of new resources: a [Parish Leader Playbook](#) and a [sample plan](#) families of parishes can implement to best utilize the available materials. Check out iVoteCatholic.org and help yourself and your community face the coming election with faith, compassion, and a commitment to loving your neighbors.

*If you have any questions, please contact **Andrew**.*

We've created [this flyer](#) to help highlight our new Voter Information resource page. Please download it and share it far and wide. We want to make sure everyone that is eligible to vote can vote. Thanks!!



OHIO now requires voters to show a photo ID when they cast in-person ballots, either early or on Election Day. The ID must be unexpired, but it does NOT need to have your current address on it. *Other documents, such as utility bills and bank statements, are **NO LONGER** accepted.*

The following documents qualify:

- *Ohio driver's license
- *Ohio state ID
- *U.S. passport or passport card
- *Interim identification issued by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles
- *Ohio National Guard ID
- *U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs ID
- *U.S. Military ID

Use the QR Code below to find comprehensive voting information:



or visit

www.catholicaoc.org/voting



Ohio Innocence Project

Working for Justice: Stories of Innocence & New Life

Date: Wednesday, 10/2, 9:00am-3:00pm

Location: Curran Place, UD

Every year, our criminal justice system puts innocent people behind bars. This injustice must be addressed, and the Ohio Innocence Project takes on this mission.

On Wed., 10/2, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Diocese of Columbus, and ELCA Southern Ohio Synod will present a day on the work of the OIP, hearing from both the professionals who run the program as well as several exonerees. We will also hear a legislative update on several related bills and have a chance for conversation with the exonerees.

For more information, check out the [event website](#) or contact [Andrew Musgrave](#). You can register [here](#).



A Catholic Relief Services

GLOBAL SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE

PROMOTING PEACE-BUILDING

Peace in Our World

Learn about initiatives around the world to foster peace. These programs and individuals confront violence, environmental destruction, and serve those least among us.

Peace in Our Communities

Our nation is polarized, our communities and families divided. Discover groups and organizations committed to dialogue, advocacy, and restorative justice. Let's respect each other and disagree better.

Peace in Our Hearts

As we address the conflicts around the world and in our own homes, we must address the unease and anxiety within ourselves too. Practice techniques to take care of your own well-being so that you may be a force for good and peace.

Saturday, October 12
9:00am-2:30pm

University of Dayton, Torch Lounge

Details and Registration
here: <http://tiny.cc/q1etyz>



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

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action.
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CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES



Farm Bill

In late May, the USCCB sent [a letter to Congress](#) - co-signed by multiple agencies - on the Farm Bill, both supporting some aspects and advocating for change in others. The Farm Bill touches on a number of areas, including access to food, support for farmers, and foreign aid. It is a massive bill, renewed every five years, that touches the lives of tens of millions of people.

We STRONGLY encourage you to reach out to your elected officials and encourage them to keep the different components of the Farm Bill in line with our commitment to the dignity of all people, special care for the poor, the dignity of work, care for creation, and solidarity with sisters and brothers around the world.

For greater accessibility, Pat Hornschemeier, leader of our Southeast Rural Life conference, has drafted a consolidated version of the USCCB's letter. You can [download the letter here](#). Please edit the letter as you see fit, sign it, and send it to your elected officials. Share the letter with your networks as well and encourage them to send letters as well.

You can also take action by signing this [Action Alert](#) from the USCCB that specifically asks Congress to protect SNAP in the Farm Bill.

For additional resources, please check out the materials from Bread for the World, one of our strong partners in Farm Bill advocacy.

[Bread Statement on House and Senate Farm Bill Frameworks - Bread for the World.](#)

[Bread Statement on House Farm Bill - Bread for the World](#)



Come Share Catholic Faith in the Country!

You are invited to join us for an outdoor Mass at the farm home of Byron and Dawn Brodt on **Friday, September 6 at 7:00 pm**. Their farm is located at **10550 State Route 247, West Union OH 45693**. The Mass is being sponsored by Our Lady of the Hills Family of Parishes. In case of inclement weather, Mass will be moved to Holy Trinity Catholic Church in West Union. Please bring a chair and a snack to share. For more information, contact Patrick Hornschemeier, Chairperson of Southeast Catholic Rural Life, 513-752-0647.



What We Have Seen and Heard - 40th Anniversary of the Pastoral Letter Fr. Clarence Rivers - 20th Anniversary of his Death

In the fall of 2024, two important anniversaries will highlight the great contributions of African American Catholics in the Church. We join the African American Pastoral Office in three events honoring these anniversaries.

On Monday, September 9 - The Feast of St. Peter Claver - Archbishop Schnurr will celebrate mass at the Cathedral-Basilica of St. Peter in Chains at 7:00pm to honor the 40th anniversary of the pastoral by the 10 Black Catholic U.S. bishops.

On Friday & Saturday, November 22 & 23, an academic symposium titled, Seeking for a City, will be held at Curran Place on the campus of the University of Dayton with session.

On Sunday, November 24 - The Feast of Christ the King - Cardinal Wilton Gregory will celebrate mass at the Cathedral-Basilica of St. Peter in Chains at 11:00am to honor the 20th anniversary of Fr. Clarence Rivers passing.



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





STRATEGIC NONVIOLENCE INTENSIVE



A four-hour introductory workshop on the tenets of strategic nonviolence, nonviolent communication, de-escalation, bystander intervention and more.



**SATURDAY,
SEPT 28**





ANNUAL GATHERING

feat. Emma's Revolution

Wednesday, October 9, 2024 • 7:00 pm
Woodward Theater, 1404 Main Street, Cincinnati, OH

RACE AND RACISM IN CINCINNATI: A 3-PART DOCUSERIES

A people's history of how race shaped neighborhoods, education and culture



Fall 2024 Session Screening Schedule:

Part 1: Friday, October 18, 12:00 - 2:00 PM

Part 2: Friday, October 25, 12:00 - 2:00 PM

Part 3: Friday, November 1, 12:00 - 2:00 PM

Presented by:



For registration and more information visit: RaceAndRacismCincinnati.org



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

Is your parish 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.

Bellarmino Chapel will once again host the seventh annual Share the Journey: A Concert for Compassion **on Sept. 28th at 7:00pm**. The concert will be live and livestreamed and will raise funds for four organizations on the front line of working with immigrants and refugees. This year's concert's feature performer will be Jesse Manibusan. The initial event was inspired by the 2-year global campaign called "**Share the Journey**" launched by Pope Francis in 2017 to heighten global awareness of the arduous journey facing migrants, immigrants, and refugees throughout the world, and to invite Christians to share the journey with them in a spirit of compassion and hope. The intent of the concert is to raise awareness of issues faced by immigrants, provide assistance to organizations working with migrants, and offer hope to all of us as we address these issues. Additional information can be found at [Share the Journey Concert: A Concert for Compassion - Bellarmine Chapel](#)



Advocacy Opportunities

The Catholic Conference of Ohio recently shared updates on several pieces of legislation being considered in Columbus. Please consider reaching out to your elected officials and letting them know your support or opposition to these bills.

CCO Opposes HB 451 on Remittance Transfer Fee

The Catholic Conference of Ohio opposed [House Bill 451](#) in the House Ways and Means Committee. HB 451 would levy a remittance transfer fee on money transmissions to a person outside the United States. Within the testimony, CCO notes that "HB 451 puts onerous restrictions on legal residents of Ohio and threatens their support of loved ones stuck in cycles of poverty and violence. ...these small remittances of \$200 to \$300 are the difference between survival and starvation." Ohio residents should not need to pay an

additional fee for fulfilling a Christian obligation to provide charitable resources to people in other countries. [Click here to view the full testimony >](#)

HB 7, the Strong Foundations Act, Passes the House

[House Bill 7](#), the Strong Foundations Act (*sponsored by State Representatives Andrea White (R-Kettering) and Latyna Humphrey (D-Columbus)*), a CCO-supported bill, passed the Ohio House of Representatives and will now go to the Ohio Senate. HB 7 supports Ohio mothers and babies in their first one thousand days to address maternal and infant mortality and to improve health, developmental, and learning outcomes

SB 198 Passes the Senate

CCO supported [Senate Bill 198](#) (*sponsored by Senators George Lang (R-West Chester) and Nathan Manning (R-North Ridgeville)*), which provides inmates with state identification cards and documentation upon their release relating to work experience, education, and trade skills passed out of the Small Business and Economic Opportunity Senate Committee. It will now move to the Ohio House.

End the Death Penalty in Ohio

The time is NOW to change state law.

Make your voice heard and urge your state legislators to support [Senate Bill 101](#) and [House Bill 259](#) to abolish the death penalty in Ohio. We cannot solve violence with more violence or obtain justice via the state of Ohio directly and intentionally killing a defenseless human life.

[Action Alert for Senate Bill 101](#)

[Action Alert for House Bill 259](#)

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.

Urge the Senate to Strengthen the Child Tax Credit

Every year, the Child Tax Credit (CTC) lifts millions of American families out of poverty and helps them live according to their dignity and with greater economic security. While the USCCB has long supported the CTC, the current credit must be improved because it excludes many of the poorest children. [Add your voice here.](#)

Stand in Solidarity with our Afghan Neighbors

Tens of thousands of Afghan nationals have now been resettled in communities across the United States, many of whom served alongside U.S. servicemembers. They are in need of a legal pathway to real and lasting safety. [Add your voice here.](#)

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

The bill would relieve the backlog currently confronting special immigrant juveniles by exempting them from the annual caps for the employment-based, fourth preference (EB-4) visa. This would ensure that abused, neglected, or abandoned youth who are deemed eligible for relief by state courts no longer need to compete with adults relying on the same category of visas. It would also increase the availability of EB-4 visas for religious workers who serve communities across the nation. [Add your voice here.](#)



From the Respect Life Office

Bob Wurzelbacher, Director of Respect Life Ministries

The 24-hour Waiting Period is Suspended

In August 2024, Judge David Young of Ohio issued a temporary injunction blocking the state law requiring a woman be given informational materials on abortion, undergo two visits with a physician, and wait 24 hours before obtaining an abortion. This move is likely only the first of several restrictions on abortions that will fall now that Issue 1 passed last November, enshrining a right to abortion into the Constitution.

The Ohio law, which mandates a 24-hour waiting period between a woman's initial consultation and the abortion procedure, was designed to ensure that women have at least a minimal period of time to consider their decision and receive necessary

counseling. Proponents argue that this waiting period is crucial for women's safety and well-being, and to ensure they are not being coerced.

Brian Hickey of the Ohio Catholic Conference commented on the protective measure of the waiting period. "The 24-hour waiting period is a necessary safeguard to ensure that women are fully informed and have time to reflect on their decision," Hickey stated. "It is not about restricting access but about ensuring that women have the support and time they need to make a decision that is right for them."

The Ohio Catholic Bishops also emphasize the importance of the waiting period. In a statement, they wrote, "This waiting period provides a crucial window for women to consider their options thoroughly and seek out counseling if needed. It is a compassionate measure intended to ensure that decisions are made with complete understanding and care."

Maya McKenzie, spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood of Southwest Ohio, which runs the only Cincinnati surgical clinic, was very enthused about the ruling. "We're elated to see this," she said. "This does open a huge door for patients, particularly those coming from out of state." That is undoubtedly true.

This ruling will not only increase abortions among Ohio residents, but will have a snowball effect on the out-of-state patients coming from southern states where abortion is more restricted. Look at this [**map of states where abortion is banned or heavily restricted south of Ohio**](#). For many living in those states, I-75 is the best route to get to a state with abortion access, which run through Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and as far south as Florida. "We are the southernmost clinic on I-75," said Nan Whaley, CEO of Planned Parenthood of Southwest Ohio. "We have a responsibility, not just to patients in Ohio," she said. "We need to expand. We need to provide more service," Whaley said. She makes it sound like she is hoping to increase the number of clinics here in Cincinnati.

When Roe fell in 2022, it looked at first like Ohio was going to be one of the friendlier states for babies and mothers in crisis pregnancies. Now, however, we have become a destination state for others. This is why it is more important than ever to be trained in sidewalk advocacy and sign up to pray outside of the abortion clinic. Check out the article on [**signing up for hours**](#), including overnight hours, or [**sign up for the training today**](#).



From the Office for Persons with Disabilities

Lisa Averion, Associate Director of Office for Persons with Disabilities

Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. Suicide is an urgent and growing public health crisis. More than 49,000 people in the United States died by suicide in 2022. That's one death every 11 minutes. (hhs.gov) Our office and CCSWO are training parishes and schools in the archdiocese in Mental Health First Aid. Mental Health First Aid helps individuals to identify, understand, and respond to those who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge. Mental Health First Aiders learn how to assess for risk of suicide or harm, listen, give information, encourage professional help and encourage self help and other support strategies. Mental Health First Aid can save someone's life. Our pilot parish Mental Wellness Ministry teams have been trained in Mental Health First Aid and are preparing to launch mental health ministry support groups this fall. They are also planning Suicide Healing and Remembrance Masses. St. Gregory the Great Family of Parishes will host a Mass on September 14, 2024, at Immaculate Heart of Mary at the 5:00 PM regular weekend vigil Mass. It will be an opportunity for the community to come together to support and remember families and friends who have lost loved ones to suicide. The Mass concelebrants will be Fr. Steve Angi and Fr. Michael Barton (Comboni Missionaries), with homily by Deacon Dave Shea. The Mass will include a flower procession for individuals whose lives have been impacted by suicide and reception will follow the Mass in Heritage Hall. Click here to learn more. Our Lady of Hope will host a Mass of Remembrance at St. Philip the Apostle in Morrow on September 22, 2024 at the 11:30 Mass. Fr. Brice Berger will be the celebrant with homily by Deacon Dave Shea. There will be a flower procession and reception in the undercroft immediately following the Mass. Please plan to attend one of these Masses. We have all been affected by suicide whether it has been in our family or community. Let's join together to bring healing and hope!

Please contact Lisa Averion, laverion@catholicaoc.org if you have any questions.



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