



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



LOVE IN ACTION

A Principle of Beacons of Light

FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

What's that in the air?

Is it the smell of history? February is Black History Month. We invite you to take some time this month and learn a bit more about the long history of Black people in our country. You can start [here](#).

Is it the smell of honor? This Sunday was the Presentation of the Lord. At mass this weekend we celebrated the power of God and the gifts of the prophets who looked for the coming of the Lord.

Is it the smell of love? Valentine's Day is on Th. 2/14. Make sure to take some extra time to let your loved ones know how much you adore them and thank God for them.

Is it the smell of fear? There has been a lot of concern in response to 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 by checking [here](#) (USCCB Press Releases, Action Alerts, and Informational Materials).

Is it the smell of joy? We are fully into the Eucharistic Year of Mission and the Jubilee Year of Hope. You can find resources on how the Archdiocese is celebrating and practicing these occasions [here](#).

Regardless of what we're feeling, we must always start with prayer. Whether you're learning and honoring, feeling concern or joy, or celebrating God's love, take it to prayer. Never forget that Christ stands ever-ready to listen, wrap us in His love, and guide us along our journey.

On the state level, new legislation that protects life from womb to tomb was introduced. You can learn more about it [here](#), and look for our office to be involved in the efforts to get this bill passed as soon as possible.

On a related note, Jill and Andrew were in D.C. last weekend for the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering which culminated with a day spent on Capitol Hill meeting with our members of Congress. Thank you for your prayers and support, and let's pray for all of our elected leaders.

We humbly ask that you continue to pray for us. 2025 will 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 February, 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

P.S. It's not to donate to the **Catholic Campaign for Human Development** (CCHD). You can [click here](#) to make your secure online donation.



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we are one family under God

The USCCB on the recent Executive Orders re. Immigration

(from the Catholic Conference of Ohio)

The Catholic Church in the United States has a long history of embracing diverse newcomers and providing assistance and pastoral care to immigrants, migrants, refugees, and people on the move, as mandated by the Bible. Please see and share the following statements from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) on recent executive orders related to immigration. The most recent statement clarifies the Church's longtime partnership with the federal government to help resettle refugees – those who have been verified to be fleeing violence or persecution and have been vetted for over a year by U.S. authorities and international organizations in a third country. Afghan and Iraqi nationals who assisted U.S. troops in those countries have also qualified for the U.S. refugee program in recent years. The USCCB spends more money than it receives to help these individuals and families start anew in the United States.

USCCB Statement on its Work with the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (Jan. 26)

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued the following statement on its long-time partnership with the federal government to serve refugees.

[Read the statement >](#)

"Human Dignity is Not Dependent on a Person's Citizenship or Immigration Status" (Jan. 23)

Bishop Mark J. Seitz (USCCB), Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM (CHA), and Kerry Alys Robinson (CCUSA) have issued a statement in response to action taken by the Trump Administration rescinding guidance related to "protected areas" in immigration enforcement.

[Read the statement >](#)

Executive Actions Will Subject Vulnerable Families and Children to Grave Danger (Jan. 22)

Following an earlier [statement](#) by Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Migration, issued a statement highlighting the dignity of human life, regardless of immigration status, and urging just and merciful solutions for an orderly immigration system that furthers the common good.

[Read the statement >](#)

If you're interested in getting involved in this life-saving and life-affirming work, contact Andrew amusgrave@catholicaoc.org.

Solidarity in El Paso

Thursday, February 13

7:00pm

<https://zoom.us/j/96562397424>



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Catholic Charities
Southwestern Ohio
Enlighten | Serve | Empower

Through eyes from Cincinnati, learn about El Paso, the border, and the superstars we met there.

As we mentioned last month, a small group from the Archdiocese visited El Paso and Juarez in December to learn about the amazing work happening on the border and determine how we might support them in these challenging times.

Join us on on Th. 2/13 to learn more about the trip and how we can be allies.

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





As a representative from Catholic Relief Services, Tom will share his vast experiences in improving the human condition during a visit that coincides with the 50th anniversary of CRS Rice Bowl.

Tom Hollywood

A Local Invitation for a
Global Solution

Presentation Dates

Tuesday, February 4, 6:00pm
Sisters of Charity Motherhouse
5900 Delhi Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45233

Wednesday, February 5, 7:00pm
St. Charles Center
2860 US-127, Carthagen, OH 45822

Thursday, February 6, 7:00pm
Immaculate Heart of Mary
7820 Beechmont Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45255



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Meet Tom Hollywood. He has a GLOBAL story to tell.

THIS week we are hosting Tom Hollywood, *Partner and Campaign Engagement Advisor for Catholic Relief Services (CRS)*. Tom will be sharing his vast experiences in improving the human condition during a visit that coincides with the **50th anniversary of CRS Rice Bowl**.

For the past twenty-five years, Tom tackled challenging emergencies and entrenched global problems that the poor encounter in Latin America and Africa. In 2007, he joined Catholic Relief Services (CRS). As a fellow, he worked in Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and Ethiopia.

Tom's position focuses on connecting individuals, parishes, high schools, and universities to CRS. Using his field-based experiences, Tom invites the US Catholic community to learn more about CRS and global realities while presenting opportunities for impactful actions that alleviate poverty. Tom's visit will include visits to numerous high schools and parishes around the Archdiocese. His visit will be tailored to his audience and highlight the accomplishments of CRS and, specifically, CRS Rice Bowl.

There is still a chance to hear Tom. If your parish group is interested in a presentation or where one might be available to attend, please contact Jill Foster jfoster@catholicaoc.org.

If you are interested in joining the Catholic Social Action's CRS Committee, you can [learn more about it here!](#)

CRS Rice Bowl is the Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services, the official relief and development agency of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Rooted in the history of the Eucharistic Congress, CRS Rice Bowl invites Catholics and faith communities in the United States to encounter God and our global family throughout Lent by practicing the pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Lenten alms donated through CRS Rice Bowl support the work of CRS in more than 120 different countries each year. Twenty-five percent of donations to CRS Rice Bowl stay in the local diocese, supporting hunger and poverty alleviation efforts. Since its inception in 1975, CRS Rice Bowl has raised more than \$350 million. <https://www.csricebowl.org/about>



Remembering Sr. Dorothy Stang, other Eco-Martyrs, and lost species

February 11
7:00 pm - 8:15 pm
online

The Laudato Si' Circle of the Family of the Most Holy Eucharist parishes invites you to an event dedicated to reflecting on the incredible life of Sister Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN.

We will explore her legacy through a PowerPoint presentation and two short videos and review other Eco-Martyrs and lost species featured in the Season of Creation 2024 Catholic liturgy guide. We will begin and end our remembrance with prayer.

REGISTER: email Monica Kleimeyer at laudatosicircle@gmail.com or text 513-520-0125.
Deadline to register: Monday, February 10, 2025 at 5 p.m.

Those registered will receive the Dorothy Stang Novena nine days before the meeting. Join us as we honor her life and continue the call to care for creation.

[Sr. Dorothy Stang Memorial Page](#)

[Remembering Sr. Dorothy Stang, other Eco-Martyrs and lost species. | February 11, 2025. | 20th Anniversary](#)

Social Media post:

You are invited to join the Family of the Most Holy Eucharist's Laudato Si' Circle for this zoom meeting.

[#dorothystang](#) [#NotreDamedeNamur](#) [#martyrs](#) [#snddenohio](#)



**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.



Advocacy Opportunities

The Catholic Conference of Ohio shares updates on legislation being considered in Columbus. Please consider reaching out to your elected officials and letting them know of your position on these bills.

Legislation Introduced for No State-Funded Death

The Catholic Conference of Ohio was honored to speak at a press conference on January 28 to introduce bipartisan and bicameral legislation to prohibit state funding that intentionally terminates human life at any stage and circumstance in Ohio. Both the Senate and House of Representatives bills reinforce current law banning state funding for abortion, abolish the death penalty, and expand protections against assisted suicide by linking these prohibitions together. An official bill number will be forthcoming.

Look for opportunities to engage in advocacy for this bill in the coming months. It will take all of us working together to move get this bill through the state house and onto Gov. DeWine's desk for his signature.

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.

Let Congress know you care about helping our sisters and brothers experiencing hunger and malnutrition to thrive!

U.S. international aid provides lifesaving food assistance in emergencies and supports long-term development programs that help communities build resilience to overcome the challenges of hunger. At a time when global hunger and poverty are on the rise, we must act now to ensure communities around the world can access nutritious food, strengthen agricultural livelihoods and improve food security. [Add your voice here.](#)



From the Respect Life Office

Bob Wurzelbacher, Director of Respect Life Ministries

2024 Respect Life Award - Donna Murphy

Archbishop Schnurr bestowed the 2024 Respect Life Award upon Donna Murphy, founder of Heaven's Gain Ministries, at the Respect Life Mass on January 19th at the Cathedral Basilica St. Peter in Chains. She is pictured at left with her husband, Jim. Donna Murphy has been a defender of human life her entire life. Her heart for the vulnerable started when she was young. In junior high, she used to plan and manage neighborhood carnivals where she would raise a couple hundred dollars for muscular dystrophy or cancer research. In high school, she volunteered at a developmental learning center for severely disabled children.

Donna received degrees in Physical Therapy and Athletic Training. She worked at local hospitals where she treated patients with a variety of diagnoses, eventually focusing on patients suffering from strokes and spinal cord injuries. She even used to spend extra time with the young spinal cord patients on her weekends off to help these young men with spinal cord injuries to acclimate back into social activities.

While pregnant in 1990, she felt called to volunteer at local pregnancy centers, helping abortion-minded clients to choose life. Donna and her husband, Jim, renovated a two bedroom apartment for mothers in need to have a warm, welcoming place to receive clothing, diapers, and other baby items.

Donna helped develop the chastity program at Pregnancy Center West. As a part of this program, she spoke at most local high schools in Cincinnati on the beauty of baby development in the womb and the truth of abortion. She also did these talks for Pregnancy Center East and Cincinnati Right to Life, sometimes speaking to up to 10,000 students a year. Donna's volunteering at local pregnancy centers lasted for over 20 years.

Donna is a mother of eight living children and three who now live in Heaven. Her pro-life passion led her to foster care, and the youngest Murphy child was fostered and ultimately adopted. Donna loves and values her family fiercely, and she still aches for the three she lost. Her life-long commitment to uphold the dignity of human life is perfectly exemplified by her love for her own children and for those of the families she serves in her ministry at Heaven's Gain.

In 2007, Jim and Donna heard the calling to help families suffering the loss of a baby due to miscarriage or stillbirth. Jim and Donna researched for a year, and Heaven's Gain Ministries was opened in 2008. Heaven's Gain has grown from only selling burial items to a robust support and educational non-profit that currently serves over 2,000 families. As part of the mission, HGM provides low-cost caskets, urns, and burial and memorial supplies. The free support includes birth planning, peer support, support groups, and a helpline. The educational mission has helped doctors, hospitals, priests, funeral directors, and pregnancy care centers learn to better care for those facing pregnancy loss. Donna has now created a program called Advocates for Parents of Perinatal Loss (APPL), which is designed to train caring individuals to address the needs of parents experiencing loss. Heaven's Gain Ministries APPL offers a supportive "doula"-like service for those who will deliver a deceased baby. They guide families to create a personalized birth plan that will assist parents in treasuring the short time they have with their child, therefore decreasing many of the traumas that happen with pregnancy loss. In all these efforts, Donna not only exemplifies love for the unborn, but for the families stricken by grief at the loss of their child.



From the Office for Persons with Disabilities

Lisa Averion, Associate Director of Office for Persons with Disabilities

Bringing Hope to Persons with Disabilities

As Pilgrims of HOPE in this Jubilee Year, our office has already seen the fruits of His goodness as we plan events and work with parishes. Throughout 2024, outreach to

parishes spanned across the Archdiocese of Cincinnati seeking ways to serve the Special Needs communities in liturgy spaces, masses, youth and adult groups, and faith formation. Families have called and emailed asking for more opportunities for their children and adult children to serve in their parishes, attend Sensory Friendly Masses, and grow in faith and community. It is often difficult for families to advocate; therefore, they look for opportunities outside of the Catholic Church and go where they feel they belong. Our office is actively working with parishes to evaluate the needs of all family members and provide a plan to “close the gap” and create a culture of BELONGING for all.

In 2025, our office will help support young adults with special needs communities, expand opportunities for adaptive sacramental preparation classrooms, offer Sensory Friendly and Special Needs Masses, and provide retreats for children and adults with special needs, to name a few.

We are all called to evangelize and bring everyone to the table. In Matthew Chapter 5:14, *You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden.* We have been called to influence the world for good and to be a light. Consider how you can help and support our office in the Year of HOPE. Can you share your light or perhaps grow brighter by volunteering with our community?

Our office wants to continue to meet the needs of your Family of Parishes. Your participation in a short survey is important. Please complete and share it with other parishioners, community members, and church leaders. There are five questions and will take 2-3 minutes to complete. The link will close on February 20, 2025. Once the data is collected, I will host Coffee & Conversation sessions throughout the archdiocese and share the results. Click [HERE](#) to complete the survey. Thank you for your time!



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