



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



**LOVE IN ACTION**  
*A Principle of Beacons of Light*

## FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

### MOVING INTO LENT

Unbelievably, we're in February and Lent is upon us. We made it through a VERY frigid and snowy 2nd half of January, and now we prepare to journey through Lent with our hearts focused on the perfect sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus.

Speaking of our hearts, they are HEAVY. Every day we are bombarded with images and stories of people's dignity being disrespected and forgotten. Our immigrant family members are terrified and face a completely uncertain future.

Our Church leadership has used its voice, pleading with our government to end the dehumanizing and violence.

*"As pastors, we the bishops of the United States are bound to our people by ties of communion and compassion in Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are disturbed when we see among our people a climate of fear and anxiety around questions of profiling and immigration enforcement. We are saddened by the state of contemporary debate and the vilification of immigrants. We are concerned about the conditions in detention centers and the lack of access to pastoral care. We lament that some immigrants in the United States have arbitrarily lost their legal status. We are troubled by threats against the sanctity of houses of worship and the special nature of hospitals and schools. We are grieved when we meet parents who fear being detained when taking their children*

to school and when we try to console family members who have already been separated from their loved ones.

...

*We bishops advocate for a meaningful reform of our nation's immigration laws and procedures. Human dignity and national security are not in conflict."*

[USCCB Special Statement, November 2025](#)

Monday, at an event in Springfield supporting the Haitian (and broader immigrant) community, Archbishop Casey added his voice:

*"...(T)hese are increasingly divisive and disturbing times for our country and our world. Those who live on the margins of society are frightened. In particular, our immigrant brothers and sisters find themselves challenged and facing an uncertain future...*

*The blanket criminalization of migrants, together with the indiscriminate mass deportation of people, places our nation in crisis and does not serve the common good...*

*Along with my brother bishops, your pastors, and other Church leaders, I offer you my support and spiritual closeness as you navigate the way forward. **May we never grow weary in our efforts to end the dehumanizing and demonizing rhetoric that seeks to overtake us. May we treat each other with the dignity and respect, mercy and compassion due our brothers and sisters. And may God bless us with the discipline to strive tirelessly to bring about justice for all."***

*- [Archbishop Casey, 2/2/26](#)*

We will continue our fight for justice and peace, and we hope that you will join us. (See below for one opportunity to engage.)

Back to Lent, we encourage everyone to utilize the wonderful resources from CRS and their annual [Rice Bowl campaign](#). Your parishes should have received materials, but if they didn't, please let us know.

Last month, we hosted the first presentation of our series on economic justice and the rights of workers - Faith & Labor. It was a fantastic, informative event, and you can [watch the recording here](#). See below for information on our second presentation on February 24.

Thanks in advance for your prayers and support!

We humbly ask that you continue to pray for us. 2026 will continue 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 start to your Lenten journey, and - as always - we look forward to seeing you soon as we continue to stand up for justice, solidarity, and

peace.

Peace and all good,  
Catholic Social Action team



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# FAITH & LABOR

*A CATHOLIC VISION FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE*

A 4-Session Series on:  
Catholic Social Teaching,  
Economic History, and the  
Dignity of Work

SESSION 2:  
Capitalism, Labor, and the  
Catholic Response

**WHEN:**  
Tuesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>  
6:30 PM EST

**WHERE:**  
A Virtual Presentation:  
[Http://tinyurl.com/faithandlabor](http://tinyurl.com/faithandlabor)



*Led by: Erin Shaw*



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[Click Here to Join](#)



## Praying in Solidarity

The Archdiocesan Immigration Task Force has developed a new initiative, an effort to peacefully and prayerfully stand in solidarity with our immigrant and refugee sisters and

brothers.

We are encouraging people to go and pray - either outside of the Butler County Jail (where ICE detainees are being held) or the ICE office in Blue Ash.

You can find all of the information on this webpage - **Praying in Solidarity** - but, simply put, this is an opportunity for groups - no matter the size, faith tradition, or frequency - to stand in witness to and solidarity with those who are being affected by the "climate of fear and anxiety around questions of profiling and immigration enforcement." *US Bishops Special Message on Immigration*.

This is prayer, not a protest, so no signs/posters. People will be standing together, witnessing and praying in solidarity.

On the webpage, you'll find forms to fill out if you're looking to organize an event, whether one-time or repeated, as well as one to give feedback after your event(s).

The ITF will be meeting on the **4th Monday of every month at 12:30pm outside of the Blue Ash ICE office**. All are welcome.

**Monday, February 23, March 23, and so forth, 12:30pm  
Blue Ash ICE Office - 9875 Redhill Dr., 45242**

If you have any questions, please let us know.

*"We pray for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement. We pray that the Lord may guide the leaders of our nation..." -US Bishops Special Message on Immigration*



## **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.

If you're interested, please contact [Andrew](#). We will be scheduling training sessions in the coming months.

## **A Day of Dialogue**

WHERE – Chaminade Ctr. on the Mt. St. John campus, Dayton OH

WHEN – Saturday, April 25, 2026; 9:00am-5:00pm (Eastern Time)

FOCUS - How Do We Sustain our Commitments & Maintain a Sense of Hope in Fearful Times?

[Click here](#) for more information.



# Annual Buy Local Foods Seminar

Sunday February 15, 2026 1:30-4:30 PM

St. George Parish Hall

509 East State Street, Georgetown, Ohio 45121

Sponsored by Catholic Rural Life (CRL)

OSU Extension Brown County

Adams-Brown Community Action Partnership

And the Adams-Brown Diabetes Education Coalition



- ❖ Keynote: “Know Your Farmers Better”. Featuring a panel of local farmers discussing their needs and concerns as well as their benefits to the community.
- ❖ Social break with snacks and time to browse table displays and speak with producers and representatives of local organizations.
- ❖ “Hot Topics” discussion led by Trevor Corboy, OSU Extension Educator

No Charge or preregistration required

For questions contact Julie Kline at 937-515-1807 or

Patrick Hornschemeier at 513-752-0647

In case of bad weather, program will be held on February 22.



# An Exhibition Humanity Needs You to See



## Auschwitz

Not long ago. Not far away.

Cincinnati Union Terminal  
Opens **October 18**

**GET TICKETS**

*Sellouts Expected*

**Open through April 12, 2026 | Cincinnati Union Terminal**

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. highlights the profound humanity of those who survived, and those who perished, in one of history's most notorious places. Featuring more than 500 original objects from the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and more than 20 other international museums, the exhibition is the largest collection of artifacts from Auschwitz outside of Europe. Tracing the transformation of Auschwitz from an ordinary Polish town into a place where unimaginable atrocities and extraordinary human resilience intersected, Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. is an exhibition the world needs to see.

[www.cincymuseum.org/auschwitz](http://www.cincymuseum.org/auschwitz)



## Fasting For Peace - A Lenten Opportunity

Our community has for too long been divided, increasingly pulled apart by individuals and groups who seek to benefit from opposition and hatred. As people of faith, we stand firmly against this effort. We recognize the dignity of all people and the spark of the divine in all faiths. Furthermore, we recognize that our lives have been overstressed, and that has prevented us from truly enjoying the gifts and joys that are all around us. We recognize that we need to take a break and make time to share and reflect together without the demands of a deadline or goal to reach.

To this end, an interfaith group of folks in Dayton have developed an opportunity for people of all faiths to come together and unite around common goals - sacrifice, compassion, and action.

The proposal is this: fast for one week, sacrificing together for peace in our world and the common good and against selfishness and greed. The fast can take many forms, and we encourage participants to fast each day in a different way - whether from social media, cell phones, computers, meat, sweets, shopping, or even criticizing other people or ourselves. Furthermore, we encourage each group/community to find a time to come together and discuss their fasts - what was hard, what was easy, how we connected the fast to suffering or need in the community, how it compelled us to build from the act of sacrifice to an act of justice or charity, etc.

Two of the major faiths - Christians and Muslims - are celebratory holy days (Lent and Ramadan, respectively) around the same time. We are therefore suggesting the week of **March 9-13** as the week to fast. Groups can of course choose another time, but this the week we're encouraging everyone to join the effort.

We invite everyone to give it a try. There's no pressure and there's no goal. If you or your group fast for one day, fantastic. If you all fast from different things, superb. If it's just you and your neighbor, excellent. Any and all participation is good.

If you're interested in joining, please click [this link](#) and let us know how you're participating. And if you have any questions, you can let us know by emailing [Dr. Bill Hirt](#).

Thanks in advance for your participation, and we wish you a peaceful and loving spring.



## **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, please contact Mary Anne Bressler at [mbressler@ccswoh.org](mailto:mbressler@ccswoh.org).



## 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!

### Protect International Humanitarian Assistance

Support our global family in poverty by advocating for U.S. international humanitarian and development assistance. This funding provides lifesaving aid in emergencies and

supports long-term development to help families and communities become more resilient and create a brighter future. [Lift your voice today!](#)

## Support Religious Workers & 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 churches, schools, and other Catholic institutions have already had to part with men and women who served in our country for years because of challenges with the Religious Worker Visa Program. [Tell Congress to act now!](#)



## From the Respect Life Office

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

### US Bishops Praise Two New Life-Affirming Bills

In a moment of national policy aimed at strengthening support for women and families, the recent passage of the *Pregnant Students' Rights Act* and the *Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act* in the U.S. House of Representatives represents a profoundly Catholic affirmation of the dignity of every human life and the responsibility society has to those who are most vulnerable. Catholic teaching holds that life — from conception to natural death — is a sacred gift from God, and that the flourishing of families and mothers must be supported not just in rhetoric but in concrete public policy.

The *Pregnant Students' Rights Act* directs colleges and universities that receive federal aid to ensure that students who are pregnant or parenting receive clear information about their rights, available resources, accommodations, and how to file a discrimination complaint if unfairly treated because of their pregnancy. Its intent is modest but meaningful: to remove barriers that too often force women to feel they must choose between their education and carrying their child to term. For many young women, the perception that pregnancy will derail their academic and professional futures can create immense pressure — a pressure that harms both mother and child. By guaranteeing access to information and support, this legislation promotes true freedom: the freedom to welcome life without sacrificing personal development or educational goals.

From a Catholic perspective, the *Pregnant Students' Rights Act* echoes the Church's long-standing commitment to "radical solidarity" with mothers and their children, both born and unborn. In a [letter to Congress](#), U.S. Catholic bishops quoted Pope St. John Paul II in urging support for the bill, emphasizing that no woman should feel pressured into ending a pregnancy because she lacks support or resources. Their advocacy reflects the Church's mission to uphold the dignity of every human person and to strengthen policies that respect life while accompanying those in need with compassion. The *Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Women and Families Act* complements this work by affirming states' authority to use federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to support pregnancy help centers. These centers offer practical assistance — from prenatal education and counseling to baby supplies, childcare

support, and career guidance — to women who choose life for their children but often struggle to find help. Ensuring that public resources are available to such ministries aligns with Catholic social teaching's emphasis on subsidiarity — the idea that human needs are best met at the most local level possible, with government support when necessary.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) **praised both bills in a joint statement**, with Archbishop Shelton Fabre, Bishop David O'Connell, and Bishop Daniel Thomas noting that "building a culture of life requires helping mothers to be able to welcome their new children." They underscored that no woman should have to choose "either her child or her future," a choice the Church believes is ultimately false when society commits to genuine support for pregnancy and parenting. In a cultural moment often marked by divisive rhetoric, these two bills offer a unifying, life-affirming path forward: compassionate public policy that respects both the sacredness of life and the real needs of women and families across the nation. From a Catholic viewpoint, this is not only right — it is a necessary manifestation of faith in action.



## From the Office for Persons with Disabilities

*Lisa Averion, Associate Director, Persons with Disabilities*

### Low Vision Awareness Month

February is Low Vision Awareness Month, and it is deeply personal to me. As a mother raising children with low vision, I have seen firsthand how visual impairment can affect not only daily life, but also a family's ability to fully participate in faith, education, and community. I have also seen how small accommodations can make a profound difference.

In the Catholic Church, access matters. **Large-print missals, worship programs, hymnals, and faith-formation materials** allow people with low vision to pray, read Scripture, and participate in the liturgy with independence and dignity. When these resources are missing, individuals can feel unintentionally excluded. When they are present, the message is clear: *you belong here*.

Through my work and advocacy, I often point parishes to resources offered by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Office for Persons with Disabilities, which encourages inclusive practices so that all members of the Body of Christ can engage fully in parish life. I am also grateful for organizations like the **Xavier Society for the Blind and Visually Impaired**, which provides free large-print, braille, and audio religious materials to Catholics around the world. These services have been invaluable to families like mine.

Education and awareness are equally important. The **National Eye Institute** offers clear information about low vision and vision rehabilitation, while **Foundation Fighting Blindness** supports research, resources, and community connections for those affected by vision loss. These organizations remind us that low vision is more common than many realize—and that support and hope are available.

My children's journey with low vision has shaped my own. It has strengthened my faith and fueled my commitment to advocacy. This February, I encourage parishes to reflect

on accessibility and take intentional steps to ensure that everyone can encounter Christ without barriers.



## Our Team

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