



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



## **LOVE IN ACTION**

*A Principle of Beacons of Light*

## **JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER**

### **Happy New Year!**

Greetings from the Social Action Office. We hope all is well and you had a beautiful Christmas and a joyous start to the new year.

It's hard to believe, but 2025 - the Jubilee Year of Hope - is here. We're finishing up the Eucharistic Revival (which started in 2022) with the Eucharistic Year of Mission, and we look forward to journeying with you to share God's grace and mercy and stand with our neighbors in solidarity and compassion.

We must, as always, start with prayer. There are so many places around the world suffer the effects of violence and turmoil, and we must pray for their

peace and survival. More locally, we pray for the people affected by hatred and evil, perhaps most acutely those in New Orleans.

Politically, it's going to be a big year. On the national level, the new Congress starts tomorrow (Friday), and the new president takes office on the 20th. Besides the ongoing struggles to fund the government, there will be massive fights on the issues of immigration, border security, and the environment. On the state level, there will be a big push to support legislation that protects life from womb to tomb. Look for our office to be involved in these (and many other) justice and life issues, and we will be eager to partner with you in these efforts.

On a related note, Jill and Andrew will be in D.C. the last weekend of January for the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering (a long-weekend of training and formation) which culminates with a day spent on Capitol Hill meeting with our members of Congress. Please keep them in your prayers, and pray for all of our elected leaders.

On Monday, Jan. 20, we celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Given the challenging times we're facing, two quotes of his ring especially true:

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

Let us pray that King's life of standing up for justice inspires and guides us.

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 rest of the Christmas season and joyful Three Kings (Epiphany), 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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## Standing in Solidarity with our Immigrant Sisters & Brothers

Fact: the U.S. immigration system is broken. No matter where you stand on the issue of immigration and how you think things should work, it's broken. It's been broken for many years, and Congress – the institution who has the power to fix it – has not done so. The Catholic Church has for years pleaded with Congress to make changes that will honor the dignity of everyone involved – citizen of the U.S., folks on border communities, folks fleeing from their homes, and countries from which people are fleeing – but it has largely been to no avail. (To learn more, check out [the church's position on immigration reform](#). To see the U.S. bishops most recent statement, [click here](#).)

Fact: there are many, many people in the immigrant and refugee communities – as well as people who work in those spaces – who are nervous about what might happen in the coming years. As Pope Francis recently said, “migrants often flee from oppression, abuse, insecurity, discrimination, and lack of opportunities for development,” and our country continues to do a poor job of welcoming these people who have traveled great distances to escape these atrocities. ([Pope Francis, World Day of Migrants statement, 2024](#)) With all of the bluster and political rhetoric swirling around, it's important to remember that we're talking about real people – sisters and brothers in Christ – who

deserve the chance to receive God's blessings and be treated with dignity and respect.

The first week of December, a small team from the Archdiocese and Catholic Charities had the opportunity to travel down to El Paso, TX and spend time with the community down there. Visiting organizations both in El Paso and in their neighbor city Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, we encountered amazing people doing God's work: providing hospitality, supporting children, building community, offering legal assistance, meeting basic needs, and working together to honor the dignity of each and every person. There is quite a lot of uncertainty about what the future might hold, but what is known is that these brave and dedicated people will continue to love their neighbors without hesitation or limit.

Time will tell how we can best support immigrants, refugees, and those who work with them, but we can always use more help. If you're interested in getting involved in this life-saving and life-affirming work, contact Andrew [amusgrave@catholicaoc.org](mailto:amusgrave@catholicaoc.org).



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

During the first week of February 2025, the Catholic Social Action Office of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati will host Tom Hollywood, *Partner and Campaign Engagement Advisor for Catholic Relief Services (CRS)*. It is most appropriate that Tom will share his vast experiences in improving the human condition during a visit that coincides with the **50<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:jfoster@catholicaoc.org).

*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](mailto: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.

**[Back to Calendar](#)**

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

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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](#)



## **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](mailto: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**



# 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](mailto: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 support or opposition to these bills.*

**In 2025, an exciting and powerful bill will be introduced in the Ohio General Assembly. This legislation - if passed - will protect life at all stages: abolish the death penalty, affirm the prohibition against state money being used for physician-assisted suicide, and strengthen laws banning state funding for abortion. There will be a state-wide effort to move this legislation forward, and we hope you will work diligently with us on this effort. Look for more information in the coming months.**

## 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.

## **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***

### **March for Life 2025**

This month, the Office for Respect Life Ministries is hosting a trip to the March for Life in Washington, DC for the first time in five years. In January 2021, due to COVID-19 restrictions placed on the streets of our nation's Capital, relatively few were able to attend that year's March for Life in Washington, DC. Since then, several things have come into play to make it much more challenging to organize a trip, but we are excited to make this trip a reality for many of our young people once again. In the interim, the

Office for Respect Life Ministries created a March for Life Toolkit to empower parishes, schools, and respect life groups to join in the vigil at home, and those materials are still available to you, whether you are attending or not, especially if you work with youth. So, whether in conjunction with your planned trip to Washington, DC or perhaps especially for those unable to attend, we have created a **WEBSITE** with an abundance of resources ranging from **PRO-LIFE MOVIE NIGHT** options to **YOUTH MINISTRY LESSON PLANS** and ideas for **PRO-LIFE PRAYER SERVICES**.

In addition, I want to let you know about some of the local events you can attend in January. First, there is our annual **RESPECT LIFE MASS** with Archbishop Schnurr on Sunday, January 19th at the 10AM Mass at the St Peter in Chains Cathedral Basilica downtown. We will honor our 2024 Respect Life Award winner at that Mass. Also on Sunday, January 19th, **ALL SAINTS PARISH** is hosting their annual Celebrate Life Event from 12 noon to 3PM with Eucharistic Adoration, Reconciliation, a fire pit and a prayer service. On Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2PM, you may join **CINCINNATI RIGHT TO LIFE** for a peaceful and prayerful event where we march beginning at Holy Name Church (2422 Auburn Ave) to Cincinnati Planned Parenthood's abortion headquarters with hundreds of other pro-life supporters. Of course, you should surround all of these events with prayer, and one easy way to do that is by participating in the novena **9 DAYS FOR LIFE** for the protection of human life organized by the USCCB. Each day's intention is accompanied by a short reflection and suggested actions to help build a culture of life. Click on the link above to learn more or sign up for daily reminders.

Regardless of whether you travel or stay home, let us also pray together for the countless women and men who are suffering from the consequences of abortion, that they might find **HEALING AND FORGIVENESS**, and let us work ardently to create a culture of life.



## **From the Office for Persons with Disabilities**

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

### **World Braille Day**

January 4th is World Braille Day, and I have asked Christopher Sabine to share his perspective on living with blindness, using Braille, and participating as a full member of the Catholic Community. Christopher is an amazing advocate and loves being Catholic; however, there are barriers, and our office is working on building awareness of those needs and a culture of Belonging for all.

*Blindness, Braille, and the Church by Christopher Sabine*

First, I would like to say that Braille is absolutely essential for the majority of Blind people to be successful in the workplace. Unfortunately, only 10% of Blind people are literate in Braille, and many Blind people are essentially functionally illiterate. Seventy percent of Blind people are unemployed, but of those who are employed gainfully, 90% are Braille readers, according to data from the National Federation of the Blind and other sources.

Unfortunately, churches and other religiously affiliated organizations are exempt from laws protecting people with disabilities in the United States, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. To date, St. Xavier Society for the Blind is the only resource for Catholic materials in Braille or other alternative formats for the blind. It is my experience that discrimination and lack of knowledge and resources have created artificial barriers to the participation of members of the Blind community in religious life. What would Jesus think of this?

Despite this, there are members of the Blind community involved in all aspects of the Faith, from lectors and Eucharistic Ministers to several priests who read Braille and use Blindness skills to function, including the white cane and assistive technology. Though we celebrate the life of Louis Braille and the code that enables us to read as Blind people, we need to ensure that all members of society can access the faith to fulfill our mission as Catholics to serve Christ and live a Christian life.



## Our Team

### Andrew Musgrave

*Cincinnati | Director*

### Jill Foster

*Dayton | Regional Director*

### Glen Glenn

*Program Coordinator | CRS, CCHD*

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<https://resources.catholicaoc.org/offices/catholic-social-action>

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