



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



LOVE IN ACTION

A Principle of Beacons of Light

JULY 2025 NEWSLETTER

The Heat of Summer

Welcome to summer, both officially and with the oppressive heat and humidity. We hope you're enjoying the sunshine - and are able to get breaks from it.

Things sure have been busy. Between the ongoing advocacy to protect our migrant sisters and brothers, celebrating the 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, and working to make sure the federal government respects the dignity of all people - especially the poor and vulnerable - there has been a LOT to do.

There were a couple of highlights during June, including our Year of Mission Mass with Archbishop Casey, a mass to honor the life of Sr. Dorothy Stang and *Laudato Si'*, and the Cincinnati Festival of Faiths. All offered wonderful opportunities to celebrate the goodness of God and God's call for compassion and love.

We continue to pray especially for those who are seeking safety and a better life for themselves and their families (i.e. immigrants, refugees, and asylees) and the support of our sisters and brothers around the globe.

There are a couple of occasions for which we'd appreciate your prayers:

- On Tuesday, July 8, the Social Action Commission will meet with Archbishop Casey, both to share our work and to learn how we can support his vision for charity, justice, and peace.
- The third week of July, Jill and Andrew will travel to New York for the annual meeting of NACSAM (National Association of Catholic Social Action and Ministry).

Thanks in advance for your prayers and support!

We humbly ask that you continue to pray for us. 2025 continues 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 July, a fun Independence Day, 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...

Budget Advocacy

Laudato Si Conf.

Voices of Immigrants

Polarization Conference

Love in Action

Year of Mission

Advocacy

Respect Life

Disabilities



Follow the US Bishops on Budget Advocacy

Unless you've been out of the country or abstaining from the news, you're aware that Congress is currently debating the budget reconciliation bill (known as the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act"). As of this writing, it has passed the House, just passed the Senate, and is heading back to the House for reconsideration. As the name indicates, there are hundreds of issues addressed, and many (if not most) of the issues have a direct impact on the lives of our neighbors, especially the poor and vulnerable.

In late May, the USCCB bishops sent [a letter to all members of Congress](#) (all Representatives and Senators) encouraging them to "make the changes necessary in this package so it truly supports the flourishing of families, without harming the poorest and most vulnerable, according to the following principles: Protect Human life and dignity, Care for the poor, Family formation and strengthening, Adequate revenue for the sake of the common good and avoiding future cuts to poverty programs, Progressivity of the tax code, Incentivize charitable giving and development, Support parental choice in education, Inclusion of immigrant and mixed-status families, and Energy and environment. The letter - and several pages of Appendices - touch on many, many changes they would like to see made. If you have the time, please review the entire letter to gain guidance on how you can reach out to your elected officials and encourage them to push for changes that respect the lives of all people. Here are a few highlights:

- Protect Medicaid (the government health insurance program for low-income and disabled people) and SNAP (formerly known as food stamps), rejecting any and all cuts, especially as these cuts are being made to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy.
- Further strengthen the Child Tax Credit, especially for the lowest income children.
- Make the tax code work for those most in need rather than (as it currently does) raising taxes on the working poor while simultaneously providing tax breaks to the highest-income taxpayers.
- Utilize money to strengthen our long-broken immigration system rather than raising to unprecedented levels the mandatory funding that would escalate enforcement far beyond the legitimate goals of promoting public safety and bringing to justice those who commit crimes.
- Remove fees that further endanger people's rights to seek safety from dangerous and unhealthy situations (i.e. support asylum).
- Remove significant barriers to accessing clean energy, especially for rural and urban poor and middle-income families, and empower clean energy companies to operate and create good jobs.
- Strengthen and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for low-income workers without children to ensure they are not taxed further into poverty.

As we previously suggested, please review the letter from the U.S bishops and [call your elected officials](#) (or you can use this [email advocacy tool](#) from the USCCB) to implore them to advocate for changes that honor human dignity and protect those most in need.



SAVE THE DATE!
Laudato Si' Conference
Creating a Hope-filled Future Together



*Registration is not up yet,
but sign up here stay
up to date!*

10.11.2025
9:00AM - 4:30PM
Xavier University, Cincinnati



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

The poster features a background of green leaves and various colorful flowers. The text is arranged in a clear, hierarchical manner, with the date and time prominently displayed in the center.

[Click here to sign up for updates.](#)



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



DEEPENING COMMUNION IN A POLARIZED WORLD

November 4-6, 2025 | St. Meinrad, IN

Designed for Catholic theologians, students of theology, and Church leaders, this convocation brings together recognized leaders from differing perspectives to model healthy discourse, seek common ground, and make recommendations for how to build unity in a deeply divided Church.

[Click here for more information.](#)



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.

Our next offering will be on Saturday, August 23, at St. Luke's in Beaver creek. **[Click here](#)** for more information and to register.

If you would like more information, please contact Mary Anne Bressler at mbressler@ccswoh.org.



Eucharistic Year of Mission

Inspired by the Christ in the Eucharist and following the Eucharistic Congress, we are celebrating a Eucharistic Year of Mission. To showcase the amazing work of Catholics in the Archdiocese, we launched a webpage, www.catholicaoc.org/yearofmission, to promote several events, programs, and stories of mission and action. For this Year of Mission, we are:

- Relaunching the 2015 Food for All Campaign, which includes a year-long food drive and letter-writing opportunity to promote the Farm Bill
- Promoting Parish Ministry Fairs and the Love in Action principle of Beacons of Light
- Year of Mission stories in the *Catholic Telegraph*

Please visit www.catholicaoc.org/yearofmission for more details and information. Contact Jillian Foster at jfoster@catholicaoc.org with any questions.



Advocacy Opportunities



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Tell Congress to Prioritize Families and Protect Safety Net Programs in Budget Reconciliation

“Those services which society offers to its citizens are not a type of alms, but rather a genuine ‘social debt’ with respect to the institution of the family, which is foundational and which contributes to the common good.” – Pope Francis

Congress is working on a budget deal called a reconciliation package. The package will include tax policies and other economic policies that affect everyone, including families. Later today, the House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on a budget resolution that could set the reconciliation process in motion. Deep cuts are being proposed to Medicaid, SNAP, and other important social safety net programs as Members of Congress debate how to pay for the package.

Please urge your Representative to oppose cuts to SNAP and Medicaid, keeping in mind how budget and tax decisions will impact families, especially the most vulnerable families, and to use budget reconciliation to support the needs of children and families experiencing poverty. Essential safety net programs that serve those most in need, including SNAP and Medicaid, must be protected. Changes to these programs that result in the loss of access to life-affirming healthcare and proper nutrition, including for millions of children, are unacceptable. Legislators must avoid creating a situation in which cuts to programs for the poor will be made to seem inevitable and necessary, whether in the short- or longer-term, in order to make tax cuts possible.

We encourage you to add your own personal story about how families are struggling in your community and why ensuring they have the support they need to thrive is important to you.

You could also share why any the following policies that could be included in a reconciliation package are important to you:

- *Strengthening the Child Tax Credit so its benefits are targeted to the poorest children and continuing to provide the credit to all children with a SSN, regardless of their parents' immigration status.*
- *Protecting Medicaid and SNAP for families and individuals in need.*
- *Ensuring taxes raise adequate revenue for programs that meet the needs of the poor.*
- *Expanding the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC), Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), and Adoption Tax Credit and ensuring their benefits better serve low-income families and individuals.*
- *Incentivizing and assisting charitable giving at all income levels through the charitable tax deduction.*

You can read the recent USCCB letter advocating to prioritize vulnerable families in the budget reconciliation process [here](#).

Take Action Now

**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!

Prioritize Lifesaving Aid

Tell Congress to Protect God's Creation

As the Senate engages in the budget reconciliation process, **please urge your Senators to oppose cuts** to climate and environmental justice investments that help families, communities, Catholic dioceses, and businesses to adopt and afford clean energy and energy efficiency and create climate resilient and healthy communities.

Address Unjust Immigration Provisions

Tell Congress to Protect Migrants

Before the Budget Reconciliation bill passed in the House, several bishop chairmen of the USCCB wrote to Congress to commend certain provisions and to urge reconsideration of others that would irreparably harm the poor and disadvantaged, as well as our immigrant brothers and sisters. **Contact your Senators** and tell them to protect people who are seeking only for a better life for themselves and their families.

Support Our Sisters and Brothers World-wide

Tell Congress to Protect International Assistance

Urge Congress to ensure the highest funding levels possible for hunger-reducing international humanitarian and development assistance in the fiscal year 2025 budget.

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.

Protect the Persecuted

Ask your members of Congress to lift up their voice in support of upholding our nation's bipartisan legacy of refugee resettlement.

The U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)—communicates the importance of responding to the needs of those forced to flee their homes because they are persecuted on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

The Reception & Placement (R&P) Program provides crucial assistance to refugees and Afghan special immigrant visa holders during their first three months in the United States to support their successful integration and help them to achieve self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. Tell Congress to immediately resume these programs.

Prioritize Families and Protect Safety Net Programs in Budget Reconciliation

Oppose cuts to Medicaid and SNAP, and use Budget Reconciliation Process to Support the Needs of Children and Families Experiencing Poverty.

Act Now!



From the Respect Life Office

Bob Wurzelbacher, Director of Respect Life Ministries

A Seat at the Table

Reflecting on the past year and a half, I am pleased to share that Mental Wellness Ministry teams serve five parishes, and in September, this ministry will be available in fourteen additional parishes. St. Gregory the Great and Our Lady of Hope Families of

Parishes have provided support groups, special Masses, prayer services, and wellness hikes. Breaking the stigma of mental illness and encouraging open conversations fosters a culture of belonging for everyone.

Pope Leo XIV on the Feast of Corpus Christi shared, "Strengthened by the food that God gives us, let us bring Jesus to the hearts of all, because Jesus involves everyone in his work of salvation by calling each of us to sit at his table. Blessed are those who are called, for they become witnesses of this love!" Mental Wellness Ministry is a mission-based ministry of accompaniment to bring all those with mental illness, caregivers, and survivors of suicide loss back to the table.

Save the date!

You are invited to attend the Mass for Survivors of Suicide Loss on September 14, 2025, at 10:00 with Archbishop Casey at St. Peter in Chains. This Mass is offered to remember loved ones who have died by suicide and promote healing for those who grieve their passing. In honor of a loved one, those attending will be invited to place a candle on the altar to symbolize our commending those lost by suicide to God's love, mercy, and care.



From the Office for Persons with Disabilities

Fr. Charles Onumaegbu, Chaplain for Deaf Ministry

A Silent but Profound Encounter: the Deaf and the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Deaf individuals experience the world differently, not through sound, but through sight, gesture, and sign. This mode of communication does not diminish the spiritual depth of their faith; rather, it offers unique insights into how God's grace transcends language. In the confessional, Deaf penitents seek the same healing and forgiveness as any other member of the Body of Christ; however, the process must accommodate their unique language and needs.

What does Canon Law say about the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The Code of Canon Law, under the Obligation and Rights of all Christian Faithful, fully affirms the rights of the Deaf to receive the sacraments. Canon 213 of the Code of Canon Law states: ***"The Christian faithful have the right to receive assistance from the sacred pastors out of the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the word of God and the sacraments."*** This includes providing access to confessions in a form that the penitent can understand and express.

However, in 2004, the **Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People** issued guidelines specifically addressing the pastoral care of Deaf people. It encouraged dioceses to train clergy in sign language or to provide qualified interpreters to ensure that Deaf Catholics are not spiritually neglected.

For the Deaf and the sacrament of reconciliation, confessions in sign language may take place in several ways:

- With a priest fluent in sign language: this is ideal, as it allows for a direct and private exchange. This is what we are doing in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati: providing time and space at specific parishes for the Deaf to access confessions in their own language (ASL).
- With a qualified interpreter present: the Code of Canon Law no. 990 and 983, section 2 explains that no one is prohibited from confessing through an interpreter as long as abuses and scandals are avoided, and without prejudice to the prescript of Can. 983, Sec. 2, which permits the presence of an interpreter if needed, with the strict requirement that the interpreter uphold the seal of confession with absolute confidentiality. Although the Canon Law permits this method of going to confession, however, from my wealth of experience in “Deaf Culture”, it is very difficult to see the Deaf go to confession in the presence of a licensed interpreter when the priest does not know sign language.
- In written form: as a last resort, confession may be made in writing, with the paper destroyed after absolution to protect privacy. This kind of method is adopted in places where no priest knows ASL. However, it is recommended that the priest be kind enough to write out the penance of the penitent and hand it over to the Deaf before he or she leaves the confessional.

Whatever the mode may be, the focus remains on the penitent’s contrition and the priest’s absolution, which are two elements that are not dependent on vocal speech but on a sincere heart and pastoral care.

Despite these provisions, we still face many challenges in getting the Deaf to go to confession. Many Deaf Catholics still face barriers to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There are relatively few priests who know sign language, and access to interpreters can be limited. Furthermore, the personal nature of confession can make the presence of an interpreter uncomfortable for some Deaf individuals, especially if they are part of the same small community. One good thing is that some dioceses have made remarkable efforts to address these needs by:

- Encouraging seminarians to learn sign language.
- Hosting Deaf-specific retreats with opportunities for confession.
- Collaborating with Deaf ministry offices to train interpreters in the liturgical and theological language necessary for the sacraments.

A Call to Greater Inclusion:

The Deaf community is not peripheral to the Church; it is an integral part of it. Pope Francis repeatedly emphasized the Church’s responsibility to “accompany and include” all the baptized, regardless of ability. Providing accessible reconciliation is not merely an act of accommodation. It is a matter of justice and pastoral love. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a gift meant for all. For the Deaf, receiving this sacrament in a language they understand is essential for their full participation in the life of the Church. As the Church continues to grow in awareness and inclusion, may it ensure that God’s mercy is never hindered by silence but spoken clearly through signs of love, understanding, and grace.



Our Team

Andrew Musgrave

Cincinnati | Director

Jill Foster

Dayton | Regional Director

Glen Glenn

Program Coordinator | CRS, CCHD

Tammie Mers

Administrative Assistant

Sr. Christine Pratt

Eastern Area Coordinator

csa@catholicaoc.org | 513-263-6690
<https://resources.catholicaoc.org/offices/catholic-social-action>

Follow us on social media!

X (TWITTER)

[@AoCincinnatiCsa](https://twitter.com/AoCincinnatiCsa)

YOUTUBE

[@CatholicSocialAction](https://www.youtube.com/@CatholicSocialAction)

INSTAGRAM

[@aocincinnati_csa](https://www.instagram.com/aocincinnati_csa)

FACEBOOK

[csacinci](https://www.facebook.com/csacinci)



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

Catholic Social Action Office | 100 East Eighth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

[Unsubscribe](#)

Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 100 E 8th St, Cincinnati, OH 45202, United States