



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



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

## **JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER**

### **Summer is (almost) here**

We've passed Memorial Day and summer is unofficially here (though the weather hasn't quite been summer-like).

Normally summer is a bit calmer, but right now it seems like there's a whole lot coming down the pike. Hopefully you can make time to enjoy the season AND stay engaged with the work for dignity and justice.

This probably goes without saying, but we're so thrilled to have our new pope. Pope Leo XIV has already shown himself to be a man of compassion and care for the poor, and we look forward to his leadership following the wonderful papacy of Pope Francis.

This Sunday, June 1 - Ascension Sunday, at 10:00am at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains we'll celebrate the Eucharistic Year of Mission. We've been

working hard to make sure there are representatives from every family of parishes, and we hope you can join us! See below for more information.

In two weeks, on Sat. June 14 at 4:00pm, we'll celebrate mass at Our Lady of the Valley to celebrate the life of Sr. Dorothy Stang and the 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si'*.

In three weeks, the 8th annual Festival of Faiths happens. The beautiful gathering happens on Sunday, June 22, 12:30-4:30pm at the Cintas Center (Xavier campus).

The next day, on Monday, June 23, Archbishop Casey will celebrate Mass at St. Bernard, Burkettsville, at 7:00 PM for the families affected by the bird flu. All are welcome to attend.

Amidst all of this, we continued to face myriad challenges. We 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.

For those who weren't able to join us, we had a wonderful celebration on May 1 in the chapel at Archbishop Moeller High School where we welcomed four new *Laudato Si'* Communities: Marianist Environmental Education Center, University of Dayton, St. Bernards in Spring Grove, and Moeller High. Check out our [Facebook page](#) for pictures.

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 start to summer, 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



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# Mass of Celebration

## A Year of Mission and Love in Action

*Let us celebrate the wonderful service and care our parishes give to their communities. All are welcome to attend this Mass of Celebration for the Eucharistic Year of Mission as we recognize all the work that has been done, and all the work yet to come.*

**Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains**  
**Sunday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00am**



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## **Honoring Sr. Dorothy Stang and *Laudato Si'***

Sr. Dorothy Stang, SNDdN, was a tireless advocate for the poor and the earth. She spent much of her life caring for marginalized people and the Amazon forest, and

- 20 years ago - she was rewarded for her work by being assassinated on the way to a community meeting.

*Laudato Si' - On Care for our Common Home* was the first of two powerful documents penned by Pope Francis to encourage Catholics and all people to have a great focus on the needs of the earth and all of God's creation. This year we celebrate the 10th anniversary of it's release.

On Saturday, June 14, at 4:00pm at Our Lady of the Valley (Reading) and St. Rita (Dayton), we will gather to celebrate these anniversaries. We're holding masses in both locations in the hopes that we can gather as many people as possible to pray together for the blessings received and the strength to carry on this work.

Look for more details in our June newsletter, but - for now - add these dates to your calendar. We'd love to see you then!

Join Us for a Mass In Honor of

**THE 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF LAUDATO SI'  
&  
THE LEGACY OF  
DOROTHY STANG, SNDdeN**



**JUNE 14TH, 2025 | AT 4 PM**

**Location:** Our Lady of the Valley Parish  
330 West Vine Street, Cincinnati OH 45215

A similar mass will be offered in Dayton during  
the fall Season of Creation



*Sister Dorothy Stang*  
HER DREAM/OUR HANDS • 2005 - 2025



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## ***Festival of Faiths Returns!***

*In today's increasingly globalized world, as the vast human society finds itself everyday more intimately connected across the geographical, cultural, and religious boundaries, one cannot underestimate the impact of the Church's interreligious undertaking. As Pope Francis said, "It is neither a culture of confrontation nor a culture of conflict which builds harmony within and between peoples, but rather a culture of encounter and a culture of dialogue; this is the only way to peace" (September 1, 2013, Angelus message). In a world filled with conflict and tension, the call to dialogue is essential to heal division and misunderstanding. (USCCB Committee Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs)*

On Sunday, June 22, the Greater Cincinnati community will come together to answer this call, to learn about and celebrate our beautiful tapestry of religious diversity. The 8<sup>th</sup> annual Festival of Faiths, the flagship program of EquaSion (one of the Archdiocese's primary partners in interfaith work), brings together over 30 faith traditions from 13 world religions. Dozens of faith communities, nonprofits, and religiously-affiliated organizations will show up to both display their gifts and talents and to experience the gifts and talents of their sisters and brothers. The event – which will again happen at the Cintas Center on the campus of Xavier University – begins at 12:30pm with an interfaith devotional. Archbishop Casey and other faith leaders will join together in prayer, song, and celebration to open the festivities. Over the next four hours, attendees can visit the exhibitors and vendors, listen to and watch the musical and cultural performances, and participate in breakout sessions. Throughout the afternoon, folks will have the opportunity to meet and learn from neighbors they might not otherwise encounter, all in the hope of opening their hearts and minds and growing in their appreciation of the diversity of God's people.

*The Church holds all that is good in esteem, even understanding those elements of other religious traditions to be reflections of rays of Truth... It is our hope and our goal to foster bonds of friendship, mutual understanding, and constructive collaboration among the world's religions in the genuine service of humanity. (USCCB Committee Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs)*

For more information, check out [www.equasion.org/about-the-festival-2/](http://www.equasion.org/about-the-festival-2/).



# 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*



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[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](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**



# 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. If you would like more information about the series, please contact Mary Anne Bressler at [mbressler@ccswoh.org](mailto: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](http://www.catholicaoc.org/yearofmission), to promote several events, programs, and stories of mission and action. For this Year of Mission, we are:

- Celebrating a Year of Mission Mass, an occasion for a plenary indulgence for the Jubilee Year of Hope, on Ascension Sunday, June 1<sup>st</sup>
- 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](http://www.catholicaoc.org/yearofmission) for more details and information. Contact Jillian Foster at [jfoster@catholicaoc.org](mailto:jfoster@catholicaoc.org) with any questions.



## Advocacy Opportunities



Republican leaders recently introduced legislation in both the House ([House Bill 298](#)) and Senate ([Senate Bill 197](#)) to expand gambling to personal devices (cell phones and tablets) in Ohio that they will likely try to include in the State budget during its last month of deliberation in June.

The Catholic Conference of Ohio testified in opposition of SB 197 ([view testimony here](#)) in today's Senate Select Committee on Gaming. We also setup an [Action Alert](#) to enable people to easily send a pre-written message urging your Ohio Representative and Senator to oppose expanding the legalization of gambling on personal devices.

24/7 access to addictive online gambling would disproportionately harm the poor and lonely. Plus, 4 in 5 struggling with gambling addiction consider suicide. Urge your Ohio Senator and Representative to oppose the expansion of gambling access in Ohio.



# 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 International Assistance**

Millions of vulnerable people worldwide, including women and children, have been impacted by the disruption of international humanitarian and development assistance by the administration. [Demand](#) that your elected officials oppose further reductions of previously appropriated funds for lifesaving humanitarian aid and maintain current funding levels for poverty-reducing international assistance in fiscal year 2026 appropriations.

## **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.

## **Protect Dreamers and Mixed Status Families**

**Dreamers have made critical contributions to our communities and our nation. For most, the United States is the only home they know.**

Urge Congress to support legislation that will provide Dreamers, especially DACA recipients and those who are part of mixed-status families, with access to permanent legal status and a pathway to citizenship.

## **Protect at-risk Pregnant Moms and babies Abroad**

**The lives of he lives of thousands of pregnant women and their children face a new risk from starvation and lack of basic health services.**

Ask Congress to ensure that the promised, lifesaving nutrition and basic health assistance are able to reach vulnerable young mothers and babies.

# 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

*Emily Branscum, Associate Director of Respect Life Ministries*

### The Power of Prayer in the Pro-Life Movement

June is the month in which we celebrate the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a devotion that invites us into the deepest source of Christ's mercy and love. The image of the Sacred Heart, burning with divine love and still pierced for our sins, reminds us that prayer lies at the core of our pro-life ministry. Prayer is not an accessory to our work; it is the source of our strength, the conduit through which God pours out His graces on our efforts and in the hearts of those we seek to save.

It is tempting in our pro-life efforts to focus primarily on action. We have meetings to attend, trainings to host, money to fundraise, and arguments to learn. These are all important, but if our efforts are not first anchored in prayer, everything else we do will be disconnected from the source of mercy, love, and strength. Prayer allows us to conform our hearts to Jesus' most Sacred Heart. When we conform ourselves to Christ, we become aware of what He desires in the hearts of those we minister to.

One of the key pillars of Catholic Social Doctrine is solidarity. Solidarity is the virtue by which we are present to and for one another. One way to grow in solidarity with those we minister to is through prayer. By meditating on the experiences of others, we become better advocates for them.

One example of this radical intercessory solidarity can be found in the [Rachel Rosary](#). This powerful rosary meditation includes a sentence for each Hail Mary bead that reflects the very real and heartbreaking situations many women and men face when confronted with the fear of an unplanned pregnancy and the wounds of abortion. By meditating on the 'teenage girl too afraid to tell her parents she is pregnant' or the 'young woman who cannot enter a church because she feels so unclean,' we better understand the hearts of those who need us most. Praying through the lives of these individuals in such a specific way unlocks even more graces that can be poured onto the most intimate wounds.

This month, I invite you to renew your commitment to prayer for the pro-life movement. Let us pray for those who are suffering silently, for those discerning what to do amid unexpected pregnancies, for our volunteers, counselors, priests, and most especially for those who oppose us. We pray that their hearts may be touched by the most sacred, loving, and divine Heart of Jesus.

**O Sacred Heart of Jesus,**

fountain of eternal life,  
Your Heart is a glowing furnace of Love.  
You are my refuge and my sanctuary.  
O my adorable and loving Savior,  
consume my heart with the burning fire  
with which Yours is aflame.  
Pour down on my soul those graces  
which flow from Your love.  
Let my heart be united with Yours.  
Let my will be conformed to Yours in all things.  
May Your Will be the rule of all my desires and actions.  
Amen.



## From the Office for Persons with Disabilities

*Fr. Charles Onumaegbu, Chaplain for Deaf Ministry*

### A Celebration of Spirit and Scholarship at St. Rita's

In the blossoming heart of May, St. Rita's School for the Deaf emerged as a beacon of hope and inspiration. The month unfolded like a delicate sign language poem, revealing the profound connections between faith, education, and community. Each moment celebrated the unique communication of the Deaf students, their hands weaving stories of resilience, their spirits dancing with understanding. Last month filled me with memories of a smile. At St. Rita's School for the Deaf, where community, learning, and growth are part of everyday life, the activities carried out in May portrayed the reason why the school is not only the best Catholic Deaf School in the country, but also a citadel with a special mission. From the reverent May Crowning of Mary to the joyous First Holy Communion, the graduation ceremony, and the feast day of St. Rita, the school demonstrated that true communication transcends spoken words.

Reflecting on the spiritual and Marian devotion that took place on the first Friday of May, I was so touched by the active participation of students and staff during the mass. The beautiful school chapel of St. Rita was filled not only with signs and smiles, but with reverent silence during the May Crowning of Mary. Students offered flowers, prayers, and reflections in a language deeper than words, honoring the Mother of God through visual hymns and peaceful presence. Also, on the 3rd Sunday of May, after well-guided and coordinated preparation, Lilly Gonzalez and Lian Valdivia, two Deaf students, received their First Holy Communion. What a joyful moment for those kids, their families, and relatives.

Filled with enthusiasm, the students celebrated their growth in both mind and heart in their respective classrooms through literature, science, arts, capstone projects, and poetry recitations in sign language.

On the 22nd of May (feast day of St. Rita of Cascia), was a great day and time for sharing, inner stillness, and the exhibition of the spirit of "camaraderie" (mutual trust and friendship), where students and staff embraced their faith, reflected on gratitude, and deepened their sense of purpose anchored in the legacy of St. Rita, Patron of impossible causes.

As the month neared its end, a bittersweet joy filled the air. A Holy Mass was celebrated to kick-start the graduation ceremonies of 4 seniors. Their graduation symbolized not just an academic milestone but a testament to the school's mission of

empowering Deaf students. Each signed performance, each prayer, each moment of reflection spoke volumes about the school's commitment to holistic education and spiritual development. However, the graduating students were reminded that they have been pruned and so should remain in the Lord, just as the Gospel of the day pointed out. Ms. Kim, a teacher for the Deaf students, led a stunning signing performance that captured the essence of communication beyond sound. The students' journey represented more than academic achievement. It was a celebration of identity, language, and spiritual growth. Parents watched in awe as their children demonstrated the depth of their education, the strength of their spirits, and the beauty of their unique language.

May at St. Rita's was not just a month on the calendar, it was a living testament to the power of education, the beauty of silence filled with meaning, and the grace of a faith that speaks without sound but is heard in every heart.



## Our Team

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