



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



## **LOVE IN ACTION**

*A Principle of Beacons of Light*

## **MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER**

### **Lent is here**

It seems like February flew by, and now here we are, ending the winter season and preparing for this year's Lenten journey. Hopefully everyone is ready to make this annual spiritual pilgrimage, and I'm sure everyone is ready for warmer temperatures.

One thing that isn't changing is the tumultuous times in which we find ourselves. Along with our commitment to advocacy and action, we must first (and always) ground ourselves in our prayer and worship. We have all surely been praying for the lives of those who are marginalized, impoverished, forgotten, and abused, and we must double down on these efforts. Perhaps Lent is coming at exactly the time we need it.

With Lent comes the CRS Rice Bowl campaign. Given the changes in foreign aid, CRS and their beautiful work of global solidarity needs all the help you can offer. See below for more information.

There continues to be much concern regarding 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).

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.

Speaking of state level action, the annual Catholics at the Capitol event is coming up on Tuesday, March 25. Everyone is welcome to join us - with Catholics from across the state - to advocate to our legislators for policy and legislation that supports and protects life. See below for more information.

In case you missed it, the deadline for local Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) grant applications is Friday, March 14. These grants are for nonprofit organizations which are addressing the root causes of poverty. Click [here](#) for more information, or contact [Glen](#) with any questions.

On a similar note, applications are now available for our CRS Rice Bowl local grants. You can find information about this opportunity and the related CRS programs [here](#).

We humbly ask that you continue to pray for us. 2025 continues to 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 Lenten journey, 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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# Catholics at the Capitol

## March 25, 2025

Register at:  
[www.ohiocathconf.org](http://www.ohiocathconf.org)

### **Catholics at the Capitol** *Activate Your Faithful Citizenship*

"...we are called to direct society to the pursuit of the common good and, with this purpose in mind, to persevere in consolidating its political and social order, its fabric of relations, its human goals." (*Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, no. 66*)

In the introduction to the USCCB's document, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship (FCFC)*, Pope Francis is quoted to emphasize our role as Catholics in moving our society towards a greater respect for the life and dignity of all people. There are many ways we can do this, and one of them is work directly with our elected officials to point legislation towards greater respect, care, and compassion.

First off, we must "form (our) consciences and grow in the virtue of prudence to approach the many and varied issues of the day with the mind of Christ." (*FCFC*) We do this through studying scripture and the teachings of the Church, gathering facts and information, and prayerful reflection. Through this discernment, we seek always to do good and avoid evil.

We then look at the issues of the day (of which there are many), and we make practical, faith-guided decisions. Some issues are clear and involve intrinsic evils, others are less obvious and require deeper work. Across all issues, we must recognize that the erosion

of respect for the life of anyone (or any of God's creation) necessarily diminishes the respect for all life.

Once we have seen and judged, it is then time to act. We are called to carry the love and grace of the Eucharist out into the world, seeking always to bring Christ to and see Christ in others. And it is in this acting with and through love that we engage in the work that moves our society towards solidarity and care for all, especially those who are marginalized and impoverished.

On Tuesday, March 25, Catholics from across the state will gather in Columbus to advocate to our elected officials about policy and legislation which can move our state towards greater respect, civility, and love. Organized by the Catholic Conference of Ohio (CCO), each diocese will bring individuals - young and old, lay and ordained, representing the fullness of our Church - to unite their voices and share a message with each and every one of our elected officials.

Visit [www.ohiocathconf.org](http://www.ohiocathconf.org) to learn more and register by March 21st.



This Lent is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Catholic Relief Services' Rice Bowl. Journey with members of our human family around the world and commit our Lenten prayers, fasting, and almsgiving to deepening our faith and serving those in need. There is something to deepen everyone's Lenten journey with CRS Rice Bowl. Explore [www.crsricebowl.org](http://www.crsricebowl.org) for highlighted stories from Guatemala, Nigeria, and Bangladesh. Find lessons and prayers for all ages, videos, reflections, Stations of the Cross, and meatless Lenten recipes to share as a community or a family. Communicate easily using CRS' premade materials such as these bulletin entries for each week.

Visit [www.crsricebowl.org](http://www.crsricebowl.org) or contact Jillian Foster [jfoster@catholicaoc.org](mailto:jfoster@catholicaoc.org) for more information.



## **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**





## Faith in Action: Inspired by Sr. Dot Stang and Catholic Sisters

# Sr. Dorothy Stang SNDdeN

**Thursday March 13, 2025**

**2 pm ET or 7 pm ET  
on ZOOM**

**Please join us for a webinar  
and conversation**

- Pray
- Learn
- Reflect
- Share
- Encourage



**Register here for 2:00 pm session:**

<https://tinyurl.com/2Stang25>

**Register here for 7:00 pm session:**

<https://tinyurl.com/7Stang25>



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CATHOLIC  
SISTERS WEEK

March 8-14, 2025

Celebrating Traditions, Changing the World





# Polarization Impact

Thursday, April 4, 7:00-8:30pm, St. Charles, Carthage

Democrats, Republicans and Independents seemingly **live in separate and divided worlds** and the pandemic has deepened this divide. But political disagreements are important for a healthy democracy.

The problem is that the **political divisions are limiting our ability to function effectively as a country.** People tend to trust and associate only with people on their side which has intensified the division between the two parties.

A Pew Research Study in October 2019 found a majority of respondents wanted less divisiveness and more cooperation. Both Trump (86%) and Biden (89%) supporters said that their preferred candidate, if elected, should focus on addressing the needs of all Americans, *“even if it meant disappointing some of his supporters.”*

## Seminar Content:

- Polarization has increased over the last 40+ years
- Key Sources Contributing to it
- What We Can Do

For more information, contact Jillian Foster at [jfoster@catholicaoc.org](mailto:jfoster@catholicaoc.org)

Learn more about Braver Angels at <https://braverangels.org/>



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## LENTEN CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE RETREAT

The Southeast Region, St. Mary Deanery, and the Catholic Social Action Office are offering a day long retreat **“Mass-Misa-Mission: The Eucharist as the Source of all Mission”** on **Saturday April 5th** from **9:30am-4:00pm**, (Sunday liturgy included). The retreat will be held at **The Chatfield Edge** (formerly Ursulines of Brown County and Chatfield College) 20918 St. Rte.251, St Martin, OH 45118. Fr. Steve Pawelk of Glenmary Home Missioners, accompanied by five novices in community formation, will lead the retreat. (The Glenmary community had its beginning in the Southeast region and served parishes there for several decades.) The deadline to register is **Friday, March 28th**. To register and pay the **\$10.00** fee go to <https://resources.catholicaoc.org/event/crl-2025-retreat-day>. For more information call Sr. Christine Pratt (513-407-3006) or email [cpratt6@tds.net](mailto:cpratt6@tds.net).





## 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:

- 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*

- 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>

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



# 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**

*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.

For more information, see the Respect Life article below.

We'll be in touch soon with opportunities to advocate.

## **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 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**

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

### **A New Bill Against Abortion, the Death Penalty, & Assisted Suicide**

A new bill was introduced in the Ohio legislature last month, backed by the Ohio Catholic Conference, prohibiting state dollars from funding abortion, the death penalty or assisted suicide in the state. In addition, it abolishes the death penalty, replacing it with a life sentence without parole. This unique piece of legislation was introduced by a bi-partisan group of members of both the House and Senate in Ohio—including Senate minority leader Nickie Antonio—giving it a solid chance of moving through the process to become law.

One of the interesting facets of this legislation is its non-severability clause. This means that, if one piece of the legislation is challenged in court and found to be unconstitutional, the entire law would go away, not just the part of it that is challenged. This will discourage groups from attacking one piece of the bill, if they want another part to stay. So, by linking the prohibition of spending state dollars on abortion to a ban on the death penalty, it further protects and strengthens pro-life policies from future legal challenges.

Will Kuehnle, associate director for Social Concerns at the Catholic Conference of Ohio, said this about the bill:

*Of every piece of legislation I've ever seen, whether the Catholic Conference has ever supported or been part of, this is, in some ways, the most patently Catholic. Whereas legislation will sometimes see one life issue or another – or one moral issue or another – as separated, the reason why I'm a Catholic is because I believe they're all united in the person of Jesus Christ, and I think this bill sees that.*

Representative Adam Mathews, a practicing Catholic and co-sponsor of the House version of the bill, made these remarks in the press conference:

*It is about affirming that the state should not be subsidizing death...It should not be subsidizing ending human life no matter the form, no matter the circumstance. This legislation embodies a unity of purpose and resolves to protect that dignity for all human life from beginning to end.*

The **House version of the bill, HB 72**, has been introduced and referred to the House Judiciary Committee. A companion bill will soon be introduced in the Senate.

You can stay up-to-date with this legislation on the Ohio Catholic Conference website at [www.ohiocathconf.org](http://www.ohiocathconf.org).



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

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

### **World Down Syndrome Day**

Let's celebrate and work to create a culture of BELONGING for our friends with Down syndrome! March 21<sup>st</sup> is World Down Syndrome Day, the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of the year and the

21<sup>st</sup> day of the month. It was selected to signify the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome, which causes Down syndrome.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately one in every 775 babies in the United States is born with Down syndrome, making it the most common chromosomal condition. Approximately 5,000 babies with Down syndrome are born in the United States each year.

Research provides statistics regarding the termination of children with Down Syndrome which is heartbreaking. According to *Life Institute*, in Britain, 90% of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted, in Denmark, an average of 98% of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted each year and in Iceland, almost 100% of babies with Down syndrome are aborted, because prenatal screening is very high. According to official statistics reported in the Icelandic Parliament in the period from 2008-2012, all babies diagnosed with Down syndrome in Iceland were aborted. Living in a culture of death, society fails to understand the value of the person who is created in the image of God. Having a daughter with Down Syndrome has provided a glimpse of heaven for our community. Gianna's unconditional love, joy, and peace radiate daily with each person she encounters. I feel blessed to be chosen to be her mother, and I will continue to advocate for Gianna and all friends with Down Syndrome. Click [here](#) to learn more about World Down Syndrome Day.



## Our Team

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