



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



LOVE IN ACTION

A Principle of Beacons of Light

MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER

LENT CONTINUES

We've finally reached the unofficial start of spring. There's sure to be some additional stretches of cold yet to come, but vegetable seeds are back on the shelves, temps are generally climbing, and I've even seen a few flowers (weeds?) in the yards in our neighborhood. And of course we are fully into the Lenten season.

Speaking of Lent, in case you haven't seen them, the Catholic Telegraph is posting daily scripture reflections throughout Lent, written by employees and friends of the Archdiocese. You can find them [here](#).

Sadly, our hearts continue to mourn. 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. Please keep them in your prayers and keep looking for ways you can stand in solidarity. (See below for one such opportunity.)

Back to Lent, don't forget about the wonderful resources from CRS and their annual [Rice Bowl campaign](#). It's never too late to put our your rice bowl.

Earlier this month, we hosted the second presentation of our series on economic justice and the rights of workers - Faith & Labor. It was another wonderful talk , and

you can [watch the recording here](#). See below for information on our third presentation on April 2.

As always, our office is part of two ecumenical **Good Friday events** - one in Dayton, and one in Cincinnati. See below for details.

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 peaceful 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 3:
History of Labor
and Catholic Involvement

WHEN:

Thursday, April 2
6:30 PM EST

WHERE:

A Virtual Presentation:

<https://zoom.us/j/94789043039>



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. (March 23, April 27, and so forth)

- The Jesuit Family of parishes will be praying outside the **Blue Ash ICE Office the second Tuesday of every month at 12:00pm**. Again, all are welcome. (March 10, April 14, and so forth)

- There will also be prayer (hosted by the St. Stephen family) at the **Butler County Jail every Thursday during Lent at 10:00am**.

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.



The Saintly Seven



Back row: Venerable Pierre Toussaint, Venerable Henriette DeLille, Father Augustus Tolton, Servant of God Mother Mary Elizabeth Lange

Front Row: Friar Martin De Porres Maria Ward, Servant of God Julia Greeley, Servant of God Sister Thea Bowman

Celebrating the Seven African American Candidates for Sainthood

Were you aware that there are seven African American candidates for canonization? The lives of these holy men and women span the nearly the entire existence of the United States as an independent nation—from Pierre Toussaint, born in 1766, through Thea Bowman, who died in 1990. It will be a truly thrilling day when we celebrate the canonization of the first African American saint!

To grow awareness of the lives of the Sainly Seven over the coming months, the Archdiocesan Anti-Racism Task Force is organizing seven sessions throughout the Archdiocese to talk about their lives, their causes for canonization, and the experience of Black Catholics in this nation. The sessions will be in-person and live-streamed so that everyone can join in the conversation and reflection. In conjunction with the presentations, each candidate will be featured in the Catholic Telegraph as well. The series will conclude in November, Black Catholic History Month—reminding us that a single month is not sufficient to honor the contributions that Black Catholics have made to our Church and our nation since before its founding.

For information on the series, please check out this [webpage](#). It will be updated regularly as information becomes available.

- The first presentation will be on Venerable Pierre Toussaint on Thursday, April 23 at [St. Susanna Parish in Mason](#) at 7:00pm.
- The second presentation will be on Venerable Mother Mary Lange on Saturday, May 30, at Province House of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur.
- The third presentation will be on Venerable Fr. August Tolton on Monday, June 29.

All are welcome to join, and you can one or as many as you're able.



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



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: to 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 or community to find a time to come together on Zoom or at a meeting and discuss their fasts - what was hard, what was easy, how we connected our fast to suffering or to needs 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 celebrating 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 is 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 filled with grace.

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.



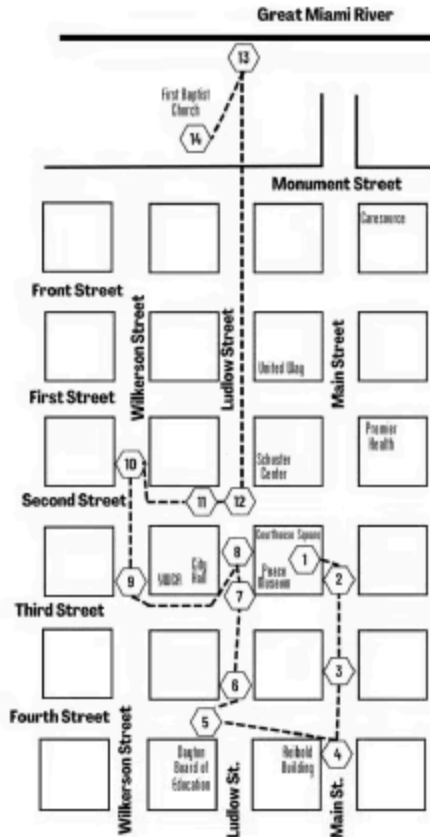
Good Friday in Dayton

A Walk for Justice and Peace Good Friday

April 3, 2026

starting at Noon at Courthouse Square

Join us for a free soup lunch at
First Baptist Church on
Monument Street after the walk,
courtesy of its members.



*Do not weep for me...
Weep rather for
yourselves.*

- Luke 23:28

Good Friday in Cincinnati



Thank You to our Partners:

Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Social Action Office
Christ Church Cathedral
Clifton United Methodist Church
Congregation of Divine Providence
God Space Community
Great Miami River District of the United Methodist Church
Ignite Peace
Jesuit Parish Family (Bellarmine Chapel and St. Xavier Parish)

Join us

**WAY OF THE CROSS FOR JUSTICE:
A PRAYERFUL REFLECTION**

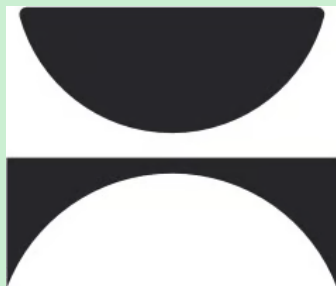
Good Friday, April 3, 2025, 12:00-2:00 PM
American Queen Paddle Wheel
100 Joe Nuxhall Way, Cincinnati, OH 45202

Join us in this Good Friday prayer service connecting the suffering of Jesus with the suffering brought about by injustice in our day.

We will walk along the riverfront from the American Queen Paddle Wheel through Smale Riverfront Park to the Castellini Esplanade.

Parking options include pay lots at the Public Landing (just east of the American Queen Paddle Wheel) or Central Riverfront Garage (124 Ohio River Scenic Byway)

More Info: give.ignitepeace.org/WOTC26
Questions? shannon@ignitepeace.org or 513.864.5784



BREAD
FOR THE WORLD

Offering of Letters

One in ten people around the world go to bed hungry each night.

One in four children under five are severely malnourished. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Every voice matters. With your help, we can reach the people with the power and resources to make hunger a problem of the past.

For many years, our office has partnered with Bread for the World to advocate for those who suffer from hunger and food insecurity. We again encourage families of parishes to join in this power, unifying effort to appeal to our elected officials to take care of those - both locally and around the world - who are hungry.

You can find information about the ministry [here](#). If you and your community decide to engage, we strongly encourage you to register your group with Bread so they know how many folks are sending letters.

Thanks in advance for partnering on this important effort.



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!

Stop Unjust Treatment of Immigrants

The U.S. bishops urge Congress to demonstrate its support for religious liberty on a bipartisan basis by (1) ensuring respect for what are commonly referred to as sensitive locations, especially houses of worship, and (2) mandating consistent access to religious and pastoral services for all immigration detainees.

Complete [this action alert](#) to join with the bishops in calling for immigration enforcement that respects human dignity and religious freedom for all.

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

Assisted Suicide is Not Compassion - it is Cultural Surrender

In an age that prizes autonomy above almost every other value, assisted suicide is often presented as a compassionate response to suffering. Advocates frame it as mercy for the terminally ill and freedom for those facing pain or dependency. Yet beneath the reassuring language of “aid in dying” lies a profound moral and social danger — one recognized not only by Catholic teaching but increasingly by secular research as well.

The Catholic Church’s opposition to assisted suicide is sometimes dismissed as purely religious. In reality, it rests on a deeply human insight: dignity does not disappear when independence fades. Human worth is not measured by productivity, comfort, or control over circumstances. Every person remains worthy of care precisely when they are weakest.

Catholic theology understands suffering not as something to be romanticized, but as a reality that calls forth solidarity. Christ did not eliminate suffering by escaping it; He entered into it, transforming it through love and accompaniment. A society shaped by that vision seeks better hospice care, pain management, and community support — not a prescription that ends a patient’s life.

This moral reasoning also protects the vulnerable. Once death becomes a medical solution, subtle pressures inevitably arise. Elderly patients may fear becoming financial or emotional burdens. Persons with disabilities may internalize the message that dependence diminishes dignity. What begins as a “choice” can quietly become an expectation.

Even apart from religious belief, serious empirical concerns exist.

Research published in the ***Southern Medical Journal*** examining U.S. state data found that legalizing physician-assisted suicide was associated with increases in total suicide rates compared with states that did not legalize it — and importantly, there was no corresponding decrease in non-assisted suicides. In other words, assisted suicide did not replace other suicides; overall deaths increased.

Other analyses have warned of a broader “suicide contagion” effect. When society publicly validates some suicides as rational or dignified responses to suffering, longstanding suicide-prevention messaging becomes conflicted. One **peer-reviewed review** noted evidence linking rising suicide rates with the legalization and positive media portrayal of assisted suicide, particularly following Oregon’s pioneering law.

Oregon itself has long struggled with suicide rates significantly higher than the national average in the years after legalization — a troubling reality given that assisted deaths are not counted among ordinary suicides in many comparisons.

Dr. Joseph Meaney of the National Catholic Bioethics Center recently highlighted this contradiction in his February 2026 essay, **“The General Rise in Suicides and Legalized Assisted Suicide.”** At a time when communities invest enormous resources into preventing despair-driven deaths, he argues, public policy cannot coherently promote suicide as therapy for some people while urgently trying to prevent it for others.

Ultimately, assisted suicide reflects a deeper cultural anxiety about suffering itself. Modern medicine has become extraordinarily skilled at extending life, yet society often struggles to accompany those who live with fragility, illness, or decline.

The Catholic vision proposes something far more demanding — and far more humane — than autonomy alone. It calls families, physicians, and communities to refuse abandonment, to invest in palliative care, and to affirm until natural death that no life is disposable.

A culture is judged not by how efficiently it ends suffering, but by how faithfully it refuses to abandon those who suffer. Authentic compassion does not eliminate the sufferer. It surrounds them with love.



From the Office for Persons with Disabilities

Lisa Averion, Associate Director, Persons with Disabilities

March is Developmental Disabilities Month

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, a time when the Catholic Church reaffirms the inherent dignity and gifts of persons with developmental disabilities. Rooted in the belief that every person is created in the image and likeness of God, the Church proclaims that disability does not diminish one's value or one's place in the Body of Christ. Parishes are especially encouraged to create a culture of belonging, where individuals and families feel welcomed, supported, and fully included in worship, faith formation, and community life.

In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the Office for Persons with Disabilities works to foster meaningful participation for people with disabilities and their families. The office provides consultation, resources, and advocacy to help parishes become more accessible and inclusive, particularly in sacramental preparation and catechesis.

Nationally, the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) equips dioceses and parishes with pastoral guidance and practical tools to ensure that ministry with persons with disabilities is integrated into every aspect of Church life.

As St. Joseph of Cupertino, patron saint of those with intellectual disabilities, reminds us: "If we have only love, that will suffice." During March and beyond, Catholics are called to make that love visible through welcome, inclusion, and belonging.



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