



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



LOVE IN ACTION

A Principle of Beacons of Light

August 2026 NEWSLETTER

Summer continues

Greetings all. We hope this newsletter finds you well and continuing to enjoy your summer.

This past month has certainly had it's challenges, between record rains, wildfires, soaring temps, continued assaults on migrants, resurgent wars, and the arrival of the election season. We join you in praying for all those who are facing these and other challenges.

Perhaps most notably, the nightmare situation continues for our Haitian sisters and brothers. Just last week, many of them were given orders to appear at the Blue Ash Homeland Security (ICE) office on either Sunday 8/2 or Sunday 8/9. (This is 70 miles from Springfield where many of them live, and they have lost their work permits and therefore their source of income.) Over 550 people showed up this past Sunday (8/2) to support these folks and stand in opposition to their treatment.

If you'd like to add your support, you can:

- Show up this Sunday (8/9) for another morning of solidarity (7:00am, corner of Kenwood and Malsbary in Blue Ash; do **NOT** park in the ICE parking lot - park on side streets or nearby businesses that are open to the public)
- Support the [Haitian Community Fund](#)

- Drop off donations at St. Vincent de Paul (see flyer below)
- Donate to [Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio](#) for their legal fund

This month we host the fifth event in our series on the [Saintly Seven](#) - the seven African American candidates for sainthood. We're thrilled to celebrate the life and legacy of Julia Greeley. Just like the first four sessions, this event will be in person and livestreamed. The fifth session is **Sunday, August 23, 12:30pm at [Lehman High School](#)**. See below for more information.

The Southeast Farm Mass is happening this month on Friday, 8/21, out in Greenfield. See below for the details. All are welcome!!

As you know, it's another big election year. To support our parishes, schools, and Catholic communities, we've updated the [iVoteCatholic website](#). We hosted two relaunch webinars, and you can [see the recording here](#). More information is below!

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 continued joyful summer, 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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The Saintry 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 Saintry 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. You can register for the event(s) on that page (encouraged but not required).

- The fifth presentation will be on Servant of God Julia Greeley on Sunday, August 23, at [Lehman High School in Sidney](#), at 12:45pm (with lunch beforehand). (Please do register for this one (if you plan to attend) so we can have the right amount of food.)

- The sixth presentation will be on the Venerable Sr. Henriette Delille on Sunday, September 20, at [St. Benedict the Moor Parish in Dayton](#), at 1:30pm (mass is at 10:30am, lunch is at 12:00pm).
- The seventh presentation will be on Servant of God Fr. Martin de Porres Maria Ward on Tuesday, October 27, at [Church of the Resurrection](#), at 6:30pm.

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

THE SAINTLY SEVEN

Black Candidates for Sainthood



Servant of God Julia Greeley

Sunday, August 23, 12:30–2:00pm
Lunch at 12:00pm
Lehman High School, Door 10
2400 St Marys Ave., Sidney, OH 45365



RSVP Here



or join the Zoom!



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI
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Contact Andrew Musgrave for more information
amusgrave@catholicaoc.org | (513) 263-6691

<https://zoom.us/j/91370876545>



iVoteCatholic

We again find ourselves in an election year where the country is deeply divided and unable to find common ground, and neither party (nor any candidate) fully represents our Catholic commitment to life and dignity.

Thankfully, we don't have to rely on a party platform to tell us how to vote; in fact, we aren't called to vote Democrat or Republican. We are called to vote with our morals, our faith; we are called to vote **Catholic**, and the archdiocese has a resource to help you do that: iVoteCatholic.org. On this website, you'll find information about key issues – the life

and dignity of the human person, care for creation, love for people who are poor and vulnerable, etc. – as well as resources to use in liturgies, meetings, classrooms, and homes.

Check out [iVoteCatholic](#) and help yourself and your community face the coming election with faith, compassion, and a commitment to loving your neighbors.

If you missed the re-launch webinars, you can find the recording and the slides [here](#).



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. (**August 24, September 28, and so forth**)

- The Ohio Sisters Justice Network will be praying outside the **Blue Ash ICE Office the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30pm**. Again, all are welcome.

- There will also be prayer (hosted by the St. Stephen family) at the **Butler County Jail every Tuesday 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



Catholic Conference of Ohio 250th Celebration Message

The Catholic bishops in Ohio released a statement as Haitians in Ohio awaited a Supreme Court ruling on their Temporary Protected Status. They wrote, "We reflect upon the promises of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and to worship God free from government intervention. We take seriously the truth that our rights come from God and recognize the great blessings that God has bestowed on our country. Therefore, as proud and faithful citizens of the United States, we need to take responsibility to support the common good of our country and to love our neighbors as ourselves." The bishops lamented the situation of Haitians in Ohio and across the U.S. who despite working hard to support their families, worshiping God regularly, and seeking to live in peace, "may be forced to abandon familial stability, jobs, and community due to policy decisions. We find no moral justification for terminating their Temporary Protected Status (TPS) without an alternative way to adjust their immigration status."

Click [HERE](#) to read the full message.

Donations Needed to Support Immigrants

The Immigrant Dignity Coalition is seeking donations to support immigrants who are in need of basic resources (e.g. food, diapers, etc.) If you're willing and able to contribute, please [click here](#) to learn how to donate.





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.



Rice Bowl Grant Recipients

We're thrilled to announce this year's recipients of our Rice Bowl grants:

- Caring Kitchen (Urbana)
- Catholic Social Services of Miami Valley (Dayton)
- Franciscan Ministries Community Garden (Cincinnati)
- Hope Emergency Program (Lynchburg)
- Nexus Community Garden & Urban Farm (Cincinnati)
- Rustic Hope (Russia)

Please click [HERE](#) to learn more about these wonderful organizations.



SAVE THE DATE

CRS Rice Bowl Celebration

Honoring 2026 CRS Rice Bowl Grant Recipients and
Archdiocese of Cincinnati CRS Rice Bowl Promoters

DATE

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026

TIME

2:00 PM–3:30 PM

LOCATION

St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church
5720 Hamilton Mason Rd, Liberty Township, OH
45011

[Click here to RSVP](#)



OUR LADY OF THE HILLS
www.ourladyofthehillsoh.com

FARM MASS

**Friday, August 21, 2026
7:00pm**

Let the earth bless the Lord,
praise and exalt him above all forever.
Mountains and hills, bless the Lord;
praise and exalt him above all forever.
Everything growing on earth, bless the Lord;
praise and exalt him above all forever.

Daniel 37:74-76

**All are invited to join us for an outdoor Mass supporting
farmers, gardeners and rural life!**

**The Mass is being sponsored by the Our Lady of the Hills Family of Parishes and Cory
Taylor, in partnership with Southeast Catholic Rural Life.**

Please bring a chair and a snack to share.



**Hosted at the home of;
Dick and Marilyn Easter
11837 Hull Road
Greenfield, Ohio 45123**

Come Share Catholic Faith in the Country!

You are invited to join us for an outdoor Mass supporting farmers, gardeners and rural life, at the home of Dick and Marilyn Easter, 11837 Hull Road, Greenfield, Ohio, on Friday, August 21, 2026 at 7:00 pm. The Mass is being sponsored by Our Lady of the Hills Family of Parishes and Cory Taylor. Please bring a chair and a snack to share. For more information, contact Patrick Hornschemeier, Chairperson of Southeast Catholic Rural Life, 513-752-0647.



PRAY FOR A CULTURE OF LIFE IN OHIO

Join the Catholic Conference of Ohio for a monthly Zoom event to pray the Divine Office, delve into Church teaching on important issues such as abortion, assisted suicide, and capital punishment, and learn how you can get involved to uphold the dignity of life in Ohio!

Every 1st Friday
11:00 - 11:45 am

beginning August 7, 2026

SIGN UP TODAY:

[Click here to receive the meeting call link](#)

Questions? Email mforson@ohiocathconf.org

"I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then."

- Deuteronomy 30:19



[Click here to receive the meeting call link](#)



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.

In response to Gov. DeWine's recent statement calling for the abolition of the death penalty in OH, the Catholic Conference of Ohio said, "We join Governor DeWine in urging Ohio legislators to pass House Bill 72 and Senate Bill 134 to prohibit the State of Ohio from funding the intentional termination of human life—including abortion, assisted suicide, and State-sanctioned execution—and to abolish the death penalty in favor of life without parole."

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 Us from Coal Ash Pollution

"The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recently proposed amendments to the Coal Combustion Residuals Regulations is a direct threat to our waterways and the health and well-being of our neighbors across the country, particularly the most vulnerable.

The Catholic Climate Covenant is collecting electronic signatures on this joint comment through June 10, 2026. They will submit this comment and all signatures to the Federal Register for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on June 11, 2026."

[Add Your Name Here](#)

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!](#)

Support Anti-Trafficking Legislation

The Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2025 (H.R. 1144) was reintroduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. It would:

- Reauthorize and strengthen existing anti-trafficking programs across numerous federal agencies;
- Establish a new Human Trafficking Survivors Employment and Education Program to help prevent the re-exploitation of trafficking survivors; and
- Require counter-trafficking strategies, activities, and efforts to be further incorporated into U.S. international assistance.

[Tell the House to reauthorize immediately!](#)



From the Respect Life Office

Bob Wurzelbacher, Director of Respect Life Ministries

Accompanying Those Who Suffer

Earlier this year, Ohio lawmakers introduced legislation that would legalize physician-assisted suicide, allowing certain adults with a terminal illness to obtain medication to intentionally end their lives. Supporters often refer to the proposal as “medical aid in dying,” emphasizing compassion and the desire to relieve suffering.

At first glance, the proposal can seem compelling. Many of us have watched a loved one endure the pain and uncertainty of a terminal illness. We naturally want to spare people unnecessary suffering. If someone is dying from an incurable disease, isn't helping them end their suffering an act of mercy?

This is a deeply human question, and it deserves a thoughtful, compassionate answer. The Catholic Church's opposition to assisted suicide is not rooted in a lack of compassion, but in a conviction that authentic compassion never intentionally ends a human life. Instead, it calls us to accompany those who are suffering, ensuring they are never abandoned or made to feel that their lives have lost their value.

Of course, one should not use religious reasoning to argue against legislation. The first argument against this would always be that “one should not be compelled to act against their own personal beliefs.” Last March, I wrote **an article against assisted suicide**, focusing on the increase in other suicides that always accompanies its legalization. Another practical concern surrounding assisted suicide is that these laws cannot protect those who are most vulnerable. Many people living with disabilities have voiced opposition to assisted suicide because they understand how easily society can send the message that dependence diminishes dignity. Others facing terminal illness may not truly want to die; rather, they simply fear becoming a burden to their spouses, children, or caregivers. Recent systematic reviews (**here** and **here**) of patients requesting assisted death have found that these decisions are not primarily based on physical pain, if at all. Researchers more commonly identify a complex combination of factors—including fear of losing independence, concerns about becoming a burden to loved ones, loss of dignity, and social isolation—that often contribute to a person's desire to hasten death. These findings remind us that the answer to suffering is not just better pain management, but primarily compassionate relationships, practical support, and the reassurance that every person's life retains its dignity and worth. Legalizing assisted suicide also risks changing how society responds to suffering. When ending life becomes an accepted “treatment option,” there is less incentive to invest in high-quality hospice care, palliative medicine, caregiver support, and mental health services. Rather than asking, “How can we better care for this person?” we begin asking, “Why isn't this person choosing to die?” That subtle shift has profound consequences for the elderly, people with disabilities, and anyone who feels isolated or unwanted. The Ohio Catholic Conference has consistently opposed physician-assisted suicide while advocating for policies that uphold the dignity of every human life. This year, the Conference expressed support for House Bill 72 and Senate Bill 134, legislation that would prohibit state funding for assisted suicide, abortion, and capital punishment. While these issues are different in many respects, each reflects the same underlying principle: every human life possesses an inherent dignity that should be protected from conception until natural death.

At the same time, Catholics should acknowledge an uncomfortable truth: we can do better. Too many families caring for loved ones with terminal illnesses feel overwhelmed. Too many caregivers experience exhaustion and isolation. Too many people living with serious illness struggle to access quality palliative care, mental health services, and practical support. If we truly want fewer people to see death as their best option, our response cannot simply be to oppose assisted suicide. We must ensure that no one feels abandoned, burdensome, or without hope. That means expanding access to excellent palliative care and hospice, supporting family caregivers, addressing loneliness and depression, and building communities where every person knows they are loved and their life remains a gift.

Our response to suffering should never be to eliminate the person who suffers. Instead, we are called to be present—to sit beside hospital beds, to support caregivers, to improve hospice and palliative care, and to remind every person that their life remains precious, even in its most fragile moments. True compassion does not hasten death. It walks with those who suffer, affirming through both our words and our



From the Office for Persons with Disabilities

Fr. Charles Onumaegbu, Chaplain for Deaf Ministry

A Pilgrimage of Grace: Visiting the Tomb of St. Rita of Cascia

As the Chaplain for the Deaf Ministry of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and serving at St. Rita School for the Deaf, I have long been inspired by the life and witness of St. Rita of Cascia, our school's patroness. While I was in Italy recently, I was blessed with the opportunity to visit the Tomb of St. Rita in Cascia and the ancient Augustinian monastery where she lived, prayed, and eventually entered eternal life. It was a deeply moving spiritual experience that strengthened both my faith and my appreciation for her enduring legacy.

Walking through the streets of Cascia, nestled among the beautiful hills of Umbria, I was reminded that holiness often grows in quiet and ordinary places. The monastery where St. Rita spent over forty years as an Augustinian nun remains a place of remarkable peace. Within its walls, one can almost sense the countless hours she devoted to prayer, sacrifice, and loving service.

Standing before the tomb of St. Rita was a profound moment of prayer. I carried with me the intentions of the students, families, staff, and the entire Deaf community whom I have the privilege of serving. In that sacred place, I prayed especially for those facing illness, family struggles, loneliness, and the many challenges that can accompany communication barriers. I also offered prayers for greater understanding, inclusion, and respect for the gifts of Deaf individuals within the Church and society.

St. Rita's life was marked by suffering, yet she never allowed hardship to diminish her trust in God. As a wife, mother, widow, and later an Augustinian religious sister, she experienced violence, personal loss, rejection, and sorrow. Through every trial, she responded not with bitterness but with forgiveness, perseverance, and unwavering faith. For this reason, she has become known throughout the world as the "Saint of the Impossible" and the patroness of impossible causes.

One of the most touching places within the monastery is St. Rita's simple cell. There, in its simplicity, one is reminded that extraordinary holiness does not require extraordinary circumstances. Rather, it is cultivated through daily fidelity to God, humble service, and constant prayer. Seeing the places where she prayed, worked, and rested brought the stories of her life vividly to life.

As I reflected on my ministry with the Deaf community, I found St. Rita's witness especially meaningful. She understood what it meant to be misunderstood, to endure suffering silently, and to remain faithful despite obstacles. Her example encourages all of us to become instruments of reconciliation, compassion, and hope. In many ways, her life mirrors the mission of our ministry: to ensure that every person is welcomed, valued, and able to encounter Christ fully within the life of the Church.

My visit also renewed my gratitude for St. Rita School for the Deaf. For generations, the school has carried forward the spirit of its patroness by providing not only excellent education but also a loving community where Deaf children are encouraged to develop their God-given talents, deepen their faith, and flourish in every aspect of life. I was grateful to pray for our students, alumni, teachers, staff, benefactors, and families before the relics of our beloved patron.

Pilgrimages remind us that while we journey to holy places, our ultimate destination is always closer union with Christ. Leaving Cascia, I carried home not only memories of a

beautiful sanctuary but also a renewed commitment to serve with greater compassion, patience, and joy. St. Rita's life continues to teach us that God's grace is present even amid life's greatest challenges and that no prayer offered with sincere faith is ever unheard.

May St. Rita of Cascia continue to intercede for our Deaf community, for St. Rita School for the Deaf, for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, and for all who seek hope in difficult times. May her example inspire us to trust God more deeply, forgive more generously, and love more faithfully each day.

St. Rita of Cascia, *pray for us.*



Our Team

Andrew Musgrave

Cincinnati | Director

Jill Foster

Dayton | Regional Director

Glen Glenn

Program Coordinator | CRS, CCHD

Cooper Jones

Administrative Assistant

Sr. Christine Pratt

Eastern Area Coordinator

csa@catholicaoc.org | 513-263-6690

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

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

Sent to: respectlife@catholicaoc.org

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