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RESPECT LIFE NEWSLETTER



Working together to spread the Gospel of Life across the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

A New Chaplain for Deaf Ministry

We are incredibly excited to welcome Fr. Charles Munachiso Onumaegbu to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Fr. Charles knows American Sign Language (ASL), and will serve as Chaplain for Deaf Ministry across the Archdiocese.



Fr. Charles was born in 1983 in Nigeria as the youngest of 11 children. His nickname is Shosho, which is simply the way he mispronounced his middle name (Munachiso) as a young child. His parents both served as elementary school teachers. Life was difficult for his family. They were poor, and his walk to school and Church every day took 30 minutes. He entered a seminary high school primarily because it was a better education, since he already had an older brother in major seminary at the time. Upon graduating from High School, his older brother was already a Deacon, so he chose to study Environmental Engineering at Federal University of Technology Owerri in Nigeria.

While studying for his degree, he was captivated by a weekly television show teaching sign language. After graduating, he went to visit his brother, now a priest, who connected him with some Italian nuns (Srs. Maurav and Claudia) of the Daughters of Providence for the Deaf. They told him he looked like a seminarian, but he objected that a family cannot have more than one priest. They told him of a family they knew with 3 priests and 3 nuns, and because of his

interest in deaf ministry, encouraged him to consider applying to the Congregation of the Little Mission for the Deaf in Rome. He did so, and was accepted enthusiastically.

He was sent to study philosophy for 4 years in the Philippines, where he learned ASL and Tagalog. He then was sent to Rome for further theological studies, where he learned both Italian and Italian Sign Language (LIS), before being ordained a priest in 2016.

Fr. Charles was soon elected Bursar General of his congregation. He served at St. Francis of Assisi and St. Catherine parishes in Rome with a special apostolate to the deaf, celebrating Mass, Reconciliation, and offering spiritual direction and seminars. He also traveled to the Congo to supervise the construction of a formation house and deaf school there.

In 2021, a letter from the Vatican informed him that his congregation was too small and would be fused with the Rogationists. Their charism did not serve the deaf, so he ventured to find another home better suited to his calling. Looking for a good place to utilize his knowledge of ASL and English, he discovered St. Rita's School for the Deaf and our ministry for the deaf right here in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. He sent a letter to Archbishop Schnurr, who welcomed him to come visit, and shortly thereafter was incardinated as a priest in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. He is looking forward to serving our deaf communities, offering them hope, supporting them in their faith, and providing the sacraments to them, especially Reconciliation. All blessings to God for sending us this wonderful priest!



Welcome

Thank you for your openness to God's call to foster respect for human life at all its stages, from conception to natural death. We live in a time when so many in our culture promote values contrary to human life itself. These include life issues such as abortion and euthanasia, and issues of human dignity such as advocacy for those with disabilities or victims of violent crime. It is a monumental task, but one worth pursuing. What is needed is people of love and humility, devoted to God, immersed in the Sacraments of Jesus Christ, and open to the direction of the Holy Spirit in helping others bring a greater respect for all human life to the lives of all.

May God bless you in this work. Know that I am truly grateful to work with you in this. Together, let us build a culture of life here in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati!

Bp. Wurzelbacher

2023 Respect Life Award Winners



On Sunday, January 14, the 2023 Respect Life Award was presented to Mark and Jeannette Niezgodski (St. Luke Parish) and Laura Bride Strietmann (Executive Director of Cincinnati Right to Life).

Mark and Jeannette have consistently promoted the Gospel of Life in their parish and community through support of the annual Life Chain, 40 Days for Life Prayer Vigils, Pro-Life Rosary Rallies, Project Rachel and their local Greene County Right to Life.

Laura has demonstrated a lifetime commitment to upholding the dignity of human life, including her professional work serving women at a local pregnancy care center and promoting Theology of the Body for Ruah Woods, before taking on her current role at Cincinnati Right to Life, where she went above and beyond, making sure we did everything we possibly could with the gifts we have, to defeat Issue 1.

Please take a moment to congratulate them the next time you see them, and may we all be inspired by their witness to continue to advocate for the dignity and respect for all people.

February

Sidewalk Training

3

With abortion enshrined in our Constitution, we can still reach women entering the dangerous abortion facilities in our state. Please register for this all day training and learn how to really make a difference for life. Register [HERE](#).

National Marriage Week

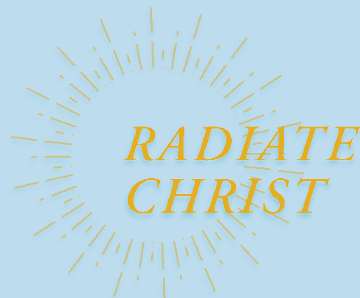
7-14

National Marriage Week is this month. Please make sure you pass along the many resources available to couples to help them celebrate and live the great gift of married life! Check the [USCCB WEBSITE HERE](#) for more info, including easy ways to share.

Coordinator's Corner

This section is dedicated to providing seasonal resources for Parish Respect Life Coordinators. If there is a resource that you believe would be useful to include, please contact us at respectlife@catholicaoc.org.

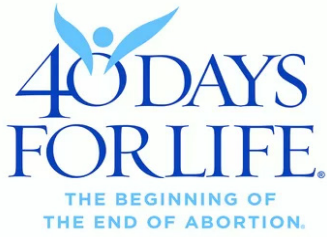
- 01- Word of Life
- 02- Healing Within Marriage
- 03- Ending Capital Punishment
- 04- Respect Life Coordinator Gatherings



Respect Life Coordinator Resources

- 01 The month's **WORD OF LIFE** includes intercessions for life to be used each week, and a page of resources to help you **CELEBRATE NATIONAL MARRIAGE WEEK** from February 7-14 and World Marriage Sunday on February 11. As always, there is also a **SPANISH VERSION** available.
- 02 In the spirit of National Marriage Week, take a look at this great resource for **HEALING WITHIN MARRIAGE FROM AN ABORTION**. Couples can learn how to support one another through the healing process and how to discuss an abortion experience with their spouse. Bulletin inserts and articles are available for download to use sometime this month, as well as brochures to order.
- 03 Make your voice heard and urge your state legislators to support efforts to abolish the death penalty in Ohio through **SENATE BILL 101** and **HOUSE BILL 259**. Use the above links for action alerts to easily send a message to your legislators
- 04 **Mark your calendars** for Parish Respect Life Coordinators regional gatherings in March of 2024. We will have four offerings from 7-8:30 PM: Wed., March 6 (IHM-Cincinnati), Thurs., March 7 (St. Francis of Assisi-Kettering), Wed., March 13 (St. Anns, Groesbeck) or Wed., March 20 (Holy Angels, Sydney). Registration will open next month, but for now mark your calendar for the location and date most convenient for you!

40 Days for Life



For 40 years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. For 40 days Jesus prayed in the desert. Though it may feel like we are wandering like the Israelites, abandoned in a state that embraces the culture of death, we know that with Christ all things are possible. We invite each of you to boldly proclaim that abortion is wrong and to stand as joyful witnesses to life by joining in our own 40 days of fasting

and prayer outside abortion clinics. The next 40 Days for Life prayer vigil starts Wednesday, February 14, with kick-off events at our **CINCINNATI** and **DAYTON** locations on Sunday February 11, and at our **HAMILTON** location on February 18, all at 2PM. Our goal is not only to shut down these clinics, but to change hearts and minds. As St. Teresa of Avila said, "Christ has no hands but yours". If we do not speak up for the unborn no one will. If we do not support women facing unplanned pregnancy, they will feel they have no choice but to succumb to the narrative that abortion is necessary. Please join us in this vigil, taking place at over 1,000 other centers across the nation. Invite others and sign up today at www.40daysforlife.com. Lend your witness to this cause, that we may save lives, convert hearts, and bring forth a civilization of love.

Mental Wellness Ministry Pilot

The Mental Wellness Ministry Pilot Teams at Our Lady of Hope (St. Francis DeSales and St. Philip the Apostle) & St. Gregory the Great (Guardian Angels, IHM and St. John Fisher) Families of Parishes are meeting monthly and completing the required trainings for this exciting new outreach ministry. Mental Wellness Ministry will be officially kicking off during Lent with Team commissioning and events for all members of the parish family communities.



Each month the Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers (CMHM) partners with the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network and Click to Pray to offer a Monthly Day of Prayer for Mental Health. Each 2nd Monday of the month, the CMHM offers prayers and a blog post connected to the Pope's monthly prayer intention. **ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC MENTAL HEALTH MINISTERS | POPE'S WORLDWIDE PRAYER NETWORK (CATHOLICMHHM.ORG)** Register today to receive these important updates and join our office in praying for this very important ministry.

February

Day of Reflection

10

Are you or is someone you know suffering from the effects of an abortion experience? Consider attending or inviting someone to our next Project Rachel Day of Reflection to experience God's unconditional love and mercy. See the [WEBSITE](#) for more info.

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40 Days Kick-Off

Join us at 2PM in Cincinnati or Dayton as we gather in prayer and song to kick off our Spring 40 Days for Life campaigns. For more information on our local efforts, check out the calendar for **CINCINNATI** or **DAYTON**. There is also one in **HAMILTON** on Feb. 18.

Standing With Moms and Families

By: Andrew Musgrave



Last year, our state mobilized like never before to protect the sanctity of life and support families, women, and children. It was an amazing and beautiful effort, and our work is of course far from done. We must continue to Stand With Moms in Need.

We now have before us two additional opportunities to carry on this work of protecting life, this time at the federal level. There are now two distinct bills before Congress - both endorsed by the USCCB - that move us toward this goal.

The first is an effort to Fund WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) for all families in need. WIC provides financial support for healthy food and nutrition. If Congress doesn't act, there is the very real possibility that - for the first time in decades - people could be waitlisted to receive support, and we all know that you can't wait to get food to support yourself and your children. You can [CLICK HERE](#) to contact your legislators.

The second is an effort to strengthen the Child Tax Credit (CTC). The CTC is one of the most powerful tools we have to lift people out of poverty, but unfortunately in its current form it leaves some of the most impoverished families out. Improving the CTC will add support during the time of pregnancy, encourage the building of family, and not cut access to other poverty-reducing programs. You can [CLICK HERE](#) to contact your legislators.

We encourage you to reach out TODAY and plead with your elected officials to support these two pieces of legislation (and share this with friends!). Families, women, and children are struggling and deserve to have their dignity honored and their lives protected.

Being Pro-Life

Rebecca Kiessling

This month Bob talks with Rebecca Kiessling, a family law attorney, adoptee and mother of five children. She shares her compelling story of being conceived in rape and coming to the understanding that her identity and value are not



based upon the actions of a rapist, but by virtue of being a daughter of the true Creator. If you missed her when she came to speak at the Cincinnati Right to Life banquet last October, this podcast should be a must-listen for you. Be more equipped to talk to your friends and colleagues about the fallacy of rape exceptions in abortion law. She may even have you rethinking your own position. This podcast is typically posted on the first Tuesday of each month, so her video and interview should be posted by Tuesday, February 6 at [BEING PRO LIFE](#).

9 Months With Christ in the Womb



March 25th marks the feast of the Annunciation or Incarnation, for it is on this day that we celebrate the moment Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Jesus' incarnation provides a uniquely beautiful opportunity for us to ponder the great gift of our earthly lives and the way that God so meticulously orders and develops the human person from the moment of conception. This campaign offers short reflections for your parish bulletin each week from Sunday March 24 until Christmas Day, that prayerfully chart where Our Lord Jesus Christ was in his fetal development. Additionally, we include 9 monthly reflections on a different biblical story during the earliest moments of Christ's time on earth. Each reflection discusses the importance of a different social issue such as immigration, the death penalty, and concern for the disabled. Additionally, prayer cards are available for you to order and hand out to your parishioners. Everything you need can be downloaded or ordered from our website [HERE](#). Please contact our office at RESPECTLIFE@CATHOLICAOC.ORG with questions.

Sensory Friendly Mass/Space

By: Lisa Averion



Sensory Friendly Mass or a Sensory Friendly Space brings everyone to the table. As a mother of five children, I receive strength through the Eucharist. Jesus invited everyone to receive Him, and some families have children and adults who struggle with the "typical" environment of Mass. Does your parish community openly accept and provide a Mass or space for families who need to have alternative seating, softer music, lower lighting, shorter homilies, and no incense? If the answer is no, then some families in your parish community do not attend Mass. They are forced to stay home with their child that cannot stay still, fidget, or are sensitive to loud music and bright lights. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus said, "let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs" How can you advocate for the children and adult in your parish family? Jesus wants everyone at the table and we are expected to provide a culture of belonging for all. If you want to learn how to offer a Sensory Friendly Mass or create a Sensory Friendly Space at your parish, contact [LISA AVERION](#).

February For HER

24

All are welcome to this inspiring event for the pro-life community in Cincinnati. The day begins at St. Susanna (Mason) with 8AM Mass followed by a snack before three speakers, lunch and time to visit booths from local pro-life organizations. Click [HERE](#) for more info.

March Special Needs Retreat

23

The Office for Persons with Disabilities is teaming up again with NET Ministries for two regional retreats for adults with special needs. Our Northern area retreat is March 23, followed by a Cincinnati area retreat in April. [CONTACT LISA AVERION](#) for more info.



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

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Project Rachel March Retreat



WEEKEND RETREAT

MARCH 8 to MARCH 10

Our weekend retreats are designed for mothers affected by an abortion experience and have served over 500 women. These retreats are a way to grow in your healing journey with other women who have shared a similar experience. The weekend offers a loving and confidential environment where participants can experience the love and mercy of God in a personal way.



For more information or to register, visit PROJECTRACHELOHIO.ORG or call us at: (513) 784-0531. To invite someone to come and speak at your school or parish, please contact [EMILY BRANSCUM](#).