



March 2011

# Office for Social Concerns

## *Catholic Diocese of Columbus*

# Upcoming Events

## One Day to End Homelessness

Thank you to all parishes who participated in the One Day to End Homelessness campaign. Bishop Campbell invited Catholics of the Central Ohio Community to donate the equivalent of one day's rent or mortgage payment to assist in providing shelter to individuals and families in Central Ohio. Money raised supports the programs of the Community Shelter Board, the nationally recognized agency that funds housing and homelessness services in Franklin County. Donations may be made through the Community Shelter Board's website which has been set up to receive funds at [www.onedaytoendhomelessness.org](http://www.onedaytoendhomelessness.org).

## March is Developmental Disabilities Month

The National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) facilitates the implementation of the Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with Disabilities by calling for inclusion of people with disabilities in the life of the church and the community. To view NCPD's website, go to [www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org). To obtain a copy of NCPD's "Opening Doors of Welcome and Justice to Parishioners with Disabilities: A Parish Resource Guide," contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540.

## Lent - Operation Rice Bowl

As part of our faith community's Lenten observance, many parishes participate in Catholic Relief Services' Lenten program, Operation Rice Bowl. For over three decades, Operation Rice Bowl has inspired Catholics in the United States to pray, fast, learn, and give to increase their understanding of our global community throughout our Lenten journey. Family Operation Rice Bowl calendars and "bowl banks" are sent directly to the parishes. Additional materials

may be obtained from the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540. You may also visit the Operation Rice Bowl website at <http://orb.crs.org>. All are encouraged to participate in Operation Rice Bowl at home with their families and loved ones.

## March 9 - Ash Wednesday Food Drive

Parishes are encouraged to consider holding a parish food drive to support their local food pantries. The diocesan Office for Social Concerns has resource materials to assist parishes in conducting a local food drive. Questions can be directed to (614) 241-2540 or [socmailbox@colsdio.org](mailto:socmailbox@colsdio.org).

## March 9 - April 17 - 40 Days for Life

From March 9 - April 17, the Greater Columbus community will be uniting with hundreds of cities from all 50 states in the 40 Days for Life campaign. Faithful believers are praying that this effort will mark the beginning of the end of abortion in America. This peaceful prayer vigil will take place at an abortion facility in Columbus between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Participants are asked to volunteer for one-hour shifts and sign a statement of peace. For more information, visit [www.40daysforlife.com/columbus](http://www.40daysforlife.com/columbus).

## March 26 - Legislative Advocacy Workshop

The diocesan Office for Social Concerns and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Voice of the Poor will hold a Legislative Advocacy Workshop on Saturday, March 26, 2011, from 10 a.m. to Noon, at St. Mary Magdalene Church, 473 S. Roys Ave., Columbus. Meet and dialogue with Catholic advocates from around the diocese; hear about issues regarding the state budget in the areas of health, human services, education, and programs that protect impoverished and vulnerable people; learn how to effectively lobby

public officials; and schedule legislative lobby appointments. Your voice is needed. Registration is free and open to all. Please RSVP at (614) 241-2540 or [socmailbox@colsdio.org](mailto:socmailbox@colsdio.org).

### **April is Autism Awareness Month**

For decades April has been observed as Autism Awareness Month. The National Catholic Partnership on Disability has prepared resources for parishes to build awareness about autism spectrum disorder (ASD), including prayers of the faithful and bulletin articles. To view these and other resources, please visit [www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org) or contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-1540.

### **April 2 & 3 - Catholic Relief Services Collection**

Catholic Relief Services, the official international relief and development agency of the U.S. Catholic community, continues to respond to the needs of the people in Haiti and around the world. To learn more about their global solidarity efforts, please visit the CRS website at [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org) or contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540.

### **April 2 - Respect Life Conference**

The diocesan Respect Life Conference will be held on Saturday, April 2, 2011, at St Andrew Catholic Church, 1899 McCoy Road, Columbus. Featured speaker will be Dr. Michael Waldstein, English translator of Pope John Paul II's theology of the body addresses and professor of theology at Ave Maria University. Teresa Flores, a former sex trafficking survivor, will present on the issue of human trafficking. Ashley Fernandes, M.D., Ph.D., a pediatrician, bioethicist, and assistant professor at Wright State University, will speak about conscience rights related to health care. Mass begins at 9 a.m. Conference begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m. Registration fee is \$15 which includes lunch. To register, contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540 or email [socmailbox@colsdio.org](mailto:socmailbox@colsdio.org).

### **April 22 - Good Friday - Downtown Walking Stations of the Cross**

The many facets of faith and justice will be the focus of the annual Walking Stations of the Cross. The event is cosponsored by the diocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry and the Office for Social Concerns. The walk will begin with an opening prayer at St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 East Broad Street, Columbus, at 8 a.m., Friday, April 22, 2011. Participants will stop at locations throughout downtown Columbus to recognize Jesus Christ's suffering and crucifixion as well as reflect on a current area of social concern. The walk is open to all. For more information, contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540 or the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at (614) 241-2565.

### **May is Mental Health Awareness Month**

The National Catholic Partnership on Disability's mental illness council has produced educational and pastoral resources for parishes regarding mental illness. For more information, visit the NCPD website at [www.ncpd.org](http://www.ncpd.org) or contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540.

### **May 13 -- J.O.I.N. BiblioBenefit VII**

J.O.I.N. BiblioBenefit VI is Friday, May 13, 2011 at St. Andrew Church, Nugent Hall, 1899 McCoy Road, Columbus. The Joint Organization for Inner-City Needs' annual BiblioBenefit fundraising event helps support their mission to provide emergency aid to the poor with food, clothing, prescriptions, transportation, utilities, and referral information. At the event participants will have an opportunity to browse a display from the Cathedral Book Shop. For more information, contact J.O.I.N. at (614) 241-2530.

### **May 15 - Feast Day of St. Isidore the Farmer**

Sunday, May 15, is the feast day of St. Isidore the Farmer. This is a day to recognize the call to stand in solidarity with farm families, agricultural laborers, and migrant farmworkers. We all eat. We all benefit from the fruits of their labor. Please pray for our farming community. For more information on Catholic rural life activities and resources, visit the National Catholic Rural Life Conference's website at

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[www.ncrlc.com](http://www.ncrlc.com) or contact the diocesan Office for

Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540.

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## Action Alerts

For current legislative Action Alerts, visit [www.socialconcerns.colsdioc.org](http://www.socialconcerns.colsdioc.org).

### State Budget

On March 15, the Governor of Ohio will release his proposed two-year state budget. The Ohio General Assembly will then work to pass a budget bill by the end of June. Ohio faces a projected \$8 to 10 billion budget deficit in the midst of a situation where there are many needs throughout our communities due to the ongoing economic crisis. Many important decisions will be made in the next few months. Your advocacy is needed. The Catholic Conference of Ohio will issue legislative action alerts related to the budget in the days to come. To access these action alerts, visit [www.ohiocathconf.org](http://www.ohiocathconf.org).

### Life Issues

There are many state and federal bills under consideration regarding life issues: abortion, end of life, and the death penalty. Please visit the Catholic Conference of Ohio's issue page on their website at [www.ohiocathconf.org](http://www.ohiocathconf.org) for the latest action alerts. You may also visit the website of NCHLA (National Committee for a Human Life Amendment) at [www.nchla.org](http://www.nchla.org) for action alerts.

### Domestic & International Issues

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development has statements and action alerts about domestic and international issues. To access their website, visit [www.usccb.org/sdwp](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp).

### Information and Response Network

If you would like to receive legislative action alerts and upcoming events from the diocesan Office for Social Concerns via email, subscribe to the Information and Response Network. Send an email to [socmailbox@colsdioc.org](mailto:socmailbox@colsdioc.org).

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## Catholic Bishops of Ohio call upon Governor Kasich & legislative leaders to end the death penalty

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio agree with recent comments made by both Ohio Supreme Court Justice Paul Pfeifer and former Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections Director Terry Collins that Ohio's elected legislative leaders ought to debate and ultimately abolish the death penalty.

Murder rightly evokes moral outrage and a call for justice. It also calls for spiritual healing and caring support for all those impacted by such a tragedy. Just punishment-- punishment that reflects the seriousness of the offense, seeks restoration for the offense, and protects society -- is a foundational moral principle within our justice system.

Just punishment can occur without resorting to the death penalty. Our Church teachings consider the death penalty to be wrong in almost all cases. Every human being is a child of God, no matter what

sins the person commits. Every human life has infinite dignity because it is designed by God to be immortal.

Today, given the means available to the State for dealing with crime, cases where it is absolutely necessary to use the death penalty are practically nonexistent. In other states and countries, life imprisonment has shown itself to be an effective alternative. Life imprisonment respects the moral view that all life, even that of the worst offender, has value and dignity.

We concur with Judge Pfeifer that today is an “opportune time in Ohio to seriously debate and discuss whether or not we have the death penalty”. We urge Governor Kasich, Attorney General DeWine, and our elected legislative leaders to pursue such debate. Fair and effective punishment is possible without the death penalty.

**Catholic Conference of Ohio | 614-224-7147 | [www.ohiocathconf.org](http://www.ohiocathconf.org)**

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## **Catholic Bishops of Ohio Call for Continued Good Faith in Negotiations Regarding Collective Bargaining**

The Ohio General Assembly is currently debating legislation that seeks major changes in collective bargaining laws. The Catholic bishops of Ohio encourage leaders in government, labor, and business to pursue changes that promote the common good without the elimination of collective bargaining. We urge continued good faith in ongoing negotiations. Civility, open communication, mutual cooperation, and peaceful witness should characterize legislative actions and public discourse.

In our faith tradition, defending the human dignity of every person, born and unborn, includes promoting economic justice. This justice places the good of the person at the center of all economic activities. It stresses that the economy exists for the person, not the person for the economy. It challenges society to measure the moral effectiveness of our economic practices by how well they strengthen families and provide for the poor and vulnerable.

This social doctrine has long recognized that all people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions, to organize and join unions or other associations, and to engage in collective bargaining.

At the same time, this doctrine promotes mutual partnerships where both the needs of labor and the needs of management are freely and openly acknowledged and addressed. It challenges both unions and management to work for the common good, to make sacrifices when required, and to adjust to new economic realities.

May God’s wisdom and prudence guide all of us on this important justice issue.

**Catholic Conference of Ohio | 614-224-7147 | [www.ohiocathconf.org](http://www.ohiocathconf.org)**