

# OFFICE OF PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES

## Suggested Intercessions for the Month of October

### October 5th TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

For all who have reached the autumn of their lives: that these final years will be received as God's good gift, and that even suffering and pain might be received as a share in the cross of Christ, Our Lord; *We pray to the Lord:*

### October 12th TWENTY EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

For our legislators: that a growing love for the unborn might move them to protect and defend every American, from conception to natural death; *We pray to the Lord:*

### October 19th TWENTY- NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

For teenagers: that they might learn from us a respect for the life of every human being and a love for the littlest and most vulnerable among us; *We pray to the Lord:*

### October 26 THIRTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

For those who are about to die, and for their families: that they might cherish the beauty of the gift of life, and trust in the goodness of the God who made them; *We pray to the Lord:*

## Suggested Bulletin Messages for the Month of October

Today too, it is necessary to “give renewed hope to the poor,” so that in welcoming and serving them, it is Christ himself who welcomes and serves (cf. Mt 25:40). Many challenges in this regard confront European believers. Today there are many categories of persons who are poor: among them, the unemployed, the sick, isolated or abandoned elderly persons, the homeless, marginalized youth, immigrants and refugees. A service of love also means to re-propose faithfully the truth about matrimony and the family, to educate young people, engaged couples and families themselves to live and spread the “Gospel of Life,” fighting against the “culture of death.” – *Pope John Paul II*

Every human being shares the same origin, nature and destiny, but our features and physiques, skills, interests, tastes and habits are astonishingly diverse. – *Life is a Miracle, Respect Life program 2003*

Despite what our culture tries to tell us, growing old is an important part of life. And those who have the opportunity to grow old are not cursed, but are blessed with abundance of life! –*Cardinal Bevilacqua, Keynote Address for Celebrate Your Age, Philadelphia, October 3, 2001*

We need to be radical witnesses for life, including very guilty life, so that we can turn the tide toward a culture of life. –*Rachel Muha, on why she rejects the death penalty even after her son was murdered, We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us, Respect Life Program 2003*

From the moment of conception, the awesome complexity of a new human life unfolds.  
– *Life is a Miracle, Respect Life Program 2003*

Life is a Miracle! – 2003 Respect Life Program

OFFICE OF VOCATIONS  
(12) SEMINARIAN ROSTER 2003-2004

**ALBRIGHT, MATTHEW J. (I THEOLOGY)**  
**ST. VINCENT SEMINARY**  
300 Fraser Purchase Road  
Latrobe, PA 15650  
Phone 724-532-7969  
E-mail [seminarium@catholic.org](mailto:seminarium@catholic.org)  
**HOME ADDRESS**  
55 West Carol Street  
Alliance, OH 44601  
Phone 330-821-7706

**BEVAK, JON-PAUL (I COLLEGE)**  
**PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM**  
7625 North High Street  
Columbus, OH 43235  
Phone 614-985-2450  
E-mail [jpbbevak@pcj.edu](mailto:jpbbevak@pcj.edu)  
**HOME ADDRESS**  
123 – 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
Campbell, OH 44405  
Phone 330-755-2613

**BOOTH, JOSIAH (I COLLEGE)**  
**PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM**  
7625 North High Street  
Columbus, OH 43235  
Phone 614-985-2409  
E-mail [cbooth@pcj.edu](mailto:cbooth@pcj.edu)  
**HOME ADDRESS**  
5810 Bosford Street, SW  
Navarre, OH 44662  
Phone 330-484-1312

**CICERO, CHRISTOPHER J. (III COLLEGE)**  
**PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM**  
7625 North High Street  
Columbus, OH 43235  
Phone 614-985-2467  
E-mail [ccicero@pcj.edu](mailto:ccicero@pcj.edu)  
**HOME ADDRESS**  
890 Fairway Drive, NE  
Warren, OH 44483

**CLINE, BRIAN (IV COLLEGE)**  
**PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM**  
7625 North High Street  
Columbus, OH 43235  
Phone 614-985-2476  
E-mail [bcline@pcj.edu](mailto:bcline@pcj.edu)  
**HOME ADDRESS**  
5580 Tracy Drive  
Boardman, OH 44512

**CONOBY, SHAWN (II THEOLOGY)**  
**PONTIFICAL NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE**  
00120 Vatican City State  
Europe  
Phone 011-39-06-6849-3382  
E-mail [sconoboy@pnac.org](mailto:sconoboy@pnac.org)  
**HOME ADDRESS**  
342 E. Jefferson Street  
Jefferson, OH 44047  
Phone 440-576-1300

**LOFTUS, JOSEPH (III THEOLOGY)**  
**SACRED HEART SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**  
P.O. Box 61  
Hales Corners, WI 53130  
Phone 414-425-8300  
E-mail [joj1788@aol.com](mailto:joj1788@aol.com)

**LUONI, CHRISTOPHER (III THEOLOGY)**  
**MOUNT ST. MARY SEMINARY**  
6616 Beechmont Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45230  
E-mail [cluoni@yahoo.com](mailto:cluoni@yahoo.com)  
**HOME ADDRESS**  
3846 Willwood Street, NW  
Massillon, OH 44646  
Phone 330-477-2580

MARCELLI, MICHAEL A. (III COLLEGE)  
PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM  
7625 North High Street  
Columbus, OH 43235  
Phone 614-985-2475  
E-mail mmarcelli@pcj.edu  
HOME ADDRESS  
4120 Mill Road  
Dorset, OH 44032  
Phone 440-293-8322

SHELTON, REV. MR. MATTHEW W. (PASTORAL YEAR)  
ST. ROSE PARISH  
48 E. Main Street  
Girard, OH 44420  
Phone 330-545-4351  
E-mail mshelton@pcj.edu  
HOME ADDRESS  
P.O. Box 12  
Niles, OH 44446  
Phone 330-856-4204

ROACH, JOHN J. (II COLLEGE)  
PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM  
7625 North High Street  
Columbus, OH 43235  
Phone 614-985-2403  
E-mail jroach@pcj.edu.  
HOME ADDRESS  
102 W. Main Road  
Conneaut, OH 44030  
Phone 440-599-7844

SHERIDAN, JOHN E. (III COLLEGE)  
PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM  
7625 North High Street  
Columbus, OH 43235  
Phone 614-985-2494  
E-mail jsheridan@pcj.edu  
HOME ADDRESS  
8035 Deerpath Drive  
Boardman, OH 44512  
Phone 330-758-8502

\*\*\*\*\*

REVEREND LEO J. WEHRLIN  
VOCATION DIRECTOR  
**Diocese of Youngstown**  
**144 W. Wood Street**  
**Youngstown, OH 44503**  
**Phone 330-744-8451**  
**Home 330-938-2033**  
**E-mail lwehrlin@youngstowndiocese.org**

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SEMINARY ADDRESSES

MOUNT ST. MARY SEMINARY  
6661 Beechmont Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45230  
Phone: 513-231-2223  
Fax 513-231-3254

SACRED HEART SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
P.O. Box 429  
Hales Corners, WI 53130  
Phone 414-425-8300  
Fax 414-529-6999

PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM  
7625 North High Street  
Columbus, OH 43235  
Phone 614-885-5585  
Fax 614-885-2307

ST. VINCENT SEMINARY  
300 Fraser Purchase Road  
Latrobe, PA 15650  
Phone: 724-537-4592  
Fax: 724-532-5052

## Suggested Stewardship Bulletin Inserts for October/November

October 5, 2003 (27<sup>th</sup> in Ordinary Time)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

The phrase in today's Psalm, "May you see your children's children," is really a prayer for a long life. The good steward knows that every day is a gift from God, to be lived with joy and thanksgiving. "May the Lord bless us all the days of our lives!"

October 19, 2003 (29<sup>th</sup> in Ordinary Time)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

Good stewards must not argue about who is the most important. Today's Gospel says clearly that those who aspire to greatness must humbly serve the needs of all. Even Jesus came not to be served, but to serve.

November 2, 2003 (All Souls)  
Lateran)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

On the Feast of All Souls we pray for those who have gone before us and stand in judgment before God. May we share with each other the gift of love's memory, and console one another with the hope of resurrection.

November 16, 2003 (33<sup>rd</sup> in Ordinary Time)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

The readings today speak of the end of the world and the coming of the Kingdom. The bishops' pastoral on stewardship says clearly that "that 'life to come' is in continuity with this present life through the human goods, the worthy human purposes, which people foster now." May our good stewardship cause us to be numbered among the chosen on the last day!

November 30, 2003 (1<sup>st</sup> Advent)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

"Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy...." Jesus warns in today's Gospel. Let us heed His warning and follow the advice of St. Paul, conducting ourselves in a way pleasing to God, overflowing with love for one another.

October 12, 2003 (28<sup>th</sup> in Ordinary Time)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks the rich young man to give away all that he has in order to have treasure in heaven. But he is unable to free himself from his possessions, and so he goes sadly away. Does what I own keep me from following Jesus?

October 26, 2003 (30<sup>th</sup> in Ordinary Time)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

Today's Psalm says, "The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy." Good stewards demonstrate by their living and giving that they understand God as the Source of all they are and have.

November 9, 2003 (Dedication of St. John)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

As we pray today for an increase of spiritual gifts, we are reminded by the bishops' pastoral on stewardship that good stewardship of the Church "means cherishing and fostering the gifts of all, while using one's own gifts to serve the community of faith."

November 23, 2003 (Christ the King)  
STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

Today's second reading reminds us that the sacrifice of Christ frees us from sin and makes us a royal nation of priests *in the service of* God. How am I using my gifts to serve God and others?

**“If you want peace, work for justice.” — Pope Paul VI**

# Social Action Update



Catholic Charities  
Diocese of Youngstown

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Diocese of Youngstown — [charities@youngstowndioocese.org](mailto:charities@youngstowndioocese.org)— 330.744-8451



Annual  
Bishop's Appeal

## **Recommitting to Justice for Farm Workers**

**Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick**

Chairman, Domestic Policy Committee  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

A few decades ago, the plight of farm workers was at the forefront of the nation's attention. Through the decades we read *“The Grapes of Wrath”* and then later watched *“The Harvest of Shame.”* In the 60's and 70's people boycotted, marched, and/or fasted in support of workers.

This past year, we were reminded, if only for brief moments, that the plight of farm workers is still very much a serious concern. *United Farm Workers'* founder, the late Cesar Chavez, was honored for his leadership and vision by the U.S. Postal Service with a new commemorative stamp. And in the spring, we all watched in horror as nearly one hundred immigrant farm workers were found inside a locked tractor-trailer in the sweltering heat.

Beyond these occasional headlines, the hardships that farm workers and their families continue to suffer are rarely on the evening news but still have a claim on our conscience.

### The Bishops and Farm Workers

Our Conference has long stood by farmers and farm workers in their struggles to live with dignity and make a decent living for their families as they provide affordable and plentiful food for us and our families. Beginning in the late sixties, the U.S. bishops decried their low wages, untreated health problems, inadequate education and housing, and lack of year-round employment. The late Msgr. George Higgins, who wrote this Labor Day statement for so many years, was a pre-eminent leader and champion in this cause. He condemned the fact that most farm workers were not covered by national labor laws, including the minimum wage and unemployment insurance. The fact is, these labor protections are still sorely lacking for farm workers. Such seemingly modest safeguards, which most other workers enjoy already, would offer steps towards a better life.

Later this year, our Bishops' Conference will consider a significant document on farmers, farm workers, and the agricultural sector. This reflection will raise some new issues\*increasing concentration and globalization, trade, and genetically modified foods. But on this Labor Day we should focus on an old test for our nation and Church: How do we treat those who harvest and prepare our food? Sadly, they are the \*least of these\* (Matt. 25) in our own time.

### Farm Workers Today

Today these workers are increasingly moving from the fields to the factories: working in meat and poultry processing plants, and large hog and cattle operations. They

settle in rural areas and too often find themselves linguistically and culturally isolated and vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination because of their legal status and language barriers. More than 50 percent of farm workers in the U.S. are undocumented and more than 80 percent are foreign-born.

But their vulnerability does not begin in this country. They are also preyed upon in their desperate effort to reach the United States. In May, when police discovered the aforementioned truck crammed with immigrants—nineteen of the 100 men, women, and children were dead, including a five-year-old child. The U.S. Border Patrol reports that last year 371 people died crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. Mexican officials believe the number is higher. Yet, thousands still take the risk, still come to find work and a better life for themselves and their families. We recognize that, as an alternative to widespread undocumented migration, a just and fair legal pathway must be established that protects the basic labor rights of foreign-born workers and recognizes the reality of so many of these workers in the field. In addition, farm workers already present and working in the U.S. should have an opportunity to earn permanent legal residency.

When farm workers do come, they too often find meager jobs, decrepit housing, and unsafe conditions. Some end up living under bridges or even in caves. Those who do find housing in labor camps sometimes live without decent sanitation, despite state and federal health laws. Violations of wage and hour laws are commonplace. Their children often must join them in the fields because without their help, the family may not survive. They can face death and injuries on the job from dangerous farm equipment and the threat of poisoning from the pesticides used to protect the crops.

Some farmers treat their workers well and we should commend and acknowledge their efforts on this Labor Day. But too many do not, often relying on labor contractors, some of whom essentially traffic in human labor and suffering for economic profit. Many of us seem content to avert our eyes or ignore the reality that

so many who provide our food live in such misery.

### More Action is Needed

We call upon our nation to develop policies that reflect a fundamental respect for the dignity and rights of agricultural workers. At a minimum, we must ensure that agricultural workers earn a decent wage for themselves and their families and live in conditions that are safe and humane. Comprehensive immigration reform which features legalization is needed to ensure that undocumented migrant farm workers obtain legal status and can assert their basic labor rights.

Our Catholic teaching tells us that the economy, including the agricultural sector, must serve people and not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living, and farming is one pre-eminent example of our participation in God's creation. Catholic teaching on the dignity of work calls us to engage in productive work and supports the right to decent and fair wages, health care, and time off. Workers, including agricultural workers, have a right to organize to protect these rights and to have a voice in the workplace.

In California, after years of organizing efforts, the United Farm Workers union (UFW) recently signed a contract with the nation's largest direct employer of strawberry workers, many of whom are recent immigrants. The hard-won contract should improve the wages, benefits, working conditions, and job protection for some 800 workers near Watsonville, California. We applaud the efforts of the workers, growers, and the UFW for negotiating these changes.

However, even when workers are organized, their employers might refuse to negotiate a contract with the new union. Nationally, 32 percent of workers still have no contract two years after the initial election. Because of weak

and ineffective labor laws, organizing but especially farm workers who have fewer labor protections. One bright spot was the recent California legislation that requires mandatory arbitration so that workers who do organize can get a contract.

#### Conclusion

This Labor Day, as we reflect on work and workers in this land, let us renew our commitment to stand in solidarity with farm workers and other agricultural workers in defending their life

workers is difficult in the best of situations and dignity and helping them to secure decent wages, safe working conditions, and better labor protections. Let us stand with the men and women in Immokalee, Florida, who pick tomatoes, the poultry workers in Maryland and Delaware, the fruit and vegetable pickers in California, and the meat packers in the Midwest. The plight of agricultural workers may not be on the evening news or in the headlines, but it should be at the heart of our thoughts, reflections, and priorities as we celebrate Labor Day this year.

## *Catholic Charities 2003 Voice of Hope Dinner*



***Friday, October 24, 2003***

***Leo's Ristorante and Banquet Center***

***7042 East Market St., Warren***

***Cocktails and Hors D'oeuvres: 5:30 p.m.***

***Dinner: 6:40 p.m.***

***Keynote Speaker: Rev. J. Bryan Hehir, President, Catholic Charities USA***

***Master of Ceremonies: Rev. Thomas P. Dyer***

***Voice of Hope Award Recipients:***

***Individual: Dr. Paul Wright***

***Parish: Mother of Sorrows, Ashtabula***

***Institution: Hispanic Outreach Ministry in Stark County***

***(represented by All Saints and St. Anthony Parishes, Canton)***

***Tickets: \$40.00 each***

***Call 330-744-8451, ext. 328 for ticket information and reservations.***