



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Catholic Sisters in Northeast Ohio Issue Nationwide Challenge to End Hunger *Addressing Food Insecurity is Focus for Catholic Sisters Week March 8-14*

CLEVELAND (March 5, 2021) – Fifty-two weeks a year women religious stand with the poor and immigrants, teach children, fight injustice, heal the sick, share spirituality, empower women, defend the planet, promote peace, create community, offer hope and more. Catholic Sisters Week happens annually March 8-14 as part of National Women’s History Month to shine a spotlight for one week on the good works and good will of Catholic sisters.

In Northeast Ohio, the Conference of Religious Leadership (CORL) is marking Catholic Sisters Week by initiating a food insecurity challenge, asking congregations locally and nationally, as well as the general public, to join in a campaign to address food insecurity.

“The food insecurity challenge is a collaborative effort to serve persons in need and bring much needed awareness to the current increase in food insecurity and underlying causes, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty, unemployment/under-employment and inconsistent access to healthy food. Most congregations in Northeast Ohio and nationally are already working to battle hunger. We are challenging them and the people in the communities they serve to emphasize food insecurity during Catholic Sisters Week to build even more momentum to alleviate hunger throughout the year,” said Sister Margaret Taylor, SIW, congregational leader, Sisters of the Incarnate Word, and member of the CORL executive team.

Food Insecurity Challenge Activities

A number of congregations in Northeast Ohio have accepted the challenge and have multiple activities planned during Catholic Sisters Week to bring awareness to food insecurity and serve persons in need. These food insecurity challenge activities include:

- Donations to food banks and food distribution organizations across the region, such as from the Congregation of St. Joseph, Dominican Sisters of Peace, Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati, Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, Sisters of the Humility of Mary, Sisters of Notre Dame, Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis, the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland and the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown.

- Bag lunches and meals for shelter residents.
- Advocating for state and federal policies that increase access to food.
- Congregational prayer.
- Drive through drop off of non-perishable food items on Sunday, March 7, from noon to 2 p.m. at the Sisters of the Incarnate Word (6618 Pearl Road in Parma Heights) with items given to the Parma Heights Food Pantry and the Cosgrove Center. Sisters will partner with Incarnate Word Academy in Parma Heights to continue food collection through the school March 8-11.

How the Community Can Participate

There are multiple ways those in the Cleveland area can also participate in the food insecurity challenge. Possible activities include:

- Host a food drive for local food bank or food pantry.
- Volunteer for a food bank or food pantry.
- Donate to an organization that addresses hunger, food insecurity or food injustice.
- Set up a community garden, little free pantry or other project serving persons who are food insecure.
- Contact local, state and federal representatives and advocate for policies that will increase access to food, including expanding SNAP benefits, increasing the minimum wage and funding food initiatives.

The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine is one of the many congregations participating in the food insecurity challenge. Sister Marian Durkin, CSA, first assistant for the congregation, said about the challenge, “The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine are so pleased to be able to financially support food banks in all the locations where we minister using stimulus checks from the federal government. Our hearts were moved over and over again by the long lines of persons suffering from food insecurity across the country. It is a blessing to be able to share with those less fortunate. Our hope is that others might be able to do the same.”

Food Insecurity Podcast

Prior to Catholic Sisters Week, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland will release a podcast on March 5 focused on food insecurity. In this next episode of the “[Generative Spirits: Conversations with Catholic Sisters](#)” podcast, Sr. Marie Manning, SND, will discuss how she has been working in East Cleveland to address food insecurity. These monthly Catholic sister

podcasts explore how members of Northeast Ohio congregations respond to the signs of the times in ways only sisters can—with personal insights and a collective knowledge of life and ministry over a century old. The foundation is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine.

About Catholic Sisters Week

Catholic Sisters Week (formerly National Catholic Sisters Week) occurs March 8-14 every year as part of National Women's History Month. It is intended to shine a spotlight on the good works and good will of Catholic sisters, while recognizing past and present sisters, from the movers and shakers pressing the frontlines of social change to the faithful praying in cloistered chapels. Catholic Sisters Week is under the direction of Communicators for Women Religious (CWR), a professional organization of communicators within religious congregations of women. catholicsistersweek.org

About The Conference of Religious Leadership

The Conference of Religious Leadership (CORL) was founded in 1975 by the leaders of congregations of women religious in Northeast Ohio. These leaders, recognizing the power of collective impact, saw the need to share ideas, support each other and collaborate on ministry initiatives. CORL and its member religious congregations seek to further strengthen the bonds among women religious in Northeast Ohio and consider new ways to maximize the collective strength and influence of sisters in the Church and in Northeast Ohio. CORL also works to discover new avenues where sisters and committed lay-persons can collaborate in ministry in Church and in society. socfcleveland.org/conference-religious-leadership-corl

About the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland

Since 1996, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland has partnered with residents, nonprofits and community leaders to change the trajectory of poverty in Cuyahoga County. Its nearly \$100 million endowment includes the first health care conversion foundation and first foundation formed by a congregation of Catholic sisters in the United States. The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland is a ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System.

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