

# Catholic Information Center

Friends of the Center · October 2024 Newsletter

[catholicinformationcenter.org](http://catholicinformationcenter.org)



Dear friends of the Center,

Life is marked by violence, from the natural world to human society. Violence manifests in wars, capital punishment, killing of the unborn, euthanasia, and various criminal enterprises. There are families torn apart by domestic violence. And our sense of community is eroded by recent gun violence. Even disease and illness inflict violence at the cellular and microbial levels.

Our faith is tested by violence. But Jesus taught us that life can transcend violence through sacrificial love. He continues to invite us to live lives of nonviolence and sacrificial love.

The US Catholic Bishops, in their pastoral message “Confronting a Culture of Violence,” remind us that violence permeates our homes, schools, streets, and even our hearts. They call us to a conversion that begins with a clear conviction: respect for life. This respect is not just a slogan but a fundamental moral principle that values people over things. We are called to transform our lives and become nonviolent in our thoughts, words, and actions.

Interestingly, Jesus does not tell us to ignore violence or avoid confronting it. Violence is the daily media in which we breathe and swim. While we can’t avoid it, we can learn how to navigate it. Our response starts with our thoughts and words.

For example, both political parties are currently inciting a war of words across all media. Watching an emotionally charged and biased election campaign commercial might provoke an immediate, negative reaction. Thoughts and emotions often arise unbidden in our minds. Emotionally unfiltered words, words taken out of context, and flagrant falsehoods shouted as truths serve as violent provocations that can lead to further violence.

It does not have to be this way. When discussing political matters whether at home or in public, we take care to filter our speech to avoid inciting further violence. As Christian disciples, we should ask ourselves: What can I do to mitigate the violence in my words? Can I suspend judgment and make room for someone else’s viewpoint or opinion without necessarily agreeing with it?

There is a mental health crisis today, which I believe is tied to a corresponding spiritual crisis in our Christian response to violence. Jesus is not just a commodity to make us feel good about ourselves. He calls us to transform our lives, to become nonviolent in our thoughts, words, and actions. This “gentling” of our lives is something we can only achieve by praying for and receiving the supernatural help of God’s grace.

To help you connect with that gentling grace, consider participating in our upcoming programs. Details for each are on the back.

- Oct. 3 - The Way of Francis: Let Us Sow Hope.
- Oct. 10 & 24 – The Catholic Vote.
- Nov. 3 - Busy Person’s Retreat.

As always, we remain grateful for your continued financial partnership, your active participation in our programs, and your ongoing prayers and support for our outreach within West Michigan and beyond.

Christ’s Peace and Joy to your hearts always,



Sean Donovan  
Director of Religious Education

## Pray for:

Jean Cook  
Marge Giesken  
Terry Hartsell  
Deacon Ed Harwood  
Bob Jackson  
Benjamin Ortega  
Geri Patis  
Kay Taylor  
Kevin Whalen

**October Mass for CIC  
Intentions:  
Sunday, October 13  
5:30 p.m. at the  
Cathedral**

*Please include your prayer intentions with your green envelope or email them to [cicoffice@catholicinformationcenter.org](mailto:cicoffice@catholicinformationcenter.org)*

# Upcoming Programs

## The Catholic Vote

Thursdays, Oct. 10 & 24  
7 – 8:30 p.m. ET

Media pundits and political analysts often talk about the “Catholic vote” during election years.

Yet with changing social norms, the challenges of Catholic public witness have become increasingly more difficult. This series will offer the space to explore the four pillars of Catholic moral life as they apply to the political and legal issues around this year’s election. Facilitated by **Mark Mann**, director of programs and institutes.



## Walking with St. Francis

Tuesday, Oct. 8  
10 – 11:30 a.m. ET

Find contemplative peace and healing in the Saint Francis Sculpture Gardens outdoor nature trail on the Dominican Sisters Marywood Campus. The garden pathway illustrates the life of St. Francis of Assisi in 17 bronze statues throughout 6 acres of natural beauty. The pathway is ADA-wheelchair accessible. **Mic Carlson**, artist and founder of the Saint Francis Sculpture Gardens and **Mark Mann**, director of programs and institutes at the Catholic Information Center.



## The Way of Francis: Let Us Sow Hope

Thursday, Oct. 3  
7 – 8:30 p.m. ET

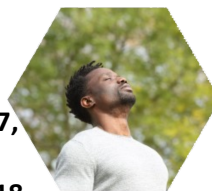
In the prayer of St. Francis, we pray “Let Us Sow Hope.” At a time of political polarization and high climate anxiety, it reminds us that feeling hopeful about the future is not only possible but also an essential part of our faith. With St. Francis of Assisi as our guide, explore the ways we can seek peace and justice for all creation. Presented by **Nancy D’Amico**, a Paulist Associate.



## A Busy Person's Retreat: Creating Space to Meet God in Everyday Life

Onsite: Sundays, Nov. 3 & 17,  
2 – 4 p.m. ET  
Online: Mondays, Nov. 4 & 18,  
7:30 – 9 p.m. ET

Are you feeling fragmented, pulled in many directions and wish to center yourself in God's love and care for you? This unique retreat experience offers you personalized guidance to meet God within the fullness of your busy life. In this space, we will practice reflective listening so that we can hear the whispers of God within our lives.



Your generous and regular contributions help ensure a vibrant and enduring future for the Paulist ministry at the CIC. All donations, no matter the size, make a significant impact.

Become a monthly contributor through online giving by scanning the QR code below or by visiting our website.



For more information or to register call 616-459-7267  
or visit [catholicinformationcenter.org](http://catholicinformationcenter.org)



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## Friendship Corner

Welcome new Program Coordinator  
Mary Martin

Mary Martin has been in parish leadership for over 20 years in the Archdiocese of Detroit. Serving at all levels of the Church, she has developed evangelization programs to help disciples live their faith in their everyday lives. Mary has a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and a Masters in Pastoral Studies from Sacred Heart Major Seminary. With a passion for small groups, she continues to help people grow closer to God through prayer and faith-sharing opportunities.

A mother of two young adult children and five grandchildren, some of whom live on the West side of Michigan, she loves cooking, travelling, and visiting sacred spaces.

