

Sooner Catholic

Serving the People of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Volume 35, Number 2 * January 20, 2008

BIG

Changes
are Coming
if You.....

*OPEN YOUR
HEART TO
GOD'S LOVE*

*ADF 2008 To Start
February 3*

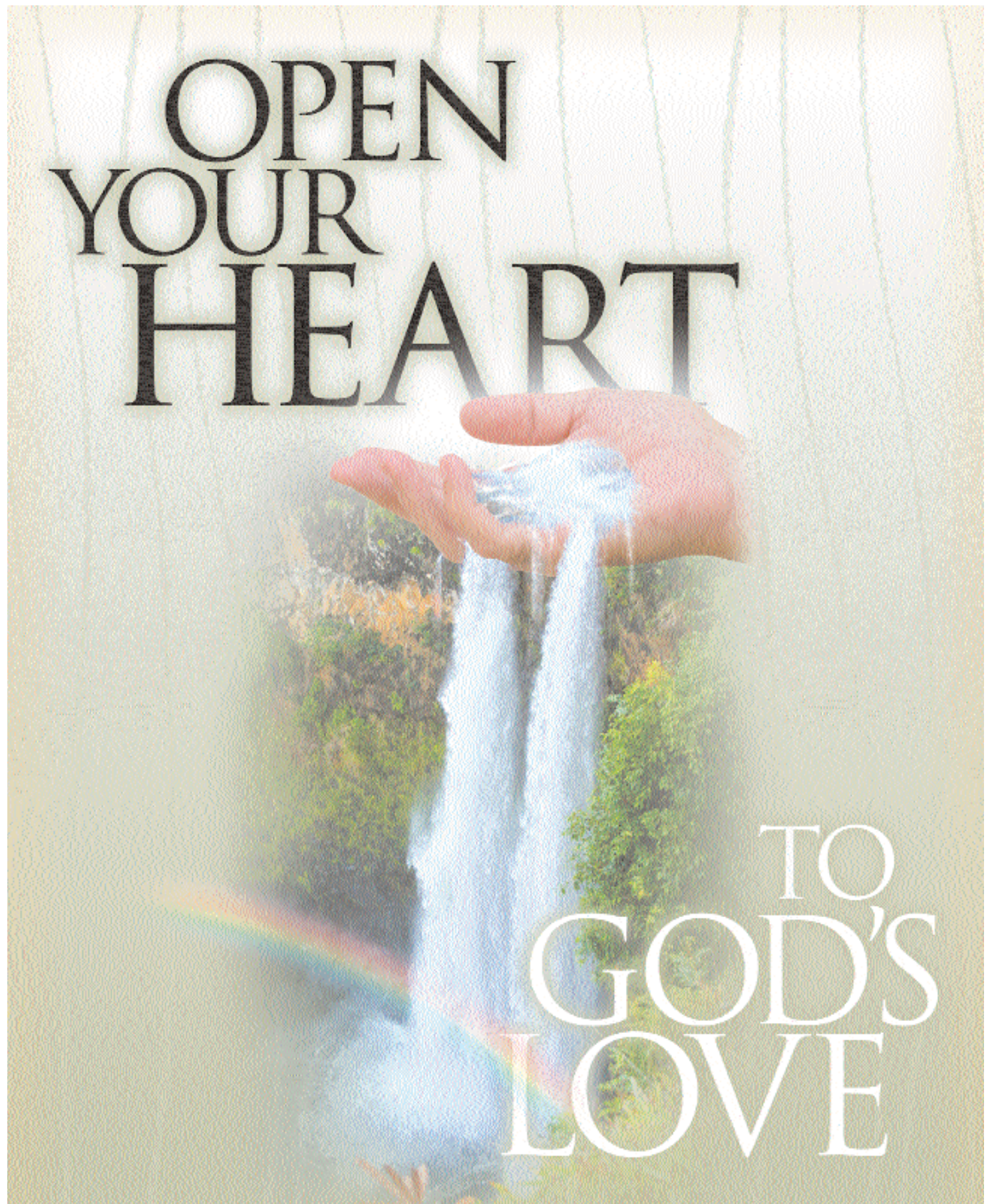
*Talk with Him – Walk
with Him – Pray to Him –
Follow Him – Live with Him
in everyday life – ACCEPT
the “Greatest” love –
God’s Love!*

Romans 5:5 — “...because the love of God has been poured out into our heart through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

Whatever our definition, or our understanding of, or our feelings regarding love, and whatever type of love we have received from the special ones in our life, it cannot be compared or equated in any way with that “Love” that God gives freely to each and every one of us. God’s love allowed Mary to live a life dedicated to Him, to bear a son — Jesus Christ — and to give Him up to the Cross for mankind. God’s love allowed countless men and women to become martyrs and saints and innumerable others to live their lives in dedicated service to mankind for Him. God’s love, so overwhelming, forces one to find an outlet through which to share that love, to be complete, for us to find fulfillment.

Since each of us wants to be loved, why is it so difficult for us to allow God’s love to enter our hearts

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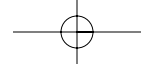
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Fill Needs For
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The Good News ... Continuing to Live the Fullness of Our Catholic Faith

In the first issue of the *Sooner Catholic* for 2008, I extended a very sincere invitation to the Catholic people of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. I invited you to strive to live the fullness of our Catholic faith throughout this New Year. That invitation arises from my own personal belief and love of our Catholic faith. I want you to experience the same joy which the practice of our Catholic faith brings me. Then together you and I will be able to share this Good News of Jesus with others.

My first challenge for 2008 was that you participate in the Sunday Eucharist every Sunday of the year as well as all Holy Days of Obligation. To miss Mass on Sundays or on days of obligation without sufficient reason is a serious sin which damages or destroys our relationship with God and inflicts restrictions on us.

The value of the Mass does not arise from the externals such as the music, the preaching or the socialization. All these are important and all contribute to our overall growth in faith. But the essential value, which is priceless, arises from Jesus Himself. The sacrifice of the Mass is the re-enactment of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is His sharing of His tremendous love for us who are sinners. In response to God's love and invitation, let us make our utmost priority the full and active participation in the Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation!

In future issues of the *Sooner Catholic*, I will address other important practices of our Catholic faith such as regular confession, daily prayer, Marian and private devotions and requirements for valid marriages. But I must also remind you that as human beings composed

of body and soul, we can never restrict holiness of life to the "purely spiritual dimension." We are human beings made of flesh and blood. We live in real time. We are bound by natural laws. We hunger and thirst. We get tired and we must rest. These human, material and timely realities all contribute to our truly living a life of holiness.

Two weeks from now we will conduct our Archdiocesan Development Fund appeal. Over the years, we have simply referred to this appeal as the ADF. Therefore, at the Masses on the weekend of Feb. 2 and 3, I will address you at every Mass in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City with a sincere and earnest recorded message. I hope all of you will hear my appeal and respond with generosity and love.

It is most unfortunate that some people do not make a faith connection to the financial needs of the Church. I am convinced that generosity to the Church, practiced out of love of God, is a real sign of that love. It is indeed one of the most striking signs of our love of God.

The Catholic Church is unique. It is not just a community of believers. The Church is established by Jesus Who leads and guides it. It is His Body through which He brings us God's great love and mercy. Through this visible Church which He founded, He forgives us, nourishes us, strengthens and guides us. And in His mysterious divine plan for our salvation, He invites us, His Church, to share in His own mission. Through us, the Mission of Jesus and His presence in the world continues.

Therefore, whenever we support the mission and life of the Church, we are responding to Jesus Himself.

Support of the ADF campaign is part of living the fullness of our Catholic faith. Financial support of the Church is indeed a sign of your faith and love of Almighty God Who loves us totally and completely.



Archbishop
Beltran

Whenever we make His teachings known or His mercy experienced, whenever we share the Good News of Jesus with others, we are responding to Jesus Himself.

The Church of our Archdiocese is able to continue this mission and ministry of Jesus with the funds you contribute through our ADF appeal. Therefore, I thank all who in the past have generously responded to my ADF appeal. Now, I invite all other Catholics to join us in this great combined mission of Jesus.

On ADF Sunday, please make a generous pledge of financial support to our Archdiocese. Your pledge can be fulfilled over the next 10 months, thereby each month your commitment will be gratefully acknowledged.

Support of the ADF campaign is part of living the fullness of our Catholic faith. Financial support of the Church is indeed a sign of your faith and love of Almighty God Who loves us totally and completely.

Sooner Catholic

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Seminary Burses

A \$10 donation was made to the
**Father Stanley Rother
Seminary Burse**
by Clara Schwarz.

A \$20 donation was made to the
**Father Stanley Rother
Seminary Burse** by
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A \$500 donation was made to the
**Father Stanley Rother
Seminary Burse** by Pete and
Clara Schwarz family.

A \$10 donation was made to the

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Seminary Burse** in memory of
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A \$15 donation was made to the
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A \$200 donation was made to the
**Father Stanley Rother
Seminary Burse** by Good
Shepherd Church, Marietta.

A \$10,000 donation was made to
the **Father Stanley Rother**

Seminary Burse by the Mary
Grellner Schwarz Trust.

A \$300 donation was made to the
**Father Joseph Beltran
Seminary Burse** by St. Andrew-
Dung-Lac parish, OKC.

A \$200 donation was made to the
**Father Joseph Beltran
Seminary Burse** by Mr. and Mrs.
Henry J. Cebulski.

A \$100 donation was made to the
**Father Joseph Beltran Seminary
Burse** by an anonymous donor.

ACCW Plans Mass Prior to Bus Ride to Capitol for Pro-Life Rally

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women (ACCW) invites all Catholics planning to attend Rose Day, the pro-life event held each year at the state Capitol, to join them for a Rose Day Mass before going to the Capitol building. The 7:30 a.m. Mass will be held Feb. 6 at Saint Francis of Assisi Church, 1901 N.W. 18th St.

Following Mass, a light breakfast will be served at the Birth Choice Business Office, 4701 S. Western Avenue. The breakfast is free, but donations of any amount will be accepted. Rose Day participants are also invited to return to Saint Francis Church following breakfast to board a reserved bus to the Capitol. The bus will leave from the Saint Francis parking lot at 8:30 a.m. The round-trip bus fare to the Capitol and back is \$10 to be paid when bus reservations are made.

The ACCW bus will drop passengers and pick them up again at the front door of the Capitol. The afternoon pickup time will be between 2 and 2:30 p.m., with arrival back at the Saint Francis parking lot by 3 p.m.

Over the years, the ACCW has noticed that Christians from other denominations have always out-

numbered Catholics at Rose Day. They hope that this year, with your help, this trend will be reversed. To bring this about, they invite all men, women and schools in the archdiocese to participate in Rose Day. The event begins at 10:30 a.m. Feb. 6.

Attendance at Rose Day is an important way for Catholics to show their love for the unborn child. On that day, red roses are presented to state legislators as a symbol of the sanctity of life.

The red rose also symbolizes the participant's pro-life stance and his or her desire that Oklahoma lawmakers also support pro-life issues.

Those attending Rose Day are asked to bring four red roses with them to the Capitol: one for the governor, one for lieutenant governor, one for the participant's state representative and senator.

Schedule for Rose Day

- * Sign in.
- * Find out room numbers of the Rose Day participant's state senator and representative.

- * Fill out cards asking those legislators, plus the governor and lieutenant governor, to be pro-life advocates.

- * Visit offices of the participant's legislators and give out cards and

red roses.

- * Gather on the fourth floor of the Capitol building in the House chamber for a pro-life program that begins at 11:45 a.m. This year's pro-life legislators will be introduced to the audience after which Father Frank Pavone, one of our nation's most prominent pro-life advocates, will deliver the Rose Day keynote address.

There is limited seating in the House chamber. Additional seating and an audio broadcast of the House chamber events will be available in

the Senate chamber for overflow crowds.

The ACCW bus to the Capitol holds 32 people. Bus passage from the Saint Francis parking lot to the Capitol and back is open to anyone from the state of Oklahoma. For this reason, those interested in taking this bus are encouraged to make their bus reservations early.

For bus reservations, call Pearl at (405) 524-3641. Make out \$10 checks to Pearl Sullens and mail to 1941 N.W. 17th St., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73106.

Sanctity of Life Mass

Acknowledging the 35th Anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Decision

January 23, 2008

6 p.m. Mass

Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Principal Celebrant

Most Rev. Eusebius J. Beltran,

Presentations to follow Mass

for Teens with Dr. Rick Boothe,

3 Reasons to Choose Life

and Adults will have a panel discussion on Life Issues

Refreshments will be served

More information Call Judy Reilly at Catholic Charities (405) 523-3009

Sponsored by: Archdiocesan Sanctity of Life Committee



Rosaries, Skateboards Help Make Headway in Pro-Life Effort

A few days before Christmas, four skateboarders rescued a crying newborn baby who had been wrapped in a paper bag and abandoned in a neighborhood dumpster on one of the coldest nights of the year. The quick-thinking New York teens called 9-1-1, waited for the ambulance and then accompanied the baby girl to the hospital, where they learned that she survived only because of their alertness and their actions. None of these boys ever expected to be called on in such a dramatic way. Appropriately, they were considered heroes for saving the baby's life.

Even if we don't make it into the evening news, we are all called to be just as alert and active in protecting human life. There are always opportunities to respond. The 35th anniversary of Roe v. Wade reminds us that our courts and legislatures still cling to the lie that human life

can be discarded whenever it is inconvenient. Abortion is still protected in our land. Had that dumpster been located behind an abortion facility, the skateboarders would have been labeled as meddling trespassers trying to undermine "choice" instead of being hailed as heroes.

To mark this sad anniversary, many of us will join in the March for Life in Washington, D.C., San Francisco or similar marches in many cities across the country. Many of us will work in our legislatures to expand protection for unborn children, or to prevent abortion-rights activists from enshrining abortion at the state level, because they fear the coming



By Tom Grenchik

demise of Roe. Many of us will serve at our neighborhood pregnancy help centers, maternity homes, prenatal care programs, shelters and food pantries so those in need will know there are alternatives to abortion and many people willing to help. Many of us will speak to our neighbors, classmates, co-workers, relatives and friends about the life and dignity of each human person. Many of us will pray and offer loving assistance outside the doors of abortion facilities, the legally protected "dumpsters" of Roe v. Wade. Many Rosaries will be prayed to usher in a springtime of faith and a culture of life.

And our prayers are being heard. There are many signs that our culture continues to grow in a pro-life direction. Those who promote abortion are, with good reason, fearful that Roe v. Wade is nearing the end. They fear a massive generation of

young people who reject the culture of death. They fear the witness of countless women, men and family members who mourn the loss of their children to abortion. They fear the growing attention to the humanity of unborn children on the Internet, in magazines, news reports and the ultrasound images expectant parents and grandparents forward to friends. And they fear the growing trend to view each child, even those with health problems, as a gift, and not a threat. These "fears" should give us great encouragement. Pro-life prayers and actions are working. Rosaries and skateboards are building a culture of life!

Tom Grenchik is the executive director of the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Go to www.usccb.org/prolife to learn more about the bishops pro-life activities.



Saint Eugene School Plans Celebrations

OKLAHOMA CITY — St. Eugene Catholic School is preparing to celebrate national Catholic Schools Week Jan. 27-Feb. 1. This year's theme is "Catholic Schools Light the Way." The slogan reminds us that we are called to "light the way" to the kingdom for others even as we walk "the way" of discipleship and grow in faith ourselves.

"St. Eugene has many activities planned to celebrate what makes Catholic education special and to honor those that contribute to our school's excellence," said Principal Suzette Williams. "It is time to celebrate and to share St. Eugene's blessings with others."

The weeklong celebration will begin with an open house on Sunday, Jan. 27 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The parish and community members are invited to tour the school, visit with teachers and parents and learn more about St. Eugene's academic excellence and strong moral code.

On Thursday, Jan. 31, the school will celebrate its students and their talents during a physical education assembly during the day and a Fine Arts Night in the evening. And on Friday the school will celebrate the parish's 50th anniversary of faith and fellowship. There will be a Catholic Trivia Bowl, a birthday surprise and students will dress in 1950s attire.

During the week the school will also recognize and give special thanks to St. Eugene alumni, volunteers, pastors and staff and to families.

St. Eugene is a Catholic School for 3-year-old preschool through eighth grade. It is located in northwest Oklahoma City at 2400 W. Hefner Road. St. Eugene School offers excellence in education, opportunities for spiritual growth, an array of sports and other extracurricular activities and before and after-school care. St. Eugene School is affiliated with St. Eugene Church, a member of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

January 27- February 3

Catholic Schools Week

All Saints Principal Tops in Region

By Eileen Dugan
The Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — Leslie Schmitt, principal of All Saints Catholic School, has been named the National Distinguished Principal for Region 10 by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). Region 10 includes the states of Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, New Mexico and Arizona. Schmitt, a 27-year veteran of Catholic Schools, has been principal at All Saints School for the past six years.

Based in Washington, D.C., the NCEA is the largest private professional organization in the world, representing 200,000 Catholic educators nationwide.

"The National Catholic Educational Association is a wonderful force for the development of new ideas and support," Schmitt said.

Superintendent of Schools Sister Catherine Powers, CND, nominated Schmitt for the Distinguished Principal Award. "Leslie has been a principal for the archdiocese for about 14 years, and before that, she taught in our Catholic schools. She has been very devoted to Catholic education and has worked hard for far less than she could have made in the public schools.

"I nominated Leslie because I wanted to recognize her devotion to Catholic education in some way," Sister Catherine said. Schmitt was

also nominated because her school was named a No-Child-Left-Behind Blue Ribbon School, one of only 50 private schools in the United States to be so designated.

"Leslie's principal's award is a big honor for our school system. She was picked as the best principal in all of Region 10, a large, five-state region including an awful lot of Catholic schools and principals," Sister said. "I feel that when one of our teachers or principals is honored, the whole Catholic school system of the archdiocese is honored. I am very proud of Leslie as I am proud of all our principals. They all do a great job."

Schmitt graduated from Bishop John Carroll School and Bishop McGuinness High School where she was All-State in basketball. She also graduated from Mary Mount College in Salina, Kan., which she attended on a basketball scholarship.

Following graduation, she taught for five years at Sacred Heart School and for nine at Christ the King (CTK) before becoming its principal. As principal, she served five years at CTK, one at Villa Teresa, and six, so far, at All Saints.

"I consider receiving the Distinguished Principal's Award an extreme honor. It reaffirms that when I decided to become a teacher in the Catholic schools, I made

the right decision. It has been my lifelong dream to be where I am right now. I



Leslie Schmitt

feel truly blessed.

"This past year has been a banner year for me. I was inducted into the Bishop McGuinness Athletic Hall of Fame, our school, All Saints, was proclaimed a Blue Ribbon School, and I received this principal's award. Good things come in threes," Schmitt said.

Schmitt will receive her Dr. Robert J. Kealey Distinguished Principal Award at a banquet at the NCEA's national convention in Indianapolis, Ind., in March.

Rosary School to Host Events

OKLAHOMA CITY — Rosary Catholic School, 1910 NW 19th, will host two events in the coming days.

"Visit Rosary Catholic School Day" will be celebrated on Sunday, Jan. 27. The open house will be from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and will include a tour as well as the opportunity to meet with faculty and visit with current students and parents. Rosary is affiliated with Saint Francis Catholic Church and provides quality Catholic education to ages 3 through the eighth grade.

For more information, contact Karen Lynn at (405) 525-9272.

Also, on Saturday, Feb. 2, Rosary will host its "Parish Prom," the annual fundraiser for the school. The event will be held from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Montgomery Event Center in downtown Oklahoma City. Tickets are \$30 per person in advance or \$35 at the door. For reservations or information, contact Mercedes Lyon at 210-3235 or Michele Popielec at 946-1897.

The evening will feature the raffling of a 37-inch flat screen television, delicious food and many other auction items.

St. Greg's Lists Honor Students

SHAWNEE — A total of 69 students from 33 different communities were named to the 2007 fall honor rolls at St. Gregory's University. Of those, 24 made the President's Honor Roll and 45 made the Dean's Honor Roll. To earn President's Honor Roll status, a student must maintain a 4.0 grade point average. For the Dean's Honor Roll, a 3.5 or higher must be maintained.

President's Honor Roll

Amarillo, Texas: Jannett S. Rizcallah
Broken Arrow: Sean P. O'Brien
Centerton, Ark.: William T. Beal
Chickasha: Shembra L. Reed
Denton, Texas: Loraine M. Bottorff
Grand Prairie, Texas: Joshua L. Coulter
Newalla: Cory W. Underhill, Bradley W. Ward
Okemah: Christopher E. Duke
Oklahoma City: Helen V. LaVictoire, Dominique N. Martinez

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Can You Hear Her Now?

At 14, Caitlin Baker is Determined to Change the World for Young American Indians by Teaching Them How To Use Their Voice

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — Caitlin Baker didn't know how to respond two years ago when she was asked what Indian reservation was her home. A student at All Saints Catholic School, Caitlin had never been to a reservation and admits she really didn't know such places existed. A competitive swimmer, she had traveled to Denver to compete in the North American Indigenous Games games. She was the only swimmer from Oklahoma and the experience was quite new. Most of the young American Indians she would meet from around the country lived on reservations. Caitlin said she was quite moved as they described their way of life and the conditions from which they came. The upscale university town of Norman she lives in seemed literally a world away from the poverty, substance abuse, abandonment and lack of hope described by the young American Indians she met.

Caitlin returned home with a deep desire to make a difference. Now 14 and in the eighth grade, she has created a not-for-profit outreach program called CAITLNB which stands for Competitive American Indians Turning Lifestyles Into New Beginnings.

"My mission is to bring a message to native youth on the importance of being healthy and active," Caitlin said in her mission statement which introduces her program on its Web site. "I will talk to my peers and encourage them to be active and healthy, sharing my personal goals and experiences. Also, I will speak to Native American leaders about the need to build facilities and organize programs for the young people of their communities."

Caitlin, a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, is living out her mission statement. She is concerned too many young American Indians are losing hope for a successful future because of diabetes, substance abuse, lack of education and in general, no real hope for success. Caitlin has visited with American Indian youth and tribal leaders in Anadarko and helped organize a swimming clinic in Pryor for the Boys and Girls Club that featured Olympic Gold medalist Josh Davis. Last September

she participated in a swim clinic in Tahlequah for the Cherokee Nation that featured Olympic swimmer Mark Spitz.

Caitlin's mother, Edith Baker, director of Indian Education for Norman Public Schools, said her daughter has a way of connecting with the young people she comes in contact with. She said adults at the swim clinics have been impressed by Davis and the legendary Spitz, but the youngsters seem more interested in what Caitlin has to offer.

"She has a way of grabbing their attention," Edith Baker said of her daughter. "Maybe it's because they can relate to her since she's their own age."

Caitlin has formed partnerships with the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic, Association of American Indian Physicians, Boys and Girls Clubs, USA Swimming/U.S. Olympic Committee, Oklahoma Swimming and Josh Davis, Premier Swimming. She has challenged tribal leaders in Oklahoma to invest in the health of their young people by promoting healthy activities such as swimming and other recreational activities. "The Oklahoma Tribes have the money," she said.

During her visit to Anadarko, school officials and students took her on a tour of the new gymnasium that was recently built. "They were very proud of the new gym and rightfully so," said Edith Baker. But her daughter was quick to point out that only a few can participate on a basketball team. "The rest of us are sitting in the stands getting fat," Caitlin told the adults. She encouraged tribal leaders to work with city and school leaders to build an indoor swimming pool. "She told them if they build a pool, she'll help them start a swimming team," Edith Baker said.

Swimming, Caitlin said, should be promoted more for young people because it is year-round. "Basketball is great, but it only lasts a few months. A basketball player only has to keep his grades up during basketball season," she said. "If you are on a swimming team you go all year, so your grades must stay up all year."

Caitlin said her young age has been both a help and a hindrance to her mission.

"Adults will often take me for granted because I'm only 14," she said. "I try to push past that and use



Caitlin Baker at All Saints School in Norman.
Photo/Sooner Catholic

my voice. That's also what I tell the kids when I speak to them, I tell them to use their voice.

"Our leaders hold the key through funding and education. I want to be an example to minority youth that no matter your age, you can change the world. Be an advocate for yourself and your community. Every child needs to be told and to believe that they can achieve greatness. This is the goal of my outreach program. To be the voice that sends that message to minority youth."

In April, Caitlin will be honored by the Women's Sports Foundation at the dedication of the Billie Jean King Center inside the Sports Museum of America in New York City. She plans to attend Mount Saint Mary High School as a freshman next school year. She and her family attend Saint Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church in Norman.

To learn more go to www.caitlinb.com

Saint Greg's Opens Campus for Adults in OKC

SHAWNEE — St. Gregory's University announced that its rapidly expanding College for Working Adults will open a third campus. Business degree classes at the associate level will be available at Oklahoma City's Mercy Hospital.

Classes will meet in Mercy's conference center, located in the McAuley Building just off Memorial Road. SGU has plans to begin bachelor's degree classes sometime this spring in Oklahoma City.

"Just four years ago, we began

with an initial enrollment of 15 in our bachelor's program," said Jean Thornbrugh, Ph.D., dean of SGU's College for Working Adults. "We now have more than 350 students and offer degrees at the associate, bachelor and graduate levels. We anticipate the same growth pattern in Oklahoma City. We're excited about what's ahead."

St. Gregory's, the state's oldest institution of higher learning, initiated its College for Working Adults in 2003 in Tulsa and expanded to the school's

traditional campus in Shawnee in 2006.

SGU's CWA is designed for working professionals, providing accelerated evening classes — one night a week — for busy adults who need a practical option for their education. Because of its unique, non-traditional format, CWA students are considered "full time," making them eligible for full-time state and federal financial aid.

For more information, call (405) 878-5200, or visit stgregoryscwa.org.



Celebrate Catholic Schools

Coach Joe Weber to Leave Legacy of Character at Mount

OKLAHOMA CITY — Max Dupree, author of *Leadership Is An Art*, declared, "Succession is one of the key responsibilities of leadership." Yet when it comes to most coaches, they are only viewed by their won/loss record at a school, and not by the value of leaving a legacy of succession. In six years at Mount St. Mary High School, retiring head football coach Joe Weber has not only brought stability and credibility to the program, but has put Mount St. Mary football in a position to do great things after his departure.

After 40 years of pacing the sidelines on Friday nights, coaching two state championship teams in Davis and establishing a Hall of Fame career, Joe Weber has decided that it is time to retire from the coaching ranks and spend more time with his own family. Weber's two sons, Jody and Matt, are both successful head coaches in their own right at Davis and Marlow. Joe's oldest grandson will be playing high school football at Davis next year and the timing seems right to put away the coaching whistle.

"Joe Weber has been an incredible blessing for our school. He has



Coach Joe Weber addresses the Rockets during a practice session. Photo/Courtesy

inspired discipline, work ethic and organization to the young men in our football program," said Talita DeNegri, MSM principal. "Most importantly, Joe has led by example as a

classroom teacher and a man of character. For those qualities, I am greatly thankful that he chose to be part of our Mount St. Mary family for the last six years."

"I am extremely proud of the young men that have come through our program," said Coach Weber. "I will never forget our first group of 23 kids that came out for football in 2002. They never gave up and they had a lot of character. The excitement when we won the last game of the season is a feeling that I will never forget."

In Weber's 40 years of coaching at nine different schools, he said that being at Mount St. Mary High School has been an incredible experience. "Everyone here pulls in the same way. We have great kids, parents and administration. I believe in my heart that the football program at Mount St. Mary High School has great days ahead in the very near future.

"When all is said and done, your ability as a leader will not be judged by what you achieved personally, or by what your team accomplished during your tenure. You will be judged by how well your program or organization perform after you are gone."

At The Mount, Joe Weber is leaving a legacy that will have lasting value for many years to come.

Edmond Scout Earns Rank of Eagle

EDMOND — John Brennan Blagg, 14, has earned the rank of Eagle Scout.

A member of Troop 21 from Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond and an eighth-grade student at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton School, John earned the rank on July 25, 2007. For his Eagle project he organized the building and delivery of 45 lap desks for veterans at the VA Medical Center in Oklahoma City.

John is the son of Mahlon and Karen Blagg. The family attends Saint Monica Church in Edmond. He has served as patrol leader, librarian, den chief and assistant patrol leader for Troop 21.

John earned the Religious Award Parvuli Dei in 2004 and has attended Scout camps at Slippery Falls and

Camp Alexander. He is a member of the Order of the Arrow.

John is on the honor roll at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton and is a member of the National Junior Honor Society. He attended the Junior National Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. in 2006, and is involved in a number of other activities and organizations. He is a member of the Saint Monica youth group and volunteers at the parish as well as in the community. He also plays basketball for Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton School.



Saint Eugene's Advent/Christmas pageant told the story of the birth of Christ through the eyes of the animals in the stable and with the help of Saint Francis of Assisi. Students dressed as cows and sheep as they presented the story in song.

Congratulations! Success in 2007!

Almost 11,000 donors, of these, 3,028 who did not donate in 2006, have reached a new level of sharing, sharing their love and gifts from God. Before the New Year, \$3 million (\$3,000,000.00) has been received from those who have put their "Trust in the Lord." These donors have chosen to actively participate in the life of their parish and the Archdiocese by giving themselves to God's family. On behalf of those who will be touched by this generosity, the ADF staff wishes to acknowledge and commend you for your faith and love of God's people!

Every Aspect of Catholic Mass Deserves Proper Attention

This is one in a series of articles intended to help explain the Mass.

By Father Tom Margevicius

Of the articles I am writing for this series on the Mass, I am really excited about this one: the Liturgy of the Word.

For too long, we have assumed, "Protestants get the Bible, Catholics get the sacraments."

Wrong.

One is not more Catholic than the other; both are essential for the celebration of the Eucharist.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal says the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist "are so closely interconnected that they form but one single act of worship."

The word proclaims what the sacrament enacts: it's the same Christ, really present. The Second Vatican Council's "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" taught that Christ is present in multiple ways in the liturgy: in the people assembled, in the word proclaimed, in the ordained minister, in the other sacraments and especially in the Sacred Species.

Three years ago, the world's Catholic bishops held a synod discussing the Eucharist. Pope John Paul II followed up with the wonderful document, "Ecclesia de Eucharistia," resulting in resurging interest in the importance of the Eucharist in the life of the church.

That's great, but we need to go further.

Pope Benedict XVI has instructed the bishops that when their next synod meets in October 2008, the topic will be the word of God.

I predict the Holy Father will follow up with his own document on the word of God. (You heard it here



Photo: AgnusImages.com

first.) The bishops already have their "homework" assignment: you can read it on the Vatican Web page (www.vatican.va) if you search for "synod," "word" and "lineamenta," which is Latin for "outline."

Maybe you know someone who left the Catholic Church because they found another church where they "get fed," meaning they hear the word preached better.

Of course, the irony is they can't get fed any better than in our Eucharist. But we should take their departure seriously: a fuller celebration of the word of God will only enhance participation in the Eucharist.

The "Catechism of the Catholic Church" directs: "The Liturgy of the Word is an integral part of sacramental celebrations. To nourish the faith of believers, the signs which accompany the Word of God should be emphasized: the book of the word (a Lectionary or a Book of the Gospels),

its veneration (procession, incense, candles), the place of its proclamation (lectern or ambo), its audible and intelligible reading, the minister's homily which extends its proclamation, and responses of the assembly (acclamations, meditation, psalms, litanies and profession of faith)."

Notice how we offer the word what we usually associate with the Sacred Species: incense, gilded books, even processions.

The General Introduction to the Lectionary goes so far as to say, "The church has honored the word of God and the eucharistic mystery with the same reverence, although not with the same worship, and has always and everywhere insisted upon and sanctioned such honor."

To honor the word of God, let the ambo be a fixed, dignified place that parallels the altar itself, since there is "one table of the word and the Eucharist." Don't proclaim the word from disposable booklets for the same

reason wine should not be consecrated in a throwaway cup. Let there be adequate lighting and amplification.

Regarding preparation, Pope Benedict writes, "I ask that the Liturgy of the Word always be carefully prepared and celebrated. Consequently, I urge that every effort be made to ensure that the liturgical proclamation of the word of God is entrusted to well-prepared readers."

Just as we appreciate silence after receiving Communion, include periods of silence after the word so it can resonate in our hearts.

Finally, encourage priests and deacons when preaching homilies. Not a single preacher I know thinks it's easy.

Pope Benedict is straightforward on this issue: "The quality of homilies needs to be improved. The homily is 'part of the liturgical action' and is meant to foster a deeper understanding of the word of God, so that it can bear fruit in the lives of the faithful. Hence ordained ministers must 'prepare the homily carefully, based on an adequate knowledge of Sacred Scripture.' Generic and abstract homilies should be avoided.

"In particular," he said, "I ask these ministers to preach in such a way that the homily closely relates the proclamation of the word of God to the sacramental celebration and the life of the community, so that the word of God truly becomes the church's vital nourishment and support."

That intersection of three terms — word, sacrament and community — all come together in a beautiful way in the part of the liturgy we'll examine next week: the preparation of the gifts.

Father Tom Margevicius is instructor of liturgical theology at St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity in St. Paul.



A groundbreaking ceremony for the new youth/daily Mass Chapel at St. Joseph Church, Ada, took place Dec. 2. Pastor, Father Rusty Hewes, is shown with the youth of the parish during the groundbreaking ceremony. The multipurpose building will provide much-needed space for youth group meetings, religious education classes and a chapel that will seat 50 people. Projected completion date is early August 2008.

McGuinness Lands \$200,000 Grant

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Robert Glenn Rapp Foundation has awarded a \$200,000 grant to Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School. The grant will be used to help renovate the old McGuinness cafeteria into dance and music practice rooms.

"The large space of the old cafeteria provided us the opportunity to renovate and create modern classrooms for dance and music," said Principal David Morton. "We'll also be able to add storage for band instruments and a dressing room for the dancers. Whereas many schools are cutting back on their arts programs, the generosity of the

Robert Glenn Rapp Foundation is helping us strengthen our performing arts programs."

Additionally, the grant will help fund the renovation of the current drama and speech classrooms, and create an area specially designed to accommodate the needs of the school's stagecraft class curriculum.

"To become a well-rounded, educated individual, learning about the arts is essential," said Morton. "These programs are very popular with our students, and the new facilities will be used on a daily basis. Arts programs keep schools energized."

Are Catholic Funerals Relevant to Catholics Today?

Editor's Note: The following was presented during the annual convention of the Catholic Cemetery Conference held in Phoenix. It was modified for publication in the Catholic Cemetery magazine and is reprinted in a series that will run in this and following issues of the Sooner Catholic.

By Reverend Stephen J. Bird

I recently spoke with several funeral directors and asked them what they noticed about our Catholic funerals that set them apart and were helpful to the family. One thing mentioned that we do well is that we have the presence of the community. A group of parishioners often come to participate in the funeral services even if they do not know the deceased. Some parishes have "funeral choirs," made up of retired parishioners or others who are available during the daytime. This is the way it should be in a parish community as we minister to one another.

The way we use music was also mentioned by one of the funeral directors as something that added richness and reverence to our Catholic services. We do not simply *listen* to music, we *participate* by singing.

Our selection of music is perhaps the most important decision we make.

Of course, music needs to be carefully planned. In the section on music, the ritual says, "Music is integral to the funeral rites. It allows the community to express convictions and feelings that words alone may fail to convey. It has the power to console and uplift the mourners and to strengthen the unity of the assembly in faith and love." (Order of Christian Funerals 30). I think our selection of music is perhaps the most important decision we make among the many choices in preparing the various rites.

Vigil for the Deceased

As I continue to explore the funeral rites, I would invite you to think about the power of music. When my mother died about four years ago, we began the Vigil for the Deceased with a hymn not usually associated with a funeral: "For the Beauty of the Earth." All the verses are appropriate, but I chose the hymn especially because of verses 1 and 4.

For the Beauty of the Earth

(1) *For the beauty of the earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies:*
(Refrain) *Lord of all, to You we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.*
(4) *For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above;
For all gentle thoughts and mild:*

**Text: Folliot S. Pierpont
Tune: Conrad Kocher and
William H. Monk**

With this opening hymn, combined with some carefully selected Scripture readings, comforting words from the deacon, and some stories and reflections shared by several friends and relatives, our family felt the joy of God's love for my mother. We were reminded of the promise of eternal life given to my mother at her baptism.

Earlier, I mentioned how videos have become popular in many non-Catholic churches. At the time of death, there is certainly a desire to reminisce about the life of the person who died. I find the Vigil service is the perfect time for family members and friends to share stories and remembrances. While the Vigil can be celebrated at a funeral home, in my area we often celebrate the Vigil at the church. When the Vigil is celebrated at church, we frequently use the parish hall afterwards as a place for people to visit while sharing some refreshments.

Photos, mementos and even videos of the deceased are certainly appropriate in the parish hall.

Funeral Liturgy

Moving on to the Funeral Liturgy (usually a Mass), I go back to some comments by one of our local funeral directors. He felt there was great value to the *structure* of our Catholic service. People know what to expect. This funeral director noticed that in some other churches, the ministers seem to deal solely with the emotional aspects of death. In contrast, he sees how our Catholic service always deals with the reality of death and always goes back to the Christian meaning of life, death and the hope of resurrection.

Once again, music can play an important role in comforting family, friends and the community at the time of loss. The hymn "We Shall Rise Again" by Jeremy Young is somewhat long, but the verses are excellent, based on Scripture, and reinforce our Christian understanding of death.

We Shall Rise Again

(1) *Come to Me, all you weary,
with your burdens and pain.
Take My yoke on your shoulders
and learn from Me;
I am gentle and humble,
and your souls will find rest,*

*For My yoke is easy
and My burden is light.
(Refrain)*

*We shall rise again on the last day
with the faithful, rich and poor.
Coming to the house of Lord Jesus,
we will find an open door there,
we will find an open door.
(2) Though we walk through
the darkness,
evil we do not fear.
You are walking beside me
with Your rod and Your staff.
Only goodness and kindness
follow us all our lives.
We shall dwell in the Lord's
house*

unity of the
assembly in faith
and love."

We have an opportunity to use special music during various seasons of the Church year: Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. An opening hymn such as "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" can work well for a funeral during the Christmas season, which extends from Christmas through the Sunday after Epiphany. Think of the words:

*Hark the Herald Angels Sing
Born that we no more may die.
Born to raise us from the earth,
Born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King."*

The hymn "Alleluia! Alleluia!" used during Easter season has these words:

*We with Him to life eternal
By His resurrection rise.*

Years ago, I was called to the hospital after the death of a baby due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. It was the couple's first child and they were devastated. The only request they had for the funeral Mass was the song "On Eagle's Wings." After the funeral, they took some time off from work and spent a week in Colorado. While there, they found an artist who drew an adult eagle and a baby eagle in flight. When they showed it to me, they said it reminded them of how God was taking care of their child.

Music can indeed be powerful.

We also need to educate our people about the symbols used for a funeral and make full use of these symbols, the funeral pall, the paschal candle, holy water, incense. A cross or a Bible may be placed on the coffin.

One of the funeral directors applauded the way we try to involve friends and family members during our Catholic services. He said this does not happen as much in other churches. The family is made to feel a part of the service.

Friends and family can place the funeral pall over the casket, proclaim

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for so
many years
to come!

(3) *We depend on God's
mercy,*

mercy which never fades.

*We remember our covenant
and the promise Jesus made:*

*If we die with Christ Jesus,
we shall live with Him,
And if we are faithful,
we shall reign with Him!*

(4) *Do not fear death's dominion,
look beyond earth and grave.*

*See the brightness of Jesus
shining out to light our way.*

*Loving Father and Spirit,
loving Jesus the Son,
All God's people together,
we shall live on as one!*

(5) *At the door there to greet us,
martyrs, angels, and saints,*

*and our fam'ly and loved ones,
ev'ry one freed from their chains.*

*We shall feel their acceptance,
and the joy of new life.*

*We shall join in the gathering,
reunited in God's love.*

**Words and music by
Jeremy Young.**

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Music has the power to console and uplift.

I think this is an example of what I quoted earlier from the funeral ritual. Music "allows the community to express convictions and feelings that words alone may fail to convey. It has the power to console and uplift the mourners and to strengthen the

Obituary

Brother David Downey Dies at St. Greg's Monastery

SHAWNEE — Brother David Downey, monk of St. Gregory's Abbey, died peacefully in the Lord the morning of Jan. 9. He was strengthened by the sacraments and died at the monastery in the presence of his sister, Kathleen, and members of the monastic community.

Visitation of the body was available in the monastery until the funeral on Jan. 14. Vigil for the Deceased was celebrated at St. Gregory's Abbey Church, Sunday, Jan. 13. Mass of the Resurrection was at St. Gregory's Abbey Church on Monday, Jan. 14. Internment was at St. Gregory's Abbey Cemetery.

Brother David was born Oct. 16, 1940, to Michael and Nellie (O'Keefe) Downey of Dodge City, Kan. He professed vows as a monk of Holy Cross Abbey, Canyon City, Colo., on July 11, 1963. It was a sad moment for Brother David when Holy Cross Abbey was not able to continue; it began to close its doors in 2004 and the remaining monks sought transfer to a number of other monasteries. Brother David and his

great friend, Brother Matthew, came to St. Gregory's Abbey, and promised their stability here on Sept. 3, 2006. It is bittersweet to note that Brother Matthew passed away suddenly less than a year ago on Feb. 16, 2007, and Brother David will be buried in the Abbey Cemetery next to him.

He attended St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, St. Bernard's College in St. Bernard, Ala., and St. Benedict College in Atchison, Kan. He was a certified Instructor of Horsemanship from Ranchland in Dallas. Brother David was extremely popular among the students and friends of Holy Cross Academy, serving as a mentor to many. Numerous Academy alumni have traveled to St. Gregory's over the last two years to visit with their friend, Brother David. Since coming to St. Gregory's, Brother David was a faithful and active member of the community. He put his training and long experience with horses and therapeutic riding to work at the stables at St. Gregory's, assisting with the therapeutic horseback riding program located on campus. He quickly

became highly regarded and beloved by members of the extended community of St. Gregory's.

Brother David was diagnosed with gastro-esophageal cancer last March. He battled the disease with courage and faith. After he learned that his cancer had metastasized in December, he embraced God's will for his life. The monks at St. Gregory's are very grateful to members of Brother David's family, the Abbey Health Care staff and Heartland Hospice for making it possible for Brother David to remain at the monastery until his death.

Please remember Brother David, his family and friends, and the monks of St. Gregory's in your prayers.



Brother David Downey

Shrine to Host Seminar

PRAGUE — The National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague will host Steve Ray, Catholic apologist and author, in March. Father Shane Tharp, pastor at Saint Wenceslaus Church in Prague, said Ray will be at the Shrine March 14-15. The event is open to everyone. For more information, call (405) 567-3080. To learn more about Ray, go to www.catholic-convert.com

Day of Reflection March 1

OKLAHOMA CITY — Saint Charles Borromeo Parish will host a day of Lenten reflection on March 1. Our discipleship is based on the teachings of Jesus and lived by faithfully interpreting the "signs of the times." As Catholic Christians, our Catholic Social Tradition challenges us to perform "actions on behalf of justice." Using the lens of Catholic Social Tradition, the Lenten Scriptures and our own lives, we will prayerfully reflect on the relationship of citizenry and discipleship.

The reflection will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St Charles Borromeo, 5024 N. Grove. Cost is \$10. To register, contact Margaret Phipps or Linda Clark at (405) 789-2595. The day will be facilitated by Sara Dwyer, A.S.C., NETWORK Education Program coordinator. Supported by the Commission for Justice and Human Development.

St. Gianna Molla Relics to Tour, First Stop at Women's Conference

OKLAHOMA CITY — She was called a "martyr of modern day motherhood" by future Pope Paul VI at her funeral Mass in April of 1962, and thus, Gianna Molla had given her life that her newly born daughter might live, in lieu of being aborted as the doctors had recommended.

It was in an attempt to save her life, which the doctors had concluded, would be best for her to cure her of uterine cancer. But this mother of three had said that to abort her unborn child would be an abomination unimaginable. So, with instructions to her husband, Pietro, she proceeded to bring the third child to birth.

In 1994, during the Pontifical Year of the Family, she was beatified and a decade later, the late Pope John Paul II proclaimed her a saint in the Church. The life of this modern day saint of motherhood will be celebrated during the last week of January across the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. A special presentation will be given at the Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference, and then her story will make its way across Oklahoma, said Father M. Price Oswalt, associate pastor at Epiphany of the Lord Parish in Oklahoma City.

"Her story is one which many need to know about, and so I wanted to make sure more people were exposed to her story," Father Oswalt said. "So when I heard that the Oklahoma Women's

Conference was bringing her story to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, I thought it would be great if they could stay a while and travel around."

So they — Mr. and Mrs. Jim Buffer — a lay couple who helps promote St. Gianna's story and mission, will be staying for over a week to help spread her story and mission. "They are bringing a second class relic of the saint as well," Father Oswalt said. "They have a set of gloves that St. Gianna wore to Mass and these will be available for the faithful to venerate."

The presentations will be held at the following parishes:

Sunday, Jan. 27: Epiphany of the Lord Youth Group

Monday, Jan. 28: Epiphany of the Lord, 7 p.m., Mass and presentation to follow

Tuesday, Jan. 29: Sts. Peter and Paul School, Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 30: St. Joseph Parish, Ada, 7 p.m., Mass and presentation

Thursday, Jan. 31: St. Wenceslas Parish, Prague, 7 p.m. Mass and presentation

Saturday and Sunday, Feb 2 and 3: Prince of Peace Parish, Altus

For more information, contact the respective parishes. The presentations will also be given to the religion classes at Mount St. Mary's during the week.

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A Charitable Gift Annuity is a contractual agreement between a donor and the Catholic Foundation in which the donor transfers assets in exchange for a promise of annuity payments for life.

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National Catholic Certification Program Completed by Lepak

Susan Lepak, associate director of the Office of Family Life, has successfully completed the National Catholic Certification Program in Health Care Ethics offered by the National Catholic Bioethics Center and fulfilled all requirements and examinations for the 2006-2007 academic year. The NCBC, located in Philadelphia, developed the certification program at the request of many bishops and health-care administrators to provide a credible and systematic formation so that dioceses, hospitals and ethics committees will have advisers better qualified to apply the Catholic moral tradition to challenging contemporary issues in health care.

The program uses The Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services as the basis to help the ethicist articulate the Church's understanding of the inherent dignity of

the human person as the objective basis for the Church's moral tradition in health care. It also enables the ethicist to apply the moral teachings to the resolution of complex bioethical dilemmas encountered in clinical education, practice and research. The course-work provides a valuable resource of information on topics such as infertility treatments, abortion, contraception, stem cell research, organ transplantation, euthanasia, artificial nutrition and hydration and other life issues as related to health care.

For more information about the certification program, contact the National Catholic Bioethics Center at www.ncbcenter.org or 215-877-2660.



Susan Lepak

Parish to Host Talent Workshop

PRAGUE — Saint Wenceslaus Parish will host a two-day parish workshop featuring speakers from the Catherine of Siena Institute. The workshop will be held Feb. 15-17 and is intended to help Catholics realize how their God-given talents can be used to help their parish committee, school or organization.

"At issue is a perception of stewardship," said Father Shane Tharp, pastor at Saint Wenceslaus. "Parishioners easily make the connection that the faith calls them to support the Church's works financially. Asking for their time and talent falls upon deaf ears when parishioners don't think they have talents or gifts to share."

The workshop will open Friday evening and will run all day Saturday. The Sunday session is for those who wish to explore the issues more in depth.

To learn more about the Catherine of Siena Institute, go to www.siena.org. To register for the workshop, call (405) 567-3080.

Father Thomas Dubay to Speak

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Carmelite Seculars of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and Teresa of Jesus/Province of Saint Therese/Oklahoma Community invite you to

attend an evening with Father Thomas Dubay, SM.

Father Dubay will speak on "The Universal Call to Deep Intimacy with God" on Monday, Jan. 21, at 7 p.m. at Epiphany Catholic Church, 7336 W. Britton Road.

Those planning to attend should bring several items for the Sisters of Villa Teresa's Pantry for the Homeless "Breakfast in a Bag" Program: small tubes of toothpaste, small bottles of shampoo, small bars of soap, granola bars, juice boxes, Vienna sausages, peanut butter, jelly and/or snack crackers.

Father Dubay is a retreat master and an expert on the spiritual life and on John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. He has spent the last three decades giving retreats and writing more than 20 books on various aspects of the spiritual life. Father Dubay holds a Ph.D. from Catholic University of America and has taught on the major seminary level for 15 years.

For more information about the Carmelite Seculars or Father Dubay's visit, contact Deacon Jim Breazile, OCDS, Stillwater, (405) 377-9478; Janet Midfelt, OCDS, OKC, (405) 848-6275; Susie Spanier, OCDS, Tulsa, (918) 749-4249; Susan Staudt, OCDS, Guthrie, (405) 282-6624; Barbara Tinervia, OCDS, Tulsa, (918) 250-1307.

Upcoming Catholic Charities Events

Catholics Invited To Legislative Breakfast

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Commission for Justice and Human Development is hosting the annual Legislative Breakfast on Jan. 30 at 7:30 a.m. at Catholic Charities. It is open for participation for Catholics and legislative leadership to discuss bills related to Catholic social teaching. You are encouraged to invite your legislator to join you for the breakfast. Invitations will be delivered and you are encouraged to assist. Call Becky VanPool for information. RSVP by Jan. 25 at 523-3000.

World Day of the Sick Feb. 11

The 16th annual World Day of the Sick is planned for Feb. 11. This day, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, is a day proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI to especially pray for those who are ill in our community. Many churches use a Sunday surrounding that day as a time to have a special anointing for those in need of healing. It is also a time used to bless the caregivers. Prayer cards can be inserted into bulletins. For more information, contact the FCN office at (405) 523-3006.

Faith Community Nursing Enrollment

The Faith Community Nurses Association of Oklahoma, in association with Catholic Charities, will offer the Basic Preparation Course for faith community nurses the weekends of March 13-15 and April 17-19. The two-weekend course will be held at St. Peter Catholic Church in Guymon. An additional course will be held at Our Lady of the Lake Lodge in Guthrie the weekends of May 15-

17 and June 5-7. Participants must attend both weekends. The course will include local faith community nurses and leaders with expertise in theology, ethics, legal, counseling, community resources and education. Registration is limited to 15 people for each course. Tuition for the entire basic course is \$450. Scholarships may be available. If you are interested in more information or to hold your space, call Marilyn Seiler or Mary Diane Steltenkamp, Faith Community Resource Center, at (405) 526-3006 or e-mail mseiler@catholiccharities-ok.org or mdsteltenkamp@catholiccharitiesok.org

St. Patrick's Day Ball March 8

OKLAHOMA CITY — The 2008 St. Patrick's Day Grand Marshal Dinner, Ball and Auction will be held March 8 at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club, said Toby Boothe, co-chair of the event. Tickets will be on sale in February for the annual fundraiser which benefits Catholic Charities Homeless Services in Oklahoma City.

Artist Lucille "Lou" Flanagan Ackerman, 2008 St. Patrick's Day Grand Marshal, will be recognized at the event. The charity ball will feature dinner, a live auction and an evening of dancing to a live band. The evening will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Individual tickets for the ball are \$125 per person. Individual tables and corporate tables are also available. Corporate sponsorships include a table for 10 and promotion on the Web site, program, posters and media publicity. Corporate sponsorships are Emerald Isle, \$10,000; Gold

Sponsor, \$5,000; Crystal Sponsor, \$2,500; and Linen Sponsor, \$1,250. For information on corporate sponsorships, tickets, or to donate silent or live auction items, contact Jane Moon, Development Activity Coordinator, at Catholic Charities, 523-3000. For more information on the St. Patrick's Day Grand Marshal Ball, go to www.catholiccharitiesok.org.

Corpus Christi to Host Mass on Jan. 20

OKLAHOMA CITY — Mass will be celebrated at 3 p.m. Jan. 20 for the Archdiocese in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Archbishop Beltran will celebrate the Mass at Corpus Christi Church, 1005 NE 15th. Rev. David Lafferty and his staff at Corpus Christi will host the celebration as a tribute from the Catholic community. Mass will feature an interpretive dance by Corpus Christi youth as well as the "I Have a Dream" speech. Langston University Choir will join together with Corpus Christi's Choir in celebration.

Catholic Charities has joined the parish of Corpus Christi Church for the past four years in sponsoring a community awareness to support the ideals that Dr. King was promoting for the underserved and voiceless minority.

"We are hoping this Mass will give Catholics and non-Catholics an opportunity to join together in honoring the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Individuals and families are encouraged to come celebrate the Mass," said Becky Van Pool, director of Parish Outreach for Catholic Charities.

For more information, contact Sandra Moore, youth director, Corpus Christi Church, at 236-4301.

ADF 2008

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and guide our lives? It is hard to accept or believe that we are loved to that degree by anyone — overwhelming yet very humbling. Why do we deserve to be loved so greatly based on the lives we lead? In our minds we don't deserve it, but He pours out His love on us without limits. Maybe it is the commitment that frightens us. If we accept His love, then we may have to change our lives. Maybe the struggles in our life make us think that we are being punished and not loved — maybe our life is being lived contrary to what we think God wants. By ourselves, these and other similar feelings are very difficult to overcome, but by just giving in, opening our heart to let God's love come into our lives, makes these changes easier to accept and accomplish. Not all at once but gradually, day by day, our lives change for the better, and we become closer to God as He becomes more important to our lives.

His love is overwhelming — beyond our comprehension. But striving to fathom its immensity, we become more and more aware of the gravity of our infidelities. We see them as rejecting God's love. Sin is saying "no" to love. But God's love surmounts all failures as seen in His assurance, "I drew them with human cords, with bands of love; I fostered them like one who raises an infant to his cheeks." Hosea 11:4. He loves us with a forgiving, healing, redeeming love, regardless of what we have done.

We need to know that God loves us because we do not always love ourselves. We are aware of our weaknesses, our selfishness, our failures, our sinfulness, and we wonder how God could really love us. But God continues to love us with an everlasting love. We must come to know Him as a loving, kind, forgiving Father who welcomes His errant children with open arms. When we are convinced that we are loved, only then can we be open and honest.

We have often heard "To err is human, to forgive is divine." God is always anxious and eager to forgive us. He assures us: "Though your sins be like scarlet, they become white as snow; though they be crimson red, they may become white as wool." Isaiah 1:18. "How could I give you up ... or deliver you up ... My heart is overwhelmed, my pity stirred ... for I am God and not man." Hosea 11:8-9. Only Love — Divine Love — can continue to forgive in this manner.

The power of God's love, related through His words, can effect within us a complete transformation. Our thinking, our attitude, our relationships to others, will gradually change.

St. Paul is quite emphatic when he advised us to "acquire a fresh, spiritual way of thinking, you must put on that new man." Ephesians 4:23-24. "Your attitude must be that of Christ." Philippians 2:5; "Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may judge what is God's will, what is good and pleasing and perfect." Romans 12:2

St. John's gospel relates, "If you live in Me and My words stay a part of you, you may ask what you will — it will be done for you." John 15:7

God wants to speak to us. He wants us to listen in the quiet of our own being, and only then respond in our hearts. Our consciousness of God's great love makes us deeply aware of His loving presence, and in the quiet of our hearts we whisper, "I love you too." As we spend more time in prayer, our relationship with God grows and becomes more intimate. He reveals Himself a kind, loving God, who provides for us at every moment of our existence.

With this experience, we rest in His presence and feel His love warming and enveloping us. God puts a genuine hunger for a more intimate personal relationship with Him in our hearts. This awareness responds as a transformation takes place within us, developing a more personal relationship with God — a spiritual way of thinking — a new mentality as our minds become conformed to the mind of Christ. We believe and trust that God is compassionate and wants to forgive us more than we could even want to be forgiven. The word of God through the Bible speaks to us of love, and by comparisons it is said to be the greatest of all virtues. This is most often transmitted to us as a need to love — to love God — to love our neighbor and even to love ourselves, but not often do we get the message that this

continued on page 14



The Catholic Pastoral Center at 7501 NW Expressway provides Oklahoma Catholics a working Catholic center in a spiritual and pastoral setting.



Catholic Education directly affects more than 20,000 youth and adults.

SCHOOLS: Enrollment increasing (5,110 students with 452 teachers/administrators and 125 support personnel; additionally, Adult Continuing Education is possible in conjunction with Newman University at the Pastoral Center through interactive television.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: "The Office of Religious Education calls forth the leadership and creative potential of adult Christians to enhance their spiritual and professional skills to develop sound religious education programs in all the parishes of the Archdiocese."

RE programs are held at 82 parishes/missions with 13,500 students learning and growing in their faith with the help of 1,914 Catechists, many of whom attend workshops and the Fall Catechetical Congress, becoming certified Catechists and youth ministers. Department provides policies and resources for programs and their leaders.

Soon to be launched is the Adult Faith Formation Resource Binder. This is a project that has been realized through the collaboration of the Pastoral Ministry Office and the Office of Religious Education and the efforts of faith-filled adults who answered the call to form an Adult Faith Formation Task Force. This binder is a resource for parishes and Adult Faith Formation programs throughout the OKC Archdiocese, intent on providing ongoing faith formation opportunities for adults. The combined efforts of many people have produced a resource that offers an introduction to Adult Faith Formation, ideas on how to get a program started, planning and evaluation materials, other resources, and an extensive list of topics and speakers who are available to travel to the many parishes throughout the Archdiocese. The binder is arranged in two sections with information and resources in English and Spanish.

PASTORAL MINISTRY: Affiliated with Newman University and with master's programs through the Dominican's, Aquinas Institute of Theology, courses are held for those involved in service roles for the Church and those becoming increasingly responsible for the life and ministry of the Church. In 2007, 106 individuals took courses leading to their degrees in these programs. Affiliated through programs of the Adorers of Precious Blood; Newman University for 25 years in 2008.

The Office of Safe Environment was established to fulfill the mission and obligation to protect children and young people in accordance with the Archdiocesan Code of Conduct and other policies adopted by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The Office of Safe Environment provides screening and training of all employees and all volunteers interacting with children and youth at the Archdiocesan and parish level. In addition, it coordinates the Archdiocese's educational and training efforts including educational programs for youth, training and continuing educational programs for parishes and those ministering to youth, and developing educational materials for parents. It is also responsible for maintaining and responding to calls to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Response Hotline (open 24 hours a day), providing an effective response to allegations of abuse, coordinating assistance to victims of abuse for their healing and reconciliation.

Anyone with questions concerning this program can contact the coordinator at 721-5651 Ext. 150. The Catholic Pastoral Center Response Hotline number is 720-9878. Anyone wishing to report abuse of a minor or other vulnerable person by Archdiocesan personnel should contact the appropriate civil authorities and the Safe Environment coordinator.

The Office of Vocations exists to be of assistance to men and women considering vocations: (A) to the religious life by providing information about various religious orders and institutes and by helping with referrals; (B) to the priesthood primarily by recruiting candidates for the seminary and to assist them with their formation and development. This work is done with guidance from the Archbishop and assistance from the Seminarian Board.

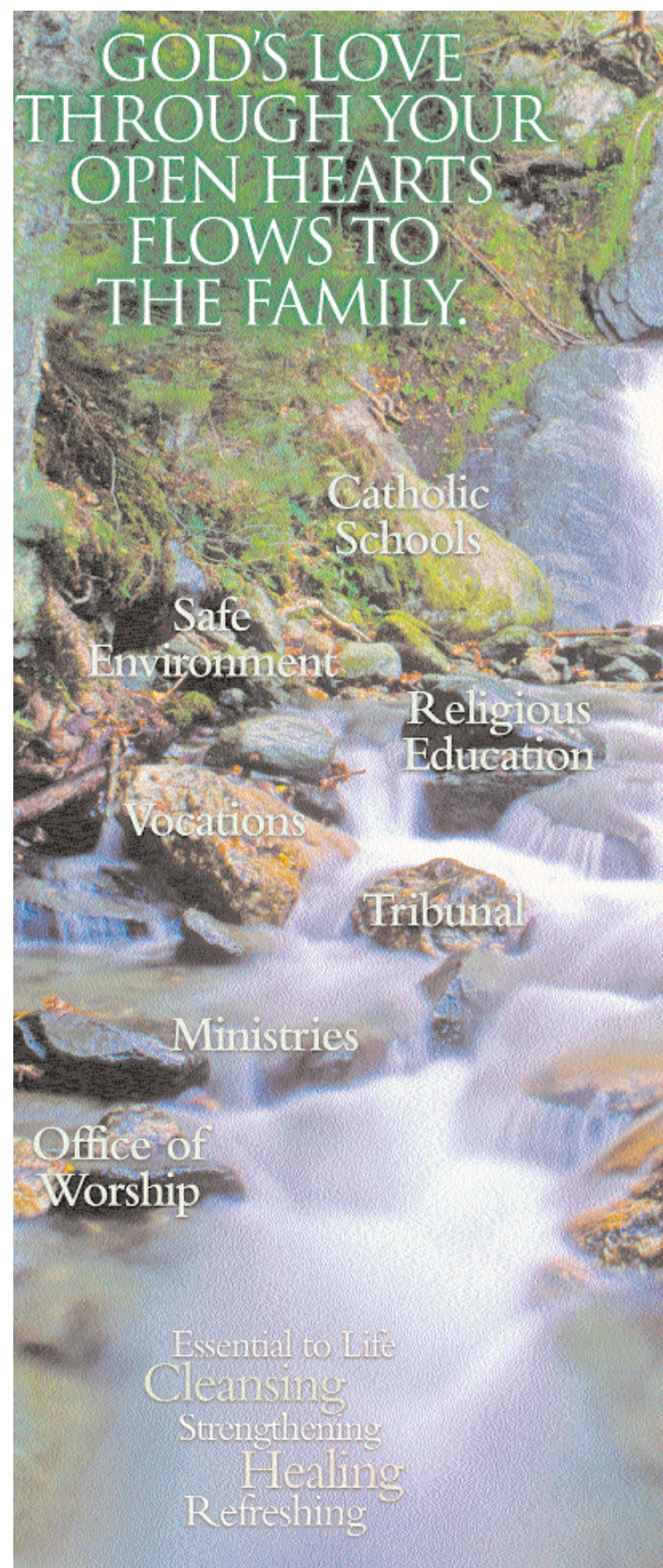
"The Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and the Interdiocesan Tribunal for the Province of Oklahoma City are Church courts. The work of Church Tribunals and the procedures to be followed are specified by the Canon Law of the Church."

Unlike most other Dioceses, this Archdiocese subsidizes the expense of the tribunal partially through donations to the ADF, creating no charge for its services. Sixty percent of the cases each year involve marriages of two non-Catholics because one of the parties wishes to marry a Catholic and/or wants to join the Catholic Church. The major portion of the work is processing petitions for annulments, a declaration from a church tribunal that the marriage bond did not and could not come to be. After annulment is granted, then both parties are free to remarry in the Church.

The Church presumes marriage of a man and woman, Catholic or not, as binding until proven otherwise. Cases have different grounds and different processes based on circumstances. Trained and qualified canon lawyers and support staff with proper equipment are required to sort through the cases. The ADF Appeal keeps the cost from being shared by the couples.

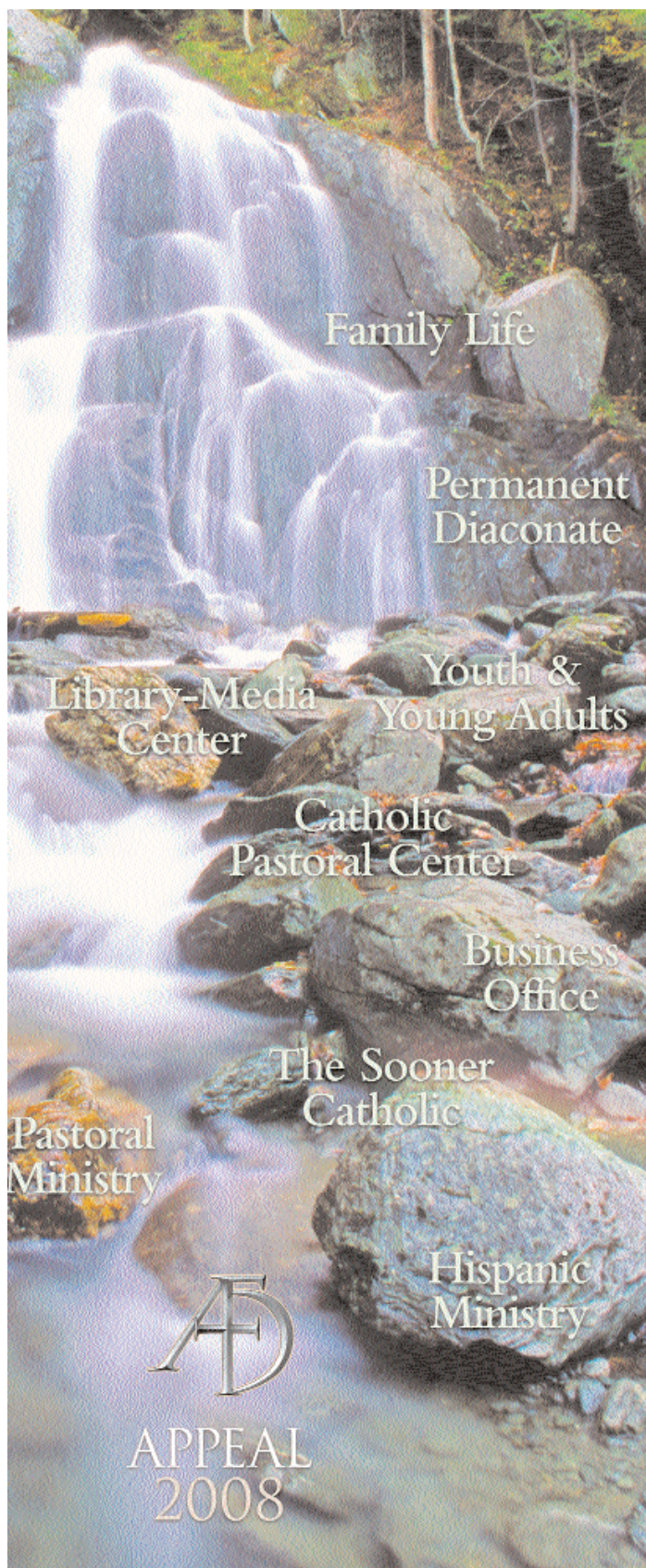
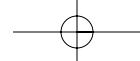
Offices of the Vicar General, the Vicar for Ministries and the Chancellor provide service for pre-nuptial investigations, schedule emergency and night coverage for Deaconess and Integris hospitals by priests of the Archdiocese, research Sacramental records, arrange Papal Audiences and Blessings, comply and maintain statistical data for the Official Catholic Directory, assist in researching and preparing grant applications, Canon Law research and civil law assistance for the Archbishop and other departments, plus consult with priests and parishes on canon law and civil legal matters.

Office of Worship serves as an extension of the Archbishop's leadership role in spiritual and liturgical matters, supporting, enhancing and enabling the prayer experience, communal and personal, for all the faithful of this Archdiocese. The staff provides services renewing the hearts, minds and practices of liturgical and spiritual worship to all regions and parishes throughout the Archdiocese.



The Hispanic Ministry Office supports the growth of spiritual formation of the Spanish-speaking Catholic Community in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Sponsors two special events: Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Field Mass, as well as being involved in Sunday Spanish radio programs and prison and hospital ministries. The office provides Spanish materials and translations for homilies, baptisms, Quinceaneras, weddings, funerals and Scripture study. The staff holds retreats and workshops for Hispanic parish leaders; works with Family Faith Formation and instructions on Natural Family Planning, the Cursillo movement and Youth and Young Adult Encuentros.

The Sooner Catholic is the official newspaper of the Archdiocese — a twice-a-month view of the life and development of the faith of its people. But it is only a glimpse because the scope of the ministries services provided through parishes and the Archdiocesan offices is too great to give full coverage to all activities in only 26 issues per year. Circulation has exceeded 35,000 copies. It also provides an opportunity for feedback from the community and expression of differing views.



The **Business Office of the Archdiocese** handles the financial requirements and manages the temporal goods of the Archdiocese by maintaining records for all business-related matters. It collects assessments for Central Diocesan Operations and Priest Retirement. The office issues each priest their W-2 forms at the end of the year, relieving the parish of the responsibility. A yearly audit is performed by a national firm with results provided to the Archdiocese through the Sooner Catholic.

The office assists parishes in obtaining loans, preparing deeds, mortgages, mortgage releases and lease agreements. It contracts with hospitals and prisons for chaplain services and administers the retirement and insurance plan for all employees of the Archdiocese. It supports the duties of the Safe Environment Office as it manages volunteers and employee applications, background checks and training records through the Web-based database.

“The Office of Family Life exists to provide support for families through various programs and to serve as a resource for parishes engaging in building up and fostering of the Catholic family.”

Programs offered at the Pastoral Center have attracted 211 couples and 58 additional individuals and many others have attended courses and meetings at their parish under the auspices of this ministry. The various programs, supported by their activities, shows concern for all areas of family life: Pre-Cana, Convalidation, Engagement Encounter Weekend, First Years and Forever, parish-sponsored Couple Training, Marriage Encounter to Seal and Strengthen Love, Parenting Classes, Stepping into Marriage with Children, Natural Family Planning, Retrouvaille, Divorced and Separated Group, Beginning Experience, Bereavement Ministry, Rainbows, Miscarriage Support Group, From Grief to Grace, Rachel's Vineyard Retreats, Project Rachel, Project Gabriel, Sacred Heart Apostolate and Teams of Our Lady.

A **Permanent Deacon's** duties extend beyond assisting the priest at Mass. It is a ministry of service dedicating themselves to 10 or more hours per week serving the people of their parish and the Archdiocese. Ordained through the sacrament of Holy Orders, like a priest but without the special function of a priest; e.g. saying Mass, hearing confessions. Deacons can serve in many roles: prison chaplain, parish administrator, director of religious education and RCIA for adults, marriage and baptism preparation, baptisms, witness church marriages, teach in adult education classes, plan and officiate at funerals, have communion services, take communion to and visit the sick and shut-ins. These duties, which they do while still working to support their own family, involves training to receive their Holy Orders is a three-year process with monthly meetings, continuing faith education programs and spiritual retreats. All of this training is supported through ADF. The Archdiocese is blessed to have 92 active deacons and a class of 14 working toward their ordination in November of 2009.

The mission of the **Youth and Young Adult Office** is to respond to the needs of Catholic young people and to involve youth and young adults in sharing their unique gifts with the larger community with these goals in mind:

To empower the youth and young adults of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City to live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

To draw the youth and young adults to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community.

To assist parishes in fostering the total personal and spiritual growth of each youth and young adult in their community.

The staff attempts to carry out this mission by offering summer camp, national and regional conferences, retreats, promoting Scouting and Camp Fire religious awards, young adult activities and formation for adults.

The Youth and Young Adult Office works to fulfill the mission by providing training and consultative options for youth ministry for all parishes in the Archdiocese. Also, we sponsor a number of direct services for the youth. In 2007, 1,159 attended summer camp, 144 youth and adults traveled to Columbus, Ohio, for the National Catholic Youth Conference, 216 youth and adults participated in the Outdoor Retreat facilitated by the Catholic Committee on Scouting, 70 young adults joined Archbishop Beltran for a cookout and program, 74 youth received their Religious Emblems Awards, the National Evangelization Team provided retreats for 17 parishes and 35 adults were involved in the National Certification Program held in Oklahoma City.

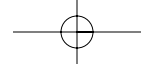
The Library Media Center supports Catholic education by providing resource materials: books, videos (VHS/DVD), audio tapes, assorted magazines and reference books (for in-library use). In support of Catholic Education, almost 11,000 books are available to lend as well as 3,000 videos/DVDs with over 1,000 audio tapes to listen to, plus there are assorted magazines and reference books for use in the library.

The Catholic Pastoral Center, originally built as a seminary in 1958, after several improvements, now contains the Office of the Archbishop and offices of the ministries serving the people of the Archdiocese along with the office of the Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma. In addition, the facility is home to eight retired priests.

The facility provides dining areas for meals for the retired priests and lunches for the employees and participants at the many conferences and other special events scheduled at the center. The facility also contains sleeping quarters for those attending events longer than one day. The North Wing of the building contains 30 double occupancy rooms and the East Wing, on the second floor, has 16 double occupancy rooms. In addition, there are six suites, with sitting areas, for double occupancy.

In 2002, the original gym was converted to the Conference Center which hosts many of the meetings and events held at the Pastoral Center. The center can be used in a variety of ways by opening or closing two sets of dividers which allows for up to three different events at the same time. The rooms provide separate sound and projection systems for video capabilities, for TV, Internet, Power Point, overhead projections and DVD. In addition to the Conference Center, the facility has additional meeting areas in a variety of room sizes to fit any group. The crowning beauty of the Catholic Pastoral Center is the chapel where daily Mass is held at 11:30 a.m. during the work week. Many groups attend Mass as part of their meetings and/or hold prayer services in the chapel. The chapel's beauty develops from the serenity, solitude and inspiration created by the massive marble altar, the 58 saints shown in the stained glass windows reflecting from the marble walls around the altar, and statues of Mary, Joseph, the Crucifix and symbols for the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and for the parable of the loaves and fishes.

To take care of the building, grounds and retired priests requires a staff of 12 people — two housekeepers, one for the priests and one for the other 52 guest rooms, three cooks sharing duties requiring 12-hour days, three maintenance men, a maintenance supervisor, a receptionist, an events director and the building manager. These 12 people also support the duties and activities of the 58 employees for all the ministries.



Photos from the Pastoral Center, including the chapel, dining room and conference center.



ADF 2008

continued from page 11

love we give comes first from God to us. Our ability to love is directly affected by our ability to be loved — to accept love from God and others. In John 1: 34 "... love one another as I have loved you" ... and in Isaiah 43:4 "Because you are precious in my eyes and glorious and because I love you..."

Currently 70 percent of the Catholic families in this archdiocese do not or cannot support its ministries or those of their parish or community. Is God's love left wanting, unused, unaccepted, unrealized or undiscovered? This Annual Appeal is about "developing the life of the archdiocese through ministry" — ministering to its people, helping them to find God's love and grow in that love. As love grows, so does trust in the Lord. As trust grows, so does the desire to share God's love and ourselves with others.

God calls each of us to a specific role or ministry during our time here on earth. By ourselves we could never accomplish

the task; hence He gives us our unique gifts which we need for our special work. Since these are gifts, they are freely given just as is His love. God asks only that we be open to receive them, just as for His love. So, just what is our unique talent? When focusing on talents, we tend to forget that our real gift is not so much what we can do, but who we are. "What can we offer each other?" but maybe it is better to say, "Who can we be for each other?" We may have only a few talents, but we have many gifts. Our gifts are the many ways in which we express our humanity. They are part of who we are: friendship, kindness, patience, joy, peace, forgiveness, gentleness, love, hope, trust, and many others. These are the true gifts we have to offer each other.

Teresa of Avila (1515-1580) put it in a different way. "Christ has no body on earth but yours: Yours are the only hands

with which He can do His work; Yours are the only feet with which He could go about the world; Yours are the only eyes through which His compassion can shine forth upon a troubled world. Christ has no body on earth but yours."

With God's love in our heart, we can fulfill the plan He designed for each of us. We can find inner peace once we understand our calling; because our serving and living our unique call, true joy and happiness is realized as we give ourselves to others. Our love from God is so filling we cannot help but share its magnificence with those around us and then experience His grace and abundance in the world.

Opening our heart to God's love will be a life-changing experience. As we learn to completely open our heart to God's love, the meaning and richness of our life will reach fulfillment. May the love of God in our heart lead us to support the ministries serving His people in the archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Many of the thoughts above contain excerpts from "Speak, Lord, Your Servant is Listening" — a daily guide to scriptural prayer by Msgr. David E. Rosage — an excellent beginning to accepting God's love through His own words.

2008 Pro-Life Events

January 22

Ecumenical Prayer Vigil: To mourn the 35th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, join Archbishop Eusebius J. Beltran on Jan. 22 from 10 to 11 a.m. at the state Capitol, Fourth Floor Rotunda. Let us remember all of the victims, living and dead, of this notorious decision to legalize abortion in our country. We will gather for one peaceful hour of Scripture, prayer and song to show our solidarity as people who recognize our Creator as the sole authority over the dignity and sanctity of human life. For more information, call the Office of Family Life, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, (405) 709-2707, e-mail: susanlepak@yahoo.com.

January 23

Sanctity of Life Mass: Acknowledging the 35th anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade decision, Jan. 23 at 6 p.m. at Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Principle Celebrant: Most Reverend Eusebius J. Beltran. Presentations to follow Mass with Dr. Rick Boothe for teens (Three Reasons to Choose Life) and a panel discussion for the adults on life issues. Refreshments will be served. For more information, call Judy Reilly at Catholic Charities, (405) 523-3009. Sponsored by the Sanctity of Life Committee.

February 5

Father Frank Pavone, Moderator General of Missionaries of the Gospel of Life and Director of Priests for Life, will speak at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 N.W. Expressway at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Office of Family Life, (405) 709-2707 or e-mail susanlepak@yahoo.com.

February 6

ROSE DAY at the state Capitol.

February 6, ASH WEDNESDAY

A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death: The beginning of a Lenten project to implement the Catholic campaign to end the death penalty. Usccb.org/sdwp/national/deathpenalty/death-penaltybrochure.pdf

February 9

The Samaritan Ministry Inc., a faith-based ministry dedicated to providing grief-related training and other resources to groups and individuals in order for them to offer spiritual, emotional and practical support to those who are experiencing Anticipatory Grief (during times of being homebound or suffering serious illness); Shock Grief (during the time of a funeral); and Lingered Grief (during times of bereavement.) For more information, contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

March 28-30

Rachel's Vineyard Retreat, Hope and Healing After Abortion, rachelvineyard.org. Call the Office of Family Life at (405) 709-2707 or e-mail okcrachel@yahoo.com. All calls confidential.

April 19

Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Conference for youth and parents. Ben Atherton-Zeman, a nationally known and popular actor, comedian, feminist and husband, will present a one-man play: "Voices of Men," www.voicesofmen.org, to educate youth about the epidemic of violence in dating. April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Other workshops will include Internet Safety; Cell Phone Safety; Suicide: How to Recognize, Question and Prevent; and more. More information forthcoming.

May

Honor thy Father and thy Mother: A conference on education and prevention of elder abuse. An outreach to the elderly by Safe Place Faith Community (Office of Family Life). More information forthcoming.

June 19-22

Grief to Grace: Healing for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse (griegtograce.org). Contact Office of Family Life. All inquiries are confidential.

July 11-13

Rachel's Vineyard Retreat: Hope and Healing After Abortion (Office of Family Life)

July 26

The 40th anniversary of Humanae Vitae: The prophetic encyclical that speaks to us today.

August 14-17

Grief to Grace: Healing for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse (www.griegtograce.org).

September 27

Project Gabriel Volunteer Retreat Day

October 4

Respect Life Conference: The Consistent Life Ethic. More information forthcoming.

October 31-November 2

Rachel's Vineyard Retreat, Hope and Healing After Abortion (rachelvineyard.org).

Saint Greg's Honor

continued from page 4

Plano, Texas: Rachel L. Langford
Seminole: Allen B. Harvey
Shawnee: Emily E. Walsh, Amanda D. Sauviller, Marcy L. Reeves, Jason E. Talley, Michelle Q. Henderson
Tecumseh: Brittnie A. Sassaman, Carrie L. Harris
Warrensburg, Mo.: Jennifer L. Organiscak
Winfield, Kan.: Elizabeth A. Bevilacqua
International: Igor G. Manfro, Nathalie S. Pfeifer

Dean's Honor Roll

Ada: Amanda N. Kelley
Bartlesville: Megan K. Hudson
Clarksville, Md.: Maree A. Collins, Chet J. Collins
Edmond: Driskill A. Sawyer
Fort Worth, Texas: Kathryn T. Anthony
Harrah: Morgan S. Jack, Kayla D. Jackson, Amanda E. Visnieski
Lindsay: Brooks W. Robbins

Lookeba: Kyra L. Hart
Mannford: Melissa D. Rich
Maud: Genieve M. Taylor
McLoud: Allie K. Fleischfresser
Moore: Melody D. Mattox
Noble: Lorraina J. Robinson
Okemah: Randall W. Vaught
Oklahoma City: Erin E. Howard, Joe L. Hughes, Amelia G. Patterson
Shawnee: Amy M. Carlile, Toni M. Christian, Rita A. Hunnicutt, Eric R. Landess, Laurie B. Mason, Deborah D. Shafer, Kimberly S. Willis
Springdale, Ark.: Hannah M. Engledowl
Tecumseh: Cody A. Roe, Charles D. Scott
Tulsa: Mayra Chavez, Kimberly A. Kelley, Katherine Neal
Wilson: Callie R. Brewer
Yukon: Jessica M. Munson, Abby M. Wolf
International: Assane N. Diedhiou, Michiko Matsui, Glixon J. Mavarez, Diego A. Molero, Gerardo E. Santos, Ya-Hsun Su, Juri Suzuki, Misato Tamura, Oscar E. Zuleta

Death Penalty: The Irreversible Mistake

Mistakes?

The New Year is a good time to reaffirm our commitment to the sanctity of life and review the death penalty process and all the mistakes that have been uncovered. Studies show that more than 120 innocent people have been put on death row in the 37 states that have the death penalty, eight of these in Oklahoma.

We learned most recently that charges against a death row inmate by the name of Curtis McCarty were dismissed. He is now in the process of suing Oklahoma City, the chief of police and ex-police chemist Joyce Gilchrist for his wrongful conviction. Part of his claim is that Gilchrist manufactured evidence that put him on death row. Jeff Pierce was also one of her mistakes. Pierce spent 16 years in prison, wrongfully convicted of rape, and it has cost Oklahoma City millions of dollars.

When we think of all these mistakes being made, it is a tragedy, but good people can and do make mistakes. When we think of evidence being produced and manipulated, it is criminal.

As long as people are in charge of



*Life.
Period.*

By Jim Fowler

our criminal justice system, mistakes will be made. This is the main reason why we should not have a punishment such as the death penalty. It is a punishment which is totally irreversible. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the state of New Jersey abolished the death penalty this past December.

We continue to have the death penalty in Oklahoma because the majority of our state legislators want it. They continue to turn their backs on the possibility of tragic mistakes and the outrageous cost to us, the taxpayers. Perhaps an added tragedy is with the voters and taxpayers. Your silence and passive acceptance of the death penalty is a sign that perhaps the majority of Oklahomans really do not care. Where do you stand?

Feeding Our Loved Ones: The Modern Curse of Brain Damage

Many families are faced with decisions about what to do when their loved ones suffer serious brain injury. When individuals are unlikely to come out of so-called “vegetative states,” should we discontinue nourishing them by tube feeding? Is there anything wrong with causing patients in compromised states to die from starvation and dehydration under these circumstances? We all lived through such a decision when Terri Schiavo died in 2005 in Florida. Her death raised disturbing ethical questions which continue to reverberate in society today.

I remember discussing her situation with somebody who remarked, “Well, I wouldn’t want to live the way Terri did, with such poor quality of life.” My response was, “Nobody would want to live the way she did — yet we all face deficits and disabilities that we have to live with. The bigger question is whether other people should be taking it upon themselves to remove feeding tubes that are effectively nourishing individuals who are compromised or disabled.”

Oftentimes people fail to grasp several of the key factors regarding Terri’s condition. First, they may mistakenly assume that she was actively dying from something, that she was hanging onto life by a mere thread. But Terri was not dying of any particular disease; she was living with a disability, surrounded by the love of her parents, siblings and friends. She had been living reasonably well with her disability for nearly 15 years, before her estranged husband made the decision to stop feeding her. Terri was an otherwise healthy young person who suffered under the burden of a serious brain injury, which left her unable to do many things on her own. In many ways, she was like a young, helpless child because of her injury. But she

was not actively dying from anything.

A second error that is sometimes made is to imagine that Terri was brain dead. I once did a segment for a national news program where the reporter asked me why Catholics were required to do everything in their power to keep people alive who were basically brain dead, like Terri Schiavo. I had to spend a moment explaining how Terri was not even close to being brain dead, and that she had significant brain function. This was evident from her ability to initiate movement, her ability to breathe on her own (she was not on a ventilator), and her ability to pass through sleep-wake cycles. Brain dead individuals can never perform these kinds of activities because the organ of the brain has died, and such individuals are, in fact, dead.

A third error that is made in analyzing Terri’s situation is to suppose that tube feeding would be required only if it might improve or cure her vegetative state. Some bioethicists, including sadly some priests, seem to pursue this erroneous line of thought. One of them has written:

“Even though her parents disagreed, her spouse... asked that life support in the form of ANH [artificial nutrition and hydration] be removed. Was it ethical or sound? It seems it was. First of all, he maintained that this was her wish. Moreover, given the history of the case and sound medical opinion, he would be on sound ethical grounds if he requested that ANH be removed because it did not offer her hope of benefit.”

Tube feeding, of course, cannot offer hope of benefit or cure for the vegetative state. Tube feeding is not meant to be a therapy for brain damage. Rather it offers a different kind of benefit, namely, the very real benefit of preventing dehydration and starvation, which nobody ought to die

Making Sense

Out of Bioethics

Father Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D.



from. Generally speaking, we ought to die from a particular pathology or a sickness, not from a state of dehydration or starvation that could easily be prevented by tube feeding. Thus, tube feeding was very effective for Terri, and did offer her benefit. In fact, it enabled her to be nourished for 15 years before being disconnected on March 18, 2005, resulting in her death nearly two weeks later.

A commentary issued by the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 2007 describes the benefits of tube feeding:

“It does not involve excessive expense; it is within the capacity of an average health-care system, does not of itself require hospitalization, and is proportionate to accomplishing its purpose, which is to keep the patient from dying of starvation and dehydration. It is not, nor is it meant to be, a treatment that cures the patient, but is rather ordinary care aimed at the preservation of life.”

Sometimes patients suppose that tube feeding can be generically declined, by specifying it beforehand in a living will. It would never be ethical, however, to decline an ordinary or proportionate means that is oriented toward preserving life. We are morally obligated to use all such ordinary means, because we must take care of the life we have received as a gift. It is not ours to dispose of or act against, and we cannot ever ethically engage in suicide or euthanasia, nor specify such actions beforehand in written instruments, like living wills.

On the other hand, we should not draw the conclusion, that tube feeding will always be required. There will be circumstances and situations where tube feeding may become extraordinary or disproportionate, as when it is no longer effective (the food is not absorbed), when it causes extreme discomfort, pain or serious infection, or when it causes other grave difficulties such as repetitive aspiration (vomiting and breathing the vomit into the lungs, often resulting in pneumonia). Normally, however, tube feeding is not unduly burdensome and is not unduly expensive or difficult, and therefore should be presumed necessary for patients who might need it, unless and until it is shown to no longer provide the benefit of nourishment, or to cause significant complications and harmful side effects.

Often what lies at the heart of these debates is the view that a life must have a certain amount of “quality” or else it need not be continued. But every life has imperfect qualities, and some have more than others. It is never our place to judge whether another’s life is “worth living.” Our duty is to provide loving care and strong support to those whose “quality of life” may be less than perfect, including those who are sick or those who may be struggling with serious disabilities like those in Terri Schiavo’s situation, rather than targeting them for an early demise through the withholding of food and water.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D., earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org.

Still Time to Register For Oklahoma Women’s Conference

OKLAHOMA CITY — There is still time to register for the upcoming Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference. The conference will be held on Saturday, Jan. 26 at Bishop McGuinness High School.

Four sessions featuring both local and out-of-state speakers have been scheduled, and vendors have contracted to set up booths selling books, clothing and religious items. The relics of St. Gianna will also be on display.

Snacks and lunch are included in

the registration fee. After Jan. 18, the registration fee is \$45. Students may register for \$25, and any religious and those who cannot afford the fee may attend at no charge. A T-shirt commemorating the event may also be ordered for \$15.

The conference will begin with check-in at 8 a.m., and conclude with Mass at 5:30 p.m. celebrated by Archbishop Eusebius Beltran.

For registration and more information, visit the conference Web site at www.OCWConference.com.

Mustang Parish to Celebrate Anniversary

MUSTANG — On July 2, Holy Spirit Catholic Church will turn 25 years old. However, parishioners there plan to celebrate all year long with a variety of activities. Already their parking lot light poles are decorated with colorful anniversary banners featuring the church logo and anniversary theme — “Celebrating 25 years of faith, family and service.” Other planned activities include the annual church celebration; a free community-wide breakfast; a special commemorative Mass; a catered lunch for the entire parish community; a parish photo directory; a community service project to benefit the greater Mustang area; and the construction of a 25th anniversary “Celebration Pavilion.” This will

be a 2,350-square-foot, multi-purpose outdoor covered pavilion.

Father James Greiner, pastor, said the previous Merritt Funeral Home’s chapel served as a temporary place of worship as the new membership began its existence in 1983. The first Masses were offered in the chapel on July 2 and 3rd of that same year. In November 1985, the current temporary church and Parish Center at 1100 N. Sara Road were built providing parishioners a place to worship and to continue to grow as a Catholic faith community. Current membership totals more than 375 families. Plans are under way to construct a much-needed permanent church, dependent on the raising of the necessary funds.

Letters

Article Laughable

I must say that reading the article on why Hispanics were noticeably absent among those who used the Cox Center as a shelter during the recent power outage made me chuckle. Once again a media outline, this time the *Sooner Catholic*, makes the assumption that fear of HB 1804 is what governs the day-to-day activities of the Hispanic community. The article also relies on the traditional “Hispanic experts,” non-Hispanics, when attempting to determine why the Hispanic community is or is not participating in a particular activity. If you wanted to know why Hispanics did not use the Cox Center, all you had to do was go into the community and ask — what a novel idea.

And while you did not ask, let me give you a few possible reasons. Understand that while I do not speak for the community, I am, at least, Hispanic, and have a working knowledge of my community. HB 1804 probably did have an impact on the decision by some Hispanics not to use the Cox Center. To say otherwise is foolish. However, to highlight this as the primary reason is equally foolish as you have no basis for this determination. Your article leaves the impression that most Hispanics in Oklahoma are fearful of HB 1804 because they are illegal immigrants. This simply is not true. Let me say it loud and clear; yes, we have illegal Hispanic immigrants in Oklahoma but the majority of us are here legally and are, in fact, native born.

Now for a few possible reasons Hispanics, and many other people, did not use the Cox Center: 1) No loss of electricity. I, as an example, live in Midwest City, also known as ground zero for the ice storm, and did not lose power. This is also true for many of my Hispanic and non-Hispanic friends who live throughout the metro area; 2) Relying on friends and relatives. Like many I know, we hosted people during the ice storm; 3) More conveniently located shelters.

There were quite a few shelters more convenient to the community than the Cox Center; and 4) they did not want to.

As for HB 1804, among most Hispanics I know, there is more disappointment in this bill than fear. The disappointment is twofold: 1) This bill does not address how to solve a real problem — illegal immigration; and 2) Many of us feel betrayed by those who said they would help, on our behalf, craft an effective law. In the end, what resulted was nothing more than an ineffective, emotional and ill-conceived approach toward solving a real problem and a law that protects not those in the Oklahoma community needing help but the “service providers” who helped craft this law.

Abel Aldaz Jr.

**Our Lady of Fatima
Nicoma Park**

Updates Needed

The individual parish Web sites are interesting and informative about personnel and activities, but, in some cases, not current with Mass times. As a good Catholic girl, I try to schedule our holiday plans around holy day Masses and this year checked Web sites for Mass times, only to end up standing in an empty church parking lot. (Does the Lord give us credit for trying?) I am sure it's a bit of a hassle to update Mass times regularly, but it certainly would be appreciated by out-of-towners, especially at the holidays.

Rita Hughes

Sacred Heart, Hinton

Yeah to Epiphany

I am a member of Epiphany Parish in Oklahoma City and I am the director of the north Oklahoma City Birth Choice. I want to brag on my parish. I have never gone to our pastor, or any board with a need and been turned away. Our pastor, the Community Service Board, the Men's Club, Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the Women's Club, the RE director, the youth director and any member of our parish that I have

asked for help for a mother or her baby have always said yes.

What a beautiful example of stewardship. What a beautiful example of living God's words: “Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers...”

Yeah Epiphany of the Lord Church.

Ray Ann Merchant
Epiphany of the Lord
Oklahoma City

Not Fit to Print

With due respect, the news item, “Cardinal presides over Methodist event,” that appeared in the Jan. 6, 2008, issue of *Sooner Catholic*, sends the wrong message to all who are faithful to the Catholic faith.

Clearly, this is going overboard with the “ecumenism” agenda that is being promoted by our prelates, a member of the College of Cardinals and a papabile of all people!

This ecumenical event and “celebration” of a heretic, who rejected the Catholic Church and established his own Church (along with his brother, John), is a communicatio in sacris, condemned by the Magisterium. And that this event was held in one of Catholicism's greatest Basilicas, St. Paul Outside the Walls, definitely sends the message that his Eminence, Cardinal Kasper, has lost the Catholic faith. Why the Holy Father has not spoken against this, I'm at a loss to know.

Christian Unity, which Our Lord prayed for in St. John Chapter 17, means conversion to the true faith, for there should only be one Lord, one Faith and one Baptism.

This news item is not something to be printed in a Catholic newspaper. Many of your readers will think that all religions are equal (indifferentism) and that it is OK to participate in Protestant services.

Vincent Alcazar
Saint Thomas More, Norman

Across Oklahoma

Tax Clinics

EDMOND — St. Monica Parish will be hosting free tax clinics for low-income families every Sunday from now until April 13 from 1 to 3 p.m. The clinics will offer free state and federal income tax return preparation and e-filing for low-income families. There will also be free legal advice regarding tax, business and bankruptcy issues.

Catholics Returning Home

YUKON — Have you been away from the Church? Have you ever thought about returning? If so, we would like to welcome you back to St. John Nepomuk Catholic Church, 600 Garth Brooks Blvd. We have a special ministry for people just like you who have been away from the Church. Join us for a week series that begins at 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 5 in the Parish Activity Center. We would like to address your questions and make you feel at home once more in the Catholic Church. For more information, call the parish office at 354-2743.

Samaritan Ministry Workshop

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Office of Family Life will be sponsoring a SAMARITAN MINISTRY WORKSHOP on Feb. 9 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The SAMARITAN MINISTRY WORKSHOP

provides volunteer training, enabling participants to assist their fellow parishioners who are ill or homebound, at the time of a funeral and during bereavement. Come and learn which place is right for you in this ministry of “Ordinary People Serving Ordinary People during Extraordinary Times.” This workshop will be held at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 NW Expressway. Registration fee is \$10 and lunch will be provided. Manuals and training material fees are separate. For more information, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

Altus Priest Leads Group to Italy

ALTUS — Father Joseph Arledge, pastor of Prince the Peace Church, will be the spiritual director for a pilgrimage to the Shrines of Italy. The 12-day visit is from Oct. 13-24. The itinerary includes five nights in Rome, two nights in Assisi, one night in Florence and two nights in Venice. Side trips to Siena, Ravenna and Padua are planned. Cost is \$3,199 each. Deposit is \$450 each with final payment due by July 10. The package includes air from OKC, Tulsa and DFW, daily breakfast and dinners, Superior Tourist Class hotels, air-conditioned motor coach and English speaking guide. For more information, call John Tagnesi, toll free, at 1-888-544-4461.

Priest to Be Honored

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma City Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women will host an “Appreciation Reception” in honor of Father Joseph Kolb, who faithfully served the Council for years. The reception will be held from 2 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 3 at the Catholic Pastoral Center in the dining room. All are invited. If you are unable to attend but would like to send a card, please mail it to Pearl Sullens, 1941 N.W. 17th, Oklahoma City 73106. For more information, call (405) 524-3641.

Dinner Feb. 16

NICOMA PARK — The Catholic Daughters of Our Lady of Fatima Church, N.E. 23rd and Meyer Circle, will hold a spaghetti dinner on Feb. 16 at 5 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Cost for the dinner is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children under 12. For more information, call Pat Holcomb at 390-8679.

Peru Dresses for Sale

OKLAHOMA CITY — Christ the King Church is selling smock dresses made by the nuns and others who work in a Peru orphanage. These dresses will be on sale after the Masses the week-end of Feb. 16-17. Mass times are Saturday, 5 p.m., Sunday, 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. Christ the King is located at 8005 Dorset Drive.

Holy Eucharist: The Most Personal Relationship One Has With Christ

Even when we speak the same language, we sometimes have difficulty communicating with one another. You don't have to travel to England to experience this. There are regional anomalies right here in the United States.

It happened to me while walking out of a grocery store in Atlanta a number of years ago. A lady entered Winn Dixie and asked me, "Are you finished with that buggy?" I stared blankly for a moment and realized she was referring to my grocery cart.

"Oh, yes. Sorry. It's all yours," I mumbled, as I quickly added another definition to the word buggy. From henceforth, it could refer to a piece of baby equipment, a prop for an Old West movie, or (in Atlanta) a grocery cart.

Likewise, one of the more frustrating aspects of sharing the Gospel with others is that we do not always share the same dictionary. Recently, a woman on the reality show *Survivor* proved the point. The host asked her about being religious. She bristled and explained that she is not religious but has a personal relationship with Jesus.

Catholic viewers scratch their heads and think, she sure sounds religious to us. The problem is that Evangelicals and Catholics mean different things when they use certain words or phrases.



Catholic by Grace

By Denise Bossert

Take the word religious. To the Catholic, it means to be counted among the faithful. One who is devout. Baptismal vows shape how they live, and they are fully engaged in this journey to God.

To Evangelicals, the word religious means almost the opposite. They believe a religious person concentrates on rituals and formulas at the expense of a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ.

That is why Evangelicals will not ask a stranger if he is religious. Rather, they will ask him if he has a personal relationship with the Lord. And it's a valid question. To answer it appropriately, though, we need to consider what the person really wants to know. Like the woman who asked if I was finished with the buggy, you may not be able to answer the question if you do not know what the question is really asking.

In short, how real is Jesus to you? To what extent has He impacted your life? Do you invite Him to go with you into your week? Do you talk to Him

before you fall asleep? Is He the first one you speak to when you wake in the morning? Do you see Him in the face of the homeless? The poor? Your aging parents?

When things go really well, is He the first one you tell? When things are spinning out of control, do you reach out for His hand, like Peter walking on the water to Jesus?

Being religious does not mean (or should not mean) that we cling to external rituals that are void of meaning. On the contrary, it should mean that our faith impacts everything that we do. It redefines our calendar, it gives framework to the way we worship God, it instills reverence and a proper fear of the Lord, and it brings order, balance, depth, fullness and unwavering faithfulness to our walk with God. This kind of faith is very personal.

Moreover, every Catholic who receives the Most Blessed Sacrament receives Jesus Christ in the most intimate way possible. You can't get more personal than having Jesus Christ on your tongue. His Real Presence meeting you at the cellular level. Overwhelming you. Changing you. Think about it, when you went forward to receive Our Eucharistic Lord at Mass last time, you experienced the most personal touch we can experience on this earth. The

one who created you, the one who flung the stars into space and formed every valley and mountain, the one who holds all things in His hands — He became so small and humble that you have been given the opportunity to rise from your knees, walk the aisle, bow, and put out your hands and take Jesus into your own body!

It is too miraculous, too mysterious to comprehend. But that doesn't mean that it isn't true. And it doesn't mean that you shouldn't try to contemplate such profound love. Spend the distance from your seat at Mass to the raised Eucharist contemplating with awe and wonder who it is that comes to you — so intimately, so personally.

How is it possible that He should come inside me, and I not cease to breathe, to think, to exist? Such love, it is almost too much to grasp. And yet, we do grasp it enough to say, "Amen" when we come face to face with God the Son. The next time someone asks you if you know Jesus personally, the answer must be one resounding yes.

Editor's Note: Denise Bossert is the mother of four children. She lives with her husband in New Melle, Mo., where she is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church. She writes a monthly column for the St. Louis Review that traces her journey from Protestantism to Catholicism.

'Why Is There Something' Perfect Antidote for Political Sound-Bites

It was a very peculiar place in which to find one of the world's most distinguished philosophers: the hard-currency bar of the Hotel Europa in Moscow, a basement dive full of cigarette smoke, appalling rock music and East German women practicing the world's oldest profession. Still, when someone mentions the great Polish thinker Leszek Kolakowski, that dump is the first place that comes to mind. The second is an encampment of homeless Russians at the edge of Red Square, near the multicolored onion domes of St. Basil's Cathedral.

In October 1990, in company with a half-dozen academics and several colleagues from Washington think-tanks, I spent a week in Moscow in intense discussions with men and women who described themselves as the "democratic opposition" to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev — whom none of them regarded as a democrat. We were fomenting revolution, if of a nonviolent sort, and the days were filled with bad meals, seedy spooks in the hotel lobby, and fascinating arguments about the building blocks of the free society. On checking into the Europa, it was clear even to amateurs that our rooms were bugged, so we had to find a secure place to meet in the

evening, debrief and plan the next day's discussions. The hotel's hard-currency bar (entrance to which required dollars or deutschmarks) was a convenient spot where the decibel-level was so awful that even an artful KGB bug-artist couldn't figure out what we were discussing.

So there we met, night after night, as the venerable Dr. Kolakowski — author of one of the 20th century's magisterial works, the three-volume *Main Currents of Marxism* — dispensed wisdom while sipping cherry brandies and politely batting away aggressive frauleins trying to plant themselves on his lap. As remarkable as those memories are, however, walking with Leszek through the wretched tent-city that homeless Russians from the provinces had erected just outside Red Square gave me a full sense of the human decency of the man: for Kolakowski, who speaks fluent Russian, had a word of sympathy and encouragement for every one of those poor souls who tried to engage us in conversation.

I mention all of this, strangely enough, as an invitation to an antidote — an antidote to the brain numbness that descends on any thoughtful person at this point in an election



The Catholic Difference

By George Weigel

cycle. The antidote is Leszek Kolakowski's new book, *Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?* 23 Questions from Great Philosophers (Basic Books). Tired of mindless sound-bites? Disgusted with political demagoguery? Spend a few hours with Kolakowski, as he explains in plain language how some of the world's greatest minds wrestled with the Really Big Questions: How can we know anything? What is justice? Why is there evil in the world? What is the source of truth? Is it possible for God not to exist?

On that same visit to Moscow, a friend and I toured the three cathedrals inside the Kremlin; all of them had recently been restored to mark the millennium of Christianity among the eastern Slavs. Our guide was a young man who wanted to practice his English and who'd been hanging around our hotel. He was

good company, but a bit baffled when we got to a large restored fresco depicting the Last Supper. "Who are those men and what are they doing?" our guide asked, in complete innocence.

Here was Soviet Man: culturally and spiritually lobotomized, unable to comprehend a great artifact of his own civilization. Leszek Kolakowski, I thought, should be here. A philosopher who had, at great personal cost, broken with Marxism in his native Poland could explain to this youngster the bad ideas — the bad answers to the Really Big Questions — that had deprived him of his cultural heritage. I hope something like that has happened to my young friend since our brief meeting.

In any event, if you're looking for an antidote to campaign pabulum, have a go at *Why Is There Something Rather Than Nothing?* Then give it to a young friend. Or a presidential candidate. Or Chris Matthews.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. Weigel's column is distributed by the Denver Catholic Register, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Denver. Phone: 303-715-3215.

Whether Read From Left or Right, Scripture Our True History

"We didn't stop burning witches because we stopped reading scripture; we stopped burning witches because we kept on reading scripture."

Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled*, wrote those words and they teach a lesson that we would be wise to learn as we debate whether morality is progressing or declining today within secular culture.

What Bailie's axiom suggests is that history should be written carefully: The past wasn't all golden and the present isn't all bad, just as the past wasn't all bad and the present isn't all good. Our age, like every other, has brought moral advancements in some areas and moral decline in others. Mostly this is not acknowledged in our debates about morality.

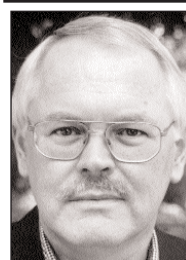
Conservatives too easily idealize the past and demonize the present. In their view, secular culture is generally seen to be morally decadent, soft, hedonistic, shortsighted and superficial, a fall from a better time, from a golden moral age where in people believed in God more strongly, were more generous, more community-minded, more committed to church, and more responsible sexually. Conservatives tend to look at certain moral indicators within our culture (abortion, euthanasia, family breakdown, declining church attendance, sexual irresponsibility) and see the whole culture as "a culture of death."

Liberals too easily do the oppo-

site: They tend to see secular culture precisely as an "enlightenment," a huge moral advance over many former moral blind spots, racism, superstition, sexism, narrow fundamentalism, unhealthy fear and intolerance in the name of God. Secular culture is then seen as possessing the moral high ground and this achievement is itself seen as the result of secular culture shedding the restraints of religion. For many liberals, we have stopped burning witches precisely because we have stopped reading scripture, or at least because we have stopped listening to organized religion.

What Bailie's comment does, among other things, is expose both these views as being too selective in their reading of history. Conservatives are right in pointing out that secular culture's too-easy acceptance of abortion, family breakdown, euthanasia, faith without church, pornography and sex outside of marriage are major moral blind-spots, a regression that does make for a certain "culture of death." But, as Bailie's comment also makes clear, that's not the whole story. The same culture, so blind in some areas, is progressing morally in other areas. It has stopped burning witches. In what way?

Conservatives are right in pointing out that secular culture's too-easy acceptance of abortion, family breakdown, euthanasia, faith without church, pornography and sex outside of marriage are major moral blind-spots, a regression that does make for a certain "culture of death." But, as Bailie's comment also makes clear, that's not the whole story. The same culture, so blind in some areas, is progressing morally in other areas. It has stopped burning witches. In what way?



By Father
Ron Rolheiser

Christianity and the cross (which lies at its center) can be compared to a time-released moral-capsule that is dissolving slowly in history. We can trace, historically, some of the more salient moments in this process: It took us, the Christian world, 1,800 years to accept, unequivocally, that slavery is wrong, but eventually we learned it. We kept reading scripture long enough. It took us 2,000 years, and the last pope, John Paul II, to accept that capital punishment is wrong, but, like slavery, eventually too we learned that. We kept reading scripture long enough. And it has taken us 2,000 years and we are still, slowly, learning and accepting more and more of the implications of the gospel in terms of social justice, equality for all, and respect for the integrity of creation.

The good news is that we are, slowly, getting it and it is no accident that, for instance, Holland, the most secularized culture in the world, takes care of its poor better than any other country in the world, has perhaps the highest status for women in the world, and is a culture of high tolerance. These are major moral achievements inside of a culture that is at the same time regressing morally in terms of its acceptance of abortion, euthanasia, prostitution, pornography and drugs. Moreover, its moral achievements have come about not because Holland or secular culture has stopped reading scripture. What's best morally inside of secular

culture issues forth mostly from its Judeo-Christian roots. Liberalism's reluctance to admit that stems more from an adolescent grandiosity than from any honest reading of history, akin to a 17-year-old who sees only her parents' faults and is unable to acknowledge that the very moral guns she now has trained on her parents were given to her by those same parents.

What all this highlights is that our moral judgments may not be simple: The past we sometimes idealize, for all its moral strengths (its faith in God, in church, in family, in sacrifice, in self-renunciation, in sexual responsibility) was, because of racism, sexism and dogmatic intolerance, less of a golden age for some than for others. We once too had our "Taliban" that declared that error had no rights and killed people in the name of God and of purity of doctrine. Conversely, today, our secularized liberal culture, for all its heightened moral sensitivity within the areas of race, gender, justice, tolerance and the integrity of creation, has its own glaring moral blind-spots in the areas of abortion, end of life issues, church, family values and sexuality.

And so, no doubt, we need, all of us, to keep on reading scripture.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. He can be contacted through his Web site www.ronrolheiser.com.

Understanding Often Begins When We Laugh at Ourselves

I was standing in the shower recently, chuckling at myself about a recent foible or mistake I had made, and the realization came to mind what a gift it is to laugh at oneself. It use to be that I took myself so seriously and experienced so much hurt, anger and resentment. What a relief that I can now smile at, chuckle (there I go again) and even laugh at myself when I make a mistake.

As I continued standing there, enjoying the flow and warmth of the water flowing on my head, neck, shoulders and back, a sense of God's creativeness crept in and I realized the word "laugh" could be an acronym for Love, Acceptance, Understanding, Gratitude and Happiness.

Wow! What a lovely, delightful moment with God, a creative moment, a moment of laughter I had enjoyed. And I experienced a deeper realization of how meaningful it is to laugh at ourselves, our foibles, our character defects with Love, Acceptance, Understanding, Gratitude and Happiness.

Laughing at ourselves is a healthy form of Loving ourselves for it means we recognize that in spite of our character defects, our shadow sides, our shortcomings, that we are,

nevertheless, children of God who loves us just the same. When we laugh at ourselves we are recognizing we have and we can be honest about our character defects, knowing they are a part of who we are, who God made us to be, and, with our willingness, God can gradually modify and soften these defects of character.

Laughing at our foibles is a recognition that we can Accept these shortcomings. They came to us, perhaps as we were formed in our mother's womb, but most likely they came to us in our response to the environment around us as infants, toddlers, children, adolescents and young adults. Noticing and Accepting these defects is a significant step in our spiritual and personal growth.

Which brings us to Understanding. If we run away, blame others, don't take responsibility for, ignore and/or cover up our character defects, the more these shortcomings will grow and fester like a cancer within. And the stronger these defects become, the more likely we will live angry, resentful, miserable lives. Sad! However, God allows this.

However, the more we Understand our defects of character, the more we are honest about them,



Counseling Corner

By Joe Froehle,
LPC, ICADC

notice them, journal about them, wonder where they came from, observe who they help us, talk about them, expose them to the sunlight, make amends, the more likely God will help us remove them.

But before God can remove the defect, it must be Accepted and Understood. Anthony De Mello, in his book, "Awareness," writes, "As we understand, change happens." I love this statement for it gives me hope that as I notice, observe and understand my shortcomings, that change will happen and I will become a better man ... the man God wants me to be.

And this is where Gratitude comes in. For, in the realization that even though we have these shortcomings, God loves us. With our willingness to be honest and with God's help, these character defects can be softened and even removed. We can be grateful for the awareness and under-

standing that we can be forgiven, that we can be redeemed, and that no matter what, God loves us, has compassion for us and forgives us

Which brings us to Happiness or perhaps an inner joy that no matter what, God loves us and is always with us. And if God loves and forgives us, then we are lovable persons just as we are and we can love ourselves. And as long as we are willing to be honest about, not only our gifts, but our shortcomings, the more we will become the person God wants us to be.

So we are encouraged to Love ourselves, Accept and Understand our shortcomings, be Grateful and Happy that no matter what, God loves us and will help us remove these flaws. This certainly gives us reason to smile at, chuckle about (there I go again) and LAUGH at ourselves. My guess is God is laughing with us.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Joe Froehle has years of experience in marital, individual and family counseling. He serves in the Counseling Center at St. John the Baptist, Edmond. He can be reached at (405) 359-8539 or by e-mail at jfroehle@swbell.net.

Buenas Noticias...

...Viviendo continua y completamente nuestra Fe Católica

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas de Cristo:

En la primera edición del Stoner Catholic de este año 2008, le extendí mi más sincera invitación al pueblo Católico de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City. Les invité a que fortalecieran completamente la vida de nuestra fe Católica a lo largo de este año. Era invitación viene de mi propia convicción y del amor de nuestra fe Católica. Que experimentar la misma alegría cuando practico la fe Católica que se me ofrece. Para así entonces, poder compartir esta Buena Nueva de Jesús con los demás.

Mi primer desafío para el año 2008 es que ustedes participen en la Eucaristía todos los domingos como también en todos los días de obligación que establece la Iglesia. Perder un día de Misa en un día domingo o en un Día de Obligación, sin una causa suficientemente justificada, es un serio pecado que daña y destruye nuestra relación con Dios y nos impone restricciones.

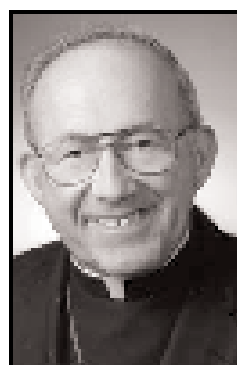
El valor de la Misa no se puede fundamentar en el valor de la música, en el sermón o como un acto de socialización, sin embargo, estas cosas son importante y contribuyen a que crezcamos en nuestra fe. Pero el valor esencial, el que no tiene precio, viene dado por Cristo mismo. El sacrificio de la Misa es recapitular la vida, muerte y resurrección de Cristo. Allí compartimos su tremendo amor, reconociendo que somos pecadores.

Vamos a responderle al amor y a la invitación de Dios y hagamos una prioridad y participemos activamente en la Misa de todos los domingos y en los Días de Obligación. En las próximas ediciones del Stoner Catholic, me dirigirá a ustedes sobre otras importantes prácticas de nuestra fe Católica tales

como lo son la confesión, el rezo diario, la devoción mariana, las devociones privadas y los requerimientos válidos para un matrimonio. No obstante, debo recordarles que ustedes son seres humanos compuestos de cuerpo y alma, no debemos olvidar restringirnos de la santidad de la vida a "puramente a la dimensión espiritual". Somos seres humanos hechos de carne y sangre. Vivimos en un mundo real. Estamos conectados con leyes naturales. Padecemos de hambre y de sed. Nos cansamos y debemos descansar. Estas condiciones humanas y materiales se relacionan con el tiempo y todas estas cosas contribuyen a vivir nuestra vida con santidad.

En dos semanas, estaré dirigiendo nuestra Colecta Anual de Fondos para nuestra Arquidiócesis.

*Cuando
somos gene-
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como un ver-
dadero signo de ese amor.*



Arzobispo
Salvan

Por muchos años, nos hemos simplemente referido a esta colecta como el ADF. Por lo tanto, en las Misas que se efectúan durante el fin de semana que comprende el día y tres de febrero, estaré dirigiéndome a ustedes en todas las Misas de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City en un sincero

mensaje grabado. Espero que todos ustedes puedan con mi súplica y respondan con generosidad y con amor.

Es muy desafortunado encontrar que hay personas que no tienen ninguna conexión con las necesidades económicas de la Iglesia.

Estoy convencido que cuando somos generosos con la Iglesia, practicamos el amor de Dios y lo expresamos como un verdadero signo de ese amor. Es uno de los signos más ciertos de expresión de nuestro amor a Dios.

La Iglesia Católica es única. No es solamente una comunidad de creyentes. La Iglesia fue establecida por Jesús, quien nos guía y nos lidera. Es a través de su Cuerpo que nos trae a Dios gran amor y piedad.

Mediante la Iglesia que es

visible y la cual Dios fundó. Dios nos perdona, nos nutre, nos fortalece, y nos guía. Y en misterioso plan divino, Dios tiene nuestra salvación. Dios nos invita a su Iglesia, para compartir su propia misión. A través de nosotros, la misión de Cristo y Su presencia continúa en el mundo.

Por ende, donde apogemos la misión y vida de la Iglesia, estamos respondiéndole a Cristo mismo, cuando damos a conocer las enseñanzas de Cristo o experimentamos su piedad, cuando compartimos la Buena Nueva de Jesús con nuestro prójimo, estamos respondiéndole a Cristo mismo.

La Iglesia de nuestra Arquidiócesis puede continuar la misión y el ministerio de Jesús con los frutos que ustedes dan generosamente a través de la colecta ADF.

Por lo tanto, le agradezco a quienes han respondido al ADF en el pasado. Ahora, invito a todos los Católicos a que se unan a nosotros en esta gran misión combinada de Jesús.

El ADF es el domingo por favor hagan un generoso donativo económico a nuestra Arquidiócesis. Su compromiso lo puede establecer en pagos de 10 meses. Esto será reconocido y apreciado grandemente.

A apoyar a la campaña del ADF es parte de vivir completamente nuestra fe Católica.

El apoyo económico a la Iglesia es profundamente un signo de fe y amor a Dios Todopoderoso, quien nos ama total y completamente.

Instituto Cultural Hispánico comenzó sus clases

Por Mauro Yanes
Stoner Catholic

NORMAN — La instrucción basada por la cultura familiar, religiosa y comunitaria de las personas es esencial para apoyar el amor propio de una sociedad, el desarrollo de una identidad fuerte y un sentido coherente de integración a la diversidad.

Al traer la cultura y las prácticas de las familias y las comunidades de los hispanos a nuestra Iglesia, se pueden mejorar las experiencias de aprendizaje que nos han sido dadas por mandato de Dios en el Evangelio y en nuestra doctrina Católica.

Por lo tanto, el éxito de una verdadera integración de una cultura distinta de la dominante está fundamentado en el amor a nuestro prójimo. El crecimiento de la población hispana tanto como de diversidad lingüística y étnica ha llamado la aten-



Grupo de instructores del Instituto Cultural Hispánico.

ción a un grupo de laicos para promover la cultura hispana y la lengua española a través del Instituto Cultural Hispánico en la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City.

El Instituto Cultural Hispánico es un programa que tiene

como finalidad crear el respeto por la cultura y el idioma de la familia hispana inmigrante.

Tenemos que estar dispuestos a tener una actitud muy abierta hacia los inmigrantes, especialmente reconocer y dar por sentado que todos los

hispanos tienen su cultura o identidad propia. Quienes ya están participando en este instituto han hecho sentir que es divertido y alentador aprender cosas nuevas sobre culturas nuevas.

El Instituto establecido recientemente en la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City cuenta actualmente con más de 80 anglo-parlantes de diferentes parroquias. Estas personas son informadas sobre la historia y características de los hispanos y cuentan con clases de español.

Al respecto la profesora María de Jesús Páez Ruiz mencionó que fue impresionante la respuesta que tuvieron los participantes durante el primer semestre del instituto. Ella dijo: "Quiénes participan se sienten llamados a vivir mejor su fe".

Registrations still open; please call to Saint Joseph parish at (405) 321-3030.

Sus oraciones a Dios y su confianza en Caridades Católicas fueron más fuertes Días de angustia vivió una familia por aplicación errónea de ley HB1804



El abogado Richard Klinge está trabajando arduamente a favor de los inmigrantes.

Por Mauro Yanes
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Las exigencias de los ciudadanos por un sistema de justicia más justo se están sintiendo cada día más en el estado de Oklahoma.

La organización Caridades Católicas de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City ha intensificado su trabajo en lo relativo al tema de justicia social y derechos humanos, a través de su oficina de servicios legales. Esta oficina, está bajo el mando y dirección del abogado Richard Klinge, quien es su Director.

Recientemente una familia católica, quienes son miembros de la parroquia del Sagrado Corazón, vivieron momentos muy angustiosos cuando enfrentaron el desafío que le impuso a uno de sus miembros la ley anti-inmigrante HB1804. Ese miembro de esta familia, se llama José Miguel Vacío, de 22 años de edad, quien es hijo del señor Álvaro y la señora Marta Vacío, oriundos de México.

José Miguel Vacío, es un joven que quiere vivir el sueño americano. Así pues, hace tres años atrás se dispuso a convertirse en ciudadano estadounidense mediante el proceso de naturalización y lo logró.

José Miguel como cualquier otro joven y como ser humano que es, ha podido cometer faltas, y una de éstas fue tomar mientras conducía. Sin embargo, José Miguel reconoció su

falta y lo está enmendando.

El padre de José Miguel Vacío, el señor Álvaro Vacío en una entrevista exclusiva para el Sooner Catholic nos narró la odisea que desencadenó en una gran confusión y días de angustias para toda su familia.

El señor Álvaro Vacío dijo lo siguiente: "Mi hijo cometió una falta, lo que conllevó un complicado proceso judicial que nos condujo a pagar su fianza. Después de haber pagado su fianza, me dijeron que mi hijo me lo entregarían en un par de horas. Pasaron horas y nada. Por lo que mi esposa y yo, decidimos averiguar qué pasaba. ¡Que sorpresa nos llevamos cuando nos dijeron que nuestro hijo lo habían puesto a la orden de inmigración para chequear su estado migratorio y sabíamos que él era ciudadano de este país!".

Algunos católicos hispanos se enteraron por Álvaro Vacío de su situación y contactaron a Caridades Católicas para explicarles a los abogados de esta institución que un ciudadano estadounidense podía haber sido detenido arbitrariamente, puesto que ya un juez le había concedido una fianza para su liberación.

El señor Álvaro Vacío se dirigió a Caridades Católicas para hablar con el abogado Richard Klinge, solicitándole ayuda.

El señor Álvaro Vacío explicó, que escuchó de las autoridades de la cárcel que ellos le aplicaron la ley HB 1804 a su hijo José Miguel, quien



El católico Álvaro Vacío busca respuestas solamente con la paz en Orinda, Jesús.

es ciudadano estadounidense, para verificar su estado migratorio después de su infracción. Álvaro Vacío no entendió porque ya sí había llevado la licencia de conducir, la tarjeta del seguro social y la fotocopia de su certificado de naturalización, las autoridades de la cárcel no le daban la libertad a su hijo.

El señor Álvaro y su esposa no entendían nada de lo que pasaba. El abogado Richard Klinge ordenó a la directora de la oficina de inmigración de Caridades Católicas, la abogada Margie Solís, atender al señor Álvaro Vacío. José Miguel Vacío, firmó en la cárcel el poder de representación legal a Margie Solís. Ella demostró que José Miguel Vacío había sido privado de su libertad por tres días de manera equivocada.

Al respecto, el señor Álvaro Vacío dijo: "Como es posible que dejaran a mi hijo detenido tres días para chequear su ciudadanía, yo le doy gracias a Dios y a los abogados de Caridades Católicas por toda su ayuda".

Este caso de la familia Vacío evidenciará una vez más que se requiere una vigilancia de mayor alcance para salvaguardar la dignidad de todo ser humano en nuestro estado. Muchas organizaciones de la sociedad civil en Oklahoma están haciendo un llamado para que los legisladores modifiquen la ley HB1804. Será cuestión de esperar a que más periodistas, funcionarios y opinión pública empie-

cen a preguntarse cuándo los legisladores van a corregir esta ley que va en contra de la dignidad de los inmigrantes.

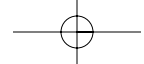
Algunos activistas de la sociedad civil y expertos legales mantienen que se necesita un concepto coherente sobre el tema de inmigración para prevenir abusos y actos irresponsables por parte del gobierno del estado de Oklahoma. Sólo mediante el establecimiento de claros precedentes legales, de oraciones y manteniendo el juramento a la resistencia, será posible lograr grandes progresos para lograr la derogación de la ley HB1804 que es inhumana, racista y xenofóbica.

Es crucial no ignorar la importante dimensión económica que adversa esta ley.

La ley HB 1804 puede desencadenar en poca transparencia de una rendición de cuentas, tal como pasó en el caso de José Miguel Vacío, donde las autoridades de inmigración alegaron que las autoridades de la cárcel del condado de Oklahoma le habían suministrado el nombre erróneo de José Miguel Vacío.

El gobierno de Oklahoma debe garantizar que los derechos humanos se respeten a todos los ciudadanos que residen en este estado, sin importar si éstos son legales o indocumentados.

Debemos permitirnos más fácilmente hacer bombo y cuenta nueva y dialogar sobre inmigración de una forma más sincera y profunda.



Elementary School Principal

Christ the King School is a kindergarten through eighth-grade school located in Oklahoma City, with an enrollment of 376 students and a professional staff of 25. Christ the King seeks a principal who will be a faith leader as well as academic leader of a fully accredited Catholic parish elementary school. Candidates must be willing to assume responsibility for day-to-day administration as well as assist in the long-range goals for the school. Applicant must be a practicing Catholic and hold a master's degree in educational administration or related field and a minimum of five years educational experience. Position is available for the 2008-2009 school year. For an application, contact the Office of the Superintendent, P.O. Box 32180, OKC 73123, or call (405) 721-4202.

Elementary School Principal

St. Mary's School in Ponca City is seeking a principal who will be a faith leader as well as academic leader for the school. St. Mary's has preschool through eighth grade and enrolls approximately 150 students. Applicant must: 1) be a practicing Catholic; 2) have a master's degree in educational administration or a related field or be working toward such a degree; 3) have a minimum of three years teaching experience, preferably in a Catholic school. Salary based on qualifications and experience. Position available June 1. For an application, contact Office of the Superintendent, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City 73123, call (405) 721-4202, or contact mdubey@catharch-dioceseokc.org.

Catholic School Secretary

St. Eugene Catholic School is seeking a full-time secretary. The successful candidate must possess excellent verbal and written skills in English (Spanish skills would be an asset), the ability to use Microsoft Word, Outlook and other basic computer programs, and the ability to multi-task. Salary is dependent on education, experience and relevant job skills. To apply, send resume to Principal Suzette Williams, 2400 W. Hefner, OKC 73120, or e-mail at SWilliams@steugenes.org.

Groundskeeper Needed

National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague has an opening for a groundskeeper/facilities maintenance person. Responsibilities include: maintain the Shrine grounds including trees, shrubs, grass, sidewalks, parking lots; snow removal; painting; general handyman and other duties as needed. Must be physically able to lift at least 60 pounds and be willing to work out-

doors in all weather conditions. Some weekend and evening hours may be required. Salary commensurate with experience. To apply, send resume to National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague, P.O. Box 488, Prague 74864, or e-mail shrine_iop@hotmail.com

Bilingual Receptionist

Catholic Charities is seeking a bilingual receptionist for the Immigration Assistance Program. The successful candidate must possess excellent verbal and written communication skills in both English and Spanish, the ability to use Microsoft Word, Outlook and other basic computer programs, and the ability to interact in a positive way with clients, volunteers and donors. Salary is dependent on education, experience and relevant job skills. Bilingual candidates preferred. Resumes and salary history should be sent to Human Resources, Catholic Charities, 1501 N. Classen Blvd., Oklahoma City 73106, or by e-mail to nlargent@catholiccharitiesok.org.

Full-time Bilingual Counselor

Catholic Charities/St. Joseph's Counseling Center is seeking a full-time bilingual (Spanish) licensed counselor to provide professional counseling and related services. Services will be provided in the St. Joseph's Counseling Center at Catholic Charities and at selected parishes within the community. Submit cover letter and resume to Human Resources, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, 1501 N. Classen Blvd., OKC 73106, or nlargent@catholiccharitiesok.org.

Maintenance Employee

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School is looking for a Maintenance Department employee. Resume and references should be mailed to L.D. McGowin, Maintenance Director, 801 NW 50th, Oklahoma City 73118. Any questions may be directed to 842-6638 Ext. 241.

Teacher Needed

Volunteer English teacher needed for the Father Rother Parochial School in Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala. Transportation, room and board provided. For more information, contact Father Tony Taylor at (405) 517-2303.

Teacher Sought

Sacred Heart Catholic School in El Reno is seeking a pre-kindergarten teacher. Applicants must have a license or certification in Early Childhood. Submit resumes to Principal Shannon Statton, 210 S.

Evans, El Reno, Okla. 73036 or fax to (405) 262-3818.

Job Coaches

The Center of Family Love in Okarche is looking for job coaches. This position is best described as a mentor for our community-based clients helping them to get to their jobs as well as helping them to understand what their employer needs and expects from them. For more information, call John Isenegger at the Center of Family Love, (405) 263-4658, or fax your resume to (405) 263-4563.

Interim Media Specialist

Mount St. Mary High School (Oklahoma City) is currently seeking an Interim Media Specialist (librarian) for the remainder of the 2007-2008 school year. This position needs to be filled on or before March 1. Applicant may also be considered for this permanent position for the 2008-2009 school year. Applicants can fax letter of interest, resume and copy of teaching certificate to Talita DeNegri at (405) 631-9209 or by e-mail to tdenegri@mountstmary.org. EOE

Head Football Coach

Mount St. Mary High School (Oklahoma City) is currently seeking qualified candidates for its position of head football coach for the 2008-2009 school year. Teaching fields are pending at this time. Applicants can fax letter of interest, resume and copy of teaching certificate to Talita DeNegri at (405) 631-9209 or by e-mail to tdenegri@mountstmary.org. EOE

Adjunct Faculty

The College for Working Adults at St. Gregory's University on the Shawnee campus has openings for adjunct faculty at the undergraduate and graduate level: General Education, Business and Business Law, Computer Science, Professional Development and Psychology. A master's degree is required, preference for candidates with experience teaching adults. Candidates must be supportive of and willing to contribute to the Catholic and Benedictine identity of the university. Send a cover letter, vita and transcripts to hr@stgregorys.edu or mail to Dr. Denise Short, Associate Dean, St. Gregory's University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee 74804.

Campus Minister

St. Gregory's University in Shawnee is looking for a campus minister. Responsibilities: Oversee and implement a comprehensive Catholic and Benedictine campus ministry program. Coordinate student-led retreat ministry as an outreach to area parishes and high schools (Buckley

Team). Coordinate student liturgies and student liturgical ministries and assist in the planning of campus-wide liturgies. Provide catechetical and faith formation activities such as Bible study, Lectio Divina, discussions on Catholic social teaching, small faith groups, etc. Develop service and mission trip opportunities for students. Maintain a pastoral presence among students, faculty and staff. Qualifications: Master's degree in Theology or Pastoral Ministry is preferred. Bachelor's degree and experience in Youth/Young Adult Ministry will be considered. Mature understanding of the Catholic faith tradition and ability to communicate the tradition creatively and pastorally. Willingness to work some evenings and weekends.

Send cover letter, resume and references to: St. Gregory's University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee 74804, or e-mail hr@stgregorys.edu. EOE

V.P. of Institutional Advancement

St. Gregory's University, a small, Catholic, Benedictine liberal arts university in Shawnee, invites applications for the position of vice president of Institutional Advancement. The vice president reports directly to the president and will be responsible for the planning and direction of all philanthropic initiatives, will plan and lead all advancement initiatives to capitalize on the university's success story, engage a broad range of constituents and grow the endowment. The vice president will work closely with staff, senior administrators and board members to identify priorities for fundraising and manage a portfolio of major gift prospects. A master's degree is preferred. It is strongly preferred that this individual be a practicing Catholic with knowledge of Benedictine spirituality.

Electronic applications are preferred, and should include a cover letter and resume. Nominations or requests for the complete position specifications may be sent directly to the university: Shingi Goto, Executive Vice President, St. Gregory's University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee 74804, or sngoto@stgregorys.edu, (405) 878-5435.

Catholic Radio is now on the air until 5:30!

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"Web of Faith" and
"Defending Life" from 5 to 5:30 p.m.

On KTLR 890 AM

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Catholic Broadcasting, Inc.
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JANUARY

20 The Catholic Daughters of Holy Trinity, Okarche, will be holding their annual **Chicken Noodle Dinner** from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Adults are \$6, children 6-12 are \$4, 3 and under are free. Two handmade quilts will be given away.

20 Pilgrimage Sunday, 10:45 a.m. Anointing of the Sick, 11 a.m. Mass, noon lunch, 1 p.m. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Prayer of the Chaplet of the Infant Jesus and the Litany of the Infant Jesus. Nat'l Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague is located at St. Wenceslaus Church, SH-99 7 miles N. I-40 or 20 miles S. I-44 at Stroud exit, Prague, (405) 567-3080.

20 Taize Prayer, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Red Plains Monastery, 728 Richland Road SW, Piedmont. For more details, call 373-4565. Optional video on Taize prayer at 6 p.m.

20 The Community of the Secular

Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus - Oklahoma Community and Province of St. Therese meets at St. Joseph Carmelite Monastery in Piedmont from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call Janet Mildfelt at (405) 848-6275 or Deacon Jim Breazile at (405) 377-9478.

21 Father Thomas Dubay, a well-known retreat master and expert in the spiritual life, will hold a conference at Epiphany Church, 7336 W. Britton Road, Oklahoma City, at 7 p.m. Those attending are asked to bring items such as small tubes of toothpaste, shampoo, soap, granola bars, etc., for the Sisters of Villa Teresa's Pantry for the homeless.

22 Ecumenical Prayer Vigil: To mourn the 35th Anniversary of Roe v. Wade. Join Archbishop Eusebius J. Beltran from 10 to 11 a.m. at the Oklahoma State Capitol, Fourth Floor Rotunda. For more information call the Office of Family Life at (405) 709-2707.

23 Sanctity of Life Mass, 6 p.m., Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Presentations to follow Mass with Dr. Rick Boothe for teens and a panel discussion for adults. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Judy Reilly at Catholic Charities, (405) 523-3009.

26 Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference at Bishop McGuinness High School.

27 Catholic Schools Week

29 McGuinness Home Basketball Game vs. PC North girls at 6:30 p.m., boys at 8 p.m.

1 Holy Family Home Mass, 11:30 a.m., Holy Family Home, 6821 Eddie Drive, Midwest City, (405) 523-3000.

1 First Friday Adoration at St. Francis of Assisi in Oklahoma City. After the 7:30 a.m. Mass, and concludes at 5:30 p.m. with closing prayer and Benediction. This is open to all. St. Francis is located at 1910 NW 19th, (two blocks east of Penn), Oklahoma City.

1 First Friday Sacred Heart Mass at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is at 5:30 p.m. with the Sacrament of Reconciliation available prior to Mass. Mass is at 7 p.m. Those wanting to learn more about First Friday Devotion and the practice of consecrating the family and home to the Sacred Heart of Jesus will find materials available after Mass. For more information, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944 or Diane Grim at (405) 528-6252.

For a full calender of events, visit www.catharchdioceseokc.org

FEBRUARY

1 Bingo Night at St. Joseph's Church in Norman. Light supper served at 6:30 p.m. Games begin at 7 p.m. with a first session; second session at 8:30 p.m. \$5 per session, no limit on blackout cards, group photo of all the winners.

Catholic Funerals

continued from page 8

the scriptures, carry up the bread and wine at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and serve as ushers and altar servers. Qualified persons can help distribute Holy Communion.

Within the Funeral Ritual, there are so many options. How many of you know that the priest has about 50 choices for the opening prayer? In addition to the general options, there are prayers for a child, a young person, a parent, a married couple, a deceased non-Christian married to a Catholic, one who died after a long illness, one who died accidentally or violently, one who died by suicide and more.

Here is one of the general prayers:

*Holy Lord, almighty God,
hear our prayers for Your servant
Virginia, whom you have summoned
out of this world.*

*Forgive her sins and failings and
grant her a place of refreshment,
light and peace.*

*Let her pass unharmed through the
gates of death to dwell with the
blessed*

*in light as You promised to Abraham
and his children forever.*

*Accept Virginia into Your safekeeping
and on the great day of judgment
raise her up with all the saints
to inherit Your eternal kingdom.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen. (OCF #398-3)*

As the Mass continues, we hear the comforting words from Sacred Scripture. The Ritual offers over 50

selections from the Old and New Testament. One of the most difficult portions of the funeral for priests or deacons is the homily. It is not supposed to be a eulogy. This is what the ritual says:

"A brief homily based on the readings should always be given at the funeral liturgy, but never any kind of eulogy. The homilist should dwell on God's compassionate love and on the paschal mystery of the Lord as proclaimed in the Scripture readings. Through the homily, the community should receive the consolation and strength to face the death of one of its members with a hope that has been nourished by the proclamation of the saving word of God." (OCF #141)

With careful preparation, I think the homilist *can* talk about what God does for all of us and how God's love was present in the life of the deceased.

But there is a place in the liturgy for more personal remarks. The ritual suggests, "Following the prayer after communion, a member or a friend of the family may speak in remembrance of the deceased before the final commendation begins." (OCF #170)

Careful instructions should be given to the person who will speak about the deceased. They should not declare that the deceased person is already in heaven. I also recommend that the comments be written out and somewhat brief. Again, these comments come at the end of the Mass, before the final commendation.

After the Liturgy of the Word, we turn for spiritual nourishment to the table of the Eucharist. This is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet that is to come.

"In partaking of the body [and blood] of Christ, all are given a foretaste of eternal life in Christ and are united with Christ, with each other, and with all the faithful, living and dead." (OCF #143)

At the end of the Mass, we have the Final Commendation and Farewell as we entrust the deceased to the tender and merciful embrace of God. The Ritual emphasizes that the "Song of Farewell" is the climax of the rite of final commendation. It "should affirm hope and trust in the paschal mystery." (OCF #147)

Since the "Song of Farewell" is to be the climax, I believe it is especially important that everyone participate. I elicit participation by saying something like this: "Now, I ask everyone to please join in our final prayer for James. You can find the prayer in our hymnal, number such and such. Let us all pray for James as we sing." This is the time for the priest to incense the body while everyone is singing the hymn.

One easy version of the "Song of Farewell" is set to the same tune as "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow." Here are the words:

Song of Farewell

*(1) Come to her aid, O saints of God;
Come meet her angels of the Lord*

(Refrain)

*Receive her soul, O holy ones;
Present her now to God, Most High.*

*(2) May Christ who called you,
take you home,*

And angels lead you to Abraham.

(3) Give her eternal rest, O Lord.

May light unending shine on her.

(4) I know that my Redeemer lives;

The last day I shall rise again.

Text based on

"Subvenite." Translation

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Individual parishes that wish

to reprint must contact the

author, dsmolarski@scu.edu

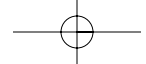
Music: "Old Hundredth"

by Louis Bourgeois.

After a few final prayers, the priest or deacon then says, "Let us take our sister to her place of rest."

If the "Song of Farewell" (like the one above) is supposed to be the climax of the funeral, then I think that it is not appropriate to have another congregational hymn as the procession leaves the church. Instrumental music or music sung by the choir is more appropriate.

Rev. Stephen Bird is pastor of Epiphany Parish in Oklahoma City. He also serves as director of the Archdiocesan Office of Worship and Spiritual Life. Rev. Bird may be reached at (405) 722-2110 or epiphany@epiphanyokc.com.



Cathedral Parish Reaches Out To Help the Homeless Through Social Action

By Elieen Dugan
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Sister Barbara Joseph Foley, CST, is “ecstatic” over the help the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish is giving to the ministry she helped to start, Sister BJ’s Pantry.

Owned and operated by the Carmelite Sisters of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, the religious order of which Sister Barbara is a member, Sister BJ’s Pantry is a ministry committed to helping those who find themselves destitute on the street.

While Sister Barbara Joseph was helping Rick Swyden, the founder of Hot Dogs for the Homeless, give out hot dogs to street people one Sunday afternoon, she realized the homeless needed more than a hot meal. They needed love and prayer, and they also needed personal hygiene articles like toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo and razors. They needed water to drink and clean clothes to wear. And, on cold winter nights, they needed blankets.

Immediately, Sister Barbara started collecting these items, and a new ministry, Sister BJ’s Pantry, was born. “BJ” stands for Barbara Joseph. The pantry that bears her name is at 819 NW 4th St., just east of Classen, where items gathered by Sister and her helpers are stored for future distribution to the homeless.

Our Lady’s Parish adopted Sister BJ’s Pantry as their service project through their Social Ministries Board. Soon, most Cathedral parishioners were putting goods aside for Sister’s ministry, and groups and individuals from the Cathedral were volunteering to spend time at Sister BJ’s Pantry. RCIA class members plan to join in the volunteer effort this year.

“Father Ed Weisenburger, the pastor at Our Lady’s, is very excited about all this,” Sister Barbara said. “It’s amazing what one parish can do!”

With Father Weisenburger’s support and encouragement, parishioners of Our Lady’s Parish collected more than 5,000 bottles of water in July, more than 3,000 cans of Vienna sausage in August, and more than 3,000 granola bars and 3,000 fruit cups in September for Sister BJ’s Pantry.

On “Undee Sunday” in October, Cathedral parishioners donated some 3,000 pairs of underwear to Sister’s ministry, while in November and December they helped the homeless cope with the extreme cold. In November, people from Our Lady’s contributed 387 blankets. In December, they collected 356 “hoodies” for the homeless.

Father Weisenburger was the impetus behind his parish’s social-action outreach. He asked parishioners Sharon Tappan and her husband, Jim to help choose a program currently benefiting the community that the Cathedral Parish could help.

The Tappans have been involved in JustFaith, a Catholic, parish-based, social-action organization. “Father Ed wanted to find an outreach that our parish could get involved with. He asked us to do some research and come back with a recommenda-



Hun Tran, an usher at Our Lady’s Cathedral, drops a parishioner’s donation onto the pile of items being given to help the homeless ministered to by Sister BJ’s Pantry. Photo/Sooner Catholic

tion,” Sharon Tappan said.

There were two requirements. The chosen project had to be led by volunteers, and it had to be one that would involve a large and diverse number of Our Lady’s parishioners “from the youth group, to RCIA, to individuals,” she said.

“We never had a formal agenda or plan,” Tappan added. “The Holy Spirit was leading us, so we went along for the ride!”

The Holy Spirit led the Tappans to form a group of their JustFaith colleagues and other interested parishioners to study the suitability of different ministries as a Cathedral Parish outreach project. Anyone from Our Lady’s could join.

The search group met, brainstormed and researched the ideas. A consensus emerged: Our Lady’s Parish should help a ministry located in or near their church neighborhood.

After much discussion and study, Sister Barbara Joseph’s ministry was chosen.

Sister Barbara was asked to come to Our Lady’s Church one Sunday and speak at each Mass in order to kick off the parish’s social-action program. The response of the parishioners to Sister’s appeal for help for her ministry was immediate and inspiring. Almost everyone wanted to help.

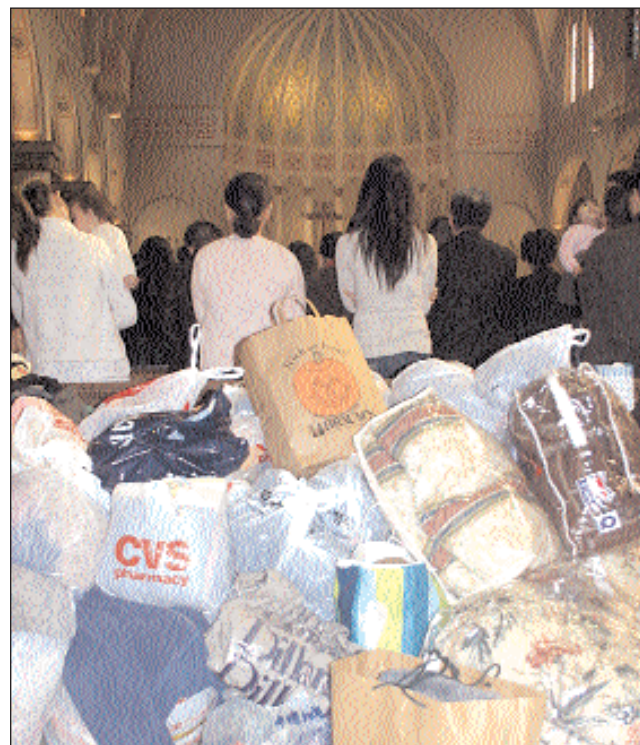
“Father Ed has been so supportive and helpful,” Tappan said. “We have an automatic caller, and Father leaves an upbeat message each month to remind people to bring their donations.”

D.W. Hearn, a JustFaith member, helped the Tappans co-lead the search group and is helping them co-direct Our Lady’s outreach effort.

On the weekends, Hearn makes sure there are enough volunteers to organize, categorize and transport the collected items to the pantry building. “D.W. does a tremendous job. He has been a real blessing to us,” Tappan said of her co-leader.

“There has been amazing generosity. One benefit is that the results have come from all over the parish. We have a large Vietnamese community, and they have been so generous in their support, both by donating and providing volunteers to help box up the donations, count them and get them to Sister Barbara. They have been just wonderful!” she said.

To learn more about Sister BJ’s Pantry, check out its Web site at www.srbjpantry.com.



A recent collection at The Cathedral of Our Lady brought in 661 hats, 290 scarves, 503 pairs of gloves. Also, 82 hooded sweat shirts and jackets, seven blankets, 28 pairs of jeans, 38 shirts and more than 70 other cold-weather items. Photo/Sooner Catholic