

Sooner Catholic

Serving the People of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Volume 36, Number 21 * November 7, 2010



St. Eugene Breaks Ground For 'Permanent' Home

Growing Oklahoma City Parish To Build New Church After 50 Years

By Rex Hogan
For The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — For the first time in more than a half century, St. Eugene's Parish will have a "permanent" church building in which to celebrate Mass.

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held Oct. 31 for a new \$6.77 million church for St. Eugene's Parish. The new church will be built on St. Eugene property in the 2400 block of West Hefner. The new church will be connected to the current sanctuary, which will be remodeled into a parish hall.

Work is expected to take 18 months with the new church expected to be open for worship in the spring of 2012.

Mary Diane Steltenkamp, one of the founding members of St. Eugene, said the first parish church was a prefabricated building built in 1959 in a wheat field. She said the current church was built in 1995 and it also was considered a temporary building.

"It has served us well over the past 45 years," Steltenkamp said.

Jim Cowan, co-chair of the New Church Capital Campaign

Committee, said the effort to raise money for the church hit several snags including a downturn in the economy, and those who doubted the funds could be raised.

"I reflect today how easy it was to obtain the funds," Cowan said in a humorous manner.

Archbishop Beltran said the effort by St. Eugene parishioners to erect a new church shows a great spirit of accomplishment.

"The construction of a parish church is more than putting up a building," the archbishop said. "The purpose of a parish church is to bring us closer to Jesus, and Jesus to us."

Archbishop Beltran said he recognized the "enthusiasm" that St. Eugene parishioners are bringing to the Catholic faith.

Anne Coddling, co-chair of the New Church Design Committee, said the work to build the new church started four years ago when "a small group of parishioners met at Father Joseph Jacobi's invitation to prayerfully plan how the parish would go about building a new church."

Father Jacobi said the current church seats 475 worshippers, not



Archbishop Beltran blesses the site for the new St. Eugene Church.

nearly enough room for the growing parish community.

"Our present structure is too small for special functions at our main Sunday Mass at 10 a.m. and too small for the most important services of the year during Holy Week," Father Jacobi said.

St. Eugene currently has five Masses celebrated during the weekend with attendance between 1,700 and 1,800 people. The new church building will have seating for 800 with room for an overflow of 200 worshippers.

"Thousands of vehicles pass by our parish property every day on Hefner Road and a beautiful new church would not only let people know we are here, but also draw them in to pray and worship," Father Jacobi said.

The Good News. . . **A Man for All Seasons**

Homily, Funeral Mass
Reverend David F. Monahan
Cathedral of Our Lady
November 2, 2010

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

We, the Catholic people of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, together with the larger community of people of the state of Oklahoma, have lost a great friend. The death of Father David Monahan closes many doors for the Church of Oklahoma as well as for the state. Father Monahan was a versatile and charming young man who grew in wisdom and grace and age before God and us.

I extend a very personal word of condolence and on behalf of the Archdiocese our sincere sympathy to Father Monahan's five nieces and nephews and the many grandnieces and grandnephews and all his dear friends. May we always cherish our memories of him and pray that he has now entered into the everlasting Kingdom of God.

As I reflect on the life of David Monahan, I cannot help but recall another historical figure who, like Father Monahan, was unique among his peers. I am thinking of one of the most remarkable lay persons in the history of the Church, Saint Thomas More. His many accomplishments testified to his intelligence, integrity, common sense, versatility and faithfulness. The famous play which later became a popular movie about Saint Thomas More tagged him perfectly as "A Man for All Seasons." Today, I believe that Father David Monahan can rightly be remembered as "A Man for All Seasons."

We are all familiar with his myriad accomplishments. Priest, pastor, teacher, principal, sports enthusiast, author, editor — and we could go on and on. These and other achievements have been referred to in the news about his death as well as in past and more recent conversations. But I believe his most striking testimony and his greatest witness for Jesus occurred in his years as a resident of Saint Ann Nursing Home.

It was true that after Father Monahan was admitted to Saint Ann's,

there was constant deterioration in his physical well-being. Eventually unable to walk or to respond verbally, his eyes and smile became his way of communicating. Yet there were two responses that he made almost to the end.

Throughout the daily Masses he attended, there seemed to be very little participation until the consecrated Host was offered to him. Then the words "This is the Body of Christ" or "Receive the Body of Christ" elicited a smile as he received Holy Communion. Also, whenever he received the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick or even an ordinary blessing, there was an attempt to make the Sign of the Cross himself. He might have been cut off from ordinary human discourse but he certainly was not cut off from God!

Visits to Father Monahan in this condition provoked many questions. I wondered how much he understood? How much was he suffering? How long would this silent vigil continue? Looking at him in this condition, I wondered if he felt alone? But in faith and with trust in God, I knew the Lord was truly with him at all times.

The Church is a community of people united to Jesus Who has called each of us and forms us into His chosen people. Consequently, much has been spoken and written about the virtues and importance of actual togetherness. Too little has been said about the reality and opportunity of aloneness. If togetherness means a sensitivity to the presence and value of other human beings, it is, of course, an ideal to be cherished and pursued. For no one, at least no Christian, would encourage someone to withdraw from humanity. But this pursuit of togetherness can obscure a very important reality, namely, the fact of a personal, private sanctuary in every human being. This sanctuary can be ignored but it will not go away. Nor can it be opened to all in some misguided search for absolute community. It is the center of one's being and ultimately it can be opened only to God. To surrender it to anyone but God is to become a slave. To surrender it to God is to be free forever.

Loneliness is a condition of one who feels abandoned. It is a result of our fallen human nature. It is a part of

Today, I believe that Father David Monahan can rightly be remembered as "A Man for All Seasons."



Archbishop
Beltran

our bondage. Father Monahan, a man of faith and love, wasn't alone or lonely. He lived his final years on this earth in mysterious solitude. Loneliness is a condition of one who feels abandoned, but solitude is a healthy condition. Solitude is the experience of a subtle, aching void which can be filled only by the Creator. Union with God in this life begins to fill this void and to ease this aching. Full and final satisfaction and completion is reserved until one has left this earthly pilgrimage and rests at last in the bosom of the Father.

Early last Tuesday, I anointed Father Monahan for the last time. Unlike previous occasions, his eyes never opened and there was no attempt to raise his hand, no smile. The mysterious solitude now deepened. On Wednesday, I took the Crucifix from the wall near his bed to bless him and thank him for taking up his cross and following Jesus. I said, "David, you have faithfully carried the Cross which the Lord gave you. Now may you share the victory of that Cross — life everlasting in heaven — and there may you meet your dear friend and brother priest, the Servant of God, Father Stanley Rother."

It was evident that his pilgrim journey on this earth was nearing completion. On Thursday, just before I arrived at Saint Ann Nursing Home, I received word that he had just died.

David, I thank you for being a good and holy and faithful priest. May you now have life everlasting.

*Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.
Let perpetual light shine upon him.
May his soul and the souls of all the
faithful departed rest in peace.*

Amen.

Sooner Catholic

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The Sooner Catholic (USPS 066-910) is published biweekly except for once in July and twice in December by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

The newspaper is not responsible for unsolicited material.

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Subscription rate: \$20 per year for all who are not members of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Periodical postage paid at Oklahoma City, OK 73125. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the *Sooner Catholic*, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, OK 73123.



The *Sooner Catholic* is supported through the Archdiocesan Development Fund.

'Adopt-A-Family' Returns For 15th Year

OKLAHOMA CITY — For many Oklahomans, the holidays are a flurry of shopping and gift-giving. Sadly, for a growing number of Oklahoma City's poorest families, a single Christmas gift can be out of reach. Fortunately, Catholic Charities Adopt-a-Family program is available to provide low-income families with Christmas gifts. Now in its 15th year, the Adopt-a-Family program has made Christmas possible for thousands of Oklahoma families. This year, however, the

program faces a growing need as more people are affected by the recent recession. To help fulfill this need, Catholic Charities is seeking sponsors for the Adopt-a-Family program.

"Although Oklahoma has weathered the recession well, the sad reality is that the number of people living in poverty has grown larger than ever," said Catholic Charities Executive Director Tim O'Connor. "This year alone, we anticipate 350 families to apply for assistance from the Adopt-a-

Family program, making the need for local support larger than ever."

Adopt-a-Family sponsors can be individuals, families, church groups, small businesses or even large corporations. Those who participate can choose to sponsor a single family or several (for larger groups).

Upon enrolling, each sponsor receives gift tags with the names and ages of family members as well as gift ideas for each person. To ensure that the program can help as many families

as possible, all gifts are limited to \$20 per person. For those who may not have time to shop, cash donations or department store gift cards are greatly appreciated. Gifts will be distributed to families the week of Dec. 13-17.

To learn more about sponsoring a family in need or to learn more about the Adopt-a-Family program, please call 523-3013. For more information about the programs and services of Catholic Charities, please visit www.catholiccharitiesok.org.

Program Seeking Donations

Catholic Charities To Help Refugees

OKLAHOMA CITY — Over the next few weeks, Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Oklahoma City will receive 40 refugees from Burma and Iraq through a U.S. State Department agreement. A large resettlement of refugees in such a short time is unusual for the program, which usually receives 175 State Department refugees in a year.

The unusual influx has created an urgent need for the Refugee Program, which not only helps transition the new refugees to life in Oklahoma, but also provides a place for each family to live, as well as basic household goods and furniture. Additionally, the program helps adult refugees obtain jobs, assists with school placement for younger refugees and ensures they have the services needed to become self-sufficient

Oklahomans.

"Many of these refugees have left their home country with little more than the clothes on their back. At Catholic Charities, our primary goal is to ensure new refugees have everything they need to be successful and self-sufficient in their new country," said Aimee Ryan, director of Refugee Resettlement Services for Catholic Charities. "To achieve this, we rely on donations of low-cost or useable household goods and clothing to help ease the transition."

Items needed include dining tables and chairs, living room furniture, basic household goods, such as cleaning supplies, dishes and towels, as well as hygiene products. All items should be clean and in good working order. To learn more about sponsoring a refugee in need or to learn more about the

Refugee Resettlement Program, call (405) 523-3002. For more information about other programs and services of Catholic Charities, please visit www.catholiccharities-ok.org.

Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement program helps newly arrived refugees for 90 days after arrival to ensure safety and stability, self-sufficiency and integration into their new community. Established in 1975, the Refugee Resettlement Program has operated as an affiliate of the Migration and Refugee Services of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, with the responsibility for the provision of Reception and Placement services to all newly arrived refugees in the initial 90 days, at which time, most refugees begin work and become financially independent.

Cleanup Set For Little Axe

OKLAHOMA CITY — Almost six months after a powerful tornado tore through the small community of Little Axe, debris still stands in many rural areas. To alleviate the problem, Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City will hold a debris cleanup day on Saturday, Nov. 13 at 10 a.m. Local churches, businesses, social service organizations and disaster-relief agencies that wish to assist in cleanup efforts are invited to attend.

In addition to volunteers, Catholic Charities is in need of donations to make possible the debris cleanup efforts. Among the items needed are gloves, tools, larger equipment and bottled water. To learn more about volunteering for the Little Axe tornado cleanup day or to donate items, please contact Nancy Martinez, Catholic Charities Disaster Services case manager, at (405) 523-3028 Ext. 154.

Adoption Support To Be Offered During Seminar Nov. 9

OKLAHOMA CITY — For those hoping to adopt, navigating the system can be difficult. Fortunately, the process can be made significantly easier with the help of a good agency, but how does one learn what questions to ask when looking to adopt?

In honor of National Adoption Month, Catholic Charities Adoption Services will host an informational open house for would-be adoptive parents on Tuesday, Nov. 9 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The short informational event will enable prospective parents to learn more about the program

and if adoption is a fit for them.

Catholic Charities Adoption Services is a licensed child-placing agency serving central and western Oklahoma.

All adoptive children are infants that have been placed in the custody of Catholic Charities by birth parents who have made an adoption plan for their baby.

Families are prepared for adoptive placement by completing the adoption home study and the adoption preparation seminar. The fee for adoption placement

covers the cost of the mother's medical care, legal fees for the birth mother and the child, living expenses for the birth mother, counseling for the birth family, as well as counseling and follow-up services for the adoptive family.

Catholic Charities provides adoption services regardless of ethnicity or religious preference.

For more information about Catholic Charities Adoption Services or the upcoming open house, please contact Kirsten Lee or Stephanie Storzyszyn at (405) 523-3012 or visit www.catholiccharitiesok.org.

Father David Monahan Dies October 28

Rev. David Francis Monahan died on Oct. 28, 2010, in Oklahoma City. Father Monahan was born March 6, 1927, in Tulsa, the second of two children born to Frank Monahan and Evelyn Connolly Monahan. Father Monahan received his education at Marquette High School, Tulsa, St. Louis Preparatory Seminary and Cardinal Glennon College in St. Louis, Mo. (now Kenrick Seminary) and St. John's Home Missions Seminary in Little Rock, Ark. He also received a master's degree from Notre Dame University in 1963.

Father Monahan was ordained by the Most Reverend Eugene McGuinness on May 23, 1953, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Oklahoma City. Following his ordination, Father Monahan served as associate pastor at Saint Francis of Assisi Church in Oklahoma City for five years. In 1958, he became a teacher at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School where he became principal in 1963, a position he held until 1971 when he was appointed Superintendent of Catholic Schools. Father Monahan served as Superintendent of Catholic Schools until 1974. From 1966 to 1978, Father Monahan was also pastor of Saint Robert Bellarmine Church in Jones, and Saint Theresa Church in Luther. Father Monahan was also the pastor of Our Lady of Fatima,



Nicoma Park, from 1973-1974. From 1979 to 1994, he was associate pastor of the Church of the Epiphany of the Lord, Oklahoma City. From 1995 to 1997 he served the parishes of Sacred Heart Church, Mangum, and its mission, Saints Peter and Paul Church, Hobart. From 1997 until his retirement in June 2002, Father Monahan served as pastor of Saint Catherine of Siena Church, Pauls Valley, and Saint Peter Church, Lindsey.

During his long service to the Archdiocese, Father Monahan was also a member of the Priests Council, the Pastoral Board, and has served as a Consultor, Vicar of the West and

Director of Communications.

Father Monahan is probably best known across the Archdiocese for his work as founding editor of *The Sooner Catholic*, where he served for 20 years (1974 to 1994). As editor, he traveled throughout the state to find stories and news in the parishes and built the newspaper into an award-winning newspaper. Father Monahan genuinely enjoyed his work as editor and writing his whimsical, folksy column, *For the Time Being*. An avid historian, Father Monahan compiled and edited "One Family: One Century," a photographic history of the Catholic Church in Oklahoma from 1875 to 1975, published in 1977. He also wrote "Sacred Heart Church: The Story of the Catholic Community of Greer County Oklahoma" in the mid-1990s.

Following the death of Rev. Stanley Rother on July 28, 1981, at the Archdiocesan mission in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala, Father Monahan published "The Shepherd Cannot Run," a compilation of letters from Father Rother to friends and family. In 1994, Father Monahan took a sabbatical to research and draft a biography of Father Rother. This work became a passion for Father Monahan, who found the personal story of Father Rother to be a great inspiration.

Father Monahan was preceded in death by his parents, his sister,

Helen Monahan Perrine Nance, and his nephew, Robert Perrine Jr.

He is survived by six nieces and nephews, Susan Perrine McHugh and husband, Tucker of Edmond, Mary Helen Perrine Edwards and husband, Bryce of Hilton Head, S.C., William Perrine of Tulsa, Patrick Perrine and wife, Julie of Seattle, Wash., Michael Perrine and wife, Susan of Longmont, Colo., and Richard Perrine of Tulsa; many grandnieces and grandnephews and many dear friends. Father Monahan's many lifelong friends remember him as an exemplary priest filled with humility and concern for people. They also remember his great sense of humor and sparkling smile.

A Vigil for the Deceased was held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 3214 N. Lake Ave., Oklahoma City, on Monday, Nov. 1, 2010. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at the Cathedral on Nov. 2, 2010, with interment following at Resurrection Memorial Cemetery, 7801 N.W. Expressway, Oklahoma City.

Family and friends are contributing to the Father Stanley Rother Seminarian Burse c/o of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123, or the Alzheimer Association, 3555 NW 58th, Suite 220, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73112.

Woman in the Ditch Was Barely There

Editor's Note: Father David Monahan's Irish-born storytelling ability graced the pages of the Sooner Catholic for 20 years. His tell it like it is, no nonsense humorous approach to life and journalism shined through in the column that ran every issue — For the Time Being. We at the Sooner Catholic could think of no better way to honor Father Monahan than to reprint one of his favorite columns so those who never read him and those who never missed an issue could enjoy his unique look at life. He will be missed.

Sooner Catholic - 03/27/83
For the Time Being
By David Monahan

This is the fourth anniversary of my nighttime encounter with *The Woman in the Ditch*. I am

sincerely grateful that the intervening period has not been spent gazing at the insides of the walls at Big Mac. The whole incident has given me a new appreciation of people with peculiar alibis.

A post-midnight telephone call formed the first link in the chain of events. John was dying, a parishioner and a friend. I dressed and drove to Baptist Medical Center.

Having done what I could for John and his family, I started back to the rectory preoccupied with the whole mystery and nastiness of death. My route took me south on Grand Avenue where it transforms into Interstate 44.

There was a car in the ditch dividing the highway. It was wedged east and west in the ditch which ran north and south. As I slowed to take a look at

the car, I was startled by the sight of a woman standing in the ditch next to the automobile. Her total costume on this chill March night was a pair of red bikini panties. The God of the unexpected had struck again.

I stopped. The area was empty of open stores, service stations or even passing motorists. There was nothing to do but to help the damsel in distress. I scrambled into the ditch. She was thirtyish and was swaying as though the ground were shifting under her feet. Her first words, which proved to be an exact statement of fact, were "I'm crazy drunk."

The engine of the car was running, and I turned it off. In the backseat were her purse, her eyeglasses and a blanket. I wrapped the blanket around

Continued to Page 5

Father Richard Parker Dies At Age 60

Rev. Richard Parker, 60, died at the Ave Maria Convalescent Hospital, Monterrey, Calif., on Oct. 27, 2010. Father Parker was born April 29, 1950, in Oklahoma City, one of four sons born to Harold and Betty Zoeller Parker. He attended Putnam City Schools, Conception Seminary, Conception, Mo., the University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond (B.A. 1974), and St. Meinrad School of Theology, St. Meinrad, Ind. (M.Div. 1977).

Father Parker was ordained on April 16, 1977, in Oklahoma City. Following his ordination he served the parishes of Saint Eugene Catholic Church, Oklahoma City, Saint John the Baptist, Edmond, and Saint Francis of Assisi, Oklahoma City. While serving Saint John the Baptist Church, he started the Newman Center at UCO. In 1983 he left Oklahoma to live in a religious community. He later took a teaching position at San Domenico Girls School in San Anselmo, Calif. He later was the chaplain and taught at Notre Dame High School, Riverside, Calif. In 1995, Father Parker was diagnosed with cancer, but continued his ministry as a volunteer chaplain at the John XXIII AIDS Ministry, Monterey, Calif.

Father Parker was preceded in death by his parents and his brother, Mark.

He is survived by his twin, Brent Parker, and brother, Brock Parker, both of Oklahoma City.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at the Catholic Pastoral Center Chapel, Oklahoma City, on Friday, Nov. 5. Interment followed in the Resurrection Cemetery. Funeral arrangements were under direction of Smith & Kernke Funeral Home, Oklahoma City.

Sister Mary Haase Dies at 101

Sister Mary Ninette Haase, age 101, died peacefully on Saturday, Oct. 23, 2010, at Mercy Health Center Convent in Oklahoma City after suffering a stroke. She was a Sister of Mercy for 79 years.

Sister M. Ninette Haase was born Lucille Haase to Charles Haase and Mary Blanche Allen Haase in Trail, Okla. In 1919 the family moved to Elk City where she first met the Sisters of Mercy. After graduating from high school she entered the St. Anthony Hospital School of Nursing in Oklahoma City. Finishing nurses training, she followed her older sister, Sister Mary Christina Haase, and entered the Sisters of Mercy in Webster Groves, Mo.

A meticulous nurse, Sister Ninette ministered in hospitals in Oklahoma, Kansas and Arkansas, where she served as a supervisor and instructor. "Nothing will ever replace a consistent, conscientious bedside caregiver," she said. In her lifetime, Sister went from living in a sod house to experiencing the invention of robotic surgery.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her siblings, including her brothers, Carl, Bill, Tom, George, Charles and Larry Haase; and her sisters, Sister Mary Christina, RSM, Cecilia O'Reilly, Rosa Amend, Ruth Murdock, Catherine (Kay) Stephan and Helen Witmire.

Family survivors include her

beloved sisters-in-law, Bonnie Jo Carroll Haase and Anna Belle Marcotte Haase, as well as many loving nieces and nephews, and her beloved Sisters of Mercy community.

Those she leaves behind will always love her and miss her dearly, including her co-workers, friends, compassionate physicians and loving caregivers at Mercy Retirement Convent.

Mass of Requiem was concelebrated on Oct. 27, 2010, at Mercy Health Center Convent, with Father Marvin Levin officiating, with Father Jude Shayo, AJ, and John Baptist Sseruwu, AJ, and Deacon Paul Lewis assisting. Burial followed in Resurrection Cemetery in Oklahoma City.

Monahan

Continued from Page 4

her and together we emerged from the ditch leaning into each other like a couple in the last hour of a dance marathon. Somehow I flopped her into the passenger seat of my old Maverick.

"Where do you live?" I asked.

She began to tell me, but then slurred, "Take me to my boyfriend's."

"You don't need to go to your boyfriend's, you need to go home."

She didn't answer.

I put my car in gear and started south on I-44. "If you won't tell me where you live, I'm going to take you to St. Anthony's Hospital," I said. "You might be hurt and not realize it."

This sane proposal was met by a gusher of profanity describing St. Anthony's, me and my forebears down to the 10th generation in not altogether laudatory terms. We proceeded.

Only three blocks from my goal a traffic light stopped us at Northwest 10th and Classen.

Eva (the name had tumbled out along with the obscenities) decided she was going to abandon ship. The Maverick had a tricky indoor latch and I hoped she couldn't work it. But she did. The right door opened, the dome light came on, the blanket fell off and I grabbed Eva's left arm to try and keep her in the car. At this moment another vehicle came to a stop behind us.

Imagine the scene. A middle-aged man wearing a Roman collar restraining a young woman in her birthday suit from leaving his automobile at 2:30 a.m. I was hoping that I would do well on the lie detector test.

"If you'll close the door, I'll take you anywhere

you want to go," I said, making Chamberlain at Munich look like an unshakable fortress in comparison. We drove north on Classen Boulevard, certain that swirling red lights and a S.W.A.T. team would blockade the road ahead, she trying to extract her boyfriend's house number from her pickled brain.

Her first fix on the guy's address turned out to be approximately in the middle of Belle Isle Lake. We tried again and again and then once more for Romeo's illusive habitat. At last she recognized a truck.

"Is this man married?"

"No."

"Does he live by himself?"

"Yes."

I decided to give it a try. Leaving Eva in the car, I walked to the front door and rang the bell. Nothing. I rang again. Somewhere inside a light shown. The door opened. A tall character in blue jeans but no shirt starred at me.

I went into my act like a nervous Girl Scout cookie seller. "My name is Father Monahan from Sacred Heart Church and I was driving down Grand Avenue when I spotted this car in a ditch and a naked woman standing beside it and I picked her up and the only address she would give me is yours and her name is Eva."

His groaned response, "Oh, God."

I knew salvation had arrived. Before that bozo could organize himself and slam the door, I had Eva, her blanket, her glasses and her purse on his porch. He opened the door for her, God bless him.

As Eva staggered into the house, she turned and said sweetly, "You are a beautiful man." The beautiful man watched for the police all the way home.

Hope After Abortion Offered At Retreat

Experience the healing love of Jesus Christ on a Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreat.

The retreat offers an opportunity to deeply enter into the grieving process and identify the ways your abortion may have affected you.

Discussions, spiritual exercises, prayer and reflection are combined with the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a memorial service honoring your child and a Mass of Resurrection.

Participation is strictly confidential and offers a profound opportunity to experience God's tender love and forgiveness.

Sadness, anxiety, guilt and grief are common, not only for the woman, but also the man involved — or for other relatives and friends.

Many struggle for years after the choice. All are welcome at the Rachel Vineyard retreats. There are trained peer companions, therapists and clergy who understand the pressures that can lead to abortion and the pain that can follow.

RETREAT DATES AND TIMES:

Retreat weekends are held twice each year. Current dates are posted on the national website: www.rachelsvineyard.org

Each retreat begins at 6 p.m. on Friday and concludes on Sunday at 4 p.m.

Pre-registration is required. We want to talk with you. Please contact us at (405) 623-3844, or rachelsvineyardokc@gmail.com.

The cost is \$75 for materials, lodging and meals.



Tom Avant of the Catholic Foundation presented Dana Hoffman of St. Eugene's in Weatherford with a CFO award recognizing her as being a finalist for the award of 2010 Religious Educator of the Year.



The Catholic Foundation

CORNERSTONE

Don't Let Dec. 31 Sneak Up on You

With this year's challenges and accomplishments still fresh in your mind, now is a good time to review and update your estate plans. To help you in this process, here is a checklist of estate planning actions for you to go over as the end of the year nears:

1. Review your current will and trusts. Should these documents be updated because of major changes in your life, such as births or deaths, or moves, etc.?
2. Take inventory and make a written record of the contents of any safe-deposit box. Give a copy to a trusted family member.
3. Review the beneficiary designations for your life insurance and retirement plans to make sure your beneficiary isn't someone who is now deceased.
4. Make sure your durable power of attorney for health care and living will are current.
5. Be sure you are comfortable with the guardian named in your will for minor children or disabled loved ones under your care.
6. Finish charitable contributions by Dec. 31. As you think about special holiday gifts for family and friends, remember that making charitable gifts to the Catholic Foundation in their honor can be a heartwarming experience that also offers you tax benefits.

For more information on Planned Giving contact:
**The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma,
Inc.**

P.O. Box 32180
Oklahoma City, OK 73123
(405)721-4115 ■ www.cfook.org
tcasso@catharchdioceseokc.org

Please Remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Your Estate Plans

ADF Appeal Attracts 9,500 Donors

Even with current economic conditions, around 9,500 donors, through their faith and their love of God, have pledged almost \$2,850,000 in support of the various apostolates and ministries serving the people of this Archdiocese. Although these dollars are short of the needed goal, it is an extraordinary amount when we consider that the number of donors is almost 1,500 below the average for the

last few years. Realistically, the total payments on all pledges generally do not match the generous desires of the donors. At press time, payments are a little over \$2,400,000. Therefore, it becomes increasingly important that all pledges be met. However, there are many parishioners who have waited to see what will happen with the economy before making any donation. Now is the time, everyone is requested to

open their hearts to God's love and pray for guidance, knowing God chose each one of us for a special purpose and to respond to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to help with the work of building Jesus Christ's church for His people.

Donations may be made as one-time gifts or divided into two payments. The parish will see that all gifts to the ADF Appeal are forwarded to

the ADF office or gifts may be mailed directly to Archdiocese of OKC, c/o ADF Office, 7501 NW Expressway, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73132.

A special thank you to all donors current and future — you have made your life, a life lived in God's love and shared with others. God continues to bless you and enrich your lives.

Tom Maxwell
Executive Director ADF Appeal

Campus Event To Tackle 'New Atheism'

By Rep. Rebecca Hamilton
For *The Sooner Catholic*

The so-called "New Atheism" is mostly a press event. Despite worshipful claims to the contrary by its followers, the "New Atheism" is just a rehash of worn-out thinking, almost entirely from the 19th century. What is new is the adolescent quality of its rhetoric and actions.

Consider the following:

— Two of the so-called "Four Horsemen" of the so-called "New Atheism" announce that they will stage a citizens arrest of the pope on his recent visit to Great Britain. Then, as the guffaws and outrage grow, they claim they never said it.

— A petition demanding that the government pass laws saying that parents who teach their children to believe in God are committing child abuse is signed by, among others, one of the "Four Horsemen" of the "New Atheism." Then, as the outrage grows, he claims he signed the petition by mistake.

— One of the "Four Horsemen" of the "New Atheism," in his eagerness to prove that war and all other human brutality is caused by religion, blithely announces that Josef Stalin, the Soviet dictator and mass murderer, was not an atheist. Then, as it becomes clear that this places him in the same intellectual space as Holocaust deniers, he claims that what he meant is that Stalin didn't murder in the name of atheism.

— Repeated desecrations of the Eucharist by individuals — a number of them college professors — who present themselves for Communion in Catholic Churches in order to obtain a host, then film themselves pouring urine on it, spitting on it, driving nails into it and flushing it down the toilet. They then post the films on the Internet.

If you think this sounds like the behavior of a bunch of juvenile nut jobs, you're not too far

from wrong. Unfortunately, this particular group of juvenile nut jobs has a cult-like following in certain self-proclaimed "intellectual" circles and on our college campuses.

This behavior is based primarily on the philosophy found in a series of books written by four men, who the press dubs "The Four Horsemen" of the "New Atheism." What, one might ask, makes a "New" atheist "New?" It's not the age of "The Four Horsemen," since most of them are on the high side of 60. It's not what one slaving reviewer called their "intellectual brio," since they are basically just restating the same stale points that Bertrand Russell made over 80 years ago in *Why I Am Not a Christian*. It's certainly not a new philosophical approach, since Friedrich Nietzsche, who is the true father of modern atheism, first told the world that "God is dead" in 1882.

Even the "New Atheism's" incivility and aggressive political agenda is old-hat. Despite the fact that three of these four atheist evangelists travel the United States on a self-proclaimed mission to "convert" the populace to their peculiar brand of militant unbelief, their political activism doesn't hold a candle to that of earlier "New" atheists such as Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin.

The "New Atheism" is the same old nihilism that gave us the totalitarian bloodbaths of the 20th century, gift-wrapped in a crazy quilt of pretense, arrogance and painfully simple-minded insults targeting anyone with the temerity to lay claim to a belief in God. So why should we take these "New" atheists, or "brights" as they like to call themselves, seriously? Because, incredible as it may seem, they are gaining followers, especially, or perhaps I should say, particularly, on our college campuses.

I don't think this is an accident. The authors of these books are somewhat obsessed with what our children are taught. Dr. Richard

Dawkins, in his book, "The God Delusion," uses extensive quotations, which he casts in a favorable light, to make his case that parents who take their children to Sunday school or Mass are, in his opinion, committing child abuse.

Dawkins says that he is trying to create a politico/socio movement of atheism; that he wants to drive religious belief from the public square. His cohort, Peter Hitchens, told a reviewer that he was targeting the southern United States because faith is strongest here.

Dawkins' website has a section called "Convert's Corner," complete with a photo of a rosary, in which converts to atheism relate their conversion experiences. These "New" atheists may try to lay claim to science in their arguments, but what they're doing has nothing to do with science. They are creating a religious and political movement designed to attack and silence people of faith in America.

Their primary target isn't you and me. Adults, as they know, are too set in their ways to be easy converts. Their target is our children, their method is "education" and their means is our schools. Dawkins lays it out clearly in his books and we see it acted out in reality on our college campuses every day. We must equip our children to answer this onslaught of propaganda that comes at them daily. At the very least, they need to know that it is propaganda, and not science.

That's why a small group of committed Christians, including representatives from Catholic Charities and the Southern Baptists, have been working to create a series of events for our college campuses called The God Decision. The first event in The God Decision series will be Dec. 1 at 8 p.m. in the Oklahoma Memorial Ballroom, 900 Asp Ave., University of Oklahoma campus. The first speaker will be Dinesh D'Souza, author of *What's So Great About Christianity*. The event is free and open to all who wish to attend.

Fifth Annual Women's Conference February 5

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma Catholic women are invited to spend a day of reflection, healing and renewal at the Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference in February. The fifth annual conference will be held on Saturday, Feb. 5 at the Clarion Conference Center at I-40 and Meridian.

The conference will include a morning Mass with Archbishop Eusebius Beltran, Adoration and Reconciliation, and a vendor area. Both online and mail-in registrations began on Nov. 1.

Four sessions featuring nationally known speakers have been scheduled, and vendors have contracted to set up booths selling books, clothing and religious items.

Through Jan. 21, the registration fee is \$50, \$30 for students, and includes a box lunch and drink. After Jan. 21, the registration fee is \$60, and will be accepted as space permits. Registrations can be submitted on the conference website, or by mailing in a registration form available on the website or in parish offices. The conference website is www.OCWConference.com.

Special room rates of \$89 are available at the nearby Hilton Garden Inn by calling (405) 942-1400. Reservations should be made by Jan. 21.

Speakers and topics are:

Marge Fenelon
"She's My Mother, and She's Your Mother, Too!"

Who is Mary? She's the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. But who is she really? Most people tend to either ignore her completely or put her on a pedestal so high they can't relate to her. In this enticing and informative talk,



Marge Fenelon will help us to get to know Mary personally so that we can truly say, "She's my Mother, too!"

Marge Fenelon is a Catholic, author, speaker and columnist. She's the author of *Waiting with Mary*; *Advent Reflections for Those Who Hate to Wait* and *Ecce Mater Tua — Behold, Your Mother*; and *Marian Stations of the Cross*. Her book, "When's God Gonna Show Up?" has gained substantial momentum, spawning her snappy and inspiring *When's God Gonna Show Up?* workshop. Her most recent work is *When's God Gonna Call Me Back?*, and has already been instrumental in leading others back to the Catholic Church.

Learn more about Marge at www.margefenelon.com.

Sharmane Adams

Leap of Faith

Experience an hour of testimony by clinician and concert musician Sharmane Adams. She takes you on a journey through her conversion. Sharmane experienced a life-changing event during Lent 1997. She shares stories and music and makes her own personal experiences a spiritual awakening for all.

Sharmane Adams grew up as a child who traveled the globe. She was exposed to numerous cultures and openly admits that she was blessed with many of the material privileges that only some can imagine. But as she grew into her adult life and was confronted with numerous challenges, she felt a yearning to grow deeper and more spiritual in her life journey. Although she was rooted in religious upbringing, it wasn't until she attended a church retreat that she truly converted from being religious, to living her life on-fire



for her faith! As Sharmane embraced this new direction for her life, she also quickly realized that music and ministry would be a significant aspect of this conversion experience.

Learn more about Sharmane at www.sharmane.com.

Colleen Hammond
Love, Honor and Obey?

Is there any one "head of the family?" Or is it mutual submission? In this talk, Colleen delves into what the Bible says, what the Church, Saints and Doctors of the Catholic Church say about wives being subject to their husbands. Hold on to your hats!

The Family: A Sacred Calling



Colleen shows how the family is not our idea, but God's, and how the family is what will save our culture and society.

A former on-camera meteorologist for The Weather Channel, model, actress and Miss Michigan National Teen-Ager, Colleen lived the American Dream and found it to be a nightmare. While working in television, she reverted to the Catholic Faith. The moment their first baby was born, Colleen "saw the light" and abandoned her highly successful career in television to become a stay-at-home-mother.

Colleen is an award-winning writer, radio and television talk show host, educator, comedienne, and mother — all rolled into one!

Learn more about Colleen at www.colleenhammond.com.

The Agenda for the Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference

- 7 a.m. — Registration begins
- 8 a.m. — Mass is celebrated by Archbishop Beltran
- 9:15 a.m. — Vendors Open
- 10 a.m. — Conference Begins
- 12 p.m. — Lunch, Reconciliation, Adoration and Shopping
- 2 p.m. — Conference Resumes
- 4:45 p.m. — Closing Comments
- 5 p.m. — Closing Prayer

Yukon Parish Celebrates Construction, Historic Bell

YUKON — The parish of St. John Nepomuk Catholic Church recently enjoyed a celebration of their rich history and promising future.

Father William Novak, pastor of St. John Nepomuk, blessed a new parking lot and entrance plaza to the church and rang a newly installed historic bell on Sunday, Oct. 10, during the annual parish picnic.

The bell dates to 1904 and was first installed in the second Catholic church built in that same year at the corner of Oak Street and 8th Street. When the parish moved to its current location on Garth Brooks Boulevard, the bell was placed in a shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In 1994, the bell was put in storage when a new, larger church was built. After 16 years of silence, the bell is now in a prominent place and is operational, calling the people of God to worship.

Bells have always had an important place in the life of the Church. In the fourth century AD, after Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Empire, Christians no longer had to worship in hiding but could build churches and worship openly. Bells rang to remind people that it was time to worship and praise God. The bell at St. John Nepomuk is named Vincent de Paul, after the French saint who served the poor in the 17th century and also for the first pastor of the parish, Father Vincent Bendarek. Other names that appear on the bell inscription are Bishop Theopholus Meerschaert, the first bishop of Oklahoma Territory, and Pius X (now a saint), who was pope at that time.

A new parking lot with 75 regular parking places and five for handicapped parking was con-



Father William Novak and St. John Nepomuk at the Blessing of the Bell.

structed to meet the needs of the growing parish. Trees and plants of many varieties, as well as lighting and irrigation, were part of the construction project and provide a warm and welcoming environment to parishioners and visitors.

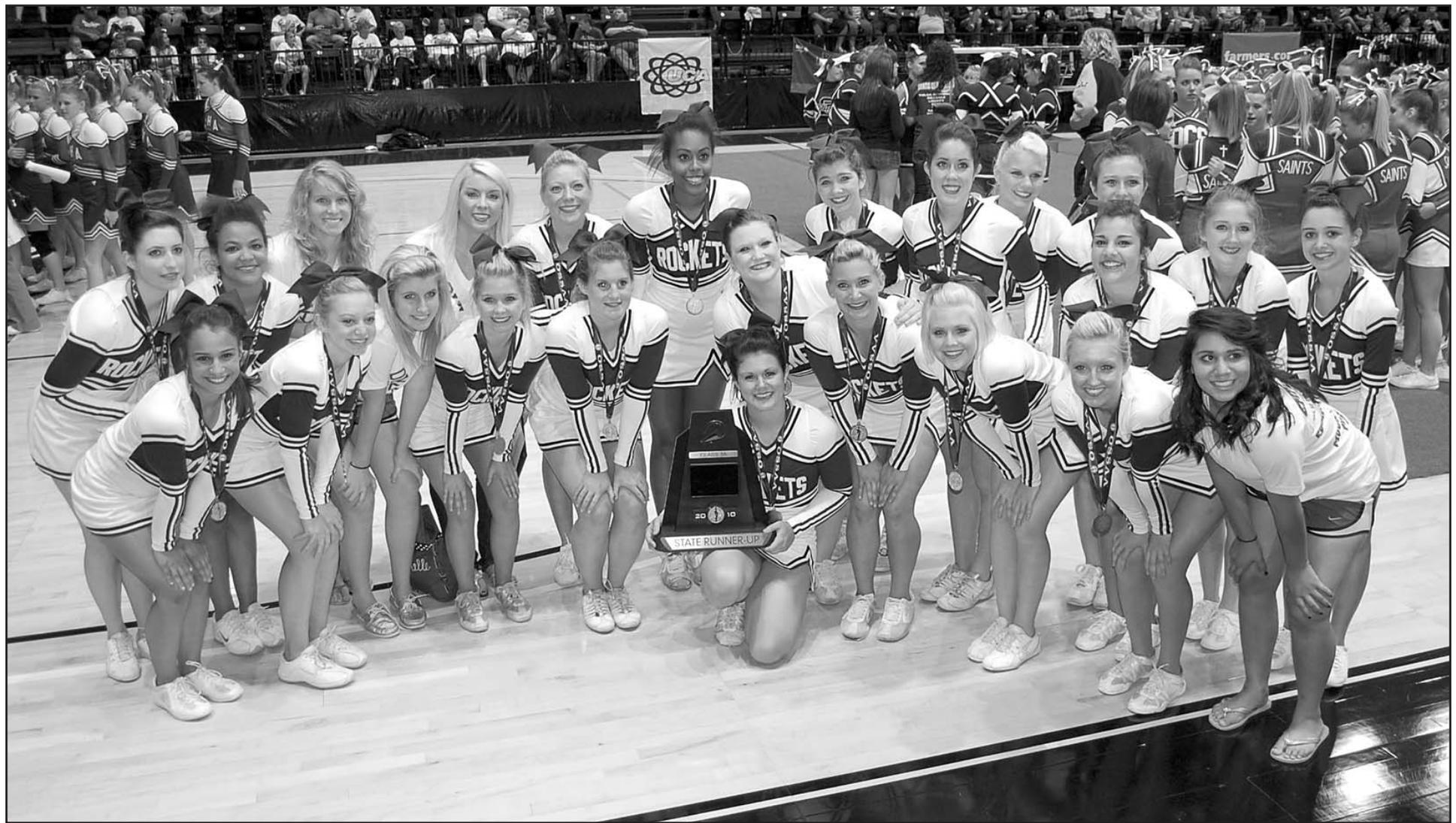
The parking lot and plaza were made possible by the generosity of St. John parishioners. Many of them worked as contractors on the project, including

John Mayfield and Charlie Schwarz of Schwarz Paving; Al and Mary Slattery of Al Slattery Masonry; Jim Parizek, David Parizek and Francis Parizek of Parizek Farms; Kenny Arthur of Five Star Fencing; Nick Allison of HK&S Steel; Kirk Hawkins of KC Plumbing; and Coy Welch, Keith McAlister and George Schwarz. Dennis Kastl, maintenance supervisor, served as the project manager.



All Saints Procession

NORMAN — In preparation of the formal blessing of the new school chapel and library, the Blessed Sacrament was brought to All Saints from the St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church. Nearly 400 students, parents and school staff processed with Father Tom Boyer and Deacon Steve Lewis one-half mile from the church to the school through the Castlerock neighborhood and along 36th Avenue. Archbishop Beltran blessed the chapel and library Nov. 3. After construction of the new gymnasium, space previously used for the school cafeteria was remodeled to create the library and chapel. The library was formerly housed in a portable building on the school grounds.



The Mount St. Mary's softball team captured the Class 3A State Championship recently. The state tournament was played at the USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium. Also, the Mount's award-winning Cheer Team captured the state runner-up trophy.

Briefs

Upcoming CCHD Collection Nov. 20, 21

The annual collection for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development will be Nov. 20 and 21. CCHD was founded 40 years ago by the United States Bishops to work to address poverty in communities. For more information, go to www.usccb.org/cchd.

Mustang Parish To Host Annual Festival

MUSTANG — The Holy Spirit Catholic Church 23rd Annual Altar Society Craft Festival will feature a variety of local artists and crafters offering unique goods for sale. The event will also include door prizes, a delicious brisket lunch and made from scratch baked goods. Visitors will find one-of-a-kind items including Christmas decor, religious items, jewelry, embroidered gifts, handmade pet treats, stationery, trendy baby gifts, metal yard art and much more.

The festival will be held Saturday, Nov. 13 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Located at Holy Spirit Catholic Church, 1100 N. Sara Road. For more information, contact Roxy Kostuck, Craft Festival chairperson, at (405) 924-9003 or rkostuck@cox.net.

Thanksgiving Dinner To Be Served For 88th Time At St. Joseph's

NORMAN — St. Joseph Catholic Church in Norman is hosting its 88th annual Thanksgiving Dinner on Sunday, Nov. 14 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The dinner will be served in the Parish Center gym

at 421 E. Acres.

This annual meal was originally started in 1920 by the Ladies Altar Society. It has been a labor of love and dedication for the parish and the community.

The home-cooked meal consists of recipes handed down for the past 88 years. It includes turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, corn, cranberry jello salad, rolls, pie, coffee, tea and milk.

Ticket chairwoman is Clare Maehs. Ticket prices are \$8 for adults, \$3.50 for children 6-12 years, children 5 and under eat for free. Family tickets are \$25. Tickets are available for advanced purchase at the parish office at 421 E. Acres in Norman. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door.

The chairpersons, Elaine Meiser and Rhonda Dean, with the help of members of the Women's Club, Knights of Columbus, Youth Group, and many faithful volunteers, will turn this into a day to be enjoyed by families, friends and neighbors.

For the convenience of the elderly or handicapped, the parking area in front of the hall will be used as a drop-off and pickup point.

If you have any questions or require more information, please call 517-3318 or 364-5448.

Turkey Bingo Nov. 19

OKLAHOMA CITY — Rosary eighth-grade class will again host this night of family fun. Lots of great food and prizes. A turkey will be awarded in 16 games of bingo, and a cash prize for intermission blackout. Come see who the King and Queen of Bingo will be! Friday, Nov. 19. Dinner begins at 5 p.m. and bingo starts at 6 p.m. All are invited to share in the holiday fun! St. Francis Parish Hall, 1901 NW 18th, Oklahoma City. Call 525-9272 for more details.

Vatican II Discussed

JONES — Group discussion on Vatican II, moderated by Father Jack Zupez, SJ, is currently meeting in St. Roberts Church Hall, 121 NW 1st St., on the second and fourth Mondays of each month from 6:30 to 8 p.m. All are welcome. For further information, call Father Jack at 301-0203.

Kairos Outside Retreat Set For This Weekend

Walking in Love, a candlelight gathering, will be held for Kairos Outside Retreat on Saturday evening, Nov. 6, 2010, at 8:45 p.m. in the parking lot of St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 8140 NW 36th, Bethany. Kairos Outside is a special retreat for women who have an incarcerated loved one. It is interdenominational and women who are interested may call (405) 447-1505 for more information. There is also a closing at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 7, 2010. You are invited to attend either or both of these events. People are encouraged to come and show support for the women who are participating in the retreat.

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St. Monica To Host Advent Mission

December is a month of frantic fury as we get ready for Christmas.

What are we doing to prepare ourselves spiritually for this great season?

Join us for an evening with Dr. Edward Sri, best-selling author. He is a nationally known, dynamic Catholic speaker who regularly appears



Edward Sri

on EWTN. Dr. Sri will inspire and encourage us as we learn about the faith of our Blessed Mother.

Advent Parish Mission Living Advent with Mary: Biblical Insights on the Five Joyful Mysteries

This presentation will take us on a biblical tour of the five Joyful Mysteries of the rosary. Sri will offer many practical insights that can help strengthen our marriages, our families, our communities and most of all,

our relationship with Christ. As we enter into Mary's journey of faith as she witnessed the coming of the Messiah some 2,000 years ago, we will discover rich application for our own lives, especially as we await his coming into our hearts at Christmas.

**December 1, 2010
7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
St. Monica Catholic
Church, (405) 359-2700
2001 N. Western Ave.
Edmond, Okla. 73012**

U.S. Bishops Grieve Iraqi Massacre Victims

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Catholic bishops in the United States expressed their solidarity with Iraqi Christians after Islamic militants stormed a cathedral in Baghdad, killing more than 50 faithful and wounding over 70.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) also said that the United States has “failed” to safeguard Christians in Iraq and stressed the moral obligation the United States has to protect the human rights of those within the country.

On Oct. 31, gunmen linked to al Qaeda took over 120 faithful hostage at the Syriac Catholic Cathedral of Our Lady of Salvation during Mass, demanding that the Coptic Church of Egypt release the wife of one of its priests, whom the extremists claim voluntarily converted to Islam and was locked up by the Church.

After the Iraqi military raided the church to free the hostages, over 50 people, including three priests,

were killed. Vatican Radio reported that between 70 and 80 people were seriously wounded from the attack, many of them women and children.

Pope Benedict lamented the disaster after he prayed the Angelus on Nov. 1. He condemned the “savagery” attack and offered prayers for the victims.

Cardinal Francis George, president of the USCCB, said that the incident has “shocked and horrified” the Catholic community.

“We join Pope Benedict XVI in expressing our profound sorrow at this savage violence and offer our heartfelt prayers for the victims, their families, and the Church and people of Iraq,” Cardinal George said in a statement Nov. 2.

Referring to the recent synod of bishops on the Church in the Middle East, the prelate recalled that “bishops from Iraq spoke of the perilous situation facing Christians and other minorities in that country,”

which included human rights violations such as “kidnappings for ransom; bombings of churches, schools and other property occupied by Christians; threats to Christian-run businesses and livelihoods; and the death of Archbishop Rahho and other priests following kidnappings.”

“Together with this most recent murderous attack, this pattern points to an appalling lack of basic security. Many Christians have been forced to leave their homes or have fled abroad in search of safety. Many have little hope of return to Iraq in the near future.”

“The United States bears responsibility for working effectively with the Iraqi government to stem the violence,” he underscored. “Our Conference of Bishops raised grave moral questions prior to the United States military intervention in Iraq and then called for a ‘responsible transition.’”

“While we welcomed the end of

U.S.-led combat in Iraq, we share the Iraqi bishops’ concern that the United States failed to help Iraqis in finding the political will and concrete ways needed to protect the lives of all citizens, especially Christians and other vulnerable minorities, and to ensure that refugees and displaced persons are able to return to their homes safely,” Cardinal George wrote.

“Having invaded Iraq, the U.S. government has a moral obligation not to abandon those Iraqis who cannot defend themselves,” he stressed.

“We offer our prayers and solidarity with the suffering Christians of Iraq at this terrible time of loss and horrific violence. We stand with the bishops, Church and people of Iraq in their urgent search for greater security, freedom and protection. We call upon the United States to take additional steps to help Iraq protect its citizens, especially the most vulnerable.”

Archbishop: Christ Provides The Road To Reconciliation

Piura, Peru (CNA) — Archbishop Jose Antonio Eguren Anselmi of Piura, Peru, noted in a homily on Oct. 28 that the Lord of the Miracles calls all who are baptized to become saints.

During a Mass and procession honoring the Lord of the Miracles — a feast that takes place each October in Peru — the archbishop recalled that Catholics need to “be saints in order to change the world, as there is no message more important for society than holiness.

“The transformation this world needs is the transformation of our hearts. Let us commit ourselves to working to be saints, to be disciples of Christ, to follow him and be like him, and thus build a society based on truth and love.”

“We are called on this day to

look upon the cross with faith and love in order to embrace the mystery of it, which is the cure for the illness of sin,” the archbishop said. “It is on the cross that Jesus reconciles us with his Father and makes reconciliation between each other possible as well. It is there that we find the strength and love to live as brothers and sisters, the strength to overcome hatred, quarreling and distrust, the strength to love each other as true brothers and sisters.”

“Christ’s mercy is so great that he comes out to meet us,” Archbishop Eguren stated. “What tenderness the Lord of the Miracles has for us! For this reason the month of October ... should be filled with days we take advantage of to respond with faith and enthusiasm,” he said.

Pope: Lord’s Mercy Available to All Souls

Vatican City (CNA/EWTN News) — God “sees a soul to save” in everyone, the Pope said before praying the Angelus on Sunday. The Lord’s mercy, he taught, takes nothing away from the gravity of sins, but always seeks to save the sinner.

Pilgrims enjoyed a break from a morning of rain in Rome as they joined the Pope for the Angelus.

Referring to the Gospel reading from Luke that recounts the story of the chief tax collector Zacchaeus, he reflected on his conversion after contact with Jesus.

Jesus’ encounter with Zacchaeus is one of several episodes where St. Luke talks about the merciful love of God and of Christ, said the Pope. In this case, Jesus directs his attention to Zacchaeus, considered a “public sinner” for his position.

The Lord “knew very well what

he was doing” when he asked the publicly disliked man to host him in his home, and his “gamble” was rewarded with the man’s conversion, Benedict XVI pointed out.

Citing Jesus’ words from the Gospel, the Pope said, “today, salvation has come to this house” and “the Son of man has come to seek and to save what had been lost.”

“God,” the Holy Father said, “does not exclude anyone, rich or poor.” Neither is He “conditioned by our human prejudices, but He sees in everyone as a soul to save and is attracted especially by those who are judged lost and who consider themselves to be such.”

Jesus, he said, demonstrates this immense mercy, “not taking anything away from the gravity of the sin, but looking always to save sinners, to offer them the possibility of rescue, starting over from the beginning, repenting.”

Pro-Lifers Help Stop Austin Abortion

AUSTIN, Texas (CNA) — After a temporary restraining order, the parents of a 16-year-old girl in Texas have agreed not to force their daughter to have an abortion against her will. Sidewalk counselors saw the violent coercion in progress and called police.

The teenager's mother brought her by force to local abortion facilities on two occasions, demanding she get an abortion. Her parents insisted that she have one even though she refused and the father of her baby also did not want the abortion.

Attorneys allied with the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) secured a temporary restraining order blocking the parents from forcing their daughter to go to an abortion facility. They signed a long-term court order prohibiting them from forcing their daughter to have an abortion for the duration of her pregnancy.

"No one should be allowed to decide that an innocent life — especially one that belongs to someone else — is worthless," commented ADF attorney Stephen Casey of Round Rock, Texas.

ADF attorney Gregory R. Terra of Georgetown agreed.

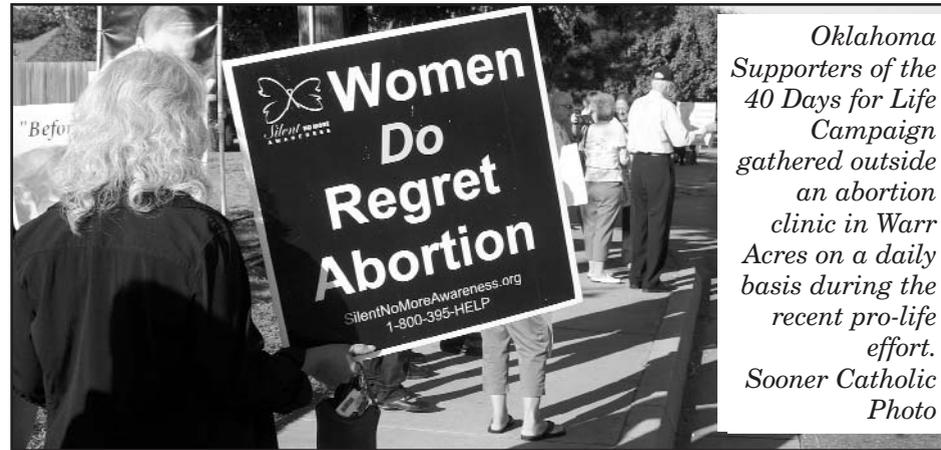
"The parents made the right decision, one which they, their daughter, the baby's father, and especially their grandchild, will appreciate," he said.

The 16-year-old, a high school student, is 14 weeks pregnant. She became more resolute against having an abortion after she received information from a pro-lifer outside one of the abortion facilities.

"The right not to have an abortion is protected by law, and this right isn't relinquished just because someone else considers the child to be an unwanted burden," said ADF Legal Counsel Matt Bowman. "This situation illustrates what a difference it can make when a woman is more fully informed about the true nature of abortion."

Joe Pojman, executive director of the Texas Alliance for Life, told CNA that this was a "fairly extreme" case of coercion, with reports the girl was dragged by her hair.

Elizabeth McClung of the Austin Coalition for Life was not present for



Oklahoma Supporters of the 40 Days for Life Campaign gathered outside an abortion clinic in Warr Acres on a daily basis during the recent pro-life effort. Sooner Catholic Photo

the Oct. 9 incident at the International Health Care Solutions independent clinic in northwest Austin. However, she reported that sidewalk counselors involved in the 40 Days for Life campaign had spoken with the girl before her mother started "getting physical."

The girl's mother "was shoving her, hitting her, pushing her. She actually fell on the ground and scraped her leg."

"At one point she actually was holding onto the bed of a pickup truck in the parking lot, but her mom was yanking on her to go inside."

Pro-life advocates who witnessed the coercion called the Texas Alliance for Life and asked what they should do.

"Dial 911, that is a crime occurring," they were told, according to Pojman. "No one can be coerced, it may be an assault."

"We stayed on public property, we didn't trespass," McClung told CNA. "We called police and were peacefully praying."

When police arrived, counselors told the police they were available to help. When the girl and her mother came out, the sidewalk counselor emphasized to the young woman that it was her decision not to have an abortion. She gave the girl her name and phone number.

While the teen's mother did take her to Planned Parenthood a few days after the incident, she again decided not to abort, McClung reported. A local maternity home has offered to help the young woman.

"That girl is extremely courageous, because she had to go against her

parents' wishes, which should not be taken lightly," Pojman continued. "But in extreme situations where parents (are) forcing abortion on a minor who clearly does not want it, it is time to step in to intervene, to work with the parents if possible but also to involve police and courts."

Pojman said the incident sparked the realization that many in the Austin pro-life community lacked a process for how to help coerced women.

"Be familiar with the law," he suggested. "Have attorneys available to take these cases."

"No person, whether adult or a minor, should be in any way coerced into having a procedure she doesn't want, especially an abortion."

McClung recommended materials from the Center Against Forced Abortion (CAFA), a project of the San Antonio-based Justice Foundation.

"We had spoken about it before and we had a protocol in place but this was the first time in practice."

Allan Parker, president of the Justice Foundation, said the Austin case shows the need for attorneys willing to help women being coerced to have abortions.

Coerced abortion is "extremely frequent" in America, Parker claimed.

"I have spoken with hundreds of pregnancy resource centers. They say it is a very frequent problem."

CAFA has produced a "Dear Parent" letter which often suffices to stop parents from coercing their daughter to have an abortion by noting the illegal nature of their intended action.

"Most parents think they can

make the decision because they're the parent. They don't realize that it's illegal."

"The best thing for pro-life clinic demonstrators to remember is to tell the young woman: 'No one can legally force you to have an abortion. Period.'"

"If the girl herself will continue to tell that to the abortionists, most abortionists will not perform an abortion, though some have."

The sidewalk counselors should also have the "Dear Parent" letter with them for the girl, for the police and for social service agencies, Parker recommended.

He also noted the "second largest problem" is men forcing adult women to have an abortion because the man does not want to take care of a child.

"It's illegal for the father of the child to force the mother to have an abortion," he repeated.

"Education is the best answer at this time. Abstinence ed courses should include this training," as should pregnancy resource centers, Parker advised.

Pojman of the Texas Alliance for Life said the teen in the Austin incident is ending a rough period of her life.

"Hopefully she and her parents can reconcile," he said. "She is brave and her boyfriend is also very brave and supportive. She was many times close to being despondent. But she's a brave and tough kid. It's a shame she had to go through this, but it looks like it's going to be a good ending, for this chapter of her life at least."

McClung also drew lessons from the coercion attempt.

"We're there not just for the baby but for the mothers as well. We're talking to the mothers not their babies. Let's reinforce the fact that there are so many people who want to help them, not break them down," she said.

She praised the young woman for refusing the abortion despite the "very difficult" situation of her parents' opposition. "There's a real community of support standing behind her and helping her through this."

The CAFA website is at the URL <http://www.txjf.org/>.

Catholics, Orthodox State Areas of Agreement

WASHINGTON — Representatives of the Orthodox and Catholic churches have issued two new documents outlining immediate steps they can take to overcome their thousand-year separation. The North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation finalized these agreed statements when it met at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. The Consultation is co-chaired by Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond of New Orleans and Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh.

The first statement, “Steps Toward a Reunited Church: A Sketch of an Orthodox-Catholic Vision for the Future,” is an unprecedented effort to begin to visualize the shape of a reunited Catholic and Orthodox Church that would result from the re-establishment of full communion. The text acknowledges that the role of the Bishop of Rome in the Church is a central point of disagreement and outlines the history of this divergence between East and West. It goes on to summarize the many elements of the Christian faith and ecclesial life that the two churches share, and emphasizes the urgency of overcoming our divisions.

“Clearly, this cannot be achieved without new, better harmonized structures of leadership on both sides: new conceptions of both synodality and primacy in the universal Church, new approaches to

the way primacy and authority are exercised in both our communions,” the document says.

The agreed statement lists some of the features that would characterize a fully reunited Church and then focuses on the role the papacy would play within it. This role would need to be carefully defined, “both in continuity with the ancient structural principles of Christianity and in response to the need for a unified Christian message in the world of today.” The document then suggests several aspects of the Pope’s ministry in a reunited Church that could be both faithful to Catholic teaching and acceptable to the Orthodox. The document also lists several “preparatory steps” that could be taken even now as a prelude to the future unity of the churches, such as shared prayer and social ministry, and enumerates several questions and problems that remain outstanding.

The text concludes that “the challenge and the invitation to Orthodox and Catholic Christians ... is now to see Christ authentically present in each other, and to find in those structures of leadership that have shaped our communities through the centuries a force to move us beyond disunity, mistrust and competition, toward that oneness in his Body, that obedience to his Spirit, which will reveal us as his disciples before the world.”

The complete text of this statement is available here: www.usccb.org/seia/steps-towards-reunited-church.shtml

The second statement, “Celebrating Easter/Pascha Together,” is a reaffirmation of the Consultation’s 1998 document, “A Common Response to the Aleppo Statement on the Date of Easter/Pascha.” In this new text, the members emphasize the importance of a united witness to the Resurrection of Christ, which lies at the very center of the Christian faith, and the scandal caused by the inability to celebrate this feast day consistently on the same date.

The Consultation joins many other expressions of support for a recent proposal that would recalculate the date of Easter for all Christians based strictly on the teaching of the First Council of Nicaea (325), which determined that Easter be celebrated on the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox. Determining the equinox from the Jerusalem meridian and using the most accurate scientific instruments and astronomical data available would require a change for both traditions, but would also represent greater faithfulness to the teaching of Nicaea.

The full text is available at www.usccb.org/seia/easter.shtml.

Eucharist: The Lord’s Gift That Keeps on Giving

One day during a childhood summer vacation, a friend invited me to pass the day with her on their Iowa farm. Her mother was a member of my dad’s congregation (Presbyterian), and while I was there, I joined her family at the table for a meal. My friend’s mom stated quite adamantly that she didn’t think she needed to go to church on Sunday. “You can worship God anywhere .. just go outside and see the beauty all around. You can worship God without church,” she stated her position flatly, and then asked me what I thought about that.

I remember feeling uncomfortable. I’d lost my appetite. I had the distinct feeling that she had targeted me for a couple of reasons. I was young enough that I wasn’t prepared to refute her argument. And, as the preacher’s daughter, if I couldn’t “win” the argument, then she could walk away justified in skipping church.

All I could come up with was a lame defense of my dad’s sermons. I always thought they were pretty good. Obviously, other people didn’t like them as much as I did. What else could

I use to defend church attendance? She could turn a radio on and get some Christian music. She could read the Bible at home. I felt the burden of proof on my end, and it seemed like I didn’t have much to work with.

What I would have given to be able to pull out a quote by St. John Chrysostom about then. “You cannot pray at home as at church, where there is a great multitude, where exclamations are cried out to God as from one great heart, and where there is something more: the union of minds, the accord of souls, the bond of charity, the prayers of the priests.” (CCC 2179).

OK, so we didn’t have priests, but the rest of it would have sounded great.

As a Catholic, it is much easier to support the requirement of Mass attendance. We don’t subscribe to a simplistic Jesus-and-me faith, for



By Denise Bossert

starters. We know that our faith is ecclesial and universal. We believe in unity and communion with one another. The prayers we pray, the Scriptures we read at Mass, they are the same the world over. We are quite literally all on the same page. Catholics in every country, regardless of language and culture, are united in word and praise and prayer. We are one.

But we also believe in Communion — union — with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Again, we have a reason to go to Mass that many Protestants cannot understand. They don’t have Communion every Sunday, and most think Holy Communion is merely a symbol. One might even be able to replicate the Protestant kind of Communion at the dining room table. We know that the Liturgy of the Eucharist requires God’s ordained priest, and that the priest has been given the special grace, an indelible mark, to pray the prayer of Consecration and bring to us the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

One might disregard Sunday Mass

obligation (though it is a serious sin and a desire to be obedient to God should draw us to the Mass even if we can think of no other reason to go), but the greater question is why would you want to skip Mass? What do I get out of Mass? We receive Jesus Christ! The Eucharist changes us. Renews and perfects us. With the entire people that Christ has claimed as His own, I can pray the Mass ... and then be sent out as one who is changed and changing.

Besides, the world is waiting for me once Mass is over. I can always go into that beautiful world and continue to praise Him after the final amen. Strangely enough, not only is the world waiting for me to bring the song of praise to it following Mass, but the world itself seems more beautiful and the song inside of me more demanding than ever after I pray the Holy Mass with the faithful.

Just because I can worship God anywhere, that isn’t a case for missing the greatest gift we have been given. Our Lord’s gift of Himself.

Contact Bossert at catholicbygrace.blogspot.com.

Calendar

NOVEMBER

7 Annual Turkey Dinner at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, Kingfisher, in Ross Hall, Nov. 7 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

7 Open House at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School for all interested and prospective students and parents from 1 to 3 p.m.

7 Byzantine Liturgy will be offered on Nov. 7 at 5 p.m. at St. Mark's Church, 3939 W. Tecumseh Road, Norman. For more information, call Father Phil Seeton at (580) 536-6351.

9 Adoption Open House at Catholic Charities House from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at 1501 N. Classen Blvd., Oklahoma City. Any couple interested in adoption services is invited to attend. For more information, call (405) 523-3012.

9 Aging Gracefully series is for those who are or will be dealing with the issues of aging. Medical/End of Life Panel – Palliative Care, Church's Teaching and Pastoral Care. Aging Gracefully will be held at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 NW Expressway, OKC, (park on the north side of the building), 7 to 8:30 p.m. For questions or to RSVP, call (405) 721-8944.

9 Catholic War Veterans (of any war/conflict) will meet the second Tuesday of each month in the community room of St. Ann Retirement Center at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Father M. Price Oswalt at (405) 567-3404.

10 Eucharistic Adoration at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, NW 32nd and Western, every Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to noon.

10 Catholic War Veterans USA Oklahoma Memorial Post 168 monthly meeting, 7 p.m., Sunnyslane Family Reception Center, 3900 SE 29th St., Del City. For more information, contact Ken at (405) 739-0036 or e-mail OkPost168@cox.net.

11 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at Epiphany Parish, in the chapel every Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and daily (M,T,W,F) from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. All are welcome. Epiphany is located at 7336 W. Britton Road, Oklahoma City 73132.

11 Eucharistic Adoration every Thursday night from 5 p.m. to midnight at St. Gregory's Chapel, St. Gregory's Monastery, Shawnee. The evening will begin with Mass at 5 p.m. with adoration to follow.

Included is vespers with the monks. **12 Bingo** at St. Joseph's, Norman. A light dinner is served at 6:30 p.m., first session begins at 7 p.m., second session at 8:30. Each session is \$5, blackouts are \$1 each, no limit.

13 Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School placement test, 8 to 11:30 a.m., to any eighth-grader interested in attending in 2011-2012. A second test will be offered Nov. 20 for those who cannot make it on the first test date. Students not attending a feeder school and interested in taking the test, call Amy Hanson at 842-6638 Ext. 225 to register.

13 Catholic Charities Debris Cleanup in Little Axe. Almost six months after a powerful tornado tore through the small community of Little Axe, debris still stands in many rural areas. In addition to volunteers, donations are needed: gloves, tools, larger equipment and bottled water. To volunteer or to donate items, contact Nancy Martinez at (405) 523-3028.

13 The Benedictine Oblates of Red Plains Monastery will meet from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Join the Community for Vespers, followed by a potluck dinner. For more information, contact Sister Eunice at 373-4565 or

osbokc@ionet.net.

14 Charismatic Healing Mass, 5:30 p.m. at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 3901 S.W. 29th St., Oklahoma City. For more information, call (405) 685-4806.

16 Aging Gracefully, a series for those who are or will be dealing with the issues of aging. Funeral Liturgy and the Grief Process. Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 NW Expressway, OKC, 7 to 8:30 p.m. For questions or to RSVP, call (405) 721-8944.

17 Monthly Novena to The Infant Jesus. Nine days of novenas to Infant Jesus of Prague at Saint Wenceslaus Catholic Church at 304 Jim Thorpe Blvd. in Prague. (405) 567-3080 or shrineofinfantjesus.com.

19 Marriage as Covenant. For more information or to register, contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

20 Pre-Cana in Spanish. For more information or to register, contact the Office of Family Life, (405) 721-8944.

21 St. Peter Catholic Church in Woodward will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the church building. Mass at 10:30 a.m.,

Jobs Box

Long-Term Substitute Teacher

Sacred Heart Catholic School, El Reno, is looking for a long-term first-grade substitute teacher. Candidate must be a Certified Teacher in the state of Oklahoma. Please call Shannon Statton at 262-2284 for more information.

Director of the Business Department

St. Gregory's University has an opening for the position of Director of the Business Department at our Tulsa location. This position will teach undergraduate and graduate business courses; director and curriculum coordinator for undergraduate business programs. Earned doctorate in a business-related field with strong quantitative background preferred; MBA with strong quantitative background required with three to five years academic program development experience desired; 12-month faculty reporting to dean of College for Working Adults. Send letter of application, vita, transcripts, statement of teaching philosophy and three letters of recommendation to the attention of Jean

Thornbrugh, Ph.D., by e-mail, hr@stgregorys.edu, or by mail to Human Resources Department, St. Gregory's University, 1900 W. MacArthur Drive, Shawnee, Okla. 74804.

Adjuncts

The College for Working Adults at St. Gregory's University has adjunct faculty openings on campus in Tulsa and Shawnee at the undergraduate and graduate level for courses in finance, marketing, project management, research methods, clinical social work, art, nutrition, speech, statistics, math, English literature, economics, history, critical thinking, accounting and accounting control systems. Candidates for adjunct faculty openings for undergraduate courses are required to hold a minimum of a master's degree in the preferred subject, doctoral degrees preferred and related business and industry experience. Adjunct faculty openings at the graduate level require a doctorate in a business-related field or in health care management/health care administration or a

doctorate in management/business with an area of specialization in health care management. Candidates for graduate courses should have related business and industry experience. Send a cover letter, vita and transcripts to the attention of Jean Thornbrugh, Ph.D. Materials may be sent electronically to hr@stgregorys.edu.

CWA Financial Aid Counselor (Tulsa)

St. Gregory's University, College for Working Adults, Tulsa campus, has an opening for a financial aid counselor. Must be able to advise students about financial aid eligibility, applications procedures, aid programs and indebtedness, and work closely with accounting and student services staff. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree preferred and financial aid experience, knowledge of data processing and computer tracking systems required. Send cover letter, resume and three references to hr@stgregorys.edu or mail to Att: HR, 5801 E. 41st St., Tulsa, Okla. 74135.



Father James Greiner, Deacon Cory Stanley's pastor at Mustang's Holy Spirit Catholic Church, vests him for the first time as a deacon. Father Greiner was incorrectly identified in this photo in the Oct. 24 issue of the Sooner Catholic.

Hope: A Vital Force More Powerful Than Death

By Kimberly Baker
Life Issues, USCCB

In a recent statement, Ludwig Minelli, founder of the Swiss death clinic, Dignitas, called for suicide drugs to be legally available to distraught spouses of his suicide clients should they wish to follow their loved ones in ending their lives.

Assisted suicide has become an increasingly controversial issue as advocates insist it is a humane, dignified way to die. Efforts to turn public opinion in favor of assisted suicide include an appeal to patient autonomy and freedom of choice. Opponents of assisted suicide are criticized for lacking compassion when they try to prevent an elderly, disabled or terminally ill person from deciding to end his or her suffering through suicide.

The choice to end one's life, however, is not an exercise of freedom; it is ultimately a manifestation

of loss and despair. The desire to end a painful health condition is one reason for a suicidal tendency, but there are ways to eliminate pain without killing the patient. By far, the most common reason for a suicidal tendency is one's self-perception as a burden, as not worthy of someone else's time or care. Something is very wrong when people, out of feelings of guilt, fear or sadness, begin to define their worth and sense of self only in terms of their "usefulness" to others.

This idea of being a "burden" shows a lack of hope. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the 11th leading cause of death among the general American population, and the third leading cause of death among young people between the ages of 15 and 24. (What does this lack of hope say about our culture and especially the younger generation?)

Taking one's life is not an act of courage; it is an escape. One could say, however, that the decision to go on living despite difficulties is the supreme act of courage and a significant expression of freedom.

If governments and societies encourage a "right to die," among those who are elderly, handicapped and terminally ill, where then can the line be drawn among others who also wish to end their lives?

It is tragic for an elderly or disabled person to say, "I'm no good like this anymore, I'm in pain, I'm useless, I'm ugly, I'm running up medical bills for my family, I want to die and be gone." It is the suicidal person who is a prisoner, who feels trapped.

So where lies true freedom? To be secure about one's dignity and worth, to be convinced that one is immensely loved by God and has infinite value, allows a person to be truly free.