

# Sooner Catholic

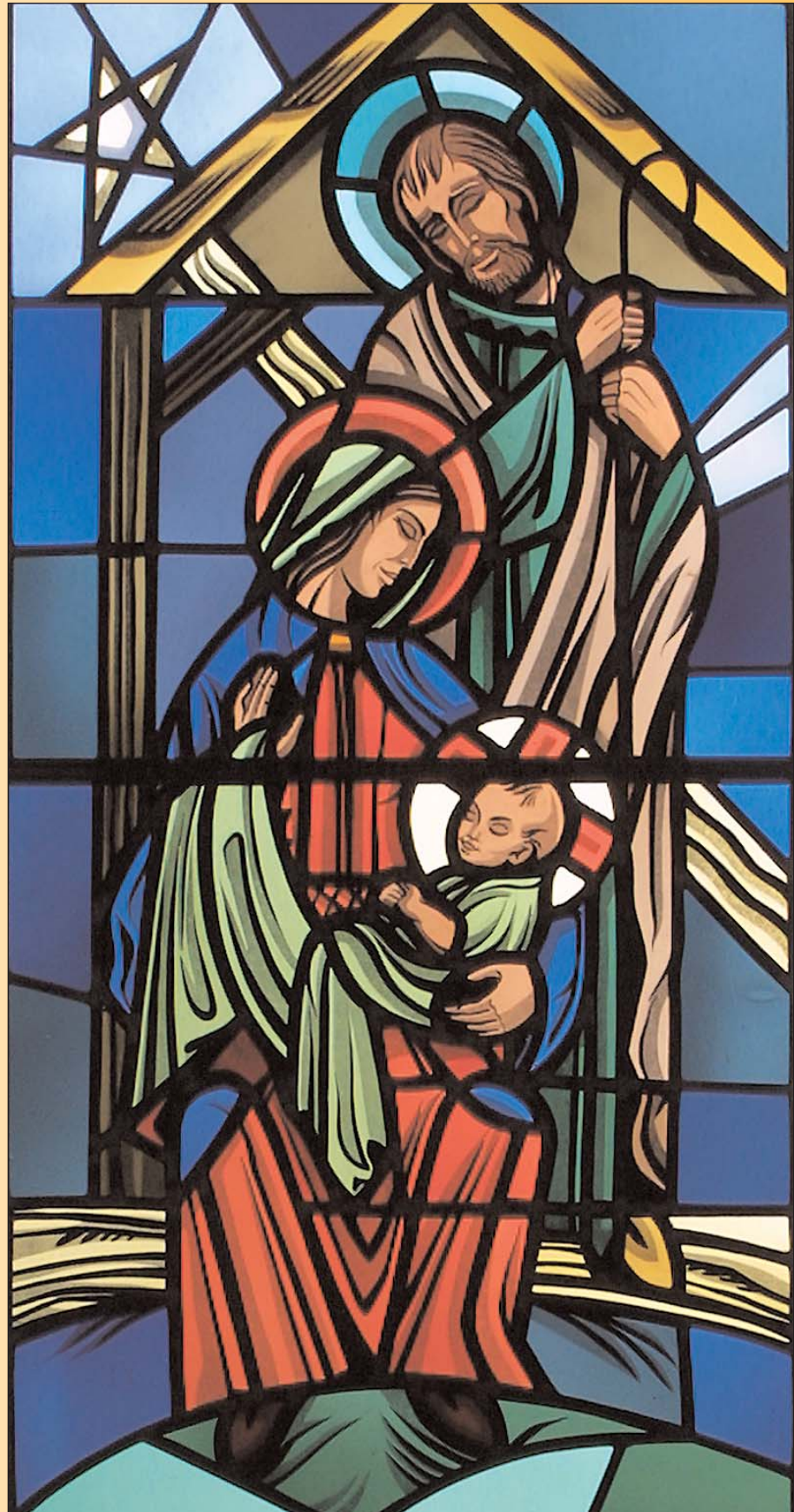
Serving the People of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Volume 37, Number 24 \* December 18, 2011

*Behold, the  
virgin shall  
conceive and  
bear a son,  
and they shall  
name him  
Emmanuel*

*Matthew 1:23*

*Stained glass  
from Our  
Lady of  
Perpetual  
Help Parish in  
Sterling.*



# Prepare the Way for Christ:

## Advent, Christmas and the New Evangelization

Each year the Church gives us this joyful season of Advent to help us prepare spiritually for Christ's coming. Advent is one of my favorite seasons of the year. It is also one of the most challenging. For Catholics, the focus of this season looks beyond the busyness of shopping, putting up decorations and making the rounds of parties. While our lives do tend to get busier than ever during this time of year, the true spirit of Advent invites us to slow down, to become reflective, and to tap into that deepest longing of our hearts which only the coming of Christ can fully satisfy.

In contrast to the instant communication and gratification of our digital culture, Advent invites us to slow down and to wait. We await Christ's coming into our world. To keep Advent well requires a deliberate effort on our part. It calls us to be counter-cultural in some small but important ways. It calls us to recognize that our salvation is not something we can produce or purchase or download, but something that is given by God. It must be received in faith.

In a few days we will celebrate the joyful feast of Jesus' birth. At Christmas we welcome Christ Our Savior by offering him a worthy dwelling place in our hearts and homes. But as Christians we not only welcome him into our hearts, we are also called to bring him to the world. Faith in Jesus Christ is a gift to be received and shared. Our faith is not merely a private refuge. Indeed, faith

brings a profoundly personal experience of God's love, healing and direction to our lives. But the Gospel has social and public implications as well. Jesus came to save the world from sin and hopelessness and to inaugurate his Kingdom of justice, love and truth. His Gospel proclaims liberty for captives, sight for the blind. His coming is good news and it is intended for all. Each of us has a personal role in bringing the Gospel, the joyful news of Christ's coming and of his saving death and resurrection, to the world in which we live. Each of us are called to be evangelizers.

Like his immediate predecessors, Pope Benedict XVI has called the whole Church to a renewed commitment to evangelization. To give support to this urgent task of the whole Church, the Holy Father will convene in 2012 a synod of bishops to address the challenge of the New Evangelization. The special focus of this latest evangelizing effort in the long history of the Church's mission, while not excluding those who have never heard the Gospel, will focus on re-evangelizing those parts of the world where faith has grown cold. Its focus will be especially on the secularized culture that has excluded God, marginalized and privatized faith, or rejected God outright. This is the culture in which we live.

Just as the pagan culture into which Jesus sent the Apostles almost 2,000 years ago often dismissed the Gospel as foolishness, and just as



Archbishop  
Coakley

*"Put out  
into the  
deep and  
lower  
your nets  
for a  
catch."*

*Luke 5:4*

his own people often found it a stumbling block, so our culture presents considerable obstacles for those who undertake its re-evangelization. The thing that we must bear in mind, however, is that the ultimate success of every effort at evangelization does not depend ultimately on the one who sows the seed, or even on the quality of the soil where the seed is sown, but on the inherent power of the seed itself, that is, the Word of God. It is God who produces the harvest. God uses our voice and our testimony, but it is God who brings forth the fruit.

For those who are willing and eager to take on the challenge of the New Evangelization, what is most necessary is a firm faith in the truth of the message they proclaim and in the One who guarantees its truth and power. Jesus guarantees the triumph of the Kingdom, which though sown like a tiny mustard seed, will ultimately become a great tree in which all creatures will find refuge.

## Archbishop Coakley's Calendar

*The following events are part of Archbishop Coakley's official calendar.*

**December 20** - St. Ann Retirement Center Board Meeting, Catholic Pastoral Center, 8 a.m.

**December 20** - Oklahoma Conference of Churches Communion Leaders Meeting, Episcopal Diocesan Offices, 11 a.m.

**December 20** - Mass and Dinner at St. Ann Home, 4 p.m.

**December 24** - Mass at Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 8 p.m. (Vietnamese) and Midnight Mass (English)

**December 27** - Mass and Dinner with Seminarians, St. John Nepomuk Church, Yukon, 6 p.m.

**January 2 - Friday, January 6** - Region X Bishops Retreat, San Antonio, Texas.

## Sooner Catholic

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# Composer Finds Faith, Passion in Liturgical Music

By Traci Chapman  
For the Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — For Lisa Stafford, music has been a lifelong passion.

Music expresses who she is, her love for her family and her faith, she said. Through her compositions, she said she hoped to help others find and express “sacred truths.”

“I wrote a Mass of Grace setting — we’re using it here with the new translation,” Stafford said recently. “It’s mainly for people to learn the New Mass.”

Her new composition is far from her first. Stafford said she first discovered music listening to her grandfather play the piano. In seventh grade, she began piano lessons, and her passion took flight, she said.

“I’ve composed off and on all my life, and I’ve performed in music theater, been in choirs and sung all of that time too,” Stafford said. “I got serious about composing about 15 years ago.”

Her dedication has paid off. About 20 of Stafford’s compositions have been published, most of them sacred music. During that time, she served as music director, formed a children’s choir, been the cantor and sung in the choir at St. Joseph’s Church in Norman, where she has been a



Lisa Stafford

member for about 30 years, she said. In 2002, Stafford said she stepped down as music director and away from her children’s choir duties.

“I wanted to have more time to compose and to explore music,” she said.

With her compositions, Stafford said she hoped to enhance each person’s sacred experience.

“I think the Mass should really have a sense of the sacred space,” she said. “When I write, I try to be very conscious of the sacred space.”

“Good music can nourish the liturgy or it can detract from it — it should almost be transparent,” Stafford said.

While sacred music is her “heart and soul,” Stafford said her tastes run from classic Gregorian chants and complex compositions to indie rock bands.

“I hear all of it in our family,” she said.

Stafford met her husband, Doug, while working toward a bachelor’s degree in musical arts at the University of Oklahoma. Doug Stafford is part of a bluegrass band, while son, Paul, is a costume designer and makeup artist. Son, Michael, recently attended Boston Conservancy, studying clarinet, and daughter, Rebekah, writes music and plays guitar and bass, Stafford said.

“We all have our different tastes, but I think we all like the kind of music that makes you think,” Stafford said. “That’s certainly how I work with my compositions — they’re a marriage of words and music, and it should flow.”

“Hopefully when other people hear it, that’s what they think,” she said.

## Sanctity of Life Mass Set for Jan. 18 at Cathedral Speakers to Address Youth, Adults

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Sanctity of Life Mass will be held at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 18 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 3214 N. Lake Ave. The Mass will be celebrated by Archbishop Paul Coakley. Everyone is invited to join in the Mass on the anniversary of the 1973 Supreme Court decision known as Roe vs. Wade.

Programs to discuss the Catholic social and moral teaching about the sanctity and dignity of human life will follow Mass. Greg Schleppenbach, Nebraska Catholic Conference State Director of Pro Life Activities, will present “Proclaiming the Gospel of Life in a Culture

of Death” for adults in the Cathedral. Rev. Joseph Irwin of St. Francis Xavier Church, Enid, will facilitate the discussion for teens, in the Connor Center located next to the Cathedral.

On Thursday, Jan. 19, Schleppenbach will repeat the presentation at 11:30 a.m. at Catholic Charities, 1501 N. Classen Blvd., for those unable to attend the previous evening. Lunch will be provided. Reservations are required for the Thursday presentation. For more information or to make reservations, contact Becky VanPool, Parish Outreach for Catholic Charities, at 523-3003 or [bvanpool@catholiccharitiesok.org](mailto:bvanpool@catholiccharitiesok.org).

## Archdiocese to Celebrate MLK

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Archdiocese annual celebration to honor the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will be held on Sunday, Jan. 15 at noon at Corpus Christi Church. Mass will be celebrated by the Most Reverend Paul Coakley, Archbishop of Oklahoma City.

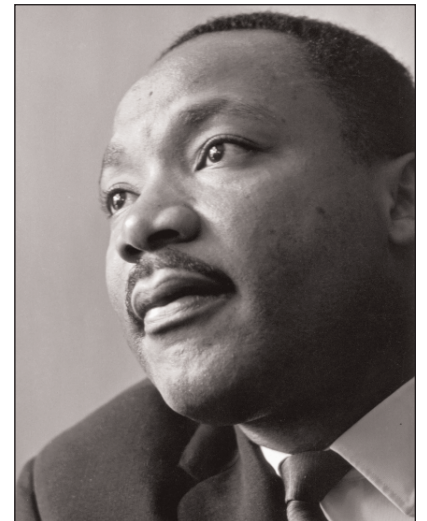
A Multicultural Tribute will follow Mass at 12:15 p.m. The tribute will include liturgical dances performed by St. Gregory’s University students, Corpus Christi youth, and dancers representing Guatemala, Puerto Rico and Mexico. A presentation of the “I Have a Dream” speech by Dr. King will be given by Mount St. Mary students.

“The event, which is organized each year by Corpus Christi Parish and Catholic Charities, celebrates Dr. King’s work and invites the community to join in solidarity with those who are in need, and working for ways to improve their lives,” said Becky VanPool, director of Catholic Charities Parish Outreach and Program Development.

“Dr. King challenged society to ‘lift the load of poverty,’ and we are challenged to pray and work for all those who are poor and marginalized,” VanPool said. “By improving their lives, we improve our lives as well.”

“The Mass and the celebration are a tribute from the Catholic community. Everyone is invited to attend.”

For additional information, contact VanPool at 523-3003.



# Mercy Makes Room for Good Samaritan Clinic

**By Ray Dyer**  
*The Sooner Catholic*

EDMOND — Deacon Lee Hunt remembers when some people at St. Monica Church were wrestling with the idea of trying to create a free medical clinic to serve the uninsured in the Edmond area.

“We were trying to figure out how would we fund it and where would the continued support come from,” Deacon Hunt said. “Finally, one of the women said, ‘Let’s just do this and if God wants it, the money will come.’”

After providing medical care for more than 700 people a year for the past three years, the founders of Good Samaritan Clinic have learned a few things. Chief among them is that indeed, God did want them to push forward with creating the free health care clinic. Another lesson learned is that when the clinic outgrew its original home inside the Edmond Birth Choice office, a new home, even bigger and better, would be made available.

As of Dec. 10, the Good Samaritan Clinic is now housed inside Mercy Health Clinic in Edmond, 1919 E. Memorial Road. Deacon Hunt called the new location a “very exciting” development. For the past three years the clinic had operated out of the Edmond Birth Choice office. While the space was appreciated, the health care ministry was not a perfect fit sharing room with the pregnancy ministry.

Now, Good Samaritan is actually inside a medical center.

Dr. James Dixon said opening Mercy’s doors to the free health clinic makes perfect sense. He noted how

Samaritan Clinic. Perhaps it’s more than coincidence that he also serves as system director of Mercy’s Health Clinics in Oklahoma. Deacon Hunt said Good Samaritan didn’t need to

Monica and St. John the Baptist. Deacon Hunt said a gentleman who wishes to remain anonymous has also provided generous funding to the clinic. Most patients who visit the Good Samaritan Clinic come from the Edmond area, but they have helped people from western Oklahoma and as far as Wichita, Kan. Deacon Hunt said that it surprises people when they hear there are so many uninsured people living in one of Oklahoma’s more affluent communities.

“Last Saturday with the volunteers we had on hand, we were able to see 20 people,” Deacon Hunt said. “But there were 71 others we had to turn away.”

Dr. Dixon said Good Samaritan is making a difference in the lives of many people, especially those with conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes. Deacon Hunt said he has seen Dr. Dixon immediately send those seriously ill to the emergency room.

“I think several lives have been saved,” the deacon said.

So far, the Good Samaritan Clinic has been blessed with money to open and operate. Now it is being blessed with a spacious home in a modern medical center. The people who have dedicated themselves to opening and promoting this health care ministry for the poor are not overly disturbed by the fact more volunteers are always needed.

## *How to Help*

*Good Samaritan Health Clinic of Edmond is a not-for-profit 501 c3 entity. Contributions are tax-deductible. Contributions can be sent to Good Samaritan Clinic, 9 NW 160th, Edmond, Okla. 73013-2041.*

the main ministry of the Sisters of Mercy, founded in Ireland by Sister Catherine McCauley, was to care for the poor and less fortunate. Since this is exactly what the Good Samaritan Clinic does, every Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon, Mercy was more than willing to lend a hand.

Already the clinic has grown from two volunteer doctors to three and by housing the clinic inside Mercy, there is room for more growth. Another plus, Mercy will provide blood testing and radiology free to the clinic, and as Dr. Dixon said, the 20,000-square-foot Mercy clinic will allow patients a much greater level of comfort and dignity.

In his free time, Dr. Dixon serves as volunteer medical director for Good

jump through very many hoops to find a home inside Mercy of Edmond. He said a simple contract was signed, but other than that the deal was pretty straightforward.

“Mercy said we need to follow their ethics,” Deacon Hunt said. “I asked what are they and they said, ‘Well, you are already doing it so just continue to do what you are doing.’”

Those “ethics” would include taking care of the poor and treating people with dignity and compassion, something Mercy strives to do daily and something Good Samaritan strives for every Saturday morning.

The free health care clinic has drawn continued financial support from the Edmond parishes of St.

## Across Oklahoma

### **Program Has Openings**

OKLAHOMA CITY — We have openings in our Epiphany Children’s Day Out Program for children ages 12 months through 4 years old. Epiphany CDO is a two-day-a-week program that gives young children an opportunity to learn how to play with other children, to be away from their parents and begin to find security in their own resources. Registration \$18, \$20/day. Call Mel Luetkemeyer, (405) 722-2110 Ext. 110.

### **Could You Be a Monk?**

SHAWNEE — You, a monk? Is that preposterous? Or is there

something in you that says maybe? You can try it on for size at the next Monastic Experience Retreat at St. Gregory’s Abbey in Shawnee, Dec. 29-31. For more information or to make reservations, contact Father Charles Buckley, O.S.B., (405) 878-5462, or [cjbuckley@stgregorys.edu](mailto:cjbuckley@stgregorys.edu).

### **Catholics Returning Home**

SHAWNEE — Let your heart listen to the Holy Spirit and let us help you return to the Catholic Church. Your family is missing you. Catholics Returning Home begins Jan. 5 at 7 p.m. St. Benedict Church, 632 N. Kickapoo, Shawnee, Okla. For more information, call Gail or Clyde at (405) 878-6746.

### **Becoming Catholic**

YUKON — A six-week inquiry series for people who are interested in learning more about the Catholic Church and the process of becoming Catholic will begin Jan. 11 at St. John Nepomuk Church, 600 Garth Brooks Blvd. They will meet each Wednesday at 7 p.m. The sessions are free. For more information, contact Ann Cook in the parish office at 354-2743 or [pastoral@sjnok.org](mailto:pastoral@sjnok.org).

### **Prayer for Christian Unity Set**

This year’s theme is *We Will All Be Changed by the Victory of our Lord Jesus Christ*. (Cf. 1 Cor 15:51-58). On Jan. 22 there will be a gathering

for Oklahoma Christians at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church at 5 p.m. with guest speaker Archbishop Coakley.

### **Friends of Bolivia Dinner**

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Knights of Columbus at St. Eugene’s Parish are hosting their annual spaghetti and meatball dinner to benefit the Friends of Bolivia medical mission. It will take place on Saturday, Jan. 21 beginning at 5:30 p.m. at St. Eugene’s Church, 2400 W. Hefner Road. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for kids ages 5 to 12. Kids under 5 are free. Tickets may be purchased at the door. For more information, call Steve Chastain at (405) 755-1052.





*These Sacred Heart Oklahoma City fourth-grade students were selected by the Duke University Talent Identification Program for scoring at the 95th percentile on various parts of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills standardized test. They are, back from left, Kassandra Gandara, Alondra Morales and Rafael Zapata; front from left, Astrid Cenicerros and Tammy Vu.*

## Parishes Win Food Grants

The trustees of the Oklahoma City Community Foundation have awarded \$23,975 in grants to 61 churches that provide meals to homebound elderly through Mobile Meals of Oklahoma County. In addition to helping offset the cost of food and transportation, the grants will help provide non-perishable meals for the seniors during inclement weather.

Among those receiving grants were six Catholic Churches in the Oklahoma City area.

Carolyn Roslick, Mobile Meals project coordinator, says that during the winter months there are often days when Mobile Meals providers are not able to deliver warm meals due to severe weather. "Thanks to these grants, we will be able to provide each senior with two non-perishable meals in early December so they will have food available in case of bad weather," Roslick said.

"It really fulfills a need in the community."

Mobile Meals of Oklahoma County serves nearly 1,100 seniors annually, and in 2010 delivered 143,695 meals throughout Okla-

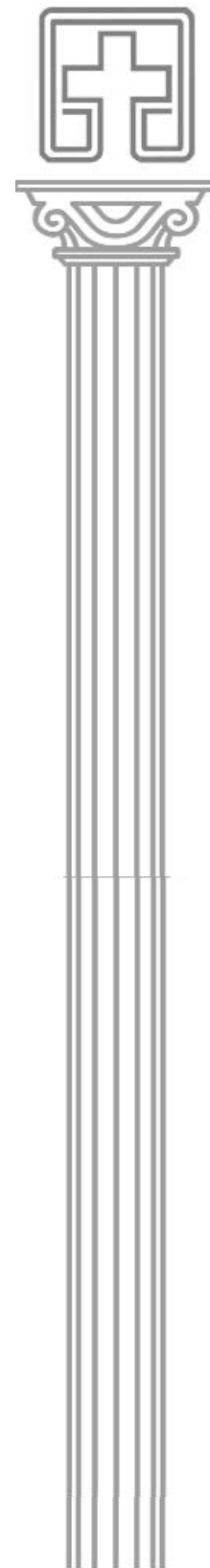
homa County. The 61 churches receiving the grants provide anywhere from one to five meals each week per recipient. The grant amounts range from \$200 to \$1,000 based on the number of meals provided by each site.

"Mobile Meals is a vital service for homebound elderly in our community, and we truly appreciate the commitment from these churches and their congregations to support the program," says Nancy B. Anthony, executive director of the Oklahoma City Community Foundation.

This is the fourth consecutive year the Oklahoma City Community Foundation has awarded grants to Mobile Meals of Oklahoma County.

Grants were awarded to the following Catholic churches in Oklahoma County that participate in the Mobile Meals program:

Epiphany of the Lord  
Our Lady of Fatima Church  
St. Charles Borromeo Church  
St. Eugene Church  
St. Francis of Assisi Church  
St. Paul the Apostle Church



## The Catholic Foundation **CORNERSTONE**

### Catholic Schools Endowment Fund

Please consider a gift to the Catholic Schools Endowment Fund today. Catholic Schools are lighting the way, devoted to forming the whole student — spiritually, academically, socially and physically. A recent analysis by the Institute of Education Science at the U.S. Department of Education found that:

- Catholic school students generally perform higher than their public school counterparts on standardized achievement tests;
- Catholic school graduates are more likely to have completed advanced-level courses;
- Catholic high schools typically have more demanding graduation requirements;
- Catholic school students are more likely to complete a bachelor's or advanced degree by their mid-20s.

Currently, the cost of Catholic elementary school and secondary school tuition in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is almost \$16 million annually. These figures are based on enrollments in 20 Catholic elementary schools and two Catholic secondary schools. The Catholic Schools Endowment, with a fund balance of about \$2.5 million (as of 6/30/11), was established to provide income to reduce the cost of Catholic elementary school and secondary school tuition in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Through your generosity and support, the Catholic Schools Endowment will provide a way to offset rising expenses in our schools and lower tuition. It will keep the cost of a Catholic education affordable for most families. Please consider Investing in the Future of Our Faith by an outright gift or pledge, or by including the Catholic Schools Endowment in your estate planning.

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](http://www.cfook.org) ■ [bsemtner@catharchdioceseokc.org](mailto:bsemtner@catharchdioceseokc.org)

**Please Remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Your Estate Plans**



# Students Work as Santa's Helpers for Make-A-Wish

OKLAHOMA CITY — When Mount St. Mary Catholic High School art teacher Kathleen Blake got her students started on the Make-A-Wish Believe “Letter to Santa” project, she had an idea much bigger than Santa Claus in mind.

Mount art students raised more than \$400 for the Macy's Make-A-Wish Foundation by rallying fellow Rocket students and MSM faculty to write a letter to Santa Claus. Art students organized the effort and for each letter to Santa Claus mailed from Mount St. Mary, Macy's donated \$1. Together, Mount St. Mary donated over \$400 to the Make-A-Wish Foundation!

Blake's relationship with the Make-A-Wish Foundation began when a friend's child was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. In the



*Huiqin Li, Allison Keeley, Meredith Shadid and Jesus Carreon.*

last few years of the child's life, difference in the life of that Blake and her community did young child, and the Make-A-Wish everything they could to make a Foundation was instrumental in

that effort. Make-A-Wish made the child's biggest wish come true — a trip to Disney World for the entire family.

“My goal for the Santa letter project was to bring our Mount community together to raise money for a foundation that makes huge differences in the lives of those in need. But I also hope that while writing the letters to Santa Claus, our students took a minute to pause and reflect on what the holidays are all about — their faith and serving others,” she said.

Mount St. Mary Catholic High School would like to wish you a Merry Christmas. May all of your wishes come true, may you take a moment to reflect on the gifts in your life and may you do something to give back to others this Christmas season.

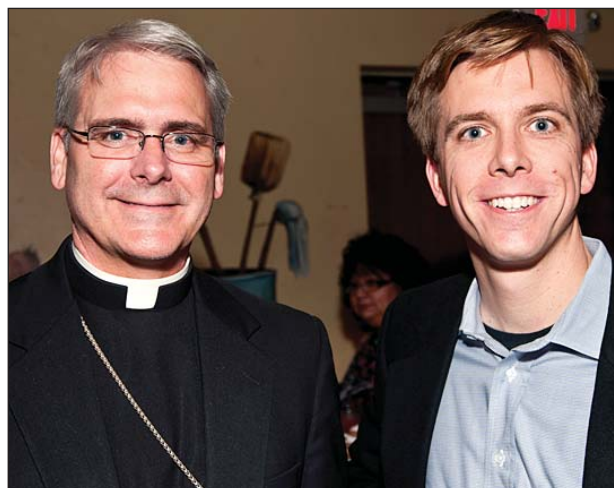
## Mount Creates ‘Magic’ With Successful Fundraising Event

OKLAHOMA CITY — Over 350 Mount family members and friends attended this year's Magic at The Mount held at the historic Oklahoma City Farmers Market. The event was highlighted by silent and live auctions, with items such as a catered dinner with Archbishop Coakley, an evening with Coach Barry Switzer and several getaways, including an exclusive South Beach condo, along with condos in Naples and Navarre Beach, Fla., and Outer Banks, N.C.

A Dutch Auction was held to continue building the perimeter fence around The Mount's campus. Last year, Mount families stepped up to the challenge of surrounding the school's new student parking lot with classic brick columns and ornamental wrought iron fencing. This year, constituents were invited to purchase columns and fencing that would extend the project from the southeast corner of the student parking lot, east to Shartel, then north to the front of the school building. Eighteen columns were sold along with many fence panels connecting the columns.

“My personal highlight of the evening was witnessing the incredible commitment to continue our fence project. This project is adding a world-class look to our already beautiful campus,” said Chris Stiles, director of Advancement.

The event raised more than \$162,000. These funds are designated to the fence as well as assisting with the renovation of the school's science labs,



*Archbishop Coakley with MSM alum Justin Byrne, '93.*

renovating gymnasium restrooms and enhancing campus security.

“In our 13 years of hosting this event, this year's auction was by far the most enjoyable and profitable. The atmosphere inside the Farmers Market was electric. I am so grateful to our Mount friends and families who continue to amaze me by their generosity of supporting our school's mission,” said Principal Talita DeNegri.

A special thank you to all of the school's corporate partners who helped sponsor this event. These partnerships include 18002SellHomes, Affiliated Movers, Architectural Design Group, BancFirst, Chris and Ursula Bolding, CareSource,



*Sister Catherine Powers with Lenny Hatchett.*

Durham Supply, Farm Bureau Insurance - Mark Wolf, Ferguson Buick GMC, Inc., Forest Building Materials, Grace Living Centers, Mac and Joan Maguire, Krapff Reynolds Construction, Maccini Construction Company, Maguire-O'Hara Construction, Inc., Matt and Janis Mollman, Mercy Health Center, Michael Brooks-Jimenez Attorney at Law, Mollman Culligan Water, Nash Construction Company, Oklahoma Center for Orthopedics and Sports, Oklahoma Oil and Gas Management, Sisters of Mercy OKC Convent, Sisters of Mercy South Central Community, Smith Robert Baldischwiler, Stillwater National Bank, Tyler Media and Ward & Glass, LLP.





# Catholics Celebrate Our Lady

Hispanic Catholics across the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City celebrated The Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12. Several parishes, including Sacred Heart of El Reno pictured here, saw hundreds of people join in the colorful celebration and Mass. The character pictured in the scary-looking mask represents Satan, who Father Mark Mason said “is always trying to throw us off balance.” In December of 1531, the Blessed Mother appeared before a poor Aztec Indian by the name of Juan Diego. The apparition of Our Lady outside Mexico City before Juan Diego is credited with leading to the conversion of Mexico. In 2002, Pope John Paul II declared Juan Diego a saint.





# *Eucharistic Adoration Around the Archdiocese*

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour, vouchsafe, O God! to hear our prayers and grant our desires, through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ and of his Blessed Mother. Amen.

Following are the locations and intervals of Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament across the Archdiocese. If your parish is not listed, needs updating, or if you have a question, feel free to contact:

**Barbara M. Curcio,**  
**St. Eugene Parish**  
**(405) 755-9163 or**  
**Barbara-Curcio@OUHSC.edu**

Perpetual Adoration, 24 hours a day/year round  
**St. Monica Parish** - 2001 N. Western, Edmond  
**St. Joseph Parish** - 421 E. Acres Street, Norman  
**St. Andrew Parish** - 800 NW 5th Street, Moore

Sunday 2:30 to 5 p.m.  
Wednesday 6:30 to 10 p.m., Friday 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
**St. Francis Xavier Parish** - 110 N. Madison Street, Enid

Sunday 6 to 7 p.m.  
**St. Joseph Parish** - 403 Kate Boevers Avenue, Union City

Monday 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.  
**Christ the King Parish** - 8005 Dorset Drive, Oklahoma City

Monday 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
**Immaculate Conception Parish**, Highway 9 West, Seminole

Monday noon to 10 p.m.  
**Sacred Heart Parish** - 208 S. Evans Avenue, El Reno

Wednesday 9 a.m. to 12 noon  
**Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help** - 3214 Lake Avenue, Oklahoma City

Wednesday 6:45 to 8:15 p.m.  
First Friday 11 a.m. to noon  
First Saturday 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.  
**St. Benedict Parish** - 632 N. Kickapoo Avenue, Shawnee

Wednesday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
**St. Charles Borromeo Parish** - 5024 N. Grove Avenue, Oklahoma City

Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
**St. Damien Parish** - 8455 NW 234th Street, Edmond



Wednesday 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Benediction  
First Friday 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. Saturday  
**St. Eugene Parish** - 2400 W. Hefner Road, Oklahoma City

Wednesday 6 p.m.  
**St. Mary Parish** - 125 E. Street, Ardmore

Wednesday 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
**St. Francis of Assisi Parish** - 610 W. 9th Street, Newkirk

Wednesday 5 to 7 p.m.  
**St. Francis Xavier Parish** - 700 E. Oklahoma Avenue, Highway 7, Sulphur

Wednesday 5 to 6 p.m., Friday 9 to 10 a.m.  
**St. Rose of Lima Parish** - 4254 N. 9th Street, Perry

Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Daily M,T,W,F 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.  
**Epiphany of the Lord Parish** - 7336 W. Britton Road, Oklahoma City

Thursday 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
**Sacred Heart Parish** - 627 12th Street, Alva

Thursday 5 to 9:30 p.m.  
**St. Gregory Monastery** - 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee

Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
**St. James the Greater Parish** - 4201 S. McKinley, Oklahoma City

Thursday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
**St. Philip Neri Parish** - 1107 Felix Place, Midwest City

Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
**Prince of Peace Parish** - 1500 Falcon Road, Altus

Friday 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
**St. Peter Parish** - 1220 N. Quinn Street, Guymon

Friday 6 to 7 p.m.  
**Holy Cross Parish** - 14 W. Francis, Madill

Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
**St. John the Baptist Parish** - 900 S. Littler, Edmond

Third Friday 5 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday  
First Friday 6 to 7 p.m.  
**St. Joseph Parish** - 1300 E. Beverly, Ada

First Friday Benediction 5:30 p.m.  
**St. Francis of Assisi Parish** - 1901 NW 18th Street, Oklahoma City

First Friday Benediction 5:30 p.m.  
**St. John Nepomuk Parish** - 600 S. Garth Brooks Blvd., Yukon

First Friday 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.  
**Holy Angels Parish** - 317 N. Blackwelder Avenue, Oklahoma City

First Friday 9 a.m. to noon  
**St. Mark the Evangelist** - 3939 W. Tecumseh Road, Norman

First Friday 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
**St. Mary's Parish** - 707 E. Ponca Ave., Ponca City

First Friday 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
**Sts. Peter and Paul Parish** - 309 S. Main Street, Kingfisher

First Friday 6 to 7 p.m.  
**St. Teresa of Avila Parish** - 1576 N. Tim Holt Drive, Harrah

First Friday 7:30 p.m.  
**St. Ann Parish** - 8492 State Highway 17, Elgin

First Friday 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.  
**St. Vincent De Paul Parish** - 123 S. 9th Street, McLoud

Saturday 6 a.m. to Sunday 9 p.m.  
**Sacred Heart Parish** - 2706 S. Shartel Avenue, Oklahoma City

Third Sunday of the Month 7 p.m.  
**Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish** - 220 N. A Street, Sterling



# Pope Says Keep Focus on Christ This Christmas

By David Kerr  
*Catholic News Agency*

Vatican City (CNA/EWTN News) — Pope Benedict XVI reminded Christians not to be dazzled by the shopping lights of the season, but to keep focused on the coming of Jesus Christ, the “true light of the world.”

“The external environment offers the usual commercial messages, even if in a lower-key way because of the economic crisis,” said the Pope during his Sunday Angelus address in a rain-soaked St. Peter’s Square Dec. 11. The Christian, by contrast, is “called to live Advent without being distracted by the lights.”

Christians should keep their eyes fixed on Christ so that “if, in fact, we persevere ‘vigilant in prayer and rejoicing in praise,’ our eyes will be able to recognize in him the true light of the world that comes to enlighten our darkness.”

Tens of thousands of pilgrims were at St. Peter’s Square for the third Sunday of Advent, known as Gaudete Sunday.

The title is taken from St. Paul’s encouragement in the day’s reading: “Gaudete in Domino Semper,” meaning “Rejoice always in the Lord.” The day marks a change in the Church’s liturgical colors from the somber purple of Advent to a more hopeful shade of rose.

Pope Benedict acknowledged the importance of time for rest and relaxation. However, he added that true joy is “not the result of fun,” but is “something more profound” that is “tied to the relationship with God.”

Those who have encountered Christ in their lives “experience in the heart a serenity and joy that no one and no situation can remove.”

The Pope paraphrased the famous words of the fourth and fifth century bishop St. Augustine of Hippo. He noted that St. Augustine searched else-



where in vain for truth, peace and joy before concluding that “the heart of man is restless, (and) cannot find peace and serenity until it rests in God.”

Therefore, true joy is not a “passing mood” nor “something that can be reached through its own efforts.” Instead, it is a gift “born from the encounter with the living person of Jesus.”

“In this season of Advent,” the Pope continued, “we strengthen our certainty that the Lord came among us and continually renews his consoling presence of love and joy.”

God is “closer to us than we are to ourselves,” he added, citing St. Augustine’s description of God as “more inward than my innermost and higher than

my uppermost.”

After praying the Angelus with pilgrims, the Pope turned his thoughts and words to the thousands of families who had gathered in St. Peter’s Square for the traditional blessing of the “bambinelli,” the little statues of the baby Jesus that will take pride of place in family cribs.

“Dear children,” said the Pope, “when you pray in front of your nativity scene, remember me as well, as I remember you. Thank you and Merry Christmas!”

In response, the children cheered and released balloons and paper lanterns into the air in celebration.

## Parishes Offer Catholics Returning Home Program

Did you know that one out of every 10 Americans is an “ex-Catholic?” If they were a separate denomination they would be the third largest denomination in the United States, after Catholics and Baptists (Pew Research Center). In February, 2011, three parishes in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City (St. John the Baptist, The Epiphany of Our Lord and Christ the King) began reviewing programs to invite non-practicing Catholics back to the Church.

They have chosen Catholics Returning Home (CRH), a six-week

series of compassion and reconciliation. The program is confidential, non-judgmental, and is facilitated by lay Catholics who have previously “returned home” and are eager to share their stories.

The sessions will include stories of returning Catholics, an overview of the church today, a walk-through of the Mass, an explanation of Reconciliation, and a discussion of the Creed in addition to ample opportunities to ask questions.

Please help our parishes to reach out to inactive Catholics by praying for them, for the Holy

Spirit’s guidance, and for the success of the Catholics Returning Home programs beginning in January. Christmas is a time when inactive Catholics often return to the church for a Mass or celebration. During the upcoming holiday and Holy Day Seasons, we can warmly greet others as we are coming into and leaving church. We can go out of our way to notice visitors and newcomers seated near us and greet them at the “sign of peace.” And if the parking lot and church are overflowing, we can turn our complaining into rejoicing!

The Catholics Returning Home programs will be hosted at the following parishes:

Tuesdays beginning Jan. 10  
from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church: Dale and Connie Moore, 834-0765

Church of the Epiphany of the Lord: 722-2110 Ext.125

Wednesdays beginning Jan. 11  
from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Christ the King Church: 496-0033



# Children Thrive With Unconditional Parental Love

Once I met a woman who had worked for years in fashion and modeling. Unsurprisingly, she was strikingly attractive. She was accompanied by her teenage daughter who, by contrast, was rather unremarkable to look at, maybe even a plain-Jane. After spending time with them, I began to sense that the mother, whose life had largely revolved around her appearance, seemed to look down on her daughter, perhaps unconsciously, because of her average appearance. Her daughter seemed aware of this lack of maternal acceptance, and seemed troubled and uncomfortable as she tried to compensate and please her mom in other ways.

The girl's situation was a strong reminder to me of how important it is for every child to experience unconditional acceptance from their parents if they are to grow and mature in a healthy way. Unconditional love profoundly and beautifully molds us as human beings.

A growing number of parents in our society, however, no longer seem to hold to this key notion of unconditionally accepting their own children. If parents are told by doctors that their children might be born with physical or mental disabilities, many parents today will reject them and even yield to the temptation to end their lives through direct abortion.

I was recently discussing the Special Olympics with the father of a

boy who has Down syndrome, and he remarked that when he takes his son to the local chapter, there seem to be reduced numbers of new children participating each year. He wondered if this could be due to the expanded targeting of Down syndrome children through prenatal testing and abortion.

Most unborn children diagnosed with Down syndrome, in fact, are never allowed to be born. Data from the United Kingdom indicate that between 1989 and 2006 approximately 92 percent of women chose to terminate a pregnancy with a prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome, while in the U.S., several published studies suggest the figure may be somewhere between 87 percent and 98 percent. A great many Down syndrome children, indeed, never see the light of day.

In the face of these harsh data, the importance of explicitly repudiating the eugenic mind-set that has taken hold in our society cannot be overstated. No child is perfect, but every child is precious. We need to act as a people "set apart" in our attitude to the begetting of children who may be disabled. Historically, Catholics have always stood apart in this way.



By Father  
Tadeusz  
Pacholczyk

Practically, this means overturning our culturally-conditioned attitude toward "imperfect" children, and accepting every child without preconditions. We must push back against the almost ubiquitous pressure that counsels us to ensure that our children are born without defects.

Bioethicist Luke Gormally argues it this way: "In part, these pressures are the natural temptation to avoid the burdens of care for the handicapped ... In part, however, they are the pressures of cultural attitudes, assimilated by many Christians, toward the child."

He continues: "For many it has become merely quaint to think of each child as a unique gift of God; children are more like planned acquisitions in our culture, acquisitions which should fit into our expectations about how our lives should go, about the ease and enjoyments that should characterize our lifestyle. A child who might threaten our ease may, if he or she is viewed as an acquisition, be thought of as a replaceable acquisition. And indeed genetic counselors will tell parents: You can terminate this pregnancy and try again for a 'normal child.'"

A husband and wife are called to give themselves to each other completely and unreservedly, and to accept each other unconditionally in the marital embrace. Every child of theirs, whether entering the world

with a handicap or not, is an expression and fruit of themselves and their acceptance of each other. To reject their own progeny because of a disability is to reject each other on some level. To deny life to their own flesh and blood is also to reject an infinite gift from the Giver of gifts, and to arrogate to themselves a ruthless power over life. Meanwhile, the unconditional acceptance of a child as a gift of God flows from the true and unconditional acceptance of each other as husband and wife, even with all their spousal faults and defects.

As Gormally concludes, "Truly unreserved self-giving carries with it a commitment to unreserved acceptance of the fruit of that self-giving. The dignity of the child is only adequately recognized in the acceptance and cherishing of him just as he is."

We do well continually to realign our thinking, so we can come to see how our children, whether "perfect" or not, are treasures and never possessions; they are gifts, and never acquisitions. They are blessings to be safeguarded and nurtured in the embrace of unconditional parental acceptance.

*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 the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See [www.ncbcenter.org](http://www.ncbcenter.org).*

## Author Offers Look at Papacy During World War II

**The Policies and Politics of Pope Pius XII: Between Diplomacy and Morality.** Frank J. Coppa. New York: Peter Lang, 2011. 205 pages. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-4331-0521-0. \$36.95

Does Dr. Frank J. Coppa, a history professor at St. John's University and author of previous books on the history of the papacy, provide anything new to the discussion of Pope Pius XII's supposed silence during World War II in not protesting stronger against the Holocaust? The answer is some. Nothing earth-shaking was added. He points out that Pope Pius was following the example of Pope Benedict XV during World War I by not only being neutral but also

being diplomatically impartial. Pope Pius was walking this tightrope of impartiality to protect Catholics, the Vatican and others from suffering even more from Hitler and his allies than they already were. Pope Pius feared that Hitler or Mussolini would use any strong remark against them in order to invade the Vatican because he had broken the Lateran Treaty of 1929 which prohibited the Pope from being involved in favoring one nation over another in any dispute. Pope Pius took a narrow understanding of the clause in the treaty. He spoke out as Coppa shows with as much force as he dared without causing harm to Catholics or others. He knew that if he spoke out not using restrained diplo-

matic language that many would suffer for it as had been shown before when other Church officials spoke out, like in the Netherlands. There is evidence that even when he spoke out using diplomatic language that Hitler and his allies knew he was talking about them and this would enrage them. Coppa points out that Hitler had plans to kidnap the Pope and other leaders of the Church, but this was thwarted by others. Venerable Pius XII used all his diplo-



By Brother  
Benet Exton,  
O.S.B.

matic training to speak out as much as he could without causing more harm to Jews and to Catholics. This Pope was honored and revered by Catholics and Jews alike for his actions during the War, but the Communist started slandering him after his death and many Jews and Catholics have come to believe these lies. Because of this, Pius' cause for canonization has been slowed, but not totally stalled. The truth will eventually come out and show that he is saint. This book is recommended to those interested in Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust issue.

*Brother Benet Exton, O.S.B., St. Gregory's University, Shawnee.*



# Calendar

## DECEMBER

**18 Pilgrimage Sunday.** Mass begins at 11 a.m. and includes blessing of the sick and blessing of the children, noon lunch, 1 p.m. Novena prayers to Infant Jesus of Prague, Litany of the Infant Jesus, and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague is located at St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church at 304 Jim Thorpe Blvd. in Prague. (405) 567-3080 or [www.shrineof-infantjesus.com](http://www.shrineof-infantjesus.com).

**18 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 12 to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Katherine Payne at 210-4826 or Corliss Elsworth at 286-3012.

**18 The Secular Franciscan Order of St. Francis Fraternity** meets at 1:15 p.m. at St. Anthony's Hospital Chapel. For more information, call Jim Disbrow at 830-8688.

**22 Divine Mercy Adoration**

from 7 to 8 p.m. at St. Joseph's Old Cathedral, 307 N.W. 4th St., Oklahoma City.

**25 Company: Catholic Adult Singles ages 35+** Christmas dinner, 6 p.m. As it gets to be close to an activity, email Mary at [maryhall@consultant.com](mailto:maryhall@consultant.com), or call/text at 401-4105 to let her know you are coming.

## JANUARY

**1 Mary Mother of God-Holy Day of Obligation**

**1 The Secular Franciscan Order of St. Claire Fraternity** meets at 1:15 p.m. the first Sunday of the month at St. Thomas More Church in Norman in the library. All are welcome. If you would like to learn how Francis lived, plan to attend one of our meetings. For more information, call Alice at (405) 473-7680.

**1 The Lay Missionaries of Charity**, the Secular (Lay) Order of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, at St. John the Baptist Catholic Parish, Edmond, on the first and third Saturday of each month beginning with Holy Mass at 7:30 a.m. in the chapel. For more information, contact

Toni Harrelson at (405) 341-2199 or [lmckoklahoma@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lmckoklahoma@sbcglobal.net).

**5 Catholics Returning Home** begins Jan. 5 at 7 p.m. St. Benedict Church, 632 N. Kickapoo, Shawnee Okla. For more information, call Gail or Clyde at (405) 878-6746.

**6 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. For more information, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

**10 Catholics Returning Home**, Tuesdays beginning Jan. 10 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Dale and Connie Moore, 834-0765.

**10 Catholics Returning Home**, Tuesdays beginning Jan. 10 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Church of the Epiphany of the Lord, 722-2110 Ext. 125.

**11 Catholics Returning Home**, Wednesdays beginning Jan. 11 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Christ the King Church, 496-0033.

# 2012 Sooner Catholic Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
1/8/2012	12/19/2011
1/22/2012	1/12/2012
2/5/2012	1/26/2012
2/19/2012	2/9/2012
3/4/2012	2/23/2012
3/18/2012	3/8/2012
4/1/2012	3/22/2012
4/15/2012	4/5/2012
4/29/2012	4/19/2012
5/13/2012	5/3/2012
5/27/2012	5/17/2012
6/10/2012	5/31/2012
6/24/2012	6/14/2012
7/15/2012	6/28/2012
8/12/2012	8/2/2012
8/26/2012	8/19/2012
9/9/2012	8/30/2012
9/23/2012	9/13/2012
10/7/2012	9/27/2012
10/21/2012	10/11/2012
11/4/2012	10/25/2012
11/18/2012	11/8/2012
12/2/2012	11/20/2012
12/16/2012	12/6/2012

# Jobs Box

## Chief Financial Officer

**St Gregory's University** seeks a Chief Financial Officer. The CFO will provide leadership in strategic planning processes, particularly relating to financial and budgetary components maintaining a high degree of financial accountability and transparency. The CFO will provide budgetary leadership and oversee all the university accounting functions.

CPA required with 7+ experience in financial administration in a management or supervisory capacity. Knowledge of relevant regulations and requirements to satisfactorily meet government reporting requirements for financial activities pertaining to accountability and stewardship of university resources. Submit resume to [hr@stgregorys.edu](mailto:hr@stgregorys.edu). Full job description at [www.stgregorys.edu](http://www.stgregorys.edu) under Faculty and Staff tab.

## Secretary/Receptionist

**St. Thomas More University Parish and Student Center** in Norman is looking for a secretary/-receptionist. Responsibility includes preparation of weekly parish bulletin, maintaining sacramental records, and being the parish office receptionist. Needed are basic computer skills, organizational effectiveness, attention to detail, time management ability, people skills and talent for multi-tasking. Successful candidate should have significant office and receptionist experience. Job is full-time with salary commensurate with qualifications. Send letter of application, resume and contact information for three references to Father James Goins, St. Thomas More University Parish and Student Center, 100 E. Stinson, Norman, Okla. 73072. Job remains open until filled. For more information, call (405) 321-0990.

# Nun to Celebrate 100 Years

Sister Teresa Palsmeier will be celebrating her 100th birthday Thursday, Dec. 29. Sister Teresa, an Oklahoma native who now resides at the Adorers Wichita (Kan.) Center, served as an educator, provincial superior, in volunteer services and in catechetical work.

She was born in Okeene and was baptized there at St. Anthony Church. When she was between 3 and 4 years old, she traveled with her family by wagon from Okeene to Garden Plain, Kan. She grew up on a farm near Garden Plain.

Later in her ministry, Sister Teresa returned to Oklahoma. She worked at St. Mary's Hospital in Enid, where she served as coordinator of volunteer workers from 1973 to 1990 and in volunteer services from 1990 to 1993. She also volunteered at Corpus Christi Parish in Oklahoma City from 1993 to 1997, when she retired to the Wichita Center.

Family and friends will host a birthday party in her honor Dec. 29 at the Wichita Center, and the Adorers will celebrate Sister Teresa's birthday there on Friday, Dec. 30.



*Mirad, la  
virgen  
concebirá y  
dará a luz un  
hijo, a quien  
pondrán por  
nombre  
Emmanuel*

*Mateo 1: 23*

*Vidrio de color de la  
Parroquia de Nuestra  
Señora del Perpetuo  
Socorro en Sterling.*

