

Sooner Catholic

Serving the People of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

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The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe December 12

The apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1531 to Juan Diego, a Mexican Indian at the Hill of Tepeyac, marks the beginning of the massive conversion of the native peoples of Mexico. "Today, there are approximately 23 million Hispanic Catholics in the United States," says Ronaldo Cruz, adviser to the U.S. Bishops on Hispanic Affairs. "Our Lady of Guadalupe continues to be a source of consolation and hope not only to people of Hispanic descent, but to all peoples throughout the hemisphere. In fact, Pope John Paul II speaks of Our Lady of Guadalupe as the Star of the New Evangelization."

Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe, mystical rose, intercede for the Church, protect the Holy Father, help all who invoke you in their necessities. Since you are the ever Virgin Mary and Mother of the true God, obtain for us from your most holy Son the Grace of a firm faith and sure hope amid the bitterness of life, as well as an ardent love and the precious gift of final perseverance. Amen

Cover art from St. Mary Church in Medford



The Good News

... Through Advent With Our Blessed Mother

The season of Advent is a time to be renewed in our faith by returning to the promise of God which alone gives real meaning to our lives.

Even though the human race had fallen into sin and was hopelessly immersed in it, God did not abandon us. Rather, He looked on us with love and in His goodness, He gave us a promise: "I will send My Son and He will save you," God said. This promise was Good News then and this promise, fulfilled in the Person of Jesus is always Good News for us.

The Liturgical Season of Advent is that special time each year when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus and once again enter fully into the eternal plan of God for all of us.

One of the central figures of Advent is the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. It was through her that the beautiful promise of God was accomplished. Mary gave birth to God's "Good News" — Jesus. She is the mother of Jesus whose birthday we celebrate on Christmas Day.

Because Mary is such a key person in our Advent season, it is most fitting that now in this second week of Advent, we will observe two special feast days to honor Mary and to thank God for her role in His plan.

On Wednesday, Dec. 8, we honor Mary as the Immaculate Conception. Although a creature of God (Mary is totally human), she was conceived free of all sin. Furthermore, by her compliance with the Grace of God, she remained free of sin throughout her entire life. Thus she was truly prepared by God to become the mother of His eternal Son, Jesus. This

role was not thrust upon her but was offered and she humbly accepted by responding: "Thy will be done!"

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is so intimately bound up in the mystery of the Incarnation that the Church Universal always celebrates it as a major feast day. It is for us a holy day of obligation, a day on which you and I are obliged to participate in the celebration of Mass.

A few days later, on Dec. 12, we have another great festival of our Blessed Mother. This is commonly referred to as the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This feast goes back in history to the beginning of the colonization of the Americas. In the outskirts of Mexico City, on a hillside called Tepeyac, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Saint Juan Diego, a native of the area. Mary pledged her maternal care not only to Juan Diego but to all of us. At her request a shrine was constructed there so people could celebrate the Eucharist every day.

God's promise to send His Son Jesus to save us was fulfilled once and for all when Mary gave birth to Him at Bethlehem. Mary's appearances to Juan Diego gave the people of "the new world" an assurance that the promise was fulfilled in Jesus. Mary's influence upon the Native Americans enabled millions of people to discover Jesus and to follow Him. Within a few short years, those people were reborn in baptism, living the fullness of our Catholic faith and sharing the Good News of Jesus with others.

Next weekend, millions of people throughout the Americas will honor the Blessed Virgin Mary under the

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Archbishop
Beltran

title of Our Lady of Guadalupe. But even more importantly, we will be healed and nourished and strengthened by the Body and the Blood of Jesus in celebrating the Eucharist.

Jesus is the heart of our Catholic faith. He is the One and Only Savior. He is the Good News because He fulfills the promise of God. He grants us everlasting life.

This is the reason the Advent season is such an important time in our lives. It enables us to prepare properly to celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas and His continuing presence among us thereafter. May all of us use these remaining three weeks of Advent with joy and enthusiasm to praise the Lord through His Holy Mother Mary who is our mother, too.

Seminary Burses

A \$100 donation was made to the **Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse** by the St. Joseph Monastery.

A \$100 donation was made to the **Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse** in memory of Clara Schwarz from the Schwarz family at Twin Cities Ready Mix, Inc.

A \$110 donation was made to the **Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse** in memory of Clara Schwarz from St. Anthony Cardiac Lab.

A \$75 donation was made to the **Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse** in memory of Sister Teresa Ranallo.

A \$35 donation was made to the **Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse** by an anonymous donor.

A \$300 donation was made to the **Father James Kastner Seminary Burse** in memory of Father Kastner's birthday by Adele E. Crump.

A \$50 donation was made to the **Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse** by an anonymous donor.

To make a donation to a Seminarian Burse, mail a check to the Vocations Office, Attn: Seminarian Burse, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123. Make the check out to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and in the memo write which burse it is for and if we can publish your name or if it is to remain anonymous.

Sooner Catholic

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Harold and Kathy Heiple, Christy Meiser and Holy Family Home Director Mary Jane Webster.

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Christmas season began early for Catholic Charities Holy Family Maternity Home (HFMH) as the University of Oklahoma Parish, St. Thomas More, gave a Pack 'N Play filled with diapers and other much-needed baby items to the home. The gift was presented to HFMH on Nov. 10.

The result of an innovative fundraiser for the parish, the HFMH gift was auctioned for \$1,000 at St. Thomas More's annual fundraising gala. Another basket filled with food garnered an additional \$1,000 and was donated to the Cleveland County Community Action Food Pantry.

Adopt-A-Family Program Makes Christmas Possible for 286 Families

OKLAHOMA CITY — For some of Oklahoma's struggling families, a single Christmas gift can be out of reach. Fortunately, due to the benevolence of its sponsors, Catholic Charities Adopt-a-Family program is available to provide Christmas presents this year for 286 low-income families.

Now in its 15th year, the Adopt-a-Family program has made Christmas possible for thousands of Oklahoma families. This year alone, the program will assist approximately 1,400 individuals.

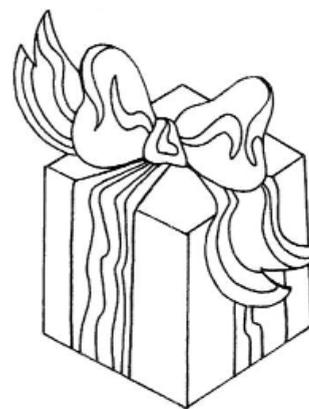
Upon enrolling, each sponsor receives gift tags with the names and ages of family members as well as gift ideas for each person. To ensure that the program can help as many families as possible, all gifts are limited to \$20 per person.

"We are grateful for the generosity of all of those who found room in their

hearts, and budget, to adopt a family this year. Thanks to their sponsorship, Christmas will be a joyful time for so many families," said Catholic Charities Executive Director Tim O'Connor. O'Connor also pointed out that those who wish to donate or assist in the program can do so by mailing their donations to the Catholic Charities offices or donate online at the Catholic Charities website.

Volunteers will also be needed to distribute the gifts to needy families Dec. 9-10 at the former location of Our Lady of Fatima Church in Nicoma.

To learn more about the Adopt-a-Family program or to volunteer for the gift distribution, please call 523-3013. For more information about the programs and services of Catholic Charities, visit www.catholiccharities-ok.org or at www.facebook.com/CCOKC.



Catholic Charities Annual Appeal Reaches 80 Percent of Its Goal

OKLAHOMA CITY — Two months after it began, Catholic Charities Annual Appeal has now reached 80 percent of its goal in pledged donations. As the social arm of the Catholic Church and a living witness to the Catholic faith, Catholic Charities and its programs provides help and assistance to women, children, families and the elderly of Oklahoma regardless of race, creed, religion, ability to pay or other qualification.

This year's campaign, titled "Called to Respond," has brought a fantastic reaction from donors. As of the third week in November, Catholic Charities had received more than \$1.9 million in pledges, up from \$1.87 million at the same time last year. Additionally, the charity has noticed a strong increase in funds from new donors, with 1,211 people contributing \$102,293, up from 1,026 people pledging \$96,107. Nevertheless, \$500,000 is still needed to reach Catholic Charities 2010 goal of \$2.4 million.

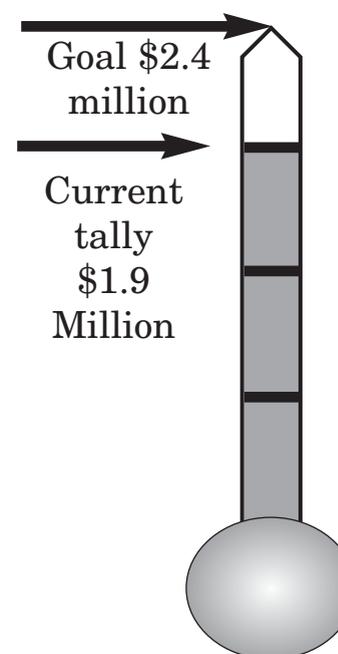
"In September, we put out the call for Oklahomans to respond to the massive need of our neediest families, and many of you did," said Tim O'Connor, executive

director of Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Oklahoma. "However, we are still half-a-million dollars short of reaching the funds needed to ensure that our programs, such as the Holy Family Maternity Home and disaster relief services, are fully funded for the upcoming year. For the price of one hour's wages per month, people can fund a wide range of programs designed to help those in need overcome incredible obstacles. If you have not pledged yet, I encourage you to do so."

The funds raised will go toward programs benefiting needy families and children throughout the western two-thirds of Oklahoma. Catholic Charities programs include maternity and adoption, the Holy Family Maternity Home, homeless social services for needy families and children, disaster relief, immigration services, refugee resettlement and St. Joseph's Counseling Center.

For more information about Catholic Charities Annual Appeal and its many programs, call (405) 523-3000. You may also visit www.catholiccharitiesok.org or www.facebook.com/CCOKC.

Catholic Charities Annual Appeal Tally as of Nov.



Online Gallery Opened By SGU Visual Arts Dept.

SHAWNEE — The Visual Arts Department at St. Gregory's University recently unveiled its new online gallery. The gallery consists of three main sections: faculty and visiting artists, alumni, and current art students. It can be accessed by visiting www.stgregorys.edu/finearts and clicking on the "Visual Arts." The "Galleries" link can be found on the Visual Arts page.

The gallery is a result of many years of gathering photographs of artwork, SGU visual arts faculty member Sheryl Cozad said. "We're very excited about this opportunity to show the high quality of artwork produced here at SGU," Cozad said. "Our SGU artists can link their gallery pages to their resumes and Facebook pages, which can be a real boost to their careers. In

addition, it's a good way to make people more aware of our school and our program."

Each artist featured on the website has a dedicated page filled with paintings, drawings, sculpture, graphics and other works created during their time at SGU. The alumni gallery features the work of seven art majors who have recently graduated, while the student gallery features work by five artists currently at SGU. Each of the galleries will have additional artists added during the next few weeks, and each artist currently on the site will have additional works of art added to their galleries.

For more information about SGU's online art gallery, contact Cozad at (405) 878-5162 or secozad@stgregorys.edu.



Bishops Commend House Resolution

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Bishops commended a resolution in the House of Representatives that condemns recent attacks on religious minorities in Iraq and calls for the U.S. government to work with the Iraqi government to protect these vulnerable groups.

In a Nov. 29 letter to the sponsors of House Resolution 1725, Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany, N.Y., chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on International Justice and Peace, and Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, co-adjutor archbishop of Los Angeles and chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration, called for its immediate passage.

The resolution was introduced Nov. 18 by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) and co-sponsored by Reps. Frank Wolf (R-VA), Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA), Mark S. Kirk (R-IL), Gary C. Peters (D-MI), Joseph Pitts (R-PA), and Trent Franks (R-AZ).

"Our conference welcomes this bipartisan resolution as a way to focus attention on the situation of the vulnerable religious communities in Iraq," the bishops wrote. "In particular," they added, "we support the emphasis on developing a comprehensive plan to improve security for religious minorities and to increase their representation in the government of Iraq and to include them in all aspects of Iraqi society."

In their letter, the bishops referenced the recent attack in Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad.

"The October 31 attack on worshippers in Our Lady of Salvation Church in Baghdad that killed 58 and wounded 75 and the continuing violence against Christians are horrific reminders of the appalling lack of security that has condemned many in Iraq to live in fear," the bishops said. The House resolution condemns the attack against Our Lady of Salvation Church.

The bishops also welcomed the resolution's concern for Iraqi refugees and supported its call for measures to accelerate the review of their applications for resettlement and to improve conditions on the ground so that refugees may safely return to Iraq.

"We sincerely hope that House Resolution 1725 will be adopted quickly by the House of Representatives as we believe it will help improve security for all Iraqis, especially Christians and other vulnerable minorities," the bishops said. "We hope it will contribute to the overall goal of achieving a "responsible transition" that will reduce further loss of life and address the refugee crisis in Iraq."

Fr. Wolf Named Chair at SGU

SHAWNEE — St. Benedict Church pastor Father Donald Wolf has been named chair of the St. Gregory's University board of directors.

Father Wolf, who has served on the board for more than a year, officially began his duties on Nov. 1. He succeeds Nikki Cook, who served in the position for three years.

Father Wolf is a native of Wheatland. He graduated from Western Heights High School and attended Oklahoma State University. In 1975, he entered St. Meinrad College Seminary, earning a bachelor's degree in philosophy in 1977. He entered the St. Meinrad School of Theology that same year and earned a master of divinity in 1981. He was also ordained for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in 1981.

With a variety of assignments throughout western Oklahoma, Father Wolf has been associate pastor in Guymon and Enid and pastor in Mangum, Altus, Duncan, and in Oklahoma City at Holy Angels Parish and Sacred Heart Parish. The Most Rev. Eusebius Beltran, Archbishop of Oklahoma City, appointed Father Wolf as pastor of St. Benedict Catholic Church in Shawnee in June 2008.

Father Wolf's other pastoral work includes serving on the vocations



Fr. Don Wolf

board for 14 years, on the board of directors of Catholic Charities for eight years (three as chairman of the board), as spiritual moderator of the Cursillo Movement for 11 years, service on the Archdiocesan Priests Council and

as Vicar of Hispanic Ministry for four years. He also founded, produced and hosted the weekly radio program "La Voz Catolica" for seven years.

Father Wolf served on the National Board of the National Federation of Priests Councils for six years. In 1996, he was elected national president, serving from 1997 to 2000. Father Wolf earned a doctor of ministry degree from Seabury-Western School of Theology in 2003.

In addition to Father Wolf's appointment, SGU also promoted board member Greg Main to vice chair. Main, president and CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, has served on the SGU board since 2008.

St. Gregory's University, founded in 1875, is Oklahoma's oldest institution of higher learning. For further information, go to www.stgregorys.edu or call 1-888-STGREGS.

OLOG Scholarship Named In Memory of Jake Meier



Jake Meier

Earlier this month an Endowment Fund was established at the Catholic Foundation by family and friends in memory of Jacob Meier, a former camper and counselor at the Youth Summer Camp. The income of the Endowment Fund will be used to provide need-based camp fee scholarships to Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Youth Camp's summer camping program for Catholic students in the Archdiocese. Jake died unexpectedly as a result of a lifelong seizure disorder on Nov. 9, 2009, at the age of 27.

The second oldest of five children, Jake is the son of Rich Meier and Sandy Meier. He grew up in Yukon and attended Yukon Public Schools. He was an active member of St. John Nepomuk Catholic Church's youth group during his junior high and high school years. He helped with the chili suppers, sandwich meals, the Czech Fest youth booth, countless receptions including senior graduation, Knights of Columbus Christmas party and St. John's Halloween party. He attended numerous youth retreats through the Archdiocese including several National Catholic Youth Conferences and Region X conferences. Jake was a charter member of the Yukon Columbian Squires sponsored by the St. John's Council of the Knights of Columbus and was a member of the St. John's Youth Board. At the time of his death, he was a member of St. Mark's Parish in Norman.

Jake began attending camp while in junior high school when the Catholic Youth Camp was located at Lake Murray. The next summer when he was 15 years old, he applied for the camp staff and was hired as a kitchen assistant. In his application for a camp counselor position the next summer, Jake stated, "Since my first summer at

Lake Murray, I have learned more and more about my faith while having more and more fun each year as well. The more I go to camp, the more my eyes are opened to Christ's light of the world."

Jake was a counselor-in-training in 1999 and a counselor in the 2000 camp session (the first year of the new camp at Our Lady of Guadalupe).

Jake went on to the University of Oklahoma and received a bachelor's degree in health and exercise science. During this period he worked at Mercy Hospital as a physical therapy technician. Upon graduation he was accepted into the University of Central Missouri master's degree program and completed his graduate degree in sports administration. Part of his requirement for graduation in 2008 was to complete an internship. He interned in Nashville, Tenn., as the manager for the Nashville Metros professional soccer team. Upon hearing of his death, the owner and general manager of the Metros commented that Jake was the most professional young man he had ever worked with. At the time of his death, Jake was employed in the promotions department of the Oklahoma City Thunder basketball team and also worked at the Interurban Restaurant in Norman.

Jake's dad related that Jake had told him on his 18th birthday that when he was at camp, he always felt God was calling him to become a priest. He never acted on this calling, but his experience there made him closer to God and his Catholic faith. In the summer of 2009, he discussed with Nancy Housh, director of the Office of Youth Ministry, how he could become more active as a youth minister and was planning on taking classes to further his youth ministry education.

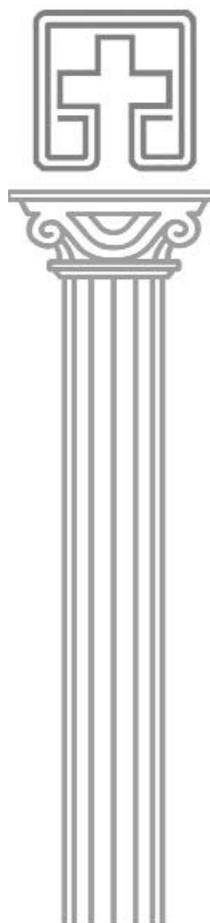
Although his life ended way too early, the scholarship in Jake Meier's memory will serve as a reminder of a talented, loving and caring young man whose faith guided him in the right direction. His camping experience was a great part of that faith formation. In



Jake Meier at camp with fellow counselors.

sharing that experience with more young campers, Jake will continue to do God's work even after he has gone from this earth. If you would like to contribute to the Jake Meier Memorial Endowment Fund for need-based camp fee scholarships to

Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Youth Camp, please send your tax deductible gift to the Catholic Foundation, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123, or online at www.cfook.org. For further information, call (405) 721-4115.



The Catholic Foundation CORNERSTONE

Investing in the Future of our Faith

This is a central theme for the works of the Catholic Foundation. By focusing your planned giving, estate planning or year-end giving on the efforts of the Catholic Foundation, your charitable interests provide the basis for the Foundation to support the Catholic education system in our Archdiocese, at the same time, returning to you a very competitive rate of return on your investment. The growth and success of Catholic education among our young people is truly "investing in the future of our faith."

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

P.O. Box 32180
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bsemtner@catharchdioceseokc.org

Please Remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Your Estate Plans

Pastoral Ministry Offers Many Choices

Archdiocese Now Linked By Video Conference Technology

OKLAHOMA CITY — One of the most significant changes experienced in the Catholic Church since Vatican Council II has been the increasing number of persons active in Church service as lay ministers, along with priests and deacons. Essential to becoming a minister in the Church, whether as ordained or lay, is preparation and formation including the key elements of theological education and personal, spiritual and pastoral formation. We are familiar with those who are called to priesthood, receiving years of seminary training. But what about the many women and men who experience a call to ministry other than priesthood? Many have families, work and other obligations, and are not able to “go away” for years of preparation.

Since the 1980s, many dioceses have begun to provide lay ministry formation and diaconal formation programs. Here in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City a variety of opportunities is available for those discerning a call to ministry, preparing for ministry, or wanting to develop and enrich what they already are and do in ministry. The Religious Education Office and the Youth and Young Adult Office offer certification programs and in-service for catechists and youth ministers. The Diaconate Office oversees the preparation and formation of permanent deacons.

In addition to these programs, two degree programs are offered for ministry formation in general. These are available to all members of the Archdiocese, both lay and ordained.

In 1983, the Archdiocese began the Pastoral Ministry program, which provides theological education and informal spiritual formation for ministry. The Pastoral Ministry program is offered in affiliation with Newman University in Wichita, Kan. It offers the possibility of a bachelor's degree or Archdiocesan diploma in Pastoral Ministry. Courses may also be taken for personal enrichment or continuing education for those who have completed formation programs in the Archdiocese. Courses are offered in spring, summer and fall, at five sites in the Archdiocese. Classes are connected via videoconferencing technology.

Since 1992, the Archdiocese has offered the Aquinas Ministry Formation Program in affiliation with Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis, Mo. The purpose of this program is to prepare women and men, both lay and ordained, for leadership in ministry in a variety of Church settings (parishes, schools, hospitals, etc.). This is a master's degree program of four years, and leads to a master of arts degree in Pastoral Ministry (MAPM). MAPM is offered in a cohort model, the group begins and continues through its program of study and formation together to completion. MAPM includes individual study, online work and face-to-face meetings eight times through the year. MAPM builds on the four pillars of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation, which parallel the language in church documents for programs of priesthood and diaconate formation. The next cohort of MAPM begins in March 2011. Applications are now being accepted and need to be in process by January 2011. At least 15 students are required for a cohort to begin.

For additional information, schedules or application materials on either of the degree programs, please call or e-mail the Office of Pastoral Ministry, 405-721-4208 or 800-721-5651 Ext. 118, or cgrimes@catharchdioceseokc.org.



A new videoconference class.

OKLAHOMA CITY — Theology and ministry courses will be offered during spring, summer and fall semesters for the education and formation of persons who minister in Church or are preparing for ministry in the Church. Courses may be taken for college credit (with the possibility of a BA in Pastoral Ministry from Newman University or an Archdiocesan diploma), audited for personal enrichment or taken for non-credit continuing education and ongoing formation.

Course locations via videoconferencing: St. Francis Xavier, Enid St. Mary, Clinton, St. Peter, Woodward Holy Family, Lawton, Catholic Pastoral Center, Oklahoma City. (Check course schedule; not all courses offered at every location.)

Spring 2011 classes begin Tuesday, Jan. 18, and conclude Saturday, May 7. Tuesday evenings, 7 to 10 p.m.

Introduction to the Old Testament, Lee Hunt, all videoconferencing locations.

The Creeds and Faith, John Warren, St. Catherine of Siena, Pauls Valley. Thursday evenings, 7 to 10 p.m.

The Prophets, Sheila Mueller, OKC, Woodward, Clinton, Lawton. Saturday mornings, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Christology, Vince Brady, OKC, Woodward, Clinton, Lawton. Cost: \$160/credit; \$90 audit; \$75 continuing ed (grads of our programs) plus books.

For a full schedule with course descriptions, registration information, etc., call or e-mail Office of Pastoral Ministry, (405) 721-4208 or 800-721-5651 Ext. 131, or cgrimes@catharchdioceseokc.org.

OCB To Air Special Christmas Programming

Oklahoma Catholic Broadcasting, KTLR, will be airing Christmas programming this year. Tune into 94.1 FM or 890 AM on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to enjoy Catholic programming on Annunciation Radio. Listen while your family is celebrating the gift of Jesus this year!

Oklahoma Catholic Broadcasting is currently looking for a patron to sponsor a billboard during this holiday season. For more information, please visit their website at www.okcatholicbroadcasting.com. Oklahoma Catholic Broadcasting is dedicated to answering the call of Pope John Paul II for a “New Evangelization” by providing positive, wholesome and inspirational programming in the state of Oklahoma.

Author: Giving Thanks Has Life-Changing Impact

Denver, Colo. (CNA). — Father Charles Shelton, a Jesuit priest, psychologist and the author of a new book on gratitude, says that the choice to live gratefully can help to improve virtually every aspect of a person's life.

The multi-talented priest, a professor of psychology at Denver's Regis University, recently published "The Gratitude Factor," a book that examines the importance of giving thanks for one's work, leisure, relationships, and other everyday experiences of God's grace.

Father Shelton has made notable contributions to the field of "positive psychology," a branch of the social science which studies the cultivation of virtue and well-being. "The Gratitude Factor" combines his work in the field with an emphatic focus on Christian spirituality, in the tradition of St. Ignatius Loyola.

Speaking to CNA on Nov. 20, he explained how the choice to live gratefully, even in the midst of difficulty, could profoundly change one's experience of the world. Gratitude, he said, gives depth to the experience of joy, and profound meaning to less desirable tasks — by "re-framing" both as important aspects of the life that one receives from God.

He stressed that gratitude, for Christians, comes most of all from understanding that "we are God's sons and daughters, and Jesus' brothers and sisters." That "core experience" is "channeled, through our hearts, into various commitments" that allow believers to share God's gifts to them with others.

"The more we can carve out some time to reflect on that (identity) in our lives," he offered, "the more rich they become." He described the fatherhood of God as a "centering point" for Christian gratitude, allowing the entire range of human experiences to be viewed as God-given responsibilities.

Jesus himself, Father Shelton observed, was grateful for every aspect of his human life: not only for his family, community and work, but also, as the priest explains in a profound passage of "The Gratitude Factor," for his suffering and death, which he accepted to give new life to humanity.

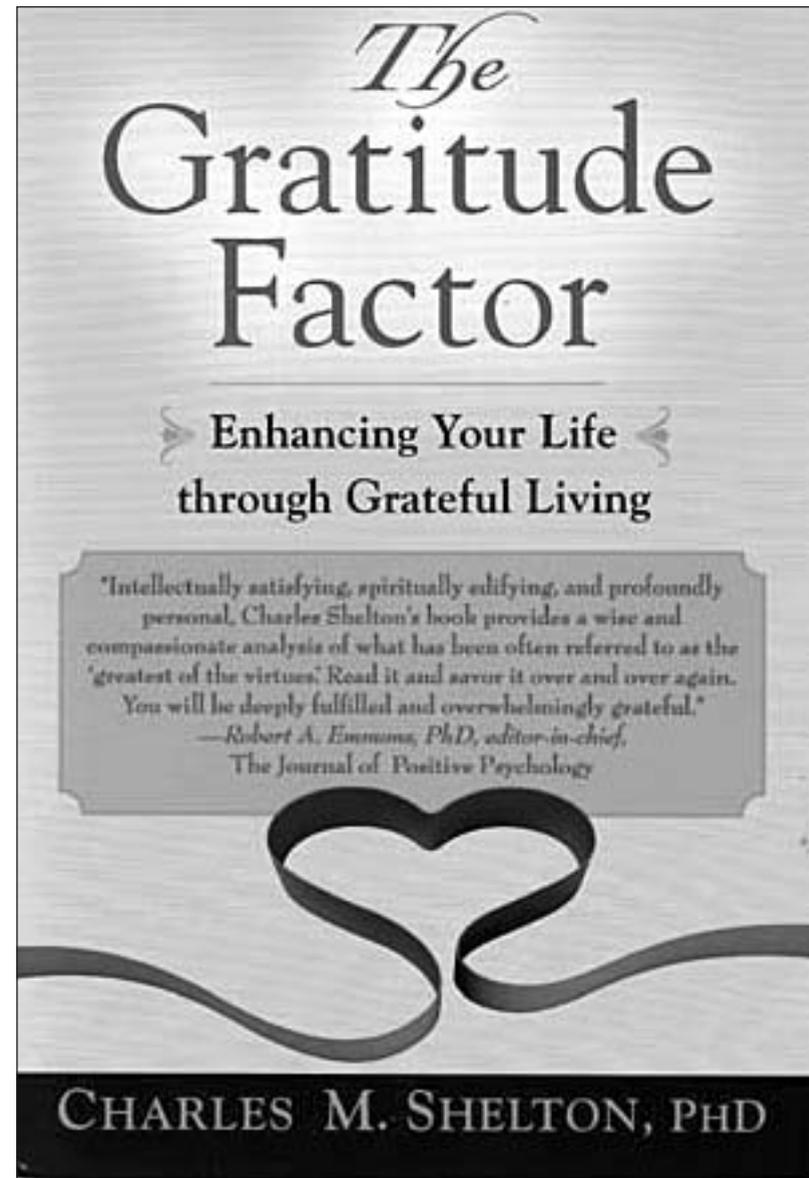
While some experiences naturally inspire a feeling of gratitude, others take work, patience and prayer to appreciate. Sometimes the benefit of a situation is completely hidden, requiring the attitude of faith. "Regardless of what happens, I would want to be a grateful person," Father Shelton said. "You could weather anything, and draw from it, if you are grateful."

But even when it comes to obviously good experiences, Father Shelton stressed that gratitude is a virtue that requires attention and effort to develop. His book offers a number of strategies for making thankfulness a part of life, including a "daily gratitude inventory" modeled on the Jesuits' traditional techniques for recalling God's presence.

Besides making a person aware of God's blessings, Father Shelton explained that gratitude helps people appreciate one another. The act of giving thanks, he noted, is always outward-directed. "Because it's always an acknowledgment of someone else, or something else, by definition there has to be an openness (to others) ... That's just inherent in what the experience is."

Since it is oriented toward others, the experience of gratitude can especially deepen bonds with friends and family. "The whole idea of bonding, and community, comes out of gratitude," he reflected. "We see the gifts of others, we're grateful for the gifts of others, and we all need the gifts of others."

Father Shelton also affirmed that the gratitude-centered holiday of Thanksgiving, while not a liturgical feast in its own right, could offer Catholics in the United States a unique chance to prepare themselves for the season of Advent. Modern consumer trends have tended to eclipse that liturgical time, in favor of a "shopping season" filled with anxiety.



But Father Shelton noted that Thanksgiving was perfectly timed to help American Catholics rediscover Advent. An authentic Thanksgiving experience of gratitude, he said, could help Catholics begin preparing to receive the surpassing gift of Jesus' arrival, rather than focusing on shopping.

"Studies show (that) people who feel grateful, don't feel the need for as many material possessions," he noted. "They don't have to fill themselves up" to compensate for a perceived "deficit." By using Thanksgiving to consider "the gifts God has given ... through this year, up to now," Catholics could more easily embrace "the idea of waiting" that should define Advent.

"It makes sense, psychologically," he said. "Although this is a secular holiday ... it does become, for American Catholics, a fitting end to the liturgical calendar — as we really reflect on what Thanksgiving is."

Although the Church's solemnity of Christ the King formally closes the liturgical year and signals Advent's beginning, its moveable date always closely coincides with the civic holiday of Thanksgiving. Father Shelton reflected that the combination of the national and liturgical celebrations could enrich American Catholics' experience of both.

"Having felt God's gifts," he said, "we can now prepare ourselves for the greatest gift" — that of Christ's birth — "which is coming."

Region X 2010 Catholic Youth Days

Close to 260 students and chaperones from across the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City attended the Region X Catholic Youth Conference held Nov. 12-14 in Little Rock, Ark. The Oklahoma group represented 27 parishes. One of the highlights of the conference was the “Third World” learning environment the young Catholics were exposed to at Heifer International. The ranch, operated by a not-for-profit organization, is northwest of Little Rock. It gives students a realistic look at what life is like for those people who live in less developed nations and how they cope with hunger and poverty.



In this photo is the group from Epiphany, Oklahoma City, and St. Francis, Enid, at the Region X Youth Day.



Aschley Ramjak and KJ Nigg at Heifer Ranch, the ranch owned by Heifer International, where the group shared a poverty meal and learned about the work of Heifer International.

*“Region 10 was a very amazing experience! It was extremely awesome to be around so many other people who share the same faith as you. This was my first Catholic youth conference, but it definitely will not be my last!”
— Christina Meyer (St Francis Xavier - Enid)*



Leitner Gumerson, Sean Walsh, Janna Clare Mallory, Andrew Wilmes and Emily Lodes from Epiphany posing in the T-shirts they got at the conference.

“My favorite part of RCYC was Heifer International. It was so cool to see the different kinds of culture. It gave you a feel of how unfair the world really is. Also, how one person just giving a little affected many people. Heifer International is a great example of what the world could be if we all just give a little.” — Ashley Haan (Epiphany)



Shoes, Shoes Everywhere!

Students at Christ the King School in Oklahoma City recently participated in their annual Shoe Collection. Shoes contributed are given to families in Peru as well as needy families in the area. The project is a joint effort of the school and Parent-Teacher Organization. The PTO said they stopped counting the shoes collected after 200 pairs.

Leaders Warn That 'Hate Group' Label Defines Christianity As Bigotry

Washington, D.C. (CNA/EWTN News). — The Southern Poverty Law Center's classification of pro-family groups as hate groups is the "next phase" of a gay rights movement which seeks to redefine Christianity as bigotry and to shut down honest debate, pro-family leaders warned.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is a well-funded civil rights organization which began in 1971 in opposition to racism and white supremacist groups.

Last week the center published an article classifying the Family Research Council and several other organizations as "hate groups." The SPLC also criticized the National Organization for Marriage, claiming both groups are "anti-gay." The center claimed its listed groups have spread "known falsehoods" about "LGBT people" and have engaged in "repeated, groundless name-calling."

The group listed 18 total organizations, including Concerned Women for America, Americans for Truth About

Homosexuality, and Mass Resistance. The Law Center stated that viewing homosexuality as unbiblical "does not qualify organizations for listing as hate groups."

In response, FRC president Tony Perkins charged that the SPLC was engaging in "a deliberately timed smear campaign" against FRC's nearly 30 years of action "with civility and passion. We hold to the indisputable fact that the family, a dad, a mom and children, is the best building block of a good society, which is why we oppose efforts to transform it based on personal sexual preference," he said in a Nov. 24 statement.

He called on the Law Center to apologize for its "slandering attack and attempted character assassination."

Maggie Gallagher, chairman of the board for the National Organization for Marriage, spoke about the SPLC article and list in a Nov. 29 interview with CNA. She called it an "absurd distraction" and a

"very sad" move for "a once-great civil rights organization. What we're seeing now is the next phase of the gay rights movement," she warned. She noted homosexual rights activist Dan Savage's claim in the Washington Post that the country should get to a point where same-sex marriage isn't debatable.

"This is part of the unfolding process of attempting to redefine Christian teaching on sex and marriage as the moral, legal and cultural equivalent of racism."

"I do believe this is the goal of the architects of the gay marriage movement," Gallagher stated. "And they're making it very clear."

In a Nov. 29 e-mail to CNA, Princeton University law professor and National Organization for Marriage chairman emeritus Robert P. George compared the action to Sen. Joseph McCarthy's smearing of opponents by accusing them of being communist sympathizers.

While the Law Center continues

to do some good work in the area of civil rights, its "tarring" of those it opposes "reveals itself to have become an ideologically partisan organization bent on shutting down dissent by intimidating into silence those with whom it should be engaged in honest debate."

Gallagher noted that the Southern Poverty Law Center did not name her organization as a hate group, "but even the Washington Post got confused" by its article. Responding to the Law Center's accusations that some groups listed had spread falsehoods, she said she did not see anything that "would remotely cause us to be included in this report."

In general comments about the SPLC's attack on other groups, she described precedents in Europe where professions of belief in religious freedom accompany government suppression of believers in traditional marriage.

In Britain, according to Gallagher,
Continued on Page 15

Pope Heralds Beginning of Advent With Pro-Life Vigil

VATICAN CITY (CNA/EWTN News) — Pope Benedict XVI heralded the beginning of Advent this year with an unprecedented worldwide pro-life vigil. At St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, he urged respect for human life and warned against "selfishness" by adults and the "darkening of consciences" in modern society.

On Nov. 27, St. Peter's was the center of global focus, as dioceses around the world joined the Pope's invitation to prepare for the season of Christmas by joining in a special Vespers service for the unborn.

Although it is common for the Pope to encourage prayer for particular intentions, the request for a coordinated worldwide vigil — to be held on the same date and approximately the same time, in all dioceses — is highly exceptional.

Pope Benedict began his homily saying that God became a child to experience the life of man in order to "to save it completely, fully."

"The beginning of the liturgical

year helps us to relive the expectation of God made flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary," he said, adding that the "Incarnation reveals to us, with intense light and in an amazing way, that every human life has an incomparable, a most elevated dignity."

Because "God loves us so deeply, totally, without distinction," the Pope noted that belief in "Jesus Christ also means having a new outlook on man, a look of trust and hope."

Humankind, therefore, "has the right not to be treated as an object of possession or something to manipulate at will, not to be reduced to a mere instrument for the benefit of others and their interests," he said.

"In this vein we find the Church's concern for the unborn, the most fragile, the most threatened by the selfishness of adults and the darkening of consciences," the Pontiff added.

He then reiterated the Church's



stance against abortion, warning against "cultural tendencies that seek to anesthetize consciences with misleading motivations."

"With regard to the embryo in the womb, science itself highlights its autonomy capable of interaction with the mother, the coordination of biological processes, the continuity of development, the growing complexity of the organism," he said. "This is not an accumulation of bio-

logical material, but a new living being, dynamic and wonderfully ordered, a new unique human being."

"So was Jesus in Mary's womb, so it was for all of us in our mother's womb."

Pope Benedict went on to say that even after birth, children around the world face abandonment, hunger, poverty, disease, abuse, violence or exploitation.

"I urge the protagonists of politics, economic and social communications to do everything in their power to promote a culture which respects human life, to provide favorable conditions and support networks for the reception and development of life," he said.

The Pope concluded by entrusting prayers for the unborn to the Virgin Mary, "who welcomed the Son of God made man with faith, with her maternal womb, with loving care, with nurturing support and vibrant with love."

Advent Reminds Us To Be Voice For Those In the Womb

By **Mary J. McClusky**
USCCB Pro-Life Activities

After experiencing two miscarriages, Pete and Alisha Arnold said they created the website "Birthnot.com" and claimed they would decide whether to keep their unborn child or have an abortion based on the final vote count of visitors to their website by Dec. 9. Before the couple finally revealed the site was a hoax, comments on the site indicate that many took it very seriously. Its casual approach to such a life and death decision was shocking but believable to many. Over 1 million visitors "voted" and the controversial website became an international story.

Stories like these detailing our culture's twisted views of unborn human life continue to become more and more disturbing. Yet despite a steady and often demoralizing stream of reports chronicling the downward spiral of

our culture's regard for human life, unborn children always seem to find a way to voice their humanity from the womb.

Pete and Alisha's baby is so active they have named him or her "Wiggles," and the baby seems to be trying everything to make the world take notice. In recently posted 17-week ultrasound photos, Wiggles appears to be waving and giving a thumbs-up sign. Ultrasound technology provides a clear and swift connection between a baby and its mother, even if she may be contemplating an abortion. Pregnancy help center directors say that up to 90 percent of expectant mothers decide not to abort after seeing such images of their child.

The stories of the Advent season and preparations for the coming of the Christ Child provide a welcome contrast to "Birthnot.com." Through her humble accept-

ance of a challenging pregnancy and God's will for her life, the Blessed Virgin Mary provides an inspiring model for our own behavior. There was no bed rest for Mary! Despite her own preparations for birth, Mary made the long journey to visit Elizabeth out of concern and loving support for her pregnant cousin. As John leapt within Elizabeth's womb at the sound of Mary's voice, he announced the presence of the Savior. The unborn child became a voice heralding the Good News of Christ's humanity and presence in the world, as well as the humanity of all unborn children who are Jesus' brothers and sisters. Like John, Catholics are called to courageously affirm and promote human life even in disturbing and difficult circumstances, and to seek and find a lesson of hope even when we hear the most depraved stories of attacks on human life.

In the Christ Child we see the hope and promise that each new human life called into existence by God can bring to this world — only if each is given the chance to live out God's plan. The Advent season is the ideal time to reflect and pray on how to become a voice for the smallest of our brothers and sisters. All are called, like John, to proclaim the Gospel of Life with joy and enthusiasm. Look no further than the unborn themselves for examples of witnessing to life. Like Mary and Elizabeth, as well as the unborn John and "Wiggles," may each of us find our voice, leading our culture into a greater awareness of the unborn child and the peace offered by Christ Jesus our hope.

Mary McClusky is Special Projects Coordinator at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. To learn more about the bishops pro-life activities, go to www.usccb.org/prolife.

Book Offers Inspiring Look at Humble Life of Saint Andre

Brother Andre: Friend of the Suffering, Apostle of Saint Joseph. Jean-Guy Dubuc. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2010. 234 pages. Paperback. ISBN 978-1-59471-190-9. \$16.95.



This book originally was published in French in Montreal, Canada, in the late 1990s. It was translated by Robert Prud'homme from French into English. Brother Andre Bessette was a member of the Holy Cross Congregation of Brothers and was canonized in October 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI. Pope John Paul II had beatified him in 1982. Who is St. Andre? He was a very holy and humble man whom God worked many miracles through. He was a member of a very poor French Canadian family who lost his parents and had to look for work to survive. He ended up in New England to make ends meet. Throughout this period he was a humble man of

prayer. He returned to Canada and a priest friend convinced him to enter a religious order. He decided to apply to the Holy Cross Congregation and was accepted in 1870. He did "lowly" jobs like being the porter, where he came into contact with those needing physical, mental, material and mental help. This is when the miracles began to occur. St. Andre would encourage the person he was visiting with to pray or he promised to pray for them; many times he gave a few words of advice that turned many of these people's lives around. Over time he drew more and more people seeking his help of any kind.

One of St. Andre's favorite saints was St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus. He would encourage people to pray for St. Joseph's help and intercession. He



By Brother Benet Exton

would give people St. Joseph medals and he also rubbed St. Joseph's oil on people to cure them. He was inspired to have a chapel built in honor of St. Joseph, which started out as a very small building and over time succeeding structures were built larger and larger. He encouraged someone to ask St. Joseph to help him since this person's church was under this saint's patronage. He told him to say to St. Joseph to "pay his bills." Many times this worked because the bills would get paid. This reviewer has heard of Carmelite Nuns doing this too. They would put their bills under a St. Joseph statue who was their monastery's patron and the bills would be paid. This reviewer has been telling St. Gregory, his monastery's patron, to pay his bills or send financial help. He is still waiting for St. Gregory to act.

St. Andre did not leave behind any written works like a diary or journal. Most of the primary sources come from people who knew St. Andre. There are a few black

and white photos of St. Andre and the St. Joseph's Oratory in Canada. There is a time line and index. There is a foreward by Father Mario Lachapelle, C.S.C., who served as the vice postulator to Dr. Andrea Ambrosi, the postulator of St. Andre's cause, who is also the postulator for the causes of Blessed John Henry Newman, Archbishop Fulton Sheen and Father Stanley Rother.

This book flows very well and tells St. Andre's story as he would have liked it, in a simple and humble way. St. Andre's feast day is Jan. 6. He was the first Canadian male to be canonized. This book is highly recommended to those interested in St. Andre or in saints.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Brother Benet Exton is a Benedictine Monk at St. Gregory's Abbey in Shawnee. Among other duties, he serves as the librarian there and he writes book reviews regularly for several Catholic publications, including the Sooner Catholic.

Eucharistic Adoration: The God Present Before Me Knows My Heart

It is silent as I enter the church. I feel alone with my thoughts and God. There are others here, but I am isolated with the burdens and prayers I have on my heart. I know so many hurting people. What do I say? How do I react to the awe I feel in the presence of Christ? How do I thank Him for what He has done for me?

It is a freedom many of us take for granted. Admittedly, I have done so in the past. Yet, I know the God present before me on the altar, knows my heart. All I have to do is to ask for His forgiveness for those times I have needed it, to accept that forgiveness and to be bathed in His oceans of mercy.

I wept, overwhelmed, as I realized the depth of Christ's selflessness. His very presence here in the Blessed Sacrament is witness to this truth. The reality of Christ on the cross, the Crucifix in front of the

Church is another reminder of the depth of Christ's love. The Stations of the Cross on the side walls of the church are yet another reminder of Christ's sacrifice for us. His Life, His Death and His Resurrection are all examples for us.

It is Thursday, as such, a part of the time I spend here will be reflecting on the Mysteries of Light, a gift given to the Church by Pope John Paul II. They are beautiful to reflect on with the help of sacred scripture.

These mysteries gave me a renewed enthusiasm for reciting the Rosary when they were introduced by the late Holy Father and they lift my spirits each time I meditate on them. His insight for knowing there was a need for them must have been inspired by God and the Blessed Mother.

I dedicate or unite my sufferings to the souls in Purgatory, to those who left the Church and my

sins as well as those who do not have someone to love them, have someone to touch them. I pray they meet Christ in the Eucharist.

Mother Angelica said, "We are all called to be saints; don't miss the opportunity." Adoration can help us to achieve that goal.

As I exited the church, I realized, Christ has kept His promise He made at the Ascension, "I will be with you always until the end of time." (Matthew 28:20). Christ, present on the Altar, has kept that promise. Visiting Him frequently can change your life.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bill Zalot is a freelance writer who lives in Levittown, Pa. Although afflicted



By Bill Zalot

with spastic cerebral palsy, he writes extensively for Catholic publications. His columns will appear in The Sooner Catholic from time to time. Bill Zalot can be reached at billzalot@comcast.net.

Check with your parish to see if Adoration is offered. Here are a few parishes with Adoration:

St. Monica Parish, Edmond, 24-hour adoration seven days a week.

Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Oklahoma City, every Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to noon.

Epiphany Parish, Oklahoma City, every Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and daily (M,T,W,F) from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

St. Gregory's Monastery Chapel, Shawnee, every Thursday, 5 p.m. to midnight.

Buenas Noticias...

...A través del Adviento con Nuestra Santísima Madre

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo:

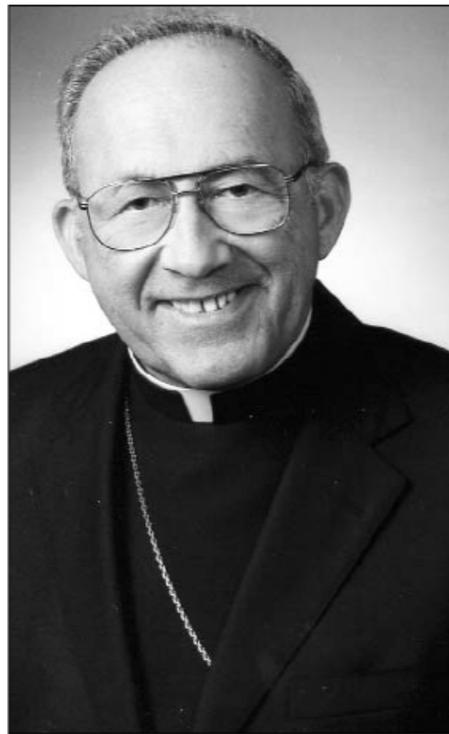
La temporada de Adviento es el tiempo para renovar nuestra fe, por lo que podemos volver a la promesa de estar con Dios, de esa manera le damos sentido a nuestras vidas.

Aunque cuando la raza humana se ha hundido en el pecado sin esperanza alguna, Dios nunca nos abandona. Por el contrario, Él nos ve con amor y con una infinita bondad. Dios nos dio y dijo una promesa de enviar a su hijo para nuestra salvación. Esa promesa fue la Buena Nueva, entonces, se hizo realidad en la persona de Jesús, porque es siempre la Buena Nueva para nosotros.

La temporada litúrgica del Adviento es ese tiempo especial de cada año, donde nos preparamos para celebrar el nacimiento de Jesús y nuevamente entramos por completo en el plan eterno de Dios para todos nosotros.

Una de las figuras relevantes del Adviento es la Santísima Virgen María, la Madre de Dios. Fue a través de ella que la bella promesa de Dios fue realizada. María dio a luz a Cristo y consecuentemente la "Buena Nueva" se hizo realidad. La Santísima Virgen María es la madre de Jesucristo, de quien celebramos su nacimiento el día de Navidad.

Porque Santa María es una persona clave en esta temporada de Adviento, es más adecuado en esta



*Muy Reverendo Eusebius Beltran
Arzobispo Metropolitano de la
Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City*

segunda semana de Adviento, que observemos dos días festivos en honor a María para agradecer a Dios por el papel que la Virgen María tiene en su plan.

El miércoles 8 de diciembre, honraremos a María como la Inmaculada Concepción. Como una criatura de Dios (María fue totalmente humana) y fue concebida libre de todo pecado. Es más, por su complacencia con la Gracia de Dios, ella permaneció libre de pecado durante

toda su vida. Por lo que estaba realmente preparada por Dios, para ser la madre de su eterno hijo Jesús. Este rol no le fue impuesto, sino que le fue ofrecido y ella lo aceptó humildemente con esta respuesta: "Hágase tu voluntad"

La Festividad de la Inmaculada Concepción está tan íntimamente ligada a la Fiesta de la Encarnación, que la Iglesia Universal siempre lo celebra como un día de festividad mayor. Es para nosotros un día santo de obligación, un día en el cual ustedes y yo estamos obligados a participar en la celebración de la Misa.

Unos días después, el 12 de diciembre, tendremos otra gran festividad de nuestra Santísima Madre. Ese día es comúnmente referida como la Fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Esta festividad va hacia atrás en la historia, nos remonta en el principio de la colonización de América.

En las afueras de la Ciudad de México, en el monte de Tepeyac, la Santísima Virgen María se le apareció a San Juan Diego, un nativo del área. Allí María prometió su protección maternal, no sólo a Juan Diego, sino a todos nosotros. A su requerimiento, una basílica fue construida para que las personas pudieran celebrar la Eucaristía cada día.

Cuando Santa María dio a luz a Jesús en Belén, en ese instante Dios cumplió la promesa de enviar a su Hijo Jesús para redimirnos del

pecado. La Virgen María cuando se le apareció a Juan Diego, le dio al pueblo del "nuevo mundo" su promesa de conocer y encontrar a Jesús. María influenció a muchos indígenas para que luego millones de personas descubrieran a Jesús y lo siguieran. Con el pasar de unos pocos años, estas personas renacieron en el sacramento del Bautizo, viviendo a plenitud nuestra fe Católica y compartiendo la Buena Nueva de Jesús entre nosotros.

El próximo fin de semana, millones de personas a través de las Américas honrarán a la Santísima Virgen María con el título de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Pero más importante, seremos aliviados, nutridos y reforzados por el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo en celebración de la Eucaristía.

Jesús es el corazón de nuestra fe Católica. Él es el único Salvador. Él es la Buena Nueva porque es la promesa realizada por Dios. Cristo nos da vida eterna.

La razón por la que el Adviento es una temporada tan importante en nuestras vidas. Nos permite prepararnos apropiadamente para celebrar el nacimiento de Jesucristo en Navidad y incesante presencia entre nosotros.

Vamos a utilizar estas tres semanas de Adviento remanentes para disfrutar y con entusiasmo y alabar al Señor a través de su Santa Madre María quien es nuestra madre también.

Jóvenes esperan la Navidad con alegría y mucho entusiasmo para reflexionar



La Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City fortaleciendo lo que es de Dios

Los cursos prematrimoniales no deben ser vistos como un trámite más



El Padre Melquiades de Puerto Rico y el Padre José de Oklahoma.

Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — El Matrimonio es uno de los Sacramentos Católicos más importante, pues involucra creencias de nuestra doctrina Católica y formaliza el compromiso de una pareja ante Dios e instaura la familia. Es un Sacramento, signo sensible de la gracia divina por lo que los contrayentes deben prepararse espiritualmente. Además de esta preparación, es necesario cumplir una serie de requisitos indispensables para formalizar el compromiso de una pareja ante Dios y ante la Iglesia.

De esta manera hay que profundizar en temas como el de reflexionar juntos sobre el grado de madurez de su relación, identificar

los patrones de relación aprendidos que puedan afectar favorable ó desfavorablemente a la pareja bajo los ojos de Dios, equilibrar patrones de refuerzo y cambio para lograr un matrimonio sólido, adquirir herramientas para mejorar la comunicación, solucionar conflictos y permitir el crecimiento en la relación de la pareja y tener el espíritu de Dios dentro de los corazones, reflexionar sobre el plan de Dios para la vida matrimonial y el significado maravilloso del matrimonio como realidad natural y como sacramento; y evaluar los retos que implica todo esto como seres humanos y como cristianos.

Los cursos prematrimoniales no deben ser vistos como un trámite más, sino como una preparación previa para la estabilidad futura de la



El Centro Pastoral acogió a los hispanos que quieren un matrimonio exitoso.

pareja, estabilidad de la familia, paternidad responsable, entre otros aspectos. La pareja tendrá la oportunidad de concientizar sobre el paso que están por dar, y realizar que la vida matrimonial es hermosa pero difícil a veces y que la presencia de Dios será la única fuerza para vencer las dificultades. Lo que hace al matrimonio eclesialístico una fuente de felicidad.

Por lo que el objetivo fundamental de nuestra Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City con estos cursos prematrimoniales, es evitar que la pareja llegue al matrimonio sin la información sobre esta nueva etapa de la vida cristiana que inician.

Es importante que las parejas asistan a estos preparativos donde pueden compartir vivencias personales con parejas cristianas

establecidas, tratando temas como; la administración del hogar, el verdadero sentido religioso del sacramento del matrimonio y la espiritualidad conyugal, lo que dará una visión más amplia sobre los tipos de problemas que pueden llegar a enfrentar en una nueva vida las parejas.

Es una orientación para su vida conyugal y de la importancia de Dios a su lado y sobre todo, una comunicación y paciencia que nos enseñó Dios cuando nos los entregó para nuestra salvación.

Es un recordatorio que quienes deciden hacer vida matrimonial entre un hombre y una mujer están escogiendo libremente a la persona con la que pasarán el resto de su vida, tal como nos lo contempla nuestro derecho canónico y enseñanzas de la Iglesia.

Los adolescentes y la religión Católica

Nuestra Arquidiócesis busca reavivar la llama de sus pastorales juveniles

Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — La Iglesia Católica establece programas de orientación que dan respuesta a los desafíos de la generación actual. Por lo que debe darse prioridad a las pastorales juveniles, ya que muchos adolescentes tienden a distanciarse de la religión Católica. No debe entenderse solamente, como un trabajo que la Iglesia debe realizar, el papel de los padres, de la educación en el hogar,

es definitivo para evitar el alejamiento de los adolescentes de la religión, en una edad donde es de suma importancia mantenerlos firmes en sus creencias para evitar que caigan en tentaciones que sólo les proporcionarían retraso en su futuro, dolor y angustia a sus familias.

En nuestras parroquias se pueden observar grandes cantidades de adolescentes en las clases para la primera comunión y confirmaciones, pero como padres debemos hacer que se le dé seguimiento a las clases de

religión y mantenerlos involucrados con los diferentes programas para jóvenes que ofrecen nuestras parroquias. No dar el seguimiento adecuado muchos se alejan, trayendo como consecuencia los problemas de pandillas, drogas y embarazos a corta edad que ya conocemos.

En la etapa de la adolescencia es normal plantearse la existencia de Dios y la autenticidad de la Iglesia, porque en la escuela, la televisión y con amistades escuchan cosas contrarias.

Para los jóvenes nunca ha sido fácil vivir el Evangelio en asuntos morales. Algunos jóvenes no les gustan las normas morales de la Iglesia Católica y no las siguen, tal vez se deba, a que existe entre muchos de ellos un total desconocimiento del porqué de estos principios morales. Por lo que es importante recordarles a nuestros jóvenes constantemente que Dios no señala, castiga. Sencillamente Dios es amor y sólo nos quiere guiar por buen el camino.

NFP Institute July 11-16

Benedictine College Hopes To Reach Catholic Physicians, Others Through National NFP Outreach

By Father Matthew Habiger, OSB

There is a great deal of ignorance about NFP (Natural Family Planning) both within the Church and the broader society today. Slow and steady gains have been made since the 1970s, but the vast majority of people have not discovered the merits of this great gift that God has given to our times. Consider this: Less than 5 percent of Catholic couples of childbearing years use NFP. Eighty-five percent of couples are using some form of contraception, or are sterilized. There is now a 50 percent divorce rate among Catholics.

One percent of Catholic Ob/Gyns are with the program, in the sense that they refuse to prescribe contraception or perform sterilizations, or make referrals for these. This means that 99 percent of Catholic Ob/Gyns are part of the problem. Most of these never heard anything about NFP in their medical schools, except that it was related to the rhythm method. Rhythm is an antique, found only in museums.

Everywhere you hear complaints from the laity that there is little to nothing being said from the pulpits about God's plan for marriage and spousal love, and how contraception and sterilization damage spousal love and are intrinsically evil. There is a great silence about serious sins that must be repented of and confessed.

Many marriage preparation programs are staffed by lead couples who do not understand, or use, NFP. This means that they cannot effectively witness to the values of NFP. The engaged couples are then deprived of this knowledge.

It is difficult for Catholic couples to find a doctor who is sympathetic to the teachings of the Church on contraception and sterilization. Many young mothers complain about being pressured to use the pill, or to get a tubal ligation. Sometimes this happens to them shortly before giving birth in a hospital. Many doctors put young women on the pill "just in case."

What can be done to change this culture of resistance to God's plan for marriage and spousal love?

NFP Outreach is collaborating with Benedictine College in Atchison, Kan., to hold a National Summer Institute on July 11-16, 2011. The theme of the Institute is: A complete Christian Anthropology helps people understand God's plan for marriage, spousal love and family. Because we are bodied persons, male and female, sexual and fertile, we need to appreciate the great value of our fertility and morally good ways of spacing pregnancies within marriage. This requires that we learn how to make the total personal gift of self to others. We want to reach many Catholic leaders and help them get answers to their questions about NFP, and to resolve their doubts and reservations. We want them to receive the full Christian anthropology and become part of the solution.

We want to help clergy learn how to bring God's plan for marriage, spousal love and family back into the pulpit, where everyone can hear this message.

We want to raise the percentage of Catholic Ob/Gyns and family practice doctors who are faithful to Church teaching from a pathetic and shameful 1 percent. CMEs are being secured.

We want to help marriage prep leaders discover the true Christian anthropology which helps couples understand why NFP is so much better for them than the evil of contraception.

We want to help mothers everywhere so that they do not feel harassed



by their local doctors, nurses and hospitals to get on the pill and then to get a tubal ligation.

We want to help editors and journalists of diocesan newspapers discover the merits of NFP, and how to share this with their readers.

NFP Outreach and Benedictine College have put together a rich slate of faculty to address these issues for the various groups. Go to our website, benedictine.edu/nfpo, for detailed descriptions of each part of the Summer Institute.

Some of our major keynotes are:

For Marriage Prep Leaders: Dr. Janet Smith, Ph.D.

For Priests, Deacons and Journalists: John Allen Jr.

For Doctors, Nurses and Catholic Hospitals: Dr. Robbie George, Ph.D.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

You know the leaders (doctors, nurses, clergy, journalists, marriage prep leaders) who need to hear this message, to arrive at convictions about the merits of NFP, and then to advocate God's plan for marriage and spousal love. We ask you to help promote the NFP Outreach National Summer Institute. Encourage people to visit our website and explore. Download and circulate the descriptions of the various programs. Help increase the numbers of supporters of NFP in all our parishes and dioceses.

Calendar

DECEMBER

5 Byzantine Liturgy will be offered 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.

7 & 9 "Meet the Principal" coffee at Mount St. Mary High School. Middle school parents are invited to join us at Mount St. Mary Catholic High School on Dec. 7 or Dec. 9 at 8:45 a.m. in the Heritage Room for coffee. Visit with Principal Talita DeNegri, Whitney Faires, VP, Diane Wilson, Admissions, and students. Contact Diane Wilson at 631-8865 or dwilson@mountstmary.org for more information.

8 Immaculate Conception Holy Day of Obligation.

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

8 Catholic War Veterans USA. Oklahoma Memorial Post 168 monthly meeting at 7 p.m. in the

Catholic Pastoral Library Hours

Due to the death of our librarian, Charlotte (Wood) Janz, the library will be open for limited hours. These hours will start on Monday, Dec. 6, and will stay in effect until further notice.

Mondays	1 to 4:30 p.m.
Tuesdays	8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Wednesdays	2 to 4:30 p.m.
Thursdays	2 to 4:30 p.m.

Sunnylane Family Reception Center located at 3900 SE 29th St. in Del City. For more information, contact Ken at (405) 739-0036 or by e-mail at OkPost168@cox.net.

9 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, Okla. 73132.

9 Eucharistic Adoration every Thursday 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.

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

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

14 Catholic War Veterans (of any war/conflict) will meet 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.

17 Monthly Novena to The Infant Jesus. Nine days of novenas to Infant Jesus of Prague monthly. (405) 567-3080 or shrineofinfantjesus.com.

18 Lay Missionaries of Charity, the Secular (Lay) Order of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, meet in the Council Room 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 lmc-oklahoma@sbcglobal.net.

18 The Sugar Plum Market at St. Mary's in Guthrie, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

18 St. Charles Catholic Singles Christmas dance, Dec. 18 from 7 to 11 p.m. For more information, call Al at 631-0763. The church is located at NW 50th just east of MacArthur.

Jobs Box

Financial Representative

The Knights of Columbus has an opening for a financial representative in the Oklahoma City and north central Oklahoma areas. Ideal for a determined, high-energy, high-expectation, professional, self-disciplined, independent individual desiring to serve others, yet earn a better than average income. We provide top-rated financial products to our members and their families and will provide excellent benefits and training. You must be eligible for membership in the Knights of Columbus. Learn about us at www.KOFC.org. Please contact Kevin W. Pierce, General Agent, for more information or an interview at 1019 Waterwood Parkway Suite E, Edmond, Okla. 73034, (405) 514-7660, or Kevin.Pierce@kofc.org.

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.

For an updated and full listing of Jobs, go to catharchdioceseokc.org

'Hate Group' Label

Continued from Page 9

Christian schools have the right to teach religious doctrine, but the state claims the right to decide whether or not what is taught is a fact. "The line they're drawing is that you can say that gay marriage is unbiblical, but you can't say, 'It's better for children to have a mom and a dad,'" Gallagher explained.

The attempt to "shut down the scientific debate" on statements of fact controls what ordinary people can say and think and helps "morally shame" people who think marriage is a union of a man and a wife.

Gallagher saw the Law Center's action as a vindication of her past statements. "I wish they would stop proving that we're right so consistently. They believe you should be treated like a racist if you think marriage is a union of a man and a wife," she said.

Asked to explain the difference between having racist views and having views opposed to homosexual acts, Prof. George said that debates about sexual ethics are about whether certain acts are "consistent with the dignity of human beings." However, this debate assumes "the equal and inestimable worth and dignity of all human beings" because it asks whether certain acts are worthy of them. Racist ideology rejects this, basing itself on

"skin pigmentation" or other "morally irrelevant factors."

"We need to face squarely the goals of this movement, the rhetoric of this movement, and the fact that this is an issue," Gallagher remarked. She added that Pope Benedict XVI and the Catholic bishops have made clear that "it doesn't get better" if opponents of same-sex "marriage" stand down.

"The next fight is going to be whether or not our religious institutions and parents and schools are going to be stigmatized in the public square as racists, and face legal disabilities that racists face."

George similarly warned that adherents of traditional Christian and Jewish beliefs have seen their rights "trampled" where same-sex unions have been recognized and where anti-discrimination laws have been used as "weapons against dissenters. Here in the United States, we don't put people in jail for advocating bigotry, but we impose civil disabilities of various sorts," he commented. He predicted that if support for traditional marriage is treated as a form of bigotry, dissenting persons and institutions like the Catholic Church will "quickly find such disabilities imposed upon them."

"It has already happened in Massachusetts, where Catholic Charities has been driven out of the field of providing adoption services," he said.

GOOOOOOD Morning All Saints!

By Rex Hogan
For the *Sooner Catholic*

NORMAN — All Saints Catholic School is on the air.

It now has its own radio station and is broadcasting in a two-mile area around the school.

“The kids are getting a kick out of doing it,” said Dr. Theresa Bragg, All Saints Director of Operations.

The idea of students producing radio shows was born at All Saints — a school of 400 students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, from its “Car Line ID” program.

The school bought a system last spring in which parents can purchase a dashboard card for their cars. The school has a radio tower on the school roof which allows parents to pick up the radio broadcast on their car radio. Parents could tune in and hear about school events and programs, Bragg said.

Bragg said the company that sold the Car Line ID to the school also offered to provide the school with an FM transmitter.

School administrators and science teacher Frank Lawrence

then came up with the idea of having students produce radio programs.

“It’s an elective,” Lawrence said.

“Students learn everything from how to roll up a microphone cord to how to do digital recording,” he said. “The students are loving it. We’ve got a quiet place in school where we set up to do our recordings.”

Currently, the format is to record about four minutes of broadcasting, which includes six or seven school announcements.

Lawrence has a background in radio production. He has worked on radio commercial production in New Orleans and also has done music production.

Lawrence said students are getting so comfortable with the production of programs that they are switching positions. He said students who were recording now want to get in on the production side.

Lawrence said plans are being made to expand school programming.

“We could record a class that is having, for example, poetry reading and broadcast that,” he said.



Jeremiah Luttrell and Nikiel Kim work on their radio spot.



Frank Lawrence helps Lindsey Hancock and Mercedes Marsee with the audio editing.



Nia Personnette, Christian Curling and Mark Lewis work on an assignment.