

Sooner Catholic

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Go Make Disciples

Oklahomans awarded Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice by Pope Francis

By Diane Clay
The Sooner Catholic

Oklahomans Larry and Dodie Wells were honored by Pope Francis April 8 with a medal for distinguished service during a Mass celebrated by their son Archbishop Peter Wells at the Catholic Pastoral Center. The medal, which is one of the highest medals that can be awarded to the laity by the pope, was presented by Archbishop Coakley.

Larry Wells served for more than 16 years as manager of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Summer Camp before retiring in 2015. Their son, Bill Wells, a carpenter by trade, succeeded his father this year as camp manager.

The Wells' son, Archbishop Peter Wells, was ordained in March by Pope Francis as the Holy See's new Apostolic Nuncio in South Africa and Botswana. The Holy Father also elevated him to the titular see of Marcianopolis, with the dignity of archbishop. He is believed to be the first Oklahoman to be named an archbishop.

Larry and Dodie Wells have five children and live in Guthrie.

The Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (Latin: For Church and Pope) medal is an award of the Roman Catholic Church that is also known as the "Cross of Honor."

The medal was established by Leo XIII on July 17, 1888, to commemorate his golden sacerdotal jubilee and was originally bestowed on those men and women who had aided and promoted the jubilee, and by other means assisted in making the jubilee and the Vatican Exposition successful.

It is currently given for distinguished service to the church by lay people and clergy.

The medal may be cast in gold, silver or bronze. On the medal is a cross made octangular by fleurs-de-lis fixed in the angles of the cross. The arms of the cross narrow towards the center, with slightly indented ends, approaching the form of the patonce cross.



Archbishop Coakley presents Larry and Dodie Wells with the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice award. Photo Diane Clay.

In the center of the cross is a small medal with the image of Leo XIII, the words "Leo XIII P. M. Anno X" (10th year of his pontificate) circle the image. In the center of the reverse side are the papal emblems. The motto Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice is stamped in the circle surrounding the emblems.

On the obverse side of the medal, the branches of the cross are comets, which, with the fleurs-de-lis, form the coat of arms of the Pecci family. Stamped on the reverse side are the words "Pridie" (on the left branch), "Kal" (on the top branch), and "Januar" (on the right branch) and the year "1888" (at the foot of the cross). The medal's ribbon is red, with delicate lines of

white and yellow on each border and is worn on the right side of breast.

The current version is only awarded in gold. The obverse depicts the Apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul. On the left arm of the cross is the inscription Pro Ecclesia (For Church), on the right arm of the cross is Et Pontifice (And Pope).

At the point of the top arm of the cross is the coat of arms of the reigning pope. At the points of the other arms are small Greek crosses. Below the depiction of the saints is the Latin name of the pope. The reverse depicts a Greek cross.

Diane Clay is editor of the Sooner Catholic.

Archbishop Coakley celebrates Mass with Conception Seminary College

CONCEPTION, Mo. — On the Solemnity of the Annunciation, Archbishop Coakley celebrated Mass in the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception for the seminary and monastic communities at Conception Seminary College. The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City has five men pursuing priestly studies at Conception.

During his homily, Archbishop Coakley encouraged the two communities to reflect upon the Blessed Virgin's total surrender to the will of God, something that each of us is continually called to imitate.

While visiting the college, Archbishop Coakley also was able to meet privately with each of the archdiocese's seminarians and participate in the daily life of the college, including the annual celebration of Pastor's Day.

"It was great hosting the archbishop! Serving for him at Mass, sharing meals and having quality time to visit meant a lot to me," said Michael Krug, a freshman at CSC studying for the archdiocese. "His spiritual leadership is something I am very appreciative of as a seminarian of the archdiocese."

Conception Seminary College is one of the largest free standing seminaries in the United States, and the main apostolate of the Benedictine monks of Conception



Archdiocesan seminarians Michael Krug, Tomas Sandoval, Chad Thurman and Martin Parizek. Photo Charles Peirano.

Abbey. For more information, go online to www.conception.edu or follow the college on social media.

Put Out Into the Deep

Luke 5:4

Looking at “The Joy of Love”

“The Joy of Love” (Amoris Laetitia) is Pope Francis’s just released apostolic exhortation “On Love in the Family.” It serves as a fitting complement to his first apostolic exhortation, “The Joy of the Gospel” (Evangelii Gaudium) released in 2013.

While both are characterized by their fresh approachable writing style and concreteness, this latest exhortation is much longer, and considerably more complex, dealing as it does with the many realities facing families and married couples around the world. “The Joy of Love” is the fruit of the deliberations of two recent Synods of Bishops on marriage and family that were held in 2014 and 2015.

“If we consider the immense variety of concrete situations,” Pope Francis writes, “it is understandable that neither the Synod nor this exhortation could be expected to provide a new set of general rules, canonical in nature and applicable to all cases (AL 300).

He takes a very different approach. He does not propose new teaching or change any doctrine of the Church as many people had either hoped or feared. He situates this exhortation within the living tradition of the Church, rooting it in the Scriptures, the teachings of previous popes, the Second Vatican Council and various bishops’ conferences. It is a teaching, however, that must be applied through a careful pastoral discernment of the particular situations in which people find themselves, and through a loving accompaniment by the Church’s pastors and pastoral workers.

“Christian marriage as a reflection of the union between Christ and his Church is fully realized in the union between a man and a woman who give themselves to each other in a free faithful and exclusive love, who belong to each other until death and are open to the transmission of life, and are consecrated by the sacrament.” This is a good summary of the traditional understanding of the Christian ideal of marriage. “Some forms of union radically contradict this ideal, while others realize it in at least a partial and analogous way” (AL 292).

Speaking of the former, Pope Francis affirms that “there are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family ... and deplores that local Churches should be subjected to pressure in this matter” (AL 251).

At the same time, speaking of persons experiencing same-attraction, he reaffirms “that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, ought to be respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration,” deploring any sign of unjust discrimination, aggression and violence (AL 250).

In the introduction to “The Joy of Love,” Pope Francis writes, “I do not recommend a rushed reading of the text. The greatest benefit, for families themselves and for those engaged in the family apostolate, will come if each part is read patiently and carefully or if attention is paid to the parts dealing with their specific needs” (AL 7). One of the risks, of course, is that certain portions may be taken out of context or that the text will be used only to glean sound bites, without making the effort necessary to really understand the teaching in its richness and nuances.

The 260-page text includes two extended meditations on the Scriptures, Psalm 128 found in Ch. 1 and Saint Paul’s Hymn to Love (1 Corinthians 13). The latter meditation

is found in Ch. 4 called “Love in Marriage,” which is arguably the very heart of this exhortation. It is the chapter that probably will be of most interest to married couples. The psychological insights and appreciation of the emotional world of spouses, including the erotic dimensions of their love is unprecedented in papal documents.

Other chapters treat the real experiences and complex challenges of families, the varieties of ways that love is made fruitful in marriage, including, of course, through procreation and welcoming children. There are chapters that address the education of children and the spirituality of marriage and family life.

While holding up the full ideal of Christian marriage and calling all to a fuller response to God’s grace, Pope Francis returns to an image that he has used often: the Church as field hospital (AL 291). All of us experience brokenness in our lives. We need to experience the healing touch of mercy through the Church.

Ch. 8 is titled, “Accompanying, Discerning and Integrating Weakness.” This is the chapter that will probably be of most interest to priests who are called to minister to those couples whose lived experience often falls short of that full ideal.

The pastoral approach that the Holy Father proposes calls for a careful personal and pastoral discernment of all of the circumstances in those “irregular” cases, including those couples who are divorced, cohabiting or who are not in a sacramental marriage, or who are divorced and only civilly remarried. He invites pastors to patiently accompany these couples in the hope of gradually reintegrating them as fully as possible into the life of the Christian community.

Accompaniment is the key. Pope Francis writes, “a pastor cannot feel that it is enough simply to apply moral laws to those living in ‘irregular’ situations, as if they were stones to throw at people’s lives” (AL 305). Through pastoral accompaniment and discernment, pastors help couples find possible ways of responding to God and growing in the midst of limits. The Holy Father acknowledges the challenges and messiness of this approach.

“I understand those who prefer a more rigorous pastoral care, which leaves no room for confusion. But, I sincerely believe that Jesus wants a Church attentive to the goodness that the Holy Spirit sows in the midst of human weakness, a mother who, while clearly expressing her objective teaching, ‘always does what good she can, even if in the process shoes get soiled by the mud of the streets’” (AL 308).

Ultimately, Pope Francis notes that it is providential that these reflections come during the Jubilee of Mercy as he cautions us lest “we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators.” The “Church after all is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems” (AL 310).



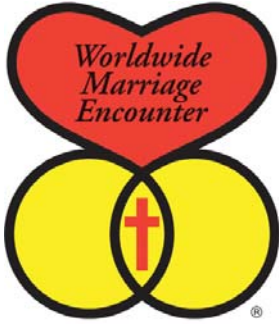
Archbishop Paul S. Coakley

Find more news on the website

By Sooner Catholic Staff

Additional coverage of Church and archdiocesan news and events, only on www.soonercatholic.org:

✓ For a copy of “The Joy of Love,” go online to w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html.



Marriage Encounter Weekend

Catholic Pastoral Center
7501 Northwest Expressway, OKC
April 29 - May 1
www.meoklahoma.org
Openings still available

Plus, don’t miss daily updates on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!



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Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City



☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞

Prayer for the Fourth Sunday of Easter

Almighty ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Catholic Advocacy Day



More than 100 Catholics from across Oklahoma attended Catholic Advocacy Day March 31 at the state Capitol with Archbishop Coakley, Bishop Slattery and representatives of Catholic Charities in Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

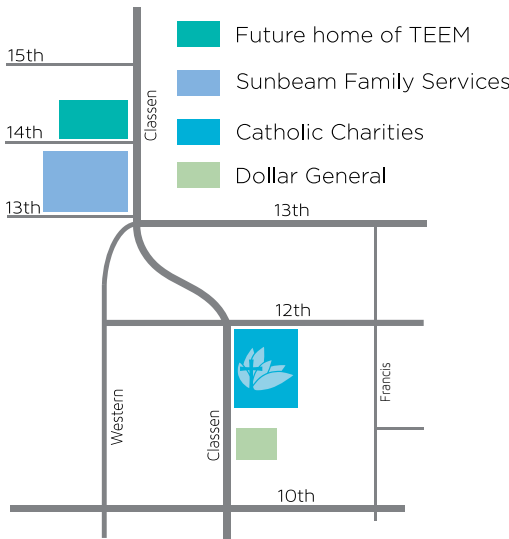
Following presentations by Archbishop Coakley, Bishop Slattery, Dick Klinge, senior director of advocacy and legal services for Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City, and former House Speaker Kris Steele, participants visited state representatives and senators to discuss legislation.

To find legislation or to contact a legislator, go online to <http://oklegislature.gov>. Photos Diane Clay.



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Archbishop Coakley’s Calendar

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

- April 17 – Catholic Day at the Dodgers, 2 p.m., Bricktown Ballpark
- April 17 – Mystagogy Mass, 4 p.m., Saint Francis de Sales Chapel, Catholic Pastoral Center
- April 19 – Mass, 11:30 a.m., Saint Francis de Sales Chapel, CPC
- April 20 – Presbyteral Council, 9:30 a.m., CPC
- April 20 – Live on-air for Catholic Radio Radiothon, 4:30 p.m., Oklahoma Catholic Broadcasting
- April 20 – Confirmation, 7 p.m., Saint Joseph Old Cathedral, Oklahoma City
- April 21 – Vocations Board Meeting, 1 p.m., CPC
- April 21 – Confirmation, 7 p.m., Saint Mark the Evangelist, Norman
- April 23 – Knights of Columbus state convention, Tulsa
- April 24 – Confirmation, 9 a.m., Saint Robert Bellarmine, Jones
- April 26 – Workshop for Clergy on revised marriage rite, CPC
- April 26 – Confirmation, 7 p.m., Good Shepherd, Marietta
- April 27 – School Mass and classroom visits, 8:30 a.m., Saint Joseph School, Enid
- April 27 – Confirmation, 6 p.m., Holy Angels, Oklahoma City
- April 28 – Catholic Charities board meeting, 11:30 a.m., Catholic Charities offices, OKC
- April 29 – Confirmation, 7 p.m., Saint Catherine of Siena, Pauls Valley
- April 30 – Confirmation, 2 p.m., Saint Patrick, Oklahoma City
- May 1 – Confirmation, 11 a.m., Corpus Christi, Oklahoma City



**Most Reverend
Paul S. Coakley**

Archbishop of Oklahoma City
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A Millenial Journey in Faith

Learning to carry Christ's forgiveness, peace to others

When Denise Uwimana was growing up, her family had a unique ritual: every night after dinner, they would discuss what they experienced that day. They sang hymns, read a Bible passage, and talked about any misunderstandings that had arisen that day. Each member of the family would forgive the others for any wrongdoing. The day would end with a family prayer.

Uwimana, a Tutsi in Rwanda, grew up to have many of her family members killed by the Hutu tribe; though she and her children were spared, her husband was killed. Despite the grave evil done to Uwimana and her tribe during the genocide, she chose to forgive the perpetrators and work for reconciliation in her country.

Her childhood practice of daily forgiveness enabled her to work for peace and reconciliation in her homeland, in spite of the terrible pain she suffered. The habit of repeated forgiveness prepared her to attain heroic virtue and work toward reconciliation after an unthinkable offense was committed against her family and her tribe.

Her story makes clear what Thomas Aquinas and other great philosophers wrote: virtue is a

habit. It's like a muscle; the more we exercise it, the stronger it becomes. Forgiveness in small matters leads to the ability to forgive an egregious wrong because we have practice at forgiving; our "forgiveness muscle" is strong.

So, it is with any virtue — the more we practice courage, self-control, justice and prudence, the better we are able to be courageous, possess self-control and act with justice and prudence.

Reflecting on Uwimana's story spurs me to re-evaluate my own habits of reconciliation. Do I cultivate peace and forgiveness in my home? Do I have "a positive attitude that seeks to understand other people's weaknesses," or do I "[look] for more and more faults, [imagine] greater evils, and [presume] all kinds of bad intentions," as Pope Francis contrasts in his recent exhortation, "Amoris Laetitia?"

When I am honest with myself, I know that so often I do not have a positive attitude toward other's weaknesses, especially those who I love most. For most of my life, I have been guilty of letting "the just desire to see [my] rights respected turns into a thirst for vengeance rather than a reasoned defense of



**Anamaria
Scaperlanda
Biddick**
*For the Sooner
Catholic*

[my] dignity," that Pope Francis warns against.

My own habits of forgiveness and peace fall woefully short of those of Uwimana and her family. I resolve to begin again; to pray to forgive rather than dwell on the offense wrought against me; to think of the strengths of the other rather than the weaknesses; to pause before reacting; to end the day by apologizing for my own wrongdoings. I would like to work toward becoming the type of person so practiced in forgiveness that I could forgive such a severe wrong as Uwimana was able to do.

The model of virtue provided by Uwimana and other holy men and women gives me the framework for how to carry Christ's peace to others. The saints, living and dead, provide the example; we must follow.



MAY 5, 6 & 7 LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINAR

A Short Course on the Holy Spirit

The early Church was launched by the power of Pentecost, when the first followers of Jesus encountered the Holy Spirit. They were empowered with gifts of preaching, healing, prophecy, and much more, enabling them to fulfill the mission Jesus had entrusted to them.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Popes have been urging us to pray for a renewal of the experience of Pentecost in the Church, which has led to the re-emergence of these gifts. The Archdiocese would like to encourage you to discover the gifts God wants to give to you. Please join us!



May 5 & 6

7 **p.m.** - 9:30 **p.m.**

May 7

9 **a.m.** - 4 **p.m.**

Talks:

God's Love
Salvation
New Life
Receiving God's Gifts
Baptism in the Spirit
Growth
Transformation in Christ

*"Together we shall invoke
the Holy Spirit,
confidently asking God for
the gift of a new
Pentecost for the Church
and for humanity in the
third millennium."*
-- Pope Benedict XVI

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PASTORAL CENTER
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Making Sense of Bioethics

On "Aging Gracefully"

It seems odd, even a bit repulsive, when we encounter tales of elderly men running after women who are young enough to be their granddaughters. The wheelchair-bound billionaire oil tycoon J. Howard Marshall was 89 years old when he married the 26-year-old Anna Nicole Smith. He had met the Playboy model and reality TV star in a strip club. Anna insisted that she really did love the old man, and wasn't in it for the money.

With age should come wisdom. It's appropriate and fitting for older men to leave behind their former ways, and no longer live and act like college frat boys. It's right to expect growth in self-control as we mature, and to expect a more reflective and sober approach to life. Growing old invariably offers us the opportunity to redirect our focus, and as our body weakens, our mind and soul can be drawn to consider matters we may have previously avoided, like death and that which awaits us beyond death's threshold. Our later years powerfully can provoke us to come to terms with our destiny and with higher truths.

In a recent column, Father Ron Rolheiser, quoting James Hillman, speaks to the graces that aging and infirmity can bring our way: "Why have God and nature so structured things that as we age and mature and are finally more in control of our lives, our bodies begin to fall apart, and we need a bevy of doctors and medicines to keep functioning? Is there some wisdom in the very DNA of the life process that mandates the breakdown of physical health in late life? Hillman says, yes. There's an innate wisdom in the process of aging and dying: the best wines

have to be aged in cracked old barrels. The breakdown of our bodies deepens, softens and matures the soul."

I once overheard a hospital nurse chatting with one of her patients and was caught a bit off guard when she nonchalantly declared, with a little twinkle in her eye, "...when we get to be over 40, who doesn't have hemorrhoids?" The comment, I thought, reflected a healthy, positive attitude toward aging and infirmity. Un-

great virtue.

But, aging gracefully is not something many of us tend to do well. We resist the idea. We may cling to the fantasy of eternal youth. Some in our society even push the notion that we shouldn't have to put up with the challenges of infirmity, and instead ought to receive help from the medical system so we can beat a hasty retreat to the exit.

By pushing for physician-assisted suicide, they encourage us to



Pope Francis greets an elderly woman as he meets with people of Banado Norte, a poor neighborhood in Asuncion, Paraguay, July 12. *CNS photo/Paul Haring.*

avoidably, our bodies decline. Our strength wanes. We get hemorrhoids and warts and cancers and high blood pressure and male pattern balding.

In the midst of it all, we can accept our lot with grace and gratitude. A serene acceptance of our struggles, and even of the specific death that awaits us, is surely a

despise the good of our own lives and to reject the graces that arise from our struggles by choosing to ingest any of a number of doctor-prescribed poisons.

On the other hand, by embracing our particular path into death, and by offering up our trials, we acquire a poise of soul and human maturity that orients us toward



**Father Tad
Pacholczyk**
*National Catholic
Bioethics Center*

our destiny, a destiny in the hereafter that so many seem largely oblivious to. By letting our infirmities existentially speak to us, and coming to realize how true it is that we have no permanent dwelling here, we begin to grapple with that mysterious truth that heaven and home are synonymous.

Aging gracefully also involves recognizing and accepting the shortening of the time ahead of us and the lengthening of the time behind us. Even as we achieve a much-sought independence in our lives, we begin to cycle back toward a renewed dependence on others, on caregivers, family and the community, and we may even come to the realization that our own mind will have to be surrendered if dementia comes our way.

All of this can instruct us, if we accept it with grace, in the wisdom of relinquishing our own willfulness once again like little children, and returning to a humble framework of interdependence in our shared destiny with others and with God.

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.

Sister M. Sponsa Beltran

Sister Sponsa Beltran, O.S.F., died on April 6, 2016, at Saint Joseph's Villa in Reading, Pa.

A native of Pennsylvania, Sister Sponsa was born Rosario Beltran on March 25, 1925, the oldest of eight children. She entered the Order of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters in 1944 and received her degree in nursing.

More than 40 years of her ministry was spent in Liberia, Africa, where she established a residence for society's throw-away children — the handicapped. There, these children would find shelter, food, medical attention, an education and learn about the Lord. With the civil unrest in the country, there were times when she was confronted by the military regime. One time, she had to take her children and flee to the Ivory Coast until it was safe to return to Liberia.

During her ministry in Liberia, she became legally blind and continued her work even though wheelchair bound.



Many people in Oklahoma came to know her through her infrequent visits and her appeal for monetary assistance and prayers for her children.

She is survived by two sisters, Helen Marie Beltran and Angie Cebulski, two brothers, Archbishop Eusebius Beltran and Frank Beltran along with many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services and burial were at the motherhouse of the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters in Reading, Pa.

Sister Frances Therese Murray, O.P., celebrates jubilee

SINSINAWA, Wis. — Sister Frances Therese Murray, O.P., will celebrate her 75th jubilee in June. Her religious name was Sister Mary Daniel.

Sister Frances Therese's home parish is Visitation, Chicago. Sister Frances Therese's ministry has been dedicated to teaching.

In the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Sister Frances Therese taught at Rosary School in Oklahoma City in 1941 and ministered as chaplain at Saint Anthony Hospital from 1981-1985.

Sister Frances Therese is retired and living in community at Saint Dominic Villa.

If you would like to honor Sister Frances Therese on her jubilee, go to the Sinsinawa Dominicans' website at www.sinsinawa.org/jubilarians.



A walk with Colleen Carroll Campbell

By J.E. Helm
For the Sooner Catholic



A really good memoir or autobiography must do two things. It must be a record of the times in which it was written and it must tell us what it was actually like to be a human being at that particular time, in that particular place.

At the same time, such a narrative must transcend these things and must deal with questions and issues that all humans have had to deal with over the centuries and across the borders of various geographies. “My Sisters the Saints,” Colleen Carroll Campbell’s award winning memoir does both of these things, inviting us along to search with her for the meaning of life and to celebrate joyfully with her as she discovers these truths.

Campbell is a writer and a journalist. She is the author of “The New Faithful,” and her work has appeared in The New York Times and The Washington Post. She has produced and anchored for EWTN and was a speechwriter for President George W. Bush.

“My Sisters the Saints” was published in 2012, and in 2013 was awarded the Christopher Award and the Association of Catholic Publishers Award.

As a college student at Marquette University during the 1990s, Campbell finds her life as a self-described party girl is empty and unfulfilling. Highly successful academically, she nevertheless writes that she feels as if “I had lost something. I didn’t know what it was or how to get it back.” Enrolled in a course in feminist thought, she can only ask, “If this is liberation, why am I so miserable?”

Attending a Sunday evening Mass with her

non-Catholic boyfriend, Campbell realizes that her “lingering melancholy might be connected to the intimacy with God [she] had abandoned shortly after arriving at college.” Deciding to change, she “opened the door to God.”

Campbell’s parents are truly devout Catholics, and over Christmas break her father gives her a copy of a biography of Saint Teresa of Avila, enthusiastically telling her that “it makes Teresa come alive.”

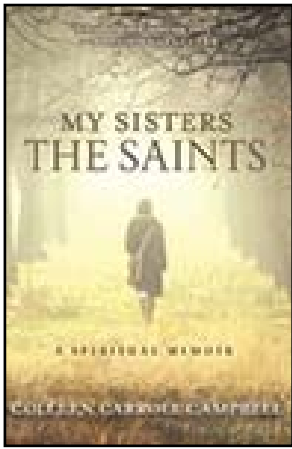
Campbell develops a true friendship with this saint, seeing in Teresa’s early-life attachments to personal appearance and reputation parallels to her own life. Teresa’s “spicy, messy, and meandering spiritual journey cast my own struggle in a new light.”

Saint Therese of Lisieux was another of Campbell’s father’s favorites, and again there are parallels between the life of the saint and Campbell’s own.

In her last semester in college, Campbell learns that her father has Alzheimer’s.

Campbell loses her beloved father, even as her career takes her from newspaper reporter to author, even as she meets the convert to Catholicism who would eventually become her husband.

Campbell’s adventure takes her to a job as a speechwriter for President George W. Bush, but she is torn between pursuing success in the nation’s capitol and a deep desire to return home to Saint Louis and marry her medical student fiancé, John.



She decides to trust her feelings of love for John, and she leaves her White House job after just one year, marrying at Christmas in 2003.

When she and her husband learn that it may not be possible for them to have children, they were completely devastated. A new saint-friend comes along to help Campbell understand that her desire for motherhood can be fulfilled, although not necessarily by giving birth. The newly canonized Edith Stein had written a series of reflections during the 1930s, published as “Essays on Woman,” in which she explains what she calls woman’s maternal gifts. Campbell embraces the idea that “motherhood is more about what’s in your heart than what’s in your womb,” that she “needed to stop waiting for a baby to use [her] maternal gifts.”

When Campbell’s father dies, it is a terrible loss for her, but in reading “Come Be My Light,” in which Mother Teresa describes her feelings of being abandoned by God, Campbell writes that “I was surprised to discover that this saint I once regarded as impossibly holy could speak so powerfully to the blackness suffocating my soul.”

Almost miraculously, Campbell discovers that she is pregnant. She and John had walked on their knees to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City and had bathed in the waters of Lourdes, praying for a child. Now in her early 30s, she learns they have been doubly blessed: she is carrying twins.

Campbell concludes her book with a joyful account of the celebration of the children’s baptism. It is a celebration of her life’s journey, of faith pursued and found, of the friendship with six holy women, of a path we all have walked with her in this inspiring work. Campbell’s conclusion is truly victorious, and this wonderful book, “My Sisters the Saints,” is highly recommended.

For Catholic astronauts, flying to space doesn’t mean giving up the faith

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON – On the International Space Station there’s a place, while filled with robotic equipment, where astronauts like to hang out. Called the Cupola, the small module has seven large bay windows that give crew members a panoramic view of Earth.

On his first – and thus far only – mission into space in September 2013, astronaut Mike Hopkins, was eager to find the Cupola. What he saw he found amazing.

“When you see Earth from that vantage point and see all the natural beauty that exists, it’s hard not to sit there and realize there has to be a higher power that has made this,” said Hopkins, who is Catholic.

It was in the Cupola that Hopkins found himself praying and at times taking Communion.

Under a special arrangement with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and with the help of Father James H. Kuczynski, the rookie astronaut carried a pyx with six consecrated hosts broken into four pieces. It was enough for him take Communion once a week for the 24 weeks he was aboard ISS.

“It was extremely, extremely important to me,” said Hopkins, now 47, who grew up on a farm outside of Richland, Missouri, in a United Methodist family, but completed Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults classes and became Catholic just before going into space.

He said he wanted to become Catholic not just because his wife and two teenage sons were Catholic, but because “I felt something was missing in my life.”

Hopkins completed two spacewalks to change out a pump module with fellow spacefarer Rick Mastracchio. Before exiting ISS, he took Communion as well.

“Those events can be stressful events,” he told Catholic News Service from his office in Houston. “Knowing Jesus was with me when I stepped out the door into the vacuum of space was important

to me.”

Such practices of faith, especially among Catholics in the astronaut corps, is hardly unusual.

“My crewmates knew I had the Eucharist with me,” Hopkins said. “In fact, I coordinated with my Russian commander. He knew everything going on. They were all aware of that, but I never tried to make a large deal about it and publicize it and they didn’t either. They respected my faith and my desire to follow that faith even when I was in orbit.”

Astronaut Mike Good, a member of Saint Paul the Apostle in Nassau Bay, Texas, near NASA’s Johnson Space Center, and a veteran of two space flights, spent about 12 days on each of his missions aboard the space shuttle. Taking Communion into space, he said, was not as imperative.

“But, if I was going to do a six-month expedition on the ISS, I would talk to my priest and figure out what we were going to do,” Good said.

From another perspective, Good, 53, and retired astronaut Mike Massimino, 54, told CNS that the opportunity to fly in space offered time to reflect on creation as they gazed upon Earth.

“One thought I had is that God must love us to give us such a beautiful home,” Massimino said. “It has given me a view of the planet; of how special it is; and how loved we are to have such a great place; and how we should appreciate it.”

Good, Massimino’s spacewalk partner on a 2009 shuttle mission, said he felt blessed to see the planet from high above.

“Looking back at Earth, I can’t really describe how beautiful it is from 300 miles up,” Good said. “Looking down, you can tell it’s a planet. The sky is black. There’s just a thin blue ribbon, what we see as blue sky on Earth. You realize how small it is and how fragile the planet is.

“It just makes it so obvious that God created this beautiful place. The word ‘awe’ just comes to mind. ... And looking out into space, it’s just a clear view. The stars don’t twinkle. It’s like a high definition 3-D TV. You look out into space and feel very small.”

Good expects that when the moment of launch



Retired astronaut Mike Massimino. CNS photo / courtesy NASA.

comes, there’s a feeling of connection with God or a higher power among just about everyone heading to space.

“Heading out to the launchpad is like being in a foxhole,” Good said. “There’s not a lot of atheists in a foxhole. I don’t think there’s many atheists sitting atop the launchpad.”

Among the things Massimino took on his first flight was a Vatican City flag, which he later gave to St. John Paul II. On his second flight, he took a prayer card depicting Pope Benedict XVI, which he gave to the pontiff.

One Catholic astronaut, Mark Vande Hei, 49, is preparing for his first mission to the ISS next March. He said he has talked a bit with his Catholic colleagues about what to expect. For now, his spiritual preparation remains the same with daily prayer and regular Mass attendance at Saint Paul the Apostle in Nassau Bay.

To keep astronauts’ spirits high, NASA arranges for occasional calls with celebrities on flights and asks each astronaut with whom they might like to talk. Vande Hei, who holds a bachelor’s degree in physics from Saint John’s University in Minnesota, said he suggested Pope Francis.

His request may not be outside the realm of possibility. Pope Benedict communicated with the crew aboard the ISS in May 2011 in a 20-minute conversation.

Priestly presence: a gift to Catholic school families

On behalf of our principals and teachers, I would like to express gratitude to the many pastors who serve our Catholic schools. Our archdiocese is blessed with great support from clergy. During our recent study of Catholic schools conducted by The Catholic University of America, our pastors expressed profound support for Catholic schools as a means to evangelize.

This support begins with Archbishop Coakley and Archbishop Emeritus Beltran, and is characterized in the ministry of our priests. I would like to highlight the work of two pastors in particular who I believe represent the goodwill and dedication of all of our clergy.

First, Father Richard Stansberry, recognized by the National Catholic Educational Association as a distinguished pastor, recently published a chapter in an NCEA publication called “Priestly Leadership in Catholic Schools.” In his article, Father Rick shared many examples where priestly presence has made a difference not only in the lives of students, but also in the lives of their teachers and families.

Having worked with Father Rick for many years, I can attest to the gift of his care to all parish families. In addition to his duties at a large and busy parish, Christ the King, he serves the archdiocese as judicial vicar. Although his schedule is intense, he always makes a point to visit the school just to say



Fr. Denis Hanrahan at St. Mary School in Guthrie. Photo archives of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

hello and be present. I remember the first day of school when we were both new to Christ the King, he stood with me at the front door during morning arrival. He wanted to greet the children, to say hello to the parents and to be a welcoming presence.

That gesture of welcome set the tone for the entire year. His frequent walks through the school, his on-the-fly conversations with students and staff, and his joy in ministry said, “I care,” and “I want to walk this path with you.”

The second pastor I would like to recognize is Father Denis Hanrahan. He was a dedicated and loving school pastor. Father Hanrahan brought me to the Catholic school system, and that truly changed



Fr. Rick Stansberry (front center) takes a hiking trip to the Wichita Mountains with the Christ the King seventh grade class in 2014. Photo provided.

Bishop McGuinness newspaper receives accolades

The Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School 2015-16 Chi Rhoan newspaper received Highest Honors and was named All Oklahoman at the Oklahoma Scholastic Media State Competition held at the University of Oklahoma April 4. Individual winners were juniors Caroline Dykstra, 2nd place in Mini Feature and Honorable Mention in News Story; Addie Martinez, 2nd place in News, Inside Spread Design, and Sports Feature; Beth Sine, Honorable Mention in Opinion Column; and Charlotte Edmonds, 3rd place in Mini Feature and Honorable Mention in Feature; sophomore Ben Miller, 3rd place in Mini Feature, and Honorable Mention in Feature. The school advisor is Betty Herman.

The 2015 yearbook The Chi Rho with the theme of “IRISH, The New Generation” received Highest Honors and a Gold Medal from New York’s Columbia University Scholastic Press Association and Highest Honors from Oklahoma Scholastic Media Association.

Members of the Bishop McGuinness Chi Rhoan newspaper staff – Far left is Caroline Dykstra. Top row from left – Charlotte Edmonds and Ben Miller. Bottom row from left – Beth Sine and Addie Martinez. Photos provided.



Cris Carter
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

can believe the worst or the best about them. I choose to believe the best until they prove me wrong.”

This bit of wisdom has stuck with me since those early years serving as a principal. Father Hanrahan reminded me that there is more good in the world than bad, and that the majority of people want the best for their children, for their school and for their church.

He would laugh, and say “sometimes Jesus is hard to see in the other person, but it is our responsibility to look for Him.”

Here are a few paraphrased tidbits I remember:

“Your conscience, that little voice inside you telling you the right thing to do, is the Holy Spirit at work within you. Listen to that small quiet voice.”

“Sin is the absence of love.”

“God loves us in the same way your mom, dad, grandma and grandpa love you. You are God’s precious gift.”

“The best way for a child to know God’s love is to see parents who love one another.”

“Instead of giving up things like candy and pop for Lent, go out of your way to do something good for someone else. What can you do for someone that will bring them joy and show your love?”

“If you can’t remember the Act of Contrition when you come to reconciliation, just say you are sorry.”

“A problem is not your problem until the person with the problem brings it to you.”

“Some people spend all their time looking for the one giant miracle, but miracles happen every day in plain sight. Look around you, there are miracles all around you every day.”

Thank you Father Hanrahan, Father Rick and all of our pastors for teaching us how to live and strive to build God’s kingdom here on earth.



God’s Not Dead 2 misses mark on religious liberty

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service



NEW YORK – The very real threats to religious freedom in contemporary society could serve as the theme for a valuable documentary or a thought-provoking drama.

What we get with “God’s Not Dead 2” (Pure Flix), however, is a flawed message movie undermined from the start by a fictional premise that feels thoroughly implausible.

In following up on his 2014 original, director Harold Cronk, along with returning screenwriters Chuck Konzelman and Cary Solomon, shifts the scene from the groves of secularist academe to the halls of an Anywhere, USA, public high school.

There, history teacher, and committed evangelical believer, Grace Wesley (Melissa Joan Hart) is asked a question regarding the Christian antecedents of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s strategy of nonviolence during the civil rights movement. (She has already covered the influence of Mahatma Gandhi on Rev. King.)

Grace responds by citing Jesus’ famous admonition, recorded in the Gospel of Matthew: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.” Whereupon all hell breaks loose.

Never mind that Grace has done nothing that could possibly be seen as proselytizing in the

classroom; that she has invoked no specifically religious belief such as the divinity of Christ or his role as mankind’s savior; that her answer is strictly factual and thoroughly within the appropriate confines of the discussion. Faster than you can say Madalyn Murray O’Hair, the administration is down on her like a pack of wolves – closely followed by the school board and the American Civil Liberties Union.

If only Grace would apologize for her lapse in judgment, all would be forgiven. But, she remains steadfast. So, it’s off to court, where she’ll be represented by untried but good-hearted lawyer Tom Endler (Jesse Metcalfe).

Cheering Grace on from the sidelines – and providing her with emotional and spiritual support – is her kindly grandfather, Walter (Pat Boone). Leading the charge against her is the American Civil Liberty Union’s serpentine lead attorney, Peter Kane (Ray Wise).

Kane oozes sweet reasonableness, yet he rests his case on the thoroughly irrational notion that Jesus never existed. The debate that follows showcases the interesting work of J. Warner Wallace, a veteran Los Angeles County cold-case detective who applied police investigative techniques to examining the evidence about Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. But, the fact that Kane is a straw man pursuing an unrealistic strategy compromises the impact of Wallace’s rebuttal.

It also may be slightly unsettled by the fact that Kane’s backup counsel, who hovers around with little to say, looks like a thin Seth



Hayley Orrantia stars in a scene from the movie “God’s Not Dead 2.” The Catholic News Service classification is A-II – adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG – parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children. *CNS photo/Pure Flix.*

Rogen playing a young Henry Kissinger. His persona implicitly evokes a stereotype far better left alone.

Taken as a whole, this reaffirmation of belief, though appropriate for most moviegoers, suffers from an off-key tone, a pervasive sense of victimhood and sometimes painful sentimentality.

The film contains mature themes and an instance of harsh parental violence. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

Mulderig is on the staff of Catholic News Service.

By Monica Knudsen
For the Sooner Catholic



Imagine such scant papal security that during the opening of the Holy Doors in Holy Year 1949, pilgrims carried scissors to snip a fragment from Pope Pius XII’s cassock. According to a horrified witness, Father John Charles-Roux, the Pope returned to his apartments with a trimmed hem and cuts on his legs. Author Joan Lewis presents fascinating behind-the-scenes stories in her newest book, “A Holy Year in Rome: the Complete Pilgrim’s Guide for the Jubilee of Mercy.”

Far more than a Jubilee Year guide, the writing in this 211-page book gracefully describes why we pilgrims are seekers of closeness to God; “our yearning to know who God is, to understand His goodness, His love for us. ... A yearning to understand how truly unimportant everything else is, if it does not lead us to God.”

The author notes that pilgrimages are an inversion of the Gospel mission; “as the faithful seek the route that brings them back to the Father’s house.”

Beyond the spiritual, Lewis conveys the Eternal City’s magic, “the history, the art, the majestic basilicas, the elegant bridges, the splendid piazzas, the cobblestone streets, the bubbling fountains, and the symphony of church bells.”

Chapters include descriptions and color photos of the seven major basilicas, a history of Jubilee years, Vati-

can City State, the Catacombs and so much more, including 18 additional historic churches to visit just a few of Rome’s many hundreds.

This is a book for every year. For example, the chapter on Castel Gandolfo, the Popes’ centuries-old summer residence, refers to how to book a new full-day tour of the Vatican Museums, Vatican Gardens and Castel Gandolfo (pgs. 188-189). How to visit the Vatican complex, a Jubilee Year Calendar of Events, and practical advice concerning taxis, tipping, drinking water, staying safe, traveling with children and even a few of Joan’s favorite restaurants are included.

I was privileged as a recent Rome traveler, along with my former classmate, Anne, to join her at two of these, La Vittoria and La Scaletta Degli Artisti. Joan Lewis was a young French teacher in our Catholic high school in Silver Spring, Md., not much older than her students. A chance viewing of her tour of a Jerusalem church on EWTN television caught my attention, and voila!, after several e-mails, the three of us enjoyed a joyous Roman reunion 45 years after our high school days.

Joan Lewis is the EWTN Rome Bureau Chief and has lived and worked in Rome for more than 30 years. On the book jacket’s review blurb, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, writes, “Leave it to Joan to make us feel at home in Rome!”

“A Holy Year in Rome” is available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble on order, and Sophia Institute Press, by phone at (603) 641-9344 or online at www.sophia institute.com.

The Papal Basilicas in Rome

To enter the Holy Doors in Rome, pilgrims are asked to register their visit. This can be done online at www.iubilaeummiseri-cordiae.va. Click Participate, then Pilgrim Registration.

Saint Peter’s Basilica:

The site where Saint Peter was martyred and where his bones remain today. The largest church in the world and the final resting place of many saints and popes, including Pope Saint John Paul II.

Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran:

The pope’s cathedral and the mother church of all the world.

Basilica of Saint Mary Major:

The first church in Rome dedicated to the Mother of God. Holds the relics of the manger where Jesus was laid after he was born.

Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls:

The burial place of Saint Paul.



People touch the foot of the statue of St. Peter in St. Peter’s Basilica. *CNS photo/Paul Haring.*

Pope Francis celebrates Mass outside Rome’s Basilica of St. John Lateran on the feast of Corpus Christi June 4. *CNS photo/Paul Haring.*

A few quotes from Pope Francis’s “Amoris Laetitia”

Selected by Pedro A. Moreno, OP, MRE
Director of Hispanic Ministry

I have selected at least one quote from each section.

Here is the first sentence that gives the document its name: “The Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church.”

Another quote on love from the end of the introductory section says: “It is my hope that, in reading this text, all will feel called to love and cherish family life, for families are not a problem; they are first and foremost an opportunity.”

Ch. 1, “In The Light of the Word,” has many quotes from sacred scripture with some short reflections on each: “The couple that loves and begets life is a true, living icon – not an idol like those of stone or gold prohibited by the Decalogue – capable of revealing God the Creator and Savior. For this reason, fruitful love becomes a symbol of God’s inner life.”

Ch. 2, “The Experiences and Challenges of Families,” in addition to giving specific examples of the difficulties in love in the family, the pope speaks of love in this way: “The strength of the family ‘lies in its capacity to love and to teach how to love. For all a family’s problems, it can always grow, beginning with love.’”

Ch. 3, “Looking to Jesus: The Vocation of the Family,” is a summary of church teaching on marriage and the family. After speaking on the importance of the kerygma in all Christian formation the Holy Father gave us the following



A newly married couple hold rosaries in their hands as they leave Pope Francis’s general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Feb. 24. *CNS photo/Paul Haring.*

warning: “Our teaching on marriage and the family cannot fail to be inspired and transformed by this message of love and tenderness; otherwise, it becomes nothing more than the defense of a dry and lifeless doctrine.”

Ch. 4, “Love in Marriage,” is my favorite chapter. Here the Holy Father gives us a beautiful meditation on 1 Corinthians 13, St. Paul’s Hymn to Love. He begins the chapter by sharing every unique description of love that Paul gives us. He then connects this to Christ’s sacrifice in the cross. Here are a few words after speaking about the Lord’s sacrifice: “The Spirit it which the Lord pours forth gives a new heart and renders man and woman capable of loving one another as Christ loved us. Conjugal love reaches that fullness to which it is interiorly ordained: conjugal charity.” A few lines later he reminds us that: “Marriage is the icon of God’s love for us.”

I totally recommend that everyone take time to at the very least read chapter four.

Ch. 5, “Love Made Fruitful,” is a wonderful restatement of church teaching on openness to life within the marriage: “Love always gives life. Conjugal love ‘does not end with the couple. ... The couple, in giving themselves to one another, give not just themselves but also the reality of children, who are a living reflection of their love.’”

Ch. 6, “Some Pastoral Perspectives,” here is some of the novelty in the document regarding preparation for marriage. “Married couples are grateful that their pastors uphold the high ideal of a love that is strong, solid, enduring and capable of sustaining them through whatever trials they may have to face.”

After speaking on the importance of accompanying engaged couples on their journey to the sacramental celebration of their marriage, the Pope also added: “Learning to love someone does not happen automatically, nor can it be taught in a workshop just prior to the celebration of marriage.” This opens the door to new ways, some already in place, to prepare couples for marriage.

Ch. 7, “Towards a Better Education of Children,” reaffirms the parent’s responsibility in the Christian upbringing of their children, but it doesn’t stop there. The Holy Father reminds us the faith community also cooperates in the education of children. A special mention is made of Catholic Schools: “Catholic schools should be encouraged in their mission to help

Prayer to the Holy Family

By Pope Francis
(Conclusion to “Amoris Laetitia”)

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendour of true love; to you we turn with trust.

Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division; may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing.

Holy Family of Nazareth, make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God’s plan.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Graciously hear our prayer. Amen.

pupils grow into mature adults who can view the world with the love of Jesus and who can understand life as a call to serve God.”

Ch. 8, “Accompanying, Discerning and Integrating Weakness,” here you can find some recommendations on how to respond pastorally to the unique situations many married couples are going through. I can imagine how the secular press might give this section more attention. The section states what marriage is supposed to be realizes that many are not there: “Christian marriage, as a reflection of the union between Christ and his Church, is fully realized in the union between a man and a woman who give themselves to each other in a free, faithful and exclusive love, who belong to each other until death and are open to the transmission of life, and are consecrated by the sacrament, which grants them the grace to become a domestic church and a haven of new life for society. Some forms of union radically contradict this ideal, while others realize it in at least a partial

and analogous way.”

The mercy and love of God is for everyone and we are being called by the Holy Father to reach out with love to our brothers and sisters that live in other forms of union. The Holy Father used the example of the Samaritan Woman to show us how Jesus reached out to those living in different situations when he: “... addressed her desire for true love, in order to free her from the darkness in her life and to bring her to the full joy of the Gospel.”

Ch. 9, “The Spirituality of Marriage and the Family,” is the final chapter and within it you can find a beautiful reflection of the married couple’s intimacy with a loving God: “The Lord’s presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes. Living in a family makes it hard for us to feign or lie; we cannot hide behind a mask. If that authenticity is inspired by love, then the Lord reigns there, with his joy and his peace. The spirituality of family love is made up of thousands of small but real gestures. In that variety of gifts and encounters which deepen communion, God has his dwelling place. This mutual concern ‘brings together the human and the divine,’ for it is filled with the love of God. In the end, marital spirituality is a spirituality of the bond, in which divine love dwells.”

Year of Mercy pins available for Oklahoma pilgrimages

During the Jubilee Year of Mercy, the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City has designated eight Holy Doors for pilgrimages through Nov. 20.

At each Holy Door site, passports are available with information on corporal and spiritual works of mercy, how to gain a jubilee indulgence and how to attain a Year of Mercy pin.

After visiting at least three Holy Doors, Oklahoma Year of Mercy pins are now available at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway in Oklahoma City. Present the passport to receive a pin.

The Holy Doors are located at:

- ✠ The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help - OKC
 - ✠ Saint Joseph Old Cathedral - OKC
 - ✠ Saint Wenceslaus - Prague
 - ✠ Saint Gregory’s Abbey - Shawnee
 - ✠ Saint Peter - Woodward
 - ✠ Saint Mary - Ponca City
 - ✠ Holy Cross - Madill
 - ✠ Blessed Sacrament - Lawton
- For more information, go online to www.archokc.org, click on Offices and Year of Mercy.



Lánzate a lo más Profundo

Luke 5:4

Una mirada a “La Alegría del Amor”

“La Alegría del Amor” (Amoris Laetitia) es la recién publicada exhortación apostólica del Papa Francisco “Sobre el Amor en la Familia”. Sirve como un complemento adecuado a su primera exhortación apostólica, “La Alegría del Evangelio” (Evangelii Gaudium) lanzado en el 2013.

Mientras ambas se caracterizan por su modo de escribir accesible, fresco y muy concreto, esta última exhortación es mucho más larga, y considerablemente más compleja al tratar de las muchas realidades que enfrentan las familias y parejas casadas en todo el mundo. “La Alegría del Amor” es el fruto de las deliberaciones de los últimos dos Sinodos de los Obispos sobre el matrimonio y la familia, que se llevaron a cabo en 2014 y 2015.

“Si se tiene en cuenta la innumerable diversidad de situaciones concretas”, escribe Francisco, “puede comprenderse que no debía esperarse del Sinodo o de esta exhortación una nueva normativa general de tipo canónica, aplicable a todos los casos”. (AL 300)

El Papa toma un enfoque muy diferente. El no ofrece nueva enseñanza ni tampoco cambia doctrinas de la Iglesia, lo que muchas personas habían esperado o temido. Sitúa esta exhortación dentro de la tradición viva de la Iglesia enraizada en las Escrituras, las enseñanzas de los papas anteriores, el Concilio Vaticano II y de las conferencias episcopales. Es una enseñanza sin embargo, que debe ser aplicada a través de un discernimiento pastoral cuidadoso de las situaciones particulares en las que las personas se encuentran y a través de un acompañamiento amoroso por los pastores de la Iglesia y agentes de pastoral. “El matrimonio cristiano, reflejo de la unión entre Cristo y su Iglesia, se realiza plenamente en la unión entre un varón y una mujer, que se donan recíprocamente en un amor exclusivo y en libre fidelidad, se pertenecen hasta la muerte y se abren a la comunicación de la vida, consagrados

por el sacramento.” Este es un buen resumen de la concepción tradicional del ideal cristiano del matrimonio. “Otras formas de unión contradicen radicalmente este ideal, pero algunas lo realizan al menos de modo parcial y análogo.” (AL 292)

Hablando de los primeros, Francisco afirma que “No existe ningún fundamento para asimilar o establecer analogías, ni siquiera remotas, entre las uniones homosexuales y el designio de Dios sobre el matrimonio y la familia... Es inaceptable que las iglesias locales sufran presiones en esta materia.” (AL 251)

Al mismo tiempo se habla de personas que sufren de la atracción al mismo sexo, el Papa reafirma “que toda persona, independientemente de su tendencia sexual, ha de ser respetada en su dignidad y acogida con respeto, procurando evitar todo signo de discriminación injusta y particularmente cualquier forma de agresión y violencia”. (AL 250)

En la introducción a “La Alegría del Amor” Francisco escribe: “No recomiendo una lectura general apresurada. Podrá ser mejor aprovechada, tanto por las familias como por los agentes de pastoral familiar, si la profundizan pacientemente parte por parte o si buscan en ella lo que puedan necesitar en cada circunstancia concreta.” (AL 7) Uno de los riesgos, por supuesto, es que ciertos pasajes del documento pueden tomarse fuera de contexto o que el texto se utilizara sólo para recoger fragmentos de citas, sin hacer el esfuerzo necesario para comprender realmente la enseñanza en su riqueza y matices.

El texto de casi 270 páginas incluye dos meditaciones extendidas de las Escrituras, el Salmo 128 en el capítulo 1 y El Himno al Amor de San

Pablo (1 Corintios 13). Esta última meditación se encuentra en el Capítulo 4 que lleva por título “El Amor en el Matrimonio”, que es sin duda el corazón de esta exhortación. Es el capítulo que probablemente será de mayor interés para las parejas casadas. Las percepciones psicológicas y la apreciación del mundo emocional de los cónyuges, incluyendo las dimensiones eróticas de su amor no tiene precedentes en los documentos papales.

Otros capítulos tratan las experiencias reales y complejos desafíos de las familias, las variedades de formas que el amor se hace fecundado en el matrimonio, incluyendo, por supuesto, a través de la procreación y recíprocamente alegre de los hijos. Hay capítulos sobre la educación de los hijos y la espiritualidad matrimonial y familiar.

Mientras que apoya el ideal completo del matrimonio cristiano y llama a todos a una respuesta más completa a la gracia de Dios, Francisco vuelve a una imagen que se ha utilizado a menudo: la Iglesia como hospital de un campo de guerra. (AL 291) Todos nosotros experimentamos quebrantamiento en nuestras vidas. Necesitamos experimentar el toque sanador de la misericordia a través de la Iglesia.

El capítulo ocho se titula, “Acompañar, Discernir e Integrar la Fragilidad”. Este es el capítulo que probablemente será de mayor interés para los sacerdotes que están llamados a atender a aquellas parejas cuya experiencia vivida es a menudo menos que ese ideal completo.

El enfoque pastoral que el Santo Padre propone llama a un discernimiento personal y pastoral cuidadoso de todas las circunstancias y en esos casos “irregulares”, incluyendo aquellas parejas que se divorcian, la cohabitación, o que no están en un matrimonio sacramental, o que están divorciados y se volvieron a casar civilmente solamente. Se invita a los pastores a acompañar pacientemente estas parejas con la esperanza de reintegrarse gradualmente en la medida posible a la vida de la comunidad cristiana.

El acompañamiento es la clave. Francisco escribe, “un pastor no puede sentirse satisfecho sólo aplicando leyes morales a quienes viven en situaciones ‘irregulares’, como si fueran rocas que se lanzan sobre la vida de las personas.” (AL 305) Mediante el acompañamiento y discernimiento pastoral pastores ayuda parejas a encontrar posibles formas de responder a Dios y crecer en medio de los límites. El Santo Padre reconoce los retos y enmarañado que puede ser este enfoque.

“Comprendo a quienes prefieren una pastoral más rígida que no dé lugar a confusión alguna. Pero creo sinceramente que Jesucristo quiere una Iglesia atenta al bien que el Espíritu derrama en medio de la fragilidad: una Madre que, al mismo tiempo que expresa claramente su enseñanza objetiva, ‘no renuncia al bien posible, aunque corra el riesgo de mancharse con el barro del camino.’” (AL 308)

En última instancia, Francisco señala que es providencial que estas reflexiones vienen durante el Jubileo de la Misericordia como nos advierte, “Es verdad que a veces ‘nos comportamos como controladores de la gracia y no como facilitadores. Pero la Iglesia no es una aduana, es la casa paterna donde hay lugar para cada uno con su vida a cuestas.’” (AL 310)



Arzobispo Pablo S. Coakley

Para obtener una copia de “La Alegría del Amor,” ir en línea para w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/es.html.

Algunas citas de “Amoris Laetitia”

Seleccionadas por Pedro A. Moreno, OP, MRE
Director del Ministerio Hispano

He seleccionado al menos una cita de cada sección.

Esta es la primera frase del documento, que le da origen a su título: “La alegría del amor que se vive en las familias es también el júbilo de la Iglesia”.

Aquí hay otra cita sobre el amor tomada del final de la sección introductoria: “Espero que cada uno, a través de la lectura, se sienta llamado a cuidar con amor la vida de las familias, porque ellas ‘no son un problema, son principalmente una oportunidad’.

Cap. 1, “A la Luz de la Palabra”, tiene muchas citas de la Sagrada Escritura con algunas reflexiones breves sobre cada uno: “La pareja que ama y genera la vida es la verdadera ‘escultura’ viviente — no aquella de piedra u oro que el Decálogo prohíbe —, capaz de manifestar al Dios creador y salvador. Por eso el amor fecundo llega a ser el símbolo de las realidades íntimas de Dios”.

Cap. 2, “Realidad y Desafíos de las Familias”, además de dar ejemplos específicos de las dificultades en el amor en la familia el Papa también habla de amor de esta manera: “La fuerza de la familia ‘reside esencialmente en su capacidad de amar y enseñar a amar. Por muy herida que pueda estar una familia, esta puede crecer gracias al amor’.”



Una pareja recién casada mantienen rosarios en las manos. Foto CNS/Paul Haring.

Cap. 3, “La Mirada Puesta en Jesús: Vocación de la Familia”, es un resumen de las enseñanzas de la Iglesia sobre el matrimonio y la familia. Después de hablar sobre la importancia del kerigma en toda la formación cristiana el Santo Padre nos dio la siguiente advertencia: “Nuestra enseñanza sobre el matrimonio y la familia no puede dejar de inspirarse y de

transfigurarse a la luz de este anuncio de amor y de ternura, para no convertirse en una mera defensa de una doctrina fría y sin vida”.

Cap. 4, “El Amor en el Matrimonio”, es mi capítulo favorito. Aquí el Santo Padre nos da una hermosa meditación en 1 Corintios 13, el famoso Himno al Amor de San Pablo. Él comienza el capítulo reflexionando sobre cada descripción del amor que nos da San Pablo. A continuación, conecta este amor con el sacrificio de Cristo en la cruz. Aquí les ofrezco una cita del Papa después de hablar de sacrificio del Señor: ‘El Espíritu que infunde el Señor renueva el corazón y hace al hombre y a la mujer capaces de amarse como Cristo nos amó. El amor conyugal alcanza de este modo la plenitud a la que está ordenado interiormente, la caridad conyugal’. También nos dice: “El matrimonio es el icono del amor de Dios por nosotros”.

Les recomiendo a todos que tomen tiempo para por lo menos leer este capítulo cuatro.

Cap. 5, “Amor que se Vuelve Fecundo”, es una maravillosa repetición de la enseñanza de la Iglesia sobre la apertura a la vida dentro del matrimonio: “El amor siempre da vida. Por eso, el amor conyugal no se agota dentro de la pareja... Los cónyuges, a la vez que se dan entre sí, dan más allá de sí mismos la realidad del hijo, reflejo viviente de su amor...”

Cap. 6, “Algunas Perspectivas Pastorales”, aquí encontramos algo de la novedad en el documento respecto a la preparación para el matrimonio. “... los matrimonios agradecen que los pastores les ofrezcan motivaciones para una valiente apuesta por un amor fuerte, sólido, duradero, capaz de hacer frente a todo lo que se le cruce por delante”.

Después de hablar sobre la importancia de acompañar a los novios en su viaje a la celebración sacramental de su matrimonio, el Papa también ha añadido: “Aprender a amar a alguien no es algo que se improvisa ni puede ser el objetivo de un breve curso previo a la celebración del matrimonio”. Esto abre la puerta a nuevas formas, algunas ya puestas en práctica, para preparar parejas para el matrimonio.

Cap. 7, “Fortalecer la Educación de los Hijos”, reafirma la responsabilidad de los padres en la crianza cristiana de sus hijos, pero no se detiene allí. El Santo Padre nos recuerda que la comunidad de fe también coopera en la educación de los niños. Se hace una mención especial de las Escuelas Católicas: “Las escuelas católicas deberían ser alentadas en su misión de ayudar a los alumnos a crecer como adultos maduros que pueden ver el mundo a través de

Oración a la Sagrada Familia
Por el Papa Francisco
(Conclusión de Amoris Laetitia)

Jesús, María y José en vosotros contemplamos el esplendor del verdadero amor, a vosotros, confiados, nos dirigimos.

Santa Familia de Nazaret, haz también de nuestras familias lugar de comunión y cenáculo de oración, auténticas escuelas del Evangelio y pequeñas iglesias domésticas.

Santa Familia de Nazaret, que nunca más haya en las familias episodios de violencia, de cerrazón y división; que quien haya sido herido o escandalizado sea pronto consolado y curado.

Santa Familia de Nazaret, haz tomar conciencia a todos del carácter sagrado e inviolable de la familia, de su belleza en el proyecto de Dios.

Jesús, María y José, escuchad, acoged nuestra súplica. Amén.

la mirada de amor de Jesús y comprender la vida como una llamada a servir a Dios”.

Cap. 8, “Acompañar, Discernir e Integrar la Fragilidad”, es el capítulo donde se pueden encontrar algunas recomendaciones sobre cómo responder pastoralmente a las situaciones específicas que muchas parejas casadas están pasando. Me puedo imaginar cómo la prensa secular podría darle a esta sección más atención. Esta sección del documento establece lo que el matrimonio debería ser mientras que reconoce que muchas parejas no están allí: “El matrimonio cristiano, reflejo de la unión entre Cristo y su Iglesia, se realiza plenamente en la unión entre un varón y una mujer, que se donan recíprocamente en un amor exclusivo y en libre fidelidad, se pertenecen hasta la muerte y se abren a la comunicación de la vida, consagrados por el sacramento que les confiere la gracia para constituirse en iglesia doméstica y en fermento de vida nueva para la sociedad. Otras formas de unión contradicen radicalmente este ideal, pero algunas lo realizan al menos de modo parcial y análogo”.

La misericordia y el amor de Dios es para todos y el Santo Padre nos está llamando a todos a llevar este amor a nuestros hermanos y hermanas que viven en otras formas de unión. El Santo Padre utilizó el ejemplo de la Samaritana para mostrarnos cómo Jesús se acercó a los que viven en diferentes situaciones. El Señor Jesús: “dirigió una palabra a su deseo de amor verdadero, para liberarla de todo lo que oscurecía su vida y conducirla a la alegría plena del Evangelio”.

Cap. 9, “Espiritualidad Matrimonial y Familiar”, es el capítulo final y dentro de él se puede encontrar un bello reflejo sobre la intimidad de la pareja casada unida con un Dios de amor: “La presencia del Señor habita en la familia real y concreta, con todos sus sufrimientos, luchas, alegrías e intentos cotidianos. Cuando se vive en familia, allí es difícil fingir y mentir, no podemos mostrar una máscara. Si el amor anima esa autenticidad, el Señor reina allí con su gozo y su paz. La espiritualidad del amor familiar está hecha de miles de gestos reales y concretos. En esa variedad de dones y de encuentros que maduran la comunión, Dios tiene su morada. Esa entrega asocia ‘a la vez lo humano y lo divino’, porque está llena del amor de Dios. En definitiva, la espiritualidad matrimonial es una espiritualidad del vínculo habitado por el amor divino”.

Broches para Año de Misericordia disponibles para peregrinaciones

Durante el Jubileo de Misericordia, la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City ha designado ocho Puertas Santas para peregrinaciones hasta el 20 de noviembre.

A cada sitio de una Puerta Santa, están disponibles pasaportes con información sobre las obras de misericordia corporal y espiritual, cómo obtener una indulgencia para el jubileo, y cómo obtener un

broche para el Año de Misericordia.

Después de visitar al menos tres Puertas Santas, broches del Año de Misericordia Oklahoma están disponibles al Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway en Oklahoma City. Presente el pasaporte para recibir un broche. Las Puertas Santas están ubicadas:

La Catedral de Nuestra Señora de Socorro Perpetuo – OKC
San José Catedral Vieja – OKC
San Wenceslao – Prague
La Abadía de San Gregorio – Shawnee
San Pedro – Woodward
Santa María – Ponca City
Santa Cruz – Madill
Santisimo Sacramento – Lawton
Para más información, ir en línea

a www.archokc.org, haga clic en Offices y Year of Mercy.



Un par de anillos de boda simboliza el matrimonio. Foto CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz.

Fiscal Year 2015 financial audit results of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

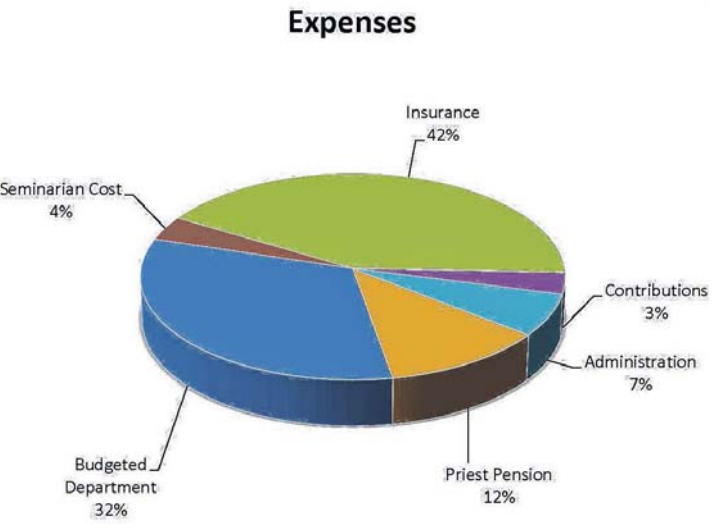
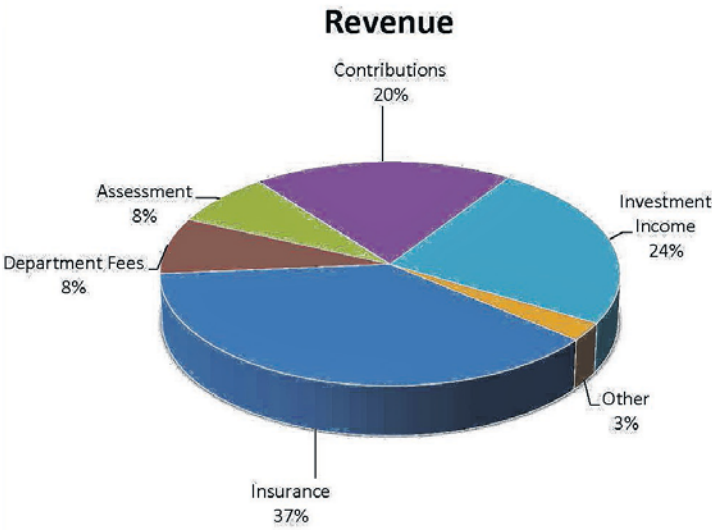
Revenues, gains, and other support:

	2015	2014
Contributions and collections:		
Archdiocesan Development Fund	3,210,029	3,132,232
Assessment Archdiocesan Operations	1,752,634	1,682,417
Fees and Revenue of Budgeted Departments	1,846,273	1,584,666
Priest Medical Collections	139,960	65,049
Property Additions by Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School	220,307	226,656
Bequests and Other	1,274,782	550,793
Insurance Premiums Earned	8,382,724	8,678,247
Oil, Gas, and Royalty Income	852,862	529,941
Interest and Dividend Income:		
Investments	1,647,796	1,500,576
Notes Receivable	275,408	221,079
Gain on Investments	2,700,325	7,777,078
Other Income	379,610	422,095
Total Revenues, Gains, and Other Support	22,682,710	26,370,829

Expenses:

Budgeted Departments and Offices:		
Pastoral Center	1,627,961	1,057,741
Business Office	1,130,564	1,234,879
Safe Environment	98,977	70,537
Archdiocesan Newspaper	419,179	440,596
Office of Communication	63,230	98,775
Office of Christian Education	612,020	490,361
Youth Ministry	513,372	509,275
Office of Family Life	219,677	220,866
Hispanic Ministry	427,089	408,546
Our Lady of Guadalupe	356,090	346,156
Office of Planning, Stewardship, and Development	171,920	191,292
Ministry to Priests, Permanent Deacons, and Clergy Education	417,147	292,013
Hospital Ministry	246,789	240,484
Tribunal	126,272	130,027
Office of Worship and Spiritual Life	245,140	150,837
National Conference of Catholic Bishops -		
United States Catholic Conference	41,602	41,120
Priests' Welfare, Retirement, and Disability	36,442	38,249
Property Taxes and Maintenance	81,725	73,450
Total Budgeted Departments and Offices	6,835,196	6,035,204
Sponsored Programs and Other Subsidies:		
Insurance	8,847,059	8,064,500
Pilgrimage	34,359	38,738
Campus Ministry	124,650	105,600
Ecumenical & Interreligious	16,500	13,950
Contributions Made to Others	712,838	2,977,776
Seminarian Programs	799,146	980,653
Pension Cost	485,463	788,739
Interest Expense	343,924	253,393
Other	384,637	426,167
Total Sponsored Programs and Other Subsidies	11,748,576	13,649,516
Total Expenses	18,583,772	19,684,720
Change in Net Assets Before Other Comprehensive Income	4,098,938	6,686,109
Other Comprehensive Income:		
Actuarial Gain (Loss)	(2,447,332)	47,811
Change in net Assets	1,651,606	6,733,920
Net Assets at Beginning of the Year	109,444,632	102,710,712
Net Assets at End of the Year	111,096,238	109,444,632

Assets	2015	2014
Cash	1,823,801	3,813,393
Accounts Receivable, Net of Allowance for Doubtful Accounts	1,508,131	1,800,118
Contributions Receivable, Net of Allowance for Doubtful Accounts	907,478	842,447
Investments	100,770,333	94,138,392
Notes Receivable, Net of Allowance for Doubtful Accounts	15,118,838	16,508,742
Land, Buildings, and Equipment	52,947,447	50,559,718
Other	35,992	93,317
Total Assets	173,112,020	167,756,127
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Accounts Payable and Other Liabilities	598,834	1,281,466
Contributions Payable, Net of Discount	1,530,122	2,483,026
Investments Managed for Related Parties	46,709,566	43,151,160
Accrued Insurance Claims	1,665,148	1,586,658
Bank Borrowings	-	-
Accrued Pension Benefit Cost	11,512,112	9,809,185
Total Liabilities	62,015,782	58,311,495
Net Assets:		
Unrestricted:		
Designated and Operating	55,979,939	54,307,855
Accumulated Other Comprehensive Loss	(4,553,291)	(2,105,960)
Net Investment in Property and Equipment and Other	52,947,447	50,559,718
Total Unrestricted Net Assets	104,374,095	102,761,613
Temporarily Restricted	446,723	534,146
Permanently Restricted	6,275,420	6,148,873
Total Net Assets	111,096,238	109,444,632
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	173,112,020	167,756,127



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the Risen Lord! As your shepherd, I consider it a solemn responsibility to be a good steward of the financial gifts received by the archdiocese, and to be transparent and accountable to the people of the archdiocese, who have shown great generosity in the support of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and its ministries.

In that spirit, I present this financial report for fiscal year 2014-15. It has been prepared by our archdiocesan business office and reviewed by independent auditors as well as by our archdiocesan finance council. I offer it now for your review.

Numbers on a page can only present an incomplete picture, but hopefully this report provides an overview of the activities and ministries provided by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. I give you my pledge that we are continuing to make every effort to be good and faithful stewards of the financial resources of the archdiocese.

Every good gift comes from a generous and loving God. Our gratitude to God moves us to a generous response in sharing our gifts with others. This is part of discipleship. When we acknowledge that the source of our joy is Jesus Christ, we can't help but share that good news with others. We become what we are called to be. We become missionary disciples!

With the assurance of my prayers and gratitude, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Paul S. Coakley

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City