

Sooner Catholic

Serving the People of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

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Father Rother Cause Heads to Vatican

Archbishop Beltran Leads Closing Mass After Three-Year Effort On Part of Oklahoma Priest Ends

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Close to two dozen members of Father Stanley Rother's family took part in the Closing Mass for his Cause of Canonization, celebrated July 20 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Several hundred more Catholics witnessed the historic celebration of faith as Oklahoma prepared to send documents related to Father Rother's Cause to Rome where it is hoped someday the Church will officially declare the slain Oklahoma priest a saint.

But as Archbishop Beltran said in his homily, in many hearts and minds Father Rother, the Oklahoma farm boy who in 1981 was shot to death for bringing the Word of God to the impoverished people of Guatemala, is already a saint.

Archbishop Beltran paid tribute to those who worked for more than three years on the local effort to promote the Cause of Sainthood for the Okarche-born priest.

"For the past 33 months, this Tribunal has worked tirelessly to prepare the necessary documents for the Holy See," Archbishop Beltran said in his homily, asking members of the Tribunal



Sister Marita Rother, ASC, Archbishop Beltran and Tom Rother with the sealed box of documents.

to stand and be recognized. "In the past week, this Tribunal has labored late into the evening and throughout the weekend. In addition, a number of other faithful people joined the Tribunal members to complete the requirements for tonight's ceremony of the closure of the Archdiocesan phase of the Cause for Canonization of the Servant of God, Rev. Stanley Francis Rother.

"I am extremely grateful to all who participated and worked so hard to accomplish this great work. I am inspired by you for as some of you, tired though you are, repeatedly stated: 'This is a labor

of love.'

"Yes, this is a labor of love! What an appropriate way to describe the efforts for canonization. Truly an exact way to explain the value, purpose and goal of all human life."

Archbishop Beltran was joined in the Eucharistic Celebration by Bishop Edward Slattery of the Diocese of Tulsa as well as Bishop Anthony Taylor of Little Rock. It was as a priest of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City that Bishop Taylor joined the Tribunal, relinquishing his

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The Good News

Once again I am very pleased to be able to express my gratitude to you, the generous Catholic people of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

I am referring here to your very generous response to a great need far beyond Oklahoma. Your exceptionally generous response to the special Haiti Relief Collection following the Jan. 12 devastating earthquake that rocked Haiti is a sign of your great faith. On July 6, Catholic Relief Services sent me the following report:

Received from Archdiocese of Oklahoma City for the special Haiti Relief Collection — \$458,452.36

Received from other groups and individuals with zip codes in Archdiocese of Oklahoma City — \$151,747.19

Total — \$610,199.55

Earlier I also received the following letter detailing the efforts and accomplishments of CRS in Haiti because of the generosity of Catholic people in the United States.

Your Eminence/Excellency:

I write to express deep gratitude for the support you and your people have shown for our brothers and sisters in Haiti, and for your confidence in Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and its ability to respond effectively to this crisis. I want to let you know how your support is being used and to respond to some concerns you may have heard about CRS' operations in Haiti. Having visited Haiti and often receiving frequent reports from our people on the scene, I can assure you that we can all be extremely proud of the work our agency is doing.

In the months since the earthquake, CRS has accomplished a great deal. We have fed more than 880,000 people, while continuing to operate feeding programs that were in place before the earthquake that regularly benefit nearly 10,000 vulnerable children through orphanages and child-care centers. We are also operating school feeding programs benefiting more than 24,000 students in over 100 schools.

At the St. Francis de Sales Hospital that CRS helped to reopen and continues to support, surgeons brought in by CRS have performed more than 800 emergency surgeries and about 60,000 outpatient consultations. CRS has installed hundreds of latrines and hand-washing stations, drainage, potable water tanks and inflatable water bladders in 10 sites in and around Port-au-Prince.

We have established child-friendly spaces for unaccompanied children in two of the largest and densely crowded camps, serving nearly 2,000 children, and provided more than 5,000 families with vouchers that allow them to choose the types of seeds and fertilizers they want — an approach that also benefits local seed

... Thank You

Your exceptionally generous response to the special Haiti Relief Collection following the Jan. 12 devastating earthquake that rocked Haiti is a sign of your great faith.



Archbishop
Beltran

suppliers and stimulates local markets.

These accomplishments would be remarkable under normal circumstances as part of an ongoing program. To me, the fact that they have been done during the last four months under most difficult circumstances by staff, most of whom were directly hurt by the earthquake, is remarkable.

You may have heard an unfortunate and unfair news account that criticized several of the most active aid agencies, including CRS, for not quickly spending the majority of the donations they have received for Haiti earthquake relief. We take scrupulous care that all donated funds are used in the most responsible and accountable way possible, both for immediate relief and long-term development. We must always balance good stewardship with the desire to respond as quickly as possible.

As the accomplishments I mentioned above indicate, CRS has responded with remarkable speed to the initial crisis. Since the emergency began in January, we have spent, distributed or made available over \$19 million of supplies, personnel and assistance. But we are also carefully planning how it will use a significant portion of donated funds for long-term redevelopment. CRS has a five-year strategy that will involve comprehensive programs focusing on the areas of Port-au-Prince, the southern peninsula including the towns of Jacmel and Leogane, and the northern border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

I would also like to mention a longstanding CRS policy that, aside from a small percentage to cover administrative costs — only 5 percent this year — all money collected for a specific emergency, such as the Haiti earthquake, must be used for that purpose.

We have also learned of a particularly vexing blog that has criticized CRS' response to requests for help from smaller programs in Haiti. In the weeks and months since the devastating earthquake, CRS has received literally hundreds of individual requests for

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Sooner Catholic

Most Reverend
Eusebius J. Beltran
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Publisher

Ray Dyer
Editor

Cara Koenig
*Technology/
Photographer*

Mauro Yanez
Hispanic Editor

7501 Northwest Expressway
Oklahoma City, OK 73132
(405) 721-1810 Fax: (405) 721-5210
e-mail: rdyer@catharchdioceseokc.org
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 32180
Oklahoma City, OK 73123

**Visit us online through the
Archdiocesan Web Page at
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Good News

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aid. Given our limited staff capacity for this, we have struggled to respond to them all in a timely manner. We deeply value our relationships with Catholics in the United States and parishes that have ministries and parish twinning relationships in Haiti. CRS staff in Baltimore responded to more than 120 cases, involving hundreds of inquiries, from Catholic communities in the United States, advising these parishes, schools and individuals about conditions in Haiti, and in many cases letting them know how we were able to help their partner in Haiti. We are continuing to respond as quickly as possible to these individual requests, while at the same time carrying out our large-scale relief operations.

Shortly you will be receiving an accounting of all donations received from your respective (arch)diocese in support of our relief and recovery efforts to the Haiti earthquake. This will include both the Special Collection for Haiti Earthquake Relief Efforts and all other support for individuals and organizations within your (arch)diocese.

I have been extremely impressed by the quality of our programs and the commitment of our staff in Haiti. If you would like to visit Haiti and see the excellent work CRS is doing on our behalf, please let me know. We would be most happy to work with you to make arrangements for your travel.

**With gratitude for your support and generosity, I am
Fraternally yours in
Christ,**

**Timothy M. Dolan
Archbishop of New York
Chairman
CRS Board of Directors**

Aquinas Ministry a Unique Opportunity

A unique opportunity is offered by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Called the Aquinas Ministry Formation Program in Oklahoma City, this program provides academic studies and spiritual formation to prepare pastoral ministers for leadership in ministry in a variety of settings within the Archdiocese. Offered in affiliation with Aquinas Institute of Theology, the program participants earn a master of arts in Pastoral Ministry [MAPM]. MAPM includes theological studies, pastoral ministry

studies, supervised practice of ministry and spiritual formation for ministry. Students and faculty in MAPM use a "cohort" model of learning which offers a stable community in which to study and grow together throughout the four-year program. Courses are offered using a mixed methodology of individual study, online structured study and face-to-face sessions.

Are you someone who would like to live your baptismal call more fully? Would you like to grow in competence

and confidence in your present ministry to and with others, in Church, in family, in the marketplace? Would you like to come to a better understanding of your own call and gifts for the lay apostolate? If you answer yes, then now is the time for you to consider MAPM!

The next cohort of MAPM begins in March 2011. For a full set of materials describing MAPM, or for more information, please call or e-mail Sister Diane Koorie at (405) 721-4208, dkoorie@catharchdioceseokc.org

Pastoral Ministry Enrollment to Open

The Pastoral Ministry Program offers theological education and formation for ministry. Courses are offered for college credit, personal enrichment or continuing education. Credit students may earn either a BA in Pastoral Ministry or an Archdiocesan diploma. Classes meet for 15 weeks, in the evenings or Saturday mornings, for 3 hours/class. Tuition for credit is \$160 plus textbooks; audit, \$90 plus textbooks; Continuing Ed, \$75 plus textbooks.

Beginning this fall, courses are available at several sites: the Catholic Pastoral Center, OKC; St. Francis Xavier, Enid; St. Peter, Woodward; St. Mary, Clinton; and Holy Family, Lawton. Students may attend at any site. Sites are connected by videoconferencing.

This fall, Introduction to the New Testament will be offered on Tuesday evenings; Church History 2 on Thursday evenings; and Morality and Social Issues on Saturday mornings. On Tuesday evenings, Theology of Mary will be offered in Pauls Valley. A special elective is being offered on Thursday evenings at the Catholic Pastoral Center on the writings of Rene Girard. This elective will be of interest to those with some background in Scripture and theology, and will engage the topic of violence and the Christian Gospel.

For complete information or to register, please call or e-mail the Pastoral Ministry Office, (405) 721-4208 or 800-721-5651 Ext. 131, or cgrimes@catharchdioceseokc.org. Classes begin Aug. 24.

RCIA Can Answer the Faith Questions

When we were dating, my husband said those three little words first. He knew my history and was well aware of my doubts in things like lasting love and fidelity. After a little gentle and careful wooing, he took a gamble and told me he loved me. Before I could formulate a reply, he quickly assured me that he didn't expect me to say anything to that. My reply could wait. He told me that he had time, all the time in the world. And he would wait as long as necessary for me to figure it all out.

Deacon Weishaar shares an interesting fact about God in his first lesson with the Confirmation class at



By Denise
Bossert

Immaculate Heart of Mary in New Melle, Mo. This is my third year as his assistant, so I know what's coming. "What is the most dangerous gift God has given to us?" He poses the question and the students stare at him blankly, waiting for him to supply the answer.

"Free will!" he says quite loudly, and all of the students jump in their seats. "God gave you life. He died on a cross for your redemption, but He is the perfect gentleman. He never forces Himself on anyone. Being God, He could make us love Him." The deacon's voice gets soft now, as he tries to convey the mystery of such love. "But God doesn't do it. He lets you decide how you will respond to that kind of love."

Incredibly, the God who made you also gives you the option of loving Him or turning your back and walk-

ing the other way. The Creator of all living things lets you decide how to respond to Perfect Love.

Back when I was dating the man who has been my husband for nearly 14 years, I had three options. When he said that he loved me, I could have run in the other direction. And to be honest, I was scared enough that I thought about it. I also could have said the words back to him, though I knew I wasn't ready. It would have filled the awkward silence, but it wouldn't have meant very much because it would have been a knee-jerk response.

I chose the third option. I decided to stick around long enough to know for certain. I watched him. I tested him a little (poor guy). I wanted to know if this was real. I gave him time to prove himself, and I gave my heart

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A Catholic Foundation Scholarship was presented recently at Mass at St. Peter Church in Woodward to Gilda Palacio by Father Scott Boeckman and CFO board member John Baransy. Gilda received a \$1,000 scholarship per year for four years to attend Northwestern Oklahoma State University. The Catholic Foundation Scholarship Program awarded over \$90,000 in scholarships for the 2010-2011 year.

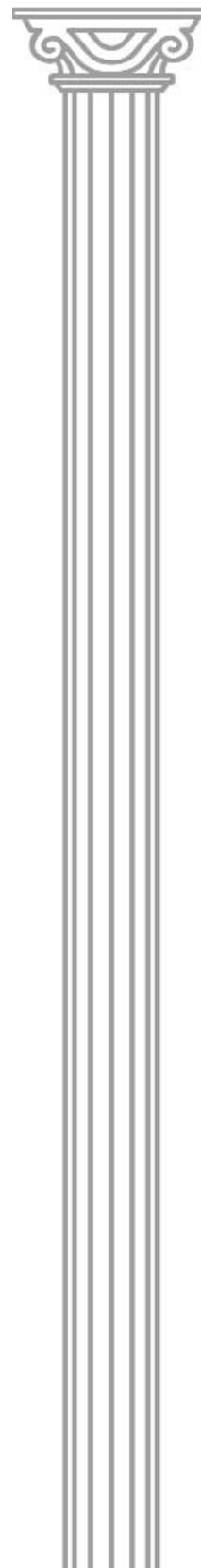
Cardinal Blasts Court Decision On Gay Marriage

WASHINGTON — Cardinal Francis George, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, decried the Aug. 4 decision of a federal judge to overturn California voters' 2008 initiative that protected marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

"Marriage between a man and a woman is the bedrock of any society. The misuse of law to change the nature of marriage undermines the common good," Cardinal George said. "It is tragic that a federal judge would overturn the clear and expressed will of the people in their support for the institution of marriage. No court of civil law has the authority to reach into areas of human experience that nature itself

has defined."

Joining Cardinal George in his criticism of the court decision was Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, chair of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Marriage. Archbishop Kurtz noted that "Citizens of this nation have uniformly voted to uphold the understanding of marriage as a union of one man and one woman in every jurisdiction where the issue has been on the ballot. This understanding is neither irrational nor unlawful," he said. "Marriage is more fundamental and essential to the well-being of society than perhaps any other institution. It is simply unimaginable that the court could now claim a conflict between marriage and the Constitution."



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For more information about making a gift to the Catholic Church in Oklahoma, contact:

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P.O. Box 32180

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Join us for an evening to focus on:

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Conversion...

Prayer.

Hear from others about how NFP can bless your marriage. Hear how learning about NFP gave one priest a change of heart. Talk with NFP teachers about what options are available for you.



Frank and Chrissy Cleary have been married for 9 years and have three beautiful children. Frank works as a youth minister for St. Philip Neri Catholic Church and Chrissy works as a therapist & case manager with a non-profit foster care agency.



Fr. Mike Chapman has been a priest for the Archdiocese for 41 years and currently serves as pastor for Holy Angels Parish in OKC.



Join us at 6:30 pm on August 31
 Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Church,
 7336 West Britton Road, OKC.
 Capacity for FREE childcare is limited,
 please RSVP to 405-721-8944 by August 25.

This FREE event is sponsored by the Office of Family Life through the generosity of contributions to the ADF

Covering NFP

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Catholic Faith Calls For Natural Family Planning

By **Eliana Tedrow**
For *The Sooner Catholic*

OKLAHOMA CITY — Cristy Welch has heard a lot of reasons why newly married, or long-married couples, for that matter, don't use Natural Family Planning (NFP). As the programs assistant and NFP instructor for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, she is often responsible for orienting engaged couples with the term "Natural Family Planning." Although the Catholic Church typically stands united on pro-life issues, when it comes to understanding Natural Family Planning, there's still some confusion. With an effectiveness rate of over 99 percent when used correctly (USCCB) and virtually no health risks or side effects, why aren't more Catholics practicing the Church's preferred method for family planning?

"There are a lot of Catholics who are not open to NFP," Welch explains. "We live in a culture that really pushes contraceptives and not just for contraceptive purposes, but for a cure-all: acne, cramping, irregular cycles or whatever — you take a pill and it will all go away." Couples may look at some families with multiple children, Welch says, and make the assumption that, because they have a big family, they must not have wanted to have that many children, that they must have made mistakes, or that NFP just doesn't work.

So ... What is NFP? How does it work? Why does the Catholic Church allow couples to use NFP to avoid pregnancy but look dimly on the use of "contraception?"

Until 1930, most Christians held a universal belief that the use of "contraception" or abortion was immoral. It wasn't until the development and legalization of the birth control "pill" in the 1960s, when Christians started to become divided on the issue.

The issue of contraception is an



Dr. Mary Martin

important aspect of Catholic teachings on "Right to Life." "Right to life" encompasses issues like abortion/respect of life, cloning, "contraception," end of life/euthanasia and embryonic stem cell research, to name a few. In all cases, though, the Church believes that human life should be protected — from natural death to natural conception.

The right to human life has been reaffirmed throughout the Papal See, including Pius XI (Casti Connubii "On Christian Marriage"), Paul VI (Humane Vitae "On Human Life"), John Paul II (Familiaris Consortio "The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World," "Theology of the Body" and Evangelium Vitae "The Gospel of Life"), Benedict XVI (Deus caritas est "God is Love" and On Marriage: A Compendium).

What is NFP?

NFP is an umbrella term for certain methods used to achieve and avoid pregnancies. These methods are based on observation of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman's menstrual cycle. Couples using NFP to avoid pregnancy abstain from intercourse and genital contact during the fertile phase of the woman's cycle. No drugs, devices or surgical procedures are used to avoid pregnancy.

NFP reflects the dignity of the human person within the context of marriage and family life, promotes openness to life, and recognizes the value of the child. By respecting the love-giving and life-giving natures of marriage, NFP can enrich the bond between husband and wife. (Standards for Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry, P. 23)

Welch laughs when she explains that couples come into her office, thinking they need to do algorithms. In reality, she explains, "NFP is as simple as making an observation

and writing down a two-word description."

Dr. Mary Martin can attest to that. An OB/GYN at St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City and outspoken advocate of NFP, Martin is

"In our culture, the pill is used for contraceptive purposes and we have this mind frame that has pushed it for so long, it's made it seem that's what is normal."

— **Cristy Welch, Programs Assistant and NFP Instructor, Office of Family Life, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City**

forced to dispel myths and misconceptions about what and how effective NFP is on a daily basis in her practice.

"[NFP] is an issue that keeps people away," Martin says. "They think NFP is still the rhythm method when in reality the science behind NFP is the same science and scientists behind in vitro fertilization and the birth control pill. Most people don't realize that."

Medical professionals often prescribe birth control to patients presenting with various ailments: irregular cycles, acne, cramps, etc. But simply prescribing a pill does not get at the root of, what could be a serious medical condition. Dr. Martin cautions both caregivers as well as patients: "[NFP] is not only a great way to space pregnancy," she explains, "but a fantastic way to diagnose and treat causes of infertility. We do not have to revert to unethical means — that's sacred. We diagnose it. We treat it."

What about the wedding vows?

In a Catholic marriage, the man and woman are asked, "Are you ready to accept children lovingly from God?" Without hesitation, both readily answer "Yes." But are Catholics really being asked to have as many children as the spouse's body can produce?

No. Rather, the Church continually calls for "responsible parenthood."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains, "A particular aspect of [the fecundity of marriage] concerns the regulation of procreation. For just reasons, spouses may wish to space the births of their children." (CCC 2368).

Perhaps the bigger issue is what constitutes "just reasons." The Catechism isn't clear on this. Instead, it leaves the discernment up to the couple.

"It is their duty to make certain that their desire is not motivated by selfishness but is in conformity with the generosity appropriate to responsible parenthood." (CCC 2368).

Every couple is different. The real issue is applying the principle of "responsible parenthood." For instance, there may be economic issues that would prohibit the parents from caring for their child or children's basic needs. Another couple may be experiencing health or psychological issues or just need more time to mature before being ready to parent "responsibly." The issue is not cut and dry. It is true, however, that "Sacred Scripture and the Church's teaching see in large families a sign of God's blessing and the parents' generosity." (CCC 2373). As long as the couple's intentions are not frivolous or materialistic, NFP can help couples avoid, space or even obtain pregnancy.

What is the definition of "contraception?"

In 1968 the publication of Pope Paul VI's "Humane Vitae" sent shock waves through a nation just opening its doors to the newly legalized birth control "pill," a pill many expected would fix the number of unwanted pregnancies and therefore lower the abortion rate, put more females back into the workplace and make for happier marriages, to name a few. It took about a decade for these expectations to be deflated. Within a short time period, the number of unwanted pregnancies rose, along with the abortion rate, and infidelity was higher, as was divorce.

"Humane Vitae" addresses the concern of all forms of birth control in the following:

[The Church] once again declare[s] that the direct interruption of the generative process already begun, and, above all, directly willed and procured abortion, even if for therapeutic reasons, are to be absolutely excluded as licit means of

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Father McCaffrey: Contraception Killing Church

Archdiocesan Priest Travels Globe Pleading for Fellow Priests, Faithful to Consider Devastation Caused by Acceptance of Artificial Birth Control

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Father Daniel McCaffrey pulls an old military saying from his memory when describing the tragic impact contraception and sterilization has had on the world and especially on our Catholic Church.

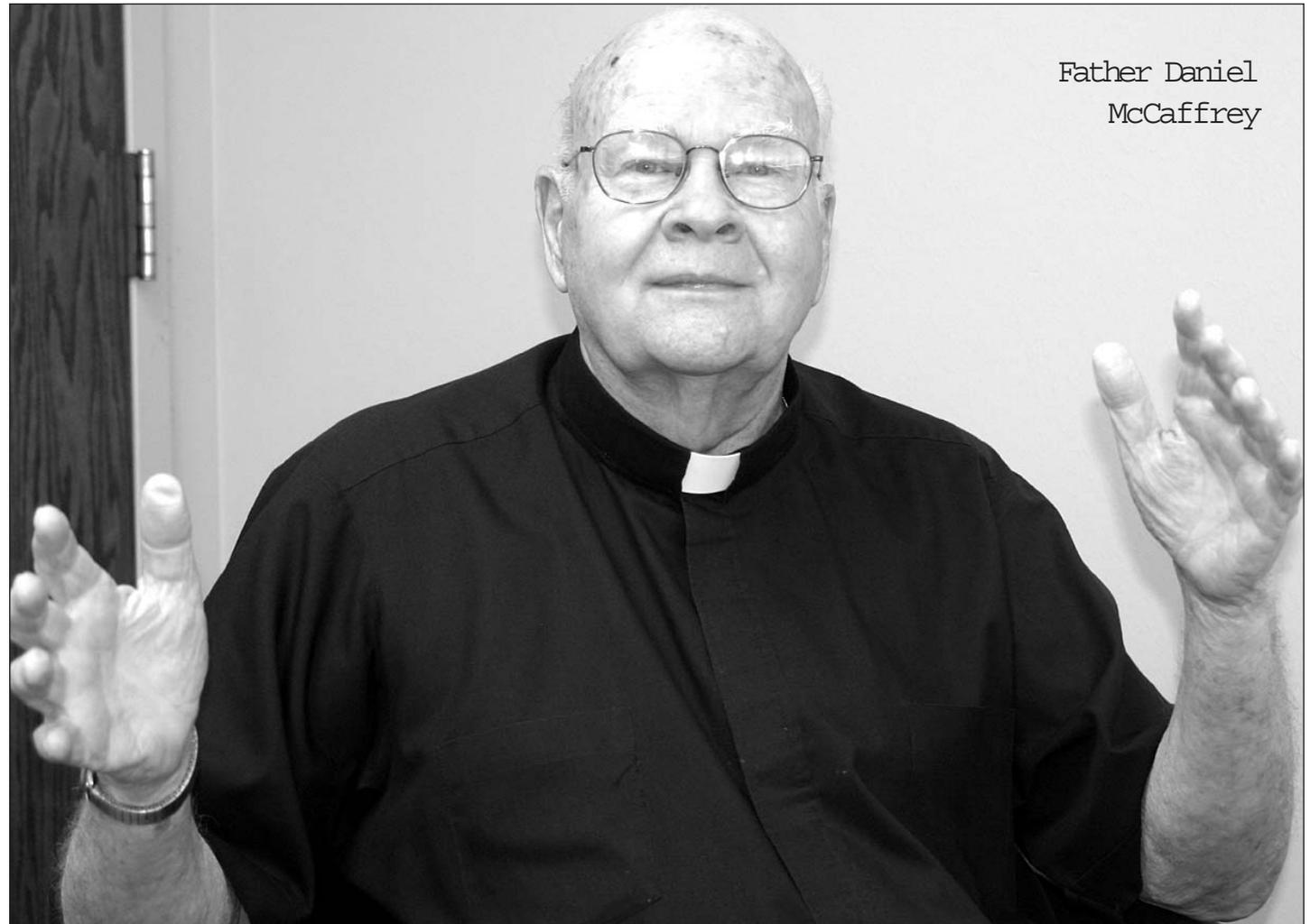
“Bad news doesn’t get better with time,” Father McCaffrey says, recalling the saying, “It’s like cheese, all it does is stink worse.”

A priest for 52 years, Father McCaffrey offices in a small suite on Northwest 57th Street. But it’s not often you will find the feisty 79-year-old behind a desk. Every week he’s in another state or another part of the world encouraging Roman Catholic priests and their Catholic faithful to open their hearts and minds to the truth. The truth that God created us to love one another unconditionally and be open to raising children. Father McCaffrey says this truth must be accepted and practiced if the culture of life is to pull us from the jaws of the destructive Satan-inspired culture of death.

“Contraception and sterilization are grave sins,” Father McCaffrey said. “But unless the people hear this from the pulpit, how will they know.” Father McCaffrey said unless the tide begins to turn in favor of Catholic pro-life natural family planning, the consequences for our culture and our Catholic Faith are severe.

“Marriages are breaking up over the barrier contraception has placed between God and husband and wife,” Father McCaffrey said. “This is devastating. Husband and wife are not freely giving themselves to one another because they are blocked by contraception.”

In 1997, at the invitation and with the encouragement of Archbishop Eusebius J. Beltran, Father McCaffrey established Natural Family Planning Outreach in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. NFP Outreach is an international apostolate of preaching on the truth of



Father Daniel
McCaffrey

Humanae Vitae, the landmark encyclical published by Pope Paul VI in 1968 that condemned artificial contraception. The encyclical is considered prophetic considering the destruction wrought on our society since the “pill” was introduced.

“The results are evident,” Father McCaffrey said. “More than 50 percent of our Catholic marriages break up in divorce. We’ve seen a tremendous surge in divorce since the pill was introduced 50 years ago.

“I can promise that 98 percent of all our Catholic marriage annulments have some element of artificial birth control or sterilization involved with them.”

The reason, Father McCaffrey said, is artificial contraception and sterilization act as a barrier to God’s perfect gift of love created through the

union of a man and a woman.

“Marriage is about love. Contraception and sterilization is a barrier to that love, it kills the intimacy. It reduces us to purely physical beings and the truth for a woman is if sex is only about being physical, well, she’d rather not be involved with it.”

Father McCaffrey said to counter the mentality behind this culture of death, a mentality that is embedded in our society, priests must speak out loud and clear about the evil of contraception and sterilization, especially for women in their child-bearing years from 18 to 45, Father McCaffrey said. Otherwise, Catholics are no different than any other religion.

“It’s not that Catholics are rejecting the message, they have not heard the message,” said Father McCaffrey. He said priests tend to shy from the

topic because it’s uncomfortable and causes people to often turn away. But the truth is the truth.

“I believe it was Hawthorne who said, “The greatest lies are told in silence.”

“When we as priests don’t have the courage to speak out in love about this, we do our people a terrible injustice. They deserve to know the truth and they deserve to be told from the pulpit.”

Father McCaffrey said he is offering to preach his message of Natural Family Planning at parishes throughout the Archdiocese during weekend Masses. So far, he said two priests have taken him up on the offer.

When the message is heard by our Catholic faithful, it is well received, often with applause, Father McCaffrey said.

NFP

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regulating birth. (14) Equally to be excluded, as the teaching authority of the Church has frequently declared, is direct sterilization, whether perpetual or temporary, whether of the man or of the woman. (15) Similarly excluded in every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, proposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible. (16)

Why call it “contraception?”

The term “contraceptive” has been the center of debate for scientists. Oral “contraceptives,” Norplant, Depo-Provera, the IUD, the “morning after pill,” NuvaRing, etc., all work, at least sometimes, by causing an early abortion. This may come in the form of thinning the endometrial lining so much it prohibits the fertilized egg from implanting or, in some cases, release so much progesterone it causes a fertilized egg to be aborted, thus causing an “early abortion.” There is mounting scientific data that supports these concerns. The term contraception means “the deliberate prevention of conception or impregnation.” (Merriam-Webster). Because the hormones used in these forms of birth control can cause a pre-born baby to die after conception, clearly they cannot be called “contraception.”

Though not comprehensive, the Catholic Church teaches any of the following to be immoral forms of preventing or ending unwanted pregnancy:

- Using chemical birth control of any kind
- The “Pill”
- DepoProvera
- NuvaRing
- Plan B or “The Morning After Pill”
- Progesterone-only shots
- IUD’s (intrauterine devices)
- Norplant
- Condoms
- Diaphragms
- Tubal Ligations
- Vasectomy
- Sterilization of any kind, male or female

What’s wrong with using the “Pill?”

When couples use “contraception,” either physical or chemical, they suppress their fertility, asserting that they alone have ultimate control over this power to create a new human life. With NFP, spouses respect God’s design for life and love. They may choose to refrain from sexual union during the woman’s fertile time, doing nothing to destroy the love-giving or life-giving meaning that is present. This is the difference between choosing to falsify the full marital language of the body and choosing at certain times not to speak that language.”

The use of birth control, including abortion, has been linked to multiple risks including:

- Breast cancer
- Stroke
- Blood clots
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Depression
- Headaches
- Loss of bone density
- Weight gain
- Gallbladder disease
- Bleeding irregularities
- Psychological disorders

Can some methods of birth control cause an abortion?

Some methods of birth control are aimed at preventing the union of sperm and egg and therefore act only as contraceptives. These would include barriers such as condoms and diaphragms. By contrast, hormonal methods such as the Pill may work in several ways: suppressing ovulation or by altering cervical mucus to prevent fertilization, and thus act contraceptively. But they may at times have other effects, such as changes to the lining of the uterus. If the contraceptive action fails and fertilization takes place, these hormonal methods may make it impossible for a newly conceived life to implant and survive. That would be a very early abortion. Medical opinions differ on whether or how often this may occur. Currently there is no way of knowing precisely how these drugs work at any given time in an individual woman.

Concern about the risk of causing an early abortion is stronger in the case of pills taken after intercourse to prevent pregnancy — “emergency contraception” or “morning after pills.” In some cases these pills are taken when sperm and egg have already joined to create a new life, in which case the drug could not have any effect except to cause an early abortion. (“Married Love and the Gift of Life,” USCCB).

What if one can’t conceive naturally?

The Church supports the natural helping of women who have unhealthy fertility to help them obtain pregnancy versus circumventing the parents completely to be able to conceive. The church wants couples to have children. It believes children are a gift from god. The Church wants couples to be able to have children if that’s God’s plan.

Dr. Martin points to the issue of in vitro fertilization. During this process, she explains, a whole new person is being conceived. You take away, however, one very important aspect of this conception: the Holy Trinity. Secondly, “Whoever the technician is ‘grades’ the embryos,” stresses

Martin. “Someone could turn a petri dish over and forget to keep it warm ... Techs decide ‘this one’s good, this one isn’t ... Someone is actually deciding who gets to live and who gets to die.’”

NFP is 100 percent natural with virtually no side effects or risks. The following is a list from the USCCB regarding the benefits of using NFP:

- Based on scientific fact.
- Cooperates with nature’s design and treats each menstrual cycle as unique.
- Is effective for achieving or avoiding pregnancy.
- Can be used throughout a woman’s reproductive lifetime (post-partum, breastfeeding, perimenopause, etc).
- Has no harmful side effects.
- Economical.
- Values children.
- Requires mutual responsibility by husband and wife.
- Encourages couple communication.
- Fosters respect for and acceptance of the total person.
- Cooperates with God’s design for spouses.

A final note from the USCCB

NFP promotes openness to the transmission of human life and recognizes the value of children. Sexual relations are understood as love-giving as well as life-giving. It is true family planning. Because NFP respects the two-fold nature of sexual intercourse, it can enrich the bond between husband and wife. For these reasons it is an acceptable form of family planning for people of various religious and philosophical beliefs. (An Introduction to Natural Family Planning).

If you have questions or would like more information about NFP, please contact Cristy Welch, Office of Family Life, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, (405) 709-2708, or e-mail: cwelch@catharchdioceseokc.org.

Catholic Radio Five Days a Week

on

KTLR 890 AM

and

KTLR 94.1 FM

Work on Canonization Cause an Honor for a Lifetime

By Cara Koenig
The Sooner Catholic

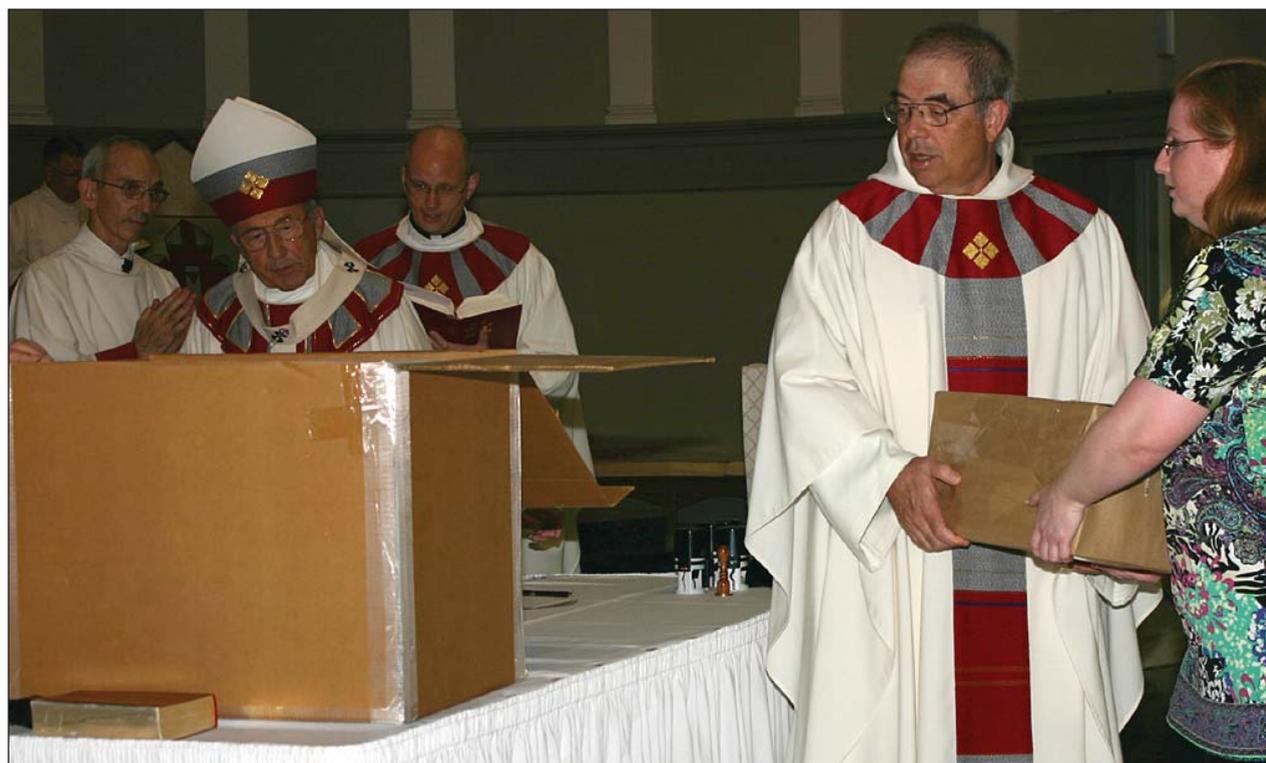
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I remember the day I received the call asking me to come meet with Archbishop Beltran. Needless to say I was a little nervous being called in to see the Archbishop. I kept trying to think of what it could be about. To my great surprise he asked me to serve on the Historical Commission for the Cause of Father Rother.

I did not have to think about it. I immediately said yes. I had no idea of what this would entail. I had no way of knowing about the endless worry the Tribunal would face as we worked to get the necessary work done or the countless hours of reading. Likewise, I had no way of knowing how much laughter we would share or the bonds that would be created.

More people were named to the Tribunal and assigned positions. At our first meeting there were 14 of us. Along the way we lost a few, Father Antony Taylor was named Bishop of Little Rock. Even though he was no longer here he still worked from a distance. Sadly, Father Charles Schettler died.

Father Albert Bruecken was named to replace Bishop Taylor, and a few more committee members and a few more notaries were added to help with the load.



Father Albert and Cara Koenig presenting one box of documents to Archbishop Beltran.

At this first meeting we were all sitting around the room with anticipation and excitement. None of us had any idea of what was to come. This was a first for our Archdiocese.

Dr. Andrea Ambrosi, our Postular for the

cause, I think of him as our lawyer who presents our case and helps us understand the ins and outs of the process, was at the first meeting with his translator. We learned our roles and what was expected. George Rigazzi and I were on the Historical Committee, both of us being history buffs and knowing where to look for information. We were told the workload would be heavy and it was decided a third member, Loutitia Eason, would be added.

The Historical Commission's job was to gather all the information we could find about Father Rother. This meant we were to collect everything ever written by him, about him or for him. Let me tell you that was a lot of papers.

Over the course of the next few years interviews were conducted, documents were collected and read through and slowly the life and death of Father Rother was re-created through the committee's efforts.

The end of the process came faster than we could have imagined. The race was on to get everything finished and copied in duplicate, so we could send two sets of the report to Rome and keep one set in the Archdiocese. Each page had to be stamped and notarized and hand-written documents typed.

The weekend before the closing on July 20, and before Dr. Ambrosi's arrival, it was time to get the pages numbered. We called for recruits. Family and friends of the commission members came, archdiocesan staff members, deacons and deacons

Continued on Page 11



Madelaine Kuns Bruschini, Dr. Ambrosi's assistant, Cara Koenig and Msgr. Weisenburger melt the wax to seal the document box.

Work on Canonization Cause an Honor for a Lifetime

By Cara Koenig
The Sooner Catholic

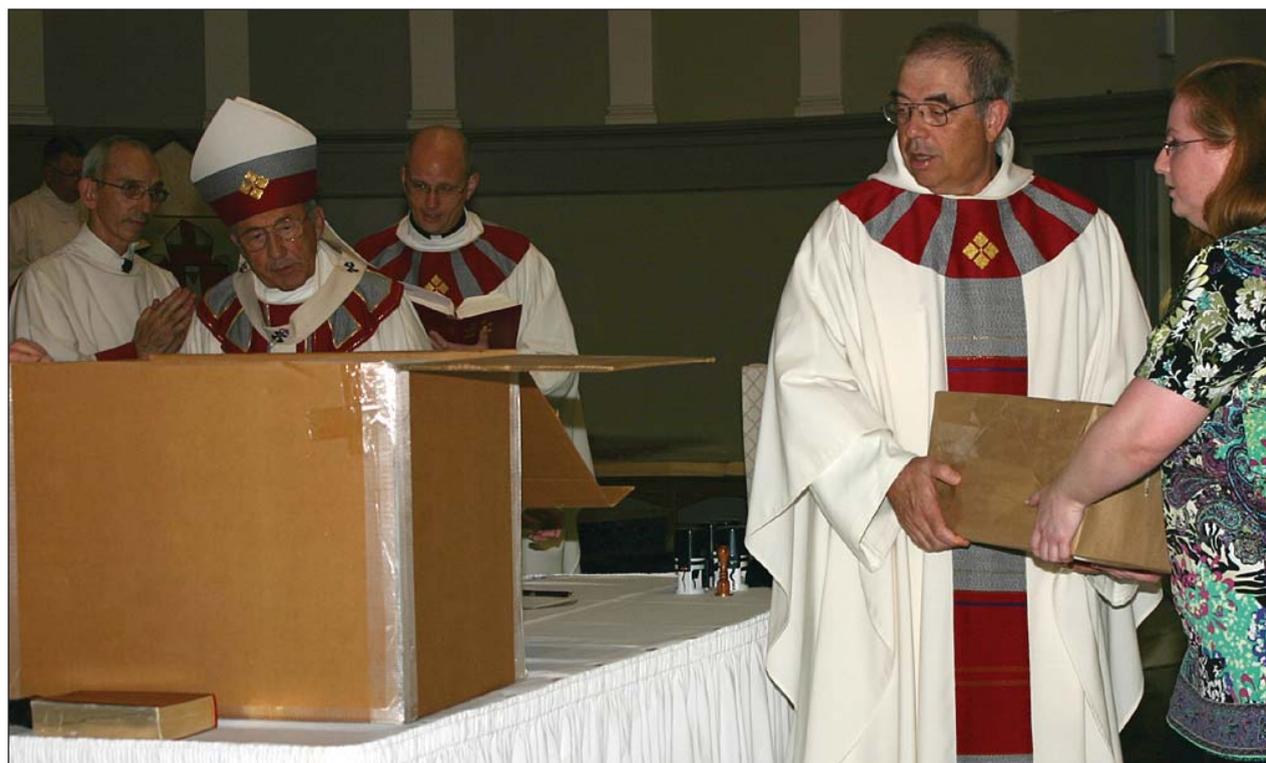
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Continued on Page 11



Madelaine Kuns Bruschini, Dr. Ambrosi's assistant, Cara Koenig and Msgr. Weisenburger melt the wax to seal the document box.



Archbishop Beltran seals the box of documents with the Archdiocesan seal in wax to secure the box.



After Mass, people came to look at the sealed box and take photos.

To read Archbishop's homily from the closing ceremony, go to the Archdiocesan website, www.catharchdioceseokc.org, click on Sooner Catholic Online, the link is on the main page. A song has been written inspired by Father Rother titled "The Shepherd Cannot Run" by Jamie Biller. To hear it go to the Archdiocesan website, www.catharcdhioceseokc.org, click on the photo of Father Rother and the song will begin playing.

Lifetime Honor

Continued from Page 10
in training and Catholic Charities staff all came in shifts to help stamp all three sets of documents so they all were numbered the same. The halls of the Catholic Pastoral Center were abuzz night and day for more than two days. The final number of pages of the report is more than 7,000. We are so grateful for those that came and helped and then returned to help even more.

Dr. Ambrosi and his assistant arrived and the questions began. We answered his questions about our process or why we did something this way or that. Part of what I did on the Historical Commission was file and organize the documents collected, so I was called down to talk with Dr. Ambrosi. Apparently all the work had paid off because I knew my stuff and answered all of his questions. His assistant said to me, "You got a 10. He grades everyone, 10 is

the best."

I can't tell you how relieved I felt to know what we did was correct. All of us worried that we may have missed something, that we did it all wrong and had messed up the cause. I felt so much lighter after hearing we had done it right.

The box that contains the documents had to be sent to Rome. It had to be wrapped with red ribbon and then sealed with red wax and affixed with the Archdiocesan Crest before being sent to the Vatican. If the ribbon, wax or wrapper on the box were broken, the Office of the Cause in the Vatican would not accept it. Did I mention the box weighed over 200 pounds?

The night of the closing had finally arrived. Some 33 months of work, worry and faith and one amazing experience. I was given the honor of presenting one of the boxes along with Father Albert to the Archbishop. We carried the box up to the litany of the Saints. It is our prayer that

one day Father Rother's name will be sung with the litany of the Saints.

We now must wait for the Office of the Cause to open the box and review the materials. We have no idea how long that may take.

It was a wonderful experience and a great honor to serve on this Tribunal. The day-to-day duties could be a little harried and sometimes downright frustrating. But it was all for a great cause and well worth it. I will forever be grateful that Archbishop Beltran asked me to serve. It is and will always be one of the greatest honors and achievements of my life.

For now, all that is left is to pray and wait.

Father, if it be Your will, may Father Rother be proclaimed by the Universal Church as Martyr and Saint.

Amen



Above: Volunteers and Tribunal members watch as the 7,000 documents are stamped. Below: Father Albert stands in the truck with the box of documents on its way to Rome.



Tom Rother beams at grandchild, Avery Rother, prior to the beginning of Mass on July 20.

These are the members who served on the Tribunal promoting the Cause of the Servant of God, Father Stanley Francis Rother

CANONIZATION TRIBUNAL

July 2008

Archbishop: Most Reverend Eusebius J. Beltran

Episcopal Delegate: Reverend Albert Bruecken, OSB

Promoter of Justice: Monsignor Edward J. Weisenburger, V.G., JCL

Notaries: Sister Kathryn Olsen, IHM, JCL, Ms. Anne Kirby, JCL

Scribe: Mrs. Marcia Dubey, BS, Ms. Anne Kirby, JCL

Historical Commission: Mr. George D. Rigazzi, JCL, Miss Cara Koenig, BA, Mrs. Loutitia Eason, JD, Maria Ruiz Scaperlanda, MA

Theological Commission: Most Reverend Anthony B. Taylor, DD, Right Reverend Lawrence Stasyszen, OSB, STD, Dr. Anne McGuire, Ph.D.

Coordinator: Deacon Norman Mejstrik, Ph.D.

Assistant Coordinator: Ms. Carol Davito, LC*HS

Notary: Felipe Coche (Guatemala), Ana Romero, Reverend Stephen Bird

The Prophecies of Pope Paul VI's 'Humanae Vitae'

Pontiff's 1968 Encyclical on Target With Warnings of Destruction Caused By Artificial Birth Control

By **Eliana Tedrow**
For *The Sooner Catholic*

In 1968, when Pope Paul VI wrote "Humanae Vitae," he warned several things could happen as a result of the use of "contraception." Although the encyclical was originally intended to merely clarify what the Catholic Church really taught about contraception, it turned out to be prophetic. In it, Pope Paul VI warned of the "grave consequences of artificial birth control." When the document was published in 1968, what remained was a torn society and Church on the issue of artificial contraception and the impact it would have on the world.

The secular world said contraception would empower females, make for better marriages and lower the rate of unwanted pregnancies and, as a result, lower the number of abortions. These sounded like rational assumptions. But the Catholic Church responded with a resounding, "No!" In his encyclical, Paul VI argued there would be much more harm than good, if any. Obviously, these were two very different schools of thought.

He tried to make clear the Church's teaching on morality and the use of contraception. If society ignored the warnings, he said, there would be "grave consequences." These consequences included a lowered sense of morality, disregard of females by males, the government would use family planning for coercive purposes, and finally, that humans would begin to believe they have "unlimited dominion," and begin treating their bodies as though they were machines.

Janet Smith, a professor of moral theology and consultant to the Pontifical Council for the Family, addressed the issue of contraception on society and its relevance to Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae*. In her famous speech, "Contraception: Why Not," Smith argues that, while some view contraception as one of the best inventions in the modern world, it's actually become one of the worst.

"Today we see a pandemic of sexually transmitted diseases, an enormous rise in co-habitation, one in three children born outside of marriage, and abortion used by many when contraception fails," Smith says. "A failure to respect married love's power to help create a new life has eroded respect for life and for the sanctity of marriage."

When the "pill" was legalized in the 1960s, people argued it that it would have a positive impact in many ways. Smith cites the following reasons society then was optimistic about this newly legalized and widely available form of birth control:

Feminism was on the rise — Because of the rapid growth and interest in feminism, we had to have contraceptives because women couldn't get in the workplace and find their fulfillment unless they were having fewer babies. The only way they could have fewer babies, they argued, was with a better contraceptive.

Women are financially more independent now. Smith contends that because women have fewer children, they are able to go into the workplace and support themselves. They don't rely on their spouse's income, so when they have difficulties in the marriage, "It's much easier to say 'I'm done' than it is to work it out because they need their husband for fewer reasons than they did before."

We would have better marriages — There was the mentality the pill would allow married couples to "get past the fear of pregnancy that was dampening the spontaneous and blissful marriages that spouses thought they could have," says Smith. "It didn't take people long to catch on that if you could wipe the fear of pregnancy out of sex within marriage, you could wipe the fear of pregnancy out of sex before marriage."

Smith argues that the ease of access to contraception has had a direct impact on the rise in adultery. "It's easy enough to think about wanting an affair," she says, "But wanting a child out of wedlock

is another story. If most every woman is contracepting, then most every woman is available. Adultery is absolutely devastating to marriages."

Lowered number of unwanted pregnancies and, as a result, a lower number of abortions would result — In 1960, the percentage of babies born out of wedlock hovered around 6 percent, today that rate is at least 20 percent and as high as over 60 percent in some cases. Of women who go to abortion clinics, 50 percent of them tell us they're there because of contraception failure (Smith).

Shortly after the legalization of the birth control pill, "Humanae Vitae" was released. But the reception was not favorable by all in the Church. In fact, some priests and bishops taught against the Pope's teachings, siding with the secular consensus. This deepened the divide within the Church and the Christian community at large. Today, however, the majority of Catholic leaders are in agreement with Pope Paul VI — and see, as he did 42 years ago, the consequences of artificial birth control.

Were Paul VI's predictions correct? Paul VI made a list of "Grave Consequences of Methods of Artificial Birth Control." Nearly 42 years later, historians, scientists, demographers, to name a few, are still able to trace back some of our current day issues to the legalization of birth control. Here's a look at some of the warnings: (All from "Humanae Vitae" (17):

1) There would be a "general lowering of morality" in society. You don't have to look far, Smith argues, to see that we, as a culture, have lower standards of morality. You see this on TV, the Internet, music and advertising, to name a few.

2) There would be a general "disregard for the physical and psychological welfare for the general well-being of females by males." Pornography is a great assault on a woman's psychological and physical well-being, Smith stressed. There seems to be an enormous outbreak of sexual abuse of women. Current

statistics are overwhelming of women who have been sexually abused by someone in their own household.

3) Governments would use family planning programs for coercive purposes. As the general use of contraception began to increase, some began to fear that the government would use access to contraception, especially in third world countries, to coerce them into aggressive population control programs. Today there are forced abortions in China. "In many areas of China, if a woman has more than one baby, the second pregnancy will be forcibly aborted. They're physically dragged out of fields, laid in a hospital and forcibly aborted," Smith confirmed.

4) We would begin to treat our bodies as though they are machines.

The encyclical warned we would no longer have respect for our bodies as though they were body and soul, but the body would now be a machine that we can do with it whatever we will. "There's no greater evidence than our use of reproductive technologies of surrogate motherhood, and in vitro procedures. Any woman can buy a baby, any woman can go to an in vitro clinic and buy herself some semen and get herself impregnated and get the kind of baby she wants. Is this not treating our bodies like machines?" Smith asks.

Catholics are asked to view marriage as a sacred "calling" where God blesses the couple with the task of procreation. "The Church teaches that to use contraception is to reject God and his life-giving blessings," Smith concluded. "The Church teaches not merely that contraception is wrong, but that because contraception is wrong, it will have bad consequences."

You can access the entire Janet Smith speech, "Contraception: Why Not" at www.catholiceducation.org.

You can view the entire encyclical, "Humanae Vitae," at www.vatican.va.

Briefs

“Ride for Refuge” to Benefit Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities invites bicyclists to join the first annual “Ride for Refuge” on Oct. 16. Participants may register for a 5-, 10-, 30- or 60-mile bike ride around downtown Oklahoma City to raise funds and awareness for the Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Department in their work with displaced, vulnerable and exploited persons. For more information, contact Katy Brooks or Wyatt Schmitz at (405) 523-3002, or by e-mail at [wschmitz@catholiccharitiesok.org](mailto:weschmitz@catholiccharitiesok.org).

Medical Help Needed

EDMOND — Nurses or medical assistants can have an awarding experience helping the uninsured of the Edmond community at the Good Samaritan Health Clinic. Volunteer at your own convenience once every month or two on Saturdays from 9 to noon. For more information, visit <http://www.goodsamaritanofedmond.com/>, or contact Deacon Lee Hunt at DeaconLee@cox.net or call him at 348-9461.

Enrollment at School Open

Enrollment is open at Villa Teresa Moore, a small Catholic school for children ages 3 years through kindergarten. We have a full-day program and our hours are 6:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. We are sponsored by the Carmelite Sisters. The school year will begin on Aug. 16, 2010. We are located at 13501 S. Western Avenue in Oklahoma City. Please call Ann Grover at 691-7737.

All School Reunion Set

GUTHRIE — St. Mary’s Elementary School will host a reunion of all alumni and teachers of St. Mary’s Elementary, Benedictine Heights High School and College and St. Joseph Academy.

Former students and staff members are invited to attend a prayer service at the Sisters Cemetery (current Guthrie Job Corps) at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 4, followed by registration and visiting at St. Mary’s Church basement and school. The Eucharist will be celebrated at St. Mary’s Church at 6 p.m., followed by a banquet at 7 p.m. An open house will be held at St. Joseph Monastery in Tulsa on Sunday, Sept. 5. Please help us develop a contact list and pass along the word. Contact stmarys@coxi.net with REUNION in the subject line or call (405) 473-6328.

Heart Health Seminar To Be Offered Sept. 2

OKLAHOMA CITY — Dr. Pamela Craven and Dr. Terrie Gibson will present “Women’s Heart Health” Thursday, Sept. 2 at 6 p.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Church, 1901 N.W. 18th St. The educational program will focus on cardiovascular care for all persons with a special emphasis on under-served populations of women. The program, sponsored by Faith Community Nursing, provides information on the risks of cardiovascular disease and what individuals can do to reduce their risks. Registration is free but reservations are required by calling Glenda Bronson, (405) 936-5226.

School Sets Carnival

KINGFISHER — Sts. Peter and Paul Parish will host its Back to School Carnival and Centennial Celebration on Sunday, Sept. 12 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The event will include food, moon bounce, face painting, music, 20-foot super slide and more. Wristbands will be available for rides and games. Call the church office at 375-4616 or go to our website for more information, www.stspeterandpaul.org.

Missouri Opts Out of Abortion Mandate

WASHINGTON — Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon will allow SB 793 to become law without his signature, which will significantly enhance the state’s informed consent protections for pregnant women and make Missouri the fifth state to opt-out of the abortion mandate in the federal health care law.

“We applaud our allies in the Missouri Legislature for dramatically enhancing the informed consent protections for women in Missouri and making Missouri the fifth state to opt out of taxpayer-funded abortion,” said Dr. Charmaine Yoest, president and CEO, Americans United for Life. “This new law protects women, their unborn children and taxpayers, making it a win for everyone in the state.”

AUL’s state director Kerry Messer worked extensively with Senate sponsor Rob Mayer on the legislation. Sen. Mayer stated:

The new informed consent law includes many new provisions, including:

- Women must be advised of the risks of abortion, given information about the physiological characteristics of their unborn child, be presented with what resources are available to women who choose to bring their child to term, and the information can only be given to a woman by a physician or qualified professional.

- Women must be given the opportunity to view an ultrasound, learn about the pain an unborn child may feel during a later term abortion, and to have access to a telephone if she is at the abortion facility under duress from a third party.

- Insurance plans in the soon-to-be-created federal health care exchanges which are subsidized by taxpayer dollars cannot offer abortion coverage in their health plans

Americans United for Life (AUL) is a non-profit, public-interest law and policy organization whose vision is a nation in which everyone is welcomed in life and protected in law.

RCIA

Continued from Page 3
time to heal. Like a gentleman, he gave me all the time I needed.

And that’s what RCIA class is all about. The letters stand for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. But here it is at the most basic level:

There is a class that meets every year in every Catholic parish. The classes usually form in August or September. For those of us who were raised outside of the Catholic

Church (or with no faith at all), we have a way to stick around the Bridegroom and see if He’s for real. We can give Him time to prove Himself to be the Eucharistic Lord Jesus Christ who comes to us in the Holy Mass, under the appearance of bread and wine. Through RCIA, Our Lord gives each one of us time to let our hearts (and souls) heal from previous wounds ... a failed marriage, a disillusioned spiritual

life, a persistent doubt. RCIA is a lot like dating — it’s a kind of spiritual courtship.

It’s really an invitation to love, but you don’t have to make any statements of love and fidelity until you are ready. It’s a time to let God do what He does oh so well — woo the soul.

Sure, you can run away from the greatest love humankind has ever known. But then, you will never

really know what might have been. God sets a choice before you, and then He waits. He gives you that most dangerous gift. The gift of choosing what to do with the offering of a Perfect Love.

Here’s my advice: Stick around and ask Jesus to show you more of Himself. Call your nearest Catholic Church and ask them about RCIA. And then, look out, because you are about to be swept off your feet.

Archdiocese to Host Session September 10-12

Retrouvaille: Hope for Struggling Marriages

Are you struggling in your marriage vocation? Are you at the end of your rope, ready to throw in the towel and hang it up because nothing seems to work? Well, you are not alone. Today, in our society, the greatest assault is on the family life, and in particular, married life. Married life is difficult for many reasons and the challenges overwhelm and burden many husbands and wives who feel alienated and lost as they struggle through and in their relationship. There is no one to turn to in order to help refocus attention to understand what being committed to our husband or wife means.

There is help available for those struggling in their marriage. It is a program called Retrouvaille. It is a Catholic program that helps men and women who are married to each other rebuild their relationship. This program focuses on helping married couples recognize the value of their faith and their commitment to their relationship. The fascinating grace coming from this program is realizing that other couples are suffering in their marriage relationship and that they are not alone! Incredible friendships grow from this weekend, and help renew the marriage covenant.

As a priest and chaplain of Retrouvaille, I am awed and humbled by the value of this program. I see firsthand and hear through counseling the difficulties which plague a marriage, and on more

than one occasion, I have used the principles of Retrouvaille and referred couples to the program. I am humbled as some of my own healing comes from realizing the fruits and blessings I have received myself while participating in this program. Retrouvaille reminds us how loving God and others are important decisions to make each day. These are the blessings and graces that come with making the commitment to the vocation of marriage and priestly life.

Why share this with you? The Universal Church recognizes the value of the family and married life, and is assisting in as many ways as possible to help reinvigorate, renew and reinforce the great value and gift of married life. This is one such program that can assist anyone who is willing to work at their marriage relationship. Retrouvaille is Catholic-based, yet we accept and encourage other religious denominations to attend. Retrouvaille provides the hope couples need to continue to work on their marriage. All that is needed is a willing interest in renewing their commitment to their spouse and God. Retrouvaille can make a difference in your married life, and I encourage anyone who reads this who knows of a couple who is struggling in their relationship, to give them this information on Retrouvaille and encourage them to attend this weekend.

There is a weekend scheduled for Sept. 10-12 in Oklahoma City at the Pastoral Center. Following the weekend, there are six Sunday sessions held in Tulsa, which help each couple to further experience healing in their marriage, and provide the tools needed to strengthen this marriage commitment. Yes, it is a commitment of time, but the value of saving your marriage and family, while renewing your commitment to each other is worth so much more, and is worth the commitment to Retrouvaille.

Living our Catholic Faith means we all can help each other through the life experiences we live in order to make our faith; our vocation, a decision to love and live daily in our lives. Please share with those people you know who are struggling in their marriage, the gift of a Retrouvaille program. It can make a difference in their lives, and continue to promote the value of married life as a true vocation, and reflect our relationship with God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

For more information, please call (918) 695-7010, or go online at helpourmarriage.com for more information, or contact the Office of Family Life of Tulsa at (918) 307-4939 or in Oklahoma City at (405) 721-8944.

God Bless You!
Father Jim Caldwell
Chaplain

Norman Event Unfolds August 28

Registration Continues for Women of Faith Conference

Register today for a faith-filled day at the second annual Women of Faith/Women of Action Conference at our website, <http://okaccw.tripod.com/woa/index.html>. For registration by e-mail, call Barbara Wann at (580) 875-2278, wannb@sbcglobal.net. For general information, contact Chris Thomas at thomaschrisL@sbcglobal.net or call (405) 306-5187. For mail-in registration, call Marilyn Blevins at (405) 745-5966. Registration is \$40. A catered box lunch is available for \$10. Women of Faith/Women of Action T-shirts are \$15.

The conference is being held at St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church in Norman, located at 3939 W. Tecumseh Road just west of the I-35 Tecumseh Road exit on Saturday, Aug. 28, 2010. Doors will open at 7:30 a.m.

An opening Byzantine prayer and music service will be presented by Rev. Phil Seeton and will include Icon pictures and informational instruction. This is a very beautiful and holy service.

The theme of this year's conference is "Moving Forward in Faith, Hope and Love." Most Reverend Edward J. Slattery, Bishop of Tulsa, will speak to the assembly both in the morning and afternoon sessions. Tim Staples of EWTN/Catholic Answers fame will speak twice during the conference. Karen Painter, first vice president of the National Council of Catholic Women Region II, will address the assembly in the morning session. Rev. Tom Boyer, a national seminar speaker, will speak in the afternoon session.

A priests panel will entertain

questions from the assembly. The panel includes Revs. Thomas Boyer, Jim Goin and Paul Gallatin.

Most Reverend Eusebius J. Beltran, Archbishop of Oklahoma City, will be the principal celebrant and Homilist at closing Mass, with Bishop Edward J. Slattery and Rev. Tom Boyer concelebrating. Closing Mass is at 5 p.m.

Proceeds this year will help "Water for Life" through Catholic Relief Services. We as an assembly will help drill a water well, thus, "Water for Life." The need is enormous. We are so blessed to have safe clean drinking water. They in turn, only have dirty water to drink every day.

Reconciliation will be available during lunch break. Vendors and pastoral services will be available all day until time of Mass.

Doors will open at 7:45 a.m. for registration and opening prayer and music begin at 8:15 a.m. The conference begins at 8:50 a.m. Closing Mass will be at 5 p.m. at St. Mark.

This wonderful day of Faith, Hope and Love is being sponsored by the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women.

Come be a part of this informational/instructional faith-filled holy day. Extend a hand to a friend or neighbor to attend with you. Get a group together from your parish. Requests will be taken for large group seating.

For by His grace are ye saved through faith, and not of your own — Eph. 2:8.

This faith which encompasses and captures our hopes and love for all.

Buenas Noticias...

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo:

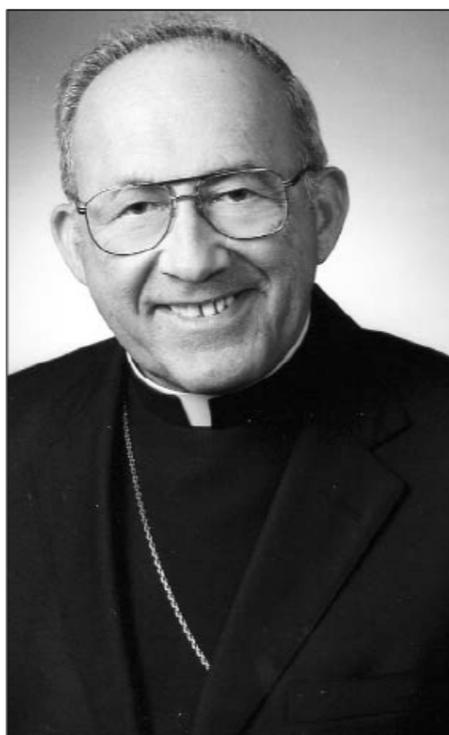
Nuevamente estoy muy complacido de expresar mi gratitud a todos ustedes, generoso pueblo Católico de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City. Cuando digo estas gracias, me refiero a la respuesta generosa obtenida para aliviar una gran necesidad en un lugar muy lejano a Oklahoma. Su excepcional respuesta a la colecta especial para ayudar al pueblo de Haití, después del devastador terremoto del 12 de enero que estremeció a ese país. La ayuda de ustedes y muchos otros es una señal de gran fe. El seis de julio, "The Catholic Relief Services" conocida con las siglas de CRS, me envió parte del siguiente reporte:

Recibido de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City a través de la colecta especial de ayuda a Haití la cantidad de dinero de \$458,452.36. Recibido por otros grupos e individuos con códigos postales que se encuentran en el territorio de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City la cantidad de \$151,747.19. Por lo que da un gran total de 610,199.55 dólares de ayuda al pueblo de Haití.

Con anterioridad, yo ya había recibido la siguiente carta detallando los esfuerzos y logros del CRS en Haití gracias a la generosidad de los Católicos en Estados Unidos.

"Su Eminencia/Excelentísimo: le escribo para expresarle mi gratitud por el apoyo que usted y su pueblo han demostrado a nuestros hermanos y hermanas en Haití, y por su confianza en los servicios de "The Catholic Relief Services" (CRS) y su habilidad para responder efectivamente ante esta crisis. Quiero hacerle saber cómo estos fondos han sido utilizados y responder algunas interrogantes que probablemente usted ha escuchado acerca de las operaciones de CRS en Haití.

Habiendo visitado Haití y recibiendo reportes frecuentemente de nuestra gente en el lugar de los acontecimientos, le puedo asegurar que estamos muy orgullosos del trabajo que nuestra agencia está reali-



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

zando. En los meses que han transcurrido desde el terremoto, CRS ha obtenido importantes logros. Hemos alimentado más de 880.000 personas, mientras continuamos programas que estaban funcionando antes de que ocurriera el terremoto que regularmente benefician a más de 10.000 niños vulnerables, a través de orfanatos y centros de cuidado infantil. También estamos operando programas de alimentación en las escuelas que benefician a más de 24,000 estudiantes alrededor de 100 escuelas.

En el Hospital San Francisco de Sales que CRS ayudó a reabrir y continua apoyando, cirujanos que fueron traídos por CRS, han realizado más de 800 cirugías de emergencia y cerca de 60,000 consultas. CRS ha instalado cientos de letrinas y estaciones de lavamanos, drenajes, tanques de agua potable y vejigas inflables de agua en 10 lugares en y alrededor de Puerto Príncipe.

Hemos establecido espacios amigables para niños que no estén acompañados en dos de los más grandes y densamente poblados campamentos,

sirviendo cerca de 2.000 niños, y previendo a más de 5.000 familias con cupones que les permiten escoger el tipo de semillas y fertilizante que desean una aproximación que también beneficia a los suplidores locales de semillas y estimulando el mercado local.

Estos logros serían maravillosos en circunstancias normales como parte de un programa continuado. Pero tomando en cuenta que estos logros han sido realizados en los últimos cuatro meses bajo las más difíciles circunstancias para el personal, quienes en lo personal, la mayoría fueron directamente afectados por el terremoto, son aún más maravillosos.

Probablemente usted ha escuchado la desafortunada e injusta noticia que criticó muchas de las más activas agencias de ayuda, incluyendo CRS, por no utilizar prontamente la mayoría de las donaciones que se recibieron para la ayuda del terremoto en Haití. Nosotros tenemos un escrupuloso cuidado con todos los fondos donados para que sean usados de la manera más responsable y contable posible. Como los resultados que menciono arriba indican, CRS ha respondido con la mayor celeridad a la crisis inicial. Desde que la emergencia comenzó en enero, hemos gastado, distribuido o hecho disponible unos 19 millones de dólares en provisiones de auxilio, personal y asistencia. Pero también estamos cuidadosamente planeando como será usada una porción significativa de fondos donados para el redesarrollo a largo plazo.

CRS tiene una estrategia de cinco años que envuelve programas comprensivos enfocados en las áreas de Puerto Príncipe, el sur meridional de la península, incluyendo los pueblos de Jacmel y Leogane, y al norte en el borde entre Haití y República Dominicana. También me gustaría mencionar una antigua póliza de CRS, que aparte del pequeño porcentaje para cubrir costos administrativos, sólo un 5% este año, todo el dinero colectado para una emergencia específica, como el terremoto de

...¡Gracias!

Haití, debe ser usada sólo para ese propósito. Hemos conocido de un irritable blog en internet que ha criticado la respuesta de CRS al requerimiento de ayuda realizado por pequeños programas en Haití.

En las semanas y meses desde el devastador terremoto, CRS ha recibido cientos de requerimientos para ayuda individual. Debido a nuestra limitada capacidad de personal para esto, hemos luchado para responderles a la mayor brevedad posible. Valoramos profundamente nuestra relación con los Católicos en Estados Unidos, parroquias que tienen ministerios y parroquias con estrechas relaciones con Haití. CRS en Baltimore respondió a más de 120 casos, envolviendo cientos de requerimientos de comunidades Católicas en Estados Unidos, dando consejos a estas parroquias, escuelas e individuos acerca de las condiciones en Haití, y en muchos casos dejándoles saber cómo podíamos ayudar a sus compañeros en Haití.

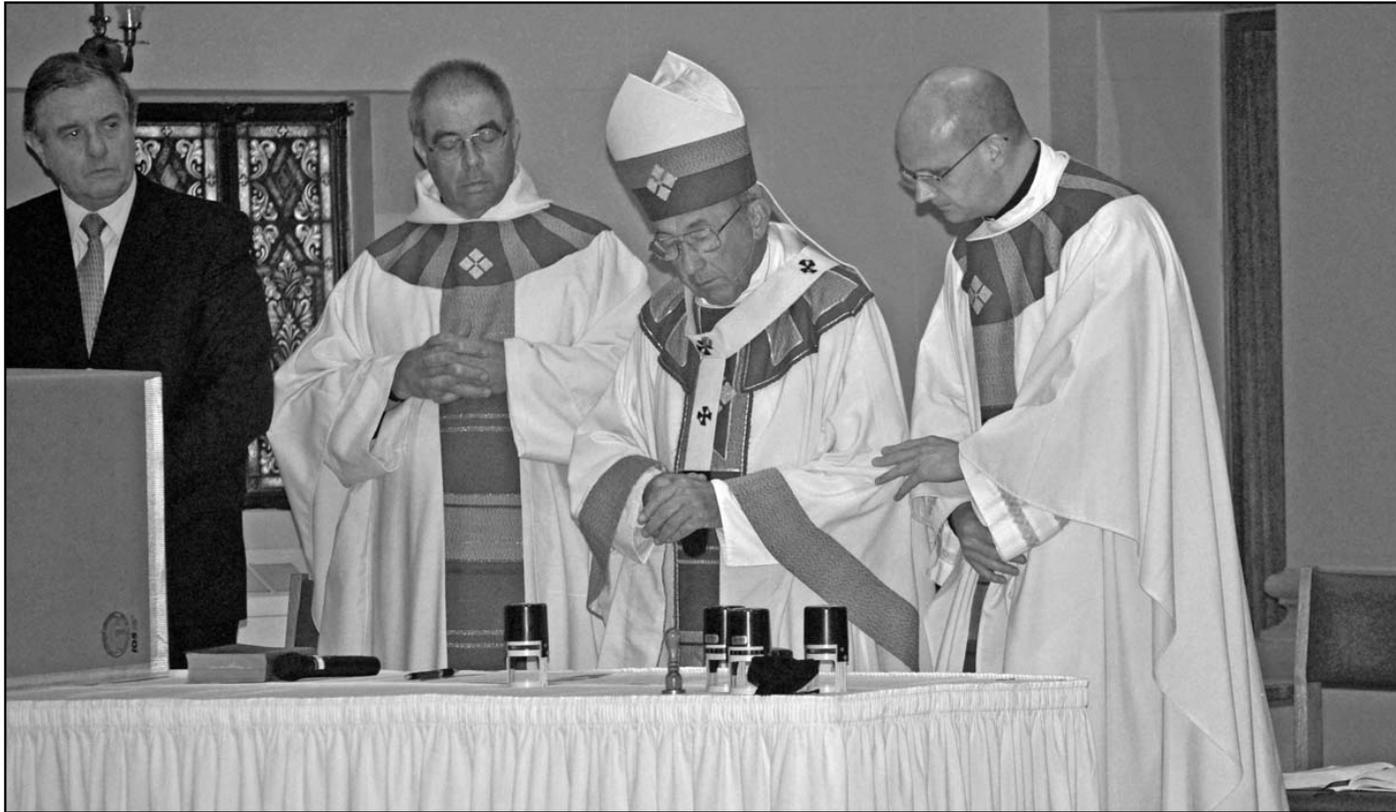
Nosotros continuamos respondiendo tan pronto es posible a estos requerimientos individuales, mientras al mismo tiempo llevamos a cabo nuestras operaciones de ayuda a larga escala. Muy pronto recibirá una relación de cuentas de todas las donaciones recibidas de su respectiva Arquidiócesis en apoyo a nuestro esfuerzo de recuperación y ayuda por el terremoto de Haití. Esta incluirá tanto la Colecta Especial de Ayuda por el Terremoto de Haití como otros aportes individuales y de organizaciones en el territorio de su Arquidiócesis.

Estoy extremadamente impresionado por la calidad de nuestros programas y el compromiso de nuestro personal en Haití. Si usted quisiera visitar Haití y ver el excelente trabajo que CRS está realizando por nosotros, por favor déjeme saber. Estaremos muy complacidos de trabajar con usted con los preparativos para su viaje.

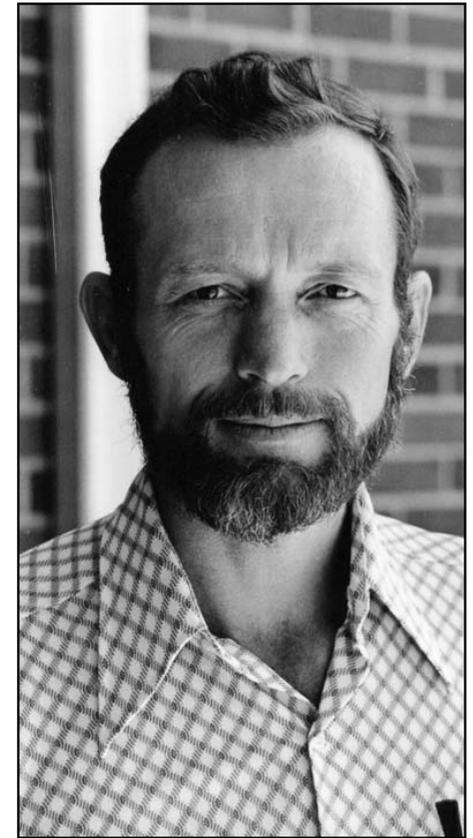
Con gratitud por su apoyo y generosidad, estoy Fraternalmente con ustedes en Cristo, Timothy M. Dolan, Arzobispo de Nueva York".

Culminada la primera etapa de la Causa de Canonización del Padre Rother

Padre Stanley Rother, Siervo de Dios, vive en el cielo en comunión con Dios



A la izquierda el Dr. Andrea Ambrosi, Postulador de la Causa del Padre Rother, presentando al Arzobispo Beltrán los documentos para ser llevados a la Santa Sede para que continúe el proceso de Canonización del Padre Rother.



Padre Stanley Rother, Siervo de Dios.

Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — El Padre Stanley Rother, fue un misionero estadounidense que cumplió su apostolado de paz y justicia en nombre de Dios y en representación de la Iglesia Católica de Oklahoma, fue asesinado en el pueblo de Santiago de Atitlán de Guatemala el 28 de julio de 1981. Su asesinato aconteció en una época donde la violencia y el terrorismo estaban en pleno apogeo en Centro América.

Según los relatos de Francisco Bocel, testigo del homicidio del Padre Rother y quien relató para ese entonces a las autoridades que tres hombres altos, vestidos de civiles y enmascarados y no indios, entraron al rectorado de la parroquia en busca del Padre Rother y lo asesinaron sin misericordia.

El Padre Rother había recibido varias amenazas de ser asesinado con anterioridad y desde esas amenazas dormía en una habitación de la planta baja del rectorado de la parro-

quia y con la firme convicción de seguir sirviendo al pueblo de Dios.

Los criminales cuando llegaron a la parroquia ese día, buscaron previamente en el piso superior al clérigo Rother, pero al no encontrarlo amenazaron a punta de pistola en la cabeza a Bocel, quien se encontraba en el piso superior y éste se negaba a decir el paradero del sacerdote Rother, pero los matones a punta de pistola forzaron a Bocel para que le dijera dónde estaba el Padre Rother y lo llamara, bajaron a la habitación en la que se encontraba el Padre Rother, posteriormente le dijeron a Bocel que se fuera de la habitación en la que estaba el Padre Rother.

Los asesinos del Padre Rother, sin un motivo válido, le dieron dos tiros en la cabeza y lo golpearon. El Padre Rother hablaba la lengua cakchiquel que es hablada por más de medio millón de personas en el centro de Guatemala, estando estrechamente relacionada con la tzutujil, la cual es considerada un dialecto local de Santiago Atitlán.

El Padre Rother, Siervo de

Dios, dedicó trece años de su vida pastoral a la protección de los indios, quienes eran asesinados vilmente.

El Padre Rother dedicó su tiempo a evangelizar a los indios de esa región, los ayudó a que creyeran en Dios y se mantuvieran fuertes con la fe Católica. El Padre Rother murió por su fe. Hace pocos años, el 5 de octubre del 2006, fue iniciado el proceso de martirio para la Canonización del Padre Rother.

Al introducir este proceso, se establece la duda procesal de si el Padre Rother sufrió martirio por su fe. El señor Andrea Ambrosi, Doctor en Leyes Canonícas y Leyes Civiles (utroque iure), Abogado de la Rota Romana y Licenciado en Teología Sagrada con años de formación en la Oficina del Promotor General de la Fe, fue el Postulador de la Causa del Padre Rother. Según las reglas, promulgadas por la Congregación para las Causas de los Santos, el Postulador debe residir en Roma en el momento en que la Causa se lleve a la Congregación y según el Derecho Canónico, en este caso, el Postulador

de la Causa del Padre Rother es el que examina, colecta e investiga el material teológico para ser presentado al Arzobispo Beltrán y a la Santa Sede.

Con una Misa solemne presidida el 20 de julio por el Arzobispo Beltrán, el Postulador de la Causa del Padre Rother presentó e informó al Arzobispo Beltrán, que su trabajo y el del equipo de personas que lo ayudaron a recaudar la fase probatoria había terminado su encargo en la Arquidiócesis.

En la Santa Misa se certificó un documento en el que se examinaron los datos recogidos y se enviaron todas las actas a la Congregación para las Causas de los Santos en la Santa Sede en Roma para que continúe el proceso de Canonización del Padre Rother. El pueblo Católico está presto y reza todos los domingos para que el Padre Rother sea un Santo.

El Padre Rother, Siervo de Dios, un ejemplo de fe y amor que une a un solo pueblo con la fe en Dios. ¡Hágase tu voluntad Dios Todopoderoso!.

Faulk Named New St. Gregory's Dean

SHAWNEE — St. Gregory's University announced that Ron Faulk, Ph.D., is the new dean for its College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). Faulk, who has served in various roles at SGU since 1998, officially began in his new position July 1. He replaces Father Robert Busch, Ph.D., who recent-



Ron Faulk

ly was named Superintendent of Catholic Schools and head of Holy Cross Catholic Academy in Amarillo, Texas.

As dean, Faulk serves as a primary representative of and advocate for the CAS to the administrative policy-making university bodies and to the university's departments. He will provide leadership and direction for academic program development and evaluation within the CAS as well as oversee and recommend the approval of the re-

cruitment, appointment, reassignment or termination of CAS full-time faculty.

"SGU has a tradition of excellence and diversity among faculty," Faulk said. "I look forward to working with the faculty to fulfill the university's mission of helping students develop a love of learning and to live lives of balance, generosity and integrity."

Faulk has been associated with SGU since 1998, serving as faculty member and chair in both the Social

Sciences and Humanities Divisions. Faulk has developed many courses and special curricula at SGU and is involved in implementing assessment measures and plans. He served as an associate dean from 1999 to 2007.

"This is an exciting time. Education is changing and SGU is changing," Faulk said. "I always have loved the opportunities that change brings and look forward to implementing new ideas and programs at the university."

Event Benefits Athletic Programs

Irish Hold Successful Golf Tournament

Over 160 golfers attended the 2010 Bishop McGuinness Clancy's All Sports Tee-Off Golf Classic last week at Twin Hills Golf and Country Club. The morning round teed off at 8 a.m., while afternoon play began at 1 p.m. Players enjoyed a four-man scramble with a shotgun start.

At the end of the day, an awards ceremony was held where first- and second-place trophies were handed out. There were also prizes for closest to the pin and the longest



drive. Several drawings were held for door prizes which included gift

cards at local merchants and golf paraphernalia.

In the first flight, the team of Pete Penner, '96, Jason Davey, '96, Bryan Schones and Travis Kidd captured first place.

Second place went to Jim Nashert, Kim Cowherd, Hal Smith and Jim Dunford.

In Flight Two, McGuinness Principal David Morton's team consisting of Morton, Jerry Kelley, Zack Morton and Tommy Tubbs

came in second.

Closest to the pin was George Poplin, Brad Lewis, Bill Smith and Bryan Schones. Longest drive winners were Bryan Schones for the men and McGuinness sophomore Katie Vaughn for the ladies.

The tournament was a great success through the generosity of the Bishop McGuinness community including sponsors, players and volunteers. Proceeds benefit the Irish athletic programs.

Jobs Box

Director of Music

St. Charles Borromeo Church in Oklahoma City seeks full-time Director of Music. Duties include planning and staffing weekend liturgies, holy days, weddings and funerals. The director is responsible for directing, scheduling and rehearsing with the choirs as well as providing keyboard accompaniment for the English liturgies. The director would also provide supervision and assistance for the Spanish Choir. Degree in music is required as well as thorough knowledge of the Roman Catholic Liturgy along with excellent keyboard and vocal skills. Send cover letter and resume to Rev. Tim Luschen, St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, 5024 N. Grove Ave., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73122. E-mail at Tluschen@prodigy.net.

Volunteer Driver

St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store needs a

volunteer driver for the donation truck. Person applying needs to have a clear driving record and be able to load and unload furniture. Call 917-5999 for further information.

Part-Time Openings

Villa Teresa Moore, 13501 S. Western, Oklahoma City, has two part-time openings for the new school year. An after-school aide is needed to watch the children, 3 years through kindergarten, until closing at 5:45 p.m. Monday through Friday. Another individual is needed in the mornings to help in the office. Microsoft office experience, initiative and flexibility are preferred. For questions or to apply, please call Ann Grover at 691-7737.

DRE Opening

Epiphany of the Lord Parish, Oklahoma City, is accepting applications for the full-time

position of Director of Religious Education. The parish is searching for a candidate deeply rooted in the Catholic faith with experience and vision to serve its 1,600 families.

The director will coordinate all education programs for pre-K through 12th grade, including sacramental preparation for children and parents. The director will be responsible for catechist recruitment, formation and certification, and must also collaborate with the parish leaders of youth ministry, music and adult education.

Applicants should have a degree in theology, religious education or related area and a minimum of five years experience working with youth (master's degree preferred).

Interested candidates should contact Patricia Koenig in the Archdiocesan Office of Religious Education to initiate the application process, (405) 721-5651 Ext. 126.

Calendar

AUGUST

15 The community of the Secular Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus - Oklahoma Community and Province of St. Therese meets at St. Joseph Carmelite Monastery in Piedmont from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call Susan Staudt at (405) 282-6624 or Sister Silvia Negrete at (405) 232-7926.

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

17 Monthly Novena to The Infant Jesus. Nine days of novenas to Infant Jesus of Prague monthly. During these nine days, the novena prayers will be as follows: Monday-Friday following noon Mass, Saturday following 6 p.m. Mass, and Sunday following 11 a.m. Mass. At Saint Wenceslaus Catholic Church at 304

Jim Thorpe Blvd. in Prague. From I-40, take exit 200 north 7 miles on SH 99/377; or from I-44, take Stroud exit south 18 miles on SH 99/377. (405) 567-3080, or www.shrineof-infantjesus.com.

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

19 The second annual Faith Community Nurse Conference, "Are You Ready," Thursday, Aug. 19 from 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 1001 NW 25th St., Oklahoma City. The day will focus on preparing the Faith Community Nurse and Congregation for emergencies as well as exploring new prayer practices in times of crisis. Cost is \$55 for FCNAOK members; \$75 for non-members; \$60 for clergy, health ministers and students. Checks are payable to FCNAOK:

Attn: Maria Avers, treasurer, 820552 S. 3320 Road, Wellston, Okla. 74881. For more information, contact Marilyn Seiler at (405) 334-1630 or mjsjuly@yahoo.com.

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

19 TAP into FAITH! This month's topic: "Hot Topics." Come out for drinks or dinner, hear an interesting talk on important Catholic issues and meet other Catholic adults! Bring your friends. Single or married. Ages 21 to 121. 8:30 p.m. talk, 9 p.m. Q & A. Stay afterwards for fellowship. Tap into Faith is held at Pepe's Mexican Restaurant located at 1701 S. Broadway in Edmond. For more information, call Mary Lacher at 401-4105.

20 Mount St. Mary home football game vs. OCS at 6 p.m.

21 Pre-Cana. A day for couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. A specially prepared volunteer team of married couples and a priest share their experiences and information with the intention of enabling engaged couples to be more aware of the privileges and responsibilities of marriage. For more information or to register, contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

21 Retreat - COMPASSIONATE UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE OF ONESELF with Joe Froehle, Aug. 21, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Come and learn to develop compassionate understanding and acceptance of yourself while exploring the presence of your true or higher self — the manifestation of God within. Fee: \$40 (\$10 deposit). Place: Red Plains Spirituality Center Library. Bring a sack lunch.

Meet Anthony

Continued from Page 20

we were thankful for what we had was by going as a family to cook and serve the homeless in Phoenix, where I grew up."

In college, Rocko learned that André House, the homeless center where his family volunteered, was founded on the principles of the Catholic Worker Movement started by his other hero, Dorothy Day. "I felt such a connection to her," he says about reading Day's writings, "like I knew this woman."

It was Anthony's mother who instilled in him a love for the Catholic faith.

"Mom was such a testimony of faith, especially her love for the poor. Now all three of her children are living lives of service," said Rocko, noting that his older brother, Joey, runs homes for special needs people, and his younger sister, Brianna, plans to enter the Dominican Sisters in Nashville the fall of 2011. Wanda and her husband of 11 years, Michael Eash, have lived in Springdale, Ark., since 2005.

"Anthony is a very spiritual person," said Father Warren Harvey, St. Gregory's University board member from Arkansas. Perhaps the most impressive thing about Anthony is "his dedication and commitment to feed the homeless without hesitation — his dedication to serve. He may not be able to fix their problems, but he talks with

them and he is present," he explains. "Jesus commanded us to serve the least among us, and Anthony is living that directly."

For Rocko, prayer is the foundation for his work. "It's what keeps me going," he says. "As (St. Gregory's Abbey) Father Theo used to say, take time to pray every day and you'll find more time for challenges!"

Rocko has a special devotion to the "Endless Love" of the Eucharist, and hopes the new chapel at Philomena House will some day offer Perpetual Adoration. But first he seeks donations from local Catholic churches for items that will renovate it into a Catholic chapel, such as Stations of the Cross and Catholic artwork.

Asked if he's nervous about the details of opening the shelter, Rocko smiles. "I never would have expected or imagined what Labor of Love is today. Just when you think nothing is going to happen, God outdoes himself again," he laughs. "In order for me to make a difference, I have to have faith enough to leap into what God has envisioned, knowing that God will provide."

A sidenote

Rocko will be a presenter on Nov. 13 at the Region X Catholic Youth Conference taking place in Little Rock, Ark., Nov. 12-14.

Immediate needs for Labor of Love include:

- Volunteer plumbers, electricians, painters, contractors — and anyone willing and able to help clean and renovate the inside of Philomena House.

- Donations from Catholic churches to renovate the existing chapel into a Catholic one, including Stations of the Cross and art pieces.

- Donors that will commit to regular monthly donations to help cover running expenses for Philomena House. "No gift is too small."

Labor of Love feeds the homeless every Sunday at 2 p.m. at Woodland Veterans Park in Shawnee. Everyone is welcome to join them.

For more information about Labor of Love Charities or to discuss ways to volunteer, call (405) 273-9LOL (9565), <http://www.LOLCharities.org>, e-mail: LOLCharities@gmail.com.

Facebook Page:
<http://www.facebook.com/LaborofLoveCharities>

Scaperlanda is a journalist and author living in Norman. See: www.mymaria.net

Editor's Note: This story was first published in The Arkansas Catholic. Shortly after it appeared, Anthony Rocko decided to return to his home state of Arkansas where he is contemplating a vocation to the priesthood.

Meet Anthony Rocko

SGU Student Awakens Community to Needs of the Homeless

By **María de Lourdes Ruiz Scaperlanda**
For *The Sooner Catholic*

At first sight, Anthony Christopher Rocko looks like an average 22-year-old. The May 2010 graduate of St. Gregory's University sports a short stylish haircut, a fashionable scruffy beard, kind blue eyes, stud earrings and a killer smile. But look past Rocko's shorts and flip-flops and you'll also notice a T-shirt proclaiming: "Live to Love."

That's the first hint of something special.

For the past year and a half, this Springdale, Ark., native has made it his business to get to know and feed the homeless in Shawnee. What began as a kind act by one college student, however, has evolved into a community-based effort called Labor of Love Charities.

Rocko was a college junior at St. Gregory's majoring in religious and cultural studies and dreaming of being a youth minister in January 2009, when he drove to Walmart to buy supplies in preparation for another bitter Oklahoma winter storm. That's when he noticed a woman in her 30s, sitting on the curb outside McDonald's as it began to hail.

"My heart stirred," Rocko simply describes. "So I got her cheeseburgers and sat down next to her as she ate. The only thing she could say was thank you. But that was my sign from God."

Back at school, Rocko remembered hearing about a "Hot Dogs for the Homeless" ministry in Oklahoma City, so he immediately e-mailed the man in charge asking for his help. For the next year, Rick Swyden mentored him.

"I never could have imagined there were that many homeless in Shawnee," Rocko said. "I just kept thinking, these are the people that Jesus would be hanging out with."

A few Sundays after that first encounter, Rocko made eight hot dog sack lunches and took them in his laundry basket to Woodland Veterans Park. Soon eight lunches turned to 16, 16 to 32, then 40. Labor of Love now feeds an average of 80 to 90, and up to 130 a week. He describes the Shawnee homeless community as a demographically diverse mixture of approximately 100 to 150 individuals and families, including 25 to 30 children.

"As someone told me, miracles happen when individuals hand over their loaves and fishes! This is much bigger than me," he says. "It's the community caring about the poor. Churches, businesses and families have adopted LOL as their project."

His final year at St. Gregory's, Rocko



Anthony Rocko with his signature T-shirt, "Live to Love."

combined his love for the homeless with his college responsibilities, making his senior capstone project a one-year video documentary portraying "how one person's actions can spark a movement." The video addressed all the common stereotypes about the homeless by showing their personal stories. "It's important to remember that it all started with one hot dog," said Rocko.

In a culture where politeness disguises itself as genuine kindness, Anthony Rocko offers the homeless something much bigger than food. He looks them in the eye and sees them.

"I talk with them, hear their story — find out where they're from, how they are doing," he said. "God has placed in my heart the mission of restoring the dignity of the human person and empowering the homeless for change."

And the Shawnee community has noticed.

This past year Rocko and a large number of volunteers hosted a park outreach where individuals and families received free food, clothing and boxes of groceries to take home. At Christmas, Labor of Love hosted a dinner for 150 where children received toys from Santa. Thanks to a 2010 grant from the Oklahoma Communities Foundation, Labor of Love now offers food on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as Sundays. "Sundays in the park will never stop," said Rocko. "It's the foundation of Labor of Love."

When the Shawnee Board of Realtors selected Labor of Love as its year-long service project, Rocko asked for their help in finding a building to be used as a homeless shelter in downtown Shawnee. Rocko said he envisioned two things for this shelter: a chapel that would be available 24 hours, and an apartment within the building where he could live in community with the poor. Since graduating two months ago, Rocko has been working full time as a general manager with Bosco Joe's B-B-Q & More to cover his own living expenses.

"I have a strong devotion to St. Philomena," said Rocko of the patron saint of babies, infants and youth — a favorite among the Rocko family, and a saint renowned for her miraculous intercessions. "And I prayed a novena with a promise — if she would bless this work and allow me to get a shelter, I would name it after her."

It wasn't long before a building was suggested — the old Gaskill Funeral Home with "the most beautiful chapel I have ever seen," said Rocko — and with a third-floor apartment where the funeral home owner used to live.

Philomena House, already in the process of being restored inside by volunteers, is a distinctive blue roof building on Union Street, just south of Ninth Street, in the heart of downtown Shawnee — between the Salvation Army and a behavioral rehabilitation center. It is scheduled to open in fall 2010 as the first extended-care shelter for the homeless in the city. The programs Rocko envisions include: GED classes, clothing and food pantries, two meals a day, and roundtable discussions of community leaders with the residents, following the vision of Catholic social activist Dorothy Day.

The middle of three children, Rocko claims two personal heroes: his mother, Wanda, and Dorothy Day.

Rocko was only 5 years old when his father walked out on the family. "The majority of my life I was raised by a single mother who wanted to beat the stereotype. One way she made sure that

Continued to Page 19