

Go Make Disciples

Nativity scenes reminder of Christmas meaning

By Steve Gust
The Sooner Catholic

A centuries old tradition of inspirational Nativity scenes continues to spark devotion and belief in the hearts and souls of those throughout the archdiocese and beyond.

The Nativity recreation, whether a living outdoor version or in decorative sets smaller than a book cover, remains part of the Christmas season and is a reminder of Jesus' birth in a humble stable in Bethlehem.

The familiar figures from the



continued on page 8 Archbishop Beltran's Nativity scene. *Photo Diane Clay/Sooner Catholic.*

Oklahoma March for Life, pro-life events coming in January

By Eliana Tedrow
The Sooner Catholic

Oklahomans are gearing up for an active January that will include several pro-life events and rallies across the state.

The annual Sanctity of Life Mass will be celebrated by Archbishop Coakley on Jan. 20 at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The Mass also will be live-streamed.

Mass will be followed by "Ignite for Life," which will include an on-site, engaging pro-life speaker and live music. Noelle McHugh, co-coordinator for the Office of Respect Life Ministry for the archdiocese, said COVID precautions have created challenges, but it is important for the Mass and pro-life events to go on.

One of the newest and largest pro-life events in Oklahoma will be the revival of the Oklahoma March for Life in Oklahoma. The large, pro-life rally and march will feature live music, food trucks and pro-life ministries from throughout Oklahoma. The march will include the archdiocese, the Diocese of Tulsa and other faith traditions in the state.



Taking place one week before the National March for Life, the Oklahoma March for Life, will begin at the Oklahoma State Capitol and span approximately two miles. Details are available at okmarchforlife.com.

"When we learned that the COVID pandemic would prohibit travel for many to the national march in D.C., we knew we needed to make a stand for life in our own community. We hope that this will continue to grow and be a longstanding event, representing our commitment to fight for life, our witness as a pro-life generation, and our hope to support life so abortion becomes unthinkable in Oklahoma," said David McHugh, co-coordinator for

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Catholic Charities, priests seek to serve during pandemic

By K.S. McNutt
The Sooner Catholic

Caring for Oklahomans in need has been more challenging physically and financially during the pandemic. At the same time, the need has grown.

"We're seeing people who thought they would never reach out to charitable organizations," said Theresa Flannery, senior director for social services at Catholic Charities.

Some of them previously donated to Catholic Charities but cannot this year, resulting in both a decrease in contributions and an increase in clientele.

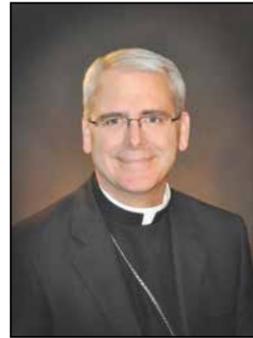
Flannery said people often

"There is a weariness but also there is a hope because we trust in the Lord. It helps to know that God is there for us."

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Put Out Into the Deep Luke 5:4

A safe and effective vaccine: An answer to prayer



Archbishop Paul S. Coakley

The season of Advent is our time of preparation for the coming of the Lord. He comes in history, in mystery and in majesty. We acknowledge his coming in history at Christmas when we celebrate Jesus' birth and the events surrounding his Nativity 2,000 years ago. His coming in majesty will occur at the end of the ages when he returns in glory to judge the living and the dead. His coming in mystery recognizes the many ways he comes to us between the other two "advents," for example, through his word and the sacraments, and in the daily unfolding of his wise and loving Providence in our lives. Faith discerns the coming of the Lord and his gracious purposes in these ordinary events.

As I write this column, the first FDA-approved COVID vaccine from Pfizer is being shipped to all 50 states. Vaccinations are beginning. A second such authorization is expected for the Moderna vaccine in the days ahead. This is rightly being hailed as a remarkable scientific achievement, bringing a ray of hope to a world that has been devastated by fear, illness and death since the outbreak of this global pandemic.

For persons of faith, we acknowledge this life-saving development not only as an amazing scientific and technological achievement, but also as an answer to prayer. Jesus is the Lord of history. He comes to our assistance. We believe that sometimes the Lord may work in extraordinary ways such as through miracles, but ordinarily he works through simple human agency. He has made the world intelligible and given knowledge and understanding to those who seek the truth.

Science itself is a gift from God. It is a path (though not the only path) toward truth. There is no contradiction between faith and science. Truth is one. How science might be applied, however, requires further ethical evaluation.

We certainly give thanks to God for this scientific breakthrough that offers light shining in the darkness of fear and insecurity. But, the development of these COVID vaccines does raise other questions. Though the FDA approves a vaccine as safe and effective, we must ask if these vaccines have been developed ethically. Often, that means asking whether they have been developed using materials from aborted fetal cells. If so, can we use them?

There is some confusion and misinformation circulating about these questions. The Pfizer and the Moderna vaccines are completely

synthetic. Neither of them utilized cell lines that originated in fetal tissue acquired through abortion to produce the vaccines. Of the various vaccines advancing toward FDA approval, these two are among those that have been ethically sourced. A very remote connection to abortion exists because both utilized a tainted cell line in one of their confirmatory tests. But, the remoteness of the connection to abortion is so remote that it would not make one who receives the vaccine morally complicit in the act of abortion.

Other vaccines being developed may not have the same safe distance from abortion. Given a choice, one always ought to choose a vaccine that does not involve even remote material cooperation with abortion. However, we may not always have such choices. Vaccines are likely to be distributed regionally and the vaccine coming to one's local pharmacy may not afford any choice at all.

Given the seriousness of the public health crisis and the remoteness of the level of cooperation in an abortion that gave rise to the fetal cell lines used in a vaccine many decades ago, the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Pontifical Academy for Life as well as the U.S. Catholic bishops' chairmen of the Doctrine and Pro-Life Activities Committees make clear that there is no moral culpability in using tainted vaccines, especially if there are no other choices for receiving the vaccine in a timely fashion and if there would be a serious risk to health for oneself or for others who might come in contact with us if we were to refrain from being vaccinated.

We never can grow lax, however, in advocating for ethically sourced vaccines and registering our disapproval of those who rely on abortion to produce any vaccine.

Everyone must make their own health decisions in this matter. Certainly, parents must guide the health decisions for their families. Therefore, it becomes even more important that we have access to reliable information about these vaccines, not only about their risks and benefits, but the ethics involved in their development and use.

I, for one, will be in line to receive the COVID vaccine as soon as my turn comes.

Find more news on the website

By Sooner Catholic Staff

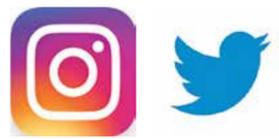
Additional coverage of Church and archdiocesan news and events, only on soonercatholic.org.

✓ **To send photos**, event information or story ideas, e-mail tips@archokc.org.

✓ **Archbishop Coakley** will celebrate Christmas Vigil Mass at 9 p.m. Dec. 24 at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 3214 N. Lake Ave. in Oklahoma City.

✓ **Upcoming courses** for the Blessed Stanley Rother Institute include: PHIL 1203 Introduction to the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas on Thursdays 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. Jan. 19 - May 4 with Alex Schimpf, Ph.D.; and THEO 3053 Sacramental Theology on Thursdays 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. Jan. 21 - May 6 with Jason Fugikawa, Ph.D. Visit archokc.org/institute.

✓ **Become a seminarian pen pal!** Our seminarians are away from home for months at a time during their formation. While at seminary, they would like to hear from people back home in Oklahoma! To become a Seminarian Pen Pal, go online to archokc.org/penpal, find their addresses and write a note.



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*God our Father,
every year we rejoice
as we look forward to
this feast of our
salvation. May we
welcome Christ as our
Redeemer and meet him
with confidence when he
comes to be our judge,
who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy
Spirit, one God, for ever
and ever.
Amen.*

Pope proclaims year dedicated to St. Joseph

By Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY – Marking the 150th anniversary of Saint Joseph being declared patron of the universal Church, Pope Francis proclaimed a yearlong celebration dedicated to the foster father of Jesus.

In a Dec. 8 apostolic letter, "Patris Corde" ("With a father's heart"), the pope said Christians can discover in Saint Joseph, who often goes unnoticed, "an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble."

"Saint Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all," he said.

As Mary's husband and guardian of the son of God, Saint Joseph turned "his human vocation to domestic love into a superhuman oblation of himself, his heart and all his abilities, a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home."

Despite being troubled at first by Mary's pregnancy, he added, Saint Joseph was obedient to God's will "regardless of the hardship involved."

"In every situation, Joseph declared his own 'fiat,' like those of Mary at the Annunciation and Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane," the pope said. "All this makes it clear that Saint Joseph was called by God to serve the person and mission of Jesus directly through the exercise of his fatherhood and that, in this way, he cooperated in the fullness of time in the great



A crucifix and a statue of St. Joseph are seen in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Aug. 26. In a Dec. 8 apostolic letter, Pope Francis proclaimed a year-long celebration dedicated to St. Joseph. Photo CNS photo/Vatican Media.

mystery of salvation and is truly a minister of salvation."

Saint Joseph's unconditional acceptance of Mary and his decision to protect her "good name, her dignity and her life" also serves as an example for men today, the pope added.

"Today, in our world where psychological, verbal and physical violence toward women is

so evident, Joseph appears as the figure of a respectful and sensitive man," he wrote.

Pope Francis also highlighted Saint Joseph's "creative courage," not only in finding a stable and making it a "welcoming home for the son of God (who came) into the world," but also in

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Recalling the meaning of Advent, U.S. bishop chairmen call for end to executions

WASHINGTON – With more federal executions scheduled in December and January, two bishop chairmen called on the administration to recall God's mercy during Advent. Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities, issued the following statement:

"We've asked many times to stop the federal executions. In fact, last Advent, three bishops wrote that the resumption of federal executions was at odds with this season of anticipated redemption. But the executions resumed. Eight since July. Two more this week. Three in January. A new regulation will permit federal execution by means other than lethal injection, such as the electric chair. "What does the birth of our

Lord say to this? The Lord comes not to destroy, but to save. For the Second Sunday of Advent, we hear St. Peter counsel that the Lord 'is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance' (2 Pt. 3:9). Can we follow the Lord's example?

"We are all sinners. Some have done terrible things. Victims need help. Justice is needed for peace. But executions solve nothing.

"This Advent, the Lord comes to love us even though we don't deserve it. Let us repent and embrace his gift. We call on President Trump and Attorney General Barr, in recognition of God's unmerited gift of self-giving love: stop these executions."

For additional USCCB statements and resources on the death penalty and the recent resumption of federal executions, go online to usccb.org/committees/domestic-justice-and-human-development or usccb.org/newsroom.

Archbishop Coakley's Calendar

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

- Dec. 22** – Mass, 11:30 a.m., St. Francis de Sales Chapel, Catholic Pastoral Center
- Dec. 22** – Personnel Board meeting, 2 p.m., CPC
- Dec. 23** – Mass, 11:30 a.m., St. Francis de Sales Chapel, CPC
- Dec. 24-Jan 3** – CPC Closed for Christmas Holidays
- Jan. 4-8** – Region X Bishops Retreat, San Antonio
- Jan. 11** – U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Divine Worship Committee virtual meeting, Noon
- Jan. 12** – Archdiocesan Review Board meeting, 3 p.m., CPC
- Jan. 14** – Spitzer Center Episcopal Advisory Board virtual meeting, 11 a.m.
- Jan. 16** – Martin Luther King Day Mass, 11 a.m., Corpus Christi, OKC

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Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley

Archbishop of Oklahoma City Publisher

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St. Rose of Lima receives art grant

PERRY – The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma, in partnership with the Bobby Dean Little Trust, presented a Pastoral Music and Fine Arts Grant of \$28,652 to Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church to help restore the church’s stained-glass windows.

The parish, dedicated in 1923, had most of its 38 stained-glass windows installed over seven years from 1923 through 1930. The windows were crafted by artists in the Munich Studios of Chicago, Ill.

Weather and decomposition have caused the nearly century-old windows to decay, so a campaign

to raise \$144,000 was started to restore them before the centennial celebration in 2023. Associated Crafts was selected to begin the restoration project. Their inspection of the windows revealed the windows’ true artistic significance.

Along with the grant, funding was received from several sources, including descendants of original parish families, former and current parishioners and friends of the church. Due to the fund-raising efforts, the church will complete the stained-glass window restoration without using funds set aside for its Jubilee celebration.

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the Office of Respect Life Ministry. “The idea was to have a local march not focused on politics, but focused on supporting women and their unborn children.”

David McHugh said as things progressed, the local march turned into something more significant. The march has combined with groups from Tulsa as well as around the state to make the event one of the newest, most exciting public

pro-life efforts in Oklahoma, he said.

McHugh said being pro-life is about supporting women and is a huge health care issue.

“People are trying to do the most compassionate thing, talking about the care of vulnerable women and their children. We want to walk with them through that.”

The Oklahoma March for Life is accepting applications for ministry and supportive services booths for the rally.

The goal is to help raise awareness of the sup-

port available to women and children in Oklahoma from health care to mental health and needs such as housing and transportation.

The week after the Oklahoma march, the National March for Life will be held in Washington D.C. This year’s theme – “Together Strong: Life Unites!” – is expected to draw hundreds of thousands to the National Mall, all marching in solidarity to Capitol Hill.

The day’s purpose commemorates the

anniversary of the Roe v. Wade U.S. Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion in all 50 states. The national march is considered the largest annual human rights demonstration in the world.

COVID precautions will be followed at each event.

To reserve a pro-life service or ministry spot at the rally or for more information, visit respectlife@archokc.org.

Eliana Tedrow is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

From the Archives ...

A photo series from George Rigazzi, archdiocesan archivist

James Arthur Garvey was born on Dec. 19, 1897, in either Atchison, Kan., or Fargo, N.D., depending on which source someone chooses to believe. Regardless of the location of his nativity, he was raised in El Reno and, thus, firmly rooted in the Oklahoma soil.

Ordained a priest in 1918 by Bishop Meerschaert, he began his career in the normal fashion being named an assistant pastor at Bartlesville and later Enid (the term associate pastor wasn’t used until the 1960s). In 1920, he was named pastor of Duncan and served there until his appointment as the newly created superintendent of Associated Catholic Charities in 1926. Bishop Kelley sought a more unified effort as diocesan charities consisted of Saint Joseph’s Orphanage (greatly expanded during monsignor’s tenure) dedicated in October of 1912, and a few cottages for the aged as well as a nursery for infants.

Bishop Kelley wanted his priests (even those in diocesan of-

fices) to be a pastor of a parish, and Holy Angels in Oklahoma City was erected in 1926. Obviously, a gifted priest, he became the founding pastor as he was beginning to develop the Associated Catholic Charities program.

Father Garvey (later monsignor in 1944) began a program to fully develop services based on the social teachings of the Catholic faith. He began in earnest by starting an independent infant care center in 1927 that later morphed into Our Lady of Victory Nursery and Maternity Clinic in 1937.

The pressing need for senior care was met with Saint Vincent’s Home (1946) and Saint Ann’s Home (1950), which he did not live to see. His health began to fail as he suffered his first heart attack in 1948. The Southwest Courier reported in his obituary: “Following his release (from the hospital), he plunged once again into the work of Catholic Charities with undiminished fervor, expending his strength and his tremendous nervous energy in unceasing



Fr. James Arthur Garvey

effort to further the activities of the Catholic Charities in the diocese.”

That same article stated beautifully: “During the 23 years that he served as superintendent of Catholic Charities, his zeal for the unfortunates was a flaming torch that ultimately consumed him.”

Monsignor Garvey left this life on Nov. 30, 1949, as a faithful servant and champion of the poor.

ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY ARCHIVES



Above: St. Ann Retirement Center residents Leonora Stramski (left), Leo Morrison (middle) and Kay Morrison (right).

Right: Fr. Michael L. Chapman. Bottom: Corrine Sardis (left) and Bernadette Stangl. Photos provided.



St. Ann Retirement Center ready to welcome new residents

Residents at Saint Ann Retirement Center in Oklahoma City have embraced the journey of this past year with great joy, enthusiasm and peace, said Richard Amend, mission and community relations director at Saint Ann.

“No matter what challenges they face on a daily basis, they choose to face them with that same anticipation in waiting for the birth of Christ. Wearing masks and social distancing have become a way of life in our community,” Amend said.

Residents said they have adjusted to the pandemic in their community.

Leonora Stramski, resident of Independent Living, said, “I was tired of having to make decisions about the upkeep of my home, so I investigated

retirement at Saint Ann, and three years ago this became my home. I’ve had the opportunity to make many new friends with people from all walks of life. The activity directors make sure something different is happening each day and the chapel is very important.

The Rosary is prayed every day, we have a communion service and look forward to having Mass again soon. I love living here at Saint Ann.”

Father Michael Chapman, a resident in Assisted Living, shared his story of entering Saint Ann.

“I lived alone for three years after retiring. One evening, I fell in my house and couldn’t get up! I spent the whole night on the floor. I knew then that I could

no longer live alone. The very next week I applied to Saint Ann and moved in in 2019. Being in residence here a year before the pandemic, I learned about the programs and routine. I am quite content.”

Bernadette Stangl, a resident of Assisted Living, said, “Saint Ann Assisted Living has been a wonderful part of my life. After having a stroke and to be in a secure and safe environment, my family chose Saint Ann, and I am so blessed. Next year, I

hope we will be able to celebrate with everyone. So, 2021 here we come!”

Amend said with the pandemic guidelines in place and vaccines becoming available soon, Saint Ann is working to provide visits for future residents and their families with the goal of bringing in more residents.

St. Ann Retirement Center 7501 W. Britton Rd., OKC Independent and Assisted Living For visits, tours: Bridget or Richard (405) 721-0747 saintannretirementcenter.com

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resist seeking help because they are sure someone else has a greater need. One man recently reached out to the organization only after he depleted his savings and turned to payday loans.

As of Oct. 14, Catholic Charities had provided more than \$93,000 in COVID-19 assistance across the archdiocese. Its staff also has helped distribute nearly \$500,000

CATHOLIC CHARITIES ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY For assistance related to setbacks, needs or loss during the COVID-19 pandemic, contact Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City: catholiccharitiesok.org (405) 523-3000, (800) 375-8514

disasters like storms and fires, Flannery said.

Although Catholic Charities had to scale back its Christmas program, the organization was able to provide gifts for 241 children from refugee resettlement families and other lower-income families, she said. “It’s such a blessing to work here,” Flannery said. “As great as the need is, I’m thankful every day to be here.”

End-of-life care Parish priests also have had to make many adjustments.

“We’ll just keep doing our best to respond and move forward,” said Father Joseph Irwin, vicar for priests for the archdiocese and pastor at Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Norman.

Father Irwin asked people pray for their pastors even more than in the past as they tackle the challenges of ministering to the faithful, including the dying.

Calls for end-of-life hospital visits and sacraments have been coming in since early in the pandemic, he said.

He put out a message for volunteers and formed a list of priests who are willing to go where they are needed. Some priests are immunocompromised and cannot go

into federal coronavirus relief funds to Oklahomans in need of rent and utility assistance.

“The need is great. I don’t think it will be improving for a bit,” Flannery said. “Every time we think we’ve turned a corner there’s a spike (in COVID-19 cases).”

She hopes the federal government will extend the deadline to apply for federal funds already allocated and will provide additional funds.

The pandemic response efforts come on top of the usual long-term recovery work Catholic Charities does to assist people affected by



Oklahoma City residents wait outside Catholic Charities for gift cards to assist people affected by the October ice storm. The weather disaster compounded the need resulting from the pandemic. Photo provided.

into the hospitals, while others are temporarily unable to go because they have been exposed to or contracted the virus, he said.

He said he was apprehensive the first time he went to anoint a COVID-19 patient who was dying.

“There was a sense of fear, but also a real desire to risk that for that person,” he said. “We want to love and serve people to the best of our ability.”

Each hospital has its own procedures. Some only allow chaplains already on their staff into patients’ rooms or no one at all.

“It’s sad when the family can’t go in there,” Father Irwin said. He re-

cently prayed with a family outside a patient’s room and gave an apostolic pardon through the window.

“It’s a tough time. We’re trying to do the best we can and manage a situation that’s difficult,” he said. “It brings a weariness to everyone.”

Father Irwin said a lot of people are praying earnestly for the light at the end of the tunnel.

“Advent is a great time to do that,” he said. “There is a weariness but also there is a hope because we trust in the Lord. It helps to know that God is there for us.”

K.S. McNutt is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

What to know when returning to Mass at Christmas

By Josh Noem
Grotto

You're home for the holidays, and it's Christmas Eve. The stockings are hung by the chimney with care, but before you dive into the egg-nog and start exchanging gifts, everyone hops into the minivan and heads off to church.

If it has been a while since you've been to church, you might be feeling nervous about fitting in. Or maybe you're just tagging along because it's just one of those family traditions. In either case, you're not alone. Any pastor will tell you that the Masses around Christmas bring in lots of newcomers – family, friends, even folks off the street who want to experience something deeper than the sparkling lights at the mall.

Here are three things that might help you unlock what's going on and maybe discover something new.

We're all sinners

You might feel slightly out of place. They all know what they are supposed to be doing, you think – I'm already behind. At Mass, don't look around and assume that everyone is there because they're holy and you're not.

The only reason we're all there is because we realize we're not holy and we need help. No one has it figured out. You're not behind or out of place. Know that you belong there. And, if you keep coming, you'll see personalities start to emerge. More and more, you'll find that you have a spot there, too.

It's not about you (no offense)

Whenever we're in a public space with a group of people, we're almost always there to be entertained – like at a movie theater or sporting event. If I take that same expectation to church, though, the elderly man with a squealing hearing aid will get on my nerves real fast, just like the restless toddler doing parkour in the pew ahead of me.

Mass isn't intended to entertain us. It's not even necessarily intended to make us feel good (though it's nice that it does sometimes). The purpose of Mass is to bring us into communion with one another and with God, which is a reality much deeper than emotion.

Catholics participate at Mass as a way to do something together with people, and the more different we all are, the better we express unity.

It's about change

Here's what Mass is for: it's geared to effect change – that's the whole point. Catholics are at Mass because bread and wine are changed into Jesus' body and blood, which feeds us. But, that's not all. We're changed, too, and in no less a dramatic fashion. No one goes to church who isn't interested in changing their lives and becoming a better person – the person God created us to be.

The thing about this kind of change is that it takes a long time. It happens incrementally. That's a tough pill to swallow in this day and age when a click can have anything delivered to our doorsteps, but it's how anything mean-

ingful comes about in our lives. We can't build deep friendships overnight. Adopting a diet and exercise routine will change our bodies, but it takes weeks.

This is the kind of change that happens at Mass. The whole point is that we do it repeatedly, over and over. Don't expect to have a life conversion at midnight Mass on Christmas Eve (it might be a good place to start, though!). Those who make Mass a weekly habit are seeking degrees of change that, over time, allow us to better recognize and respond to God's grace.

The writer Flannery O'Connor once said, "All human nature vigorously resists grace because grace changes us and the change is painful." God wants to make us into something new, but that's not an invitation that's easy to accept. Going to Mass (even better, regularly) puts us in the way of God's grace, where we can't avoid it.

Just remember: the change isn't all pain – the whole point of our faith is that there's something new on the other side of the cross.

Catholics have a lot of traditions, and they all come together at Mass. All of that might be rusty for you, but that's okay – just follow along the best way you can. The ushers won't yank you out of the pew for saying the wrong thing.

You can trust that everyone around you is glad you're there, whether or not you put anything in the collection basket. We're all there to be part of a people walking toward God's table together. And that body is not the same without you.

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protecting Christ from the threat posed by King Herod.

"The Holy Family had to face concrete problems like every other family, like so many of our migrant brothers and sisters who, today, too, risk their lives to escape misfortune and hunger. In this regard, I consider Saint Joseph the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty," the pope said.

As a carpenter who earned "an honest living to provide for his family," Christ's earthly guardian is also an example for both workers and those seeking employment and the right to a life of dignity for themselves and their families.

"In our own day, when employment has once more become a burning social issue, and unemployment at times reaches record levels even in nations that for decades have enjoyed a certain degree of prosperity, there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which Saint Joseph is an exemplary patron," he said.

The Apostolic Penitentiary, a Vatican tribunal that deals with matters of conscience, also issued a decree Dec. 8 stating that plenary indulgences will be granted to Catholics not only through prayer and penance, but also through acts of justice, charity and piety dedicated to the foster father of Jesus.

Among the conditions for receiving an indulgence are a spirit detached from sin, receiving sacramental confession as soon as possible, receiving Communion as soon as possible and

praying for the Holy Father's intentions.

However, the decree also highlighted several ways to obtain the indulgence throughout the year, including to those who "meditate on the prayer of the 'Our Father' for at least 30 minutes or take part in a spiritual retreat of at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph."

As a "just man," the document continued, who guarded "the intimate secret that lies at the bottom of the heart and soul," Saint Joseph practiced the virtue of justice in "full adherence to the divine law, which is the law of mercy."

"Therefore, those who, following the example of Saint Joseph, will perform a corporal or spiritual work of mercy, will also be able to obtain the gift of the plenary indulgence," it said.

Indulgences will also be granted to families and engaged couples who recite the rosary together and thus imitate the "same climate of communion, love and prayer lived in the Holy Family."

Other acts of devotion include entrusting one's daily activities and prayers for dignified employment to Saint Joseph, reciting the litany or any "legitimately approved" prayer to Saint Joseph.

During this time of pandemic, the Apostolic Penitentiary also decreed that special indulgences will be granted to the elderly, the sick and all those who "for legitimate reasons are prevented from leaving their home" by "reciting an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph and committed to fulfilling the conditions as soon as possible."

Dcn. Armando Cruz-Rodz

Deacon Armando Luis Cruz-Rodz passed away Nov. 25 in Edmond at age 58.

He was born April 14, 1962, to Luis Angel Cruz-Velez and Blanca Lydia Rodriguez-Figueroa in Lares, Puerto Rico. He earned a bachelor's degree in microbiology from the University of Puerto Rico. He loved learning so much he earned several more degrees in art, theology and engineering.

He was the S.T.E.M. dean of Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City for several years and was a professor of chemistry. Cruz-Rodz served as a deacon at Holy Angels Catholic Church in Oklahoma City and prior to that as a deacon at Epiphany of The Lord Catholic Church in Oklahoma City.

As a deacon, he also served the Byzantine Catholic Community of Oklahoma City and the Holy Family Theosis retreats (similar to Cursillo). He traveled with Father Phil Seeton to visit isolated families around Oklahoma once or twice a year.

He taught Spanish for Putnam City Public Schools during the day and served as adjunct professor at night. He also taught at Tulakes, Windsor Hills, DD Kirkland and Coronado Heights elementary schools. He was known for his basso profundo voice in chanting his parts of the liturgy and he could keep up with any Russian deacon. He loved the Eastern churches and his office at OSU-OKC had many icons.

Cruz-Rodz was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Luis Angel Jr. and William Nelson. He is survived by his son, Derrick Cruz-Rodz and his wife Cheryl Lynn; grandchildren, D.W., Ayla, Arley and one on the way; one brother, Juan "Tony" Cruz-Rodriguez; nieces, Maiyomi Rivera, Yomara Cruz-Torres, Blanca Cruz-Torres and Clarixa Cruz-Torres; great-nieces and nephews, Mia, Zamaya, Jeremiah, Cynthia, Prince, Manny and Lirio Ammir. He also is survived by many beloved colleagues, parishioners and friends. Armando was larger than life in both stature and heart with a smile as bright as his spirit. He will be remembered as a loving, faithful and self-giving deacon of the Church.

A prayer service was held Dec. 2 at Epiphany. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Dec. 3 at Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church. Memorial gifts can be made to Holy Angels Youth Ministry at 317 N. Blackwelder Ave., OKC 73106.



Dcn. Armando Cruz-Rodz

Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma awards college scholarships

Scholarship application period opens Jan. 15, closes March 7

Each year since 1965, the Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma has awarded college scholarships to deserving young men and women throughout the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

From its humble beginnings of just two \$500 scholarships, this year the foundation will award more than \$100,000 in college scholarships to 77 students. The scholarships are based on scholastic achievement, service to Church and community and financial need. The scholarships are awarded from several endowed funds that were specifically established for college scholarships.

Noah Staudt, Taylor Akin and Dominick Denney all received scholarships through the Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma.

Noah Staudt
Noah Staudt was a 2017 recipient of a Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma scholarship and is currently a senior at Oklahoma State University. He is



Noah Staudt



Taylor Akin



Dominick Denney

working to earn double degrees in aerospace engineering and mechanical engineering. Although the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted his internship with Pratt and Whitney, Staudt already has secured a full-time job upon graduation.

A Guthrie resident and one of six children, Staudt attends Mass every weekend at Saint

Mary Catholic Church with his family. He attended school through the home-school program at Saint Damien Catholic Church in Edmond, and later attended and graduated from Mount Saint Mary Catholic High School.

Staudt suggests applying for niche scholarships like the foundation scholarship since not everyone qualifies.

Taylor Akin

Taylor Akin from Purcell is a sophomore at Princeton University and received a Catholic Foundation scholarship in 2019. He was able to spend one semester at Princeton before

COVID-19 shut down the school. Akin is majoring in computer science with a minor in music and plans to do software development after college. For fun, Akin, his brother and

dad build dragsters and race them around their farm where they raise horses. In addition, Taylor is an exceptional bassoonist and saxophonist. Due to his talent, Taylor was featured in a series, "Where Music Lives" produced by Kevin Olusola, best known as the beatboxer of the Grammy winning vocal group Pentatonix.

Akin said he is grateful for the foundation

scholarship because it fills gaps where other scholarships can't.

Dominick Denney

In 2018, Dominick Denney received the Amelia P. Davis and Elizabeth J. Davis Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship was created by the Lawrence's to benefit students at Saint Gregory the Great or a Catholic church in the

geographic areas of Enid, El Reno or Okarche. Denney, who was a parishioner at Saint Francis Xavier

Catholic Church in Enid, is a junior studying philosophy at Conception Seminary College in Missouri. He described his time at seminary as typical plus time for regular prayers and rigorous formation provided by professors and Benedictine monks on campus. There are five seminarians from the archdiocese in the program.

While the archdiocese pays his seminary tuition, Denney is responsible for many college expenses, including room and board. The Catholic Foundation scholarship is allowing him to focus on studies and formation and not worry about paying off loans in the future. He urged future applicants to apply early knowing the time demands involved in submitting multiple applications.

Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma

College Scholarships Program

Apply Jan. 15-March 7
cfook.org/grants-awards

Fr. Alexander Kroll celebrated a Rorate Caeli Mass at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception Dec. 8. The Mass is a traditional Advent devotion where the Mass is illuminated only by candlelight. The Mass takes its title, Rorate Caeli, from the first words of the Entrance Antiphon, which are from Isaiah 45:8: "Rorate, caeli, desuper, et nubes pluant justum, aperiatur terra, et germinet Salvatorem." The music is somber and mostly chanted to mimic the play of the candles.

The Mass is offered Ad Orientem, meaning the priest and the faithful face the altar together. The priest leads a procession of the faithful toward the light of Christ, toward the altar. *Photo provided.*

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All Night Silent Eucharistic Adoration

Saturday, January 2
9:00 am: Meditation on St. Joseph: Fr. John Herrera
10:00 am: Mass
11:00 am: Meditation on Mary: St. Maria of the Trinity
Noon: Rosary, followed by lunch
1:00 pm: Confessions available

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St. Matthew Catholic Church celebrates 50 years in western Oklahoma



Archbishop Coakley celebrated Mass Dec. 13 at St. Matthew Catholic Church in Elk City for the parish's 50th anniversary. Photos Diane Clay/Sooner Catholic.



By Diane Clay
The Sooner Catholic

ELK CITY – On a snowy December morning in far western Oklahoma, parishioners braved the elements to join Archbishop Coakley, priests and deacons to celebrate the rich history of Saint Matthew Catholic Church. The Mass marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of the parish in 1970.

“This season is about God’s gift to us. Do we recognize Jesus in our midst? Do we welcome him? Jesus blessed; Jesus sacrificed. It is our responsibility to put prayer in our homes, in our families. The love and hospitality in our homes will reflect the light of Christ,” Archbishop Coakley said during his homily.

“The mission of Saint Matthew parish is to reflect the light of Jesus

Christ so others may recognize the savior. ... May God pour out his abundant blessings on you, on your families, this parish and the archdiocese.”

Following Mass, Archbishop Coakley and Father Philip Louis, pastor, helped present the parish’s first Blessed Stanley Rother Award. The award was given posthumously to Norma Hoffman, a long-time volunteer and parish leader who was a member of the Women’s Guild and was known for her service to those less fortunate, including serving the poor through the parish food pantry.

Joining archbishop and Father Louis at the celebration was former pastor Father James Greiner and Deacon Paul Albert, a native of Elk City who now serves as deacon at Saint Joseph Old Cathedral in

downtown Oklahoma City.

Saint Matthew Catholic Church was dedicated in December 1970 by Bishop Victor J. Reed as an amalgamation of three area churches – Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Elk City, Holy Family Catholic Church in Canute and Saint Francis Catholic Church in Scheidel. Some parishioners of parishes had a difficult time transitioning from their beloved parishes to a temporary location at Saint Matthew Catholic School on the outskirts of Elk City.

In November 1998, the archdiocese dedicated a permanent church building adjoining the school that included a daily Mass chapel dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene.

Since then, the parish has thrived and is now home to more than 300 families with a mission, Queen of All Saints, in Sayre.

To learn more about Saint Matthew Catholic Church or to visit, go online to stmatthew.weconnect.com or on Facebook.

Diane Clay is editor of the Sooner Catholic.

To read a letter from St. Matthew Catholic Church parishioners, visit sooneratholic.org.

continued from page 1

gospels of Matthew and Luke include the angels, shepherds, camels, stable animals, Magi and the Holy Family of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph and the infant Jesus.

Pope Francis weighed in on the tradition this past year.

“The depiction of Jesus’ birth is itself a simply and joyful proclamation of the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God,” the Holy Father wrote.

Mary Jekel of Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond fondly recalled the set she received many Christmas-ago. Jekel’s husband, coincidentally, is named Joseph.

“Joe’s mom and dad gave us one for our first anniversary,” she recalled. “It reminded us of what a special gift God gave us, Jesus Christ our Savior.”

John Thomas attends Saint Robert Bellarmine Catholic Church in Jones. Thomas said he appreciates the beauty of the Nativity.

“I like to think (the Nativity scene) helps



remind people what the real reason for the season is, especially this year. It will instill a spirit of peace and joy into people’s lives,” Thomas

said. “Little kids love seeing and hearing about baby Jesus.”

A fellow parishioner, Glenn Nead, agreed. “I enjoy Nativity scenes,” he said. “They are an oasis of calm in the rush and help bring devotion to the birth of our Lord who humbled himself to save us.”

He wasn’t sure if Saint Robert’s would set up the beautiful scene this year because of COVID, but many families continued the tradition at the parish.

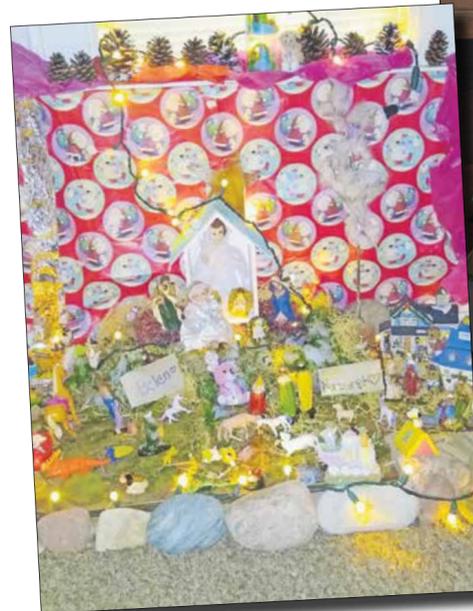
Deacon Paul Lewis of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Mustang said families in the parish have outdoor scenes and the church Nativity scene will be set up after the last Advent celebration.

On the recently concluded third Advent Sunday, Holy Spirit had another special tradition. It’s called “the blessing of the Bambinelli” as the baby Jesus is called in Italy. Parishioners, mostly children bring a replica baby Jesus for the blessing. In years past, many children lovingly clutch their baby Jesuses and take them to the altar for the blessing.

The tradition of the Nativity had its origin with Saint Francis of Assisi in the Italian town of Greccio during the 13th century. Saint Francis’s idea has spread worldwide with millions of observances. Pope Francis remains a staunch advocate.

“It is my hope that this custom will never be lost and that, wherever it has fallen into disuse, it can be rediscovered and revived.”

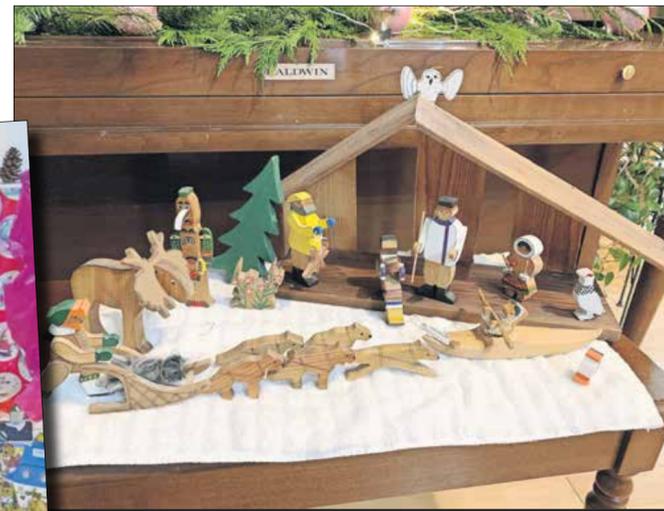
Steve Gust is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.



Above: A Nativity scene from Ellen Menor of St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Norman.

Left: A Nativity scene from Maria Micaela Negrete.

Far left: A Nativity scene at St. Robert Bellarmine Catholic Church in Jones. Photos provided.



Blessing of a Christmas manger or nativity scene

God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Savior was great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Making Sense of Bioethics

Must Catholics refuse a COVID-19 vaccine made with cell line from abortion?

In the wake of announcements from multiple pharmaceutical companies about safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, many are expressing ethical doubts about whether it is OK to take these vaccines. Do Catholics have a moral duty to decline an inoculation if it was unethically produced using a cell line that came from an abortion?

The short answer is “no.” This has been discussed and explained in several magisterial Church documents in recent years.

In 2008, for example, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith reminded us in the Instruction “*Dignitas Personae*” that:

“Grave reasons may be morally proportionate to justify the use of such ‘biological material.’ Thus, for example, danger to the health of children could permit parents to use a vaccine that was developed using cell lines of illicit origin, while keeping in mind that everyone has the duty to make known their disagreement and to ask that their health care system make other types of vaccines available.”

For a serious reason, therefore, Catholics may receive a COVID-19 vaccine having an association with abortion, and a serious reason could include a threat to one’s health and wellbeing. Those who are elderly or who face co-morbidities like diabetes, obesity or other significant health conditions are among the highest risk groups for adverse outcomes from infection and would clearly have a serious reason.

Included below is information comparing some of the COVID-19 vaccine candidates that may become available in the U.S. in terms of their association with abortion-derived cell lines, helpfully collated by the Charlotte Lozier Institute and alphabetically arranged:

Vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer are likely to be among the first to receive emergency approval in the United States and do not rely on cell lines from abortions in the manufacturing process. As such, they appear to be good candidates for Catholics to use.

There is a problem that a cell line from a 1972 abortion was used to carry out some ancillary testing of those vaccines, but the fact that zero material derived from any cell line from an abortion is present in these vaccines – that is to say inside the syringe that actually jabs the patient – is sufficient in the minds of most to assuage any concern over using them, even if problematic laboratory testing may have taken place along the way.

but was only 35 percent effective at protecting from COVID-19, while the second was more than 90 percent effective, but was manufactured using a cell line derived from an abortion. In such a case, again, we could choose the significantly more effective version for the serious reason of danger to our health.

Relying on cell lines from abortions to manufacture a COVID-19 vaccine provokes strong moral objections and some can and will refuse the vaccines



Father Tad Pacholczyk
National Catholic Bioethics Center

absolves or diminishes the serious wrongdoing of those who used cell lines from abortions to make vaccines in the first place.

Any time we decide to receive an unethically produced vaccine, moreover, we should push back. We need to do our part in applying pressure on the manufacturer, perhaps by sending an e-mail indicating our objection to the fact that their vaccine was produced using ethically controversial cell sources, and requesting that they reformulate it using alternative, non-abortion-related cell sources.

Alternatively, we might write a letter to the editor of our local paper pointing out the injustice of being morally coerced to rely on these cell sources or take other steps to educate and inform others.

Such efforts help expand public awareness of the problem and apply real pressure for change. Such efforts can be more effective (and require more authentic determination on our part) than merely “digging in our heels” or “taking a stand” and refusing to get vaccinated, which has the negative effect of subjecting us, and others around us, to heightened risk from various diseases.

While it is too early to know which COVID-19 vaccines will end up becoming available in the United States, the pandemic is certain to elevate the profile of abortion-related ethical concerns among the public to a degree not previously seen, offering a unique opportunity to push for the elimination of these cell lines from future biomedical research and pharmaceutical development projects.

on these grounds.

While it is a personal decision of conscience as to whether to accept a vaccine, it is important to be clear that the Church does not require us to decline it on such grounds in the face of serious reasons as in the situation of an elderly person or someone with multiple health issues who faces significant risks if they were to contract COVID-19.

This fact, of course, in no way

| Company/Sponsor | Abortion-Derived Cell Line Used in Vaccine Development/Production? | Abortion-Derived Cell Line Used in Vaccine Lab Testing? | “Ethical Profile” |
|----------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|
| Altimmune | Yes | ? | Poor |
| Arcturus Therapeutics | No | Yes | Good |
| AstraZeneca/University of Oxford | Yes | Yes | Very Poor |
| Immunity Bio & NantKwest | Yes | Yes | Very Poor |
| Inovio Pharmaceuticals | No | Yes | Good |
| Janssen Res/Johnson & Johnson | Yes | Yes | Very Poor |
| Merck and IAVI | No | ? | Good |
| Moderna | No | Yes | Good |
| Novavax | No | Yes | Good |
| Pfizer/BioNTech | No | Yes | Good |
| Sanofi & GSK Protein Sciences | No | ? | Good |
| Sanofi Pasteur/Translate Bio | No | Yes | Good |
| Sorrento [“T-viva-19”] | No | No | Very Good |
| Univ. of Pittsburgh | Yes | ? | Poor |
| Vaxart | Yes | ? | Poor |

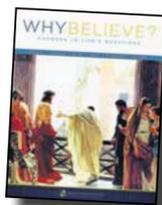
If we end up facing a choice among multiple COVID-19 vaccines of similar or equal safety and efficacy, as appears likely, it will clearly be preferable to choose alternatives with a better ethical profile, i.e., those not associated with, or less associated with, material derived from abortions.

Suppose, however, that two new vaccines both appeared to be safe during clinical trials. The first vaccine had no association with abortion

long curriculum in Catholic apologetics produced by the Augustine Institute in Colorado in partnership with the Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y.”

“The purpose of the set is to provide high school seniors information to know their Catholic faith deeper and to be able to share it effectively.”

Volume one discusses who and what we are, science and reason, God’s existence, creation, scripture, the Eucharist, and other topics. There are sidebars, color and black and white illustrations, and at the end of each chapter are review questions, and a suggested book to read connected with the chapter’s topic. Volume two discusses modern day morality like



sexuality, life issues, Catholic social teaching, suffering, death and the afterlife.

This set is not for the general reader. The website at Augustine Institute is a great addition to the set with its videos and other materials available. This set also could be used by college students and other adults curious about Catholic morality.

The topics are thought provoking and encourages the reader to ponder the topics.
Br. Benet Exton, O.S.B., Saint Gregory’s Abbey, Shaunee, is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Waiting for arrival of the King

Once upon a time, there was a beggar who would sit every day in the same place in the city and ask for help from passersby. He normally would arrive very early in the morning and not leave until the sun went down. Some days were better than others; sometimes he got small coins and sometimes bigger and more valuable coins.

One day, he was told that the king of that kingdom would pass precisely by the street where he sat. He had been through other streets before but had never been through this one. He was excited because the king had a reputation for being very generous. He walked with a bag full of gold coins tied around his waist. Precisely to help the poor and needy.

The night before, he told his wife that the next day would be very special. That day his poverty would end. The king would pass by where he was going to be, he would get out of his carriage and give him a big gold coin as soon as he asked for it. The next day, he got up earlier than ever. Prepared his blankets, his small container for coins. He hurried to his place. He didn’t want anyone else to get there before him. He sat impatiently and waited.

The hours passed and the king seemed not to arrive. But, his joy grew with every minute. His waiting was a joyous waiting. A waiting he knew could transform his life forever. It was a waiting for a coming that he knew would bring him gifts, blessings and a new life. The king would pass in front of him. And, he was ready to make the most out of the opportunity.

Around Noon, the commotion of the people made it clear that the king was walking toward the place where he was. Songs, dances, parties,

joy, trumpets! Each time with greater intensity. His heart was beating with happiness at the opportunity to finally be able to stand before the king and receive from him what everyone said he gave. Gold coins that could change his life of poverty and bring a new life. A life that would never be the same.

Finally, the moment arrived. The king, in a beautiful golden carriage, passed in front of him. The man jumped to his feet, stood in front of the carriage and held out his hand asking for money. To his surprise, the king ordered everyone to stop. Slowly got out of his vehicle and approached the poor man. He could hear the gold coins in a bag in his waist. At last, the king stood in front of him.

However, it wasn’t what he expected. The king, instead of giving him a coin, stretched out his hand to him, to the beggar, to the poor, so that he would be the one to give a coin to the king. He turned around in amazement. He slowly reached into his pocket. He began to feel the different coins he was carrying. Some were bigger than others, and he thought: “No way will I give him a big coin. He has many. He doesn’t need my coins. If I have to give him one, it will be the smallest of all.”

And so, he did, he took out of his pocket the smallest possible coin and put it in the king’s hand. The king looked at it, closed his hand and got into his carriage, to order the caravan to continue.

The man stayed sad and disappointed. Not only had the king not given him a coin, but he had taken away what little he had. He gathered up his things and went home angry. Upon arriving at his humble home, he began to tell his wife

what had happened. She couldn’t believe it. As he told her, he pulled out every-



Luis Soto
Assistant Executive Director of the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis

thing he carried in his pockets, including the few coins he had collected that day. As he threw them on the table, he noticed that one of them shone in a special way. It was a gold coin. It was exactly the same coin he had given the king.

The man wept inconsolably. If I had only given him the bigger coin ... Or better yet. If I had given him all my coins.

My brothers and sisters. Something like this happens with Advent and Christmas. The Lord comes and will pass us. We the needy, the ones who beg for love, truth, salvation. In Advent, we await his coming with eagerness and joy.

But, in passing, he will ask us what we have for him. Traditionally Christmas is the time to give. I hope that this Christmas, you will be the one giving to the Lord. Give him a heart with a deep faith in him. Consecrate your family to him, your job, your whole life to him.

Ultimately, whatever we offer him, the Lord will turn it into gold. Hopefully, you decide not to give him the smallest coin. The least of the hours in the middle of your celebrations. The least time possible. Hopefully, you decide to give him a lot. I hope you decide to give it all.

God is never outdone in generosity, and he will turn it into gold.

Jobs Box

Organist/choir director - Duncan

Assumption Catholic Church in Duncan is seeking a part-time organist/choir director. Must successfully pass the Safe Environment training, play a pipe organ, direct choir and prepare service music. Salary commensurate with experience. Send resume and contact information to rev.p.jandaczek@gmail.com.

Youth evangelization coordinator - Mustang

Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Mustang is seeking a coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Evangelization to lead efforts to evangelize and catechize youth in grades 6-12 and their families as well as the young adults of the parish community. Visit holyspiritmustang.org or contact Dcn. Paul Lewis at (405) 376-9435.

Youth evangelization coordinator - Norman

St. Joseph Catholic Church in Norman is seeking a coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Evangelization to coordinate efforts to evangelize and catechize youth in grades 6-12 and their families as well as the young adults of the parish community. Experience in catechetical leadership preferred, concern for personal and spiritual growth, and able to communicate in both English and Spanish. Send resumes to randy.hearn@stjosephsok.org.

Theology teacher - OKC

Sacred Heart Catholic School in Oklahoma City seeks a part-time theology teacher for grades 6-8, beginning Jan. 4. Candidates must be practicing Catholics in good standing. Candidates with a theology background, missionary experience or previous catechist certifications are preferred. Sacred Heart middle school currently teaches in a block schedule, so the teaching position alternates between days of the week. Applications at archokc.org/careers. Contact Diane Floyd or Allyson Helm at (405) 634-5673 or principal@sacredheartokc.org

Special education teacher - OKC

Christ the King Catholic School is looking for an educator to work with students in the Supplemental Opportunities for Academic Readiness program. A bachelor’s degree in education and a special education certification is required. Send resume and cover letter to Amy Feighny, Christ the King Catholic School, 1905 Elmhurst Ave., OKC 73120; afeighny@ckschool.com. Download teacher application packet at archokc.org/careers.

Communications coordinator - Norman

St. Joseph Catholic Church in Norman is looking for a part-time communications coordinator. This person will assist staff and key volunteers daily with distribution of

parish information and updates to the parish community. Experience in basic graphic design and social media is preferred. Bilingual in English and Spanish. Send resume to tatiana.rodriguez@stjosephsok.org.

Substitute teachers - OKC

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School is looking for substitute teachers. E-mail cover letter and resume, with the subject line Substitute Teacher to bishop@bmchs.org.

Classroom substitutes - OKC

The Catholic School of St. Eugene is seeking applicants for an on-call substitute list. Teaching experience not required. Must pass background check and have Safe Environment training (or be willing to complete). Fill out application at archokc.org/careers and at jobs@steugeneschool.org.

To see more job openings, go online to archokc.org/jobs-box.

Book review: “Why believe? Answers to life’s questions”

By Br. Benet Exton, O.S.B.
The Sooner Catholic

This is a two-volume set on Catholic Church teaching on morality for seniors in high school.

There are 30 chapters all together with 15 chapters per volume. There also are 60 short-form videos that go with the chapters that are found on the website for Augustine Institute – augustineinstitute.org.

There also is a teacher’s manual available. According to the introduction this is a “year-



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Lánzate a lo más Profundo Luke 5:4

Una vacuna segura y efectiva: La respuesta a nuestra oración

El tiempo de Adviento es un tiempo de preparación para la venida del Señor. Viene a nosotros en la historia, en el misterio y en majestad.

Reconocemos su venida histórica cuando celebramos la Navidad, es decir, el nacimiento de Jesús y todos los eventos alrededor de su nacimiento hace 2,000 años. Su venida en majestad se llevará a cabo al final de los tiempos, cuando regrese en gloria para juzgar a los vivos y a los muertos. Su venida en el misterio nos hace reconocerlo en todas las maneras en que viene a nosotros en medio de los otros dos "advientos", por ejemplo, por medio de su palabra y los sacramentos; y en los sucesos del día a día que nos muestran su sabiduría y providencia amorosa en nuestras vidas.

La fe nos ayuda a discernir la venida del Señor y la presencia de su gracia en eventos ordinarios.

Mientras escribo esta columna, la FDA ha aprobado la primera vacuna contra el COVID elaborada por Pfizer, y está comenzando su distribución en todos los 50 estados. La vacunación ha comenzado. Una segunda aprobación para la vacuna de Moderna se espera que llegue en los próximos días. De manera correcta se califica a estos eventos como un notable logro científico, trayendo un rayo de esperanza a un mundo que ha sido devastado por el miedo, la enfermedad y la muerte desde que comenzó esta pandemia global.

Las personas de fe reconocemos este evento no solo como un maravilloso desarrollo científico y tecnológico que tiene el poder de salvar vidas, sino como una respuesta a nuestras oraciones. Jesús es el Señor de la historia. Él viene en nuestra ayuda. Sabemos que algunas veces el Señor trabaja por medios extraordinarios, como sucede con los milagros, pero la mayoría de las veces el Señor trabaja a través de simples medios humanos. Ha hecho de este un mundo inteli-

gente y da el conocimiento y la sabiduría a los que buscan la verdad.

La ciencia misma es un regalo de Dios. Es un camino (aunque no el único camino) hacia la verdad. No existe contradicción entre la ciencia y la fe. La verdad es solo una. Sin embargo, la manera como se aplica la ciencia requiere evaluación ética más profunda.

Ciertamente le damos gracias a Dios por este descubrimiento científico que nos ofrece una luz brillante en medio de la oscuridad, el miedo y la inseguridad. Pero el descubrimiento de esta vacuna contra el COVID trae consigo otras preguntas. Aun cuando la FDA apruebe estas vacunas clasificándolas como seguras y eficaces, debemos preguntarnos si han sido desarrolladas de manera ética. Muchas veces, debemos preguntarnos si han sido desarrolladas usando células de bebés abortados. Y, si fue así, preguntarnos si podemos usarlas.

Hay mucha confusión y desinformación que circula sobre estas preguntas. Las vacunas de Pfizer y Moderna son completamente sintéticas. Ninguna de ellas usó líneas celulares originadas en tejidos fetales adquiridos por medio de abortos para producir las vacunas. De las muchas vacunas que siguen su proceso de aprobación por parte de la FDA, podemos decir que estas dos han sido elaboradas de manera ética. Una conexión muy remota con el aborto podría existir dado que ambas vacunas utilizaron una línea de células comprometidas en uno de sus exámenes de confirmación. Sin embargo, la conexión remota con el aborto es tan remota que no hace que la persona que reciba una vacuna sea moralmente cómplice con el acto del aborto.

Ese pudiera no ser el caso con otras vacunas que están desarrollándose. Si tenemos la opción de elegir, deberíamos elegir la vacuna que no involucre una cooperación material con el aborto, así sea remota. Sin embargo,

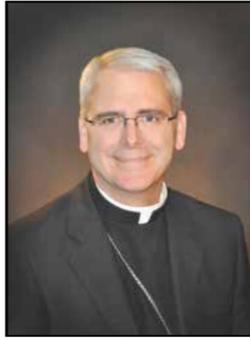
es probable que no tengamos la posibilidad de elegir. Las vacunas serán distribuidas regionalmente y la vacuna que esté disponible en nuestra farmacia local podría ser solo una, sin darnos la oportunidad de elegir.

Dada la seriedad de la crisis de salud pública y el nivel tan remoto de cooperación con el aborto por haber usado líneas de células fatales que se utilizaron en una vacuna hace decenas de años, la Congregación para la Doctrina de la Fe del Vaticano, así como la Academia Pontificia para la Vida y el mismo presidente del Comité de Doctrina y Actividades Pro-Vida de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos, han afirmado claramente que no existe culpabilidad moral en el uso de vacunas comprometidas, sobretodo cuando no existe otra opción disponible de recibir una vacuna en el tiempo indicado, y considerando que habría un grave riesgo para nuestra salud y la de las personas que nos rodean, si no la recibimos.

Esto no quiere decir que debemos bajar la guardia cuando se trata de exigir vacunas elaboradas éticamente y dejar de denunciar nuestra desaprobación a vacunas que usan el aborto para producirse.

Cada persona debe tomar sus propias decisiones de salud en este tema. Ciertamente, los padres de familia deberán tomar decisiones para toda la familia. Esto hace todavía más importante que tengamos acceso a información confiable sobre estas vacunas, y no solo sobre sus riesgos y beneficios, sino sobre las implicaciones éticas involucradas en su elaboración y uso.

Yo, por mi parte, me formaré en la fila para recibir la vacuna contra el COVID tan pronto como mi turno esté disponible.



Arzobispo Pablo S. Coakley

Esperando la llegada del rey

Había una vez un mendigo que se sentaba todos los días en el mismo lugar de la ciudad y pedía ayuda a los transeúntes. Llegaba muy temprano y no se iba hasta que caía el sol. Algunos días eran mejores que otros, a veces le daban monedas pequeñas y, a veces, unas mas grandes y de más valor.

Un día le dijeron que el rey de aquel reino pasaría precisamente por la calle donde él acostumbraba a sentarse. Había pasado antes por otras calles, pero nunca había pasado por esta. Se emocionó, porque el rey tenía la fama de ser muy generoso. Caminaba con una bolsa llena de monedas de oro amarrada a la cintura. Precisamente para ayudar a los pobres y necesitados.

La noche anterior, le dijo a su esposa que el día siguiente sería muy especial. Ese día su pobreza terminaría. El rey pasaría por donde él iba a estar, seguramente se bajaría de su carruaje y le daría una moneda grande de oro en cuanto se la pidiera.

Al día siguiente, se levantó mas temprano que nunca. Preparó sus cobijas, su pequeño recipiente para recibir las limosnas y donaciones. Se apresuró a llegar a su lugar. No quería que nadie más se lo ganara. A fin de cuentas, había sido suyo por muchos años. Se sentó impaciente y esperó.

Las horas pasaban y el rey parecía no llegar. Pero su ansia crecía cada minuto. Su espera era una

espera gozosa. Una espera que sabía podía transformar su vida para siempre. Era una espera de una venida que sabía le traería dones, bendiciones, regalos y una nueva vida. El rey, pasaría frente a él. Y él estaba listo para aprovechar al máximo la oportunidad.

Alrededor del mediodía, el alboroto de la gente le hizo ver con claridad que el rey se encaminaba hacia el lugar donde él estaba. Se escuchaban cantos, bailes, fiesta, jubilo, trompetas. Cada vez con mayor intensidad. Su corazón palpitaba de felicidad por la oportunidad de por fin poder estar frente al rey y recibir de él lo que todo el mundo decía que daba. Monedas de oro que podrían cambiar su vida de pobreza e invitarlo a una nueva vida. Una vida que no sería la misma jamás.

Por fin se llegó el momento. El rey, en un carruaje dorado y hermoso, pasaba frente a él. Se puso de pie de un salto, se paro frente al carruaje y extendió su mano pidiéndole que le diera una limosna. Para su sorpresa, el rey dio un grito y ordenó que se detuvieran todos. De manera lenta se bajó de su vehículo y se acercó al pobre hombre. En su cintura sonaban las monedas de oro que llevaba en una bolsa de tela. Por fin lo tenía frente a sí.

Sin embargo, y a diferencia de lo que esperaba. El rey, en lugar de darle una moneda, le estiró la

mano a él, al mendigo, al pobre, para que fuese él quien le diera una moneda al rey. Volteó alrededor con asombro. Los soldados le hicieron gestos para que entendiera que debía obedecer. Lentamente metió su mano en la bolsa del pantalón. Comenzó a sentir las diferentes monedas que traía. Había unas más grandes que otras y pensó: "de ninguna manera le daré una moneda grande. Él tiene muchas. No necesita de mis monedas. Si le tengo que dar una, será la más pequeña de todas."

Y así lo hizo, sacó de su bolsa la moneda más pequeña posible y la puso en la mano del rey. Este la miró, cerró su mano y se subió a su carruaje, para ordenar que siguiera la caravana.

Ahí se quedó el pobre hombre. Triste y decepcionado. No solo no le había dado el rey una moneda a él, sino que le había quitado de lo poco que tenía. Recogió sus cosas y se fue enfadado a casa. Al llegar a su humilde vivienda, le comenzó a contar a su mujer lo que había pasado. Ella no podía creerlo. Mientras le contaba, sacó todo lo que llevaba en sus bolsillos, incluyendo las pocas monedas que había juntado ese día. Al tirarlas sobre la mesa, se dio cuenta que una de ellas brillaba de manera especial. Era una moneda de oro. Y era exactamente la misma moneda que le había dado al rey. El hombre lloró desconsolado. Si tan solo



Luis Soto
Subdirector Ejecutivo del Secretariado de Evangelización y Catequesis

le hubiera dado la moneda más grande... O mejor aún. Si le hubiera dado todas mis monedas ...

Mis hermanos y hermanas. Algo así sucede con el Adviento. El Señor viene y va a pasar junto a nosotros. Nosotros los necesitados, los que mendigamos amor, verdad, salvación. En el adviento lo esperamos con ansia y alegría. Pero al pasar, nos preguntará que tenemos para Él. Qué le vamos a dar nosotros a Él.

Tradicionalmente en Navidad es tiempo de dar. Ojalá que esta Navidad, seas tú el que le regale al Señor. Le regales un corazón con una fe profunda en Él. Le consagres tu familia, tu trabajo, tu vida entera. A final de cuentas, todo lo que le ofrezcamos, el Señor nos lo convertirá en oro. Ojalá decidas no darle la moneda más pequeña. El menor de tus recuerdos en medio de tus celebraciones. El menos tiempo posible. Ojalá decidas darle mucho. Ojalá decidas dárselo todo.

Dios no se deja ganar en generosidad. Y te lo convertirá en oro.

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Briefs

Please contact organizers before attending. Find more Briefs at archokc.org/briefs.

Oklahoma Pastoral Music and Fine Arts Grant application period opens Jan. 4. Visit cfook.org.

Mask requirement in place

Archbishop Coakley has issued a mandatory requirement for masks to be worn for all public Masses in the archdiocese. Pews also must be marked for social distancing. To find guidelines for Mass, RE classes, parish gath-

CFO scholarship application

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma Scholarship application period opens Jan. 15 and closes Feb. 28. All high school seniors within the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City are encouraged to apply at cfook.org.

Luncheons 4 Life

The January Luncheons 4 Life is 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Jan. 14 at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway in Oklahoma City. Speaker: Dcn. Patrick Lappert, plastic surgeon. Topic: Transgender Issues/Christian Anthropology. RSVP at respectlife@archokc.org.

Sanctity of Life Mass

The 2021 Sanctity of Life Mass/Ignite for Life is Jan. 20 at The Cather-

dral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and regional sites. Details coming soon.

Oklahoma March for Life

The Oklahoma March for Life is Jan. 22 at the Oklahoma State Capitol. More information can be found at okmarchforlife.com.

Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference

The 2021 Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference is Feb. 27. Tickets \$65. For more information visit okcatholicwomen.com.

Faith Community Nurses' Conference

The 14th annual Faith Community Nurses' Association Virtual Conference "Finding Peace Through Spiritual Self Care" is March 5. Registration before Feb. 7 is \$55 (members), \$60 (clergy) and \$80 (non-members). Check fcaok.org for rates after Feb. 7. Register at surveymonkey.com/r/3PJL5W3 and pay at PayPal.me/FCNAOK or contact fcaok@gmail.com.

erings or to read archbishop's "Letter to the Faithful," go online to archokc.org/mass.

Safe environment training

The archdiocese announced a new training program for volunteers, staff members and clergy that will be required before working with minors in the diocese's Catholic churches or schools. Learn more at archokc.org/safe-environment.

Shrine webcam

Watch construction of the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine on a live webcam at archokc.org/shrinewebcam.

COVID-19 information

Find "Procedures for Resuming Ministries," prayers, an act of spiritual communion and other resources related to the quarantine and coronavirus at archokc.org/health, archokc.org/mass or archokc.org/digitalresources.

CFO grant application

The Catholic Foundation of



Are you listening?

By Sally Crowe Nash

I am a fan of the Knights of Columbus. I admire their fraternity and their charity that produces tremendous good. Despite their humble beginnings in one American parish in 1882, the Knights today are more than two million men-strong, worldwide. Their founder, Father Michael McGivney, was beatified in October.

Several times in the past three or four years, I approached the Knights with ideas to expand their presence on Oklahoma Catholic Radio. I corresponded with the state public relations chairman, but it remained just an idea. It seemed a shame we weren't working together more, but after a while I forgot about it.

Support for OKCR from the Knights of Columbus is not new. The Lawton Knights held pancake breakfasts to raise part of the money needed to get the Lawton station on the air. Knights from Saint Charles Catholic Church were among the first to participate in OKCR's "Station Identification" promotion.

In Del City, at Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church, it's the Knights who hold the license for KRGU, the east side Spanish station. Two OKCR board members are Knights, Deacon Larry Sousa and past Grand Knight, Fred Pope. Locally, the Knights reach into the greater community, funding an ultrasound machine for the

GoLife mobile pregnancy testing van. Wherever Christ's Church is at work, whether through OKCR or anywhere else, the Knights seem to lend a hand or lay groundwork.

Then, the first week of December, I got an e-mail from Ryan King, complete with a recording, inviting men via Catholic radio to join the Knights! I called Ryan about this unexpected blessing to see what he envisioned in an expanded relationship with OKCR. I presumed he would want to explore recruiting members and publicizing charitable opportunities. He took our conversation in a different direction.

Catholic radio bridges a gap, enabling the passive Catholic to become active, he said. He pointed out that social conditions in 2020 have directed and even forced some to become passive.

Through Catholic Radio, people are challenged to become engaged by choosing podcasts, calling into "Catholic Answers Live," or linking to other social media. "Children" King added, "may not actively listen to Catholic Radio, but they observe their parents listening and can conclude that it is a valuable practice. Then, they are disposed to listen as they grow older."

That was powerful. Silently, I prayed a thank you for what the Knights of Columbus have done for OKCR and how they are now poised to go on the air. I was in awe of how God could use our partnership for his purposes. My anticipation is growing over what will develop in 2021.

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LISTEN ONLINE
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Calendar

This calendar only covers the two weeks between issue dates and may not reflect all of the calendar items. To see a full calendar, go to sooneratholic.org.

| December | January |
|--|--|
| 20 Fourth Sunday of Advent. | 4 Feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. |
| 20 Pray the Rosary for Life, 6:30 p.m., at the chapel at St. Thomas More, 100 Stinson St., Norman. Contact Connie Lang, (405) 249-1041, potato.lang@gmail.com . | 5 Feast of St. John Neumann. |
| 21 Feast of St. Peter Canisius. | 6 Feast of St. Andre Bessette. |
| 23 Feast of St. John of Kanty. | 7 Feast of St. Raymond of Penyafort. |
| 24 Catholic Pastoral Center offices closed Dec. 24 - Jan. 3. | 7 Charismatic Catholic prayer meeting, 7 p.m., Catholic Pastoral Center. Contact Elaine at (405) 358-3610, ccrprayers@gmail.com . |
| 25 Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas). | 9 Benedictine Oblates meeting 11 a.m.-1 p.m. via Zoom. For people who seek to live more completely; what it means to be a Christian. Contact Judith Martin, (405) 635-5665, jm-martinosb@yahoo.com . |
| 26 Feast of St. Stephen. | 10 The Baptism of the Lord. |
| 27 The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. | 10 Pray the Rosary for Life, 6:30 p.m., at the chapel at St. Thomas More, 100 Stinson St., Norman. Contact Connie Lang, (405) 249-1041, potato.lang@gmail.com . |
| 28 The Holy Innocents. | 11 First Week in Ordinary Time. |
| 29 Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord. | 13 Feast of St. Hilary. |
| 29 Feast of St. Thomas Becket. | 13 Catholic War Veterans USA the Oklahoma Memorial Post |
| 30 Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord. | |
| 31 Seventh Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord. | |
| 31 Feast of St. Sylvester I. | |
| 31 Charismatic Catholic prayer meeting, 7 p.m., Catholic Pas- | |
| | 105. Call John or Mary McClernon, (405) 313-6611, (405) 414-9407. |
| | 14 Luncheons 4 Life, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway, OKC. |
| | 14 The Catholic Women's Activity Club meeting in the patio room at Epiphany of the Lord, 7336 W. Britton Rd., OKC. Lunch 11:30 a.m. followed by short program and meeting. Contact Sharon Fernbaugh at (405) 721-2183. |
| | 16 Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Mass, 11 a.m., Corpus Christi, 1616 N. Kelly Ave., OKC. |
| | 16 Lay Missionaries of Charity, the lay order of the Missionaries of Charity of St. Teresa of Calcutta, meeting at 10 a.m. at Holy Innocents' conference room. Contact Toni Harrelson, (405) 694-1292, or tonimah@sbcglobal.net . |
| | 16 The Oklahoma City Community of Secular Carmelites meeting at Little Flower Catholic Church, OKC. Call Vicky Caudell at (405) 637-4611 or William Ginn at (405) 737-2024. |

Ranked the #1 Knights of Columbus Agency in the Order in 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

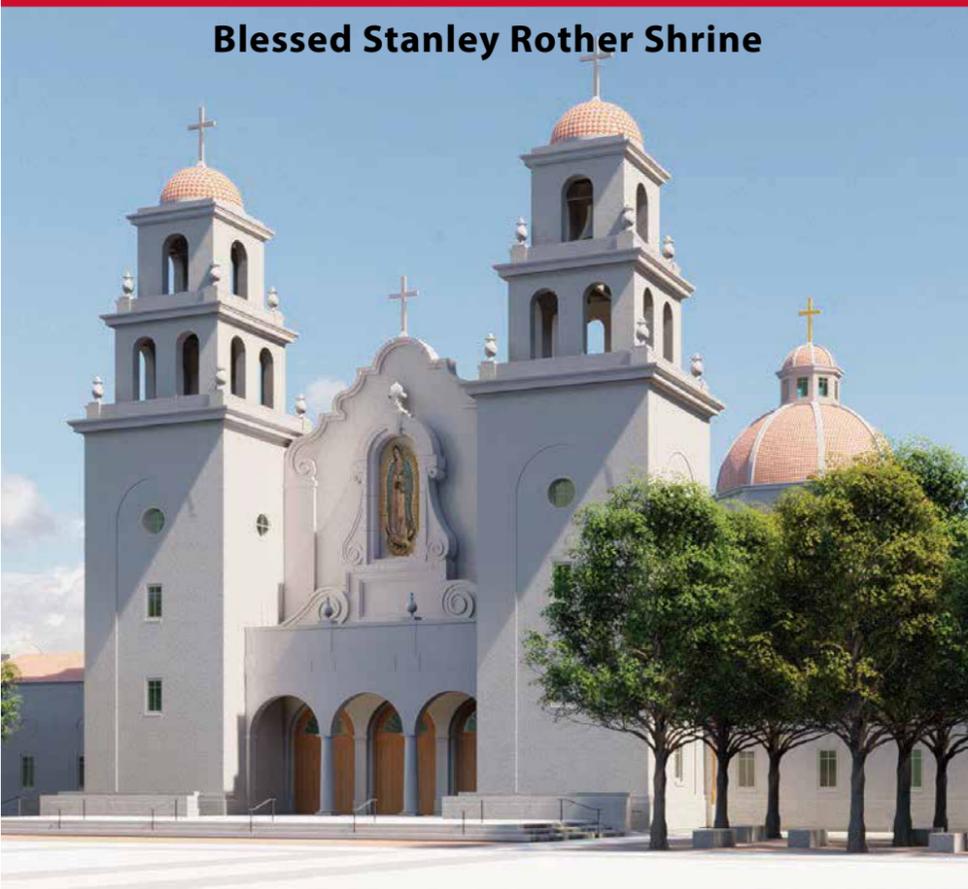
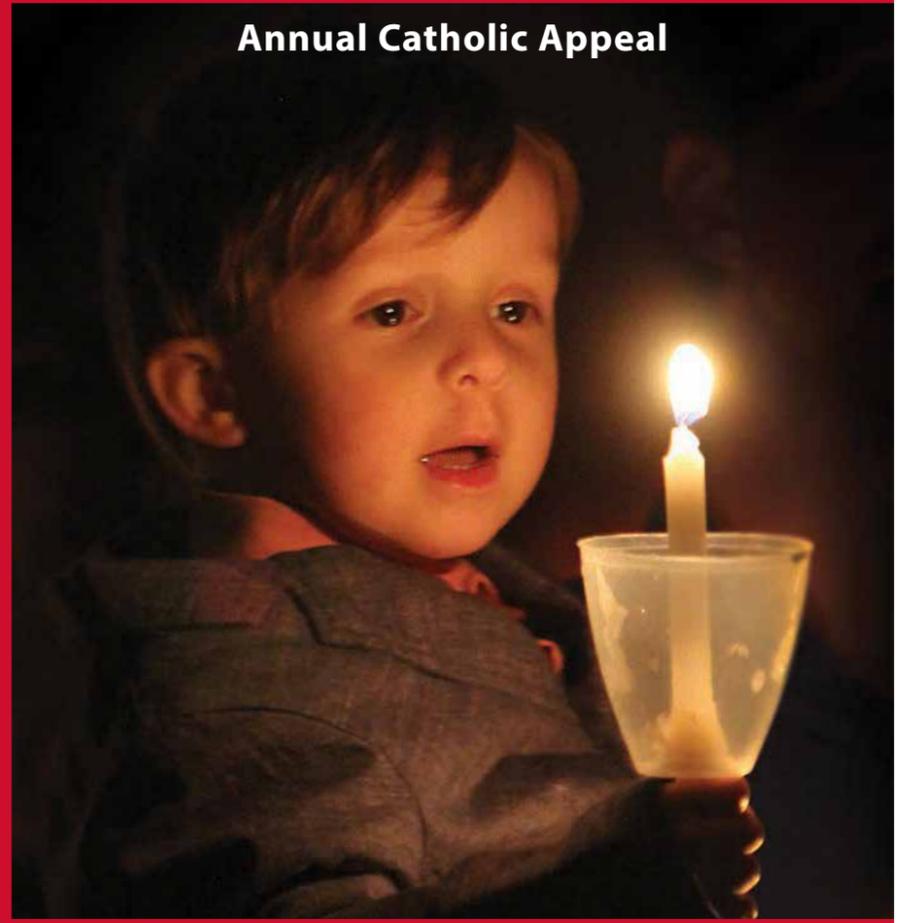
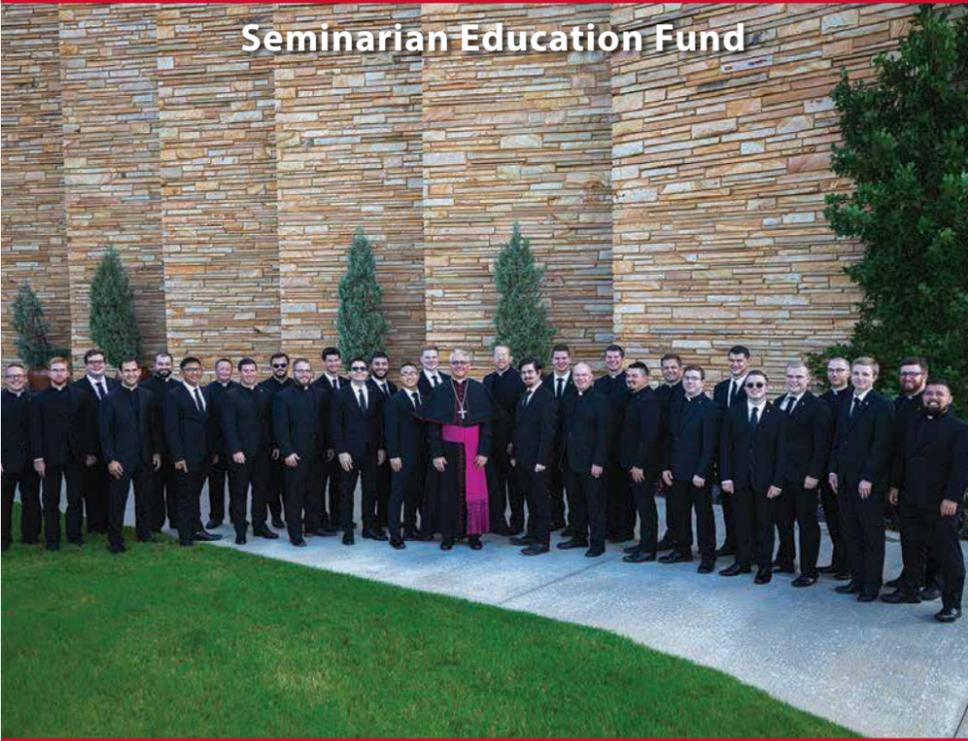
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| Kevin Pierce Regional Agency Executive Consultant General Agent SKC Office: 877-707-0752 Cell: 405-514-7660 kevin.pierce@kofc.org | Michael Dalby 405-638-1274 michael.dalby@kofc.org Councils: 965, 1287, 2604, 4889, 5168, 6367, 8523, 9900, 11648, 11909, 12819, 12382 | Chris Wright 405-822-2181 chris.wright@kofc.org Councils: 1038, 1044, 1533, 1537, 2974, 3113, 3309, 9334, 13366 | Mike Maggio 405-697-8820 michael.maggio@kofc.org Councils: 916, 949, 1053, 1903, 3336, 4026, 4042, 5266, 5396, 9333, 9583, 11135, 11237, 14106 | Max Yardley 405-570-2179 max.yardley@kofc.org Councils: 4601, 6477, 8204, 12518, 12605 | This could be you! Career opportunities available. |

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Stephen Cude, an inactive priest removed from ministry in 1998 and listed on the priest abuse list for the archdiocese, died Dec. 8 in Oklahoma City.



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