

Go Make Disciples



The 2021 Oklahoma Catholic Men's Conference was held virtually and in person on Feb. 20. Photo Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.



The 2021 Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference was held virtually on Feb. 27. Photo provided.

Virtual men's conference finds creative ways to bring Jesus to Catholic faithful

By Steve Gust
The Sooner Catholic

The 2021 Oklahoma Catholic Men's Conference was mostly a virtual experience. Yet that didn't seem to lessen the holy experience for hundreds.

The 25th edition of "In the Father's Footsteps," put on by the Oklahoma Fellowship of Catholic Men, had the theme of "Walking with the Risen Christ." Four speakers spoke on ways for men to enrich their faith and become better fathers, husbands and

spiritual leaders for their families.

A few dozen men wearing masks and socially distanced attended the conference in person at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Oklahoma City with most of the attendees watching online.

"The hybrid concept of live/virtual was a new challenge to the team," Conference Director Ray Haeefele said.

"We had great feedback. The Holy Spirit was alive and well. We had 18 parish remote events across Oklahoma."

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Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference reaches women where they are

By Eliana Tedrow
The Sooner Catholic

"Behold, I am a handmaid of the Lord" (Luke 1:38) marked this year's virtual Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference.

On Feb. 27, more than 1,200 women from 25 states and two countries, including Canada, were invited to break away from the noise of daily life and renew their Catholic faith. Centering on prayer and renewal, this year's conference invited women to meet the Lord where they are.

Keynote speakers included Kathryn Whitaker and Father Jacque Phillipe. Oklahoma musicians, Still Morning, led praise and worship, kicking off the conference with their song, "Storms."

Meg Beckman, the new conference chairwoman, recalled the committee's effort to ensure this year's conference was possible in light of the uncertainties with the pandemic.

"So many of us need a spiritual boost from the Lord, a spiritual consolation to give us the

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Life triumphs over death as Christians rebuild in Iraq, pope says

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

QARAQOSH, Iraq – Amid the rubble and bombed out remains of four churches destroyed by Islamic State militants, Pope Francis paid tribute to Iraqi Christians who endured persecution and even death.

But, visiting Mosul and Qaraqosh in northern Iraq March 7, he also urged the Christians to live up to their faith and honor the sacrifice of those who died by promoting peace and reconciliation.

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Pope Francis participates in a memorial prayer for the victims of the war at Hosh al-Bieaa (church square) in Mosul, Iraq, March 7. CNS photo/Paul Haring.

Put Out Into the Deep

Luke 5:4

A year of COVID

One year ago, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was identified in Oklahoma. Who imagined at that time its impact or the changes that were in store for us? Since last March there have been more than 425,000 COVID cases in Oklahoma and more than 7,200 COVID deaths. There have been more than 520,000 deaths nationwide. It has touched us all.

This morning, I celebrated the funeral Mass of a parishioner who died long before his time leaving behind a grieving young family and an interrupted life. This is only one sorrow among so many.

One year ago, there were many naysayers declaring that COVID was not the threat that the media claimed and that it was no more dangerous than a seasonal flu. We have learned a lot about the disease since then. We have seen how unpredictable it is. We have experienced its devastating effects on every aspect of our lives, including our schools, our jobs, our ability to meet socially and to worship. We are learning how to live with it and mitigate its effects while slowing its spread.

Today, it seems that we are finally turning a corner on this terrible disease. Due in large part to the development of safe and effective vaccines, there is hope on the horizon for the first time in a long time. Currently, three vaccines have been approved for use in the United States and a massive distribution effort is bringing these to more and more people every day.

One of the threats that could slow the effort to reach herd immunity, however, is misinformation and fear about these vaccines. They have been declared safe and effective. But, are they ethical? Ethical considerations are important in health care. How have these vaccines been developed and tested?

This gets complicated. Unfortunately, in the testing process, all the currently approved vaccines used cell lines that initially were derived from aborted fetal tissue. One of the three, Johnson and Johnson, also relied on cell lines derived from aborted fetal tissue in the production process as well. Does that mean that a Catholic or anyone opposed to abortion ought not to receive these vaccines?

Vaccine Research The Catholic Perspective

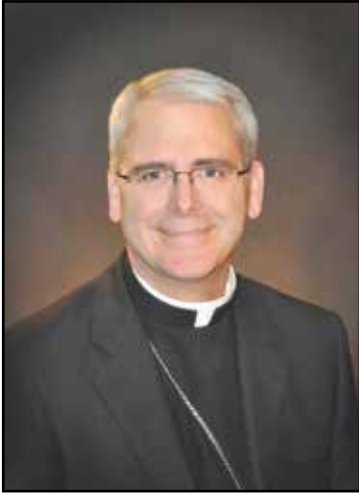
Archbishop Coakley encouraged Catholics to get vaccinated against COVID-19 to help protect them, their families and their communities from the deadly virus. However, along with medical considerations, ethical considerations also are important in health care.

“From a moral and ethical perspective those receiving these vaccines have a duty to express their concerns to the pharmaceutical companies and demand that they produce vaccines that have no reliance on cells or tissues that have any connection with abortion.” -- Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, Archbishop of Oklahoma City.

Please find sample letters to send to pharmaceutical companies regarding development and testing of vaccines at archokc.org/vaccineletters.

From a moral and ethical perspective those receiving these vaccines have a duty to express their concerns to the pharmaceutical companies and demand that they produce vaccines that have no reliance on cells or tissues that have any connection with abortion.

Let us pray for one another and for an end to this deadly pandemic.



Archbishop Paul S. Coakley

Find more news on the website

By Sooner Catholic Staff

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

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

✓ **We pray for** everyone in our global family who is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, for people in our own parish, and for people who live in countries where health care is limited, and poverty brings enormous challenges. May God grant us all the gift of an open-hearted, generous and compassionate response to people in need. We pray to the Lord. Lord hear our prayer.

✓ **Join the staff** of the Catholic Pastoral Center on the first Friday of every month for adoration and the Divine Mercy Chaplet in the St. Francis de Sales Chapel, 7501 Northwest Expressway, Oklahoma City. Adoration is open to the public.

✓ **A new Red Dirt Catholics Podcast** comes out every Wednesday! Visit archokc.org/reddirtcatholics.



@archokc



Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City

God of love,
through this Lenten journey,
purify my desires to serve you.
Free me from any temptations to judge others,
to place myself above others.
Please let me surrender even my impatience with others,
that with your love and your grace,
I might be less and less absorbed with myself,
and more and more full of the desire to follow you,
in laying down my life according to your example.
Amen.

Pope Francis returns historic prayer book to Nineveh Plains

Manuscript was almost destroyed by ISIS

By Courtney Mares
Catholic News Agency

ROME – During his trip to Iraq, Pope Francis returned a historic Aramaic prayer manuscript that was restored after the Islamic State desecrated the Catholic church where it was once held.

Dating back to sometime between the 14th and 15th century, the book contains liturgical prayers in Aramaic for the season of Easter in the Syriac tradition.

The manuscript was formerly kept in the Great Al-Tahira Immaculate Conception Church in Bakhda, also known as Qaraqosh. The Syriac Catholic church was plundered and set alight when the Islamic State had control of the town from 2014 to 2016.

Pope Francis visited the church on March 7 and prayed the Angelus with the local Christians from towns and villages across the Nineveh Plains. The church was completely restored by Aid to the Church in Need.

While visiting the Immaculate Conception Church, the pope presented the manuscript to Syrian Catholic Archbishop Yohanna Boutros Mouche of Mosul.

Like Bakhda's Immaculate Conception Church itself, the manuscript recently underwent a thorough restoration process.

The book was discovered in northern Iraq in January 2017 by journalists – when Mosul was still in the hands of Islamic State – and sent to the local bishop, Archbishop Mouche, who entrusted it to a federation of Christian NGOs for safekeeping.

It had been hidden in the basement of the church together with other important books, but ended up in Erbil before being sent overseas for restoration.

The Central Institute for the Conservation of Books in Rome oversaw the restoration of the manuscript, which was funded by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage.

The 10-month restoration process involved consultation with experts at the Vatican Library, which has Syriac volumes dating back to the same period.

The only original element of the book that was replaced was the thread that binds it together.

Pope Francis was presented with the restored liturgical text by a small delegation in the library of the Apostolic Palace a few weeks before his trip to Iraq.

The delegation included the head of the restoration laboratory of ICPAL, Archbishop Luigi Bressan, the retired archbishop of Trento, and the leader of the Federation of Christian Organizations in International Voluntary Service, the Italian federation of 87 NGOs that helped to ensure the book's safety when it was found in northern Iraq.

Ivana Borsotto, president of



Pope Francis returns a historic prayer manuscript to Immaculate Conception Church in Bakhda, Iraq, on March 7. The manuscript was almost destroyed by ISIS. Photo Vatican Media.

FOCSIV, was part of the delegation. She said that the return of the book was symbolic of the return of Christians to their homes after the genocide perpetrated by the Islamic State.

“To bring it home and ensure that Pope Francis could – in this historic and important journey to this land – return the Sidra [the prayer book] to the faithful and to its church has a strong symbolic value of the return and recovery of common roots in places where war not only destroyed but tried to eradicate traditions and ... erase any trace of remembrance ... of the history of peaceful coexistence of Christianity present for centuries in these places,” Borsotto said.

“The work carried out all together to ensure that Sidra returned home is also the expression of the positive role that international cooperation plays in different parts of the world: to promote the development of people, but also to foster cohesion and the growth of territories and communities in order to make populations self-sufficient and autonomous,” she added.

“Without books, there is no community and without this, there can be no history of a people and its culture.”

SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH – MARCH 19

Archbishop Coakley reminds the faithful that the Friday Lenten law of abstinence from meat is dispensed for Friday, March 19, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph.

Archbishop Coakley's Calendar

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

- March 14** – Confirmation, 8:30 a.m., Prince of Peace, Altus
- March 14** – Confirmation, 10:30 a.m., St. Helen, Frederick
- March 16** – Clergy Days, 9 a.m., Catholic Pastoral Center
- March 18** – Senior Staff meeting, 10 a.m., CPC
- March 18** – Mass, 11:30 a.m., St. Francis de Sales Chapel, CPC
- March 19** – Mass, 11:30 a.m., St. Francis de Sales Chapel, CPC
- March 20** – Confirmation, 1 p.m., St. Peter the Apostle, Guymon
- March 21** – Confirmation, 2 p.m., St. Francis of Assisi, OKC
- March 23** – Mass, 11:30 a.m., St. Francis de Sales Chapel, CPC
- March 23** – Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine Building Committee meeting, 2 p.m., Frontline Church, OKC
- March 23** – Topping Off Ceremony, 3 p.m., Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine site, OKC
- March 24** – School Mass, 8:20 a.m., St. Mary Catholic School, Ponca City
- March 25** – Senior Staff meeting, 10 a.m., CPC
- March 25** – Mass, 11:30 a.m., St. Francis de Sales Chapel, CPC
- March 25** – Catholic Charities Executive Committee conference call, Noon
- March 26** – CPC closed for staff Lenten retreat
- March 28** – Palm Sunday Mass, 10 a.m., The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, OKC



Rother shrine update

Family members of Bl. Stanley Rother donated 3,000 trees for planting at the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine in south Oklahoma City. Nearly 2,500 trees were planted on the first weekend of February. They will grow at the current location on the property before being transplanted elsewhere on the shrine site, including on Tepeyac Hill. Photos Sue Rother Bond.



BLESSED STANLEY ROTHER SHRINE
ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY



Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine BEAM SIGNING

Be a part of history!
Sign your name on a beam for the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine!

10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Tuesday, March 16
Wednesday, March 17
Saturday, March 20

On S. 89 between I-35 & Shields Boulevard
Oklahoma City

rothershrine.org **BOLDT**



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Paul S. Coakley**

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Volume 43, Number 5

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The Sooner Catholic
(USPS 066-910) is published
biweekly except for once in
January and July by the
Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

The newspaper is not responsible
for unsolicited material.
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Subscription rate: \$25 per year
for all who are not members of the
Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Periodical postage paid at
Oklahoma City, OK 73125.

POSTMASTER: Send address
changes to the Sooner Catholic,
P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City,
OK 73123.



The Sooner Catholic
is supported through the
Annual Catholic Appeal and Sooner
Catholic Communications Appeal.

Mark Edward Ruffin

Mark Ruffin, a longtime real estate advisor for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City who helped secure the land on which the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine is being built, died Feb. 28 in Oklahoma City from complications due to COVID-19.

Ruffin was born Aug. 27, 1962, in Oklahoma City at Saint Anthony Hospital, blocks from his childhood neighborhood where he would later return as an adult to raise his family.

The son of Dr. Joseph and Vestina Ruffin. He was the fifth of six children.

He attended Wilson Elementary, Bishop John Carroll Catholic School and was a 1980 graduate of Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School. Ruffin matriculated at Cardinal Newman College in Saint Louis, Mo., where he thrived, majoring in business and philosophy. He served as yearbook editor and cafeteria line cook, and played basketball, earning the title of Cardinal Newman's all-time leading scorer.

Ruffin returned to Oklahoma City, joining Henderson Properties where he managed his parents' various properties in what is now the Midtown/Uptown districts.

Along with friends and business partners, Ruffin helped develop the first loft-style apartments, The Garage Lofts, north of downtown Oklahoma City, leading to many pioneering renovations, including the downtown Grain Elevator with office space and a climbing wall.

His efforts with the archdiocese included securing real estate sites for Catholic Charities, the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine and Cristo Rey OKC Catholic High School.

He was active in his parish, The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, where he was instrumental in its renovation.



Mark Ruffin

He was married to his wife Manda for 26 years and was blessed with four children, Reina (21),

Aubrey (18), David (14) and J.J. (10)

In lieu of flowers, the Ruffin family suggested a gift to one of the following: The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School, Cristo Rey School or Positive Tomorrows.

From the Archives ...

A photo series from George Rigazzi, archdiocesan archivist

With an indomitable spirit and a firm grasp on what he desired to achieve, the Rt. Rev. Felix DeGrasse, O.S.B., his imprint on the early Church in Oklahoma is great. Throughout his life in Oklahoma, he was at the forefront of missionary expansion. His presence was not without controversy, however.

Traveling from the Abbey of Pierre-qui-Vire in France, he arrived at Sacred Heart Mission in Indian Territory on April 14, 1877. With a profound affinity toward the American Indian, he wasted no time in becoming a missionary to the Pottawatomí Tribe from 1877-1887.

Through his efforts, the Benedictines formed a strong relationship with the Pottawatomí that has persisted to the present day. He set his sights on the Osage Tribe that had been removed to Indian Territory not long before his arrival. The Jesuit missionaries in Missouri had made periodic efforts to evangelize but did not have a permanent presence. In 1887, he became the first resident missionary to the Osage and partnering with Saint Katherine Drexel, built Saint Louis School for Indian Girls at Pawhuska in the same year. He also was responsible for Saint John's School for Boys in Hominy Creek. These two schools were operated by Franciscan Sisters and provided a basic education for hundreds of children.

Leaving in 1889, he became the consummate advocate for the faith as he

established parishes in Pawhuska, Guthrie, Ponca City, Perry, Mulhall, Langston, Shawnee and Chandler. Realizing the skills and capabilities of this gifted monk, the community of Sacred Heart Abbey elected Father Felix the abbot of the monastery in 1898 after the death of Thomas Duperou. There were problems in the community that had to be addressed such as the relationship of the French, Basque and American monks that was indeed problematic.

So as not to mislead, it should be understood that the relationship between the abbot and Bishop Meerschaert was not without turbulence. The Prefects Apostolic (the first structure that would lead to diocesan status) previously were Benedictine. When Bishop Meerschaert was named Vicar Apostolic, the next step toward becoming a diocese, the Benedictines were not pleased since the territory had been in their pastoral charge and should remain so.

From Father James White: "Abbot Felix DeGrasse, in particular, was insistent that the monks be permitted the care (and the income) of certain parishes they had held or planned for prior to Bishop Meerschaert's arrival. The abbot's complaints to Rome about the matter caused several years delay in



Abbot Felix De Grasse
Second abbot 1898-1905

reaching a settlement."

Bishop Meerschaert had petitioned Rome to elevate the vicariate to diocesan status in 1898 and the bishops of the New Orleans province (to which the vicariate belonged) concurred. It was not until 1905 that the Diocese of Oklahoma was erected. Abbot Felix died on Jan. 3 of that year and the decree establishing the diocese was issued on Aug. 17. The obstacles appear to have been removed rather quickly upon his demise.

Regardless of political tensions, the death of Abbot Felix was a great loss to the Church in Oklahoma. His indefatigable energy and zeal for souls cannot be questioned.



ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY ARCHIVES

Knights of Columbus council raises funds for pregnancy resource center

By Jolene Schonchin
The Sooner Catholic

Each year, members of the Knights of Columbus conduct a program called Faith in Action with pro-life efforts as a part of the program.

With January as pro-life month, the Knights of Columbus Council #5168 joined with parishioners at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Marlow and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Duncan to promote the right to life.

"We wanted to do something for our community. We chose Charis Center in Duncan," explained Michael Heim, grand knight of council #5168. "Charis is more than just a pregnancy center. It is a ministry. Their mission is to glorify God by sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and upholding the sanctity of human life. 85 percent of women considering



Knights of Columbus Council #5168 and parishioners at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Marlow, and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church, Duncan, collected \$2,000 to assist in the upgrading of the ultrasound machine at Charis Center in Duncan. Photo provided.

abortion have a change of heart when they see the ultrasound of

their unborn child."

Kimberla Treat, executive direc-

tor for the Charis Center, said the center offers pregnancy testing, options counseling, ultrasound, prenatal and parenting classes, a baby boutique for baby items, abortion recovery and classes for dads.

"We are so thankful for Michael and the local Knights of Columbus. The money raised will go toward the purchase of a new ultrasound," Treat said.

The council and parishioners used baby bottles to fill with loose change.

"We collected \$2,000 to assist in the upgrading of the ultrasound machine, which the Knights donated to Charis a few years ago," Heim said. "Our council and our parishioners are praying for an end to abortion with our pastor Father Peter Jandaczek."

Jolene Schonchin is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

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Much of Mosul's old city center remains in ruins or under reconstruction. And Pope Francis stood in Hosh al-Bieaa, church square, facing some of those ruins: the remains of the Syriac Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Syriac Orthodox and Chaldean Catholic churches all destroyed between 2014 and 2017.

His message was clear:

"If God is the God of life – for so he is – then it is wrong for us to kill our brothers and sisters in his name.

If God is the God of peace – for so he is – then it is wrong for us to wage war in his name.

If God is the God of love – for so he is – then it is wrong for us to hate our brothers and sisters."

In Mosul, 250 miles north of Baghdad, Pope Francis listened to the stories of Christians forced to flee, the fear many have to return and the encouragement of Muslim neighbors committed to making the city a thriving, multicultural metropolis again.

But he also heard choirs of children singing in welcome, women ululating to honor his arrival and the cheers of young people waving flags.

Father Raid Adel Kallo, pastor of Mosul's Church of the Annunciation, told the pope that he and many of his people left the city in June 2014; at that point, he said, his parish had 500 families.

"The majority have emigrated abroad," but 70 families have returned. "The rest are afraid to come back."

The 2003 invasion of Iraq by U.S. and coalition forces battered the city but the biggest, most horrifying blow came in early June 2014 when militants of the Islamic State group launched an offensive. They controlled the city for three years, terrorizing the population, executing hundreds and kidnapping, raping and selling women. They blew up major landmarks, both Muslim and Christian. They destroyed

libraries and museums and tens of thousands of lives.

Offering prayers "for all the victims of war and armed conflict," Pope Francis said. Mosul is concrete proof of the "tragic consequences of war and hostility."

"Today, however, we reaffirm our conviction that fraternity is more durable than fratricide, that hope is more powerful than hatred, that peace more powerful than war," the pope said. "This conviction speaks with greater eloquence than the passing voices of hatred and violence, and it can never be silenced by the blood spilled by those who pervert the name of God to pursue paths of destruction."

Dr. Rana Bazzoiee, a 37-year-old pediatric surgeon, who fled Mosul to Irbil in 2013, told reporters, "I don't like to remember that moment." Before the Islamic State fighters came, "we were living here in Mosul all together — Christians, Muslims" — and "we couldn't believe something like that would happen. I think nobody stayed here. All the Christians left."

Explaining that her Muslim and Yazidi friends helped her in those dark days, Bazzoiee said she is not angry, and she hopes the pope's visit will help the process of getting life back to normal.

"Why not?" she said. "We lived together for a long time in Mosul."

After the prayer service and a private visit to the ruined churches, Pope Francis took a helicopter about 20 miles Qaraqosh, a majority Christian city that also suffered devastation at the hands of the Islamic State group. Less than half of the city's inhabitants have returned since the militants were ousted in 2016.

Mounir Jibrahil, a 61-year-old math teacher, said he came back in 2016, but only finished rebuilding his house last year.

"Now it's safer here," he said. "It's great to see the pope; we never expected him to come to Qaraqosh. Maybe that will help to rebuild the country, finally bringing love and peace."

The largest crowds of the pope's March 5-8

visit to Iraq lined the streets in Qaraqosh. While security concerns meant leaving the popemobile in Rome and using an armored Mercedes-Benz in the town, the pope had the window down and the driver going slow enough that the police and security officers on foot did not even have to jog.

Bells pealed to welcome the pope to the Syriac Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception, desecrated during its use as a base by Islamic State fighters, who turned the courtyard into a shooting range.

While much of the city still needs to be rebuilt, Pope Francis said the presence of the jubilant crowds inside and outside the church "shows that terrorism and death never have the last word."

"The last word belongs to God and to his son, the conqueror of sin and death," the pope said. "Even amid the ravages of terrorism and war, we can see, with the eyes of faith, the triumph of life over death."

With Muslim and Yazidi guests joining Catholics in the church, Pope Francis told the people that "this is the time to restore not just buildings but also the bonds of community that unite communities and families, the young and the old together."

And, he thanked the international organizations, particularly the Catholic organizations, that are helping fund the reconstruction of homes, schools, churches and community halls in the city.

Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan did likewise, specifically mentioning Aid to the Church in Need, the Knights of Columbus and L'Oeuvre d'Orient, a France-based charity.

And, on the eve of International Women's Day, Pope Francis paid special tribute to Mary — a photo of a decapitated statue of her from Qaraqosh made the news around the world — and to "all the mothers and women of this country, women of courage who continue to give life in spite of wrongs and hurts."

BMCHS swimmers win state championships



The Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School swim team competed in the state championships Feb. 22-23 at Mitch Park in Edmond. Students winning state championships were Victoria Whitbeck, 200 freestyle, and Macy Lewis, 100 backstroke and 100 butterfly. The swim teams finished in sixth place overall.

Photos provided.



Jeanine Heire passed a bag of pancake plates through the cafeteria window during the Knights of Columbus #1287 drive-thru pancake breakfast Feb. 28.

The Knights of Columbus #1287 held a drive-thru pancake breakfast fundraiser Feb. 28 at the former St. Mary Catholic School cafeteria in Lawton. Cars lined up after both Masses. *Photos Jolene Schonchin/Sooner Catholic.*



A youth group at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond planted crosses last month to represent the babies lost daily to abortion. *Photos provided.*



U.S. bishop chairmen join statement on abortion funding in American rescue plan

WASHINGTON – Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has been joined by the chairmen of seven USC-BB committees in a statement on abortion funding in the American Rescue Plan.

Joining Archbishop Gomez were Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty; Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City in Kansas, chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities; Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the Committee on Justice, Peace and Human Development; Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace; Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ, of Oakland, chairman of the Committee on Catholic Education; Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism; and Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, auxiliary bishop of Washington, chairman of the Committee on Migration.

The full statement from the bishops follows:

“Our nation needs to heal, come together, and help one another. The American Rescue Plan is an important step in the right direction. It should provide much needed assistance for American families and businesses hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

“However, we are deeply concerned that this important legislation, as written, risks creating new divisions by abandoning a longstanding bipartisan compromise that respects the consciences of millions of Americans.

“For 45 years, the United States Congress – whether controlled by Democrats or Republicans – has maintained that taxpayers should not be forced against their conscience to pay for abortions. Abandoning this compromise in a time of national emergency only serves to divide people in the very moment we should be united. Please, let us instead focus on delivering the COVID relief so

desperately needed.

“We urge President Biden and the leadership on Capitol Hill not to force upon Americans the wrenching moral decision whether to preserve the lives and health of the born or unborn, all of whom are our vulnerable neighbors in need. We ask that our leaders please not pit people against one another in such a way. We ask all Members of Congress to include the same protections against abortion funding that have been present in every COVID relief bill to date, and every annual spending bill for almost half a century.”

“

We urge President Biden and the leadership on Capitol Hill not to force upon Americans the wrenching moral decision whether to preserve the lives and health of the born or unborn, all of whom are our vulnerable neighbors in need.

ARCHBISHOP JOSÉ H. GOMEZ
President

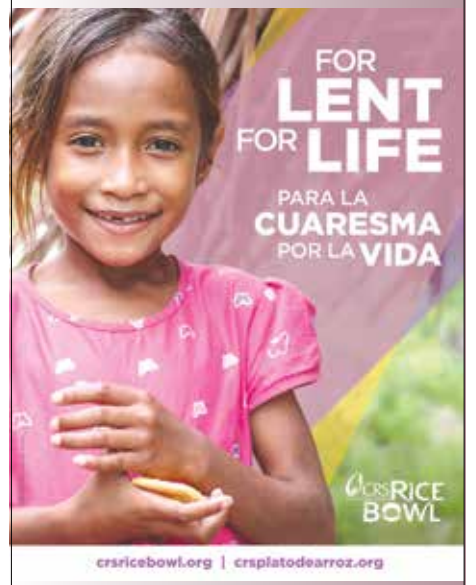


CRS Rice Bowl

CRS Rice Bowl is the Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services, the official relief and development agency of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Through CRS Rice Bowl, faith communities in dioceses throughout the United States put their faith into action through **prayer, fasting and almsgiving.**

Lenten alms donated through CRS Rice Bowl support the work of CRS in more than 100 different countries each year. Twenty-five percent of donations to CRS Rice Bowl stay in the local diocese, supporting hunger and poverty alleviation efforts. Since its inception in 1975, CRS Rice Bowl has raised nearly \$300 million.

Visit crsricebowl.org.



POST-ABORTION HEALING

Rachel's Vineyard

Are you struggling with grief, loss, pain, or anger after abortion?
We have been there too.
But there is hope, forgiveness, and healing for both men and women.

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June 18-20
October 29-31 in Spanish**
November 19-21**
December 3-5

OKC Team Email: rachelsvineyardokc@gmail.com
**Tulsa Team Email: rachel@cceok.org

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*Due to COVID safety precautions, our campus remains closed to outside visitors.

Virtual men's conference finds creative ways to bring Jesus to Catholic faithful

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Haefele said one of the men watching online was doing so from Madison, Wis. Many other men met at their respective parish halls. Haefele pointed out some non-Catholic men registered. Handling emcee duties during the day was Adam Minihan.

Some mention was given to the founding of the conference in 1996. Helping to start the annual event was the late Father John Petuskey. Earlier this year, the group lost another founder, Deacon Bill Bawden. He served as a deacon at Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond and Saint Eugene Catholic Church in Oklahoma City.

Archbishop Paul Coakley welcomed the men and noted "the Lord looks on us with love as we enter into the season of Lent."

Attendees also heard greetings from another founder, Deacon Roy Forsythe as well as live spiritual music during the day from Emmaus Road.

The main attraction were the four speakers.

Jeff Cavins

Jeff Cavins, a national and international Bible teacher as well as successful podcaster, urged others to "become more like Jesus and take on his world view."

"Hear the voice of God and be where he's speaking, in the Scriptures."

He compared going out into the world for Christ much like the valor the Apostles had in leaving behind their lives as fishermen.

"Get out of your boat and be courageous and be men. Truth is related to justice," he said.

During the day, some short video clips discussing the benefits of the men's conference, were provided. One was from Father Joe Jacobi, pastor of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Mustang.

"The secular world challenges men," Father Jacobi said. "The conference helps men grow in the knowledge of God's love for them."

Steve Angrisano

The second speaker was Steve Angrisano, a national ministry leader and committed witness to the life and love of Jesus.

He asked men to be like clay so God can mold them. The speaker also stressed the vital need to pray every day. He thanked his late grandfather for helping him to learn the Rosary. He pointed out that men were the leaders of

the faith and that 80 percent of Catholics only would become faithful adult Catholics if their fathers were.

"Be a person who goes to daily Mass and invite others with you," Angrisano said.

Tony Ferraro

After lunch, Tony Ferraro, a faithful executive coach for many business leaders nationally, spoke on the theme of being a "man capable of dreaming."

He mentioned a quote from Saint Teresa of Calcutta.

"Let no one come to you without leaving happier," he noted.

He added everyone can dream and plan a bigger and better future. He also cited statistics showing 7 percent of a parish responsible for contributing 80 percent of a parish's time, talent and money. He asked men to recognize that Catholicism had "housed and fed" more people than any group in history.

Jim Beckman

Jim Beckman, the archdiocesan executive director of evangelization and catechesis, closed out the conference, reminding all the men to follow up on the notes and lessons they learned during the conference.

"It's all about the follow through," he said. He also said we lived in a climate "hostile to God."

"There's more we can give," Beckman said. "We can never outgive God."

He also pointed out Jesus walks with us.

"We need to listen to the word and walk in his footsteps."

Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Oklahoma City was one of the locations that viewed the conference online. Their pastor, Father William Novak, urged men to watch in the parish hall.

Kirk Broussard attended at Saint Francis.

"Participating together helps us to go out afterwards and try to be the best disciples that we can be," he said.

Perry Hatch of Saint Francis agreed.

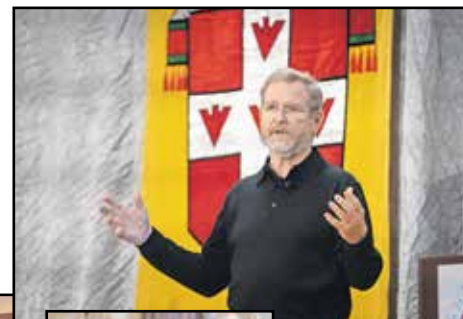
"Praying the Rosary as a group was wonderful and powerful," he said.

The 26th Oklahoma Catholic Men's Conference will be March 12, 2022.

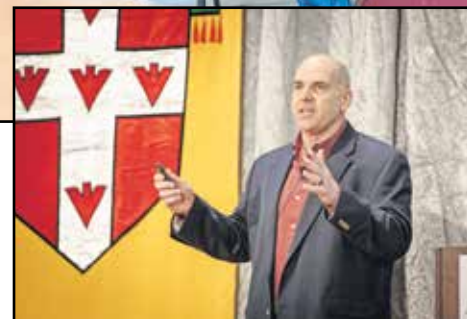
Steve Gust is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.



Archbishop Coakley spoke at the 2021 Oklahoma Catholic Men's Conference Feb. 20. Photo Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.



Photos Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic and provided. Screenshot photo Steve Gust/Sooner Catholic.



Jim Beckman was one of the speakers at the Oklahoma Catholic Men's Conference. Photo Avery Holt/Sooner Catholic.

Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference reaches women where they are

continued from page 1

strength to go forward and be his disciple," Beckman said.

"Our hearts are like a landscape for the Lord to cover in ways he can make us holy and more like him. The conference met women where they are in their landscape."

Natalie Mollman, promotions chairwoman for the conference, said there were many moments they didn't know what to do, but the Holy Spirit provided for them time and again.

"It has been beautiful to see the Holy Spirit move so much," Mollman said. "Another committee person said it best: It's cool to see how much the Holy Spirit loves the women of Oklahoma."

New this year were "Blessing Boxes" given to the first 300 registrants. Sent by mail, these boxes were filled with Catholic-themed gifts donated by vendors. Door prizes also were mailed to randomly selected registrants.

Archbishop Coakley provided an opening reflection and prayer, encouraging women, "As we face unprecedented and uncertain times, we need faith-filled mothers, sisters and friends to provide steadfast prayer and structure to our families, communities, schools and parishes."

Small groups were encouraged to meet, and women responded, with multiple small groups gathering throughout Oklahoma in homes and parishes. Online programs provided prompting questions for individual or small group discussions.

In her talk, "Behold," Kathryn Whitaker, a convert to Catholicism, encouraged women to focus on four things: pray, trust, hope, be.

Whitaker, who gave birth to her preemie son, Luke, in 2009, was told by a priest she needed to stop praying like a nun and start praying like a mom. "Whatever your current vocation is," she told the audience, "start praying like that."

"Let your whole day be a prayer," urged Whitaker, a mom to six children.

"Figure out where Jesus wants to meet you and invite him into that space. Prayer looks different, but it is necessary. Your prayer life is organic, it changes with your season, but it's about showing up."

This year looked different for Anita Semtner of Saint Benedict Catholic Church in Shawnee. Semtner has a tradition of taking her daughters, daughter-in-law and now granddaughters to the typically in-person annual conference.

"(I) enjoyed the first speaker and it's true that she was a generation younger than (me), but the message that she had was a message that applies to everyone: pray according to the station of life we are in and how we are able," Semtner said.

Vicki Middleton is a graduate student,

mom, wife and active parishioner at Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Mustang.

"This was my first conference, and it was a much-needed break with my fellow sisters in Christ from my parish. I enjoyed hearing the spirit-filled messages and look forward to attending for many years to come."

Father Alex Kroll, associate pastor at Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond and this year's conference chaplain, reiterated the necessity of prayer in our daily life.

"We have to pray our vocation," Father Kroll stressed. "If you start your day with prayer, time opens up throughout the day. Maybe you have a mountain of laundry, kids with sticky hands, your life is busy, there are obstacles.



Photos provided.



Offer him your first fruit and these obstacles are overcome with joy. Time opens up for everything else."

Bishop David Konderla of the Diocese of Tulsa closed the virtual conference in prayer.

The pre-recorded conference garnered so many positive reviews, leadership extended the viewing link by two additional weeks, through March 14.

To donate or register for next year's conference visit okcatholicwomen.com.

Eliana Tedrow is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

The Catholic Difference

Cardinal Pell and squirming Catholics

According to the movie “Love Story,” “Love means never having to say you’re sorry.” Typical Hollywood fluff, you might say. Yet, the best answer to that asininity was given by a Hollywood all-star, the late, great Charlton Heston. Asked the secret of what would eventually become his 64-year long marriage to Lydia, Chuck Heston replied, “Learning to say five words: ‘I’m sorry, I was wrong.’”

It’s a lesson that seems especially hard to digest these days, at all points along the polarized spectrums of political and ecclesiastical opinion. One gang that finds it impossible to admit error is the Australian Left, which is still conducting a war of calumny against Cardinal George Pell even after his acquittal by Australia’s High Court of spurious charges the Aussie Left may well have had a hand in concocting. That stubbornness extends to the Catholic subdivision of the Aussie Left, as a recent review in “The Australian” of the cardinal’s prison diary by Gerard Windsor, a longtime campaigner for Catholic Lite, suggests.

Mr. Windsor gracefully admits that, in “Prison Journal: Volume I – The Cardinal Makes His Appeal” (Ignatius Press), “there is no self-pity, just the assumption that the wrong eventually will be righted, that God knows what he’s doing, and that the suffering involved

can be put to fruitful use.”

Windsor admires the cardinal’s heroic resolve in jail, which he rightly attributes to the depth of George Pell’s faith. The first volume of what will be a multi-volume work centers on the cardinal’s hope, eventually frustrated, for vindication by a state appellate court; Mr. Windsor seems to have shared that hope, for he notes that he was one of two people not “on the conversative wavelength” whose supportive letter the cardinal discusses in his diary.

Full marks, then, to Gerard Windsor for discerning what he describes in his review as a “miscarriage of justice.” We can assume that Mr. Windsor was pleased when justice was finally done and the Australian High Court did what that state appellate court inexplicably failed to do, given the emptiness of the prosecution’s case against the cardinal: quash the trial court’s guilty verdict, effectively reprimand the trial jury and the majority of the appellate court, and enter a verdict of acquittal.

But, then (to riff on “Love Story”), the maxim “Being Left means never having to say you’re sorry” kicks in, and Mr. Windsor’s review skids off the road into a rant about Pell the “warrior Prince” who continues to “wage war” from jail. That war is fought against the “militant

secularists” the cardinal believes conspired against him, and “against his fellow Catholics:” an ecclesiastical vendetta conducted, according to Mr. Windsor, “with even greater determination.”

Windsor is thus offended by the cardinal’s description of the Catholic Lite Brigade as “the bland leading the bland,” which Windsor regards as a “vacuous slur” from “the mike-hogging uncle in the family.”

Australian public life is a contact sport, and it ill behooves Mr. Windsor (evidently an eager entrant in the Epithet Derby) to complain when Cardinal Pell speaks his mind robustly, as he was and is wont to do. That, Mr. Windsor says, makes “liberal Catholics squirm.” But, isn’t that Catholic Lite squirming a form of surrender to the shibboleths of the secular Left and its culture of lifestyle libertinism?

There are honorable exceptions, of course, but “liberal Catholics” have been notably absent in Australia (and elsewhere) from the battle against the Left’s determination to establish, with the force of law, what amounts to a new religion: the religion of the Self, in which the human person is reduced to a bundle of morally equivalent desires, the satisfaction of which is the primary function of government.



George Weigel
Ethics and Public
Policy Center

That ersatz religion – which underwrites everything from the abortion license to legalized euthanasia and physician assisted suicide to the LGBT political agenda – will eventually settle for nothing less than criminalizing the biblical and Christian idea of the human person. Indeed, that effort is already underway in the Australian state of Victoria (where Cardinal Pell was maliciously prosecuted) and it’s implicit in the Biden administration’s promotion of gender ideology and the Newspeak-redolent “Equality Act.”

Mr. Windsor admits that “secular animosity” toward the Church and the Catholic idea of what makes for human flourishing “does exist.” But, he doesn’t seem to grasp the virulence embedded in that animosity or the need for courageous bishops to fight it. One wonders if that blind spot is a result of too much squirming about truth-telling, and too little willingness to reconsider and then say, “I’m sorry, I was wrong.”

Upcoming Days of Reflection

Spend a day at St. Gregory's Abbey in Reflection.

March 13, 2021
"With a Father's Heart – Reflections for the Year of St. Joseph"
Presenter: Abbot Lawrence Staszyn, O.S.B.

April 24, 2021
"Living Our Baptismal Promises with the Desert Fathers"
Presenter: Br. Peter Shults, O.S.B. (via ZOOM)

June 12, 2021
"Our Mother's Heart: The Immaculate Treasure of Love"
Presenter: Abbot Lawrence Staszyn, O.S.B.

July 24, 2021
"In the Beauty of Holiness: A Day of Reflection for Artisans and Crafters"
Presenter: Br. Damian Whalen, O.S.B.

Registration - Due to limited space, pre-registration is required for all attendees. Cost is \$30 per session (early bird special) or \$35 if paid at the door. Register by e-mailing retreats@monksok.org or call (405) 878-5656. Lunch is included in the cost of the session. Due to COVID-19, masks and social distancing are required.

Schedule- Mass begins at 8:30 a.m. The day concludes after Adoration around 3 p.m.

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Real Life Disciples

The invisible reality

“Christians can wrongly think that the kingdom of heaven is fundamentally of this world, that its strength can be measured by its visible manifestations. As a result, they too often attempt to maintain worldly influence at the expense of genuine spiritual strength . . . Holiness, prayer, humility, hidden acts of charity are the spiritual means by which the Church is visibly upheld.

When these are diminished, the outward expressions of the Church’s life grow tenuous and liable to failure. The Church is never in a more fragile situation than when she seems strong but has lost her deep rootedness in the invisible world” (“From Christendom to Apostolic Mission,” pg. 24).

The above statement captures a fundamental truth that I believe, and way back in my mind I know, but I must admit that my confidence in it clearly has diminished. You can tell by my actions! We easily can fall into the human trap of thinking that our work, our efforts, are what is really going to move things forward. The reality is that everything we do, including prayer, is possible only because of God’s gracious assistance.

There is a famous quote often attributed to Saint Augustine, “Pray as though everything depended on God; work as though everything depended on you.”

There is speculation about the quote and its interpretation. Some say it was Saint Ignatius of Loyola who said it, not Augustine; paragraph #2834 of the Catechism does exactly that. Trent Horn from Catholic Answers says that “there are others who argue that this quote is a mis-translation of the authentic Ignatian saying, ‘Let your first rule of action be to trust in God as if success depended entirely on yourself and not on him: but use all your efforts as if God alone did everything, and yourself nothing.’ (In other words, what Saint Ignatius really said was, ‘Pray as though everything depended on you, and act as if everything depended on God’)” (Catholic Answers, “Saint Ignatius Said What?”).

The valuable principle to be gained, though, is twofold: 1) Our first efforts always needs to be toward prayer, trusting ourselves and the work before us to God and recognizing that without him we can do nothing (John 15:5); and 2) But, God also gives us gifts and talents that he desires us to use to cooperate with him in accomplishing the work.

Sitting back and praying all the time and leaving everything up to God alone is a heresy. The 17th century Quietist heresy taught that man’s ultimate goal was to achieve “perfect quiet” and be so united to God in prayer that he did not have a single other thought. Quietists literally prayed as if everything depended on God and did nothing else. However, trusting in human effort alone is also a heresy, that of Pelagianism.

What I have realized and have been drawn to is a reawakening of the “first efforts toward prayer.” If we don’t start there, everything else we do can begin to go off track. We need God’s grace in every area of our lives, in our families, and especially in the Church today.

In these difficult times, we need to be praying more, interceding more, lifting up our archbishop and our priests more. The quote that I started with is from a book I have been reading the past six months or so, “From Christendom to Apostolic Mission.” I’m sure I will be talking about this book a lot in the coming months – it has had a profound impact on me.

One of the key strategies that the book recommends in what it calls the “apostolic times” in which we are currently living is to “refuse to be trapped by social analysis” (Pg. 39). We can find ourselves looking at our current circumstances and be completely overwhelmed. How are we ever going to get the Church back to what it used to be? How are we going to get people to simply come back to Mass? The sociological statistics are a whole lot of doom and gloom.

We must never forget, though, that all these studies leave out the miracle of faith and the

activity of the Holy Spirit. As the book says, “What sociological survey could have predicted the conversion of an ancient and sophisticated civilization at the hands of a small group of uneducated laborers? What numerical analysis could have surmised the explosion of the monastic movement? Or the conversion of all the pagan peoples of Europe? Or the appearance of a Saint Francis and his thousands of followers in a few short years? Or the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the conversion of Mexico? Or, for that matter, the conversion of a single soul?”

What sociological study can gauge the presence of the Holy Spirit or the power of prayer? From its first appearance, the Church has been a massive surprise; in every age its existence a standing miracle” (“From Christendom to Apostolic Mission,” pgs. 39-40).

Lent is a great time for this reawakening, a great time for more prayer. As we continue our Lenten journey, I invite you to join me. Let’s take extra time for prayer, for more rosaries asking for Mary’s help and intercession, for more time before the Blessed Sacrament, on our knees begging God for his miraculous intervention.

We all have heard one study after another that tells us “they won’t come back,” “a full two-thirds of Catholics do not believe in the real presence in the Eucharist,” and “the new normal is a much smaller Catholic Church.” Let’s spend the rest of our Lent begging God for a greater outpouring of his Holy Spirit and the grace of conversion throughout our archdiocese!



Jim Beckman
Executive Director
of the Secretariat for
Evangelization and
Catechesis

Book Review: “Creating a Culture of Encounter”

By John H. Dolezal
The Sooner Catholic

According to Pope Francis, “The history of evangelization began with the Lord’s own passionate desire to call and enter into friendly dialogue with everyone just as they are.” And, as Christians, we too, are called to evangelize.



“Creating a Culture of Encounter: A Guide for Joyful Missionary Disciples” provides us a process for reaching out to others and share the Good News of Jesus Christ and serve as a light for those who may be struggling with darkness.

This book is authored by “various members of the sub-com-

mittee on Hispanic affairs with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and it is an adaptation of the process developed for the V National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry (primary activity of the USCCB Strategic Plan: 2017-2020).”

The book is designed to serve as a “Guide for Joyful Missionary Disciples” and as a “process of formation in the faith that invites all Catholics in the United States to an intense missionary activity, in the spirit of the New Evangelization.” It is “bilingual” with the first 56 pages written in English and the last 56 pages written in Spanish.

The three main parts to this book are:

- Introduction;
- Sessions of the guide for creating a culture of encounter;
- Resources for the encounter process.

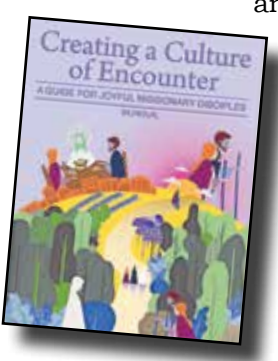
At the heart of the encounter

process is a five-week experience of reflection and evangelization guided by five themes, inspired by Pope Francis’s call to foster a culture of encounter (The Joy of the Gospel). The five themes are:

- Called to a loving encounter with Jesus in the Church;
- With words and actions: Do it!
- Walking together with Jesus;
- Bearing fruits of new life;
- Celebrating the joy of being missionary disciples.

As Christians, we are called to serve as missionaries spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ to all we encounter. Pope Francis, in his “Joy of the Gospel” exhortation, shares a powerful vision and strong encouragement for us to expand our missionary encounters to include those we may not normally include.

We are asked, and are capable of, doing better. We can, by God’s grace, overcome the limitations



we have placed on our missionary outreach and stretch the circle of our encounters to include those on the peripheries. Creating a culture of encounter appears to be an excellent tool for learning how to improve our service as missionaries. This book is well-organized and offers clear guidance for those who want to design and deliver a powerful formation experience to parish missionaries empowering them to respond to Pope Francis’s exhortation and propose the Good News to those who may live in the peripheries of society.

John H. Dolezal is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Lánzate a lo más Profundo
Luke 5:4

Un año de COVID

Hace exactamente un año se identificaba el primer caso confirmado de COVID-19 en Oklahoma. ¿Quién se iba a imaginar en ese momento el impacto o los cambios que traería consigo? Desde ese día de marzo, han habido mas de 425,000 contagios y más de 7,200 muertes en el estado. Con más de 520,000 muertes a nivel nacional. A todos nos ha tocado.

Esta mañana celebré el funeral de un feligrés que murió mucho antes de lo que debía haber muerto, dejando atrás a una familia joven sufriendo y una vida interrumpida. Y este es solo un caso en medio de muchos.

Hace un año también, habían muchos escépticos que afirmaban que el COVID no representaba la amenaza que decían los medios de comunicación y que no era más que otro tipo de virus de la influenza estacional. Desde entonces, hemos aprendido mucho sobre esta enfermedad. Hemos visto lo impredecible que puede ser. Hemos experimentado sus efectos devastadores en todos los aspectos de nuestras vidas, incluyendo nuestras escuelas, nuestros trabajos, nuestra capacidad de socializar y de rendir culto. Hemos aprendi-

do a vivir con él y a mitigar sus efectos al tiempo que reducimos el número de contagios.

Hoy, parece que al fin estamos saliendo de esta terrible enfermedad. Debido en gran parte al desarrollo de vacunas seguras y efectivas, por primera vez en mucho tiempo podemos decir que hay esperanza en el horizonte. Tenemos actualmente tres vacunas aprobadas para su uso en los Estados Unidos y los esfuerzos masivos de distribución la están haciendo llegar a más y más personas cada día.

La Investigación de las Vacunas La Perspectiva Católica

El Arzobispo Coakley alentó a los católicos a vacunarse contra el COVID-19 para ayudar a protegerlos a ellos, a sus familias y a sus comunidades del virus mortal. Sin embargo, junto a las consideraciones médicas, las consideraciones éticas también son importantes en el cuidado de la salud.

“Desde la perspectiva moral y ética, todos los que estamos recibiendo estas vacunas, tenemos el deber de expresar nuestras preocupaciones a las compañías farmacéuticas y exigirles que produzcan vacunas que no dependan de células o tejidos con alguna conexión al aborto.” – Arzobispo Pablo S. Coakley, Oklahoma City.

Encuentre cartas de muestra para enviar a las compañías farmacéuticas acerca del desarrollo y prueba de las vacunas en archokc.org/vaccineletters.

declaradas seguras y efectivas. Sin embargo, ¿son éticas? Las consideraciones éticas siempre son importantes en el cuidado de la salud. ¿Cómo han sido desarrolladas y probadas estas vacunas?

Se complica. Desafortunadamente, todas las vacunas aprobadas hoy en día usaron en sus

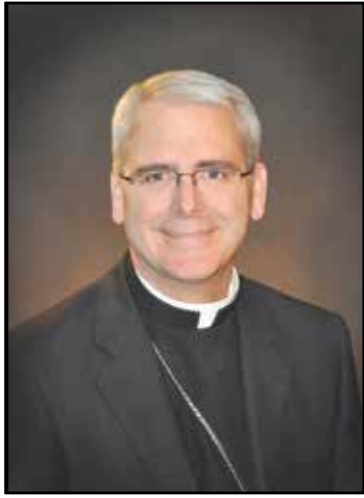
ensayos clínicos líneas celulares que se derivaron de tejido fetal abortado. Una de las tres, la vacuna de Johnson and Johnson, usó además líneas celulares procedentes de tejido de fetos abortados en el proceso de producción. ¿Significa esto que los católicos, y todo aquel que se oponga al aborto, deben evitar recibir estas vacunas?

Después de un análisis moral cuidadoso, el consenso de la Conferencia de Obispos de los Estados Unidos, el Vaticano y otras fuentes reconocidas, tales como el Centro Nacional Católico de Bioética, han concluido que el nivel de cooperación con el mal moral del aborto es tan remoto, que es moralmente permisible recibir estas vacunas.

Si tuviésemos la oportunidad de elegir cuál vacuna recibir, deberíamos elegir la que no tenga conexión con el aborto, o al menos la que tenga la menor conexión. En este caso, sería la vacuna de Pfizer o la de Moderna. Sin embargo, puede que no tengamos opción de elegir. Por lo tanto, y dada la gravedad de la crisis de salud actual, animo a todos los católicos a que reciban cualquier vacuna disponible tan pronto como sea posible.

Desde la perspectiva moral y ética, todos los que estamos recibiendo estas vacunas, tenemos el deber de expresar nuestras preocupaciones a las compañías farmacéuticas y exigirles que produzcan vacunas que no dependan de células o tejidos con alguna conexión al aborto.

Oremos unos por otros y por el fin de esta pandemia mortal.



Arzobispo Pablo S. Coakley

Al regresar de Irak, el papa habla sobre los ‘riesgos’ en el viaje

Por Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

A BORDO DEL VUELO PAPAL DESDE IRAK – El compromiso de la Iglesia Católica de dialogar con otras iglesias y con otras religiones fluye del Evangelio, pero el papa Francisco dijo que sabe que algunos católicos no están de acuerdo.

“A menudo hay que arriesgarse” para promover la armonía, dijo a los periodistas el 8 de marzo mientras volaba de regreso a Roma desde Bagdad. “Hay algunas críticas: ‘El papa no es valiente, es imprudente’. Está haciendo cosas en contra de la doctrina católica. Está a un paso de la herejía”.

Aún así, dijo, a través de la oración y escuchando los consejos de expertos y asistentes, se ha convencido de que Dios quiere que la iglesia, y toda la humanidad, continúe promoviendo un sentido de pertenencia a una sola familia humana.

Y, dijo, que no importa si algunas religiones, sectas o grupos parecen estar más lejos de compartir esa visión.

“El gobierno de Jesús es el amor y la caridad”, dijo el papa. “¿Pero cuántos siglos nos llevó poner eso en práctica?”

Predicar y vivir la “fraternidad humana”- reconociendo que todos los hombres y mujeres, creados por Dios, son miembros de la misma familia humana y hermanos y hermanas entre sí - es un proceso que requiere esfuerzo, énfasis y repetición.

“Eres humano. Eres un hijo de Dios. Eres mi hermano o hermana”, dijo el papa.

Con la violencia esporádica que continúa en Irak, el viaje del papa del 5 al 8 de marzo involucró una operación de seguridad masiva con el despliegue de miles de policías y oficiales militares. Incluso la policía del Vaticano y la Guardia Suiza usaban chalecos antibalas debajo de sus trajes oscuros, una práctica inusual en un viaje papal.

Pero el otro peligro lo planteaba el COVID-19 y el riesgo de que las personas que se reunieran para ver al papa, que ha sido vacunado, genere un aumento en el número ya creciente de casos en Irak.

El papa Francisco dijo que la pandemia, no el problema de seguridad fue lo que lo hizo pensar varias veces, “tal vez, tal vez no” sobre la visita.

Las decisiones sobre viajes al extranjero “se acumulan en el tiempo”, dijo el papa.

“Pensé tanto, recé tanto” sobre el viaje a Irak por la pandemia del coronavirus “, y al final tomé la decisión libremente, pero vino de por dentro y me dije a mi mismo que él que me ayudó a decidir esto va a cuidar a la gente”.

Y aunque muchos expertos no esperan que la pandemia se resuelva para el otoño, el papa Francisco dijo que prometió ir a Budapest, Hungría un día en septiembre para celebrar la misa de clausura del Congreso Eucarístico Internacional, que se pospuso de 2020.

El otro viaje que le gustaría hacer pronto, dijo, es una visita al Líbano.

El cardenal Bechara Rai, patriarca de la Iglesia católica maronita, incluso le pidió que se detuviera en el Líbano en el camino hacia o desde Irak, dijo el papa, pero hacer eso parecería darle “migajas” al pueblo libanés dado su sufrimiento.

Cuando se le preguntó sobre su reunión del 6 de marzo en Nayaf con el ayatolá Ali al-Sistani, una figura de autoridad para los musulmanes chiitas en Irak y en todo el mundo, el papa Francisco lo describió como “un gran hombre, un hombre sabio, un hombre de Dios”.

La reunión, dijo, “fue buena para mi alma” y fue un paso más en el camino de promover una mayor comprensión y cooperación con los musulmanes.

El día después de reunirse con el ayatolá, el papa Francisco viajó a Mosul, una ciudad atormentada y dejada en gran parte en ruinas por los militantes del Estado Islámico que controlaron el área de 2014 a 2017.

Aunque dijo que había visto fotos de las iglesias en ruinas de Mosul, el papa Francisco dijo que estar parado entre los escombros era “increíble, increíble”.

Pero aún más conmovedor, dijo, fue el testimonio de los sobrevivientes, incluso la de una madre que perdió a un hijo, que habló sobre la importancia del perdón y la reconstrucción.

“Somos muy buenos para insultar y condenar a la gente”, dijo, pero demasiadas personas han olvidado el poder de perdonar a los demás.

Cuando se le preguntó, si alguna vez, haría un viaje a Argentina, el papa Francisco repitió que se imaginaba muriendo o renunciando y permaneciendo en Roma, “mi diócesis”.

Bromeó diciendo que había pasado 76 años en Argentina y no veía por qué la gente quería que pasara más tiempo allí.

Pero, negando tener lo que denominó “patrio-fobia”, dijo a los periodistas que había planeado un viaje a Argentina, junto con Chile, en noviembre de 2017. Sin embargo, el viaje se retrasó hasta enero de 2018 debido a las elecciones en Chile. Y enero en Argentina habría sido demasiado cálido.

“No sé si los viajes van a disminuir, pero les puedo decir que en este viaje me he sentido más cansado”, dijo, y agregó que tener 84 años viene con algo de cansancio.

Sin embargo, dijo, disfruta estar con la gente, especialmente “después de estos meses de encarcelamiento” debido a la pandemia y el cierre en Italia.

“Me siento diferente cuando estoy lejos de la gente”, dijo, y agregó que continuará siguiendo las recomendaciones de las autoridades gubernamentales de salud en cuanto a realizar audiencias generales u otros eventos que puedan atraer a un gran público.

“La cercanía al pueblo de Dios” es una parte esencial de ser sacerdote, dijo el papa. “Los únicos que nos salvan del orgullo son el pueblo santo de Dios”, de lo contrario los sacerdotes corren el riesgo de actuar como “una casta de élite”.

San Eugenio

CLASES DE INGLÉS ESL

virtual o en persona

la próxima clase comienza el 6 de abril

Martes y Jueves 7-8:30 PM

PROMOCODE - COMMUNITY2020

Inscríbete en línea con el código de promoción de la Iglesia - eschoolenglish.com/community for more information contact: [Patty Dearden a: pattyjo57@gmail.com](mailto:PattyDearden.a:pattyjo57@gmail.com) o con Martha Martinez a: mmartinez@steugenes.org

Sister BJ's Pantry

Campaña de Recolección de Jeans 2021

- Sister BJ's pantry está recolectando jeans para hombres, nuevos y usados.
- El objetivo es recolectar 1,000 pares de pantalones de mezclilla.
- La fecha límite para la recolección es el 31 de marzo del 2021

Lugares donde puede encontrar una caja para la recolección de Jeans para Sister BJ's Pantry:

St. BJ's Pantry: 819 NW 4th Street
Sábados de marzo por la mañana:
De 9 am a 11am

O bien,
Saint Mark, Norman
Saint James, OKC
Saint Francis of Assisi, OKC
Epiphany of the Lord, OKC
Christ the King, Nichols Hills
Saint Eugene, The Village
Saint Monica, Edmond
Saint John the Baptist, Edmond

Jeans nuevos y usados:
Tallas: 30 al 38 de preferencia

Sister BJ les da las gracias y que Dios los bendiga!

Para mayor información, visite: www.srbjpantry.org

Santuario del Beato Stanley Rother

Firma de la Viga

¡Sea parte de la historia!
Firme su nombre en una viga para el Santuario del Beato Stanley Rother.

10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Martes, 16 de Marzo
Miércoles, 17 de Marzo
Sábado, 20 de Marzo

Situado en S. 89 entre la I-35 y Shields Blvd.
Oklahoma City

rothershrine.org **BOLDT**

Briefs

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

Lenten initiative

Parishes across the archdiocese are participating in a Lenten initiative to build community and to prepare for Easter. The initiative by Real Life Catholic features Chris Stefanick, host of The Search on Formed. The initiative includes a live show online each week of Lent with a different bishop. **Archbishop Coakley will be live on March 24.** Find more information at reallifecatholic.com or formed.org, and watch the live broadcast at reallifecatholic.com/live.

Sign up for FORMED!

There are three easy steps for parishioners to sign-up on FORMED: 1) Visit signup.formed.org. 2) Enter parish zip or name. 3) Enter name and e-mail.

Catholic hospitality training

The Catholic Hospitality Training Institute will offer a training seminar 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. March 17 at the Catholic Pastoral Center with streaming to satellite locations at Holy Family Catholic Church in Lawton and St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church

in Enid. The training is for staff and volunteers who make “first contact” with guests. Registration is \$25, includes materials, lunch and monthly messages. Register by March 10 at archokc.org/pleevents. Contact Larann Wilson at lwilson@archokc.org.

Marriage in His Image Date Nights

Christ the King Catholic Church presents Marriage in His Image Date Nights on March 20 with Fr. Rick Stansberry and April 17 with Dcn. Rick and Toby Booth. These individual sessions are based on Catholic teaching to guide committed couples in their marriage journey with Jesus Christ before and after the wedding. Sessions begin at 6:15 p.m. in the school cafeteria, 8005 Dorset Dr. in Nichols Hills. RSVP for free childcare at mihi@ckokc.org. Visit ckokc.org/mihi.

Fish Fry

Knights of Columbus Council 5168 will be hosting a drive-thru Lenten Fish Fry 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. March 19 and March 26 at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 4th Street and Comanche, in Marlow. Dinner of fish, fries, coleslaw, pickle, onion, lemon, tartar sauce and brownie for \$9.

Lent retreat

A Lent retreat “Making Personal Discoveries” will be 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. March 26 at The Healing House, 320 W Adams in Crescent. The retreat, facilitated by Fr. Anthony Ram, will focus on faith and walking with Jesus into the future. Visit thehealinghouse.co.

Chrism Mass

The Chrism Mass will be live-streamed at 3 p.m. March 30 from The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City. Due to social distancing requirements, the Mass will not be open to the public. Watch the live-stream at archokc.org/live, Facebook and YouTube.

Jeans Drive 2021

Sister BJ’s Pantry is having a Jeans Drive for homeless people. New or gently used men’s jeans will be collected until March 31 at several locations including from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Sr. BJ’s Pantry, 819 N.W. 4 in Oklahoma City. Sizes 30-38 preferred. Visit srbjpantry.org.

Domestic Church Evangelization Retreat

A retreat for sacramentally married couples to begin, or deepen, their spiritual lives together is

April 15-18 at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway, OKC. Cost: \$350 (scholarships available). Register at archokc.org/dc. Contact Alex Schimpf at (405) 709-2755, aschimpf@archokc.org.

Rachel’s Vineyard

A Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat is April 30 - May 2 at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway, OKC. This healing retreat is for post-abortive women and men. E-mail rachel@cceok.org to register or call (918) 512-1525 for information.

Golf tournament

Knights of Columbus Council #5266 at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Stillwater is hosting the 2021 Oklahoma Knights of Columbus annual golf tournament May 22 at the Golf Course at Cimarron Trail in Perkins. Proceeds benefit The Center of Family Love. Open to all golfers; 4 player scramble with a shotgun start at 1:30 p.m. Cost: \$75 per player, which covers the green fee, cart, lunch, goody bag and two drink tickets. Visit kofc5266.org/p/resources. Contact SK Pedro Velasco at pedropvelascoe@gmail.com, (405) 614-4585.

cover letter and resume, with the subject line Substitute Teacher.

Business manager – OKC

Mount St. Mary Catholic High School is seeking an accountant to fill the business manager position. Accounting responsibilities: financial reporting, oversite of the general ledger, budgeting, accounts receivable, investments, accounts payable, accruals and fixed assets. Student financial aid applications and awards also are managed by this position. A bachelor’s degree in accounting or finance, proficiency with Microsoft Office applications, making presentations and experience using accounting software a must. Bilingual in Spanish preferred. Send inquiries and resumes to cfinsel@mountstmary.org.

Director of housing – OKC

Catholic Charites of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking a director of housing to take a leadership role in the creation of Housing First communities for the formerly homeless and oversee real estate development activities. Relevant master’s degree preferred; experienced and technically proficient in all aspects of affordable housing real estate development, including finance, entitlement and design, construction, lease-up and operations. Send cover letter with resume to David Ashton at dashton@ccaokc.org.

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

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 soonercatholic.org.

March

14

Fourth Sunday of Lent.

14

Daylight Saving Time begins.

14

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.

16

Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine public beam signing; 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.; S.E. 89 and I-35.

16

Serra Club of Oklahoma City meeting, 10:30 a.m., Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway, OKC. Visit serraokc.org.

16

Suicide grief support group, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., St. Francis, 1901 N.W. 18, OKC.

17

Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine public beam signing; 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.; S.E. 89 and I-35.

17

Feast of St. Patrick.

17

Entertaining Angels training, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., CPC and satellite locations. Contact Larann Wilson, lwilson@archokc.org.

17

Monthly Novena to the Infant Jesus. Nine days of

novenas to the Infant Jesus of Prague. During the nine days, the novena prayers will be: Monday-Friday following Noon Mass, Saturday following 5 p.m. Mass, and Sunday following 11 a.m. Mass.

18

Feast of St. Cyril of Jerusalem.

18

Charismatic Catholic prayer meeting, 7 p.m., Catholic Pastoral Center. Contact Elaine at (405) 358-3610, ccrprayers@gmail.com.

19

Feast of St. Joseph.

20

Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine public beam signing; 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.; S.E. 89 and I-35.

20

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. Any lay person interested in living a consecrated life is welcome to "come and see." Contact Toni Harrelson at (405) 694-1292, (405) 341-2199 or tonimah@sbcglobal.net.

20

The Oklahoma City Community of Secular Carmelites meets monthly at Little Flower, OKC. Anyone interested in deepening prayer life with community

support, call Vicky Caudell at (405) 637-4611 or William Ginn at (405) 737-2024.

21

Fifth Sunday of Lent.

21

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.

23

Feast of St. Turibius of Mogrovejo.

25

The Annunciation of the Lord.

25

Charismatic Catholic prayer meeting, 7 p.m., Catholic Pastoral Center. Contact Elaine at (405) 358-3610, ccrprayers@gmail.com.

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Tuesdays - 3:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m.

Wednesdays - 3:30 p.m.

March 9, 10: **Caden Bennett** - lay ministry, St. John, Edmond

March 16, 17: **Juan Valarde** - catechist, St. Francis, Sulphur

March 23, 24: **Shawn Carney** – national president and founder, 40 Days for Life

March 30, 31: **Dcn. Paul Albert** - St. Joseph Old Cathedral, Oklahoma City

April 6, 7: **Jerry Lang** – assistant principal, All Saints Catholic School, Norman

April 13, 14: **Sr. Veronica Higgins** – The Center of Family Love, Okarche

April 20, 21: **Fr. Nabil Mouannes** - pastor, Our Lady of Lebanon, Norman

April 27, 28: **Sally Crowe Nash** - board member, Oklahoma Catholic Radio

Office manager and executive assistant – OKC

The Catholic Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City seeks an office manager and executive assistant in the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis. Responsible for organizing, coordinating and managing office administration procedures to ensure effectiveness and efficiency, including coordinating events and maintaining schedules for the executive director and assistant executive director, intra-office communications, inventory control, staff supervision and delegation of tasks. Independently manage a wide range of administrative tasks. Send resume to mmills@archokc.org.

Principal - OKC

Sacred Heart Catholic School is seeking a principal for the 2021-2022 school year. Sacred Heart is a vibrant, culturally and economically diverse PreK-4 through 8th grade Catholic school with a current enrollment of 125 students. Ideal candidate is highly effective communicator and creative problem solver who is enthusiastic about addressing the challenges of providing access to Catholic education for all. Must be practicing Catholic with a minimum of five years of teaching experience. Administrative experience and bilingual in Spanish preferred. Effective July 1; earlier start date possible. Contact the Office of the Superintendent, P.O. Box 32180, OKC 73123; dfloyd@archokc.org or call (405) 721-4202.

PreK-4, kindergarten teacher - OKC

Sacred Heart Catholic School in Oklahoma City is seeking a certified PreK-4 and kindergarten teacher for the 2021-2022 school year. E-mail cover letter and resume to Principal Joana Camacho at principal@sacredheartokc.org.

Science teacher - OKC

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School is seeking an experienced data fluency, quantitative and qualitative research methods instructor teaching sections of methods of science and honors methods of science. Physical science certification required. Intermediate math preferred. E-mail resume and cover letter to Department Chair Julia Anderson-Holt at janderson@bmchs.org.

Teachers – Midwest City

St. Philip Neri Catholic School in Midwest City is seeking early childhood and elementary teachers. Applicants must hold state certification. Teaching experience preferred. E-mail resume to Principal Brenda Tener at btener@spnok.org.

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 young adults in the parish. Experience in catechetical leader-

ship preferred, concern for personal and spiritual growth, and able to communicate in English and Spanish. Send resumes to randy.hearn@stjosephsok.org.

School secretary - OKC

St. James Catholic School seeks a school secretary and administrative assistant to the principal. Strong written and verbal communication skills; light bookkeeping, outstanding technology skills, strong organizational and time management skills. Responsible for opening the school. Bilingual in English and Spanish preferred. No phone calls. E-mail resume to Principal Alicia Vazquez at avazquez@stjames-catholic.org.

Organist/choir director - Duncan

Assumption Catholic Church in Duncan is seeking a part-time organist/choir director. Must 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.

Substitute teachers – OKC

Cristo Rey Oklahoma City Catholic High School is seeking substitute teachers. Apply at cristoreyokc.org/careers.

Substitute teachers - OKC

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School is seeking substitute teachers. E-mail bishop@bmchs.org. Candidates should include a

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2015, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.*

Trey Welker
Assistant General Agent
MDRT, SKC
405-850-4092
trey.welker@kofc.org
Councils: 3220, 10822, 12669

Chad McAuliff
MDRT, SKC
918-284-0685
chad.mcauliff@kofc.org
Councils: 1104, 4721, 6606, 9668, 9737, 13828

Bobby Stevens
SKC
405-534-0397
bobby.stevens@kofc.org
Councils: 1018, 3556, 4598, 5160, 5354, 9901, 12108, 16048, 16214, 16367

Troy Snow
918-798-0012
troy.snow@kofc.org
Councils: 775, 1677, 7392, 10388, 11194, 11633, 11959, 13313, 15834

Devon Soukup
MDRT, SKC
405-505-6030
devon.soukup@kofc.org
Councils: 767, 3101, 5440, 5759, 6478, 8633, 14744

Lance Dufour
918-550-0886
lance.dufour@kofc.org
Councils: 962, 1302, 3167, 4519, 4804, 7395, 8433, 11734, 14220, 14248, 14448, 15785, 17559

Kevin Pierce
Regional Agency Executive Consultant
General Agent
SKC
Office: 877-707-0752
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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

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40 DAYS FOR LIFE™

THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF ABORTION

Every Spring and Fall, the 40 Days for Life campaign aims to turn hearts away from abortion and the culture of death through around-the-clock, peaceful prayer vigils outside of abortion facilities.

On Feb. 21, Sue Thayer, director of outreach with 40 Days for Life, visited Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond. She shared her story of being a former abortion facility manager and how she eventually founded Cornerstone for Life Pregnancy Resource Center in Iowa.

Estela Hernandez, with U.S. Sen. James Lankford’s office, also spoke at the Edmond event.

Thayer visited the campaign sites in Oklahoma City and Norman also. The Spring campaign ends March 28. To sign up, visit 40daysforlife.com or contact respectlife@archokc.org for more information.

Photos Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.



40 DAYS FOR LIFE

Feb 17 - March 28

Locations:
Edmond, OKC,
Norman

Sign up at www.40daysforlife.com to choose a day, time, and location. Simply arrive and park off site. Find a spot on a public side walk and pray for the men, women, children, and abortion workers.

Questions? Email respectlife@archokc.org

