

Rodrigo Serna ordained to the priesthood



Archbishop Coakley led Vespers on Aug. 11 and celebrated Mass on Aug. 12 for the Priesthood Ordination of Fr. Rodrigo Serna Velasco at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City. *Photos Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.*

By Diane Clay
The Sooner Catholic

Deacon Rodrigo Serna kissed his white stole, lifted it over his head and around his neck, and prayed for the repose of the souls of his grandparents before walking from the rectory to the ornate doors of The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help next door where more than 350 faithful quickly filled the pews for his ordination to the priesthood.

The Mass on Aug. 12 was the culmination of an 18-year journey for Serna that began when he left home at age 14 for a seminary in Mexico. The winding road with many stops and starts is what

he said he needed to discern the vocation he'd been professing since elementary school.

The hymn "All Creatures of Our God and King" was played by Nolan Patrick Reilly and sung by the cathedral choir as the procession began.

Following the readings and proclamation of the Gospel – with his mom, Maria del Socorro Velasco, and dad, Jose Rosario Serna, seated in the front row – Deacon Serna was presented as a candidate for ordination by Father John Paul Lewis, director of seminarians for the archdiocese.

During his homily, Archbishop Coakley spoke of the challenge and responsibilities Father Serna would face as a priest.

"It's not enough today for a priest

to be a good churchman. A priest, now as much as ever, must be first and foremost a faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus, a witness to Jesus Christ and herald of his Gospel. ... We are all called to be witnesses to Jesus Christ to become not only disciples, but missionary disciples filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit to go forth into the world. If this is the challenge and the mandate for all of the baptized and the confirmed, it is more so for those who are called by the Lord to serve as his priests," he said.

"(The priesthood) is a vocation of radical dependence on Jesus Christ, who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life in ransom for many. ... Deacon

continued on page 20



Put Out Into the Deep

Luke 5:4

St. Augustine: a guide for restless hearts

On Aug. 28 we celebrate the feast day of one of the most intriguing and well-known saints on the calendar: Saint Augustine; a product of the Church of the 4th century.

Although from the remote Christian outpost of North Africa, he influenced the development of Catholic thought from his time until present day. We can recognize the extent of his influence by noting the number of times Pope Benedict XVI referred to him when discussing contemporary issues. Saint Augustine was a man for all times.

In his youth, Augustine was a bright student enamored by the ways of the world. He tasted the pleasurable fruits of his passions as he pursued a life of advancement, preferment and success.

But, even with all his achievements, he grew weary and remained restless. He wanted to be celebrated for his intelligence while at the same time be known as a man about town. His inner chaos was resolved when he accepted the Catholic faith and was baptized by Saint Ambrose of Milan. He attributed his conversion to the power of God's grace working through the scriptures and the persevering prayers of his faithful mother, Saint Monica.

After his conversion, Saint Augustine lived in Hippo, North Africa, where he became the bishop. He placed his considerable talents at the service of his faith and became notable throughout the Christian world for his wisdom expressed in his vast writings.

His insights and explanations have provided the basis for theological reflection on nearly every aspect of Christian thought. He also wrote the first autobiography, "The Confessions," which became the most popular book in the Christian world – after the Bible – for more than 1,000 years.

Augustine's thought has gained him an unfair reputation among many for being too negative, especially concerning human sexuality. It is true; he is cautious about indulging the natural goodness of our human appetites, which is understandable due his own experience with the power of sin.

However, compared to the gritty reality of our time in which medical professionals advise the mutilation and sterilization of children in pursuit of an imagined gender identity, the somber Augustine looks increasingly sober and realistic.

His greatest insight was in parallel with Saint Paul's. Like Paul, he was always the smartest person in the room. But, when he depended only on his own abilities, they brought him to the ruin and frustration of his ambition. It was only when he began to conform his life to the Gospel, when he gave himself to Christ, that he began to realize the promise that was his.

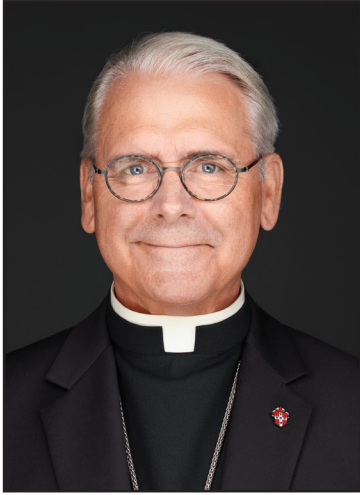
As Saint Paul put it so well, he became himself as he gave himself to Jesus. We are created in the image and likeness of another; it is only as we give ourselves to the other that we become what we were made to be. When Augustine surrendered himself to God's will, he found the happiness he had been looking for. As he wrote in "The Confessions," "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

He died in 430 as the security and stability of the Roman Empire was crumbling. And yet, amid the failure of politics, he trusted in God's unfolding plan. Through the power of his faith, Augustine knew God was just getting started.

No matter how dark the present moment, he knew it was simply prelude to the dawn breaking. We can find encouragement in our time from his hope-filled confidence.

Lastly, after 35 years of being a bishop in Hippo, in the last year of his life, Saint Augustine had three main priorities as the head of the Church (according to biographer Peter Brown). He had to find priests who could speak the native language of the Berber tribes who were converting to the faith; he needed to raise money to build classroom buildings to accommodate the young people in his growing parishes; and he had to begin a program of education and certification for those who were the teachers of the faith. Not much has changed in the life a bishop!

Saint Augustine is a champion of restless hearts who yearn to know life in Christ. His past did not disqualify him from the love of God; it won't disqualify any of us as we turn to Him. Saint Augustine is the great witness of hope for us all.



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 communications@archokc.org.

✓ **For people who** have drifted away from the faith. May they encounter Christ and rediscover abundant life in him. We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

✓ **Surviving Divorce**
A 14-week Surviving Divorce program begins Sept. 13 and will meet 6 p.m. - 7:15 p.m. each Wednesday at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond. For more information and to register, e-mail sjbsurvivingdivorce@gmail.com.



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Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our priests.

Through them, we experience your presence in the sacraments.

Help our priests to be strong in their vocation.

Set their souls on fire with love for your people.

Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Inspire them with the vision of your kingdom.

Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel.

Allow them to experience joy in their ministry.

Help them to become instruments of your divine grace.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest.

Amen.

The National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague celebrates 74th anniversary, new momentum of Eucharistic Revival

By Jad Ziolkowska
The Sooner Catholic

A spirit of prayer and thanksgiving filled the National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague, in Prague, Oklahoma, on Aug. 6, as parishioners and pilgrims commemorated the 74th anniversary of the shrine.

Father Christopher Tran, rector of the shrine and pastor of Saint Wenceslaus Catholic Church, in Prague, Oklahoma, celebrated the Holy Eucharist. It was followed by a Holy Hour, Rosary and Divine Mercy prayers, Benediction, anointing with holy oils for healing and a talk by Father Tran about the importance of the Eucharistic revival in the hearts of the faithful.

Father Tran explained the relationship between the Eucharist and the devotion to the Infant Jesus of Prague.

"The little Infant Jesus and the Eucharist are one. The Infant Jesus is very humble, awaiting our prayers, and Christ hidden in the Eucharist is also humbly waiting for us," said Father Tran.

He invited everyone to visit the shrine for the daily Eucharist and Holy Hour. "Come to the Eucharistic Christ. If you love someone, you want to be with them. It is about your 'being' with Jesus, not about your 'doing' of the worldly tasks."

Eucharistic revival at the shrine has been the main mission of Father Tran since he started his pastoral assignment in Prague one month ago.

The shrine was formally dedicated in 1949 by Bishop Eugene J. McGuinness, bishop of then-Oklahoma City and Tulsa, and built under the auspices of Father George G. Johnson, pastor. Thousands of pilgrims from across Oklahoma and other states have been visiting the shrine annually to worship the Infant Jesus of Prague known for centuries for his miraculous healing power.

Mary Ann and Roger Pritchett,

faithful parishioners married for 65 years, have been living in Prague all their life. Roger Pritchett served as an altar boy at Saint Wenceslaus Catholic Church through his grade school, high school and college years. He vividly recalls the year when the shrine was built.

"I remember very well when Father Johnson gave each one of us – kids then, one brick and had us lay it for the foundation of the current church and the shrine," said Pritchett.

Speaking about the Infant Jesus of Prague, Mary Ann Pritchett stated, "The Infant has been helping us with our daily issues and has solved many of our family problems."

Roger confirmed with confidence, "When we trust in the Infant Jesus, he will help us on account of our faith in him."

The couple appreciated the Holy Hour and the devotions to the First Fridays and First Saturdays adopt-



Infant Jesus of Prague in St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church and the shrine.

ett, explaining the importance of religion in their family life.

Roger Pritchett agreed, stating, "If I didn't come to the Holy Hour, I know deep in my heart that I would be missing out on something very essential. I want to do what is right and important and

their appreciation for multiple graces received from the Infant Jesus of Prague.

"We have been coming here regularly for many years," said Debra Longoria.

With tears in her eyes, she shared her personal story of healing, "I had stage 4 cancer and treatment for the second time. I prayed a lot to Jesus. When my cancer disappeared completely after treatment, my oncologist was surprised and said that I was the only person she treated who survived. I have been cancer-free for two years now."

Ernesto Longoria added, "We will continue to visit with the Infant Jesus as long as we have family that needs the Lord's help."

Father Tran concluded the anniversary celebrations with a missionary call to the faithful to be witnesses of the transforming power of the Eucharist in their lives.

"You have just received the Holy Communion. You are the Tabernacle of Christ ... The message of the Eucharist does not end here, but it is a beginning of the journey ... You are sent forth to put out into the deep and bring Jesus to those who don't know him."

Jad Ziolkowska is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.



Parishioners of St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church and pilgrims with Fr. Christopher Tran. Photos Jad Ziolkowska/Sooner Catholic.

ed at the shrine by Father Tran.

"I ask Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to give me the grace to pray better and to be a better Catholic," said Mary Ann Pritch-

ett, explaining the importance of religion in their family life.

Debra and Ernesto Longoria, visitors from Saint Teresa of Avila Catholic Church in Harrah, shared

Archbishop Coakley's Calendar

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

Aug. 31 – Senior Staff meeting, 10 a.m., Catholic Pastoral Center

Aug. 31 – Mass, 11:30 a.m., St. Francis de Sales Chapel, CPC

Sept. 5 – St. Ann Retirement Center Board meeting, 8 a.m., CPC

Sept. 5 – Presbyteral Council meeting, 9:30 a.m., CPC

Sept. 5 – Mass, 11:30 a.m., Saint Francis de Sales Chapel, CPC

Sept. 5 – Jubilarian Dinner with priests of archdiocese, 6 p.m., The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Oklahoma City

Sept. 6 – Mass and breakfast with archdiocesan missionaries, 8 a.m., CPC

Sept. 6 – Eucharistic Procession, 6 p.m., Norman

Sept. 7 – Mass, 9:30 a.m., Center of Family Love, Okarche

Sept. 7 – Continuing Education Committee meeting, 2 p.m., CPC

Sept. 7 – Archdiocesan Review Board meeting, 3 p.m., CPC

Sept. 8 – Mass and Rite of Installation of Deacon Candidates as Lectors, 7 p.m., CPC

Sept. 9 – 125th Anniversary Celebration, 3 p.m., Good Shepherd Church, Boise City

Sept. 10 – Young Adult Mass and cookout, 3 p.m., CPC



**Most Reverend
Paul S. Coakley**

Archbishop of Oklahoma City
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“Make Straight the Way”

hosted by Dcn. Larry Sousa

*Conversations with people who are
making a difference in Oklahoma.*

Sept. 5 and 6: David and Julie Lewis, GoLife Women's
Services and Mobile Medical, Norman.

Sept. 12 and 13: Dcn. David Ashton, director of
administration, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of
Oklahoma City.

Sept. 19 and 20: Fr. Peter Shults, O.S.B., St. Gregory's
Abbey, Shawnee.

Sept. 26 and 27: Debbie Espinosa, president/CEO,
Center of Family Love, Okarche.

“Make Straight the Way” broadcasts on Oklahoma
Catholic Radio Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
and Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. Listen online at okcr.org.

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From the Archives ...

A photo series from George Rigazzi, archdiocesan archivist

Since 1885, in the community of Krebs, Oklahoma, Saint Joseph Catholic Church has continued to be a beacon of faith in this small mining town. Boasting a population of around 1,000, the current building is the oldest in what is now the Diocese of Tulsa. Built in 1903, while Oklahoma was still a Vicariate Apostolic (the Diocese of Oklahoma was erected in 1905), this edifice served what was a predominantly an Italian population.

Many of the immigrants had come to work the thankless job of coal mining. It was common at the time that many were not fond of the clergy. And while they would never think of not baptizing their children or marrying in the Church, Sunday Mass attendance was not seen as a must. Tithing was also a foreign concept, as the state funded churches in Italy. The intense poverty they had fled in the homeland did little to inflame the desire to support the Church, and some turned to socialism and saw the clergy as part of the problem.

This tension between the people and their pastor came to a boil when it became known that Father Germanus Guillaume had mortgaged the church to build a new rectory without informing the congregation, although Bishop Meerschaert had given his approval. Due to the antagonism of the parishioners, Guillaume was replaced by a fellow Benedictine, Father



St. Joseph Church circa 1935.

Louis Sittere, who hailed from the Alsace-Lorraine region that was sometimes part of France and at other times Italian depending upon the treaty. Father Louis was not a man to be trifled with and when he explained that he had been sent to pay off the debt. He had not anticipated the anger he faced. Being painfully honest, he admitted that the property would be seized unless the cash was forthcoming. To his chagrin, much of the parish welcomed this eventuality as they planned to purchase it in the sheriff's sale and would run it as they saw fit.

Obviously, they were not familiar with canon law and didn't actually care. In February of 1916, Bishop Meerschaert, who was determined not to give in, put the parish under quasi-interdict. With this action, the parishioners would not be allowed to gather at the church and could not go to nearby par-

ishes. This proved to be a poor solution as the difficult faction in the parish became increasingly more virulent in their protests.

The decree of quasi-interdict was lifted in March and the situation began to cool. Very slowly, the parish shed the “baptized, married and buried” Catholicism that permeated the original community. It has done its best to maintain its Italian heritage and for many years celebrated the Our Lady of Mount Carmel feast day in July as a major parish event. Many were from the province of Abruzzo where Our Lady's feast was held in high esteem.

Saint Joseph Catholic Church, the architectural gem, remains a parish church even though it is in close proximity to McAlester. With the shortage of clergy, the fact that it still retains that status is a testament to the people and their faith.

Bishop McGuinness earns speech school of excellence award

Seven Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School students competed at the 93rd annual National Speech & Debate Tournament June 11-16 in Phoenix, Arizona, where Bishop McGuinness was honored with the prestigious Speech School of Excellence Award, securing a spot among the top 20 schools in the nation.

Price Collier, a 2023 graduate, was a national final round champion, finishing third overall in humorous interpretation. A three-time national qualifier, this was Collier's first time to advance to the final round of competition. He had to compete and advance through 12 rounds of competition to qualify for the last round of six finalists.

Asher Thorson, a junior at Bishop McGuinness, placed 21 in humorous interpretation. Other competitors included Delaney Anderson, Daniel Soto, Kayleona Hill, Brock Gowens and Fina Chongwa.

The Bishop McGuinness Speech and Debate Team was

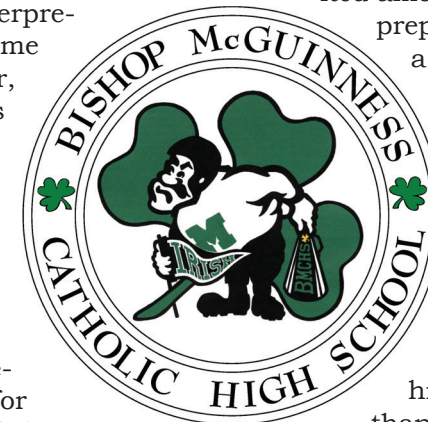
also the 5A State Champions in 2022 and 2023.

At the National Tournament, students debated tough topics covering trade agreements with Taiwan, civil liberties and environmental issues. Other championship performances ranged from interpretation of literature to public address to events where students have a limited amount of time to

prepare a speech on a current event they've been assigned.

This year's tournament was the largest in National Speech & Debate Association history with more than 6,700 students participating. Students

competed throughout the year at one of 111 district tournaments to qualify for nationals. Schools are allowed a certain number of entries to the district tournament. Districts are allocated a number of qualifiers based on the size of the district and their growth.



The Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School Speech and Debate Team.

Photos provided.



Join us
Saturday,
Sept. 2
2023

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 2:00 p.m. | Outdoor Mass (bring your own chair or blanket) |
| 3-5:00 p.m. | Indoor and outdoor games and activities for all ages, pool party, raffle baskets, snacks and beverages |
| 5-7:00 p.m. | BBQ dinner / Pig Roast and more! |
| 7:00 p.m. | Live outdoor concert |

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and the OU Catholic Student Association

Shannen Dee Williams, Ph.D.

**Still Mining the Forgotten:
The Hidden History and
Legacies of Black Catholic Nuns
in the United States**

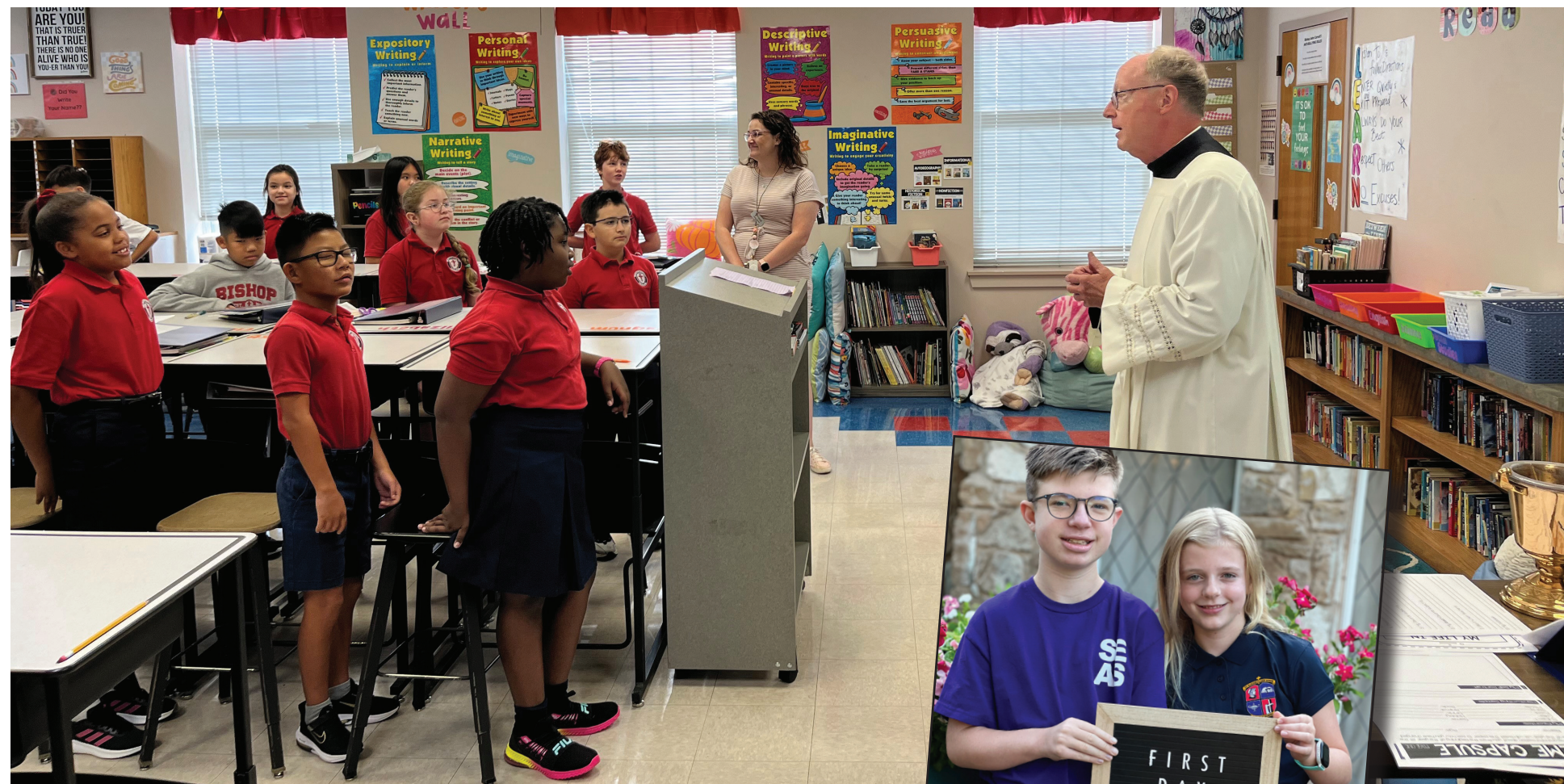


**Wednesday,
September 20, 5:30 p.m.**

Sam Noble Museum of
Natural History Auditorium
2401 Chautauqua Avenue, Norman
Free and open to the public

For more information, call (405) 321-0990 or email TFLatSTM@gmail.com.





Fr. Rick Stansberry blessed the classrooms on the first day of school at Bishop John Carroll Catholic School in Oklahoma City. *Photo provided.*



The Fairchilds from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School

Blessings and beginnings: schools begin new school year

By Everett Brazil, III
The Sooner Catholic

Saint Mary Catholic School in Ponca City opened its doors to the start of the new school year on Aug. 10.

On Aug. 8, Principal Wade Laffey enjoyed a quiet afternoon - a "calm before the storm." "I think we're looking at approximately 110 students, which is a little up from last year, which is good," said Laffey.

Saint Joseph Catholic School in Enid also saw an increase in enrollment, enough so that they have added a new class and possibly another class soon.

"We added a middle school, so we added sixth grade," said Principal Fred Martin, adding that a seventh grade may be added later.

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School in Oklahoma City also saw a bevy of changes, as they undergo a campaign to expand the school, which is hoped to be finished in the coming years.

"We're in the middle of a \$6 million capital campaign. We hope to break ground in September, and the

facility will be ready for the 2024-2025 school year," said Principal David Morton.

Mount St. Mary Catholic High School, also in Oklahoma City, returned to the classroom Aug. 14, but some students entered the hallways Friday for student orientation.

"Our first day for new students and freshmen was last Friday, Aug. 11. It was our orientation day, and we call it Rocket Rookie Rally," said Principal Laura Cain. "The full student body reported to the full day Monday, Aug. 14."

Each school held their first Mass of the school year on the Solemnity Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Tuesday, Aug. 15. Each school saw a larger number of students enrolled for the 2023-24 school year.

Saint Joseph Catholic School was able to add a new class. The school is located adjacent to Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Enid, and the student body also includes students from Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Church. They are not alone in sending students to the school.

"Some of the rural parishes also send their students here," said Martin.

Those rural parishes include Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Hennessey and Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Bison.

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School also saw an increase.

"Our enrollment has been at our largest, with 752," said Morton.

Many schools looked for ways to improve the incoming school year. Saint Joseph Catholic School added new classes for students.

"We're adding an orchestra this year. We've had a choir before,

and we wanted to add instruments," said Martin. Those instruments will be a 10-piece ensemble, including bass, cello, viola, and violin. The choir also sings during regular Mass. "We have a church concert and spring concert, as well."

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School saw the biggest advancement with their capital campaign.

"We're going to add five classrooms, and an advancement office," said Martin. "This is going to help in our increase in enrollment. This allows us to position our classes better. This will be a tremendous day-to-day part of the school."

Many students received blessings to start the new school year and the school buildings were blessed to begin the new year.

"Our associate pastor at Saint Francis Xavier led us in a blessing of our school," said Morton. "It was quite lovely."

Mount St. Mary Catholic High School welcomed a new president of the school: Deacon John Harned.

"We're looking forward the shared leadership and strategic visions that he can bring to the school," said Cain. As for the start of the school year, the excitement was palpable.

"The first day of the school is always the best day of the year," said Laffey. "Everyone's excited to be back to school."

Everett Brazil, III is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.



Ilan from Duncan High School



Cristo Rey OKC Catholic High School



Clare and Gregory House from All Saints Catholic School



Top: Kylie, Lexy and Kaitlyn
Bottom: Syanne from Mount St. Mary Catholic High School



St. John Nepomuk Catholic School



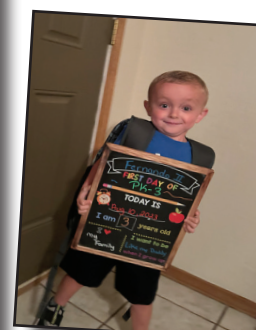
Marco from Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School



Emelia from St. Philip Neri Catholic School



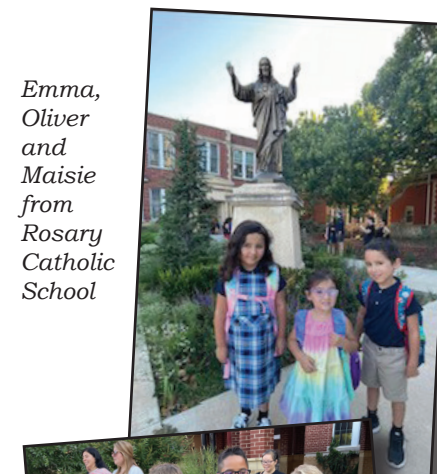
St. James Catholic School



Payton, Fr. Don Wolf and Principal Tera Albert from Sacred Heart Catholic School - OKC



Logan, Blair and Pierce with Fr. John Paul Lewis



Emma, Oliver and Maisie from Rosary Catholic School



Eleanora from Christ the King Catholic School



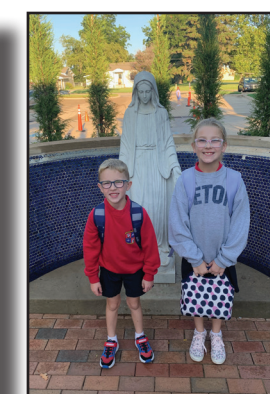
Holy Trinity Catholic School



Rogelio from Elgin High School and Adelina from Elgin Middle School



Zoey (above) and students from St. Mary Catholic School in Ponca City. *Photos Everett Brazil, III/ Sooner Catholic and provided.*



L to R: Achilles and Penelope; Sonya; Mallory and Grayson; and Max, Ella and Wynn from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School

Catholic Answers apologist moves to eastern Oklahoma

The Diocese of Tulsa is happy to announce it has entered into an agreement with Catholic Answers to provide parishes greater support in catechesis and evangelization.

On July 1, Catholic Answers Apologist Karlo Broussard moved to the Tulsa diocese, and began offering his services to the parishes part-time. This is the first formal partnership between a diocese and Catholic Answers to offer apologetical, catechetical and evangeliza-

tion training to the faithful.

"Catholic Answers has a reputation for some of the best Catholic apologists in the United States. We are excited to have Karlo in our diocese to equip the laity better so that they can share with others that Jesus is Lord," said Bishop David Konderla, bishop of the Diocese of Tulsa.

"We will miss Karlo very much, but I could not be happier for him as well as his wife, Jacqueline, and the entire Broussard clan,"

said Catholic Answers President Christopher Check. "And I am overjoyed that Catholic Answers has been able to partner in this way with a diocese where a true renaissance of spiritual, cultural and intellectual life is well underway. The faithful of Tulsa are blessed with a true shepherd in Bishop Konderla."

While Broussard will continue his radio, speaking, articles and podcasts work at Catholic Answers, he will also be making

himself available to the pastors, not by implementing a set diocesan program, but by offering his services based on what the pastors determine is needed for their flock.

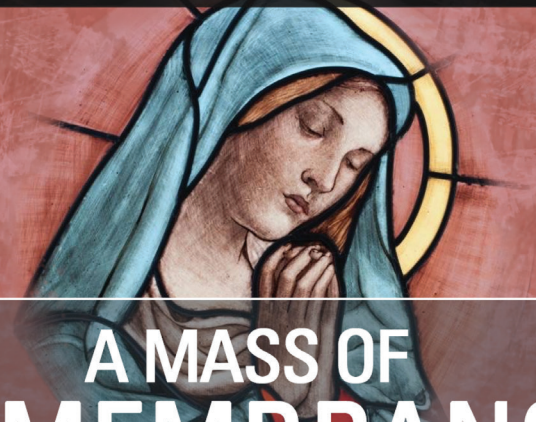
"We are delighted to have Karlo in our diocese," said Deacon Harrison Garlick, chancellor and in-house council for the Diocese of Tulsa. "We are honored to have this partnership with Catholic Answers and look forward to a successful relationship."



St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church in Norman held a parish picnic on June 25. Photos provided.




IN MEMORY OF THOSE LOST TO SUICIDE
Those who have experienced the loss of someone to suicide are invited to celebrate their loved one's life at...



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Officiant: Rev. John Paul Lewis

Those who wish to pray for and offer support to families and friends are welcome to attend.
A reception will follow in Parish Hall
For more information, please contact us at secretary@stfrancisokc.com

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September 23, 9 am - 8:30 pm

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www.stfrancisokcwomen.com

Meg Hunter-Kilmer
Catholic speaker, author, and 'hobo for Christ'
www.piercedhands.com




The inaugural archdiocesan Discipleship Conference was held on Aug. 19 at the Oklahoma City Convention Center in Oklahoma City. Photos Lindsay Tesio/Sooner Catholic.

Discipleship Conference gathers more than 1,000 Catholics from Oklahoma, beyond

By Jad Ziolkowska
The Sooner Catholic

The inaugural bilingual Discipleship Conference, under the auspices of Archbishop Paul Coakley, brought together nearly 1,300 Catholics from across the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and adjacent states on Aug. 19. "Two thousand years ago, Christ gave his followers the transformative mission to 'go make disciples.' This mission remains alive in the Church today. Empowered by the Holy Spirit we are called to carry on the good news and gain others for Christ," said Archbishop Coakley explaining the aim of the conference.

With 13 breakout sessions and talks given by two internationally known keynote speakers and nine national and local speakers, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, confessions, the Holy Eucharist and dozens of exhibitors, the event provided a multitude of opportunities to pray, learn and become equipped to share Christ with others and make disciples.

Eighty priests and deacons offered their time to attend the event and assist the faithful in their formation.

In the opening keynote speech, Father John Riccardo, a missionary and ACTS XXIX executive director, presented two essential components necessary to be mobilized for mission: become overwhelmed anew with the Gospel and surrender everything to Jesus in faith.

He explained Jesus' great sacrifice of love on the cross through the lens of discipleship.

"Jesus wants us to lift our eyes to him because if we would like to be effective in our mission of discipleship it is possible only through our confidence in his lordship." He continued, "You were born for this moment. The Lord wants us to cooperate with him and do for others what he did for us on the Cross – rescue people. We only need to surrender and say, 'Lord, use me.'"

Father Agustino Torres, C.F.R., a priest with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in the Bronx, New York, also emphasized the need for surrender to God and readiness for missionary action.

continued on page 11





Archbishop Coakley spoke at the Discipleship Conference on Aug. 19 in Oklahoma City. Photos Lindsay Tesio/Sooner Catholic.



People live their lives by the stories they believe. What if there is a different story? That story is the Gospel. Know the true story.

The Gospel message is simple, according to Fr. John Riccardo: Jesus, out of love, died to rescue man from his sins and calls him to a life of friendship with God.

Fr. Riccardo said The Rescue Project has three goals: Overwhelm somebody with the message of the Gospel, move them to surrender and mobilize them for the mission.

Visit rescueproject.us to learn how to easily lead this free series at home or in a parish.



continued from page 9

In his closing keynote address, he urged, "Let's adopt the apostolic mindset. We need to find souls the Lord indicates to us and bring them home."

Father Torres, C.F.R., depicted four ways of accomplishing this task: Eucharistic amazement, love of the poor, the necessity to be pierced as a missionary of Christ (i.e., to share in sufferings of others and unite sufferings with Christ on the cross) and spreading the missionary joy.

"Bring joy to your parishes ... then this fire that burns in you will also burn in others," said Torres.

The breakout sessions covered a multitude of practical topics related to Christian hospitality, prayer life, encounter with God, conversion, the model of Jesus and the apostles, spiritual healing, the treasure of the Eucharist, the meaning of time as God's gift and love of neighbor.

Father Jim Goins instructed the attendees to ensure that their discipleship is deeply rooted in the Eucharist.

"To be able to say to people, 'I have found a treasure in the field [the Eucharist], and I want to share it with you' - This is discipleship on fire," said Father Goins. He continued, "... To sit in the presence of the Lord hidden in the Blessed Sacrament is one of the greatest remedies we need to offer to the world."



Speaking from the pastoral perspective about the relevance and practical application of the conference teachings, Father Joseph Irwin remarked in his breakout, "The biggest word of the day is 'to equip.' It is really important. As the faithful receive lots of information and inspiration today, the main task is to go back on mission to parishes and communities, get into the fight for souls against the clear attacks of the enemy and into the work of evangelization."

Excitement and anticipation were present among participants eager to learn how to become effective disciple makers for Christ.

"I am so impressed with the level of intentionality and care the conference extended. I am positively overwhelmed with God's message and filled with appreciation for all the speakers ... It was so edifying to see many faces I haven't seen in years ... The Catholic Church in Oklahoma is thriving!" shared Angela C. Basse from Saint Damien Catholic Church in Edmond.

Theresa Horinek from Saint Francis of Assisi Church in Newkirk expressed her deep gratitude as well.

"Today I feel like an integral part of the big Church of Christ, related to other Catholics and one with them in the mystical Body of Christ ... This conference has been very useful and inspiring for my ministry. I will be here next year, and I strongly encourage others to attend also."

Larann Wilson, Ph.D., the conference director said, "It is a wonderful day to celebrate our faith together. This conference certainly feels like a summit experience, but we are not meant to remain on the summit. We are called to fulfill our mission as Catholics and share Christ with the world ... We hope that all participants will invite others to the next-year conference on Aug. 17, 2024."

Luis Soto, senior director of the department of evangelization and discipleship of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, the office that planned and organized the conference added, "The Hispanic community, representing 40% of the conference participants, is very strong in apostolic movements of prayer, faith formation, service and spiritual growth. We hope that through these movements we can expand the work of evangelization in the archdiocese."

The conference ended with the celebration of Mass by Archbishop Coakley, and his blessing sending the participants forth to be zealous disciples and witnesses to the Gospel.

"May God continue to bless you as you go forth as disciples and return to your communities as heralds to cultivate, develop and generously and confidently share with others the gifts you have received," said Archbishop Coakley.

Jad Ziolkowska is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

"We only need to surrender and say, 'Lord, use me.'"

Fr. John Riccardo, missionary and ACTS XXIX executive director.

Learn more at actsxxix.org.

Archdiocese of Oklahoma City
Discipleship Conference
Aug. 19 - Oklahoma City.



Discipleship Conference breakout sessions offer discipleship deep-dive

By Ann Cook

It was a day that promised opportunities for inspiration, prayer and reflection. Participants left the OKC Convention Center having heard from national speakers and participated in breakout sessions that aimed to better equip them to turn inspiration into action at their parishes.

In addition to the keynote speakers, breakout sessions led by nine individuals steeped in the response to Christ's command to "Go make disciples" provided answers to important questions, practical resources, tips and real-world examples to address challenges to mission.

Encounter

The first breakout sessions focused on encounter, including an explanation from Father Agustino Torres of an encounter with Christ as the necessary first step in the process of conversion to discipleship. God's desire to love people as unique individuals, prayer as encounter and Christian hospitality rounded out the available options.

"Father Agustino's talk reminded us of our first encounter with our Lord. Once a person has an encounter with the Lord, nothing is the same again. Something changed forever in our lives," said Jesus and Rocio Juarez, Saint James the Greater Catholic Church.

Accompany

The second breakout series was about accompanying others on the evangelization path. From the art of conversation to small groups based on the model Jesus gave with the apos-

les, along with guidance on training for mission and healing for authentic relationship, these breakouts gave participants much to ponder in the coming weeks.

Sue Ryan, theology department coordinator

"I'd love to find a safe and comfortable way to invite new people in or invite those that have left back, to build a true sense of community and a place to belong," said Emily Pickett, director of religious education at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Okarche, after hearing Matt Regitz' talk on the art of conversation.

Community

The last series of breakout sessions directed everyone's attention to community. The celebration of the Eucharist, the Church's liturgical calendar and love of neighbor are key occasions for community. In union with God and each other, people change the way they live in their homes, communities and parishes.

Sheri Wohlfert's talk on "Time as a Teacher" and the liturgical calendar was a favorite of AJ Meier, a parishioner at Saint Joseph Old Cathedral.

"Sheri inspired me to realize that God is present in every moment, and I should stop waiting to be holy, but

live in the present, knowing that God gives us exactly what we need, exactly when we need it," said Meier.

"Bring joy to your parishes ... then this fire that burns in you will also burn in others."

Fr. Agustino Torres, C.F.R.



Archdiocese of Oklahoma City
Discipleship Conference
Aug. 19 - Oklahoma City.

at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School, attended Jim Beckman's talk on healing for authentic relationship. She said she was reminded that everyone needs to spend quiet time considering their own areas of brokenness, and that everyone is called to minister to the brokenhearted.

"Jesus is always with us, and our wounds are a unique access point to intimacy with Christ. We can invite Jesus into the wound to heal, restore and lead us toward love, peace, and gratitude," said Ryan.

Be a disciple who makes disciples

Do people know where they are on their discipleship path? How are individuals growing as a disciple of Jesus and sharing him with others? The Disciple Maker Index was developed by the Catholic Leadership Institute. This 75-question survey is a tool that invites people to reflect anonymously on where they are on their journey of discipleship and enables parish leadership to make data-driven decisions to help parishioners grow in their faith.

The DMI is open from Aug. 19 to Sept. 18. The DMI will be offered again next year so people can see how they have grown in discipleship over the past 12 months. To complete the DMI, visit catholicleaders.online/okc.

Go Make Disciples
Text GMD to 84576

to receive
post-conference news,
resources, encouragement,
and information on upcoming
events

**STAY
CONNECTED**

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2024**
SAVE THE DATE

**20
24**

**08.17
2024**
RESERVA LA FECHA



Fr. Jerome Krug, Dcn. John Harned and Dcn. Robert Dunlap blessed the Mount St. Mary Catholic High School campus on Aug. 16. Photos Avery Holt.

Friday, September 15
6PM THE GREAT HALL AT
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN EDMOND, OK

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Annual Golf Tournament
Lunch provided by TEXAS ROADHOUSE

September 23rd, 2023
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Jobs Box

Priest nurse - OKC

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking a full-time priest nurse to serve as a health educator, counselor, resource/referral person, advocate, pastoral/spiritual care provider and coordinator of health-related services. The nurse establishes a relationship with health of mind, body and spirit and is the program’s liaison with the priest community. Must be a registered nurse from an accredited school or college of nursing, possess a current, active Oklahoma nursing license and have three-five years of nursing experience. Send cover letter and resume to humanresources@archokc.org.

Director of annual giving - OKC

The Secretariat for Stewardship and Development is seeking a director of annual giving to manage the Annual Catholic Appeal, Catholic Communications Appeal, Seminarian Education Appeal and other fundraising processes in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The director will lead a team and seek to build a culture of philanthropic support for parishes and ministries in the archdiocese. Position includes a diverse range of responsibilities and a fast-paced office. Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing, have a flexible demeanor, calm under pressure, poised with excellent written and oral communication skills. Bilingual English/Spanish is preferred. A background check and safe environment training will be required. Send cover letter and resume to humanresources@archokc.org.

Associate director of planned giving - OKC

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma is seeking an associate director of planned giving to work collaboratively with the executive director on marketing, solicitation and administration of the planned giving program. Build and steward the CFO’s Meerschaert Legacy Society and Planned Giving Advisory Council. Requires a flexible demeanor, calm under pressure and poised with excellent written and oral communication skills in a fast-paced office. Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing. Send cover letter and resume to humanresources@archokc.org.

Administrative support - OKC

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking an administrative support position that will provide oversight of daily operations in the department of evangelization and discipleship at the Catholic Pastoral Center. This position will include maintaining and coordinating schedules, facilitating communication, processing financial invoices and payments, arranging travel and accommodations, answering calls and maintaining office supplies. Assist with event registration, communication and marketing needs. Should have at

least three years of office experience and demonstrate proficiency with computers and Microsoft Office programs. Send cover letter and resume to humanresources@archokc.org.

Director of communications - Shrine

The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine is seeking a full-time director of communications to oversee all aspects of communication and promotion of the shrine, including public relations, social media, the Church’s work of evangelization and knowledge of and devotion to Bl. Stanley Rother. Must have a bachelor’s degree in communications or related field, at least three years of public relations, journalism and/or marketing experience, and be a practicing Catholic in good standing. Fluency in English and Spanish preferred. A background check and safe environment training will be required. Send cover letter and resume to humanresources@archokc.org.

Accounting assistant - Shrine

The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine is seeking a part-time accounting assistant to be responsible for administrative tasks associated with financial operations, including but not limited to processing cash receipts, deposits and entering data in accounting system. Some weekend hours (Friday – Sunday) may be required. Must be a Catholic in good standing. At least one year of accounting and/or cash management experience. Bilingual in Spanish a plus. Send cover letter and resume to humanresources@archokc.org.

Administrative support/sacristan - Shrine

The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine is seeking a part-time administrative support/sacristan to provide administrative and clerical support to the shrine rector as well as ensuring efficiency of the shrine sacristies. Requires approximately 20 hours per week, Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Must be a Catholic in good standing. Bilingual in Spanish is a plus. Send cover letter and resume to humanresources@archokc.org.

Human resources generalist - OKC

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking a human resources generalist to provide assistance with and facilitate the human resource processes at all business locations. Serve as the agency PQI coordinator and help with tasks in the administration department. Bachelor’s degree in human resources, business or related field. Experience may be substituted for degree; three years of experience in human resources; and experience with Microsoft Office. Send cover letter and resume to Dcn. David Ashton at dashton@ccaokc.org.

Director of Immigration Legal Services – OKC

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking a director of immigration legal services to establish and provide effective management and oversight for all operational and strategic services and programs. Juris doctorate degree; admitted to and licensed by the state bar of Oklahoma or of another state(s), which license must be maintained in good standing at all times or accreditation as a Department of Justice representative for no less than five years in good standing at all times. A minimum of five years of experience in providing family-based immigration legal services under the INA and related statutes, rules and regulations. No less than three years of experience in supervision, management or coordination of professional and/or clerical staff involved in the providing of legal services under the INA and related statutes, rules and regulations. Send cover letter and resume to Monica Palmer at mpalmer@ccaokc.org

Bilingual attorney – OKC

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking a bilingual attorney to be responsible for assessing individuals’ eligibility for immigration relief and representing individuals before USCIS and the immigration court. Must be a member in good standing of the bar of any state. (Oklahoma State Bar preferred); fluent in the reading, writing and speaking of Spanish; One to two years of immigration law experience preferred, but willing to train the right candidate. Send cover letter and resume to Monica Palmer at mpalmer@ccaokc.org.

After care workers - Edmond

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School is seeking after-school care teachers for the 2023-2024 school year who love God and enjoy children, arts-and-crafts and creative play. Must work effectively with students in after-school activities, assist with behavior management and serve as role models. No degree is required; high school students are encouraged to apply. Contact Janine Hunt at jhunt@seasok.org.

Director of operations, advancement

The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help is seeking a director of operations and advancement to oversee operations of the parish office, purchasing activities, financial recording, filing, serving as a resource to parish organizations and ministries, scheduling and oversight of parish and archdiocesan events. Working with both the parish and Bishop John Carroll Catholic School to develop and enhance advancement opportunities for both. Working some evenings and weekends as needed. Degree

in administration or management preferred as well as several years of experience. Send resume to rstansberry@cathedralokc.org.

Music director – Del City

St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church is seeking a choir director/pianist for three weekend Masses, funerals and Holy Days. Working knowledge of the Catholic Mass and “Breaking Bread” collection is helpful. Must enjoy working with small, diverse groups of singers (one group per Mass), select music for each Mass and have a vision for Easter and Christmas celebrations. Salary negotiable. Contact the parish office during the morning hours at (405) 677 4873 or by e-mail at stpaulch@coxinet.net.

Parish secretary - OKC

Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Church is seeking a parish secretary. For a job description, or to submit a resume, contact Tracy Russo at epiphany@epiphanyokc.com, (405) 722-2110, Ext. 128.

Receptionist - Edmond

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church is seeking a full-time receptionist to greet visitors; welcome people, provide assistance, answer a multi-line phone system, collaborate with staff members, assist in the maintenance of parish membership database and sacramental records as well as provide excellent customer service. Requires attention to detail, time management skills and the ability to maintain confidentially. Good administrative skills, knowledge of Microsoft Office software, organization skills, adaptability, dependability and ability to work well with others. Send resume and cover letter to adennis@stjohn-catholic.org.

Aftercare director - Yukon

St. John Nepomuk Catholic School is seeking a part-time aftercare director. Send resume to George Meiwes at principalsjn@sjnok.org.

Nursery teacher - OKC

Christ the King Catholic Church is seeking a part-time Mothers’ Day Out teacher for the nursery and Mother’s Day Out program. Must assist the lead teachers with crafts, story time, games, lunch and naps. Hours are 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. Monday/Wednesday along with one evening or morning shift per week, one Saturday evening and one Sunday per month. Must be over the age of 16 and complete the archdiocesan Safe Environment program once hired. Contact Margaret Ballas at margaret@ckokc.org or (405) 242-4521.

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

The Catholic Difference

Archbishop Fernández and the learning curve

“Pope Francis has just given the Vatican his Ratzinger,” declared one July 2 headline; “Pope Francis Finds His Ratzinger,” announced another, four days later. Both quickie assessments of Argentinian Archbishop Victor Manuel Fernández’s appointment as prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith were wrong. Archbishop Fernández is no Joseph Ratzinger in either theological left (a point Fernández himself implicitly acknowledged in one of his post-appointment interviews) or in his relationship to the pope he will serve.

To the latter point: John Paul II did not make Joseph Ratzinger a great figure in the world Church; Ratzinger, one of the most important theologians at Vatican II, was a globally influential churchman long before the Polish pope tapped him as prefect of what was then called the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). Archbishop Fernández’s career, however, has been almost entirely a creation of Pope Francis. As archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Mario Bergoglio appointed Fernández the president of the Catholic University of Argentina (over the objections of CDF and the Congregation for Catholic Education), and once he came to Rome, “Pope Bergoglio” (as the Italians refer to him) has made extensive use of his protégé in various capacities.

Nor are the intellectual relationships here symmetrical. John Paul II and Joseph Ratzinger worked in close harness for a quarter-century. But their ways of thinking were by no means identical, and they disagreed (without being disagreeable) at several key moments, as I demonstrated in “Witness to Hope.” Moreover, the two men had quite different views of late modernity: John Paul II was rather sanguine about the prospects of the post-Cold War world; Ratzinger tended to think of the destruction of the Bavarian Catholic culture of his

youth as a preview of coming distractions for the entire West. By contrast, it is hard to detect a centimeter of distance between the thinking of Pope Francis and Archbishop Fernández, not least because the younger man seems to have been a scriptwriter and amanuensis for his patron.

When Joseph Ratzinger became the chief doctrinal adviser to the pope, he was one of the most learned men in the world, deeply versed in biblical studies, philosophy, history and political theory as well as the various sub-disciplines of theology. Archbishop Fernández is an intelligent man, but no one could possibly claim that he is as competent, across as wide a range of subjects, as Ratzinger was. In fact, in several of his (numerous) post-appointment interviews, the archbishop betrayed a sorry lack of familiarity with the creative moral theology that has been developed in the Church since John Paul II’s 1993 encyclical, “Veritatis Splendor” (The Splendor of Truth). In one conversation, for example, Fernández opined that, while “Veritatis Splendor” had been a necessary corrective to certain untoward tendencies in post-conciliar Catholic moral theology, the encyclical had not fostered theological creativity with real pastoral impact.

I beg to differ. Serious Catholic moral theology and moral philosophy in the English-speaking world have been energized over the past 30 years by John Paul II’s brilliant theological and pastoral analysis of the moral life. As Archbishop Fernández prepares to take up his new duties in Rome, perhaps he could accelerate his learning curve by familiarizing himself with such creative, post-“Veritatis Splendor” books as “Veritatis Splendor” and the Renewal of Moral Theology” (edited by Joseph Augustine DiNoia, Avery Dulles, and Romanus Cessario); “Morality, the Catholic View” (by Servais

Pinck-aers); “Living the Truth in Love: A Biblical Introduction to Moral Theology” (by Benedict Ashley); “The Abuse of Conscience: A Century of Catholic Moral Theology” (by Matthew Levering); “Biomedicine and Beatitude: An Introduction to Catholic Bioethics” (by Nicanor Pier Giorgio Austriaco); “Aquinas and the Market: Toward a Humane Economy” (by Mary Hirschfeld); “Good and Evil Actions: A Journey through Saint Thomas Aquinas” (by Steven Jensen); “Action and Conduct: Thomas Aquinas and the Theory of Action” (by Stephen Brock); “Cooperation With Evil: Thomistic Tools of Analysis” (by Kevin Flannery); “Sharing in Christ’s Virtues” (by Livio Melina); and “The Christian Moral Life” (by John Rhiza).



George Weigel
Ethics and Public Policy Center

“Veritatis Splendor” enraged Catholic-Lite moral theologians in 1993 by its vigorous defense of the classic Catholic understanding that some acts are “intrinsically evil” — wrong in any circumstance — and the encyclical has been a bone in the throat of the establishment Catholic theological guild ever since. It would be beyond tragic if the new prefect of the Doctrine of the Faith used that office to promote the guild’s false claim that “Veritatis Splendor” was an exercise in papal nay-saying that underwrites theological torpidity and pastoral rigidity.

George Weigel’s column ‘The Catholic Difference’ is syndicated by the Denver Catholic, the official publication of the Archdiocese of Denver.

Book Review: “God’s Will: The Life and Works of Sr. Mary Wilhelmina”

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

Around Memorial Day weekend in 2023, news about an incorrupt Black nun made headlines. The nun was Sister Mary Wilhelmina Lancaster, O.S.B., the foundress of the Benedictine nuns of Mary, Queen of Apostles, who are affiliated with the Abbey of Our Lady of Ephesus.

She passed away at the abbey on May 29, 2019, which coincided with Ascension Day for those observing it on Thursday. At the time of her passing, she was 95 years old. Her upbringing took place in Saint Louis, Missouri, where she attended Catholic schools designated for African Americans. Her mother, a devout Catholic, successfully converted her husband and acted as a source of inspiration for their entire family. Sister Wilhelmina soon discerned that God was calling her to a religious vocation. During her high school years, she encountered the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the order

she eventually decided to join—a significant choice given that it was an African American missionary order. Within this order, she served as both a teacher and an archivist. However, her dissatisfaction with the liturgical reforms arising from the Second Vatican Council, and their impact on the Oblates’ way of life, led to disillusionment.

Sister Wilhelmina eventually became involved with the Fraternity of Saint Peter, who wished to have an order of women who wanted to follow the pre-councilor way of religious life. While initially three women participated, she ended up being the only one to move forward with the project.

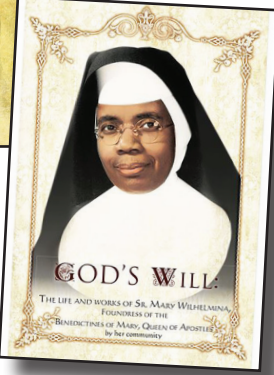
She discovered her calling to live the Benedictine way of life. Eventually, other women joined her cause, resulting in the formation of a substantial community of Benedictine nuns who became famous for their Catholic music, available on CDs and other formats. They gained enough money that they built their abbey in Gow-er, Missouri which is near Kan-

sas City, Missouri. The nuns had looked into building in Oklahoma, but that fell through.

This book not only presents Sister Wilhelmina’s biography but also includes her poems and other writings. Throughout the book, readers will find both color and black-and-white illustrations. It’s important for readers to remain attentive to the text of the biography, since the poems and other sidebar material can mislead the reader if they do not pay attention.

The biography, which draws on some of Sister’s autobiographical material, is very down to earth and shows the personality of this very humble nun. The book features accounts of visions and miracles, although they don’t contribute to her canonization since they happened before the Vatican has decided on her cause. Some

Book Review



readers might take offense at Sister’s statements and actions. Her opposition to the liturgical reforms of Vatican II and her concerns

about the relaxation of religious life might prove divisive.

Ironically, Sister’s patron was the Benedictine Saint William the Abbot since she did not start out time. She was a very devout and spiritual woman who was feisty and stuck to her principles. This book comes highly recommended, particularly for those who appreciate the music of the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles—I, myself, possess several of their CDs.

Br. Benet Exton, O.S.B., of Saint Gregory’s Abbey in Shawnee, serves as a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Lánzate a lo más Profundo

Luke 5:4

San Agustín: Una guía para corazones inquietos

El 28 de agosto celebramos la festividad de uno de los santos más intrigantes y conocidos del calendario: San Agustín; fruto de la Iglesia del siglo IV.

Aunque proviene de una remota periferia cristiana al norte de África, ha influido en el desarrollo del pensamiento católico desde su época hasta nuestros días. Podemos reconocer el alcance de su influencia observando el número de veces en las que el papa Benedicto XVI se refirió a él al tratar temas de actualidad. San Agustín ha sido un hombre para todos los tiempos.

En su juventud, Agustín era un estudiante brillante cautivado por la vida mundana. Probó los frutos placenteros de sus pasiones mientras buscaba una vida de ascenso, privilegio y éxito.

Pero, incluso con todos sus logros, se hastiaba y seguía inquieto. Quería ser famoso por su inteligencia y, al mismo tiempo, ser conocido como un hombre de ciudad. Su caos interior se resolvió cuando aceptó la fe católica y fue bautizado por san Ambrosio de Milán. Atribuyó su conversión al poder de la gracia de Dios que actuó a través de la Sagrada Escritura y a las oraciones perseverantes de su fiel madre, santa Mónica.

Tras su conversión, san Agustín vivió en Hipona, al norte de África, donde se convirtió en obispo. Puso sus grandes talentos al servicio de su fe y se hizo famoso en todo el mundo cristiano por la sabiduría expresada en sus vastos escritos.

Sus razonamientos y explicaciones han servido de base para la reflexión teológica sobre casi

todos los aspectos del pensamiento cristiano. También escribió su primera autobiografía llamada “Confesiones” que se convirtió en el libro más popular del mundo cristiano – después de la Biblia – por más de mil años.

El pensamiento de Agustín se ha ganado una injusta reputación entre muchos por ser demasiado negativo, especialmente en lo referente a la sexualidad humana. Es cierto; es caute-

losa a la hora de consentir la bondad natural de nuestros instintos humanos, lo cual es comprensible porque él mismo experimentó el poder del pecado.

Sin embargo, en comparación con la cruda realidad de nuestro tiempo, en la que los profesionales de la medicina aconsejan la mutilación y esterilización de niños en pos de una identidad de género imaginaria, el sombrío Agustín parece cada vez más sobrio y realista.

Su gran perspicacia era paralela a la de san Pablo. Al igual que Pablo, siempre era la persona más inteligente del lugar. Pero, cuando dependía sólo de sus propias habilidades, éstas lo llevaban a la ruina y a la frustración de su ambición. No fue hasta que empezó a adaptar su vida al Evangelio, cuando se entregó a Cristo, que comenzó a realizar la promesa que era suya.

Como bien lo dijo san Pablo, llegó a ser él mismo al entregarse a Jesús. Hemos sido creados a imagen y semejanza del otro; y sólo cuando nos entregamos a los demás nos convertimos en aquello para lo que hemos sido

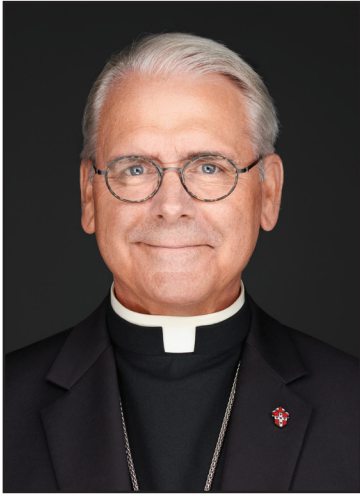
creados. Cuando Agustín se entregó a la voluntad de Dios, encontró la felicidad que buscaba. Tal como lo escribió en “Confesiones”: “Nos creaste para Ti, y está inquieto nuestro corazón hasta que descanse en Ti”.

Murió en el año 430, cuando la seguridad y la estabilidad del Imperio Romano se desmoronaban. Y aun así, en medio del fracaso de la política, él confiaba en el plan de Dios. Gracias a la fuerza de su fe, Agustín sabía que Dios sólo acababa de empezar.

A pesar de la oscuridad del momento, sabía que era el preludio del amanecer. Su confianza llena de esperanza puede animarnos en nuestro tiempo.

Por último, después de 35 años de obispo en Hipona, en el último año de su vida, san Agustín tenía tres prioridades principales como cabeza de la Iglesia (según el biógrafo Peter Brown). Tenía que encontrar sacerdotes que hablaran la lengua nativa de las tribus bereberes que se estaban convirtiendo a la fe.; necesitaba recaudar fondos para construir aulas que sirvieran para atender a los jóvenes de sus crecientes parroquias; y tenía que comenzar un programa de educación y certificación para aquellos que eran los educadores de la fe. ¡No ha cambiado mucho la vida de un obispo!

San Agustín es el campeón de los corazones inquietos que ansían conocer la vida en Cristo. Su pasado no lo descalificó del amor de Dios; y no nos descalificará a ninguno de nosotros cuando acudamos a Él. San Agustín es un gran testimonio de esperanza para todos nosotros.



Arzobispo Pablo S. Coakley

Rodrigo Serna ordenado sacerdote

Por Diane Clay
The Sooner Catholic

El diácono Rodrigo Serna besó su estola blanca, la levantó sobre su cabeza y alrededor de su cuello, y oró por el descanso de las almas de sus abuelos antes de caminar desde la rectoría hasta las puertas ornamentadas de la Catedral de Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro, cerca de donde más de 350 fieles llenaron rápidamente los bancos para su ordenación sacerdotal.

La Misa del 12 de agosto fue la culminación de un viaje de 18 años para Serna que comenzó cuando se fue de casa a los 14 años para ir a un seminario en México. El camino sinuoso con muchas paradas y arranques es lo que dijo que necesitaba para discernir la vocación que profesaba desde la escuela primaria.

El himno “Oh, Criaturas del Señor” fue interpretado por Nolan Patrick Reilly y cantado por el coro

de la catedral al comienzo de la procesión.

Después de las lecturas y la proclamación del Evangelio, con su mamá, María del Socorro Velasco, y su papá, José Rosario Serna, sentados en la primera fila, el Diácono Serna fue presentado como candidato para la ordenación por el Padre John Paul Lewis, director de seminaristas de la arquidiócesis.

Durante su homilía, el Arzobispo Coakley habló sobre el desafío y las responsabilidades que enfrentaría el Padre Serna como sacerdote.

“Hoy no basta con que un sacerdote sea un buen eclesiástico. Un sacerdote, ahora como siempre, debe ser ante todo un discípulo fiel del Señor Jesús, testigo de Jesucristo y heraldo de su Evangelio. ... Todos estamos llamados a ser testigos de Jesucristo para convertirnos no solo en discípulos, sino en discípulos misioneros llenos del fuego del Espíritu Santo para salir al mundo. Si este es el



El Arzobispo Coakley celebró la Misa el 12 de agosto para la Ordenación Sacerdotal del Padre Rodrigo Serna Velasco en la Catedral de Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro en Oklahoma City. Foto Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.

desafío y el mandato para todos los bautizados y confirmados, lo es más para los que son llamados por el Señor a servir como sus sacerdotes”, dijo.

“(El sacerdocio) es una vocación de dependencia radical de Jesucristo, que no vino para ser servido

continúa en la página 17

La Conferencia de Discipulado reúne a más de 1,000 católicos de Oklahoma y otros lugares

Por Jad Ziolkowska
The Sooner Catholic

La Conferencia inaugural bilingüe de Discipulado, bajo los auspicios del arzobispo Paul Coakley, reunió el 19 de agosto a casi 1,300 católicos de toda la arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City y de los estados adyacentes.

“Hace dos mil años, Cristo dio a sus seguidores la misión transformadora de ‘ir a hacer discípulos’. Esta misión sigue viva en la Iglesia de hoy. Empoderados por el Espíritu Santo, estamos llamados a llevar la buena nueva y ganar a otros para Cristo”, dijo el Arzobispo Coakley explicando el objetivo de la conferencia.

Con 13 sesiones y charlas impartidas por dos ponentes de renombre internacional y nueve ponentes nacionales y locales, adoración del Santísimo Sacramento, confesiones, la Sagrada Eucaristía y docenas de expositores, el evento ofreció multitud de oportunidades para rezar, aprender y equiparse para compartir a Cristo con los demás y hacer discípulos.

Ochenta sacerdotes y diáconos ofrecieron su tiempo para asistir al evento y ayudar a los fieles en su formación.

En el discurso de apertura, el Padre John Riccardo, misionero y director ejecutivo de ACTS XXIX, presentó dos componentes esenciales necesarios para movilizarse para la misión: sentirse abrumado de nuevo por el Evangelio y entregarlo todo a Jesús en la fe.

Explicó el gran sacrificio de amor de Jesús en la cruz a través de la lente del discipulado.

“Jesús quiere que levantemos los ojos hacia él porque si queremos ser eficaces en nuestra misión de discipulado sólo es posible a través de nuestra confianza en su señorío”. Y continuó: “Habéis nacido para este momento. El Señor quiere que cooperemos con él y hagamos por los demás lo que él hizo por nosotros en la Cruz: rescatar a la gente. Sólo tenemos que entregarnos y decir: ‘Señor, úsame’”.

El Padre Agustino Torres, C.F.R., sacerdote de los Frailes Franciscanos de la Renovación en el Bronx, Nueva York, también hizo hincapié en la

necesidad de la entrega a Dios y la disposición para la acción misionera.

En su discurso de clausura, instó: “Adoptemos la mentalidad apostólica. Tenemos que encontrar almas que el Señor nos indique y llevarlas a casa”.

El Padre Torres, C.F.R., describió cuatro maneras de llevar a cabo esta tarea: El asombro eucarístico, el amor a los pobres, la necesidad de ser traspasado como misionero de Cristo (es decir, compartir los sufrimientos de los demás y unirlos a los de Cristo en la cruz) y contagiar la alegría misionera.

“Llevad la alegría a nuestras parroquias... entonces este fuego que arde en nosotros arderá también en los demás”, dijo Torres.

Las sesiones de trabajo abarcaron multitud de temas prácticos relacionados con la hospitalidad cristiana, la vida de oración, el encuentro con Dios, la conversión, el modelo de Jesús y los apóstoles, la sanación espiritual, el tesoro de la Eucaristía, el significado del tiempo como regalo de Dios y el amor al prójimo.

El Padre Jim Goins instruyó a los asistentes a asegurarse de que su discipulado está profundamente arraigado en la Eucaristía.

“Ser capaz de decir a la gente: ‘He encontrado un tesoro en el campo [la Eucaristía], y quiero compartirlo con nosotros’ - Esto es discipulado en llamas”, dijo el Padre Goins. Y continuó: “... Sentarse en presencia del Señor escondido en el Santísimo Sacramento es uno de los mayores remedios que debemos ofrecer al mundo”.

Hablando desde la perspectiva pastoral sobre la relevancia y la aplicación práctica de las enseñanzas de la conferencia, el Padre Joseph Irwin comentó en su descanso: “La palabra más importante del día es ‘equipar’. Es realmente importante. Mientras los fieles reciben hoy mucha información e inspiración, la tarea principal es volver en misión a las parroquias y comunidades, entrar en la lucha por las almas contra los claros ataques del enemigo y en la labor de evangelización.”

El entusiasmo y la expectación estaban presentes entre los participantes, deseosos de aprender a convertirse en eficaces hacedores de discípulos para Cristo.



“Estoy tan impresionada con el nivel de intencionalidad y cuidado que se ha extendido en la conferencia. Estoy positivamente abrumada con el mensaje de Dios y llena de aprecio por todos los oradores... Fue tan edificante ver muchas caras que no había visto en años... ¡La Iglesia Católica en Oklahoma está prosperando!” compartió Angela C. Basse de la Iglesia Católica de San Damián en Edmond.

Theresa Horinek, de la iglesia de San Francisco de Asís de Newkirk, expresó también su profunda gratitud.

“Hoy me siento parte integrante de la gran Iglesia de Cristo, relacionado con otros católicos y uno con ellos en el Cuerpo místico de Cristo... Esta conferencia ha sido muy útil e inspiradora para mi ministerio. Estaré aquí el año que viene, y animo encarecidamente a otros a que asistan también”.

Larann Wilson, Ph.D., la directora de la conferencia dijo: “Es un día maravilloso para celebrar nuestra fe juntos. Esta conferencia se siente ciertamente como una experiencia en la cumbre, pero no estamos destinados a permanecer en la cumbre. Estamos llamados a cumplir nuestra misión como católicos y compartir a Cristo con el mundo... Esperamos que todos los participantes inviten a otros a la conferencia del próximo año, el 17 de agosto de 2024”.

Luis Soto, director del departamento de evangelización y discipulado de la arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City, la oficina que planificó y organizó la conferencia, añadió: “La comunidad hispana, que representa el 40% de los participantes en la conferencia, es muy fuerte en movimientos apostólicos de oración, formación en la fe, servicio y crecimiento espiritual. Esperamos que a través de estos movimientos podamos ampliar la labor de evangelización en la arquidiócesis.”

La conferencia terminó con la celebración de la Misa por el Arzobispo Coakley, y su bendición enviando a los participantes a ser discípulos fervorosos y testigos del Evangelio.

“Que Dios continúe bendiciéndolos mientras avanzan como discípulos y regresan a sus comunidades como heraldos para cultivar, desarrollar y compartir generosamente y con confianza con otros los dones que han recibido”, dijo el Arzobispo Coakley.

Jad Ziolkowska es escritor independiente para Sooner Catholic.

Arzobispo Coakley, quien completó la ordenación orando por él, recordando el amoroso plan de salvación de Dios que continuamente provee ministros para el servicio del pueblo.

Ahora que es sacerdote, el Padre James Goins, párroco de la Iglesia Católica de San Eugenio en Oklahoma City, donde el padre Serna se desempeñó como diácono de transición, lo invistió con vestiduras sacerdotales.

El Arzobispo Coakley ungó sus manos con el sagrado crisma y luego sus hermanos sacerdotes le

dieron la bienvenida al sacerdocio, quienes desfilaron ante el Padre Serna para bendecirlo.

Después de la ordenación, el Padre Serna saludó y bendijo a amigos, familiares, compañeros sacerdotes y fieles en una recepción en el Centro Connor. Entre ellos estaba un antiguo compañero de trabajo y amigo del seminario, el Padre Germán Ramos de la Diócesis de Sacramento.

“Estoy muy feliz de que este día finalmente haya llegado. Estoy emocionado por él”, dijo el Padre Ramos. “Rezo para que Dios

lo siga guiando y llegue a ser un buen sacerdote a la semejanza de nuestro Señor Jesucristo”.

La primera asignación sacerdotal del Padre Serna será como vicario parroquial en la Iglesia Católica San Carlos Borromeo en Oklahoma City. Sus primeros pensamientos después de la ordenación fueron de gratitud.

“La idea de servir en el nombre de Dios al pueblo de Oklahoma me hace sentir agradecido por el don del sacerdocio”.

Diane Clay es una escritora independiente para el Sooner Catholic.

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Briefs

Reboot

Chris Stefanick will be speaking at 7 p.m. Aug. 30 at St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church, 3939 W. Tecumseh Rd. in Norman. For tickets, visit reallifecatholics.give-virtuous.org/Event/st-mark-the-evangelist-reboot.

Archbishop's young adult Mass and cookout

Join Archbishop Coakley and other young adults from around the archdiocese on Sept. 10, at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway, OKC. Mass will begin at 3 p.m. and will be followed by a cookout and a talk by Fr. Joseph Irwin. Register to attend online at bit.ly/CYA-Cookout.

Eucharistic Adoration

Eucharistic Adoration will take place every Thursday after the 11:30 a.m. Mass, from Noon to 3:50 p.m. in the St. Francis de Sales Chapel at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway. The period of adoration will conclude with benediction.

Oklahoma Catholic scouting alternative

Troop 1887 of St. George is welcoming boys ages 6-10, young men ages 11-18, and their fathers. Fathers from several parishes across the Oklahoma City metro area aim to teach (and learn alongside) their sons: knot tying, archery, camping, marksmanship, Dutch oven cooking, fishing, survival skills and Catholic virtues. No previous outdoor experience required. For more information or to donate used camping equipment e-mail troopsofstgeorge1887@gmail.com. Visit troopsofsaintgeorge.org.

GOLD 10th anniversary

The Gospel of Life Disciples 10th anniversary celebration is 2 p.m. Sept. 2 at the GOLD St. John Paul II Dwelling, 4113 S. Eastern Ave. in Moore. Outdoor Mass will be celebrated at 2 p.m.; Games, activities, pool party 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.; Barbecue dinner/pig roast 5 p.m. 7 p.m.; and outdoor concert 7 p.m.

A Royal Celebration

Cristo Rey OKC Catholic High School presents A Royal Celebration at 6 p.m. Sept. 7 at Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club, 7000 N.W. Grand Blvd. in Nichols Hills. It will be an evening of cocktails, food and dancing to the music of TakeCover. Cocktail attire. RSVP By Aug. 21. Visit cristoreyokc.org/royalcelebration. Contact Salma. Morales@CristoReyOKC.org.

Honor Dance

A St. Kateri Tekakwitha Honor Dance will be held Sept. 9 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 47943 Abbey Rd. in Konawa. Mass will be celebrated at 2 p.m.; gourd dance 3 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.; supper 6 p.m.; and grand entry 7 p.m. Contact Esther Lowden at (405)

249-5246. Vendors can contact Kendra Lowden at (580) 399-0442; kendralowden@gmail.com.

Organ dedication

St. Mary Catholic Church in Ponca City will have an organ dedication, blessing by Archbishop Coakley, choral vespers, and an organ recital by Burton K. Tidwell, who built the organ, at 5 p.m. Sept. 10 at 408 S. 8 St. in Ponca City. A reception will follow.

GOLD Fall Discipleship Bible Study

The Gospel of Life Disciples Fall Bible Study is every Monday 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. Sept. 11 – Nov. 27 (except Sept. 25 and Oct. 2) at the St. John Paul II Dwelling, 4113 S. Eastern Ave. in Moore. E-mail david@gospeloflifedisciples.org to register for in-person or online.

Luncheons4Life

The September Luncheons4Life is at 11:30 a.m. Sept. 14 at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway in Oklahoma City. The speaker is Alex Sanchez, mental health and ministry. RSVP to jvandervort@archokc.org.

Mass of Remembrance

The 2023 Mass of Remembrance will be at 6 p.m. on Sept. 15 at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 1901 N.W. 18 St. in Oklahoma City. The Mass is in remembrance of those lost to suicide. Everyone is welcome. People who have experienced the loss of someone to suicide are invited to attend and celebrate their loved one's life.

Retrouvaille – For troubled marriages


A Retrouvaille weekend will be held Sept. 15-17 to help couples through difficult times in their marriage. Visit helpourmarriage.org. Contact (405) 443-3541; okc@retrouvaille.org.

Broncho Bash

The 2023 Broncho Bash to support the UCO Catholic Campus Ministry is 7 p.m. Sept. 15 in the great hall at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, 900 S. Littler in Edmond. Cocktail hour 6 p.m. Contact jmurphy@stjohn-catholic.org; (405) 274-9685. UCO Catholic alumni can reach out to Joy Murphy for discounted tickets.

Opening night

The Bl. Stanley Rother Hispanic Cultural Institute of St. Joseph Catholic Church will have an opening night for the Spring semester at 7 p.m. Sept. 19 in the Metter room, 421 East Acers St. in Norman. Everyone welcome. Membership is not necessary for opening night. The Spanish language and cultural studies classes will be 7 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. on Tuesday's. Register on the Facebook page or <https://bit.ly/BSRHCFall2023>. Tuition: \$40 per semester. If reg-



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Are you listening?

By Sally Crowe Nash

When my five-year pledge to the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine was completed this year, I debated on where to direct my charitable giving. I thought about contributing to a new ministry, increasing the amounts given to the current charities and more. Whatever I decided to do, it meant a shift in my habits, more payments to keep track of, maybe a little research on a new ministry... it could get complicated. On top of that, I had an attack of the “what ifs.” What if I experienced an unexpected expense? What if the new charity merged with another that was unknown to me? What if a family member needed financial help? Wouldn't I want to be prepared to help?

It might be easier, I reasoned, to table a decision for now. My conscience nagged at me a little because my sweet niece Melissa came to mind. As a little child, whenever Melissa was challenged to perform better or try something new, her response was, “I am going to do that when I am 8.” Waiting until I was 8 was no longer an option for me. By putting off action for worthy causes, I was allowing fear to paralyze me and block the help I could supply. That was enough for me to dispense with my phantom contingencies and embrace the change.

Maybe, like me, you have fulfilled your pledge to the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine. If some new possibilities are opening up for you, one idea you might consider is to “build” Oklahoma Catholic Radio in the same way you did your part for the construction of the shrine. Put aside your own “what ifs” and turn a potential OKCR radiothon donation into a pledge. A commitment of a monthly amount to OKCR uncovers the potential for reaching all of Oklahoma with Catholic radio. The current OKCR stewards carry an additional aspiration to broaden the appeal of Catholic life and devotion with diverse Catholic programming. Our sacrificial giving can transform the potential into reality. The Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine is evidence of that.

One reason I advocate for your support of OKCR is that I like a good value for my efforts. I have been educated in my faith and evangelized by listening to OKCR. Since we are all called to evangelize, I have a great tool to accomplish that in Catholic radio, as well. OKCR travels far beyond what I can do individually by my contribution or my testimony. It is a way to bring hope, the person of Jesus Christ, on a large scale, beyond my own capacity to everyone I know. These are benefits I do not deserve, but I have been blessed to receive them because I am not sitting on the fence and waiting to see what happens. Do not “wait until you are 8” to begin sharing in the mission of Catholic radio.

istering online, tuition can be paid on opening night. Make checks payable to St. Joseph Catholic Church. Donations to the institute are accepted.

True Family Lecture

St. Thomas More Catholic Church and the OU Catholic Student Association welcome historian and author Shannen Dee Williams, associate professor of history at the University of Dayton, a Catholic, Marianist university, for the 2023 True Family Lecture: “Still Mining the Forgotten: The Hidden History and Legacies of Black Catholic Nuns in the United States” at 5:30 p.m. Sept. 20, in the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History auditorium, 2401 Chautauqua, Norman. The talk is free and open to the public. Contact, e-mail TFLatSTM@gmail.com.

Catholic women's retreat

A Catholic women's retreat, Women in Scripture, is 9 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. Sept. 23 at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 1901 N.W. 18 St. in Oklahoma City. Meg Hunter-Kilmer will be the speaker. Visit stfrancisokcwomen.com.

Married couples retreat

A Domestic Church Married Couples Retreat will be held Sept. 22-24 in Oklahoma City. Register at okc@domesticchurchfamilies.com. Contact Matt and Nicole Hughes at domesticchurchokc@gmail.com or (405) 361-2359.

Festival de Matachines

The Festival of Matachines scheduled for Sept. 23 at the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine has been postponed until September 2024.

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.

August

- 27** Twenty-First Week in Ordinary Time.
- 27** Fr. Jack Feehily to celebrate 50 years as a priest. He will be the celebrant at the 11:30 a.m. Mass, St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church, 800 N.W. 5 St., Moore.
- 28** Feast St. Augustine.
- 29** The Passion of St. John the Baptist.
- 30** Reboot with Chris Stefanick, St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church, 3939 W. Tecumseh Rd., Norman.

September

- 1** First Friday Sacred Heart Mass, 7 p.m., Catholic Pastoral Center. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 5:30 p.m.; reconciliation prior to Mass. Call (405) 721-8944, (405) 528-6252.
- 2** Lay Missionaries of Charity provides an explanation through prayer and the charism of St. Teresa of Calcutta. Meeting on the first Saturday of the month at St. Ann for Holy Mass at 9:30 a.m., adoration and the Rosary. On the third Satur
- day of the month the meeting is at Holy Innocents' conference room. Contact Toni Harrelson at (405) 341-2199, (405) 694-1291.
- 2** Pray the Rosary for Life, 9:30 a.m., Our Lady of Lebanon Catholic Church, 500 Alameda St., Norman. Contact Connie Lang, (405) 249-1041, potato.lang@gmail.com.
- 2** Gospel of Life Disciples 10th anniversary celebration, 2 p.m., John Paul II Dwelling, 4113 S. Eastern Ave., Moore. Outdoor Mass 2 p.m.; Games, activities, pool party 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.; Barbecue dinner/pig roast 5 p.m.; outdoor concert 7 p.m.
- 3** Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time.
- 3** The Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity of Central Oklahoma meets at 2 p.m. on the first Sunday of the month at St. Eugene Catholic Church in meeting room 3. Interested individuals can join. Contact Bill Full, OFS minister, at billfull1@att.net.
- 3** Third Order (Lay) Dominicans meeting, 3 p.m. - 5 p.m., St. Monica Catholic Church, Edmond (St. Ambrose building

room No. 115), for any Catholic layperson drawn to religious life. Call David Lassiter (405) 924-6661 or Cesar Valles (405) 706-6271.

4 Labor Day - CPC closed.

7 Cristo Rey OKC Catholic High School, A Royal Celebration, 6 p.m. Sept. 7, Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club, 7000 N.W. Grand Blvd., Nichols Hills.

8 The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

9 Feast of St. Peter Claver.

9 Pray the Rosary for Life, 9:30 a.m., Our Lady of Lebanon Catholic Church, 500 Alameda St., Norman. Contact Connie Lang, (405) 249-1041, potato.lang@gmail.com.

9 St. Kateri Tekakwitha Honor Dance, Mass, 2 p.m., Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 47943 Abbey Rd., Konawa. Gourd dance 3p.m. – 5:30 p.m.; supper 6 p.m.; grand entry 7 p.m.

Please let us know...

Have you left your parish, the archdiocese or another Catholic ministry in your Will?

If so, then join Archbishop Coakley at a Mass and luncheon on **Thursday, Oct. 19, at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Mass is at 11:30**, with lunch immediately afterward.

No matter the size, every gift to establish your Catholic legacy is gratefully appreciated.

Contact us with the info below to RSVP!

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continued from page 1

Rodrigo, you are to be raised to the order of the priesthood. We rejoice with you; we give thanks to God for you.”

During the rite of ordination, Deacon Serna promised obedience to the archbishop and laid prostrate in prayer while the faithful prayed for God’s grace and mercy. The ordination began with the “laying on of hands” on Deacon Serna by Archbishop Coakley, who completed the ordination by pray-



Fr. Rodrigo Serna Velasco

ing over him, recalling God’s loving plan of salvation that continually provides ministers for the service of the people.

Now a priest, Father Serna was vested in priestly garments by Father James Goins, pastor of Saint Eugene Catholic Church in Oklahoma City where Father Serna served as a transitional deacon.

Archbishop Coakley anointed his hands with sacred chrism and then he was welcomed into the priesthood by his brother priests, who filed past Father Serna, blessing him.

Following the ordination, Father Serna greeted and blessed friends, family, fellow priests and the faithful at a reception in the Connor Center. Among them was a former co-worker and friend from seminary, Father German Ramos of the Diocese of Sacramento.



Archbishop Coakley led Vespers on Aug. 11 and celebrated Mass on Aug. 12 for the Priesthood Ordination of Fr. Rodrigo Serna Velasco at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City. *Photos Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.*

“I’m really happy this day finally arrived. I’m excited for him,” Father Ramos said. “I pray that God continues to guide him, and he becomes a good priest in the likeness of our Lord,

Jesus Christ.”
Father Serna’s first priest assignment will be as a parochial vicar at Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Oklahoma City. His first thoughts after ordination were of gratitude.

“The idea of serving in the name of God to the people of Oklahoma makes me grateful for the gift of the priesthood.”

Diane Clay is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

