

*Go Make Disciples*



St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church adoration chapel in Enid. Photo provided.

## Perpetual Adoration transforming Enid, its people

By John Helsley  
The Sooner Catholic

This story is the second in a series previewing the Eucharistic Congress.

Blake Gibson, now 41, figured he'd been dealing with depression since junior high school. The worst kind of depression, too, sometimes resulting in suicidal thoughts.

So it was the day Gibson nearly succumbed to those dark

**continued on page 20**

## Appreciating the ministry of women religious

*Catholic Sisters Week is March 8-14*



Benedictine sisters from St. Joseph Monastery visiting Monte Cassino Early Childhood Learning Center in Tulsa. Photos provided.

By Jad Ziolkowska  
The Sooner Catholic



Sr. Barbara Joseph Foley in 2013 with shoes collected for Sr. BJ's Pantry by students at Mount St. Mary Catholic High School.

The National Catholic Sisters Week

(March 8-14) has been celebrated in the U.S. since 2014 to recognize women religious and their ministries, as well as to educate and encourage young women to consider religious life as their vocation.

While some women religious congregations are committed solely to contemplative prayer (e.g., Discalced Carmelite Sisters in Piedmont), other religious communities combine

both contemplative prayer life and active apostolate work.

"Although our monastic Benedictine community has a contemplative orientation, our sisters have been very active with



teaching at Monte Cassino School since 1926 and serving at the Catholic Charities for the past 50 years,"

**continued on page 13**

Live in the Spirit



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2024 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL  
ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY





Put Out Into the Deep Luke 5:4

# The Church, the Eucharist and the Body of Christ

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI wrote a teaching letter on the topic of the Eucharist to the entire Church following a synod of bishops. In that letter he writes, “The Eucharist is constitutive of the Church’s being and activity. This is why Christian antiquity used the same words, Corpus Christi, to designate Christ’s body born of the Virgin Mary, his eucharistic body and his ecclesial body” (Sacramentum Caritatis, 15).

In these words, the Holy Father reminds us that, ultimately, the mystery of the incarnation, the Holy Eucharist and the Holy Catholic Church is one single mystery – the Body of Christ.

This is not mere theological fancifulness, but a profound and striking truth of our faith. If we can allow this truth to penetrate our hearts, it will impact how we approach not only the celebration of the Mass but also the reality of the Church itself.

In our world, which so often thinks exclusively in sociological or political terms, this profound truth liberates us from being entrapped in applying that same logic to the Church.

The Church is not a mere organ of society, an aggregate of persons or groups of persons, but is the Body of Christ. The Church is not to succumb to the ideologies of the day, because it preexists them, as the Church is one with Christ, the eternal Word of the Father.

This is not a new idea, but, like Benedict said, a way of speaking from the earliest days of the Church. We can trace this thread back to the 1st century in the writings of Saint Paul: “The bread which we break, is it not a communion in the Body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:16-17).

It is the Eucharist, which is not so much an after-the-fact celebration of the community we have formed on our own, but it is the divine action that not only transforms the sacred species, but also the gathered assembly. It is not so much that the Church makes the Eucharist, but the Eucharist makes the Church.

It is in this light that the inclusion of the Holy Eucharist among the sacraments of initiation has the most clarity. In baptism, we are adopted by the Father, incorporated (see the word corpus, body, here!) into the Body of Christ and so made co-heirs with Christ and members of his Church.

It is in the Holy Eucharist that this fact is so powerfully renewed, not in the sense that it had grown stale, but in the sense in which we are re-presented to the Paschal Mystery itself in the Holy Mass.

Saint John Paul II beautifully articulated this when he wrote, “Our union with Christ ... makes it possible for us, in him, to share in the unity of his body, which is the Church. The Eucharist reinforces

the incorporation into Christ that took place in Baptism” (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 23).

We are one with each other because we are one with him. The unity of the Church is Christ, and not a social or political reality we bring about by our action. In submission to Christ and his lordship, we find communion with the ecclesial Body of Christ.

It is, therefore, impossible to overstate the necessity of the Holy Eucharist in the life of the Church – it is the life, or better, the living of the Mass.

The Church comes to be in the Holy Eucharist. The heart of the life of the Church – universal, diocesan and parochial – is the celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday. On Sunday, the first and the eighth day of creation, the day of the resurrection, the Lord’s Day, the Holy Church of God gathers to be actualized in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

It is not what we do leading up to the Sunday Eucharist or flowing out from it that is the heart of the life of the Church.

His Holiness, Pope Francis, expressed this poignantly in a recent teaching: “There is no aspect of ecclesial life that does not find its summit and its source in the Liturgy. More than being the result of elaborate programs, a comprehensive, organic, and integrated pastoral practice is the consequence of placing the Sunday Eucharist, the foundation of communion, at the center of the life of the community” (Desiderio Desideravi, 37).

It is the Sunday Eucharist that gives the Church its existence. The mystery offered on the altar is extended in the life of the faithful into every zone and sphere of daily life.

In these years of Eucharistic Revival, we renew our recognition, not only of the wonder of the Real Presence, but of the entire Eucharistic mystery by which we are re-presented time and again to the paschal sacrifice of Christ. We not only remember this mystery, but we are transformed to embody it.

The mystery that is celebrated is consummated when that mystery is lived. The incarnation not only is extended in time through the sacred species on the altar, but also before the altar in the Church gathered in the pews. This sacramental communion enables us to be a different presence among the ideologies of the day, often torn by ideology and conflict.

It is my prayer that in this Eucharistic Revival we will see the unity between the communion of the altar and the communion of the Church, and that from seeing this unity we will receive it!



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](mailto:communications@archokc.org).

✓ **That gifts to** the Annual Catholic Appeal may properly reflect the gratitude for the graces that God has given.

✓ **National Eucharistic Congress** - Join Archbishop Coakley and other members of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City at the National Eucharistic Congress July 17-21 in Indianapolis, Ind. Visit [archokc.org/nec2024](http://archokc.org/nec2024).



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Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City

God, heavenly Father, look upon us and hear our prayer during this holy season of Lent.  
By the good works you inspire, help us to discipline our bodies and to be renewed in spirit.  
Nourish us with your word of life and make us one with you in love and prayer.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever.  
Amen.

# Satterfields paying gift of marriage forward

By Everett Brazil, III  
The Sooner Catholic

Paul and Tracy Satterfield couldn’t be happier in their marriage. The high school sweethearts are faithful members of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Overland Park, Kansas, and celebrating their 35th anniversary this year.

Their marriage, however, hasn’t always been filled with joy, and more than 10 years ago they were staring down the devastation of divorce.

“We were legally separated and a couple of months before the divorce date,” Paul Satterfield said.

They made a last-minute decision to try to save their marriage in October 2012, agreeing to participate in Retrouvaille, a program that helps married couples face their problems with the chance to save their relationships.

“My expectation was pretty low,” Paul said. “I was hoping to be civil to each other, not necessarily save a marriage.”

Save a marriage it did, in ways they couldn’t see beforehand.

“I went in expecting they would fix Paul, and in reality, it fixed me, and found a strength and confidence in me that I never knew existed,” Tracy said.

The experience also launched a shared mission.

The Satterfields now serve as deputy international coordinators with Retrouvaille International and will soon be bringing the program to Oklahoma City, with the assistance of Father Mark Mason of Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Enid

“What Retrouvaille does is it helps those couples reconnect to that love that was there in the beginning,” Father Mason said. “It’s to return both to the love that God has given them, and to rediscover one another on those weekends.”

The program begins with a spiritual retreat, conducted by married couples who previously rediscovered love in their lives through the program. The couples participating will not experience marriage counseling, but rather will work together, one-on-one. Though the couples will be meeting together in groups, they will not share anything in those group sessions.

“They are going to learn how to communicate



and understand more deeply, listening skills and rekindle that love they once had, through practical skills,” Paul said. “There is no group sharing, and we never have to share our struggles or problems with anyone else but our spouses.”

The lessons learned often come to light after the weekend event.

“Where the traction really takes place is in the follow-up sessions where they go deeper into the concepts introduced,” he said. “It is not realistic that what takes months, years to break apart a marriage can be pieced back together in a weekend.”

The follow-up sessions will be held later.

“There are 30 hours of counseling in the weekend. They’ll be given homework and also have the post sessions,” Paul said. “They’ll be held by specific members of the Retrouvaille community who have also been through the program themselves. They’ll be given a list of times, dates and places and what the topics will be.”

The priests also play an important spiritual role.

“The priest has an integral part in every one of the talks and relates his own life experience as it pertains to the topics and places the Gospel in light of the topics,” Father Mason said, adding

that the priests also offer Mass and confessions.

Those married couples leading the sessions will share their own experiences, especially how it directly saved their marriages and how they learned to listen.

“This allows us to live a life of joy, which is what

Jesus wanted for us, instead of, ‘it’s just OK,’” Tracy said. “We’re just better in everything in our life.”

Father Mason sees the Retrouvaille program as an important way to preserve marriages.

“As a priest, I find a Retrouvaille weekend as a miraculous weekend,” he said. “You can see a transformation take place in those marriages in most of the couples that take part on the weekend.”

For more information about the Retrouvaille weekend March 15-17 in Oklahoma City, call (405) 443-3541, e-mail [2034@retrouvaille.org](mailto:2034@retrouvaille.org) or visit [helpourmarriage.org](http://helpourmarriage.org).

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

## Archbishop Coakley’s Calendar

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

- March 3** – Confirmation, 10:30 a.m., St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, Okeene
- March 4-6** – Spring Clergy Days, Catholic Pastoral Center, Oklahoma City
- March 5** – St. Ann Retirement Center Board meeting, 8 a.m., Catholic Pastoral Center
- March 6** – School Mass for Mount St. Mary Catholic High School, 10 a.m., Historic Sacred Heart Catholic Church, OKC
- March 6** – Confirmation, 6 p.m., St. Mary Catholic Church, Ardmore
- March 7** – Presbyteral Council meeting, 9:30 a.m., CPC
- March 7** – Vocation Board meeting, 2 p.m., CPC
- March 7** – Confirmation, 6:30 p.m., St. Monica Catholic Church, Edmond
- March 9** – Oklahoma Catholic Men’s Conference, Embassy Suites Hotel & Conference Center, Norman
- March 11** – USCCB Committee on Priorities and Plans meeting, Washington, DC
- March 12-13** – USCCB Administrative Committee meeting, Washington, DC
- March 14** – Senior Staff meeting, 10 a.m., CPC
- March 14** – Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine Board meeting, 3 p.m., Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine, OKC
- March 17** – Mass and 25th Anniversary Celebration for St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, Denver, Colo.

# OKLAHOMA MARCH FOR LIFE

JOIN US AS WE MARCH TO THE CAPITOL TO SHOW OUR SUPPORT FOR LIFE

**June 8, 2024**

*The roughly two mile march is optional. There will be buses stopping at the Oklahoma City National Memorial, a halfway point and the capitol.*

### FEATURED SPEAKERS

**Archbishop Paul Coakley**  
Archbishop of Oklahoma City

**Bishop Konderla**  
Bishop of Tulsa, Oklahoma

**Mass starts at 8:30 a.m.**

**March starts at 10 a.m.**

**St. Joseph Old Cathedral**  
307 N.W. 4 St., Oklahoma City

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**The Schedule**

- 7:45 Doors Open
- 8:45 Welcome
- 9:00 Morning Keynote
- 10:30 Breakout Series 1 (English & Spanish)
- 11:30 Lunch/Vendors/Confession
- 1:15 Breakout Series 2 (English & Spanish)
- 2:30 Breakout Series 3 (English & Spanish)
- 3:45 Afternoon Keynote
- 5:00 Saturday Vigil Mass

**Aug. 10, 2024**

**OKC Convention Center**

**100 Mick Cornett Dr, Oklahoma City, OK 73109**

**OKdisciple.org**

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photos by: Lindsay Tesio/Sooner Catholic





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## From the Archives ...

*A photo series from George Rigazzi, archdiocesan archivist*

Practically the face of Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School due to her 41 years of dedicated service, Sister Stephanie Sanchez is remembered with great affection by the students and faculty.

A member of the Carmelite Sisters of Saint Therese for 57 years, she was the model of perseverance in her faith. Never dull and forever feisty, Sister Stephanie was always challenging her students to be better and to not settle for mediocrity.

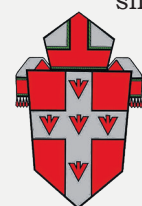
Originally from Denver, Colo., Sister Stephanie was a high school athlete and her love of sports became a life-long obsession. She was attracted to the Carmelites as her aunt, Sister Joan Marie was a member of the community. Sister Joan Marie would also become a McGuinness legend as she taught hundreds of pupils Spanish. She was known as tough but fair and was revered by her students.

Making vows in 1965, Sister Stephanie later attended Marquette University and earned her master's degree in theology. This would lead to her honing her charism as educator for the remainder of her life. And educate she did, first as the director of religious education for Saint James Catholic School in Oklahoma City and then on a broader scale as the head of religious education for the Diocese of Tulsa.

Returning to Oklahoma City in 1982, her storied career at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School began as she became the head of the theology department and classroom teacher. If she felt a teacher was not doing their job to her liking, she would not hesitate to verbalize it. However, she was willing to hear the other side and after an explanation could admit that she might not be correct in her assessment.

She genuinely loved her students and had the ability to reach some of the more troubled by her sincerity and dynamic prayer life. At

her very core, prayer sustained her and through her prayer and worship class introduced various forms that



ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY ARCHIVES



*Sr. Stephanie Sanchez*

could lead them on the road to living a productive Christian life. She was also known for saving cards and other religious items that might useful down the line. When she stopped teaching, clearing out her room was an adventure.

Lest we begin to canonize her, realize too that due to her passion for sports and her loyalty to the Fighting Irish of Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School, she was adept in letting referees know of her displeasure at less than adequate calls. It must have been even more discouraging for the officials to be harangued by a nun.

Whenever there was a sporting event (almost any sporting event), Sister Stephanie was at the gate taking tickets, visiting with alumni and generally enjoying herself. She seemed to know everyone in the McGuinness community and that same community identified with her. Even as her health began to fade, she continued for as long as she could to be present and supportive.

After retiring in December 2021, she passed from this life in June of the following year finally succumbing to her battle with diabetes and other related issues. "Sis" as she was affectionately known by friends, left an indelible mark on hundreds of children and adolescents across the state of Oklahoma by her personality and devotion to them and the God she so gladly served.



## Ask a Priest

**Q:** I know that during Mass priests bow to Jesus in the tabernacle, but sometimes they bow to the altar. Why do priests sometimes bow to the altar?  
*Collin Zink  
Saint Joseph Catholic Church,  
Blackwell*

**A:** Thank you for the question. Actually, the liturgical norms are to genuflect on our right knee before the tabernacle and to make a profound bow before the altar. We genuflect to the tabernacle in recognition and adoration of our Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament. The tabernacle is a sacred dwelling place for the Eucharist. The sacrament of the Eucharist is preserved in the tabernacle so that the faithful can come to adore Jesus and also so that we can bring the Blessed Sacrament to those who are sick, homebound and unable to come to Holy Mass. Why do we bow to the altar? The altar, in any Catholic Church, has been consecrated by the local bishop and is the place where the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered. On the altar, through the words of the priest at Mass, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus. Because of this, altars in any Catholic Church are sacred and deserve reverence. Everyone in the Church, when passing by the tabernacle or the altar, should make the appropriate gesture of reverence.

*Father Joseph Irwin  
Saint Joseph Catholic Church,  
Norman*

**Have a question for a priest?**  
The Sooner Catholic will be adding this new feature, Ask a Priest, and some of the submitted questions will be chosen. E-mail questions to communications@archokc.org.

### The Bible in a Year podcast

If The Bible in a Year podcast has impacted anyone's understanding of the Bible, Church teaching or just enhanced their faith journey, the Sooner Catholic is working on a story and would like to know. E-mail communications@archokc.org.

# St. James students shine in Spain

**By Jolene Schonchin**  
*The Sooner Catholic*

Students from Saint James Catholic School in Oklahoma City enjoyed a special trip. And a special victory.

Seventh graders from the school traveled in December to Madrid, Spain, for the International Competition of Creative Youth Projects, "Vive La Musique," winning with an organ constructed out of recycled paper.

"It's truly heartwarming to talk about the remarkable," said Maris Karpova, music teacher at Saint James. "The dedication and passion of these 15 students shining through to claim the first prize is a testament to their hard work and talent."

"This win not only celebrates their individual success but also reflects the supportive environment fostered by our school. It's moments like these that highlight the importance of encouraging and nurturing young talents on their creative journeys."

Karpova said the competition encouraged participants to think outside the box, therefore criteria for the competition included a strong presentation in showcasing creativity and developing a music research project that can inspire an original approach to creative endeavors. Projects were judged on the successful integration of art and design into a music research project for added impact.

The winning students from Saint James: Azrael Aguirre, Airam Celedon Huerta, Anthony Deloera, Jayleen Escobar, Alan Gomez, Nayib Huaman, Kevyn Olmos, Estrella Ortiz-Morales, Perla Pina, Adriana Rodriguez, Jose Rodriguez, Lucas Shaw, Jose Torres and Victoria Zuniga.

Each student was given the opportunity to craft a



St. James Catholic School seventh graders entered the International Competition of Creative Youth Projects, "Vive La Musique," and won with an organ constructed out of recycled paper. *Photos provided.*

section of the pipe organ model out of recycled cardboard and paper, such as pasta and cake boxes, drinking straws and other items. Then to showcase their musical talent, they played a small section of music on the piano, combined in the music software program to create a cohesive original piece of music.

"As a result, students have created a harmonious music piece that reflects everything our students wanted to hear," Karpova said. "Happy, relaxing music for pipe organ that would help people to clear their minds and souls."

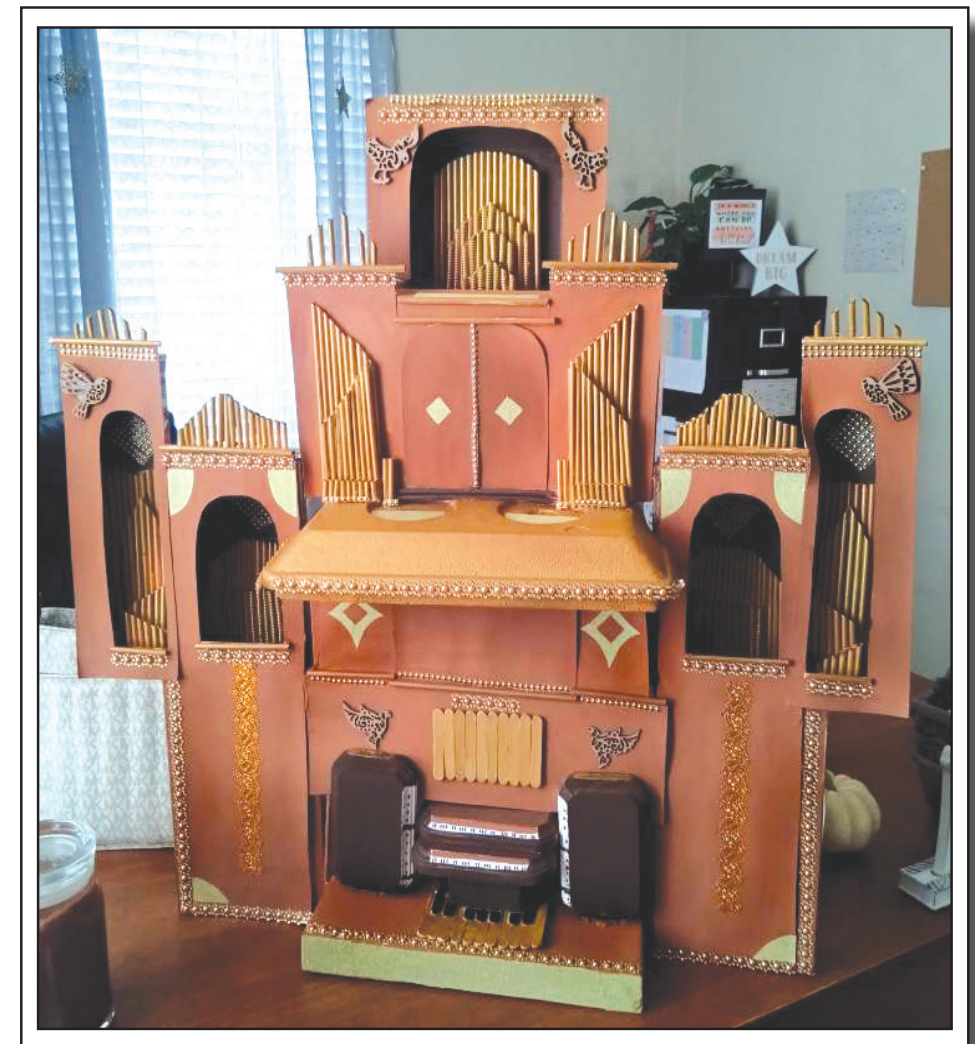
The Saint James students received medals and diplomas signed by leading European music educators.

Karpova, who supervised, guided and prepared students for the competition, received a special diploma for her contribution to the success of world culture and art.

"It's truly inspiring to witness young minds come together to showcase their talents and work as a team," she said. "Their hard work and dedication truly paid off, and their success must have filled their hearts with pride and joy. Their project is a testament to the power of collaboration and the limitless possibilities that can be achieved when we work together."

"This victory not only highlights their creativity and teamwork but also promises a bright future filled with success for these amazing kids. They have truly made their school proud, and we can't wait to see what great accomplishments lie ahead for them."

*Jolene Schonchin is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.*





# ‘Your spirit is not willing and the flesh is also weak’

By Charles Albert  
The Sooner Catholic

Tony and James attend Platinview Intermediate School and Saint Mary Catholic Church in Ardmore. They are typical youth interested in sports and video games. When their 70-year-old grandfather took them recently to adoration, something surprising happened to the young boys.

When entering the church, they were struck by the quiet, the serenity, peacefulness, the darkness, and after a few minutes of short prayer and reflection, they decided it was a great opportunity to take a nap. These energetic young men haven’t taken naps since they were 2-3 years old and are difficult to get to bed at night.

The grandfather smiled and understood human nature hasn’t changed much in 2000 years. It is human nature when the Lord asks people to spend an hour praying. Jesus had 12 beloved Apostles and he choose the cream of the crop – Peter, James and John – to pray with him for just an hour on the night before he was to die.

Instead, the apostles fell asleep ... Matthew (26) Mark (14) Luke (22) all reported how the Apostles failed Jesus. The grandfather also remembered when he was 10 years old. His father had “dragged” him to adoration and the young boy promptly fell asleep.

Afterward, his dad asked him, “You wouldn’t have fallen asleep watching Dallas Cowboys on TV, why would fall asleep in front of the Lord?”

The 10-year-old quoted Matthew 26:41, “The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”

The dad said, “We are going to fix that next time. In the meantime, if we have a car accident tonight and both die, I am going to tell the Lord, ‘Here is my phony son, his spirit is not willing and his flesh is also weak.’”

The next time at adoration, his dad gave him an exhaustive list of things to pray for that was much longer than an hour. It included things like thanking Christ, the Church, family, faith, friends, health, school, country, relatives, people who have died, etc.

However, most important, he said to visualize that Christ was seated next to him and Christ wanted to hear all about his life as a long-lost friend.

“What are the good things, bad things, what do you want to be when you grow, your concerns about Russia, ask for any other intentions, etc. Most important, remember to thank him for dying for us.”

The grandfather remembered to do the checklist for his grandsons the next time they went and adoration proved much better. Also, in the middle of the hour, rosary was mixed in with special intentions of family and friends.

It took many years for the grandfather to appreciate the foundation and love that his dad gave him for adoration. Now the grandfather always looks forward to telling Christ about his many years of marriage, his job challenges, his wonderful children and grandchildren.

His dad died 50 years ago, so he longs for the day he can tell his dad the same stories and thank his dad for their shared devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

There are many ways of praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament in adoration. Father Mark Toups of Ascension Press suggested: “Tell God how you feel. Tell him what you think. Tell him what you want. Share all your thoughts, feelings and desires with God. Listen to what he is telling you. Maybe he invites you to reread scripture. Perhaps he invites you into a still, restful silence. Trust that God is listening to you.”

Dana Dempewolf, also of Saint Mary Catholic Church, said, “Be still, let the words fall like rain on your heart and let them puddle there. You are spending time with God. That alone is enough.”

Dempewolf quoted Saint Bernard, “The Holy Spirit is really doing the heavy praying.”

Becky Goza of Saint Monica Catholic Church in Edmond said, “The more I practice the silence, the more I long for more time in his presence. I just don’t know how you can sit with Jesus and be anything other than humbled and surrounded by a feeling of great love and peace. In this busy world where we are connected at every minute by our social sites and mobile devices, just taking a break to be with Jesus for a short time, really sorts out my priorities for the day.”

Goza added, “Two of my favorite sayings attributed to Mother Teresa are ‘Jesus has made him-



The Bl. Sacrament at the Eucharistic Procession on Oct. 29, 2023, at the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine in Oklahoma City. Photo Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.

self the bread of life to give us life. Night and day, he is there. If you really want to grow in love (remember Matthew 22), come back to the Eucharist, come back to that adoration,’ and ‘each one of us is a co-worker of Christ. We must labor hard to carry him to the hearts where he has not yet been known and loved ... But, unless we have Jesus, we cannot give him. That is why we need the Eucharist. Spend as much time as possible in front of the Blessed Sacrament and he will fill you with his strength and his power.”

Charles Albert is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

# Author: Catholics must be evangelists

Catholics around the world must embrace the idea of becoming evangelists of the faith, author and theologian George Weigel told members of the Assembly of Catholic Professionals during their meeting in February.

Weigel, author of the seminal biography of Pope Saint John Paul II, “Witness to Hope,” and its sequel, “The End of the Beginning,” told attendees, “We’re living in the fifth major transitional moment in the Church’s history – what John Paul II called the Church of the New Evangelization.”

“The faith has to be actively proposed,” Weigel said.

“Friendship with the Lord has to be actively offered. And each one of us has to take responsibilities for that.”

Weigel classified the previous four transitional moments as the early Church, which was centered on the proclamation “Jesus is Lord;” patristic Christianity, which saw that proclamation converted into creed and doctrine; Medieval Christendom, which produced “the closest synthesis that’s perhaps ever been created between cul-

ture, society and Church;” and counterreformation Catholicism, which spawned the institutionally centered Church familiar to us today.

Weigel noted that Pope John XXIII, ahead of the Second Vatican Council, described the council’s mission in one word: evangelization.

Pope Saint John Paul II and his successor, Pope Benedict XVI, Weigel said, summed up Vatican II this way: The Church doesn’t have a mission, it is a mission. Thus, everyone is a missionary,



Author and theologian George Weigel spoke to members of the Assembly of Catholic Professionals during their meeting on Feb. 15 in Oklahoma City. Photo Avery Holt.



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missionaries in the fields of politics, economics, culture,” Weigel told ACP members and guests.

“That’s why an association like this is so important -- it helps equip you to be those missionary disciples. It helps you support each other in doing that

“There is really nothing finer in this world than bringing others to meet the Lord Jesus,” he said. “Whether that’s within the family or within our professional circles or among our friends, that is the challenge that this moment lays before us.”

The Assembly of Catholic Professionals meets quarterly at the Petroleum Club. Meetings include networking, lunch and remarks from guest speakers. The theme of this year’s ACP luncheons is “Building Tomorrow: Empowering Catholic Professionals for Evangelization.”

To view George Weigel’s speech or for more information, visit [cfbook.org/acp](http://cfbook.org/acp) or call (405) 709-2745.

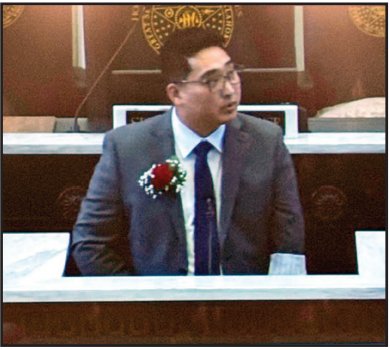
and everywhere is mission territory. “John Paul II insisted ... that lay people are particularly well equipped and in fact particularly charged with being the Church’s

because it’s not an easy thing these days.”

Weigel said that despite the challenges, the work of evangelization can be exhilarating.

## Life: Care and care well

By Courtney Rhone  
The Sooner Catholic



Josiah Presley was the keynote speaker during Rose Day on Feb. 7 at the Oklahoma State Capitol. Photo Courtney Rhone/Sooner Catholic.

care well.”

That was Presley’s message at The Rose Day rally held Feb. 7 in the Oklahoma House of Representatives Chamber, featuring several speakers including Pro Tempore Greg Treat, Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell, Gov. Kevin Stitt and Presley, the keynote. The governor briefly spoke at Rose Day saying,

“Oklahoma is the most pro-family state,” and “Oklahomans value the dignity of life from beginning to end.”

Every year on Rose Day, people gather at the Oklahoma State Capitol to promote and support the lives of the unborn by meeting with their state senators and representatives, presenting them red roses. The red roses symbolize the sanctity of the unborn.

Presley, the youth minister at North Pointe Baptist Church challenged attendees in four ways: “What we believe.” “Care about beliefs.” “Care well about beliefs.” And, “Do something about it.”

He related each of these four challenges to his story about surviving abortion and the importance of these challenges to the pro-life movement overall. Presley read Psalm 139:13-16, saying it’s an important Bible verse to him because it shows him the value of his life and other lives to God.

“Everyone’s life is important and valuable because we’re all made in God’s image,” he said.

The Rose Day rally concluded with Presley asserting in his speech that, “We should encourage our leaders to pass pro-life legislations to show that Oklahomans are for life.”

Courtney Rhone is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.



Parishioners at St. Paul Catholic Church in Del City held a celebration Jan. 28 for the feast of the conversion of St. Paul (Jan. 25). The Mexican folkloric dancers from Bl. Sacramento Catholic Church in Lawton performed. There was also a performance from Filipino dancers. A light lunch was served, and the parish had door prizes and raffles. Photos Jolene Schonchin/Sooner Catholic.

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# Archdiocesan SPELLING BEE

Students from Catholic schools throughout the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City participated in the annual Archdiocesan Spelling Bee on Feb. 21 at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Oklahoma City. *Photos Rosalinda Rivera/Sooner Catholic.*

## First and second grade winners:

**1st place:** Jonas, Bishop John Carroll Catholic School, Oklahoma City  
**2nd place:** Kingston, St. Mary Catholic School, Ponca City  
**3rd place:** Regina, St. Joseph Catholic School, Enid  
**4th place:** Jake, Bishop John Carroll Catholic School, Oklahoma City  
**5th place:** Kinneri, St. Philip Neri Catholic School, Midwest City



## Third and fourth grade winners:

**1st place:** Caroline, St. Joseph Catholic School, Enid  
**2nd place:** Madison, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School, Edmond  
**3rd place:** Ray, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School, Edmond  
**4th place:** Gabriel, Rosary Catholic School, Oklahoma City  
**5th place:** Mary Kate, Christ the King Catholic School, Oklahoma City



## Fifth and sixth grade winners:

**1st place:** Layla, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School, Edmond  
**1st place:** William, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School, Edmond  
**3rd place:** Huy, Bishop John Carroll Catholic School, Oklahoma City  
**4th place:** Theodore, Christ the King Catholic School, Oklahoma City  
**5th place:** Jayden, St. John Nepomuk Catholic School, Yukon



Above: Natalie, 5th place, was not present for the group photo.

## Seventh and eighth grade winners:

**1st place:** Aaron, St. Eugene Catholic School, Oklahoma City  
**2nd place:** Ryan, Christ the King Catholic School, Oklahoma City  
**3rd place:** Azael, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School, Edmond  
**4th place:** Franny, St. Charles Borromeo Catholic School, Oklahoma City  
**5th place:** Natalie, Bishop John Carroll Catholic School, Oklahoma City



# Good year for tax credit program

By Owen Canfield

Hundreds of students seeking a Catholic school education in 2024-25 will benefit from the \$1.77 million in gifts made to the Tax Credit Scholarship program during 2023.

The Tax Credit Scholarship program (TCS) provides donors with a state income tax credit for their gift. Those who make a two-year pledge receive a 75% state income tax credit each year; one-year pledges receive a 50% credit.

During 2023, individuals and businesses gave \$1,769,082 to the program. TCS attracted 92 new donors, including eight businesses that

gave for the first time. Altogether, 465 individuals and businesses contributed in 2023.

Business gifts have the potential to be transformative. This is because while couples are eligible for a maximum state income tax credit of \$2,000 each year and individuals may get a maximum credit of \$1,000 per year, qualified businesses can get as much up to \$100,000 annually. If the business operates as a pass-through, the tax credit on the gift can pass through to the owner's personal tax liability.

For this school year, 568 students are attending Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City thanks to help from the TCS program.

Fundraising for this year is underway. Donors who wish to give to TCS in 2024 may

complete a pledge form now and pay their gift any time before Dec. 31. We also are happy to accept gifts paid out monthly via credit card or bank draft if that best suits the donor.

The Tax Credit Scholarship program is a tremendous tool for those who pay Oklahoma state income taxes and want to support Catholic education in the archdiocese. Through the program, donors redirect their state tax dollars to help students attend Catholic schools. Simply put, the program helps students, their families and donors.

To make a pledge or learn more, visit [tcsok.org](http://tcsok.org), or contact me at [ocanfield@tcsok.org](mailto:ocanfield@tcsok.org) or (405) 709-2700.

Owen Canfield is director of the Tax Credit Scholarship program.



Archbishop Coakley celebrated a T<sub>u</sub>it Mass on Feb. 11 at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City. T<sub>u</sub>it is the celebration of the Vietnamese Lunar New Year. *Photos Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.*



Archbishop Coakley visited seminarians Jan. 30 at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md. He celebrated Mass for the seminary, toured the campus and met with seminarians. Bl. Stanley Rother attended Mount St. Mary Seminary after he was dismissed from other schools due to his academic struggles. Archbishop Coakley also attended the seminary and later served as director of spiritual formation for several years. *Photos Avery Holt.*



## Eucharistic Miracles traveling display

*Parish/school display schedule*

**March 8** - Saint Mary Catholic Church and School, Ponca City

**March 15** - Saint Joseph Catholic Church and School, and Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Enid

**March 22** - Holy Trinity Catholic Church and School, Okarche

**April 2** - Cristo Rey OKC Catholic School, Oklahoma City

**April 5** - Sacred Heart Catholic Church and School, El Reno

**April 12** - Saint John Nepomuk Catholic Church and School, Yukon

**April 19** - Saint Eugene Catholic Church and School, Oklahoma City

**April 26** - Christ the King Catholic Church and School, Oklahoma City

**May 3** - All Saints Catholic Church and School and Saint Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church, Norman

**May 17** - Saint Teresa of Avila Catholic Church, Harrah

**Aug. 9** - Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Elk City



Students at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School learn about Bl. Carlo Acutis in a traveling display at the school from Jan. 29 to Feb. 2. Photo Kate Menz.

# EUCCHARISTIC MIRACLES

## *exhibit visits BMCHS chapel*

**By Kate Menz**  
*For the Sooner Catholic*

An exhibit of the Eucharistic miracles compiled by Blessed Carlo Acutis was recently displayed in the Frassati Chapel at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School, one of several stops across the state to feature the work of Blessed Carlo.

Blessed Carlo was an Italian teenager who died in 2005 after creating a website documenting Eucharistic miracles from around the world. "What's unique about him is he is a 21st century saint, and so he understands the world that we live in more so than those saints from the 19th, 18th, 17th centuries, but also he's a teenager," Father Will Banowsky said. "He knew how to use the internet."

The exhibit consists of a collection of pamphlets explaining some of the Eucharistic miracles Blessed Carlo documented.

"All this comes from a website that

he built," Father Banowsky said. "He knew enough about HTML and website internet infrastructure in the early 2000s to put together this website and put it on the web."

Campus minister Kelly Allen said Blessed Carlo was a modern-day saint not much older than high school students today.

"As just a middle school, early high school kid, he started making a website about Eucharistic miracles because he was like, 'I think these are cool; everyone should know about them,' so he started making this website about them," Allen said.

Blessed Carlo lived a normal life until the age of 15 when he was diagnosed with an untreatable leukemia. He died at 15 on Oct. 12, 2006.

"He was just the kid at school who everyone thought was a nice kid," Allen said. "You know, he was a real caring kid, very sweet and stuff like that."

Now, he is called "Blessed" after being beatified in 2020.

"He's on his way to almost full sainthood, and he is the patron

saint of the internet now," Allen said.

Father Banowsky explained that Blessed Carlo was a good example of a normal teenager who showed that people today can achieve holiness.

"He shows you can play video games and be a blessed of the church," Father Banowsky said. "You can build a website and be a blessed of the church. You can use technology in a positive and enlightening and enriching and educational way and be a blessed of the church."

Following the stop at McGuinness, the exhibit will be displayed at various stops into August.

"I hope that for you and for anyone who comes here, that this can lead them deeper into their faith and deeper into a love and appreciation of encountering Christ in the Eucharist," Father Banowsky said.

*Kate Menz is a staff writer for the Chi Rhoan, the Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School student newspaper.*



Archbishop Coakley celebrated the Rite of Election on Feb. 18 at the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine in Oklahoma City. Photos Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.

## Bl. Carlo a modern-day model for young adults

**By Sally Linhart**  
*The Sooner Catholic*

The story of Blessed Carlo Acutis has deeply impacted people around the world, his conviction serving as an example to people of all faiths. However, it is his influence on young adults that has given Blessed Carlo such remarkable distinction in the Catholic church.

Beginning a tour of the state, students at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School were first to witness the powerful display of unwavering devotion to the Eucharist, The International Exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles, designed by Acutis, on display at the school from Jan. 29 to Feb. 2.

Blessed Carlo was born in London in 1991 and moved to

Italy shortly after. As a child, he felt a strong connection to his faith and found joy in praying the rosary. Blessed Carlo begged his parents to take him on pilgrimages to sites where Eucharistic miracles occurred, his actions resulting in a renewed faith in his mother, Antonia Salzano, who had only attended Mass three times in her life: for her first communion, her confirmation and her wedding to Carlo's father.

She described being influenced by Carlo's service to Christ because it was visible in every aspect of his life. "... in every situation, from the smallest thing to the biggest, such as helping out at home, helping children who were victims of bullying, or those in difficulty who had a disability, or the homeless, bringing them food and blankets."

As a student, he had a reputation for defending classmates who were being treated unfairly. In particular, he felt called to stand in alliance with classmates with disabilities. Although he loved playing video games, he only played them for one hour per week in an effort to maintain his spiritual discipline. Admittedly, Blessed Carlo wanted to play more often, yet he chose to abstain as an act of penance.

In 2006, at the age of 15, he was diagnosed with leukemia. During his brief battle, Blessed Carlo offered his suffering "for the Lord, for the pope, and the Church." On Oct. 12, 2006, only a week after his diagnosis, Blessed Carlo died.

In 2013, his cause for canonization commenced. In 2018, he was declared venerable, and in 2020 was declared blessed. His

beatification took place Oct. 10, 2020, in Assisi. Blessed Carlo's body, dressed in jeans and sneakers, now lies in repose in a glass tomb in the Sanctuary of the Renunciation in Assisi. His heart, now considered a relic, sits on display in a reliquary at the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi.

Salzano, using the opportunity to continue Blessed Carlo's mission, delivered a simple message to young adults: "Carlo is a young man of your time, who lived what you live, with the same dangers, joys and sorrows. Sainthood is for everyone. Carlo became a saint by practicing the seven theological and cardinal virtues. He knew how to resist and win his fight. Win yours!"

*Sally Linhart is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.*



# 100 years of Court Salve Regina celebrated

By Martha “Karin” Dudash  
Oklahoma State Regent  
Catholic Daughters of the Americas

In January, the Oklahoma Catholic Daughters of the Americas celebrated the 100th Anniversary of Court Salve Regina No. 847 in El Reno. They began with Holy Mass led by Sacred Heart Pastor Father Lance Warren, with dinner following.

The attendees were treated to a musical performance by Jamie Biller Landry. In attendance were the state officers: regent Karin Dudash, first vice regent Joella Newbury, second vice regent Karla Ludwig, secretary Debra Brzozowski and treasurer Laura Hamilton. On behalf of all the Oklahoma Catholic Daughters, the State Regent presented Court Salve Regina with a framed certificate recognizing their 100 years of “Spirituality and Service.”

Court Salve Regina was instituted on Jan. 13, 1924, at the Knights of Columbus Hall in El Reno, with 55 charter members. After the initiatory ceremonies, a banquet for the charter members and over 50 visiting members was held across the street at the Oxford Café. Following the banquet, they returned to the hall for the election and installation of officers. By the end of 1924, there were 107 court members.

Their most visible court projects are the stained-glass window, which was donated when the church was built in 1952, and the baptismal font which is still in use. In 1952 the members provided religious instruction and transportation to and from a church for Navajo children located in Concho. They furnished clothing, books, medals, and rosaries for the students and entertained them at Christmas



The Oklahoma Catholic Daughters of the Americas celebrated the 100th Anniversary of Court Salve Regina No. 847 in El Reno. Seated, left to right: state treasurer Laura Hamilton, first vice state regent Jo Ella Newbury, state regent Karin Dudash, state secretary Debra Brzozowski, second vice state regent Karla Ludwig, and Sherri Koos. Standing, left to right: Loretta Valdez, Michelle Brothers, Paula Porter, Rosie Church, Amelia Henderson, Natalia Valenzuela, Kathy Hauenstein, Karen Huber, Nancy Lembke. *Photo provided.*

parties. Their work resulted in 39 baptisms in three years.

Over the years these busy ladies have held rummage sales, bake sales and various dinners. The money they have earned has been given to the 15 CDA national projects and charities. They also contribute to the 1903 Society to maintain the CDA National Headquarters in New York.

Locally, they support Love for the Children, Blessing Baskets, Community Thanksgiving Dinner, Center for Family Love, Mobile Meals, Lord's Harvest, Taste of Sacred Heart, Girl's State, Lenten Supper and Seder Meal. Each

month the unborn babies are remembered at Mass on the first Saturday and a Rosary is said to begin each of their monthly meetings.

Each June the court hosts a clergy appreciation supper for the Sacred Heart Catholic Church pastor and deacon. They have also adopted a seminarian. They pray for him and send cards and gifts of encouragement.

Members give their time, energy, stewardship, hearts and finances to help others in the service of Christ in the local parish and community, as well as at the state and national levels.

## St. Teresa of Avila in Harrah celebrates St. John Bosco

Saint Teresa of Avila Catholic Church in Harrah hosted a New Year's Eve celebration for the Feast of Saint John Bosco. The parish celebration was done in conjunction with the religious education program and was held in the Saint Teresa of Avila Family Center under the “big top tent” following the Bosco theme.



The night started with prayer from Deacon Jim Black, an introduction of Saint John Bosco (played by parishioner James McKay), and a dinner.

During dinner, McKay, as Saint John Bosco, intro-

duced his “Bosco boys,” who would go from table to table to conduct various tricks and illusions, much like the Bosco boys of the 1800s. One Bosco boy even rode his unicycle.

After dinner, Saint John Bosco told the story of “his” life, recapping how he lost his father at an early age, forcing his mother to support him and his siblings.

Raised in a life of poverty, Bosco always had a passion to help other children find hope by catching their attention with things like juggling, storytelling and acrobatics. He believed that God had blessed him with these special talents, and he wanted to share them with others.

Bosco began performing free shows, where he always started and ended with prayer. Bosco later was ordained a priest so that he could continue a life of ministry, focusing on orphans,



preparing them for the sacraments. In addition to forming the Salesians of Don Bosco, “The Bosco Boys,” he co-founded the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, now known as the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco.

McKay talked with the children of the parish about how Saint John Bosco's life and ministry is still alive and helping children today. He ended with a prayer focused on the children, their families and the parish community, and concluded with a Hail Mary, dedicated to Mary Help of Christians.

The Saint John Bosco Feast Day celebration was one of many events the parish

has hosted to help educate the children and their families about the lives of the saints. They have celebrated Saint Nicholas, Saint Valentine and Saint Lawrence with special themed dinners showcasing their lives and how people can follow in their footsteps.

The parish has also had saint themed events like a Saint Teresa of Calcutta workday, where parishioners served families lunch and then worked together to improve the parish grounds.

Above: St. John Bosco (played by parishioner James McKay) spoke to children at St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church in Harrah.

Left: St. John Bosco and the “Bosco boys.”

*Photos provided.*

## 50 years of sisterhood, stewardship

Twenty-nine present and past members of Saint Bridget's Guild gathered at Legends Restaurant to celebrate 50 years of stewardship (time, talent, treasure) to the Norman community and discuss treasured memories of their past.

Saint Bridget is also known as Bridget (Brigid) of Ireland, Brigid of Kildare, Bride of Isles and Mary of the Gael. She is the patron saint of newborns, infants, nuns, midwives, poultry farmers, poets, scholars, travelers and many more.

Of the original five Founding Sisters of Saint Bridget, three were present. Pat Feurborn Cain, Jan Kahoe and Carolyn Seiter were honored and awarded with a founders lifetime trophy and corsages. Cathy Fagan, Jan Kahoe and Mary Waggoner were recognized with a Presidents Service Award. Each lady has held the office of presidency for six plus years since 1973.

Although Saint Bridget members originated at Saint Joseph Catholic Church in 1973, it soon became apparent a new Catholic church was considered with the new home and business construction to the West. Soon, Saint Mark Catholic Church was established.

Also, families were transferring to Saint Thomas More Catholic Church due to their college-bound children attending the University

of Oklahoma. People may attend the three churches, however they are “Sister's in Spirit” and “Disciples of Christ.”

Not once did members consider this a challenge. In fact, they consider their group as “very unique.”

Their past and present philanthropic projects are: assisting families in need at Christmas; Toys for Tots; The Christmas Store; the annual Thanksgiving dinner held at Saint Joseph Catholic Church; cash donations to all three churches for Saint Vincent de Paul Ministry; Sunday dinners for OU students; donations of food, clothing, shoes, coats and personal hygiene needs to the Women's Sanctuary located on the Saint Joseph Catholic Church campus; bingo meals; and gift cards for Women's Sanctuary for the “Queen For a Day” program sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.



Present and past members of St. Bridget's Guild gathered to celebrate 50 years of stewardship to the Norman community. *Photo provided.*

Those attending the celebration were: Sallie Ahlert, Mary Barse, Shirley Bates, Ann Berry, Catherine Bishop, Pat Cain, Debbie Clagg, Kathy Cooper, Susan Dobry, Cathy Fagan, Sue Francis, Kathy Gent, Mary Ellen Hook, Rosanne Huseman, Rita Ille, Jan Kahoe, June Letta, Deb Lewis, Margaret Luza, Katherine Malloy, Linda McNeely, Carol O'Bryan, Debbie Osborne, Sharon Parker, Suzanne Pendergraft, Carolyn Seiter, Marilyn Vitello, Mary Waggoner, Bonnie Whited and Mandy Woodford.

### continued from page 1

said Sister Marie Therese Long, O.S.B., the prioress of the Saint Joseph Monastery in Tulsa.

“We teach students, faculty, parents and staff about our Benedictine values and how to live them out in everyday life. We offer Lectio Divina retreats twice a year. We see people for spiritual direction and welcome everyone for private retreats to experience our monastic prayer and community life and utilize our vast library resources.”

She emphasized the importance of hospitality and serving the needy as one of the important goals of her congregation's ministry.

“Welcoming all people as Christ is a way for us to live out the Gospel,” she said, “to witness to God's love and encourage people on their spiritual journey.”

Sister Barbara Joseph Foley, C.S.T., the superior of the Carmelite Sisters of Saint Thérèse of the Infant Jesus in Oklahoma City, started a new ministry – the Sister BJ's Pantry in 2006. The Pantry's mission is to work corporal acts of mercy by serving the homeless population and thus model Christ's love and respect for human dignity of each single person, according to Matthew, 25.

“We try to show them the love we want to be shown – this is what Christ wants us to exemplify,” Sister Barbara said.

The Pantry offers help through various programs, including food ministry (breakfast program and food bank), clothing ministry, coats for the homeless, eye clinic and foot clinic. As of December, the food bank program alone served 2,240 people.

“We see nearly 400 people per week for our meals,” Sister Barbara said. “Each Sunday we serve breakfast to 100-150 people at the pantry. In addition, Peter de Keratry leads the Knights and Dames

ardship and Development for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Said Sister Barbara, “I have been blessed with volunteers. If you feel called to be Christ's hands and feet, come visit us. It is a very

**Celebrating Traditions**  
*Changing the World*

**CATHOLIC**  
**SISTERS WEEK**  
**2024**

Sr. Maria of the Trinity and a volunteer with Mark, who died 10 days later.  
*Photo provided.*

Advancing the Mission of Catholic Sisters

**March 8-14, 2024**

of Malta (a religious order) on a bus to 3rd/Virginia Street to feed additional 50-80 people there.”

“Our charism is to serve the poor and the sick, and it has been a wonderful gift to live the beatitudes by supporting Sister Barbara's ministry,” said de Keratry, who also works as the executive director of the Secretariat for Stew-

rewarding experience. Parishes have been organizing monthly item collections for us for almost 15 years now.”

She also shared her ongoing efforts to build a small, tiny-home community for the homeless.

“God's providence is so real,” she said. “He always provides, and he is always faithful.”

Gospel of Life Disciples, led by Sister Maria of the Trinity, is an emerging Catholic ecclesial family of consecrated and lay persons committed to caring for and accompanying the frail and terminally ill in the final stages of their lives, both Catholics and religiously unaffiliated of all ages. The ministry relies on donations, solidarity and volunteer service.

“It is a sacred grace to be able to accompany people in that supreme moment of their passage from this life to eternal life. We are blessed to minister in this unique way by helping people prepare for this unrepeatable moment and providing life-affirming care,” said Sister Maria.

The ministry began in 2013, with the Saint James Dwelling in South Oklahoma City and Saint Adelaide Dwelling in Grand Prairie, Texas. The Saint John Paul II Dwelling in Moore opened in 2018.

New efforts are underway, with plans for a new mission in Guatemala in Cerro de Oro, next to Santiago Atitlán where Blessed Father Stanley Rother served.

“Gospel of Life is an active ministry grounded in prayer,” Sister Maria said. “Where contemplative prayer is the foundation of our service to others. The Holy Eucharist is the center of our day.”

More information about Catholic Sisters Week can be found at [catholicsistersweek.org](http://catholicsistersweek.org). Volunteers are welcome to contact Sister Barbara Joseph Foley at (405) 837-7068 or [srbarbarajoseph@gmail.com](mailto:srbarbarajoseph@gmail.com) and Sister Maria of the Trinity at (405) 778-1107 or [srmaria@gospeloflifedisciples.org](mailto:srmaria@gospeloflifedisciples.org).

*Jad Ziolkowska is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.*



## Jobs Box

### Cook/Cocinero - OKC

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking an experienced cook to assist with meal preparation at the Catholic Pastoral Center. The flexible work schedule will include some evenings and most weekends. A minimum of two years' experience in food preparation and catering service preferred. Customer service experience a plus. High school diploma a must. A background check and safe environment training will be required. Send cover letter and resume to [humanresources@archokc.org](mailto:humanresources@archokc.org).

### Gift shop manager - Shrine

The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine is seeking a gift shop manager to be responsible for all operations of the gift shop, including purchasing and maintaining inventory of religious items that reflect the Catholic faith and promote knowledge of and devotion to Bl. Stanley Rother, tracking purchases and accurately accounting for payments made in the gift shop. Bachelor's degree in management or a related field and/or at least three years of work experience in merchandising, business management/ administration, or any combination of education and experience which demonstrates the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the above-described responsibilities. Send cover letter and resume to [humanresources@archokc.org](mailto:humanresources@archokc.org).

### Disaster Case Manager - OKC

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking

a disaster case manager to counsel and aid disaster survivors requiring services to aid in disaster recovery; interview clients experiencing disaster impact to finances, employment, food, housing, physical and mental impairments, and/or similar areas; secure and evaluate applicable related information; vet and refer clients to community resources and organizations as appropriate outside of disaster recovery needs. High school diploma; a bachelor's degree in a related social service field is preferred; at least three years of experience that is directly related to the duties and responsibilities specified. Send cover letter and resume to Nicole Curran at [ncurran@ccaokc.org](mailto:ncurran@ccaokc.org).

### Case worker - OKC

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking a case worker for two days/week at the Swan Respite Center to assist case manager(s) through Cardinal Community House with assessments, follow up on identified needs and maintenance of client data in the HMIS database system. This part-time position is 15 hours/week Tuesday and Thursdays. Bachelor's degree in social work, or human services related field preferred; experience working with homeless or other at-risk populations preferred; experience working with individuals with mental health a plus; Experience in case management preferred; bilingual a plus. Send cover letter and resume to Nicole Curran at [ncurran@ccaokc.org](mailto:ncurran@ccaokc.org).

### Social services case manager level II - OKC

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking a social services case manager level II to provide case management services to clients through various social services programs. Will work across multiple departments, primarily family support services and as assigned. Case management includes identification of needs and developing a plan to address those needs within the scope of the specific department and providing resources and referrals. High School Diploma or GED; bachelor's degree in social work or related field preferred; three years of experience in case management or community action; fluency in Spanish and English preferred; a combination of education and relevant experience may also be considered. Send cover letter and resume to Nicole Curran at [ncurran@ccaokc.org](mailto:ncurran@ccaokc.org).

### Teachers - Edmond

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School is accepting resumes for teaching positions for the 2024-2025 school year. Bachelor's degree and teaching certification required. Send a letter of interest and resume to Interim Principal, Jenny Lang, at [jiang@seasok.org](mailto:jiang@seasok.org).

### Teaching assistants - Edmond

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School is accepting resumes for teaching assistant positions for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school year. Send a letter of interest and resume to Interim Principal, Jenny

Lang, at [jiang@seasok.org](mailto:jiang@seasok.org).

### Musician/music coordinator - Hinton

Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Hinton is seeking a musician/music coordinator to choose liturgically/seasonally appropriate music; guide the choir; and coordinate rehearsal times outside of Mass. \$30/Mass. Ability to play piano or guitar greatly preferred. Contact Fr. Kelly Edwards at [kelly.edwards@archokc.org](mailto:kelly.edwards@archokc.org).

### Music director - Del City

St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Del City is seeking a choir director/pianist position for three weekend Masses, funerals and Holy Days. Working knowledge of the Catholic Mass and "Breaking Bread" collection is helpful. Salary negotiable. Contact the parish office during the morning hours at (405) 677-4873 or by e-mail at [stpaulch@coxinet.net](mailto:stpaulch@coxinet.net).

### Nursery teacher - OKC

Christ the King Catholic Church is seeking a part-time Mothers' Day Out teacher Monday/Wednesday 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. 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](mailto:margaret@ckokc.org) or (405) 242-4521.

To see more job openings, go online to [archokc.org/jobs-box](http://archokc.org/jobs-box).

## The Catholic Difference

# 'Gendered' nonsense is dangerous nonsense

Dean Acheson, U.S. secretary of state from 1949 until 1953, is buried in Washington's Oak Hill Cemetery. When I read recently that Acheson's 20th successor, Antony Blinken, had sent a cable subtitled "Gender Identity Best Practices" to American diplomats around the world, warning against "harmful, exclusionary messages" conveyed by the use of terms like "mother/father," "son/daughter," and "husband/wife," I was tempted to visit Oak Hill, to determine if secretary Acheson's mortal remains were spinning in his grave.

Acheson titled his brilliant 1969 memoir *Present at the Creation*, which he certainly was, as initiatives in which he played a key role, such as the Marshall Plan, NATO, and the Japanese peace treaty became the international security architecture that underwrote communism's defeat in the Cold War.

Might Secretary Blinken riff on his distinguished predecessor and entitle his memoirs, *Present at the Destruction*? Of what, you ask? Of what Acheson and others wrought.

Consider what was afoot in the world when Mr. Blinken dispatched that cable. Wars were raging in Ukraine and Gaza. Latin America was falling apart politically and economically, one result of which was an unprecedented migrant and refugee crisis on America's southern border. Russia was building a space-based nuclear weapon that could eliminate America's satellite-based communications network. Iranian proxies were creating mayhem throughout the Middle East and disrupting vital international commerce in the Red Sea. China continued its saber-rattling attempts to intimidate Taiwan. The crises of governance in sub-Saharan Africa were too numerous to count. The president of the United States couldn't keep the presidents of Mexico and Egypt straight. The leading Republican candidate for the presidency was informing his

adoring fans that he would tell Vladimir Putin to "do whatever the hell (he) wanted" to NATO allies not spending 2% of GDP on defense.

And amidst all that, the U.S. secretary of state thought it important to instruct his diplomats to "remain attuned to and supportive of shifts in pronouns" while substituting "you all" or "folks" for the potentially offensive "ladies and gentlemen?"

This is not just nonsense, it is dangerous nonsense.

It is a distraction from the real work of diplomacy. It further erodes American credibility in the eyes of Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping and the apocalyptic mullahs in Tehran, who may well conclude that a putative superpower obsessed with "fluid gender identity" will not pose an obstacle to their aggressive designs. It sends a signal of terminal unseriousness to the rest of the world. It offends what are often termed "traditional" nations and cultures, but which are in fact repositories of common sense.

From the point of view of the Catholic analyst of world affairs, for whom politics is always downstream from culture, this is what happens when what scholars call "expressive individualism" – self-absorption on steroids – displaces the biblical view of the human condition: that there are truths built into the world and into us, including the truth that we are male and female, distinct but complementary, ordered to communion and fruitfulness.

Ideas, as always, have consequences, and the desperately defective ideas of woke culture – the cult of the false trinity of Me, Myself, and I – have now corrupted American diplomacy, endangering both our country and the world.

As is typically the case with falsehood, the gender ideology now infesting the Department of State seeks to impose itself by bureaucratic power and personal intimidation.

Thus under Mr. Blinken, State has decreed

a third gender "marker" on U.S. passports for those who don't "identify" as male

or female; appointed the first U.S. "Special Envoy to Advance the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQ+) Persons;" and informed state department personnel that those seeking promotion must "advance" DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, as wokesters understand those otherwise honorable terms). This is not quite the totalitarian future that George Orwell described as "a boot stamping on a human face – forever." But it's coercion in the name of falsehood, nonetheless.

A friend with a keen sense of history, returning from Rome to Washington via London last month, e-mailed me acerbically from a Heathrow lounge, saying he felt like he was going from Sodom to the Fall of Constantinople. I advised him to have another drink, not least because "Rome" is fixable.

But Secretary Blinken's cable suggests that the analogy between our American moment and the Fall of Constantinople isn't completely far-fetched. And that new fall is not going to be arrested by either of two narcissistic, elderly presidential candidates who embody, rather than challenge, the culture of self-absorption that is killing America and impeding our capacity to help shape a better world.

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



**George Weigel**  
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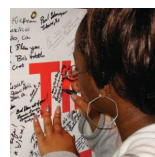
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**Where?** Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City

**When?** Offered during the Summer of 2024. Participation in an orientation May 29 - 31 in Washington D.C. is required for all interns.

**Why?** To support this important ministry of the Church while building professional skills and relationships.



## Book Review: 'The Stations of the Cross in Slow Motion'

By John H. Dolezal  
The Sooner Catholic

Lent is a 40-day liturgical season of fasting, special prayer and almsgiving in preparation for Easter. Pope Francis recently suggested that "Lent immerses us in a bath of purification and it means looking within ourselves and acknowledging our real identity, removing the masks we so often wear, slowing the frantic pace of our lives and embracing the truth of who we are."

Oh my! Suzan Sammons in her new book, "The Stations of the Cross in Slow Motion," has given us a wonderful gift that can help us use a Station of the Cross each day during Lent versus only using it on Fridays.

Sammons, writer, editor, and homeschooling mother of seven, provides us with this fantastic daily, easy-to-use devotional that invites us to slow down and linger in prayer, reflection and meditation upon each of the 14 Stations of the Cross.

Says Crisis Magazine, "Drawn from the writings of the Church Fathers and prayers of

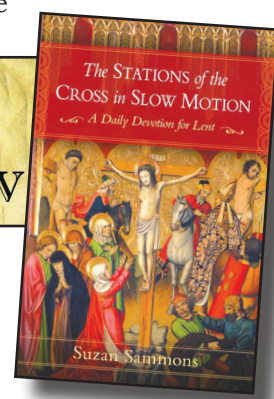
various saints, these Lenten meditations explore the depths of each station to enliven your experience in in the desert."

The content for each station consists of a title page with a beautiful illustration of the scene and a theme that is set for reflection. The devotional is designed for you to spend from two to four days at each station. For each day there is a quotation from a saint, relevant scripture, words to stimulate meditation and a few questions that might help with reflection.

For example, the eighth station – when Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem – consists of three days of devotional material. However, with "slow motion," this content can be used for all seven days of the fourth week of Lent.

Having the quotations and prayers from saints and the reflection questions deepened my consciousness for Jesus' sacrifice. This helped put me at the cross with him feeling sorrow and helplessness knowing that his death was for my salvation.

## Book Review



Since my conversion to Catholicism 42 years ago, Lent has become my favorite season in the Catholic tradition. Reading "The Stations of the Cross in Slow Motion" has definitely enriched my experience spending time immersing myself in the bath of purification and embracing the truth of who I am, while growing in appreciation for the sacrifice Christ made for me.

This devotional is designed to be used privately or as a tool for walking the whole family through the

sacred season of Lent and I highly recommend it for everyone.

Though you may be reading this review while we are well into Lent, it isn't too late to acquire a copy this wonderful book and heighten your Lenten spiritual journey.

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



## Lánzate a lo más Profundo

Luke 5:4

# La Iglesia, la Eucaristía y el Cuerpo de Cristo

En el 2007, después de un sínodo de obispos, el papa Benedicto XVI escribió una exhortación apostólica para toda la Iglesia sobre el tema de la Eucaristía. En esa exhortación escribe: “La Eucaristía es, pues, constitutiva del ser y del actuar de la Iglesia. Por eso la antigüedad cristiana designó con las mismas palabras Corpus Christi el Cuerpo nacido de la Virgen María, el Cuerpo eucarístico y el Cuerpo eclesial de Cristo”. (Sacramentum Caritatis, 15)

En estas palabras el Santo Padre nos recuerda que, en definitiva, el misterio de la Encarnación, la Sagrada Eucaristía y la santa Iglesia Católica es un solo misterio – el Cuerpo de Cristo. No se trata de una mera extravagancia teológica, sino de una verdad profunda y sorprendente de nuestra fe. Si permitimos que esta verdad penetre en nuestros corazones, no sólo impactará en nuestra forma de acercarnos a la celebración de la Misa, sino también a la realidad de la Iglesia misma.

En nuestro mundo, que con frecuencia piensa exclusivamente en términos sociológicos o políticos, esta profunda verdad nos libera de caer en la trampa de aplicar esa misma lógica a la Iglesia.

La Iglesia no es un mero organismo de la sociedad, un agregado de personas o grupos de personas, sino que es el Cuerpo de Cristo. La Iglesia no debe sucumbir a las ideologías actuales, porque está por encima de ellas, ya que es una con Cristo, Verbo eterno del Padre.

No se trata de una idea nueva, sino, como dice Benedicto, de una forma de expresarse desde los primeros tiempos de la Iglesia. Podemos rastrear esta idea hasta el siglo I, en los escritos de san Pablo: “Y el pan que partimos ¿no es comunión con el cuerpo de Cristo? Porque aun siendo muchos, un solo pan y un solo cuerpo somos, pues todos participamos de un solo pan”. (1 Cor 10,16-17)

La Eucaristía, no es sólo una celebración posterior de la comunidad que hemos formado por nuestra cuenta, sino que es la acción divina la que transforma no solo las especies sagradas sino a la misma asamblea reunida. No es tanto que la Iglesia haga la Eucaristía, sino que la Eucaristía hace la Iglesia.

Es bajo esta luz que la inclusión de la Sagrada Eucaristía entre los sacramentos de iniciación tiene una mayor claridad. En el Bautismo, somos adoptados por

el Padre, incorporados (ver la palabra corpus, cuerpo, aquí) en el Cuerpo de Cristo y por ello constituidos coherederos de Cristo y miembros de su Iglesia. Es en la Sagrada Eucaristía donde este hecho se renueva tan poderosamente, no en el sentido de que se haya convertido en algo obsoleto, sino en el sentido en que se nos vuelve a presentar el Misterio Pascual en la Santa Misa.

El papa san Juan Pablo II lo expresó con gran belleza cuando escribió: “Nuestra unión con Cristo... hace que en Él estemos asociados también a la unidad de su cuerpo que es la Iglesia. La Eucaristía consolida la incorporación a Cristo, establecida en el Bautismo”. (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 23)

Somos uno con el otro porque somos uno con Él. La unidad de la Iglesia es Cristo, y no una realidad social o política que provokamos con nuestra acción. En la sumisión a Cristo y a su señorío, encontramos la comunión con el Cuerpo eclesial de Cristo.

Por lo tanto, es imposible exagerar la necesidad de la Sagrada Eucaristía en la vida de la Iglesia – es la vida, o mejor dicho, el vivir de la Iglesia.

La Iglesia nace en la Sagrada Eucaristía. El centro de la vida de la Iglesia – universal, diocesana y parroquial – es la celebración de la Eucaristía los domingos. Es en domingo, primer y octavo día de la creación, día de la resurrección, día del Señor, que la Santa Iglesia de Dios se reúne para renovarse en el Santo

Sacrificio de la Misa.

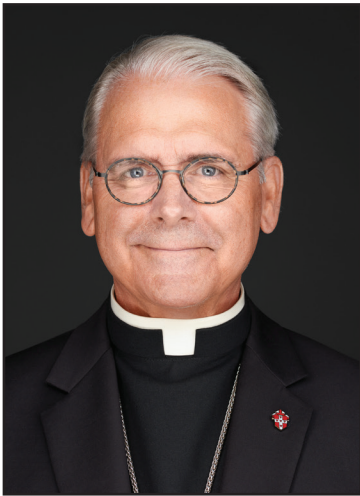
El centro de la vida de la Iglesia no es lo que hacemos antes o después de la Eucaristía dominical. Su Santidad, el papa Francisco, lo expresó de forma conmovedora en una carta apostólica reciente: “No hay ningún aspecto de la vida eclesial que no encuentre su culmen y su fuente en ella. La pastoral de conjunto, orgánica, integrada, más que ser el resultado de la elaboración de complicados programas, es la consecuencia de situar la celebración eucarística dominical, fundamento de la comunión, en el centro de la vida de la comunidad”. (Desiderio Desideravi, 37)

Es la eucaristía dominical la que da existencia a la Iglesia. El misterio ofrecido en el altar se extiende en la vida de los fieles a todas las áreas y ámbitos de la vida cotidiana.

En estos años de Avivamiento Eucarístico, renovamos nuestro reconocimiento, no sólo de la maravilla de la Presencia Real, sino de todo el misterio eucarístico por el que se nos representa una y otra vez el sacrificio pascual de Cristo. No sólo recordamos este misterio, sino que nos transformamos para encarnarlo.

El misterio que se celebra se completa cuando se vive. La Encarnación no sólo se prolonga en el tiempo a través de las especies sagradas sobre el altar, sino también ante el altar en la Iglesia reunida en las bancas. Esta comunión sacramental nos permite ser una presencia diferente entre las ideologías de hoy, con frecuencia rasgadas por la ideología y el conflicto.

Es mi plegaria que en este Avivamiento Eucarístico veamos la unidad entre la comunión del altar y la comunión de la Iglesia y, que al ver esta unidad, la recibamos.



Arzobispo Pablo S. Coakley



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# La “parroquia” de Laverne sale del garaje

Mucho es posible gracias a la Colecta Católico Anual

Por John Helsley  
The Sooner Catholic

Ramitas de vegetación y flores y tela de gasa blanca brotan del crucifijo colocado correctamente detrás de un altar que contiene lo esencial.

Dos velas. La pequeña cruz colocada delante, en el centro. Un soporte para el misal. Un ramo de claveles rosas y blancos situado en el suelo enfrente, adornan el altar. En las paredes hay imágenes enmarcadas de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y de San José Luis Sánchez del Río el niño mexicano condenado a muerte a los 14 años por negarse a renunciar a su fe católica, ambas apropiadas para esta gran comunidad hispana.

Todo está en su sitio en esta casa de adoración.

Incluso si se trata de un culto alojado en el garaje de un taller metálico.

Esa es la escena en Laverne, una remota comunidad rural en un rincón del Panhandle de Oklahoma, donde hasta 75 devotos “feligreses” se hacían en la improvisada iglesia, llevando la alegría cada domingo para celebrar misa.

Con la parroquia católica más cercana a unos 65 kilómetros de distancia, en Woodward, hacen que la misa funcione en el garaje. Por el momento..

La buena noticia: una nueva casa parroquial - una casa parroquial de ladrillo y mortero establecida por el Arzobispo Paul Coakley como una iglesia de misión designada a San José Luis Sánchez del Río - ha pasado de ser una esperanza a un hecho, gracias a un generoso donante y a los fondos de contrapartida de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City recaudados a través de la Colecta Católica Anual.

Se ha comprado una antigua iglesia protestante y se están llevando a cabo renovaciones en la futura sede de San José Luis del Río, con el optimismo de abrir sus puertas en 2025.

A medida que la campaña de la Colecta Católica Anual 2024 va cobrando impulso, la historia de Laverne pone de relieve lo que es posible hacer con el espíritu de donación.

“Con su ayuda”, dijo el Padre Cristóbal De Loera, párroco en Laverne, “nos ha dado la esperanza de que es posible que una pequeña comunidad rural en Oklahoma pueda tener una iglesia digna donde podamos adorar a Dios.”

La Colecta Católicoa Anual llega a muchos. El dinero recaudado se utiliza para ayudar a las parroquias con necesidades de

construcción, como San José Luis Sánchez del Río, y repercute en muchas otras áreas esenciales, como los programas de jóvenes, y jóvenes adultos, programas universitarios; la formación de adultos; la educación religiosa y las escuelas católicas; el matrimonio y la vida familiar; y la causa de canonización del Beato Stanley Rother; entre otras.

“Los fondos recaudados por la Colecta Católica Anual repercuten en prácticamente todos los ministerios de la archidiócesis”, afirmó el Arzobispo Coakley.

Todos los ministerios, cercanos y lejanos. Laverne, con 1,198 habitantes, se encuentra a casi tres horas de Oklahoma City, al noroeste de Woodward, en el condado de Harper. La ganadería, la agricultura y las granjas porcinas impulsan la economía.

De los que llenan las sillas plegables del garaje para la misa de los domingos, muchos son emigrantes de México, que han encontrado un buen trabajo en Laverne.

“A veces está lleno y no tenemos suficientes asientos para todos”, dice Laura Sánchez, una feligresa.

No hay suficientes asientos, pero los que caben dentro, dijo el Padre De Loera, llenan el espacio con algo especial.

“El espíritu de Dios está aquí”, afirmó.

También párroco de la iglesia católica de San Pedro en Woodward, el padre De Loera ve la congregación abarrotada en el garaje y espera el día en que ellos, y más, puedan reunirse en un espacio sagrado más adecuado.

Aunque ya se ha comprado el edificio para la nueva iglesia, es necesario realizar renovaciones antes de que San José Luis Sánchez del Río abra sus puertas para la misa. El interior se ha vaciado para adaptarlo a la arquitectura eclesiástica de un santuario católico. Hay que sustituir el sistema de calefacción y aire acondicionado y hay otros problemas para que el edificio cumpla las normas. Y eso antes de abordar la estética.

Todo eso requiere más dinero.

El padre De Loera y los feligreses ponen de su parte.

Todos los domingos venden comida que incluyen tacos y tamales caseros. Han conseguido donaciones a través de cenas con baile, incluido un baile de San Valentín que recaudó 11,000 dólares.

Sin embargo, la mayoría de los feligreses son inmigrantes con pocos o ningún ingreso disponible. A veces sienten que su nueva iglesia es una realidad lejana.

“Intentamos hacerlo lo mejor que podemos, pero necesitamos la ayuda de nuestros hermanos y hermanas de la archidiócesis” afirma

el padre De Loera.

No es que haya signos de desánimo entre la comunidad.

“La gente está comprometida con Cristo, comprometida con su fe”, dijo el padre De Loera. “Es increíble ver a los padres traer a sus hijos, y están sonriendo y están felices. Y están allí para adorar a Dios.

“Eso me da mucha esperanza de que nuestra iglesia está bien y viva aquí en el noroeste de Oklahoma”.

Sánchez y otros han experimentado toda una jornada al vivir su fe en Laverne.

Han celebrado misa en casas, en un restaurante mexicano, incluso en el sótano de una funeraria. Y ahora, están en el garaje, que ha sido gentilmente dedicado 100 por ciento para la Misa por Ismael y Noemí Domínguez, quienes mandaron construir el taller detrás de su casa.

“Creo que nos estamos esforzando mucho para tener nuestro propio lugar”, dijo Sánchez. “Agradezco a toda la comunidad por trabajar tan difícilmente para nosotros. En una ciudad pequeña, tenemos muchas iglesias diferentes, pero ninguna católica”.

Eso cambiará. Está cambiando.

Historias como éstas revelan el impacto de la Colecta Católica Anual.

“Creo que si vamos a tomarnos en serio la llamada del arzobispo Coakley de ‘Ir y hacer discípulos’, si vamos a ser un pueblo que lleva a Cristo a los demás, entonces creo que tenemos que poner nuestro dinero donde está nuestra boca”, dijo Peter de Keratry, director ejecutivo de Mayordomía y Desarrollo de la archidiócesis.

“Este es un caso en el que estamos llevando la Misa a un grupo de personas que no la tendrían de otra manera”.

El padre De Loera calcula que la asistencia a misa casi se duplicará cuando se inaugure el nuevo edificio. El garaje, después de todo, ofrece asientos limitados. Y se sigue corriendo la voz de la Misa en español en Laverne, que está experimentando un nuevo crecimiento.

Con el tiempo, el crecimiento de la comunidad incluirá una nueva parroquia católica.

“La gente, con su sacrificio, su generosidad, da para la Colecta Anual, y tiene un mayor impacto”, dijo el Padre De Loera. “A veces la gente quizá da y piensa: ‘Quizá mi ayuda no llegue tan lejos’.

“Pues mire hasta dónde ha llegado. Ha llegado hasta Laverne, Estados Unidos”.

John Helsley es editor del Sooner Catholic.





## Briefs

### Camp registration open

Registration is open for the 2024 Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Camp season. Cost is \$450 per camper. Price increases to \$500 on May 1. Discounts are available for siblings. Scholarships available. Visit campolog.org.

### Oklahoma Catholic Men’s Conference

The “In The Father’s Footsteps XXVIII” Oklahoma Catholic Men’s Conference is 8:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m. March 9 at Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center, 2501 Conference Dr. in Norman. Visit catholicmen.net.

### Shamrock Shindig

The first Shamrock Shindig is 6-10 p.m. March 14 at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, 1700 Northeast 63 St. in Oklahoma City. The event honors the 2024 Oklahoma City St. Patrick’s Day Parade Grand Marshal, Anita La Cava Swift, John Wayne’s granddaughter. Proceeds benefit the Center of Family Love, OK Kids Korral and the John Wayne Cancer Foundation. Tickets \$150 each. Contact Nikki Craven at (405) 568-5999.

### Retrouvaille

A Catholic peer ministry to heal marriages, no matter the size of the problems, will offer a program beginning March 15-17. Call (405) 443-3541, e-mail 2034@retrouvaille.org or visit helpourmarriage.org for more information.

### Day of Reflection

Day of Reflection, “Living the Liturgy: Learning from Maronite Spirituality,” presented by Fr. Nabil Mousannes of Our Lady of Lebanon Catholic Church, is 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. March 16 at St. Gregory’s Abbey, 1900 W. MacArthur St. in Shawnee. Attendees must pre-register by e-mailing retreats@monksok.org, via the link at monksok.org or call (405) 878-5296. Cost \$30 pre-paid or \$35 at the door. Lunch included.

### St. Patrick Feast Day celebration

St. Patrick Catholic Church in Oklahoma City invites everyone to celebrate the Feast of St. Patrick with Mass at 10 a.m. March 17 at 2121 North Portland Ave. in Oklahoma City. A festival will follow with food, games and a raffle for a 2019 Toyota C-HR. Tickets can be purchased from any parishioner for \$5 each. Everyone is invited to pray a novena from March 8 to March 16. Visit the

parish Facebook page and website, saintpatrickkoc.org.

### Serra Club of OKC

The next Serra Club of Oklahoma City meeting is 11a.m., March 19 at Catholic Charities, 1232 N. Classen Blvd, Oklahoma City. The guest speaker is Fr. Jimmy James, pastor at Holy Family Syro-Malabar Catholic Church in Oklahoma City. Visit serraokc.org.

### Bingo

The Knights of Columbus family bingo is March 21 at St. James Catholic Church, 4201 S. McKinley in Oklahoma City. All games are \$10, with all door prizes furnished by the Knights. Food, reasonably priced, will be served at 5:45 p.m. Bingo begins at 6:30 p.m. All players will receive a raffle ticket for a 55-inch LED TV to be given away in October. Everyone with a March birthday will be recognized.

### Day of Reflection

Day of Reflection, “Silence and Communion” moderated by Fr. Peter Shults, O.S.B. is 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. April 20 at St. Gregory’s Abbey, 1900 W. MacArthur St. in Shawnee. Attendees must pre-register by e-mailing retreats@monksok.org, via the link at monksok.org or call (405) 878-5296. Cost \$30 pre-paid or \$35 at the door. Lunch included.

### Emmaus Retreat for Grieving Parents

An Emmaus Retreat for Grieving Parents is 9 a.m.-7 p.m. April 26-27 at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway in Oklahoma City. Cost: \$150 individual; \$275 couple. Visit archokc.org/emmaus-retreat.

### Runners Mass

The OKC Memorial Marathon Runners Mass is 5 a.m. April 28 at St. Joseph Old Cathedral, 307 NW 4 St. in Oklahoma City.

### Derby Day fundraiser

St. Joseph Old Cathedral will have its annual fundraiser at 4:30 p.m. May 4 in the parish hall, 307 NW Fourth St. in Oklahoma City. The 150th Kentucky Derby will be televised, with heavy hors d’oeuvres, cigar lounge, bourbon tasting, cash bar, silent auction, games and hat contest. Cost \$125 per person or \$500 for a table of six. Must be 21 years of age. Proceeds go towards flowers for the altar throughout the year. Purchase tickets at sjokc.org (events tab) or from Maria in the office.

### James Mickus

James Mickus died on Feb. 20. He was 79. He was ordained as a priest of the Diocese of Oklahoma City and Tulsa on June 1, 1972, and served as a priest of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City once the dioceses split in 1972. Archbishop Coakley removed Mickus’s faculties to function as a priest in November 2018.



## Are you listening?

By Sally Crowe Nash

Ice, snow and cold howling winds of winter compel us to seek warmth and safety at home. It is comforting at first. Then we get restless, yearning for adventure, and we get the itch to travel.

People start planning their vacations. The beach. Historic sites. The mountains. They also design their trips around weddings or graduations or a conference.

Some travels are more profound than mere recreation or rest.

The Christian tradition of the pilgrimage is one such journey. The pilgrim searches for a more meaningful understanding of his or her relationship to God. The goal is conversion or transformation, whether that results in a healing or discovery and acceptance of God’s will.

Oklahoma Catholic Radio, for the second time, is sponsoring a pilgrimage to EWTN. Deacon Larry Sousa will host and Father Danny Grover will serve as the chaplain. The six-day excursion, scheduled for Oct 7-12, includes five nights lodging, five breakfasts, four lunches and five dinners, with taxes and tips included.

Although walking is one of the traditional means of transport for a pilgrimage, this trip is by motor coach. Take note of the accompanying flyer for more information,

including cost and itinerary.

In my conversation with Deacon Larry, I learned that the host and chaplain are already generating a lot of excitement. In fact, before the flyer was even published, Father Danny had two people signed up!

“The power of the pilgrimage is the experience itself rather than just the destination,” Deacon Larry said.

He noted that the sacred aspects of travel cultivate fellowship among the group and enhance reverence for God. As the passengers on the bus travel each day, for example, they pray the rosary together. One day of the trip features a retreat with a talk by a Franciscan friar, time for confession and Holy Mass.

Of course, the tours of the EWTN studio and the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament wowed the pilgrims on that first OKCR journey. Guests of EWTN take part in the actual broadcast as studio audience for Father Mitch Pacwa and “EWTN Live.”

They are witness to the realization of Mother Angelica’s vision and faith.

Kathleen Shannon of Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church was one of those inaugural OKCR pilgrims. She enthusiastically shared a transformative experience that took place during confession.

“I told the priest that I was bothered by recalling past sins,” Shannon said. “He told me that was the devil. He said if that occurs, pray, ‘Jesus, I trust in you.’ That’s what I do, now!”

I have only recounted a fraction of this travel experience. It is exciting that it is being offered once again by OKCR. Deacon Larry estimates that the pilgrimage can accommodate 45-50 people.

“I would not be surprised,” he said, “if some people repeat the pilgrimage. It’s that meaningful.”

**Pilgrimage to EWTN**  
6 Days October 7-12, 2024

*This Pilgrimage to Birmingham features a full day at EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network) ... Plus a visit to The Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament ... as well as Ave Maria Grotto where a young Benedictine Monk carved famous scenes of the Christian World in miniature.*

**Tour Highlights:**

- Wiederkehr Winery Tour & Tasting
- Tour of Subiaco Abbey & Private Mass
- Visit Ave Maria Grotto w/Lunch
- Vulcan Park & Museum
- Visit EWTN and enjoy the following:
  - Chapel Adoration, Studio Tour,
  - Catered Dinner, EWTN Live Show
- Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament including:
  - Spiritual Talks with Franciscan Friar,
  - Private Mass, Rosary with the Nuns,
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**For More Information/Send Reservations to:**

**Deacon Larry Sousa**  
Oklahoma Catholic Radio  
P.O. Box 722234  
Norman, OK 73070  
(405) 366-7590

## 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.

March		
3	Third Sunday of Lent.	9 Oklahoma Catholic Men’s Conference, 8:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center, 2501 Conference Dr., Norman.
3	Ladies vocation brunch, 10 a.m., St. Joseph Catholic Church, 421 E. Acres St., Norman.	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.
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	10 Fourth Sunday of Lent.
3	Interested individuals can join. Contact Bill Full, OFS minister, at billfull1@att.net.	10 Daylight Saving Time begins.
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 Vallejos (405) 706-6271.	13 Catholic War Veterans USA the Oklahoma Memorial Post No. 168 meeting, 7 p.m., Sunnyslane Family Reception Center, 3900 S.E. 29, Del City. Contact (405) 760-3886, OklaPost168@cox.net.
4	Feast of St. Casimir.	14 Shamrock Shindig, 6 p.m. - 10 p.m., National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, 1700 Northeast 63 St., Oklahoma City.
7	Feast of Sts. Perpetua and Felicity.	15 Retrouvaille weekend begins. Call (405) 443-3541, e-mail 2034@retrouvaille.org.
8	Feast of St. John of God.	16 Day of Reflection, 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m., St. Gregory’s Abbey, 1900 W. MacArthur St., Shawnee. Visit monksok.org.
9	Feast of St. Frances of Rome.	

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continued from page 1

thoughts, only to suddenly pivot. “Something said, ‘Confession is at 10:45,’” Gibson said, recalling the message that rushed into his head as he contemplated ending his life. “So I went to confession.”

Father John Herrera, then serving Saint Gregory the Great and Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Churches in Enid, heard Gibson’s confession and gave him a pointed penance.

“He said, ‘For your penance, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed outside. I want you to go and kneel in front of the Blessed Sacrament. And for as long as you feel called, ask Jesus to continue to open your memories and continue to heal the scars on your heart.’”

He said, ‘I can just tell you have these scars on your heart from something, that you don’t feel that you deserve love. But God is always giving us His love.’”

There, on his knees in adoration, Gibson encountered that love.

During adoration hours at Saint Francis, he said he found himself with a smattering of elderly ladies sprinkled throughout the church.

“Of course, I break down and cry,” he said. “And I’m out there crying and praying and someone just comes up and gives me this giant bear hug. And I thought it was one of the little old ladies who saw me.

“I went to pat their arm to tell them thank you for hugging me. And I look around and there’s no one there. I just had this feeling of, ‘I love you. You can never disappoint me.’”

Gibson is one of many Enid Catholics discovering the joy and love of Jesus in the Eucharist, with Saint Gregory the Great presenting a thriving perpetual adoration program.

Only a handful of parishes in the archdiocese offer perpetual adoration and Enid ranks as the smallest community in the group. Yet since making the bold move in April 2021, with COVID still lingering, parishioners continue to fill the 24-hour time slots, at least two at a time.

During this period of Eucharistic Revival in the Church and heading toward the Eucharistic Congress this summer in Indianapolis, Father Herrera doesn’t have to look far for inspiration.

“It makes sense that we put our people before Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and let him do the heavy lifting,” he said.

With a reassignment to serve four panhandle churches on the horizon, Father Herrera felt a need to do something special for the parishioners in Enid.

“If this is my last year in Enid, what is the best gift I can give to our people?” Father Herrera asked himself. “It was continually put on my heart, ‘Well, give them to me.’”

Soon, with the blessings of Father Mark Mason in Enid, and Archbishop Coakley, the plans for perpetual adoration sprouted.

There was prayer and fasting, dedicated to invigorating the community. There were pledge drives and talks aimed at attracting adorers and Father Herrera preached on the benefits of perpetual adoration.

They formed captains – point people to recruit when openings occurred or substitutes were needed – assigned to each day. That eased the burden from one person being charged with accounting for all hours, 24/7.

They utilized a platform, AdorationPro, for easy-access scheduling for adorers.

And the people responded, committing to all but a few of the week’s 168 hours, with two people per slot.

They transformed a cry room into a chapel, which is required for perpetual adoration.

Soon, it was go time. And they’re still going, strong.

“It was absolutely the Holy Spirit that got all this going, impressing on people’s hearts to take a risk with all these people who are recommending this for their lives,” Father Herrera said. “Just try it, it’s going to be a great blessing for our parish. “It was a great privilege to be a part of that.”

Pat Molitor, a parishioner of 33 years, fills the 7 p.m. Thursday and 3 p.m. Friday time slots for adoration. And he fills in where needed, serving as a sort of super-sub, averaging 8-10 hours a week in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

And he recognizes a distinct difference, in himself and others.

“What I see in Enid is a community that is more on track in a country that has never been more offtrack,” Molitor said. “I see a Catholic community within the sub-community of Enid that is highly on track.”

basis, minimum, they’ve all been given spiritual hearing aids,” he said. “They can more clearly hear what the Holy Spirit is telling them, and act on it.”

And the actions are measured in impact. The churches in Enid run a soup kitchen that feeds 360 daily – including 200 delivered meals – all funded by donations. Saint Joseph Catholic School is enjoying a surge in enrollment. A thriving Hispanic community is enhancing small faith and prayer groups, perpetual adoration and a Cursillo movement.

The six Masses at the two churches each weekend feature mostly full parking lots.

And there’s a strong vocations ministry in Enid, to the point that they’ve been put on the short list to speak this summer at the Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis.

“I know you can tell a tree by its fruit,” Molitor said. “People are either developing, or have developed a personal relationship with Jesus. And it’s causing them to behave in a way that more and more every week imitates His behavior.”

Blake Gibson confirms what that relationship has done for him and his life, and his wife and daughters.

And Gibson traces it all back to that penance of adoration.

“I went home and told my wife, ‘My depression’s cured.’”

Soon, he quit his depression medication, cold turkey.

Now, Gibson said, he has a devotion to adoration.

His permanent time is 3-5 a.m. Tuesday, although he fills in other slots when needed, preferring the early morning shift “because you cannot hear anything else in the world.”

And now in the quiet that once tormented Gibson, there’s peace.

“I tell people, ‘God saved me in confession. And he showed me he loved me in adoration,’” Gibson said. “And continues to do so.”

I was a faithful, practicing Catholic by every definition of the term when that happened. We never missed a Mass. I probably went to bi-monthly confessions. I prayed a rosary every day.

“And it wasn’t until God completely saved me that I realized I could be doing so much more.”

John Helsley is editor of the Sooner Catholic.



Children from St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church in Enid prayed recently in the adoration chapel. Photo provided.

Molitor offered an analogy to describe what’s taken place.

“People that are going to adoration now on a weekly



Members of the St. Benedict Catholic Church Parish Guild in Shawnee held their Christmas parish guild meeting in January with lunch and a gift exchange. Photos provided.

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