Sooner Catholic

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Go Make Disciples

Student reporters shine light on importance of communications

By John Helsley
The Sooner Catholic

Emma Bowman considers herself a "natural introvert."

And yet, she bravely embraced a new challenge entering her senior year at Mount Saint Mary Catholic High School: newspaper reporter.

Emma Bowman

"I found myself constantly stepping out of my comfort zone to talk to people about the events they were involved in," Bowman said. "Conducting interviews was super scary at first, when it came to talking with students outside of my senior class."

Still, Bowman kept interviewing and kept writing, delivering compelling stories that became popular with classmates, teachers, parents and alums.

"I had numerous people stop me after Sunday Mass at my parish, Christ the King, as well as other places at least once a week, to simply tell me how much they enjoyed reading about the students and teachers at The Mount," Bowman said.

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This past year Jonah Beckham carried a monstrance and blessed his pastor, Fr. Collin Poston, of St. Bartholomew Catholic Church in Manchester, Maryland. *Photo provided.*

'Being in ministry is better than I could have imagined'

By Diane Clay
The Sooner Catholic

At age 13, Jonah Beckham told his parents he thought he was being called to the priesthood. The revelation was a little surprising, yet his parents, Maggie and Monty Beckham, knew their son was serious about his faith and they would do whatever they needed to do to support his discernment.

Now, eight years after being accepted into the seminary program at the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Beckham is only a few weeks away from being ordained a priest.

When Maggie Beckham talked about her son's approaching ordination, she became emotional.

"As parents, the greatest gift you can pass down to your children is the gift of your faith and then watching them mature and grow in that faith until it becomes their own," she said. "This is a true blessing. At his deaconate ordination, his smile of pure joy was radiating from within him, from his heart. I thought he would levitate!

"As Jonah's mother, I cannot wait to experience Jonah celebrating his first Mass, holding

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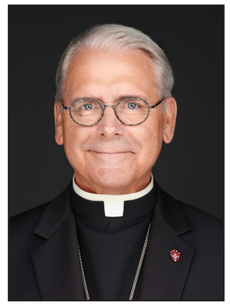
Put Out Into the Deep Luke 5:4

Pilgrimage and Pentecost



Archbishop Paul S. Coakley

During this time of year, the powerful story of Pentecost stirs deeply within my heart, as I visit parishes across our vast archdiocese to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In the past few months, I've journeyed from Prince of Peace in Altus to Saint Francis of Assisi in Newkirk, from Holy Cross in Madill to Saint Peter in Guymon, and dozens of parishes in between celebrating Confirmations.

Central to each of these celebrations is the recounting of Pentecost – the moment when, 50 days after Easter, the Holy Spirit dramatically transformed the disciples of Jesus.

Locked in fear within the Upper Room after the Ascension, the apostles received the Holy Spirit, sent by Christ to empower and free them for mission.

This Spirit, rushing upon them like the strong winds familiar to us here in Oklahoma, propelled them outward to proclaim the Good News to the ends of the Earth. Similarly, I have been sent to every corner of this archdiocese, calling forth spiritual renewal and commissioning new missionary disciples who bear the image of Christ through the gift and anointing of the Holy Spirit. This responsibility, rooted deeply in the Paschal Mystery, is an immense and profound privilege.

This pattern of renewal and growth in the Church reflects the broader vision articulated in my 2019 pastoral letter, "Go Make Disciples!"

"Since my installation as archbishop … I have not ceased praying for a new Pentecost leading to a New Evangelization in Oklahoma."

Indeed, we witness vibrant fruits of this outpouring.

The Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine has welcomed tens of thousands of pilgrims, becoming a significant source of grace.

Our enthusiastic participation in the National Eucharistic Revival has significantly deepened Eucharistic devotion among the faithful, young and old.

Flourishing spiritual movements and formative events – such as Cursillo, the Discipleship Conference, Together in Holiness and Encuentros de Promoción Juvenil – are clear evidence of the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

Our sacramental life is thriving, and our priests continue to be dedicated shepherds, leading the flock each day with care to deepen their relationship with God. Truly, the Spirit is alive and actively renewing our Church!

Yet, our daily prayer remains, "Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the Earth." The Christian journey calls us not to a sprint but to embrace the lifelong pilgrimage of faith. We reflect on this image as we continue to celebrate the Jubilee Year as "pilgrims of hope."

Having walked several pilgrimages over the years, particularly the Camino de Santiago in Spain, I know firsthand how such a pilgrimage demands a daily renewal: each morning brings a fresh start, strengthened and guided anew by the Spirit. Even upon reaching Santiago, the pilgrimage of life must go on.

As we approach Pentecost Sunday, I warmly invite each of you to join me in praying fervently for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our archdiocese.

I also am hopeful and confident that the Holy Spirit will bring forth a profound renewal of the universal Church through the newly inaugurated pontificate of Pope Leo XIV, bearing abundant spiritual fruits. Pope Leo already has encouraged us boldly, urging evangelization even "in settings in which the Christian faith is considered absurd, meant for the weak and unintelligent. Settings where other securities are preferred, like technology, money, success, power or pleasure" (Mass with the College of Cardinals, May 9, 2025).

We have no better local example of this missionary zeal than Blessed Stanley Rother. It is my fervent prayer that Pope Leo, himself a missionary priest, will take particular interest in Blessed Stanley's cause. I pray that God wills that a miracle will be approved, leading to his canonization during this pontificate. Blessed Stanley has been a remarkable intercessor and role model in my priestly ministry; I deeply desire that his inspiring story continues to touch many hearts.

May we always remain open to the movement of the Holy Spirit along our life's pilgrimage, ever striving to become instruments of the Gospel. Indeed, God wills a vibrant, Spirit-filled Church for Oklahoma!

"Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the Earth."

Archbishop Coakley's Calendar

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

June 1 – National Eucharistic Congress Pilgrimage (Christ the King to St. Eugene), 2 p.m., Oklahoma City
June 2 – Catholic Benefits Association virtual board meeting, 6 p.m.
June 3 – St. Ann Retirement Center board meeting, 8 a.m., Catholic Pastoral Center
June 3 – Eucharistic Procession and Mass, 10 a.m., Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine
June 5 – Confirmation, 6 p.m., St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church, Woodward
June 6 – Bishop McGuinness summer discipleship course, 10 a.m., CPC
June 6 – Catholic Foundation Mass and awards luncheon, 11:30 a.m., CPC
June 7 – March for Life Mass and March for Life, 9 a.m., St. Joseph Old Cathedral, OKC
June 7 – Gift of Love Gala, 6 p.m., National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, OKC
June 8 – Confirmation, noon, St. Mary Catholic Church, Ponca City
June 10 – Presbyteral Council meeting, 9:30 a.m., CPC
June 10 – All staff meeting, 12:30 p.m., CPC
June 10 – 75th Anniversary Mass, 7 p.m., St. Patrick Catholic Church, OKC
June 12 – Senior Staff meeting, 10 a.m., CPC
June 12 – Mass, 11:30 a.m., St. Francis de Sales Chapel, CPC
June 14 – Confirmation, 10 a.m., Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church, Chickasha
June 14 – Confirmation, 5 p.m., St. Patrick Catholic Church, OKC
June 15 – Confirmation, 10 a.m., St. Joseph Catholic Church, Ada

Find more news on the website

By Sooner Catholic Staff

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

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

✔ **For the unborn**, elderly and vulnerable. May their value and dignity be recognized and defended. We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

✔ **Taste 2025** - The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine presents Taste 2025 at 6 p.m. Sept. 18 at 700 S.E. 89 in Oklahoma City. Enjoy Norahua Mexican Folkloric Dancers, Mexican fare, Mezcal tasting and live music. Call (405) 438-0310 for sponsorship information. This event is for guests 21 and over.

✔ **The Office of Hispanic Ministry** of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City will host the second Festival de Matachines from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 27 at the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine, 700 S.E. 89 St. in Oklahoma City. All Matachines groups are invited and can register at archokc.org/matachines.

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Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City

"Lord Jesus
Let my heart never rest until it finds you, who are its center, its love, and its happiness. By the wound in your heart pardon the sins that I have committed whether out of malice or out of evil desires. Place my weak heart in your own divine heart, continually under your protection and guidance, so that I may persevere in doing good and in fleeing evil until my last breath. Amen."
- St. Margaret Mary Alacoque.

Pope Leo XIV greeted people in St. Peter's Square after he was elected pope on May 8. *Photo Fr. Stephen Jones/Sooner Catholic.*

Fr. Stephen Jones: 'Profound joy' in St. Peter's Square

Father Stephen Jones, soon to join Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond as an associate pastor, has spent most of the year in Rome following his ordination to the priesthood last June. Before departing Rome, however, he experienced the death and funeral of Pope Francis and the election and celebration of Pope Leo XIV. Father Jones served as a "reporter on the ground" of sorts for Sooner Catholic, providing stories of these historic days. Here is his final installment.

Fr. Stephen Jones (right) waited in St. Peter's Square for the new pope to be announced. *Photo provided.*

"*Habemus Papam*!"

What a beautiful few weeks this has been in Rome. It was awe-inspiring to see the Church come together in a very human way over the past month.

First, we had the funeral for Pope Francis. We came together to pray for the happy repose of his soul and to give thanks to God for the gift of his life as the Shepherd of the Church here on earth over the last 12 years.

After the funeral, we moved into the official *novemdiales*, or nine-day mourning period for Pope Francis. The College of Cardinals celebrated a mass for the repose of his soul every day for nine days. It was a good reminder of the importance of praying for the souls of the faithful departed. This was especially true as the rest of the world moved on to start speculating about who the Cardinals would choose to be the next pope.

After the nine-day period of mourning was over, the Conclave began on May 7. The highlight of the opening rites of the Conclave was definitely the solemn procession of the College of Cardinals from the Pauline Chapel to the Sistine Chapel. The choir solemnly chanted the Litany of the Saints, imploring them to pray for the Cardinals as they began the process of electing the next Successor of Peter.

Seeing their faces on the TV screen, there was a palpable sense of their recognition of the gravity of what they were about to do.

A few of my friends and I headed down to Saint Peter's Square on the night of May 7. Since it was the first day of the Conclave, we expected black smoke. However, there was a substantial delay in the smoke appearing, which left everyone a little on edge. And yet, Black smoke finally appeared at about 9 p.m.

We returned to the square the next morning, and there was another round of black smoke at about 11:45 a.m. After a quick lunch and a return to the seminary, we journeyed back to the square and arrived about 5 p.m., not expecting any smoke until 7 p.m. or so, but we wanted to get a good spot just in case.

Suddenly at about 6:10 p.m, white smoke began to rise from the chimney! A moment of stunned silence was followed by wild cheering from the whole square. Some people began to speculate about who the pope was. Others began to pray for him, as he just accepted the weight of the world on his shoulders.

No one quite does drama or pageantry like the Catholic Church. The next hour seemed like an eternity of waiting. Finally, the curtains opened and Cardinal Dominique Mamberti, the senior Cardinal Deacon in charge of announcing the good news, came out onto the loggia of Saint Peter's, pronouncing: "*Annuncio vobis gaudium mangium: Habemus Papam*" (I announce to you with great joy: we have a pope)!

He then proceeded to tell us his name: Robert Francis Prevost … an American!

What an additional joy to be in the square for the first pope from the United States. As he came out onto the loggia 10 minutes later, the crowd erupted. After three weeks as "sheep without a shepherd," the Church received with great joy the successor of Peter.

It was an experience of profound joy to witness his first moments as pope. Over the next 10 days, he had many firsts: his first Regina Caeli in Saint Peter's square, his first audiences with different groups and his Inaugural Mass. All throughout, it is becoming clear that he is a very thoughtful, prayerful and genuine shepherd who models the heart of Christ to the Church.

Praise God for his great goodness in giving us Pope Leo XIV!"

Most Reverend
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2024 WINNER Catholic Media Awards

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Foundation launches one million Holy Hours campaign for Pope Leo XIV

BELOIT, Kan. – Adoratio Foundation, in partnership with Comunità Regina della Pace, has launched an initiative to offer one million Eucharistic adoration Holy Hours for Pope Leo XIV.

This spiritual campaign invites Catholics to pledge Eucharistic adoration hours on behalf of the newly elected Holy Father, culminating in a spiritual bouquet to be presented on the Feast of the Assumption, Aug. 15.

Participants can pledge their Holy Hours at starsofpeace.org/pope-leo. The total number of hours offered will be shared with Pope Leo as a unified gesture of love, support and spiritual solidarity.

"Leading the world's 1.4 billion Catholics is such a tremendous responsibility," said Andrew Niewald, president of Adoratio Foundation and Comunità Regina della Pace board member. "Offering prayers before the Blessed Sacrament for our new Holy Father is one of the most powerful ways we can support him as he begins his pontificate ...

"Through this outpouring of prayer and devotion, we are confident that abundant grace will flow to Pope Leo XIV and to the entire Church. It is our prayer that this effort deepens the world's love for Christ in the Eucharist."

Retreat supports those impacted by addiction

By Jason Fugikawa

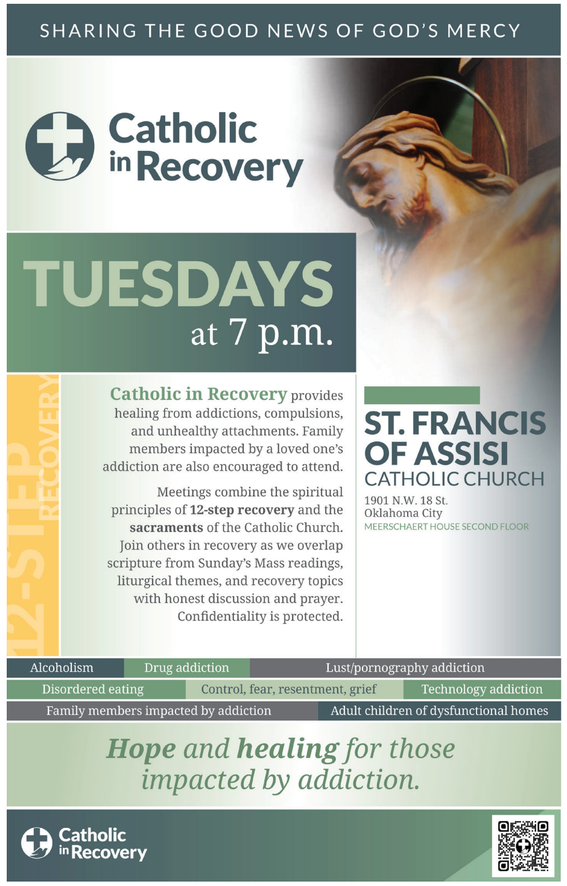
For those impacted by addiction, Catholic in Recovery hosted a retreat for individuals, families and community members May 8-10 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Camp in Wellston.

Fifteen participants from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, the Diocese of Tulsa, as far west as Arizona and as far east as Massachusetts settled in for an early Mother's Day weekend retreat featuring witness talks, discussions, Catholic in Recovery meetings and the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

The focus of the retreat was on the hope, healing, fellowship and support received through a 12-step recovery with particular attention to the Catholic faith and the grace of the sacramental life.

The talks and testimonies were filled with the gospel's message of hope in healing the psychological and spiritual wounds inflicted upon people by others as well as by a person's own behaviors, unhealthy habits and addictions.

Anyone interested in the healing that is offered through a program like Catholic in Recovery can visit Catholicinrecovery.com. There is an in-person weekly meeting in English for general recovery issues on Tuesdays from 7-8 p.m. at Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 1901 N.W. 18 St. in Oklahoma City, in the Meerschaert House. For more information on Catholic in Recovery within the archdiocese, call Kendra Mann at (405) 709-2895.



CALL OR TEXT 988 | MENTAL HEALTH LIFELINE

Sophomore theology students from Mount St. Mary Catholic High School volunteered for a grotto beatification day on May 10, where they learned about caring for creation. *Photos provided.*

Anniversary of 'Laudato Si' prompts opportunities for reflection

By Olivia Dailey
The Sooner Catholic

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical, "Laudato Si." The title translates to "Praise Be To You," a reference to Saint Francis of Assisi's "Canticle of the Creatures," a religious song praising God for all of creation, from Brother Sun to Sister Water.

The encyclical's subtitle is "On Care for Our Common Home."

Pope Francis deftly wove together Catholic social teachings on creation care, citing saints, scripture and popes, establishing a common thread throughout hundreds of years of theology. These issues are not foreign to liturgy, but rather deeply familiar.

At each Mass, during the blessing of the Eucharist, the priest says, "Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation."

Uniquely, Laudato Si' is addressed to "every person living on this planet," not just Catholics, because caring for everyone's common home is an urgent and universal responsibility. Pope Francis did not mince his words. He plainly called out the destruction of God's creation: human-caused climate change, loss of biodiversity, pollution and throwaway culture, caused by greed and a collective moral breakdown, an "internal desert," as described by Pope Benedict XVI.

However, it's not just an environmental encyclical, almost half of the encyclical is dedicated to economic justice. Laudato Si' highlights both the cries of the Earth and the poor. Throwaway culture refers not only to microplastics and hyper consumerism, but also to how society discards marginalized people – migrants, the elderly, the poor, etc.

According to Paz Artaza-Regan, program manager at Catholic Climate Covenant, "We cannot, as a Church, be talking about taking care of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters if we're not talking about how climate change is impacting their communities."

Freshman theology students at Mount St. Mary Catholic High School participated in the Soil to Soul initiative this school year. Activities included making Stations of the Cross and wooden crosses. *Photos provided.*

Everything is interconnected.

Pope Francis would often pose the question: "What kind of world are we leaving to our children?" Mount St. Mary Catholic High School in Oklahoma City provides two recent examples of caring for creation.

Soil to Soul

Deacon Robert Dunlap teaches freshman theology at Mount St. Mary. This school year, he started a program called the Soil to Soul initiative, where freshmen spend one day each month on a ranch to learn practical agricultural, vocational and medical skills.

Its main goal is to prepare these young students for adulthood. It's an opportunity to spend time outside, communing with nature and one another, away from screens.

"All that we have is a gift, and our only response to a gift is 'thank you,'" Dunlap said. "We want to get back to God's creation, the dirt. We're created from the dirt (Genesis, 2:7). This year being our first year, we worked the soil, we gathered the soil, and everything goes back into the soil.

"The root of humility is 'humus.' Humus is simply all the dead plant and animal life."

Grotto Beautification Day

Kim Dandurand teaches sophomore theology at Mount St. Mary. This spring, she led her students through a Stations of the Cross on the campus grounds, when the grotto caught

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(Above) MSM students were able to help care for the chickens, horses, dogs and cows during Soil to Soul.

(Right) About 30 students and some parents cleaned the grotto at Mount St. Mary. *Photos provided.*

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her students' attention. It needed some extra care.

So one Saturday, Dandurand held a grotto beautification project. About 30 students, plus some parents, participated, making the project a success.

"I just was blown away by their response to the call," said Dandurand.

More service days to beautify and maintain the grounds are anticipated.

On Laudato Si', Dandurand said, "Like when Saul was knocked off his horse, this document is a knock-you-off-your-horse kind of moment, and it also makes you realize that I might not be able to do much, but I can do something."

With Pope Francis' passing and the 10th anniversary of Laudato Si', now offers a time to read or revisit the landmark encyclical. There are many ways to respond to the call of Laudato Si.' This year, Pilgrimages of Hope for Creation are being held throughout the United States to celebrate the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope, the 10th Anniversary of Laudato Si', and the 800th Anniversary of "Canticle of the Creatures."

There will be a pilgrimage at Saint Gregory's Abbey in Shawnee on Saturday, Sept. 27. There is a Laudato Si' Action Plan for institutions and individuals, which can be accessed through the official website: laudatosiactionplatform.org.

Olivia Dailey is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

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Totus Tuus featured across the archdiocese

By Charles Albert
The Sooner Catholic

The term "Totus Tuus" was a motto of the late Saint John Paul II. Its Latin meaning: "totally yours."

Saint John Paul II understood the importance of educating the young.

This year, many parishes in the archdiocese are investing in this program for the youth.

The program kicks off the week of June 1-7 at several parishes in the archdiocese and runs continually until finishing the week of July 19-26. Some of the parishes include Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church in Chickasha and Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Oklahoma City.

"We have been doing the program for nine years and it is very popular," Carmen Santos-Heinen, director of religious education and youth ministry at Saint Charles Borromeo, said. "We have two teams for 180 participants. There are just a few vacancies and people can still sign up to the last minute. We don't want anyone to miss the opportunity."

The program is also in various parishes in the Diocese of Tulsa and Little Rock.

"Totus Tuus is a summer program that fuses the faith with fun and is led by faithful college students and young adults throughout the state of Oklahoma (both dioceses)," said program director Sarah Jameson. "It originated in the Diocese of Wichita and has been in this state since 2004.

"Since its inception, many of the clergy ordained in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and Diocese of Tulsa were Totus Tuus missionaries, having served at least one summer during their seminarian formation. Totus Tuus has also fostered religious life for both men and women, and many faith-filled marriages."

The program is administered by the Diocese of Tulsa. This year's curriculum is focused on the Sacraments and Joyful Mysteries and is for children and youth in grades 1-12. Youth will meet Sunday through Thursday evenings, while children will meet daytime hours Monday through Friday.

Youth played outside during Totus Tuus at Bl. Sacrament Catholic Church in July 2023 in Lawton. *Photo provided.*

"We absolutely love hosting Totus Tuus each year," said Darby Heard, coordinator of youth and young adult evangelization at Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Norman. "We collaborate with Saint Mark and Saint Thomas More to have a Norman-wide Totus Tuus program.

"One of the best parts about Totus Tuus is how readily available the sacraments are to the children and teens during the week. Daily Mass and confession happen during the day program, and the evening teens have the opportunity for adoration and confession as well. Totus Tuus does a great job of teaching the faith in ways that are tailored to each age range, so they can minister to littles up through high school.

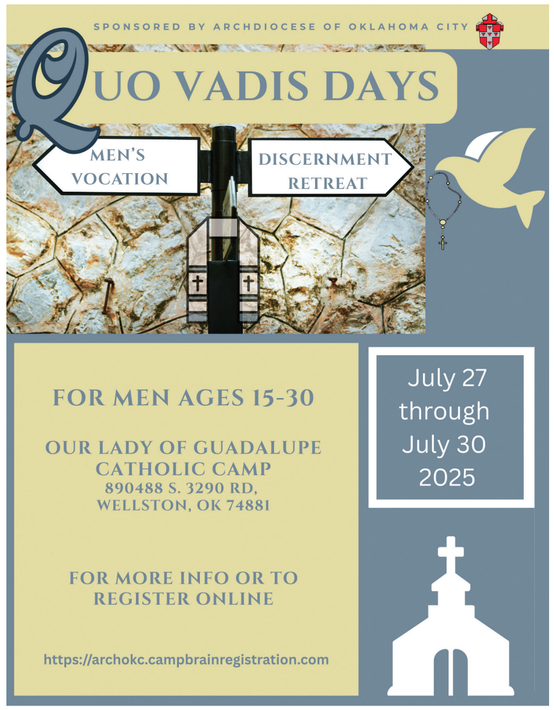
"Totus Tuus really brings the community together as well, with many high school teens wanting to help during the day program as well as attending their evening youth time. One fun thing for me is that I served as a Totus Tuus missionary and was assigned to Saint Thomas More that summer."

Saint Monica Catholic Church in Edmond has been hosting Totus Tuus for over a decade. Ninety attendees are expected for the morning youth program this year, with 20-30 teens in the evening.

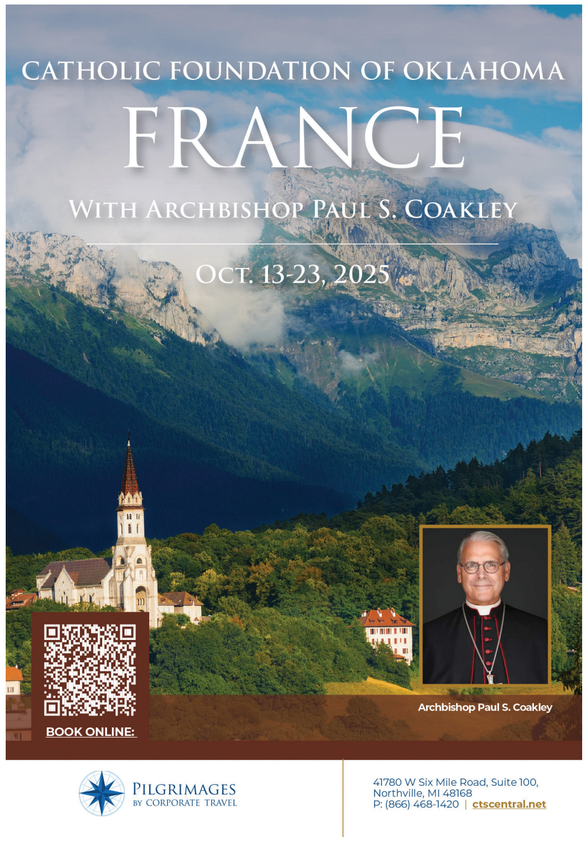
"The program stays fresh to students as it changes every year," said Adriana Adamson, children's formation coordinator at the church. "The great thing about the program is that children have an opportunity to participate, plan and lecture at special Masses, participate in confession and work with counselors.

"Aside from fostering holy and healthy vocations, college students and young adults are given the tools and formation to be missionary disciples. The 'program' provides a deeper dive into the tenants of the faith based on the pillars of the Catechism, a deep Marian devotion through the teaching of the Mysteries of the Rosary, daily participation in the sacramental life, and regimented prayer that missionaries carry into their vocation."

Charles Albert is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.



Fr. Francis Nguyen, pastor at St. Andrew Catholic Church in Moore, took 56 parishioners on a pilgrimage April 25 to four churches for the Jubilee 2025 Pilgrims of Hope. They visited St. Gregory's Abbey in Shawnee, National Shrine of the Infant Jesus in Prague, Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Okarche and The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City. They enjoyed a sack lunch in Prague and dinner at Eichen's Chicken in Okarche. *Photos provided.*



Anna Fitts served as the director of the Catholic Food Bank at Assumption of the Bl. Virgin Mary Catholic Church in Duncan for more than 26 years before retiring. Parishioners had a party for her on May 2 to honor her dedicated service. *Photo provided.*

Senior Baccalaureate Mass 2025, St. Mary Catholic Church, Ponca City. *Photo provided.*

Student reporters shine light on importance of communications

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"Everyone that I've spoken with in the last nine months about this column had nothing but positive feedback for me, which was massively encouraging to do even better for whatever piece I had next on my calendar."

Katherine Menz

Bowman was one of four student reporters from the three Oklahoma City high schools to bring a new voice to Sooner Catholic, joining Katherine Menz at Bishop McGuinness and Diana Garcia and Mariana Carrera at Cristo Rey OKC.

The new feature, just one aspect highlighting the appetite for good coverage of the archdiocese, will return for the 2025-26 school year. Expect more new communications content overall, too, ranging from stories to videos and photos to podcasts and more.

Mariana Carrera

With so much taking place at the schools, and a large interested audience, providing coverage made sense. It also provided the students with opportunity.

"In reporting for the Sooner Catholic, I feel I was given more opportunity to share the Irish mission through the stories of my peers," Menz said. "I also believe that it gave me more experience in writing for a newspaper, which is something I want to continue as an adult."

Diana Garcia

Like Bowman, Menz said she heard from many readers, as well as those who made the news.

"I heard positive feedback from people all around Oklahoma saying they enjoyed reading about the younger generation of the Church," Menz said. "In addition, the people who were featured in the stories said they appreciated having their stories shared."

Emma Bowman took a break one afternoon from working on a story for the Sooner Catholic. *Photo provided.*

The students, who took their roles as reporters seriously, said they recognize the need for good and accurate storytelling, whether in school hallways or across the globe.

"In a world where much of the news is negative, I think it's important to also tell the positive stories like those at McGuinness," said Menz, who just completed her junior year. "I feel that my work for the Sooner Catholic allowed me to share a bit of hope in a world that can sometimes be seen otherwise hopeless.

"As media and communications continue to change, I think it's important to keep the consistent goal of helping people stay informed by reporting the truth. I believe that communication is the key to promoting positivity and mutual understanding between all people in a world where so much is miscommunicated."

Bowman, a recent Mount Saint Mary graduate, has been hard at work on a multimedia portfolio, including writing and directing a short film for class. And she recognizes the importance of storytelling.

"Writers tell the stories of our world, informing and enchanting audiences while also taking direct criticism over unavoidable bias on certain topics," she said. "As a writer myself, in a world that seeks to diminish the light of Christ, I constantly find myself reveling in the power of speech.

"Words possess meaning. I have been blessed to articulate my thoughts and observations to others through writing, both academic and professional. Writers shape stories. Stories become our history. History teaches us lessons.

"As a writer and storyteller, I think that telling the masses about the message of Christ through small stories with heavy meaning is perhaps the most humbling experience of my life to date."

John Helsley is editor of the Sooner Catholic.

‘Brand new baby’ entering spotlight

Rother Shrine set to host national convention

The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine, museum and gift shop are located at 700 S.E. 89 in Oklahoma City. *Photos Andrew W. Griffin/ Sooner Catholic.*

By Andrew W. Griffin
The Sooner Catholic

In Archbishop Coakley’s 2019 Pastoral Letter, he called on all in the archdiocese to “Go Make Disciples!”

Fittingly, perhaps, that call is coming full circle as the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine is set to host the National Association of Shrine and Pilgrimage Apostolate Convention, which presents its theme: “Go and Make Disciples.”

The shrine has already impacted the plea for discipleship locally. Now it figures to play a part in spreading that message, with those attending the conference – set for Sept. 15-17 – likely to return home to their dioceses proclaiming what they’ve seen and learned.

“We’re a brand new baby,” said Miguel Mireles, executive director of the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine. “Barely 2-years old. And with nearly a quarter of a million people coming to visit, our shrine is becoming better known.

“Being with NASPA really exposes us to other colleagues that are in the industry and how we do things bigger and better. And we want to show off what we’ve done here.”

Mireles played a major role in bringing the convention to Oklahoma City.

During the 2024 NASPA convention, held in St. Augustine, Florida, the board voted Mireles to be part of the NASPA board. It was the decision to add Mireles to the board that made a significant difference in the decision to place the convention at the shrine.

Carol Bezak, director of NASPA, told the Sooner Catholic in a phone interview that Mireles’ efforts in highlighting what the Oklahoma City shrine is and could become going forward was critical.

“Miguel is proactive and interested in the mission of NASPA,” Bezak said. “After all, the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine is fairly new and we haven’t seen it yet. So, we are very excited.”

And while Bezak said the board thought it over for a short while, it was concluded that while there are approximately 100 shrines in the U.S. – including the Shrine of the Infant Jesus in Prague – it made sense that the Oklahoma City shrine would be a great location to host their convention because of its unique qualities and its newness.

“I know our convention being there will help spread the word” about the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine, Bezak said. “And any other shrines that come to participate will leave and talk about it at their shrines.”

Speaking on behalf of NASPA, Bezak said

The shrine, museum and gift shop are open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day. The museum and gift shop are located in the Pilgrim Center.

Mireles’ offer was much appreciated, as it takes approximately a year to plan and prepare for the following year’s convention. So far, the schedule lists several speakers, including Father Don Wolf, rector of the Rother Shrine, giving the opening keynote speech. Also speaking will be Father Michael Baggot, a professor of bioethics at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum in Rome, Italy, and Archbishop Coakley, who will address the convention on the final day.

Mireles said more speakers are likely to be added to the three-day schedule.

Bezak, who is also the director at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Middletown, New York, said before the Oklahoma shrine was selected for this year’s convention, she did not know a lot about Rother.

“It’s sad the way he died,” she said. “Like so many of the other missionaries who lost their lives” spreading God’s message.

Deacon Rob Blakely, director of pilgrimage at the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine, said he is pleased that NASPA’s presence this fall will shine a light on the shrine.

“We’re looking to bringing people to Oklahoma City who normally wouldn’t come to Oklahoma City,” Blakely said. “And show them our hospitality. Show them the shrine that we’ve built.

“We’re in the early planning stages, but we have it all laid out and ready to go.”

Blakely pointed out that even though the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine is a diocesan shrine, it will become a national shrine after a decade of being a diocesan shrine. Still, NASPA accepts the Rother Shrine as part of its membership. This, he said, in light of there being “more established shrines” that could have hosted as well.

“As a new shrine, we want to bring all that knowledge (of other directors) here, absorb their knowledge,” Blakely said.

This includes, he said, discussing the basics of operating a shrine from “the gift shop … to roof maintenance” and everything in between.

The timing of this year’s NASPA convention is also notable, Blakely said, in that the Catholic Church has a new pope – the American-born Pope Leo XIV – and the excitement among the faithful is “burning bright.”

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The conventioneers have a lot on their three-day schedule.

“We’re doing a special Mass with them, with the archbishop, and taking them to Cattlemen’s (Steakhouse) for dinner and bringing them here for a tour,” Blakely added.

Bezak said she senses there is a “lot of excitement,” adding that this is her first trip to Oklahoma.

“I am really looking forward to visiting the shrine,” she said.

When it comes to promoting the shrine, Mireles said exposure via social media has been one of the biggest ways they have exposed the public to the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine.

“And not just necessarily us,” he said, “but our friends who come and share videos on TikTok and make TikTok videos and those videos go viral, nationally.”

Many social-media videos highlight Tepeyac Hill, the shrine’s recreation of the hill in Mexico where peasant Juan Diego encountered the Virgin of Guadelupe in 1531. The videos made on Tepeyac Hill, at the shrine, have generated as many as half-a-million views, Mireles said.

Asked if he sees repeat pilgrims, he said he does and that daily Mass features as many as 80 people throughout any given week.

For Mireles, networking with other shrine operators during the convention will be key.

“How do we keep our shrine looking our best? How do we keep the energy and the spirit, the encounter with Christ, with Blessed Stanley? How do we keep that fresh?”

The museum showcases Bl. Stanley Rother’s life and ministry. Learn more at rothershrine.org.

he asked. “When you are among friends, you learn new things.”

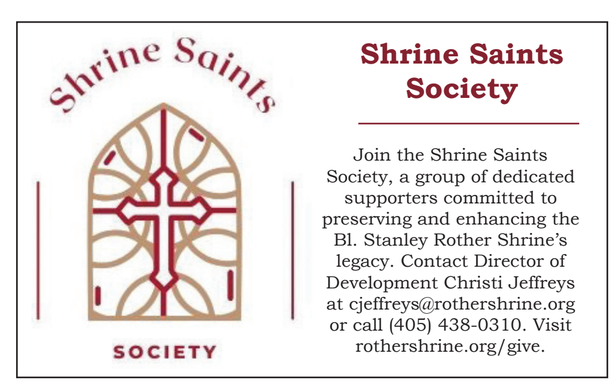
And while many people have heard the phrase “The Oklahoma Standard,” Mireles said that when the NASPA board and others are here in September “they will experience the Oklahoma Standard. Because that is what Blessed Stanley is about, too. He gave his life. He just wanted to help people … (w)hen in need, we wrap our arms around the community.”

Mireles said the NASPA event is going to give the shrine a real boost, and deservedly so.

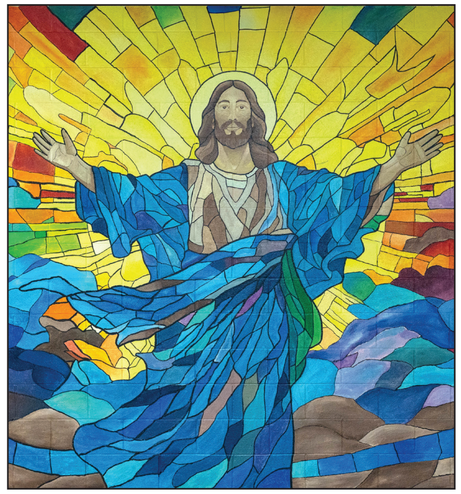
“We’re proud of this shrine. We’re proud of Blessed Stanley,” Mireles said. “And archbishop, too, wants to welcome all. The shrine is for everyone. We want to share the shrine and being with NASPA has been a great opportunity.”

For more information go to catholicshrines.org/2025-convention.

Andrew W. Griffin is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.



The middle school girls at St. Philip Neri Catholic School in Midwest City worked from February to April painting a mural of Jesus at the school. "Students, faculty, families and future Falcons will get to enjoy this beautiful art piece when they go to the library, Spanish room, first grade and second grade. The use of rich colors on this stained-glass Jesus mural brightens the hall," said art teacher Ramon Garcia. *Photos Jesse Paxton.*



Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit

St. Helen Catholic Church is hosting a Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit made by Bl. Carlo Acutis 2 - 5:30 p.m. on June 12, 19 and 26, and on July 10, 17, 24 and 31 at 507 E. Highview Ave. in Frederick.

Four-year-old Eleni sat on the Sacred Heart Catholic School playground in El Reno and prayed by the statue of Mary. The statue is dedicated to one of the school's teachers who died a couple years ago due to cancer. *Photo provided.*

Tax credit program does much good

By Owen Canfield

The question is asked occasionally: With the Parental Choice Tax Credit now available to parents who want to send their children to a private school, is the Catholic Schools Opportunity Fund needed?

Short answer: Yes.

The Parental Choice Tax Credit provides parents with a tax credit ranging from $5,000 to $7,500 per child, depending on the family's adjusted gross income. The credit is fabulous for families but doesn't cover the full cost of education.

The Catholic Schools Opportunity Fund helps fill some of the tuition gap for students in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and provides a tremendous tax benefit to donors.

During the 2024-25 school year, 494 students received assistance from CSOF. That total equals about 10 percent of the overall enrollment in the 15 elementary schools and three high schools within the archdiocese. Eighty-five percent of those children were from families who qualified for free and reduced-price meals.

For the 2025-26 school year, it's expected that a similar number of students will benefit from CSOF and receive a high-quality, Christ-centered Catholic education.

Their CSOF assistance will derive from the $1.95 million donated to the program in 2024 by individuals, couples and businesses. Donors who made a two-year pledge received a 75% Oklahoma state income tax credit for their gifts.

The maximum tax credit available is $2,000 per year for couples and $1,000 per year for individual filers. Qualified businesses can receive up to $100,000 per year in a state income tax credit.

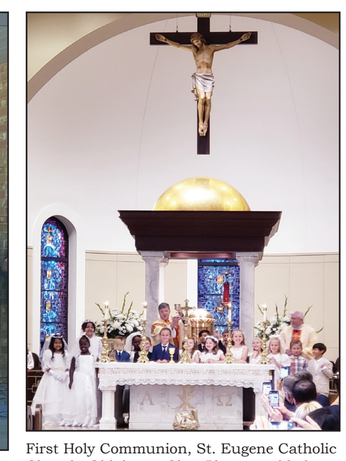
This program offers a true win-win scenario: It allows donors to redirect their state income taxes, which they are obliged to pay anyway, to help children receive a potentially transformative Catholic school education.

For more information about the Catholic Schools Opportunity Fund, call me at (405) 709-2700 or visit www.csofok.org.

Owen Canfield is director of the Catholic Schools Opportunity Fund.

Eighth grade students from All Saints Catholic School in Norman had a retreat on May 13 at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Oklahoma City. *Photos provided.*

Holy Family Catholic Church in Lawton held their sixth annual 0.05K non-runners fun run on May 3. *Photo provided.*



First Holy Communion, St. Eugene Catholic Church, Oklahoma City. *Photo provided.*

Jobs Box

Director of communications - OKC

The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine is seeking a full-time director of communications to oversee all aspects of communication, media relations and promotion of the shrine. Must have a desire to promote the Church's work of evangelization, and to promote knowledge of and devotion to Bl. Stanley Rother. Must have three-five years of experience in public relations, journalism or marketing; a bachelor's degree in a related field and must be a practicing Catholic in good standing. Bilingual experience is desired but not required. To submit a cover letter and resume, visit archokc.org/jobs-box.

Director - OKC

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking a director for the Office of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry, which prepares and supports local parish, school and campus leaders to be missionary disciples. The director will provide overall direction and vision for program efforts, resources, training and formation in all phases of evangelization and discipleship of young people in the archdiocese. This position will provide direct leadership of all efforts for junior high and high school teens, supervisory leadership for young adult and campus ministry, summer youth camp and other camp programs, serve as a resource for parish leaders assisting them in the active ministry of building up and fostering vibrant ministry to young people, provide leadership and resources to parish youth ministers, and collaborate with priests, parish leaders and community organizations. Must have a good understanding of discipleship and evangelization and be able to assist parishes in deepening their understanding through consultation, formation and training. A minimum of a bachelor's degree in theology, religious education, pastoral ministry or some related field is required and at least five years of experience in youth ministry, and specifically in discipleship/mentorship; diocesan-level experience preferred. To submit a cover letter and resume, visit archokc.org/jobs-box.

Associate judge - OKC

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking an associate judge to work in the Archdiocesan Tribunal. The associate judge has the primary responsibility of ensuring that the rights and responsibilities of the Church and the faithful of the archdiocese are protected in all facets of the life of the Church, including but not limited to examination and adjudication of the canonical investigation of nullity of marriages. Other responsibilities include properly instructing canonical proceedings and serving as a resource for canonical advice as it relates to reviewing marital status in the Church. Licentiate in Canon Law (J.C.L) is required. A minimum of three years of tribunal experience is preferred. Bilingual Spanish-speaking preferred. A background check and Safe Environment training will be required. To submit a cover letter and resume, visit archokc.org/jobs-box.

Gift shop associate - OKC

The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine is seeking a full-time gift shop associate. This position is responsible for assisting customers with item selections and completing sales transactions. Duties include, but are not limited to, customer service, sales, inventory and stocking. The successful candidate will provide customer service by interacting with customers, explaining merchandise, answering questions, and assisting with purchase decisions as well as cleaning, restocking the gift shop and front desk area. Knowledge of POS software, cash and credit transaction processing, and inventory procedures is required. Candidate should be an active practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church. Bilingual in Spanish a plus. To submit a cover letter and resume, visit archokc.org/jobs-box.

Head sacristan - OKC

The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine is searching for a part-time head sacristan. The successful candidate will support the overall mission of the shrine by providing oversight of the sacristies and Sacred Heart Catholic Church at the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine weekend Masses. Responsibilities include but are not limited to updating and managing the weekly Mass celebrant schedule, attending weekend shrine Masses and liturgies to provide support and assistance to clergy and other liturgical ministers, preparing and arranging items necessary for all Masses and liturgies, ordering and maintaining equipment contained in the shrine, including but not limited to cleaning vestments on a regular basis, washing and ironing altar linens and cloths, polishing vessels, chalices, patens and candlesticks, and replacing candles, as needed This position will require approximately 20 hours per week, with general hours Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The successful candidate must be a Catholic in good standing. Bilingual in Spanish is a plus. To submit a cover letter and resume, visit archokc.org/jobs-box.

Maintenance assistant - OKC

The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine is seeking a part-time maintenance assistant (less than 20 hours per week, primarily weekend hours) to work on the facilities, including the church, Pilgrim Center and associated grounds. Work includes general maintenance, cleaning and groundskeeping, and daily on-site review of the buildings and grounds. Must have knowledge of occupational hazards and safety precautions involved in general building and maintenance work. Experience with commercial facility maintenance, construction or similar experience preferred. Background check required. To submit cover letter and resume, visit archokc.org/jobs-box.

Grant program coordinator - OKC

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma is seeking a grant program coordinator to manage board committees in their efforts to distribute grants from endowment and charitable funds to parishes, schools and the general Catholic community in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Works with parishes, schools and other organizations and assists in the grant application and reporting process. The coordinator is the foundation's primary point of contact and support for grantees and donor advisers, and provides information to the executive director, board of directors and grants committees. Helps publicize available grants and scholarships, sets deadlines for when applications are to be received, and vets all applications with corresponding selection committees. Should be active, practicing Catholic, in good standing with the Church, have excellent written and oral communication skills, an ability to learn new software, and enjoy interacting with others by phone and in person. To submit a cover letter and resume, visit archokc.org/jobs-box.

Senior director of development and outreach – OKC

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking a senior director of development and outreach to lead and manage the development and community/parish engagement department's support of agency long-term objectives, support program staff and all related activities. Primary functions include planning and execution of agency fundraising strategies and supporting marketing, public relations, parish engagement and volunteer coordination activities undertaken by supervised staff. Works closely with the executive director and senior staff to ensure that the mission objectives are funded and understood throughout central and western Oklahoma. Bachelor's degree in applicable field. Advanced degree preferred. Ten years of progressive fundraising and supervision experience or equivalent. History of soliciting single gifts of $10,000 or more from corporations, foundations and individuals. Experience with event management of 400 or more guests. Send cover letter and resume to Nicole Curran at ncurran@ccaokc.org.

Disaster case manager - Sulphur

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking a disaster case manager to, under general supervision, 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 other organizations as appropriate outside of disaster recovery needs. High school diploma; 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.

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

A way to ease your tax burden
csofok.org 405-709-2700

Does April 15 get you down? Reduce your tax burden next year by giving to the Catholic Schools Opportunity Fund this year.

Gifts to the program defray tuition costs for children attending Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

A two-year pledge gets donors a 75% state income tax credit each year. The max credit is $2,000 for couples and $1,000 for individuals. Qualified businesses can receive a much larger tax credit.

Catholic Schools Opportunity Fund

Making Sense of Bioethics

'De-Extinction': a good or bad idea?

Father Tad Pacholczyk
National Catholic Bioethics Center

Several private companies have set out to "resurrect" extinct species using DNA and cloning technologies, with ongoing efforts to revive the dire wolf, wooly mammoth, dodo bird and various other ancient species.

Today's "de-extinction technology" remains limited. It typically allows for the introduction of a small number of genetic changes into currently existing species, modifying individual animals to varying degrees so they resemble, and even behave like animals that have long been out of existence.

Recent news reports declaring that Colossal Biosciences has managed to "resurrect" the dire wolf took this approach, introducing a couple dozen genetic changes into the genome of a modern-day gray wolf. The company produced a captivating animal that nevertheless retains most of the gray wolf genome. Although the animal looks and behaves differently from a gray wolf, it is not yet a dire wolf, but constitutes, at best, a kind of hybrid between the two species.

Are there any potential ethical concerns that arise concerning such animal de-extinction protocols?

A few, yes.

One is that the use of CRISPR technology as a tool for revival and manipulating animal genetic codes involves very complex science. It is still the case, despite progress in the field, that unforeseen effects and troublesome traits, like heightened aggressiveness, strange growth patterns or various birth defects could unexpectedly arise. Mistakes may come at a high cost if we can't put the genie back into the bottle when something goes awry.

Another ethical concern involves the so-called dire wolves being kept in very large enclosures in undisclosed locations, to protect them from the prying eyes of the public and from other potential predators. By restoring only a small number of animals, they end up existing without a large reference group of their peers, never being released into the wild, and growing up mostly isolated and in captivity. Is it a good idea to be bringing back extinct animals that cannot roam free and participate in a natural habitat?

"If this is always going to be a zoo animal, then stop," argues ecologist Ben Novak, a researcher interested in genetically rescuing endangered and extinct species in San Francisco. He says that the goals of de-extinction "have to be about ecological restoration and function."

Ecological niches, however, can be very complex and unpredictable, even if there have been some occasional "rewilding" success stories, such as when wolves were reintroduced into Yellowstone National Park in 1995 in an attempt to cull the large number of elk.

Yet as David Blockstein, senior scientist at the National Council for Science and the Environment observes, "Bringing back extinct species sounds romantic, but it's a distraction. The ecosystems they lived in are gone or radically changed, and we're likely to create invasive species problems rather than restore balance."

Or as synthetic biologist Lynn Rothschild notes, "We're gambling with ecosystems that are already fragile."

When novel species have been introduced to natural settings in the past, they have sometimes wreaked ecological havoc, proving to be more damaging than anticipated, and negatively affecting other animals within the same habitat.

For example, when cane toads were introduced in Australia in an attempt to control pests, they spread rapidly and caused a significant decline in native predator populations because they were toxic when consumed by many native species. The law of unintended consequences can raise its ugly head in unforeseen ways when attempting to introduce changes to complex systems.

When we consider that many millions of species have already gone extinct, an additional ethical issue arises: who should determine which ones deserve to be resurrected?

How likely is it that such decisions will end up being driven, as appears to have been the case with Colossal Biosciences, by the "flashiness" or "cultural appeal" of the animal, perhaps as a way to generate buzz and drive corporate investment? The wooly mammoth certainly garners a great deal of interest as a "charismatic mega-vertebrate," and it's not a stretch to suppose that companies might be drawn to the de-extinction of certain animals based on their glitziness and potential for generating venture capital rather than strictly ecological grounds.

The massive funding and scientific efforts that are required for de-extinction projects are also likely to divert resources from less expensive efforts to protect currently endangered species. If we can just bring back extinct species, isn't that likely to sap the motivation out of conservation efforts trying to prevent extinction in the first place? It is always simpler to preserve what we already have than to go through the trouble of recreating it again.

While de-extinction efforts raise ethical concerns, they do not seem to cross fundamental ethical lines. While there is nothing in principle that should make us object to the use of genetic engineering to introduce major modifications to animals, it behooves us to try to be clear, open, and ecologically-rigorous about the purposes, motivations and goals that undergird these endeavors.

Book Review: 'First Belong to God: On Retreat with Pope Francis'

By John H. Dolezal
The Sooner Catholic

Oh my, what a special treat we have with this magnificent book.

In "First Belong to God," we have the opportunity to receive guidance from the late Pope Francis and gain encouragement and support from the work of author Austen Ivereigh as we participate in a wonderful eight-day spiritual retreat.

"Each of the eight days is designed to facilitate a 'primary encounter' with Jesus as an experience, rather than an idea, one that changes our horizon and opens us to a new imagination of what's possible in our lives and in our world."

Ivereigh, British writer, journalist and fellow in Contemporary Church History at Campion Hall, University of Oxford, has designed this retreat guide around the "Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius" and encourages us to "come out of ourselves and overcome temptations that keep us from deepening our discipleship."

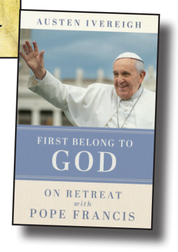
As defined at jesuitseastois.org, "The Spiritual Exercises is a compilation of meditations, prayers, and other contemplative practices for helping people develop their openness and responsiveness to God."

Utilizing Ignatius's work and drawing from the wisdom of Pope Francis, Ivereigh provides us plenty of things to ponder on during each day of the retreat. Through the Spiritual Exercises, we have the opportunity to experience a renewed personal encounter with Jesus.

Personally, I really liked Ivereigh's "Point of Reflection" questions provided each day of the retreat. They seemed to create an openness that allowed my heart to listen to God communicating with me.

My experiences by reading and spending time pondering the eight-day "exercises" were highlighted by several different "aha" moments and new insights. For example, on Day One, I discovered confirmation through Thomas Merton's words: "There is a virginal point where things begin anew, an innocence for which we were created, which we have lost and which we can regain."

Book Review



One of the most significant insights I gained came on Day Three, when I found the Ignatius examen, a spiritual exercise that includes "five steps for reviewing our life to see where and how faith has freed us from 'the world.'"

And perhaps, the highlight of the retreat for me came on Day Eight (A New Imagination of the Possible). It was here that Ignatius's exercise "Contemplation to attain the love of God" is practiced. This exercise "helps us go out of ourselves and into deeper belongingness with the Creator, creation and our fellow creatures."

Though I never had the opportunity to be in the presence of Pope Francis, reading through this book I felt as though he was with me guiding my thoughts and meditation each day of the retreat.

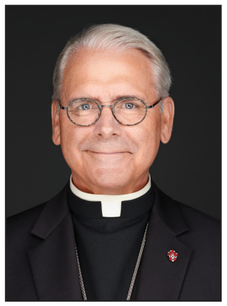
Hats off to Ivereigh for being able to capture and present the real essence of Pope Francis' message consistently throughout this book.

Writing this review has been challenging as there is much more to say about this magnificent book than what I can provide without telling too much. The bottom-line: I highly recommend "First Belong to God" and encourage you to read the book and participate in a retreat which I believe could "deepen your discipleship." The book can also be used as a resource for a group retreat.

John Dolezal is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Lánzate a lo más Profundo Luke 5:4

Peregrinación y Pentecostés



Arzobispo Pablo S. Coakley

En esta época del año, mientras visito las parroquias de nuestra extensa arquidiócesis para conferir el Sacramento de la Confirmación, el relato impactante de Pentecostés se estremece profundamente en mi corazón.

En los últimos meses, me he trasladado desde Príncipe de la Paz en Altus hasta San Francisco de Asís en Newkirk; desde la Santa Cruz en Madill hasta San Pedro en Guymon, y docenas de parroquias intermedias celebrando Confirmaciones. En cada una de estas celebraciones el relato de Pentecostés destaca de manera central, es decir, el momento en que, cincuenta días después de la Pascua, el Espíritu Santo transformó radicalmente a los discípulos de Jesús.

Tras la Ascensión, los Apóstoles, que estaban encerrados en el Cenáculo por miedo, recibieron el Espíritu Santo, enviado por Cristo para darles poder y liberarlos para su misión.

Este Espíritu, que se abalanzó sobre ellos como los fuertes vientos que ya conocemos aquí en Oklahoma, los impulsó a salir para proclamar la Buena Nueva hasta los confines de la tierra. De la misma manera, he sido enviado a cada rincón de esta arquidiócesis, llamando a la renovación espiritual y enviando nuevos discípulos misioneros que portan la imagen de Cristo a través del don y la unción del Espíritu Santo. Esta responsabilidad, profundamente arraigada en el Misterio Pascual, es un privilegio inmenso y profundo.

Esta pauta de renovación y crecimiento en la Iglesia refleja la visión más amplia expuesta en mi carta pastoral del 2019: "¡Vayan y hagan discípulos!"

"Desde mi nombramiento como arzobispo … no he dejado de orar por un nuevo Pentecostés que conduzca a una Nueva Evangelización en Oklahoma".

De hecho, somos testigos de los frutos palpables de esta efusión.

El Santuario del beato Stanley Rother ha recibido a decenas de miles de peregrinos, convirtiéndose en una importante fuente de gracia.

Nuestra entusiasta participación en el Avivamiento Eucarístico Nacional ha profundizado significativamente la devoción eucarística entre los fieles, jóvenes y mayores.

Los movimientos espirituales en auge y los eventos formativos, como lo son los Cursillos, la Conferencia de discipulado, Juntos en Santidad y los Encuentros de Promoción Juvenil, son un claro ejemplo del poder renovador del Espíritu Santo.

Nuestra vida sacramental es próspera, y nuestros sacerdotes continúan siendo pastores dedicados, guiando cada día al rebaño con cuidado para profundizar en su relación con Dios. ¡Verdaderamente, el Espíritu está vivo y renueva activamente nuestra Iglesia!

Aun así, en nuestra oración diaria repetimos: "Envía, Señor, tu Espíritu. Y renovarás la faz de la tierra". El camino cristiano no nos pide que corramos, sino que acojamos la peregrinación permanente de la fe. Reflexionamos sobre esta idea mientras seguimos celebrando este Año Jubilar como "peregrinos de esperanza".

Después de haber realizado varias peregrinaciones a lo largo de los años, en particular el Camino de Santiago en España, sé de primera mano cómo una peregrinación de este tipo exige una renovación diaria: cada mañana trae un nuevo comienzo, fortalecido y guiado de nuevo por el Espíritu. Incluso después de llegar a Santiago, la peregrinación de la vida debe continuar.

Al acercarnos al Domingo de Pentecostés, los invito cordialmente a que se unan a mí en oración ferviente por una nueva efusión del Espíritu Santo sobre nuestra arquidiócesis.

También tengo la esperanza y la confianza de que el Espíritu Santo suscitará una profunda renovación de la Iglesia universal a través del pontificado recién asumido por el Papa León XIV, que seguro producirá abundantes frutos espirituales. El Papa León ya nos ha animado con valor, exhortando a la evangelización donde incluso "son muchos los contextos en los que la fe cristiana se retiene un absurdo, algo para personas débiles y poco inteligentes, contextos en los que se prefieren otras seguridades distintas a la que ella propone, como la tecnología, el dinero, el éxito, el poder o el placer" (Santa Misa con el Colegio Cardenalicio, 9 de mayo de 2025).

No tenemos mejor ejemplo local de este celo misionero que el beato Stanley Rother. Rezo fervientemente para que el Papa León, sacerdote misionero, se interese especialmente por la causa del beato Stanley. Rezo para que Dios permita que se apruebe un milagro que conduzca a su canonización durante este pontificado. El beato Stanley ha sido un intercesor y un ejemplo extraordinario en mi ministerio sacerdotal; deseo profundamente que su inspiradora historia siga tocando muchos corazones.

Que permanezcamos siempre abiertos a la moción del Espíritu Santo a lo largo de la peregrinación de nuestra vida, esforzándonos siempre por convertirnos en instrumentos del Evangelio. De hecho, ¡Dios quiere una Iglesia vibrante y llena del Espíritu para Oklahoma!

"Envía, Señor, tu Espíritu. Y renovarás la faz de la tierra".

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Celebración del Día del Niño

Movimiento Familiar Cristiano Católico

El pasado 27 de abril, todos los miembros del Movimiento Familiar Cristiano Católico se reunieron para celebrar con alegría el Día del Niño. Fue una jornada llena de juegos, convivencia y alegría, donde padres, madres e hijos compartieron momentos inolvidables, fortaleciendo los lazos familiares en un ambiente sano y de comunidad. ¿Desea más información sobre el Movimiento Familiar Cristiano Católico? Comuníquese con la Oficina de Ministerio Hispano al (405) 728-3561. *Foto proporcionada.*

'Estar en el ministerio es mejor de lo que podría haber imaginado'

Por Diane Clay
The Sooner Catholic

Jonah Beckham junto a sus padres, Maggie y Monty Beckham, tras ser ordenado diácono transitorio el 1 de junio de 2024 en la Catedral de Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro de Oklahoma City. *Foto Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic*

A los 13 años, Jonah Beckham les dijo a sus padres que pensaba que lo estaban llamando al sacerdocio. La revelación fue un poco sorprendente, sin embargo, sus padres, Maggie y Monty Beckham, sabían que su hijo hablaba en serio de su fe y harían todo lo necesario para apoyar su discernimiento.

Ahora, ocho años después de haber sido aceptado en el programa del seminario de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City, Beckham está a sólo unas semanas de ser ordenado sacerdote.

Cuando Maggie Beckham habló sobre la próxima ordenación de su hijo, se emocionó.

"Como padres, el regalo más grande que pueden transmitir a sus hijos es el don de su fe y luego verlos madurar y crecer en esa fe hasta que se convierta en suya", dijo. "Esta es una verdadera bendición. En su ordenación diaconal, su sonrisa de pura alegría irradiaba desde dentro de él, desde su corazón. ¡Pensé que levitaría!

"Como madre de Jonah, no puedo esperar a experimentar a Jonah celebrando su primera Misa, sosteniendo el precioso Cuerpo y la Sangre de nuestro Señor en sus manos, participando del mayor regalo de Dios, su hijo Jesús y recibiendo a su hijo, de las manos del regalo de Dios para mí, mi hijo. Estoy asombrada por las maravillas de Dios y conmovida por el amor y las bendiciones que ha derramado sobre nuestra familia".

Beckham, quien cumplió 26 años a principios de mayo, fue aceptado en el programa de seminaristas de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City en abril de 2017. Asistió al Conception Seminary College durante cuatro años antes de terminar sus estudios en el Seminario Kenrick-Glennon y el Seminario Mount Saint Mary en Maryland, el mismo seminario al que asistieron el Arzobispo Coakley y el Beato Stanley Rother.

En junio de 2024, él y su compañero seminarista John Grim fueron ordenados diáconos de transición en la Catedral de Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro en Oklahoma City.

Si Dios quiere, serán ordenados sacerdotes el 28 de junio en la catedral. La ordenación está abierta al público y se transmitirá en el sitio web de la arquidiócesis y en la página de YouTube de la catedral.

Mientras Beckham reflexionaba sobre sus últimas semanas, estaba emocionado de haber terminado la escuela y dijo que esperaba compartir los sacramentos como sacerdote mientras servía a la comunidad católica.

"El último año definitivamente pasó rápido, pero también diría que fue surrealista llegar al final de mi tiempo en el seminario", dijo. "Este año los dos hemos tenido la bendición de realizar viajes, incluido un viaje a santuarios de toda Europa durante 16 días".

Dijo que su año como diácono de transición ha sido una prueba de fuego, comenzando a servir a los demás y predicando su primera homilía en su parroquia natal de la Iglesia Católica San Juan Bautista en Edmond.

"Cuando ingresas al seminario, tienes esta idea de lo que crees que es el sacerdocio, ¡pero para ser honesto, no tenemos idea! Todo lo que sabía es que creo que necesito ir al seminario, creo que necesito ser sacerdote", dijo.

"Un avance rápido hasta ahora y no sé qué podría haberme preparado, pero mientras miro hacia el sacerdocio, me concentro en mi deseo de servir, mi deseo de estar con mi pueblo y poder entregar mi vida al servicio de esta manera. Estar en el ministerio es mejor de lo que podría haber imaginado".

Beckham tiene una devoción particular por rezar el Rosario, algo que hace con frecuencia. Dijo que probablemente rezará el Rosario la mañana de su ordenación.

"Reflexionaré sobre lo que Nuestra Señora ha hecho por mí", dijo. "El Rosario fue importante para mí en la escuela secundaria cuando estaba discerniendo, poniendo mi confianza en Nuestra Señora y durante mi tiempo en el seminario. La cercanía con el Rosario ha sido lo más importante que he tenido".

Beckham dijo que la oración es fundamental para otros jóvenes que están considerando el sacerdocio, o para hombres y mujeres que están siendo llamados a la vida religiosa o al matrimonio.

"Confía en tu vida de oración y confía en lo que Dios proporciona", dijo. "No habría podido hacer estas cosas sin eso".

A medida que se acerca la ordenación, Maggie y Monty Beckham dijeron que están cada vez más agradecidos por el "sí" de su hijo.

"Jonah comentó una vez durante su discernimiento que, si su llamado no lo llevara al altar como sacerdote, no querría vivir su vida de otra manera que no fuera para la mayor gloria de Jesús y su Iglesia", dijo Maggie Beckham. "Él está donde debe estar y donde Dios quiere que esté".

Diane Clay es escritora independiente de Sooner Catholic.

Briefs

OKCR volunteers

Oklahoma Catholic Radio is seeking volunteers to help with several support aspects of the non-profit ministry. Anyone considering an opportunity to join in their outreach to "Go make disciples" of Jesus Christ, can contact info@okcr.org; (405) 255-7348. Visit okcr.org.

Lay Missionaries of Charity

The Lay Missionaries of Charity is a response of the laity to the universal call to holiness. As the Third Order of the Missionaries of Charity of St. Teresa of Calcutta, they are dedicated to a life growing in holiness through the Sacraments and the Magisterium of the Church. Their primary emphasis is free service to the members of their own families and to the poorest of the poor. They meet twice a month for Holy Mass, prayer, study and discussion. For meeting schedule and locations contact Jonathan Tarman, LMC (405) 278-8199 or Toni Harrelson, LMC Link (405) 341-2199.

National Eucharistic Pilgrimage

As part of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage there will be a Eucharistic procession 2-4 p.m. June 1 from Christ the King Catholic Church to St. Eugene Catholic Church in Oklahoma City. At 7 p.m. on June 1 is SUMMIT adoration, confession and music at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City. Another Eucharistic procession will be at 10 a.m. June 3 at the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine. Daily Mass will be celebrated at 12:15 p.m. at the shrine. Visit archokc.org/nep to sign up.

Garage sale

St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church will have a garage sale 8 a.m.-6 p.m. on June 5 and 8 a.m.-5 p.m. on June 6 at 3901 S. Sunnylane Rd. in Del City.

Discipleship Conference

The 2025 Archdiocesan Discipleship Conference is Aug. 9 at the Oklahoma City Convention Center, 100 Mick Cornett Dr. in Oklahoma City. This full-day event will offer keynotes by national speakers, inspiring breakout sessions, liturgies, exhibits and music designed to inspire, equip and encourage people to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and to share the Good News with a world that desperately needs to hear it. Visit okdisciple.org.

Summer Camp

Registration is open for the 2025 Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Camp season. campguadalupe.org/summercamp.

Catholic in Recovery

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Catholic in Recovery meetings are 7 p.m. Tuesdays in the Meerschaert House, second floor, at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 1901 N.W. 18 St. in Oklahoma City. The meetings are for individuals and families seeking recovery from a variety of addictions, compulsions and unhealthy attachments. For more information, visit catholicinrecovery.com or contact Kendra M. at (405) 709-2895; kmann@archokc.org.

Craft fair vendors

Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Mustang will host its annual Altar Society craft fair 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Nov. 8 at the church, 1100 N. Sara Rd. in Mustang. Vendor applications are now being accepted. Visit holyspiritmustang.org/craft-fair-form.

Craft fair vendors - Yukon

St. John Nepomuk Catholic Church in Yukon is having its annual arts and crafts show from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Sept. 13. There will be Indian tacos and drinks to purchase. People interested in booth registration can contact Rachelle Goldsboro at rachelle_goldsboro@sbcglobal.net, (405) 350-7559.

Monastic Encounter Weekends

St. Gregory's Abbey vocation director Fr. Simeon Spitz, O.S.B. invites single Catholic men ages 18-45 to a Monastic Encounter Weekend June 6-8, Aug. 1-3 or Oct. 17-19. Participants will share in the liturgical prayer, lectio divina, common work and communal life of the abbey and live as a monk. While these encounters are primarily intended for those discerning a religious vocation, they are of spiritual benefit to anyone yearning to know God's still, small voice amidst life's chaos. To register or for more information about discerning a vocation at St. Gregory's Abbey, e-mail vocations@monksok.org, visit monksok.org, or call Fr. Simeon at (405) 878-5456.

Oklahoma March for Life

The Oklahoma March for Life Mass will be celebrated at 9 a.m. June 7 at St. Joseph Old Cathedral, 307 N.W. 4 St. in Oklahoma City. The march will begin at 10:30 a.m. The rally will be at 11:45 a.m. on the capitol steps. Speakers include Archbishop Coakley and Sen. James Lankford.

Gift of Love Gala

The Center of Family Love 12th annual Gift of Love Gala is 7:30 p.m. June 7 at the National Cowboy &Western Heritage Museum, 1700 N.E. 63 St. in Oklahoma City. The 2025 honorees are Sr. Veronica Higgins and Daniel Zeigler. RSVP at (405) 263-4658 or cflinc.org/gala.

Diamond anniversary

St. Patrick Catholic Church in Oklahoma City will be celebrating its 75th anniversary on June 10. All former parishioners, seminarians and anyone connected to the parish is invited to help make the celebration special. Time, talent and ideas are welcome. For more information, contact Florence Daugomah at (405) 626-8638.

Elegant Table

The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help will host an Elegant Table 9 a.m.-3 p.m. June 14 in the Connor Center, 3214 N. Lake Ave. in Oklahoma City. Various items will be for sale including tableware, silverware, glassware, cutlery, table linens and centerpieces, Proceeds will be used to assist people struggling financially.

MSM 50-year reunion

The Mount St. Mary Catholic High School Class of 1975 will celebrate its 50-year reunion at 6:30 p.m. June 14 in the school commons. Cost: $50 per person or $90 per couple. E-mail msmclassof1975@gmail.com.

Camp Subiaco

The 2025 summer camp dates for Camp Subiaco are June 15-21 and June 22-28. A limited number of campers will be accepted to this adventure-based camp for boys ages 9-13. Visit campsubiaco.org.

BMCHS 30-year reunion

The Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School Class of 1995 will celebrate its 30-year reunion at 7 p.m. June 20 at Cock-O-The-Walk (private event) for drinks and hors d'oeuvres; and at 7 p.m. June 21 at the Lively Hotel on Oak for dinner, drinks and dancing. Cost $150 per person for the weekend. If unable to attend, donations to the class are welcome. Payments can be made to Lindsey Selph Evans via Venmo:
Lindsey-Evans-0130; Cash App: $LindseyEvans0130 or mailed to 3013 Red Rock Circle, Oklahoma City, OK 73120.

Reds, Whites & Brews

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City will host the 16th annual Reds, Whites & Brews from 6-10 p.m. July 24 at the OKC Farmers Public Market, 311 S. Klein Ave. in Oklahoma City. Proceeds support Sanctuary Women's Development Centers in Oklahoma City and Norman, helping women and children experiencing homelessness. Visit catholiccharitiesok.org.

A Night of Prayer

A Night of Prayer for the country will be held 7-8 p.m. June 26 at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, 900 S. Littler Ave. in Edmond. Everyone is welcome.

Pilgrimages

France pilgrimage

Join the Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma and Archbishop Coakley on a pilgrimage to France Oct. 13-23. There will be opportunities to celebrate Mass daily in iconic cathedrals, like the newly restored Notre Dame of Paris; walk in the footsteps of St. Therese of Lisieux and St. Joan of Arc; pay respects to the fallen soldiers in Normandy; and pray with monks at the abbeys of Mont-Saint-Michel and Solesman. Savor traditional French cuisine and wine throughout the pilgrimage.

Visit ctscentral.net/travel-tours/catholic-foundation-of-oklahoma-pilgrimage-to-france.

Italy pilgrimage

Join Fr. Carl William Janocha and Fr. Danny Grover on a Jubilee pilgrimage to Italy Nov. 10-20. Visit Venice, Padua, Florence, Assisi and Rome with the Vatican and the Holy Doors. Cost $4,799 from Oklahoma City. Contact frcarlj@gmail.com or dgrover2010@gmail.com.

Visit nawas.com.

Rome, Assisi pilgrimage

Join Fr. Joseph Irwin on a pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi Jan. 5-17 from Philadelphia. Package price is $5,490 and includes roundtrip airfare from Philadelphia, all-night accommodation in double-occupancy, four- and five-star hotels, breakfast and dinner daily, 11 days of sightseeing in a private luxury bus and daily Mass.

Visit ducinaltumpilgrimages.com; (888) 424-6266.

Visit archokc.org/pilgrimages

Calendar

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

June

1 The Ascension of the Lord

1 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage Eucharistic Procession, 2 p.m., Christ the King Catholic Church, 8005 Dorset Dr, Nichols Hills to St. Eugene Catholic Church, 2400 W. Hefner Rd., Oklahoma City.

1 The Secular Franciscan Order St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity of Central Oklahoma meeting, 2 p.m., St. Eugene Catholic Church, meeting room No. 3. Contact Bill Full, OFS minister, at billfull1@att.net.

1 Third Order (Lay) Dominicans meeting, 3 p.m., St. Monica, Edmond (St. Ambrose Building) in room No. 115. Call David Lassiter, (405) 924-6661 or Cesar Vallejos, (405) 706-6271.

1 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage Summit Adoration, Confessions, 7 p.m., The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 3214 N. Lake Ave., Oklahoma City.

2 Feast of Sts. Marcellinus and Peter.

3 Feast of St. Charles Lwanga and Companions.

3 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage Eucharistic Procession, 10 a.m., Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine, 700 S.E. 89 St., Oklahoma City.

3 National Eucharistic Pilgrimage daily Mass, 12:15 p.m., Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine, 700 S.E. 89 St., Oklahoma City.

3 Catholic in Recovery meeting, 7 p.m., Meerschaert House, second floor, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 1901 N.W. 18 St., Oklahoma City.

5 Feast of St. Boniface.

6 Feast of St. Norbert.

6 Monastic Encounter Weekend, St. Gregory's Abbey. Visit monksok.org.

6 First Friday Sacred Heart Mass, 5:30 p.m., Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway, Oklahoma City.

7 Oklahoma March for Life and Mass, 9 a.m., St. Joseph Old Cathedral, 307 N.W. 4 St., Oklahoma City.

7 The Lay Missionaries of Charity meeting. Contact Jonathan Tarman, (405) 278-8199, Toni Harrelson, (405) 341-2199.

7 Gift of Love Gala, 7:30 p.m., National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, 1700 N.E. 63 St., Oklahoma City.

8 Pentecost Sunday.

9 The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church.

9 Tenth week in Ordinary Time.

10 75th anniversary Mass, 7 p.m., St. Patrick Catholic Church, Oklahoma City.

10 Catholic in Recovery meeting, 7 p.m., Meerschaert House, second floor, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 1901 N.W. 18 St., Oklahoma City.

11 Feast of St. Barnabas.

11 Catholic War Veterans USA the Oklahoma Memorial Post No. 168 meeting, 5 p.m., St. Philip Neri Catholic Church, 1107 Felix Place, Midwest City. Contact Ronald Sandhop, CWV Post 168 Adjutanta, (405) 640-0450, resandhop@gmail.com.

13 Feast of St. Anthony of Padua.

14 Flag Day.

14 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.

14 Mount St. Mary Catholic High School Class of 1975, 50-year reunion, 6:30 p.m., school commons, 2801 S. Shartel Ave., Oklahoma City.

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continued from page 1

the precious Body and Blood of our Lord in his hands, partaking in the greatest gift from God, his son Jesus and receiving his son, from the hands of God's gift to me, my son. I am in awe at the wonders of God and humbled by the love and blessings he has poured over our family."

Beckham, who turned 26 in early May, was accepted into the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City seminarian program in April 2017. He attended Conception Seminary College for four years before finishing his studies at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary and Mount Saint Mary Seminary in Maryland – the same seminary attended by Archbishop Coakley and Blessed Stanley Rother.

In June 2024, he and fellow seminarian John Grim were ordained transitional deacons at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City.

God willing, they will be ordained to the priesthood on June 28 at the cathedral. The ordination is open to the public and will be broadcast on the archdiocesan website and the cathedral's YouTube page.

As Beckham reflected on his final few weeks, he was excited to be done with school and said he was looking forward to sharing in the sacraments as a priest while serving the Catholic community.

"The last year definitely went by quickly, but I would also say it was surreal coming to the end of my time in seminary," he said. "This year the two of us have been blessed going on trips, including a trip to shrines throughout Europe for 16 days."

He said his year as a transitional deacon has been a trial by fire, jumping in with serving others and preaching his first homily at his home parish of Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond.

"When you enter the seminary, you have this idea of what you think priesthood is, but to be honest we have no idea! All I knew was I think I need to go to seminary, I think I need to be a priest," he said.

"Fast forward to now and I don't know what could have prepared me, but as I'm looking toward priesthood, I am focused on my desire to serve, my desire to be with my people and to be able to give my life over to service in this way. Being in ministry is better than I could have imagined."

Beckham has a particular devotion to praying the Rosary, something he does often. He said he probably will be praying the Rosary the morning of his ordination.

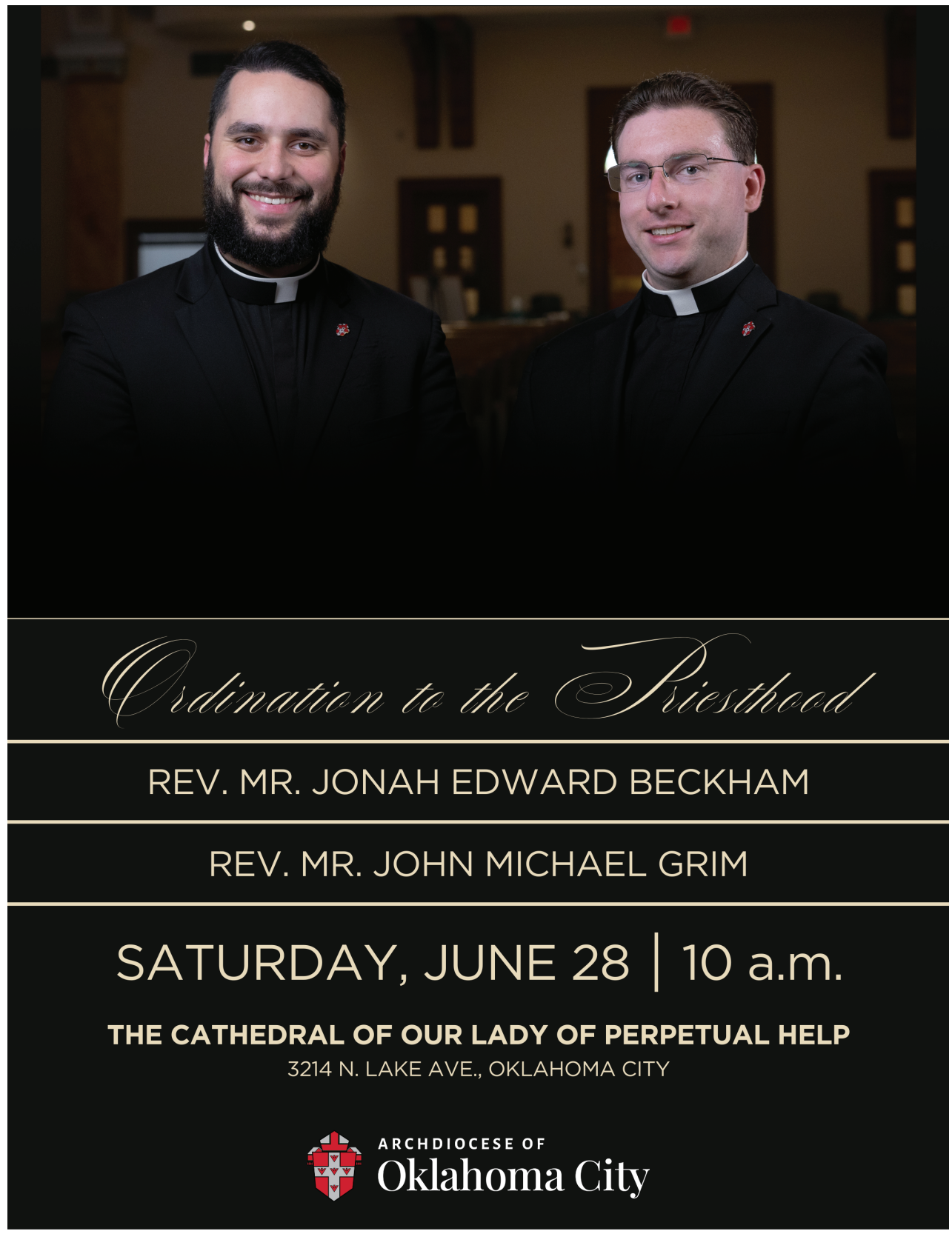
"I'll be reflecting on what Our Lady has done for me," he said. "The Rosary was important to me in high school when I was discerning, placing my trust in Our Lady, and through my time in the seminary. Closeness with the Rosary has been the most important thing that I've had."

Beckham said prayer is critical for other young men considering the priesthood, or men and women being called to religious life or marriage.

"Trust your prayer life and trust in what God provides," he said. "There is no way I could have done these things without that."

As the ordination approaches, Maggie and Monty Beckham said they're increasingly grateful for their son's "yes."

"Jonah once commented during his discernment that should his call not lead him to the altar as a priest, he wouldn't want to live his life any other way but for the greater glory of Jesus and his Church," Maggie Beckham said. "He is where he should be and where God wants him to be."

Diane Clay is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Rev. Mr. Jonah Beckham stood with his parents, Maggie and Monty Beckham, after he was ordained to the transitional diaconate on June 1, 2024, at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City. *Photo Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.*