

Go Make Disciples

‘What does it mean to be a drum major for justice?’ – Archbishop Coakley

Editor’s note: This piece was featured on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website.

WASHINGTON – “Dr. King encouraged people to be leaders in the priorities that Christ gave us in the Gospel,” said

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in a reflection commemorating the late civil rights leader’s life and legacy.

Archbishop Coakley focused his reflection for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on a portion

of Dr. King’s sermon, Drum Major Instinct:

“Let us take a moment to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose prophetic voice was a ‘drum



The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Photo OSV News.

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Pope Leo XIV closed the Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica Jan. 6 at the Vatican, marking the official end of the Jubilee Year. CNS photo/Vatican Media.

Clemency denied for Kendrick Simpson as Catholic leaders urge mercy, prayer

By Eliana Tedrow
The Sooner Catholic

On Jan. 14, the governor-appointed Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board voted 3–2 to deny clemency for death row inmate Kendrick Simpson. Convicted of the 2006 killings of Glen Palmer and Anthony Jones, Simpson is scheduled to be executed by lethal injection on Feb. 12, unless Gov. Kevin Stitt grants a last-minute reprieve.

Advocates for clemency say jurors were not permitted to hear evidence of his severe post-traumatic stress disorder, a mental health factor they say might have led to a different outcome than capital punishment.

Archbishop Paul Coakley released a statement urging state leaders to grant clemency to

Kendrick Simpson, explaining that while Simpson’s life has been marked by profound suffering and trauma, these factors do not diminish the gravity or pain of the crime. Instead, they “call us to a deeper moral reflection on justice, mercy, and the dignity of the human person.”

“From the teaching of Our Lord, we must conclude that the death penalty is inappropriate because it attacks the inviolability and dignity of the human person, and because society today has the means to protect itself without ending another human life.”

Archbishop Coakley had asked everyone entrusted with the solemn decision to grant Simpson clemency to consider if execution is actually necessary, “or whether

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30th men’s conference: ‘Seeking the will of God’

By John Helsley
The Sooner Catholic

Pick up a book penned by Father Larry Richards and it’s clear he’s not fooling around.

“Be a Man!”
“Surrender!”

Richards frequently takes aim at men – challenging them to be better men, husbands and fathers. And that

will surely be in focus when Richards returns to the Oklahoma Catholic Men’s Conference, In The Father’s Footsteps, set for March 14 at the Oklahoma City Convention Center. The theme of the conference: Seeking the Will of God.

Tickets for the 30th annual conference are available at catholicmen.net at a cost of \$94 for adults, \$49 for

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Read about Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City on pages 10-11 and in Archbishop Coakley’s column on page 2.



Catholic Schools
United in Faith and Community

Catholic Schools Week
Jan. 25-31

Put Out Into the Deep

Luke 5:4

Gratitude for growth in Catholic education

During Catholic Schools Week from Jan. 25-31, we have an opportunity to reflect on and express our gratitude for the blessings of our Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Each year, Catholic Schools Week highlights quality Catholic education. Schools throughout the country and in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City celebrate and honor their parishes, communities, students, faculty, staff, volunteers and families in unique and festive ways.

Celebrations include creative dress days, various service projects, acknowledgment of student achievements, and celebrations that feature food and meals, open houses, door decorating and more. The beauty is that each school community celebrates in their own unique way. It is great fun each year!

Here in the archdiocese, it has been an incredible year of growth. As you may have heard or seen on social media, we are excited to announce that our system is growing with two new schools that are scheduled to open in August.

Both schools will emphasize a curriculum strong in the Catholic intellectual tradition and utilize various aspects of a rich classical pedagogy. We invite you to inquire about the new schools to see if they are the right fit for your family.

The first new school is the Saint Carlo Acutis Virtual Academy, a statewide Catholic virtual school. It is a collaborative effort with the Diocese of Tulsa. Initially, it will open for grades kindergarten through 8th grade and add a grade level each year until it reaches 12th grade.

This school is a wonderful opportunity for families who desire a Catholic education but may live in rural communities that are too far from a Catholic school, or for families who have other reasons for needing a virtual option.

Families can apply for or learn more information about the Saint Carlo Acutis Virtual Academy at acutisacademy.org.

The second new school, the Saint Monica Catholic Academy in Edmond, will open for grades pre-school age 4 to 2nd grade, then add a grade level each year until reaching 12th grade.

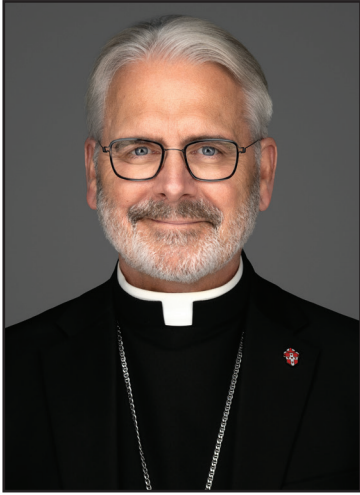
The academy is a ministry of Saint Monica Catholic Church and will be housed on its campus. The application period is coming soon. Parents can register their interest online and will receive the application directly when the school opens.

More information about Saint Monica Catholic Academy can be found at stmonica-academy.org.

Teaching students to discover and value the good, the true and the beautiful in our faith is the worthy task of our faculty and staff at the 18 Catholic schools in the archdiocese. We're thrilled to partner with families who desire to give their children the gift of faith and a quality education.

May God bless abundantly everyone associated with Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City – the students and their families, and the administration, faculty and staff who serve them.

We have great hope for the future. Thank you for choosing Catholic schools!



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.

✓ **May God's light** lead people toward unity and help heal the wounds of division and indifference. We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

✓ **The choir of** The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help will chant vespers at 5 p.m. March 8 at the cathedral, 3214 N. Lake Ave. in Oklahoma City. The prelude recital will feature Melissa Plamann, the Wanda L. Bass Chair of Organ and associate professor of music at Oklahoma City University. A reception will follow.

✓ **The next Rachel's** Vineyard retreat is April 24-26 for people seeking healing and reconciliation after abortion. Contact (405) 345-6212 or rachelsvineyardokc@gmail.com. Begin the process of addressing the hurt and pain in a secure, non-judgmental environment.

✓ **Volunteers are needed** in a variety of capacities at the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine in Oklahoma City. Visit rothershrine.org/volunteer.



@archokc



God, our Father and Creator, be with us in our schools. Help us to treasure your gift of life and treat one another with care. Guide our administrators, teachers, parents, staff and students to recognize you in all people. Help all of us to grow in faith and love. Amen.



"Monday (Jan. 12), I had the opportunity to meet with President Donald Trump, and also Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and their wives. The meetings served as an introduction as well as an opening to further conversations on topics of mutual concern, which will hopefully carry forward. I appreciate the opportunity and welcome the potential for ongoing productive conversations." - Archbishop Coakley. Photo Daniel Torok/ White House.

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mercy, accountability and the possibility of redemption can better witness to the values we seek to uphold as a people."

Opponents of clemency say Simpson has not shown remorse and they support carrying out his execution. Attorney General Gentner Drummond asked the Pardon and Parole Board to deny clemency for Simpson, saying, "Kendrick Simpson hunted his victims, executed them without hesitation, and then boasted about what he had done."

"The families left behind have endured unimaginable pain, and nothing in Simpson's decades on death row has shown that he deserves the mercy he refused to give to others."

Tena Jefferson, a friend of Simpson and a member of the Criminal Justice Action Team of VOICE, a local community organizing coalition, said she has personally witnessed concrete changes during his time in prison.

She said Simpson is "horribly remorseful and sorry" for what happened and would do anything for his victims' families or to change the past. Jefferson believes the jury might have reached a different verdict if they had been fully informed about his PTSD, paranoia and trauma experienced before coming to Oklahoma.

According to Jefferson, Simpson has four sons and a granddaughter whom she said he is "absolutely crazy about."

In addition to earning his GED, Simpson has written a book of poetry. In 2024, his poem "Who Am I?" was selected as the winning entry for the Pegasus Publication



Photo Catholic Mobilizing Network.

by Rose State College. Another of his poems, titled "Remorse," is a reflection on the irreparable harm he caused and his desire to rebuild his life.

In a place he has "absolutely nothing to give," said Jefferson, "he still finds ways."

Emmjolee Mendoza Waters, director of Death Penalty Abolition at the Catholic Mobilizing Network, said Simpson's case reflects broader national concerns about how capital punishment is applied. Waters said capital punishment disproportionately affects people with trauma, mental illness and disabilities.

"Accountability and mercy do not need to be at odds," she said. "It does not require killing a person in the name of justice. In the United States, our modern incarceration system has the capacity to keep society safe. There is this tension about accountability and mercy. We don't have to kill some-

one to teach that it was wrong."

Waters said capital punishment perpetuates a cycle of trauma and harm, noting that while the state may keep people physically safe, executions leave families grieving the loss of friends, sons and fathers.

Oklahoma Sen. Dave Rader, R-Tulsa, said Oklahoma's history of the execution process shows "much improvement is needed."

Pointing to the 46 recommendations of a 2017 commission report on Oklahoma's handling of execution and everything that accompanies the process and protocol, Rader said, "of all the recommendations made, very few, if any, were followed, let alone implemented."

Advocates have called on the faithful to pray and to contact Gov. Kevin Stitt, urging him to grant clemency.

Eliana Tedrow is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Statement from Archbishop Paul S. Coakley urging clemency for Kendrick Simpson

"I respectfully urge Oklahoma's state leaders to grant clemency to Kendrick Simpson. His life history reflects profound trauma and suffering—realities that diminish neither the gravity of the crime nor the pain and suffering of the victims and their families—but which call us to a deeper moral reflection on justice, mercy and the dignity of the human person.

"In this case, this is all the more concerning when we learn that Mr. Simpson's issues were not shared with members of the jury.

"From the teaching of Our Lord, we must conclude that the death penalty is inappropriate because it attacks the inviolability and dignity of the human person, and because society today has the means to protect itself without ending another human life. I ask those entrusted with this solemn decision to prayerfully consider whether execution is truly necessary, or whether mercy, accountability and the possibility of redemption can better witness to the values we seek to uphold as a people."

Prayer vigil for an execution

catholicsmobilizing.org

God of mercy, We gather to pray for an end to the many acts of violence occurring in our society. We pray in a special way for all those impacted by the use of the death penalty.

Guide us with your love and compassion, O God, as we strive to be vessels of your mercy and live in a manner that lifts up the dignity of all life. Help us to live the path of discipleship and faith as we work to end the death penalty and promote a more restorative justice system. Amen.

For people impacted by acts of grave harm. May they and all victims of crime know God's healing power and be transformed by his mercy. We pray, God of mercy, hear our prayer.

For people on death row awaiting execution. May they know God's unending love and forgiveness as children of God. We pray, God of mercy, hear our prayer.

Archbishop Coakley's Calendar in Review

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

- Dec. 21** – Centennial Mass and celebration at St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church, Harrah
- Dec. 23** – Catholic Pastoral Center staff Christmas breakfast, archbishop's residence
- Dec. 23** – Mass, St. Francis de Sales Chapel, Catholic Pastoral Center
- Dec. 28** – Mass for Closing of Jubilee Year, The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Oklahoma City
- Dec. 28** – Seminarian Christmas party, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, OKC
- Dec. 29** – Mass with residents at St. Ann Nursing Center
- Jan. 5-9** – Region X bishops retreat, San Antonio, Texas
- Jan. 10** – Archbishop's Circle Mass and reception, The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
- Jan. 13** – Archbishop's Circle Mass and reception, Christ the King Catholic Church, OKC
- Jan. 14** – School Mass, All Saints Catholic School, St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church, Norman
- Jan. 20** – Presbyteral Council meeting, CPC
- Jan. 20** – Archdiocesan Finance Council meeting, CPC
- Jan. 21** – School Mass, St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, OKC
- Jan. 22** – School Mass, Christ the King Catholic Church, OKC
- Jan. 22** – Confirmation, St. John Nepomuk Catholic Church, Yukon
- Jan. 23** – School Mass, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, El Reno
- Jan. 25** – Confirmation, St. Matthew Catholic Church, Elk City



**Most Reverend
Paul S. Coakley**

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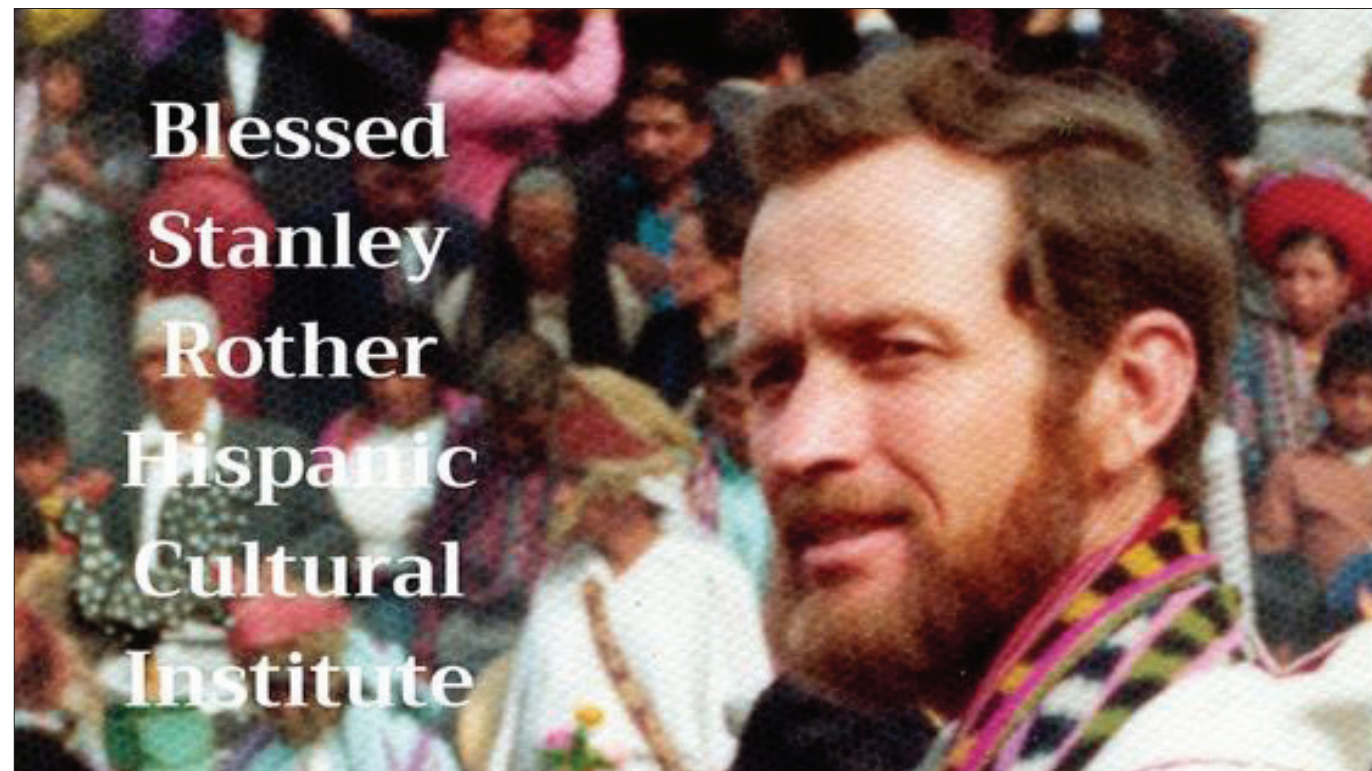
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B1. Stanley Rother Hispanic Cultural Institute announces spring semester

The Blessed Stanley Rother Hispanic Cultural Institute of Saint Joseph Catholic Church will have the opening night for the spring semester at 7 p.m. on Feb. 3 in the Metter Room of the Parish Center, 421 East Acres St. in Norman.

All are invited, as membership in the Institute is not necessary to attend this first session.

Spots are available for Spanish language and cultural studies classes to be offered from 7 to 9:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, with registration found on the Institute's Facebook page or at bit.ly/BSRHCL-Spring2026.

Tuition is \$50 per semester and enrollment continues Feb. 10. For those who register online, payment is encouraged on

opening night. Others can arrive at 6:30 p.m. to register. Payment can be made by check or cash.

For more information, call the parish office at (405) 321-8080 and/or e-mail Ignacio Ruiz, Jr. at rotherhispanicinstitute@gmail.com. Visit the Facebook page at facebook.com/groups/bsrhci.



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“Make Straight the Way”

hosted by Dcn. Larry Sousa

Conversations with people who are making a difference in Oklahoma.

Feb. 3 and 4: Patrick Manning, Catholic author, parishioner of Church of the Epiphany of the Lord, Oklahoma City. Part one.

Feb. 10 and 11: Patrick Manning, Catholic author, parishioner of Church of the Epiphany of the Lord, Oklahoma City. Part two.

Feb. 17 and 18: Patrick Manning, Catholic author, parishioner of Church of the Epiphany of the Lord, Oklahoma City. Part three.

Feb. 24 and 25: Fr. Rusty Hewes, pastor, St. James Catholic Church, Oklahoma City.

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

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major for justice.’ His inspiring words continue to speak to our hearts today:

‘Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter.’

“What does it mean to be ‘a drum major’ in our own communities? Dr. King’s sermon encouraged people to be leaders in the priorities that Christ gave us: to feed the hungry,

give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick and visit those in prison. Through the social service and charitable ministries of the Catholic Church, we strive to embody the Gospel mandate at the local and community levels. But just as important is the challenge to help the faithful to authentically live out this call. Our special message on immigration and our commitment to continue addressing the sin of racism are two recent examples that serve as efforts to be drum majors of love in our communities.

“In our pastoral letter against racism, we bishops affirm Dr. King’s leadership in bring-

ing together people of faith in the work of racial justice, noting ‘that spirit is integral to the fight today.’ As we remember Dr. King and commemorate his legacy, let us continue this work as drum majors and engage in actions of compassion and mercy.

“I encourage you to take time to reflect on how the Holy Spirit may be inviting you to join with others in addressing challenges within our families, neighborhoods, or communities. May we lead the way in building a society rooted in justice, peace, righteousness, and the dignity of every human person.”



Fr. Alex Kroll celebrated Mass on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe at St. Mary Catholic Church in Ponca City. Parishioners held a celebration after Mass. Photo Rich Cantillion.



Advent Lessons and Carols were held at St. Mary Catholic Church in Ponca City. Both the adult and children’s choirs participated. Photo Cindy Heidlage.



Fr. Alex Kroll celebrated Midnight Mass at St. Mary Catholic Church in Ponca City. Photo Cindy Heidlage.



Fr. Alex Kroll celebrated a candlelight Mass for the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception at St. Mary Catholic Church in Ponca City. Photo Cindy Heidlage.



OKLAHOMA MARCH FOR LIFE

FEB. 4, 2026

7:30 a.m. Sanctity of Life Mass, Corpus Christi Catholic Church
9 a.m. March around the capitol
9:30 a.m. Enter the capitol for Rose Day
11:30 a.m. Speeches on the floor of the House
1 p.m. Benediction by Archbishop Coakley

OKLAHOMA STATE CAPITOL, 2300 N. LINCOLN BLVD., OKLAHOMA CITY
CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1616 N. KELLEY AVE., OKLAHOMA CITY



GREEN TIE GAIA

02.21 2026



Saturday, February 21, 2026
National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum
5:30 p.m. Check-in | 6:00 p.m. Cocktail hour

With Special Emcee
Nick Gallo, Sports reporter

Supporting Sanctuary Women’s Development Centers
and other Catholic Charities programs

This Year’s Awardees:

Ambassador Award	Mosaic Award	Honorary Chairs
Shellie & Don Greiner	City of Oklahoma City	Gayle & Barney Semner



Sponsorships and tickets available at **onecau.se/gtg2026**

Questions? Please contact Tessa Traxler at ttraxler@ccaokc.org

'A servant's heart'

Davito starting anew after 50 years serving archdiocese, Beltran

By John Helsley
The Sooner Catholic

Carol Davito's timing aligned perfectly in the winter of 1975.

New job for the newly established Diocese of Tulsa, filling the role as secretary for its first bishop, Bernard J. Ganter. Soon she was serving as a hostess when Mother Teresa arrived for a visit; then greeting Bishop Fulton Sheen, who one day strolled into her office unannounced.

"We had a short, but pleasant exchange," Davito said of an interaction with Sheen. "I was lucky enough to be able to tell him that I always watched his TV program."

What a beginning.

And only the beginning.

Now a half-century later, Davito nears retirement, closing a long and dedicated run in serving the Catholic Church in Oklahoma.

"I thank God every day for the path that my life has taken," she said, "for all the wonderful people that I have met, for all the beautiful places I have seen and hope to see, for good health and a very happy life."

Thank then-Monsignor Eusebius Beltran, too.

"When Bishop Ganter was leaving for Beaumont, Texas, he told me it was protocol for the chancery staff to resign, so the



lasting friendship that stretched across five decades.

Now nearing retirement, Davito relishes the relationships and experiences that have filled her life these past five decades, none more than her ever-developing friendship with Beltran.

"My first encounter with Monsignor Eusebius Beltran was by telephone," she said. "He called and I immediately fell in love with his voice."

"My first years with him were basically a 9-to-5 position as his secretary, because I had three teenage sons still at home. I felt so fortunate to work with him because he was very easy to be around and soon people learned to love him very much as he would go out into the parishes of the diocese. We called him the energizer bunny because he never stopped. He told me his day off was Thursday, but he never took a day off, so it became kind of a joke."

In November 1992, Beltran returned from a meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and handed Davito a letter to read. The subject: Beltran was being moved to Oklahoma City as archbishop.

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new bishop could pick his own staff.

"However, he suggested I sit tight and see what happened."

Beltran, set to follow Ganter, retained Davito, and they remained together until Beltran's death in September at the age of 91, first forming a working relationship, then a

"As he began to decline, I spent more and more time with him as I realized I was losing my best friend."

Carol Davito about the late Archbishop Beltran

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"I congratulated him but fought back tears because I thought it meant that I would no longer be working for him," Davito said. "It was a long time before he asked if I would like to come to Oklahoma City, because he told me if there was a secretary already there, he could not displace her."

"That was only one of his many kindnesses."

Davito followed Beltran to Oklahoma City, where her responsibilities eventually expanded – and continued to expand.

"Carol has spent most of her adult life serving the Church in some capacity," said Archbishop Paul Coakley. "I am personally grateful for her generous service to the Church in Oklahoma, both in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and the Diocese of Tulsa."

"Not many are aware of Carol's many years of service assisting the staff during the annual plenary meetings of the USCCB as well. She has a servant's heart."

Serving has been a mark of her career. And, as she says, came with a few "perks."

Davito and Beltran became beekeepers together, growing hives and processing honey, which they regularly shared with the Catholic Pastoral Center staff. As Beltran's assistant, she was able to meet Saint John Paul II, Pope Benedict and Pope Francis. Father Stanley Rother visited whenever he was in Oklahoma, allowing her to get to know him. And in June, Davito attended the pallium Mass of Pope Leo IV.

The duo became famous travel pals, too.

"In 1981, he decided to take a small group from Tulsa to the Holy Land and Rome and asked if I would like to go along," Davito said. "I had to get a passport, as I had never been out of the country before!"

"It was a wonderful trip and I watched everything that he did as our leader. And when we came home, he said, 'Now do you think you could handle a pilgrimage?'"

"That was the first of our 29 pilgrimages in 30 years. We covered a lot of territory and took groups of 25 to 100 persons. Most popular, of course, were the Holy Land, Rome and Guatemala."

When Beltran retired as archbishop, the two remained close. They often dined together and Da-

vito ran errands for the archbishop emeritus. When he helped with confirmations, she would drive.

"I felt my job was to make his job easier," she said.

With the extra time, they attended classical concerts together and went on drives through the countryside. They rode bicycles around Lake Hefner. And they went on many vacations together, with friends often happy to join in.

As Beltran grew older, his health, as it often does, became a challenge. Still, Davito remained by his side.

"When archbishop felt the time was getting close that he would not be able to say Mass at home anymore, he said to me, 'When I can no longer say Mass, I want you to attend every day the 11:30 Mass and pray for me.'"

And she did, always seated in the front pew.

"As he began to decline," she said, "I spent more and more time with him as I realized I was losing my best friend. He hoped to have a peaceful death at home, which the Lord granted him. My wish was to be with him at the very end and I was."

Archbishop Coakley said, "I got to know Carol upon my arrival in the archdiocese. Archbishop Beltran was retiring and she had already served as his assistant for many years since he first came to Oklahoma as Bishop of Tulsa. Carol was determined to continue to serve as his assistant for as long as she could."

"Her devotion to the Church and to Archbishop Beltran until the end of his life have been a beautiful witness."

Now, Davito is readying for what and where is next.

"My life now seems rather weird, adjusting to not having Archbishop Beltran in my life," she said. "I have always loved to travel and will continue to do so as long as my health and money holds out. In fact, the first two weeks of February, a friend and I will be going to Japan."

"I plan to continue working at the USCCB annual meetings, as I have been doing registration for the bishops for about 20 years. I do Tai Chi, hope to join an exercise program, have more time to read and socialize with friends. I still love the OKC Thunder and will continue to be a big fan of theirs!"

John Helsley is editor of the Sooner Catholic.

Photos top to bottom:

Carol Davito and Archbishop Beltran.

Carol Davito and Archbishop Beltran in Almont, Colorado.

Carol Davito and Archbishop Beltran at the Green Tie Gala in 2020.

Carol Davito and Archbishop Beltran watching the Thunder game in his home.

Photos provided.

Photos on page 6:

(Top) Carol Davito and Archbishop Beltran on vacation in Puerto Rico. *Photo provided.*

Carol Davito assisted the late Archbishop Emeritus Eusebius Beltran prior to the Chrism Mass on March 25, 2024, at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City. *Photo Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.*





The Catholic Daughters of the Americas Chapter No. 2166 St. Jude's holiday gathering was held Dec. 20 at Bl. Sacrament Catholic Church in Lawton. *Photos Jolene Schonchin/Sooner Catholic.*



The Mount St. Mary Catholic High School Vocal Music Ensemble held Advent Lessons and Carols on Dec. 15 at Historic Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Oklahoma City. *Photo Dana Attocknie/Sooner Catholic.*

OKLAHOMA Catholic WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES ARE OUR *Letters from Home* ST. AUGUSTINE

**FEBRUARY 21, 2026
AT THE OKLAHOMA CITY
CONVENTION CENTER**

General Admission **\$79** Student Admission **\$59**

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Dr. Mary Healy
Msgr. James Shea

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VERSO MINISTRIES

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college-aged and \$39 for high school-aged.

Richards, a popular speaker, author, podcaster and retreat master, is a priest in the diocese of Erie, Pennsylvania. A return speaker for In The Father's Footsteps, he is delivering a talk titled In His Will Is Our Peace.

One focus: "You must listen in prayer," he said. "Ask what he wants and then do it!"

When it comes to the Lord's will, especially discerning that will, Richards said people must first get out of the way.

"Stop trying to do it yourself," Richards said. "Give Jesus full control. Let him live."

"Galatians 2:20! I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me."

"Surrender."

The speaker lineup also features: Curtis Martin, popular evangelist and founder of FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students); Nathan Crankfield, combat veteran and Catholic leader; and Joe Heschmeyer, a renowned Catholic apologist.

"The speakers will come at our theme, Seeking the Will of God, from different ways to give us more clarity on how we discern this voice," said Ray Haeefe, conference director and co-founder.

"Every man hears a response to their prayers and request. How do we know we are doing God's will instead of just a voice in our head?"

"Father Larry and Curtis Martin are return speakers, among our most highly rated speakers from the past. Nathan Crankfield and Joe Heschmeyer will bring new perspectives with their powerful

OKLAHOMA FELLOWSHIP OF CATHOLIC MEN • 30 YEARS OF FAITH, FELLOWSHIP AND FORMATION

Fr. Larry Richards | Curtis Martin | Joe Heschmeyer | Nathan Crankfield

**IN THE FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS 30
MARCH 14, 2026**

Oklahoma City Convention Center
8:45 AM Start
Mass Follows at 4:30 PM

REGISTER NOW

catholicmen.net

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path.
Psalm 119:105



Fr. Larry Richards



Curtis Martin



Nathan Crankfield



Joe Heschmeyer

message and witness."

Richards said he's routinely seen the fruits of such conferences, with men carrying renewed

faith into their homes and into the world, with one typical Father Larry caveat.

"Absolutely," he said. "But they

need to put in to practice what they learn."

John Helsley is editor of the Sooner Catholic.

Become a seminarian pen pal

Seminarians are away from home for months at a time during their formation.

To become a Seminarian Pen Pal, go online to archokc.org/penpal to find addresses and write a note.



In December, seminarians Kazimir Biesiada (left) and John Paul Pierce visited Holy Trinity Catholic School in Okarche. The two seminarians are pen pals to the school. The students were able to put faces to names and learn more about their priesthood journeys. *Photos provided.*



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OKC 73109
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**Catholic School
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**Bishop McGuinness
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OKC 73118
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bmchs.org



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**Mount St. Mary
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OKC 73109
(405) 631-8865
mountstmary.org



**Cristo Rey OKC
Catholic High School**
4200 Leonhardt Dr.
OKC 73115
(405) 698-1300
cristoreyokc.org



Students formed for the WORLD

By Lara Schuler
Senior Director of Catholic Education

It's Catholic Schools Week! From Jan. 25 to Jan. 31 Catholic schools across the country celebrate the legacy of Catholic education in the United States. Catholic education is seeing a renewal and resurgence nationwide, as young families and others are returning to or discovering Jesus Christ and his Church.

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Catholic schools are doubling down on their commitment to the Catholic intellectual tradition and exploring or reviving time-tested pedagogy both in strategy and curricular resources for virtue development and academic excellence.

Life is full of many different paths and knowing how to react at various important times in life can be daunting if our consciences are not well-formed. Perfection evades us this side of the veil, however, those who attend a Catholic school do have an edge in being taught that there is a difference.

Those who educate and those who attend Catholic schools can work together to help the student learn through everyday decisions that may seem inconsequential, but over time develop and form the student's mind and conscience towards the good, true and beautiful.

It does not just happen, it is not an accident, it is intention and inspired by God.

As students matriculate through the grade levels, they learn why certain decisions will bring everlasting joy, while others will bring pain and suffering to them and those around them. Ultimately, a student graduates and decides for himself or herself the paths they will take.

One thing is for certain: administrators and teachers never stop praying for the success of their students, past, present and future.

Catholic schools educate for life and for the fulfillment of the human person as God designed them, individually and collectively. Our world needs ethical government and community leaders with integrity; well-formed parents to lead the next generation; and well-educated industry leaders and employees to further development of the human race.

It also needs those who bring truth, beauty and goodness to the world through literature, the arts, and music and home sciences, making life enjoyable in all of its facets with the ultimate goal that it ends with our students returning to our Heavenly Father for eternity.

Catholic schools form students for their benefit and that of the world.

**Catholic Schools
Week 2026
Jan. 25-31**

The Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship program provides scholarships to a participating private school of choice for PK3 through 12th grade students with special needs who meet specific criteria. A recent legislative change removed the year requirement to attend a public school. More information can be found at oklahoma.gov/education/services/special-education/lnh-scholarship.html. Parish and school grants, if available, differ according to school and information will be located on the school website.



Catholic Schools
United in Faith and Community

How to afford a Catholic education

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City are more affordable now than ever before for any family seeking a Catholic education for their child. Due to school choice efforts of legislators over the past few years, the Parental Choice Tax Credit, the Catholic School Opportunity Fund, and changes to the Lindsay Nicole Henry Scholarship provide opportunities for families to fund a desired education to meet their specific needs. These are tremendous blessings for which we are thankful.

The overall value of the Oklahoma Parental Choice Tax Credit is substantial, as it provides eligible Oklahoma taxpayers with a refundable income tax credit ranging from \$5,000 to \$7,500 to help offset private school tuition and fees for their children. This program has enabled thousands of families, particularly from low-and middle-income backgrounds, to afford private education options they might not otherwise access.

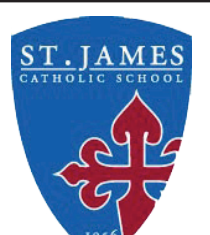
The Catholic School Opportunity Fund benefits both donors and students. Donors can receive an Oklahoma Tax Credit and low-to-middle-income students can receive a scholarship to help with tuition. This program allows you to direct your taxes where you want them to go by providing financial assistance to low-income families as well as helping the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, particularly those most in need, to offer tuition assistance to their families. More information can be found on their website at csokc.org.

The Lindsey Nicole Henry Scholarship program provides scholarships to a participating private school of choice for PK3 through 12th grade students with special needs who meet specific criteria. A recent legislative change removed the year requirement to attend a public school. More information can be found at oklahoma.gov/education/services/special-education/lnh-scholarship.html. Parish and school grants, if available, differ according to school and information will be located on the school website.

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210 S. Evans Ave.
El Reno 73036
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sacredheartelreno.com



Moments at the Mount

A proposal for the history books

On Dec. 9, the Mount Saint Mary Catholic High School staff and students gathered in the gym for what they assumed would be a normal pep rally. But they would be proven wrong.

“Alright, before we go, will Rocket join me in the center of the court?” Elle Muzny asked enthusiastically into the microphone.

The student body fell into a confused hush. They thought the winter sports pep rally was over. After all, they had done the games, court announcement, and chants. What else was there to do?

Muzny made her way to the center of the court with Rocket right behind her. All eyes were on them and what would be happening next.

“And would Ms. Strah join us please?” Muzny asked, looking around the gym for her.

All eyes turned towards the door where Strah stood. Everyone was still confused but some had the right idea of what was happening: a proposal.

Since February 2024, history teacher Alexander Weishan and sophomore English teacher Emily Strah had been dating. Unbeknownst to Strah, Weishan had been planning a proposal since the end of September 2025. Over fall break, Weishan told Strah that he was helping a teacher with a paper, but he secretly drove to Stillwater to ask her parents for permission to marry her. And now, the moment had come.

Strah made her way to the center of the basketball court to join Muzny and Rocket. She was as confused as everyone else. Rocket took his helmet off and under it wasn't a student; it was Weishan.

The gym erupted in the loudest cheers ever heard at a pep rally this school year. Muzny handed Weishan the ring and he knelt. Somehow, the students got even louder. Kids screamed, some clapped, a few cried. No one could hear what Weishan said to Strah. After his short speech, Strah said yes.

They embraced each other as the students



History teacher Alexander Weishan proposed to English teacher Emily Strah on Dec. 9, 2025, after a pep rally at Mount St. Mary Catholic High School in Oklahoma City. Photos Kaylyn Henderson.

and staff continued to produce ear-ringing cheers. From the sidelines came Strah and Weishan's families. After lots of hugs and tears, the most exciting pep rally came to an end.

“I was very anxious,” Weishan said as he recalled the moment, “It was hard to be Rocket and have spirit when I was ready for it to be over with, but it was so rewarding. It was the happiest moment of my life.”

Strah said, “I was very surprised. But I was also very excited and happy. I couldn't stop shaking until maybe an hour after. It was quite the surprise.”

Weishan spent most of November and early December planning this surprise proposal.

“Mrs. Muzny was the real MVP in helping me pull this off,” Weishan said. “I tried to propose ideas that would get her to the court without it being suspicious.”

“It was a little suspicious,” Strah replied.

When asked about their future together, they said they're excited to just spend life together.

“It will be nice to have all our family at one place for the wedding,” Strah said.

Weishan is a Notre Dame alum and said he needs to take Strah there since he's been to her alma mater, Oklahoma State University.

“Advice I would give to young couples is to just be honest with each other. It's the most



Lucy Rosenhamer

Mount Saint Mary Catholic High School

important part of any relationship, regardless of if it's with a romantic partner or family,” Weishan said.

“I would say my advice would be to remember that you're worthy of being loved,” Strah said. “And it's important to know that in regard to God as well. Just know that you are loved and deserve the best so don't settle for any less.”

Their happy moment has been posted to the Mount Saint Mary Instagram.

Teacher spotlight: Bryan Kohout

Bryan Kohout, who graduated from the University of Oklahoma in December 2025, is the newest addition to the Mount Saint Mary community as a history teacher.

What drew you to The Mount?

“I've been a Catholic my whole life,” Kohout said. “I had heard great things about the Mount, but had never visited it. Once I had graduated and heard that there was an open position here, I leapt at the opportunity to apply.”

What do you look forward to this semester?

“I look forward to joining the Mount community. I'm a very community-oriented person, so I'm excited to immerse myself in the strong community here.”

Why did you choose to teach history?

“It's basically just storytelling. It connects everything and makes learning interesting.”

What advice would you give to your students this semester?

“I would tell them to learn from the past. I like to say that history doesn't repeat itself, but it runs.”



Bryan Kohout

Irish Insights

BMCHS students return from break focused

After a 2024-25 year boasting four state qualifiers, the girls wrestling team has been moving through the season with renewed determination.

Practices started in October with the regular season opening on Dec. 5. By the time the team reaches regionals and state, the squad will have participated in 13 tournaments and duals.

“We practice every day,” coach Marty Monigold said. “We drill our moves. We are constantly just doing the moves as many times as possible so that they become muscle memory.”

With regular season tournaments until February, the team is keeping a common goal in mind: to

exceed four state qualifiers, breaking a school record.

“We could have as many as six state qualifiers, and that would be more than the school has ever had,” Monigold said.

Sophomore Nora Thompson qualified for regionals and then state the previous season.

“I'm kind of just in that mindset of, ‘If I can make it to state and get on the podium, then I'll have done good,’” Thompson said.

With the addition of coach Courtney Mullinix, the team now has two coaches, along with three volunteer assistants helping the wrestlers improve in practice every day.

“I have really good coaches and a

really good team,” Thompson said. “I'm excited for the results of the season.”

Monigold explained that other than breaking the school record, his goals for the team remain the same: just to get better.

“We're another year older, another year more mature,” Monigold said. “These kids are, they're just battlers.”

The team's next tournament will be Jan. 30 in Chickasha.

Mock Trial prepares for first competition

For the first time in school history, students will be participating in Mock Trial competitions hosted by the Oklahoma Bar Association.



Katherine Menz

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School

The year-long class taught by Mock Trial coach Lori Crews is set to compete Jan. 29 at Muskogee High School. Senior Reed Bramlett will be a witness in the first trial.

“I think all our attorneys are pretty good,” Bramlett said. “Our witnesses, I think we took some notes for the scrimmage that we

continued on page 13

Royals Report

Honoring students and staff at Cristo Rey OKC



Orlene Grant Chaney

In December 2025, Orlene Grant Chaney, dean of academic support and accountability at Cristo Rey OKC Catholic High School, was recognized as Teacher of the Month by Oklahoma City Community College and Perry Publishing & Broadcasting Company.

The award highlights her dedication, leadership and the positive influence she has on students' academic growth. Chaney received a \$250 gift card, dinner for two at a Chef Andrew Black restaurant, and she is now eligible for Teacher of the Year, with the chance to win \$2,500.

“I felt humbled and blessed to be nominate as the Teacher of the Month for just doing the job God called me to do,” she said. “I appreciate the award and it is important to me to know that my community recognizes that I go over and beyond for my students. “It is an encouragement to keep giving my students 100% of my effort every day to help them meet their individual goals.”

Chaney's work goes beyond teaching individual lessons. She works closely with students to provide academic support, track their progress and develop strategies to overcome challenges.

Her guidance helps students



Cristo Rey OKC Catholic High School Class of 2026. Photos provided.

grow in confidence, responsibility and skills that will prepare them for success long after high school.

“One moment in my job that made me feel proud is when one of my students didn't think he had what it takes to go to college,” Chaney said. “I had conversations with him every year for four years, encouraging him and telling him he could be successful in college.

“And he is in his third year at one of the largest universities in Oklahoma and doing extremely well in his college classes.”

Parents and alumni often note her patience and dedication, and students often mention how her support makes them feel encouraged and capable.

“I dedicate this award to my parents, that are no longer on this earth, but I feel their presence in my everyday life,” she said, “and to my son for unselfishly allowing me to give extra time and attention to students that need it, which is sometimes out of the scope of a traditional school day and not feeling that he is missing out on my time and attention for him.”

Senior Night: A celebration of dedication

On Jan. 6 Cristo Rey OKC held its annual Senior Night for basketball. The senior presentation was held between the games, recognizing each student for their leadership, perseverance and contribu-



Allison Turrubiarres

Cristo Rey OKC Catholic High School

tions to the team throughout high school.

The gym was filled with energy as families, friends and students cheered from the stands. Each senior was introduced individually, and the crowd applauded loudly for every player.

Some students held roses, while others were greeted with cheers and high-fives from peers. Parents smiled proudly as they watched the seniors reflect on their journey, from their first day at Cristo Rey OKC to their final season on the court.

The night celebrated more than just athletic skills; it highlighted the commitment required to balance schoolwork, work study responsibilities, and sports. Families and students shared excited conversations before and after the games, and the sense of community filled every corner of the gym.

“Being honored on Senior Night made me feel proud of everything I've worked for,” said Nicole, a senior. “Balancing school, work and basketball wasn't always easy, but this night made it feel worth it.”

continued from page 12



Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School sophomore cheese club members stood for a photo at the first meeting. Photo Victoria Farley.

took last time, but I think we did pretty well.”

As the team's first competition, Bramlett said he felt special to be able to “set the bar” for other students.

Cheese Club

For many, the new year means getting back in the gym, saving enough money for that big ticket item or quitting a bad habit. But for a group of sophomores looking for community, 2026 means getting shredded in a different way.

After a discussion about the Cheese Club and a well-timed spelling error, sophomores Victoria Farley and Alex Yager, along with other friends, hatched a plan to start the Cheese Club. Weeks later, theology teacher Troy Bodman and other curd connoisseurs gathered with cheese in hand. Bodman, a cheese lover himself, said he chose to become the club's sponsor because of its communal nature.

Bodman's goal for the club is to create a place for anyone to gather.

“It's not so much about all of these crazy activities and very niche interests or things like that,” Bodman said. “It's more of a social excuse to have just a good time at a club.”

Yager agrees.

“It's just whoever wants to come can come,” Yager said. “We're not exclusive in any way, shape or form. We believe cheese should be for everyone.”

Before each meeting, the club posts hints on Instagram of what the cheese of the week might be, before revealing it at the meeting.

“Everyone gets to try a bite or two, and we have this rating system of like, texture, color, taste, just smell, like all the different things you'd expect for a cheese, and you taste it, you give us our rating,” Yager said. “It's kind of a group effort.”

So far the group has had one meeting.

“It's been great,” Yager said. “We've had a lot more people turn out than we expected. It's going pretty smoothly.”

Catholic School Jobs Box

Chemistry teacher - OKC

Mount St. Mary Catholic High School

Send cover letter and resume to Laura Cain, Ed.D. at lcain@mountstmary.org.

Director of admissions, retention

Development officer

Esports coach - OKC

Cristo Rey OKC Catholic High School

Apply at cristoreyokc.org.

Head volleyball coach - OKC

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School

Send cover letter and resume to John Hamilton at jhamilton@bmchs.org.

Find more jobs at:
archokc.schoolspring.com
archokc.org/jobs-box

Jobs Box

Coordinator of youth ministry – Edmond

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church is seeking a coordinator of youth ministry to lead young people, grades 6-12, in becoming active and intentional disciples of Jesus Christ. Will work collaboratively and under the direction of the priest and director of mission, in addition to working with parents, Youth Advisory Council, core teams, parish staff and volunteers. Bachelor's degree; degree in theology, religious education, or related field preferred. Organizational skills, including ability to communicate well both orally and written; time management, delegation, planning, and budgeting. Successful completion of Safe and Sacred. Proficiency in Microsoft Office. Flexible hours, including evenings, weekends and occasional overnight stays. Contact Amy Dennis at adennis@stjohn-catholic.org.

Promoter of the Cause for Canonization of Bl. Stanley Rother - OKC

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is in search of a promoter of the Cause for Canonization of Bl. Stanley Rother. This part-time position requires approximately 25-29 hours per week and will office at the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine. Provide direction and support for advancing the Cause for Canonization, including coordinating programs and events, ensuring availability of resources to encourage intercessory appeals to Bl. Stanley Rother, maintaining the website

and portal for reporting favors, and investigating favor reports for potential miracles. Bilingual in English and Spanish, a degree in theology, pastoral ministry, religious education, a related field or equivalent experience is strongly preferred. Must have knowledge of the canonization process and be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church. To submit cover letter and resume, visit archokc.org/jobs-box.

Director of development - OKC

The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine is seeking a director of development, to be responsible for all aspects of fundraising and donor relations. The director will be charged with building the material resources of the shrine in support of its mission to lead souls to Christ and honor Bl. Stanley Rother. Will organize and manage all fundraising programs and services for the shrine, including direct mail, gift cultivation and solicitation, annual appeals, donor events, database management, planned giving, endowment funding and grant writing. The director will form a collaborative working relationship with pastors, parish leaders, chanery staff and potential donors to identify and cultivate gift prospects for special projects and programs of the shrine as well as create and execute an annual calendar of development initiatives. The successful candidate will organize special events and capital campaigns to raise funds for shrine initiatives and building projects. Must have

a bachelor's degree (Masters or MBA preferred) in business/management or another relevant field, or possess general management experience in a comparable position, a minimum five years of development experience and be an active, practicing Catholic in good standing. To submit cover letter and resume, visit archokc.org/jobs-box.

Gift shop associate – OKC

The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine is seeking a part-time gift shop associate to be responsible for assisting customers with item selections and completing sales transactions. Duties include, but are not limited to, customer service, sales, inventory, and stocking. Will also clean, restock 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 cover letter and resume, visit archokc.org/jobs-box.

Director of communications - OKC

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma is seeking a director of communications to create and implement comprehensive communications and marketing strategies to advance its mission, fundraising priorities and brand. This role is highly strategic and hands-on, with primary emphasis on marketing, storytelling, content creation

and distribution, digital communication, and donor-focused messaging. The position is also responsible for media relations on occasion as needed. Bachelor's degree in communications, marketing, journalism, or a related field required. Master's degree preferred. Minimum of three to five years' experience in communications, marketing, fundraising, or a related role with strong background in marketing strategy, content creation, and digital communications. Must be an active, practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church. Bilingual in English and Spanish preferred. To submit cover letter and resume, visit archokc.org/jobs-box.

Custodian – OKC

The Church of the Epiphany of the Lord is seeking a part-time custodian to support weekend parish operations by maintaining a clean, welcoming, and safe environment for parishioners, visitors and staff during weekend Masses and events. Ability to work independently and manage time effectively; ability to perform indoor/outdoor light physical tasks (standing, walking, bending, lifting 50lbs); reliability and punctuality are essential; willingness to work a flexible weekend schedule. Contact Geof Archer at (405) 722-2110 or operationsdirector@epiphanyokc.org.

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



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Making Sense of Bioethics

Is it ethical to clone animals?

The global market for cloning cats, dogs and other pets reached \$300 million in 2024, and has been projected to reach \$1.5 billion by 2035.

When it comes to the ethics of cloning animals, whether cattle, racehorses, dogs or cats, it is important to inquire if a "proportionately serious reason" exists for doing the procedure, since the process can cause physical and genetic defects of varying severity in cloned animals.

Cloned mice, for example, have aberrant patterns of gene expression in multiple genes, and cloned animals have elevated rates of unexplained gestational or post-natal deaths, as well as anomalies like enlarged hearts or abnormal lungs.

Because cloning involves the bringing together of two remnants of heavily damaged cells — an extracted nucleus from a body cell, plus an egg that has been deprived of its nucleus — it should come as no surprise that these two conjoined elements may have difficulty cooperating and communicating with each other to produce a presentable member of the species.

It is also conceivable that a cloned animal could give rise to a dangerous genetic variation, by making the individual animal, for example, more violent. Even in the absence of such outcomes, regularly described in science fiction, it is still noteworthy that genetic variability and the long-term viability of animal populations, particularly small populations of endangered species, could be affected by extensive animal cloning. Decreasing diversity through

cloning could make populations more susceptible to disease and environmental changes, impacting sensitive ecosystems and conservation efforts.

Even with the risks of cloning, we can envision situations where a "proportionately serious reason" would exist for attempting to clone animals. A German shepherd, for example, that is exceptionally skilled at sniffing out illegal drugs or other contraband, might be cloned to expand the availability of "super-olfactory canines" for police departments around the country.

If a famous Hollywood celebrity loses his or her beloved Fido to cancer, however, we can validly debate whether a strong attachment to the departed canine constitutes a sufficiently serious reason for embarking on a cloning project with a price tag of tens of thousands of dollars. A generated dog clone will always be an imperfect copy of Fido, and will often have a very different personality from the original animal.

When actress Barbra Streisand lost her beloved 14-year-old Samantha, she cloned two replicas. She commented that they had "different personalities... I'm waiting for them to get older so I can see if they have her brown eyes and her seriousness." Later, a somewhat disappointed Streisand remarked, "You can clone the look of a dog, but you can't clone the soul."

Given that canines hold a primary position in the animal world as "man's best friend," it should not be difficult to find another furry friend, perhaps one waiting to be rescued from a local shelter, who can serve as a new member of the

family and once again pull at their owner's heartstrings.

While animal cloning can sometimes be a reasonable choice, and ethically justifiable, the Catholic Church teaches definitively that the cloning of human beings is morally unacceptable. This conclusion arises from the recognition that human persons, unlike non-human animals, are created in God's image and likeness, which implies an essential obligation that human procreation and the transmission of human life happen exclusively within marriage through the marital act of spouses.

As we consider animal cloning and other novel biomedical developments of recent years, we face important ethical questions about how best to exercise our limited dominion over the earth, including the animal kingdom. Our dominion is not an absolute right of domination over God's creation. Instead, we are called to use reasonably — and avoid abusing — the powers we have received.

Exercising proper stewardship over animals ought to be a balanced part of a broader concern of avoiding exploitation of the vulnerable, as we try to be respectful of the given order of creation.

Cloning technology can have useful applications in animal husbandry, helping to generate stock animals that are more resistant to disease or that have a higher productivity rate. Researchers can engineer and clone dairy cows, for example, to produce an improved quantity of milk or better quality meat.

But if animal cloning becomes widespread, as seems likely, it may



Father Tad Pacholczyk
National Catholic Bioethics Center

have the subtle effect of shifting our attitudes and perceptions towards the animal kingdom.

By routinely cloning animals, they may come to be seen as little more than "manipulable quantities" or "raw material" for our domination — less as animals, and more as artifacts or objects. We need to be attentive to the prospect of reducing animals, including cloned animals, to market-driven technological commodities, cobbled together under the impetus of unrestrained profit-seeking.

So while the cloning of non-human animals is generally permissible when proportionately serious reasons exist, we must also remain attentive to the broader social and environmental implications. The responsible use of the technology requires us to weigh carefully its scientific potential against the duty to avoid causing unnecessary suffering to animals or risks to their populations.

Fr. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts, and serves as senior ethicist at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See ncbcenter.org and fathertad.com.



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Agradecimiento por el crecimiento de la educación católica

Durante la Semana de las Escuelas Católicas, realizada del 25 al 31 de enero, tenemos la oportunidad de reflexionar y expresar nuestra gratitud por las bendiciones de nuestras escuelas católicas en la Arquidiócesis de la Ciudad de Oklahoma.

Cada año, la Semana de las Escuelas Católicas destaca la calidad de la educación católica. Las escuelas de todo el país y las de nuestra arquidiócesis celebran y honran a sus parroquias, comunidades, estudiantes, profesores, personal, voluntarios y familias de diferentes maneras, únicas y festivas.

Las celebraciones incluyen días de atendidos creativos, diversos proyectos de servicio, reconocimiento de los logros de los estudiantes y celebraciones que incluyen comida y refrigerios, eventos de apertura al público, decoración de puertas y mucho más. Lo bonito es que cada comunidad escolar lo celebra a su manera. ¡Cada año es muy divertido!

Aquí, en nuestra arquidiócesis, ha sido un año de increíble crecimiento. Como quizá hayas escuchado o visto en las redes sociales, nos complace anunciar que nuestro sistema escolar está creciendo con dos nuevas escuelas que tienen previsto abrir en agosto.

Ambas escuelas harán hincapié en un plan de estudios fuertemente basado en la

tradición intelectual católica y utilizarán diversos aspectos de una amplia pedagogía clásica. Los invitamos para que se informen sobre las nuevas escuelas y vean si son adecuadas para su familia.

La primera escuela nueva es la Academia Virtual san Carlo Acutis, una escuela católica virtual a nivel estatal. Es un esfuerzo de colaboración con la Diócesis de Tulsa. Inicialmente, abrirá para los grados de kinder hasta octavo grado y añadirá un grado cada año hasta llegar al grado doce.

Esta escuela es una maravillosa oportunidad para las familias que desean una educación católica pero que viven en comunidades rurales que están demasiado lejos de una escuela católica, o para las familias que tienen otras razones para necesitar una opción virtual.

Las familias pueden solicitar información y obtener más detalles sobre la Academia Virtual san Carlo Acutis en acutisacademy.org.

La segunda escuela nueva, la Academia Católica santa Mónica en Edmond, abrirá sus puertas para alumnos de preescolar de 4 años hasta el segundo grado, y luego añadirá un grado cada año hasta llegar al grado doce.

Esta academia es un ministerio de la Iglesia Católica Santa Mónica y estará ubicada en su campus. El período de inscrip-

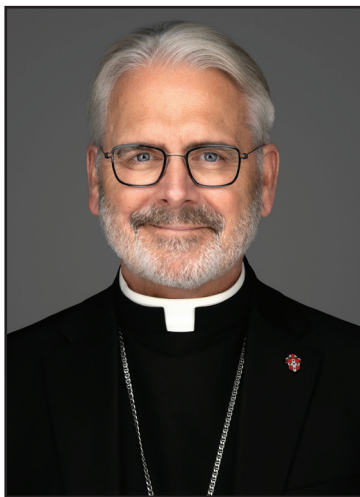
ción comenzará pronto. Los padres pueden mostrar su interés en línea y recibirán la solicitud directamente cuando la escuela abra.

Para obtener más información sobre la Academia Católica Santa Mónica, visite stmonica-academy.org.

Enseñar a los alumnos a descubrir y valorar lo bueno, lo verdadero y lo bello de nuestra fe es la valiosa tarea de nuestro personal docente y administrativo en las 18 escuelas católicas de nuestra arquidiócesis. Estamos muy contentos de colaborar con familias que desean brindar a sus hijos el regalo de la fe y una educación de calidad.

Que Dios bendiga abundantemente a todos los que están relacionados con las escuelas católicas de la Arquidiócesis de la Ciudad de Oklahoma – a los estudiantes y sus familias, así como la administración, al personal docente y administrativo que les presta el servicio.

Tenemos grandes esperanzas en el futuro. ¡Gracias por elegir las escuelas católicas!



Arzobispo Pablo S. Coakley

Por Lara Schuler

Directora sénior de Educación Católica
Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City

¡Es la Semana de las Escuelas Católicas! Del 25 al 31 de enero, las escuelas católicas de todo el país celebran el legado de la educación católica en los Estados Unidos. La educación católica está experimentando una renovación y un resurgimiento en todo el país, a medida que las familias jóvenes y otras personas vuelven a descubrir a Jesucristo y su Iglesia.

Las escuelas católicas de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City están redoblando su compromiso con la tradición intelectual católica y explorando o reviviendo una pedagogía probada por el tiempo, tanto en estrategia como en recursos curriculares, para el desarrollo de la virtud y la excelencia académica.

La vida está llena de muchos caminos diferentes y saber cómo reaccionar en los momentos importantes de la vida puede resultar abrumador si nuestra conciencia no está bien formada. La perfección se nos escapa en este lado del velo, sin embargo, quienes asisten a una escuela católica tienen la ventaja de que se les enseña que hay una diferencia.

Quienes educan y quienes asisten a escuelas católicas pueden trabajar juntos para ayudar al estudiante a aprender a través de decisiones cotidianas que pueden parecer insignificantes, pero que con el tiempo desarrollan y forman la mente y la conciencia del estudiante hacia lo bueno, lo verdadero y lo bello.

No es algo que suceda por casualidad, no es un accidente, es algo intencionado e inspirado por Dios.

A medida que los alumnos avanzan en los cursos, aprenden por qué ciertas decisiones les reportarán una alegría duradera, mientras que otras les causarán dolor y sufrimiento a ellos y a quienes les rodean. Al final, el alumno se

gradúa y decide por sí mismo el camino que va a seguir. Una cosa es segura: los administradores y los profesores nunca dejan de rezar por el éxito de sus alumnos, tanto del pasado como del presente y del futuro.

Las escuelas católicas educan para la vida y para la realización de la persona humana tal y como Dios la diseñó, individual y colectivamente. Nuestro mundo necesita gobiernos éticos y líderes comunitarios íntegros; padres bien formados para guiar a la próxima generación; y líderes industriales y empleados bien formados para impulsar el desarrollo de la raza humana.

También necesita personas que aporten verdad, belleza y bondad al mundo a través de la literatura, las artes, la música y las ciencias domésticas, haciendo que la vida sea agradable en todas sus facetas, con el objetivo final de que nuestros alumnos regresen al Padre Celestial para la eternidad.

Las escuelas católicas forman a los alumnos para su beneficio y el del mundo.

Cómo costear una educación católica

Las escuelas católicas de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City son ahora más asequibles que nunca para cualquier familia que desee una educación católica para sus hijos. Gracias a los esfuerzos de los legisladores en materia de elección escolar durante los últimos años, la deducción fiscal por elección parental, el Fondo de Oportunidades para Escuelas Católicas y los cambios en la beca Lindsay Nicole Henry ofrecen a las familias la oportunidad de financiar la educación que desean para satisfacer sus necesidades específicas. Se trata de bendiciones enormes por las que estamos muy agradecidos.

El valor total del Crédito Fiscal por Elección Parental de Oklahoma es considerable, ya que ofrece a los contribuyentes elegibles de Oklahoma un crédito fiscal reembolsable que oscila entre 5000 y 7500 dólares para ayudar a compensar la matrícula y las tasas de los colegios privados de sus hijos. Este programa ha permitido a miles de familias, especialmente de ingresos bajos y medios, acceder a opciones de educación privada a las que de otro modo no habrían podido acceder.

El Fondo de Oportunidades para Escuelas Católicas beneficia tanto a los donantes como a los estudiantes.

Los donantes pueden recibir un crédito fiscal de Oklahoma y los estudiantes de ingresos bajos a medios pueden recibir una beca para ayudar con la matrícula.

Este programa le permite destinar sus impuestos donde usted desee, proporcionando ayuda financiera a familias de bajos ingresos y ayudando a las escuelas católicas de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City, en particular a las más necesitadas, a ofrecer ayuda para el pago de la matrícula a sus familias. Puede encontrar más información en su sitio web csfok.org.

El programa de becas Lindsey Nicole Henry ofrece becas a una escuela privada participante de su elección para estudiantes de PK3 a 12.º grado con necesidades especiales que cumplan criterios específicos. Un cambio legislativo reciente eliminó el requisito de asistir a una escuela pública durante un año. Puede encontrar más información en oklahoma.gov/education/services/special-education/lnh-scholarship.html.

Las subvenciones parroquiales y escolares, si están disponibles, varían según la escuela y la información se encuentra en el sitio web de la escuela.



Escuelas Católicas
Unidos en Fe y Comunidad



OKLAHOMA MARCHA POR LA VIDA 4 DE FEBRERO DEL 2026

7:30 a.m. Misa por la santidad de la vida,
Iglesia Católica Corpus Christi
9 a.m. Marcha alrededor del capitolio
9:30 a.m. Entrada al capitolio para el Día de la Rosa
11:30 a.m. Discursos en la Cámara
1 p.m. Bendición del Arzobispo Coakley

CAPITOLIO DEL ESTADO DE OKLAHOMA, 2300 N. LINCOLN BLVD., OKLAHOMA CITY
IGLESIA CATÓLICA CORPUS CHRISTI, 1616 N. KELLEY AVE., OKLAHOMA CITY



ACOMPÁÑENOS AL TALLER DE FORMACIÓN

SOMOS El Pueblo Elegido

28 de Febrero
8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Centro Pastoral Católico
7501 Northwest Expressway, Oklahoma City
Incluye Desayuno y Lunch

Presentador:
Padre Jorge Luis Zarazúa
Apologeta

FECHA LIMITE DE REGISTRO: 20 de Febrero

Para más información llame a:
Andrea Fraire / (405) 720-2759
Connie Diaz / (405) 728-3561

Favor de traer su Biblia y Cuaderno
Costo: \$20

altum.leadlms.com/course/357

Pescado frito
El Consejo 16214 de los Caballeros de Colón de la Iglesia Católica San Pablo Apóstol organizará un pescado frito de Cuaresma de 5 a 6:30 p. m. los días 20 y 27 de febrero, y 6, 13, 20 y 27 de marzo en 3901 S. Sunnyslane Rd. en Del City. La donación sugerida es de 12 dólares por plato. Se puede comer allí o pedir comida para llevar.

Entradas
21 años en adelante Solteros o Parejas
San Juan Nepomuceno y Espíritu Santo
Valentine
Cena, Bebidas y Baile

Cena con servicio de catering, cerveza, vino, baile. Sábado 14 de Febrero. 6pm a 10pm Gimnasio del colegio San Juan Nepomuceno

\$30 Entradas a la venta desde ahora hasta el 10 de Febrero.

una docena de razones para elegir escuelas católicas

1. Ofrecemos una educación que combina la fe y la doctrina católicas con excelencia académica.

2. Colaboramos con los padres en la formación en la fe de sus hijos.

3. Establecemos estándares elevados de logros para nuestros alumnos y les ayudamos a alcanzarlos.

4. Contamos con planes de estudio académicos balanceados que integran la fe, la cultura y la vida.

5. Usamos la tecnología de manera efectiva para optimizar la educación.

6. Inculcamos en nuestros alumnos el valor del servicio al prójimo.

7. Enseñamos a nuestros alumnos a respetarse a sí mismos y a respetar a los demás.

8. Ponemos el énfasis en el desarrollo moral y la autodisciplina.

9. Preparamos a nuestros alumnos para ser ciudadanos productivos y líderes del futuro.

10. La tasa de graduación de nuestras escuelas secundarias es de 99 por ciento. 85 por ciento de nuestros graduados asisten a la universidad.

11. Cultivamos un cuerpo docente y a personal dedicado, solidario y eficaz.

12. Brindamos un ambiente seguro y acogedor para todos.

Catholic Schools
United in Faith and Community

NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
NCEA.org/csw

Briefs

Join the team

Applications are open for 2026 summer staff at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Camp in Wellston. Must be 16 years of age by June 1, 2026, to apply. campguadalupe.org/summerteam.

Come and see

The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary of Wichita will host a come and see weekend Jan. 30-Feb. 1 and Feb. 27-March 1 at the IHM Motherhouse, 3550 N. 167 St. W. Colwich, Kansas. Single women ages 18-35 who are discerning or wanting to learn more about religious life can RSVP with Sr. Marie Therese at (316) 722-9316 or vocations@sistersihmofwichita.org. Visit sistersihmofwichita.org.

Shrimp boil

St. Philip Neri Catholic School will host a shrimp boil 6-9 p.m. Jan. 31 at the SPN family life center, 1107 Felix Place in Midwest City. Silent auction baskets, raffle games and a selection of beer and wine are available. Cash donations graciously accepted. Adults only.

Trivia night

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School will host a trivia night at 7 p.m. Jan. 31 at the school, 801 N.W. 50 St. in Oklahoma City. Doors open at 6 p.m. Ticket options include a \$600 VIP Table (10 seats, dinner, wine, dessert, premium seating), a \$400 Table (10 seats, dinner), or individual tickets at \$80 for two seats and \$40 for

one seat. Alcohol will be available for purchase. Purchase tickets at bmchs.org/alumni/trivia-night.

Choral vespers

As part of the 150th year celebration of serving the Church in Oklahoma, the choir of The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help will chant choral vespers at 5 p.m. Feb. 1 at St. Gregory's Abbey Church, 1900 W. MacArthur St. in Shawnee.

Oklahoma March for Life

The Oklahoma March for Life is Feb. 4 at the Oklahoma State Capitol, 2300 N. Lincoln Blvd. in Oklahoma City. The day begins with the Sanctity of Life Mass at 7:30 a.m. at Corpus Christi Catholic Church, 1616 N. Kelly Ave.; a march around the capitol at 9 a.m.; enter the capitol for Rose Day at 9:30 a.m.; speeches on the House floor at 11:30 a.m.; and benediction by Archbishop Coakley at 1 p.m.

Rose Day

The annual pro-life rally Rose Day is Feb. 4 at the Oklahoma State Capitol. The day includes rose distribution and an indoor rally. The keynote speaker is Mia Armstrong. Visit roseday.life.

Magic at The Mount Gala

The Mount St. Mary Catholic High School Magic at The Mount Gala is 7 p.m. Feb. 7 at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, 1700 N.E. 63 St. in

Oklahoma City. mountstmary.org.

Holiness and Marriage retreat

A Holiness and Marriage retreat presented by Fr. Peter Shults, O.S.B. is 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Feb. 14 at the St. Gregory's Abbey Conference Center, 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) 878-5656. Cost is \$30 prepaid or \$35 at the door. Lunch included.

Valentine dinner, dance

A Valentine dinner, dance will be held 6-10 p.m. Feb. 14 at St. John Nepomuk Catholic School gym, 600 Garth Brooks Blvd. in Yukon. Tickets \$30. Event for people 21 years of age and up. Catered dinner, beer, wine and dancing.

ACP luncheon

Assembly of Catholic Professionals luncheon is 11 a.m. Feb. 19 at the Petroleum Club, 100 N. Broadway Ave. in Oklahoma City. The guest speaker is Elizabeth Lev, art historian, author and speaker on Christian art and architecture. Visit cfook.org/acp.

Fish Fry

The St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church Knights of Columbus Council 16214 will host a Lenten fish fry 5-6:30 p.m. on Feb. 20 and 27; and March 6, 13, 20 and 27 at 3901 S. Sunnyslane Rd. in Del City. Suggested donation cost is \$12 per meal. Dine in or take out.

Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference

The Oklahoma Catholic Women's Conference is Feb. 21 at the Oklahoma City Convention Center, 100 Mick Cornett Dr. Speakers include Msgr. James Shea, Mary Healy and Scott Hahn. Cost \$79; students \$59. okcatholicwomen.com.

The forge

The forge college retreat with the Servants of Christ Jesus is Feb. 27-March 1 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Camp in Wellston. Early bird price \$60. After Feb. 7 \$100. campguadalupe.org/forge.

Nurses' conference

The Faith Community Nurses Association of Oklahoma "The Treasures of Aging: Perspectives of Grace and Wisdom" conference is March 5-6 at the Kramer School of Nursing, 2501 N. Blackwelder Ave. and Crossings Community Center, 10255 N. Pennsylvania Ave. in Oklahoma City. The conference will feature national speakers and current information on healthy aging used by nurses and health ministers in their faith community nursing ministry or daily living. Visit cnaok.org. Register at forms.gle/A3YR8ktEUBugp92aA. FCNA OK is approved as a provider of continuing nursing education by the Kansas State Board of Nursing. This course is approved for 8.5 contact hours applicable for APRN, RN, LPN, or LMHT relicensure. Kansas State Board of Nursing provider number LT0298-0316.

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.

January	February		
25 Third Sunday in Ordinary Time.	1 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time.	4 Oklahoma March for Life Mass, 7:30 a.m., Corpus Christi Catholic Church, 1616 N. Kelly Ave., Oklahoma City; march around the capitol, 9 a.m.; Rose Day, 9:30 a.m.; speeches on the House floor, 11:30 a.m.; benediction, 1 p.m.	7 The Lay Missionaries of Charity meeting. Contact Jonathan Tarman, (405) 278-8199, Toni Harrelson, (405) 341-2199.
26 Feast of Sts. Timothy and Titus.	1 The Secular Franciscan Order (OFS) St. Francis of Assisi Fraternity of Central Oklahoma meets at 2 p.m. on the first Sunday of the month at St. Eugene Catholic Church in meeting room 3. Interested individuals can join. Contact Bill Full, OFS minister, at billfull1@att.net .	5 Feast of St. Agatha.	7 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 .
27 Feast of St. Angela Merici.	1 Catholic in Recovery meeting, 7 p.m., in the Meerschaert House, second floor, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 1901 N.W. 18 St., Oklahoma City.	6 Feast of St. Paul Miki and companions.	7 Mount St. Mary Catholic High School Magic at The Mount Gala, 7 p.m., National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, 1700 N.E. 63 St., Oklahoma City.
28 Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas.	1 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.	6 First Friday Sacred Heart Mass, 7 p.m., Catholic Pastoral Center. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 5:30 p.m.; reconciliation prior to Mass. Call (405) 721-8944, (405) 820-7255.	
29 Saints & Scholars dinner, 6 p.m., Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club, 7000 N.W. Grand Blvd., Nichols Hills.	1 Choral vespers by the choir of The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 5 p.m., St. Gregory's Abbey Church, 1900 W. MacArthur St., Shawnee.		
31 Feast of St. John Bosco.	2 The Presentation of the Lord.		
	3 Feast of St. Ansgar.		
31 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 Feast of St. Blaise.		
31 Shrimp boil, 6-9 p.m., St. Philip Neri Catholic School/Church family life center, 1107 Felix Place, Midwest City. Adults only event.	3 Catholic in Recovery meeting, 7 p.m., St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 1901 N.W. 18 St., Oklahoma City.		
31 Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School, trivia night, 7 p.m., 801 N.W. 50 St., Oklahoma City.			



FEBRUARY 14, 2026

PRESENTED BY FR. PETER SHULTS, OSB

ST. GREGORY'S ABBEY CONFERENCE CENTER

8:30 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

A DAY RETREAT SPONSORED BY ST. GREGORY'S ABBEY

COST \$30 (IF PREPAID, \$35 AT DOOR). LUNCH INCLUDED



SEMINAR SERIES:
MARY, MODEL OF FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

6:30 - 8:30 P.M.

MARCH 5, 12, 19

Discover the richness of Marian doctrine and gain a deeper understanding of the dogmas. Mary was the first to follow Jesus and is honored as a model of faith and obedience. Come and learn more about her life and her role in salvation history.

Cost: \$50

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7501 Northwest Expressway, Oklahoma City
St. Peter's Basilica
Light Refreshment Provided

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For more information:
(405) 720-2759
afraire@archokc.org



Seminar Series will be presented by: Troy Bodman



Seminar Series:
Mary's Heart Revealed through the Rosary

Explore the rosary as a prayer that leads us into Mary's heart and closer to Christ. This series will deepen your understanding of Marian devotion and offer practical ways to make the rosary a source of grace in daily life.

APRIL 9, 16, 23, 30

6:30 - 8:30 P.M.
Catholic Pastoral Center
7501 Northwest Expressway, Oklahoma City
St. Peter's Basilica
Light Refreshment Provided

Cost: \$50



Seminar Series will be presented by: Amber Johnson

altuminstitute.org/discipleship/sse

For more information:
(405) 720-2759
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Parishioners from Sacred Heart Catholic Church at the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine celebrated the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 14. During the day Msgr. Don Wolf celebrated Mass. The festivities included music, dancing, food and an apparition play of when Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin on Tepeyac Hill. *Photos Chris Porter/Sooner Catholic.*

