

Together, our faith goes further

In this issue of the *Eastern Oklahoma Catholic*, we are introducing our new annual appeal, Faith & Works, to the diocese. As a part of the new appeal, we will begin to use a new tag line for the diocese. Where before it said the Diocese of Tulsa, now it will say the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma. Both the new appeal and the new tag line will help us keep in mind and better serve the needs of the entire diocese, from Idabel to Shidler and Miami to Durant, and all points in between.

We derive the new name of our annual appeal, "Faith & Works Annual Appeal" from James 2:14-18:

Faith & Works

"What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Indeed someone may say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works."

When we unite our faith in Christ together in the common purpose of serving the needs we find in all parts of the Church here in Eastern Oklahoma, we are able to do more than any one person or parish could do by themselves.

A beautiful example of what is possible when we join together occurred on February 22. On that night youth from St. William in Durant, St. Francis De Sales in Idabel, Sacred Heart in Miami, St. Anthony in Okmulgee, Immaculate Conception in Pawhuska, St. Francis Xavier in Stillwater, St. Brigid in Tahlequah and Bishop Kelley High School in Tulsa used common purpose and technology to join together for a night of praise and worship. Each of those locations has a relatively small number of youth, but together some 600 youth were united. The event marked a high

level of logistical sophistication from our Youth Office and the many Youth leaders and volunteers throughout the diocese. It will certainly not be the last such event. It was a beautiful example of Faith & Works.

Another example of Faith & Works happens after divorce. When one of our friends, family members or fellow parishioners has suffered through the tragedy of a divorce, part of their healing and moving forward might include pursuing a Declaration of Nullity. The Tribunal of the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma works hard to provide this restorative ministry. It is because we all work together to fund our Tribunal that we can share in Christ's merciful ministry no matter where our parish might be located.

When I travel to parishes throughout Eastern Oklahoma, those travels are made possible because we all work together to provide my transportation. And, after already visiting 45 parishes since I arrived, my little Toyota pick-up truck may need a new set of tires sooner rather than later!

The Faith & Works Annual Appeal also goes to promote vocations and support the discernment process of those who feel the call to consecrated life and the priesthood. When it comes to our seminarians, I often joke that as a

bishop, I am like a parent with 23 kids in college! There is no way one parish could afford to educate our seminarians, so it is important for us to work together. And, God willing, when those men are ordained they will be sent to parishes throughout Eastern Oklahoma. The same is true for the wonderful deacons who serve parishes throughout the diocese. Their education through our excellent Diaconate Formation Program is funded entirely by the Faith & Works Annual Appeal.

These are just a few examples of why I am very excited about something as seemingly small and unsubstantial as a tagline. This change reflects the truth that we need one another and that God has given us to one another. I thank God for all the ways we work together and put our faith into action to fund these ministries and resources that no single

parish could afford by itself.

I thank all of you for the generosity you have displayed in responding to the annual appeal. And I look forward to seeing you when I come out to visit your parish. If I haven't been there yet, please know that I am on my way. May Christ continue to bless us here in the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma. †

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>> Bishop David Konderla