

Sent:

Monday, May 5, 2025 11:58 AM

Subject:

Around the Diocese: May 5, 2025



e-newsletter companion of *Eastern Oklahoma Catholic* magazine

Destruction and Recovery: Documentary Film Recounts Impact of May 6, 2024 Tornado

BARNSDALL — The Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma has just released a short [documentary film](#) by filmmaker Manny Marquez recounting the aftermath of a deadly tornado that struck here on May 6, 2024.

"I was honored to be asked by the Diocese to tell the story of St. Mary's in Barnsdall," said Marquez. "After reading the [EOC article](#) about the community's resilience and steadfast dedication to the Lord, even in the face of so much hardship, I knew it would be fertile ground for a documentary."



The overnight EF4 twister, which tore a path of devastation through the Osage County town of Barnsdall and beyond, destroyed St. Mary's Parish Hall but left the church building next door standing. Miraculously, the altar area inside the church was virtually untouched.

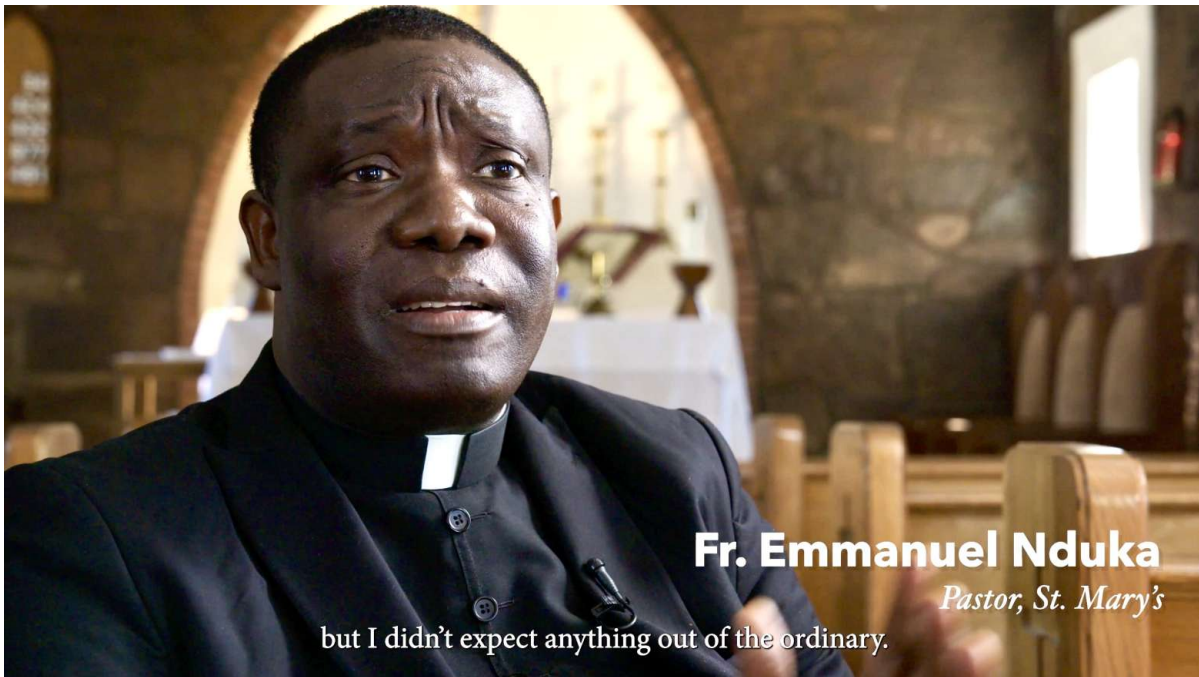
"When you hear in person Fr. Nduka and the parishioners recount how the sanctuary lamp was still lit, and how the tabernacle was untouched by the damaging winds, you can only think of one word: miracle."

St. Mary's Pastor Fr. Emmanuel Nduka, along with parishioners and diocesan leaders, are interviewed for the film. They recall the aftermath in which both parishioners and townspeople mobilized to clear debris, rehang doors, cover broken windows, and thoroughly clean the church in time for Mass the following Sunday.

"In the immediate days after the tornado, people from around the diocese came together and made the little church ready for Mass the very next Sunday," said Marquez. "My hope is that anyone seeing this film will be inspired by the motivation and devotion of the parish community in Barnsdall and reflect on the gifts their parish has been given. This story should make us all contemplate just how good Jesus is to us. God bless Barnsdall, and know we stand with you."

The short film can be viewed [here](#). Watch for additional coverage of the church's recovery coming soon.





The black and white file photographs above, by EOC Photographer Daniel McCay, were taken in the aftermath of the May 6, 2024 EF4 tornado which ripped through Barnsdall and destroyed St. Mary's Parish Hall. In the screen capture above, Fr. Nduka explains what he encountered inside the church the following morning.

Bishop Invites Diocese to Pray for Conclave; Vicariates to Host Mass at 6 p.m. Tuesday

BROKEN ARROW — In anticipation of the conclave to select a new Pope beginning on Wednesday, May 7, each vicariate within the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma will host a “Mass for the Election of a New Pope” on Tuesday, May 6 to pray for the College of Cardinals as they seek to discern the will of, and be led by, the Holy Spirit.

“I would like to invite all of the faithful of the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma to take part in one of these masses being offered on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, to pray for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit among the College of Cardinals as they call forth our next Holy Father,” said Bishop David Konderla in announcing the masses. “This sacred conclave is a testimony to how the Holy Spirit continues to guide the work of the Church. Please join your pastors and other Catholics from across eastern Oklahoma to pray for a fruitful conclave.”

Each vicariate will host “Mass for the Election of a New Pope” at 6 p.m., Tuesday, May 6, at the following parish locations:

Western Vicariate: Mass at St. Francis Xavier in Stillwater
Celebrant: Fr. Brian O'Brien

Southern Vicariate: Mass at St. John in McAlister

Celebrant: Fr. Jovita Okonkwo

Eastern Vicariate: Mass at Holy Cross in Wagoner

Celebrant: Fr. Leo Ahanotu

Tulsa South Vicariate: Mass at St. Bernard's in Tulsa

Celebrant: Fr. Jack Gleason

Tulsa North Vicariate: Mass at Church of the Madalene in Tulsa

Celebrant: Fr. Desmond Okpogba

Northern Vicariate: Mass at St. John Before the Latin Gate in Bartlesville

Celebrant: Fr. David Carvajal

In addition to the six vicariate locations, the 6 p.m. Mass will also be celebrated in Spanish at St. Thomas More and St. Francis Xavier parishes in Tulsa:

Spanish Mass: St. Francis Xavier in Tulsa

Celebrant: Fr. Elmer Rodriguez

Spanish Mass: St. Thomas More in Tulsa

Celebrant: Fr. Jose Maria Briones

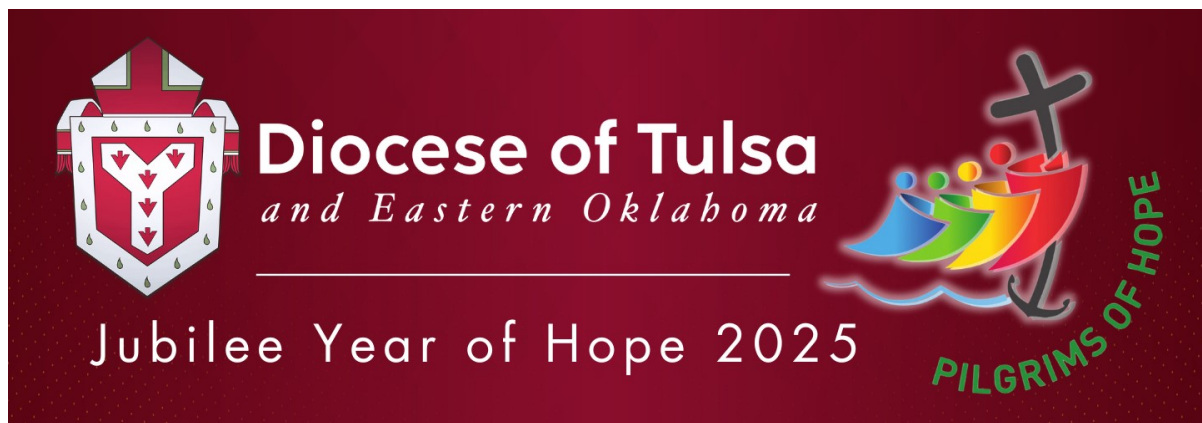
The Holy See released a declaration last week in which the Cardinals preparing for the upcoming conclave asked Catholics everywhere to pray for them. The Cardinals said they felt “the need to be supported by the prayers of all the faithful,” because they are aware of their responsibility in choosing the next Successor of Peter.

“The College of Cardinals gathered in Rome, engaged in the General Congregations in preparation for the Conclave, wishes to invite the People of God to live this ecclesial moment as an event of grace and spiritual discernment, listening to the will of God,” read the statement. “Faced with the enormity of the task ahead and the urgency of the present time. It is first of all necessary to make ourselves humble instruments of the infinite wisdom and providence of our Heavenly Father, in docility to the action of the Holy Spirit.”



Photo courtesy of Dipartimento della Protezione Civile from Roma, Italia

More than 250,000 people filled St. Peter's Square on Saturday, April 26, to celebrate the life of Pope Francis. The funeral Mass was attended by more than 200 cardinals, 750 bishops and priests, more than 50 heads of state, foreign delegations from more than 130 countries, and 4,000 journalists.



Pawhuska's Historic 'Cathedral of the Osage' Hosts Jubilee Year of Hope Pilgrimage

BY RENATA COPSEY

PAWHUSKA — The sun was shining on the pilgrims this past Saturday morning as they traveled to [Immaculate Conception Catholic Church](#) in Pawhuska for the fifth stop of the Jubilee Year of Hope “First Saturday Masses” Pilgrimage.

Three young men — Champ, Seth, and Isaac — were poised at the front steps of the church and greeted all the pilgrims with kindness. Pilgrims were directed to the old convent building to freshen up, attend Confession, and receive their Mass program, Jubilee prayer card, stickers, and stained-glass card. The Parish Hall was set up as an overflow. Parents, grandparents, and children eagerly participated in this month's Mass celebrating families.

"As we come to this Mass, on the feast day of Saints Philip and James in this beautiful 'Cathedral of the Osage' as Pilgrims of Hope let us ask for the heavenly intercession of these saints, Philip and James, and all the apostles, to pray for us as individuals, but to pray for our families," said celebrant Fr. Gary Kastl, Vicar General for the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma.

It was hard for many pilgrims not to capture a quick photo or video from this pilgrimage set in the beautiful "Cathedral of the Osage." Fr. Kastl and Pastor Fr. Emmanuel Nduka were joined by Fr. Perez, Fr. Rodriguez, Fr. Obirize, Fr. O'Neill, Fr. Hernandez as concelebrants, along with Dcn. Victor, Dcn. Axsom, and altar servers — some dressed in their Osage Nation attire — at the Mass attended by approximately 300 worshippers.

Mass ended with Fr. Nduka thanking everyone for coming to Pawhuska and especially to Fr. Kastl for celebrating Mass. Fr. Nduka also thanked local parishioners for their hard work and for the children singing in the choir with their beautiful voices. He invited everyone to stop by the gift shop, enjoy Osage meat pies, and return back to the Church for a presentation explaining the history of the stained-glass windows.

Next month's pilgrimate Mass is set for Holy Family Cathedral in Tulsa on June 7. The theme will be prayers of hope for Holy Orders and Consecrated Life.





Photos Special to the EOC by Lori Scholl

U.S. Supreme Court Hears Catholic Charter School Case; Decision Expected in June

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Wednesday, April 30, attorneys presented oral arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court in [*St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School v. Drummond*](#) — a case challenging the exclusion of schools of all faiths from a program that supports privately operated charter schools in Oklahoma.

Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, Archbishop of Oklahoma City, and Most. Rev. Bishop David A. Konderla, Bishop of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma, issued the following [joint statement](#): “We are grateful that the U.S. Supreme Court heard our case and now entrust it to their wisdom. Of course, we pray and hope for a decision that stands with

religious liberty and the rights of Oklahoma families to make their own decisions in selecting the best educational options for their children.”

In June 2023, [St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School](#) was approved to join the more than 30 privately operated charter schools offering diverse learning options to families across Oklahoma. The school was set to open to interested families for the 2024-2025 academic year until Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond sued to block it. In June 2023, the Oklahoma Supreme Court sided with Drummond, ruling that the state could not partner with a religious school, shuttering St. Isidore before it could open.

The school, joined by representatives from Oklahoma’s Statewide Charter School Board and the United States Solicitor General, argued to the Supreme Court that its exclusion from this program violates basic constitutional rights, unlawfully discriminates against people of faith, and denies critical educational opportunities to families who need them most.

“As arguments (Wednesday) underscored, St. Isidore does not ask the Court to break new constitutional ground,” said Nicole Stelle Garnett, John P. Murphy Foundation Professor of Law, Notre Dame Law School. “The Supreme Court has made abundantly clear that Oklahoma cannot discriminate against religious organizations in a program that supports privately operated schools. That is true whether Oklahoma chooses to call those privately operated schools ‘public’ or not.”

The decision, expected by the end of June, will be made by eight of the nine justices as Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett has recused herself from the case. A team of attorneys from Notre Dame Law School’s Lindsay and Matt Moroun Religious Liberty Clinic, Dechert LLP, and Perri Dunn PLLC represents St. Isidore in the case.



Supreme Court of the United States

In this file photo, the nine justices of the U.S. Supreme Court are pictured. Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett, top left, has recused herself from the case, *St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School v. Drummond*.

Mass on Death Row: A First in More Than 100 Years at Oklahoma State Penitentiary

MCCALESTER — The Oklahoma Department of Corrections recently released approved photographs taken during an historic visit by Bishop David Konderla to the Oklahoma State Penitentiary this past winter.

Amid ultra-tight security, Bishop Konderla, accompanied by Father Khiet Nguyen, prison ministry chaplain, and Deacon Alan Mikell, director of the diocesan prison ministry, celebrated Mass in the presence of armed prison guards, a deputy warden, and a single death row inmate on Jan. 16.

The Bishop also administered the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick to the aging prisoner who was securely shackled by the ankles to an immovable steel table. The condemned man reportedly faces the prospect of execution this year.

Bishop Konderla stated his desire that the rare occasion would "focus our attention on praying for those on death row and for the victims of their crimes."

According to Father Nguyen, this was the first time that a Catholic Bishop had celebrated Mass inside the Oklahoma State Penitentiary, the state's largest maximum-security prison, in over 100 years.

Also accompanying Bishop Konderla that day was OSP Chaplain Todd Minshall and Oklahoma State Representative Jim Grego, who is a Catholic parishioner at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Wilburton.

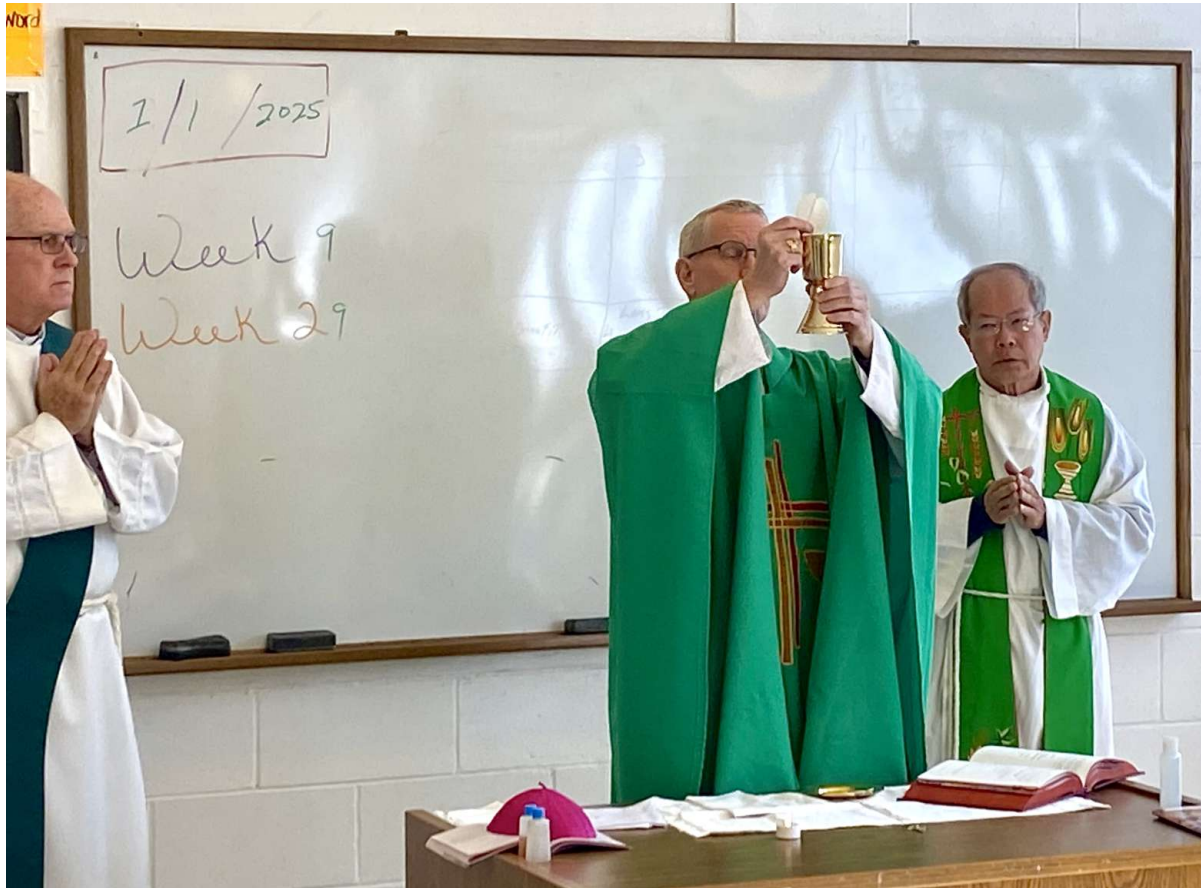


Photo by Oklahoma Department of Corrections

In this photo recently approved and released by the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, Bishop David Konderla celebrates the Eucharist in the presence of prison personnel and a single death row inmate at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester on Jan. 16. At Bishop Konderla's left is Father Khiet Nguyen, and to his right, Deacon Alan Mikell.

Faith and Culture Conference Explores 'Human Happiness & the Intellectual Virtues'

TULSA — The five intellectual virtues were the main topic under consideration at this year's annual Faith & Culture Conference this past Friday and Saturday at Holy Family Cathedral's Heiring Auditorium.

The panel of speakers sought to reimagine the dynamic and life-altering role of the intellectual virtues in the pursuit of human happiness.

"The aim is to bring local and national educators together in fruitful and festive dialogue to discuss the importance of the Catholic faith in shaping and restoring culture," said Dr. Richard Meloche, resident theologian for the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma, and the event's host.

The conference is an annual gathering hosted by the Diocese's Department of Evangelization and Catechesis as part of Adult Faith Formation. This year's theme focused on Human Happiness & the Intellectual Virtues and included keynote talks and an open mic panel discussion.

Distinguished presenters included Dr. Jennifer Frey, Dean of the Honors College and Professor of Philosophy of the University of Tulsa; Dr. Joshua Hochschild of Mount St. Mary's University where he directs the Philosophy, Politics and Economics program; Dr. Kent Lasnoski, formerly an associate professor of theology at Wyoming Catholic College and founder of new Catholic Trade School; Dr. Mathew Post, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs for the Honors College at University of Tulsa; and Dr. Meloche.



Dr. Jennifer Frey, Dean of the Honors College and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Tulsa, addresses the 2025 Faith & Culture Conference gathering Friday night.

From the Editor...

Readers will note the news item above featuring Bishop Konderla's visit to the Oklahoma State Penitentiary earlier this year. Photos taken during that event were only just released by the Oklahoma Department of Corrections in the last few weeks.

Understandably, security for such a unique event as Mass for a death row inmate deep behind the walls of the state penitentiary was extremely tight. As a journalist accompanying the Bishop, I was not allowed to take photographs inside the prison, nor allowed to even carry a phone inside. All was left behind at the security desk. An OSP chaplain, who also accompanied our party, was designated to take photos, and then submitted those for what turned out to be a quite lengthy approval process.

We are glad to finally share a glimpse into this rare and important moment. Please continue to pray for the health and full recovery of Bishop Konderla so that he may resume his normal schedule and continue his outreach to even the darkest corners of the diocese with the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In other news, Tulsa's historic Holy Family Cathedral is preparing for a major and historic milestone this coming weekend as it celebrates the 100th anniversary of the church's consecration on May 12, 1925. On that date Patrick Cardinal Hayes, Archbishop of New York, visited Tulsa not only to consecrate Holy Family, but also to break ground at the Parish of Christ the King, and to bless the cornerstone at Saint John Hospital. According to reporting on the HFC website, Cardinal Hayes said of the consecration, "It is an indication of life, promise, and permanence."

The HFC celebration will kick off Saturday evening, May 10, with an All-Parish Consecration Block Party. On Monday, May 12, the Solemnity of the Consecration of Holy Family will take place at 12:05 p.m. Mass. Look for additional coverage of this significant anniversary in the life of the diocese in next week's newsletter. For more historical background, click [here](#).

Happy Cinco de Mayo to those who celebrate (tamales and tres leches cake are on the menu at the Rush household). Until next week, thanks for reading!

Chris Rush
Chief Editor

"Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" — Philippians 4:8

Eastern Oklahoma
Catholic



Watch us on YouTube



Follow us on Instagram



Follow us on X



Find us on Facebook

**Subscribe
to EOC Magazine**

**Subscribe
to EOC extra**



Sent by Chris Rush

Direct replies to this email can only be seen by admins.
Email me when people reply to this note

To ensure that these emails land in your inbox and do not go into spam, please add mail@flocknote.com to your email address book or safe senders list.



[my info](#) • [unsubscribe](#)

12300 E. 91st Street, Broken Arrow, OK 74012 • dioceseoftulsa.org