

Sent: Monday, June 16, 2025 11:56 AM

Subject: Around the Diocese: June 16, 2025



Report: Tulsa Diocese Ranks No. 2 in Nation for Highest Ratio of Infant Baptisms

BROKEN ARROW — According to data compiled for a June 3, 2025 [article for The Catholic World Report](#), the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma ranks No. 2 in the United States for highest ratio of infant baptisms.

In the article *"Where infants are baptized: A look at the numbers,"* writer [J.J. Ziegler](#) examines to what extent infant baptism rates in the nation's dioceses mirror birth rates and whether diocesan infant baptism rates mirror diocesan marriage rates.

"Comparing the number of infant baptisms to the number of Catholics in each diocese, I focus in this article on the dioceses with the proportionally highest and proportionally lowest number of infant baptisms," says Ziegler.

According to data published in the most recent (2024) edition of [The Official Catholic Directory](#), 480,905 infant baptisms took place in the previous year in the Latin Rite dioceses of the United States. In the Code of Canon Law's treatment of the Sacrament

of Baptism, any child who has not yet attained the use of reason, or any adult who is in a similar mental state (*non sui compos*), is classified as an infant ([Canon 852](#)).

The top Latin-rite dioceses in the United States with the highest ratio of infant baptisms to Catholics are the following:

No. 1 - Nashville, TN (2,321 infant baptisms; 1 per 48 Catholics)

No. 2 - Tulsa, OK (1,096 infant baptisms; 1 per 55 Catholics)

No. 3 - Baker, OR (587 infant baptisms; 1 per 57 Catholics)

Eight of the top dioceses also rank in the top 10 percent in their ratio to marriages in the Church to Catholic population: Tulsa ranks No. 2, Savannah ranks No. 3, Wichita ranks No. 5, and Nashville ranks No 7.

"Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Tennessee rank among the top 20 percent in their birth rates, so there is little surprise that the Dioceses of Jackson, Tulsa, Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville have relatively high rates of infant baptisms," the research concluded.

To read source article, click [here](#).



The March 2022 cover of *Eastern Oklahoma Catholic* magazine cover shows a joyous infant baptism taking place within the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma.

Cathedral Purchases Former Christ Scientist Property, Begins Roof Project

TULSA — In a letter to parishioners and school parents last week, Cathedral Rector Fr. Brian O'Brien announced that [Holy Family Cathedral and Classical School](#) had closed on the purchase of the neighboring Church of Christ Scientists property. At the same time, the church is also embarking on a massive roof repair and replacement project that will last until Christmas of this year.

"As the parish and school continue to grow and to reach more people with the Good News of Jesus Christ and His Church, our need for space has also grown," said Fr. O'Brien in his letter. "From doubling the size of our parish in the last six years to growing the school by over 100 students in the last year, we need room to grow."

The purchase of the 1.2-acre property at 924 S. Boulder, including the former church building and two parking lots, represents the parish's first land acquisition in a generation and had been in the process for several months, according to Fr. O'Brien. The newly acquired building features a Romanesque dome and stately Greek columns. The property also has mature trees and a shaded lawn that will be expanded.

"We are working with professionals to determine whether the building will suit our long-term needs," said Fr. O'Brien. "With the roof project taking over the west parking lot, there's an immediate need to convert the new land into space for Holy Family Classical School's physical education program and for school recess and outdoor lunch. Further, the trees and new grass will provide long needed and desired green space and natural beauty for our students."

That process will begin immediately by cleaning up the lot, replacing asphalt with sod grass, fencing the area, and adding new signage.

Meanwhile, on Monday of last week, the cathedral also began the lengthy and costly process of total roof replacement to include a new copper roof, new copper on the spires and dormers, and a new lower roof. This project was necessitated by accumulated storm damage over the past several years.

"The roof was heavily damaged during the Father's Day Storm of 2023," said Fr. O'Brien in making the announcement. "After much investigation, we determined a simple repair was not possible."

The project will take a number of weeks to erect scaffolding and then the roofers will get to work on the upper roof, the lower roof, and the spires. For six months (ending before Christmas), the cathedral will be covered in scaffolding.

"In addition to the total roof replacement, we will also fix our tower clocks and significantly beautify the cathedral at night with new lighting," said Fr. O'Brien. "There will be some pain as it all gets done, but come Christmas, we'll have a beautiful copper roof, working clocks, and our spires will be lit and capable of being seen from miles around."

The total cost of the roof project is roughly \$3.2 million with insurance covering \$1.3 million and the rest coming from fundraising and a diocesan loan.

"Over the past five weeks, we've received just over \$4 million in gifts and pledges towards the roof, the land purchase, and future projects," said Fr. O'Brien.

For more details on these projects click [here](#).



Aerial photo by Daniel McCay

In this aerial drone photograph, damage sustained to the spires of Holy Family Cathedral is visible with multiple missing roof tiles. In the distance, the Romanesque dome of the former Church of Christ Scientist building can be seen. An adjacent parking lot will be turned into green space for the parish school this summer.



LEFT: Scaffolding will envelop the cathedral for the next six months. **ABOVE:** The area in yellow shows the property that was acquired by HFC last week.

Ryan McDaniel Named New CFO

BROKEN ARROW — Ryan McDaniel has been named Chief Financial Officer for the Diocese of Tulsa & Eastern Oklahoma. The announcement was made last week following an extensive search and interview process and became effective June 10.

McDaniel has more than 20 years of manufacturing and non-profit experience in banking, finance and operations in both Kansas City and Tulsa. He has a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Mary and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration from Benedictine College.

"Ryan is excited to be working at the Chancery and is looking forward to getting to know everybody across the diocese," stated the announcement.

His 20+ year professional experience includes Business Manager at Bishop Ward High School in Kansas City for three years and Director of Finance and Operations at Monte Casino School in Tulsa for six years. He also has extensive financial management experience in the secular realm having held managerial positions in the banking sector and manufacturing companies in both Kansas City and Broken Arrow.

Look for a profile of McDaniel in a future issue of [Eastern Oklahoma Catholic](#) magazine.



Bishop Celebrates Mass for Fifth Anniversary of Broken Arrow Chapel

BROKEN ARROW — Last Thursday morning, Bishop David Konderla celebrated Mass for the five-year anniversary of the St. Scholastica Chapel dedication at the [Church of Saint Benedict](#).

The bishop was joined by Pastor Fr. Bryan Brooks, Fr. Gabriel Garcia, Dcn. Richard Berberet, and seminarians Joey Griggs and Sebastian Schlegal. Following Mass, Bishop Konderla led a small Eucharistic Procession from the Church to the nearby chapel. A reception and Adoration followed.

A story about the chapel can be found in the [June 2025 issue of Eastern Oklahoma Catholic](#) magazine and in the June 9 issue of the [EOC Extra](#).



Photos by Renata Copsey

Owasso's St. Henry Church Installs New Side Altar Dedicated to Divine Mercy

OWASSO — Thanks to the generosity of funds, talents, and prayers, [St. Henry Church in Owasso](#) has installed a new side altar dedicated to God's Divine Mercy through His dearly beloved Son Jesus.

Although the altar is new, the cenacle is not. Dee Schneider initiated the cenacle in 2015 under the guidance of Sandy Pickett (St. John Before the Latin Gate in Bartlesville). The name "Feast of Divine Mercy" is relatively new since Pope John Paul II formally added it to the liturgical calendar on April 30, 2000, during the canonization of St. Faustina of the Blessed Sacrament. However, the octave has been celebrated since the time of St. Augustine, who called it the "White Sunday" to emphasize the continued celebration of the Resurrection.

St. Henry's Cenacle of Divine Mercy endeavors to fulfill the purpose of its formation, which is to deepen the understanding of Divine Mercy. Its members help one another to be more prayerful by reciting the chaplet whenever they learn of a serious illness or death within the congregation. During meetings, they not only read portions of St. Faustina's diary but also related scripture and catechism passages.

Additionally, cenacle members serve the community with corporal and spiritual works of mercy. For example, in the aftermath of the hurricane that devastated North Carolina, members wrote letters of encouragement to parishioners of the Charlotte Diocese. The letters were accompanied by blessed finger rosaries and Divine Mercy chaplet cards to fortify and comfort the stricken congregants. St. Henry's cenacle has also prayed the rosary for poor souls in various cemeteries on All Saints' Day.

Several weeks were devoted to preparations for this year's Feast of Divine Mercy. The members selected the image for veneration, which Fr. Josh Litwack blessed after the Good Friday evening service. The installation and blessing coincided with the beginning of the Divine Mercy novena. A suitable table and a hand-crafted purple cloth comprise the main portion of the altar. A white perpetual candle, which reminds everyone to pray for the suffering souls in purgatory, completes the altar.

For the past three years, the parish of St. Henry has held a special celebration of the Feast at 3 o'clock on Divine Mercy Sunday. The requirements to prepare for the feast are to make a good confession, receive Holy Communion, and sincerely ask for Jesus' clemency by praying, "Jesus, I trust in You." This year's celebration was spoken in both Spanish and English.

The cenacle at St. Henry Church began as a small group but now includes 18 members, and interest is growing with the promise of more ways to know Him!



Father Josh Litwack, pastor of St. Henry Church in Owasso, and members of the Cenacle of Divine Mercy, stand next to the recently installed side altar.

Saint of the Month: St. Josemaría Escrivá, Founder of Opus Dei Feast: June 26

BY CANDACE BRYANT-LESTER/FAITH CATHOLIC

A champion of the universal call to holiness, a Spanish priest born in 1902 spent his life helping the faithful pursue sanctity no matter their state in life – a mission that lives on today.

Josemaría Escrivá was one of six children, three of whom died in infancy. After his father's business failed, his family moved from their home in Barbastro, Spain, to Logroño. Here, the sight of a monk's bare footprints in the snow stirred the teenage Josemaría to pursue holiness by offering his life to God, and he went on to study for the priesthood. During his studies, he cultivated a Eucharist-centered prayer life and was deeply devoted to the Blessed Mother.

Josemaría founded Opus Dei just three years after his priestly ordination in 1925. His inspiration, received in prayer, was to establish an organization dedicated to serving the unmet spiritual needs of laypeople and helping them grow in holiness, especially through the sanctification of work.

The movement grew exponentially after the Spanish Civil War and World War II. Opus Dei received papal recognition in 1947, and successive popes further blessed and endorsed Josemaría's faithful work. He especially welcomed the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on lay spirituality and the universal call to holiness, a theme at the heart of Opus Dei's mission.

Advancing Opus Dei's apostolic work kept Josemaría busy to the point of utter exhaustion, through which he smiled and persevered until he suffered a heart attack on June 26, 1975. He died while looking upon an icon of Mary hanging in his workroom.

Josemaría Escrivá was canonized by St. John Paul II on Oct. 6, 2002. Today, Opus Dei is a personal prelature (a group of clergy and laity with a hierarchical structure associated with the Church), and has grown to more than 90,000 members across 66 countries. St. Josemaría Escrivá's most notable work, *The Way*, has sold more than four and a half million copies in 43 languages.



From the Editor...

After reading this week's issue of the *EOC extra* — and for that matter, any number of previous issues — you may come away with a strong impression that there are a lot of positive things happening within the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma. So much

so that even local secular media and national Catholic media outlets are starting to take notice. And you know what? I think you'd be correct.

Consider the major parish building projects (two beautiful new churches in Stillwater, as an example) in just the past few years. Other new expansion and building projects have recently been completed at [St. Anne Parish in Broken Arrow](#) and [St. Thomas More](#) on Tulsa's east side.

Built as a medium-sized suburban parish in the early 1970s, St. Thomas More has experienced explosive growth. The parish currently holds 17 scheduled Masses per week in either English or Spanish, and it is estimated that the church routinely welcomes more than 5,000 total worshippers across seven Masses offered on any given Sunday. That number is likely to grow even more in the near future.

In a clear sign of its size and influence within the broader Hispanic community, Bishop David Konderla recently joined pastor Fr. Jose Maria Briones and five (yes, 5) visiting bishops from Mexico and El Salvador in dedicating a new shrine and chapel at St. Thomas More. The Diocesan Shrine of the Virgin of San Juan de Lagos is expected to draw pilgrims from around the region.

Across town, [Holy Family Cathedral and Classical School](#) are also experiencing a renaissance of near-epic proportions. The Mother Church of the diocese is seeing tremendous growth in its school enrollment, parish registrations, and a record number of participants in its OCIA (becoming Catholic) program, necessitating the creation of a new summer session. Now comes the news of the Cathedral's acquisition of the former Church of Christ Scientist property nearby to meet some immediate needs and make room for future expansion.

Growth within the diocese is not just happening in the larger metro areas. Small rural parishes in Hugo and Antlers (Southern Vicariate) are seeing tremendous growth in confirmations and youth participation. The San Juan Diego Mission in Stilwell (near the Arkansas border) needs a larger facility. Idabel is growing not only from within, but also from without, as visitors in the area (many from North Texas) look for a Catholic Church to worship while on vacation and weekend getaways. There are many other anecdotal examples sprinkled around the diocese. The Holy Spirit is moving.

Having just recently come into Full Communion with the Catholic Church, I feel incredibly blessed and thankful to bear witness to, and report on, all of the good things happening here in the Diocese of Tulsa and Eastern Oklahoma. I'll say it again: What a time to be Catholic!

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