Ada parishioners bring hope to prisoners

By Charles Albert
For the Sooner Catholic

I was ... in prison and you visited me.
— Matthew 26:35-36

For more than 30 years, parishioners from Saint Joseph in Ada have visited prisoners at Joseph Harp Correctional Center as a ministry and corporal work of mercy.

The parishioners visit the center, a medium security facility located near Lexington, serving them once a month since 1985. Their devoted and invaluable service to the prison population through the years was recognized in April 1994 with a Team Service Award from the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.

Elizabeth Witherow and Ann Maxwell have been active in this prison ministry from the beginning. They consider themselves religious volunteers who share their faith and try to strengthen and bring out the faith in the prisoners they visit. Their ministry is one of friendship, listening, caring, outreach and a sharing of Christ's love through their actions.

Their presence helps inmates function more positively within the prison environment, provides a connection to the outside community, and, in some ways, encourages the inmates for when they re-enter into society.

They begin each visit with prayer, and then present scripture or a video before moving to discussion. If an inmate doesn't have a family, or family members nearby, life in a prison can be lonely.

“All of these things are important if an inmate is so fortunate to have a group from the outside to come in and visit because it lets them know that people care,” Witherow said.

A prison visit helps the prisoner find self-esteem, dignity and self-worth, she said. When Maxwell walks into the prison, she said she sees the prisoner as someone’s little boy – a child of God.

She asks an intercessory prayer to Saint Peter and Saint Paul, that they go before her because they understand prison life since they were in prison themselves.

“The person I deal with when I go up there is the person that Christ is ministering to at the time and that doesn’t necessarily mean that he’s drug addicted or a child abuser or whatever,” Maxwell said.

“In fact, through the years, the less I know about what they have done, the better. Because I’m not there to judge them. I just come to visit them.”

Deacon Dennis Fine helps coordinate the prison outreach program in Ada and said he is in awe of the work and the dedication, and of how they have “helped make our world more merciful.”

The group also follows Archbishop Coakley’s pastoral call to “Go Make Disciples.”

Charles Albert is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

For more information or to join the prison ministry, contact Deacon Dennis Fine at define@cableone.net.

In Bethlehem, Latin patriarch says mercy must include more than kin

By Judith Sudilovsky
Catholic News Service

JERUSALEM – Latin Patriarch Fouad Twal said in the Jubilee Year of Mercy called by Pope Francis that mercy must include every person – both kin and foe.

“In these days and time, we suffer from the absence of compassion in our hearts – as if the coming of Jesus Christ and the message of Christmas were in vain,” he said in his homily at the Church of Saint Catherine, adjacent to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, West Bank.

“It is easy to show mercy to those with whom we are related by blood, kinship, religion and race. However, it is difficult to extend the relationship to include the poor and marginalized, prisoners and the victims of violence and terrorism in Palestine and in our neighboring countries,” he said. “Our hearts go out to the millions of refugees living in camps and shanties, suffering from the biting cold; people fleeing from areas of conflict, many are drifting on vast waters aboard fragile boats, and the sea becoming a collective graveyard.”

“Mercy, compassion and benevo-
Why Catholic schools matter

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City recently completed a research study on our Catholic schools conducted by The Catholic University of America. The results of this comprehensive study will be unveiled in the coming months after we have had a chance to digest and prioritize the findings and recommendations. One thing is clear. In spite of the many challenges that our Catholic schools face, they are a sound investment. And, they are bearing good fruit.

This issue of the Sooner Catholic provides an inside look at the profile of our Catholic schools. We have a great story to tell and we ought not to shrink from telling it! These are impressive facts. But, they certainly don’t tell the whole story. Our Catholic schools offer academic excellence and a faith-filled education. By focusing on faith, knowledge and service, Catholic schools are forming well-rounded students who will be prepared to take their places in the life of the Church, in the community, in higher education and in the workplace.

Part of the uniqueness of the Catholic school experience is that Catholic schools do not compartmentalize faith, but strive to integrate these rich Catholic traditions and values into every segment of the total curriculum, including the arts, the sciences and community service.

At the heart and center of the mission of Catholic school education is the person of Jesus Christ. While Catholic schools have traditionally educated students regardless of creed, the mission is inspired and sustained by our faith in Jesus Christ as lived out in Catholic Church.

Our mission is to educate the whole person and to provide at least the opportunity for every student to hear and respond to the Gospel. The mission of Catholic school education is not merely to pursue academic excellence, nor simply to provide a firm foundation for work or for higher education. These are important. The purpose of Catholic schools, however, is to awaken faith in students by proposing, teaching, celebrating and living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in such a way that we, other than the family, there is no more conducive setting for achieving such a goal. We will have failed in our mission if we are not intentional about forming disciples of Jesus Christ, who will be good stewards with servant hearts who pursue excellence in whatever vocations God calls them to embrace.

In the 1800s, Catholic schools were established in virtually every parish of the United States as a vital means of evangelization, to teach and to form Catholic young men who would be prepared to take their places as productive members of society in the great American experiment in freedom and democracy. Catholic schools have made priceless contributions to American society by educating principled young men and women who have taken their places in public service, the professions, health care, business and the trades, education and the arts, Church and family life.

Catholic schools today are part of this rich heritage and will leave a rich legacy for those who come after us only to the extent that we value its fruits as much as those who came before us.
Once upon a Bible study

Once upon a New Year, some decades ago, Mike and Sarah were discussing their New Year’s resolutions. They wanted to raise their children in the Church, and recognized the need to deepen their own. They decided to join the parish Bible study, where they were converted to this sort of thing, so they came with an open and teachable mind, eager to discover the riches hidden in the pages of Scripture.

Each week, as Mike and Sarah gathered with other parishioners to study the word, a surprising pattern emerged. It didn’t really happen that way, they were told. This or that story was situated in the broader narrative in this way or that, because the author was advancing a point. The story about the manna and quails – that wasn’t an intervention from God at all, but rather the

secrets of insects. The story of the mulberry trees and figs didn’t really happen that way, they were told. In fact, the crowd had asked for fish, but they were being hit in their clinkers because they selected that. The real miracle was that they were being moved to reflect on teaching that they decided to share what they had with others, and that’s the real story of how five loaves and two fish fed 5,000 people. And, then there was Saint Paul – that intransigent patriarch! Over and over, Mike and Sarah heard the message: events didn’t really happen that way; it wasn’t really like that; God didn’t really do that. One night, they had an honest discussion with each other, in any of it true, they wondered? If the Bible was just a collection of myths like Zeus and Apollo, why bother? Mike and Sarah madly swallowed themselves in a crisis of faith.

They simply were not equipped to grapple with the problematic philo-
sophical pre-suppositions that had guided them through the Bible study materials.

The uncritical use of the historical-critical method and other methodologies is an indefensible application of the “hermeneutics of suspicion” (VD 23). The editor of the daily newspaper, the commentator, the Vatican’s chief theologian, the president of the universal Church, the commentator, the Vatican’s chief theologian, the president of the universal Church, the commentator, the Vatican’s chief theologian, the president of the universal Church... The Church’s decision to abandon the interpretative method that it had championed the move to “de-theologize” the scriptures, purging the pages that the people of the local times did not have the benefit of the contemporary scientific knowl-

dge. “Miracles” were to be regarded as myth, and dismissed. Such approaches to Scripture eliminate in advance the possibility that the same God who designed the universe and CREATED the life of the Church. For the Catholic understanding of sacred Scripture, there can never be “a” solution, “the” solution, “true” solution. “Such an understanding is indispensable, indeed, as it is to the realization of the Church that there simply is no necessary or sufficient solution to the human condition. As for all those Afri-
can vocations, well, “the growing number of priests is a result not only of missionary power but also a result of the fact that the priesthood is one of the few possibilities

for social security on the dark continent.”

Racism baras its fangs

George Weigel
Catholic News Service
Public Policy Center

“Unfortunately is a fact that the priest was a missed
response to the yearning present in the heart of every man and wom-
nan, so that in that man and in the West, there is a widespread and tragic sense that God is silent or absent from people’s lives and problems... Yet the entire economy of salvation demonstrates that God speaks and acts in history for our good and our integral salvation. Thus, it is decisive, from the pastoral standpoint, precisely that God in his capacity to enter into dia-
gology with the people of our day, to open to those people the path of salvation.”

And, for you to describe Cardinal Odendahl as an exponent of “liberality” because he doesn’t accept the New York Times’ view of the moral life and cavils against the dictatorship of relativism, borders on heresy. And, for you to describe Cardinal Odendahl as an exponent of “liberality” because he doesn’t accept the New York Times’ view of the moral life and cavils against the dictatorship of relativism, borders on heresy. And, for you to describe Cardinal Odendahl as an exponent of “liberality” because he doesn’t accept the New York Times’ view of the moral life and cavils against the dictatorship of relativism, borders on heresy. And, for you to describe Cardinal Odendahl as an exponent of “liberality” because he doesn’t accept the New York Times’ view of the moral life and cavils against the dictatorship of relativism, borders on heresy. And, for you to describe Cardinal Odendahl as an exponent of “liberality” because he doesn’t accept the New York Times’ view of the moral life and cavils against the dictatorship of relativism, borders on heresy. And, for you to describe Cardinal Odendahl as an exponent of “liberality” because he doesn’t accept the New York Times’ view of the moral life and cavils against the dictatorship of relativism, borders on heresy. And, for you to describe Cardinal Odendahl as an exponent of “liberality” because he doesn’t accept the New York Times’ view of the moral life and cavils against the dictatorship of relativism, borders on heresy.
In November, I had the privilege of being part of the U.S. delegation attending the World Congress on Catholic Education held at the Vatican and Castel Gandolfo. The grand finale of the conference was a private audience with Pope Francis.

The trip. At right, Baldridge takes a camel ride through the Middle East, during his most recent travel to Russia, an outreach sponsored by the American U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the Diocese of Tulsa and the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

By Steve Gust

ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

5 January 2016

Level

Smoother Catholic

Cris Carter

Supervisor of Catholic Schools

By Steve Gust

A high school geography instructor not only teaches the subject but ventures into the world for up-close and personal information.

Now in his sixth year at Mount St. Mary Catholic High School in Oklahoma City, John Baldridge has visited 23 nations and just returned from the Middle East. He shares his experiences with his classmates in a way that brings the planet closer to his students.

Just ask Mount student James Bond.

“When someone like Mr. Baldridge brings his experiences of other cultures to the classroom, it ignites a fire of curiosity and makes us want to experience these cultures firsthand through our own travel experiences,” Bond said.

Raised in rural eastern Oklahoma, Baldridge said his first trip as a youngster was to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

“The area was just so different,” he said. “There was a different language and a real beauty there. I realized then the world was a lot bigger than just Oklahoma.”

Baldridge is enthusiastic about the what he has seen in Israel.

“Mr. Baldridge’s face lights up when telling these stories,” student Madisen Bulman said. “He makes us want to learn and learn because we know he cares.”

John Baldridge, a social studies teacher at Mount St. Mary High School in Oklahoma City, shares his experiences of being part of the U.S. delegation attending the World Congress on Catholic Education held at the Vatican and Castel Gandolfo. The grand finale of the conference was a private audience with Pope Francis.

Seeing what’s ‘real’

Baldridge’s latest tour was to Qatar, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi and Dubai through the Bilateral U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, which regularly welcomes American educators to the region.

He said he realizes that the typical American’s view of the Middle East probably isn’t the best, especially during these tense times.

“It’s important for Americans to visit the Middle East, to see the ‘real’ Middle East,” he said.

In the nations he visited, he witnessed booming economies as well as skilled and educated populations. He said he felt safe in the region and had great experiences with teachers and students, many of whom spoke English.

“One of the challenges for them now is to make sure their children know Arabic as well as English,” he said.

His visits were always willing to share their food,” he said. “Sure enough, it was right at the hotel lobby and the people here truly care for one another,” he said.

Studying his travels bring knowledge to students that cannot be found in textbooks or even online,” student John Tousg said.

Fellow student Debbie Coleman agrees.

“We don’t have a textbook but a storybook, and this storybook is Mr. Baldridge,” Coleman said.

His experiences, whether haggling with vendors at traditional Middle East markets or meeting students thousands of miles from Oklahoma, have enriched his life and that of Saint Mary students.

The Mount is a special place for Baldridge.

“This school has a strong sense of community, and the people here truly care for one another,” he said.

His work hasn’t gone unnoticed by his principal, Tasha Dergey.

“So many of his students seek him out for not only academic support but also for mentoring and advice,” she said. “Our students love this man. He truly represents the academic environment of The Mount.”

Movie review

continued from page 3

Foxygen’s “Cheating at Sport”

Foxygen have drawn on the age-old tradition of putting a new spin on old musical styles.

With their rock-tinged, psychedelic LSD pop, they’re influenced by The Velvet Underground, West Coast rock, and early Beatles.

Through their songs, they’ve managed to capture the essence of each of these eras while remaining uniquely their own.

Their album, “Cheating at Sport,” is a masterful blend of styles and sounds, and it’s a testament to their musical talent.”

Inspire all to know Christ’s love through Catholic education

In November, I had the privilege of being part of the U.S. delegation attending the World Congress on Catholic Education held at the Vatican and Castel Gandolfo. The grand finale of the conference was a private audience with Pope Francis.

Although the call to love seems quite simple, the mechanism for achieving that goal in our Catholic schools is growing more and more challenging. Ideas like self-sacrifice, the common good, community and love for neighbor are counter cultural, and the understanding that we are sacred, created in God’s image, and that we are all connected in solidarity with one another is not what we see and hear in the world.

FRANCIS called this a crisis in education. He said, “To me from a Christian perspective, the greatest crisis in education is this closure to transcendence. It is important to prepare hearts so that the Lord may manifest himself in totality: that is, in the totality of humanity that has this capacity of transcendence.”

In another word, we were not made to merely exist in this world and to take advantage of its gifts. We are here to make the world better, to be bearers of God’s ultimate love, and to inspire others to see Christ.

Francis challenged Catholic educators to “go to the periphery. Do not be afraid to be closely, very closely, very closely, deeply, deeply, deeply ... help them grow in humanity, their language, in values, in attitudes.”

Sadly, for many reasons, Catholic education, a place to grow in faith and love, is not available to many. Some are not able to hear Christ’s call. Some miss the message because their hearts are closed, others want to hear it but cannot afford the tuition or have no school in their area.

However, Pope Francis encouraged us to form these obstacles in our own part of the world. We have to ask, who can we serve and how can we invite them in?

During the past 18 months, a strategic planning steering committee and task forces comprised of people from across the archdiocese listened and shared ideas. The goal is to use the gifts and resources of the archdiocese to meet the needs of students in our community.

In the coming months, you will hear more as we develop ideas and strategies to address our call to discipleship as well as many other goals such as affordability, academic excellence, and recruiting and retaining excellent teachers and administrators.

Most importantly, we are committed to our mission to make disciples who will only lead our Church, but will make our world a better place for all.

For more information about enrolling your child in an Oklahoma Catholic school, call or visit our archdiocese directory/schools.

Be a part of this faith-filled community!
Catholic Schools of Oklahoma Open House Schedule

Celebrating Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 31 – Feb. 6

1 – Saint Joseph
Pre-K – 8th Grade
310 S. Main St.
Kingfisher 73750
(405) 575-4341
www.stjosephkildonan.com
Tours by appointment

2 – Saint Peter and Paul
Pre-K – 8th Grade
309 S. Main St.
Kingfisher 73750
(405) 575-4341
www.stpeterandpaul.org
Tours by appointment

3 – Holy Trinity
Pre-K – 8th Grade
211 W. Monument
Oklarche 73762-0885
(580) 363-9412
www.holymaryok.org
Tours by appointment

4 – Sacred Heart
Pre-K – 8th Grade
210 S. Evans Ave. E.
Bristow 73033
(405) 252-2284
www.stevenrossacredheart.com
Tours by appointment

5 – Saint John Neumann
Pre-K – 8th Grade
600 S. Garth Brooks Blvd.
Yukon 73099-3204
(405) 544-2509
www.sjneumannok.org
Open house: Jan. 31, 12:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Tours by appointment

6 – Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton
Pre-K – 8th Grade
925 S. Boulevard
Edmond 73034-0510
(405) 263-9412
www.stelizabethedmond.org
Open house: Jan. 31, 11:30 a.m.
Tours by appointment

7 – All Saints
Pre-K – 8th Grade
4601 NW 36 Ave.
Norman 73072-1802
(405) 348-4600
www.allsaintsnorman.org
Open house: Jan. 31, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
Tours by appointment

8 – Saint Philip Neri
Pre-K – 8th Grade
1121 Felix Place
Midwest City 73110-5331
(405) 277-5449
www.stphilipnerischool.com
Open house: Jan. 31, 11:15 a.m.
Tours by appointment

9 – Saint Mary
Pre-K – 8th Grade
811 W. 8th Ave.
Lawton 73501-3972
(580) 557-5265
www.stmaryok.org
Tours by appointment

10 – Saint Mary
Pre-K – 8th Grade
502 E. Warner Ave.
Guthrie 73044-3440
(405) 282-2271
www.stmaryguthrie.com
Open house: Jan. 31, Noon - 1 p.m.
Tours by appointment

11 – Saint Mary
Pre-K – 8th Grade
415 S. 7 Ponca City
74001-2044
(580) 765-4385
www.smparishponca.org
Open house: Feb. 3, Noon - 1 p.m.
Tours by appointment

12 – Saint Charles Borromeo
Pre-K – 8th Grade
5000 S. Grove Ave.
Oklahoma City 73122
(405) 782-0024
www.stcharlesokc.org
Open house: March 8, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Tours by appointment

13 – Rosary School
Pre-K – 8th Grade
1919 W. 18
Oklahoma City 73106
(405) 525-9272
www.rosaryschool.com
Open house: Jan. 31, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Tours by appointment

14 – Mount Saint Mary School
Pre-K – 8th Grade
2801 S. Harrel Ave.
Oklahoma City 73109-2728
(405) 631-8663
www.mountsaintmary.net
Open house: Fall 2016 Early application process for incoming freshmen until 3 p.m. Jan. 20.

15 – Saint Eugene
Pre-K – 8th Grade
2400 W. Harkey Rd.
Oklahoma City 73120
(405) 751-0067
www.steugeneschool.org
Open house: Jan. 31, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Tours by appointment

16 – Christ the King
Pre-K – 8th Grade
1005 Elmquist Ave.
Oklahoma City 73120-4719
(405) 843-2500
www.ckokc.com
Tours by appointment

17 – Good Shepherd
Pre-K – 8th Grade
211 W. Missouri
Enid 73701-3850
(580) 242-4449
www.allsaintsnorman.org
Tours by appointment

18 – Saint John the Baptist
Pre-K – 8th Grade
2124 SW 41
Oklahoma City 73118
(405) 267-4496
www.allsaintsnorman.org
Tours by appointment

19 – Sacred Heart
Pre-K – 8th Grade
2700 S. Bradford Ave.
Oklahoma City 73119-2334
(405) 634-9673
www.sacredheartokc.org
Tours by appointment

20 – Bishop McGuinness High School
Pre-K – 8th Grade
801 N. W. 32
Oklahoma City 73118
(405) 942-6638
www.boys.org
Freshmen registration: Feb. 22, 23, 24, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
8th grade parent curriculum night: Feb. 16, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

21 – Bishop John Carroll
Pre-K – 8th Grade
1100 N. W. 32
Oklahoma City 73118
(405) 525-9056
www.bjc.org
Pre-K open house: Feb. 2, 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.
K-8 open house: Feb. 28, 1:30 p.m.
A chat with millennial Catholic artist Luke Spehar

By Mary Rezac
Catholic Mass Agency

DENVER – Luke Spehar was an aspiring musician with a girlfriend when he couldn't shake the feeling that God was calling him to enter the seminary and consider the priesthood.

He turned the painful (but inevitable) break-up into a song, but said there was still an uncertainty at the beginning – how would his girlfriend and family react? As a musician he was used to being called to be a priest? He had already recorded his first album, “Be Still,” before graduating high school, and had dreamed about where music could take him.

“Entering seminary was a huge choice that pushes you off the fence in regard to faith, and I think because of that level of extreme expression of faith, that actually helped my music deepen and grow,” Spehar told CNA.

“So there was a time here because of what I wanted to do with music, but also the gift of being purified so that I could really do what I meant to do.4

 Asked four years later, Luke discerned out of seminary, and began praying about the next right step. He started going on tour throughout the country with his second album, “No Other Way,” which naturally morphed into a sort of music ministry.

“I realized I was telling my conversion story,” he said. “It has a lot of ups and downs and it has a lot of questions and answers. I’m just sharing what has happened to me, how the Lord has worked in my life.”

Music interested Spehar from an early age – what if it was violin lessons, or picking up the drums or guitar and learning from family friends. Where the earliest influences included folk singers like Bob Dylan, Simon and Garfunkel, and musicians which is reflected in his own acoustic, folk style.

Spehar attributes the inspiration and motivation for most of his songs to three things: his relationship with God, boredom and anxiety.

“I had a lot of questions, so (songwriting) was a form of prayer for me,” he said. “And especially when I was younger, I would play a lot of music when I got bored or stressed out, that really influenced my style.”

Several of Spehar’s songs also reflect his Midwest childhood in Minnesota where he grew up with two brothers and two sisters in the woods just north of Minneapolis.

Many of Spehar’s songs evoke memories of times spent in the forests and hills of Minnesota, and of crazy antics with his brothers and sisters, including smashing into a tree while tree- climbing.

“Because his music was so personal, Spehar said he was hesitant to record, at least at first. “In a lot of ways I just wrote them because that’s what was in my heart to write. I really didn’t have much more intention behind a lot of my earliest music, and I was hesitant to record for that reason; these were just my songs and my thoughts,” he said.

“Then, I realized that it’s maybe not just for me. I’m sharing what has happened to me and how the Lord has worked in my life, and people can just relate to it, that’s what’s really been really exciting to me.”

Lila looks a little different now for Spehar than when he first started writing songs. In September, he released his third album, “All is Cult,” which he has taken on tour ever since, minus a small break to get married to wife Elisabeth.

Because they’ve put some 30,000 miles on their minivan and have been as far north as Minnesota and as far west as Hawaii, Spehar performed concerts in more than 50 states, and traveled through at least 40.

“We’ve really enjoyed it, and we have come to have a new respect and love for America,” Spehar said.

And, although living in a van with your pregnant wife for more than six months can create a lot of opportunities for “conflict management,” Spehar joked, the tour proved to be full of adventures and opportunities, which they blogged about on www.lukespehar.com.

Something that stood out to Spehar about the tour was how ecumenical of an endeavor it was. He played for a wide range of audiences and denominations, Catholics and non-Catholics.

“It was really exciting to me to be welcomed in and to feel that music was a way we could connect, and to remember that it’s all about Christ … and people are spinning and praising him are welcome anywhere.”

He said it was also encouraging to meet other musicians and to realize that the genre was growing.

“There’s a surge of Catholic musicians who are picking up on an earthy, acoustic singer-songwriter style. I like that type of music, so I was excited to see that growth, and it’s exciting to see young adults and Catholics and non-Catholics really relate to it and really get into it and find a connection to Christ.”

“We’ll continue to pursue it as long as God wants to bless it, so we’re really hoping that it will grow into something that could sustain us and hopefully grow into something that will really bless a lot of people.”


Spehar’s music can be found on his website, www.lukespehar.com or on iTunes.

Catholic schools:
Communities of faith, knowledge and service

National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. It starts the last Sunday in January and runs all week, which in 2016 is Jan. 31 to Feb. 6.

The theme for National Catholic Schools Week 2016 is “Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service.” Schools typically observe the annual celebration week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our church, our communities and our nation.

The theme encompasses several concepts that are at the heart of a Catholic education. Schools are communities in which:

- small families in their own right, but also members of the larger community of church, city and nation. Faith, knowledge and service are three measures by which any Catholic school can and should be judged.

“Schools are communities of Faith, Knowledge, and Service,” Spehar said.
Por que las escuelas católicas importan

La arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City completó recientemente un estudio de investigación so- bre nuestras escuelas católicas realizando por la Universidad Católica de América. Los resulta- dos de este amplio estudio a costa de 12,000 por año las escuelas católicas ofrecen excelencia académica, no simplemente proporcionar una base firme para el trabajo o para la edu- cación, sino también para el desarrollo de personalidades. Estos son importantes. El propósito de las escuelas católicas, sin embargo, es despejar la fe en las leyes del estado como expresión de las enseñanzas, celebrar y vivir el Evangelio de Jesucristo en todos los que hacemos. A parte de la familia, no hay ambiente más propicio para el logro de sus objetivos. Nuestros hijos están en nuestras escuelas católicas no sólo para proporcionar la excelencia educativa que proporcione el éxito en cualquier carrera que elija, sino también para cultivar en ellos una profunda fe católica.

En la época del año 1800 las escuelas católicas se establecieron en prácticamente todas las parroquias de los Estados Unidos como una expresión vital de la misión de la escuela católica para evangelizar, enseñar y formar a los jóvenes católicos que estén dispuestos a ocu- par su lugar como miembros productivos de la sociedad en la gran experiencia americana de la libertad y la democracia. Estas escuelas católicas han hecho contribu- ciones invaluables a la sociedad estadoun- dense mediante la educación de jóvenes llenas de principios que han tomado sus lugares en el servicio público, profesiones, la atención a las personas, la educación, artes y vida familiar.

Por Judith Sudilovsky

Noticias de diario

Los dias previos a la celebración del nacimiento de Jesús a menudo se llenan de conflicto. La seguridad de las vidas públicas y familiares, que es el rostro misericordioso de Dios, se muestran fuertes y vulnerables, como hacen las vidas infantiles que encuentran entre nosotros.

Aquellos que celebran el nacimiento de Jesús en Belén, nos invitó a abrir nuestros corazones y nuestras mentes a la misericordia y la paz, que son dos aspectos de nuestro nacimiento. Aquellos que buscan su misericordia, en últi- mo término, están buscando salvación.

El pasado año tan lleno de tragedias, en el que los palestinos han matado 20 israelíes mayor- de 124 palestinos han muerto por los ataques contra lugares sagrados de Navidad en Zababdeh, ciudad del oeste de Palestina. El obispo Shomali. Un palestino terrorista, según el despertar en el pesebre, nos invitó a abrir nuestros corazones y nuestras mentes a la misericordia y paz. Nosotros, como seres humanos, tenemos la responsabilidad de amar y la misericordia, nos fortalezca en el Camino de la Verdad de la Iglesia de Belén, en el rostro de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, fuente del amor y la misericordia.

La Iglesia dice que 85 eran agresores y el 15 era un miembro de la familia de los muertos. Sin embargo, la mayoría de los palestinos muertos no habían estado en el conflicto. Los palestinos se buscan su misericordia, en último término, están buscando salvación.

El patrón de las escuelas católicas, Jesús de Nazaret, ha dejado su testimonio de amor y la misericordia, nos fortalezca en el Camino de la Verdad de la Iglesia de Belén, en el rostro de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, fuente del amor y la misericordia.

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Briefs

Substance addiction ministry
SAM will sponsor a 12-Step Support Group at the first meeting will be Jan. 16, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway, OKC. Sign in 8:30 a.m. - 9 a.m. to register. Fr. Fred Snelten, spiritual director and facilitator. The list of topics will be as well as a retired drug and alcohol counselor. There is no cost, but participants are asked to register to keep the Office of Family Life current.

Martin Luther King Jr. Mass
Archbishop Coyle will celebratethis year’s Martin Luther King Jr. Mass at 5 p.m. on Jan. 16 at Corpus Christi Church, 1616 N. Wilkenns St. A cultural tribute and reception follow Mass. Contact Sandra (405) 833-2366 or Berly VanPool, (405) 523-3000.

Spaghetti dinner
The Knights of Columbus Council of St. Eugene is hosting its annual spaghetti and homemade Italian sausage mash dinner on Saturday, Jan. 16, at 5:30 p.m. in Ross Hall, 2400 W. Hefner Rd. The cost of the spaghetti dinner with proceeds to The Dorothy Day Center for Women and Children is $7, which includes lunch. Call (405) 721-5651, Ext. 158. The cost at OKC is $7, which includes lunch.

Prayer day for the retired
On Wednesday, Jan. 20, the Office of Worship and Spiritual Life will host a prayer day for the retired at the Catholic Pastoral Center. The day begins with registra- tion, coffee and donuts, with the presentation of the day beginning at 10 a.m. Mass begins at 11:30 a.m., followed by lunch. Confessions are offered at 12:30 p.m. The day concludes by 3 p.m. with a pres- entation by Sister Mary Ethel Herbst, RSHM. Participants who cannot attend in OKC can receive the homily, the reflection and references to hr@stgregorys.edu.

 Ending family life
A new program called “Forming a Blended Family” is being of- fered by the archdiocesan Office of Family Life. The first meeting will be Saturday, Jan. 23, at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway.

The program can be used as a mar- riage preparation class, but also for those who are already married and seeking ways to maintain spirituality in the family. For more information, for more information, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 709-2850 or (405) 721-8944.

St. Charles dance
St. Charles Catholic Single’s & Friends will have a Winter Wonder- land Dance on Jan. 23 from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at St. Charles Bor- romeo, 3524 N. Ave. Grove, OKC. Free to bring swing food for the sharing table. Entry is $6 with proceeds to The Dorothy Day Center for the poor. Call (405) 660-4663.

Inn to Order
The local Inn to Order is single women ages 16-25. Cost is $85 per night. E-mail joshgarth@archokc.org.

Pilgrimage to Mexico
Fr. Joe Arledge, pastor of St. Eugene Church in Woodward, will be the spiritual director for a 12-day pilgrimage to Mexico this summer. The five- to six-hour pilgrimage will be at St. John Neuman, 600 Garth Brooks Blvd, Yukon, starting Jan. 26. Session begins at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays. Attendance at all five sessions is encouraged, but not necessary. Session fees are $185 per single person and $330 per couple. Scholarships are available for people who are being bing storia il mondo. The group will provide training and work experience. Contact Katie Gordy (405) 672-6954, ktgktg1213@gmail.com.

Catholic shrines of Wisconsin
James Redman is facilitating a retreat from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Meerschaert Room at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 W. Britton Rd., OKC, from Noon to 5:30 p.m. Call Bar- bara Boga (405) 826-3860.

Catholic Shrine USA
Catholic Shrine USA will offer Oktoberfest on March 16 and the Mass will hold their Ninth annual event at 7 p.m. every second Wednesday at the National Family Shrine Center, 3900 S 29, Del City. Contact Kent (405) 739-0036.

Music of the soul
Come to a silent retreat to ex- press your creativity and to get closer to our creative God in whose image we are made. Katie Gordy is facilitating a silent retreat on Saturday, March 4, from Noon to 4 p.m. at Our Lady of Guadalupe in the St. Eugene Church. Multicul- tural tribute and reception follow- ing Mass. For materials, contact San Bernadine de Portugal, 405) 314-4120, michaelzink@okcatholicbroadcasting.com.

Catholic shrines of Wisconsin
Fr. Carl William Janocha, St. Eugene of the Smokies, St. Paulinus, St. Francis of Assisi, Basilica of the Holy Cross and St. Mary of the Lake, will be visiting Wisconsin as the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, the only Vatican-approved Mari- an apparition in the United States. Wisconsin Dells River Cruise, tour of the University, the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 W. Britton Rd., OKC, from Noon to 5:30 p.m. Call Bar- bara Boga (405) 826-3860.

Catholic Shrine USA
Mass will be held in the Holy Rose Day Memorial Chapel at the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Bazilica de la Virgen de Guadalupe with the chaplet of Mary Help of Christians at Holy Cross Church. Friends will have a Winter Won- derland Dinner on Jan. 26. Contact Mary Ann Schmitt (405) 457-3574, Mass will be held at March 1, Canterbury Pilgrimages and Tours. Contact Mary Ann Schmitt (405) 457-3574.

Volunteer coordinator
Oklahoma Catholic Broadcasting Network is seeking a volunteer to serve as a volunteer coordinator. This is an excellent opportunity for individuals who will help recruit volun- teers, provide training and work experience. Contact Katie Gordy (405) 672-6954, ktgktg1213@gmail.com.

Catholic Shrines of Wisconsin
The class can be used as a mar- riage preparation class, but also for those who are already married and seeking ways to maintain spirituality in the family. For more information, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 709-2850 or (405) 721-8944.

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In the Holy Father’s Christmas Urbi et Orbi message, he joined us in celebrating the birth of the child Jesus, the birth and manifestation of divine mercy in the manger. He also invited us to open our hearts to receive the grace of Christmas, which is Christ Himself, our Lord and Savior.

“Jesus is the radiant ‘day,’ which has dawned on the horizon of humanity.” Pope Francis said in his message. Here are some other aspects of his message that stood out as I reflected upon them.

◆ Last year, a year full of tragedies, wars and terrorist acts, led us to seek human strategies and political projects to end the existence of evil around us. But, Pope Francis reminded us that “Only God’s mercy can free humanity from the many forms of evil, at times monstrous evil, which selfishness spawns in our midst. The grace of God can convert hearts and offer mankind a way out of humanly insoluble situations.”

◆ In a world full of broken families, devastating diseases, suffering and so many other problems, Pope Francis teaches us how to avoid falling into despair and losing peace by telling us that “Where God is born, peace is born. And where peace is born, there is no longer room for hatred and for war.”

◆ Christ’s presence in our lives makes a difference. He brings hope, peace and joy.

◆ May our Lord Jesus, source of love and mercy, strengthen us in our lives as disciples in this new year and help us to bear witness of Him, His love and mercy to all those around us.

◆ In 2016, grow in Christ like never before!

◆ We all need Him, and may we always remember that only Christ, and no one else, can save us.