Love, Peace, Prosperity and Safety will be found while being in the center of God’s will and walking in His ways. Acknowledge Him in all ways and He shall direct your path. Jesus Christ became man to redeem and save mankind so as to restore the Kingdom of Heaven to God’s people that they may be alive in His presence. Jesus is our model and teacher as to how we are to follow the path and direction of our life — being consistent with the direction or plan God has for our life. That is our mission — to serve His people and help His people return to the Kingdom of Heaven.

But how do we discern this path or plan God has for us? Without the Spirit of God in our life, it will be impossible to live our life for God’s mission. We cannot do God’s will without His Spirit living in us and making it known. How do we come to our individual mission of “Service?” How do we develop the attitude, desire or will to serve? We can begin through meditation and examination of our faith and relationship with God. Isaiah 55:8 tells us, “That my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.” A change in us has to occur.

We can begin by realizing that our church is no longer a place to go for our faith to be served but for us to serve our faith. To truly serve God’s family, we must become “Christ-like.” In changing our life, we find ourselves asking questions, e.g., where does God...
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Praised be Jesus Christ! I appreciate this opportunity to present to you the 2012 Archdiocesan Development Fund Appeal and to ask your support. Your gift to the ADF will be used to fund the many ministries which are so central to the life of the Church in central and western Oklahoma. Our ability to carry on the mission of the Church, Christ’s mission, depends to a great extent on your support and the involvement of every member of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Your participation matters. I hope that you will prayerfully consider a sacrificial gift.

As a faithful people responding to Christ’s call to “Follow me!” we strive to see his face in all people. He invites us to participate in the mission of his Body, the Church and to embrace this mission — “to serve.” He invites us to open our hearts and receive his gifts in faith; to open our hearts and share the gifts entrusted to us in serving his people.

The Archdiocesan Development Fund Appeal provides an effective means of exercising a responsible stewardship of our financial treasure. In the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, we carry out our mission of word, worship and charity through a variety of ministries and programs which bring hope, healing and the love of Christ to all persons.

The ADF truly makes a difference. Please join in this mission. Your gift to support these ministries and programs which bring hope, healing and the love of Christ to all persons helps us to a responsible cultivation and sharing of our God-given gifts so that you will prayerfully consider a sacrificial gift in support of the many ministries and programs which help advance the mission of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Once again, I am asking that each of you prayerfully consider a sacrificial gift in support of the ministries and programs which help advance the mission of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The educational, pastoral and apostolic works sponsored by the Archdiocesan Development Fund touch the lives of every Catholic and every parish within the Archdiocese. The ADF truly makes a difference. Please join me in making a generous pledge to the ADF according to your means and consistent with the blessings you have received.

Please be assured of my prayers for you and your family as well as my personal gratitude for all that you do to support your parish and our Archdiocese. With every good wish, I am

Gratefully yours in Christ,
Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is supported through the Archdiocesan Development Fund.
Pro-Life Rose Day Set Feb. 8 at State Capitol

OKLAHOMA CITY — People from all religions will converge on the state Capitol on Wednesday, Feb. 8 to participate in the 20th Annual Rose Day Pro-Life Rally.

Rose Day brings pro-life Oklahomans to the Capitol for a day-long campaign to make sure state lawmakers understand the importance of supporting pro-life legislation. The event will begin at 10:30 a.m. with supporters distributing roses to state lawmakers, followed by a rally at 11:45 a.m. in the House chambers.

The date for this annual legislative outreach is selected to coincide with the start of the 2011 Oklahoma legislative session and offers an opportunity for attendees to connect with their legislators. In addition, Rose Day participants are asked to bring four roses to symbolize their commitment to pro-life causes: one for the governor, the lieutenant governor, your state representative and one for your senator. Roses are not mandatory, but are encouraged.

The Rose Day Rally will begin at 11:45 a.m. in the House chambers. The program consists of recognition of legislators who are in attendance as well as a pro-life speaker. Speaker at this year’s rally is Abby Johnson, former director of Planned Parenthood in Bryan, Texas, who will tell the story of her conversion from pro-choice to pro-life work.

Founded in 1992, Rose Day was created as a response to the 1973 Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal in the United States. Since its launch, hundreds of pro-life Oklahomans have accessed the halls of the state Capitol in an effort to make their voice heard.

For more information about Rose Day, contact Becky VanPool, Catholic Charities director of Parish Outreach and Program Development, at (405) 523-3009.

Retrouvaille: Help For Troubled Marriages

TULSA — Retrouvaille is a program designed to provide help and support to married couples who are undergoing difficulties in their relationship. It has also proven helpful to couples who are separated or divorced. The program is Catholic in origin and orientation, but is open to couples of other faiths. The main emphasis of the program is on communication between husband and wife. It gives couples the opportunity to rediscover each other and to examine their lives together in a new and positive way.

The program begins with a weekend session and is followed by six follow-up sessions. During the weekend a series of informal talks are given by a team of three couples and a priest.

Participating couples are not asked to share their problems with anyone else. There are no group dynamics or group discussions.

For information about the program starting the weekend of Feb. 10-12 in Tulsa, call 918-695-7010, or go to www.helpourtmarriage.com. All inquiries are confidential.

Archbishop Coakley’s Calendar

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

January 22 - RET Mass and Celebration, Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 11:45 a.m.
January 22 - Week of Prayer for Unity Service, St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral, 5 p.m.
January 24 - Blessing of Bishop John Carroll School Addition, 8:30 a.m.
January 24-26 - Southwest Liturgical Conference, Dallas, Texas
January 26 - Saturday, January 28, Aquinas College Board Meeting, Nashville, Tennessee
January 29 - Confirmation, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church, Duncan, 10 a.m.
January 29 - Confirmation, Immaculate Conception Church, Marlow, 4 p.m.
January 30 - Evening Prayer with Priests, 7 p.m.
January 30-31 - Clergy Continuing Education, Catholic Pastoral Center
January 31 - Mass, Catholic Pastoral Center, 11:30 a.m.
February 1 - Mass and classroom visits, St. Mary School, Guthrie, 8:30 a.m.
February 1 - Confirmation, Sts. Peter and Paul Church, Hobart, 6 p.m.
February 3 - Mass and classroom visits, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, Edmond, 8:30 a.m.
February 3 - Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem Investiture Meeting, Catholic Pastoral Center, 7 p.m.
February 3 - Blessing of 10 Commandments Monument at St. Mary School, Lawton, 2:30 p.m.
February 3 - Confirmation, Holy Family Church, Lawton, 6 p.m.
February 4 - Confirmation, Christ the King Church, 5 p.m.
February 5 - Confirmation, Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Calumet, 9 a.m.
February 5 - Mass, Our Lady of Lebanon Church, Norman, 12:30 p.m.

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Mission: To Serve

Giving of Yourself

continued from Page 1

Time is one of God’s gifts to everyone equally. We can either benefit from our time or cheat ourselves by wasting/misusing it. We can’t buy more nor sell what we have. The rich don’t have more nor do the poor have less. Time is a resource that is non-renewable and non-transferable. We cannot store it, slow it up, hold it up, develop it or even give it up. We can’t save it for a rainy day — when it is lost, it is non-recoverable. When we kill time, it has no resurrection. Use it or lose it?

There are 86,400 seconds, 1,440 minutes or 24 hours in a day. The key is not to manage time but to manage ourselves. Are we managing ourself or is someone else managing us? How do we use our 86,400 seconds each day? With the passing of each day — as each hour goes by — we are one step closer to the time when there is no time left and we have to face our judgment. Each and every one of us will have to give an accounting to Jesus Christ for our stewardship of those talents and treasures we were used in the service of God’s mission. Was our heart, our mind and our ways and possessions used and how those talents and treasures were used in the service of God’s mission? Was our heart, our mind and our ways and possessions towards Christ? On that day of accounting, will Jesus say to us, “Well done good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your Master’s joy.” (Matt. 25:21).

We need to make our life count — fulfilling what Jesus has designed for our little life in His great story by becoming Christ-like and giving of ourselves, our talents and our possessions and using the time given to us for His glory, praise and honor. Our greatest time is yet to come in heaven, in God’s presence. Start the change. Re-set the priorities. Respond to the inspiration of His Holy Spirit. Give of yourself and your resources.

There are many members of this Archdiocese, its parishes, missions and schools who are already following the path chosen by Christ for them. Our support and participation in the activities and programs of this Archdiocese makes it possible for these dedicated individuals to provide the ministries necessary for others to learn of the path God has for them and help them follow that path. The ministries and special services provided, in most cases by trained, experienced and qualified personnel, can be seen in the chart provided showing where the departments and the many areas, programs and activities available throughout the Archdiocese to its members, both families and individuals.

The Archdiocesan Development Fund Appeal gives everyone the opportunity to use their resources and talents along with the Church in the work of God’s mission.

The Archdiocesan Development Fund
Appeal gives everyone the opportunity to use their resources and talents along with the Church in the work of God’s mission. Become that Christ-like individual that the great story of God’s mission needs!

ADF Donations!
Where Does Money Go?
The first $500,000 goes to Catholic Education. Each school receives an amount based on its student enrollment. This includes all elementary and secondary schools as well as St. Gregory’s University. The remaining amount, after the first $500,000, goes directly into the operating budget. Based on the amount collected, this remainder supports the operations budget from 45 percent to 50 percent. These funds are never used for any projects or needs outside of the daily operation. You can see by the chart provided how important those funds are to so many individuals and activities.
Our Ministries

These Archdiocesan Offices give direct ministry and support to parishes, parish staffs, volunteers and the Catholic community of the Archdiocese.

Archdiocesan Development Fund
Business Office
Catholic Schools
Religious Education
Pastoral Ministry
Library Media Center
Family Life
Hispanic Office

Office of Ministers
Catholic Pastoral Center
Permanent Diaconate
Safe Environment
Sooner Catholic
Tribunal
Vocations
Office of Worship and Spiritual Life
Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Services Provided By Our Ministries

APPEAL 2011
“Breath of Life”
Final Totals

Goal: $3 Million
Pledged: $3,058,519.89
Paid: $2,950,296.14
Pledged Percent Paid: 97 percent
Average Gift: $312.73
Donors: 9,780
Participation: Less than 25 percent of Families/Individuals

Our Ministries

Accident Insurance
Adult Education
Aging Gracefully
Apologists
Archdiocesan
Family
Archives
Audio Consonants
Background
Checks
Bereavement
Bi-Monthly
Publication
Bilingual Homilies
Bilingual Materials
Books
Brothers
Camp Fire
Camping
Catechetical
Congress
Cathedral
Leaders
Catechetical
Certifications
Chancellor
Chaplains
Christian Mass
Clergy File
Hispanic Pre-Can
Communications
Consultation
Contracts
Counselors
Curriculum
Cursillo
Database
Deacons
Developmental
Programs
Directors Religious
Education
Durations
Degree
Elementary
Employees
Encounters
Encounter of Life
Family Formation
Financial Records
Grief Ministry
Guides
Handbooks
High Schools
Hospitals
Hotline for Abuse
Information
Lease Agreements
Legal Services
Library
Resources
Liturgical Leaders
Leaves (PFLP)
Marriages
Encounters
Enrollment
Missions with Children
Mass - Legal
Profession
Mass - Marriage
Anniversaries
Mass - Sanctity
of Life
Medical Insurance
Meeting Facilities
Mentor Couples
Monks
Mortgages
Mortgage Releases
Natural Family
Planning
Ordinations
Papal Blessings
Parenting Classes
Parish Boards
Parish Councils
Parish License
Policies
Pre-Cana
Conference
Pre-Nuptial Forms
Private Funerals
Principals
Priests Funerals
Principals
Pre -Can
Conference
Pre-Nuptial Forms
Primes
Professional
Guidance
Project General
Pro-Life Retreats
Property Records
Quoinders
Rachel’s Vineyard
Radyo Program
RCIA
Religious Awards
Religious Ed
Classes
Resources
Retirement
Insurance
Retreats
Retrovials
Safe-Environment
School
Accreditation
Scouts
Seminarians
Seniors Prayer Day
Sisters
Spiritual Directors
Spiritual Growth
Supervision
Support Staff
Teachers
Updates
Vicar General
Videos
Vocations
Volunteers
Workers Comp
Insurance
Worship Services
Workshop
Youth Advocacy
Board
Youth
Conferences
Youth Directors
Youth Rallys

Mail to: ADF PO Box 31280, OKC, OK 73123
Petition Seeks Personhood Status for the Unborn

“It is poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish.”

— Mother Teresa

The Oklahoma Personhood Statute was made to make a difference in helping the poorest and most vulnerable Oklahomans. It has long been recognized as a constitutional right to protect the future of the unborn. Who could have known that this bill would face so much opposition? Pro-life groups and their allies are not deterred. We continue to fight for the passage of the Personhood Act.

This month and in this spring’s session of our state Legislature, Oklahoma’s Catholics have long taken a leadership role in the pro-life movement. This year, Oklahomans For Life is sponsoring several pro-life bills at our state Legislature for the last 35 years.

Oklahoma has long taken a leadership role in the pro-life movement. This year, Oklahomans For Life is sponsoring several pro-life bills at our state Legislature. We urge the members of the Oklahoma Senate and House of Representatives to enact, during the 2012 session of the Oklahoma Legislature, the Personhood Act, which affirms that human life begins at conception, and in declaring that human beings deserve the protections of law.

This Personhood Act puts the state of Oklahoma on record in declaring as a matter of public policy the scientific truth that human life begins at conception, and in declaring that human beings deserve the protections of law.

In order to counteract the opposition to this pro-life Personhood bill in our state Legislature, we hope to encourage public support for this act. Thank you for your help. By signing the Personhood Petition at your parish after Masses on the weekends of Jan. 15, 22 or 29, or by signing up online at www.OkForLife.org, you will be making a statement of support for the Personhood bill. Moreover, you will be entitled to receive an update on the bill’s progress as it moves through various stages in the legislative process, which will enable you to contact your legislators to urge them to support the bill.

We are extremely grateful for the pro-life leadership of Archbishop Coady, and of Bishop Stanley in Tulsa, for allowing these petitions to be placed in churches this month and for asking priests to facilitate the solicitation of signatures on these petitions. We are very blessed to have such shepherds in Oklahoma!

If you have any questions about the petition, the Personhood bill, or pro-life issues in general, please feel free to contact me at KevinCalvey@OkForLife.org.

Lastly, please pray for the success of the Personhood bill and other pro-life legislation in Oklahoma this year. May God bless you!

Kevin Calvey
State Vice Chairman
Oklahomans For Life
Catholic Charities Has History of Housing Elderly

From its earliest days, caring for older Oklahomans has been one of Catholic Charities’ greatest priorities. In the 1930s, the organization began this tradition with the founding of St. Ann’s Home for the Aged, which shared a common location with St. Joseph’s Orphanage. Many years later, Catholic Charities continued this tradition of caring with its affordable housing programs for seniors, Villa Isenbart and Trinity Gardens.

“As people began to live longer lives, we realized that there was an incredible need for low-cost housing for the growing number of Oklahoma City seniors,” said Catholic Charities Executive Director Tim O’Connor. “So when we learned that St. Ann’s Retirement Home was relocating in the mid-1990s, it seemed the time was ripe to create something that would be much more than a home for seniors; it would be a community.”

With help from the community, the parishes, donors and federal grants, Catholic Charities realized this goal in 1997, when it opened Villa Isenbart and Trinity Gardens. Located on NW 18th Street near Portland Avenue, the sister communities both provide independent housing for low-income Oklahomans age 62 and older, regardless of race or religious affiliation.

Supported by Catholic Charities and the U.S. Housing of Urban Development, residents at Villa Isenbart Apartments pay rent on a sliding scale determined by income after medical expenses. Situated directly behind St. Patrick’s Catholic Church, Villa Isenbart offers 39 one-bedroom units with a lovely community room, on-site laundry room and a resident lounge. Located next door on 19th Street, Trinity Gardens Apartments is a 57-unit apartment complex with a heart. Created for low-income retirees, the complex offers comfortable one- and two-bedroom units. However, both apartment complexes are much more than a place to live; they are each a close-knit community of active residents.

“Many of our residents take pride in their small community, and it shows. From the monthly birthday parties and the resident council to the small decorative touches outside each resident’s door, each person who lives here adds to this cooperative spirit.”

According to longtime Trinity Garden resident Jennie Ann Filippo, it is this feeling of belonging that first brought her to the apartments, and kept her there for over 14 years. Filippo, who moved in with her sister, Mary, on the day the apartments opened in 1997 (another sister, Frankie, moved in a month later), learned about Trinity Gardens from her church.

“Before I moved in, I worried about the safety of my alone, noises at night always seem a little scarier. But safety is an additional benefit. When one lives alone, noise at night always seem a little scarier. Before I moved in, I worried about the safety of my neighborhood. However since moving in here, I have never had any problems. Everyone is so nice,” Filippo remarked.

Of course, affordability is one of the largest draws for those on a limited income. To help its residents keep costs low, both apartment complexes offer below-market rent rates with water, trash and gas bills included. For more information about Trinity Gardens or Villa Isenbart, visit www.catholiccharitiesok.org or call (405) 947-4143.
Celebrating God Celebrating Justice

Annual MLK Mass Packs Corpus Christi

OKLAHOMA CITY — Corpus Christi Parish was packed for Mass on Jan. 15 as the parish celebrated the Eucharist and paid tribute to the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Archbishop Paul Coakley celebrated the Mass and delivered a powerful homily challenging Catholics and all people to integrate their faith “into the rest of our lives.”

Liturgical dancers from Corpus Christi Church and Saint Gregory’s University, as well as Guatemalan and Colombian dance groups performed following Mass. Benton Jones gives a dramatic presentation of Dr. King’s famous “I Have A Dream” speech.

Becky VanPool of Catholic Charities serves as coordinator of the annual Mass and tribute to Dr. King.

The following is the homily delivered by Archbishop Coakley.

It is a pleasure to be with you this morning to celebrate Mass during this my first pastoral visit to Corpus Christi Parish. I am delighted to be with the parishioners of Corpus Christi Parish.

The following is the homily delivered by Archbishop Coakley.

It is a pleasure to be with you this morning to celebrate Mass during this my first pastoral visit to Corpus Christi Parish. I am delighted to be with the parishioners of Corpus Christi Parish.

Dr. King once said, “Eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, when the morning sun comes up, and the birds begin to tweet, and the sun begins to shine, is the most segregated hour in America.” It’s 11 o'clock! I hope we have perhaps not yet lived to see that dream fulfilled, but we are here to ensure we are doing what we can to keep that vision alive.

Like Jesus, whom the Reverend Dr. King served as his minister and whose Word and teaching he labored to make his own, King’s witness and prophetic vision provoked sometimes violent opposition by shining light on injustices. Like Jesus, he was a sign of contradiction. Yet refusing to respond to violence with still more violence, he chose instead to embrace joy’s new commandment: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” And even one’s enemies. Martin Luther King made that supreme sacrifice.

Dr. King’s life and legacy was based on the very unique and personal way he integrated his faith and most deeply held convictions with what he perceived to be his Christian duty at a particular moment, in a particular place and in the midst of a particular set of very challenging circumstances. The commoners of Christ must also be integrated with the rest of our lives. Our faith cannot be something that is reserved just for our weekly hour or two of worship. It cannot be compartmentalized and privatized. Faith is by its nature public, that is, it has to be lived in order to be authenticated. It is meant to radiate light!

What is it that the Lord seeks of us as fruit of our worship, strengthened by His Word and the Sacraments we share? Is it not, as Isaiah the prophet challenges us in the first reading today: “To heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to open the prison doors to those who are oppressed.”

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, to bring the broken-down to their侥 and up the shut-in, to lead the captive out of the dungeon? Is it not to loose the chains of injustice, to bind up the wounds of sickness, to bring down oppression and open up the prison doors?

It is here that we find the deepest source of our communion in Christ and with one another, a communion that is far deeper than any differences which threaten to divide or separate us. Here sin is overcome, love conquers, communion is restored. We find the Eucharist the strength for our journey in our continuing commitment to be stewards of hope, agents of justice and instruments of peace.

Jesus’ new commandment: “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” And even one’s enemies. Martin Luther King made that supreme sacrifice.
Decision Hailed as Victory for Religious Liberty

Washington, D.C. (CNA) — The U.S. Supreme Court’s move defending religious groups’ right to determine their leaders could significantly affect future cases dealing with religious freedom, a legal expert says.

University of Notre Dame law professor Richard Garnett said that the ruling “makes it very clear that the First Amendment would not permit the government to second-guess a religious community’s decision” in appointing church authorities.

Garnett told CNA on Jan. 12 that the decision was important in part because it clarifies that religious freedom properly belongs to religious communities and institutions as well as individuals.

In their unanimous Jan. 11 decision — which was hailed by many as a victory for religious liberty — the U.S. Supreme Court justices upheld the “ministerial exception” that permits religious groups to make employment decisions without government interference.

During the case, speculation had arisen that if the “ministerial exception” was not upheld, the government could force the Catholic Church to ordain women in order to avoid discrimination lawsuits.

Garnett said that although this scenario would never have happened, it was good to have the Supreme Court “explain why that could never happen.”

He also said the ruling could have a significant influence on other religious liberty cases because the justices “unanimously rejected” the Obama administration’s view of what qualifies as religion, sending a clear message that it was “inappropriately narrow.”

Cases involving religious freedom in the United States have abounded in recent months.

A controversial mandate issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in August of 2011 requires health insurance providers to cover contraception and has very narrow religious exemptions.

Catholic Charities in Illinois and Boston have recently been forced to discontinue their adoption services in recent years because they were not willing to place children with homosexual couples.

Last fall, the U.S. Bishops Migration and Refugees Services was denied its application for a federal grant renewal to aid victims of human trafficking — despite excellent reviews — after it refused to offer referrals for abortions, contraception and sterilizations.

Garnett explained that although the Hosanna-Tabor ruling does not set a direct precedent for such cases, it has “thematic connections” to them that could influence future court decisions.

The case dealt with Cheryl Perich, a teacher at Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School of Redford, Mich.

Perich, who had a sleeping disorder, returned from disability leave to find that a substitute had already been hired to replace her for the year. When she threatened to sue to get her job back, she was fired.

Hosanna-Tabor argued that Perich had been fired for religious reasons because she had violated the church’s commitment to internal conflict resolution rather than suing in court.

The decision, which was penned by Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., was based largely on the court’s determination that Perich qualified as a “minister” and that “ministerial exception” therefore applied to her.

The court noted that Perich had been “commissioned as a minister” and was considered a “called teacher,” who had received a calling from God to fill the position. She taught both religious and secular subjects, and she regularly led students in prayer and devotional exercises.

However, in a concurring opinion, Justice Clarence Thomas went further, arguing that the court should not have tried to make its own determination of whether Perich was properly considered a minister.

Thomas contended that “the Religious Clauses require civil courts to apply the ministerial exception and to defer to a religious organization’s good-faith understanding of who qualifies as its minister.”

He noted that the broad span of religious structures and teachings present in the United States means that “the question whether an employee is a minister is itself religious in nature, and the answer will vary widely.”

Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr. wrote a separate concurring opinion. Joined by Justice Elena Kagan, he asserted that the term “minister” is not the central factor in the case.

“’What matters,’” he said, “is that Perich played an important role as an instrument of her church’s religious message and as a leader of its worship activities.”

He observed that the word “minister” is rarely used by Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists.

Rather than a debate about title or ordination, he suggested that the case was truly about the importance of safeguarding the autonomy of religious organizations to govern their internal affairs in accordance with the First Amendment.
Maryland Bishops Call for State to Address Poor

Baltimore, Md (CNA) — The bishops of Maryland urged Catholics in the state to contact elected officials and ask them to consider the needs of the poor as they make public policy decisions in the upcoming year.

"Thousands of our brothers and sisters who are homeless experience the daily reality of a life in crisis," they said in a statement released before the opening of the Maryland General Assembly's 2012 session.

Caring for the poor is "an obligation and a requirement of true justice," they underscored.

The Jan 9 statement was issued by Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington, D.C., Cardinal-elect Edward F. O'Brien, apostolic administrator of Baltimore, and Bishop W. Francis Malooly of Wilmington.

The bishops recalled the "challenging circumstances" faced by Joseph and Mary, traveling to a foreign city, being unable to find lodging even as Mary was "on the verge of childbirth," and then being forced to flee to another country to escape danger.

"Although many are familiar with this story, people often forget that this scenario is played out over and over, every day, in the lives of millions of people," they explained.

In the last year, the poverty level in Baltimore alone has increased by 20 percent and now affects one in four residents.

Almost 700,000 families in Maryland receive food assistance, and 2010 estimates indicate that more than 10,000 locales are homeless.

Twenty percent of Maryland households with children reported being unable to feed their families at times during 2009-2010.

The bishops voiced their concerns that due to continuing high rates of unemployment, many individuals in the state are struggling to find adequate food, clothing and shelter.

Recalling that we encounter Christ in our interactions with other people, they said that love of one’s neighbor is the duty of every Catholic.

The principle of subsidiarity demands that individual Catholics should donate their “time, resources and voces” to serve the poor, said the bishops, noting the Catholic community of Maryland serves as “the state’s largest non-governmental provider of social services,” providing assistance to thousands of those in need.

However, because individuals do not have the capacity to meet all of the needs that exist, the government shares in the responsibility of caring for the poor, they said.

While they acknowledged the fiscal crisis faced by many levels of government, the bishops also recognized the necessity of laws that corporate “the principles of justice and respect for human dignity.” They emphasized the importance of housing as a “basic human right,” which they said “should be made accessible to all.”

Those in the state should remind members of the Maryland General Assembly that “the budget is a moral document that reflects the public’s priorities,” they added.

Reminding Maryland Catholics of their call to put faith into action in their everyday lives, the bishops asked them to encourage legislators to institute policies that promote the creation of jobs and offer relief for the poor and vulnerable through a “social safety net.”

Pope Says Youth Need True Meaning of Justice, Peace

By David Kerr

CNA/EWTN News

Vatican City (CNA/EWTN News) — In a bid to end violence against Christians and other religious, Pope Benedict XVI said in a Jan. 13 speech to Italian police to call for educating young people in the true meaning of justice, peace.

"The Pope's comments reflected his message earlier this month when he dedicated the Church's 45th World Day of Peace on New Year's Day to the education of the young in justice and peace," it said.

"To her we entrust this year of 2012, that everyone may live in mutual respect and strive after the common good, in the hope that no act of violence will be committed in the name of God, supreme guarantor of true justice and peace," the Pope said.

The Pope made his comments to a gathering of Italian state police who are charged with patrolling and protecting St. Peter’s Square and the Vatican.

The Pope said that while young people often hear the words “justice” and “peace” being mentioned, not enough is done to explain what the terms really mean.

"Justice," he explained, "is not a mere human convention. If it is viewed as such, he added, it can end up being dominated and subverted by the "criteria of utility, profit and material possession." Pope Benedict said that when justice is corrupted in this way, the value and dignity of people can be "trampled underfoot."

In reality, justice is a virtue that guides the human will "prompting us to give others what is due to them by reason of their existence and their actions," he said.

Similarly, "peace" is not merely defined as "the absence of war, or the result of man's actions to avoid conflict."

Instead, it is primarily "a gift of God which must be implored with faith, and which has the way to its fulfillment in Jesus. Therefore, "true peace" must be "constructed day after day with compassion, solidarity, fraternity and collaboration on everyone's part," the Pope said.

The Pope's comments reflected the need for public policy that promotes the creation of jobs and offer relief for the poor and vulnerable through a "social safety net."
This last legislative session, the Oklahoma Legislature passed the Equal Opportunity Scholarship Act that allows for Oklahoma Income Tax Credits for donations to Scholarship Granting Organizations whose purpose is to grant need-based scholarships to students to attend accredited private elementary and secondary schools. The law was meant to allow students who couldn’t normally afford to attend private schools the opportunity to seek and receive scholarships to attend those schools.

The law is written so that individual taxpayers can contribute up to $1,000 individually or $2,000 for a married couple filing jointly and receive a 50 percent tax credit on the donation. For example, the average taxpayer filing jointly could donate $2,000 and receive a $1,000 tax credit at the same time they take a tax deduction on the donation. People in the 25 percent federal tax bracket and 5 percent Oklahoma tax bracket would end up receiving another $600 in lower taxes for the $2,000 donation. Combining the tax credit and the deduction, the taxpayer would receive $1,600 back on their original $2,000 donation. It is a strong motivation for individuals to make a donation to a scholarship granting organization.

The law also allows corporations to make contributions of up to $100,000 and receive the same 50 percent tax credit against their Oklahoma corporate income tax. The law includes limited liability corporations and professional corporations.

The law caps the amount of total credits available to donors at $1,750,000 for individual donations and another $1,750,000 for corporate donations. If donations exceed the cap, each donor will receive a proportional share of the credits available. Although the donations can be given at anytime after the law was passed, and the donation will be deductible in the year given, the first tax credits will be available for the tax year 2013. Donations given in the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 will qualify for credits on that year’s tax return.

Under the guidance of Oklahoma’s new tax-credit scholarship program, a student is eligible for a qualifying scholarship if the student is a child of school age who is lawfully present in the United States and the student is a member of a household whose total annual income during the preceding tax year does not exceed an amount equal to 300 percent of the income standard used to qualify for a free or reduced school lunch. As an example, the income eligibility for the 2010-2011 school year for a family household of four persons cannot be above $122,379. The largest private school organization in the state of Oklahoma is the Catholic Church. There are approximately 10,000 students who attend Catholic elementary and secondary schools in Oklahoma. In 2008-2009, Oklahoma education funding averaged $8,066 per student. This figure though, is based on the number of students enrolled in public schools. If the additional 10,000 Catholic school students switched and began attending public schools, the cost to the state would be an additional $80 million. The 22 Catholic schools in central and western Oklahoma are under the guidance of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The Archdiocese has established the Catholic Schools Opportunity Scholarship Fund to be a Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) under the new law and the first need-based scholarships from this fund will be awarded for the 2012-2013 school year.

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma will administer the fund for the Archdiocese. There will be other SGOs established to provide scholarships in a similar fashion.

The law requires that at least 90 percent of all donations and interest and investment income be granted in scholarships the following year. This requirement was generally excluded when the nonprofit organizations from qualifying as a SGO.

The 90 percent requirement would prohibit endowment funds from being established or a part of the SGO. Most all Scholarship Granting Organizations are newly established organizations that are not-for-profit corporations. They must file for and receive an IRS Section 501(c)(3) non-profit status.

This wonderful new law will hopefully inspire more donations for need-based scholarships to Catholic schools. It will relieve the burden of public schools from the costs of educating these students and allow these students the opportunity to attend the schools of their choice. A win-win situation!

For more information, contact Barney Semtner at the Catholic Foundation at (405) 721-4115.
Presence of God Allows for Life of Peace, Joy

I believe the presence of the Holy Spirit lies in our hopes, our dreams and our deepest desires. We might go for a walk, listen to soft music, meditate, consult with a counselor or spiritual director, go on a retreat, and while doing so ponder about our hopes and dreams from long ago. These dreams may include oil painting, music, setting up a bed for a baby. Some of our dreams may be as simple as being a better parent, keeping a journal, or being more physically fit. In my book, ‘Daily Life is an excellent way to know and be in touch with our gifts that we can use in being of service to others. Some of these strengths may include being caring, compassionate, passionate and helpful of others, being problem-solvers, fixers and good at getting things done; being organizers, planners and leaders; being analyzers, and detail and task-oriented, etc.

We can continue with understanding our hopes and dreams as well as our strengths and attributes, for these, I believe, are the manifestation of our true self and of God within.

A wise woman told me, when I was going through the Retreat In Daily Life, that “the true self is the manifestation of God within.” It is good for us to understand what our hopes and dreams are as well as our strengths and attributes, for these, I believe, are the manifestation of our true self and of God within. Peace and blessings!

Joe Froehle, a marital, individual and family counselor, can be reached at (405) 359-8539 or by email at jfroehle@swbell.net.

Stories of Spanish Martyrs Teach Forgiveness, Love

Madrid, Spain (CNA) — A new collection of testimonies from the Spanish martyrs is aimed at teaching young people about the strength of faith, love for God and forgiveness of one’s enemies, its author says.

“I realized what a treasure these souls were,” Father Santiago Cantera told CNA on Jan. 11. “I decided to collect and preserve them all in a single volume.”

In addition to preventing them from being forgotten, my intention was also to present attractive and generous models to the young people of today, the priest said.

He noted that the testimony of the martyrs urges today’s society to understand the transcendence of life — “that death is a passage into eternity and that there is no time to lose in this life.”

Father Cantera also observed that it is not only the often brutal deaths of the Spanish martyrs that need to be emphasized, but the choices they made throughout their lives to follow Christ.

“Martyrdom is a grace; a gift from God, and He can grant it at the very moment of death, but it is usually not something spur-of-the-moment,” he said. Rather, it’s “the final conclusion of an intense spiritual life.”

In his remarks to CNA, Father Cantera said that the martyrs ultimately “teach us the greatness of forgiveness and of love, love for God and for neighbor, including our enemies.”

“And they teach us courage, strength, firmness in our principles and in the faith — something which is badly needed today,” he added.

The lives of the Spanish martyrs also show that “only in Christ can we understand the mystery of life and mystery of death and truly be happy in life and in facing death.”
Society Fails to Grasp Damage of Premarital Sex

During a 2011 roundtable discussion on Fox News, guest commentator Jay Thomas argued that young people should not be too concerned when it comes to premarital sex, because nobody would choose to "buy a car without driving it first. You don't get married, and you don't learn about sex, by not having it." Any reasonable person would prefer to avoid someone who might be "old in the sack," as much as any reasonable person would prefer to avoid getting a lemon when purchasing a new car.

Pearl at 524-3641. Information, call June at 608-0232 or choose to become a member. For more Catholic women to join us. After Our Lord Church. We are asking in the Patio Room of The Epiphany of Catholic parishes, is a group which enjoys programs on gardening, music, Catholic rosary school.com or call Mercedes at 751-7115 Ext. 115 for more information.

As one happily married woman described it on her laboratory: "I've only been with one guy, he was only with one girl — and it wasn't until until our wedding night. Maybe we were both had in bed. But you, know, neither one of us had had sex because we'd never really been with anybody else. I've never seen that as a sin.

Singer/duties Rebecca St. James, who also participated in the roundtable, echoed the same sentiments: "Can I just say married sex (and I've never been with another man) is so much more beautiful. I'm so glad I don't have any memories with anyone else, and I think my husband doesn't have anybody to compare me to. We only have each other.

Dating and marriage are about commitment and sacrificial love, not about another person, not comparison shopping for the best deal, or test driving the latest sedan. Sex is a unique gift, by which we hand ourselves over to another within marriage, and the treasure of marital love is a permanent commitment to one another. Rev. Trudie Psycholczyk, Ph.D., serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, www.ncbcenter.org

Fertility and Infertility
d. Call Judi Wilkinson at 751-7115 Ext. 115 for more information about this marvelous opportunity to serve the poor of Bolivia.

Priests To Lead Tour
Religious and Cultural Treasures of Italy by Father Joseph Jacobus Oct. 3-10, 2012, for an enchanting journey to explore the religious and cultural treasures of Italy on the occasion of the ordination of Brian Buettner. Highlights include the major holy and cultural sites in Rome, including the diocese ordination at St. Peter's, visiting Assisi, Florence, Siena, Montecassino Terme and Cappo di Monte. For more information, call at (405) 210-325.

Medical Mission Trip

School Auction Feb. 4
OKLAHOMA CITY — We invite you to join us for the 2012 Blue Ribbon and Roses Rotary School Auction. The evening's activities will include dinner, desserts, games, derby hat contest, and silent and live auctions.

Meeting Room 3, at St. Eugene Catholic Church, 2400 W Hefner Road, OKC. Call Jill Wilkinson at 751-7115 Ext. 115 for more information about the auction.

Across Oklahoma
Club Socks Members
OKLAHOMA CITY — The Catholic Woman’s Activites Club, a club made up of women from all Catholic parishes, is a group which enjoys programs on gardening, music, and the arts. We meet on the second Thursday of each month for lunch from September through May in the Parish Room of The Episcopal Church of Our Lord Church. We are asking Catholic women to join us. After attending one meeting, you may choose to become a member. For more information, call June at 608-0232 or Pearl at 524-3641.

2011 Fall NFP Series set
EDMOND — Natural Family Planning can help postpone or achieve a pregnancy. It is an ongoing observation and inter-

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Essay Contest

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma City Central Region Council of Catholic Women is sponsoring an essay contest. The topic, chosen by Father Bill Pruett and voted on by the women of the Council, is “How Will My Catholic Faith Help Me To Love A Better Life.”

Essays should be one page and double spaced. Mail to Carol Watchock, 9068 Ashley Place, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73139. Retrace must be postmarked by March 20, 2012.

The essays will be judged by a committee and the winners will be invited to attend our meeting and luncheon on Tuesday, April 17, accompanied by their teacher and parent if they choose to attend as our guest.

The first-place winner will receive a $100 Savings Bond. The second-place winner will receive a $75 Savings Bond and the third-place winner will receive a $50 Savings Bond. We will need your name, school, age and Social Security number if you are a winner. For more information, call Pearl Sulles at 524-3641 or email psullens1@sbcglobal.net.

27 Health Care Retreat (from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Mercy Health Center). The retreat, titled “Healing the Healer,” will be facilitated by Rev. James A. Guma, pastor of St. Thomas More University Parish in Norman. The program is designed to provide spiritual renewal and healing for health professionals — physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains and spiritual directors. Registration is $35 per person. However, registration for Catholic Charities and Mercy employees and anyone over 60 is $25. Lunch is included. To register, contact Glenda Bronson at (405) 936-5228 or glenda.bronson@mercy.net.

3 First Holy Family Home Mass at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is at 5:30 p.m. with the Sacrament of Reconciliation available prior to Mass. Mass is at 7 p.m. Those wanting to learn more about First Friday Devotion and the practice of consecrating the family and home to the Sacred Heart of Jesus will find materials available after Mass. For more information, please call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944 or Diane Giam at (405) 528-6552.

5 The Lay Missionaries of Charity, the Secular (Lay) Order of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, at St. John the Baptist Catholic Parish, Edmond, on the first and third Saturday of each month beginning with Holy Mass at 7:30 a.m. in the Chapel. For more information, contact Helen Harrelson at (405) 341-2199, or imcklouis@msn.com.

9 The Franciscan Province of St. Claire Fraternity meets on the first Tuesday of the month beginning with Holy Mass at 7:30 a.m. in the Chapel. For more information, contact HFMH at 741-7419.

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Jobs Box

Chief Financial Officer

St Gregory's University seeks a Chief Financial Officer. The CFO will provide leadership in strategic planning processes, particularly relating to financial and budgetary components maintaining a high degree of financial accountability and transparency. The CFO will provide budgetary leadership and oversee all the university accounting functions. CPA required with 7+ years’ experience in financial administration in a management or supervisory capacity. Knowledge of relevant regulations and requirements to successfully meet government reporting requirements for financial activities pertaining to the accountability and stewardship of university resources. Submit resume to hr@stgregorys.edu. Full job description available at www.stgregorys.edu under Faculty and Staff tab.

Field Agent

The Knights of Columbus is seeking a field agent for a career opportunity representing our insurance program in the Norman-Lawton area. This professional position offers the chance to make an above average income, a career path into management if desired, paid advanced education and generous bonus opportunities. We offer a complete benefits package with this full-time position. Works in an assigned and exclusive marketing area to sell and service our insurance and retirement products. Performs needs analysis for assigned members and recommends appropriate products to meet those needs. Develops positive relationships with the local councils to help recruit new members. In order to qualify, one must be eligible for membership in the Knights of Columbus. For more information, please email a resume to Kevin Pierce, JCPG General Agent, at Kevin.Pierce@kofc.org, or call (405) 514-7660.
St. Gregory's University freshman Ben Milam receives his registration checklist from student worker Sarah Morris Tuesday inside Benedictine Hall. Classes resumed in Benedictine Hall more than two months after the building sustained earthquake damage. (Photo by Brad Collins)

St. Ann's Retirement Center Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Archbishop Coakley gives communion at St. Ann's Retirement Center. Mass and a reception were held for all of St. Ann's in honor of the 10th anniversary of the opening of St. Ann's. Those that have been on staff and residents for all 10 years were recognized.

SHAWNEE — Classes began inside Benedictine Hall recently, more than two months after damage caused by an earthquake forced St. Gregory's University officials to close the building. Four turrets atop Benedictine Hall were badly damaged on Nov. 5 following the 5.6 magnitude temblor. Crews have since removed and capped them.

“We are excited to be back in Benedictine Hall and have more of a sense of normalcy return to campus,” said Dana Bucko, a junior history major from Rowlett, Texas. “I think students are not only looking forward to returning to the classrooms, but also places like the library and student lounges.”

Benedictine Hall's turrets rose 120 feet from the ground and gave the building its “castle-like” appearance. One of them fell to the ground during the quake, while the remaining three became unstable and had to be removed. Students, faculty and staff were relocated to various locations on campus while crews worked to secure the building. Minor damage from the quake and its after-effects included broken windows, water main breaks, water main breaks, water damage, cracks to interior surface finishes, damage to the outside façade of Benedictine Hall and some roof damage.

The students have managed very well the past few months, but regaining access to the building should give them a big lift to start the semester,” said Josh Clark, SGU's dean of students.

The cost to fully restore Benedictine Hall is estimated at $2.8 million. SGU set up the Benedictine Hall Restoration Fund in the days following the quake and have raised more than $1 million through the support of alumni, friends of the institution and various organizations. University officials hope to begin the restoration process this summer.

Built in 1915 and subsequently renovated, Benedictine Hall is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. It contains most of the university’s administrative and faculty offices, classrooms, science laboratories, computer laboratories, campus mailroom and the James J. Kelly Library, which contains more than 50,000 bound volumes.

St. Gregory's University was founded in 1875 and is Oklahoma's oldest institution of higher learning. Further information regarding SGU can be found at www.stgregorys.edu or by calling 1-888-STGREGS.