The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City will kick off its annual ADF Appeal with a goal of raising $3 million.

Tom Maxwell, director of the ADF Appeal, said the goal, less $500,000, would provide just under half of the operating budget necessary to fund the services and ministries offered by the Archdiocese throughout the coming year.

Several years ago Archbishop Beltran established the ADF Plus campaign as a way to address the needs of Catholic education in the Archdiocese. ADF Plus requires that $500,000 from every annual appeal be invested in an endowment for Catholic education. The plan is to eventually build the endowment large enough so tuition at our Catholic schools can be capped. An even more ambitious goal is to one day provide Catholic education free of charge to young Catholics and their families throughout the Archdiocese. That is expected to require many years and much generosity, but in the meantime, critical ministries and services provided by the Archdiocese need the support of the Catholic faithful.

Maxwell and his small staff in the ADF office work year around to help ensure the appeal is a success. Last year, even though the Oklahoma economy was beginning to show signs of slowing, in line with the national picture, faithful Catholics throughout the Archdiocese helped the ADF appeal reach its goal. Maxwell called this a true testament to the faith that exists within our Catholic community across the Archdiocese.

In today’s issue of the Sooner Catholic, readers will learn how their support of ADF reaches out to help provide a variety of services and ministries to the Catholic community in the Archdiocese.

Archbishop Seeks Support for Haiti Relief

OKLAHOMA CITY — On Jan. 13, 2010, the Most Reverend Eusebius J. Beltran authorized special collections by Archdiocesan parishes to provide relief and assistance for the many victims of the devastating earthquake centered in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. This disaster has created a situation of human suffering that the victims cannot alleviate without assistance. Archbishop Beltran wishes to express the need for prayers and financial assistance for the people affected by this tragedy.

All donations received by the Archdiocese will be forwarded to Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the official international humanitarian agency of the U.S. Catholic community. CRS provides assistance to people in need in more than 100 countries without regard to race, religion or nationality.

Donations to assist CRS in short-term and long-term relief and recovery efforts should be made payable to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City - Haiti Disaster Relief, delivered to your parish or mailed to: Haiti Disaster Relief, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Catholic Pastoral Center, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123-0380.
The Good News

...Celebrating the Sanctity of Life

Homily, Sanctity of Life Mass
Cathedral of Our Lady
January 20, 2010

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

We gather together tonight in faith and with love. We believe in Jesus Who is the Eternal Son of God. We love God Who created all life on this earth and Who is Life itself. God alone is eternal. He has no beginning and no end. All else is created by Him. God alone is the eternal Supreme Being.

It is truly inspiring and hopeful to see so many young people here tonight for this celebration of the Sanctity of Life Mass. I appreciate your presence and I assure you that whatever you do to promote respect for the dignity and beauty of human life will redound to your well-being and happiness.

We know that all human life is sacred because God creates us in His own Image and Likeness and for a sacred purpose — life in Him. Tonight, therefore, as we are all aware of the tragedy and human suffering in Haiti, I ask your special prayers for our injured, sick and suffering brothers and sisters there. May God grant them healing, health, recovery and peace.

One of the richest men in the history of our country, John D. Rockefeller, admitted before his death that his great wealth brought him no happiness. Another fabulously wealthy industrialist, Andrew Carnegie, observed that millionaires seldom smile. Powerful and wealthy men and women throughout history testified that neither money nor power can buy happiness. In our own day, we observe that celebrities are often very unhappy people. Their possessions, popularity, physical beauty, athletic skill or intellectual achievements or accomplishments do not guarantee happiness.

A verse from the Psalms gives us a hint as to the source of true happiness: “Happy the people so blessed; happy the people whose

God is the Lord.” The message in that verse is that only God can make us truly happy since it is He Who created us with longing souls that He alone can satisfy. Or, as Saint Augustine put it, “O Lord, our hearts are restless until they find rest in you!”

We all want to be happy. In other words, we want to be joyful, content and satisfied. Yet, why do so many people seem to be angry or sour and downright miserable? Why are so many people unsatisfied, restless, looking for something else? Perhaps they are pursuing happiness down the wrong path. Perhaps they have been led astray. Perhaps they have lost sight of the inherent dignity and beauty of the human life which God has given to all human beings.

The Gospel which we heard proclaimed tonight is often called the Beatitudes. Beatitude means happiness or blessings. These are the teachings Jesus gave us regarding the intrinsic beauty and life of human persons. They give us direction and purpose and incentive for a life of fulfillment and joy. The Beatitudes express the hope every Christian person should have that Jesus will bring us to eternal life. In the meantime, we are challenged to fulfill correctly the obligations we have to each other.

The inherent dignity of life is integral to each human being from the moment of conception to death. It cannot be removed by law or edict. Even the reality of sin which occurs in every human person does not diminish human dignity and worth. Sin certainly affects our relationship with God, which is why Jesus is constantly calling us to repent, to change and to follow Him more closely.

Among the many blessings that we here in the United States have received was a constitution that recognized the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Thus our society began to build up a culture of life which redounded to the benefit of every person. However, as time went on and people drifted from sound principles to selfish opinions, the culture shifted. Pope John Paul II had warned us that the loss of respect for human life was turning society into a culture of death.

Today there are many threats to our inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The most alarming and devastating of those threats are abortion, which is the deliberate killing of a human being before birth, euthanasia, which is putting to death those who are sick, disabled or dying, and assisted suicide, which aids a person to terminate their own life. As Pope John Paul II had warned, we are indeed surrounded by a culture of death.

Tonight we have gathered here to celebrate the Sanctity of Life. Therefore, we proclaim the Good News of Jesus — that He has come so that we might have life and have it more abundantly. We have come to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus whereby we are healed and restored, nourished and inspired. We have come to be instructed in the program after this Mass. But most important of all, we have come to give thanks and praise to Almighty God. It is He Who created each of us in His own Image and Likeness. It is He Who gave us our human dignity. It is He Who sanctifies us and redeems us because He is our life and our salvation.
John 15:9-17 — “I have called you friend ... It is not you who have chosen me ... but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father ... He may give you.”

Genesis 1:27 — “God created man in his image, in the divine image he created him, male and female he created them.”

God gave us His Son, as a human to live among us, to be a model, an example for us of how to live our life and give glory to Him. Imagine, God being human but still God entirely separate but still in human form. It wasn’t pretending or play acting or going through the motions — but actually eating, drinking, hurting, crying, becoming angry, experiencing sadness and struggling to grow into adulthood just like each of us, except that He was free from sin. Yet through all of this, remaining God. How is this possible? Jesus completely and totally God; completely and totally human. A mystery of our faith called “The Incarnation,” an incredible and incomprehensible gift.

God’s love for us is so great that He sent Jesus to be human, one of us, to show us how to live the life each of us has been given. Not only are we given this life, but each of us receives special gifts, talents and tools to be used for specific purposes. How do we know what these purposes are? Amazingly then God also gave us Himself as God the Holy Spirit to inspire, to motivate, to teach us how to share this immense love from Him with those around us. By this sharing, it becomes a means of fulfilling the promises of His new covenant established through Jesus — the Incarnate One (God and Human). This covenant is itself another expression of God’s immense love for us. A covenant for which He had His Son suffer and die on the cross to atone for the sins of mankind — a “New Beginning” in the human relationship with the Creator.

Isaiah 43:1-5 — “Thus says the Lord ... Fear not for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name. You are mine ... you are precious in my eyes and glorious ... because I love you.”

Each of us has received a “special invitation” to accept at no cost, except that we accept and use the gifts He has bestowed upon us. Since we have gifts that differ according to the favor bestowed on each of us, we are chosen to a specific role or ministry during our life. This role, we could never accomplish without God’s gifts.

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This role, using our gifts, is accomplished through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit within us and is the source of our hope and joy and our power and strength. We are never alone. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is produced through His presence in us. Matthew 7:16, “You will know them by their deeds.”

To produce this fruit we must be receptive to what the Holy Spirit wants to accomplish in us; we must permit Him to melt us, to mold us and to use us as He wishes. St. Paul advises us to be receptive, to be docile to His inspiration and guidance and also to be generous in permitting Him to give direction to our lives. We may never know when our good deeds will bear fruit when we respond to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In Isaiah 65:24 we read, “Before they call, I will answer.” Here is a shortened version of an assumed-to-be true story. This story was written by a doctor who worked in Central Africa.

One night I had worked hard to help a mother in the labor ward, but in spite of all we could do, she died, leaving us with a tiny premature baby and a crying 2-year-old daughter. It would be difficult to keep the baby alive with no electricity or special feeding facilities.

Even on the equator, nights were often chilly with treacherous drafts. The only water bottle burst upon filling. With no hot water bottle, I said to the student midwife, put the baby as near to fire as you safely can, and sleep between the baby and the door to keep it free from drafts. Keep the baby warm.

The following noon during prayer time with the orphanage children, one 10-year-old girl, Ruth, prayed with the usual blunt conciseness of our African children. “Please, God,” she prayed, “send us a hot water bottle today. It’ll be no good tomorrow, God, as the baby will be dead, so please send it this afternoon. And while You are about it, would You please send a dolly for the little girl so she’ll know You really love her?”

I had been in Africa for almost four years at that time, and I had never ever received a parcel from home. Halfway through the afternoon, a car came to the front door; the driver delivered a 22-pound parcel. I sent for the orphanage children. After opening from the top, I lifted out brightly-colored knitted jerseys, which I distributed, then some knitted bandages for the leprosy patients, then a box of mixed raisins and sultanas. Putting my hand in again I felt ... could it really be? Yes, a brand new, rubber hot water bottle! Ruth was in the front row of the children. She rushed forward, crying out, “If God has sent the bottle, He must have sent the dolly, too!” From the bottom of the box she pulled out the small, beautifully dressed dolly. She asked, “Can I go over with you and give this dolly to that little girl so she’ll know that Jesus really loves her?”

That parcel had been on the way for five whole months, packed up by my former Sunday school class whose leader had heard and obeyed God’s prompting through the Holy Spirit to send a hot water bottle, even to the equator! And one of the girls had put in a dolly for an African child — five months before, in answer to the believing prayer of a 10-year-old to bring it “that afternoon.”

The fruit of the response to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit — five months in the making!

“Before they call, I will answer.”

Isaiah 65:24

The closer we come to God, the more completely we give ourselves to Him, the more radically will our value system change. If we tend to a materialistic attitude, we have created an obstacle to our ability to grow in our faith and to pray to God.

All that God asks of us is to respond to His great love!

Msgr. David E. Rosage wrote, “Speak, Lord your servant is listening — a daily guide to Scriptural prayer,” which was used as a resource with many of his words and ideas paraphrased or shared above.
The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City has 20 Catholic grade schools and two Catholic high schools. For the 2009-2010 school year, the grade schools range in size from 68 students to 479 students. Mount St. Mary High School has 335 students and Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School has 698 students.

In these difficult economic times, it is well to note that in 1996, our Catholic high schools combined enrollment was 901 students. This school year the combined enrollment is 1,033. Over a 13-year period, therefore, our high school enrollment has increased by 132 students which represents a 14.6 percent increase! In the same time period, the grade schools have gone from a total of 3,872 students in 1996 to 4,175 students in 2009. This represents an increase of 7.8 percent. At a time when Catholic schools throughout the country have closed or have experienced a serious decline in enrollment, our trend is just the opposite. Since 1996, we have opened two grade schools and eight of our schools have added additions to their buildings! This is the “good news” of Catholic school education in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City!

The operation of our Catholic schools system relies heavily on funding from the Archdiocesan Development Fund. The Catholic Schools Office staff is responsible for providing in-service training for teachers and principals. In addition, the Catholic Schools Office personnel work with teachers and principals to develop quality curriculum standards that will challenge our students to the best of their ability. Because salaries of the school office personnel are paid through the ADF funds, any in-service provided to our schools and/or parishes is free of charge.

As a schools office we firmly believe that our students must be 21st century learners who are comfortable using technology. These tools engage and enhance learning. Consequently, when we provide training to pastors, principals, teachers, staff, students and families, we believe we must model the use of technology. Any equipment used by the department is purchased through the generosity of our donors to the ADF campaign.

Contrary to what is often found in the central offices of the public school, our Catholic Schools Office is staffed by three people. Sister Catherine Powers, CND, is in her 14th year as Superintendent of Schools.

Sister also oversees the Department of Education which has 10 people — schools (3), religious education (3), pastoral ministry (2), library (1), and accreditation office (1).

In the schools office, Sister Catherine is assisted by Cris Carter, Associate Superintendent of Schools, who is in her eighth year of service to the Archdiocese, and Marcia Dubey, administrative assistant, who has been with the schools office for 13 years. Together, these three staff members provide services for all of our schools and parishes that have Catholic schools.

Although listed separately, the Accreditation Office is also a part of the Catholic schools. Sally Howard, Coordinator of Accreditation, works for both the Archdiocese and the Diocese of Tulsa. As such, she oversees the accreditation process of the Oklahoma Conference of Catholic Schools Accreditation Association (OCCSAA). This process involves an extensive self-study engaged in by all of our grade schools which culminates in an on-site visit by a team from another diocese. The process ensures that our schools are meeting designated standards and are providing quality Catholic education to our students. The success of this process also relies heavily on funding from ADF.

As Superintendent of Schools, one of Sister Catherine’s dreams is that Catholic education could be more affordable for every Catholic student in the Archdiocese. It would be wonderful to have a scholarship program that would provide funding for the many who cannot afford to pay the ever increasing tuition.

If the donations to ADF increased dramatically, through the efforts of ADF+, our schools could possibly receive more financial assistance. We rely on your generosity for a continued strong Catholic school system.
ADF Support the Driving Force for Youth and Young Adult Ministry

The mission of the Youth and Young Adult Office is to respond to the needs of Catholic young people and to involve youth and young adults in sharing their unique gifts with the larger community with these three goals in mind:

To empower the youth and young adults of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today through retreats, advocating for work camps, service, leadership training, advisory boards.

To draw the youth and young adults to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith community in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City conferences camp, Sanctity of Life, leadership training.

To assist parishes in fostering the total personal and spiritual growth of each youth and young adult in their community. Training certification, safe environment, networking.

ADF subsidizes the Youth and Young Adult Office programming and affords us to have the staff to support and train youth and adults for youth ministry and to implement safe environment programming for all youth events including summer camp.

Many young people receive scholarship for summer camp and national regional conferences so that youth from every parish, culture and background have the opportunity to participate. One of our teens, Diego Estrada, who attended the National Catholic Youth Conference in Kansas City with more than 20,000 Catholic youth, thanked us for the opportunity to attend and described his experience as “eye opening and jaw dropping.”

The National Evangelization Team comes to our Archdiocese to facilitate retreats in parishes and schools for three weeks. Young adult ministers gather to network and to advise the office on young adult concerns. The Sanctity of Life Mass at the Cathedral brings in youth from all over to celebrate life. The Center for Ministry Development comes to train adults for youth ministry with an option for a national certification.

Office of Ministries Covers Wide Range of Needs for the Faithful

The Office of Ministries is the repository for the Archdiocesan Archives and houses the offices of the Vicar General, Msgr. Edward J. Weisenburger, the Vicar for Ministries, Rev. Joseph Ross, and the Chancellor, Tish Eason. The Office of the Safe Environment Coordinator, Jennifer Goodrich, is an adjunct to the Office of Ministries.

The Office of Ministries provides direct service to the people of the Archdiocese in several important areas. For example, the office is responsible for processing pre-nuptial investigations for the people of the Archdiocese at no charge to the couple or any parish. During 2009, approximately 600 pre-nuptial investigations were reviewed, approved and recorded.

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The Office of Ministries is the central statistics/data repository for the Archdiocese and collects and maintains statistical data for the Official Catholic Directory (Kenedy Directory), inclusion in which is required for preserving the Archdiocese’s status as a tax-exempt organization. Statistical data is also used by the Office of Ministries to respond to various surveys sponsored by the USCCB and to prepare, or assist, other Archdiocesan departments in preparing grant applications.

The Office of Ministries provides legal assistance and research for Archbishop Beltran and other departments and consults with priests of the Archdiocese and parishes on canonical administrative issues and civil legal matters. The office serves as the general spokesperson for the Archdiocese and is responsible for coordinating media contacts and press releases.

The Office of Safe Environment coordinates the Archdiocese's safe environment education and training efforts, including educational programs for youth and training and continuing educational programs for parish facilitators and those ministering to youth. The Office of Safe Environment and the Office of the Archdiocese coordinates the Archdiocese's safe environment programming for all youth events including summer camp.

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Future plans include continued efforts to preserve the records and artifacts of the Archdiocese (which cover a period of more than 100 years of the history of the Catholic Church in Oklahoma and Oklahoma Territory), to provide an appropriate archival space can be funded; digitizing sacramental records for ease of access; and the development of new educational programs addressing a myriad of the increasingly complex issues facing parish staff and leaders.
ADF Goal of $3 Million Helps Support Archdiocesan Ministries

**APPEAL GOAL - $3,000,000**  
**ACHIEVED FOR 2009**

**APPLICATION OF FUNDS**

$500,000 to Catholic Schools  
$2,500,000 to Operating Budget

This provides 47.7 percent of the yearly expenses for the regular and normal daily operations.

Below is a list of the ministries and departments headquartered at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Also, provided are the 63 staff members working in the building along with their years of service and experience. The total years of service to the people of this Archdiocese approaches 600 years. A true indication of dedication and love in the service of God’s family!

**Office of the Archbishop:**
Carol Davito – 16 years

**Archdiocesan Development Fund Appeal:**
Executive Director: Thomas Maxwell – 4 1/2 years. Staff: Sheila Morgan – 10 years, Donna Dolf – 3 years

**Business Office:**
Manager: David Johnson – 12 years  
Staff: Marlene Rosbach – 20 years, Shannon Schrempp – 20 years, Dorinda Kelly – 9 years, Carol Ruzicka – 4 years, Diane Schutte – 2 years

**Catholic Foundation:**
Executive Director: Bernard Semtner – New  
Staff: Toby Boothe – 3 years

**Education:**
Superintendent: Sr. Catherine Powers – 14 years  
School Office Staff: Cris Carter – 8 years, Marcia Dubey – 13 years, Sally Howard – 3 years

**Library:**
Charlotte Janz – 10 years

**Pastoral Ministry:**

**Director:** Sister Diane Koorie – 9 years  
**Staff:** Cecilia Grimes – 3 years

**Religious Education:**
Director: Patricia Koenig – 11 years  
Staff: Angela Schmidt – 3 1/2 years, Becky Gomez – 10 years

**Family Life:**
Director: George Rigazzi – 10 years  
Staff: Lisa Carrasco – 14 years, Cristy Welch – 4 years

**Hispanic Ministry:**
Director: S. Rosario Martinez – 5 years  
Staff: Ana Romero – 19 years

**Ministries:**
**Vicar General:** Msgr. Edward J. Weisenburger – 20 years  
**Chancellor:** Loutitia Eason – 12 years  
**Staff:** Suzan Lombardi – 2 years

**Safe Environment:**
Jennifer Goodrich – 3 years

**Permanent Diaconate:**
Director: Max Schwarz – 6 1/2 years  
Staff: Norman Mejstrik – 4 years, Jean Milligan – 10 1/2 years

**Sooner Catholic:**
Editor: Ray Dyer – 8 years  
Staff: Cara Koenig – 12 years, Mauro Yanez – 8 years, Amanda McCabe – 2 years

**Tribunal of First Instance:**
Judicial Vicar: Reverend Richard Stansberry, JCL – 10 years  
**Anne Kirby, JCL – 5 years,**  
**Staff:** Marilyn Newman – 7 1/2 years

**Tribunal Interdiocesan of Second Instance:**
Judicial Vicar: Reverend Roberto Quant, JCL – 13 years  
**Reverend Elmer Schwarz, JCL – 15 years,**  
**Sister Kathryn Olsen, IHM, JCL – 9 years,**  
**Staff:** Toni Nichols – 17 years

In addition to the ministries listed above, expenses from the operating budget also cover such areas as — Priests, Hospital Ministry, Correction Ministry, Our Lady of Guadalupe Youth Camp, Seminarians, National Council of Bishops and the Holy See.

The importance of donations to the ADF Appeal cannot be overstated when one considers the range and scope of the activities and support provided to the people of this Archdiocese.

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**ADF 2010 Gift Form**

Please Print Clearly

Mr. and/or Mrs., Ms., Rev., Dr.

Address ____________________________

Credit this donation to Parish ____________

Credit Card: Please Charge my ☐ Master Card ☐ Visa a one time charge

Account # ____________________________ Exp. Date (Mo./Yr.) ____________________________

Card Holders Name ____________________________ (Please Print)

EFT Transaction A check must be enclosed. All transactions will be processed on the 15th of the month.

Signature ____________________________

Total Amount of Gift ____________

1st Payment (enclosed) ____________

Balance ____________

Please indicate method of payment

- 10 Pmts. March-December
- 4 pmts. April-July-Oct-Dec
- 2 Pmts. April and October
- 1 Pmt. Show Month
- Electronic Funds Transfer
- Credit Card

Make checks payable to the ADF

Mail to ADF, P.O. box 32180 OKC, OK 73123
Youngster Turns Birthday Into a Fundraiser for Poor of Peru

My name is Brendan Murphree. I am a fourth-grade student at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. When I was asked to write this article, I was flattered and a little nervous. Then I thought about it and realized if I shared my story with everyone, maybe others may do like I did and what a difference it would make on the world!

It all started two years ago when I was about to turn 9 years old. My mom said I could have a birthday party. I saw that I had a lot of toys, so I figured why don't I have a fundraiser for my birthday party. I knew the people in Peru don't have a lot of things like we have. There are many times we help them through St. John's and through the school. I thought about how if I ask my friends to just make a small donation for the people in Peru instead of giving me a birthday present, we could help some people and have a fun time for my birthday. My mom had a great idea to turn my fundraiser birthday into a charity carnival. We have fun games and prizes and since my birthday is close to Halloween, we wear our costumes and have mummy races. It's a lot of fun!

In 2008 for my 9th birthday I decided to use the money I collected from my party to buy some charcoal stoves for the people in Peru. I was hoping we would get to buy a few and was amazed when my mom told me we collected $500! We were able to purchase the stoves and some food packages to go along with it!

This year I was so excited to get to be able to help the people in Peru again. For my 10th birthday I chose to use the money collected this year to purchase car batteries. I found out they use car batteries to help provide electricity to homes. I can't imagine living without electricity. I couldn't believe when my mom told me how much we collected this year. We raised $660! I am really thankful for my friends and family's generosity and kindness.

It feels really good knowing I made a difference in this world by helping those less fortunate. This is a tradition I look forward to every year now. I am hoping this article will inspire someone else to maybe do the same or come up with another way to make a difference, like my sister, Alyssa's Girl Scout troop did. They made hair clips for the girls in Peru. It makes me feel good to be helping others, which is the best birthday present!

Brendan Murphree
Fourth-grade student
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Story Intended to Show ‘Logic’ Bishops Face in Health Care Debate

A story about a member of Congress who wants our U.S. Catholic Bishops to "join the compromise" over the so-called health-care reform legislation was published in the Jan. 10 Sooner Catholic.

The story generated a few calls and e-mails to the Sooner Catholic. Most of those contacting us wanted to know if we'd lost our minds running such a story.

Connecticut Democrat Rep. Rosa DeLauro, a Catholic, was quoted in the Catholic News Agency story as saying the U.S. Bishops should not hold health-care reform "hostage" in the U.S. Senate as they did in the House. The story first appeared in the Huffington Post and was then picked up by the Catholic News Agency.

For the record, I don't agree with Rep. DeLauro, in fact, quite the opposite is true. The reason I ran the story was I wanted Oklahoma Catholics to see what our bishops are up against. We're somewhat insulated from this kind of thinking in Oklahoma.

DeLauro wants the Catholic Church in the United States to compromise the sanctity of life. She indicated in the story that she would support language in the health-care proposal offered by the Senate that would allow taxpayer money to be used to fund abortions. This is of course totally unacceptable to our Catholic faith and thankfully our bishops have fought tooth and nail against this evil.

It's just my opinion, but I think the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops should send DeLauro a message. They should tell her they are willing to consider her proposal just as soon as God tells them there's room for negotiation concerning His Ten Commandments.

DeLauro's logic is not only goofy, it's dangerous. And more scary is the fact DeLauro's got some power and influence.

Heaven help us and especially the unborn.
Homily Recalls Civil Rights Struggle for MLK, Nation

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Jesus said: “I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.”

These words of Jesus speak to us about the present and the future.

They go directly to the real meaning and purpose of human life. To do so, Jesus first reveals that He is Lord. He is Savior. It is He and He alone Who redeems the human race.

The ultimate fulfillment of human life is granted (by God) in the kingdom of heaven. There, in the presence of God, we obtain all that we could ever desire, God Himself, and we are totally fulfilled and complete.

The proximate fulfillment of human life is also granted to us by God when Jesus says, “This is My Body. This is My Blood. Take and eat. Take and drink.” The Holy Eucharist enables us to communicate with God.

Ariel Clark performs a liturgical dance at the MLK Mass.

in a most dramatic way. The Lord is present everywhere — but in the Eucharist, He is present sacramentally. This means that although we can see this reality only with the eyes of faith, there are now visible and tangible acts to bring us into a knowing, loving COMMUNIO, a new and dynamic way of relating to God.

While seeking final fulfillment in heaven and experiencing the COMMUNIO on earth, there is the constant reminder from God that there must be a conversion of heart. Repent of your sins and be baptized was the call Saint John the Baptist gave to the people of his time. It was the same call Jesus gave to His Apostles and to all of us.

Human beings were created by God in His own Image and Likeness.

Therefore, every human person is a sacred being. Every human life is a reflection of God. Every human being has been given life by God Himself and for a purpose — to receive God’s love and to love Him in return.

The beauty of creation and the inherent dignity of the human being is the work of God. No one can destroy this work of God which is His work of love. However, since He gifted us with freedom, we can reject His love and this is precisely what sin is. Sin is disobedience to God. Sin is turning away from God. Sin is a failure to acknowledge and respect the true dignity of human beings.

Throughout history, God has raised up stalwart men and women to call sinful people to conversion. As a young seminarian, I remember reading Dr. Martin Luther King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Prison.” I was deeply moved by the content of that “letter.” It was exactly what Saint Augustine had preached and what the Church had proclaimed for centuries.

It truly was a call to conversion for the contemporary society. It was a profound teaching on the inherent dignity and beauty of every human being.

From then on, I became involved in the civil rights movement and the quest for peace, justice and equality. This is what our Catholic faith has always taught. Moreover, the popes throughout the 20th century have urged us to put into practice what the Church teaches.

My ministry as a young priest was enlivened by the march in Selma and the activities engendered by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The life and dignity of all people was the underlying motivation and theme. The governmental enactment of the civil rights laws of the ’60s was a success for life and equality.

Right so today do we gather to celebrate the determination and accomplishments of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. From that era of time and from the example he gave us, we today should continue the drive to restore respect for all human life. Today the dignity and freedom of human beings is no longer a struggle to be won solely for African-Americans but indeed for all people. Today the great threat to human life is abortion. This issue demeans and kills unborn babies of every race and every background.

Today we need to revive the enthusiasm and prophetic vision of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We need to be reminded and inspired by the Gospel of Life as he was.

We need to open ourselves to repentance and change. We need to hear and receive the ongoing announcement of Jesus: “I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly.”
Annual Men’s Conference Set for Feb. 20 in Norman

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Fellowship of Catholic Men is pleased to announce that the 14th annual In The Father’s Footsteps Catholic Men’s Conference will be held on Saturday, Feb. 20 at the new Embassy Suites Conference Center in Norman. Four outstanding Catholic speakers — Steve Bollman, Father Geoff Rose, OFSFS, Father Thomas Boyer and Eric Porteous — will hold you accountable for living up to their mission. We encourage fathers to attend with their sons and families in a modern society.

Young men (high school and college age) will get more time and attention for their needs at the 2010 conference than ever before. Eric Porteous, director of Direct Contact for Life Teen International, will host a teen lunch and lead a special program geared to the interests and needs of young men and the issues they face. Time for reconciliation is built into the young men’s program.

We encourage fathers to attend one of the four breakouts designed for them while letting their sons attend the young men’s breakout session independently. Fathers and sons will be able to spend the rest of the conference day together, including the opportunity to hear each of the featured speakers.

Early registration, $39 for adults and $15 for students, continues online (www.catholicmen.net) until Wednesday, Feb. 3. Registration after the early bird deadline and at the door is $49 for adults and $15 for students. All conference activities and a box lunch are included in the fee. Doors open at 8 a.m. and the conference begins at 9 a.m. This year’s activities include a fellowship breakout session — sign up online or use the form in our brochure. Mass is open to all who wish to attend and begins at 4:30 p.m. Please encourage family members and friends to join you. Look for our brochures in the vestibule of Catholic churches throughout Oklahoma to learn more about the conference or to obtain a mail-in registration form. Early bird registrations must be completed online or postmarked by Feb. 3 to receive the discount. Register online today at www.catholicmen.net and save $10. For more information, call Deacon Bill Bawden at (405) 245-8042.

Steve Bollman, during a successful career in the energy industry, experienced firsthand the profound pressures placed on men and families in a modern society. He has also witnessed the lasting impact a man of faith can have in the greater society. Steve is the founder and president of Paradisus Dei and developer of the Men’s Leadership program, That Man is You!

Paradisus Dei is an organization of lay Catholics dedicated to helping families discover the super abundance of God within the context of marriage and family life. Steve is also a nationally recognized writer whose articles have appeared in the National Catholic Register, Inside the Vatican and Catholic Answers, among others.

Father Geoff Rose, OSFS, believes that his life’s mission boils down to one word: service. Father Rose is a member of the religious congregation, the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales and Chaplain of Lumen Christi Catholic High School, Jackson, Mich.

Prior to joining the Oblates in 1996, Father Rose explored just about every angle of political service. He was elected to the City Council of Ypsilanti, Mich., at the age of 21 in 1992. He has served as one of the youngest Mayor Pro Tems in the history of the state of Michigan. Father Rose has also served as executive director of a Political Action Committee and as a senior staffer for a member of Congress.

Father Rose is the co-founder of Mark 5:11 Ministries, serves on the board of directors of IsleGo Ministries and is director and chaplain of the Catholic HEART Work Camp. Known affectionately as “Frose” by his students, his energy, humor and passion for sharing God’s love is refreshing.

Father Thomas Boyer, in his words, is a priest who has served the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City for 41 years. He has taught at Bishop McGuinness and Mount St. Mary Catholic high schools in Oklahoma City and has also given numerous Diocesan retreats for priests and parish congregations.

For 15 years, he served as director of vocations for the Archdiocese. He is a member of the Priests Personnel Board, National Pastoral Musicians and served on the National Organized...
Cardinal Expresses Support

Most Rev. Louis Kébreau, SDB
President Conference Episcopal d'Haiti

Dear Bishop Kébreau:
On behalf of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I write to express our solidarity with you, our brother bishops and all Haitians at this difficult time as you attempt to cope with the devastating impact of this earthquake. Our hearts are with yours as we gradually learn the extent of the tremendous loss of life and structures. We are particularly saddened at the news of the death of Archbishop Joseph Serge Miot of Port-au-Prince.

I assure you that, in concert with government and other agencies that have already begun to bring emergency assistance, Catholic Relief Services, under the leadership of Archbishop Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York, will respond with humanitarian relief for your people.

Our national collection for the Church in Latin America, under the chairmanship of Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, Archbishop of San Antonio, will also be anxious to help the Church in Haiti in the weeks and months ahead.

The bishops of the United States will appeal to our people to be generous in coming to the assistance of our neighbors to the south.

Uniting our prayers with yours, we commend the souls of the dead and the dying to the loving mercy of God and we invoke the intercession of Our Blessed Mother, Notre Dame d'Haiti, in bringing God's special graces and blessings to those engaged in rescuing the injured and the suffering.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Francis Cardinal George, OMI
Archbishop of Chicago President

Men’s Conference

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Men’s Conference

Men’s Conference

Eric Porteous graduated from Arizona State University in 2002 with a B.A. in communication. For eight years he was the coordinator of High School Youth Ministry at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Scottsdale, Ariz. During his time at St. Patrick’s, Eric led numerous mission trips to Mexico with the Friends of the Orphans Organization. He has spoken to hundreds of men and thousands of teens. His authentic and direct message is not only spoken but lived out in his daily life.

Currently, Eric is the director of Direct Contact for Life Teen International, an international Catholic youth ministry organization. His daily task is to reach out to parishes on a worldwide basis and to help them implement strong youth ministry programs. He travels around the world training youth ministers and core members and leading retreats for both teens and adults. Eric is a sports fanatic, and in his free time you can see him on the field or the court.

Breakout Sessions
Sacred Sex, Sacred Marriage and the Holy Eucharist
We live in a sexualized society. In the media, sexual relationships have few boundaries and it is rare that sex within marriage is depicted as exciting or satisfying. So ... what is God's plan for sex and marriage? How well are we living up to that plan? What are the consequences of creating our own answers and where is the Eucharist in all of this? Co-presented by Deacon Roy Forsythe and Father Joe Jacobi.

Resisting Temptation and Overcoming Sin in the Face of Evil
Turn on the TV for an hour and the “real” world is quickly presented in commercials catering both to our vanity and our lust for food, women, gambling, alcohol and the acquisition of things — lots and lots of things! Turn off the TV and this distorted view is still present to varied degrees in all facets of our lives. How do you maneuver the sea of temptation and maintain “custody” of your personal holiness, your calling as a worthy son of God? Co-presented by Father Thomas Boyer and Ray Haefele.

The Fast, The Furious and Your Family — Fighting for Time In A Frenzied World
Have you stopped to ask yourself, “Why are we so busy?” Carting children between practices, games, recitals, school events, birthday parties and get-togethers with family and friends — all the while multi-tasking: checking e-mail from work, directing homework lessons, sending text messages, trying to keep up with the deafening din of communication, entertainment and activity. Are you with your family but not truly present to them? Has all of this activity squeezed out the time to truly talk, share, listen, pray and relax? Co-presented by Father Geoff Rose, OSFS and Joe Elbow.

Developing A Successful Men’s Program In Your Parish
Do you wish that you had a regular men’s program in your parish — a reason to gather with other Christian men for fellowship and the sharing of God’s Word? Hoping to improve an existing program? Whether you want to be a leader or a participant, this session is designed to give you an overview of the keys to a successful men’s program. A primary focus will be on the That Man is You! (TMIY) Men’s Leadership Program developed by the presenter. Co-presented by Steve Bollman and Don Greiner.

Authentic Holiness: A Heroic Calling For Young Men
This talk teaches young men what it means to live lives of heroic virtue by striving for holiness. Through powerful testimony and witness to the faith, they will be challenged to practice chastity; uphold the dignity of the body and women, and pursue an authentic holiness: a heroic calling. Co-presented by Father Geoff Rose, OSFS and Joe Elbow.

Catholic Radio
Now on AM and FM radio Monday-Friday on
KTLR 890 AM
1 p.m. till sundown and
KTLR 94.1 FM
1 p.m. to 7 a.m.
Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Taking Life to Save Life

Many well-intentioned pro-lifers have inadvertently adopted flawed or incomplete arguments while trying to defend the noblest of causes: the plight of the vulnerable and the unborn. In the debate over stem cells, for example, a common argument runs like this:

Human embryonic stem cell research is wrong because we are witnessing new medical treatments for sick patients exclusively with adult, not embryonic stem cells. Every disease that has been successfully treated thus far with stem cells has relied on adult stem cells, while embryonic stem cells haven’t produced any cures yet. Adult stem cells work, while embryonic don’t, and it’s basically a waste of resources to pursue something that is not working. Therefore, scientists should stop beating their drums about human embryonic stem cells since all the real-life treatments for patients are occurring exclusively with adult stem cells.

This argument, often employed by those of a pro-life persuasion, is flawed on a number of counts.

First, it seems to presume that the only yardstick for determining embryonic stem cell “success” will be in terms of benefits to patients who are struggling with various ailments and diseases. Yet researchers themselves would argue that there are many other reasons to pursue embryonic stem cell research. For example, such research is sure to be valuable for gaining further insight into the cellular mechanisms underlying the development of an organism and is already providing important clues about how an animal builds itself up from a single starting cell called the zygote. Scientific research using non-human (e.g., mouse, rat or monkey) embryonic stem cells can address these kinds of questions in a responsible way and clearly deserves to be funded and promoted. Such non-human embryonic stem cell research is, in fact, a praiseworthy and ethically uncontroversial kind of scientific investigation.

Second, the argument that adult stem cells are helping sick patients while embryonic are not — and thus the adult stem cells are “more ethical” — seems to reduce the stem cell ethics debate to a discussion about what works best, or what is most effective. In fact, however, the ethical concerns have very little to do with scientific efficiency and everything to do with the fact that researchers violate and destroy young humans (who are still embryos) in order to acquire their stem cells.

Furthermore, it may be strictly a matter of time before the embryonic stem cells begin providing cures for human patients. At any point in the future, we could be greeted by a front page news story announcing a dramatic “success,” perhaps an embryonic stem cell transplant allowing childhood diabetics to give up their insulin injections or paralyzed patients to walk. That “success,” however, would not change the ethical objections to embryo destruction or make an evil act a morally acceptable one — though it might increase the temptation for some to cross the objective ethical line.

To put it more simply: Even if it were possible to cure all diseases known to mankind by harvesting (and therefore killing) a single human embryo, it would never become ethical to do so. We cannot choose evil that good might come, nor can we ever afford to pay the steep ethical price of ignoring the sacrosanct humanity of the embryo, that tiny creature that each of us once was ourselves. Treating a fellow human being, albeit a very small one, as a means rather than an end, violates his or her most basic human rights.

In fact, the direct killing of other humans, whether young and embryonic or old and in their dotage, is properly referred to as an intrinsic evil, meaning it is in every instance wrong, and ought never be chosen as a human act. Intrinsic evils do not admit of any legitimate exceptions. Once we concretely recognize the immoral character of an action prohibited by an exceptionless norm, the only ethically acceptable act is to follow the requirements of the moral law and turn away from the action which it forbids.

Bioethicist Paul Ramsey put it well in suggesting that any man of serious conscience, when discussing ethics, will have to conclude that “there may be some things that men should never do. The good things that men do can be made complete only by the things they refuse to do.”

Refusing to destroy human embryos as a scientist does not imply any opposition to science itself, but only to unethical science, which, like unethical investment practices or unethical medicine, is invariably harmful to society. Good science is necessarily ethical science; it cannot ever be reduced merely to “efficient” science, that which might work or “solve my problems” at the expense of others. In arguing for ethical science, those of us working to safeguard human life would do well to examine our premises carefully, so as to avoid weak or questionable assumptions that could undermine the thrust of our arguments.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D., earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org.

St. Gregory’s University Announces Budget Restructuring Plan

SHAWNEE — St. Gregory’s University officials announced Jan. 13 a budget restructuring plan that will help ensure the school’s fiscal stability — a response to declining endowment and enrollment figures. As part of the plan, the school said it will implement a hiring freeze, cut expenditures and lay off a small portion of its 119 faculty and staff.

“Although implementing a plan like this is never easy, it is necessary and will hopefully allow us to go forward not only surviving, but thriving,” said interim president Dr. David Marker. “The decisions made in this plan were carefully considered, as to have the least impact on the things that allow us to carry out our mission with integrity.”

Marker, in an address to the SGU community, said about 5 percent of the school’s faculty and staff will be affected by layoffs at this time, and those layoffs were to take place by the end of the week. He said 12 positions are currently open within the university but will not be filled at this time.

“We are by no means alone. Many institutions of higher education are facing financial challenges,” Marker said. “It is important that we clearly identify the nature of those challenges so we can address them successfully.”

St. Gregory’s University is Oklahoma’s oldest institution for higher learning and the state’s only Catholic university. SGU serves approximately 700 students in two colleges — the College of Arts and Sciences and the College for Working Adults.
Buenas Noticias...

...La Santidad de la Vida Humana

En otras palabras, deseamos poder disfrutar, estar contentos y satisfactos. Ahora, ¿Por qué tantas personas parecen estar molestas o amargadas y totalmente miserables? ¿Por qué tantas personas están insatisfechas, inquietas, buscando algo más? Quizás están buscando la felicidad en el camino equivocado. Quizás se han dado cuenta de la verdadera belleza y dignidad de la vida humana, la cual Dios ha dado a todos los seres humanos.

El Evangelio que escuchamos en esta noche es usualmente llamado Beatitudes. Beatitud quiere decir felicidad o bendiciones. Estas son las enseñanzas que Jesucristo nos dio en la que se refiere a la belleza e intrínseca de la vida humana. Ellas nos dan dirección, propósito e incentivo para una vida de enriquecimiento y disfrute.

Entonces es normal que nos enfade cuando escuchamos estas enseñanzas, ¿verdad? Pero si es así, ¿por qué? Estas no son enseñanzas nuevas. En el mismo Evangelio hablamos de la misma cosa. ¿Por qué tenemos la sensación de que no las estamos ejecutando en nuestra vida diaria?

En esta noche, queremos recordar que la felicidad no es un bien material, una cosa que se puede adquirir fácilmente. La felicidad es un estado de ánimo que viene de dentro de nosotros. Es una sensación que nos hace sentirnos satisfechos con lo que tenemos y con lo que somos. Es una sensación que nos hace sentirnos felices con lo que hacemos y con lo que hacemos por otros.

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Oficina del Ministerio Hispano de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City anuncia Retiro Espiritual

El próximo 30 y 31 de enero se efectuará en el Centro Pastoral Católico un retiro espiritual auspiciado por la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano. Así lo dio a conocer Sr. Rosario Martínez, quien es el director de esta oficina y quien comentó que el Padre Manuel Magallanes, miembro de la Abadía de San Gregorio, presidirá el retiro totalmente en español. ¿Está es una oportunidad para convivir y crecer en la fe! Para más información pueden contactar al Ministerio Hispano de la Arquidiócesis por el siguiente número telefónico: (405) 728-3561.
El pasado 18 de enero en la Iglesia Católica Corpus Cristi
Celebrado tributo multicultural en ocasión al día del Dr. Martin Luther King

Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Con una dedicación multicultural y la celebración de la Eucaristía presidida por el Arcipreste Beltrán, decenas de católicos de diferentes partes de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City se congregaron en la parroquia de Corpus Cristi para homenajear al Dr. Martin Luther King, quien fue un hombre que tenía una fuerte creencia y nona para obrar el bien y luchar contra el mal. Martin Luther King era un activista de los derechos civiles que organizó y llevó a cabo diversas actividades pacíficas reclamando el derecho al voto, la no discriminación y otros derechos civiles básicos para la gente de color. Sin embargo, fue asesinado en 1968 por defender a los pobres y a los discriminados. Aunque no profesaba la fe católica, nuestra Iglesia coincide en su lucha pacífica para favorecer a los más desamparados. Martin Luther King es recordado como uno de los grandes líderes de la historia de los Estados Unidos en el siglo XX que luchó por el respeto a la dignidad humana.

En esta celebración en homenaje al Dr. Martin Luther King se reza por los afectados y víctimas del terrible terremoto de Haití, país más pobre del hemisferio occidental. El Dr. Martin Luther King usó el camino del bien para encontrar pacíficamente la reivindicación del respeto a la vida humana.
Bishops Call for Help to Stop Abortion Funding in Health Care

WASHINGTON — In a nationwide call to Catholics to prevent health-care reform from being derailed by the abortion lobby, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has sent bulletin inserts and pulpit announcements to almost 19,000 parishes across the country.

“As longtime advocates of health-care reform, the U.S. Catholic bishops continue to make the moral case that genuine health care reform must protect the life, dignity, consciences and health of all, especially the poor and vulnerable,” the insert says. “Health care-reform should not advance a pro-abortion agenda in our country.”

Faith Nursing Spots Still Available

OKLAHOMA CITY — Catholic Charities Faith Community Nursing Resource Center still has a few spots available in the Faith Community Nurse (FCN) Basic Preparation Course. The course is open to registered nurses of all faiths and will be held over the weekends of Jan. 28-30 and Feb. 11-13 at Our Lady of the Lodge in Guthrie. Participants must attend both weekends to earn FCN certification.

“This is the 12th year the course has been available for registered nurses,” said Marilyn Seiler, faculty coordinator and manager of the Faith Community Nursing Resource Center. “By combining faith, knowledge, compassion and professionalism, Faith Community Nurses become a bridge between the challenges of medicine and the solidarity of their faith.”

Registration is limited to 20 participants and tuition is $650, which includes meals, lodging and materials. Scholarships are available for those who qualify.

Faith Community Nurses help members of church congregations cope with various health conditions and may have about their health. They also provide assistance with health promotion, offer referrals and advocacy, make home, hospital and nursing home visits, coordinate volunteers, and assist with parishioners’ spirituality.

For more information or to register, contact Diane Steltenkamp at (405) 523-3000, or visit catholiccharitiesok.org.

Catholic Charities has been dedicated to helping the people of central and western Oklahoma since 1912. All of Catholic Charities programs are available to women, children, families and the elderly regardless of race, creed, religion, ability to pay or other qualifications.

Knights to Host Festive Mardi Gras Event

OKLAHOMA CITY — Knights of Columbus Council No.10822 at St. Eugene’s Parish is hosting its 18th annual Mardi Gras Ball. The event will be held Feb. 13 at St. Eugene’s, 2400 W. Hefner Road. Council 10822 is an official Mardi Gras Krewe. There will be a live band, skits, presentation of the ladies, queen and king coronations and other Mardi Gras traditions. Tables for eight are $160, couples $40 and $20 for an individual. For reservations, call Steve Chastain at (405) 755-1052.

Scout Earns Rank of Eagle

OKLAHOMA CITY — James Reeves received his Eagle Scout Award at the Court of Honor on Jan. 10, 2010, at All Souls Episcopal Church. James is a member of Troop 193 in Last Frontier Council’s Baden Powell district.

As a Boy Scout, James has earned 43 merit badges. He has held leadership positions of scribe, historian, instructor and patrol leader for Cobra Patrol. He floated the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, paddling over 200 miles through white water as his first high adventure trip. James went to Philmont Scout Ranch this summer and backpacked over 60 miles. James plans to go to another high adventure camp at Sea Base this June. James was elected to Order of the Arrow and has earned his Brotherhood Membership.

James’ Eagle project consisted of building a flagstone walkway on tee box number 6 at Kickingbird Golf Club. This is a city of Edmond golf course where James learned to play golf. Kickingbird Golf Club plans to use his design and extra stone on other fairways. He washed cars to earn money to pay for the stone.

James is a freshman at Casady School. He plans to play on the golf team this spring. He is a member of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, where he has been an Acolyte since 2006. While a Cub Scout he earned two Catholic Religious awards, Light of Christ and Parvuli Dei. James is a member of South Central Junior PGA, Oklahoma County 4-H Shotgun Club, and the National Eagle Scout Association. As a middle school student at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School, James was awarded the 2008 Duke TIP Certificate of Merit for mathematically and verbally talented students. He also won Duke TIP state recognition in science.

The 2009 St. Ann Retirement Center’s Clothing Collection was a huge success. Residents of St. Ann’s donated 22 large bags of clothing to be donated to Sister BJ’s Pantry, a downtown Oklahoma City ministry run by Sister Joseph Foley that distributes food and clothing to the homeless. This year’s collection, the center’s third, began in late November and was delivered on Dec. 11. St. Ann Retirement Center is a community of 180 residents at 7501 W. Britton Road.
24 The Catholic Daughters of Holy Trinity Parish in Okarche will hold their annual chicken noodle dinner from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the parish hall. Cost is adults, $6; children 6-12, $4; and 3 and under eat free. Three hand-made quilts will also be given away.

24 Pilgrimage Sunday, Mass begins at 11 a.m. and includes blessing of the sick and blessing of the children, noon lunch, 1 p.m. Novena prayers to Infant Jesus of Prague, Litany of the Infant Jesus and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague is located at Saint Wenceslaus Catholic Church at 304 Jim Thorpe Blvd. in Prague. From I-40, take exit 200 north 7 miles on SH99/377, or from I-44, take Stroud exit south 18 miles on SH 99/377, (405) 567-3080 or shrineofinfantjesus.com.

24 Michael Reardon, THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, at Holy Spirit Parish in Mustang at 6:30 p.m. This event is free and open to all.

26 Eucharistic Adoration at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, NW 32nd and Western, every Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to noon. All are welcome.

26 Bishop McGuinness home basketball game vs. Union. Varsity girls, 6 p.m., varsity boys, 7:30 p.m.

27 Learn the Sympto-Thermal Method of Natural Family Planning with Jeanne Blasi, certified instructor, on Wednesday nights, Jan. 27, Feb. 24 and March 31 at 7 p.m. at St. John the Baptist Church, 9th and Boulevard, Edmond, in the basement council room. You must register for the class online at www.ccli.org.

27 Michael Reardon, THE BOOK OF REVELATION, at Epiphany Parish in Oklahoma City at 7 p.m. This event is free and open to all.

28 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at Epiphany Parish, in the chapel every Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and daily (M,T,W,F) from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. All are welcome. Epiphany is located at 7336 W. Britton Road, Oklahoma City 73132.

28 Michael Reardon, THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, at St. Eugene Parish in Oklahoma City at 7 p.m. This event is free and open to all.

29 Marriage Encounter Weekend. Contact Dan or Jean Forgue at (405) 760-0390 for more information.

29 Meditation Retreat for MIND-BODY/SPirit, from 1 to 4:30 p.m. with Debra Luther. LPC. Place: Retreat House at Red Plains Spirituality Center. Call (405) 373-0804 to register. Fee: $60, plus $15 non-refundable deposit. Bring a blanket or mat and a jacket for outdoors.

29 Film and Discussion Series at St. Francis of Assisi Parish at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall. This month’s movie will be “Millions” directed by Danny Boyle, 2005. Films will be shown in their entirety with an introduction and a discussion following. Concessions and child care will be provided by the parish. For more information, please call the Religious Education Office at St. Francis, (405) 528-0485.

30 STS Make-up Placement Test for current eighth-graders. Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School will be administering a make-up placement test from 8 to 11:30 a.m.

30 STS Make-up Placement Test for current eighth-graders. Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School will be administering a make-up placement test from 8 to 11:30 a.m.

30 Mount St. Mary home basketball game vs. OCS. Varsity girls, 1:30 p.m., varsity boys, 3 p.m.

Sooner Catholic
St. Gregory’s Abbey Novices Profess First Vows

SHAWNEE — Two St. Gregory’s Abbey novices made their first profession of vows Jan. 7 during a special Epiphany Mass inside the abbey’s chapel. Brother Gabriel Powell, O.S.B., and Brother Simeon Spitz, O.S.B., made a public commitment to live as monks at the Benedictine monastery for the next three years.

“St. Gregory’s Abbey is greatly blessed by the profession of Brother Gabriel and Brother Simeon,” said the Rt. Rev. Lawrence Stasyszen, O.S.B., who celebrated the Mass. “Both are very talented and are very sincere in their desire to grow closer to God and to serve others through our way of life. We are grateful also for the support that they enjoy from their families and from the abbey’s many friends and associates.

“With the prayerful support and encouragement of broader faith community, the abbey will continue to be blessed with new vocations and a bright future.”

As they have now professed their first, or temporary, monastic vows, Brother Gabriel and Brother Simeon become junior monks of the St. Gregory’s community. After three years of vowed life, junior monks can apply to make their final vows. They will assume work assignments in the ministries of St. Gregory’s Abbey and will continue their formal academic studies to prepare them for their future roles of service as monks.

When he entered the novitiate a year ago, Shannon Powell received the name of Gabriel, after Archangel Gabriel, who was sent by God to deliver the news to Mary that she would bear a child — Jesus. Brother Gabriel was born in Waynesboro, Miss., but grew up in McAlester and attended Pittsburg High School. He made his first visit to St. Gregory’s Abbey at age 15, and after a period of discerning his call, decided to enter the candidacy and apply for the novitiate.

Zakary Spitz also entered the novitiate last January. He received the name of Simeon, after Saint Simeon, who is described as a righteous man filled with the Holy Spirit. Before his death, Saint Simeon received the Christ child into his arms in fulfillment of God’s promise.

Brother Simeon was born in Elk City, and attended Canute High School. After graduation in 2002, he entered college at St. Gregory’s University where he first encountered the monastic community. Upon graduation in 2006, Brother Simeon attended St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, in Overbrook, Pa., for two years before returning to Shawnee to enter the novitiate.

St. Gregory’s Abbey is a community of Benedictine monks founded in 1875. The community consists of 27 members ranging in age from 26 to 87.