Tribunal Accepts Oath to Work for Canonization of Father Rother

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKARCHE — Our Catholic Faith in Oklahoma has turned another page.

Inside the beautiful Holy Trinity Church on the evening of Oct. 5, Archbishop Eusebius J. Beltran administered a solemn oath to the members of the Canonization Tribunal who vowed to work for the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of Father Stanley F. Rother.

On July 28, 1981, at the age of 46, Father Rother was beaten and shot to death while serving at the Oklahoma mission of Micatoka in Santiago Atitlan in Guatemala. The killers, although never prosecuted, were known to have been backed by a government that did not approve of the Catholic Church and the hope it was helping to spread among the impoverished and oppressed people of Guatemala. Archbishop Beltran, holding a copy of the New Testament that Father Rother had helped translate into the native Tzutuhil language during his 13 years in Guatemala, said it will take “many, many years” for the canonization process to reach a conclusion.

“Most of us will not see this to its successful completion,” the archbishop said in his homily. “The Church is slow in these matters because it is thorough and we are dealing here with the spiritual realm which is timeless. However, if we did not take the initiative to proceed now, the cause might never go forward. What is most important is that we all pray for the canonization of Father Rother and at the same time, live the fullness of our Catholic faith as we should, then, we too, will someday be saints of God.”

Archbishop Beltran will head the Tribunal and Deacon Norman Mejestrik will serve as coordinator. Carol Davito will serve as assistant coordinator. Father Anthony B. Taylor will serve as Episcopal delegate and Father Edward J. Weisenburger will serve as Promoter of Justice. Dr. Andrea Ambrosi, a trained Canonist selected by the archbishop and

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A Man of God

Archbishop Chacour Visits Oklahoma With Message of Faith, Hope, Forgiveness and Love

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

If Archbishop Elias Chacour were seated at the negotiating table when hopefully next month Palestinian and Israeli leaders gather in the U.S. for peace talks he would offer the two longtime adversaries this bit of wisdom:

"Stop looking for the enemy in one another and start looking for the friend in one another, because the friend is there."

Nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize, 1986, 1989 and 1994, Archbishop Chacour has spent a lifetime looking for the friend in all of us. He was in Oklahoma Oct. 12-14 at the invitation of Archbishop Beltran to help celebrate the commissioning of new members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. Archbishop Chacour and Archbishop Beltran met years ago in the Holy Lands when both were young priests.

In 2006 he was named Archbishop Metropolitan of the Melkite Catholic Diocese of Akka, Haifa, Nazareth and all of Galilee, Israel. Born in 1939 into a Palestinian-Christian family, this Israeli citizen took a seat in an office at Saint John Nepomuk Church in Yukon and said he was very glad to be back in Oklahoma. His first visit occurred on May 3, 1989.

“Our plane was landing as the tornado was landing,” Archbishop Chacour said. He said even that experience wasn’t enough to keep him from a return visit. “The People here are so very friendly,” he said. “I am very happy to be back.”

As archbishop of the Church in the Holy Lands, Archbishop Chacour said he is excited to continue the ministry of one of his early parishioners, Jesus Christ.

Elias Chacour was born in the small village of Biram in 1939 and raised there with Muslim and Jewish neighbors. His mother and father taught him and his four brothers and one sister to love, forgive and respect their fellow man. Life was good in the small village.

“Growing up in our village was like growing up with an extended family,” he said. The living conditions were certainly not modern, impoverished by western standards but there was peace and security. “Happiness does not come from wealth,” Archbishop Chacour said. “It comes from how we view ourselves, our self worth as human beings.”

But the peace and security was shattered in 1951 when the village of Biram and dozens of other Palestinian villages were taken over by the newly created Israeli army. Archbishop Chacour recalls in his book “Blood Brothers” that Palestinian residents were told the Israeli soldiers would need their homes for only a few weeks. After that, they were told they would be allowed to return to their homes. It’s been more than 50 years since that promise was made. The Palestinians are still hoping to return to their homes.

Of course over the years violence has raged in this part of the world and much blood has been shed. But Elias Chacour chose a different path, of prayer and peace. He’s been advocating for all parties to do the same. As a young man, Elias Chacour was the first Palestinian to graduate from Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He holds a great love for his Palestinian people, but not at the expense of his Jewish brothers. Archbishop Chacour said the Israelis and Palestinians must learn how to belong to the land instead of trying to control it. He said leaders on both sides should adopt the mind set that believes "I am also right; therefore I must also be wrong."

"The archbishop said the breakdown of the family in our western culture is causing tremendous harm. The "disintegration of the family," said Archbishop Chacour, is causing great suffering in North America and Western Europe. He said many reasons can be pointed to for the failure of the family: technology, the promotion of individualism, and the desire for more and more money.

"In the western world values have changed," Archbishop Chacour said. "What was bad 100 years ago is now considered good and what was considered good 100 years ago is no longer appreciated today." He said the culture has turned inward and success is measured in terms of money and individual accomplishment, no matter the cost to others, especially those close to us.

"Success is not what we earn," Archbishop Chacour said. "It’s our human relationships. Money does not bring happiness and success. The struggle for money causes the loss of the human personality."

He said young men and women who are not grounded in faith and family find it very difficult to navigate through life.

Archbishop Chacour travels the world lecturing about peace and working to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. He said other cultures are not experiencing the breakdown of the family the way we are here in the west. He said in cultures such as the Far East families are still strong, "they are the basis of society," he said.

He is also concerned that in Western Europe and in the United States immigrants are not being welcomed and celebrated.

"America was created as a melting pot," the archbishop said. "Is that true now, or is everyone returning to his own tribe, his own way. It’s very dangerous," he said. He also questioned whether the democracy of today is true to its original intent. Democracy, he said, can’t be that "I am not a politician," Archbishop Chacour said. "I have no political affiliation. I am a man of God."
Intercessions for Father Rother Committee
Institution Mass

For our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, our Archbishop Eusebius and all bishops, priests, deacons and all who work for God’s flock.

For those who witness God’s word in our time and for those whose faith is tested, that they remain steadfast in their obligation to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For the canonization committee that God may guide their actions as they labor for Father Rother’s cause.

For those who test our faith, for those who crush the faith of others, and especially for those who took Father Rother’s life.

For all who are persecuted because of faith, especially for those missionaries who have died in spreading God’s word.

For this parish community, especially the relatives and friends of Father Rother.
The Evil of Violence
Archbishop Beltran Tells Statewide Conference On Domestic, Sexual Violence That Battle Can Only Be Won Through Prayer and Hard Work

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahomans must turn to prayer and action if the evil that is domestic violence is to ever end in the state, according to Archbishop Beltran. The archbishop made the comment at the fifth Annual Domestic and Sexual Violence Conference. The Oct. 3-4 conference for the first time featured a segment dedicated to the state’s faith-based community. Archbishop Beltran delivered the keynote address for this portion of the conference. Held at the Clarion Meridian Hotel and Convention Center, the conference was coordinated by the Office of the Oklahoma Attorney General, the Archdiocesan Office of Family Life, Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and other agencies. Archbishop Beltran also offered the prayer to open the conference, which was attended by more than 730 people from across the state.

Oklahoma reportedly ranks 10th among the 50 states in the number of women killed each year by men.

The archbishop said the key to ending domestic and sexual violence would require people to “pray as if everything depended on God and work as if everything depended on you.” He commended Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson and others involved in coordinating the conference for including a faith-based tract. At the opening of the conference, Edmondson told the audience it had been 13 years since the Oklahoma Legislature had increased funding for programs dedicated to stopping domestic and sexual violence. A $500,000 increase was appropriated this past legislative session and new court fees initiated by the Legislature and dedicated to domestic violence prevention will pump an estimated $1 million more into the battle coffers.

Archbishop Beltran, speaking to an audience described as Catholic, non-Catholic, pro-life and pro-choice, said the “fundamental cause of violence” in our culture is sin. “Violence is more than wrong,” the archbishop said, “it’s sinful. Sin is not a failure or a mistake, it’s much worse, it is evil and it is always wrong. Sin is always selfish.”

Archbishop Beltran said Oklahoma’s clergy must speak out against domestic and sexual violence. He applauded state Rep. Rebecca Hamilton’s 2006 initiative to involve the faith-based community in the battle against domestic and sexual violence. Archbishop Beltran said the faith community “must step forward” to help the government address this heartbreaking issue. He said children must not be victimized by domestic and sexual abuse because only then can the cycle of violence be broken.

“Statistics show that if you were abused as a child, there’s a very good chance you will grow up to be an abuser,” the archbishop said.

“Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. It is this identity with God that constitutes the beauty and dignity and value of human life. Violence against any human person, man, woman or child, is evil and sinful. Women are frequently targeted by men and are abused and degraded. We must correct this inherent evil for the good of our society and its future.”
— Archbishop Beltran

Archbishop Beltran chats with Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson prior to the start of the conference on domestic and sexual violence. Photo/Sooner Catholic

Archbishop Beltran chats with Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson prior to the start of the conference on domestic and sexual violence. Photo/Sooner Catholic

Catholics Gloria Pantazis, Polly Keenan, Jane Lepak and Dr. Louie Lepak make notes at the conference. Photo/Sooner Catholic

Read the Entire Statement

To read the entire statement delivered by Archbishop Beltran at the fifth annual Oklahoma Domestic and Sexual Violence Conference held Oct. 3-4 in Oklahoma City, go to www.catharchdioceseokc.org and click on Sooner Catholic.
More Than 800 Walkers Join in Birth Choice Celebration

More than 800 people, the most ever, turned out on a beautiful Sunday for the 15th annual Birth Choice of Oklahoma Inc. Celebration of Life Walk. The event was held Oct. 7 in downtown Oklahoma City.

Prayers began for sunshine and by mid-day, most of the clouds had departed and the sun was beaming brightly in all God’s glory. Many thanks are due to all those who contributed to the great success of the day, especially event chairman Marilyn Blevins and her committee chairmen including Kathy Estlinbaum, Katie Gordy, Holly Gutierrez, Jan Mollman, Janis Mollman and Julie Murray. Thanks also to all those volunteers who helped each of these chairmen. The Celebration of Life would not be possible without the collective efforts of all those involved!

A special thank you is due to the Knights of Columbus. The Knights are ever-faithful, pro-life individuals. This year, the Life Walk was led by a contingent of 4th Degree Knights from Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Lawton, led by Al Roux.

Upon returning to the gardens, there were multiple activities for children of all ages, including a moon bounce and slide, face painting, hair decorating, pumpkin painting, a cookie walk, and last but not least, the famous (or infamous) Fearless Factor Follies for the teens.

A new event was added to the afternoon’s festivities this year. The first Birth Choice Dr. Paul Kaldahl Memorial Scholarship Essay Contest was initiated earlier this fall, honoring Dr. Kaldahl. Dr. Kaldahl was instrumental in the very beginnings of Birth Choice, providing guidance and direction for our newly formed organization. The contest was open to all students in grades 9 through 12 in private schools in the state of Oklahoma.

Winners of the essay contest were announced and recognized. The grand prize of a $1,000 tuition scholarship was awarded to Jaime Roman, a junior at Bishop McGuinness High School. The second-place winner of a $250 tuition scholarship was Frank Nguyen, freshman at Bishop McGuinness.

Grade level winners presented with an award certificate were Cain Kumler, freshman; Shannon Smith, sophomore; Greg Latta, junior; and Cate Brantley, senior.

Finalists who also received certificates included Courtney Iser, senior; Kevin Murray, freshman; Sicily Splitt, freshman; and Laura Sterkel, senior. These students are also from Bishop McGuinness.

The afternoon’s festivities ended with the completion of the Fearless Factor Follies. This year’s winners were members of the Bishop McGuinness Key Club. They received the Birth Choice traveling “Walking Shoes” trophy.

Next year’s 16th annual Celebration of Life has already been scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 12, 2008, at the Myriad Gardens in downtown Oklahoma City.

Ponca City Parishioner Makes Permanent Profession to Order

PONCA CITY — On Sept. 8, Pat Boyd, member of St. Mary’s Catholic Church, gave her permanent profession into the Secular Order of Francisans Fraternity. This concluded two years of preparation. Father Felix Petrovsky, spiritual director for the Order, concelebrated the Mass with Pastor John Michalicka and received Pat’s profession.

Larry Menestrina of Wichita, minister of the SFOs, and Jim Kerschen, also of Wichita and bearer of gifts, received Pat’s promises to follow in the footsteps of St. Francis’ Gospel to life and life to Gospel. The witnesses to Pat’s profession were Sheryl Schmidt and Josephine Wear of Ponca City. Several members of the Order from Stillwater, Wichita and Atchison, Kan., were also present.

The Secular Order of Francisans is a fraternity of lay people from any Catholic parish. They commit themselves to live the gospel way of life; to turn the other cheek, walk the extra mile, pray as Jesus prayed, forgive as he forgave and love as he loved.

Fair Outing Enjoyed

EL RENO — Residents from St. Katharine Drexel Retirement Center enjoyed a surprise outing to the Oklahoma State Fair. Senior day at the fair was aimed at our geriatric population. The exhibits were very informative for the residents as well as caregivers. Along with the exhibits, the residents enjoyed many shows but the highlight of the afternoon was the petting zoo. Residents enjoyed the animals, one animal in particular. The goat and resident Ivan Bray made quick friends.

Residents and staff of St. Katharine’s would like to invite you to join us on our next surprise outing. For information, call (405) 262-2920.
A Blue Ribbon School

All Saints in Norman Lands Coveted Honor as the Only Catholic School in Oklahoma to Land on the Prestigious National List

By Eileen Dugan
The Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — When U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings read the names of the 2007 winners of the Blue Ribbon Schools awards, All Saints Catholic School in Norman was on the list.

With Spellings’ short announcement, All Saints School became a proud recipient of the prestigious 2007 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools Award. All Saints is one of only 287 schools across the country to receive this honor.

Educational institutions that perform academically in the top 10 percent of private schools in the nation are nominated each year by the Council of American Private Education for this award. From among these nominations, the U.S. Department of Education chooses the Blue Ribbon Schools. This year they chose All Saints.

“I’m so proud of our kids and teachers,” Principal Leslie Schmitt said. “We’re a great school, and we work hard. This is a wonderful reflection of those efforts.”

All Saints is the first Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City to achieve this status and the first in more than 10 years in Oklahoma, said Assistant Principal, Dr. Theresa Bragg. She said a Catholic school in Tulsa was named to the list in 1996.

Schmitt told the All Saints students that they had won the award at a celebration on Oct. 2, the same day as the award’s announcement. Many parents, the All Saints faculty and Cris Carter, associate superintendent of Catholic Schools, were on hand at the school to help the students celebrate.

At the celebration, Carter congratulated students and faculty for all their hard work. Cookies were served and the students were treated to an extra recess.

“The students had a lot of fun; they were very excited,” Schmitt said. “We could not be prouder. This award shows that we are doing a good job.”

More honors for All Saints School will follow. On Oct. 31, another school-wide assembly at All Saints School is planned for Sunflower Hall. At that time, Dr. James Davis, Region 6, U.S. Undersecretary of Education, will present the school with the official National Blue Ribbon Schools Certificate, signed by Spellings.

In November, Schmitt and Bragg will travel to Washington, D.C., for the 2007 Blue Ribbon Schools awards ceremony. At the Nov. 12-13 event sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, these representatives of All Saints School will receive the official Blue Ribbon Schools Flag, to be flown at their school, and the official Blue Ribbon Schools Plaque.

All Saints has an enrollment of 425 students (pre-K through eighth grade) and a faculty of 35.
Trumpet Sounds:  
THE MOUNT FUND Kicks Off

OKLAHOMA CITY — Before Mount St. Mary’s homecoming game on Friday, Oct. 12, a large group of the school’s stakeholders, which included board of trustee members, faculty, alumni, parents, students and friends, gathered in the school’s Heritage Room to join forces, sound the trumpet and kick off the inaugural Mount Fund.

The Mount Fund is an annual giving campaign that is primarily to be used for school campus improvements, enhancing extracurricular programs, improving technology and classroom resources and faculty enrichment programs. This fund is separate from the school’s operating budget and will play a significant role in enhancing student life and activities at the school. A leadership committee comprised of board members, alumni, parents, parents of alumni, faculty, grandparents and friends of Mount St. Mary High School is being led by chairpersons Larry and Kathy Pierce. The goal of this year’s initial campaign is to raise $100,000 by June 30, 2008.

“Traditionally, strong institutions have strong annual giving programs. Mount St. Mary High School should be no different than any other independent school, college or university,” said Chris Stiles, Mount St. Mary Director of Advancement. “We have strong leadership, we stand for the mission of Catholic Education, and our vision for the future is crystal clear. We are moving forward to enhance The Mount experience for all our students with this campaign. A gift to The Mount Fund is a tangible vote of confidence by our constituents that they have confidence in our total school program.”

Mount Fund chairpersons Larry and Kathy Pierce

Tax-Free Gifting from IRAs — Last Chance

Any donor, age 70 1/2 or older, who has an Individual Retirement Account — no matter what size of IRA — would do well to consider using his or her IRA as the source of gifting before the end of 2007.

In August of 2006, Congress passed the Pension Protection Act and amended the Internal Revenue Code to allow — for the first time — completely tax-free charitable contributions from Individual Retirement Accounts. The new law benefits donors age 70 1/2 or older, but only in tax years ending Dec. 31, 2006, and Dec. 31, 2007. So for many, this is the last chance to use this unique opportunity for charitable gifting directly from an IRA without recognizing the assets transferred to the charity as income.

“Many of our Catholic parishes and schools have benefited from generous donors using their Individual Retirement Accounts for regular annual contributions, year-end gifts and capital campaign pledge payments. Additionally, the Archdiocesan Development Fund and Catholic Charities, as well as other ministries and programs of the archdiocese can benefit from direct IRA gifting,” said Tom Casso, executive director of the Catholic Foundation.

“The gifting is limited to $100,000 per donor for a given tax year,” said Casso. “Since each individual’s financial situation varies, talking with your financial, tax or legal adviser is recommended.”

Additionally, gifting directly from an Individual Retirement Account counts toward the annual required minimum distribution.

For further information or a sample letter to your IRA administrator directing a gift to a charitable concern, contact The Catholic Foundation at (405) 721-4115 or tcasso@catharchdioceseokc.org.

Chris Stiles provided the trumpet sounds. Photos provided.

The Catholic Foundation

Cornerstone

Annuities

Charitable Gift Annuities are the second most common type of Planned Gifts. Through the use of a Charitable Gift Annuity, a donor can transfer cash or other appreciated assets to a charitable organization in exchange for the charity’s obligation to make fixed annuity payments for life. Base on the donor’s life expectancy, the fixed annuity payments are generally greater than money market or CD rates, and the gift transfer always qualifies for a charitable deduction from income taxes.

A Charitable Gift Annuity benefits both the donor and the recipient charity.

For more information on Planned Giving contact:
The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma, Inc.
P.O. Box 32180
Oklahoma City, OK 73123
(405)721-4115 ■ www.cfook.org
tcaso@catharchdioceseokc.org

Please Remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Your Estate Plans
Inauguration of New Saint Greg’s President Set

SHAWNEE — Dr. Dave Wagie will be inaugurated as the 14th president of St. Gregory’s University on Oct. 26, university officials said. The installation ceremony is set for 1:30 p.m. inside W.P. Wood Field House, and a reception will follow at 3 p.m. in the Rockwood Center.

Representatives from the Citizen Pottawatomi Nation, State of Oklahoma, City of Shawnee, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, Oklahoma Independent Colleges and Universities, SGU alumni, faculty, staff and student body have been invited to deliver welcome addresses. Shawnee native and SGU alum Bob Weaver will serve as master of ceremonies.

Wagie assumed office in April, succeeding the Rt. Rev. Lawrence Stasyszen, O.S.B., who served in the role for seven years. Abbot Lawrence was elevated to chancellor of the university last year.

Wagie has more than 20 years of experience in higher education. He recently completed a two-year position as an educational consultant to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). While working for the UAE Minister of Education, he spearheaded the concept and design for a future “University City” in Abu Dhabi, entailing 4,000 acres, numerous universities with shared resources, and funding provided through public-private partnership.

Wagie served 32 years in the Air Force, retiring in July 2004 as a brigadier general. During his career, he served in a variety of leadership positions, including research pilot, flight instructor, engineer and educator. In his last position in the USAF, Wagie served as provost at the USAF Academy in Colorado. There he coordinated 500 teaching faculty and 200 staff, providing 500 courses in 32 academic majors to 4,000 students.

During his tenure, the USAF Academy was one of only 16 institutions nationally selected in 2000 as a prestigious “Leadership Institution” by the American Association of Colleges and Universities. In addition, the Academy was named “No. 3 best overall academic experience” and “No. 6 best undergraduate engineering school” in the United States for 2003.

Wagie, originally from Wisconsin, has a bachelor’s degree in engineering science from the USAF Academy and a master’s degree in systems management from the University of Southern California. He’s also earned a master’s from Stanford University and a doctorate from Purdue University, both in aeronautical and astronautical engineering.

He and his wife, Sue, have been married for 34 years and have three daughters, Angela, Megan and Tiffany, and two sons-in-law, Colin and Kiel.

Newman Guide Names Saint Greg’s as Among Top Catholic Universities in the Nation

By Eileen Dugan
The Sooner Catholic

SHAWNEE — If you or someone you love is thinking about going to college next semester or next fall, you might want to consider St. Gregory’s University in Shawnee.

St. Gregory’s has just been judged one of the top 21 Catholic colleges and universities in the country by the Cardinal Newman Society. This nonprofit organization was created in 1993 “to renew and strengthen Catholic higher education.”

On Nov. 1, the society will publish The Newman Guide to Choosing a Catholic College. What to Look For and Where to Find It. This guide will inform students and their parents where the best Catholic education can be obtained. St. Gregory’s University is on that list.

“S. Gregory’s is a Benedictine institution with a number of strengths. In addition to its Catholic identity, common core of courses and flexibility in academic programs, we were very impressed by its religious outreach program known as the Buckley Team. We are delighted to recommend the university to parents, students and guidance counselors,” guide editor Joseph Esposito said.

Several years ago, those in the Cardinal Newman Society heard that some “so-called” Catholic schools of higher learning offer and condone courses, speakers and attitudes that express values that are anything but Catholic. How were parents to know which Catholic colleges and universities actually foster Catholic values on their campuses? To answer this question, the society decided to evaluate U.S. Catholic colleges and universities for their fidelity to Catholic values and ability to provide students with a quality undergraduate education.

For more than two years, members of the Newman Society interviewed staff, professors and students and checked courses, curricula, teachers and speakers at Catholic colleges and universities across the nation. What they came up with were “the top 10 percent of Catholic colleges in the U.S. based on Catholic identity.”

St. Gregory’s University was chosen as one of only 21 Catholic colleges nationwide (one is just over the U.S. border in Ontario, Canada), which best promotes Catholic ideals and, at the same time, provides students with an excellent learning experience.

“We are very pleased and proud to be listed among the nation’s top 10 percent of Catholic colleges and universities,” said Dr. Dave Wagie, the new president at St. Gregory’s University. “We strive daily to offer a quality education in a supportive environment that helps our students succeed. We are especially proud of how our students and alumni reflect the excellence of Catholic education and St. Gregory’s heritage.”
Knights Launch Campaign to Create Family Life Center

By Eileen Dugan

OKLAHOMA CITY — Former Oklahoma Gov. David Walters, a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 1038, will head up the “Uniting Our Community” capital fundraising campaign. The campaign, sponsored by Council 1038, aims to raise $1.2 million to improve the former Santa Fe Fitness and Racquet Club, turning it into a family-friendly destination for Catholics.

The Santa Fe Fitness Center came under the Knights’ ownership in a property swap that occurred last year between the Knights of Columbus Council 1038 and Chesapeake Energy Corporation. At that time, the Knights swapped their 6,000-square-foot hall at 6501 Classen Boulevard for the 55,000-square-foot Santa Fe Fitness and Racquet Club, located at 6300 N. Santa Fe Avenue and owned by Chesapeake Energy.

The swap gave Chesapeake some land they needed for their company campus and the Knights an opportunity to own a property more than nine times larger than the one they had previously owned on Classen.

The Knights of Columbus Council 1038 have decided to share their newly acquired center with local Catholic campuses. The Knights also envision a center that will appeal to a greater variety of sports enthusiasts, including swimmers.

“The money from the ‘Uniting Our Community’ campaign will be used by all parishes. They fore- see this as a wonderful place for their community to spend a summer day,” said Bill Cathey, a former Grand Knight and present vice chairman and secretary of the board of directors of the Knights’ Building Corporation.

In addition to the pool, a new multipurpose building is planned. It will house a pool changing area and more exercise and classroom space. A park area, great for holding picnics and other get-togethers, will surround the pool. The Knights also plan updates to the present bathrooms, locker and cardio-exercise and weight-training area.

Archbishop Beltran supports the Knights’ vision for the future Santa Fe Family Life Center.

Even before these improvements can be put in place, Bishop McGuinness High School’s tennis program is making use of the center. Catholic elementary schools may soon have fitness and after-school tennis programs located there, and relationships with other Catholic schools are expected.

According to Cathey, the real hero in this process is Walters. Cathey said the former governor has done an amazing job pulling together the architects and contractors who will be responsible for bringing about the planned changes at the center. “It was a huge undertaking, and Gov. Walters has done a fantastic job,” he said.

Cathey and Walters agreed the center will be a vital new piece of Catholic infrastructure and a great service to the community. They hope it will be used by all parishes. They foresee a center for the entire family — a place where Catholic families can congregate, youth parties can be held and older Catholics can play board games, swim and watch TV.

“It will be a place for all Catholics from children at Villa Teresa to seniors from Saint Ann’s, and everyone in between,” Cathey said. “It’s important in all our lives. It will be a real Catholic recreation center, a place where people can relax, exercise and just re-create. It will be a safe place for all ages.”

If you are interested in donating, make your checks out to The Family Life Center, 2915 N. Classen, Suite 400, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73106.
Norman Parish Opens Hispanic Cultural Institute

By Amanda Minks
Parishioner St. Joseph, Norman

From earliest childhood, I remember hearing stories about my mom growing up in the Texas Panhandle, about her classmates from Catholic school, the discrimination all Catholics faced there, and the compounded discrimination against Catholics who were “Mexican” or “Spanish.” Spanish-speaking people lived in Texas long before English-speaking people, but came to be marginalized in the land their ancestors had settled. As Irish- and German-American Catholic farmers, my forebears shared poverty and faith with their Mexican-American neighbors—not without tensions. It seems that people with intertwined histories and partially overlapping cultural backgrounds often develop conflicts and competition. But it isn’t always that way and doesn’t have to be that way. My great-grandmother, Lucille Wilhelm, was the kind of person who reached across social and cultural boundaries, revealed in the beauty of human diversity, and made serving others an everyday vocation rather than an occasional act of “charity.” She brought her skills as a musician, nurse and teacher to the migrant camp on the edge of town, forging close ties between families that are still apparent when I go back to visit the church where my grandparents were married and my mother was baptized.

My great-grandmother would have been a strong supporter of the Hispanic Cultural Institute (HCI), recently established at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Norman. This Archdiocesan Institute is a visionary organization that reaches across social and cultural boundaries and helps to facilitate the church’s mission of sharing faith and serving all people in need. HCI offers classes in the Spanish language and Hispanic cultural studies for church leaders, parishioners and all the general public. An impressive team of Spanish teachers with international training and expertise will help students develop skills in Spanish conversation, reading and writing. Cultural studies classes will cover a range of special topics in history, religion and the arts, with rotating presentations by scholars from the University of Oklahoma and elsewhere.

The program also includes cultural trips to enrich participants’ knowledge and experience. Classes are held on Tuesday nights from 7 to 9 p.m. in St. Joseph’s Parish Center at 421 E. Acres in Norman. The first semester will be from Oct. 23 to Dec. 11, and the second semester will be from Jan. 15 to May 6. Tuition is (unbelievably) only $25 per semester. The program is open to adults age 21 and older.

Learning a second language can be a challenge, but it is also an incredibly rewarding, transformative experience. Years of study and practice have helped me gain proficiency in Spanish and in Miskitu, an indigenous language of the Caribbean Coast of Central America. When I speak these other languages, my mind, heart and body feel very different in ways that are hard to explain. Research has long shown that multilingualism fosters abstract thinking skills, and studying a foreign language is recommended to keep a sharp mind at any age. But I think the sense of joy I feel in speaking Spanish or Miskitu comes from the close social relationships I have developed with people whose “mother tongues” are different from mine. This is the most valuable skill the Hispanic Cultural Institute can offer: the capacity to reach out to others in service, friendship, faith and love. It is a skill I learned to respect from my great-grandmother’s example, and her model was the life of Jesus.

For pre-enrollment application forms and other information, call (405) 321-8080 or e-mail maria@ecjou.edu.

Pope Says October is Missionary Month

Pontiff Links Evangelization and True Peace

VATICAN CITY, (Zenit.org).—Benedict XVI affirmed that evangelization is the most profound way Christians can promote peace.

The pope explained this before reciting the Angelus with the thousands of pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square. The Holy Father observed that traditionally the Church dedicates the month of October to the missions and missionaries. World Mission Day is celebrated this year on Oct. 21.

“In any case, we know that peace spreads where men and institutions are open to the Gospel,” the pontiff said, speaking from the window of his study.

“The month of October helps us to recall this fundamental truth through a mobilization that seeks to promote an authentic missionary drive in each community, and to support the work of priests, religious and laypeople who work on the Church’s mission frontiers.”

This year Benedict XVI has dedicated his message for World Mission Day to the theme “All the Churches For All the World.”

The pontiff said: “The proclamation of the Gospel remains the primary service that the Church owes to humanity, to offer the salvation of Christ to the man of our time, who is in many ways humiliated and oppressed, and to orientate in a Christian way cultural, social and ethical transformations that are unfolding in the world.”

The pope recalled that 150 years ago five priests and a layman of the Institute of Don Mazza in Verona departed for Africa, for present-day Sudan.

He noted that among this group was St. Daniel Comboni, future bishop of central Africa and patron of the people of that region, whose liturgical memorial is Oct. 10.

Comboni founded two missionary organizations that have come to be known as the Comboni Missionaries and the Comboni Missionary Sisters. They are also called the Verona Fathers and Sisters.

He was canonized by Pope John Paul II on Oct. 5, 2003.

Benedict XVI concluded, “We entrust all missionaries to the intercession of these pioneers of the Gospel and to the many other canonized and beatified missionaries, and especially to the maternal protection of the Queen of the Holy Rosary.”

Classes Begin Oct. 23 in Norman

Interested adults from the Oklahoma City Archdiocese are invited to participate in a newly-established Hispanic Cultural Institute. The opening of the institute will take place Oct. 23 at 7 p.m. at the Parish Center of St. Joseph’s Parish in Norman. The institute has as its mission “to help our pastors, deacons, leaders, English-speaking parishioners and the general public learn the Spanish language and understand Hispanic culture.” The institute brings together a teaching staff from the Norman community with expertise in Spanish culture and language to offer courses in the Spanish language and Hispanic culture. Classes will begin Oct. 23 and continue for the entire academic year.

St. Eugene School Plans Auction

OKLAHOMA CITY — St. Eugene students are busy working on class projects to be offered at the annual school auction. This year’s theme is Chicago’s and will be held Oct. 27 at 6:30 p.m. at The Montgomery Event Center in downtown Oklahoma City.

“Each year the individual class projects are amazing,” said kindergarten teacher Marian Jeter. “The projects showcase the student’s artistic talents and they are beautiful treasures for the families who take them home.”

Class projects in this year’s auction include a hand painted wooden rosary, pottery pieces, a modern painting using the children’s hands and a human alphabet.

Besides class projects, there will be sporting event tickets, a family vacation at the Great Wolf Lodge in Kansas City, a dinner party hosted by the Carmelite Sisters at the Villa Teresa Convent, First Communion dresses, more than $2,500 worth of jewelry, a signed jersey from Payton Manning and so much more available in both a silent and live auction.

Tickets are $40 per person, or a sponsor table for eight is $500 and includes two bottles of wine, a server and express checkout. The public is invited to support the parish school of St. Eugene.

St. Eugene is a private Catholic School for 3-year-old preschool through eighth grade. It is located in north-west Oklahoma City at 2400 W. Hefner Road. St. Eugene School offers excellence in education, opportunities for spiritual growth, an array of sports and other extracurricular activities and before- and after-school care. It is affiliated with St. Eugene Church, a member of Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Persons of all faiths may attend. For more information about the grant or the school, call 751-0067.
A Ministry of the Catholic Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Owned and Operated by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

7501 West Britton Road, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73132
(405) 721-0747       Fax: (405) 721-0492

www.saintannretirementcenter.com

The Saint Joachim Chapel
by Greg Burns,
in memory of his father,
John T. Burns Jr., who was
a resident at Saint Ann
Assisted Living.
(Used by permission of the
artist.)
Saint Ann Retirement Center provides many qualities of fine independent living at reasonable rates. No matter what the size of your residence, each includes all amenities and services designed to enhance an independent lifestyle. Remember, no large entrance fee is required. Meals, activities, utilities, transportation, housekeeping and more are included. See “Amenities and Services” for a complete explanation of the many Saint Ann Retirement Center benefits.

**Studio**
- **Base Rate**: 484 sq. ft. $1,425.00/Month

**One Bedroom**
- **Base Rate**: 605 sq. ft. $1,750.00/Month

**One Bedroom Deluxe**
- **Base Rate**: 676 sq. ft. $1,875.00/Month

**Two Bedroom**
- **Base Rate**: 917 sq. ft. $2,300.00/Month

*Note: Each residence may vary according to final construction. The above square footages are approximate.*

Living at Saint Ann’s gives more time for special moments. Pictured are Virgil and Georganna Oberst.
Saint Ann Retirement Center is proud to offer assisted living on a month-to-month basis. Assisted living at Saint Ann is often referred to as “independent living with the support you need.” All rates are based on a personal assessment prior to moving to determine the specific level of care and service plan. All base rates include three meals a day, housekeeping, laundering of flat linens, scheduled transportation, cable television, utilities, activities and 24-hour staffing. Support services desired or needed for assistance with bathing, dressing and medications are determined by the individual’s assessment.

At Saint Ann Assisted Living, you help develop your own personal care plan to meet your specific needs.

### Rental Rates

#### Assisted Living

**The Sapphire**
- **Studio**
- **Base Rate**: $2,175.00/Month

**The Pearl**
- **One Bedroom**
- **Base Rate**: $2,400.00/Month

*Note: Each residence may vary according to final construction. The above square footages are approximate.*
Saint Ann
Catholic Retirement At Its Best
Owned and Operated by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Saint Ann Services*
For residents of Saint Ann Retirement Center, all services and amenities are available on month-to-month rental.

*No long-term contracts.
*No large entrance fees or endowment fees.

The monthly rent includes the following services:
*Meals: Three meals served restaurant style each day.
*Weekly housekeeping.
*Weekly laundering of linens and towels.
*Laundry facilities, located on each floor.
*Paid utilities (except personal telephone).
*Enhanced cable television.
*Free scheduled transportation for shopping, medical appointments and more.
*A dedicated 24-hour staff.
*Maintenance of all furnished appliances, buildings and grounds.

Use of the common areas:
*Saint Joachim Chapel
*Activities/Exercise Center
*Resident Computer Center
*Library
*Beauty/barber salon

Saint Ann Amenities*
Each residence will be unfurnished, allowing seniors to provide the furnishings that truly create the personal warmth of home.

The amenities include:
*Wall-to-wall carpeting.
*Independent living apartments come with full-size refrigerators, electric ranges and microwave ovens.
*All apartment bathrooms come complete with walk-in shower with built-in, fold-down seats.
*All assisted living apartments come with assist bars. Assist bars can be installed in Independent Living with request.
*Cable television.
*24-hour emergency call system in the bathroom. Personal pendants are also available.
*Fire sprinklers and smoke alarms.

Come by and visit us!
Tours are available.
We hope to see you soon!
7501 W. Britton Road, 721-0747
Cemetery Sunday Set Nov. 4

November 4 has been proclaimed Catholic Cemetery Sunday, according to Mark Lazaroski, president of the Catholic Cemetery Conference.

Why Cemetery Sunday?

Lazaroski said it is because of our belief in the resurrection of the body at the end of time.

As a sacred place, a Catholic cemetery is a place that serves the faithful and witnesses the Good News of Jesus Christ and the hope we share in the resurrection to the entire world, said Lazaroski in a prepared statement. It is a place where the signs and symbols of our Catholic faith are displayed with reverence and pride. An integral aspect of the Catholic cemetery ministry is to provide for the spiritual needs of our families. As part of the fulfillment of this commitment, we gather on Cemetery Sunday to pray for the souls of those buried in our cemeteries.

Down through the centuries, the Church has honored the burial of the dead as a Corporal Work of Mercy. Wherever a Christian community formed, sacred ground was set aside where the remains of the dead would await the resurrection of the body on the Last Day. These resting places gave public witness to the Communion of Saints, which joins the faithful on earth with all “those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith.” (Sacramentary, Eucharistic Prayer No.1)

Today, our Catholic cemeteries are these sacred burial grounds.

They differ from secular cemeteries because they are places where the Church gives witness to her beliefs and teachings surrounding death and resurrection. There the faithful depart among others who shared their faith in this life. On Cemetery Sunday, the living members of the Catholic community gather to pray, to honor the lives of the dead, and to renew our own belief in “the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.”

An integral aspect of the Catholic cemetery ministry is to provide for the spiritual needs of our families. As part of the fulfillment of this commitment, we gather on Cemetery Sunday to pray for the souls of those buried in our cemeteries.

Resurrection Cemetery, 7500 W. Britton Road, is owned and operated by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. It has served the Catholic community for more than 40 years.

“On this upcoming Cemetery Sunday, Nov. 4, we welcome you to commemorate the life of your loved one, and at this time, renew your spirit with the belief of life everlasting through the Resurrection,” said Christina T. Ford, general manager of Resurrection Cemetery. “May God’s peace, love and hope always be with you,” she said.

Catholic cemeteries reflect Catholic beliefs, and Cemetery Sunday offers a comforting atmosphere in which love for family and friends is remembered, hope is rekindled and faith is awakened, renewed and strengthened.

Let us gather as a faith community on Sunday, Nov. 4, 2007, as testimony to our loved ones who have gone before us.

Life Chain in Norman Oct. 28

NORMAN — Join the National Life Chain! Stand with thousands of pro-lifers throughout the United States on Sunday, Oct. 28, 2 to 3 p.m. at Lindsey and West 24th Avenue.

You’ll be a light in a darkened world as you help put an end to abortion through prayer! Bring your whole family! Rain or shine! Water, lawn chairs, umbrellas and strollers are welcome! Signs proclaim “Abortion Kills Children,” “Adoption the Loving Option,” “Jesus Forgives and Heals,” “Lord, Forgive Us and Our Nation,” “Abortion Hurts Women,” “El Aborto Mata Ninos,” “Life — The First Inalienable Right” and “Pray to End Abortion.”

Stand 10 feet apart. Do not park in front of an open business. Life Chain is a peaceful and prayerful public witness of pro-life Americans standing for one hour praying for our nation and for an end to abortion. It is a visual statement of solidarity by the Christian community that abortion kills children and that the Church supports the sanctity of human life from the moment of conception.

Role of Faith and Education Debated in Other Nations

By Father John Flynn, L.C.

ROME, (Zenit.org). — State funding of Catholic schools has been a hotly debated topic in the lead-up to Oct. 10 legislative elections in the Canadian province of Ontario.

John Tory, leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, raised the issue when during the campaign he questioned why Catholic schools in the province are state-funded while other faith-based schools are not, reported the National Post newspaper Aug. 25.

The newspaper article explained that the decision to fund provincial Catholic schools dates back to the 1867 Constitution Act, which established in Canada two systems of publicly funded education: government and Catholic. Other provinces have since changed their education funding, but this has not been the case in Ontario.

In reply to Tory’s proposal, some critics proposed simply eliminating any public funds for all faith schools.

“The best course of action would be to simply eliminate public funding for Ontario’s Catholic schools,” opined an editorial in the Globe and Mail newspaper on Sept. 6.

The editorial echoed a censure heard with frequency in some quarters, saying: “As we struggle to avoid the polarization of ethnic and religious minorities, governments should not be contributing to it by encouraging kids to interact only with members of their own faith.”

The province’s Catholic bishops had their say in the altercation, reported the Ottawa Citizen newspaper on Sept. 10. “The public funding of Catholic schools recognizes that parents have the right to make educational choices for their children, and that the state should assist them,” said a statement issued by Bishop James Wingle, head of the Diocese of St. Catharine’s and president of the Ontario conference of bishops.

“The primacy of parental rights in education is a value which should be realized not only by Catholic parents, but also by others,” the prelates continued.

The bishops also stated that they “respect and support the wishes of parents in other faith communities for religion education in the public school system or for alternative schools which reflect their beliefs and values.”

Faith-based education was also criticized in England recently, by columnist Zoe Williams, in a commentary written Sept. 19 for the Guardian. Her article came after the decision of Catholic schools in Northern Ireland to disband their support groups for Amnesty International, owing to its adoption of a pro-abortion stance.

Williams accused Christians of “prosecuting an agenda that is repugnant,” through their schools and argued that they should not receive any public funds.

Times opinion columnist Alice Miles previously expressed similar sentiments. In a May 23 article, she accused the middle classes of using the faith schools “as a barely covert form of social and academic selection.”

Schools run by Anglicans or the Catholic Church, Miles argued, should not be allowed to select pupils on the basis of belief, but should simply accept anyone who applies to enter.

The question of using religious criteria to select pupils also came up recently in Ireland, reported the Irish Times newspaper on Sept. 15.

Replying to criticisms of Catholic schools, Bishop Leo O'Reilly, chairman of the Irish bishops education commission, said that the schools were founded by the Church to provide a Catholic education for its members.

Parents have a right to have their children educated in Catholic schools, and having contributed through taxes to fund public education, it is not unfair that the faith schools receive government funds, argued Bishop O'Reilly.

The right of parents to choose what sort of education they wish for their children, he added, is supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the European Convention on Human Rights.

Shortly afterward, Archbishop Sean Brady of Armagh spoke about the topic of faith schools in a speech given Sept. 21 for the launch in Belfast of a Web site for the Consultative Group on Catholic Education.

At a time of moral confusion, he argued, Catholic education defends the dignity of the human person and offers a set of values based on the Gospel.

Labeling such an education as divisive is simply not the truth, Archbishop Brady maintained. “Reconciliation, love of neighbor, respect for difference: These values are intrinsic to Catholic education because they are intrinsic to the message of Jesus,” he said.
Marriage Encounter Meeting Hosted at Parish

OKLAHOMA CITY — Worldwide Marriage Encounter Section 10 meeting was hosted at Epiphany of The Lord Church. Section 10 consists of Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas and New Mexico. The leaders from these various sections gathered to work on the future activities and ministry of Worldwide Marriage Encounter.

The Marriage Encounter community greeted the leadership with typical warm Oklahoma hospitality and a family-style potluck dinner. The theme for this meeting was “Get Your Kicks on Route 66.”

The Houston community presented a workshop titled “If We Build It They Will Come.” This focused on building the Marriage Encounter weekend all over the section. This workshop will be presented in Oklahoma City to help strengthen the ministry here and increase the base of encountered couples.

Irish Students Recognized by National Board

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School announces that two members of the senior class have been recognized by the College Board's National Hispanic Recognition Program. The students are Chanel Melendez, daughter of Jeff and Kimberly Olbert of Mustang. The National Hispanic Recognition Program, established in 1983, is a College Board program that provides national recognition of the exceptional academic achievements of Hispanic high school seniors and identifies them for postsecondary institutions.

Students enter the program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) as high school juniors and by identifying themselves as Hispanic. From more than 196,000 students nationwide, 4,000 have been recognized as National Hispanic Scholars or honorable mention finalists based upon their PSAT/NMSQT scores and their academic achievements.

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 5,200 schools, colleges, universities and other educational organizations. Each year the College Board serves 7 million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT, the PSAT/NMSQT and the Advanced Placement Program (AP). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities and concerns.

AP Scholars Named at Bishop McGuinness

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School announced that 26 current students and 24 graduates of the class of 2007 have been named AP Scholars by the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level AP exams. Only about 18 percent of the more than 1.4 million high school students in more than 16,000 secondary schools worldwide who took AP exams in May 2007 performed at a sufficiently high level to merit this recognition as well as advanced placement in college.

Students take AP exams each May after completing challenging college-level courses at their high schools. The College Board recognizes several levels of achievement based on the number of year-long courses and exam.

Scholars are seniors Shannon Bass, Brittney Bierschenk, Mollie Blanchard, Cathleen Brantley, Ashley Edwards, Chelsea Epps, Lauren Forest, Jordan Fritch, Courtney Iser, Olivia Lee, Devin Luxner, Katie Oliphant, Sarah Parrish, Lauren Rattan, Ricky Schrantz, Kathryn Schrantz, Erin Smith, Therese Wade and Emily Wener. Class of 2007 Scholars are Lauren Brown, Martin Ferguson, Nathan Gardocki, Marianna Johnson, Chelsea Knox, Ricardo Montoya, Jeremy Onderek, Steven Perry, John Riesenberg, Meri Salvia, Jeffrey Semtner, Clay Vaughan and Sabrina Wallace.

Scholars with Honor are seniors Candice Gillies, John Goetzinger, Leah Norsworthy, Emma Rupert, John Scimeca, Natayla Sebastian and Breanne Ward. Class of 2007 Scholars with Honor are Paul Boer, Kaitlyn Hull, Zach Mesarick and Andrew Shaffer.

Scholars with Distinction are all class of 2007 graduates and include Elen Hight, Brianna Joyce, Ryan Kubat, Mason Morrow, Evan Ottaviani, Jonathan Roman and Matt Starr.

Awards Earned At National Conference

Three representatives of the Knights of Peter Claver Junior Branch from Corpus Christi Parish earned national awards at the Knights of Peter Claver Junior National Convention. The convention was held over the summer in Los Angeles.

Shaun Edwards, son of Robert and Shirley Edwards, earned a second-place award for his piano solo. This was the second time Shaun has served as a delegate at the national convention. His Sacred Art Photography Collage earned a place. Shaun is an active member of Corpus Christi Catholic Church. He serves as a lector, altar server, attends vacation Bible School and attended a church-sponsored trip to his first National Black Catholic Congress that was held in Buffalo, N.Y. He is a seventh-grade student at Destiny Christian School in Midwest City.

James L. Fidel is the grandson of the late James L. Fidel and Pearl M. Fidel, members of Corpus Christi. James, 13 has been a member of Knights of Peter Claver, Corpus Christi, Junior Branch No. 264 since 2000. James earned a certificate for his essay “Energize Your Faith, Expect A Blessing.” James is active in the youth program at his parish Our Lady of Perpetual Help. He has served two terms as treasurer for Knights of Peter, Junior Central States District Conference. He is a seventh-grader at Bishop John Carroll Catholic School.

Toni L. Fidel, granddaughter of the late James L. Fidel and Pearl M. Fidel, has been a member of Knights of Peter Claver, St. Martin Deporess, Junior Court No. 264 since 2006. For her project, Toni chose Holy Eucharist Photography Collage that earned second place in the national awards. Toni received national certificate recognition for Essay, Craft and Art that was submitted. Toni was the youngest member to sing in the Claver Junior National Choir. She is an active member of Our Lady of Perpetual Help where she enjoys vacation Bible School, serving as a cantor, singing in the Honor Choir and playing drums. Toni is a fourth-grader at Bishop John Carroll Catholic School.
Therapeutic Cloning: The Politics of Perfection

People are intrigued and repulsed by the idea of cloning humans. They sometimes express doubts that a cloned baby would have a soul, because the whole idea seems so offensive. They suppose that God would “refuse to cooperate” with cloning by never infusing a soul into a cloned human embryo.

Yet back in 1978 when the first human baby was created in a Petri dish by in vitro fertilization, one might likewise have argued that such an immoral action would result in God’s not infusing a soul into any baby that was manufactured in laboratory glassware. We currently have more than 1 million babies produced this way, all of whom do have souls infused by God.

Likewise even though we readily see how dropping nuclear bombs on cities of innocent people would be gravely offensive, we know that God does not “refuse to cooperate” by suddenly suspending the laws of physics that permit such bombs to detonate. Clearly, God chooses to respect the laws of physics he has established, and likewise he remains beholden to the powers of biology that he himself has set in motion, even if it is true that those same powers can be used for offensive ends by man.

Apart from purely miraculous interventions, which appear to be quite rare, God does not step in and break the humanly-initiated chain of causality which allows sinful actions and evil choices to play out with all their consequences. He invites us to make moral and upright choices ourselves, so that evil in our world might not spread further, but he doesn’t actively prevent us from doing evil by enrolling physical laws or refusing to ensoul embryos.

Human cloning, in the final analysis, is simply a technique for making an identical twin of someone, and while all of us have met various sets of identical twins over the years, none of us has ever met a pair where one of the twins lacked a soul. By similar reasoning, it is clear that the idea of a “soulless clone” is little more than an urban legend. Yet the mere discussion of a “soulless clone” serves to remind us how strikingly immoral human cloning really is, even as the mass media and various lawmakers vigorously promote a form of cloning known as therapeutic cloning.

The procedure for cloning is fairly simple in concept—it involves taking a nucleus (the “full genetic package”) from a body cell, like a skin cell, and transferring it inside a woman’s egg, after the egg’s own nucleus (the “half genetic package”) has been taken out. The presence of the “full genetic package” creates a new human embryo. That newly cloned embryo can either be killed in the laboratory for research, or allowed to live and grow by implanting it into a uterus, resulting in the birth of a cloned baby.

That baby would be an identical twin of the person who donated the skin cell, in the same way that Dolly the sheep was the identical twin of her mother who donated the mammary cell used to start the process off. Grave ethical violations are always involved in both forms of cloning: “reproductive cloning” and so-called “therapeutic cloning.”

Imagine, for purposes of illustration, that the skin cell used for cloning was donated by Sen. Ted Kennedy. The resulting cloned embryo would be the identical twin of the skin cell donor, so Sen. Kennedy would have an identical twin brother or sister, to whom he or she is expressly created for genetic matching. This sinister research represents a direct form of human exploitation, where the powerful and the wealthy violate the young and powerless. In fact, a patient who used therapeutic cloning would be destroying a family member, a blood relative, their own identical twin brother or sister, to obtain desired cells and tissues. When you clone to make a live born baby, on the other hand, as wrong as this still is, at least the cloned twin survives, breathes the same air and has the chance to enjoy the good life that the rest of us enjoy each day.

The real paradox, then, is how our moral sensitivities have become so coarsened that many can no longer see how therapeutic cloning is actually worse, from the moral point of view, than reproductive cloning. Therapeutic cloning doesn’t produce soulless clones, but it does tempt some spineless politicians and scientists to radically misuse the remarkable powers of science that God has given us.

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.ncb-center.org

Yukon Parish to Host Speaker Tim Staples

YUKON — Tim Staples will speak at Saint John Nepomuk Catholic Church, 600 S. Garth Brooks Blvd., on Nov. 11. Scheduled to speak at 1:30 and 3 p.m., Staples’ presentation will be “Catholics and the Culture War” and “The Eucharist — God’s Extravagant Love Revealed.” No admission will be charged and all are welcome.

Staples was raised a Southern Baptist. Though he got away from the faith of his childhood during his teen years, he came back to faith in Christ in his late teens through Christian television and some friends in the Assemblies of God.

Staples joined the Marine Corps and during his four-year tour, became involved in ministry in various Assembly of God communities. Immediately after his tour of duty, Staples would enroll in Jimmy Swaggart Bible College and become a worship minister in an Assembly of God Community. During his final year in the Marines, he met a Marine who really knew his faith and challenged Staples to study Catholicism from Catholic and historical sources. Having been challenged, Staples was determined to prove Catholicism wrong and ended up studying his way to the last place he thought he would ever end up — the Catholic Church. Since his conversion in 1988, Staples has spent six years in formation for the priesthood, earning a degree in philosophy from Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Overbrook, Pa. He then studied theology on a graduate level at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., for two years. Deciding that his calling was not to the priesthood, he left the seminary in 1994 and has been working in Catholic Apologetics and Evangelization ever since.

For more information, contact Julie Mayfield at (405) 354-9879 or mayfieldjj@aol.com.
The Communion of Saints: It is Written on Our Hearts

By Denise Bossert

Great Cloud of Witnesses (as it says in Hebrews Chapter 12). And we know that they are praying for us.

We are not on our own in this valley of tears.

Those who have known us and loved us most dearly are even now alive-in-Christ and praying that we will have every grace we need in order to run the course marked out for us.

In the two years that have passed since Lori’s death, Tom has picked up his cross and kept on going. He is raising their three children, has published two inspirational children’s books and has started a publishing company. He draws great strength from his eternal connection to Lori. “There is not a day that goes by that I don’t think about Lori and talk to her out loud,” he says.

When a loved one dies, the chasm that separates us seems so great — and yet we know it really can’t be much of a distance. Someone we have known intimately, someone we have loved deeply has crossed the divide and passed into eternity, and that overwhelming truth brings heaven very close. The truth of the communion of saints is written in our hearts.

It is precisely in that moment — in that valley of the shadow of death — that we cling tightly to the words of the Creed. I believe in the communion of saints. I believe in the resurrection of the body. I believe in life everlasting. Thank God, I believe!

And until the day we lay our own cross down, we keep on going, and if we listen very carefully, we can hear the cheering from the other side.

Tommy and Lori continue to be that strong Catholic family. That’s the irony of it all. Tragedy did not have the final word. The cheerleader is still cheering, only the team she is rooting for is a team of four.

You can find Tom’s book, “Father Like a Tree,” and his new release, “The Three Pigs, Business School and Wolfe Hash Stew” under the pen name Matthew S. Field at www.MattingLeahPublishing.com. He is a member of St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church in Warwick, N.Y.

Editor’s Note: Denise Bossert is the mother of four children. She lives with her husband in New Melle, Mo., where she is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church. She writes a monthly column for the St. Louis Review that traces her journey from Protestantism to Catholicism. Her columns will run from time to time in the Sooner Catholic.

Parents of Adolescents Can Lean on Love, Logic and God

Counseling Corner

By Joe Froehle, LPC, ICADC

Parents and I experienced the difficulties of raising three teenage adolescents and are enjoying them as adults as well as our four granddaughters. We look forward to observing our adult children dealing with their own adolescents in the near future and having a few chuckles while being empathetic with their plight.

Kidding aside, adolescence can be a time of loneliness, awkwardness and emptiness as young persons move beyond the concrete literal thinking of school-age children to thinking in logical, abstract terms of adulthood. They go through a normal period of creating hypotheses and conclusions that are not necessarily based on facts, of making mistakes in judgment and having to experience the normal consequences of their behaviors.

In addition, adolescents begin to question who they are, where they are going and what they want. They begin worrying about how they are going to care for themselves, getting a job, buying a car, going to college, joining the Army, determining career options, developing relationships with the opposite sex, etc.

Adolescence is further complicated by the normal distancing from parents as young persons begin to find their own way. Since they are separating themselves from parents, they begin seeking approval from their peers to cope with their aloneness and to affirm them as young persons begin to find their normalcy of these adolescent transitions.

Young persons experience confusion, self-consciousness, narcissism and awkwardness, which contributes to a normal paranoia and to adolescents taking anything as a personal affront.

Mom responds to Shirley arriving home saying, “Hi honey, how was your day?” Shirley immediately runs to her room shrieking “Can’t you ever leave me alone?” This grandiose thinking of adolescence causes her to think her mom was rejecting and humiliating her whereas the opposite is quite true, but getting the adolescent to understand is usually fruitless.

Adolescents are consumed with how they look and what their peers think of them. They spend hours in front of a mirror, obsessed with their own reflection. In addition, adolescents are coping with new and powerful sexual energies and awkwardness. Sexual exploration and behavior is normal at this age which can be concerning and scary for parents who just want the best for their children.

It is difficult for parents to deal with all these changes, however, it is good if parents can be understanding of the normalcy of these adolescent transitions. Frequent expressions of understanding, love and support can be helpful. At the same time having adolescents experience consequences to behavior is a necessity. I like Steven Glenn’s book “Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World” as a good source for helping parents establish boundaries and allowing consequences without shame nor criticism.

It can also be helpful for parents to realize that adolescents are unable to think the way we do since the human brain does not completely develop until ages 24 to 26. Just understanding this one fact may help parents in being loving and accepting of their adolescent children.

John Bradshaw, in his book “Homecoming,” summarizes a few things about “normal adolescents” I wish I had known about when I was parenting them through their teenage years. I would be happy to fax a copy of the three pages of this summary to you if you would e-mail your fax number to me at jfroehle@swbell.net.

Raising adolescents requires all of the gifts of patience and understanding of fathers and mothers. The answer is in being loving. I know God is with you and is comforting you in your parenting struggles and is with you in the good times of raising adolescents. As with Pat and I, you will enjoy watching your children cope with their own adolescents and God will smile with you.

Joe Froehle has over 16 years experience in marital, individual and family counseling. He serves in the Counseling Center at St. John the Baptist, Edmond. He can be reached at (405) 359-8539 or by e-mail at jfroehle@swbell.net.
True Love Filled With Agony as Well as Ecstasy

The title of a recent article in the Sept. 30 National Catholic Register caught my attention — “Divorce: In the Image and Likeness of Hell.” The first few sentences confirmed what I intuited from the title — this writer, Melinda Selmys, was going to speak plainly. It seems she’d had enough of the sweet, pious lingo with which many Catholic writers often speak about marriage. Heck, for all I know, she might even be married herself.

She observes: “The theologians remind us that our married life is an image of the union between ... Christ and the church. We hear of ... the bliss of the two becoming one.” When things get tough, we are told “to improve our communication, fall in love with each other all over again, observe the tender moments, etc., etc.”

Then she allows such advice to butt up against the all-too real experiences of actual marriages. “But how are you to fall in love again,” she asks, “with an insensitive beast who has broken your heart and slept with another woman?” How can you see your sex life as an image of the intimate life of the blessed Trinity when your wife consents only on a full moon when Mars is in Virgo, and makes love with the enthusiasm of a dead frog?”

When I first read that last line, I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. But I did breathe a sigh of relief. Man, it’s refreshing to hear people say it like it is. For whatever reason, such brutally honest writing seems rare in much of the Catholic press. It’s as if those who promote Catholic teaching are afraid it won’t go over so well if we talk about the real sufferings of following Jesus. So we conveniently promote the glories of the Christian life without a realistic assessment of the sorrows.

Christian marriage is a messy, painful business. How could it be otherwise? “Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church.” (Eph 5:25).

If marital union is an image of Christ’s union with the church, this means, as Selmys observes, that marriage will involve “the same agony, the mingling of tears and blood, the same thorns digging into our skulls, the same nails plowed through our palms.”

In light of how many people believe the church is “down on sex,” the glories and ecstasies to which authentic Catholic teaching calls spouses in their union should be emphasized. But the sorrows and ecstasies are the fruit of embracing much purifying suffering. If the joy is not set before us, we will have no motivation to endure the suffering. “For the joy set before him Christ endured the cross.” (Heb 12:2).

But if the path to those joys is not also realistically assessed, we will naively wonder why marriage is so agonizing.

As Selmys writes: “In every marriage there are moments when it seems impossible. I am sure that when Christ fell on the road to Calvary, the thought of lifting his cross again ... seemed like madness. Perhaps it is different through divine eyes, but for men, there are always moments when we turn to heaven and say, ‘Are you insane?’ When we are hardly able to see to the top of Golgotha through our dust-bitten tears, we derive no comfort from reassurances that crucifixion isn’t all that bad, and that, seen in perspective, it’s really a beautiful expression of love and self-giving.”

It is a beautiful expression of love, to be sure. But it’s beautiful precisely because Jesus selflessly embraced the wine-press of suffering. It’s when we’re face to face with that wine-press that we’re most tempted by sexual sin — be it an affair, internet pornography, masturbation or contraception. Why?

Because sexual sin promises the pleasure without the pain, the “wine” without the wine-press.

True love is always linked with suffering. As author Father Paul Quay said in his book “The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality,” “It is precisely this link between true love and suffering that is rejected by sexual sin.”

Christ suffered greatly in loving his spouse. We are to follow him.

Christopher West is a fellow of the Theology of the Body Institute in West Chester, Pa., and lectures worldwide. His books and other information are available at christopherwest.com.

Storms of Life Necessary to Push Us on Our Journey

Several years ago, I met a young man who was working through a very difficult time in his life.

He had graduated with a degree in business 10 years before, worked successfully in a job for awhile, but then decided that the corporate world was not for him. He quit his job a bit naively without a definite plan for his future, lived on his savings until they were gone, and then went into a pain that he knew in mind had himself living out of his car, in friends’ houses, or at the mercy and good-will of whoever would take him in. The few dollars he now earned from dishwashing were spent on tuition, for courses in literature and theology.

But his free-fall wasn’t just economic. It was emotional as well. His self-image, his confidence and his relationships all took a massive beating. Family and friends were less than sympathetic and understanding.

Their eyes, if not their words, spoke of their disappointment in him — the once handsome, successful young man, now going nowhere. He had left his job with idealistic dreams of becoming a writer, but now lacked all self-confidence. He told me one day: “The hardest thing has been dealing with my own father, who had always been so proud of me. Now there is disappointment in him every time he looks at me. Recently he told me, ‘You look shabby!’ He didn’t have to add: I’m ashamed of you! and I didn’t have to say: ‘I feel shabby!’

But right after saying this with real sadness in his voice, his voice suddenly became stronger and he added: “As painful as this, I have one consolation: I’m growing up! I was a spoiled rich kid, with no tools to handle frustration. This pain is eventually going to turn me into something else, I wonder have had to fall apart this way sometime anyway to ever grow up; so, better it happen now when I’m still young. I look at my friends who aren’t going through any of this, and I don’t envy them. They will eventually have to go through something like this too!”

I had a sense of what he meant because something very similar happened in my own life, except that I did envy my friends who weren’t as depressed as I was.

During the summer when I was 14, my inner world collapsed. It began with the suicide of a neighbor. A young man whose health and body I young man from our small farming community was killed in an industrial accident, and the summer ended with a classmate, a close friend, dying in a horseback riding accident. I served as an altar server at each of their funerals.

My outside world stayed the same, but inside, not unlike the young man whose story I just shared, things were dark, spinning, scary. I was in a free-fall. The specter of death suddenly colored my whole world, and, as Christ loved the church — as Christ loved the church. (Eph 5:25). If marital union is an image of Christ’s suffering. As author Father Paul Quay said in his book “The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality,” “It is precisely this link between true love and suffering that is rejected by sexual sin.”

Christ suffered greatly in loving his spouse. We are to follow him.

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Ofrecidos a los 107 obispos nombrados en los últimos doce meses

Consejos del Papa Benedicto XVI a los nuevos Obispos

VATICANO (ZENIT/CNS). — Publicamos el discurso que pronunció Benedicto XVI el 22 de septiembre en la audiencia pastoral de la Catedral de San Pedro a 107 nuevos obispos nombrados en los últimos doce meses.

Queridos hermanos en el episcopado,

Ya es otoño, desde hace varios años, que los obispos nombrados recientemente se reunían en Roma para un encuentro que vio como una opción para la fundación de la fundación de San Pedro. El otoño es una época propicia para reflexionar sobre la vida y el trabajo de los obispos. En esta ocasión, nos gustaría reflexionar sobre la importancia de la Iglesia en el mundo y su responsabilidad en el mundo.

En esta ocasión, me gustaría destacar dos temas: la importancia de la Iglesia en el mundo y la responsabilidad de los obispos en el mundo. En este contexto, me gustaría reflexionar sobre la importancia de la Iglesia en el mundo y la responsabilidad de los obispos en el mundo.

La extinción de la pobreza es un compromiso moral

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Ley anti-inmigrante y racista HB 1804 tiene sus días contados en una corte federal
En la unión está la fuerza y solamente Cristo nos da ese ímpetu

The evening of October 23 will start this important and historical cultural event
The Hispanic Cultural Institute will preserve and promulgate diversity

By Mauro Yanes
Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — The Hispanic Cultural Institute of Saint Joseph Catholic Church is established this fall by a group of Catholics professionals who are interested in promoting and helping our parish, diocesan, lay leaders, English-speaking parishioners and, general public for the purpose to provide a better understanding of the Hispanic culture and Spanish language.

The Institute will serve the community through a wide range of cultural, religious, educational and educational activities to disseminate and preserve the rich of the Hispanic culture and to highlight the achievements and presence of Hispanics as an important part of our society in Oklahoma. The basic sequence of Spanish courses of the Hispanic Cultural Institute of Saint Joseph Catholic Church will prepare to do more advanced work in language, and culture. The Institute will offer four levels of Spanish classes: Beginner, Intermediate I, Intermediate II and Advanced.

The basic sequence is designed to give participants a working level of ability in the four basic skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening comprehension.

The Institute will cover the cultural, historical, and spiritual roots, which are components that are essential of the Hispanic ethnicity. The classes will start at 7:00 pm and end at 9:00 pm each Tuesday with ten minutes break between the classes of language and culture. The instructors are Dr. Luis Cortes, Dr. Charles Kenny, Dr. Amanda Monks, Dr. Terry Ruggeri, Dr. Daniel Ronson, Dr. Maria Ruiz, Michael Massarandyi, Judy Domen, Dr. Arturo Guerra, Maria Ruiz Massarandyi, MA; Angela Lombardo, MSCE; Anna Lombardo, MSCE; Maria Marchand, MA; Margarita Parara, MA; Tereza Ixhbari, MA; Mauro Yanes, MA; Patricia Yanes, MA; Elizabeth Showe, MA; Gerardo Villena and Yolanda Villena, Juris Doctorate.

The United States is one of the few places where the majority of the population is not bilingual. Some people don’t care to learn another language and culture, instead some citizens expect other people to learn to speak English if they want to live here or work in the United States.

However, in order to continue our evolution and globalization process we need to be more accommodating to a culture that is estimated to attain a combined buying power of $1 trillion by 2008. The 2002 official Catholic Directory lists the U.S. Catholic population at 65,270,444. Catholics represent 23.3 percent of the total population of the United States.

According to the official 2000 Census, there are 35.3 million Hispanics in the United States, or 12.5% of the total population. Since 1990, the nation’s Hispanic population has increased 55%.

Last year the Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, archbishop emeritus of Washington said: “The Hispanic presence in our society is a new sign of hope. Their presence among us is a gift.”

For more information about this wonderful training you may contact Saint-Joseph Catholic Church at (405) 321-0800.
Network IT Personnel
Bishop McGuinness and Christ the King Schools are seeking a full-time, professional IT person. Experience and/or certification with the setup and maintenance of Windows, Linux, Mac platforms, and computer systems for this co-oped position is a must. Contact Trevor Swink, BMCHS Technology Director, (405) 314-3378 for information. Send resume to swinkt288@mcguinness.k12.ok.us

Teacher Sought
Sacred Heart Catholic School in El Reno is seeking a pre-kindergarten teacher. Applicants must have a license or certification in early childhood. Please submit resumes to Principal Shannon Statton, 210 S. Evans, El Reno, Okla. 73036 or fax to (405) 262-3818.

Part-time Youth Director
Holy Trinity Parish in Okarche is seeking a part-time youth director. Must be able to work well with youth. If interested, call Deacon Max Schwarz at 263-4640.

DRE Opening
St. Eugene Catholic Church in Oklahoma City is seeking a director of Religious Education for grades K-8th. Requirements include, but are not limited to, a Catholic actively practicing their faith and in good standing with the Catholic Church, motivated and energetic with love of children and love of a multi-cultural community. A background in Religious Education, degree in theology and bilingual (English/Spanish) are a plus. Benefits include medical/dental insurance plus a retirement plan. If you are seeking to answer your baptismal call and are ready for adventure, contact Deacon Bill Bawden at 751-7115 Ext. 153 to make an appointment.

Adjunct Faculty
The College for Working Adults at St. Gregory’s University on the Shawnee campus has openings for adjunct faculty at the undergraduate and graduate level: General Education, Business and Business Law, Computer Science, Professional Development and Psychology. A master’s degree is required, preference for candidates with experience teaching adults. Candidates must be supportive of and willing to contribute to the Catholic and Benedictine identity of the university. Send a cover letter, vita and transcripts to hr@stgregorys.edu or mail to Dr. Denise Short, Associate Dean, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804.

Campus Minister
St. Gregory’s University in Shawnee is looking for a campus minister. Responsibilities: Oversee and implement a comprehensive Catholic and Benedictine campus ministry program. Coordinate student-led retreats as an outreach to area parishes and high schools (Buckley Team). Coordinate student liturgies and student liturgical ministries and assist in the planning of campus-wide liturgies. Provide catechetical and faith formation activities such as Bible study, Lectio Divina, discussions on Catholic social teaching, small faith groups, etc. Develop service and mission trip opportunities for students. Maintain a pastoral presence among students, faculty and staff.

Qualifications: Master’s degree in theology or pastoral ministry is preferred. Bachelor’s degree and experience in Youth/Young Adult Ministry will be considered. Mature understanding of the Catholic faith tradition and ability to communicate the tradition creatively and pastorally to young adults. Practicing Catholic in good standing. Good communication and social skills are essential. Willingness to work as part of a collaborative ministry environment. Willingness to work some evenings and weekends. Instrumental music ability (especially guitar or keyboard) is desirable. Completion of Oklahoma City Safe Environment training program and requirements.

V.P. of Institutional Advancement
St. Gregory’s University in Shawnee is looking for a vice president of Institutional Advancement. St. Gregory’s University was founded in 1875 by Benedictine monks. It was originally chartered as the Catholic University of Oklahoma in 1916, and is a private, Roman Catholic university founded in the Benedictine tradition. The university’s educational mission quickly expanded, and today St. Gregory’s serves a diverse population of Catholics and other faiths from many states and foreign countries. We offer a number of majors across the spectrum including Natural Science, Social Science, Arts, Business and Theology. As a Catholic University, St. Gregory’s do not avoid the difficult questions of our day, but rather prepares students to confront these questions creatively and objectively while striving for their destiny with faith and hope.

The vice president reports directly to the president and is responsible for the planning and direction of all philanthropic initiatives for the university. The vice president will plan and lead all advancement initiatives to capitalize on the university’s success story, engage a broad range of constituents and grow the endowment. The vice president will work closely with staff, senior administrators and board members to identify short- and long-term priorities for fundraising and manage a portfolio of major gift prospects. The university is currently in the silent phase of a major capital campaign.

The successful candidate will possess the ability to embrace and communicate St. Gregory’s unique attributes and mission while leading a broad advancement program and enhancing the existing relationships with constituents across the country. A master’s degree is required. It is strongly preferred that this individual be a practicing Catholic with knowledge of Benedictine spirituality. Salary and benefits are commensurate with experience.

Electronic applications are preferred, and should include a cover letter and resume. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position has been filled. Nominations, expressions of interest or requests for the complete position specifications may be sent directly to the university: Mr. Shingi Goto, Executive Vice President, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804. angoto@stgregorys.edu or by phone, (405) 875-5455.

LPN and Direct Care
The Center of Family Love in Okarche is looking for LPNs weekends and third shifts and Direct Care Technicians for both 7-3 and 3-11 and weekends. We pay competitive wages, provide training and have a paid time-off program. For more information, call John Isenegger at the Center of Family Love (405) 263-4658 or fax your resume to (405) 263-4563.

RN Consultant
The Center of Family Love in Okarche is looking for an RN to act as a consultant for our three units. We pay competitive wages, provide training and have a paid time-off program. For more information, call John Isenegger at the Center of Family Love (405) 263-4658 or fax your resume to (405) 263-4563.

Stewardship Fair Celebrated
MUSTANG — Holy Spirit Catholic Church held its 2007 Stewardship Ministry Fair Sept. 29-30 with an estimated 175 parishioners attending one of the three sessions held after each Mass. From Youth Ministries to Social Action to the JOY (Just Older Youth) Ministry, more than 20 of the parish’s organizations set up booths where they shared information about their individual ministries’ services. In addition to the festive atmosphere, the Stewardship Ministry hosted a buffet style lasagna dinner on Saturday evening and a pancake and sausage breakfast after each of the Sunday morning services. Father James Greiner, pastor, said the primary goal of the Ministry Fair was to re-emphasize that everything we have comes from God, and that it is each of our responsibility to return to Him an appropriate portion of our God-given “Time, Talents and Treasure.”

Open House and Crafts Fair
Saint Ann Retirement Center, 7501 W. Britton Road, is hosting an open house and crafts fair from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 2. There will be plenty of tables set up with incredible crafts for the fall/holiday seasons. The event will include live entertainment, refreshments and tour of the community. Door prizes will be given away hourly.

Come and take a tour of the wonderful facility we have and find out about all the amenities we offer. Saint Ann Retirement Center has independent living as well as assisted living. Come see Catholic Retirement At Its Best. For more information, call 721-0747.
Beginning Experience Ministry Helped Open Door to Healing

By Donna Sue Ivey
For the Sooner Catholic

I’ll never forget the day that the weight of my divorce came crashing in on me. I was kneeling in my parish church, staring through tearful swollen eyes at the tabernacle, asking our Lord for some relief from the unbearable grief I was feeling. I couldn’t believe that my marriage had fallen apart. We had been childhood sweethearts, husband and wife, and now we were correspondent and plaintiff on a legal-looking piece of paper that lawfully separated us from each other. I was experiencing a suffering, both mental and physical, that I had never felt before. It was grief, pure and simple. So many years of living a joy-filled Catholic marriage were over. My marriage was dead. How all of this had happened was no longer the question that I was asking. The question was how do I live through the loss of my husband to divorce? On top of the pain, I was experiencing a multitude of emotions such as denial, anger and depression. I had even bargained with God, promising and praying, hoping that it would all go away, and that my marriage would be whole again. But all I could feel was the grief, and an unrealistic guilt that I was responsible for all that had caused my marriage to break up. I also felt guilty for the pain and shame to my family and friends because I was divorced. So much guilt made me feel that I could never go home or experience that feeling of belonging again. Sitting there in church, I ached for the words of love and forgiveness, for through all the months of the dissolution of my marriage, I had pulled away from family, friends and God. I had so long missed the closeness of a hug, the warmth of a hand on my shoulder and the kiss from someone I loved.

Kneeling there in the chapel, I experienced the reality of the loss, and the ending of my marriage and the life I had known for almost 30 years. It was then that I turned to God, and literally curled up in the pew. I cried for the longest time, asking God to forgive me and to love me. When I was finally empty, I knew that I was loved and forgiven, and I could hardly wait to go to confession. When I knelt in the confessional, my priest recognized the pain he saw in me. Two words he then spoke to me, two words that set me on my path to healing. “Welcome home.”

What happened next was his telling me to call the Archdiocesan Office of Family Life. There I would be able to contact Beginning Experience. Beginning Experience is a weekend program to help grieving, single-again persons move from the darkness of their grief into the light of a new beginning and move into the future with renewed hope. The weekend is presented by a team of men and women who have experienced the loss of a loved one as well, and who are willing to share their own experience to help others. The weekend is for men and women who have suffered the loss of a spouse through separation, divorce or death. Many who have suffered these losses, also feel uneasy and left out by their church, families and friends, as well as facing the uncertainty of their future. Rooted in the Catholic tradition, its open, ecumenical spirit serves those of all faiths (BE).

I remember the Friday morning of my Beginning Experience weekend, and how I lay there in bed wondering why I had agreed with Father to do this thing! Hadn’t I been through enough pain since my spouse left? Hadn’t I been through enough emotional feelings without signing up for more? Now I was putting myself into the hands of people that I did not even know. These people might want to “get inside my head” or be little more touchy feely than what I wanted! I had sent in the brochure Father had given me, and had gotten a phone call from one of the Beginning Experience team members who had explained to me a little about what to expect from the weekend. She told me that I would meet some very nice people, all had experienced some form of grief or loss of their own, and who were now Beginning Experience members who wanted to share and give back some of the relief that they had found through their own Beginning Experience weekend. She assured me that they were there to care for me, and that I would find Beginning Experience a tremendous experience.

Pulling up to the building, I was anything but calm inside. I had already talked myself through the running away stage of not attending, and had made an emotional feeding run through Taco Bell’s drive-up window. With diet Coke in hand and the remains of a taco sauce stain on my jeans, I stared at the big building in front of me. I was suddenly disoriented, and I didn’t know what to do next. For months, it seemed, I had had to make decisions about big things as well as the small things just to survive and get through another day. Now, here I was unable to even focus on getting out of the car, or of walking up that long sidewalk. It was then that a Beginning Experience team member knocked on my window and smiled at me. It seemed that I didn’t have to make any more decisions, and that God was placing some Beginning Experience angels at every corner that I needed to turn. Before I realized it, I was sitting in a large group of strangers, and actually beginning to relax while I listened to the introductory talk of what to expect from the weekend. I was also beginning to feel something that I hadn’t felt in a while, and that was a form of trust.

What has happened since the time of my first Beginning Experience weekend has been the relief from grief and a start of new beginnings through the grace of God, family and friends. I have tremendous support through my church community as well as my Beginning Experience friends. I realize that I am not the only person who has lost someone that they loved, or who has been through a tragic relationship. I also know that God loves me no matter where I have been, or what I have done, and I am experiencing a peace that I have missed for a very long time.
OKLAHOMA CITY — Corpus Christi Parish vibrated with sounds of gospel music proclaimed through rich African heritage when the annual “My Being Proclaims the Greatness of the Lord” music workshop was celebrated Sept. 28-30. The workshop led participants through the development of the black religious music tradition, showing how the values of African and African-American spirituality are expressed in musical heritage. The workshop began Friday with an opening service followed by a workshop, choir rehearsal and dinner. Workshops were held throughout the day Saturday and a free concert was offered that evening. On Sunday, Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Beltran in which workshop participants performed the music they had learned during the workshop. Photos/George Johnson