Oklahomans Hit the Streets to Support Lifewalk

Jerry and Juanita Bowser were two of an estimated 1,000 people who turned out Oct. 12 to support Birth Choice of Oklahoma Inc.’s annual Lifewalk event in downtown Oklahoma City.
The Good News

Investiture Mass
Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre
Little Rock, Arkansas
October 19, 2008

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

One month ago, I was very blessed to be on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Our group of 36 pilgrims went first to the Galilee area. It was there that Jesus lived; there He gathered His apostles; there He performed a number of miracles and proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

Then, after a short stay in Jordan, we had a long and tiring day's journey before we arrived in Jerusalem. For most people in our group, this was their first pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Therefore, there was great excitement as we made our initial entrance into the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Although we were scheduled to visit the shrines in the Old City the next day and despite the fact that everyone was tired, immediately after supper, the pilgrims were anxious to enter and walk in the Old City. A large group of them followed directions and headed directly to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Upon arriving at the basilica, they were disappointed as the large entrance door was being closed for the night.

The Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre is sacred to all Christians because of the many historically accurate religious sites it contains. Moreover, these are the places where the most important events of the history of salvation occurred. These include Golgotha (Calvary), the place where Jesus was crucified. Nearby and beneath Calvary is the site of the Pieta. Here Mary would receive the dead body of her Son Jesus as they prepared His body for burial. Also within the basilica is the Holy Sepulchre where Jesus' body was buried. It was there that Jesus rose from the dead and brought new life for us. By His life, death and resurrection, Jesus redeemed us from sin and saved us from eternal death.

Standing in the courtyard of that most sacred shrine, the pilgrims gratefully and humbly began to pray. They prayed as Jesus taught us: “Our Father, etc.” Much to their dismay, however, the door keeper came to them, telling them they could not pray there.

Can you imagine the horror of those pilgrims who came peacefully to praise and worship God? How sad it is that the Eternal Son of God, the Prince of Peace, the Savior of the World, is so often unknown or ignored or even despised. You and I have much to do to change this. We must proclaim the Good News of Jesus and share His love and peace with others. This is precisely what the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre is all about.

I am pleased to tell you that even though my pilgrims were unjustly confronted and told not to pray in the courtyard of the Holy Sepulchre, their pilgrimage was most rewarding. During the remaining days in Jerusalem, we prayed at the Holy Sepulchre several times and celebrated Mass on Calvary itself. While waiting in line to visit the Tomb of Christ, we listened to and meditated on the Gospel account of the Passion. As we knelt to touch those sacred places, we felt the Lord Himself touch us and heal us. How good and gracious God is!

You and I, as Knights and Ladies and all new candidates for the Order, must be people with a strong conviction. We must recognize and appreciate the tenets of our Catholic faith and be committed to observe them.

It was this strong faith which once inspired people hundreds of years ago to respond to the urgent plea of the Holy Father. The Sacred Shrines and especially the Holy Sepulchre had been violated. The popes asked people to help reclaim and open these shrines. Thus the Knights of old sacrificed much. They had to leave their homelands and travel great distances under very dangerous conditions. They generously gave of their resources. Sometimes even their lives. Above all, they prayed. They prayed for God's blessing. They prayed to fulfill His Will.

The families and especially the wives of these Knights shared the same faith and commitment. They too made sacrifices and offered generous assistance. But above all, they too prayed that God's Will would be accomplished.

The strong faith of men and women, Knights and Ladies, accomplished much to regain and protect the Sacred Shrines. That same strong faith should guide and direct us, the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre today.

Sometime after Pope Paul VI concluded the II Vatican Council, he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He prayed at the shrines and visited the Christians living there. He urged the Church and especially our Order to become more aware of this land where Jesus was born, lived, suffered and died and rose from the dead. Here it was that Jesus established His Church and sent the Apostles to proclaim the Good News.

Following the direction that Pope Paul VI gave us and the similar counsels of Pope John Paul II, it is very clear that we, Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre, should have three specific goals: One — We should pray daily for peace and harmony in the Holy Land. We should especially concern for the well-being of the Christians of the Holy Land. These people live in difficult circumstances and they need and deserve our prayers and our support.

Two — We should help preserve the actual shrines by our generous contributions so that these sacred places of biblical renown will remain open and accessible for prayer, contemplation and meditation.

Three — If at all possible, we should make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land so that we can walk in the footsteps of Jesus and grow in faith and hope and love.

In this Investiture service today, you who are new members will be challenged to proclaim and live the fullness of our Catholic faith. You will be reminded that you must practice every means to achieve the perfection of a truly Christian life. You will be asked to remain faithful to the Lord and to His teachings.

Knights and Ladies who are already members of the Order, I want you to rejoice with those who are about to be invested. See in their enthusiasm and dedication a call for renewal that as they dedicate themselves to the Lord and His Church, we do the very same thing. By our prayers, our actions and our commitment, we proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord and we are His people.

We must recognize and appreciate the tenets of our Catholic faith and be committed to observe them.
Reality Contradicts Political Posturing on Reducing Abortion

Sometimes election years produce more policy myths than good ideas. This year one myth is about abortion. It goes like this: The Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision is here to stay, and that’s fine because laws against abortion don’t reduce abortions much anyway. Rather, “support for women and families” will greatly reduce abortions, without changing the law or continuing a “divisive” abortion debate.

Various false claims are used to bolster this myth. It is said that over three-quarters of women having abortions cite expense as the most important factor in their decision. Actually, the figure is less than one-fourth, 23 percent. It is said that abortion rates declined dramatically (30 percent) during the Clinton years, but the decline stopped under the ostensibly pro-life Bush administration. Actually, the abortion rate has dropped 30 percent from 1981 to 2005; the decline started 12 years before Clinton took office, and has continued fairly steadily to the present day.

The steepest decline is among minors. Is it plausible that economic factors reduced abortions for teens but not their older sisters, or their mothers who support them?

The reality is this: In 1980 the Supreme Court upheld the Hyde Amendment, and federally funded abortions went from 200,000 a year to nearly zero. With its decisions in Webster (1989) and Casey (1992), the Court began to uphold other abortion laws previously invalidated under Roe. States passed hundreds of modest but effective laws: bans on use of public funds and facilities; informed consent laws; parental involvement when minors seek abortion, etc. Dr. Michael New’s rigorous research has shown that these laws significantly reduce abortions. In the 1990s, debate on partial-birth abortion — kept in the public eye, ironically, by President Clinton’s repeated vetoes of a ban on this grisly late-term procedure — alerted many Americans to the violence of abortion and shifted public attitudes in a pro-life direction, just as growing concern over AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases was giving new force to the abstinence message for teens. Now the Court has upheld a partial-birth abortion ban, and signaled that other laws to save unborn children and their mothers from the horrors of abortion may be valid. If Roe is reversed outright, that will allow more laws that can further reduce abortions.

By contrast, a pending federal “Freedom of Choice Act” (FOCA) would knock down current laws reducing abortions, and require public programs for pregnant women to fund abortion. No one supporting that bill can claim to favor reducing abortions.

Many women are pressured toward abortion, and they need our help. The pressures are partly, but only partly, economic in nature. Women are influenced by husbands, boyfriends, parents and friends, and by a culture and legal system that tells them the child they carry has no rights and is of no consequence. Law cannot solve all problems, but it can tell us which solutions are unacceptable — and today Roe still teaches that killing the unborn child is an acceptable solution, even a “right.” Without ever forgetting the need to support pregnant women and their families, that tragic and unjust error must be corrected if we are to build a society that respects all human life.

Doerflinger is associate director of the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Go to www.usccb.org/pro-life to learn more about the bishops pro-life activities. For more on FOCA, see www.nchla.org/issues.asp?id=50.

Catholic Foundation Awards Grants for Parishes, Schools

Annually, the Catholic Foundation awards grants to Religious Education/Formation Programs and Catholic grade and high schools throughout the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. This year, the Catholic Foundation awarded 28 full and partial grants in excess of $75,000 to educational programs from a pool of 37 applications.

“Through grants to our Catholic parishes and schools, the Catholic Foundation fulfills its mission of ‘Investing in the Future of Our Faith,’” said Tom Casso, executive director of the Catholic Foundation.

Among those grants awarded: Villa Teresa Catholic School for classroom Bibles; St. Thomas More Catholic Church for Ukrainian Service Project; and St. Philip Neri for fine arts presentations. Other grants included Catechesis training at St. Peter Catholic Church in Guymon, St. Joseph Old Cathedral in Oklahoma City and Christ the King in Oklahoma City; audio/visual equipment for Holy Family Catholic Church in Lawton; St. Mary Catholic Church in Clinton; St. Joseph Catholic Church in Buffalo; St. Peter Catholic Church in Woodward; Holy Name Catholic Church in Shattuck; and Holy Trinity Catholic School in Okarche. Also, youth conferences for St. Joseph Catholic Church in Ada, Holy Cross Catholic Church in Madill and Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Marietta.

Several parishes and schools requested and received grants for technology upgrades, including Epiphany Catholic Church in Oklahoma City; St. Monica Catholic Church in Edmond; Rosary Catholic School in Oklahoma City; Holy Name Catholic Church in Chickasha; St. Eugene Catholic School in Oklahoma City; and St. Matthew Catholic Church in Elk City.

Additionally, Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School received partial funding for a Robotics Academy as part of its physics curriculum, and St. Mary Catholic School in Ponca City received full funding for a Catholic Classroom Jeopardy Program to be used in middle school religion classes.

Funding was also provided for school safety equipment at Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic School in Kingfisher, Sacred Heart Catholic School in Oklahoma City and St. John Nepomuk Catholic School in Yukon.

The Catholic Foundation awards scholarships and grants on an annual basis, and recognizes Educators of the Year in both the Catholic school system and parish Religious Education/Formation programs.

To learn more about the Catholic Foundation, visit www.cfok.org on the Web.

Student Recognized

Bishop McGuinness senior Lauren Pinaroc has been recognized by the College Board’s National Hispanic Recognition Program. Lauren is the daughter of Dr. Nestor and Lynn Pinaroc of Mustang. The National Hispanic Recognition Program is a College Board program that provides national recognition of the exceptional academic achievements of Hispanic high school seniors. Students enter the program by taking the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test as high school juniors and by identifying themselves as Hispanic. From more than 200,000 students nationwide, 5,000 have been recognized as National Hispanic Scholars or honorable mention. Finalists are based upon their PSAT/NMSQT scores and their academic achievements.
Religious Sisters Called by Love of God and His People

By Connie Blaney
Catholic Charities

Following in the footsteps of St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, foundress of the Congregation of Notre Dame (CND), Sister Anne Leonard, Sister Betty Kehoe and Sister Catherine “Kay” Powers believe they have been called by God to be among the people in their ministry to others.

In a recent interview, Sister Anne, Sister Kay and Sister Betty shared stories of their past, what led them to Oklahoma, and how God has blessed their lives and their ministries as members of their religious order.

Sister Anne Leonard, who now resides in Montreal, as Associate Leader of the Congregation of Notre Dame, visited Sister Kay and Sister Betty in late July at their home in Oklahoma City. It was during this visit that they reflected on how their lives have intertwined, from working together at St. Jude the Apostle Catholic School in Chicago years ago, to coming to Oklahoma City to serve the needs of people through both Catholic education and Catholic Charities.

“Our common bond is our love for God and our love for the people of Oklahoma,” they said in unison. Sister Kay added, “Our congregation, founded in 1653, is the first un-cloistered religious community in North America. Our foundress wanted us to be directly among the people doing God’s work. This is our mission in life.”

Their contributions to the Catholic community of Oklahoma are numerous — beginning with Sister Anne Leonard, when she came to Oklahoma in 1990 to serve as the Director of Catholic Education. Sister Anne, who had worked with Sister Betty in Chicago, encouraged her to interview for an opening in counseling at Catholic Charities. Sister Betty agreed to come for the interview. She was hired for the position and moved to Oklahoma in September of 1990. “Just like the Oklahoma Land Run opened up for others, it was now opening up for us,” Sister Betty said. Not knowing anyone else in Oklahoma except each other, the two of them shared a house together at St. Eugene’s Parish. It didn’t take long for both of them to get adjusted to their new ministries and begin meeting people in the community.

Sister Anne held the position of Director of Education from 1990 to 1996. In 1996, she was elected Provincial Leader of her congregation in Ridgefield, Conn., which would mean leaving Oklahoma. Thinking about her replacement, she called Sister Kay and asked her to consider interviewing with Archbishop Beltran for her position. Following an interview during Holy Week in April of 1996, Sister Kay was appointed the new Director of Education and moved to Oklahoma in August to continue the CND ministry in Catholic education.

When asked what they are most proud of about their legacy to the Catholic community, all agree that carrying forth the ideals and aspirations of their foundress, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, is their most cherished contribution. In 1653, just 33 years after the landing at Plymouth Rock, Marguerite’s zeal for Christian education brought her from France to New France (Montreal). Marguerite began working with the early colonists and braved many hardships as she continued to promote the education and training of the early young women of the colony. She established her congregation, and over 350 years later many women, imbued with her spirit, have dedicated their lives in service to the Lord. St. Marguerite was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1982. This was a great source of joy and further inspiration for Marguerite’s followers.

Sister Anne and Sister Betty were moved by the spirit of Oklahoma following the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995. Sister Betty, as a counselor at Catholic Charities, was heavily involved in helping survivors and family members who had lost loved ones in the bombing. Sister Anne, as Superintendent of Schools, worked closely with her teachers, students and parents to help them in the healing process during the months that followed the bombing.

“Our congregation takes its inspiration from ‘Mary’s Visitation to Elizabeth,’ that is, seeing a need and caring for others,” Sister Betty said. “This is our call and vocation in life,” Sister Kay added. “We love our ministries and feel fortunate to have been associated with so many good people in Oklahoma.”

Sister Anne noted, “I have fond memories of Oklahoma and still consider it my second home. It is always a joy to return for a visit.”

In their unique ministries, each woman has made an impact on those they have served — as spiritual leaders, mentors, advisers, educators and friends. Sister Betty, who has been in Oklahoma the longest, has seen Catholic Charities grow as the needs have grown in the community. “In counseling, our clients continue to face many of the same challenges as when I first came to Oklahoma. However, it appears there is a higher stress level in people’s lives including uncertainty about the economy and their futures, increased addictions, marital problems, parenting, and personal issues,” Sister Betty said.

Sister Anne came to Oklahoma in 1990 when there was a growth spurt in Catholic schools. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Edmond had just opened and Sacred Heart in El Reno had reopened. When Sister Kay took over the directorship in 1996, she was involved in the accreditation process for the Catholic schools, and the opening of All Saints in Norman, St. Eugene’s School in Oklahoma City, reopening of St. Joseph’s School in Enid, and the renovation and new buildings of several other schools in the Archdiocese. “It has been most rewarding to see the renovations at McGuinness, and the revitalization of Mount St. Mary High School. Both high schools have promising futures. Our elementary enrollments are thriving, and many of our schools have waiting lists,” Sister Kay said.

God’s plan to bring Sister Anne, Sister Kay and Sister Betty to Oklahoma has been a blessing to the Catholic community. Although Sister Anne is no longer in Oklahoma, her contributions to the Oklahoma community are long-lasting. Sister Kay and Sister Betty continue to enjoy their ministries in Oklahoma. “What we are most impressed with is the ‘sense of community’ and ‘deep-rooted faith’ of Catholics across Oklahoma. We appreciate the support and friendships we have made over the years,” they concluded.
Saint Eugene School Plans Auction

OKLAHOMA CITY — “Grease” is the word at St. Eugene Catholic School where plans are under way for the annual school auction. The event is set for 6 p.m. Nov. 8 at the Coca-Cola Bricktown Events Center.

“We are going with a ‘50s theme this year because the school is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Everyone is getting so excited and pulling out their poodle skirts and other ‘50s attire,” said Principal Suzette Williams.

Proceeds from the auction will benefit various school projects. Auction items include sporting event tickets, travel vouchers, hotel packages, lawn service, signed sports memorabilia and much more.

In addition to the auction, the school is raffling off a $3,000 and a $1,500 Visa gift card. Raffle tickets are only $10 and you need not be present to win.

There’s True Marriage and Then There’s Brad Pitt Marriage

This is the final installment of a short series of columns exploring the question: What is marriage? In the first installment, we looked at the union of man and woman as the foundation stone of life and civilization itself. In the second, we drew from 2,000 years of Catholic teaching to formulate a definition of marriage. Here, I want to respond to some of the challenges raised by those who see same-sex “marriage” as a matter of justice and equality.

Proposition 8 is an initiative on California’s ballot that would overturn that state’s decision to legalize same sex “marriage.” Last month, movie star Brad Pitt made headlines when he donated $100,000 to fight Proposition 8. The statement he offered typifies the sentiments I want to respond to in this column: “Because no one has the right to deny another person his or her life, even though they disagree with it, because everyone has the right to live the life they so desire if it doesn’t harm another, and because discrimination has no place in America, my vote will be for equality and against Proposition 8.”

Who wants to deny people their rights? Who is for discrimination and inequality? It seems Pitt has everything on his side. But let’s apply some critical thinking to his statement and see where it takes us. Admittedly, I will raise more questions than I will be able to answer in this short column. Still, I would argue that these are the questions that must be raised if we are to get to the heart of the matter.

No one has the right to deny another person his or her life, even though one might disagree with it. I assume Pitt is referring to denying a person his or her “way of life.” Actually, courts do this all the time. In fact, that’s what courts exist to do. Courts exist to uphold and defend a “way of life” that serves the common good and to dissuade us from any “way of life” that does not. The question at hand, then, is this: Is redefining marriage in accord with the common good? If not, the courts have an obligation to uphold the traditional definition of marriage and to dissuade us from any contrary “way of life.”

Everyone has the right to live the life he or she so desires if it doesn’t harm another. No reasonable person would agree to this statement without the disclaimer, “if it doesn’t harm another.” The question then becomes: Is the homosexual “way of life” harmful? Pitt takes for granted the widespread idea that it is not, and expects us to do the same. But the question remains: Is the homosexual way of life harmful? Courageous people need to ask this question and let the data — all the data — speak.

Discrimination has no place in America. Discrimination has become one of those buzz-words that is “indiscriminately” linked with injustice. It seems we have forgotten that there is such a thing as just discrimination. We “discriminate” — that is, we distinguish and discern by recognizing differences — all the time, and must do so. Discrimination is unjust when the difference recognized has no bearing on the matter at hand. Discrimination is just — and required — when the difference matters.

For example, it is unjust discrimination for the state to deny blind people the right to vote. It is just discrimination for the state to deny blind people driver’s licenses (there is no universal “right” to drive a car; one must qualify). It is unjust discrimination for the state to say a woman can’t enter the town hall. It is just discrimination for the state to say a woman can’t enter the men’s locker room at the gym. So, is denying marriage to those of the same sex just or unjust discrimination? The question at hand is this: Does the sexual difference have any real bearing on marriage? If it does not, any state denying marriage to those of the same sex would be drawing meaningless distinctions. But if the sexual difference is intrinsic to what marriage is, then we are dealing with just discrimination.

Finally, Pitt says that his vote will be for equality and against Proposition 8. Who in his right mind is opposed to equality? But what does Pitt mean by “equality?” Does equality mean a bland sameness? Is there no place for meaningful distinctions? I’d say Brad is using the word “equality” indiscriminately.

Bishop Calls on Black Community to Overcome Abortion

WASHINGTON — Bishop Martin D. Holley, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, issued a statement responding to a report by the Guttmacher Institute, Planned Parenthood’s research branch, showing that black women have abortions at five times the rate of white women.

“As an African American, I am saddened by evidence that black women continue to be targeted by the abortion industry. The loss of any child from abortion is a tragedy, but we must ask: Why are minority children being aborted at such disproportionate rates?” Bishop Holley said.

“Our legitimate commitment to other social concerns must not push the primary moral issue of abortion onto the back burner. It clearly must be at the heart and center of our discussion of the survival of African American people,” Bishop Holley said.

Bishop Holley called for the federal defunding of the abortion industry. “Every year the federal government gives over $300 million to Planned Parenthood. Last year for the first time, Planned Parenthood took in over $1 billion and reported a profit of $51 million,” he said of the non-profit organization.

The bishop called upon African Americans to “defend our community by rededicating ourselves to family life and marriage, promoting the gift of chastity and marital fidelity, committing ourselves to prayer and service to others and defending the life and dignity of each human person. We can welcome every child as a gift and we can overcome abortion.”

The full text of Bishop Holley’s statement follows:

As an African American, I am saddened by evidence that black women continue to be targeted by the abortion industry. The loss of any child from abortion is a tragedy, but we must ask: Why are minority children being aborted at such disproportionate rates?

Many African Americans are not aware that since the Roe v. Wade decision legalized abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy, the number one cause of death in the African American community has been abortion. We have lost over 13 million lives. To put that in perspective, it is one-third of our present black population. Since 1973, twice as many black Americans have died from abortion than from AIDS, accidents, violent crimes, cancer and heart disease combined.

As I noted in my recent Respect Life Program article, “A Reflection on the African American Family and the Culture of Life” (www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/holley.pdf), our legitimate commitment to other social concerns must not push the primary moral issue of abortion onto the back burner. It clearly must be at the heart and center of our discussion of the survival of African American people.

The Guttmacher Institute called on policy-makers to “redouble their efforts to improve access to subsidized contraceptives for these women.” Yet studies have shown that increased access to contraceptives, especially among teens, does not reduce unintended pregnancy and abortion. On the contrary, several studies link increased access to contraceptives to an increase in STDs, with no decrease in abortion rates.

As the research arm of Planned Parenthood, the Guttmacher Institute is shamelessly trying to build a case for receiving more of our taxpayer dollars. Every year the federal government gives over $300 million to Planned Parenthood. Last year for the first time, Planned Parenthood took in over $1 billion and reported a profit of $51 million. I join my voice with others in the black community who have called for the defunding of the abortion industry.

We must demand an end to the victimizing of African American children, women, families and communities by Planned Parenthood and others in the abortion industry. Over 80 percent of Planned Parenthood clinics are located in minority neighborhoods. Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood, began the “Negro Project” to reduce the black population. We should be shocked and heartbroken by the findings of a recent phone investigation that recorded a fundraiser at an Iowa Planned Parenthood clinic, saying she was “very excited” about a donation specifically for aborting black babies.

My brothers and sisters, we can overcome abortion in our nation. Let us defend our community by rededicating ourselves to family life and marriage, promoting the gift of chastity and marital fidelity, committing ourselves to prayer and service to others and defending the life and dignity of each human person. We can welcome every child as a gift and we can overcome abortion.

Magic at The Mount Returns to The Petroleum Club

OKLAHOMA CITY — Co-chairperson, Luke and Christina Short and Rosanne Mogg, along with dedicated volunteers of Mount St. Mary High School, are preparing to host its annual fundraising dinner and auction on Saturday, Nov. 15 in downtown Oklahoma City at the Petroleum Club. The Magic at The Mount theme this year is “Remember Yesterday, Celebrate Today, Embrace Tomorrow.” Proceeds from the Magic at The Mount auction benefit the academic, athletic, physical plant improvements and community service programs of the school.

The evening will be highlighted by a fabulous dinner along with the components of both a silent and live auction. Highlighted auction items include a SmartCar; three travel packages to vacation spots in Glacier National Park, Mont., Outer Banks, N.C., and Naples, Fla.; dinner for six with Uwe von Schamann; a professional fishing guide and tackle package; a long-haired, male Chihuahua; autographed sports memorabilia; and exclusive handcrafted items by members of The Mount. There will also be several fixed price events, a wine pull and a gift card pull. In addition to the auction, the band, “The Mystery Dates,” will provide live entertainment throughout the evening.

Cost for the evening is $100 per person, and corporate sponsorships are available. Tickets and/or sponsorships may be purchased by contacting the Advancement Office at Mount St. Mary High School at 631-8865 or by e-mailing taveryt@mountstmary.org. Principal Talita DeNegri adds, “Our annual auction has always been a great way for us to raise money to support the mission of Mount St. Mary High School. Most importantly, it is a fun event that builds our school community, celebrates our mission/vision and builds relationships that will cultivate further philanthropic partnerships for the school.”
St Louis Bishop: Be the Voice for the Unborn on Nov. 4

St. Louis, Oct 18, 2008 (CNA) — Bishop Robert J. Herman, the administrator of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, has written a column reminding Catholics that their vote will be a decision weighed on the Day of Judgment. He urged Catholics not to treat the unborn as the neglectful rich man treated Lazarus in the biblical parable.

"Judgment Day is on its way," the bishop wrote in the St. Louis Review. "We cannot stop it. We don't know when it will come, but just as surely as the sun rises daily, the Son of Man will come when we least expect it."

"For many, this coming election may very well be judgment day, for this election will measure us," he continued, referencing Christ's words of judgment in Matthew 10:32-33:

"Everyone who acknowledges Me before others, I will acknowledge before My heavenly Father. But whoever denies Me before others, I will deny before My heavenly Father."

Bishop Herman asked the faithful to consider what kind of witness they give to God when they enter the voting booth on Election Day.

"The decision I make in the voting booth will reflect my value system. If I value the good of the economy and my current lifestyle more than I do the right to life itself, then I am in trouble," the bishop wrote.

He cited Pope John Paul II's apostolic exhortation Christifideles laici, which said outcry on human rights is "false and illusory" if the right to life is not defended to the maximum.

"The right of our children to be protected from destruction is greater than my right to a thriving economy," Bishop Herman continued.

"My desire for a good economy cannot justify my voting to remove all current restrictions on abortion. My desire to end the war in Iraq cannot justify my voting to remove all current restrictions on abortion."

Bishop Herman looked to the spiritual dimension as well.

"Those 47 million children our nation destroyed are still living. We have destroyed their bodies, but their souls are still alive. When our Lord comes again, they may very well be there to judge us. Even worse, Jesus tells us that whatever we do to the least of our brethren, we do to Him. We would truly shudder if we heard the words, 'I was in my mother's womb but you took my life!'"

"It is quite possible that we might see these children, but, depending upon the choices we have made, we may very well be separated from them by a great chasm which cannot be crossed, much as the rich man who ignored Lazarus, the poor man, during his lifetime here on earth but was separated from him after death."

Bishop Herman said the "deepest problem" with many Catholics is that they have become accustomed to rationalizing away a "life of sinful actions" headed in the wrong direction.

"Save our children!" he wrote. "More than anything else, this election is about saving our children or killing our children. This life issue is the overriding issue facing each of us in this coming election. All other issues, including the economy, have to take second place to the issue of life."

Briefs

CFL Gift Shop Opens
OKARCHE — Fall has arrived at the Center of Family Love Gift Shop. We have OU and OSU mugs, purses, wallets, watches, jewelry and key chains. We carry gift items, wreaths, scarecrows, Halloween and jewelry. Support your favorite local school team and decorate for the season. Center of Family Love Garden Center at 635 W. Texas, Okarche, (405) 263-4465. Hours: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All Souls Mass Set for 2 p.m.
At Resurrection Cemetery
OKLAHOMA CITY- Archbishop Beltran will celebrate Mass at 2 p.m. on Nov. 2 "All Souls Day" at Resurrection Cemetery, 7500 W. Britton Road.

Cooking for the Holidays
OKLAHOMA CITY — On Nov. 9 at 4 p.m. in the Christ the King Catholic Church Parish Center, you and your friends are invited to join Sean and Kathy Cummings as they present Cooking For Holidays. This husband and wife team will give you some tips and show you some shortcuts to make your holiday cooking fun and stress-free. Sean and Kathy Cummings are the owners of two local restaurants and are members of Christ the King Parish. For more information, call 843-4766.

Annual Thanksgiving Dinner Set
NORMAN — St. Joseph Catholic Church in Norman, 86th annual Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 16 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Served in the Parish Hall at 421 E. Acres. The home-cooked meal, consisting of recipes handed down for the past 86 years, includes turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, corn, cranberry jello salad, hot rolls, pie, tea, coffee and milk. Ticket are $8 for adults, $3.50 for children 5 to 10 years, children under 5 are free. Tickets are available at the parish office, only a limited number of tickets will be available at the door.
Longtime McGuinness Librarian, Sister Monica, Dies in Minnesota

Word has been received of the death of Sister Monica Klimek. Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Sept. 12 at Assisi Heights in Rochester, Minn.

Sister Monica was a fixture at Bishop McGuinness High School for 25 years. The following is a narrative of her life written by fellow Sisters of Saint Francis.

Early in life, sorrow became a companion on Monica Klimek’s journey, one she came to recognize well in her last years. Her twin brother died at 18 months. There were no stories, no pictures. Of the seven living siblings, two brothers became priests and three of the girls entered the convent.

From Wausau, Wis., where she grew up and where she came to know Rochester Franciscans, Monica entered our congregation at 18, and received the name Andre. She began her career teaching primary grades and would sometimes finish Friday afternoons by sitting in the back of the room and putting a student in charge — and then watch a perfect imitation of herself conducting the class. Sister Andre went on to teach every grade in the Catholic schools of southern Minnesota — she said her 30s were her best teaching years, when she “had that tiger by the tail!”

Then she was sent to study library science at Rosary College, graduating with an MA in 1973. After Vatican II, she returned to her baptismal name, and henceforth she was Sister Monica. An elementary librarian before moving to Bishop McGuinness High School in Oklahoma City, she eventually became its head librarian. She remained there for 25 years, a time of challenge, success and achievement.

Because her good friend, Sister Claudia was teaching in the same city, they were able to share community life and prayer; evenings were often spent in Claudia’s classroom, where she planned lessons and corrected papers while Monica designed and put up bulletin boards. (“That was my talent: I made them professional-looking so I could brag on them!”) Claudia could also tell us about their being held up one evening at gunpoint!

In Truth, Science and Religion Argument Only Between Humans

One subject I often end up discussing with friends and acquaintances is the apparent conflict between religion and science. A surprising number of people believe these two powerful forces in our society are incompatible with each other. Some even claim there is an “inherent conflict” between them.

When people learn that I am a scientist and a Catholic priest, a common response is, “Wow, how do you do it?” Although it may appear to a casual observer that science and religion make competing claims over the same questions, in reality they do not.

Already, back in the late 1500s, a well-known churchman named Cardinal Baronius made the point that religion teaches us “the way to heaven, not the way the heavens go.” Science, on the other hand, addresses the physical world and “how the heavens go.” This simple but important distinction, which was later incorporated into the writings of Galileo, reminds us that science and religion are objectively compatible with each other since they have distinct and unique domains.

Yet even if they deal with different domains, science and religion can and must speak to each other. Albert Einstein already saw this when he made his now-famous remark: “Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind.” Science and religion need each other and must work together. Pope John Paul II asserted this same fundamental point when he said: “Science can purify religion from error and superstition. Religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes.”

This task of collaboration and purification, however, is not an easy one in an environment of mutual doubt, suspicion and hostility. One reason for such hostility is that religion often purifies science by insisting on the primacy of ethics. Yet many scientists are clearly unwilling to acknowledge that the interests of humanity are authentically served only when scientific knowledge is joined to a truthful conscience, and the pursuit of science is attenuated through the filter of ethics.

In fact, the much-hyped conflict between religion and science turns out to be largely a conflict between men of science and men of religion, rather than between science itself and religion itself. Ultimately, some scientists may become uncomfortable when they perceive that science cannot adequately address value questions or provide answers to the ultimate questions that religion addresses. Some men of faith may similarly feel threatened when they finally have to acknowledge that the Bible is not, in fact, a scientific textbook.

A further explanation for the suspicion lies between scientists and men of faith. Can the ill will generated by a vocal minority of scientists who suggest that religion has a “softening influence on the brain,” or that men and women of faith are “spared the trouble of thinking” when they live by religious dogma and strong ethical principles. Quite the opposite is actually the case. True religion, like good science, promotes a more measured rationality, and a more ordered thoughtfulness as we consider the created world we are a part of. Absolute religious dogmas and invariable ethical principles do not stifle thinking any more than absolute definitions and unalterable geometric postulates stifle the thinking of the student of geometry. The rules of geometry do not “spare us the trouble of thinking” but, on the contrary, help us to think in a structured way, providing us with the very categories we need in order to be able to enter more deeply into this branch of mathematics. Similarly, religious dogma and sound ethical teaching afford us the essential categories we need to enter reasonably into a discussion of the ultimate questions that every person faces, questions of purpose, morality and human destiny. Religion, in the words of G.K. Chesterton, is never “an arrest of thought, but a fertile basis and constant provocation of thought.”

Moving past the mutual suspicion that has arisen between scientists and men of faith is thus a critical first step in seeing how religion and science are not, in fact, enemies at all. The two are able not only to co-exist peacefully, but within the person of the scientist, religion and science can ultimately interconnect and strengthen one another. The pioneering astronomer and mathematician, Johannes Kepler, who first calculated the elliptical orbits of the planets, perhaps put it best when he wrote: “The chief aim of all investigations of the external world should be to discover the rational order and harmony which has been imposed on it by God and which He revealed to us in the language of mathematics.”

That source of rationality, which is God himself, should be a source of continual wonder for each of us, as it was for Einstein when he mused: “The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible.”

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D., www.ncbcenter.org
OKLAHOMA CITY — The 10th annual Bishop John Carroll golf tournament was held recently at Lincoln Park Golf Course. The funds raised will be used to continue to enhance the arts, library, and other academic needs of the school. The tournament brought together teams from parishes around the city area along with players and faculty from Bishop McGuinness and Mount St. Mary’s. We thank Carl and Anita Milam and Musashis, Will’s, The Lobby Bar and Sushi Neko for again being the title sponsors for this event. We also thank Connie Diotte, principal from Bishop John Carroll, Liz Stranczek, PTO president, and all the teachers, parents, volunteers and students that came out to help. If you have an interest in Bishop John Carroll School, call 525-0956.

Birth Choice of Oklahoma, Inc. said some 1,000 people participated in the annual Lifewalk event held Oct. 12 in downtown Oklahoma City. Besides the walk, participants enjoyed live music, food and games, face painting and more.
Archbishop Beltran and Wanda Lane.

Archbishop Beltran and the staff at the Catholic Pastoral Center held a reception for Wanda Lane, who retired from the CPC after more than 30 years of service. Lane began her career with the Catholic Pastoral Center in 1974, working with Father Jack Petuskey in the Office of Religious Education. She would later work in the Office of Vocations before leaving for a few years to work at St. Charles Borromeo Parish. In 1991 she returned to the CPC to work with Father Bill Ross in the Office of Family Life. She would also do advocacy work for the Tribunal and was willing to assist wherever she was needed.

The My Being Proclaims workshop celebrated its 10th anniversary this year. The workshop, designed for persons in liturgical and music ministry, explores the history of African American hymns and Negro spirituals. Participants from eight different churches raised their voices in song at the My Being Proclaims the Greatness of the Lord conference held Sept. 25-28 at Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Oklahoma City. At right, musical instructor Valeria Foster from Washington, D.C., leads the congregation during the workshop's concluding Mass. Celebrants are, from left, Deacon Dunn Cumby, Father David Lafferty and Monsignor Charles Pope from Holy Comforter-St. Cyprian Catholic Church, Washington, D.C., who was a guest speaker at the workshop. Photographs by George Johnson Jr.
Seminarians Study “Economy of Salvation” at Conception

By Jarrod Thome
Director of Communications
Conception Abbey

CONCEPTION, Mo. — If you turn on the news today, most likely you’ll be inundated with reports of rising prices, economic turmoil and distillations of fiscal policy discussions from the most recent political debates. Amidst this constant barrage, it’s good to remind ourselves that the U.S. and world economy is a bit different from the “economy of salvation” — God’s plan for our salvation accomplished through the Church.

With that in mind, I offer you some breaking news that you might actually want to hear: a record enrollment at Conception Seminary College bodes well for the economy (of salvation). Why? Because an increase in future priests means that the message of the Gospel will reach more people, and the people who are already receiving it will receive it more effectively. With a further-reaching and more effective catechesis, the faithful can expect higher dividends on their stock in the Church.

With 108 young men on the path to the priesthood here at Conception Seminary College — including 11 seminarians from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City — and nine young monks in formation for Conception Abbey, it appears that the Holy Spirit is at work in answering the faithful’s prayers for vocations. On a broader level, Conception may very well be a bellwether of the times to come, ringing in the dawn of Pope John Paul II’s “Springtime of the Church.” In any case, it is plain to see that this auspicious beginning of the 2008-09 academic year can only mean good things for the future of the Church. What does this growth look like, though, in the specific context of a bustling seminary or a vibrant religious community?

Thanks to an 88 percent increase in enrollment since 1996, Conception Seminary College can call itself one of the largest free-standing college seminaries in the nation. To accommodate this growth, renovations to St. Maur Hall, the main seminary administration and classroom building, were completed in 2005. Today, the seminarians, faculty and staff are putting the building to good use. A typical schedule for a seminarian finds them in the Holy Cross Oratory — the seminary chapel — at 7 a.m. for the Office of Readings and morning prayer. From then on, the day is packed with classes, Mass, student committee meetings, wellness activities, formation conferences and/or reflection groups, depending on the day. Things finally start winding down with 5:50 evening prayer and the subsequent evening meal.

As you can see, the young men in priestly formation here at Conception really do have a demanding schedule. But the stretching this causes them to do is nothing more than the growing pains associated with drawing closer to God on the path to the priesthood. As far as growing pains are concerned, they’re not the only ones going through them. Due to this blessing of increased vocations, the seminary itself must grow in order to meet the increased demands of more and more young men discerning priestly formation. This is something Conception Seminary College has done time and time again over the course of its history, as evidenced through initiatives such as the Deacon Formation Program, the Pre-Theology Program, the Language, Culture and Church Program, and recently, the summer Language, Culture and Church for International Priests Program.

As numbers grow, the facilities, faculty and staff are stretched and strained to their limits, but nothing is uncomfortable yet. When asked about the possibility of even further growth, Father Samuel, president-rector of the seminary, said, “If enrollment does continue to increase significantly, we’ll have housing, classrooms and additional teachers to worry about — a happy problem but a challenge nonetheless.” With the continued prayerful support of the faithful, may God bless us with this challenge and the grace to see to its joyous resolution.
Rosary School Alumni Enjoy Reunion Festivities

OKLAHOMA CITY — Rosary graduates from the class of 1958 and fellow classmates gathered in September to celebrate their 50th anniversary. The reunion began with a cocktail party at the Community Clubhouse of Muirfield Village in northwest Oklahoma City through the courtesies of Jim Butcher.

The following day, Jim Kelley, the reunion organizer and sponsor, drove the alums in a McGuinness bus to several events beginning with a visit to Father David Monahan, who was an associate pastor at St. Francis of Assisi Church during most of the alums eight years at Rosary.

The next two stops were tours of McGuinness High School conducted by Principal David Morton, and of Rosary School conducted by Principal Karen Lynn. Both tours exposed the alums to the many structural changes that have been made since their graduation. The old Rosary building entrance has been swallowed up by the gymnasium addition. Gone are the fence around the prayer garden covered in sweet-smelling honeysuckle and the Franz Repinski caretaker’s house on the playground.

The alums attended first grade at the Meerschaert House, which was completed in 1906 (one year before Oklahoma became a state) as the home for Bishop Theophile Meerschaert, the first bishop of Oklahoma. The house also served, beginning in 1938, as the convent for the Dominican Sisters, who taught all grades. The Meerschaert House is now used for administrative offices and parish activities.

After the Rosary tour, Kelley took the group around to their old homes. This nostalgic drive highlighted one of the remarkable changes since 1958 when virtually all of the Rosary students walked to class. Principal Lynn said that only 10 current Rosary students walk to class, but the student body has greatly expanded geographically. Now students come from as far away as Ponca City, Chandler and El Reno.

After the drive, the alums attended Mass where they received a special blessing from Rev. Charles Murphy, pastor at St. Francis.

The final event was a dinner at Belle Isle Brew Pub where Kelley presented a slide show reviewing the families of the classmates and providing a history of the parish and school. Originally, (1927) Rosary School was known as St. Francis School and was located at 18th and North Youngs St. In 1938, Father Edward Van der Grinten renamed the school to Rosary and moved it to the Meerschaert House. The original, existing school was built in 1944. Also featured in the show were some of the teachers, coaches and staff, including Monsignor Bart Murtaugh, who followed Father Van der Grinten as pastor in the 1950s.

Those attending one or more of the events were Cathy Powers Frederick, Chris Sprehe, Dan Cowden, Grayson Van Horn, Jim Butler, Jim Kelley, Joe Cory, Joe Kernke, John Bane, Judy Guthrie McStravic, Judy Linhardt Quinn, Linda Shead Tacheney, Mary Bizal Peterson, John Bane, Rosemary Tener Donnell, Mary Holmes Waite, Mike Minnis and Chris Sprehe.

Also attending were Jim Burke (’57) and Martha King, who taught many of the alums when she was at McGuinness. Known to be deceased are classmates John Fish, John Starr, Tom Cawthon and David Staeheli. Classmates unable to attend were Bill Criser, C.A. Wysong, Dennis Ingram, Diana Jo Tinker Chernvinko, Frances Lynn McDonald, James Maney, Joe Corff, Judy Cowden Smith, Judy Sherrod Phelan, Ken Khoury, Mary Michele Finley LaBounty, Mike Fitzmorris, Terry McGuire and Susan Wilson Neuberger. Reunion organizers could not locate Joe Kanatser, Gary Lester, Eddie Royeton, Janice Fox, Jean Terry, Michael Feistel, Christine Cabel, Leon Campbell, John Dellitt, Kathy Randall, John Quinn, Judy Bradshaw and Mark Wilson.
Letter

Language of Unity

I feel compelled to respond to Mr. Yanez’s article in the Sooner Catholic which appeared several weeks ago. He seems to blur the distinction between immigrants and illegals as well as referring to those advocating enforcing our laws as racists.

Our constitution and laws are written in English, and it is the language of communication in government and academia. The recent English-only legislation was to promote uniformity. No one sought to eradicate minority languages. I counted 74 foreign languages spoken by physicians in Oklahoma. No one has stopped me from praying in Chaldean, my mother’s native tongue (supposedly Christ’s language).

The greatness of this country was the bond of all those that teemed our shores by shedding their provincial mantle and donning new world ones.

In Oklahoma we can see how all those of Arabic and Vietnamese descents have blended, never demanding their native tongue be forced on their generous and grateful host.

In reference to the statement that all governments have essential duties which must be carried out, I say amen to that. The most essential duty of any government is the security of its citizens, and security starts at the borders.

Every country has immigration laws. People do not have the right to immigrate, but have the right to petition a country to grant them the privilege to immigrate. Shouldn’t any country including the U.S. have the right to let whoever it wishes in? I do not have the right to immigrate to Switzerland.

As for advocacy for protection of basic human rights and dignity of human beings, isn’t that an axiom. If we were to adhere religiously to this principle, we would be fighting for the rights of the minority Christians in southern Sudan who are massacred by northern Moslems. How about Darfur?

Based on the writer’s premise, we might as well throw our immigration laws away and hand the keys of our country to all the citizens of the world.

It is a sad commentary to see the first act some individual do to come to our country is break its law. Sadder is how non-chillingly it is side-tracked if not encouraged in some circles.

The sole reason we find ourselves in this predicament falls on the shoulder of our spineless so-called leaders, both nationally and locally.

Johnny B. Roy, M.D.
Christ the King Parish

Across Oklahoma

Dinner in Okeene

OKEENE — St. Anthony Church will hold its annual dinner Oct. 26 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Okeene High School cafeteria (three blocks north and one block east of the stoplight). Adults, $6, children 4 to 10, $3, children under 4 eat free.

Prayer Day for Retired

OKLAHOMA CITY — The next Prayer Day for Retired is Oct. 29 with Father M. Price Oswalt on Celebrating All Saints and All Souls Day. Registration starts at 9:30 a.m. at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Cost is $7 which includes lunch. For more information or to register, call the Office of Worship at 721-5651.

Fall Carnival

OKLAHOMA CITY — Villa Teresa School is hosting its Fall Carnival on Oct. 25 from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. Villa Teresa School is located at 1216 Classen Drive in Oklahoma City and is open to the public. Costumes are encouraged but not required in order to attend. There will be food and beverages, as well as many delicious treats available for purchase. Armbands will ensure rides on inflatable toys, and tickets will be used for games, food, the haunted house and bingo.

Rachel’s Vineyard has a New Facilitator

OKLAHOMA CITY — Paulette Finnegan is the new retreat facilitator for Rachel’s Vineyard, a healing retreat for men and women suffering from abortion. The retreats have been offered by the Office of Family Life since 2000 and have brought hope and healing to hundreds of men and women. The next retreat is scheduled for Oct. 31 at 6 p.m. through Nov. 2 at 4 p.m. The retreat offers a safe and confidential place for men and women to grieve the loss of children lost to abortion (either chemical or surgical). The retreat is open to people of all faiths. The fee, including lodging, meals and materials, is $75. (Some financial assistance is available). For more information or to register, contact Paulette on the confidential Rachel’s Vineyard telephone number at (405) 623-3844 or e-mail okcrachel@yahoo.com.

Placement Testing for Incoming Freshman

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School will be administering a placement test Nov. 8 from 8 to 11:30 a.m. Students must take this test in order to help with course selection. On test day, students should bring $10 for the testing fee and two No. 2 pencils. No calculators or cell phones are allowed. Students not attending a feeder school and interested in taking the placement test must call 842-6638 Ext. 225 to register for the test.

McGuinness Open House

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School is hosting its annual Open House for all interested and prospective students and parents on Nov. 2 from 1 to 3 p.m. Teachers from each academic department will be available to provide information and answer questions. Student organizations as well as parent groups will be represented and ready to help visitors. Coaches will be present to highlight the school’s athletic programs. Visitors will be able to tour the facility and meet the school’s administrative staff. Refreshments will be served in the Commons area.

Faith Community Nurse Course Set

OKLAHOMA CITY — Registration is under way for The Basic Preparation Course for Faith Community Nursing to be held Jan. 15-17 and 29-31, 2009, at the Catholic Pastoral Center, Oklahoma City. Faith community nurses are registered nurses who provide holistic care to faith community members, facilitating optimal wellness and thereby reclaiming the healing ministry of the parish/congregation. The specialty is recognized by the American Nurses Association. Registration fee is $625 and includes all course materials, room and board, and nursing contact hours. A $50 non-refundable deposit is required by Dec. 15 when registration closes. Participants who pay in full before Nov. 1 will receive a 10 percent discount. Registered nurses interested in the program may contact Faith Community Nurse Resource Center manager Marilyn Seiler at Catholic Charities, (405) 523-3009, or mseiler@catholic-charitiesok.org.
Catholics Should Ponder Array of Questions for Candidates

According to the conventional wisdom, American elections are usually determined by pocketbook economic issues. This may give too little credit to the American people’s concern for how a superpower exercises leadership in the world; it certainly doesn’t take sufficient account of how “culture war” issues can be decisive (as they were in settling the electoral college vote in 2004). Still, Ronald Reagan’s famous question in a 1980 debate with Jimmy Carter — “Are you better off than you were four years ago?” — plays a considerable role in shaping voters’ choices.

Catholics seeking to bring themes from the Church’s social doctrine into American public life will thus have many domestic policy questions for the major presidential candidates:
1. Is the much-deplored “partisan-ship” in Washington an expression of unprecedented nastiness on the part of legislators, or does it reflect genuine, significant differences of opinion on serious issues?
2. How will you help save inner-city Catholic schools, which are crucial lifelines for at-risk children?
3. How can U.S. immigration policy combine respect for the rule of law and concern for national security, on the one hand, with generosity toward those who wish to contribute to our national life and improve their own condition? Will you tell Mexico that a lot of the immigration problem in the American southwest is due to Mexico’s own public policy-driven economic incapacities?
4. Do you believe that “global warming” — in the sense of dramatic, man-caused climate change with predictable, deleterious and potentially catastrophic effects — is an established fact? If so, how should we address this issue without wrecking our economy and those of developing and transitioning nations? Are you at all concerned that today’s environmental movement displays some of the features of a cult?
5. Let’s forget the mantra of “energy independence,” which is a pipe dream. Can we significantly decrease our dependence on foreign oil without a major national investment in nuclear power? What can the federal government do to encourage the development of plug-in hybrids and other more energy-efficient cars?
What do you make of the resistance to oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve, which some argue puts the migratory patterns and amorous interests of caribou above national security and economic rationality?
6. How would you reform American health care without making doctors de facto employees of the federal government?
7. How would you rationalize homeland security, so that legitimate concerns about terrorism are addressed without wasting vast amounts of travelers’ time and taxpayers’ money?
8. What role, if any, does the federal government have in fixing the broken mess that is the American air transportation system? The interstate highway system, once a marvel, now suffers from age and neglect; what’s the solution there? And while we’re on the subject of transportation, why isn’t high-speed rail the answer to both transport and energy issues in our major urban corridors?
9. How would your administration’s policies encourage a culture of saving and personal financial responsibility?
10. Everyone who can read a balance sheet knows that the Social Security system is heading over the fiscal cliff. What does “energy independence,” which is a pipe dream. Can we significantly decrease our dependence on foreign oil without a major national investment in nuclear power? What can the federal government do to encourage the development of plug-in hybrids and other more energy-efficient cars?
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Mercy Hospice Seeks “Knit-Wits”

OKLAHOMA CITY — It’s time to dig out those knitting needles and knit one, pair two for a worthy cause. A group of knitters, dubbed the Knit-Wits, are busy knitting handmade throws for Mercy Hospice patients.

“We have new knitters and old knitters. We have a young woman who brings her newborn baby and knits with us and a man who has been crocheting since he was just a young fellow,” said Cheryl Melton, co-founder of Oklahoma City’s Knit-Wits. “Not only do we all love to knit, but we get to create handmade gifts for Mercy Hospice patients.”

The third Friday of every month, the small group of knitters gathers at The Gourmet Yarn Co. to create 7-by-9-inch rectangles, which in turn get pieced together as 28-by-36-inch throws. Since the group’s inception in 2005, the Knit-Wits have made more than 1,000 handmade blankets for Mercy Hospice patients.

“One lady just makes the rectangles, one likes to put them together and some like to make the whole throw from start to finish,” said Melton. “Other people clean out their yarn closets and donate yarn which we are ever grateful for. You don’t have to knit to be a Knit-Wit.”

Knitters are welcome to knit on their own, join the monthly meetings, or do both. To join the Knit-Wits, call Melton at (405) 840-1502, or Margaret Bauer, Knit-Wit co-founder and owner of The Gourmet Yarn Co., at (405) 286-3737.

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Following Christ Leaves Believers Weak, Open to Pain

Some years ago, Michael Buckley, a Jesuit theologian of exceptional insight, delivered a homily at the first Mass of a young man who had just been ordained. His approach was paradoxical. Instead of asking the young man: “Are you strong enough to be a priest?” he asked him, “Are you weak enough to be a priest?”

That’s a curious reversal that needs to be understood: The “weakness” to which he is challenging this young man (and the rest of us) is not the weakness of moral failure or sin, but the weakness that Scripture attributes to Jesus when it says that he was “beset by weakness” in every way, except sin.

How was Jesus weak and how are we meant to be weak?

Buckley explains this by comparing Jesus to Socrates in terms of human excellence (as this is often judged). Here is his comparison:

“Imagine that divine death,” he wrote, “is superficial and secondary. Now I think this explanation, though correct as far as it runs, is superficial and secondary. Now I believe that Jesus was a more profoundly weak man than Socrates, more liable to physical pain and weariness, more sensitive to human rejection and contempt, more affected by love and hate. Socrates never wept over Athens. Socrates never expressed sorrow and pain over the betrayal of friends. He was possessed and integral, never overextended, convinced that the just person could never suffer genuine hurt. And for this reason, Socrates — one of the greatest and most heroic people who has ever existed, a paradigm of what humanity can achieve within the individual — was a philosopher. And for the same reason, Jesus of Nazareth was a priest — ambiguous, suffering, mysterious and salvific.

Jesus was weak in that his sensitivity and love prevented him from protecting himself against pain. Because he loved deeply, he felt things deeply, both joy and pain. Sensitive people suffer more than others because their sensitivity leaves them vulnerable and unable to seal themselves off against pain — their own, that of their loved ones, and that of the world. As Iris Murdoch once put it, “A common soldier dies without fear, whereas Jesus died afraid.” Sensitivity leaves you open to pain.

When we are insensitive, we sleep well, even when others are suffering and we may have contributed to that; when we are insensitive, we have less fear, especially of hurling others; and when we are insensitive, we are, from many points of view, stronger because we are more able to insulate ourselves against pain and humiliation. In the arena of athletics, we admire the player who can absorb a hard hit without apparent effect. To be hard and tough is admirable. That isn’t as true in the arena of the soul.

Yukon Parish Honors Teacher

YUKON — Carolyn Deberry retired from her second-grade teaching position at the end of the 2007-2008 school year after 23 years. Because of her June retirement date, the children and faculty at St. John Nepomuk Catholic School wanted to properly say goodbye and honor her in a special way. They invited Deberry to share Mass with the staff and student body earlier this month.

“Mrs. Deberry will truly be missed. She always did what was in the best interest of her students. She is a wonderful role model to other teachers,” said Principal Diane Floyd. Pictured are Father Bill Novak, pastor of St. John, Yukon, Deberry and Floyd.

Yukon Parish Honors Teacher

October 26, 2008 • Sooner Catholic 15

By Father Ron Rolheiser

Buenas Noticias...

...Misa de Investidura de la Orden de Caballería del Santo Sepulcro

Homilía ofrecida en la ciudad de Little Rock, Arkansas en ocasión de la Misa de Investidura de la Orden de Caballería del Santo Sepulcro el día domingo 19 de octubre, 2008.

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo:

Hace un mes, fui bendecido por estar en el peregrinaje a Tierra Santa. Nuestro grupo de treinta y seis peregrinos estuvo primero en el área de Galilea. Fue allí donde vivió Jesús, donde reunió a sus apóstoles, donde realizó numerosos milagros y proclamó la Buena Nueva del Reino de Dios.

Después de una pequeña estación en Jordania, tuvimos un día de viaje largo y fatigoso antes de que llegáramos a Jerusalén. Para muchos en nuestro grupo, éste era su primer peregrinaje a Tierra Santa. Por lo que fue muy emocionante cuando hicimos nuestra primera entrada en la Ciudad Santa de Jerusalén. Aunque teníamos programada una visita a los Santos Lugares de la Ciudad Vieja de Jerusalén al día siguiente, al terminar la cena sin importar que todos estábamos cansados, ansiábamos los peregrinos quisiéramos entrar caminando a la Ciudad Vieja de Jerusalén.

Un gran número de ellos siguió las direcciones que los llevaron a la Iglesia del Santo Sepulcro. Al llegar a la basílica con desilusión encontraron que la puerta se encontraba cerrada por ser de noche.

La Basílica del Santo Sepulcro es sagrada para todos los cristianos porque contiene muchos lugares históricamente religiosos. Música de los cielos mientras y con gratitud comenzaron a rezar. Oraron como nosotros ensayó Jesucristo: “Padre nuestro, etc...” Muchos se consternaron, sin embargo, un porte tan vino a ellos y les dijo que no podían rezar allí.

¿Se pueden imaginarse el horror que sintieron los peregrinos que fueron pacíficamente a rezar y adorar a Dios? ¿Qué tristeza es ver que el Hijo Eterno de Dios, el Príncipe de la Paz, el Salvador del Mundo, es a menudo ignorado, no reconocido e incluso rechazado. Ustedes y yo tenemos mucho que hacer para cambiar eso.

Debemos proclamar la Buena Nueva de Jesús y compartir su amor y paz con nuestro próximo. De eso es lo que exactamente trata la Orden de Caballería del Santo Sepulcro.

Estoy complacido de poder decirles a ustedes e incluso a mis peregrinos que fueron injustamente confrontados y a quienes se les ordenó no rezar en el patio del Santo Sepulcro, que ese peregrinaje no fue muy satisfactorio. No obstante, durante el resto de los días de permanencia en Jerusalén, oramos en el Santo Sepulcro muchas veces y celebramos Misa sobre el mismo Calvario. Mientras hacíamos fila para visitar la Tumba de Cristo, escuchábamos y meditábamos el Evangelio que nos contaba la Pasión. Cuando nos arrodillamos en esos lugares sagrados, sentímos al mismo Señor que nos toca y nos cura. ¡Qué grande y bondadoso es Dios!

Ustedes y yo, como Caballeros y Damas, como también todos los candidatos para la Orden del Santo Sepulcro, deberemos recordar y recordar todos los candidatos para la Orden del Santo Sepulcro, debemos recordar y recordar los poderes de nuestra fe Católica y estar comprometidos a vigilar éstos. Fue esta fuerte fe que una vez inspiró a miles de personas hace muchos cientos de años atrás para responder la llamada urgente que hizo el Santo Padre.

Los Santos Lugares, especialmente el Santo Sepulcro fueron violados.

Los Papas le pidieron al pueblo recobrar y abrir esos Santos Lugares. Fue así entonces como los Caballeros se sacrificaron mucho. Ellos tuvieron que dejar sus propias tierras y viajar grandes distancias en condiciones muy peligrosas. Ellos generosamente dieron sus recursos e incluso algunas veces sus vidas. Pero por encima de todo eso, ellos rezaron y lo hicieron para pedirle a Dios su bendición. Ellos rezaron para cumplir la Santa Voluntad de Dios. Así, su lema: “deus vult” (Dios lo quiere).

Las familias, especialmente las viudas de estos Caballeros compartieron la misma fe y compromiso. Ellas hicieron mucho sacrificio y ofrecieron su generosa asistencia. Pero por encima de todo eso, ellas también rezaron para que la Santa Voluntad de Dios se pudiese cumplir.

La fortaleza de la fe de hombres y mujeres, Caballeros y Damas, permitió recuperar y proteger los Santos Lugares. Esa misma fortaleza es la que debe guiarnos y dirigirnos a los Caballeros y las Damas del Santo Sepulcro de ahora.

Una vez que el Papa Pablo VI concluyó el Concilio Vaticano II, este Papa decidió hacer un peregrinaje por Tierra Santa, allí rezo en los Santos Lugares, y visitó a los cristianos que viven allá. En ese entonces, el Papa le urgió a la Iglesia, especialmente a la Orden de Caballería del Santo Sepulcro para que estuviesen más atentos sobre la tierra donde Cristo nació, vivió, sufrió y murió para resucitar de la muerte.

En Tierra Santa, Jesús estableció su Iglesia y envió a los apóstoles para que proclamaron la Buena Nueva. Lo que hizo el Papa Pablo VI con direcciones lo hizo de forma similar el Papa Juan Pablo II. Es claro que nosotros, Caballeros y Damas del Santo Sepulcro, debemos tener estas tres metas:

La primera meta, rezar diariamente por la paz y la armonía en Tierra Santa, preocuparnos por el bienestar de los Cristianos de Tierra Santa. Esas personas en circunstancias difíciles y ellos necesitan y merecen nuestras oraciones y apoyo.

La segunda meta, debemos ayudar a preservar los Santos Lugares con nuestras contribuciones para que esos lugares bíblicos nombrados permanezcan abiertos y se pueda rezar, contemplar y meditar.

La tercera meta, en lo posible, debemos hacer un peregrinaje a Tierra Santa para que podamos caminar en los pasos de Cristo y así crescer más en fe, esperanza y amor.

En este Servicio de Investidura, en el día de hoy, los nuevos miembros serán desafiados a proclamar y vivir fielmente nuestra fe Católica. Serán recordados que deben usar todos los medios para vivir una verdadera vida Cristiana. Se les requiere que permanezcan fieles al Señor y a sus enseñanzas.

Caballeros y Damas, quienes ya son miembros de la Orden del Santo Sepulcro, quererse pedirles que se alegren con quienes han sido invistos.

Miren su entusiasmo y dedicación a la llamada de una renuncia que les permitirá dedicarse al Señor y su Iglesia. Nosotros haremos lo mismo, mediante nuestras obras, acciones y compromiso. Proclamemos que Jesucristo es el Señor y somos su pueblo.
El lugar de trabajo, la política económica y la dimensión moral

Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles para votar

El siguiente escrito es de Thomas Shellabarger es asesor de política del Departamento de Justicia, Paz y Desarrollo Humano de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos.

Las familias en Estados Unidos se enfrentan a un lugar de trabajo y una economía cambiantes. Sin duda, este hecho es causa de ansiedad mientras debatimos si la economía está o no en recesión. Este será probablemente uno de los factores que incidan en cómo van a votar las personas el próximo mes de noviembre. El impacto de la economía en la vida familiar es un asunto moral y una preocupación legítima para los votantes.

Veamos, por ejemplo, el impacto del desempleo creciente. El Departamento de Trabajo de los Estados Unidos reportó que sólo en el pasado mes de junio se perdieron 62,000 puestos de trabajo, elevando así la cifra de pérdida de empleo a 438,000 para la primera mitad del 2008. La tasa de desempleo parece permanecer estable en el 5,5 por ciento, pero muchos economistas señalan que esto se debe a que muchas personas dejaron de buscar trabajo y ya no cuentan en las cifras de desempleo. Mientras tanto, el Congreso intentó paliar la situación extendiendo trece semanas adicionales el seguro de desempleo para trabajadores que hayan usado ya las 26 semanas tradicionales de beneficios. Desafortunadamente, la mayoría de los trabajadores en Estados Unidos no son elegibles para recibir los beneficios del complejo sistema Federal-State Unemployment Insurance (Seguro de Desempleo Federal-Estatal). No importa si el problema es la pérdida de empleo, las horas extra sin paga, la pérdida de beneficios, la reubicación de las oficinas corporativas, la exposición a la afiliación sindical, la competencia internacional, los recursos limitados para preparar a trabajadores despedidos, o la desaparición de muchas oportunidades de trabajo para trabajadores sin preparación. Todos estos cambios en las economías locales disminuyen las perspectivas de trabajos buenos para los trabajadores estadounidenses. Para las personas que trabajan el consumo adicional en la vida familiar en lugar de fortalecerla. Los votantes deberían preguntar a los candidatos de qué forma sus políticas económicas mejorarán — en lugar de reducir — la vida familiar.

El trabajo es la forma más significativa a través de la cual las personas interactúan con la economía. En Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles, los obispos afirmaron: "La economía debe estar al servicio de la gente y no al contrario. El trabajo es más que una manera de ganarse la vida; es una forma de continuar participando en la creación de Dios" (n. 52). La enseñanza social católica apunta a la interconexión entre la vida familiar y el trabajo. El trabajo es la base, la condición necesaria para la formación de la vida familiar. La familia da forma a las dimensiones sociales y éticas del trabajo humano. Es el punto de partida para establecer las condiciones del lugar de trabajo.

Desde principio de los años 70, los ingresos familiares, aunque todavía crecían, comenzaron a favorecer a aquellos en la cima de la escala de salarios. La membresía en los sindicatos comenzó a estabilizarse. A comienzos del siglo XXI, los trabajadores en la cima del salario consumían todo el crecimiento económico y los demás trabajadores se mantenían estables o se habían quedado atrás. La disparidad actual supone el mayor distanciamiento de salarios desde la Gran Depresión de los años 20.

La Iglesia Católica reconoce la vida familiar tan ocupada y las demandas de trabajo que desbordan a las familias. Muchos problemas urgentes que confrontan la vida familiar se deben a amplias fuerzas sociales, particularmente al conflicto económico. La decisión que toman un hombre y una mujer de casarse y tener una familia es significativa e implica numerosas consideraciones. Sin embargo, hoy, sin un trabajo que pague un salario familiar, el matrimonio y comenzar una familia parecen algo imposible.

Desde luego, las políticas económicas son algo complejo y los asuntos económicos están entrelazados. Por ejemplo, la política de empleo afecta a la vivienda. Desde julio del 2008 el salario mínimo es de 6.55 dólares por hora o 13.624 dólares al año. Para una familia de dos el límite de la pobreza está fijado en 13.167 dólares. Para un adulto con dos hijos el límite de la pobreza es 16.079 dólares. El ingreso anual necesario para poder pagar la renta a un precio razonable en el mercado de un apartamento de tipo estudio (sin dormitorios) es 19.320 dólares, según la publicación Out of Reach de la National Low Income Housing Coalition; para una vivienda de un dormitorio se necesita un ingreso de 22.360 dólares; y para una de dos dormitorios, 26.520 dólares.

El estudio llegó a la conclusión de que "en ninguna comunidad de los Estados Unidos hoy día puede alguien que consiga un trabajo a tiempo completo por el salario mínimo esperar razonablemente encontrar una vivienda modesta de alquiler que él o ella puedan permitirse. Aunque los incrementos en el salario mínimo planeados para los próximos dos años pueden poner la vivienda assequible más cerca del alcance de algunos hogares, estos no cerrarán el abismo que existe entre los ingresos que establece el salario mínimo federal y los ingresos necesarios para permitirse las rentas prevalecientes en la mayoría de los mercados".

Los votantes católicos necesitan poner a prueba las políticas del gobierno y las posturas de los candidatos aplicándoles los principios de la enseñanza católica. Los obispos piden a los votantes que no se centren en preguntas como: "¿Estoy mejor de lo que estaba hace dos o cuatro años?" En vez de eso cada uno de nosotros debería entrar a la cabina de votación enfocado en las dimensiones éticas y morales de las políticas que afectan a toda la comunidad.

Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — Los católicos de nuestra Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City celebraron en algunas parroquias el día de la Hispanidad, una evocación al encuentro entre dos mundos. Nuestro pueblo no sólo recibió libertad para unirse y organizarse, sino que formó una gran comunidad unida con el espíritu en Cristo.

Nuestra hispanidad tiene un contexto geográfico e histórico y está impregnada de un espíritu católico que le sirve como base fundamental para su crecimiento y desarrollo.

La doctrina católica y el Evangelio proclaman en el mundo entero perdonar a los opresores como lo hizo Cristo cuando murió crucificado. ¡Síntamos orgullosos de ser hispanos, sobre todo de ser católicos y también de saber perdonar!
For a full and up-to-date Jobs Box, go to catharchdioceseokc.org and click on Job Listings

Author Provides Remarkable Look at Holy Simplicity of Trio


Four stars

This is a wonderful book about the spirituality of St. Therese of Lisieux, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa), and of Dorothy Day. One of the things these women of the 20th century had in common other than their belief in God was their simple spirituality that did wonders in their lives and in the lives of those they were around. Blessed Teresa and Dorothy Day learned a lot from St. Therese and her spirituality called the “Little Way.” This little way is about doing little things for God and for one’s neighbor, like helping an elderly person cross the street or picking up the trash. This spirituality is one of true humility. Practitioners of this little way are not out to gain fame for themselves. All that they do in their everyday life is for God and their neighbor. It means living one’s ordinary life by doing small unselfish things.

Blessed Teresa said she took the name “Teresa” to honor St. Therese as her example in life. She called St. Therese of Avila the “Big Teresa,” while Therese she called the “Little Teresa.” She felt she could not live up to St. Teresa of Avila’s example, although she did follow her example in founding new houses like St. Teresa did. Dorothy Day had a devotion to St. Teresa of Avila. She gave her daughter the name “Teresa” as her middle name. She had not heard of St. Therese when she gave that name to her daughter until later. She would pick up on St. Therese’s little way, too. St. Therese was named after St. Teresa of Avila.

This reviewer is a Benedictine monk and he recognizes some Benedictine influence in Dorothy Day’s life as Joel Schorn wrote about her in this book. Dorothy Day was a Benedictine Oblate. The Little Way and Benedictine spirituality both call for one to live life in the ordinary day-to-day events of life. One does not have to do extraordinary things to reach holiness according to these two spiritualities. Humility and balance of life are important ingredients to these spiritualities. All three women did this.

Simplicity or the little way is helpful when a person as these three showed can be used in living or embracing suffering. As Schorn and others have said, suffering for suffering’s sake is crazy and leads nowhere, but sharing in suffering with Christ in his passion can be very rewarding to the sufferer and to others. Blessed Teresa asked those who were suffering to join the Missionaries of Charity by offering their suffering in union with the work the missionaries were doing. As Schorn points out, suffering and death are not the end results for Christians; the Resurrection and life with God is the end result that all should be aiming for. Christ’s suffering without the resurrection would have ended up being nothing. Suffering is worthwhile when one unites one’s sufferings with Christ. It gives it much more meaning and value. It is a simple thing that can cause great results.

Schorn tells stories about these three women and events in their lives to show how practicing this simple or little way can be done and what effects it can have on that person and their neighbors. He discusses the troubling problem that not everyone who needs help can be reached because there are just too many people that need help.

Schorn says even though not all can be reached, Teresa and Dorothy did try as hard as they humanly could. They wanted to help everyone, but they were sensible enough to know that this could not be done. Still they felt at least they tried and what they did was very worthwhile. They tried to help people one person at a time.

Joel Schorn has shown that practicing this simple little way can lead to holiness and that anyone can do it. It does not take much to do, but it takes commitment and thought. This book flows very well and his inspirational stories about these three women make this spirituality realistic and doable. He provides time lines for the three women and endnotes. He quotes from these women and from books on them by other authors.


Brother Benet Exton is a Benedictine Monk at St. Gregory’s Abbey in Shawnee.
Calendar

OCTOBER
26 Halloween Carnival, 4 to 6:30 p.m., All Saints Catholic School, Norman.

27 Weekly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Christ the King Catholic Church, 8005 Dorset Drive, every Monday beginning at 7 a.m. and concluding with Benediction at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Barbara Curcio at 755-9163, prayer and Benediction at 7:30 p.m.

28 Eucharistic Adoration at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, N.W. 32nd and Western, every Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. to noon. The Rosary is said every weekday at 2:30 p.m. All are welcome.

29 All-Day Adoration, every Wednesday at St. Eugene Church, 2400 W. Hefner Road. Mass at 6:30 a.m., Exposition of Eucharist at 7 a.m., Confessions from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., Anointing of Sick at 3 p.m. Adoration all day and devotions conclude with multi-lingual evening prayer and Benediction at 7:30 p.m. Contacts: Barbara Curcio, 755-9163, O en Espanol – Gloria Pantazis, 751-7115.

31 Mount St. Mary home football game (senior night) vs. Newkirk, 7:30 p.m.

31-Nov 2 Rachel’s Vineyard Retreats for Healing after Abortion. Experience the healing love of Jesus Christ on a Rachel’s Vineyard weekend retreat. The program is an apostolate of the Catholic Church, but those from other faith backgrounds are welcome to attend. Pre registration is required. Cost is $75 for materials, lodging and meals. Financial assistance is available. Space is limited. To register or for more information, call Paulette at (405) 623-3844 or e-mail okrchapel@yahoo.com or visit the Web site.

NOVEMBER
1 All Saints Day - NOT a Holy Day of Obligation

1 Mass in Tagalog. St. Paul the Apostle Catholic in Del City will celebrate Mass in Tagalog (Filipino) at 7 p.m. each Saturday. A potluck dinner will occasionally follow Mass. All are welcome.

1 Caregivers Retreat with Pat Ahern, Benedictine Oblate, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Fee: $40 ($10 deposit). Register: (405) 373-0804 or mail registration form. Bring a sack lunch. Place: Monastery Library.

2 Annual Turkey Dinner at Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Kingfisher in Ross Hall from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Cost: Adults, $8, children 3 to 12 years, $4. Under 3 free.

7 Bishop McGuinness home football game (senior night) vs. Elk City, 7:30 p.m.

7 Holy Family Home Mass, 11:30 a.m. To confirm that Mass will be held that day and for directions, contact HFMI at 741-7419.

7 First Friday Adoration at St. Francis of Assisi in Oklahoma City. After the 7:30 a.m. Mass, and concludes at 5:30 p.m. with closing prayer and Benediction. This is open to all. St. Francis is located at 1910 N.W. 19th, Oklahoma City.

7 First Friday Sacred Heart Mass at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is at 5:30 p.m. with the Sacrament of Reconciliation available prior to Mass. Mass is at 7 p.m. Those wanting to learn more about First Friday Devotion and the practice of consecrating their family and home to the Sacred Heart of Jesus will find materials available after Mass. For more information, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944 or Diane Grim at (405) 528-6252.

8 Mass in Tagalog. St. Paul the Apostle Catholic in Del City will celebrate Mass in Tagalog (Filipino) at 7 p.m. each Saturday. A potluck dinner will occasionally follow Mass. All are welcome.

8 Pre-Cana in Spanish. A day for couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. A specially prepared volunteer team of married couples and a priest share their experiences and information with the intention of enabling engaged couples to be more aware of the privileges and responsibilities of marriage. To register, contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

8 Stepping Into Marriage with Children. Too often we assume that second marriages need little to no preparation, but 60 percent of second marriages end in divorce. This seems to be due, in part, to unanticipated problems and miscommunications. The issues highlighted in this program are communication, step-family structures, former spouses, conflict, sexuality and spirituality. To register, contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

For an up-to-date calendar, go to c sacharchdioceseokc.org and click on Calendar of Events

Letter

Thank you for the article about Father John Futrell, S.J.

I have some information, of a local nature, that may be of interest to your readers.

Father John C. Futrell, S.J., was born in Oklahoma City to John R. Futrell and Martha Rose Futrell. Father John’s primary education was in the hands of the Religious Sisters of Mercy at John Carroll School, located at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City. His high school graduation was from a Catholic military school in Hayes, Kan. At home he continued to receive vocational guidance from his pastor, Msgr. John Mason Connor. After his high school graduation, John continued his studies at St. Regis College in Denver, Colo.

John came from a deeply religious family, both of his sisters entered the convent and his only brother had a career as a financial developer for the Jesuit Province of Chicago.

John is survived by his brother, James and his family in Chicago; Sister Jean Marie, O.C.D., of St. Joseph’s Carmelite Monastery in Piedmont, and Sister Jan, O.S.B., with the Red Plains Monastery in Piedmont. After 63 years of service to our God and our Church, Father John was buried at Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis, Mo.

Robert Eufinger
Oklahoma City

Pictured are some of the 16 Sisters, representing nine of the congregations that minister in the Archdiocese, who met recently for a planning session to discuss ways they could assist women who are discerning a vocation to religious life. The Sisters discussed a variety of ideas for weekend or day-long experiences offering high school and young adult women an opportunity to share prayer, learn about religious life and the call to religious vocation. During the next few months, the Sisters will be designing these presentations and sending information to the parishes and schools of the Archdiocese.
Montessori-Based Catechesis of The Good Shepherd Calmly Plants Roots in Two Parishes

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Cathy Folmnsbee wanted to share the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd with her new parish. She’d seen what the Montessori-based method of Religious Education had meant to her former parish in Amarillo, Texas. Folmnsbee knew the program could work for the children of Christ the King Parish, as well.

“I was so new here,” Folmnsbee said. “I didn’t want to just jump in and say, ‘Hey, look at this, this is what we need to do.’”

Then she met Susan Dolan. Or, as Folmnsbee would put it, the Holy Spirit opened the door.

Dolan approached the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd with an open mind and heart and today, Christ the King is one of two Oklahoma City parishes helping to bring children closer to God through the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. St. Joseph’s Old Cathedral has also adopted the teaching ministry and proponents hope other parishes will follow.

Proponents stress the parish priest must eagerly accept the method of Religious Education if it is to reach its full potential.

Folmnsbee and Dolan have teamed to help develop the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at Christ the King. Parents have embraced the teaching concept and soon Christ the King School plans to incorporate it into the school’s curriculum, said Principal Karen Carter.

“Having worked in the Diocese of Wichita, I know that it offers much to our little ones,” Carter said by e-mail. “Next year, Christ the King Catholic School has been approved by the Archbishop to begin a preschool for the first time and we want to offer this program to them as well.”

Folmnsbee, Dolan and the others involved in bringing Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to their parish hope others will take the time to learn about this beautiful method of learning that helps children quietly cultivate their relationship with God. They stress it’s not a quick and easy method of instruction, but one that requires a definite commitment, to children and the faith.

Instructors must receive roughly 90 hours of training, which is divided equally between actual hands-on learning and observation. The training is in-depth, but obviously well worth it. As Lori Carter, one of the Christ the King instructors puts it, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd “becomes a labor of love.”

No formal training is available in Oklahoma so those interested must travel to Kansas. However, in February, national Catechesis of the Good Shepherd instructor Marilee Quinn has agreed to come to Oklahoma City in an effort to help spread the ministry. More information about this event will be provided in the future.

For more information, contact Susan Dolan at 842-0726 or Cathy Folmnsbee at 840-3561.

What is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to the religious formation of children. It is rooted in the Bible, the worship of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori. Children gather in an “atrium,” a room prepared for them which contains simple yet beautiful materials that they use.

In an atrium the child can ponder a biblical passage or a prayer by taking the material for that text and working with it — placing wood figures of sheep in a sheepfold of the Good Shepherd or setting sculpted apostles around a Last Supper table. Older children who read often copy parables from the Bible, put in order the prayers from the rite of baptism, or label a long time line showing the history of the kingdom of God.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is the result of a long period of careful observation of children by Sofia Cavalletti, a Hebrew and Scripture scholar, and her Montessori collaborator, Gianna Gobbi, in Rome. It began in 1954. Perhaps it is because Sofia went before the child with no preconceived ideas of what should happen that the children responded with such joy. Certainly her background in Scripture made it possible for her to talk about God in a way that opened and enthused the child as well as Sofia herself: Sofia and Gianna have reminded us to look to the child and watch for that sign of a deeply religious life — joy — and to ask the question: “What face of God is the child telling us he or she needs to see?”

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has grown and spread amazingly. At last count it is in 20 countries. In the United States there are hundreds of atria in Catholic and Episcopal settings, as well as in United Methodist, Lutheran and other Christian churches.

Parents, teachers, Christian educators, clergy and other interested adults are drawn to the very rich, retreat-like courses in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. There are three levels of courses, focusing on children ages 3 to 6, 6 to 9 and 9 to 12. Everyone begins with the Level I course which is foundational to becoming attuned to the religious life of the child.

(From the Web site at www.cgsusa.org.)