Good Shepherd School at Mercy: A place of joyful hope

By J.E. Helm
For the Sooner Catholic

Good Shepherd School at Mercy was established in the fall of 2011 to serve the special needs of elementary school age children with autism spectrum disorders. As many as 20 children are enrolled at Good Shepherd, which is a collaborative partnership between the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Mercy Health Systems of Oklahoma and the University of Central Oklahoma.

Visitors are greeted by young students, who are smiling and walking hand-in-hand with one of the 31 staff members. A lot of hugs and high fives help the children feel love, acceptance and encouragement.

There are seven core staff members and 23 part-time child care workers, 11 of whom are graduate students in psychology at UCO.

The program at Good Shepherd uses Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). The school’s website explains that "ABA is based on the science of human learning and behavior. The success of ABA is in large part due to the persistent goal of identifying what works."

Dr. Scott Singleton, assistant professor of psychology at UCO, is the clinical director at Good Shepherd. He is in charge of all behavioral, academic and skill-building programs at the school. He explains that skills can be "looking at a letter and saying the sound, being able to function in a group or shoe tying."

The ultimate goal, he continues, is "to get the kids back into traditional schools." Good Shepherd has seen success in this regard with some students returning to public school in the fifth grade.

Students at Good Shepherd are between the ages of 3 and 9. Each child is initially evaluated, and a highly individualized plan is developed for that student.

Hope Wheeler, director of administrative operations at Good Shepherd, explains that after the evaluation, children are placed in one of three learning programs: Discovery, Transition 1 or Transition 2. Wheeler points out that the students are placed "cognitively, not chronologically."

Each of the three programs has its own room and has "the traditions and routines of a regular school," Wheeler says. In addition to group activities, each child has one-on-one time with a staff member every morning and every afternoon.

The school is Catholic, and prayer and religious education are part of each school day for all children.

In the Discovery Room, students focus on early learning skills, especially language skills. The Transition 1 Room builds on this and begins literacy, math and other academic skills.

Christie Man is lead behavior interventionist in Transition 2 where students are studying science, math, reading, writing and spelling. While students have "extra challenges," Man says her students can become successful academically.

"I’m so excited every day," Man says, and "Every day, I am blessed by them. I love these kids!"

Samantha Garman is the ABA supervising intern at Good Shepherd. She is on-hand daily, meeting with lead ABAs, functioning as a resource person. Garman says that the school is at capacity and has a waiting list. She believes one of the reasons for Good Shepherd’s success is that "we set high expectations for our kids."

Families bring children to Good Shepherd from as far away as Blanchard, Guthrie and Minco. Some, Hope Wheeler says, have even relocated to the Oklahoma City area so their children can attend Good Shepherd.

At Good Shepherd School, Wheeler points out, “It’s not what they can’t do; it’s what they can do.”

J.E. Helm is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Celebrating Thanksgiving across Oklahoma

By Diane Clay
The Sooner Catholic

Parishes across the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City celebrate Thanksgiving by giving prayerful thanks for continued blessings of family, community and service to others.

Several parishes plan community dinners, which are open to the public, and food pantries provide and deliver turkeys, trimmings and bags of food for families and hungry individuals who need assistance.

Volunteer sackers and drivers as well as non-perishable food items are needed at food pantries for the holidays. Organizers ask families to pick up a few extra items during holiday grocery trips to help feed the hungry or bring the kids to help serve.

"Thanksgiving gatherings with my family are among my fondest memories from childhood. I am grateful for those times that always involved family and friends, and of course, a traditional Thanksgiving dinner," Archbishop Paul Coakley said. "Let us not forget our neighbors who struggle with poor health, hunger and loneliness this time of year. May we give of ourselves and pray for God’s continued mercy for all."

For a list of community dinners and food pantries, see the accompanying information or contact your...
November and the four last things

During the month of November the Church’s liturgy and popular devotions turn our attention to the Final Things in the spiritual life: judgment, heaven, hell, and purgatory. This month is dedicated to those who have departed this life and have entered into the possession of the soul. St. John of the Cross wrote, “Let us not hate death, for heaven is not the end of life, but the beginning of it.” A recent study of those who died during the 4th quarter of 2013 showed that those who died during this time had lived a median of 80 years. By the end of November, we begin to reflect on the lives we have lived and the choices we have made. Just as a personal calendar is consulted to organize the day, so the liturgical calendar is a means for organizing the living and the dead.

November marks the end of the liturgical year and the beginning of the Advent season. This month we remember those who have gone before us and we are called to reflect on our own spiritual life, our relationship with God, and the choices we have made.

The four last things (judgment, heaven, hell, and purgatory) are closely linked to this month. The purification of our souls is necessary for the enjoyment of eternal life, which is why we have a month dedicated to the souls in Purgatory. The souls in Purgatory are seeking purification for the sake of their eternal happiness.

As we prepare for the Advent season, we are called to reflect on our own spiritual life and to pray for the souls in Purgatory.

Archbishop Paul R. Coakley
Young singles face great challenge of the family

A year after graduating from college, I found myself at daily Mass with a friend my age and her newborn baby. An older woman, heart-warmed by the sight of a beautiful young mother with her child, came up to say hello and was thrilled to tell me how happy she was to see a young woman living out her vocation.

The words, meant as encouragement by a woman I can only assume is a member of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, left me with a feeling of uncertainty about my relationship to others my age.

The doubts about the significance and nature of our relationships to others as adults can be compounded by the reality that we generally neglect to explore obligations to our natural or adoptive family in favor of fun times out with friends. While socializing with peers also helps us to develop a cohesive narrative, view life with a consistent mission. Such a commitment develops natural virtue, guarding against the pull to selfishness and terrifying the temptation Cardinal Erdi laid out. He said that often we live in a world of emotions, where life “is not a project, but a series of moments” and “the community exists for the purpose of love, and peace.”

He continued by saying that in following the will of God, we are given a hope that stands in the face of the trials and difficulties our culture. “Here is the lever which makes it grow and the salt which gives flavor to all our efforts to combat the prevalent pessimism which the world proposes to us.”

What community do you belong to? Do you belong to the McCarrickian Carmelites of Saint Teresa?

What is your vocation in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City? Are you part of the promotions of vocations for this region, but in Clinton, I am one of the ministers at St. Mary’s Catholic Church.

Our job is to provide a bridge between different cultures, the major one being African-American. When and at what age did you enter the convent? I entered the convent the day I turned 15. When did you take your final vows? I made my final vows in 1991.

Where and how did you first discern a call to the religious life? I first felt an emptiness in my life. I discovered that I wanted to serve God and my neighbor. This was when I was 13-1/2 years old.

What has surprised you the most in your vocation? What has surprised me the most is that I had to serve in a parish and study and continue preparing myself to serve, and respond better to my work.

What is the most fulfilling part of your vocation? What has been the most fulfilling is being able to help people who need my prayers and my presence.

What is your advice to young women who are in the process of discerning their vocation? If they feel disappointed, if they don’t feel happy in their lives, I said that often we live in a world of emotions, where life “is not a project, but a series of moments” and “the community exists for the purpose of love, and peace.”

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Meet Our Sisters

This is a part of a series to introduce the religious sisters of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The sisters serve in Oklahoma.

Sister Gisela Rivers, CMST

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Sister Anna Maria Scaperlanda

For the Sooner Catholic

Portrays the Blessed Virgin Mary in picture in front of the official image for the Sept. 22-27, 2015, World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. CNS/Photo/Massiliano Migliorato.

Black Catholics’ history, heritage given special notice

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Prayer and penance mark the Advent season

By Ted King

For the Sorrow Catholic

Nov. 30 is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent means coming to. Advent to Christians means the coming of Christmas. Advent is symbolized by the four candles we see at Mass: three colored violet and one colored rose. Each week, an additional candle is lit as we come closer to Christ- mas. “I have come as light into the world, and whoever believes in me need not remain in darkness.” John 8:12.

The first two Sundays, Nov. 30 and Dec. 7, are marked by violet-colored candles, and the priest celebrant wears a violet vestment. The third Sunday, Dec. 14, which is Gaudete Sunday, is marked by a rose-colored candle, and the priest may wear a rose vestment. The fourth Sunday, Dec. 21, is marked by a white or gold-colored candle, and the priest celebrant wears a white or gold vestment.

According to scripture, Advent is a period of preparation, penitence and prayer. “Four weeks devoted to preparation for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, for many of us, Advent is overlooked or ignored by those who believe in God or who are Christians.”

The fourth Sunday of Advent is Gaudete Sunday: a time of joy. Gaudete is Latin for rejoice, and Dec. 12 is Gaudete Sunday. It marks the final stretch of the Advent season, coming the closest to the celebration of Christmas. It is a day to be joyful and to share in the joy of others.

The second selection reviewed here, “Blessings of the Table” and “Blessings of the Daily: A Monastic Book of Days,” are available for the new year that offer to take the reader on a day-by-day journey through the liturgical and calendar seasons. Written by Brother Victor-Antoine d’Avila-La- tumette of Our Lady of the Resurrection Monas- try in New York’s Hudson Valley, each book is imbued with the personal experience and insights of the author whose culinary talent has been enjoyed in the pages of “From a Monastery Kitchen, Twelve Months of Monastery Soups,” and “The Pure Joy of Monastery Cooking.”

“Blessings of the Table” is a compilation of table graces, prayers offered before and after meals. In his introduction, Brother Victor-Antoine talks about “the sacred character of the dinner table.” He professed the link between prayer and the meal itself. He points out the many passages in the New Testament that mention the breaking of bread, most notably the institution of the Eucharist, but also the wedding at Cana, the meal at Emmaus, and the multiplication of the loaves and fishes.

Part I of “Blessings of the Daily” begins as the church year begins, with Advent and blessings for the season. Following are graces for Christ- mas, Easter, Ordinary Time and prayers of place in our hyper-secularized, consumer-driven society, especially before Christmas, but the Church challenges us to be differ- ent from the world.

So, how do we experience Christmas? Is it properly perfected to enjoy Advent, which is meant to show and emphasize what the season is about, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,” not the getting of things and parties.

Moreover, frantic shopping and partying can be a lot of work that may take some of the genuine joy away from Christmas. What can be more joyful than God’s becoming man for our salvation? Nothing! Ted King is a freelance writer for the Sorrow Catholic.

Two books that are a blessing for the coming year

By J.B. Holm

For the Sorrow Catholic

The second selection reviewed here, “Blessings of the Daily: A Monastic Book of Days,” was written on request from readers who had enjoyed Brother Victor-Antoine’s cookbooks and asked for a book that would capture and expand on the monastic themes that are a feature of a part of his culinary works. And so, Brother tells us in his introduction, he began the work of “putting into writing the daily mo- ments of monastic living, as experienced here at the monastery of Our Lady of the Resurrection.”

The book begins by recording his thoughts on Dec. 1 as he recalls the martyrdom of St. Francis de Sales, a book he purchased in the Saharan in 1916 when the hermitage of this French priest was attacked and he refused to reject his Christian faith and accept the Koran. The Dec. 1 entry is like so many in the book in that it shows the reader to a new perspective or a somewhat obscure saint or takes a new look at a familiar idea.

Brother Victor-Antoine introduces us to Saint Vincent de Paul, S. I., and Gaudete Sunday is a reprise from the penitential acts like self-denial that should be practiced during Advent to Christians means the coming of Christmas. The glossary for the Catechism of the Catholic Church states “ADVENT: the liturgical season of four weeks devoted to preparation for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” Advent is symbolized by the four candles we see at Mass: three colored violet and one colored rose.

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Oklahoma Catholics celebrate All Saints Day

By Sally Libhart
For the Sooner Catholic

On Nov. 1, Mount Saint Mary Catholic High School announced the launch of “Higher Ground,” a $4.4 million capital campaign effort set to upgrade and expand the current facility. The campaign, the most aggressive fundraising effort in the history of the school, was revealed during “Magic at the Mount,” the school’s annual fundraising event.

More than $3.1 million has been committed to “Higher Ground” from several donors, including the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Mount Saint Mary, the oldest Catholic high school in Oklahoma, is the only Catholic high school in the country that is co-sponsored by the local archdiocese and a religious congregation. Mount Saint Mary is partnered with the Sisters of Mercy, who established the school in 1903.

Other donors include Inasmuch Foundation, the Tom and Judy Love Foundation, the Robert Glenn Rapp Foundation, Mercy Hospitals/Mercy Clinic, 7-Eleven Stores, Matt and Janisa Mollman, Tim and Kae Byrnes, Fred and Fran Krupf and Nancy and George Records. Principal Talita DeNegri, a 1980 graduate of Mount Saint Mary, expressed her excitement about the upcoming additions.

As we begin taking Mount Saint Mary to “higher ground” because of our vision for the future and due to the fact our students and our school deserve this moment — this change — we hope to break ground this summer and complete Phase I within two years.

The first phase of the addition and expansion will focus on five areas — a new commons hall, kitchen, cafeteria, east patio and west patio. The current kitchen and cafeteria spaces will be overhauled as part of this phase. Kitchen space is expected to increase in size from 524 to 1844 square feet while seating in the commons area is expected to increase from 80 to 300 square feet. Eventual plans for the complete transformation of the campus include an outdoor athletic facility, performing arts center and gymnasium.

Chris Stiles, director of advancement at Mount Saint Mary, called the campaign the most bold, ambitious drive the school has ever undertaken. Stiles expressed his enthusiasm about the support the campaign has already received. “Archbishop Coakley’s involvement and the investment of our leadership partners have been the catalyst for our great start. Now, we are asking all of our constituents to take ownership in our mission and do what they can to help finish this campaign with strength.”

For more information, go online to www.mshigherground.org.

The Mount launches “Higher Ground” campaign

In Prague, a girl dressed as St. Patrick stands in line to play a game at the St. Benedict Religious Education Department’s All Saints Day Party. The week prior to the party, all classes concentrated on each child finding a saint they could relate to. That night of the party, the children dressed as their chosen saint. They played games such as Pin the Sacred Heart on Jesus, Saint Walk, Knock on Jesus’ Door and He will let you in, enthusiasm about the Most Saints are in a jar. Photos provided.

The Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School One Act Play group won their second consecutive Class 5A State Championship last week with their performance of “Alice” during the OSSAA state championships. The play was choreographed by Brandi Kelley. The Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School recently celebrated “Hip Hop” homecoming week. Selected as the 2014 Homecoming Queen was Ijeoma Njoejo. Ijeoma was crowned by Zach Kelley and last year’s queen, Maddy Hill during halftime ceremonies of the Bishop McGuinness vs. Goodrich varsity game. Ijeoma is the daughter of Charles and Blessing Njoejo of Edmond. Ijeoma was escorted by Tim Bassoon. Other members of the court were Annie Codley escorted by Ricky Bisson; Aspen Weber escorted by Ian Smith; Blair Morgan escorted by Jennings James; Anna Kaat escorted by Daniel Velasquez; Katie Deau escorted by Brett Wilson; Claire Scott escorted by Garis Geo; and Lisa Tran escorted by Hunter Rui. The Crown bearer was Jack Frame and the Flower Girl was Rylei McMahill.

BMCHS One Act Play group wins state championship

Each year, school children from across the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City dress as their favorite saints in honor of All Saints Day. This year, All Saints Day was celebrated on Saturday, Nov. 1.

All Saints Day was celebrated of All Saints Day. This year, their favorite saints in honor of Oklahoma City dress as saints provided.

Saints are in a Jar.

and Guess How Many.

They played games such as their chosen saint.

ty, the children dressed to. The night of the party, the children dressed for the auction.

Photos Cara Koenig/Sooner Catholic.

The Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School One Act Play group wore their second consecutive Class 5A State Championship last week with their performance of “Alone” during the OSSAA State Championships held at East Central University in Ada.

Cast members, juniors Christopher Allen and Evan Clear, were selected by the judges as parts of the All State Cast, placing them in the top nine of all actors coming from competing plays. Allen played the role of Mad Matter while Clear was the March Hare. The technical crew was Outstanding Stage Crew/Techn.


“Alone” was performed under the direction of Ryan J. Sweart, with technical direction by Matt Aaro.

The play was choreographed by Brandi Kelley.

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**Fury** and *St. Vincent* offer surprisingly Christian themes

*Fury* is packed with action, and while this is an impressive movie, its depictions of violence are so intense that they make the movie feel like a video game. The movie is rated *R* for intense violence, language, some sexual content, and some drug use.

*St. Vincent* is a quirky dramedy starring Bill Murray, and while it may not be a traditional Christian movie, it does offer some surprising themes. The movie is rated *R* for language, some sexual content, and drug use.

Both movies are worth watching, but it’s important to keep in mind that they are rated *R* for a reason, and parents should use caution when allowing their children to watch them.

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**Catholic Charities’ Patrick Raglow honored by Oklahoma Conference of Churches**

Patrick J. Raglow, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, was presented with the OCC Community Service Award at the 2014 OCC Annual Dinner on Thursday, Nov. 13.

"We are delighted to honor Mr. Raglow for his outstanding leadership of Catholic Charities and his personal involvement in more than a dozen social service programs in central and western Oklahoma," said the Rev. William Tabbernee, executive director of the Oklahoma Conference of Churches.

"In particular we commend him for his immediate and innovative responses to the needs of those who have been deeply hurt or found themselves in humiliating situations because they posted something inappropriate. These apps can be great tools for help others, but they can also be used by others to spread inappropriate content. Unfortunately, there is little parents can do to monitor their child's Snapchat use short of taking away their phone. In the meantime, parents need to openly discuss the dangers of Snapchat and the permanence of pictures shared through the Internet."

"Snapchat hacking a reminder of Internet permanence"...
Catequistas de la Iglesia Católica enseñan que “La pena principal del infierno consiste en la separación eterna de Dios que es nuestra suprema y definitiva realización. Al elegir pertenecer en el pecado los que están condenados al infierno hacen rechazar libremente el amor de Dios y se llaman al asomo de perversión. ‘Dios no prohíbe nada a los que irán al infierno’ (CIC 131). El deseo sólo nuestra libertad. Por ello no es posible violar nuestro libre albedrío y obligarnos a caer en el pecado.”

Por Pedro A. Moreno, OP, MRE, S.J., Miembro del Grupo de Acción Católica (Spanish)

Se ha hablado de que en el acuerdo el papa Francisco expresó un deseo de “agilizar el proceso” de juzgar las solicitudes de anulaciones. Pero en el caso de las celebraciones eucarísticas, el papa hizo los comentarios el 5 de octubre en el Vaticano.

La ciudad de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe se encuentra en la Ciudad de México, y ahora el San Juan de la Cruz escritorio: “En el ocaso de nuestras vidas vemos justicia en el amor. El amor perfecto impide que la purificación de las almas siga siendo una lucha. No estamos llamados a un sacrificio eterno, sino a una purificación más allá de nuestro control”. En el momento sagrado cuando Dios les llame a casa”, ella dijo. “Entonces, un día, vendrá el momento de muerte. ‘Matarse elimina la libertad de deleite, nos dice. ‘La pena principal del infierno consiste en la separación eterna de Dios que es nuestra suprema y definitiva realización. Al elegir pertenecer en el pecado los que están condenados al infierno hacen rechazar libremente el amor de Dios y se llaman al asomo de perversión. ‘Dios no prohíbe nada a los que irán al infierno’ (CIC 131). El deseo sólo nuestra libertad. Por ello no es posible violar nuestro libre albedrío y obligarnos a caer en el pecado.”

Por Pedro A. Moreno, OP, MRE, S.J., Miembro del Grupo de Acción Católica (Spanish)
The Oklahoma Conference of Catholic Bishops announces a 2014 Season of Prayer for Life beginning at 6 p.m. Friday with Benediction followed by Mass in the Chancery Office. The retreat concludes at 3 p.m. Saturday. Confession and Adoration available. Batistry provided. For more information, call (405) 338-5683.

**Job Box**

**Nursing adjunct faculty**

St. Gregory’s University seeks qualified applicants for an adjunct faculty position. Bachelor’s and master’s degree or equivalent is required. Position available for three professional reference letters and letters of interest, contact Patricia Menas at jmenas@stgreg.org or Dr. Mary Byrne at mbyrne@stgreg.org to work effectively with under- and non-traditional college students. Current license as a registered nurse in Oklahoma is required. To apply, send letter of application and contact information for three professional references to Human Resources Department, St. Gregory’s University, 1960 W MacArthur Dr., Shawnee, OK 74804 or e-mail to hr@stgreg.edu.

**Calendars**

**November**

16 A classical guitar program, featuring Michael Fresneda playing Spanish American compositions, Agustín Barrios Mangore’s magnificent concert piece “La Catedral,” is at 2 p.m. at St. Joseph’s Old Cathedral, 207 NW 14, OKC. The concert is free and open to the public.

19 Archbishop Combs shares inspiring, funny faith journey

“The topic is one very close to my heart... What I would like to do is share with you from a personal perspective... how prayer has been that which has sustained me for so many years, in my own journey of faith and in my own journey of ministry, sustained me as a person of faith.”

20 Christmas prayer meeting, 7 p.m., at the Catholic Pastoral Center, Rm. C-1, Call Tony Calvey at (405) 630-0539, e-mail tocalvey1990@hotmail.com or visit www.SpiritOKC.org.

20 Devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus, an unfailing means of tapping the inexhaustible mercy of God from the Sources of our Salvation. No one who is devoted to the Wounds and Blood of Jesus can be lost. 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at St. James Church 4201 S. McKinley Ave. (405) 420-2527.

20 Thanksgiving Day

27 Devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus, an unfailing means of tapping the inexhaustible mercy of God from the Sources of our Salvation. No one who is devoted to the Wounds and Blood of Jesus can be lost. 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at St. James Church 4201 S. McKinley Ave. (405) 420-2527.

**First Sunday of Advent**
We are profoundly grateful to the Lord for the growing number of young men in seminary formation, now 17 for the Archdiocese. But our success in recruiting new seminarians adds to the annual cost of preparing these men for the priesthood.

In order to stay abreast of the cost of educating our seminarians, I am asking you to consider a monetary gift specifically for the education and formation of our seminarians. No single source of revenue is adequate to fully fund the cost of seminary education but this annual appeal is very necessary. Consider this as an investment in the future of our faith in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. These are the men who will one day be the pastors of your parish.

They will bring Jesus to us, and bring us to Jesus in ways that only a priest can do!

We are deeply grateful for the generosity of our donors and are calling upon you today to join us in prayer and support. Please be generous in your prayer and financial support.

Seminarian Costs are rising annually. So, along with your prayers, please use the Investment Form below and help support our seminarians and the future of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Tuition/Room & Board $617,168
Stipends $51,600
Books $10,400
Insurance $93,192
Total Cost Per Year $772,360
Total Cost Per Seminarian $45,433

Thank You for Your Generous Tax-Deductible Donation!

[Form]

Enclosed is my Check Payable to: Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Please Bill my Credit Card:

\[\text{Visa} \quad \text{MasterCard} \quad \text{Discover}\]

\[\text{CARD NUMBER} \quad \text{3 DIGIT SECURITY CODE} \quad \text{EXPIRATION DATE}\]

\[\text{SIGNATURE}\]

Thank You for Your Generous Tax-Deductible Donation!