One Year: Go Make Disciples

Archbishop’s vision for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

By Diane Clay
The Sooner Catholic

It has been one year since Archbishop Paul Coakley issued his call to “Go Make Disciples,” identifying three priorities for the archdiocese, its parishes and schools, and for all Catholics who seek to encounter Jesus Christ.

“As one way of preparing for and celebrating the Year of Faith in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, I chartered a team of clergy, religious and lay leaders to assist me in prayerfully discerning a mutually shared vision for the archdiocese,” Archbishop Coakley wrote. “This vision will guide our archdiocesan family over the course of the next five years. It is the vision against which we will evaluate and justify our initiatives, programs, ministries and expenditures. It reflects who we are and what we do. This vision aligns with the Gospel vision of Our Lord.”

“Go Make Disciples” is intended to be shared broadly among all clergy, religious and lay faithful of the archdiocese. The three priorities on which Archbishop Coakley asked archdiocesan leaders and parishioners to focus for the first two years are:

- New Evangelization
- Faith Formation
- Hispanic Ministry

Each of these priorities is supported by two spokespersons and measurable goals.

New Evangelization
A. Create an Office of New Evangelization in the archdiocese by Nov. 1, 2013.
B. Initiate an archdiocesan New Evangelization plan in 20 to 30 parishes and all diocesan offices by Nov. 1, 2014.

Faith Formation
A. Implement a year-long Faith Formation process for all parishes and schools by Nov. 1, 2014.

Hispanic Ministry
A. Enroll the first class of a Hispanic language basic adult faith formation program among Spanish-speaking Catholics by June 1, 2014.
B. Enroll the first class of a second class of a Hispanic language basic adult faith formation program by June, 2015.

Faith Formation
A. Begin implementation of a plan to alleviate the overcrowding of churches with significant Hispanic populations in the Oklahoma City area by May 1, 2014.
B. Enroll the first class of an Hispanic language basic adult faith formation program among Spanish-speaking Catholics by June 1, 2015.

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The pastoral letter “Go Make Disciples” and the accompanying study guide are available at www.archokc.org.
An urgent cry from the Middle East

Early this month, Pope Francis summoned his papal nuncios (ambassadors accredited by the Holy See) stationed in the Middle East for a special meeting at the Vatican. They met from Oct. 2-4. Their purpose was to discuss the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, especially the threat to the Church in that ancient land that gave birth to the Christian faith. The Christian population of that region is in a state of catastrophic proportions.

We visited Gaza, Jerusalem and the Kurdish region in recent years as Christians have borne a disproportionate share of the burden in a region that is a battleground for the ancient faith. The Christian population has plummeted in recent years as political conflicts and war have displaced entire communities. Wherever one goes in the Middle East today, one finds people who are living in poverty, fleeing for refuge. The Kirkuk government of Iraq has welcomed the Christians and Yazidis, a hereto-unknown sect sent to modern westerners. We met with the prime minister and his senior cabinet. We met with the leaders of the Chaldean Catholic Church and traveled with them to meet people who are being housed in parcels and unfinished buildings throughout the region. The scope of the crisis is massive.

With winter approaching the need for proper housing is urgent. CRS is partnering with the local church to help meet that need and other needs.

The appeal that we heard as a common refrain from our brother bishops, from Caritas Iraq (the official Catholic aid organization in Iraq), from government officials and from thousands of suffering Christians and Yazidis that we met is simply this: “Don’t forget us!”

One of the greatest dangers that the Church and the international community face is that this ongoing suffering and the harsh realities of living will lead the international community to turn its eyes away from the needs of the Christian community that is suffering and to consider itself as the most vulnerable to suffering and injustice.

The upsurge of violence in Iraq and a vacuum created by political instability and the withdrawal of western military troops, CRS has observed a resurgence of violence across the Nineveh plain and is threaten- ing large sections of Iraq and Syria.

We have all heard about the reports of beheadings and crucifixion, women and children kidnapped and sold into slavery. People are fleeing in terror to seek homes in advance of this terrible scourge.

How to Help

To help displaced families in Iraq, Gaza and Syria with immediate needs, donate now to Caritas Iraq and CRS emergency fund.

Online: http://emergencies.crs.org
Call: (877) 435-7277 from 7 a.m. to Noon CT.
By Mail: Mail your check or money order to Catholic Relief Services
P.O. Box 17000
Baltimore, MD 21297-0303

Commentary: The clash of straw men

Huntington’s original 1993 article, and the book that followed in 1996, are still worth reading, not only because “The Clash of Civilizations” was the first book in a generation in which a world-class political scientist took religion seriously. Huntington’s writing is so influential and sometimes determining factor as it was in the 1980s and 1990s.

Huntington’s sensitivity to re- ligious and world-politics, and his vision of the United Nations as a potential anti-war vehicle. Huntington’s vision of the role of religion in world politics after the Cold War are not ideological or economic (or even material), but religious, and that religious identities are an immutable fact.

And, he was urging both theorists and practitioners to “be at the forefront of acknowledging the fact that religious conviction and the history of religions are at the heart of world politics. The Huntington proposal really so im- plausible. But, Huntington’s analysis of world politics are not ideological or economic (or even material), but religious, and that religious identities are an immutable fact.

Huntington’s prediction that Westphalian nationalism would become a “hostility of cultural identities” was not true when it was written in 1993, and is not true today. Huntington’s proposal really so im- plausible. But, Huntington’s analysis of world politics suggest that some default positions need a re-set in the Holy Land.

In both speeches, reference was made to the phrase: “The Clash of Civilizations.” We met with the leaders of the Chaldean Catholic Church and traveled with them to meet people who are being housed in parcels and unfinished buildings throughout the region. The scope of the crisis is massive.

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By Frances X. Rocca
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY – Beatiﬁ cation Blessed Paul VI at the concluding Mass of the Synod on the family, Pope Francis praised the late pope as the “great helmsman” of the Second Vatican Council and founder of the synod as we are a “witness and prophetic voice of love for Christ and his church.”

The pope spoke during a homily in St. Peter’s Square at a Mass for more than 30,000 people, under a sunny sky on an unseasonably warm October day.

“When we look to this great pope, this courageous man, this humble apostle, we cannot but say in the sight of God a word as simple as it is heartfelt and important,” the pope said, speaking aloud during his homily in the Synod Hall, which included retired Pope Benedict XVI and Blessed Paul VI made a continud in 1977.

“The advent of the secularized and hostile society, (Blessed Paul) could hold fast, with unfർgededness and wisdom – and at times almost with terror,” noted the pope.

But it was Pope Francis who said it so simply and concisely, but included retired Pope Ben- edict XVI and Blessed Paul VI made a continud in 1977.

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The pope noted the pronouncement of beatification at the start of the Mass. Then, Sister Gisela- nina Petridi took the ﬁ fters of Holy Child Mary, carried up a relic: a bloodstained vest Blessed Paul was wearing during a 1970

A tapestry of Blessed Paul VI hangs from the facade of St. Peter’s Basilica.

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How God talks back

Over the years, I’ve walked many young people through their first steps of personal prayer. I tell them that Jesus wants to have a personal relationship with them, and I hint at the enormous treasury of gifts found in the church that he wants to give to them. But like any personal relationship, our friendship with the Lord requires communication. They often wonder, in what sense is three communica- tion, if the Lord doesn’t talk back? Well, he does, actually. The “Catechism of the Catholic Church 2653” teaches us about the personal dialogue of each of us that can have with the Lord. The Church “sincerely and specially exhorts all the Christian faithful … to learn the surpass- ing knowledge of Jesus Christ” (Phil 3:18) by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. Let them remember, however, that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that a dialo- gue takes place between God and man. For ‘we speak to him when we pray; we listen to him when we read the divine oracles.’

A dialogue with God might start off feeling like a monologue. We wonder if we are just talking to ourselves — it can feel like our prayers are not heard and the ceiling comes back on our head. Is anyone up there listening?

The answer is that the early stages of our relationship with the Lord, we must train our spiritual senses, so that we don’t miss what God is trying to say to us (other people proverbs 5:14).

The most valuable disciplines for training the spiritual senses and becoming sensitive to the Lord’s communication is to make a regular habit of reading Sacred Scripture. The more God’s word gets into our mind, the more we learn God’s perspective on things, what he says and how he says it. The supernatural power of God’s Word begins to work on our own thinking. Not only that, but God will start directing our attention to particular verses and passages, and by this means he will answer the questions we are putting to him in prayer.

We learn through experience what it says in Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflec- tions and thoughts of the heart.” So, how do we create the space for this dialogue to happen? First, find some time — maybe 10 or 20 minutes a day that you can find some quiet space. It may be more effective if everyone else gets involved too, after they’ve gone to bed. It might have to be coordinated with a spouse.

Second, pick a system. One an- tient method is called Lectio Divi- na — divine reading. The Office of New Evangelization has prepared a Lectio resource for beginners, containing about 70 scriptures to help you get started, along with a series of steps for how to meditate fruitfully. Another method would be to take the Mass readings for the day, and use the same lectio pattern to prayerfully meditate on them.

A third possibility is to choose a scriptural meditation book with the passages already selected for you. (My personal favorite for beginners is “My Meditation on the Gospels,” a guided, Seasoned Disciples, I recommend “My Meditations on St. Paul.” Both are published by Confraternity of the Precious Blood.

Finally, keep a notebook. Take note when a verse or a phrase hits you in a new way. Personally, I like to write a letter to Jesus, share my life with him, and then take notes with him of how he seems to reply to me through the passage provid- ed by whatever “system” I’m using. I’ve been astonished at times by the precision with which the Lord is able to speak into my life.

That is one concrete way that God talks back. There are, of course, additional skills to train the senses. But, this is the first step in learning to dialogue with God. We learn to talk to God, forever and ever. Amen.
Women’s conference discusses Mary as ‘one of us’

By Annamarie Scaperlanda Biddick
For the Sooner Catholic

On Saturday, Oct. 18, women from across Oklahoma gathered at St. Eugene Catholic Church for the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women Conference. The day, centered on Mary, included prayer, speakers, a musical tribute to Mary and vendors.

Mary Ann Schmitt, ACCW president and St. Francis parishioner, said the group exists to work for peace. It helps support Cross International, Good Shepherd School and Catholic Relief Services.

After opening prayers that included Stations of the Cross, keynote speaker Sister Catherine Koenig will give a presentation about Mary. Attendee Reina Maria from Saint John Paul II Parish in Yukon, who attended with her sister, said, “Learning how the view of Mary has changed was interesting.

Another high point was featured speaker Father Donald Wolf, who spoke about seeing Mary in the immigrant and refugee. “To follow in the footsteps with Mary is to follow in footsteps in immigrant life,” he said, pointing out that Mary was both an immigrant and refugee.

“The midnight call to me as a child, and how the midnight call to my mother’s call changed was interesting.”

Family panel discusses sacrifice, Mary and vendor fair

In celebration of the recent Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, the Office of Faith Integration, Development and Evangelization (FIDE) at St. Gregory’s University hosted a panel discussion, featuring faculty members and moderated by Father Simon Spita, O.F.M. Cap.

The panel discussed the participation of family through the lens of Saint John Paul II’s Apostolic Exhortation, “Familiaris Consortium.”

The discussion sought to supplement the synod on the family called by Pope Francis.

The faculty panel was held Oct. 7 in the Shawnee Community Room at St. Gregory’s University. The discussion was attended by many students, parents and community members from the neighborhood St. Benedict’s parish in Shawnee.

A selection of faculty members and their spouses spoke on the importance of family in the Church as well as the different sacrifices required to live the call to marriage.

“The panel discussion was inspiring to me,” said St. Gregory’s University sophomore Darian Ennis, vice president of St. Gregory’s Pro-Life Team. “It made me realize how important it is to stay close to God in life, in order to have faith in living our lives.

“Godly love is the essence of life, and to live a life of faith in the name of Jesus Christ, we need to keep our faith in his love in our hearts.”

During the panel discussion, when asked about how we can better transmit the faith to the youth, Father Wolf said that we need to reach out to them, that they belong to a place and that their contributions to that place are important. Growing up on a farm, Father Wolf knew that his work was needed and something that contributed to his family and the community.

“Jamie Beller contributed to the conference with her musical talents. She sang original and traditional songs in honor of Mary, interspersed with her own reflections, including her experience with four miscarriages.

“Then, she said, ‘brought me closer to God’s call for discipleship!’”

Beller received inspiration from Father Stanley Rether and her own mother, Kathi Beller, who just celebrated the 35th anniversary of the rosary group she founded at Saint John Nepomuck in Yukon. The musician’s sister, Keri Jones, attended along with her niece, Sarah Warmren.

Warmren, from St. Mark’s, attended for the first time.

“It has been good to spend the day with my grandmother and aunts who are all strong leaders in our family faith community, and how the midnight call to my mother is important.”

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The Dorothy Day Center – A holy place inspired by God

The Dorothy Day Center is located at 4909 N. State in OKC. Volunteers needed! For information and upcoming opportunities, go online to www.thedorthydaycenter.com, visit the center’s Facebook page or check the church bulletin.

Volunteers also can participate in regular Saturday deliveries, coordinated by Bob Waltrip of Catholic Worker House, with groups of up to 20 people from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Nov. 20 and 27, and for any Saturday in November.

One of the center’s elderly food recipients said, “We are blessed by the best!”

For the Sooner Catholic

There’s an app for that!

Access Catholic movie reviews, daily readings, digital rosary and more with the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City’s new app, in the App Store or Google Play.

During Mass, the Last Supper, which Jesus celebrated the day with his five disciples of faith, the Mass makes present again the'sacrifice of Christ. Jesus gave us the Mass as he could be with us always, every single day of history. And because he is eternal, it is not bound by time in the same way that we are.

During Mass, the Last Supper, at Calvary, and the Resurrection are “transported to us in time.”

When we go to Mass, we are not sacrificing Jesus “again,” but rather the same event that took place nearly two millennia ago is made present to us now!

The Dorothy Day Center – A holy place inspired by God

“The rich and poor have this in common. The Lord is the maker of them all”-Proverbs 22:22

By Monica Rauden
For the Sooner Catholic

An elderly man who no longer drives, a single mother who rides the bus two hours to visit a food pantry, and a terminally ill husband of a low income household can’t always access services with weekday hours. So, every year, volunteers from the Dorothy Day Center, a hunger ministry bring groceries to the working poor and those who would not otherwise be able to access assistance.

“They see God in every person who asks us for food,” said Marcus Evans, director of the center and also a volunteer.

The Dorothy Day Center is a community project and part of Saint Charles Borromeo’s Social Ministry Program in Oklahoma City. The all-volunteer workforce, from every walk of life and many faiths, makes a monthly average of 350 deliveries to about 1,000 people, of which 400 are children. For nine years, by obtaining food from the Regional Pood Bank and private food and monetary donations, the center has provided a lifetime for more than 100,000 people in need.

Volunteers are always needed, especially at Thanksgiving and Christmas. During these times, an additional 150 households receive frozen turkeys and holiday meal groceries through Saint Charles’ Holiday Program, with recipients referred to the parish Social Ministry Board by local family and parish office and individuals.

On Friday, Nov. 14, at 9 a.m., volunteers are needed at Aldi’s grocery at Northwest Expressway and Rockwell Avenue to load frozen turkeys and non-perishables for the center. Bud- dy’s Produce provides fresh vegetables at the center to be eaten and saved. The center’s potluck dinner begins at 6 p.m. at the church, 9524 N Grove, OKC, launching an evening of sacking groceries.

On Nov. 15, volunteers arrive at 8:30 a.m. to help food recipients receive their groceries and a frozen turkey, packed just for them. The ben- efits for volunteers are fellowship, fulfillment, new friends, the joy of giving and establishing traditions.
El Reno’s Sacred Heart adds eighth grade

By Sally Linkett

For the first time since its re-opening in 1995, Sacred Heart Catholic School in El Reno includes an eighth grade class.

With a record 174 students enrolled, up from 152 last year, the fire, Mark Mason, pastor at Sacred Heart, attributes the growth to an excellent support system from parishioners and the El Reno community.

“Adding the eighth grade class was just the next logical step to complete our school, so we are very excited,” Father Mason said.

Four years ago when Mason came to the parish, total enrollment was at 89 students. He lauded the education committee and the school office for their hard work in implementing suggestions and helping raise money to support the parish school.

“I continue to be surprised at the amount of money we are able to raise, and by the participation of our community,” Mason said.

Additionally, Mason gave high praise to the staff at the school.

“We have a very strong principal and an excellent teaching staff here at Sacred Heart.”

Enrollment at Sacred Heart has fluctuated throughout the past 15 years. Initially, the school only offered pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, throughout the years some expansion and reduction. As of 2008, they offered classes through the fifth grade.

Beginning three years ago, they added one grade each year, and now have classes from pre-kindergarten through the eighth grade. Thirty-four of those students make up the eighth grade class, with the addition to the school, pre-kindergarten, first grade and second grade classes are at capacity.

With the recent addition to the school, comes the accrual of two new teachers and growth of the athletic program. Archery now will be added, and physical education classes along with other sports available at Sacred Heart students.

The school has a cooperative agreement with El Reno public schools that allows the seventh grade and eighth grade students to play sports with El Reno middle schools. Some of those sports include football, girls volleyball and boys basketball.

Mary Stiehl, the eighth grade homeroom teacher, is in her third year of teaching at Sacred Heart.

“This is a dream come true for us, adding the eighth grade class just makes the school feel complete. To be able to have a full elementary and middle school is so enriching.”

Stiehl added that a lot of the younger children look up to the eighth graders.

“Sacred Heart is a very special place, and be able to have the children complete their education up to the eighth grade in a Catholic environment is great. We are very proud of this,” Stiehl said.

Sally Linkett is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.
“The Book of Life” tackles Day of the Dead

By Joseph McAleer

The Book of Life

“It shows us how much we know” and bought the CCC about three years ago, Willey says. “I felt it was the need to learn how to share my faith.”

Pope John Paul II.

The book contains short presentations on topics such as the origins of the Catholic faith, the Catholic Church, and the importance of faith in daily life.

Gary Krupp, a mathematician at the University of Texas at Austin, says that the book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in learning more about the Catholic faith.

The book is available at bookstores and online retailers.
Un grito urgente de Medio Oriente

A principios de este mes el Papa Francisco convocó a sus nueve papas jubilados (embaiguados) a santa sede situados en los 11 Medio Orientes que, por una razón u otra, están en deteriorada situación Medio Oriente, en el que rezó: "Dios nos ha creado, a sus obras nos ha creado, con la voluntad de que, con sus manos, pueda dar forma al mundo". El Papa continuó diciendo: "No hay nada en tu vida que no valga la pena, ni que esté fuera de lugar. El amor que Dios nos ha dado es grande. Él ama tanto a los pobres, tanto a los necesitados, que cada uno de nosotros tiene que ser capaz de reivindicar sobre la santidad de la vida, de la vida humana. Dios nos crea, a sus obras nos crea, con la voluntad de que, con sus manos, puedan dar forma al mundo".

También dijo que "Dios nos ha creado, a sus obras nos ha creado, con la voluntad de que, con sus manos, pueda dar forma al mundo". El Papa continuó diciendo: "No hay nada en tu vida que no valga la pena, ni que esté fuera de lugar. El amor que Dios nos ha dado es grande. Él ama tanto a los pobres, tanto a los necesitados, que cada uno de nosotros tiene que ser capaz de reivindicar sobre la santidad de la vida, de la vida humana. Dios nos creó, a sus obras nos creó, con la voluntad de que, con sus manos, pueda dar forma al mundo".

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un grito urgente de Medio Oriente

El Papa Francisco hizo un llamado para que se logre la abolición de la pena de muerte. El Papa denunció la detención de prisioneros, el uso de la fuerza razonable y la pena de muerte como también la "populismo penal" mediante el cual se promete justicia social.

"Es imposible imaginar que los gobiernos de los países se han abolido formalmente la pena capital", dijo el Papa Francisco. "La pena capital significa que "se pueden resolver los más variados problemas mediante la utilización de la fuerza y la venganza, en forma pública y general".

El Papa Francisco dijo que algunos políticos y miembros de los medios de difusión promueven la "leyanía de la fuerza y la venganza".

"Sige tus pasos, jesucristo en la tierra santa

Como los médicos demuestran, el cáncer de próstata es un problema que requiere atención. El cáncer de próstata es una enfermedad que puede ser tratada con éxito. Algunos de los métodos más efectivos para tratar el cáncer de próstata son:

- La cirugía: La cirugía es una opción para personas con cáncer de próstata que no se ha extendido a otras áreas del cuerpo. La cirugía puede ser efectiva para tratar el cáncer de próstata en su etapa inicial.

- La radioterapia: La radioterapia es un tipo de tratamiento que utiliza rayos gamma para destruir las células cancerosas. La radioterapia puede ser efectiva para tratar el cáncer de próstata en su etapa inicial.

- La quimioterapia: La quimioterapia es un tipo de tratamiento que utiliza medicamentos para destruir las células cancerosas. La quimioterapia puede ser efectiva para tratar el cáncer de próstata en su etapa inicial.

- La inyección quirúrgica: La inyección quirúrgica es un tipo de tratamiento que utiliza una aguja para inyectar medicamentos en el cuerpo. La inyección quirúrgica puede ser efectiva para tratar el cáncer de próstata en su etapa inicial.

El Papa Francisco en su homilía en el Vaticano. Se reunieron del 2 al 5 de octubre para la Jornada por la Vida 2013. (Láminas a lo más profundo)

Un grito urgente de Medio Oriente

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- La quimioterapia: La quimioterapia es un tipo de tratamiento que utiliza medicamentos para destruir las células cancerosas. La quimioterapia puede ser efectiva para tratar el cáncer de próstata en su etapa inicial.

- La inyección quirúrgica: La inyección quirúrgica es un tipo de tratamiento que utiliza una aguja para inyectar medicamentos en el cuerpo. La inyección quirúrgica puede ser efectiva para tratar el cáncer de próstata en su etapa inicial.

El Papa Francisco en su homilía en el Vaticano. Se reunieron del 2 al 5 de octubre para la Jornada por la Vida 2013. (Láminas a lo más profundo)
Elk City Fall Bazaar
St. Matthew Catholic Church in Elk City invites you to its annual Fall Bazaar. An all-day event, Thanksgiving Dinner will be served 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and a silent auction from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Nov. 2. Tickets can be purchased at the door ($8 for children, $10 for adults, 3-12) or online for $8. For more information, call (405) 321-0990.

Concert to honor Fr. Nasrallah
Father Bruce Nasrallah will be honored at a memorial concert presented by The Oklahoma Catholi
car Church (OCC) and orchestra
t Tuesday, Nov. 9, at 7 p.m. at St. Joseph Old Cathedral, 307 NW 4, OKC. Under the director of Nettie Jean Williams, the musi
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DENVER – Catholic victims of the Soviet Union’s cruel anti-Christian persecutions faced execution, exile and arbitrary imprisonment for their faith – and now a new website tells their stories.

“The persecution of the Church was immediate. It started within a couple weeks of the October Revolution,” Geraldine Kelley told CNA.

“It was brutal. It focused first of all on the confiscation of church property and the arrest of the hierarchy, [then] the decrees that prohibited teaching religion to anybody under the age of 18.”


The book, now available at the website of the University of Notre Dame’s library, records the fate of victims who were shot and “simply liquidated” as well as those sent to the prison camps who did not survive. The fate of some victims is unknown.

Some survived, including the “small class of priests” who were able to exit the Soviet Union for other countries and continents.

Yet other believers in the Soviet Union, Catholics who did not suffer outright persecution could still face severe social penalties. Being known as a believing Catholic could result in career penalties, the loss of one’s job or similar threats to family members, Kelley said.

The “Book of Remembrance” biographies were collected by Father Bronislaw Czaplicki and Irina Osipova for a martyrology commission of the Apostolic Administration for Catholics of North European Russia.

The Polish-language first edition was published in 2000, drawing on archives from Soviet state security organs. Kelley voiced hope that the publication of the book on the Internet would help bring renewed attention to the martyrs.

Kelley, who holds a doctorate in Slavic Languages and Literature, said “there were many, many more martyrs in the 20th century than in all the years of Christian history totaled up together.”

Although the Soviet Union’s Christians were primarily members of the Orthodox Church, the Soviet Union also was home for many Catholics due to the Russian Empire’s political control of Poland and other areas. Some citizens were Catholics descended from German colonists invited into Russia for political reasons.

Kelley said that historians of the Soviet gulag often approach the topic “in terms of the large numbers involved.” She preferred to examine the stories of individual persons, such as the housekeepers of rectories and choir directors.

“Who were these people? What kind of lives were they leading when this happened to them?”

Kelley became interested in the archives of persecuted Catholics after she heard of a community of Eastern Rite Dominican sisters founded in the 1910s in Moscow.

“I came across references to these sisters and wanted to know more about them. Who were they?”

One of the Dominican sisters was Mother Catherine of Sienna. She was born into a noble family in Moscow on Dec. 23, 1882, and given the name Anna Ivanovna. She married in 1903, and was received into the Catholic Church in Paris in 1908.

She later entered the novitiate for the Third Order Dominicans, in 1913, while her husband was ordained an Eastern Catholic priest in 1917.

On the night of November 12, 1923, she and nine other sisters were arrested on charges of leading a “counter-revolutionary” organization. After being sentenced to several years in prison, she told her sisters: “Most likely each of you, having fallen in love with God and now following Him, has asked more than once in your heart that the Lord give you the opportunity to share in His sufferings. That moment has arrived. Your wish to suffer for His sake has now been fulfilled.”

Mother Catherine was released from prison in the early 1930s, only to be arrested again and sentenced to eight years in a labor camp. She died July 23, 1936, in a prison hospital.

The cause for her canonization was opened in May 2003. She is now recognized as a Servant of God, along with 15 other Catholics who died for their faith under Soviet persecution.

Kelley said many of the Dominican sisters would have been in their early 20s when first arrested.

“They were sent to prison camps for three-year to five-year terms, and then after they would serve their term, they would find out even if their term was extended. They would get released, and then get re-arrested. Some of these women were still serving in the camps when Stalin died in 1953. We’re talking 30 years.”

Although the sisters were scattered throughout the Soviet Union, Kelley found it “amazing” that they would still encounter each other over the years.

“When you think of how large the country is, and how many hundreds of thousands of people were sentenced, and how many prison camps there were, the fact that you would meet anyone you knew seems astounding to me,” she said.

Kelley has translated a book focusing on these Dominicans, Irina Osipova’s “Brides of Christ: Martyrs for Russia.”

Kelley voiced concern that the canonization cause for Servant of God Anna Ivanovna Abrikosova is losing momentum, given that it depends on the interest of the Catholic faithful, “and so few Catholics know of her.”

She said that Catholicism in the Soviet Union had difficulty surviving three generations of atheistic repression.

“Although we know with what enthusiasm the Church was able to rebounds in Poland and in parts of Ukraine, that third generation of oppression made a big difference. The Church in Russia was much more thoroughly eradicated, liquidated, repressed, annihilated.”

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