Sooner Catholic
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Anytime - It’s available 24/7

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My dear Brothers and Sisters, we cannot abandon those among us who are suffering and in need. Nor can we let our beautiful country, the land of the free, adopt selfish, uncharitable ways of treating our brothers and sisters of other lands.

Most Reverend Eusebius J. Beltran
Archbishop of Oklahoma City

The Good News ... And who is my brother?
October 28, 2007

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Even though this is printed in the space for my usual “newspaper article,” it is much more important. Therefore, I am writing to you in this letter format because this is really a letter “from my heart.” I write on behalf of the Catholic faith we share and my responsibility as your Archbishop. I write out of love of Jesus and of you, my brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Church has always upheld the fundamental dignity of every human person. This dignity comes from God and His creation of us in His own Image and Likeness. It precludes all other human standings and status. The Declaration of Independence of our own beloved country acknowledged “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. (In Congress July 4, 1776).

During the past week, I and some of the members of our Priests Council have signed a Pledge of Resistance to the soon-to-be-effected House Bill 1804. In doing this, neither I nor any of the priest signatories intend to meddle in politics. Rather, we have been ordained to proclaim the Good News of Jesus. I am convinced in conscience that HB 1804 does not radiate that Good News. Rather, it is contrary to our Christian beliefs and detrimental to the fundamental dignity of the human person. Therefore, it is a bad law and adherence to it will negatively affect our society.

While the Church has always upheld the dignity of every human being, the popes of the last century have often decried the injustice perpetrated against human beings by bad laws. Pope John Paul II had frequently proclaimed the right of people to emigrate when faced with the inability to live in peace or security. The American Bishops have repeatedly requested of the federal government a comprehensive change of our immigration laws and procedures. I find the current laws to be discriminatory and unjust. I judge them to be contrary to the spirit of our great country that formerly welcomed the poor, the homeless, the oppressed to new opportunities, indeed, to a new life in our great country.

In signing the Pledge of Resistance to HB 1804, I am not encouraging lawlessness. On the contrary, I am opposing the injustice perpetrated on my brothers and sisters from other lands.

In the Gospels, Jesus challenges us as He calls us to faith. Thus in the story of the Good Samaritan, He asks us: “Which of these three was neighbor to the robber’s victim?” The man answered: “The one who treated him with mercy.” (Luke 10:36-37)

Also in Saint Luke’s Gospel (17: 14-19), after Jesus had cured 10 lepers and only one returned to give Him thanks, Jesus remarked: “Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they? It seems that no one has come back to give thanks to God except this foreigner.”

Some people have condemned the undocumented because “they broke the law” or “they are illegal.” I would rather say, in fact, I am impelled to ask — why is this so and how can we help? Rather than condemn, shouldn’t we try to help? Didn’t Jesus warn those who were self-righteous to examine themselves? When the crowd wanted to stone the adulterous woman, Jesus said: “Let the one among you who is guiltless be the first to throw a stone at her.” (Luke 10:36-37)

My dear Brothers and Sisters, we cannot abandon those among us who are suffering and in need. Nor can we let our beautiful country, the land of the free, adopt selfish, uncharitable ways of treating our brothers and sisters of other lands. We have a grave problem to solve. Anger, disputes and unjust legislation are of no avail. Only prayer and sincere efforts motivated by charity, mercy and justice to protect the unalienable rights of all people will result in true progress. Love of God and love of neighbor is my motivation for signing the Pledge of Resistance to House Bill 1804.

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A $50 donation was made to the Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse by St. Gianna Home School Group.

A $50 donation was made to the Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse in memory of Barbara Schwarz.

A $1,600 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse in memory of Thomas Milam from Elizabeth Milam and family.

A $200 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse in memory of Jerry Cebulski from Mr. and Mrs. Henry Cebulski.

A $350 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse by Epiphany Parish.

A $750 donation was made to the Archbishop Charles Salatka Seminary Burse in honor of Fr. David Lafferty for his many years of work in the Cursillo Movement of Oklahoma.
Immigration Assistance Coordinator
By Eileen Dugan
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Margie Solis said HB 1804 has sent waves of confusion through the immigrant communities across Oklahoma.

Because of HB 1804, Solis, the director of Immigration Assistance Program at Catholic Charities, prepared a pod cast in Spanish and English to help undocumented people and their families understand House Bill 1804.

The Immigration Assistance Program at Catholic Charities offers low-cost legal assistance regarding immigration. The program helps people with family-based immigration. They also help refugees and people in this country seeking political asylum.

“Most of our staff is bilingual in English and Spanish. But we deal with a wide variety of cultures from all over the world. Since the passage of HB 1804, we have had much higher case loads, an increase from 60 to 90 cases a month,” Solis said.

“We made this pod cast to try to calm down the fears of the undocumented population. We have had a lot of people come to our office and tell us that a lot of undocumented people have left Oklahoma because of HB 1804. They are confused about what HB 1804 says and what HB 1804 means to them.

“It is important for the undocumented to understand that wherever they go in the United States, they are always in danger of being detained and deported. House Bill 1804 does not change that fact,” Solis said. “We are trying to inform them of what plans they need to make if they are detained or deported.

“It is also important for the undocumented to realize the federal government is the only agency authorized to enforce immigration law,” she said.

The Oklahoma state law called Oklahoma Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act of 2007, another name for House Bill 1804, became law on Nov. 1.

Solis stressed that her pod cast presentation was not intended to offer specific legal advice, but to explain what HB 1804 does and does not do.

Five things that HB 1804 does:

>“Section 3 is about aiding the undocumented. The law makes it a felony (a serious crime) for anyone who transports or provides shelter to an undocumented person. There is an exception to this section for services provided for the health and safety of a person. This exception is likely to apply to services provided by a church or school.

>“Section 4 of the law is about identification. The law states that the state must verify the legal status of all persons who apply for Oklahoma driver’s license or state identification.

>“Section 5 is about jails. The law requires that jails attempt to verify the legal status of any person charged with a felony. If the person who is charged is a foreign national (a citizen of another country) and the jail is unable to verify the legal status of the person, the person is not eligible for bond.

>“Section 8 of the law is about state public benefits. The law requires state agencies to verify the legal status of applicants for state or local public benefits who are 14 years old or older.

>“Section 11 of the law are about education. Undocumented students attending college as of the 2006-2007 academic year can continue to attend college. New students who are undocumented cannot attend college unless the Oklahoma Board of Regents adopts a policy and the student meets certain requirements.

Three things HB 1804 does not do:

>“The law does not prohibit undocumented children from attending public schools, kindergarten through 12th grade.

>“The law does not prohibit children who are U.S. citizens and have undocumented parents from applying for state/federal public benefits.

>“The law does not prohibit hospitals from providing emergency medical care to an undocumented person. All hospitals must provide emergency medical care to all persons regardless of their legal status.

Solis said those needing assistance with their immigration cases or having questions as to whether or not they qualify for an immigration benefit should contact her at the Immigration Assistance Program at Catholic Charities at (405) 523-30091 or 1-800-375-8514.

CC Works to Clear Up Confusion
continued from page 1

HB 1804,” Klinge said. “There has been so much misinformation and political rhetoric that we believed it was important to get sound factual information and a general legal interpretation of HB 1804 into the hands of our pastors and other parish leaders.

“It is important for our parish leaders to understand that in general, HB 1804 does not prohibit the Church from continuing to provide vital services to all people regardless of their immigrant status,” he said.

Klinge’s pod cast presents an overview of HB 1804. He divided his overview into four parts: Catholic Social Teaching, Provisions of House Bill 1804, Doing Business with the State and General Advice and Comments. The following is a summary of this overview.

Catholic Social Teaching

“Each person is made in the image of God and, therefore, has dignity. Catholics need to consider the human dignity of each person directly affected by this country’s immigration laws, regulations and policies.

Provisions of HB 1804

Sections 3A and 3B make it a state felony, a serious criminal offense, to transport, conceal, harbor or shelter an unauthorized alien. If convicted, a fine and/or imprisonment for more than one year could be imposed. An unauthorized alien is a person who does not have proper documentation to be legally present in this country.

>“To “harbor” or “shelter” an undocumented alien could include employing or providing housing or other shelter for such a person.

>“When employing persons, parishes and schools must continue to comply with current I-9 requirements.

>“If you receive the required I-9 information and documentation, you are not required to ask about any of the information provided in the I-9 process.

>“Section 3C of HB 1804 provides an exception to the law that allows parishes to provide services to undocumented aliens if these services are either:

(i) Provided for the health and safety of persons without regard to their income or

(ii) If they are provided by a “private charity.” A “private charity” could include a church.

>“Section 3 does not specifically require churches to inquire about the immigration status of the persons a parish is serving. If you do not need to know the immigration status of the persons to whom you are providing services, you should not ask them for it.

>“Section 4 allows parishes and schools to make identification badges for employees, visitors and contractors who come to their parish or school. The parishes and schools do not need to inquire about the immigration status of the persons receiving the identification badges. But they must state that the ID’s are “only valid for use on the campus or facility.”

>“HB 1804 does not change existing law that an undocumented person has a right to a K-12 education. Schools are not required to ask about the immigration status of any person enrolled in a K-12 education system.

>“A child born in the United States is a citizen of the United States regardless of the immigration status of the child’s parents.

>“Section 9 requires that if an “individual independent contractor” performs services for a parish or school and does not provide proof of immigration status, the parish or school hiring the “individual independent contractor” may be asked to pay taxes which an employer would be required to withhold if the “individual independent contractor” were an employee.

>“Section 10 states that unless a city, county or state law enforcement agency makes a specific arrangement with the federal government to enforce federal immigration law, those law enforcement agencies do not have the authority to enforce federal immigration laws.

>“In Oklahoma, as of Oct. 24, 2007, only certain law enforcement agencies in Tulsa had reached such arrangements with the federal government.

>“Sections 11, 13: Undocumented students currently enrolled in post-secondary education can maintain their in-state tuition.

>“Undocumented students not currently enrolled in post-secondary education are not eligible to enroll in state colleges.

Parishes or schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma having contracts to provide services to the state of Oklahoma or any of its agencies or subdivisions, need to contact Eason or Klinge to receive appropriate legal advice. Additional requirements must be satisfied.

Doing Business with the State

General Advice and Comments

>“HB 1804 represents a move by the Oklahoma Legislature into legal areas which have previously been the sole province of the federal government.

>“Enforcement of HB 1804 may vary from community to community.

>“As Oklahoma and the U.S. struggle with immigration issues, solutions will only be found if we remember Christ’s words to “Love our neighbor as ourselves.”

>“Those having specific questions about HB 1804 should contact either Tish Eason at the Pastoral Center at (405) 721-5651 Ext. 149, or Richard Klinge at Catholic Charities at (405) 523-3000."
Taking a Stand

Sacred Heart Parish Hosts Weeklong Seminar Focused on Immigration and Human Rights as Hispanic Community Braces for HB 1804

If there is any person that is suffering or being oppressed or being denied inclusion in decision-making and having their basic human needs taken care of, that is an injustice and we are responsible to correct and do what we can to make right that injustice. This is a basic Catholic principle. In the common good, there is no “other,” we are all in it together.

— Sister Sara Dwyer

By Eliana Tedrow
For the Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — When asked what prompted him to organize a weeklong workshop on Immigration and Human Rights, Father Anthony Taylor said “HB 1804 is a law that is unjust … people are being afflicted by this law and people need to know what the Church teaches about their God-given right to immigrate when circumstances so require.” Immigration is a right that does not depend on its recognition by the state because it is an inalienable right by God, he said.

HB 1804 continues to spur fear and confusion among the Latino community in Oklahoma, which beckoned Father Taylor, pastor at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, and Rey Madrid, Oklahoma state director of LULAC, to organize a weeklong series titled “Workshop on Immigration and Human Rights.” The series ran Oct. 8-12 at Sacred Heart Church and focused on four topics: the U.S./Mexican Law and HB 1804, the History of Immigration, the Duties of Citizens and the Teaching of the Catholic Church on Immigration and Human Rights. Sessions were offered in English and Spanish with separate topics offered to children. About 250 attended each session offered in Spanish, while a little more than two dozen attended the sessions offered in English.

Sister Sara Dwyer, Election Commission Education Coordinator for NETWORK, a national social organization that lobbies for economic and social transformation, fought to educate those in attendance about the ethical and moral obligation each individual has to work for social change in addition to the political importance of being an active citizen.

From a Christian Catholic perspective, she said, you must ask your self where you are personally in your own journey of justice. “As Catholics, we’re responsible for the least and all of God’s people,” said Sister Sara.

This comes at a critical time in our country, she stressed, a time where Catholic social teachings represent principles that come out of our biblical heritage. As Americans we seem to have a sense of entitlement, she said. Drawing from Father Taylor’s example of the “Four P’s,” she noted “Power, Pleasure, Possessions and Prestige” tend to be at the root of many people’s decision-making.

However, when issues like immigration threaten to strip human beings of their God-given right to have basic needs met, it should make one re-evaluate their sense of placement in the world, and to realize that we are all part of a greater good, that the decisions and actions we take impact not only us, but God’s people all over the world, she said.

Luke 12:48 states, “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded.” Sister Sara used this passage to confirm the Catholic social teaching on justice. “Compassion will cost us more because we have more … one person being treated unjustly is the same thing as 1,000 people being treated unjustly,” she said. Therefore, we need to rethink the ideas we have toward immigration.

Catholic Bishops to Discuss Faith and Politics Statement

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) will consider an updated statement on faith and politics at their 2007 November general meeting. The proposed statement focuses on the bishops’ role in helping to form consciences in political life.

“In this statement, we bishops do not intend to tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote,” the draft states. “Our purpose is to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with God’s truth. We recognize that the responsibility to make choices in political life rests with each individual in light of a properly formed conscience, and that participation goes well beyond casting a vote in a particular election.”

Every four years for more than 30 years, the USCCB Administrative Committee has produced an overview of the Church’s teaching on political life, referred to as their statement on “faithful citizenship” or on “political responsibility.” Over the years, this statement has been widely used by dioceses, parishes and other institutions. Since the current version was approved in 2003, more than 1.3 million copies of the statement, brochure and related resources have been sold by USCCB Publishing. Many more have been copied and distributed locally.

This year, the proposed document on “faithful citizenship” will be reviewed and voted on by all of the bishops of the United States. The draft to be discussed in November includes a full statement as well as a brief summary for use as a bulletin insert. It will demonstrate both continuity and change and focus on elements of Catholic teaching that are particularly important today.

The draft affirms the importance of participation in political life. It explains the necessity of opposing actions that are intrinsically wrong, such as abortion and euthanasia, and affirms the obligation to promote the common good by combating such threats to human life and dignity as hunger, poverty, racism, unjust immigration policies and unjust war.

The proposed draft also urges Catholics “to become more involved: running for office, working within political parties and communicating concerns to elected officials.” It suggests that Catholics should be “guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group.” As they prepare for the elections, the draft says, “Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates’ positions on issues and should consider candidates’ integrity, philosophy and performance.”

The draft provides 10 goals for Catholics and others to consider during the campaign and beyond. It also summarizes positions taken by the USCCB on a wide range of public issues.

To obtain a copy of the draft, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States, contact the Department of Media Relations at (202) 541-3200 or e-mail mwalsh@usccb.org.
Irish Principal Honored for Helping Youth Beat Drugs

By Eileen Dugan
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Some of the phrases used to describe David Morton at the Oklahoma Outreach Foundation’s recent “Evening of Courage and Inspiration” banquet included: “A friend when you need one.” “Someone troubled students can count on.” “Devoted.” “Devoted to helping students committed to recovery.”

Morton is the principal of Bishop McGuinness High School and he was honored at the “Evening of Courage” with Oklahoma Outreach’s “Dare to Believe” award.

Oklahoma Outreach is a non-profit organization founded by Mike Boss. Its mission is to help adolescents who are struggling with drug or alcohol dependency. It also helps their parents.

The foundation recognized Morton’s long involvement in helping teens toward recovery at its fundraiser at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club on Oct. 16. Proceeds from the event benefited the organization’s Sober School and Treatment Scholarship Fund.

“This award is a bigger deal than I ever imagined,” Morton said. “It is an honor to receive anything from Mike Boss’ foundation, knowing, as I do, all the good things they do in the community. The ‘Dare to Believe’ award recognizes people who have played a special role in the lives of students who have struggled with dependency issues. I received this award because Mike and I have had a long-term relationship helping kids with these kinds of issues.”

Also at the fundraiser were nationally known speakers and writers Kristina Wandzilak and her mother, Constance Curry. These two women co-authored “The Lost Years,” a harrowing story of Wandzilak’s struggle with substance abuse and her mother’s part in Wandzilak’s battle and recovery.

The Wandzilak/Curry story reminded the audience that the problem of drug dependency can be attacked and ultimately beaten.

“We all can help fight dependency by educating young people,” Morton said. “With education, we can alleviate drug problems before they occur.”

McGuinness High School conducts educational programs and sponsors assemblies and discussions to help their students understand and avoid or deal with drug and alcohol dependency, he said.

Morton said McGuinness supports a Parents Support Network which helps parents understand drug dependency. This parents group meets three to four times a year to discuss issues relating to adolescence. One of the issues they tackle is substance abuse. The Network brings in speakers and organizes panels of experts to help educate parents on how they can help their teens.

Mount FCA Hosts Second Annual ‘Fields of Faith’ Event

OKLAHOMA CITY — On Oct. 10, Mount St. Mary’s Fellowship of Christian Athletes hosted its second annual Fields of Faith under the lights of the school’s football field.

Fields of Faith is a student-to-student event where peers invite their own classmates and teammates to the football field to hear fellow students and invited guests share their faith testimonies, challenge them to read the Bible and to come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Fields of Faith uses Scripture from 2 Chronicles Chapter 34. In this passage, teenager King Josiah challenges his people to read the Word of God and to live by God’s laws. That same challenge was issued by inspirational testimonies from MSM seniors, Blake Gunter and Laura Allison, 1978 MSM alum, Jim Bowers, and Northeast High School head football coach and eight-year NFL veteran, Kenny Blair.

Mount St. Mary senior Liz Armstrong issued a challenge for all in attendance to read a chapter a day from the Book of John for the next 21 days. In closing, senior Mary Kate Tener led the group as they joined hands in prayer.

“This was an incredible opportunity for all Christian youth to come together and praise and worship Christ,” said Mount St. Mary senior Amy Johnson. Fields of Faith was held simultaneously at 379 fields in 36 states with more than 49,000 people in attendance. The Mount was the only Oklahoma City high school to host this year’s event.

Stadium Project Begins at McGuinness

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bishop McGuinness is tackling a new project at Clement Pribil Stadium, making the stadium entry more accessible. “Paving the Way” will be funded by the sale of engraved bricks.

The entry to the stadium currently is a descending asphalt slope and is sometimes difficult to navigate. The new entry will allow pedestrian traffic to flow smoothly. According to Principal David Morton, “We want the entryway and the concession stand area to be welcoming and accessible to our families, athletes and supporters. By purchasing a brick in the Paving the Way program, people will contribute to the improvements and also be able to capture a memory that will be permanently displayed.”

“Paving the Way” bricks will be engraved with up to three lines commemorating a student, family, team or special event. The bricks will be installed in a permanent display near the entryway of the stadium. Each brick sells for $100 and is available by calling the Development Office at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School, 842-6638 Ext. 242.
SAVE THIS DATE

OKLAHOMA CITY — In early December, an important history focusing on the Catholic Church in Oklahoma will be released. The Road to Renewal, Victor Joseph Reed and Oklahoma Catholicism, 1965-1971 by Jeremy Bonner, is grounded in thorough archival research and breaks new ground in its examination of the implementation of Vatican II at the diocesan level under Bishop Victor Reed, bishop of Oklahoma City and Tulsa from 1958-1971. In this study, Bonner explores the process of Catholic renewal and assesses the role of Bishop Reed as an agent of that process — inspiring the faithful in Oklahoma and establishing a mission parish in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala. Bonner will autograph copies of the new release and lecture on this important period in the Catholic Church on Wednesday evening, Dec. 5, 2007, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Catholic Pastoral Conference Center, 7501 N.W. Expressway, Oklahoma City, Okla.

OKLAHOMA CITY — Tim O'Connor, executive director of Catholic Charities, was presented the Friend of Nursing Award at the recent Oklahoma Nursing Association statewide conference. Presenting the award is Karen Tomajan, president of the Oklahoma Nursing Association. O'Connor was honored for his dedication and support over the years to Faith Community Nursing in Oklahoma.

Christmas Gift Sponsors Sought

Catholic Charities is seeking gift sponsors for the annual Adopt-A-Family Christmas Program. The program matches anonymous sponsors with families in need throughout the greater Oklahoma City area. Each sponsor receives a Christmas wish list for the “adopted” family, including each family member’s first name, age and clothing size. Sponsors wrap the gifts individually — labeling each gift and packaging them together in one container labeled with the family’s code number and the number of containers per family. Sponsors then drop off the gifts Dec. 10 at a central location where the families pick them up at a later date.

Cash donations also are accepted for the purchase of gift cards for families in need. Cash donations may be made in honor of a friend or relative.

Individuals or groups interested in sponsoring families, or anyone who would like to volunteer to assist with the gift drop-off and pickup process, may call the Catholic Charities Parish Outreach Office at (405) 523-3009.

The Catholic Foundation

CORNERSTONE

Trusts

Trusts are one of the oldest and most widely utilized type of Planned Gifts.

Planning for future taxes is just one of many important considerations when reviewing long-range financial plans. Another concern may be the inability of one or more heirs to manage property left to them because of age, incapacity or other factors. To address these concerns, Trusts are commonly used.

And while there are many variations on Trusts, typically the donor would transfer property in exchange for an income stream for himself/herself or another designee for a defined number of years. In the end, the charity would receive the balance of the remaining Trust assets.

For more information on Planned Giving contact:

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma, Inc.

P.O. Box 32180
Oklahoma City, OK 73123
(405)721-4115 • www.cfook.org
tcasso@catharchdioceseokc.org

Please Remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Your Estate Plans
Lawton Birth Choice Effort in Need of Volunteer Help

By Eileen Dugan
The Sooner Catholic

LAWTON — The Birth Choice office needs help.

Birth Choice is a nonprofit, volunteer organization whose only job is to help pregnant mothers and their babies. Birth Choice provides free pregnancy tests, counseling, maternity and infant clothing, diapers, cereal and formula to young mothers in a non-judgmental atmosphere.

“We help all the women who come in, in any way we can,” said Lawton director Eloise Paul. “We are pro-life. We try to give them information that may help them. We tell them about Rose House, a maternity home run by Birth Choice in Oklahoma City, or we give them adoption information.”

While the need is great, volunteers are in short supply. This could cause big problems if things don’t change soon.

If Lawton Birth Choice does not get some volunteer help soon, “We may have to cut hours,” Paul said. “If this happens, at least some of the mothers and babies in the Lawton area, who could have been helped by Birth Choice, will not get the help they need.

“We need volunteers now,” Paul said. “We need people to work two hours a day, Monday or Tuesday or Thursday, 10 a.m. to noon or noon to 2 p.m.”

Volunteers are needed to answer phones, issue equipment such as diapers, cereal and other baby items, and assist women with pregnancy tests. These tests are easy to administer. They are home pregnancy tests, but the tests are done at Birth Choice, Paul said. She and volunteer Mary Munoz show volunteers how to do them as part of their training.

“We don’t discriminate. We help everybody. There is no age limit on our help, no special creed, no special color. If a woman needs our help, we are there to give it to her,” Munoz said.

“We don’t believe in abortion. We try to persuade the mothers to keep their babies. We let them know that the child does not need to be destroyed. If the mother does not want the child, we tell her that adoption is a possibility and that we have adoption information available if she wants it. It is up to her,” Munoz said.

All this information and the items that Lawton Birth Choice make available to mothers and their babies provide a valuable service to the Lawton community.

“If a mother needs something we do not have, we give her references to other agencies so she can get what she needs from the health department, food bank, et cetera,” Paul said.

“If the girl is pregnant, one of the places we send her to DHS to get prenatal vitamins. We have maternity and infant clothes on hand, as well as diapers, formula and cereal, all for free for her and her baby,” Munoz added.

Volunteers also keep the Birth Choice office clean and presentable, by occasionally vacuuming and dusting. They talk with clients, and if the client wants to talk with a counselor, professional counseling is available.

“If the women want counseling, Lorraine Perry, a teacher and counselor, is available to talk with them. Lorraine is on the Birth Choice board of directors,” Munoz added.

Volunteers also keep the office records up to date and file information on all of Birth Choice’s clients. They sort out donated baby clothes and put them in baskets, according to size, they set out diapers and work on the computer. Paul helps volunteers needing assistance with the PC.

“It’s not hard work. Volunteers don’t need to pick up anything heavy. There is always something to do. It’s never boring,” Munoz said.

Anyone can be a volunteer. In the past, there have been volunteers from Cameron University. People in wheelchairs are welcome to volunteer. They do need to be able to wheel-up the ramp, but, if they can do that, Birth Choice can put them to work answering the phones, Munoz said.

“We have models of the different phases of pregnancy, which we show to the mothers, and we give out brochures on pregnancy and breastfeeding. We show the ladies the maternity and infant clothes. And we put together layettes for all the new mothers to bring with them when they bring their babies home from the hospital,” Munoz said.

“Birth Choice is such a worthwhile ministry. I would like to be able to extend our hours, not cut them,” Paul said. To stay open, we need volunteers we can depend on. We need people who, when they tell us they will be here for a certain number of hours, will actually be here."

“We know that everyone sometimes has emergencies, and we have backup for that. If an emergency arises and they can’t come in, they need to call me, and I’ll get someone else to cover for them."

“We need volunteers right now, and we also need donations. We need maternity clothes (all sizes) and baby clothes (infant sizes through size 4 toddlers). We need diapers, formula and baby equipment: strollers, high chairs, cribs and bassinets,” Paul said.

To volunteer and/or donate to Birth Choice in Lawton, call director Eloise Paul at (580) 248-3110.

Life Fest Walk Celebrated

MUSTANG — Your Choice Pregnancy Center, a Christian pro-life crisis pregnancy center, celebrated its second annual Life Fest Walk fundraiser. The event, held Sept. 30, took place on the grounds of the community center in Mustang. Supporters showed up and participated in a ceremonial walk in support for Your Choice. In addition to a ceremonial walk, supporters also enjoyed a free lunch, live music, a cookie walk, a balloon clown and children’s activity booths. Nursing students from Southern Nazarene University were also on hand to do free blood pressure checks. Live music was provided by The Vine Church.

Your Choice Pregnancy Center is a nonprofit Christian organization that opened on April 11, 2006. The mission of Your Choice is to defend the lives of the unborn; to equip women with the information, materials, support and resources necessary to provide for their physical, spiritual and emotional needs during and after pregnancy; and to promote abstinence before marriage. Your Choice operates solely on donations. Anyone desiring to make a donation can send it to: Your Choice Pregnancy Center, 218 W. Highway 152, Mustang, Okla. 73064. Donations of baby items are also gladly accepted. Anyone wishing to volunteer can contact Kelly at (405) 202-5144.

Eric Russell Adams earned the rank of Eagle Scout on Oct. 4. Eric, 17, is the son of Geraldine and Clifford Adams. The family attends Saint James Catholic Church. Eric has been in Scouting since the age of 6. He is a member of Troop 20 chartered by Southern Hills Methodist Church. For his Eagle service project, Eric collected more than 400 new items for babies and their mothers and donated them to Birth Choice of Oklahoma Inc.

Eric is a senior at Mount St. Mary High School and has played football for the Rockets for the past four years. Here he is pictured with Barbara Chisko, executive director of Birth Choice donating some of the items he collected for his Eagle project.
Man Turns to Catholic Charities and Receives Help For Niece and Nephew

By Connie Blaney

Family Values

Catholic Charities

It has not been an easy road. Lance, who is single, lost a good job shortly after he began to care for the children. "The children were physically ill and emotionally distraught. I made the choice to devote my time and energy to helping them get well." In the process, Lance's own physical health has suffered. Shortly after he took temporary custody of the children, he suffered from gallstones, kidney stones and a gallbladder attack. He has since had his gallbladder removed. He also discovered he is a borderline diabetic.

For several months, until he filed for temporary guardianship, Lance received no money for the children and he had no savings. Every place he turned for help was met with roadblocks, from DHS to Child Protective Services to Social Security. "I have never known such red tape. Both of the children needed medical attention. We were finally able to get help from a doctor at a clinic for American Indians. It was this doctor that recommended I call Catholic Charities," Lance said.

Lance, who had almost given up hope, decided last November to make the call to Catholic Charities. Staff in the Family HOPE program set up an appointment for Lance and his niece and nephew. "Catholic Charities helped us immediately. One of the first things the caseworker did was provide clothing for the children," Lance said. Other immediate assistance included paying several utility bills, providing a Thanksgiving basket and gas vouchers, setting up a budget and including them in the Adopt a Family for Christmas program.

Catholic Charities case manager Pat Hernandez-Byer talks about her client. "I have been so impressed with him and his love for the kids; for his determination to fight for them and what they deserve. He has given the children stability and love and guidance. I know he continues running into roadblocks and our program continues to be there for him whether its financial help, advocacy, social support, parenting ideas or resources," Pat said.

For the past year, Lance and the children continue to receive help from Catholic Charities. "I have been so grateful for the friendship and support we have received from Catholic Charities," Lance said. Through Catholic Charities Family HOPE program, Lance has learned parenting skills, budgeting and resume writing. "My caseworker, Pat, has been a friend and supporter. I have learned so much through this program," he said.

The children, now 5 and 6 years old, are attending school this year. Their health is improving and they are both in counseling. "We are still struggling, but we are moving forward," Lance said. "We are just grateful for the help and support we have known from Catholic Charities."
With These Hands
A Touching Story Of Patriotism

By Margie Wahn
For the Sooner Catholic

NICOMA PARK — Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church has a story to tell of a patriotic man who proudly served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War, to defend the rights and liberties of others. This patriot’s name is Leon Drew. He served his country well, spending 2 1/2 years overseas.

Drew has made his mark in the local area, handing out his hand-crafted wooden American flag stands and flags that he and his friend, Glen Potter have made. The recipients of his handiwork have been students, veterans and active military members, to remind us of our patriotic duty to our God and country.

Additionally, to the American flags, he has passed out patriotic cards that read “Honor the Dead by Helping the Living” and “Peace Can Never Last on Earth if God Becomes Meaningless to People.” Drew feels very strongly in presenting this meaning to our children who attend the Sunday school program here at Our Lady of Fatima. He said that this is the Veterans of Foreign Wars motto. Another motto he passes out is from the American Legion that reads “For God and Country.” I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Drew believes he can spread the belief to everyone in church, school and society that we must keep God in our thoughts, words and actions. He strongly emphasizes this to the children “that without God we cannot have a great nation.”

Drew and Potter speak of the many who have sacrificed their lives for our great nation with God as their ultimate leader. Drew said that in today’s society, people take for granted all the sacrifices our forefathers gave for our freedom. We must all pray to regain our faith and trust in God to strengthen our leaders today to run our great nation and continue giving us that liberty and justice for all peoples.

Drew and Potter from the VFW have distributed flags to the V.A. Hospital in Oklahoma City, the V.A. retirement homes in Norman, Enid, Clinton and Lawton, and to all of the Sunday classes at Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church.

Drew also plans on distributing his flags to the R.O.T.C. students at area high schools and is open to invitation to bring his gift of patriotism to other schools in the Oklahoma City area.

While distributing the flags, both veterans gave out handmade poppy flowers to the students. The poppy flower tradition started right after World War I, and represents our disabled veterans and all who died. The story behind the poppy flowers originated when the French people donated land so we could bury our dead soldiers. They then spread poppy seeds all over the ground and in the spring the gravesites were covered with a field of poppy flowers. It is a very touching, heart-warming story that breaches all across time.
Dr. Wagie Sets Vision for St. Greg’s University at Oct. 26 Inauguration

SHAWNEE — Dr. David Wagie set his vision for the future of St. Gregory’s University during his inaugural address Oct. 26. Wagie was inaugurated as the 14th president of the state’s oldest institution of higher learning before an audience of family, friends, distinguished guests, community members, faculty, staff and students inside W.P. Wood Field House.


“My presidency will be driven by a whole-hearted commitment to academic excellence, outreach and service, and religious faith,” Wagie said. “... to lead St. Gregory’s in becoming a regional force for Christian values, educational opportunity and community impact, to become a brighter, more visible beacon for the region.”

Wagie said in order to become more visible to the region, the university must grow “selectively in ways that are part of building a great future — to become a brighter, more visible beacon for the region.”

“As an emerging Catholic university, we now have the exciting opportunity to change so many more lives; to be more widely known for our service to students, our protection of the environment and our impact on our community, state and region,” Wagie said. “As the Church teaches us, the path to true happiness, peace and a meaningful life is not through accomplishment for its own sake, but by accomplishing things that help people, that serve a noble cause, that honor our Lord by using our talents and energy for the good of society.”

The traditional ceremony began with a bagpipe procession as faculty and administration marched in wearing academic regalia, along with the Knights of Columbus Honor Guard, distinguished guests and the St. Gregory’s monastic community.

Bringing greetings to Wagie were John A. “Rocky” Barrett from the Citizen Pottawatomi Nation; Scott Meacham from the State of Oklahoma; Chuck Mills from the City of Shawnee; Bob Anthony from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission; Thomas McDaniel from the Oklahoma Independent Colleges and Universities; SGU alumnus David Nicklas; Rev. Charles Buckley, O.S.B., representing SGU faculty and staff; and student body representative Sean O’Brien.

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

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

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

During his tenure, the USAF Academy was one of only 16 institutions nationally selected in 2000 as a prestigious “Leadership Institution” by the American Association of Colleges & Universities. In addition, the Academy was named “No. 3 best overall academic experience” and “No. 6 best undergraduate engineering school” in the United States for 2005.

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

He and his wife, Sue, have been married for 34 years and have three daughters, Angela, Megan and Tiffany, and two sons-in-law, Colin and Kiel.
Brunch Raises Close to $12,000 for Sister Sponsa’s Ministry

OKLAHOMA CITY — The handicapped children who live and learn at Our Lady of Fatima Rehab Center in Liberia, Africa, have a very dear friend in Sister Sponsa Beltran, the Bernadine missionary nun who founded the center years ago.

Through her efforts, countless children have been rescued from a life of suffering and even death. And while these children have a dear friend in Sister Sponsa, in Oklahoma Sister Sponsa has a very dear friend in Pearl Sullens.

On Oct. 23, Sullens brought many more friends together for a brunch to help raise money for Sister Sponsa and her ministry in Liberia. By the end of the two-hour get-together held at the offices of Catholic Charities, Sullens had collected close to $12,000.

“One of the best friends Sister Sponsa has in Oklahoma is Pearl Sullens,” said one of the women attending the event.

Over and over, Sullens thanked the people who helped support Sister Sponsa and the children of Our Lady of Fatima Rehab Center. “I love you all very much,” she said. “Oklahoma has adopted Sister Sponsa for more than five years.”

The sister of Archbishop Beltran, Sister Sponsa is confined to a wheelchair and is legally blind. Still, she works tirelessly with the children and young people who find a home or schooling or both at the rehabilitation center. Sister Sponsa founded the ministry after learning that in Liberia, children born with disabilities or physical handicaps are considered witched and are either killed or abandoned by their families.

“My dear lady, Sister Sponsa has given so much,” Pearl Sullens said. “It’s good that we’re able to help in some small way.”

Catholic Relief Workers Recall Liberia’s Struggle for Peace

By Lane Hartill

MONROVIA, Liberia — In the basement of the Tolbert Hotel, Dickson George sat on the floor, naked and prepared to die.

Opposition fighters had arrived in the city of Robertsport that morning, spreading fear along the way. At the moment, anyone the soldiers suspected of having ties to then-President Samuel Doe would be captured and often killed.

Dickson had been the student body president at Cuttington University — one of Liberia’s best. He had frequently visited Doe at the executive mansion. In the president’s office, they discussed the new student center at Cuttington. Doe was financing it. Dickson was in charge.

So when the soldiers rolled into town and sent everyone to the beach that day, Dickson had reason to worry. “That very day, they had checked my ID card, and saw my ID card,” he says. “They said, ‘Oh, these are the people that used to go to Doe.’ They stripped me naked and put me in jail. Right in front of me they took two persons and put me in jail. Right in the basement of the Tolbert Hotel, Dickson was in charge.

Dickson realized the young man pointing the business end of a Kalashnikov at him had once worked in his math class Dickson had taught.

Dickson asked.

Dickson realized the young man was about to use the university as a base. Dickson stayed on the campus — at great personal risk — to make sure all the students were evacuated before the rebels took the university.

“Just from the moment of terror as the rebels took the city of Robertsport, Liberia was scars and people were struggling somehow to survive — Dickson and his wife somehow managed to keep their kids in school. They knew it was one of the moments of terror as the rebels took their communities.”

During that time — when food was scarce and people were struggling to survive — Dickson and his wife somehow managed to keep their kids in school. They knew it was one of the moments of terror as the rebels took their communities.”

During that time — when food was scarce and people were struggling to survive — Dickson and his wife somehow managed to keep their kids in school. They knew it was one of the moments of terror as the rebels took their communities.”

continued on page 19
Campaign for Human Development Nov. 17-18

Providing support for individuals, groups and programs that focus on breaking the cycle of poverty is the main mission of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), said Becky VanPool, director of Parish Outreach and Program Development for Catholic Charities.

In Oklahoma this past year, CCHD funded two community programs and eight parishes in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. CCHD is the Catholic Church’s anti-poverty program in the United States which supports groups of low-income people as they work to bring long-term change to their lives and communities.

“Catholics can be proud of the fact that their contributions during the annual CCHD collection are helping our communities and parish programs,” said VanPool. “Financial support from our parishes is a form of ministry.”

The funds to support CCHD will be collected the weekend of Nov. 17-18 in parish collections through designated envelopes. “The envelopes will be passed out at Mass or included in the regular envelope distribution,” VanPool said.

The two community programs funded this past year by CCHD were — Possibilities Inc., and the Citizen Pottawatomi Nation Development Corporation. These two organizations are helping empower and train Oklahoma citizens to solve problems in their neighborhoods and through good business practices.

Possibilities Inc. works with neighborhoods, communities and individuals to strengthen the ability of people to work together for community change. Possibilities Inc. worked with Mount St. Mary High School students to survey the predominantly Hispanic neighborhood around the school. The study led to development of El Centro de Oportunidades (Center of Opportunities) program which provides classes in Citizenship and English as a Second Language (ESL), and high school equivalency courses.

CCHD Aims to Eliminate Poverty in U.S.

“Millions of hardworking Americans struggle to keep food on the table and a roof overhead. Two adults working full time at minimum wage jobs, with no time off for illness, family emergency or vacation, barely make enough to keep their family above the federal poverty line,” said Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Oklahoma City. CCHD is the Catholic Church’s anti-poverty program in the United States which supports groups of low-income people as they work to bring long-term change to their lives and communities.

“The compassion of millions of Catholic parishioners into timely and effective solutions to help people overcome the debilitating effects of poverty. Bishop Hubbard is the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on CCHD. This year, the CCHD Collection will be held Nov. 17 and 18 in most dioceses.

CCHD projects are aimed at eliminating poverty and injustice in the United States. Since 1970, the collection has helped CCHD provide more than 8,000 self-help grants to programs initiated and led by poor people throughout the United States.

The programs create sustainable jobs, preserve affordable housing, improve neighborhoods, enhance opportunities for youth and allow people to find a way out of poverty.

According to national data from the U.S. Census Bureau, poverty now affects some 37 million people, or 12.7 percent of the U.S. population, which is one of every eight individuals.

“Poverty erodes hope and burrows deep into families and neighborhoods. CCHD has battled entrenched poverty with creative, effective projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands,” said Bishop Hubbard. CCHD has provided more than $280 million in grants during its 38 years.

Most of CCHD’s funds come from Catholics who contribute to the annual parish-based CCHD Collection. Other significant support comes from religious orders, foundations, groups and parish organizations who share CCHD’s commitment to working in partnership with the poor. CCHD allocates the majority of the annual collection to community and economic development projects submitted to the national office for consideration. Individual dioceses retain 25 percent of the collection to fund local self-help initiatives.

More information on CCHD’s nationwide effort to break the cycle of poverty and build community is available at the CCHD Web site at www.usccb.org/cchd.
Trust in the Lord

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal 2007 Update

The goal for the Archdiocese is $3 million. At this time 28.3 percent of the membership or 10,768 families or individuals have pledged to return to God some of the gifts received from Him.

As of October 24
Pledged: $3,130,637.87
Paid: $2,647,391.14
To Cover Pledges: $483,246.00
Current Write-Offs: $4,703.00
2006 Pledged Write-Offs: $165,722.39

Average payments for the months of August and September of 2007 total $116,327.45. If we use this same average for November and December, that means that some donors made commitments to God that will not be fulfilled — for many reasons. If we made pledges to re-evaluate your situation continue to make payments on your pledges to re-evaluate your situation and to “Trust in the Lord” to help you with your needs. God loves you!

We ask those of you who have not made or have been unable to continue to make payments on your pledge to re-evaluate your situation and to “Trust in the Lord” to help you with your needs. God loves you!

Donations for the 2007 Appeal will enrich the lives of the families and individuals of this Archdiocese. Thank you for your continuing support and prayers.

Archdiocesan Annual Appeal 2007 Gift Form

My Total Contribution is $_____ Make Checks Payable to ADF

Amount Paying Today $_____ I will pay my balance in the following way:

Balance $_____ Indicate Month ______

Mail to: ADF P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, OK 73123

Obituary

Sister Mary Modesta Weyel, RSM, Dies

Mary Kathryn Weyel was born Oct. 7, 1914, in Evansville, Ind., to George A. and Magdalena Kersteins Weyel. The family moved to Fort Smith, Ark., where Sister attended St. Ann’s Academy in the first grade. This is where she met the Sisters of Mercy. Following a move to Oklahoma City, she attended Sacred Heart grade school and graduated from Mount St. Mary Academy High School. She entered the Religious Sisters of Mercy on July 27, 1933, in Webster Groves, Mo., and received the name Mary Modesta.

Sister Mary Modesta’s graduate studies from Mount St. Scholastica College, Atchinson, Kan., prepared her for a lifetime profession of teaching math, English and social studies. Teaching was a joy and a gift, and she considered it a privilege to be able to help form the lives of the children she taught. In her ministry of education, Sister served in St. Ann’s Academy, St. Joseph Schools and in Shawnee, St. Benedict School.

In 1965, Sister began a second career as a patient relations advocate at Mercy Hospital. This led her to hospital pastoral ministry. She received her Clinical Pastoral Education at Mercy Hospital in New Orleans. Sister remained in the ministry of Pastoral Services at Mercy Health Center, Oklahoma City, until her retirement in 2004.

Across Oklahoma

Mass in Tagalog

DEL CITY — St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church will celebrate Mass in the Philippine language Tagalog every Saturday starting Nov. 10 at 6:30 p.m. A Rosary and Novena will be at 6:15 p.m. A potluck dinner will follow the Nov. 10 Mass. All are welcome.

Healing Heart Workshop

PIEDMONT — Nov. 10 from 9 a.m. to noon, Bob Willis returns for a third presentation, using the medium of clay in guiding persons to share the pain of loss. Join Bob at Red Plains Monastery in the red art barn. All materials are provided. Call 373-4739 to register. Fee: $70, includes a non-refundable deposit of $20. Bring a sack lunch.

School Event Nov. 17

ENID — St. Joseph Catholic School will hold its annual fundraiser, The Taste of St. Joe’s, on Nov. 17. The event will be held at the Cherokee Strip Conference Center from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Exceptional wines from different regions will be showcased and sampled along with amazing food catered by Cathy Frantz of La Cuisine catering. Live and silent auction items will be up for bid. Some of the items to be auctioned off are Bedlam football tickets, Hannah Montana concert tickets, bikes and amazing themed baskets from each class. Tickets are $25 each and can be purchased by any St. Joseph student, at the school, St. Francis Catholic Church office and St. Gregory’s church office. Tickets can also be purchased that evening. All proceeds from the Taste event benefit St. Joseph Catholic School.

Harvest Bazaar in Norman

NORMAN — The annual Harvest Bazaar, with all proceeds to benefit the St. Vincent de Paul Society, will be held Saturday, Nov. 17 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at St. Thomas More, 100 E. Stinson. There will be handmade gifts, crafts, holiday decorations, new gift items, white elephants and wonderful baked goods for sale. Raffle items include a queen-size quilt, a quilted Christmas throw, a table runner, a wine and cheese basket and a statue of Our Blessed Mother. Chances are $1 each or six for $5 and you choose which raffle item on which to put your chances. St. Thomas More is located on the corner of Jenkins and Stinson, two blocks south of the OU football stadium at Lindsay.

Sister Mary Modesta Weyel, RSM, during her time at Mercy Health Center.
Suicide — When Someone is Too Bruised to be Touched

A few days ago, I was asked to visit a family who had, just that day, lost their 19-year-old son to suicide. There isn’t much one can offer by way of consolation, even faith consolation, at a moment like this, when everyone is in shock and the pain is so raw. Few things can so devastate us as the suicide of a loved one, especially of one’s own child. There is the horrific shock of losing a loved one so suddenly which, just of itself, can bring us to our knees. But, with suicide, there are other soul-wrenching feelings too, confusion, guilt, second-guessing, religious anxiety. Where did we fail this person? What might we still have done? What should we have noticed? What is this person’s state with God?

What needs to be said about all of this: First of all, that suicide is a disease and the most misunderstood of all sicknesses. It takes a person out of life against his or her will, the emotional equivalent of cancer, a stroke or a heart attack. Second, we, those left behind, need not spend undue energy second-guessing as to how we might have failed that person, what we should have noticed, and what we might still have done to prevent the suicide. Suicide is an illness and, as with any sickness, we can love someone and still not be able to save that person from death. God loved this person too and, like us, could not, this side of eternity, do anything either. Finally, we shouldn’t worry too much about how God meets this person on the other side. God’s love, unlike ours, can go through locked doors and touch what will not allow itself to be touched by us.

Is this making light of suicide? Hardly. Anyone who has ever dealt with either the victim of a suicide before his or her death or with those grieving that death afterwards knows that it is impossible to make light of it. There is no hell and there is no pain like the one suicide inflicts. Nobody who is healthy wants to die and nobody who is healthy wants to burden his or her loved ones with this kind of pain. And that’s the point: This is only done when someone isn’t healthy. The fact that medication can often prevent suicide should tell us something.

Suicide is an illness, not a sin. Nobody just calmly decides to commit suicide and burden his or her loved ones with that death any more than anyone calmly decides to die of cancer and cause pain. The victim of suicide (in all but rare cases) is a trapped person, caught up in a fiery, private chaos that has its roots both in his or her emotions and in his or her bio-chemistry. Suicide is a desperate attempt to end unendurable pain, akin to one throwing oneself through a window because one’s clothing is on fire.

Many of us have known victims of suicide and we know too that in almost every case that person was not full of ego, pride, haughtiness and the desire to hurt someone. Generally it’s the opposite. The victim has cancerous problems precisely because he or she is wounded, raw and too bruised to have the necessary resiliency needed to deal with life. Those of us who have lost loved ones to suicide know that the problem is not one of strength but of weakness, the person is too bruised to be touched.

I remember a comment I overheard at a funeral for a suicide victim. The priest had preached badly, hinting that this suicide was somehow the man’s own fault and that suicide was always the ultimate act of despair. At the reception afterwards a neighbor of the victim expressed his displeasure at the priest’s homily: “There are a lot of people in this world who should kill themselves,” he lamented bitterly, “but those kind never do! This man is the last person who should have killed himself because he was one of the most sensitive people I’ve ever met!” A book could be written on that statement. Too often it is precisely the meek who seem to lose the battle, at least in this world.

Finally, I submit that we should not worry too much about how God meets our loved ones who have fallen victim to suicide. God, as Jesus assures us, has a special affection for those of us who are too bruised and wounded to be touched. Jesus assures us too that God’s love can go through locked doors and into broken places and free up what’s paralyzed and help that which can no longer help itself. God is not blocked when we are. God can reach through.

And so our loved ones who have fallen victim to suicide are now inside of God’s embrace, enjoying a freedom they could never quite enjoy here and being healed through a touch that they could never quite accept from us.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. Rolheiser’s weekly column appears in more than 65 Catholic newspapers worldwide. He began writing his column in 1982. He can be contacted through his Web site at www.rolonrolheiser.com.
China on Path of Self-Destruction With One-Child Policy

A real piece of work. Back in the day, that's what we've called my friend, Nicholas Eberstadt. By his own confession, Nick left Harvard a convinced Maoist — only to find, during his early graduate work at the London School of Economics, that he couldn't out-argue British development economist Peter Bauer. So unlike others who will remain nameless, Nick figured out that being left does mean having to say you're sorry (and wrong), when the evidence overwhelmingly points in a different direction. So he abandoned the intellectual fever swamps of “Marxist analysis,” got very serious indeed, and has earned a well-deserved reputation as one of the world’s most creative students of demography.

And one of the bravest. For in September, Dr. Eberstadt became possibly the first man ever to criticize China’s One-Child Policy in China, before an audience consisting of Chinese government officials and a predominantly Chinese World Economic Forum audience.

Eberstadt first noted the human-potential costs of the One-Child Policy. Reminding his audience that perhaps the most familiar face of China in America today is Houston Rockets center Yao Ming (an only child, and the son of two basketball stars), Eberstadt asked his hosts: “Without a One-Child Policy, how many other stars might the Yao family have produced? ... That particular possibility has been lost — and we will never know how much further potential for China has been lost, thanks to involuntary birth control.”

The One-Child Policy’s proponents argue that China has experienced enormous economic growth under One-Child. That’s true, Eberstadt conceded, but “development” is more than economics. Consider the many parents who might have wanted more than one child and yet were compelled to “forswear the children they wished to have.” For those parents, economic growth is a poor substitute for their hearts’ deeper longings. Or, as Eberstadt put it, economic growth that doesn’t “meet the most basic of human needs and desires is low quality growth.”

Then there are the about-to-come due economic fiscal costs of the One-Child Policy. Thanks to 15 years of below replacement level birth rates, China’s working age population is about to start declining — and will continue to decline “more or less indefinitely.” How will an increasingly over-50 population maintain the economic dynamism that the rest of the world has come to expect from China? Moreover, because of the One-Child Policy and its skewing effects on the overall Chinese population, “China’s age profile will be ‘graying’ in the decades ahead at a pace almost never before seen in human history.”

Today, China is young; by 2030, China will be “grayer” than the United States.

In 20 years, on current trends, the “normal” Chinese family will be “4-2-1-4” four grandparents, two parents, one grandchild. “Brother,” “sister,” “aunt,” “uncle” and “cousin” will be abstract terms. What will this do to a society in which family bonds are a crucial component of social capital? And what about the demographic ramifications of sex-selection abortions under the One-Child Policy? That odious practice has created a situation in which, 20 years out, there will be tens of millions of unmarried Chinese young men with no marriage prospects — because the wives they might have married were aborted. That’s a vast human and social problem. It’s also a huge international security problem, for that many unmarried young men means, historically, an army of marauders.

Echoing Pope John Paul II in the encyclical Centesimus Annus, Nick Eberstadt closed on a humanistic note: “In the final analysis, the wealth of nations in the modern world is not to be found in mines, or forests, or deposits of natural resources. The true wealth of modern countries resides in their people — in human resources. China’s people are not a curse — they are a blessing.” Thus China’s success in “abolishing poverty and attaining mass affluence in the decades and generations ahead” may well depend on a decision by China’s rulers to reverse course and to trust their own people, with respect to the size of their families.

Eberstadt reports that his reception was “cool.” Which is bad news, not for Dr. Eberstadt, but for China.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. Weigel’s column is distributed by the Denver Catholic Register, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Denver. Phone: (303) 715-3215.

Bella, a Pro-Life Story Catholics Should Enjoy

It has been demonstrated that many women and girls who find themselves expecting a child and believe they have no options often change their decision to end the pregnancy if only someone shows an interest in them, or allows them a sounding board for their fears and concerns.

So it may be with Nina (Tammy Blanchard), an unmarried New York waitress who must decide what to do after becoming pregnant at the beginning of the sweetly sentimental drama “Bella” (Roadside).

Her whip-cracking boss, restaurant owner Manny (Manny Perez), has fired her, not even knowing Nina’s pregnant and that her repeated lateness was related to her condition. On this particular morning, she had stopped off to buy a home pregnancy kit and confirmed the problematic news. Manny’s brother, Jose (Mexican soap favorite Eduardo Verastegui), the restaurant’s long-haired, straggly bearded chef chases after the dejected young woman when she drops one of her belongings on the street.

In conversation through a subway turnstile, she reveals her situation, prompting the empathetic Jose to abandon his culinary duties — sending hotheaded Manny into a rage — and take the unhappy Nina around the city where, in their ramblings, they encounter one of Jose’s old girlfriends, and have lunch at a trendy restaurant run by another female friend. Nina begins to see that there’s more to her scruffy protector than meets the eye.

Eventually, he takes her to the suburbs to meet his Mexican-Puerto Rican parents (Angelica Aragon and Jaime Tirelli) and kid brother, Eduardo (Ramon Rodriguez), who brings his new girlfriend to supper. (There’s a nice scene where Eduardo coaches his girlfriend to say grace in halting Spanish to impress the folks.)

During this visit, Jose reveals his life story to Nina, glimpses of which we have already seen. Jose had been a rising soccer star but his career ended abruptly after his car fatally struck a child, and he was sentenced to prison for involuntary manslaughter (why — one wonders — since it was clearly an accident and the little girl had run out into the middle of the street?).

Still wracked with guilt, he well understands Nina’s emotional fragility. Throughout the day, he gently tries to persuade her to keep the baby, but their relationship stays resolutely platonic.

Director and co-writer Alejandro Monteverde’s feature film debut is, it must be said, sometimes dramatically slack and implausible, and rather overly pat in its plot resolutions, though the ending is not quite the expected one.

He nonetheless handles his cast with great sensitivity, and is particularly adept at staging the personal scenes, which comprise most of the film. Despite his hirsute appearance for most of the film, Verastegui telegraphs great warmth from his dark eyes, and Blanchard — who played the young Judy Garland in the 2001 Judy Davis TV film — gives a terrific performance, her honest emoting helping overcome plot improbable.

“Bella” is also unusual, admirably so, in presenting such a positive depiction of a Latino family even if at times Jose’s folks seem too good to be true.

Above all, the film has an affirming pro-life message, along with themes of self-forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption that should resonate deeply with Catholic viewers.

Partially subtitled. The film contains a couple of crass words, a child’s death, a drug reference, and, the out-of-wedlock theme aside, is otherwise admirably free of objectionable elements. The USCCB Office for Film and Broadcasting classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.
Buenas Noticias...

Por Eusebio J. Beltrán  
Arzobispo de Oklahoma City  
26 de octubre, 2007

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas de Cristo:

Aunque esta carta se publica en el actual espacio para mis "artículos de prensa", lo hizo considerando que esto es más importante. Por lo tanto, les escribo a cada semana en formato de carta porque es una carta que realmente viene de mí corazón, se emite en representación de nuestra Iglesia compartida y como una responsabilidad que tengo como su Arzobispo. Mis hermanos y hermanas en Cristo, les escribo con el amor de Jesucristo y por el afecto que tengo por ustedes.

La Iglesia siempre ha defendido la dignidad de la vida humana. Esta dignidad viene de Dios y de Su creación para honrar a Su Imagen y Señoría. Esta por encima de todo pensamiento y condición humana. La débil declaración de independencia de nuestro amado país proclama lo siguiente: "... todos los hombres nacen iguales y dotados por Su Creador de ciertos derechos inherentes: que entre estos son los principios de la seguridad de la libertad y la vida, que constituyen la dotes humana" (En el Congreso, el 4 de julio, 1776).

Durante la semana pasada, yo y algunos miembros del Congreso Sacrosanto, firmamos un documento llamado "Uramos Resistencia. Haciendo esto, no nos negamos a las demandas de los abusivos que firmaron ese documento, hemos queremos comentar en política. Mas bien, ratifico que nos ordenamos como sacerdotes para proclamar la Buena Nueva de Jesús. Yo estoy convencido a conciencia que la ley H.R. 1800 no trae la Buena Nueva. Más bien, esa ley contradice nuestras creencias cristianas y va en detrimento del fundamental de la dignidad humana. Por lo tanto, es una ley mala y la defensiva a esta afecta negativamente a nuestra sociedad.

La Iglesia siempre ha defendido la dignidad de todo ser humano, los Papaes de los últimos siglos, a menudo criticaron las injusticias perpetradas en contra de los seres humanos por implementación de malas leyes. El Papa Juan Pablo II proclamó públicamente el derecho que tienen las personas a elegir cuando asisten a una inapropiación para vivir en paz o salvaguardar sus vidas. Los Obispos Estadounidenses, en repetidas ocasiones han pedido al gobierno federal una amplia reforma a nuestras leyes de inmigración y sus procedimientos. Yo encuentro estas leyes discriminatorias e injustas. Yo la demando que se contraríe al espíritu de nuestra paz que siempre le ha dado la bienvenida a los pobres, a los desamparados, y a los optimistas ha dado nuevas oportunidades, en fin, nuestro gran país ha estado siempre una nueva vida.

Cuando firmé Uramos Resistencia a esta ley, no estoy animando a quebrantar las leyes. Por el contrario, me opongo a la injusticia perpetrada en contra de mis hermanos y hermanas de otras tierras.

En los Evangelios, Jesús nos decía cuando nos llamó a creer en la fe así en la historia del Buen Samaritano, Jesús preguntó: 'Según tu pareces, ¿Cuál de estos tres fue el prójimo del hombre que cayó en manos de los ladrones?' El hombre contestó: 'El que mostró compasión con él.' Jesús le contestó: 'Y él se llamaba El que estás porque es el justo que te ha mostrado el estranjero'. (Lucas 10:35-37).

También en el Evangelio de Lucas (17:18-19), dice que Jesús curó a diez leprosos y uno se devolvió a darle las gracias a El. Jesús respondió: "No quedaron limpios los diez. Los otros nueve, ¿dónde están? ¿No ha habido quien vuelva a dar gloria a Dios sino este extranjero?"

Algunas personas condiscípulos a los inmigrantes aquí porque ellos "querían cambiar la ley" o "porque ellos son ilegales". Yo diría mejor, de hecho, les diría que preguntaban: ¿por qué están aquí? Conocemos a Jesús, ¿cómo podemos ayudar? Es que acaso Jesús no promove de aquellos que se negaban a examinar lo que ellos mismos? Cuando la multitud quería apedrear a la mujer adultera Jesús dijo: "Aquí de ustedes que no tenga envidia, que le arroje la primera piedra". "Al citar las palabras, se dieron rotándo uno tras otro". (Juan 8:1-11)

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas, no podemos abandonar a aquellos que están sufriendo y están en necesidad. Tampoco, podemos dejar que nuestro hermano país, la tierra de la libertad, adopte un camino egoísta e insensible de esa realidad hacia nuestros hermanos y hermanas de otras tierras. Tenemos un gran problema que resolver. Para, peligra y una injusta legislación no son de buen provecho. Sin embargo, nuestras creencias y los valores que nos motiva por la justicia, la piedra y la justicia para proteger los derechos inalienables de cada persona, están el resultado de un verdadero progreso. Amar a Dios y amar al prójimo es la motivación por la que he firmado este documento llamado Uramos Resistencia a la ley 1800.
Hispanidad es un tesoro en la Iglesia
Entendiendo Nuestra Cultura

Juramos Resistencia

Esta carta ha sido autorizada y firmada en respuesta a la
aprobación de la ley HB 1804. Esta ley es tremendamente antihîmi-
gante y no respeta los valores que respetan a las personas y sus
familias.

Con el advenimiento de esta nueva ley, nos unimos en posición
da defensa a esta injusta e inmoral ley. La ley dice que es un crimen
ayudar, asistir o transportar a cualquier persona indocumentada en
el estado de Oklahoma. Una de las provisiones establecidas en esta
ley establece que asistir o transportar a cualquier persona indocumenta-
da en el estado de Oklahoma a una persona que región se pudiera pagar,
se encargará en prisión bajo la custodia del departamento de
migración, con una pena no menor de un año de presidio o por una
multa no menor de mil dólares o pudieran ser establecida la prisión y
la multa simultáneamente.

Nuestra es nos encantrar hacer el bien a todas las personas. No
hay ninguna división de excepción para aquellas personas que no tie-
nen documentos de nacionalidad. No nos partimos en contra de
aquellos que requieren ayuda humanitaria. Porque esta ley es cru-
madamente punitiva y hace un crimen el hecho de proveer ayuda o
asistencia humanitaria a los indocumentados en necesidad, nuestros
irritantes, amigos, hijos religiosos, y gente lejos, constantemen-
te, no obedecemos a la ley. Continuaremos ayudando y asistiendo
con cuidado caritativo y amor espiritual a todas personas sin impos-
tar su condición de nacionalidad.

Somos gente de fe y con conciencia, rehazamos el hecho de
que se nos intimide con una ley de Oklahoma, la cual que hace un
delito a quienes sirvan a otros. Por el contrario, como personas de fe,
con amor y esperanza, hacemos un llamado a rebelarse a esta anti-immi-
gante ley y pedimos una reforma que provea justicia para todos los
hijos de Dios. Estamos unidos en solidaridad y deseamos a esta ley
porque nuestra alianza está con una ley más elevada, el amor de Dios
y la humanidad.

El Instituto Cultural Hispano se estableció por un grupo de profesionales y profesores
católicos interesados en ampliar su profundo respeto por la dignidad hispana.

Podemos construir un mayor entendimiento de las culturas hispánicas mediante la educa-
obación y poniendo en marcha la colaboración de los católicos en común con sus propios.
JOBS BOX

Asso. Director for Administration
Catholic Charities seeks an Associate Director for Administration. The successful candidate must have an advanced degree in accounting, finance or business administration or equivalent experience; supervisory experience and skills; sensitivity to diversity and to clients of differing racial, economic and ethnic backgrounds; the ability to manage multiple priorities and an understanding of Catholic Social Teachings, the Catholic faith and traditions and the applicability to the work of Catholic Charities. Send cover letter, including salary requirements, and résumé to Human Resources, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, 1501 N. Classen Blvd., OKC 73106, or nlargent@catholiccharitiesok.org.

Bilingual Counselor Needed
Catholic Charities/St. Joseph’s Counseling Center is seeking a part-time bilingual (Spanish) licensed counselor to work 20 hours per week providing professional counseling and related services to individuals, couples and families. Services will be provided in the St. Joseph’s Counseling Center at Catholic Charities and at selected parishes within the community. Please submit a cover letter and resume to Human Resources, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, 1501 N. Classen Blvd., OKC 73106, or nlargent@catholiccharitiesok.org.

Network IT Personnel
Bishop McGuinness and Christ the King schools are seeking a full-time, professional IT person. Experience and/or certification with the setup and maintenance of integrated PC and Mac platform/computer systems for this co-oped position a must. Contact Trevor Swink, BMCHS Technology Director, (405) 314-3378 for information. Send resume to swinkx288@mcguinness.k12.ok.us.

Three-Year-Old Teacher Needed
Villa Teresa School in OKC has an opening for a 3-year-old class. Applicant must have an associate’s degree in early childhood or child development. The position is a 12-month position with great benefits. Call Sister Veronica 232-4286 if interested.

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

Part-Time Youth Director
Holy Trinity Parish in Okarche is looking for a part-time youth director. Must be able to work well with youth. If interested, call Deacon Max Schwarz at 263-4760.

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

Job Coaches
The Center of Family Love in Okarche is looking for job coaches. This position is best described as a mentor for our community-based clients helping them to get to their jobs as well as helping them to understand what their employer needs and expects from them. For more information, contact John Isenegger at the Center of Family Love at (405) 263-4658 or fax your resume to (405) 263-4563.

Direct Care
The Center of Family Love in Okarche is looking for Direct Care Technicians. These openings are at both the ICP M/R and the Loosen Center. We pay well and have a significant shift differential. We provide training and have a paid time-off program. For more information, contact John Isenegger at the Center of Family Love at (405) 263-4658 or fax your resume to (405) 263-4563.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Electronic applications are preferred, and should include a cover letter and resume. Nominations, expressions of interest or requests for the complete position specifications may be sent directly to the university: Mr. Shingi Goto, Executive Vice President, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804, angoto@stgregorys.edu or by phone, (405) 878-5435.
Liberia’s Struggle for Peace

continued from page 11

most important things they had to do. And it paid off: Dickson’s three children are all university educated.

After his experience with the soldiers and George, Dickson eventually made his way to the central Liberian town of Weala, about an hour and a half from the capital, and lived at a mission while the war destroyed the country. Broke and out of work, he turned to Weala’s most lucrative commodity for survival: diamonds.

He wasn’t a big-time trader. He only bought “the small ones,” he says. It was the only work in town.

“The bigger ones were bought by the bigger guys who had the money,” he says. “We bought them just to be able to find food and survive.”

Starting Over

When the fighting cooled, he moved back to Monrovia.

In 1999, some friends at CRS told him about a job opening as an educational field officer. That started his career at CRS. Other job offers came up, but his commitment to CRS, and his belief in its mission of helping the poor, won out every time.

During the war, work at CRS came in spurts. One of his best jobs, Dickson says, was in the mid-1990s when he worked in Greenville, a port city in the southeast Liberian county of Sinoe. There he was in charge of school food programs and working with parent-teacher associations.

The city, now sparsely populated with sandy streets, radiates charm. In its halcyon days, the town was full of American-Liberians — those whose ancestors were freed American slaves. They built houses that looked like those in the American Deep South.

You can still see the grandeur in sagging roofs and wraparound porches. Houses often had chimneys — useless in the tropical heat — but an impressive display of aristocracy. The indoor carpeting they thought was a sign of wealth was better for growing mold than impressing guests.

American culture seeps out of the town and grins at the newcomer from the most unlikely places. From the choice of breakfast — doughnuts and Cream of Wheat — to Liberian lovers walking hand in hand, Greenville feels like an old American beach town.

When Dickson strolls down the streets, Greenvillians greet him like a lost brother. It’s like Michael Jordan walking through downtown Chicago. People light up, Dickson, who never seems to be in a bad mood, makes time for everyone.

“Long time. How’s it?” they ask.

“All right,” he says, breaking into his trademark smile.

Dickson is back in Sinoe assessing communities for agro-enterprise, which helps farmers find markets so they can increase their income. It’s a field he believes has the potential to lift Liberia out of poverty.

Dickson can’t stop talking about agro-enterprise. His voice — in that beautiful, lilting Liberian English — grows loud. He raves about its possibilities, about how it can heal Liberia.

“Our concentration has been on production,” he says. “Agriculture should take a new direction with agro-enterprise, which is geared toward increasing not just production, but income.”

Lane Hartill is the West Africa regional information officer for Catholic Relief Services. He has visited CRS programs in Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Lane is based in Dakar, Senegal.
OKLAHOMA CITY — For the first time in nine years, The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, representing the Southwestern Lieutenancy of the United States, held its annual meeting and investiture here. Close to 700 Knights and Ladies of the Order took part in the Oct. 12-14 gathering. Conference meetings were held at the Cox Convention Center in downtown Oklahoma City.

The Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem is dedicated to preserving the Holy Places of Jerusalem, as well as supporting “its obligation toward preservation of the Christian presence in Palestine.”

Mass was celebrated on Saturday, Oct. 13 at the newly renovated Saint John Nepomuk Catholic Church in Yukon with Archbishop Beltran as principal celebrant and homilist. Concelebrants were Most Reverend Daniel N. DiNardo, Grand Prior of the Equestrian Order and Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Only days after the conference here, Archbishop DiNardo was elevated by the Holy Father to cardinal. Other Mass concelebrants were Most Reverend Joseph A. Fiorenza, retired archbishop of Galveston-Houston; Most Reverend Michael J. Sheehan, archbishop of Santa Fe; and Most Reverend Elias Chacour, archbishop of all of Upper Galilee, Israel. Three times Archbishop Chacour has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Memorial Mass at Saint John Nepomuk celebrated the lives of deceased members of the Holy Sepulchre. Also celebrated were promotions conferred upon current members of the Order.

On Sunday, Oct. 14, Mass and a Ceremony of Investiture were celebrated at Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond. Cardinal DiNardo, serving as principal celebrant and homilist, welcomed 125 new Knights and Ladies into the Order. Archbishop Beltran, Archbishop Fiorenza, Archbishop Sheehan, Archbishop Chacour and all bishops, abbots and priests of the Order concelebrated.