National Conference of Catholic School Leaders Held in Oklahoma City

By Cara Koenig
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Catholic School superintendents and directors of Religious Education from across the nation gathered here the last week of October for the annual Chief Administrators of Catholic Education (CACE) conference. The event was actually an international affair, drawing a group of administrators from the Philippines. The theme of the four-day conference was “Nurturing the Call.”

This was the first time for Oklahoma City to host the conference and making it even more special was the fact this was the 100th anniversary of the organization.

Keynote speaker Dr. Robert J. Wicks, author of “Riding the Dragon,” focused his presentation on maintaining a passion for Catholic education.

Most of those attending the conference have been involved in Catholic education for decades, from teaching in Catholic schools to serving as principals and now as administrators for entire dioceses.

See more photos on page 9

A number of workshops were held with topics ranging from Liturgy and Catholic education to emerging technology, canon law, spiritual leadership, as well as how to create a vocations culture in our Catholic schools.

The conference also made time for the visitors to enjoy the Oklahoma City atmosphere with tours of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum, the Oklahoma City Memorial, St. Joseph’s Old Cathedral and boat trips on the Bricktown canal.

Morning prayer services were led by Principal Karen Carter and DRE Tommy Cordova from Christ the King and Principal Joe Sine and DRE Vince Brady from St. Charles Borromeo. The choir from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School in Edmond performed as well.

Archbishop Beltran celebrated Mass for the Catholic administrators, while Bishop Gregory M. Aymond, D.D., offered closing remarks. His address was titled “Co-Workers in the Vineyard.”

Sister Catherine Powers, CND, director of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, had sought for several years to bring the conference to Oklahoma City. Judging from the response organizers said they received from the guests, the event was a great success.

Chief Administrators of Catholic Education (CACE) is a department of The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA).
The Good News
Homily to CACE Members
Saint Joseph Old Cathedral
October 26, 2008

My dear Brothers and Sisters:
Chief Administrators of Catholic Education (CACE), I am pleased and
honored to welcome you to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. I would be
happy to welcome you to Oklahoma anytime but I am especially pleased
that you are here this year on the historic occasion of the 100th
anniversary of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). I
hope and pray that you will find this time to be pleasant and profitable and
spiritually renewing.

How fitting and appropriate that
today's Gospel identifies Jesus as
Teacher and He is “put to the test.”
His clear, direct and complete answer
is the most accurate response that
could ever be made. God is love and
we are His people!

Some weeks ago, I was visiting
Saint John School in Yukon, Okla.
The pastor and the principal were
excited about the most recent addi-
tion to their program. They had just
opened a pre-K3!!

Three-year-olds just seem too
small to be in school, but there they
were. They were filled with energy
and enthusiasm. They sang and
danced and performed quite well.
When I blessed them and was prepar-
ing to leave, a little girl ran up to me
and thrust this card into my hand.

“What is this?” I asked and she
quickly responded: “It’s for you!”

I thanked the children as I held
the card before them and examined
the attractive front and back covers
which the teacher had made. With
that, the kids surrounded me and
noisily insisted that I open it. Then
I noticed that there were several thin
pages between the covers and each
page had a small photo of a child
alongside some crayon scribbling.
The name of the child was neatly
printed — by the teacher. They all
wanted to show me their own picture
— so I called each name and every
child in turn jumped up and down
shouting, “That’s me! That’s me!”

When I had gone through all the
names and pictures, I held up the
card before them, thanked them
again and said I was so grateful and I
would take their card home with me.
Immediately a little girl shouted:
“And show it to your mother!”

Simple — childish — but it said
so very much. This child loved her
mother. She trusted her mother. Out
of the mouth of an innocent little
child, I heard an expression of soli-
darity. I sensed the security she felt in
the presence of her mother. The bond
of a child and mother should never be
broken.

Another innocent person said
something similar but more pro-
foundly and solemnly as He hung on
the Cross. He looked at His mother
and at Saint John, His Apostle, stand-
ning at the foot of the Cross. Jesus said
to His mother: “Woman, this is your
son.” And to the disciple, He said:
“This is your mother.” And from that
hour, the disciple took her into his
home. Jesus’ magnanimous gift of His
mother as our mother unites us all in
a very special way — enabling us to
live as God’s family. We could sum up
Mary’s role: She brought Jesus to us
and now she brings us to Jesus.

The theme of your conference this
year is Nurturing The Call. The invi-
tation, the call, the Vocation of
Leadership that has been extended to
you is a profound, divine offer. God
wants you to grow in His love. He
wants you to share His love with
others. This is your Vocation of
Leadership in the Church.

For you to be a true and effective
follower of Jesus and a leader in the
Church, your vocation must be
continually nurtured. The call must
develop and grow. Your role cannot be
self-centered. Nor can it be only aca-
demic or professional. The vocation
must be nurtured like a branch on the
vine, otherwise it will wither and die.

This week, during your con-
ference, you will explore many good
ways to nurture the call. Therefore, it
is extremely important to remember
the integral part that our Blessed
Mother has in our lives and vocation.
She, as our mother, can help us right-
ly discern God’s call. In fact, Mary
occupies in Christianity a place which
is unique, transcendent and essential.
Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary
is not simply a development of
personal or cultural piety. It is a
divinely established condition for the
family of God: “Behold your mother.”
Moreover, the Blessed Virgin Mary is
the best example of someone who
observed the great commandment of
love completely. Mary loved God with
her whole heart and she loves all her
neighbors. They are her children.

A person’s loving devotion is not
adequately Christian unless it in-
cludes within its object the mother of
the Incarnate Word. Devotion toward
the Virgin Mary is not only important
but necessary if we wish to draw
abundantly from the source of life. To
separate Christ from His mother in
our devotion is to divide Christ. To
do so would be to fail to appreciate
the sacred humanity of Christ, His
humanity, in the bestowal of super-
natural grace. When one forsakes the
Mother, one no longer understands
the Son.

The Sacred Scriptures clearly
and in many places attest to the need
for Marian love. The early Church
practiced Marian devotions rooted in
the Scriptures. The great theologian,
Origen, taught that profession of the
Christian faith required devotion
to the Mother of Jesus. The Council
of Ephesus proclaimed Mary, the
Mother of God. Saint Augustine said
devotion to Mary was essential in our
spiritual journey.

The continuous sequence of theo-
ological schools, papal teachings and
the documents of the Second Vatican
Council all combine to present us
with the authentic teachings of our
Catholic faith in this area. They
concur that we, as human beings
redeemed by Jesus and called to
serve in the Church, need the
maternal love of Our Lady. Indeed, it
is she who can best help us to nurture
our vocation of leadership. Therefore,
I commend you to the loving care of
Mary the Mother of Jesus and our
mother; too.

Again, I thank you for responding
to God’s call. I thank you for your
ministry of service to God’s people.
Above all, I thank Almighty God for
all His gifts, graces and blessings of
life and I ask the Good Lord to lead us
safely to life everlasting in heaven.
Red Plains Sisters Join With Kansas Community

PIEDMONT — Continuing a heritage and tradition of Benedictine women who planted roots in Oklahoma in 1889, a group of Benedictine Sisters founded Red Plains Monastery in 1968 to give witness to their community life of prayer, work and service. Eventually they moved their monastery near Piedmont, where they continue living a monastic life, welcoming persons of all faiths with their own unique brand of Benedictine hospitality. The community ministries include retreats, educational workshops, spiritual direction, and Retreat in Daily Life, a seven-month prayer experience, introduced by them in 1983.

The Sisters of Benedict have been an ongoing presence in central Oklahoma for 40 years. Their primary challenges during the last decade are those which confront many small religious communities. Fewer women are entering religious life, and retirement-health-care needs of the older members require greater resources.

Upon completion of a five-year planning process, the Sisters unanimously decided to affiliate with a larger monastery, the Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kan. “It was a difficult but good decision that our community has made. We are so very blessed that the Atchison sisters have voted to welcome us. Through this significant step, we are able to continue living and ministering here in Piedmont,” said Sister Jan Futrell, OSB, prioress of Red Plains community since 2002.

The Sisters chose to collaborate with the Atchison group with whom they felt compatible in spirit and in mission. According to Sister Jan, “We


believe we have a good fit. Each Benedictine monastery chooses its own ministry. Like us, Atchison has a long reputation for its commitment to spirituality and education, with a special focus on the needs of women.”

Barbara Nichols, development director at Red Plains, noted, “The blending of the two communities will be mutually beneficial. The ministries that occupy the daily lives of our Sisters will remain, and yet they will enjoy the additional support of greater resources.” There will be a sharing of personnel and administrative tasks between the two communities. Some Sisters from Atchison are currently here to assist the Oklahoma group. As needed, Mount St. Scholastica will provide professional care for Red Plains’ elder Sisters in Dooley Center, its long-term health-care facility.

Sister Anne Shepard, prioress of Mount St. Scholastica, expressed that community’s feelings about the merger. “As Benedictines, the Sisters of Benedict and the Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica have many commonalities. We both value communal and private prayer. We both value community building both within the walls of the monasteries and among the people we serve. We both have a history of having Sisters study and teach spirituality, theology and pastoral ministry, as well as having a strong commitment to social justice. From the first visit of our monastic council to Red Plains Monastery, we judged this group of women to be very holy and very much like us in our mission. We are blessed to have them join us.”

The doors of Red Plains Monastery will remain open. All current ministries will continue for individuals and groups seeking solace, counsel and spiritual direction. “Our

SHAWNEE — St. Gregory’s Abbey is offering two retreats for Catholic men to help them reflect on their futures. At a time of year when we often make resolutions for the future, these retreats will give single men age 20 to 40 an opportunity to grow in their relationship with God and to share in the daily prayer, work and life of a monastery.

The first retreat, Advent and the Hope of Things to Come, Nov. 28-30, will focus on the Advent figures Isaiah and John the Baptist, urging us to “Prepare the way of the Lord” in expectation of the coming Messiah. This time at the beginning of our own Advent will provide the opportunity to reflect on how this anticipation shapes our own lives.

The second retreat, Prepare to Begin Again — Making Ready for the New Year, on Dec. 29-31, will build on the traditional theme of New Year’s resolutions. It will invite participants to focus on conversion, the elements of our life we need to redirect so that we more faithfully follow the Lord.

Participants in these Monastic Experience Retreats can gain a new appreciation of monastic life in the Church and world by spending a little time in the world of the monks. There is no cost for the retreats, but registration is required as space is limited.

Recommendation from one’s pastor or university campus minister may be required. Those interested may contact Father Charles Buckley, OSB, at (405) 878-5462, cjbuckley@stgregorys.edu, or 1900 W. MacArthur St., Shawnee, Okla., 74804.

Saint Greg’s Abbey

To Host Retreats for Men
Support for Trauma Victims Focus of Archdiocesan Workshop

OKLAHOMA CITY — Close to two dozen people attended a workshop focusing on healing and support for victims of abuse and neglect. The two-day workshop, held at the Catholic Pastoral Center, was sponsored by the Archdiocesan Offices of Safe Environment and Family Life.

Father Kenneth Schmidt and Sharon Froom presented the workshop to an audience that consisted of priests, parish nurses, state child welfare workers, victims assistance coordinators, mental health workers and Catholic nuns.

Father Schmidt and Froom represent Trauma Recovery Associates, a program initiated in their Diocese of Kalamazoo, Mich.

“Trauma creates an obstacle to normal human development,” said Father Schmidt, a licensed counselor and co-founder of the program.

Froom, a licensed psychologist who helped co-found Trauma Recovery Associates, said trauma caused by abuse and neglect is “widespread” and causes incredible harm if it goes unidentified and treated. She identified some causes of trauma as abandonment by a parent, a suicide within the family, divorce, health issues either for the parent or child, natural disasters and accidents. She said minority children can also experience trauma because of a perceived “rejecting culture.”

Poverty can also play a role in creating trauma for a child.

“Children are vulnerable,” Froom said. She said trauma inflicted before a child learns to speak is often internalized.

Father Schmidt said the objectives of the workshop were to learn how to offer better support to trauma survivors, and how to make effective referrals; understand the dynamics of trauma during childhood and its effects in adulthood; understand the core concepts of the Trauma Model; understand the nature and process of forgiveness; understand the role of therapeutic neutrality in trauma recovery; participate in experiential activities.

Jennifer Goodrich, director of the Archdiocesan Office of Safe Environment, said statistics show on the low end that one out of four females and one out of six males will be sexually molested by their 18th birthday. She said statistics also show that less than one in 10 will tell anyone about it.

“This means that there are literally millions of individuals in our society who have never dealt with the effects of what happened to them as children and all of us come in contact with those individuals every day,” Goodrich said.

Hear It Now

Father Kenneth Schmidt and Sharon Froom recorded a podcast to help better explain the trauma caused by abuse and neglect and the devastating impact it can have on a person. The podcast can be heard at www.catharchdiocese-okc.org, then click on Sooner Catholic, then click on the podcast button.

Human Development Campaign Scheduled for Nov. 22-23

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development collection will be held Nov. 22 and 23 in parishes across Oklahoma. The funds are used in community-based programs created and managed by low-income people to tackle the issues of poverty in their communities. National and local grants are given through this collection. Twenty-five percent of the funds are used in our Archdiocese for local parish programs.

Catholics in Oklahoma joined in the national campaign against poverty by implementing special projects in their parishes and communities. In 2007, the Oklahoma Commission for Justice and Human Development awarded grants to fund two community programs and six parish programs, said Becky VanPool, CCHD Diocesan director.

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) funds projects each year in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City to help make long-term changes. “From metro areas to our rural communities, our contributions help others work their way out of poverty,” said VanPool.

Six parishes received local grants in 2007. The parishes include St. Monica’s of Edmond, Holy Name of Chickasha, St. Ann’s of Fairview, and Oklahoma City parishes of Sacred Heart and St. Eugene, and also the Archdiocese’s Sanctity of Life Mass and Education program.

The programs included English as Second Language (ESL) classes, Stephen Ministry and the Mount St. Mary Summer Academy. The ESL classes assist immigrants “to learn English, thus enabling them to fit into the ... American culture generally. A primary practical goal is to increase their employment opportunities,” said Carmen Snow, Hispanic Ministry coordinator. This program was sponsored by St. Monica Parish.

The Mount St. Mary Summer Academy sponsored by Sacred Heart Parish “is a project of transformative justice designed to address some of the root causes of poverty in the next generation,” said Brian Boeckman, coordinator. Sessions on leadership development, religion, industrial crafts, personal finance, computer literacy, art, life skills, physical education and tutorials in mathematics and English language reading are offered. Also included are cultural, historical and recreational field trips and local service projects.

St. Ann’s Parish of Fairview sponsors the Little Jacket Learning Center, which gives many single-parent families the opportunity to work or attend school and build stronger families through parent education programs. The high quality care and education experiences give these families assistance to improve their futures.

The Sanctity of Life Committee for the Archdioceses received a grant for programs to provide a pro-life educational program for the clergy and the laity of the Archdiocese. These activities were in conjunction with the Sanctity of Life Mass and will be offered in a future program.

For more information or to participate in the work of CCHD, contact Becky VanPool at (405) 523-3009/800-375-8514 or bvanpool@catholiccharitiesok.org.
Parish to Host Advent Retreat

EDMOND — St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and its Ministry of Mothers Sharing are hosting a one-day Advent retreat for women of all ages from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov. 22.

The retreat, “Women as Spiritual Friends and Companions,” will be led by nationally recognized family ministry consultant and author, Sister Paula Hagen, OSB.

“We grow as we are able to share,” said Sister Hagen of the St. Paul’s Monastery in St. Paul, Minn. This retreat is “a way for all women to find spiritual renewal through the fellowship of other women.”

Women are encouraged to invite friends, family or a neighbor to take part in this life-changing retreat. The daylong event will start with a continental breakfast and a series of lectures, break-out sessions, songs and prayer. A box lunch will be provided and door prizes will be given away. The retreat will end with the entire group attending 5:30 pm Mass. The event tickets are $15 before Nov. 14 and $20 after. Group discounts are also available.

“We are privileged to bring Sister Paula Hagen to Oklahoma,” said Leslie Stockel, St. John’s MOMS coordinator. “The retreat is open to women of all ages and stages in their spiritual lives, not just mothers. We want to encourage everyone to gather all the women in your life and enjoy a faith journey together.”

Hagen, a Benedictine Sister from the St. Paul’s Monastery in St. Paul, Minn., has created MOPS retreats and developed a leadership-training program for MOPS facilitators used in Catholic parishes and communities throughout the United States.

The Ministry of Mothers Sharing (MOPS) is a parish-based adult education ministry that brings women, especially mothers, together through a model of peer communication.

According to the MOPS national office, the St. John’s MOPS group in Edmond is one of the largest and most active groups in the nation.

For more information about the retreat, “Women as Spiritual Friends and Companions,” or the Ministry of Mothers Sharing, contact Leslie Stockel at rexstockel@cox.net.

Additional information is available on the St. John’s Web site, www.stjohncatholic.org/MOPS.htm.

This retreat is sponsored in part by the Office of Family Life at the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

The Catholic Foundation
CORNERSTONE
Direct IRA Transfer Extended

The Tax Extenders and Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act of 2008 extends an excellent charitable gifting opportunity for both 2008 and 2009. This act permits Individual Retirement Account owners age 70 1/2 and older to make a direct transfer from their IRA to a qualified charity.

While these gifts count toward the required IRA distribution, they are not considered as income if distributed directly to a public charity. If you are taking mandatory IRA distributions but do not need the income, consider a gift to your favorite Catholic institution directly from you IRA account.

The direct IRA transfer gifting option is limited to a maximum gift of $100,000 and is only available in the 2008 and 2009 tax years.

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

Please Remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Your Estate Plans

Across Oklahoma

Magic at The Mount Returns

OKLAHOMA CITY — Nov. 15, Mount St. Mary High School dinner/auction, Magic at The Mount returns to The Petroleum Club. The evening will be highlighted by a fabulous dinner along with the components of both a silent and live auction. Cost for the evening is $100 per person, and corporate sponsorships are available. Tickets and/or sponsorships may be purchased by contacting the Advancement Office at Mount St. Mary High School at 631-8865 or by e-mailing us at taveryt@mountstmary.org.

Deacon Returns for Mission

SHAWNEE — Deacon Glenn Harmon from California led our fall mission three years ago and touched the hearts of many. He and his wife, Linda will lead our upcoming fall mission titled “Building a Strong Foundation.” Deacon Glenn and Linda use Scripture, prayer and song to inspire, encourage and challenge people in living the Scriptures. Their personal life stories testify to hope, forgiveness and healing which attract people into a prayerful response. All are welcome to join us at St. Benedict Parish, 632 N. Kickapoo, 7 p.m., Sunday through Wednesday, Nov 16-19.

Parish Sets Annual Dinner

KONAWA — Sacred Heart’s annual Thanksgiving dinner will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Nov. 16 at Sacred Heart Parish Hall. The parish is located four miles west of Konawa and one mile north, or seven miles east of Asher and one mile north. Adults, $7, children (ages 4-12), $3.50, and children 3 and under eat free. The dinner is sponsored by the Sacred Heart Altar Society.

Parish Liaison Forum

MOORE — Catholic Charities Parish Liaison Forum. This information session is on Refugee Resettlement Program hosted by St. Andrew-Moore, Nov. 20 at 7 p.m. These forums are to give liaisons the opportunity to learn about the services provided by Catholic Charities. RSVP by Nov. 14 at (405) 523-3009.

Taste of St. Joe’s Nov. 22

ENID — St. Joseph Catholic School is having its sixth annual Taste of St. Joe’s Nov. 22 from 6 to 10 p.m. at the Cherokee Strip Conference Center in Enid. Tickets are $25 per person. Reserved tables are also available by calling 242-4449. This year’s event will feature OSU vs. OU Bedlam football tickets, a Wii, and many more exciting baskets. Silent auction, live auction and ticket auctions will be featured. St. Joseph reopened its doors in 2001 after being closed for more than 25 years. We are the only Catholic school in Enid. The Taste of St. Joe’s is a major fundraiser for the school. For more information or to make a donation, call (580) 242-4449.

Thanksgiving Dinner Set

BISON — St. Joseph Catholic Church is having its annual Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 23. Serving time is 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Baked goods will be available, such as kolache, cakes, cookies, pies, and so much more. Please plan to come and enjoy dinner with us.
McGuinness Launches New Wellness Program

OKLAHOMA CITY — This fall Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School launched its new Health and Wellness program. The goal of the program is to educate students physically and emotionally as well as academically, in order for them to make appropriate lifelong choices. The program incorporates newly established procedures with existing policy guidelines.

The wellness initiative encompasses several areas of emphasis including random drug and alcohol testing, physical fitness, counseling services, social and emotional health and parental education. “Part of our mission statement focuses on developing the whole person,” said Principal David Morton. “This includes providing a safe school environment while promoting an atmosphere of health and wellness.”

Bishop McGuinness now employs a full-time Health and Wellness counselor to organize and manage the program. Jennifer Kelly is a licensed clinical social worker who specializes in working with adolescents. “This year we are dedicating our focus and efforts on improving the health and wellness of our students and faculty,” she said. “As the counselor on campus, I am here to provide counseling services and facilitate support groups.”

Kelly surveyed the students to determine interests and needs. Recently implemented programs include individual, family and crisis counseling; small group sessions for students who wish to discuss specific topics, such as grief, divorce, peer pressure or other areas of interest; and workshop training to create a peer mentoring program. Efforts are also being made to develop a committee to promote student awareness.

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is made up of counselors from each grade, the campus minister and the Wellness counselor. They meet once a week to discuss any students who may be in need of extra support or guidance.

An after-school intramural program has been implemented offering extracurricular physical activities. Events are held on a weekly basis. The physical activities will change from week to week, but are geared to meet the needs and interests of all students. Recent activities include volleyball, kickball and flag football.

The faculty is also actively participating in the Wellness program. Principal Morton initiated a semester-long “pedometer challenge” to all staff. Members were assembled in teams of five or more for a friendly competition on the greatest number of steps accumulated per team each week through Dec. 19. Teachers have been seen logging steps during lunch hours, planning periods and on their personal time. Also, a free 45-minute exercise class is being offered every Wednesday at 3:45 p.m.

Along with a strong student emphasis, the Health and Wellness program offers opportunities to educate and inform parents regarding the issues surrounding today’s teenager. Conferences and seminars featuring presentations by guest speakers will be offered throughout the school year.

In addition, Kelly publishes a bimonthly Health and Wellness newsletter for parents.

Catholic Charities Provides Annual Appeal Update

The 2008 Catholic Charities Annual Appeal announced in September has recorded gifts and pledges that amount to almost two-thirds of its $2.4 million goal as of the end of October. The number donor gifts counted at that time was 5,680 totaling $1,581,100 in cash and pledges.

Board of directors president Annette Jacobi said, “We are very grateful for the sacrificial response of our donors and the support of our priests. It is our hope that all people will respond to our appeal.”

The amount recorded, however, reflects an 8-percent decrease in the average amount of all gifts contributed to the 2007 appeal. Last year’s October figures reflected that almost 77 percent of the campaign goal was received from 6,961 donors. The trend may be a reflection of the economic downtown of the past two months. Overall, the number of donors is about 80 percent of the number reported from the same time last year.

However, Catholic Charities executive director Tim O’Connor said there are 1,025 first-time donors this year and the number of Spanish-speaking donors has increased. He said 100 percent of Catholic Charities board members and employees have contributed.

“Throughout the Archdiocese, pastors have been very supportive in making the needs known,” O’Connor said. “If we can count on the support of all persons who made a gift during the past two years, we will likely reach our goal.” Efforts are under way to follow up with previous donors before the end of the year, he added.

The appeal subsidizes all of the programs provided by Catholic Charities throughout the year. Catholic Charities budget requires the entire amount of the goal to provide all of the services in the Archdiocese.

Earlier this year, Catholic Charities made program and staff changes to better assist parish needs and referrals. Short-term counseling and bilingual Spanish counseling is available for children and families in the Oklahoma City area for no fee. Fees for immigration legal assistance are minimal in order to help those with the greatest need. At the same time, Catholic Charities has been receiving more requests for immediate assistance for families with children and expects to provide more direct assistance.

“The demands for our services are always greater in difficult economic times,” O’Connor said.

“We know that when people are generous and invest in the lives of others who are in need, that those helped will give back more in their lifetime to society.”

For information about the appeal, contact Catholic Charities at (405) 523-3000 or (800) 375-8514.
Mount Saint Mary Students Take Stand Against Abortion

EDITOR’S NOTE: This is the first of a two-part series about the student body at Mount St. Mary High School and how one student’s letter to Principal Talita DeNegri resulted in faith moving into action.

In his book, The Winner Within, championship coach Pat Riley shares wisdom that was passed on from his father that all of us have to make a decision on at some point in our lives. “Every now and then, somewhere, sometime you are going to have to plant your feet, stand firm, and make a point about who you are and what you believe in. When the time comes, you simply have to do it.” At Mount St. Mary High School, a core group of students, led by a passionate classmate, is standing up and being heard in the fight against abortion. Inspired by the pro-life campaign, 40 DAYS FOR LIFE, Mount St. Mary High School students have embarked on a journey that has awakened them to the truth and reality of abortion and has stirred them to take action in a Christ-like manner.

40 DAYS FOR LIFE is a worldwide pro-life mobilization where people of faith are uniting together to mark the beginning of the end of abortion. The campaign is made up of three key components:
1. Prayer and Fasting
2. Peaceful Vigil
3. Community Outreach

Elaine Naugle, a Mount parent, is assisting with the coordination in Oklahoma City efforts to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Naugle spoke to the student body on Sept. 24 to ignite their involvement in the Oklahoma City area campaign. Brian Boeckman, MSM campus ministry leader, stated, “There was not much initial reaction from the student body about getting involved in this movement.” Fortunately, one student, junior T.J. Krug, felt compelled to make a stand. Naugle’s talk motivated him to write a heartfelt and passionate letter to Principal Talita DeNegri. In the letter, T.J. writes:

“As you well know, there are hundreds of people in prayer and peaceful demonstration outside abortion mills in cities all over our nation. Our beautiful city has the sad reality of an abortion mill, but with our great and loving God, we have an opportunity to make a difference to individuals in this way. I am asking you to consider allowing our students to take a day from school and participate in a peaceful vigil outside one of these mills. My main reason for making this request is that as a Catholic school, we are called to follow the gospel service of Jesus Christ. What truly separates us from public or other private schools? Is it the fact that we have religious classes, service days, or uniforms? I appreciate the sacrifice that goes into me receiving these gifts. But if we examine the gospel words and actions of Jesus, what do we see? In Micah 6:9 we hear, “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” We will be judged by what we do to the least of our brothers and sisters.

I would like to leave you with another Bible verse from 2 Chronicles 7:14, “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Mrs. DeNegri, we must follow. We must show to the world that the Catholic youth have faith, hope and mercy. We must show what Mount St. Mary is made of.”

After receiving the letter, DeNegri stated, “T.J.’s words were sincere, humble and true. After discussing his idea with other staff members, the decision was made to set a date to allow willing students to participate in a peaceful vigil at a local abortion clinic on the northwest side of Oklahoma City.”

In the meantime, another speaker, Katie Gords, was invited to The Mount to speak to each religion class. Janis Mollman of the school’s campus ministry stated, “Katie’s talk and presentation really opened the eyes to the ugly truth and reality of abortion to our students. All students were asked to share their reactions to her presentation on note cards. It was a wake-up call that left our students with the question: What can we do?”

Part II: Students’ experience at peaceful vigil outside abortion clinic and other pro-life events scheduled at Mount St. Mary High School.

Bishops Bring Same-Sex Union Concerns to YouTube

WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops have taken their concerns about same-sex unions to YouTube, the popular video-sharing Web site.

Both videos are available on YouTube at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lh_81zsW6U8
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwCAXQhqdp-Q
http://www.usccb.org/bishops/mariagedefense.shtml


The USCCB seeks “to promote and protect marriage for the gift that it is and for the blessings that only it can bring to the world. For this reason,” the bishops state, “we come forward in defense of marriage.”

“Certain groups and individuals are trying to make same-sex unions the equivalent of marriage,” they also state. “This is a false idea being proposed and, in some cases, imposed by a minority. This is nothing less than the radical redefinition of marriage — denying the truth that it is exclusive- ly the union of a man and a woman.”

The bishops warn that if successful, “this effort of redefining marriage to include same-sex unions will bring confusion to what marriage actually means. This confusion could spread and have enormous legal consequences for the rearing of children, public education, employment and religious freedom. Children would be forced to learn that marriage is merely one kind of loving relationship among many. Churches would be prevented from witnessing to and teaching about the necessary and singular role of love between a man and a woman.”

“Same-sex unions and marriage are completely different realities,” they state. “Reaffirming the traditional understanding of marriage is neither discrimination nor the denial of rights. Like all people, homosexual persons have the right to be treated with respect and to live in peace with the support of their loved ones. But it is to the benefit of all members of society that the institution of marriage be preserved as the relationship of a man and a woman that serves the common good in a distinct way. Society needs marriage in order to establish and sustain that basic unit of society in which men and women love each other and transmit life to their children who are the fruit of that love.”

The video is the latest in a series of activities to emerge from the Defense of Marriage Ad Hoc Committee.
Nurses Complete Training in Faith Community Ministry

Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is pleased to announce the dedication of Monica Coleman, Church of Madeleine, Tulsa; Cecilia Grimes, St. Anne Catholic Church, Broken Arrow; Barbara Jenkins, All Souls Unitarian Church, Tulsa; Deborah Nord, Newspring Family Church, Tulsa; Judi Schneider, Faith Lutheran Church, Owasso; Debbie Stone, Southern Hills United Methodist Church, Tulsa; and Joyce Walker, St. Paul Baptist Church, Taft.

“The course and reflective process has changed my outlook on patients who are in situations of losing their independence. I am more sensitive to a person’s need for independence and don’t automatically do tasks for them. I am now able to provide more thorough, wholistic care and concentrate on providing for independence and higher needs. Experiences like this are very beneficial to everybody because it provides progression and improves quality of intervention. In the future, I will be able to intervene more effectively and in a timelier manner.”

According to Seiler, Faith Community Nurses not only improve their professional and spiritual lives, they also aid members of a church congregation in coping with various health conditions as well as answering questions they may have about their health. They provide assistance with health promotion, offer referral and advocacy, make home, hospital and nursing home visits, coordinate volunteers and assist with parishioners’ spirituality. “The overall goal of each Faith Community Nurse is to improve wellness in body, mind and spirit of congregation members and to continue the healing ministry of the church.”

Catholic Charities’ program is an educational partner with the International Parish Nurse Resource Center in St. Louis and uses the standard curriculum that was developed by that organization. The course meets published requirements for basic Faith Community Nurse Education by the American Nurses Association.

Catholic Charities is approved as a provider of continuing nursing education by the Kansas State Board of Nursing. This course offering is approved for 34 contact hours. Kansas State Board of Nursing provider number is SP1098-0710.

The course is open to registered nurses of all faith traditions. The course will include faculty members who are local Faith Community Nurses and community leaders with expertise in theology, ethics, legal, counseling, community resources and education. The course structure will consist of lectures, discussion, class activities and some independent study. Class highlights will include history of Faith Community Nursing, church culture and leadership, standards of practice, documentation of practice, health promotion and self-care, grief and loss issues, ethics, spirituality of all ages, family dynamics, emotional wellness and spiritual wellness. The course will conclude with a dedication service.

“What began in the early 1990s with two part-time nurses hired by St. Francis Hospital in Tulsa and assigned to St. Mary’s Catholic Parish has evolved into a statewide training and resource center for more than 170 nurses of all faiths.” Seiler said the specialty in Oklahoma took root in Tulsa in 1993 when Marilyn Whitson developed a proposal and business plan as a project for her bachelor’s degree completion program. She eventually implemented the proposal at St. Francis Hospital in Tulsa, becoming the first parish nurse in the state.

In 1999, Catholic Charities in Oklahoma City, in cooperation with Oklahoma City University, developed the Parish Nurse Basic Preparation program which since has trained more than 150 nurses representing at least 12 different denominations and 26 Oklahoma counties. Seiler said the Catholic Charities program name recently was changed from Parish Nursing to Faith Community Nursing to include nurses in churches and synagogues that do not refer to themselves as “parish” nurses and to reflect the American Nurses Association revised “Scope and Standards of Faith Community Nursing.”

Seiler said Catholic Charities received a grant from the Butterfield Memorial Foundation to expand the training statewide.

The grant also enabled Catholic Charities, in cooperation with the FCNA OK — a professional nursing association — to open a Faith Community Nursing Resource Center in July 2007.

Preparation Course in Faith Community Nursing to be Offered

Catholic Charities Faith Community Nursing Resource Center is offering an opportunity for registered nurses to integrate their healthcare experience and their personal faith. A Faith Community Nurse Basic Preparation Course is planned for Jan. 15-17 and 29-31 at Catholic Pastoral Center in Oklahoma City. Participants must attend both weekends.

“This is the 10th year of offering the course for registered nurses,” said Marilyn Seiler, faculty coordinator and manager of the Faith Community Nursing Resource Center. “Many nurses gain personal and emotional satisfaction from Faith Community Nursing. Not only do they feel they have answered a calling to a ministry, but they continue to learn through their clients and their congregation. By combining faith, knowledge, compassion and professionalism, Faith Community Nurses become a bridge between the challenges of medicine and the solidarity of their faith.”

One nurse who recently completed the basic preparation course expressed her experience this way, “The course and reflective process has changed the way that I provide patient care now and changed my outlook on patients who are in situations of losing their independence. I am more sensitive to a person’s need for independence and don’t automatically do tasks for them. I am now able to provide more thorough, wholistic care and concentrate on providing for independence and higher needs. Experiences like this are very beneficial to everybody because it provides progression and improves quality of intervention. In the future, I will be able to intervene more effectively and in a timelier manner.”

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Archdiocese Welcomes Catholic Administrators

Students from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton sang at the opening prayer on Monday.

Joe Sine and Vince Brady lead prayer Wednesday morning.

Above, Archbishop Beltran and Bishop Slattery, along with four other priests, celebrated the opening Mass at St. Joseph’s Old Cathedral. At left, CACE attendees pray together.

Photos by Cara Koenig/Sooner Catholic
Support for Guatemalan Hospital Needed, Appreciated

By Ammanda McCabe
The Sooner Catholic

Santiago Atitlan has one of the highest infant and child mortality rates in Latin America. Out of every 1,000 pregnancies, 37 die at birth and 54 before the age of 5. Complications claim the lives of 190 women out of 1,000 and deaths from untreated pneumonia, respiratory infections and intestinal diseases are far too common. But the Hospitalito Atitlan is working to prevent these tragedies — and they need help.

“The hospital under construction in Santiago is of tremendous importance to all the people of the Atitlan region,” said Father Ed Weisenburger, a frequent visitor to Santiago Atitlan. Father Weisenburger, Vicar General for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, said one can’t help but be moved by the work being done to help the people of this impoverished area.

“The commitment on the part of visiting doctors and medical professionals from around the world is very moving to witness,” he said. “Beyond the immediate goals of sacramental life and education, this health-care need of the people of Santiago is truly vital.”

The Hospitalito has a dramatic history, and one closely associated with the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. It was built in the late 1960s by Father Ramon Carlen and Father Stanley Rother. Complete with operating room, a 15-bed ward and even a dental clinic, it provided the best medical care outside Guatemala City. In the 1970s, it expanded its operations, emphasizing the treatment of malnutrition and tuberculosis as well as training local community health-care workers.

During the civil war, the military built a base near the road to the hospital, making it unsafe for the staff to spend the night there. Patients refused to venture past the barracks to receive treatment. On Dec. 12, 1990, 13 villagers were killed at the entrance to the military base during a peaceful protest. After this, financial support ended and the hospital buildings were abandoned. Over the years, the buildings were heavily vandalized, and there was little to no health care in the region.

Until the spring of 2003, when four local community leaders met to discuss the reopening of the Hospitalito. They formed the civic committee Comite K’aslimaal (“Life” in the Tz’utujil language). Support and donations poured in, and renovations began in February 2004. After two years of hard work, the town celebrated the reopening of the Hospitalito; for the first time in more than 15 years, the community had around-the-clock access to emergency, inpatient and surgical care.

Then, only six months later in October 2005, the newly renovated buildings were buried in a mudslide that killed hundreds and left thousands homeless. K’aslimaal rented an empty backpack motel and used it to continue providing medical care that was more needed than ever. But this facility can only be a stopgap measure; a permanent hospital is still very much needed. Construction has begun in a new, geologically safe location, and help is needed to make this a viable reality.

“The help of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City has been indispensable,” said Karin Bergstresser, secretary of the Asociacion K’aslimaal. “They built the first hospital of Santiago Atitlan in the 1960s, and people were extremely touched when, after the mudslides of 2005, the Archdiocese once again reached out a hand to help the community in need.

“We have since received $50,000 from the Archdiocese to begin construction of the new hospital. So far, the ground has been leveled, retention walls are up, we are working on the emergency entrance, and hope to begin construction in November, when the rains cease. We have been promised another $50,000 as construction comes along. In June, we received a $75,000 matching grant from the Kendela Fund, which means that every dollar will double up until that amount. So the $100,000 from the Archdiocese will give us $200,000! Parishioners can donate through Pueblo a Pueblo, a 501(c)3, and if they mark their donations for construction, the amount will be matched.”

Bergstresser said operating expenses also must be met, another obstacle the hospital must face daily.

“The trouble we are facing now is that besides the construction of the new hospital, we have patients to care for on a daily basis,” she said. “Most of them are poor, indigenous people. We are open 24 hours a day; have to pay salaries, rent, electricity, water, etc. Our expenses for daily operational costs are twice as high as our income. So, if people prefer to give to patient care, it is also very much needed!”

They also operate with medical volunteers.

“If anyone feels inclined to help out with their time and professional skills,” Bergstresser said, “they can contact our volunteer coordinator. We do prefer that most of our medical volunteers have at least basic understanding of Spanish. Sometimes churches help out with groups that come here for construction, etc., for a week or so.”

For more information on the hospital and their needs, please visit www.puebloapueblo.org and click on the Hospitalito Atitlan link.
‘Lord of Miracles’ Celebrated

OKLAHOMA CITY — Deacon Alfonso Lopez led a procession at St. Charles Borromeo Church on Oct. 26. The procession commemorated “The Lord of Miracles,” a Peruvian celebration that dates to colonial times. A slave, brought to Peru from Angola, drew an image of a black Christ on the walls of a rundown hut in a small village outside of Lima. Government authorities tried to remove the drawing but they were unable to erase it. In Oklahoma City more than 100 people took part in the procession, singing songs of worship and praise as they processed. Mass was celebrated following the procession and a dinner followed. Sooner Catholic Photos/Ray Dyer

Knights Pray Rosary for Country

MIDWEST CITY — Members of the Knights of Columbus Council 2508 led a public Rosary on Oct. 11. This was one of approximately 3,500 public Rosaries held throughout the nation. The United States is currently suffering from the sins of abortion, homosexuality, impure fashions and immoral laws. Additionally, secularism attempts to remove God from society. The Public Square Rosary Crusade is held each year on the Saturday closest to the Oct. 13, 1917, appearance of Our Lady at Fatima to counter today’s immoral and secularist trends with public prayers. Some 20 Knights and individuals, led by rally captain Joe Kestler, attended the Midwest City Public Square Rosary. They were from St. Philip Neri and St. Paul the Apostle parishes, and St. Francis of Assisi Chapel on Tinker Air Force Base.
Holy Sex! Author Provides Road Map to Sacramental Love

It’s rare for me to find a book that I want to buy multiple copies of to give away to friends and family. I’ve found one, and I think every engaged and married couple on the planet should have a copy: “Holy Sex” by Dr. Greg Popcak (www.exceptionalmarriages.com). Catholic journalist John Allen sums it up quite well: “Think of this book as Thomas Aquinas meets Dr. Ruth and enjoy.”

In other words, this is a theologically orthodox book on marital sexuality (that’s the Thomas Aquinas part) that dares to go where, to my knowledge, no orthodox book on marital sexuality has gone before (that’s the Dr. Ruth part). The subtitle — “A Catholic Guide to Toe-Curling, Mind-Blowing, Infallible Loving” — gives you a sense of where the pages take you. Popcak goes right between the sheets, shall we say, providing a very frank, honest and practical discussion of the sexual joys and challenges of the marriage bed.

Now I make my living speaking, writing and teaching about God’s plan for sexual love. There’s hardly an issue that I haven’t had to discuss or address at some point over the years. And yet, I must admit, even I, on occasion, found myself taken aback by Popcak’s forthrightness. (Did he just say that? Yep, he sure did.) Even if his boldness is occasionally jarring, that’s precisely what’s so refreshing about this book. It tells it like it is and, by doing so, gives couples permission to face and discuss delicate issues. More importantly, “Holy Sex” gives couples tools to overcome the many difficulties they inevitably face on the road to a truly holy sex life.

Popcak’s book brings to bear all that sound biology, physiology, sexology, psychology and theology have to offer us in a practical, educational guide for couples. As such, it is very much in keeping with what John Paul II called for in his pre-papal book, “Love and Responsibility.” In a chapter titled “Sexology and Ethics,” the young Bishop Wojtyla wrote that a proper sexual education can be the decisive factor in preventing the collapse of a marriage. (See Page 274).

But sexual education, in this sense, is not merely about physical “technique” (as is the case with, say, Dr. Ruth). Rather, an integral sexual education — while making use of all that is good in what the science of “sexology” has to offer — must take account of the inner mystery and dignity of the persons involved, creating a proper “culture of marital relations.” (See Pages 265-266, 274-275).

This is precisely what Popcak’s book provides. And he’s just the man to provide it. His wit will have you tossing the book in the air with laughter, and his wisdom — gained from much study and nearly two decades of counseling couples — will have you laying the book in your lap to pause and ponder.

Popcak begins his guide to “infallible loving” by definitively blowing out of the water all heresies that tempt us to devalue our bodies and our sexuality or view them with suspicion. We’re more affected by these heresies (Jansenism, gnosticism, Manichaeism) than we may think, and Popcak’s insights provide a great examination of conscience in this regard.

Then Popcak introduces us to the concept of “holy sex” as distinct from its counterfeit — what he calls “eroticism.” Eroticism involves a very shallow life of lustful indulgence. It “lures people in with promises of fun and fulfillment,” Popcak tells us, “and dumps them out the back door dazed, depressed and considerably worse off than when they started.” (Page 18).

“Holy sex,” on the other hand, involves the renunciation of mere eroticism for something far grander — the journey of learning to love divinely. This journey enables sexual union to “become an authentically transformative, spiritual encounter” infusing marital love “with a passion that reaches biblical proportions. Literally.” (Page 1).

The journey to “infallible loving” can be a long and difficult one, especially if we’ve been deceived by the “eroticism” that engulfs us in our pornified culture. But Dr. Popcak is confident, as am I, that the tools he provides in “Holy Sex” can help couples overcome virtually any obstacle. Give “Holy Sex” a prayerful read and you will be on your way, as the good doctor puts it in classic Popcak-style, to “a toe-curling, eye-popping, mind-blowing, deeply spiritual and profoundly sacramental sexuality.”

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

Life Issues Are More than Religious Issues, Prelate Says

SAN ANTONIO (Zenit.org). — Life and family are not “religious issues,” but actually involve “fundamental concerns of human civilization.” And thus, voters need to be informed about them, says the archbishop of San Antonio.

Archbishop José Gomez affirmed this in a column published in the San Antonio Express News, noting that a voter’s guide published by that daily had neglected to list the candidates’ positions regarding the preservation of life and the definition of marriage.

“The ‘culture of life’ issues, and I include in that the preservation of the very foundational definition of the human family, often are dismissed as purely religious issues,” he wrote. “This characterization is inaccurate. These issues deal with the most fundamental concerns of human civilization. The strong moral teaching at the foundation of these issues does not disqualify them from deserving serious public discussion, nor deny the impact they have on the common good.”

Archbishop Gomez said he finds it “unfortunate” that “when an individual raises abortion as a critical issue, there is a fear that they will be quickly labeled a ‘one-issue’ voter.”

“While this characterization might protect one from confronting the moral gravity of taking an innocent, defenseless, human life, it also avoids the reality that abortion is an issue that affects all segments of our society,” he wrote. “It represents the primary right guaranteed in our Declaration of Independence — the right to life. Unless we protect this fundamental right of each human person, at all stages of life, no other issue or liberty matters.”

The Church does not pretend to tell people for whom to vote, the archbishop clarified.

“We have a responsibility to be a voice for the innocent, the helpless, for life itself at this time of political clutter. “We cannot ignore these issues, many of which we believe are non-negotiable.’ If our nation loses respect for life and true ‘family values,’ it will have lost its moral authority to lead the world.”
‘Dark Nights’ of Faith Concern Our Feelings, Not Reality

When the memoirs of Mother Theresa were published, they revealed that for the last 50 years of her life she had struggled painfully to feel God’s presence in her life. Her critics felt a certain glee: Underneath it all, they now believed, she was an agnostic, doubting the existence of God. Her devotees were confused: How could this happen to her? How could a woman of such exceptional generosity and seeming faith not be secure in her sense of God’s existence and providence?

What underlies both reactions is a failure to understand an experience as old as faith itself, that of being inside a dark night of the soul. Looking at Mother Theresa through the eyes of Christian mysticism, the better question might be: How could she not experience what she experienced? She was an extraordinary woman, a spiritual athlete, someone who had given her entire freedom over to God; might we not expect this to happen to her? Wouldn’t you expect her to experience a dark night of the soul?

What is a dark night of the soul? A dark night of the soul is an experience where our felt-sense of God dries up and disappears. At the level of feeling, thought and imagination, we are unable to conjure up any sense of security or warm feelings about the presence of God in our lives. We feel agnostic, even atheistic, because we can no longer imagine the existence of God. God seems non-existent, absent, dead, a fantasy of wishful thinking.

But notice that this takes place at the level of the imagination and feelings. God doesn’t disappear or cease to exist. What disappears are our former feelings about God and our capacity to imagine God’s existence.

God exists, independent of our feelings. Sometimes our heads and hearts are in tune with that and we feel its reality with fervor. Other times our heads and hearts cannot attune themselves to think, imagine and feel the existence of a God who is ineffable, unimaginable and Other (by definition) and we experience precisely a certain absence, depression or void when we try to imagine God’s existence and love.

We should expect this in our lives; Jesus experienced dark nights of the soul. Just before he died on the cross, he cried out in anguish, expressing feelings of being abandoned by God. But inside this seeming agnosticism, something beyond his feelings and imagination held him steady and enabled him to give himself over in trust to someone whom he could no longer imagine as existing. This wasn’t doubt; it was real faith. Faith begins exactly where atheism assumes it ends.

If this happened to Jesus, should we be surprised that it happened to Mother Theresa? Henri Nouwen tells how shocked and surprised he was at the deathbed of his mother, a woman of extraordinary faith, when she began to express anguish and feelings of abandonment by God: “How can this be happening to my mother?” Later, upon reflection, it made sense. His mother had prayed every day of her adult life to die like Jesus. God simply took her prayer and her offer seriously.

Understood correctly, a dark night is not a failure in faith but a failure in our imagination: Imagine sitting down to pray one day and having the sure sense that God is real, more real in fact than anything else. At that moment, your faith feels secure both in your head and in your heart. Then imagine a different scene: You are lying in bed, in the dark, one night and, with every ounce of sincerity, intelligence and willpower, you try to imagine and feel God’s existence and come up empty and dry. You are haunted by the fear: “I don’t believe! Deep down I’m an atheist!” Does this mean that in the one instance you had strong faith and in the next you had weak faith?

Not necessarily. In the first instance you had a strong imagination and in the second you had a weak one. In one instance, you were able to imagine the existence of God and the other you weren’t. Neither determines whether God exists or not. Dark nights of faith have to do with feelings and the imagination and not with God’s reality or presence to us.

Why are dark nights of faith given to us? Why does God seemingly sometimes withhold his presence? Always to make us let go of something that, while it may have been good for awhile, an icon, is now causing some kind of idolatry in our lives.

Whenever we cry out in faith and ask God why he isn’t more deeply present to our sincerity, God’s answer is always the same one he gives in Scripture, time and time again: You will find me again when you search for me with your whole heart, your whole mind and your whole soul, that is, when you let go of all the things that, right now, in your mind and heart you have mistaken for God!”

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser,

Book Chronicles Misdeeds of 14th Century Pontiff


This book is the story of Rodrigo Borgia, who became Pope Alexander VI. He was a Spaniard who became pope in 1492 by bribing the other cardinals. He had served his predecessors, one of whom was his uncle, in high positions in the Vatican hierarchy, which he used to further his power and influence. Pope Alexander is probably the most notorious “sinner” to have sat on the throne of St. Peter. He did not keep his vow of chastity and had several children by various women. He did not hide that he had children and when he became pope he had them be part of his court and provided them with palaces and power. He also was not beyond murdering anyone who opposed him. Two of his children, Cesare and Lucrezia, were infamous in doing things to further themselves and the Borgia family even if it meant murder and marrying more than twice. Alexander VI used his children to create alliances with other nobles and kings. Cesare Borgia is the model for Niccolo Machiavelli’s The Prince. Cesare was very good at bribing, murdering and soldiering. He was also notorious for his womanizing even when he was a cardinal. He eventually was released from being a cardinal by his father. There were all kinds of nasty rumors about the Borgias which were probably true. People feared them because if one did not, one could end up dead or losing one’s property.

Alexander VI and his family would support one monarch against another and then would later switch sides when the situation was in his interest. He raised money by selling cardinal hats and other positions. He is the pope that decided how the so-called New World would be divided between Spain and Portugal. This decision is why Brazilians speak Portuguese instead of Spanish. He also received gold from the New World and used it on the ceiling of the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome. The ceiling has the Borgia coat of arms in many places. The Borgia coat of arms shows up in other places in Rome. Surprisingly, one of Alexander’s great-grandsons would become a saint.

Hibbert has told the fascinating story of Pope Alexander VI in a way that is quite intriguing to read. It is far from a dry academic telling of the story of Alexander VI and his family’s exploits. There is a bibliography and an index. The reader might wonder if he or she is reading a book of romance and intrigue instead of a book of non-fiction. Hibbert has done a great job in creating a history book that keeps the reader’s attention and interest! This book is highly recommended to those interested in Catholic Church history, the history of the Renaissance, the papacy, and Italian history.
Opposing Evil and Doing Good: Our Essential Obligations in Fighting Abortion

A Statement by Cardinal Justin Rigali and Bishop William Murphy

Note: On Oct. 21, the chairmen of both the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities and the USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development made the following joint statement in response to arguments that the Church should accept the Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision on abortion as a “permanent fixture of constitutional law” and should concede that the only way to reduce abortions is to provide more government support for pregnant women. At the same time, the two bishops also responded to those who argue that the Church’s efforts against abortion should focus solely on restoring recognition for unborn children’s human rights and that proposals to provide social and economic support for pregnant women distract from that effort. Below is the complete text of the statement.

In Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship (2007), the Catholic Bishops of the United States urged Catholic voters to form their consciences in accord with the Church’s moral teaching. We emphasized that: “Both opposing evil and doing good are essential obligations.” (No. 24). Unfortunately, there seem to be efforts and voter education materials designed to persuade Catholics that they need only choose one approach: either opposing evil or doing good. This is not an authentically Catholic approach.

Some argue that we should not focus on policies that provide help for pregnant women, but just focus on the essential task of establishing legal protections for children in the womb. Others argue that providing life-affirming support for pregnant women should be our only focus and this should take the place of efforts to establish legal protections for unborn children. We want to be clear that neither argument is consistent with Catholic teaching. Our faith requires us to oppose abortion on demand and to provide help to mothers facing challenging pregnancies.

In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision knocked down laws against abortion in all 50 states, fabricating a constitutional “right” to abortion that continues to haunt and divide our society. Within two days of that decision, the Catholic bishops rejected it as “bad morality, bad medicine and bad public policy.” We called for a comprehensive response: exploring “every legal possibility” for challenging the Court’s tragic error and restoring legal safeguards for the right to life of the unborn child; helping to pass laws to “restrict the practice of abortion as much as possible” in the meantime; and educating society to the need to safeguard the child and support “more humane and morally acceptable solutions” for women facing problems during pregnancy.

Recently, some have called on the Church to abandon most of this effort. They say we should accept Roe as a permanent fixture of constitutional law, stop trying to restore recognition for the unborn child’s human rights, and confine our public advocacy to efforts to “reduce abortions” through improved economic and social support for women and families.

The Catholic community is second to no one in providing and advocating for support for women and families facing problems during pregnancy. Catholic hospitals, charitable institutions and thousands of pregnancy aid centers provide life-saving care and compassionate alternatives to the violence of abortion. We have advocated for universal healthcare coverage, generous family leave policies, increases in the minimum wage, humane welfare policies for women who are pregnant or caring for young children, expanded funding for WIC and other nutrition programs, and a federal children’s health insurance program that includes coverage for unborn children and their mothers. Because some women still feel pressured by economic hardship and lack of support to resort to abortion, our task in this regard is far from over.

These efforts, however, are not an adequate or complete response to the injustice of Roe v. Wade for several important reasons. First, the Court’s decision in Roe denied an entire class of innocent human beings the most fundamental human right, the right to life. In fact, the act of killing these fellow human beings was transformed from a crime into a “right,” turning the structure of human rights on its head. Roe v. Wade is a clear case of an “intrinsically unjust law” we are morally obliged to oppose (see Evangelium Vitae, nos. 71-73). Reversing it is not a mere political tactic, but a moral imperative for Catholics and others who respect human life.

Second, the many challenges to the Court’s error since 1973 have borne fruit, leading to significant modifications of Roe. Most recently in its ruling on partial-birth abortion, the Court upheld a ban on an abortion procedure for the first time in 35 years, and acknowledged that abortion takes a human life and does serious harm to women.

Third, Roe itself enormously increased the annual number of abortions in our society. The law is a teacher, and Roe taught many women, physicians and others that abortion is an acceptable answer to a wide range of problems. By the same token, even the limited pro-life laws allowed by the Court since Roe have been shown to reduce abortions substantially, leading to a steady decline in the abortion rate since 1980. Bans on public funding, laws requiring informed consent for women and parental involvement for minors, and other modest and widely supported laws have saved millions of lives.

Providing support for pregnant women so they choose to have their babies is a necessary but not sufficient response to abortion. Similarly, reversal of Roe is a necessary but not sufficient condition for restoring an order of justice in our society’s treatment of defenseless human life. This act by itself would not automatically grant legal protection to the unborn. It would remove an enormous obstacle to such protection, so the people of the United States and their elected representatives in every state could engage in a genuine discussion of how to save unborn children and their mothers from the tragedy of abortion. Both approaches to opposing abortion are essential. By protecting the child’s life to the maximum degree possible, improving life-affirming support for pregnant women, and changing the attitudes and prejudices imposed on many women to make them see abortion as an acceptable or necessary solution, we will truly help build a culture of life.

In light of a wide range of attempts to interpret Church teaching or imply that outside materials represent the teaching of the Church, we wish to affirm that Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship is the teaching that has been approved by the body of bishops of the United States. As we explained in that statement, “We encourage Catholics to seek those resources that are authorized by their own bishops, their state Catholic conferences, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.”

Cardinal Justin Rigali, archbishop of Philadelphia, is chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities. Bishop William Murphy, bishop of Rockville Centre, is chairman of the USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.
WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops will vote on goals and objectives for the work of their five task forces on the priority initiatives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops through 2011. The vote will take place during their Nov. 10-13 annual fall assembly in Baltimore.

The initiatives and the chair of each task force are:
- Faith Formation and Sacramental Practice, Bishop Peter Sartain of Joliet, Ill.
- Strengthening Marriage, Auxiliary Bishop Gabino Zavala of Los Angeles.
- Life and Dignity of the Human Person, Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas City, Mo.
- Cultural Diversity in the Church, Bishop Ricardo Ramirez of Las Cruces, N.M.
- Promotion of Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life, Archbishop Thomas Rodi of Mobile, Ala.

Goals and initiatives to be voted on include the following:

GOAL 1-CULTURAL DIVERSITY
To increase the Catholic community’s understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity in the Church.

OBJECTIVES:
- Identify processes and resources for the evangelization of cultures including the prevailing U.S. culture.
- Provide guidance that will help Church organizations to consistently include cultural diversity when developing policies and social and pastoral responses.

GOAL 2-CULTURAL DIVERSITY
To include diverse cultures in the life and leadership of dioceses, parishes and other Catholic organizations in the United States.

OBJECTIVES:
- Invite all cultures in the Catholic community to collaborate in addressing issues and developing initiatives that affect the whole Church, including people with special pastoral needs (e.g. language, migrant workers, military).
- Identify best practices and develop models for pastoring multicultural parishes, especially those with a growing Hispanic population.
- Promote formation opportunities for parish, diocesan and national pastoral leaders (both ordained and lay) and staff to gain knowledge and skills in multicultural ministry.
- Strengthen continuing formation of priests, religious and seminarians coming from other countries.

GOAL 3-STRENGTHENING MARRIAGE
To inspire, challenge and help Catholic couples to witness to the meaning and value of marriage as a human institution and a Christian sacrament.

OBJECTIVES:
- Increase understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage through age-appropriate education and catechesis. Develop and promote parish-based programs and activities that help couples from different cultures to deal with challenges through the marriage life cycle. Develop and promote resources and training that will motivate priests, deacons and laity to achieve excellence in marriage ministry.

GOAL 4-STRENGTHENING MARRIAGE
To work for laws and public policies that protect, promote and strengthen marriage.

OBJECTIVES:
- Develop and publicize positive and inspiring messages about marriage based on key aspects of Church teaching. Support and advocate for legislation and public policies that promote and protect marriage. Influence public policy and opinion about marriage in collaboration with other conference entities, other churches and religious groups and national organizations.

GOAL 5-FAITH FORMATION AND SACRAMENTAL PRACTICE
To invite all Catholics to a relationship with Jesus in a context of living faith, especially at the parish level, by catechetical and educational formation on the nature of Catholic identity and an appreciation of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist. This effort takes place within an awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity in the identity and practice of the Catholic faith in the United States.

OBJECTIVES:
- Identify best practices for parish-level programs of outreach to inactive Catholics, with attentiveness to outreach to immigrant and culturally distinct Catholic communities.
- Explain the nature and purpose of the New Evangelization by developing a single resource for parish use based on the teaching of Evangelii Nuntiandi, Redemptoris Missio, Tertio Millennio Adveniente, Ecclesia in America, Novo Millennio Ineunte, the National Directory for Catechesis, Go and Make Disciples, and CELAM’s (Episcopal Conference of Latin America) Concluding Document of Aparecida.
- Relate the New Evangelization to strategic moments of sacramental life, particularly through outreach to parents and children at times of sacramental preparation and to couples preparing for marriage.
- Relate the New Evangelization to other strategic moments of parish life by identifying, integrating and encouraging outreach at the time of funerals, through the renewal of parish devotional life, and through parochial presence in hospital ministry and other parish apostolates. Emphasize and explain particular cultural elements of popular piety, devotions, and family customs (such as quinceañeras) transmitted through the variety of immigrant and culturally distinct Catholic communities as crucial means of transmitting the faith.
- Encourage and facilitate a doctrinally sound adult faith formation initiative that includes an awareness of the importance of cultural diversity in the transmission of the faith, founded upon the principles in Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us and based upon systematic catechesis reflecting the National Directory for Catechesis and the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults.
- Develop improved Spanish translations of catechetical resources, such as the Spanish translation of the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, to include elements of cultural heritage. Identify and evaluate catechetical materials in other languages.
- Identify best practices in development of catechesis for high-school-age youth and young adults.
- Improve preaching and homiletics by developing for priests and deacons a homiletic resource that combines the use of the Lectionary, the Liturgy and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, with awareness of the social teaching of the Church.
- Develop criteria for the identification of suitable catechists and teachers, and develop resources for their formation.
- Integrate awareness in catechetical outreach of the importance of passing on the faith through Catholic cultural identity, with particular awareness of the challenges faced by third and fourth generations of immigrant and culturally distinct Catholic communities.

GOAL 6-FAITH FORMATION AND SACRAMENTAL PRACTICE
To facilitate the prospective introduction, reception and implementation of the new translation of the Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia, to the Church in the United States.

OBJECTIVE
- Develop remote and immediate comprehensive catechetical and formational resources for the facilitation of parish-level reception of the Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia, by priests, deacons, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, liturgists and musicians, including at least three areas of focus: historical context, pedagogical development, and cultural diversity in the Church.

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Buenas Noticias...

...Departamento de Administradores Jefes de Educación Católica

Homilía ofrecida el día 26 de octubre, en la Vieja Catedral de San José a los miembros del Departamento de Administradores Jefes de Educación Católica.

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo:

Estimados miembros del Departamento de Administradores Jefes de Educación Católica (Department of Chief Administrators of Catholic Education), estoy agradecido y honrado de darles la bienvenida a su Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City.

Estaré siempre complacido de ofrecerles la bienvenida a Oklahoma, pero estoy especialmente entusiasmado de que estén aquí en esta histórica ocasión del centenario aniversario de la Asociación Nacional de Educación Católica (National Catholic Educational Association).

Deseo y ruego que encuentren este tiempo placentero, provechoso y espiritualmente renovador.

Que apropiado es el Evangelio de hoy que identifica a Jesús como a un Maestro y “fue puesto a prueba”. Su respuesta fue clara, directa y completa, además es la respuesta más exacta que jamás se haya hecho. Dios es amor y nosotros somos Su pueblo.

Hace algunas semanas atrás, estuve visitando el Colegio San Juan en la ciudad de Yukon, en Oklahoma. El párroco y el director estaban emocionados por la más reciente adquisición que habían hecho para su programa. Recientemente, ellos abrieron un Pre-K3.

A los tres años, los niños parecen muy pequeños para estar en el colegio, pero allí estaban. Llenos de alegría y entusiasmo, realizando bailes y cantos. Cuando los bendije y me estaba preparando para irme una pequeña niña corrió hacia mi y me puso una tarjeta en la mano. ¿Qué es esto? Le pregunté y ella rápidamente contestó; “Es para usted”.

Les ofrecí las gracias a los niños mientras sostenía la tarjeta y examine la atractiva cubierta hecha por la profesora. Con los niños a mí alrededor insístiéndome ruidosa-mente que abriera la tarjeta. Fue entonces cuando noté que había varias páginas delgadas con la foto de cada uno de los niños y algún garabato hecho con creyón. El nombre de cada niño estaba perfectamente escrito por la maestra. Todos querían enseñarme su foto, por lo que llamé a cada niño que brincaba y gritaba, replicando: “Eso soy yo, ese soy yo”.

Cuando terminé con todos los nombres y las fotografías, levanté la tarjeta mostrándolas, los agradecí de nuevo y les dije que me la llevaría a casa conmigo. Inmediatamente una niña gritó: “Enséñesela a su madre”.

Un gasto simplemente infantil, sin embargo dijo tanto en ese momento. Esa niña demuestra que ama a su madre. Ella confía en su madre. De su boca inocente de niña pequeña, escuche una expresión de solidaridad. Sentí la seguridad que ella se siente en presencia de su madre. El lazo entre un niño y su madre nunca debe ser roto.

Otra persona inocente dijo algo similar pero más profundo y solemne mientras Él estaba colgado en la Cruz. El miró a Su Madre y a San Juan, Su Apóstol, parado al pie de la Cruz. Jesús dijo a Su Madre; “Mujer, aquí tienes a tu hijo”. Y a Su discípulo le dijo: “Aquí tienes a tu madre”. Y desde ese momento el discípulo la llevo a su casa.

El magnánimo regalo de Jesús de Su Madre a nosotros como nuestra, nos une de una forma muy especial, permitiéndonos vivir como familia de Dios. Podemos resumir el rol de María. Ella trajo a Jesús a nosotros y ahora ella nos lleva a Jesús.

El tema de su conferencia de este año es; “Una Llamada Nutriente”. La invitación, la llamada, es una vocación de liderazgo que ha sido extendida a ustedes como una oferta divina y profunda. Dios quiere que ustedes crezcan en Su amor. Él quiere que ustedes compartan Su amor con otros. Esa llamada debe ser su vocación de liderazgo en la Iglesia.

Para que ustedes sean unos verdaderos seguidores de Cristo y unos líderes en la Iglesia, su vocación debe ser continuamente nutrida.

Muy Reverendo Eusebius Beltrán, Arzobispo Metropolitano de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City.

“Para que ustedes sean unos verdaderos seguidores de Cristo y unos líderes en la Iglesia, su vocación debe ser continuamente nutrida.”

Para que ustedes sean unos verdaderos seguidores de Cristo y unos líderes en la Iglesia, su vocación debe ser continuamente nutrida. María amó a Dios con todo su corazón y amó también a todos sus vecinos. Ellos son sus hijos.

La devoción amorosa de una persona no es adecuadamente cristiana, a menos que incluya a María como madre de la palabra encarnada. La devoción a través de la Virgen María no es solamente importante, sino necesaria para atraer abundancia en nuestra fuente de vida. Separar a Cristo de su madre es dividir a Cristo. De hacerlo, nos perdimos de apreciar la sagrada humanidad de Cristo, Su humanidad es dada de su gracia supernatural. Cuando alguien abandona a su madre, no puede entender a su hijo.

Las Sagradas Escrituras en varias oportunidades, claramente testimonian la necesidad de amar a María. Los grandes teólogos, desde el origen, pensaron que profesar la fe cristiana requería una gran devoción hacia la Madre de Jesús.

El Concilio de Éfeso proclamó a María, la Madre de Dios. San Agustín dijo que la devoción a María era esencial en nuestro viaje espiritual. La secuencia sigue en las enseñanzas teológicas, en las enseñanzas papales y en los documentos del Concilio Vaticano II. Todos combinados nos presentan las enseñanzas auténticas de nuestra fe Católica en esta área. Todos concuerdan en que nosotros como seres humanos, perdidos por Jesús y somos llamados a servir en la Iglesia, necesitando el amor materno de Nuestra Señora.

De hecho, es ella quien mejor puede ayudarnos a nutrir nuestra vocación de liderazgo. Por consiguiente, los encomiendo al cuidadoso amor de Santa María, Madre de Jesucristo y nuestra madre también.

De nuevo, les agradezco responder a la llamada de Dios. Les agradezco por todo el ministerio de servicio que hacen por el pueblo de Dios.

Sobre todo, le doy las gracias a Dios Todopoderoso por todos los regalos y bendiciones que nos ha dado en la vida y le pido a nuestro Señor que nos guíe seguros a la vida eterna en el cielo.
La sanación solamente está cuando nos acercamos al Espíritu Santo
Renovando la fe del pueblo de Dios con gran entusiasmo

Los laicos Gloria Pantazis y Francisco Martínez junto al Padre William Ross.

Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — “Quien tiene la confianza en Dios Padre, jamás, debe deprimirse porque el que confía en Dios nada le falta. Dios nos provee lo necesario para tener vida”, así lo afirmó el presbítero John Mario Montoya, quien es miembro y misionario de la congregación de Jesús y María, Padres Eudistas, trabaja en Medellín, Colombia.

“El sacerdote Montoya vino patrocinado por el grupo de oración de la Renovación Carismática de la parroquia San Eugenio, quienes vendieron cientos de tamales para poder pagarle su estancia y el pasaje a Oklahoma desde Colombia”, así lo aseveró Gloria Pantazis, quien es la directora del Ministerio Hispano de la parroquia San Eugenio.

La iniciativa del fortalecimiento de la Renovación Carismática ha desarrollado más el conocimiento y acercamiento sobre el Espíritu Santo en miles de feligreses. Al respecto, la señora Pantazis aprovechó esta ocasión para sugerir a los feligreses de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City, que promuevan más retiros espirituales para poder crecer en la fe y vernos más envueltos en la doctrina de nuestra Iglesia. Ella dijo; “La gente debe conocer más su religión, siempre son los mismos, creo que debemos involucrarnos más”.

El presbítero John Mario Montoya vino a San Eugenio e hizo una gran plática y retiro espiritual, donde participaron decenas de feligreses de diferentes parroquias de la Arquidiócesis. Él dijo; “Es importante que todos recordemos en cada minuto de nuestras vidas, que todos debemos considerarnos que somos hijos de Dios, debemos aprender a respetarnos y a querernos, es decir, debemos querernos no porque sean viejos, jóvenes, blancos, negros, latinos, pobres o ricos, valemos y debemos ser amados porque somos hijos de Dios, todos somos iguales, tenemos los mismos derechos y deberes ante Dios, nuestro Señor”.

Precisamente el señor Wilson Martínez, quien es feligrés de la parroquia San Eugenio dijo: “La venida del Padre Montoya ha traído una gran alegría a la parroquia porque nos ha recordado que ante las cosas malas y la gente que hace el mal, Dios siempre prevalecerá”.

No hay duda que el gran mensaje que ha dejado este retiro con el Padre Montoya ha sido que debemos reflexionar sobre el lamento de nuestra vida diaria, lamentarnos no puede convertirse en una amargura que nos aleje de Dios. Por el contrario, Dios nos brinda un encuentro con la alegría y felicidad. Quienes participaron de esta maravillosa bendición de compartir con el Padre Montoya su mensaje de renovación, coincidieron en la necesidad de hacer más retiros y encuentros. En este orden de ideas, el señor Alejandro Randolph, quien es diácono de San Eugenio, expresó; “La gente está renaciendo con el movimiento de Renovación Carismática, es muy importante seguir haciendo estos eventos y ver cómo llevar estos retiros a las zonas rurales, porque nuestra gente allí requiere del Espíritu Santo”. Finalmente, vale decir que ahora más que nunca, cuando pome mos todo en manos de Dios, podemos afirmar que somos libres, que nunca más seremos tratados como esclavos, que nunca más seremos alimentados de rencor y mucho menos atados a nosotros mismos con la miseria. Dios es paz y felicidad y nuestra Iglesia Católica el refugio que nos ha dejado Dios para salvarnos.

El diácono Alejandro Randolph y el feligrés Wilson Martínez.

El presbítero John Mario Montoya nos invita amar a Jesucristo en todo momento.
GOAL 7-LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

In a compelling and effective way, to re-establish the cultural compass of the United States to affirm the objective, transcendent truth of the intrinsic value of human life and the dignity of the human person from the inception of life to natural death.

OBJECTIVES
To provide a compelling and common theological, philosophical and ethical framework for teaching and defending the life and dignity of every person, developing materials that are appropriate for various audiences and ages.

To use the principle of the life and dignity of the human person as the underlying framework for the work of all of the task force's core committees, tying together the conference's ongoing policy efforts on issues of life, justice and peace.

To research the assumptions and cultural challenges that work against our understanding and acceptance of the intrinsic value and dignity of human life in order to develop communication strategies, prayer resources and other strategies that will be effective in changing the culture and affirming this central truth.

GOAL 8-PROMOTION OF VOCATIONS TO PRIESTHOOD & CONSECRATED LIFE

To help individuals hear and respond to a call by God to the priesthood or consecrated life.

OBJECTIVES
Promote active discipleship of young men and women in parishes and communities so that they may more readily hear and respond to the vocation to which the Lord is calling them. Develop opportunities for young people to experience the rich Catholic tradition of prayer, spirituality and discernment through education and catechesis.

GOAL 9-PROMOTION OF VOCATIONS TO PRIESTHOOD & CONSECRATED LIFE

To educate all of the faithful on the importance of encouraging others to consider a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life.

OBJECTIVES
Create and foster an atmosphere of communal responsibility in which the clergy, religious and laity personally encourage and invite men and women to discern a call to the consecrated life — and men to discern a call to the priesthood. Promote a vocation culture within the home by developing family-based programs and activities.
Calendar

NOVEMBER

10 Weekly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Christ the King Catholic Church, located one block north of Wilshire, halfway between Penn and May at 8005 Dorset Drive, every Monday beginning at 7 a.m. and concluding with Benediction at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Linda at 496-0033.

11 Eucharistic Adoration at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, NW 32nd and Western, every Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The Rosary is said every weekday at 2.30 p.m. All are welcome.

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

14 Christ the King Annual Dinner and Auction. Celebrating 60 years of faith, family and excellence. Silent auction begins at 6:30 p.m. For more information or for tickets, contact the parish office at (405) 842-1481.

14 Bingo at St. Joseph’s Church in Norman. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with the serving of a light dinner. First session of games begins at 7; second session at 8:30. Concessions serve popcorn, candy, coffee, soft drinks and desserts. There are drawings for door prizes.

14-15 Engagement Encounter Weekend. To register, contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

15 Placement Testing for incoming freshmen for Bishop McGuinness Catholic High from 8 to 11:30 a.m., to any eighth-grader interested in attending the school as a freshman for the 2009-2010 school year. Students not attending a feeder school and interested in taking the placement test must call 842-6638 Ext. 225 to register for the test.

15 Mount St. Mary High School dinner/auction Magic at The Mount at The Petroleum Club. Cost for the evening is $100 per person. Tickets may be purchased by contacting the Advancement Office at Mount St. Mary High School at 631-8865 or by e-mailing us at taveryt@mountstmary.org.

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

15 Contemplative Living with Sister Joanne Yankauskis, OSB, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Fee: $40 ($10 deposit). Register: (405) 373-0804 or mail registration form. Bring a sack lunch. Place: Monastery Library.

15 Create Your Own Gourd Prayer Bowl with Sister Melissa Anna Letts, OSB, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. All materials provided. No experience required. Fee: $50 ($15 deposit). Register: (405) 373-0804 or mail registration form. Bring a sack lunch. Place: Monastery Art Barn.

16 Taize Prayer. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Red Plains Monastery, 728 Richland Road SW, Piedmont. For more details, call 373-4565. Optional video on Taize prayer at 6 p.m.

16 The Community of the Secular Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus — Oklahoma Community and Province of St. Therese meets at St. Joseph Carmelite Monastery in Piedmont from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call Janet Mildfelt at (405) 848-6275 or Deacon Jim Breazile at (405) 377-9478.

17-25 Monthly Novena to the Infant Jesus, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, Nat’l Shrine of the Infant Jesus, Saint Wenceslaus Church, SH-99 7 miles N. I-40 or 20 miles S. I-44 at Stroud exit, Prague, (405) 567-3080.

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

Parish, Father Bird Plan Pilgrimage to Germany, Austria

Epiphany of the Lord Parish and Father Stephen Bird will lead a pilgrimage to the Oberammergau Passion Play in 2010.

The 10-day tour, May 27 to June 5, 2010, is described as “the best of Austria and Germany.”

The highlight of the tour will be the Oberammergau Passion Play that began in 1633.

A terrible plague had caused great suffering and death in the small German community. The people of the town took a vow to perform the “Play of Suffering, Dying and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ” once every 10 years if God would spare their community. The performance in 2010 will mark the 41st performance of this extraordinary centuries-old tradition.

The five-hour performance will enact the story of Jesus, upon his entry into Jerusalem to his death on the Cross and his Resurrection. The famous open-air stage of the Passion Play Theatre provides a most dramatic setting for this unique cultural and religious event.

The first $500 deposit for this pilgrimage is due Nov. 30, 2008. A second deposit of $1,000 will be due March 25, 2009.

The package is based on rates for 2009. Rates for 2010 are subject to change and increase. The total cost per person is $3,795 plus $600 taxes and surcharges.

The pilgrimage will include Vienna, Melk Abbey, Salzburg, Garmisch and Rothenburg.

For more information, call 1-800-225-7662 or e-mail peter@petersway.com.
All Souls Day Mass at Resurrection Cemetery

Archbishop Beltran celebrated Mass on All Souls Day at Resurrection Cemetery. Sooner Catholic Photos/Cara Koenig