Christ Lives Through Us When We Live Through Him

By Sister Margie Lavonis, CSC

When I was in graduate school at Boston College, I was introduced to process theology. The main premise or thought of this theology is that we can “influence” God by fulfilling our own potential. Needless to say, for a person who was taught that God is, was and always remains the same, this blew my mind. Process theologians conclude that since we are part of God through our membership in the Body of Christ, when we grow, a part of God also grows! Wow, what a responsibility!

Years later as I reflect on this concept, I can see a lot of truth in it in the sense that when we develop our potential, we enrich the Body of Christ. A related concept is that Christ is born again and again through his followers.

Father Ronald Rolheiser, in his wonderful book Holy Longing, which I highly recommend to anyone serious about spiritual growth, talks about incarnating or birthing Christ. He reminds us that it is through our acts of love that Jesus is revealed over and over again to our world. God is love and, in a sense, the more we live in a loving manner the greater God becomes. When we love, love grows.

As the celebration of Christmas, the Incarnation of Jesus, approaches, it would be well to take some quality time to reflect on how we have or have not given birth to the God who is love in our daily lives? Do we incarnate God in the way we live our lives?

I believe it was one of the great saints who said that Christ has no hands and feet but ours, etc. Jesus told us over and over again that he came to reveal God’s love. During his earthly life he commissioned his followers to do the same. It was the central theme of his ministry.

After Christmas Day, many of the daily Scripture readings for Mass are from the letters of Saint John. The main message of these letters he wrote to the people he served is that God is love. He tells us that it is only when we abide in love do we abide in God! He goes on to say that if we claim to love God but hate our neighbors, we are liars! Those are strong words but apt in the light of all the war and violence around us. Unfortunately, he did not say to love only the people we like or care about!

God’s word challenges us to live the Christmas spirit all year long. The spirit of loving, of giving of ourselves, of incarnating God should become a habit for all who call themselves Christian. It is not reserved for certain times of the year. The poor always need food and clothes. Homeless centers always need people to help with meals and other activities. Nursing homes are always filled with lonely people who appreciate visitors who will sit and listen. Friends like to hear from us at other times of the year also. The spirit of kindness and generosity should be a part of who we are.

God waits every day to be given birth in our world. We are God’s body. God becomes flesh in us and in our actions.

During this beautiful season, let us reflect on how we will continue to give birth to the God of peace and love throughout the New Year. The only New Year’s resolution a Christian needs to make is to be a more loving person.

Archbishop Beltran to Host Book Signing

Archbishop Beltran will host a book signing and lecture by Jeremy Bonner, author of “The Road to Renewal - Victor Joseph Reed and Oklahoma Catholicism 1905-1971” from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Dec. 5. The event will be held at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 NW Expressway in Oklahoma City. The book is said to be an important contribution to the study of American Catholicism. It explores the process of Catholic renewal at the parish level, immediately following the Second Vatican Council.
The Good News

Thanksgiving Day to Christmas, with the insertion of Advent in between affords us a unique occasion to assess the way we celebrate and live our Catholic Faith. Advent challenges us to take our Catholic Faith more seriously and thereby to grow in our knowledge and love of God. This is precisely what I mean when I urge you to live the fullness of our Catholic Faith. However, unless we adopt a plan and make a serious effort to use this time wisely, it will simply pass by and we will be no better off.

The two pivotal dates are Thanksgiving and Christmas. Thanksgiving evokes from us a spirit of gratitude to Almighty God from whom all good things come. Christmas brings us the summit of God’s gifts because it is the gift of God Himself to us.

Between these two great celebrations of Thanksgiving and Christmas we have the beautiful and joyful season of Advent. Normally this is a four-week period of preparation and anticipation of the Birth of Jesus. This year, however, because Christmas falls on a Tuesday, Advent is reduced to just three weeks. Therefore, we are faced with a greater urgency to make the most of this Advent Season.

Since Advent is a joyful time to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, we need to begin our observance by reflecting on what God has revealed to us. The Sacred Scriptures tell us about our good and gracious God from whom all good things come.

God and God alone is eternal. He and He alone, the Triune God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has no beginning and no end. Everything and everyone else has a beginning. We are created by the eternal, Almighty God. Each of us has been brought into existence by the Will of God. God has a plan for human beings.

God made each of us, breathing life into us so that made in His image and likeness we can come to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him now so that someday we could love and rejoice with Him forever in heaven.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church beautifully describes this plan of God for human beings. It states that we are created by God and for God. Therefore, the desire for God has been instilled in us with a thirst and hunger for happiness. This desire, so to speak, is written in the human heart. This hunger and thirst can be satisfied only in God. In Him alone we can find true and complete happiness.

Since God created us out of love and with a burning desire to seek Him, He will never abandon us. He is always calling us to repent from sin and He will forgive us. He invites us to a new and better life offering to heal us, to nurture us, to strengthen and lead us safely on our pilgrim journey of life.

These Advent Days offer us the opportune moment to reflect on this beautiful plan God has for us. God’s plan is fulfilled by His sending His Son Jesus to the world.

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Advent Wreath Symbolic of Love’s Victory Over Darkness

The origins of the Advent wreath are found in the folk practices of the pre-Christian Germanic peoples who, during the cold December darkness of Eastern Europe, gathered wreaths of evergreen and lighted fires as signs of hope in a coming spring and renewed light. By the Middle Ages, Christians used wreaths as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas. By 1600, both Catholics and Lutherans had more formal practices surrounding the Advent wreath. The wreath itself is usually made of pine or cedar sprigs which are drawn into a circle symbolizing God’s eternity. Affixed to the wreath are four candles; three purple and one rose or pink, which are lit one on each of the four Sundays. The rose candle anticipates and symbolizes the Christmas joy announced in the first word of the Entrance Antiphon: Rejoice (Latin, Gaudete). For this reason, the Third Sunday is also called Gaudete Sunday, and rose-colored vestments are often used. Sometimes a fifth white candle is placed in the center of the circle and is lit on Christmas Eve. The wreath has always been a sign of glory and victory while the light from the candles, gradually increasing every week, symbolically dispels the darkness. As the candles burn, they visibly mark the passing of time until Christmas Day.
This book by Jeremy Bonner is the first biography of Bishop Victor J. Reed, the fourth Catholic bishop of Oklahoma (1958-1971). Bonner was given access to Reed’s papers and other documents in the Archdiocesan Archives of Oklahoma City by Archbishop Eusebius Bellan. He also had access to other documents provided by the Reed family and others. He was also assisted by Father James White, a historian of the Diocese of Tulsa. Jeremy Bonner is an independent scholar. He has come at this project from a neutral point of view without any agendas other than presenting the biography of Bishop Reed and the events in the Catholic Church in Oklahoma after the Second Vatican Council.

Bishop Victor Joseph Reed was born Dec. 23, 1905, in Montpelier, Ind., to Victor Larue and Henrietta Mary Collins Reed. Victor Larue Reed converted to Catholicism in order to marry Henrietta. The family moved to Bald Hill, Okla., in 1910 because of the oil industry. Victor Larue Reed worked in the oil industry in Oklahoma for 35 years. Victor Joseph Reed was sent to the age of 7 in 1912 to St. Joseph’s College in Muskogee. This college was operated by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Victor Reed expressed interest in the priesthood and he was sent to St. John’s Seminary in Little Rock, Ark. In 1928 Bishop Francis Clement Kelley sent Reed to continue his studies at the Urban College of the Propaganda in Rome. He lived at the North American College during his time in Rome. Reed was ordained a priest on Dec. 21, 1929, in Rome. He returned to Oklahoma and was assistant pastor at St. Joseph’s Cathedral in Oklahoma City.

Reed joined Father Stephen Leven’s (the future bishop of San Angelo, Texas) involvement in Oklahoma becoming involved with a mission in Guatemala, Santiago Atitlan, which it is still in operation. Oklahoma Catholics had been involved in the anti-war movement of the 1960s. Bishop Reed was one of the first American bishops to sign a petition for the government to negotiate peace in Vietnam. He received lots of criticism for this.

The book reveals that Reed allowed his priests considerable latitude to do their ministries. But he did not like it when what they did caused “problems.” Oklahoma Catholics were considered progressives, according to Bonner, priests and religious, though, began to leave the priesthood and religious life in the mid to late 1960s. Some left because they considered the Church was moving too slow in renewal. Bonner discusses several reasons why clergy and religious left. He also explores how the priesthood had changed with Vatican II.

Bishop Reed had a heart attack in a movie theater on the night of Sept. 7, 1971, and died just after midnight on Sept. 8, 1971, at Baptist Hospital in Oklahoma City. He had recommended that Oklahoma be divided into two dioceses. This came about in 1973 when Oklahoma City was raised to the rank of Archdiocese and Tulsa to the rank of a Diocese.

Jeremy Bonner’s research project was to study a bishop and his diocese and how it implemented the Vatican II renewal of various aspects of the Church. Bishop Reed spent most of his life as a bishop as a Council Father and one of those who implemented the Council’s renewals. Many considered him to be an open-minded person and willing to move the Church forward. But he was also a person who knew what he was about. He knew what he was to do as a bishop and he would act as such when he thought it was needed. His time as bishop was not an easy one since he had to deal with many conflicts in his diocese. This may have led to his early death at the age of 65.

Bonner’s book has some photographs from the Reed family and from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. There is a bibliography and an index. There are many footnotes throughout the book. Bonner and his associates interviewed several people who knew Bishop Reed or were involved in certain events related to Reed. Bonner used material from the Reed papers from the archives of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and from the Reed family, which are primary sources. The combination of these sources and others provide a readable narrative.

General readers may not appreciate this book. They may find it a bit dry and academic. This book will be of great interest to Oklahoma Catholics and to Oklahomans, too. Those interested in the tumultuous times after Vatican II will want to read this book since it gives the history of what happened in an American diocese that is not one of the major archdioceses where things would have been quite different and on a very larger scale.

Research into what happened in the rest of the 1970s in the Catholic Church in Oklahoma should be of interest for a future researcher into this topic.
Catholic Foundation Honors Educators, Announces Grants

OKLAHOMA CITY — Archbishop Beltran and The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma Inc. presented the Religious Educator of the Year Award and the Catholic School Educator of the Year Award for 2007 on Nov. 16. The presentations were made following Mass at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Oklahoma City. Foundation grant recipients were also announced during the celebration.

Sharon Semtner was named Religious Educator of the Year. She is a member of Sacred Heart Parish in Konawa. The Catholic School Educator of the Year honor went to Joe Weber of Mount St. Mary High School in Oklahoma City.

The finalists for the Religious Educator of the Year Award were Kathy Wilson and Debbie Brzozowski. Finalists for the Catholic School Teacher of the Year Award were Sister Stephanie Sanchez, Marilee Talbot and Mary Jo Smith.

Some 28 Catholic schools and parishes received grants from the Catholic Foundation. The recipients included All Saints Catholic School, Norman; Bishop John Carroll Catholic School, Oklahoma City; Bishop McGuinness High School, Oklahoma City; Christ the King Catholic School, Oklahoma City; Christ the King Religious Education, Oklahoma City; Epiphany Parish, Oklahoma City; Holy Cross Parish, Madill; Mount St. Mary High School, Oklahoma City; Sacred Heart Catholic School, Oklahoma City; Sacred Heart/Mount St. Mary, Oklahoma City; Saint Ann Parish, Elgin; Saint Benedict Parish, Shawnee; Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic School, Oklahoma City; Saint Eugene Catholic School, Oklahoma City; Saint Eugene Religious Education, Oklahoma City; Saint James Catholic School, Oklahoma City; Saint Joseph Parish, Ada; Saint Joseph Catholic School, Enid; Saint Joseph Parish, Bisan; Saint Joseph Parish, Norman; Saint Joseph Parish, Union City; Saint Mary Catholic School, Guthrie; Saint Monica Parish, Edmond; Saint Patrick Parish, Oklahoma City; Saint Peter Parish, Woodward; Saint Philip Neri Catholic School, Midwest City; Villa Teresa Catholic School, Oklahoma City; and Villa Teresa Catholic School, Moore.

Saint Benedict Parishioner Named State’s Top Teacher

SHAWNEE — Physical education teacher Stephanie Canada, a parishioner at Saint Benedict’s Catholic Church, has been named the 2007-2008 Oklahoma Public School Teacher of the Year.

Canada teaches at Shawnee’s Will Rogers Elementary School. She is the first physical education teacher and the first teacher from Shawnee to win this award. As Teacher of the Year, Canada will receive cash and prizes totaling more than $50,000. One of those prizes is the use of a Toyota Prius for one year.

Canada grew up in Kellyville, attending Kelleyville Public Schools and playing basketball. While at Kelleyville High School, she was chosen as an All-State basketball player. Canada earned a bachelor of science degree in exercise science and a master’s degree in secondary physical education from East Central State University in Ada. After that, Canada spent several years of her 12-year teaching career on college campuses. In 1995, she was appointed instructor and assistant women’s basketball coach at her alma mater. She served in that capacity from 1995-1997. During the next school year, 1997-1998, she was assistant women’s basketball coach at the University of South Florida. She ended her career in higher education as an assistant women’s basketball coach at North-eastern State University, Tahlequah, from 1999-2001.

Canada has taught in Shawnee since 2003. Before teaching at Will Rogers Elementary School, she taught in the Checotah Public Schools and was also the girls high school basketball coach.

Canada was chosen Oklahoma Teacher of the Year after a lengthy process. Beginning with 500 nominated Oklahoma teachers, contest evaluators gradually narrowed the field down to 12 finalists.

In addition to a passion for teaching, Canada is also passionate about helping young people develop healthy ways of living. Experience has taught her that healthy children learn more effectively.

As Oklahoma’s Ambassador of Teaching, Canada will also interact, over the next few months, with other teachers and college students studying to be teachers as she leads professional development sessions across the state. For the rest of this school year, another teacher has been hired to take over her physical education responsibilities in Shawnee so Canada can concentrate on fulfilling her obligations as Teacher of the Year.

Catholic Tabbed for Scholarship From Oklahoma Bar Foundation

OKLAHOMA CITY — Erin L. Means has been interested in helping people all her life. This pattern of compassion led her first to serve as a volunteer at Catholic Charities, the Oklahoma Blood Institute, the Oklahoma Partnership for Public Deliberation and the American Red Cross and later to seek a law degree from the University of Oklahoma’s College of Law.

Recently, Means’ hard work and dedication to service led others to select her as one of the first recipients of the Oklahoma Bar Foundation’s (OBF) Fellows Scholarships. The OBF awards a $5,000 annual scholarship to a deserving law student at each of Oklahoma’s three law schools. The recipient must plan to stay in Oklahoma to practice law and must have demonstrated a financial need.

These scholarships were created in 2006 to help celebrate the Oklahoma Bar Foundation’s 60th anniversary. According to The Oklahoma Bar Journal, candidates for OBF Fellows Scholarships “must show continued good academic standing, diligence of purpose and evidence of ability to succeed as an Oklahoma lawyer. Special consideration is given to students with an interest in the field of public law or promise to give back to the community and to the profession.”

“THe OBF Fellows Scholarship means a lot to me,” she said. “It’s been very helpful this semester. It’s an honor to be the first person to receive this scholarship from OU!”

Now in her second year of law school in Norman, Means plans to complete her law degree and practice adoption law in Oklahoma. “I like to work with people, and I, for a long time, have had an interest in adoption law. I think it’s such a positive area of law and so much good can come out of it,” she said.

Means is the daughter of Deacon Gary and Sheila Means of Cherokee. She was born and grew up there, attending Saint Cornelius Church, the same church where her father now serves as deacon. Means attended Cherokee schools, graduating from Cherokee High School in 2001. She then moved to Shawnee to study political science at Saint Gregory’s University.

Last year, Means received the Lee B. Thompson Sr. Scholarship in recognition of her “leadership, character and service to others.” She lives in Oklahoma City and attends Saint Eugene’s Church.
Obituary
Abbot Philip A. Berning Dies at Saint Gregory’s on Nov. 17

SHAWNEE — Rt. Rev. Philip A. Berning, O.S.B., Fifth Abbot of St. Gregory’s Abbey, died peacefully at home at St. Gregory’s on Saturday, Nov. 17, 2007, sustained by prayer and strengthened by the sacraments of the Church.

Father Philip was born Anthony Bernard Berning on June 8, 1915, in Ashton, Iowa, to Joseph and Elizabeth Haverkamp Berning. He had four brothers and five sisters, all now deceased.

After grade school in Ashton, Father attended St. John’s University Preparatory School, Collegeville, Minn., and college at Trinity College, Sioux City, Iowa, for two years. He entered the novitiate of St. Gregory’s Abbey in 1935, receiving the name of Philip. He made his simple monastic profession at St. Gregory’s on July 11, 1936, and solemn monastic profession on July 11, 1939. He earned his bachelor of arts degree in history from St. Benedict’s College, Atchison, Kan., in 1938. Upon completion of theological studies at St. John’s Seminary, Collegeville, Minn., Father Philip was ordained to the priesthood at St. John’s on June 7, 1942, at which time he returned to St. Gregory’s Abbey in Shawnee. He received an honorary LL.D. from St. Vincent College, Latrobe, Pa., in 1956.

During his tenure, St. Gregory’s experienced great growth. The monks built a new monastery building as many young men entered the community.

The community assessed its ministries and made the decision to close St. Gregory’s High School and place increased emphasis on St. Gregory’s College. During that period, many of the present buildings on campus were constructed. The college administration building, Benedictine Hall, was completely reconstructed. Bernard Murphy Hall, housing the student and monastery food service, Duperou-Degrasse and Mark Braun residence halls, the Commons and the aquatic center were all completed during his term as abbot.

Before he was elected abbot, Father Philip served in several positions in the monastery, including procurator, director of scholastics and novice master. He served as Prefect of Discipline for St. Gregory’s High School, where he also taught religion, history and typing. His pastoral assignments included two terms as pastor of St. Joseph’s Church in Ada and many years as pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Church in McLoad. After his tenure as abbot he served as pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Chandler. In his later years he served as porter and procurator at St. Gregory’s Abbey. He was a positive example to all in his gentility, humility, quiet service and devotion to prayer. He greeted all with a shy smile and welcoming eyes.

He remained a faithful witness of monastic observance and ministry for 71 years and bore the increasing effects of Alzheimer’s disease with great faith and patience.

Father Philip is survived by the monks of St. Gregory’s Abbey, many nieces and nephews and countless friends.

The monastic community is grateful for the assistance of the staff of May’s Hospice of Shawnee, St. Gregory’s Abbey Health Care staff and many friends, who helped make it possible for Father Philip to remain at his monastery home during the final years of his life.

Father Philip was elected Coadjutor Abbot to Abbot Mark Braun on March 12, 1953, and received the abbatial blessing from Bishop Eugene McGuinness on May 6, 1953. He succeeded Abbot Mark Braun on the latter’s death on April 2, 1954. Father Philip led the community as abbot for the next 16 years, through the times of the Second Vatican Council, until he resigned on Feb. 16, 1970.

Before he was elected abbot, Father Philip served in several positions in the monastery, including procurator, director of scholastics and novice master. He served as Prefect of Discipline for St. Gregory's Abbey.

Congress Urged to Protect Life by Protecting Mexico City Policy

By Ryan J. Dwyer

“Around the globe, millions of women are fighting for ... the right to obtain a safe and legal abortion,” proclaimed Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA) at a recent congressional hearing. He blamed “the mindless Global Gag Rule” for standing in their way.

Rep. Lantos was referring to the Mexico City Policy (MCP), an executive order that withholds U.S. funds from any foreign non-governmental organization (NGO) which performs or promotes abortion as a method of family planning (the policy does not cover births). Opponents derisively label the MCP the “Global Gag Rule,” claiming it “gags” NGOs that want to offer women the option of abortion.

The MCP is necessary because groups such as the International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF) see abortion as an indispensable tool of population control, ostensibly to reduce poverty. IPPF lobbies aggressively for worldwide legalization of abortion on demand, and has even performed illegal abortions overseas. Under the guise of “menstrual regulation,” IPPF-funded doctors have performed early abortions on women without their knowledge or consent.

Nevertheless, many congressional Democrats now want President Bush to approve a bill that would reverse the MCP. At the Lantos hearing, doctors from Nigeria and Ghana claimed that the MCP muzzles NGOs who want to direct women to “safe” abortion clinics and that tens of thousands of African women die annually from “unsafe abortion.” But in fact, the policy forbids active promotion of abortion, not passive referrals in response to questions.

Kenyan gynecologist Jean Kagia unmasked the falsity of these maternal death claims. She testified that in Kenya, where abortion is prohibited, less than 1 percent of maternal deaths are due to abortion. She added that the leading causes of death, such as malaria, are treatable. Dr. Kagia also disputed the assumption that the typical African woman wants abortion, stating that “abortion would make her go against her faith and conscience,” and citing polls showing that 85 percent of Kenyan women are opposed to abortion.

Far from being “mindless,” the MCP guards against the faulty logic that promoting abortion on demand will decrease maternal death. This reasoning presents a false choice, pitting the life of the child against the life of the mother — and concluding that the unborn are expendable to advance their mothers’ “rights.”

We must recognize that U.S. foreign aid will only succeed if it affirms the most fundamental human right: the right to life. As Pope Benedict has said, speaking of western aid that does not reflect the natural hierarchy of rights: “When this ordering of goods is no longer respected, but turned on its head, the result is rather ruin and destruction.”

Please urge your senator or representative to support the MCP. Senate and House switchboard: (202) 225-3121

Ryan Dwyer is a Federal Policy Analyst for the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.
Cultures Can Often Differ on What ‘the Law’ Means

The legal philosophy at work in most Spanish-speaking countries — including Mexico — is Roman law, not Anglo-Saxon law. People from south of the border simply look at law differently than we do. It is a bright Tuesday afternoon, and you are cruising the streets of downtown Tulsa, looking for a place to park. There are plenty of empty curbside stretches, but they all are guarded by signs that say, “No Parking This Side of Street on Tuesdays and Thursdays,” or “Parking Not Allowed Weekdays between 5:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.”

You leave the area, making a note to return later, probably in the evening.

Change of scene: On a bright afternoon, Luigi Cavaradossi is cruising the streets of downtown Rome. Every possible parking place he sees carries a sign that says, “Parking Strictly Forbidden at All Times! Do Not Even Think of Parking Here!” A policeman is standing next to one of these signs.

Luigi pulls alongside and says, “Good afternoon, signore carabiniere. May I have a dispensation to park here for a short time? I have to run an errand.” The policeman replies, “Certainly, sir.”

What is wrong with these pictures? Actually, nothing. They merely illustrate two philosophical approaches to the notion of law, two schools of thought about the rules and regulations — and the exception to these — that govern our daily lives.

The first school of thought, which we may term the Anglo-Saxon school, or the English Common Law school, holds that no one is above the law, but the law must be written as narrowly as possible so as to leave room for a reasonable use of human freedom.

In Tulsa, therefore, parking is forbidden only during the period when streets must actually accommodate heavy traffic. Imposing a blanket prohibition on downtown parking would be counterproductive, since it would engender disrespect for the law.

When the Oklahoma Legislature in 1917 tried to enforce its citizens’ total abstinence from alcohol, the result was widespread flouting of the so-called Bone-Dry Law, accompanied by a lively trade in bootleg whiskey and bathtub gin. This continued until 1959, when the law was finally repealed.

The second, contrasting, school of legal thought goes all the way back to the Roman Empire, where it provided much of the glue that for centuries held the empire together. It is known to many of us as the Napoleonic Code, but it is much older than Napoleon.

Like Anglo-Saxon law, it sees the law as deserving of respect, but it doesn’t necessarily hold that the law is sacred in itself, in the way that many Americans are accustomed to looking at the law.

The two systems, English and Roman, are different, but neither is better than the other. Both are valid, and have been for centuries.

Only one of our 50 states, Louisiana, uses the Napoleonic Code as the philosophical basis for its law. Louisiana has sometimes had a reputation for being corrupt, but it really is no worse than neighboring states, such as our own, Louisiana, for example, has never had a scandal involving elected commissioners from every one of 77 counties accepting kickbacks from contractors, as Oklahoma did in the late 1960s and ’70s.

The Roman law tradition is also the basis for the Church’s canon law, and this has provided a fertile background for misunderstandings in countries that are not accustomed to that tradition. There have been many cases when American church superiors have attempted to interpret canon law through the philosophical lens of Anglo-Saxon law.

A similar misunderstanding underlies the anger that many Americans, Catholics among them, feel toward persons who, by coming through our southern border in search of a better life, happen to have broken a statute of our criminal law.

Many of our fellow citizens believe that this fact alone ends the argument over immigration. These people have broken the law, they say, and this cannot be allowed. But there is a problem with this view.

The legal philosophy at work in most Spanish-speaking countries — including Mexico — is Roman law, not Anglo-Saxon law. People from south of the border simply look at law differently than we do.

They believe the law enshrines important principles that undergird society, but they believe that the law cannot cover every circumstance that may arise, and there are situations in which they are justified in acting for a higher good, which in this case is providing food and support for their families.

Studies have shown that much of the money that most immigrants earn is sent back to their countries of origin, to places where the local economy does not permit them to make a living. In addition, it is a settled principle of Catholic moral law that a starving man may steal bread to feed himself and those who depend on him.

Men and women crossing the Rio Grande today are quite aware that the Norteamericans do not want them, but they likely do not realize that they are breaking an American law and are thereby causing greater rage among the American people than they probably would if the law did not exist.

Father James White is the historian and archivist for the Diocese of Tulsa.

Woman Honored for Contributions

LAWTON — Pat Powell, a parishioner at Holy Family Catholic Church, has been named Catholic Woman of the Year by the South Region of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women.

Powell, retired from the military after a 32-year career, is the first woman to have her name added to the Comanche County Veterans Council Wall of Honor.

Barbara Wann, president of the South Region ACCW, presented the Catholic Woman of the Year award to Powell.

Powell is very active in her parish as well as in the community and in veterans affairs. She is on the board of directors for Lawton’s Mobile Meals and also personally delivers meals to Purple Heart recipients, disabled veterans and military widows. In addition, she volunteers much of her time to Saint John’s Soup Kitchen and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society.

Pat Powell holds the plaque as Catholic Woman of the Year presented to her by Barbara Wann.

Powell is also involved with Habitat for Humanity and volunteers at the Fort Sill National Cemetery public information center.

Program Promotes Marriage Encounter

CHICAGO — When Oprah Winfrey hosted a Worldwide Marriage Encounter couple on her show recently, she said, “This is something you can do!” as she let her audience of millions see that couples can have great marriages and can communicate every day in a loving way.

Alton and Patricia Hassell from Texas were guests on Oprah’s show, whose theme was Married Couples and Love Stories. The couple explained that they have been writing love letters to each other every day for over 27 years.

“It’s something we will always do,” said Patricia.

Alton explained that they found the concept for the love letters when they attended a Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend. “At first it was hard to write every day, but then it became more and more natural.” So natural in fact, that they have over 105 pounds of notebooks containing love letters collected over the years.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekends start on a Friday evening and end on Sunday afternoon. There is no group sharing and no couple is ever asked to share during the weekend. There is a cost for the weekend, but in the 40-year history of Worldwide Marriage Encounter, no couple has ever been turned away from a weekend because of lack of money.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter is a non-profit organization and all donations from the weekend are used to continue offering additional weekends throughout the country and the world.

Married couples who want to learn more about making their “good marriages better” can find out more about Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekends by contacting Dan and Jean Forgue at (600) 960-0390 or (405) 760-0349, by e-mail: partspeople@cox.net or online at www.mmew.org.

Letters

It's Our Responsibility

First of all, I would like to thank the kind people of Oklahoma and the United States for welcoming my father and his family from Poland. My immediate family immigration occurred over a period of years from 1947 to 1957. My father and some family members became citizens. One family member remained as a legal permanent resident. This country has blessed us. Was the immigration process difficult? Yes. Did it put a strain on family members who were separated for more than six years during the process? Yes! Did it tear family members apart? Yes! Most importantly, these people wanted to immigrate to the United States. They accepted the risks. This was a voluntary process.

Regarding the current discussion of HB 1804, the illegal immigrant is not necessarily Hispanic. Continuing the discussion of HB 1804 as if it is solely a Hispanic issue can trigger the thought that all Hispanics are illegal aliens. This is simply not the case. Many Hispanics have entered the United States legally. With this line of thought, Hispanics who are citizens and legal residents get categorized as “Hispanic” with the implication of illegal alien status. Please, let us extend respect to those who abide by the law. Let us keep the term “illegal alien” as a unique identifier separate from the word “Hispanic.” Please keep in mind, people from various countries are currently illegal aliens in Oklahoma. Some have resided here longer than their visas allow.

HB 1804 is about illegal immigration. The citizens of Oklahoma must ask themselves some difficult questions. The most pressing questions are what are we willing to allow regarding illegal immigration and what is our responsibility to those who illegally immigrate? Illegal immigration can promote poverty of the illegal aliens. If you pay taxes under a false Social Security number, then you are not able to collect benefits. If you do not speak English, you limit your ability to rise in the workplace. You also increase your risk of bad outcomes and injury because you might not be able to respond to warnings. Unfortunately, for this group of people called illegal aliens, U.S. citizens say it’s OK if you are poor. If you live here and learn English and advance in the workplace, it’s OK, because we can get more illegal aliens that will remain poor in our low-paying jobs. In this sense, the illegal alien status promotes poverty and we are responsible.

Some illegal aliens only want to earn a certain amount of money in order to afford a more comfortable living arrangement in their home country. They plan to return to their country once their financial goal is achieved. What is our responsibility to them? What is their responsibility to this country?

It is easy to be against the law, but can we step up to the plate and propose a solution? The citizens of the United States are responsible for those who live in this country. That is part of our commitment to this country. We need commitment to this state and country from all inhabitants, including the illegal aliens for our well-being. Please, do not be lured by those who say we cannot fix the immigration problem. That is saying we are limited to our human nature. Let us ask divine guidance through prayer. We have a big God. Then let us act on that divine guidance.

Congratulations Oklahoma for bringing this issue to the forefront for discussion. With prayer and focused action, we can lead the nation toward resolution of immigration issues.

Barbara Wisniewski McEndree
St. Joseph Parish
Norman

The Immigration Issue

The need for meaningful immigration legislation is undeniable. House Bill 1804 fails to address this problem in a fair and charitable fashion. It ignores the merits and contributions of many deserving, honorable and hardworking foreigners and their families, who have dwelt among us for many years.

The clear and outspoken opposition of Archbishop Beltran and the Council of Priests to HB 1804 is commendable.

Since Archbishop Beltran has a long and consistent record of militant opposition to all forms of human rights violations, as illustrated by his participation in the 1960s in civil rights marches in the Deep South against racial segregation, his current stance should not come as a surprise to anybody.

Archbishop Chaput in a recent online article on “Citizenship Evangelization” (Zenit, November 3, 2007) states what the Catholic position should be in the controversial issues of our times: “Pluralism in a democracy doesn’t mean shutting up about inconvenient issues. It means speaking up, respectfully, in a spirit of justice and charity, but also vigorously and without apologies. Jesus said that we will know the truth, and that the truth will make us free. He didn’t say anything about our being popular with worldly authority once we have that freedom. In the end, if we want our lives to be fruitful, we need to know ourselves as God intends us to be known — as His witness on earth, not just in our private behavior, but in our public actions, including our social, economical and political choices.” May the Holy Spirit continue to illuminate Archbishop Beltran’s thoughts and give him the courage to act according to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Raoul Carubelli
Oklahoma City
Christ the King Parish

What About Life?

I am simply amazed by the pages and pages of Catholic newspapers filled with concern over Oklahoma’s new immigration law. When have we ever seen this volume of print on pro-life issues? The clergy is even openly declaring defiance of the law and willingness to go to jail over the issue! What happened to separation of church and state, and the Catholic Church’s concern that the Church’s tax-exempt status might be jeopardized and the Catholic Church’s concern that the Church’s tax-exempt status might be jeopardized with such openly political stands? Are we seeing political hypocrisy by our shepherds? Will the clergy defy the law in front of an abortion clinic and go to jail in defiance?

With the pope’s re-emphasis of the primacy of the pro-life issue for Catholics, and the soon-to-be published paper by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, I will eagerly await all the publicly printed letters with clergy signatures attached being published in Catholic print media — demanding that Catholics not vote for pro-abortion candidates in the next general election. Maybe yet hear it consistently from the ambo? I won’t be holding my breath. At least Father Feehily’s letter in the Nov. 18 Sooner Catholic was a breath of fresh, sane air.

Frank Lipsinic
Christ the King Parish
Oklahoma City

OKLAHOMA CITY — Both the boys and girls teams from Saint Charles Borromeo School took first place at the indoor rowing machines relay race, competing against 25 other schools. The teams won a Concept 2 indoor rowing machine for their school for their efforts. Sacred Heart School came in second and Christ the King third. At Saint Charles Borromeo, Brittany Riesenberg, outreach coordinator for Chesapeake Boathouse, awarded first-place gold medals to the rowers and presented the rowing machine to the school. Pictured first row from left, girls rowing team, Katie Kearns, Rochelle Garcia, Ally Rooks and Dani Beck; second row, Principal Joseph Sine and the boys rowing team, Alex Hirzy, Nicholas Largent, Jason Bertels, Victor Jackson and Brittany Riesenberg.
Bishops Say Faith Should Impact Voting Decisions

WASHINGTON, D.C., (Zenit.org) — U.S. bishops are encouraging people to use their faith and a well-formed conscience as guidance in political choices.

The U.S. episcopal conference approved a statement called “Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility.” The bishops met in Baltimore, Md., for their fall general assembly.

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

The Church’s role in helping Catholics to form their consciences is a central theme of the document.

“With this foundation,” the bishops said, “Catholics are better able to evaluate policy positions, party platforms and candidates’ promises and action in light of the Gospel and the moral and social teaching of the Church in order to help build a better world.”

The bishops affirmed their legitimate role in public life. “The obligation to teach about moral values that should shape our lives, including our public lives, is central to [our] mission,” they stated. “Our nation’s tradition of pluralism is enhanced, not threatened, when religious groups and people of faith bring their convictions and concerns into public life.”

The document recalls that respect for the dignity of every human being is a foundation for Catholic teaching about “faithful citizenship.”

“The statement says people must oppose actions that are intrinsically wrong, such as abortion and euthanasia, because these actions involve directly and intentionally ending an innocent human life. It also affirms the obligation to promote the common good by combating such threats to human life and dignity as hunger, poverty, racism, unjust immigration policies and unjust war. “Both opposing evil and doing good are essential obligations,” the document says.

“The bishops warn of two temptations for Catholics in public life. “The first is a moral equivalence that makes no ethical distinctions between different kinds of issues involving human life and dignity,” the statement says. “The direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life […] is always wrong and is not just one issue among many. It must always be opposed.”

A second temptation, the bishops said, involves “dismissing or ignoring other serious threats to human life and dignity. Racism and other unjust discrimination, torture, the use of the death penalty, resorting to unjust war, war crimes, the failure to respond to those who are suffering from hunger or lack health care, or unjust immigration policies are all serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act.”

The bishops call Catholics to a different kind of political engagement shaped by well-formed consciences and focused on the dignity of every human being, the pursuit of the common good and the protection of the weak and the vulnerable.

“Participation in political life in light of fundamental moral principles is an essential duty for every Catholic and all people of good will.”

The bishops also acknowledge the challenges faced by Catholic voters: “Catholics may feel politically disenfranchised because too few candidates fully share the Church’s comprehensive commitment to the dignity of the human person.

“As Catholics we are not single issue voters. A candidate’s position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter’s support. Yet a candidate’s position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support.”

Despite challenges, the statement urges Catholics “to become more involved: running for office, working within political parties and communicating concerns to elected officials.”

It suggests that Catholics should be “guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a particular political party or interest group.”

As they prepare for the elections, the statement says, “Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates’ positions on issues and should consider candidates’ integrity, philosophy and performance.”

The Catholic Foundation

The Catholic Foundation
CORNERSTONE

Year-End Gifts
As the end of another year approaches, many stop to review, reflect and plan. By thoughtfully addressing your charitable gifting priorities between now and December 31, you can potentially increase your tax refund or reduce taxes you would otherwise pay next April. Carefully considering what to give and when to give can help increase the impact of your gift. And if you are over the age of 70 1/2, you may want to consider your last opportunity to give directly from your Individual Retirement Account as part of the Pension Protection Act of 2006.

Year-End Gifts Make a Difference - Plan Yours Today!

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.cfok.org
tcasso@catharchdioceseokc.org

Please Remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Your Estate Plans

Retirement Fund Collection Set for Dec 8-9

Catholic parishes in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City will conduct the 20th annual appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious Dec. 8-9.

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City contributed $138,882.95 in 2006, a 4 1/2 percent increase over 2005 donations of $132,918.50. Among those religious institutes in the archdiocese that received grants that were made possible by this appeal: the Sisters of Benedict in Piedmont, the Benedictine Fathers in Shawnee and the Carmelite Sisters of St. Therese in Oklahoma City. Many religious institutes that are well-known and revered for their ministries in the archdiocese but are headquartered elsewhere benefit through grants that are directed to the institutes’ motherhouses.

In 2006, this appeal, which is conducted by the National Religious Retirement Office (NRRO) of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, D.C., distributed $23 million in basic grants that benefited 515 of the nation’s Catholic religious institutes of women and men.

“The unfunded retirement liability is difficult and painful to comprehend,” said Sister Janice Bader, a Sister of the Most Precious Blood of O’Fallon, Mo., and NRRO acting director. The appeal, she says, has helped ensure that this liability can become a “manageable concern,” rather than the “crisis” that writer John Fialka described in his groundbreaking article in The Wall Street Journal in 1986.

Since the first national annual appeal took place in Catholic parishes in 1988, NRRO has raised more than $529 million. The Retirement Fund for Religious collection has been the most successful appeal in U.S. Catholic Church history.

During the past two decades, however, the gap between assets available for retirement and the cost of living/health care for elderly women and men religious has widened from $2 billion to $9 billion and is expected to grow. In 2023, the combined Social Security benefit of all retired religious is projected to be $184 million a year, but cost of care will total more than $1.6 billion annually.

More than 37,000 Catholic religious are now past age 70. More than 5,000 women and men require skilled nursing care.

The average Social Security benefit for religious women and men is approximately one-third that paid to the average U.S. beneficiary.
Interns Gain Valuable Experience at Saint Joseph Counseling

OKLAHOMA CITY They come from different backgrounds and universities, but the graduate students practicing internships in St. Joseph’s Counseling Services at Catholic Charities have one goal in common — to learn counseling skills in a professional and supportive environment.

Monica Palmer, counselor at Catholic Charities for the past 15 years, remembers her internship experience at Catholic Charities. “When I was searching for an internship site over 15 years ago, I was very selective about the type of professional experience I wanted. I chose St. Joseph’s Counseling because of the spiritual element and the staff’s compassion and respect for others. During my internship, I appreciated the support I received from Catholic Charities.” Monica said.

“My experience was so positive that after earning my professional counseling license, I joined the counseling staff at Catholic Charities soon afterwards. I have enjoyed my job ever since.”

Several graduate students who are currently practicing their internship at Catholic Charities shared positive stories about their internship experiences. “One of the unique opportunities I have appreciated is the staff’s flexibility in our schedules, and the chance to learn from all the counselors, not just one supervisor,” said Samantha Bell, University of Oklahoma student. Nicole Porte’, University of Oklahoma student, added, “The counseling staff treats us like professionals, not interns. This allows us to learn, grow and explore theories and get feedback.” Nicole attended Bishop McGuinness before going to OU. Both Samantha and Nicole are working on their master’s in community counseling.

Southern Nazarene University student intern Ronda Morgan, who currently is a nurse in the Bethany Public Schools, is working on her master’s of arts in marital and family therapy, MAMFT. “I am so grateful for the positive attitude of the counselors, and how helpful they have been to me and the other interns. God is at work here. They go ‘all out’ to help us learn and develop our counseling skills.” Ronda completed RCIA and joined the Catholic Church last April at St. John the Baptist Parish in Edmond.

St. Joseph’s Counseling Department began in 1990, said Dr. Louie Lepak, Director of Counseling Services. The following year, 1991, the counseling internship program began. Monica Palmer and one other student were the first interns ever in the program. Since 1991, approximately three dozen interns have been trained by Catholic Charities, which averages about two or three interns each year. “What we enjoy about our relationship with our interns is that we learn from each other and from the institutions that they are attending. It is a win-win situation. While they are with us, they become a part of our team providing services for our clients. In exchange, they receive supervision and experiences that are outside the classroom setting,” Dr. Lepak said.

Over the years, interns who have participated in the program continue to stay connected with the Catholic Charities counselors. “We are always happy for them when they graduate and get jobs, but it is always great to see them again on special occasions. Staying connected is positive for all of us,” said Dr. Lepak.

Several staff members have worked for St. Joseph’s Counseling Services for many years which has brought stability and consistency to the counseling program. Sister Betty Kehoe, a member of the Congregation of Notre Dame, who is a licensed marital and family counselor, LMFT, was the third employee hired in the counseling program in 1990. She is the associate director of the program. Monica Palmer, LPC, joined the staff in 1991. Dr. Louie Lepak, who is a licensed professional counselor, LPC, with a doctorate in counseling psychology, was named director of St. Joseph’s Counseling in 1994. He has been only the second director of this program. Richard Linhardt, LMFT, school counselor, has been with the program since 1998. Counselor Lee Acres, LPC, and Rebecca Weddell, administrative assistant, have been with the counseling program for two years. Lourdes Lopez, administrative assistant, joined the counseling staff in September of this year.

St. Joseph’s Counseling Services helps individuals, children and families cope with the stresses of life issues such as marriage, divorce, sexual abuse, job loss, depression, crises, parenting, intergenerational conflicts, behavioral problems and adult and family relations. The program is a resource to pastors, parishes and schools. Last year, St. Joseph’s Counseling served approximately 600 persons and families. The department also provides counseling services in 16 parochial schools.

Help Catholic Charities Reach Annual Appeal Goal by End of Year

Your special gift to the 2007 Annual Appeal unites you in Catholic Charities ministry of following Christ in helping the homeless, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, and counseling those facing difficult life issues.

Catholic Charities Annual Appeal, which began in September, has reached 81 percent of its $2.4 million campaign goal. The Annual Appeal funds most of Catholic Charities’ $3.9 million budget. This year’s goal was raised to support increased costs of Catholic Charities programs and services which help children, adults and families throughout the archdiocese. “The rising costs of rent, utility bills, gasoline, food and other items are making it more difficult for our clients to pay their bills,” Tim O’Connor, executive director, stated.

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City needs your help. “The works of Catholic Charities are not complete until everyone participates in supporting our mission through prayers, volunteer services and financial support,” O’Connor said.

Goal $2.4 million

Current tally $1,936,242

Catholic Charities Annual Appeal Tally as of Nov. 21
Young Oklahoma Catholics Attend National Youth Conference

By Eileen Dugan
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Young Catholics from across the country arrived in Columbus, Ohio, recently for the National Catholic Youth Conference 2007. More than 20,000 strong, they worshipped, prayed and attended life-changing workshops together from Nov. 8-11.

The conference, themed “Discover the Way,” attracted Catholic teenagers, grades 9-12, and their youth leaders and chaperones crowded into the Columbus arena to hear nationally known Catholic speakers Tony Melendez, Father Tony Ricard and Renee Bondi. Steve Agrisano served as emcee.

Conference workshops exploring topics as diverse as forgiveness, Catholic spirituality and prayer, global issues, chastity, vocations and leadership development were popular with the teens as were the liturgies, concerts and exhibits.

Three chartered buses filled with high schoolers and adults from the Archdiocese traveled from the Catholic Pastoral Center in Oklahoma City to Columbus to attend the conference.

“Altogether, counting youth and sponsors, about 150 went from our archdiocese,” said Ray Malget, youth minister at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Perry. “Three girls from our parish attended: Courtney Pilkington, Bree Mendenhall and Hannah Sanders. Cathy Pilkington, Courtney’s mom, also came along.”

At the conference, the three girls from Perry went to an informative workshop in which a priest broke the Mass into small parts and explained each part. They also attended a study group about holy friendships between women which they enjoyed, Malget said.

These same girls visited the vocation area and spoke with some nuns. “They were amazed that there were so many different types of nuns,” he said. “They found out how the various orders of nuns differ from one another.”

Malget said his students benefited spiritually from the conference. “I saw a new spark in their eyes. We are a small parish, so there are not a lot of people they can share their faith with. The kids can’t talk about religion at their public school because there are very few Catholics there, and other people don’t understand our religion.

“Here at the conference and on the bus, the girls made lots of new friends. They found that they were free to talk with these friends about their faith and not feel persecuted, because everyone was Catholic.

Malget’s students gained so much from the conference that they are already planning to go to the next one, two years from now. "They are so enthusiastic, that since they returned, they have been telling everyone else in the youth group about the conference. Now, some of the others who didn’t go this year want to go next time," he said.

That many parishes from the archdiocese did not go to the conference or send any of their youth surprised Malget. "The kids that did go got a lot out of it, and I did, too," he said. "I feel rejuvenated. The speakers really got through to the kids. I saw many kids so touched by what the speakers were saying that they cried. Seeing how much they were moved by the speeches touched my heart as well. For some of these kids, the conference was a life-changing experience."

Sister Ivana Menchaca, CMST, a pastoral minister at Holy Angels Parish in Oklahoma City, saw her students changed as well.

“I took two young people: Cynthia Delatorre and Cindy Cortinas,” she said. "They have shared with me how much they got from the conference. Even while we were still in Columbus, I saw a change in them. At the conference, in the beginning, they were shy. They kept to each other. But by the end of the weekend, they were sharing their faith with many other teenagers and were sad when the conference was over. It was the same kind of experience for me."

“What most touched me was to see so many kids from all over the U.S. coming together for worship and prayer. It was really a moving moment! With all the tension about immigrants lately, to see all these kids, black, white, Hispanic and Asian coming together and not even noticing their differences was amazing."

“My students benefited from the conference because they got to know other teenagers who were Catholic. They had spiritual contact with them, and, wow, it was amazing! Since they have been back, they have shared what they did and what they experienced with the other youth of our parish."

“Next time, I hope to take many more teenagers to the conference and encourage their parents to come, too, so that they can have the same experience their kids are having,” Sister Ivana said.

Oklahoma Catholics Cathy Pilkington, Bree Mendenhall, Ray Malget, Hannah Sanders and Courtney Pilkington take in one of the local attractions in Columbus, Ohio. Photo Courtesy

McGuinness senior Jeffrey Merritt signs a letter of intent to play basketball at Samford University. Shown are Barbara Renz, Mary Beth and Brian Renz, Gary Savely, Matt Renz, Jennifer Frakes and David Morton.

McGuinness senior Mary Beth Renz signs a letter of intent to play tennis for the University of Oklahoma. Pictured are Phillip Lancaster, Peta and Mia Lancaster, David Morton, Tim Ritchie, Vicki Connelly and Gary Savely.

McGuinness senior Jeffrey Merritt signs a letter of intent to play basketball. Shown are Suzy Morrill, Jeffrey and Paul Morrill, Gary Savely, Tondrell Durham and David Morton.
Centennial Float Pays Tribute to State’s Benedictine Sisters

By Rex Hogan
For the Sooner Catholic

GUTHRIE — Weeks prior to the centennial parade, St. Mary parishioner Mary Ann Henderson started thinking about the Benedictine Sisters’ contribution to Guthrie and Oklahoma.

The Benedictine Sisters arrived in Oklahoma prior to statehood. In 1889, the Benedictine Sisters opened the Oklahoma Territory’s first school at St. Mary’s Parish in Guthrie. They established a school for black children in 1890 in Langston. The Sisters would do many other things, primarily educational, in the early days of Oklahoma.

Henderson thought the Benedictine Order should be recognized for its accomplishments. She telephoned the Benedictine Sisters in Piedmont and talked to them about being in the centennial parade. That’s when things got somewhat complicated.

The Sisters said they’d be honored to pay tribute to the Sisters who came before them in Oklahoma by riding on a float.

“I talked with members of four Christian Life community groups and said, ‘The Sisters are excited about it,’ but I have a problem. They want a float and I don’t know anything about it,” Henderson said.

Fortunately for Henderson, the Sisters and the CLC group, there were members of St. Mary’s Parish who did know something about building floats. Mary Pat Cordis and her husband, Orson, Lyn Colorio and Liz Sterkel started working on the float. The CLC group including Cris Carter, Linda Ritchie, Kris Rush and Ivey Snyder, and also Henderson’s husband, Upton, provided nail kegs for a desk and cradles for the school and orphanage scenes.

Benedictine Sister Eunice Ballmann of the Red Plains Monastery in Piedmont said the Sisters were proud to represent their order in the centennial parade.

“When they contacted us we decided we would love to do it. We even dressed in our old habits,” Sister Eunice said.

“I think there were 11 of us altogether. There were eight Sisters from Tulsa,” she said.

The Benedictine Sisters came to Oklahoma 118 years ago from Iowa to start a school. In 1916, the Sisters established a college for women west of Guthrie. About 20 years later, the Benedictine Sisters organized Claver College for black high school graduates.

Sister Eunice said being in the parade wouldn’t have been possible without the help of St. Mary’s Parish.

“They did all the work in Guthrie. All we did is show up. We were very proud of what our Sisters have done,” she said.

Mount Event Yields Payoff of More Than $100,000 for High School

OKLAHOMA CITY — More than 335 parents, alumni, faculty, board of trustees, corporate sponsors and friends gathered together Nov. 17 for the annual Magic at The Mount, a dinner and auction extravaganza that raises money to advance the mission of Mount St. Mary High School. Bright Lights, Big City, Bold Vision was this year’s theme, and those words rang true as attendees viewed a spectacular fireworks display from the Petroleum Club on the 34th floor of the Chase Building in downtown Oklahoma City. The fireworks display was an unexpected benefit that was in conjunction with Oklahoma’s centennial celebration.

The evening included impressive items generously donated by various members of The Mount family that were available at both the silent and live auction. The evening was highlighted by raffling off a car or $10,000 cash. Students of Mount St. Mary High School pre-sold the raffle tickets and the excitement was high as the names of Larry and Kathy Waite of Midwest City were drawn as winners of the raffle. The evening generated over $100,000 in proceeds that will benefit the students at Mount St. Mary High School.

“Having this year’s auction at The Petroleum Club created an air of excitement and electricity,” said Mount Principal Talita DeNegri. “Our guests were eager to support The Mount, and the generosity in the room helped us to exceed our expectations. I am extremely proud of our Mount community parents, students, alumni and corporate sponsors. It was a great evening to showcase our school mission and our school family. Everyone is already anticipating next year’s event!”
What Every Parent Should Know About ‘The Golden Compass’

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. (Zenit.org). — The film “The Golden Compass” isn’t simply about using fairy-tale magic to tell a good story. It corrupts the imagery of Lewis and Tolkien to undermine children’s faith in God and the Church, says Catholic author Pete Vere.

In this interview with ZENIT, Vere and Sandra Miesel discuss the movie adaptation of the fantasy novels written by Philip Pullman.

Vere and Miesel are co-authors of the booklet “Pied Piper of Atheism: Philip Pullman and Children’s Fantasy,” to be published by Ignatius Press next month on the topic of “The Golden Compass.”

Q: The first movie of “The Golden Compass” trilogy is being released at Christmas. For those unfamiliar with the series, what kind of books are these and to whom do they appeal?

Vere: To begin, the books are marketed for 9- to 12-year-olds as children’s fantasy literature in the tradition of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and J.K. Rowling. “If you’re a fan of ‘Lord of the Rings,’ ‘Narnia’ or ‘Harry Potter,’” the critics tell us, “you’ll love Pullman.”

Personally, I just can’t see a child picking up these books and reading them. I see them more as books that adults give kids to read. Having said that, “The Golden Compass” (1995) is the first book in Pullman’s trilogy. The second book is titled “The Subtle Knife” (1997) and it is followed by “The Amber Spyglass” (2000). Collectively, the trilogy is known as “His Dark Materials.” This is appropriately titled in my opinion, since each book gets progressively darker — both in the intensity with which Pullman attacks the Catholic Church and the Judeo-Christian concept of God, as well as the stridency with which he promotes atheism.

Collectively, the trilogy is known as “His Dark Materials,” a phrase taken from John Milton’s “Paradise Lost.” This is appropriately titled in my opinion, since each book gets progressively darker — both in the intensity with which Pullman attacks the Catholic Church and the Judeo-Christian concept of God, as well as the stridency with which he promotes atheism.

For example, one of the main supporting characters, Dr. Mary Malone, is a former Catholic nun who abandoned her vocation to pursue sex and science. The reader does not meet her until the second book, by which time the young reader is already engrossed in the story. By the third book, Dr. Malone is engaging in occult practices to lead the two main characters, a 12-year-old boy and girl, to sleep in the same bed and engage in — at the very least — heavy kissing. This is the act through which they renew the multiple universes created by Pullman.

Another example is Pullman’s portrayal of the Judeo-Christian God. Pullman refers to him as “The Authority,” although a number of passages make clear that this is the God of the Bible. The Authority is a liar and a mere angel, and as we discover in the third book, senile as well. He was locked in some sort of jewel and held prisoner by the patriarch Enoch, who is now called Metatron and who rules in the Authority’s name. When the children find the jewel and accidentally release the Authority, he is right.

Additionally, Pullman uses the imagery of C.S. Lewis’ “Narnia” chronicles. “His Dark Materials” opens with the young heroine stuck in a wardrobe belonging to an old academic, conversing with a talking ani-

mal, when she discovers multiple worlds. So the young reader is lured into fantasy, with the familiar feel of Lewis.

Q: Many Catholics, including William Donohue of the Catholic League, are speaking out against the movie. What should parents know before they let their children watch this film?

Vere: I don’t recommend any parent allow their children to view the film. While the movie has reportedly been sanitized of its more anti-Christian and anti-religious elements, it will do nothing but pique children’s curiosity about the books. I’m a parent myself. My children would think it hypocritical if I told them it was OK to see the movie, but not to read the books. And they would be right.

It’s not OK for children — impressionable as they are — to read stories in which the plot revolves around the supreme blasphemy, namely, that God is a liar and a mortal. It is not appropriate for children to read books in which the heroine is the product of adultery and murder; priests act as professional hit men, torturers and authorize occult experimentation on young children; an ex-nun engages in occult practices and promiscuous behavior, and speaks of it openly with a 12-year-old couple; and the angels who rebel against God are good, while those who fight on God’s side are evil. This is wrong. And while it’s been softened in the movie — or at least that’s what Hollywood is telling us — it’s still there in the books.

Miesel: Furthermore, there’s a great deal of cruelty and gore in the books, not just battles but deliberate murder, sadism, mutilation, suicide, euthanasia and even cannibalism. There are also passages of disturbing sensuality and homosexual angels who are “platonic lovers.”

I agree with Pete. Avoid both the movies and the books. It would be best if people didn’t picket or make a public fuss because that’s just free publicity. If the movie fails at the box office, the second and third books won’t be filmed.

Q: The author, Philip Pullman, is an outspoken atheist. Does this come across in the books and the movie as a secularist position or more in the form of anti-Catholicism?

Vere: It’s not an “either/or” situation. What begins as a rebellion against the Church turns into a rebellion against God. This then leads to the discovery that God — and Christianity — are a fraud.

The 12-year-old protagonists discover there is no immortal soul, no heaven or hell. All that awaits us in the afterlife is some gloomy Hades-type afterlife where the soul goes to wait until it completely dissolves. Thus Pullman uses anti-Catholicism as the gateway to promoting atheism.

Q: The trilogy is being compared to “Harry Potter” and “The Lord of the Rings.” Is there a comparison to be made with either?

Vere: On the surface, yes. You’ve got wizards, heroines, strange creatures, alternate worlds, etc. Although for reasons already stated, the real comparison — by way of inverted imagery — is to C.S. Lewis’ “Narnia” chronicles. Pullman, who has called “The Lord of the Rings” “infantile,” has a particular dislike for Lewis and “Narnia.” This is reflected in Pullman taking Lewis’ literary devices and inverting them to attack Christianity and promote atheism.

Vere: Thus what we see here is more contrast and corruption than comparison. Also, the work of Tolkien, Lewis and Rowling is primarily driven by the audience. It is the average reader who purchases these works, reads them and makes them popular.

Pullman’s work, on the other hand, appears to be driven by the critics. The only people I know recommending Pullman’s work are English majors and university professors. I don’t know a single electrician, hairdresser or accountant who recommends Pullman’s work by word of mouth. Thus the books haven’t resonated with the average person to the same degree as “Lord of the Rings,” “Narnia” and “Harry Potter.”

Q: Nicole Kidman, a Catholic who stars in the film, has said she wouldn’t have taken the role if she thought the movie was anti-Catholic. What do you make of this response?

Vere: The film has not yet been released, so I cannot comment on it. However, Christ asks very pointedly in the Gospels: Can a good tree bear rotten fruit? The movie is the fruit of the books and Pullman’s imagination. These are anti-Christian and atheistic at their core. How does one sanitize this from the movie without completely gutting Pullman from his story?

During an interview with Hollywood screenwriter Barbara Nicolosi a couple of months ago, I asked her whether it was possible to tone down the anti-Christian elements for the movie. Nicolosi is the chair of Act One, a training and mentoring organization for Christians starting out in Hollywood. She had given the question thought. A few years ago one of her friends — an evangelical Christian — had been asked by her agent to pitch on the project, that is, to propose to write the screenplay adapting “The Golden Compass” to film.

“We read [the book] and there was just no way we could come in on this,” Nicolosi told me. “Pullman’s fantasy universe is nihilistic and rooted in chaos. You cannot fix that in a rewrite without changing the story Pullman is trying to tell — which is atheistic, angry, and at times, polemical.”

But let’s suppose it is possible. Let’s suppose Kidman is right and that the movie has been sanitized of its anti-Catholicism. The books remain saturated with bitter anti-Christian polemic. So why promote a movie that will only generate interest in the books among impressionable young children?

For the Christian parent, the movie cannot be anything but spiritual poison to their children — for the movie is the fruit of the book.
Poor Planned Parenthood? One Corporation the Media Supports

By Brent Bozell III

As much as liberals decry major corporations that act as if they’re above the law, there’s always quiet when the subject is Planned Parenthood, America’s number one corporate provider of abortions. During its 2005-2006 fiscal year, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America performed a record 264,943 abortions, reported a tidy profit of $55.8 million — and received a record high in taxpayer funding of $305.3 million.

This is one corporation the media holds in the highest regard. They’re not “merchants of death.” That would be the tobacco companies, or gun manufacturers, or hamburger joints. These are the heroic “providers” of “a woman’s right to choose.”

They’re also sleazy in their business practices. In Aurora, Ill., Planned Parenthood planned to build the biggest abortion clinic in the country, but they lied by omission to the city. Throughout the construction process, they applied for permits by listing the owner as “Gemini Office Development,” not as Planned Parenthood.

ABC News to the rescue! Barbara Pinto filed a report on the Sept. 19 “World News,” suggesting black was white. “Planned Parenthood denies they’ve deceived anyone,” she stated, adding that their spokesman in Chicago said they were “entirely truthful.” Pinto proceeded to blame Aurora’s officials for being dimwitted: “None of the city officials or elected officials were aware that Planned Parenthood would be the tenant in this building. That, despite the fact plans they approved included a surgical center, bulletproof glass and numerous security cameras.” ABC ended by quoting the clinic’s neighbors wishing the pro-lifers would stop protesting: “I just wish that they’d go home. I’m tired of seeing their signs.”

Down the highway in Kansas, Johnson County District Attorney Phil Kline just filed 107 charges against Planned Parenthood, charging that its clinic in Overland Park, Kan., performed unlawful late-term abortions. Kansas state law holds that abortion is legal only when a doctor affirms that the baby is not viable to live outside the mother’s womb. If the baby can live, then two doctors must attest the abortion is necessary for the woman’s physical or mental health. That’s why clinic records are an issue.

The 23 felony counts allege that Planned Parenthood submitted false “pregnancy termination reports” to a court on Aug. 21 in response to a subpoena. District Court Judge James S. Vano agreed there was probable cause to think crimes had been committed and set a Nov. 16 court date. Planned Parenthood faces more than $2.5 million in potential fines.

But you’ll not see a story virtually anywhere on this budding scandal because the press studiously avoids scrutiny of its liberal sacred cows — or focuses its guns on that person who would dare to get in their way. They’d lionize a state official attacking crisis-pregnancy centers that try to talk women out of abortions. But investigate the abortion industry, and you’re a national disgrace.

In 2005, Kline was demonized by glossy national magazines like GQ as the man “who will do anything to stop abortion.” In that GQ article, his local Planned Parenthood adversary, Peter Brownlie, was allowed to make the ridiculous claim that “Planned Parenthood, by its efforts to prevent unintended pregnancies, has prevented more abortions than any anti-abortion group that has ever existed. They talk. We do.”

So pro-lifers should applaud Planned Parenthood — for not killing every baby it encounters.

Now comes another ABC News story on its Web site, with a fresh liberal tilt. ABC’s Emily Friedman began by suggesting Kline was “either an agenda-driven prosecutor operating outside the law or one of the best friends the anti-abortion rights movement has ever had.”

Not only are pro-lifers not “pro-life,” they’re not even “abortion foes.” They’re now — in a news report, remember — “anti-rights.” Friedman unloaded the critical comments of liberals: not just Planned Parenthood’s Brownlie, but Kansas professor Burdett Loomis (whom even she noted was a strategist for the Democratic governor of Kansas in 2004), and Kim Gandy, the boss of the National Organization for Women, who lionized Dr. George Tiller, the champion of hideous third-trimester abortions, as “one of the very few who has the courage to do this kind of work.”

A Kline spokesman tried to rebut the claims of “critics,” but it was hopeless. The overall tone of the piece was how Kline is only ruining the “choice” of third-trimester abortions for desperate women, his pro-life agenda is ruining the Republican Party on the plains. ABC’s expert analyst? Professor Loomis the Democrat, who concluded the article: “I think even within the Republican Party, this is a guy who has probably outlived his welcome.”

Planned Parenthood is a formidable force in national (and state) politics. One major reason is networks like ABC, news outlets that don’t really care whether this corporation plays by the rules, as long as the abortion assembly line keeps running.

“By permission of L. Brent Bozell and Creators Syndicate, Inc.”

Across Oklahoma

Christmas Gift Sponsors Needed

OKLAHOMA CITY — Catholic Charities is seeking gift sponsors for the annual Adopt-A-Family Christmas Program. “We still have about 70 families that need to be ‘adopted’ for the Christmas holidays,” Becky Van Pool, director of Parish Outreach for Catholic Charities, announced. “We hope that individuals, organizations, churches and others will sponsor a family. For many people in need, they would not have Christmas for their family if it were not for the generosity of our sponsors,” she added.

The program matches anonymous sponsors with families in need throughout the greater Oklahoma City area. Sponsors then drop off the gifts on Dec. 10 at a central location where the families in need pick them up two days later.

Families in need are referred to the program from parish-based St. Vincent de Paul groups. Last year 307 families received gifts. Cash donations also are accepted for the purchase of gift cards for families in need.

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

Craft Fair Scheduled

OKLAHOMA CITY — Trinity Gardens and Villa Isenhart Apartments are planning a craft fair and bake sale on Saturday, Dec. 8 between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend. The craft fair will be held in the Trinity Gardens Community Room at 3825 NW 19th St., Oklahoma City. There will be between 12 to 16 craft booths with many items, and the resident councils are baking goodies that can be purchased for the holidays. For anyone interested in having a booth or for additional information about the event, contact Kathy Pitt at 947-4143.

St. Francis of Assisi Craft Show

OKLAHOMA CITY — St. Francis of Assisi Church, 1901 NW 18th St., will host its annual craft show from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 9 in the Parish Hall. Parish and local crafters will have wonderful gifts for the entire family. For more information, call Mercedes at 210-3235.

Scouts to Reflect

MEDFORD — Jan. 1 will be a day of reflection for Scouts working on Religious Scouting awards. The day is for grades 5-12 and will be held here at Saint Mary’s Church. Mass will be celebrated. To register, contact the Youth Ministry Office at (405) 721-9220.

Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference will be held on Saturday, Jan. 26 at Bishop McGuinness High School. Registration begins at 8 a.m. Mass with Archbishop Eusebius Beltran is at 5:30 p.m. Cost is $35, after Jan. 18, cost is $45, students, $25, includes lunch. Register at www.OCWConference.com.
Conversion More About Growing Than Letting Go

Over 20 years ago, I bought an unpainted plaster nativity set from an arts and crafts store on their after-Christmas sale. I spent a substantial amount of time during the next year painting each little piece and constructing a stable for the Holy Family. For years, my children used the figurines like puppets as they practiced retelling the story of the first Christmas.

Last year, the nativity set had a little accident. During the installation of built-in bookshelves, my husband rested a large piece of wood against the mantel. It slipped, hit the coffee table, and took out half of my nativity set.

I was not happy. I had a deep sentimental attachment to that hand-painted nativity set. Every Advent, when I lifted the tissue-wrapped pieces from a box, I would smile and replay the memories. With one loud crash, it had all come to an end.

After some heavy sighs and an errant tear over the mishap, I began to realize that it wasn't the tragedy I was making it out to be. The set was far from a realistic depiction of the first Christmas. The diminutive figurines were cartoon-like little boys and girls, dressed up in biblical costume, like a caricature of some children's Christmas pageant at a local community center. They had infantile smiles on their painted faces. The angel wasn't even part of the infantile smiles on their painted faces. The Christmas Song we compose in our modern rendition, the "eyes all aglow" belong to proud parents, not tiny tots. And those reindeer really know how to fly; they made the honor roll.

I'm as guilty as you. We roll our eyes at the boastful letters, then we roll up our sleeves, rack our brains for the year's most impressive accomplishments. We wrap them in muscular language, trying to recall the active verbs of resume rhetoric like "execute" and "implement."

Whenever possible, we reference ranks: Captain, Senior Consultant, Most Valuable, Best in Class.

To back it up, we quote from a panel of experts: the teacher, the coach, the priest, the principal, the boss.

Then we quantify our success: winning first place in soccer, scoring a 33 on the ACT, shaving two minutes off a run, taking a 10-day trip to seven countries, overseeing 20 employees.

In the end, our attempt to update friends reads more like a request for a job recommendation.

Of course, it's hard to avoid some of these techniques. They help us fill a blank page in comprehensible terms.

But on a deeper level, this holiday custom provides us with a unique opportunity for self-inventory. How we sum up a year can be incredibly telling. What really counts cannot be counted.

The Faith Community Nurses Association of Oklahoma, in association with Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, will offer the Basic Preparation Course for faith community nurses the weekends of March 13-15 and April 17-19. The two-weekend course will be held at Saint Peter Catholic Church in Guymon.

"The training course prepares a registered nurse to provide wholistic nursing care to members of a faith community, thereby assisting that congregation to reclaim the healing ministry of Jesus," Marilyn Seiler, Faith Community Nursing Resources Center manager, stated.

Functions of a faith community nurse include health educator, advocate, coordinator of volunteers, referral agent, integrator of faith and health, counselor and developer of support groups. The course also offers an opportunity for nurses to focus on the spiritual aspects of nursing.

Registration is limited to 15 people. Tuition for the entire basic course is $450. Scholarships are available from several sources. If you are interested in more information, call Marilyn Seiler, Faith Community Resource Center at (405) 526-3006 or e-mail Marilyn Seiler, mseiler@catholiccharitiesok.org or Mary Diane Steltenkamp at mdsteltenkamp@catholiccharitiesok.org

Meaningful Lesson Often Buried in Boastful Annual Family Letter

By Christina Capecchi

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire, raw pride nipping on your prose. Stunning feats being sung in a card and kids dressed up like dynamos.

The Christmas Song we compose in our modern rendition, the "eyes all aglow" belong to proud parents, not tiny tots. And those reindeer really know how to fly; they made the honor roll.

I'm as guilty as you. We roll our eyes at the boastful letters, then we roll up our sleeves, rack our brains for the year's most impressive accomplishments. We wrap them in muscular language, trying to recall the active verbs of resume rhetoric like "execute" and "implement."

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Of course, it's hard to avoid some of these techniques. They help us fill a blank page in comprehensible terms.

But on a deeper level, this holiday custom provides us with a unique opportunity for self-inventory. How we sum up a year can be incredibly telling — if you read between the lines.

When my mom asked me to write my portion of our family Christmas letter, I made note of the notables. Easy enough. Then I read through it, surprised to discover that the entire paragraph pertained to my education and career. The lingering questions being: Do I have friends? Hobbies? A life outside work?

It was a reality check. I'm reworking the paragraph — and the lifestyle.

Our achievement-centric society takes hold at a young age. By the time you finish your schooling, there's pressure to not just begin a career, but to excel at it, to quickly earn the kind of accolades for which Christmas letters are notorious.

But the measurements we find handy and acceptable are often faulty. And the feats we deem admirable and important are often meaningless in the scheme of things, that is.

Because the scheme is incredibly broad, spanning back to a baby born two millennia ago. His arrival did not involve a new Lexus or an upscale B&B. Just a bumpy donkey ride and a dusty manger. He did not go on to be voted Most Popular. Truth is, he was kind of a loner, befriending lepers and defending an adulteress.

Jesus didn't see the Pharisees for their status and power; he saw their hypocrisy. He never paraded virtue; he prayed in private. He took no stock in society's arbitrary metrics and he made that known. St. Peter wrote, "With the Lord, one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day."

Our only true judge couldn't care less about our rung on the corporate ladder. Rather, he asks us to be good and faithful servants to feed the hungry and welcome the stranger in our midst.

This December, as bonuses are awarded and progress is chronicled on holly berry stationery, remember this: What really counts cannot be counted.

Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. E-mail her at christinaacap@gmail.com.
Tiny Tim Can Help With Advent Reflection

Ever since the South Eastern Transit Authority (SEPTA) began providing transportation for the disabled, I’ve been able to go Christmas shopping for family and friends. I’ve done most of my shopping at a bookstore. And I start my shopping early, often as soon as August arrives.

My friends think I’m nuts. But it’s the only way I can even think about buying something for all the people on my list. I finish much of my shopping before Thanksgiving because I hate fighting crowds. Besides, with shopping completed, Advent can be a time for spiritual reflection, which now includes my annual reading of “A Christmas Carol.”

In the early 90s I had a CCD student whose birthday was Christmas Day. I sympathized with her because her great day was overshadowed by a greater day. So, on the last day of class before Christmas vacation, I presented her with the Dickens classic.

“Ebenezer could see his wealth making a difference in someone’s life, while helping to change his life as well. Dickens’ book has not lost its power over the 160 years since it was first published.”

From Where I Sit
By Bill Zalot

In the following weeks, I’ve been reading my way through Dickens’ classics. Christmas Carol, Great Expectations, Hard Times, Bleak House, and the works that led to his immortal creation Tiny Tim. I fell in love with the story because of Tiny Tim. I made a trek to the local public library to see if I could find Tiny Tim...and I did.

On Sunday, December 2, 2007, I turned on my car radio and heard this conversation:

“...I have endeavored in this ghostly struggle with the dead to tell this story of the spirit of the season, for there is no arm too short to hold another, and no heart so hard that it cannot be softened by this tale.”

Our Story: Why We Oppose the Death Penalty

For several years many of you have read our letters in the Sooner Catholic and occasionally in the Daily Oklahoman about our feeling on the use of the death penalty in Oklahoma. The following is our story so that those of you who do not know us personally can better understand why we so strongly oppose the use of capital punishment.

Our son, Mark, met Billy Fox at a party the last week of June, 1985. Fox was telling everyone that he had a deal with the night manager of a grocery store about getting easy money. Mark thought this was a neat idea and agreed to go with him.

On July 3, 1985, three young men working the night shift at a grocery store in Edmond were killed. Two of them were shot with a shotgun and the other stabbed with a knife and beaten to death with the gun. Three families lost their precious children that night. There is no worse feeling.

Mark and Billy Fox were tried together by District Attorney Bob Macy. They were convicted and given the death penalty. This was in early 1987.

Imagine, if you will, having a son on death row and now another man on death row for killing your mother. We have no words to describe our feelings at that time. Again, we never questioned the integrity or the validity of our criminal justice system and the use of the death penalty. This was about to change.

Jim Fowler and his wife, Annie, are outspoken critics of the death penalty. The Fowlers are members of Saint Charles Parish in Oklahoma City. They can be reached at ja2bears@cox.net

Stem Cell News
Called Highly Promising by NCBC Leader

PHILADELPHIA — Christian Newswire — The highly promising strategy of reprogramming human somatic cells, presented in recent papers by the research teams of Dr. Shinya Yamanaka and Dr. James Thomson, represents a significant breakthrough in attempts to obtain pluripotent stem cells, and affects the ethical discussion around stem cells in a very positive way. The studies confirm that human skin cells (fibroblasts) can be used to make pluripotent stem cells sharing essentially all the features of human embryonic stem cells. The technique involves the introduction of four genes into the skin cells, thereby “reprogramming” them to a less specialized state.

The National Catholic Bioethics Center has been exploring and promoting the use of alternative methods of deriving pluripotent stem cells for several years, and the methods described in these papers fully conform to what we have hoped to see for some time. Such strategies should continue to be pursued and strongly promoted, as they should help to steer the entire field of stem cell research in a more ethical direction by circumventing the moral quagmire associated with destroying human embryos. These strategies also circumvent a second series of moral objections by provid- ing a method for obtaining patient-matched stem cells without cloning human embryos or using women’s eggs. Reprogramming also appears to be technically simpler and more straightforward than other approaches involving embryos.

In response to these developments, Dr. Ian Wilmut, the researcher responsible for cloning Dolly, has decided not to pursue a license to clone human embryos, which he was awarded just two years ago in Britain, but to pursue reprogramming strategies instead. His change of position flowed largely from practical considerations, but he reportedly acknowledged that the reprogramming approach is also “easier to accept socially.” Persistence in seeking creative scientific breakthroughs and actively pursuing alternative approaches can help resolve ethical problems associated with stem cells, maintain the ethical integrity of science while achieving important scientific and medical ends. The NCBC encourages such morally acceptable alternative approaches to obtaining pluripotent stem cells in the realization that it is never necessary for laboratory researchers to cross fundamental moral lines in order for science and medicine to make real and enduring advances.

FROM THE SOONER CATHOLIC
Where I Sit

December 2, 2007 • Sooner Catholic
Comunidad Latinoamericana en Oklahoma

Buenas Noticias...

Más quedados Humanos y Hermanas de Cristo

Entrev el día de Acción de Gracias y la Navidad encontramos. Inserción el Advento, el cual nos brin- da una nueva oración para valorar la manera en que celebramos y vivimos nuestra fe Católica. El Advento nos desafía para que tomemos nuestra fe Católica con más seriedad y podamos crecer en el conocimiento y amor de Dios. Esto es precisamente lo que queremos cuando los hijos que viven completamente nuestra fe Católica.

No adoptamos un plan y haremos un serio esfuerzo para usar este tiempo con sabiduría, entonces, el Advento para sí y no vamos a mejorar.

El Día de Acción de gracias y la Navidad son días fundamentales. El Día de Acción de Gracias nos evoca el orgullo de la gracia que Dios nos ha dado, reservado todas las cosas buenas. La Navidad nos tra la rima de los regalos de Dios porque es Dios mismo quien se nos brinda. Entre las celebraciones del Día de Acción de Gracias y la Navidad, tenemos una bella temática de Advento. Normalmente estas cuatro semanas son el período de preparación, y anticipación, del nacimiento de Jesús. Este año la Navidad nos da un día misterioso, por lo que el Advento está reducido a sólo tres semanas. Por ello, ten- mos urgidos de hacer todo lo posible para que alcancemos el mejor a esta ter- cera temporada de Advento.

Debido a que el Advento es un tiempo de ale- gria que nos presta para la preparación del nacimiento de Jesús, necesitamos comenzar a recordar lo que Dios nos ha concedido. Seguramente encontraremos en la Escritura los nombres de Dios, de quien vienen las cosas buenas.

Dios y solamente Dios es el que
Solamente Dios Triunfó, Dios Ruta, Hijo y Espíritu Santo no tiene comien- zo ni fin. Todas las cosas y todo el mundo tienen un nombre. Ellos crearon el universo. Dios Todopoderoso. Cada uno de nosotros vino al mundo por la voluntad de Dios. Dios tiene un plan para los seres humanos. Dios nos hizo a cada uno a su imagen y semejanza para que tuviéramos vida, lo conocíamos; lo amamos y lo sirvimos para que algún día nosotros, podamos adorar y rezar con él para siempre en el cielo.

El Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica nos describe hermosamente el plan de Dios para con los seres humanos. El Catecismo dice que los cri- mos creados por Dios y para Dios. Por lo tanto, el deseo de tener a Dios con- straine el hombre y todo que tome- mos por la salvación que anhelamos.

...Adiamento

El Advento nos desafía para que tomemos nuestra fe Católica con más seriedad y podamos crecer en el conocimiento y amor de Dios.

Mensage de los obispos del Piemonte

La Jornada de la Salud Mental: Escuchar el grito de dolor

BIELLA, (CENTRO).— Como es ya habitual, desde hace algunos años en Italia se celebra el 2 de diciembre la Jornada de la Salud Mental, propue- ta para llamar la atención de la opi- nión pública hacia una cuestión que se impone cada vez más, por gravidad y cantidad, en Italia y en general, en los países desarrollados.

En el trabajo religioso, y tambíe- n a través de los centros de escucha de la Iglesia italiana, según se puede manifiesto en el Congreso de la Iglesia en ese país, celebrado en Verona, celebrado en 2006, se registra un gran aumento en los últimos años de personas que sufren depresión y trastornos psíquicos. A menudo hay quien, esencialmente dice Dios que el trastorno psiquico “es un tema sobre el que no podemos hacer nada, hacen alta mente”, o bien: “no tenemos enfermos mentales en nuestro territorio”.

Son respuestas que expresan tanto falta de preparación (falta de datos, simplificación del problema mismo, etc.) como algo de lo que la comunidad eclesiástica adolece en general, según denuncia el Grupo de Christianos por la Paz de Biella, Italia: pequeños, extranjeros, médicos y pre- ocupación, que, en el mejor de los casos, son tan de no quedar aflorar la situación, para no preocupar.

Estos cristianos han dado a conocer dos documentos para reflexio- nar sobre el problema, ante la proto- ma Jornada del Eclesiastical del 2 de diciembre, que en la iglesia del Piemonte se celebrará el próximo domingo 2 de diciembre.

Además estos cristianos que “la comunidad eclesiástica debe, a pesar de estas tareas, reconocer, cuidar, convivir con el sufrimiento psiquico”, citando dicho por la Cátedra de los An- sanas de Nueva, el 25 de noviembre de 2007 sobre la pregunta: ¿qué es un cueste sobre el sufrimiento psiquico? Estos cristianos distinguen el comunio- de la pregunta de la Mesa, Regional por la Promoción de la Salud Mental del Piemonte y el Valle de Aosta, y el manejoso de los obispos de la región del Piemonte, en la que se encuentra Biella, —armado por monseñor Guido Panzuni, obispo auxiliar y vicario general de la Archidiócesis de Turín, delegado regional para la Pastoral de la Salud y monseñor Francesco Ravina, obispo de Asti, delegado regional para la Pastoral de la Canad y del Migrantes—, que se celebrará en las iglesias el domingo 2 de diciembre.

El comunicado de prensa de la Mesa se titular “La comunidad que cuída” y afirma que “la independencia de no quedar aflorar la situación, para no preocupar. Estos cristianos han dado a conocer dos documentos para reflexio- nar sobre el problema, ante la proto- ma Jornada del Eclesiastical del 2 de diciembre, que en la iglesia del Piemonte se celebrará el próximo domingo 2 de diciembre.

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Cuando cumplimos el mandamiento de Dios de amar al prójimo

Solamente existe armonía social, cultural, moral y espiritual

Por Mauro Yan
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Este año 2007 que está a punto de terminar, y el cual está por culminar ha trazado muchas lecciones y desafíos a cada uno de nosotros.

Hemos vivido un año muy intenso, sin embargo, nadie ha permitido que nos dejemos separar de Dios para seguir con nuestro peregrinaje por la vida. En este año han mos abordado por el tema de la inmigración, hubo muchos grupos que se expresaron a favor de los beneficiados y problemas que supone la inmigración en Oklahoma.

No obstante, los inmigrantes han hecho de su presencia un legado de la vida, y nos enseñan a entender al mismo tiempo que algunos presentan ante el cambio y el cambio que estamos en contra de la inmigración o simplemente hacen caso omiso a las leyes de los seres humanos.

Ante estas demandas y realidades, debemos reflexionar, estar y buscar la solución a la inmigración, mientras que las leyes de Dios y la justicia, lo cual sólo se hace posible si entiendemos nuestra vocación en Cristo, quien es nuestro Señor y Salvador. La afirmación de nuestra identidad y nuestra vocación se hace a la luz de Dios.

La comunidad inmigrante tiene sus carencias y limitaciones. Dejemos que sean una inminencia.

Por eso no puede haber que los inmigrantes, en medio de nuestras limitaciones, somos seres humanos. Ignorarlos, esto es no querer reconocer que todos somos hijos de Dios.

Por tal motivo, los inmigrantes que profesamos la fe Católica, debemos apoyar a nuestra Iglesia para encontrar un mayor diálogo que permita introducir la originalidad del mensaje evangélico en el corazón de la personalidad.

Instituto Cultural Hispánico ha sido un todo éxito

Por la gracia de Dios y la buena voluntad de sus participantes

Por Mauro Yan
Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — El Instituto Cultural Hispánico fue creado por un grupo de profesionales y estudiantes universitarios para ayudar a entender la cultura hispánica y ofrecer nociones básicas del idioma español a ascendientes, hispanos, hispanos latinos y estudiantes hispanos. Este proyecto ya es una realidad que se lleva a cabo en la parroquia San José. Allí, en este maravilloso instituto sus participantes han encontrado una forma de aprender a hablar como hispanos, desarrollar y comprender su lengua en la música y en el teatro.

Mas allá de los planteamientos y de las barreras culturales y de las diferencias raciales, lingüísticas e ideológicas, los hispanos y las inmigraciones se unieron para reconocer a nuestros hermanos que son parte de una diversidad.

En estas clases magistrales se busca concienciar a nuestros hermanos y hermanadas sobre la importancia del respeto al conjunto de principios y valores que constituyen la esencia del pueblo hispano.

El Instituto Cultural Hispánico busca sensibilizar a la sociedad, que comprendan la cultura hispánica. La urelidad que nos debe anidar con este Instituto, debe ser enseñar con nuestras palabras y nuestras acciones, la necesidad de defender al pueblo hispano y sus valores, para así lograr liberación de las circunstancias que lo opinen y humillen en los momentos actuales.
JOBS BOX

Administrative Assistant
Catholic Charities is seeking an administrative assistant for a new position. The successful candidate must have the following qualifications: a self-starter with the ability to multi-task, proficient in the use of Microsoft Word, Excel and Publisher; possess excellent communications skills including composition and proofreading; excellent interpersonal skills including the ability to interact in a positive way with clients and donors. Salary is dependent on education, experience and relevant job skills. Bilingual candidates preferred. Resumes and salary history should be sent to: Human Resources, Catholic Charities, 1501 N. Classen Blvd., Oklahoma City 73106 or by e-mail to nlargent@catholiccharitiesok.org.

Bilingual Receptionist
Catholic Charities is seeking a bilingual receptionist for the Immigration Assistance Program. The successful candidate must possess excellent verbal and written communication skills in both English and Spanish, the ability to use Microsoft Word, Outlook and other basic computer programs, and the ability to interact in a positive way with clients, volunteers and donors. Salary is dependent on education, experience and relevant job skills. Bilingual candidates preferred. Resumes and salary history should be sent to: Human Resources, Catholic Charities, 1501 N. Classen Blvd., Oklahoma City 73106 or by e-mail to nlargent@catholiccharitiesok.org.

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

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

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

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

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

Direct Care
The Center of Family Love in Oklahoma City is looking for direct care technicians. These openings are at both the ICF M/R and the Looseen Center. We pay well and have a significant shift differential. We provide training and have a paid time-off program. For more information, call John Iseneger at the Center of Family Love, (405) 263-4658 or fax your resume to (405) 263-4563.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Catholic Radio is now on the air until 5:30!
“Catholic Answers Live” from 3 to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday Then continue listening to “Web of Faith” and “Defending Life” from 5 to 5:30 p.m. on your drive home!

On KTLR 890 AM
Support Oklahoma Catholic Broadcasting, Inc. okcatholicbroadcasting.com
DECEMBER

2 First Sunday of Advent

4 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.

5 Holy Family Home Mass, 10 a.m., Holy Family Home, 6821 Eddie Drive, Midwest City, (405) 523-3000.

5 First Friday Adoration at St. Francis of Assisi in Oklahoma City. After the 7:30 a.m. Mass, and concludes at 5:30 p.m. with closing prayer and Benediction. This is open to all. St. Francis is located at 1910 NW 19th (just two blocks east of Penn) in Oklahoma City.

7 First Friday Sacred Heart Mass at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is at 5:30 p.m. with the Sacrament of Reconciliation available prior to Mass.

Pastoral Ministry Program Offers Spring Course Schedule

SPRING 2008 SCHEDULE

CORE COURSES

THEO 4003 CHRISTOLOGY
Tuesday evenings, 7 to 10 p.m., St. Andrew Church, Moore. Instructor: Mike Chavez
Students investigate the answers given in Scripture and ecclesial tradition to Jesus’ question, “Who do you say I am?” Prerequisites: Ordinarily New Testament Literature and Theology of Church.

THEO 4023 THEOLOGY & METHODS OF MINISTRY
Saturday mornings, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Catholic Pastoral Center, OKC. Instructor: Peggy Browne
This course offers a foundational theology of ministry rooted in baptism. Particular focus will be given to the role of the laity in ministry and various types of ministry will be explored. Prerequisite: Ordinarily three core courses.

ELECTIVE COURSES

THEO 4883 THEOLOGIES OF CONVERSION
Monday evenings, 7 to 10 p.m., Catholic Pastoral Center, OKC. Instructor: Joe Forgue
This course will be a study of images and processes describing movements inherent to initial and ongoing religious conversion, with special emphasis on horizons within Catholic Christianity.

THEO 4883 THEOLOGY OF MARY
Thursday mornings, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Catholic Pastoral Center. Instructor: John Warren
This course invites students to explore our long history and tradition of Mariology. The role of Mary, her many titles throughout history, in Scripture and Tradition, in the liturgical and devotional life of the Church, and in art and music will be among the topics considered in this course.

THEO 4883 CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY
Monday evenings, 6 to 10 p.m., March 10 through May 5, Holy Family, Lawton. Instructor: Sister Diane Koorie, RSM.
This course will “break open” both the Good News and those essentials of the tradition and teachings of Catholic Christianity that distinctively make us Catholic, familiarize students with the developments of Catholic Social Teaching and its movements, specifically within the context of American history, and further the cultivation of a spirituality of personal and social discipleship.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION COURSES

Information on courses in Spiritual Direction is available from Benedictine Ministries, (405) 373-4739. These courses may be taken for credit through the Pastoral Ministry program.

THEO 4101 Spiritual Classics 2 [2 hours credit]
Continuation of a two-course sequence with readings which span over 1,600 years in order to provide understanding of the spiritual journey across time, culture and personalities.

THEO 4312 Spiritual Direction Practicum 4 [Practicum 2 Part 2] [2 credit hours]
Second course in a two-course sequence which continues the learning and discerning process within one’s formation for the ministry of spiritual direction.

Course includes instruction, supervision in spiritual direction, journaling, verbatims and peer presentation. Prerequisites: THEO 4001, 4002, 4203.
Note: There will be no Practicum I until the fall of 2008.

THE CERTIFICATE IN YOUTH MINISTRY STUDIES PROGRAM

Information on this series of courses that promote leadership development for ministry with adolescents is available from the Archdiocesan Young and Adult Office, (405) 721-9220. These courses may be taken for credit through the Pastoral Ministry program.

This course explores the theology, principles and practices of effective leadership in Christian ministry.

THEO 4881 Skills for Christian Leadership [1 hour credit], March 29-30, 2008, Catholic Pastoral Center
This course addresses the theories and skills needed for principle-centered leadership in ministry. Stresses the application of leadership skills to various ministry settings, problems and issues.

For information or registration, call or e-mail the Pastoral Ministry Office, (405) 721-4208, 800-721-5651 Ext. 131, or cgrimes@catharchdioceseokc.org, or dkoorie@catharchdioceseokc.org. Program information and schedule is also available online at www.catharchdioceseokc.org. Click on Chancery Offices, then Education, then Pastoral Ministry.
 Celebration

Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference

January 26 Event to be Held at Bishop McGuinness High School

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma Catholic women are invited to spend a day of reflection, healing and renewal at the Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference in January. The conference will be held on Saturday, Jan. 26 at Bishop McGuinness High School.

Four sessions featuring both local and out-of-state speakers have been scheduled, and vendors have contracted to set up booths selling books, clothing and religious items. The relics of St. Gianna will also be on display. Gianna Beretta Molla was an Italian doctor, wife and mother who refused to have either an abortion or hysterectomy when she was diagnosed with a life-threatening condition while pregnant with her fourth child.

Snacks and lunch are included in the $35 registration fee. After Jan. 18, the registration fee is $45. Students may register for $25, and any religious and those who cannot afford the fee may attend at no charge. A T-shirt commemorating the event may also be ordered for $15.

The conference will begin with check-in at 8 a.m., and conclude with Mass at 5:30 p.m. celebrated by Archbishop Beltran.

More than 700 women attended the first conference held in January 2007.

For registration and more information, visit the conference Web site at www.ocwconference.com.

Speakers and topics are:

Katie Gordy
“The Meaning of Eucharist in My Life”

Katie Gordy holds a master’s in human relations from the University of Oklahoma with an emphasis in chemical dependency. She taught at Putnam City West High School for two years, then junior high at Rosary School for nine years where she was vice principal. Since 1993, Katie has served as the pastoral associate at St. Monica in Edmond where she does spiritual counseling and runs Religious Education for over 500 children and adults. She has facilitated the Artist Way class for over 10 years. Katie has spoken around Oklahoma for over 20 years. She has been married for 37 years to her high school sweetheart, Jack, raised five daughters and four foster children, and has six grandchildren.

Joan Wester Anderson
“Where Angels Walk”

Author and lecturer Joan Wester Anderson is the author of 15 books, including “Where Angels Walk” and “True Stories of Heavenly Visitors,” which was on the New York Times best-seller list for over a year, has sold almost 2 million copies and has been translated into 14 languages. Her most recent book, “In the Arms of Angels” (Loyola Press) covers angelic activity primarily during the past decade, including stories of hope from the 9/11 and Columbine School tragedies. Anderson has appeared on national television programs, including Good Morning America, Oprah, 20/20, NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw and Mother Angelica Live. She is a Catholic, a graduate of Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago, and resides in suburban Chicago.

Rosalind Moss
“Faith in the Midst of Unbelief” and “God’s Will for the Family: How to Live It”

Rosalind Moss is a staff apologist with Catholic Answers, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the Catholic faith through all forms of media. She was born and raised in a Jewish home, and in her adult years embraced Jesus as the Messiah of the Jewish people. Her initial conversion took her from a 15-year Evangelical Protestantism, she entered the Catholic Church at Easter 1995. Rosalind now travels the world speaking and teaching through parishes, conferences, women’s and family retreats, books and publications, TV and radio.

Gianna Beretta Molla was an Italian doctor, wife and mother who refused to have either an abortion or hysterectomy when she was pregnant with her fourth child. Doctors had discovered the second month of her pregnancy a fibroma tumor in her uterus. As a doctor, Gianna knew the consequences of not fully treating the fibroma. She chose the life of her child over her own. On the morning of April 21, 1962, a healthy baby girl was born, Gianna Emanuela. Her mother died of septic peritonitis a week after the birth. Gianna was beatified by Pope John Paul II on April 24, 1994, during the international year of the family and was canonized on May 16, 2004.

Relics
St. Gianna Molla
October 4, 1922 - April 28, 1962

Gianna Beretta Molla was an Italian doctor, wife and mother who refused to have either an abortion or hysterectomy when she was pregnant with her fourth child. Doctors had discovered the second month of her pregnancy a fibroma tumor in her uterus. As a doctor, Gianna knew the consequences of not fully treating the fibroma. She chose the life of her child over her own. On the morning of April 21, 1962, a healthy baby girl was born, Gianna Emanuela. Her mother died of septic peritonitis a week after the birth. Gianna was beatified by Pope John Paul II on April 24, 1994, during the international year of the family and was canonized on May 16, 2004.