For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:11-12

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Artwork by the late Father John Walsh
The Good News

. . . A Very Blessed and Merry Christmas

It is truly a great joy to be able to extend to you, the Catholic people of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, my very best personal wishes for a most blessed and joyous and Merry Christmas. This joyful greeting is also intended for friends and family members, associates and collaborators everywhere. In all my Masses on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the entire Octave of Christmas, you will all be specially remembered as I commend you to the Lord and pray for His very special blessings upon you and your loved ones. This means that I shall complete the year 2009 and begin the New Year 2010 with prayers and blessings for all of you. May you experience a blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy and Holy New Year!

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. As we lovingly commemorate the historical moment when Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem, we also recognize the dynamic message of God’s love. Christmas is not just a celebration of the past. It should be an ongoing realization of God’s continuing presence in our midst. Christmas is a marvelous opportunity for us to grow in faith and hope in our relationship with the Lord.

There is but one God and He is good and gracious. The very concept of God extends far beyond our limited understanding. Through personal experience we come to know that we are limited creatures both in knowledge and ability. God, on the other hand, is almighty, all powerful and eternal. It is only the goodness of God that has made it possible for us to accept and appreciate the mystery of God.

Beginning with our creation, God, out of nothing, designed us in His own Image and Likeness. Then continuing through revelation in history, God enables us to acknowledge Him and at the same time to better appreciate who we are. This revelation culminates in the coming of Christ. This is the Truth of Christmas and this Truth is unique. Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem, is indeed God. In accepting our human flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Jesus is also truly human. He is indeed our Brother as well as our Lord and Savior.

Christianity does not limit God, nor does it elevate the human person to the divine. Yes, Jesus is the Eternal Son of God and therefore truly God. He is also the Son of Mary and therefore truly human. It is the same Jesus who is both God and man. From the very beginning of the Church, the unique Person of Jesus Christ has been understood as having two natures, one divine and one human. Thus every Sunday we proclaim in the Nicene Creed:

“We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven:

May you experience a blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy and Holy New Year!

by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary and became man.”

This is Jesus whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. This is Jesus whom we recognize as a Person. Thus our faith is not placed in some unknown being but in the Person of Jesus Christ, true God and true Man!

Let us joyfully celebrate Christmas and enter the New Year as people of faith and hope. Let us also remember that for that faith to grow, we must come to know Jesus. The Sacred Scriptures, the Church and the Sacraments are the principal instruments for us to know Jesus. But they remain instruments. What is absolutely essential is our personal response to this good and loving God. This is the Good News that the Scriptures proclaim, the Church announces and the Sacraments celebrate. This is the invitation that I extend to you — a very blessed and Merry Christmas and a Happy and Holy New Year!

Sanctity of Life Mass to be Celebrated Jan. 20 at Cathedral of Our Lady

OKLAHOMA CITY — Archbishop Beltran will celebrate the Sanctity of Life Mass at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 20. The Mass will be held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The faithful are encouraged to pray for our nation and its attitude toward the value of life in remembrance of the 1973 Supreme Court case of Roe vs. Wade, which legalized abortion.

Programs to discuss the Catholic social teaching about the sanctity of human life will follow. For teens, the discussion will be facilitated by Father William Novak, of St. John Nepomuk Church, Yukon, and for adults by Father Stephen Hamilton of Saints Peter and Paul of King-fisher will preside. Refreshments will be served.

For more information, call Becky VanPool at Catholic Charities, at 523-3003, or bvanpool@catholiccharitiesok.org.

Visit us online through the Archdiocesan Web Page at www.catharchdioceseokc.org.
Parishioner Donates Quilt to Help Clinton Building Fund

Agnes Hoelker was 20-something when she and her mother made a wedding ring quilt.

It was in the 1930s as they lived on the family farm by Anthon, nine miles north of Clinton. The 1-inch squares of material came from old cotton scraps meticulously stitched together by hand. The underside stitching scroll pattern was made by a pedal-powered Singer sewing machine.

Agnes was a surgical nurse in Clinton, where she shared a home with her brother, Albert. Until recently, Agnes was an avid bowler and can still, with some coercion, tickle out those ragtime tunes on the piano. A devoted life-long Catholic, Agnes (which means “lamb” in Latin) still drives herself to church every day to set the altar for Mass. This August she will celebrate 100 years of life.

Agnes is donating this heirloom quilt to the St. Mary Church Building Fund Project in Clinton. Raffle will be drawn on Christmas Eve. Tickets are $1 each. If you would like to buy a ticket, send check to St. Mary’s, 714 S. 12th St., Clinton, Okla. 73601, put “Quilt” in the notation. Call 580-323-0345 for more information.

Archdiocese to Celebrate Mass on MLK Day

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Archdiocese annual celebration to honor the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will be held on Monday, Jan. 18 at noon at Corpus Christi Church. Mass will be celebrated by Archbishop Beltran with priests of the Archdiocese con-celebrating.

A multicultural tribute will be held at 11 a.m. to share reflections on Dr. King and the role we share in the pursuit of justice and peace. “The event, which is organized each year by Corpus Christi Parish and Catholic Charities, celebrates King’s work and invites the community to join in solidarity with those who are in need, working for ways to improve their lives,” said Becky VanPool, director of Catholic Charities Parish Outreach and Program Development.

“Dr. King challenged society to ‘lift the load of poverty,’ and we are challenged to pray and work for all those who are poor and oppressed,” she said. “By improving their lives, we improve our own lives as well.”

Many schools and government offices are closed on Dr. Martin Luther King Day to pay him respect. Father John Zupez, SJ, pastor of Corpus Christi, said the parish will host the celebration as a tribute from the Catholic community. An interpretive dance by Corpus Christi youth will be featured. After Mass, youth groups, schools and parishioners are invited to join in the King Holiday Parade which starts at 2 p.m.

The King Holiday Parade promoting the theme “Challenges Beyond the Dream” will follow the Mass. Participants are encouraged to wear their parish shirts and bring banners to carry. Groups may gather at Corpus Christi Church, 1005 N.E. 15th St. For more information, contact VanPool at 523-3009.

Bishops: Health Vote ‘Grave’ Mistake

WASHINGTON — “The Senate vote to table the Nelson-Hatch-Casey amendment is a grave mistake and a serious blow to genuine health care reform,” said Cardinal Francis George, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. “The Senate is ignoring the promise made by President Obama and the will of the American people in failing to incorporate longstanding prohibitions on federal funding for abortion and plans that include abortion.”

Bishop William Murphy, chair of the Bishops Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, said: “Congress needs to retain existing abortion funding restrictions and safeguard conscience protections because the nation urgently needs health-care reform that protects the life, dignity, conscience and health of all. We will continue to work with senators, representatives and the administration to achieve reform which meets these criteria. We hope the Senate will address the legislation’s fundamental flaw on abortion and remedy its serious problems related to conscience rights, affordability and treatment of immigrants.”

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, chair of the Bishops Committee on Pro-Life Activities, said: “Congress needs to separate facts and truth from political rhetoric on abortion funding. Even our opponents claim they do not support federal funding for elective abortions and they want current restrictions to apply. The way to settle this often misleading debate is simply, clearly and ex-plicitly to apply Hyde restrictions to all the federal funds in the legislation. That is what the House did and what the final bill must do. The Senate should not approve this bill in its current form.”

Bishop John Wester, chair of the Bishops Committee on Migration, pointed out: “For many years the bishops have strongly supported accessible and affordable health care for all. Health care must protect, not threaten, human life and dignity; respect, not violate, consciences of providers, taxpayers and others. We believe universal coverage should be truly universal, not deny health care to those in need because of where they come from or when they arrive. The Senate proposal falls short in these areas. Immigrants deserve access to health care for their benefit and the common good of all of society. We urge senators to support amendments that would leave immigrants and their families behind as the nation reforms health care. We urge senators to resist amendments that would improve health-care access for immigrants and their families and to oppose efforts that deny them access.”

Cardinal George concluded: “While we deplore the Senate’s refusal to adopt the Nelson-Hatch-Casey amendment, we remain hopeful that the protections overwhelmingly passed by the House will be incorporated into needed reform legislation. Failure to exclude abortion funding will turn allies into adversaries and require us and others to oppose this bill because it abandons both principle and precedent.”
Church to Celebrate Vocation Awareness Week in January

WASHINGTON — The Catholic Church in the United States will celebrate National Vocation Awareness Week, Jan. 10-16.

“This week provides the opportunity for parishes across the country to promote vocations through prayer and education,” said Cardinal Sean O’Malley of Boston, chairman of the Bishops Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations. “It is our responsibility to encourage young people to be generous in their response as they discern the possibility of a call to service in the Church. We must also ask parents, families and our parish communities to assist with this work, vocations are everyone's business. As we pray for an increased number of seminarians and candidates for religious life, we recognize the importance of safeguarding the gift of vocations.”

Several initiatives to highlight priesthood and religious life are ongoing in 2010. The Vatican-sponsored Year for Priests continues through June 2010, www.usccb.org/yearforpriests/. Dioceses are highlighting the role of priests in diocesan newspapers, on their Web sites and with other events.

An exhibit on the contributions of women religious in the United States, Women and Spirit, opens at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington on Jan. 14. More information on this traveling exhibit can be found at www.womenandspirit.org. The Smithsonian is co-sponsoring this exhibit with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

The U.S. bishops have also named promotion of vocations to priesthood and religious life as one of their current five priorities and are deciding on efforts to promote vocations, for example, through the observance of National Vocation Awareness Week (NVAW) began in 1976 when the National Conference of Catholic Bishops designated the 28th Sunday of the year as the beginning of NVAW. In 1997, this celebration was moved to coincide with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which falls on Jan. 10 in 2010, marks the initiation of Jesus into public ministry. At his baptism, Jesus is named the beloved Son of God. With this celebration, the faithful recommit themselves to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. They are also initiated through their own baptism to be the Beloved of God, commissioned to proclaim Good News with their lives.

For information on vocations in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, contact the Vocations Office at (405) 721-5651.

Priest Taught Great Lessons on How to Live and Die for Christ

His name was Father Marcel Salinas. I knew him only briefly, but he taught me one of life's greatest lessons. He taught me how to die.

Father Marcel was in residence at my parish. He was in his early 60s, while I was in my early 30s, and caught between what the Lord wanted of me and what the world wanted of me.

Father Marcel reminded me of my Italian grandfather. He called me “Miss Chastity” and always had a warm, grandfatherly hug for me. I loved him, and I sometimes felt sorry for him. He had taken vows of poverty and chastity. He had no family, no “stuff” except a rickety car and a sparsely furnished room. I thought it must be a difficult, lonely life.

And then I heard that Father Marcel had been diagnosed with stomach cancer and wasn’t expected to live long. Stunned, I rushed to the rectory to see him. I had no idea what to expect from a man who had just discovered his death is imminent. Would he be upset? Solemn? Morose?

The one condition I didn’t expect to find in him was “absolutely normal.” But that’s what I found. He was smiling, joking. “I’m going to haunt you, you know.” I saw no fear. Only calm confidence.

I figured the poor man was obviously in shock. In a day or two, he would get around to freaking out.

But he never did.

Two short weeks later I received a call telling me that the end was near. Again I rushed to the rectory. I wasn’t the only one. His bedroom was adjacent to an indoor courtyard where over 200 people had gathered. He was in and out of consciousness as the last rites were administered. We all sang, and then he opened his eyes and said in a strong voice, “Well, I’m obviously not in heaven yet.”

Over the next several hours, he met with each one of us there at his bedside. As I walked into the room for my turn, he smiled and exclaimed, “Miss Chastity!” I asked how he was doing, and he said, “I had no idea dying could be so pleasant.”

As I was leaving the room, I found an unobtrusive corner and lingered awhile. I watched person after person come to his bedside. He chided one about his hair. (“So it took my dying for you to finally cut it.”) He hugged and kissed and consoled. They thanked him for his impact on their lives, for leading them to Christ.

And Christ was there in that room. His presence was palpable.

Marcel had children. There in that simple, sparsely furnished room, I saw literally hundreds of them. They were his joy, his treasures.

And then I thought of what Marcel would see on the other side when he met his Maker. In that moment, when the Lord of the Universe asked him what he did with the gift of his life, Marcel could point down and say, “I led them to You.”

Father Marcel didn’t die that night. He went on to live two more weeks. But I learned a great lesson watching him. I learned that the only way to really plan our lives isn’t from this moment forward. It’s from the deathbed backwards. In my last moments of life, what do I want to look back and see? What do I want to tell God that I did with the precious years He gave me? Do I want to point out the nice furniture in the room where I died, or the late model car my heirs are fighting over?

No. I simply want to be able to say that I did His will as best I could, and allowed Him to work through me to make a difference. That’s a lot easier said than done. And I doubt that I could ever do it with the quiet confidence, grace and humility that I saw in my friend that night.

Rest in peace, Father Marcel.

Mary Beth Bonacci is an internationally known speaker on chastity and faith in the modern world.
Sister Hermana Left Legacy of Love With ‘A True Mother’s Heart’

By Katie Gordy

I am Katie Tener Gordy and I met Sister Assumpta as a 15-year-old sophomore at McGuinness High School. I was in the class of ’66, the class she always told me was her favorite, but maybe she said that to everyone.

She was a strict teacher who would only allow us to speak Spanish in the classroom. We really learned the language and many of her students went on to major in foreign languages. Judi Murray Wilkinson thought so much of the professora that she convinced OU to let her be the first person to do her student teaching in a Catholic school learning from the best supervisor she could have — Hermana.

Hermana was really old but she was actually in her early 30s. She never lived back at home. She went by, she was always affectionately called Hermana, which is Spanish for sister.

For 46 years she was so much a part of my life. She was at my wedding. When I had my first child, I called her at dawn after the 3 a.m. birth to tell her that Jennifer had arrived. I’ll never forget what she said, “I feel like a grandmother today.” It was in that moment that I saw the magnitude of her vocation’s sacrifice. But in reality, though she gave up having kids of her own, she saw the magnitude of her vocation’s sacrifice. But in reality, though she gave up having kids of her own, she saw the magnitude of her vocation’s sacrifice.

Vatican II changed Sister Assumpta to Sister Joan Marie Sanchez, her birth name. And it modified the veil to show her hair. But no matter what official name she went by, she was always the tiny window, we could see her calmly reading at her desk. We began to pound on the door because students were afforded very little time to get to our next class and being late meant demerits and possible Saturday class. We watched as she got up, took all of our possessions from our desks, and made a big pile. When the bell rang, she opened the door and stood back as we scrambled to retrieve our stuff. That was the only repercussion. She knew how to take a joke. She knew how to have fun with us.

Three exchange students from Mexico invited Hermana to bring a bunch of girls to visit them and be immersed in the culture for two weeks. So, 25 of us took a bus and trains to Mexico City. Hermana arranged for us to travel with the peasants in some pretty ratty (I mean that literally) trains because she had a heart for the poor and wanted us to experience how they lived. When we arrived in the capitol, there was an odd scramble dividing us up to stay in several separate houses. We found out many years later that these boys had not told their parents this gang of Americans was coming and I guess Hermana never checked with the adults. One of the Mexican families sent us on a train to Acapulco where we stayed in their villa for a week. I got tonsillitis there and this very ill and homesick 16-year-old was quite weepy. Hermana would have none of that. She told me to “buck up and stop crying.” And I did. On that trip, we girls were always trying to see Sister Assumpta’s passport to learn her real name and her age and to get a glimpse of her hair color since back then, it was totally hidden behind a wimple. As teens, we thought Hermana was really old but she was depending on her mood.

Hermana was a true mother’s heart. She told me of her brother who died on the USS Arizona by a kamikaze pilot on a ship in World War II. She also spoke to me often about beloved siblings, nieces and nephews, asking me for my prayers for them added to the endless ones she prayed.

My five daughters absolutely adored her and loved having her over for dinner.

Hermana was so many things to me but first and foremost, she was my mentor. When I was a young mother with a year-old baby, she called me one day and said, “Katie, I want you to go with me to a talk at McGuinness High School on abortion next Sunday.” I tried every way I could get out of it. But she wouldn’t hear of it and ended the discussion with, “I’ll pick you up at 2.” If I remember right, she had just learned to drive in her 40s. She and I went to that talk and it changed my life because I couldn’t pretend I hadn’t heard what I’d heard. It is because of Hermana I have spent the last 38 years of my life passionately involved in the pro-life movement. I was in on the ground floor of starting Birth Choice and she soon joined me there. We served together for years on the board of directors. And when Dr. Nix retired from the chairmanship, it was up to me to find others to nominates for the job.

Hermana loved pregnant mothers and their unborn babies. I went to see Hermana at the nursing home on Nov. 3. She was in and out of reality, I suspect because of strokes. She was in a wheelchair and she cried a lot that day. I asked her if she was ready to die and she said no. When I returned Dec. 1, I was shocked at how close to death she was. Though she was only semi-conscious and couldn’t really talk, I said the Rosary with her, recounted with her many of the memories I’ve shared here today and told her it was OK for her to go home, reminding her of her many relatives and students she would meet again who have gone before her. I kissed her and made the sign of the cross on her forehead, knowing it would be the last time I’d see her on this earth.

Thank you, Hermana, for helping make me who I am today and for positively touching the lives of so many. You gave your life for Christ and His Church, may you now see your bridegroom face-to-face. May you rest in peace, good and faithful servant, till we see you again.
Oklahoma Catholic Youth Applaud National Conference

Some 270 Youth, Adults From Our Archdiocese Travel to Kansas City for Faith-Building Event

Nancy Housh, Archdiocesan Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, said 30 parishes from throughout the Archdiocese were represented at the National Catholic Youth Conference held in November. The conference attracted more than 22,000 from across the United States. It was held in Kansas City, Mo.

Some 270 young Oklahoma Catholics along with their parish RE and youth directors attended the three-day event. Four priests, Father Joseph Irwin, Father Kevin Ratterman, Father Don Wolf and Father Prakash Mandineni accompanied the Oklahoma group.

By Taylor Neal

My experience at NCYC was one of love, glory and devotion. Over the course of the week I learned how to love God not only by my actions, but by the way I dress as well.

I met some new friends, even some that could not be seen, like the Holy Spirit. I laughed, I cried, I danced, I sang and it was all in the glory of our Lord. NCYC taught me how to carry out my love for God and my Catholic faith to bring to Duncan, Okla.

Living in Duncan, it is very challenging to live out a full Catholic faith with most everyone else not knowing about our faith. NCYC taught me how to show people my faith, not showing any shame, even if no one else approves.

I know most kids my age don’t quite understand how powerfully God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit can impact your life. This is very true for myself. I saw Christ, felt Him, and loved Him without even doubting it those few days in Kansas City.

I used to. And get this, I actually listen in church! I don’t zone out or not pay attention because I don’t want to miss a single minute of what God has to say to me. God broke through my deafness and my blindness in Kansas City, and I cannot wait for Him to break through everyone else’s as well.

Taylor Neal

Oklahoma Catholic teens traveled to Kansas City for NCYC.
RE Director Says Conference Powerful for Young Catholics

By Joyce Markes

There are no guarantees in life. I know, I know, except for dying and paying taxes. Nowadays, though, Catholic parents all across our state and nation can add an event to their high school teens’ experience bank that just might be a guarantee that they will remain strong, active Catholic adults. That experience is called the National Catholic Youth Conference or NCYC.

Thursday morning, one week before Thanksgiving, teens and adults from all across the state rolled into the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center around 5 a.m. That was our gathering spot before loading onto five charter buses, filled to capacity, headed to Kansas City to meet up with 22,000 other Catholic kids from all across the United States. Our particular adventure actually started last January when my husband, David, and I began talking about the fact that there were four high school-aged teens at our parish, St. Joseph in Bison, located 12 miles south of Enid on Highway 81 (aka Stanley Rother Boulevard.) We wondered then if it might be a year for a national youth conference and if any of those four teens would be interested and have the time. Two of the kids wanted to go but actually, they had no idea what they were signing up for. Their thoughts are also shared in this article.

This entire youth conference was SO Catholic and SO powerful, it knocked my socks off. Having attended many national conferences in the past as the youth director for both Enid parishes, I have never witnessed what occurred between Nov. 19-22. The stage at the opening session on Friday morning was shared with Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, the archbishop of Galveston-Houston. His presence alone was a wow thing. It gets better. That opening session ended with the age-old Catholic prayer of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with many, many priests, bishops and archbishops, incense, the monstrance, litanies, song, the covering for the procession, you get it? It was the real deal, right there in a sports arena with 22,000 Catholic young people and adults, so quiet, so prayerful. That same response carried through during the procession to the Kansas City Convention Center.

Another major Catholic action was the opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. This has been offered at previous conventions but never has there been so much emphasis by keynote speakers and workshop facilitators on the healing and peace that comes from receiving the sacrament. In order to facilitate so many confessions, a room, literally the size of a football field, was set up complete with an enormous crucifix on one candlelit wall, the smell of incense burning and seemingly uncountable priests sitting in a chair right next to an empty chair. The line to enter that room was endless yet fast moving. The teens obviously wanted the grace of that moment with a priest.

Speaking of priests, the presence of hundreds of them along with many bishops, archbishops and a cardinal, all sharing center space at the Eucharistic celebration which culminated our time together at NCYC, might possibly be a turning point for a young person pondering a vocation to the religious life. Their presence was a powerful witness to the importance of young people as the future of the Catholic Church. Workshops on saints, Mary, praying the rosary, receiving the Eucharist often — all these practices very central to the faithful Catholic — were presented in various formats oftentimes in conjunction with music and sometimes comedy or juggling. These activities, along with the participation from the clergy, completely brought home the message, the theme of the conference, CHRIST REIGNS, which was woven throughout the four days. It hit home with three pilgrims from Bison.

Markes is a veteran RE director and has attended numerous National Catholic Youth Conferences.
Buenas Noticias...

...Una Santísima y Feliz Navidad

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo:

Es una gran verdad tener el gusto de extenderles a ustedes, pueblo Católico de esta Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City, mi más sincero y profundo deseo de que tengan una feliz y próspera Navidad. Este saludo que os escribo con alegría tiene también la intención de que sea extensivo a sus amistades, familias, colaboradores donde quiera que se encuentren. En todas las Misa de Navidad, bien sea en la noche o en el día, como en la octava de Navidad, ustedes estarán especialmente recordados y los encomendaré a nuestro Señor. Estaré rezando para que Dios les dé una bendición especial a ustedes y a sus seres queridos. Lo que significa que estaré orando lo que resta del año 2009 y a comienzos del nuevo año 2010, para que todos ustedes tengan abundantes bendiciones.

¿Qué sus experiencias sean una bendición y que tengan una Feliz Navidad y un Bienaventurado Año Nuevo!

La Navidad es la celebración del nacimiento de Jesucristo. Con gran amor conmemoramos el histórico momento cuando Jesús nació en un establo en la ciudad de Belén. También reconocemos la dinámica del mensaje del amor de Dios. La Navidad no es una celebración del pasado. Más bien, debe ser una continua realización de que Dios está presente en nuestras vidas. La Navidad es una maravillosa oportunidad para que podamos crecer más en la fe y en la esperanza con respecto a la relación con nuestro Señor.

Dios existe y es muy bondadoso y nos llena de gracia. El concepto de Dios se extiende más allá de nuestro propio y limitado entendimiento. A través de nuestra propia experiencia personal, nos damos cuenta que somos criaturas limitadas tanto en conocimiento, como en habilidad. En cambio, Dios es Todopoderoso y eterno. Es solamente con la bondad de Dios que podemos hacer posible aceptar y apreciar el misterio de Dios.

Comenzando con nuestra creación, Dios de la nada nos creó a Su Imagen y Semejanza. Luego prosiguió a través de la historia para que lo conocieramos como Dios y al mismo tiempo apreciáramos lo que somos. Esta revelación culmina con la venida de Cristo. Justamente la venida de Cristo es la Verdad Navidad y esa Verdad es única. Jesucristo, quien nació en Belén, es definitivamente el verdadero Dios, quien fue humana en el vientre de la Santísima Virgen María, por lo que Jesús fue un verdadero humano. En verdad, Cristo es nuestro Hermano como también nuestro Señor y Salvador.

La Cristiandad no solamente se limita a Dios como una persona humana elevada a la divinidad. Si, Jesús es el Hijo Eterno de Dios y por lo tanto es el verdadero Dios. Jesús es el hijo de María y por lo tanto verdaderamente humano. Por eso Jesús es Dios y hombre. Desde principios de la Iglesia, la única vida que se entiende tiene dos naturalezas es la Persona de Jesucristo, quien es de naturaleza divina y también humana. Por eso todos los Domingos confesamos el Credo de Nicaea:

"Creo en un solo Dios, Padre todopoderoso, Creador del cielo y de la tierra, de todo lo visible y lo invisible. Creo en un solo Señor, Jesucristo, Hijo único de Dios, nacido del Padre antes de todos los siglos: Dios de Dios, Luz de Luz, Dios verdadero de Dios verdadero, engendrado, no creado, de la misma naturaleza del Padre, por quien todo fue hecho; que por nosotros los hombres, y por nuestra salvación bajó del cielo, y por obra del Espíritu Santo se encarnó de María, la Virgen, y se hizo hombre."

¡Es Jesús quien nació para que celebramos la Navidad. Es Jesús a quien reconocemos como Persona. Así, nuestra fe no está puesta en alguien que no conocemos sino en la Persona de Jesucristo, Dios verdadero y Hombre verdadero!

Vamos alegremente y celebraremos la Navidad y comenzemos el Año Nuevo con fe y mucha esperanza. Recordemos que para que nuestra fe crezca debemos conocer más a Cristo Jesús.

Las Sagradas Escrituras proclaman que la Iglesia y los sagrados Sacramentos son los principales instrumentos para conocer a Jesucristo. Pero son instrumentos, por lo que se hace absolutamente esencial nuestra respuesta personal para mostrar nuestra bondad y amor a Dios. Esta es la Buena Nueva que las Escrituras proclaman, la Iglesia anuncia y los Sacramentos encon- mienan.

¡Esta es la invitación que les extiende a cada uno de ustedes y en hora buena les deseamos una Santísima Navidad y un Feliz y Santo Año Nuevo!

Solidarizándose con nuestros niños en Navidad bajo expresión de bondad y amor
Vigilias, Misas, Canticos, Novenas y mucha Oración a la Patrona de las Américas
La Virgen María es honrada como verdadera Madre de Dios Redentor
Father Stephen Bird, director of the Archdiocesan Office of Worship and Spiritual Life, will lead a five-day pilgrimage to New York City next August. The dates are set for Aug. 26-30 and the deadline for registration and deposit is Jan. 15, 2010, on a first-come basis.

The pilgrimage will include tours of New York City's most famous Catholic and non-Catholic churches, cathedrals and religious sites. Mass will be celebrated throughout the trip. Some of the stops will be Shrines of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and St. Francis Cabrini, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (Episcopal, the largest cathedral in the world) and Temple Emanu-El, the world's largest synagogue.

Mass will be celebrated on Sunday, the final day of the trip at St. Patrick Cathedral. Later that evening, a harbor dinner cruise aboard the Bateaux New York will be taken. Live entertainment will be provided along the cruise that includes the Hudson and East River, passing the skyscrapers of Manhattan, and many celebrated landmarks, including the Statue of Liberty.

A deposit of $300 is required. Balance is due in monthly payments. Cost for the pilgrimage will be $1,800 per person, double occupancy; $2,177 single occupancy; three to a room, $1,644 per person; and four to a room will cost $1,565 per person.

Included in the trip is round-trip air from Oklahoma City, hotel accommodations in the Times Square area, daily breakfast, admission to all scheduled activities including two Broadway musicals, daily supper and tips (except for hotel room).

For more information, call (405) 721-5651 Ext. 158. The mailing address is Office of Worship and Spiritual Life, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123-0380. 

Father Bird to Lead New York Trip

2010 Dates for the Sooner Catholic

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Kay Conwell and Bev Layton, parishioners at Holy Family Church in Lawton, have completed an icon of the Transfiguration. The icon was requested by Father Kirk Larkin, pastor, and was blessed and dedicated at Holy Family.
Calendar

DECEMBER

20 Fourth Sunday of Advent

20 The Community of the Secular Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus - Oklahoma Community and Province of St. Therese, meets at St. Joseph Carmelite Monastery in Piedmont from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call Susan Stautd at (405) 282-6624 or Sister Silvia Negrete at (405) 232-7926.

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

20 The Secular Franciscan Order of St. Francis Fraternity meets at 1:15 p.m. at St. Anthony's Hospital Chapel. For more information, call Jim Disbrow at 830-8688.

20 Pilgrimage Sunday, Mass at 11 a.m. with blessing of the sick and children, noon lunch, 1 p.m. Novena Prayers to Infant, Litany of the Infant Jesus and Adoration. National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague is located at St. Wenceslaus Church at 304 Jim Thorpe Blvd. in Prague. From I-40, take exit 200 north 7 miles on SH99/377; or from I-44, take Stroud exit south 18 miles on SH99/377. (405) 567-3080 or www.shrineofinfantjesus.com.

23 Eucharistic Adoration at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, NW 32nd and Western, every Wednesday beginning with Mass at 8:30 a.m. and ends at noon. The Rosary is said every weekday at 2:30 p.m. All are welcome.

24 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at Epiphany Parish, in the chapel every Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and daily (M,T,W,F) from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. All are welcome. Epiphany is located at 7336 W. Britton Road, Oklahoma City 73132.

25 Christmas — Holy Day of Obligation

JANUARY

1 Mary, Mother of God — Holy Day of Obligation

9 The Benedictine Oblates of Red Plains Monastery will meet from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. They join the Community for Vespers, followed by a potluck dinner. For more information, contact Sister Eunice at 373-4565 or e-mail osbokc@ionet.net.

9 Film and Discussion Series at Saint Francis of Assisi Parish at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall. This month's movie will be Millions, directed by Danny Boyle, 2005. Films will be shown in their entirety with an introduction and a discussion following. Concessions and child care will be provided by the parish. For more information, call the Religious Education Office at St. Francis, (405) 528-0485.

12 Michael Reardon prayerfully and powerfully proclaims THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, at St. Francis Parish in the church at 7 p.m. This event is free and open to all.

12 Catholic War Veterans (of any war/conflict) will meet the second Tuesday of each month in the community room of St. Ann Retirement Center at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Father M. Price Oswalt at (405) 567-3404.

12 Bishop McGuinness home basketball game vs. Stillwater, varsity girls at 6 p.m. and varsity boys at 7:30 p.m.

12 Mount St. Mary home basketball game vs. Lexington, varsity girls at 6:30 p.m. and varsity boys at 8 p.m.

13 Catholic War Veterans USA. Oklahoma Memorial Post 168 will hold their monthly meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Sunnylane Family Reception Center located at 3900 SE 29th St., Del City. For more information, contact Bob at (405) 672-7728 or by e-mail at OkPost168@cox.net.

Jobs Box

Assistant Executive Director

The Center of Family Love, a non-profit organization serving adults with intellectual disabilities for over 28 years in Okarche, is looking for an assistant executive director. The assistant executive director will assist in establishing and directing the overall operations of the total agency. This includes the internal coordination between the group homes, ICFs/MR, and vocational programs and the external coordination with the community, other agencies and the board of trustees. Also assist in the coordination of all departments to ensure compliance with established standards. Assist the executive director in promoting public relations and overall fundraising activities in coordination with the governing body. Requirements include a bachelor's degree in a related field with several years of experience. Extensive business and management experience preferred. To apply, call 263-4658, fax 263-4718, e-mail alemke@cflinc.org or in person at 635 W. Texas, Okarche, Okla. 73762. EOE

Substitute Teachers

Sacred Heart Catholic School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for substitute teachers. Interested applicants should call 634-5673 for an application.

LPN/RN Openings

The Center of Family Love in Okarche has immediate openings for LPN/RN - Oklahoma Community and Province of St. Therese, meets at St. Joseph Carmelite Monastery in Piedmont from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call Susan Stautd at (405) 282-6624 or Sister Silvia Negrete at (405) 232-7926.

Director of Religious Education

Christ the King Church in Oklahoma City is seeking an experienced director of Religious Education. The director is responsible for overseeing the K-12 religious education for students not attending Catholic school, coordinating the RCIA program, Confirmation, First Communion and First Confession. The director also will be responsible for developing and coordinating a strong adult education program for the parish. The applicant should be well-versed in Catholic doctrine, work well with a variety of people and have strong initiative. Candidates should possess a degree in religion or theology, preferably a master's degree. Resumes should be sent to Father Rick Stansberry, Christ the King Catholic Church, P.O. Box 20508, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73156, or e-mailed to kelly@ckokc.org.
Sooner Catholic  
December 20, 2009

For the past several years, the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women have chartered a bus to help people make their way to the state Capitol for Rose Day. They will be doing it again this year and they want to make sure the bus is filled.

Rose Day is an annual event that brings pro-life Oklahomans to the Capitol for a day-long campaign to make sure state lawmakers understand the importance of supporting pro-life legislation. Rose Day was originally created by two Catholic women in response to the 1973 Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal in the United States. It will be held at the Capitol on Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2010.

The keynote speaker for the Rose Day event will be Dr. Alveda King, niece of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and who currently serves as a pastoral associate and director of African-American Outreach for Priests for Life and Gospel of Life Ministries. She is also a voice for the Silent No More Awareness Campaign, sharing her testimony of two abortions, God’s forgiveness and healing.

The daughter of the late civil rights activist, Rev. A.D. King and his wife, Naomi Barber King, Alveda grew up in the civil rights movement led by her uncle, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Her family home in Birmingham, Ala., was bombed, as was her father’s church office in Louisville, Ky. Alveda was jailed during the open housing movement. She sees the pro-life movement as a continuation of the civil rights struggle.

Dr. King is a former college professor and served in the Georgia State House of Representatives.

She is a best-selling author; among her books are “How Can the Dream Survive if We Murder the Children?” and “I Don’t Want Your Man, I Want My Own.” She is an accomplished actress and songwriter. The founder of King for America Inc., Alveda is also the recipient of a Doctorate of Laws degree from Saint Anselm College.

Shirley Stricklan, president of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, is inviting and encouraging all Catholic men, women and students to participate in the upcoming Rose Day event.

“This is a day when you can live your faith by being part of this great gathering at the Capitol,” said Strickland. “We have chartered a bus that holds 32 people. The cost to ride the bus will be $10 per person. We will meet at St. Francis of Assisi Church, Oklahoma City, for Mass at 7:30 a.m. After Mass we will go to the Kelley room on the first floor of the Meerschert House for a light brunch. At 9:20 we will load the buses for the Capitol and leave at 9:30 a.m. The bus will return between 1:30 and 2 p.m. and bring us back to St. Francis.”

Pearl Sullens, of the ACCW, said Rose Day participants are asked to bring four roses, one for the governor, the lieutenant governor, your state representative and one for your senator. Sullens said the roses are not mandatory, but are encouraged.

When participants arrive at the Capitol, they should go to the fourth floor where cards can be filled out. The cards will be addressed to the lawmakers and will ask them to be “Pro-Life Advocates” on issues that come before them. The cards will then be delivered along with roses to the various state lawmakers, as well as the office of the governor.

To reserve a spot on the bus, call 1-800-725-8051 and then mail your check, made out to ACCW for $10, to Shirley Stricklan, 2318 W. Gore Blvd., Lawton, Okla. 73505.

King: Slavery Comment ‘Outrageous’

ATLANTA, Christian Newswire — Dr. Alveda King, pastoral associate and director of African American Outreach for Priests for Life, commented on Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid’s remarks comparing opponents of his health-care bill to supporters of slavery.

“Senator Reid has written a bill that would force Americans to pay for the abortion of babies and he implies that opposition to his efforts is evil? His comments are outrageous!” said Dr. King, the niece of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. “It’s Senator Reid’s bill that treats unborn humans like property. If anything, it’s his actions that should be compared to support for slavery.”

Priests for Life is the nation’s largest Catholic pro-life organization dedicated to ending abortion and euthanasia. For more information, visit www.priestsforlife.org.