Take advantage of one of Christ’s greatest gifts – confession

By Charles Albert
For the Sooner Catholic

Private annual confession has been required by the Church for more than 1,000 years. Many Catholics do not take advantage or understand this gift from Christ, thinking their sins are “so bad they can’t be forgiven,” that they can’t forgive themselves or they worry about seeking confession because it has been “too long” since the last time.

Father Cory Stanley, pastor of Prince of Peace in Altus said the confessional is a place where the faithful can pour out their hearts to Jesus, especially concerning their failures.

“God created us with a longing to share what’s on our hearts. We’re built for relationships, for deep friendships. Whether we’ve done something great or something terrible, we have an innate desire to share it with someone,” Father Stanley said.

“God knows this yearning we have in our hearts to confess and to be forgiven. Ultimately, our heavenly Father sent his Son into the world so he could reconcile us to Himself, forgiving us in person.

“God who confesses his sins freely receives pardon from the priest by virtue of the grace of Christ.” ~ St. Athanasius

Father Stanley said it is important for everyone to frequent confession even if they haven’t committed serious sin.

“If we never confess our sins, we run the risk of becoming numb to them. If we never confess our sins, we become accustomed to our sinfulness. Sometimes we might even begin to define ourselves by it,” he said.

“If we never confront our sins, they start to define us more and more. Sometimes we ourselves can’t see this effect of unchecked sinfulness, but others can. When we make a good confession, even if it’s just one where we confess venial sins, not only do we receive God’s sacramental grace and forgiveness, but we’re reminding ourselves that ‘this is not who God wants me to be’ and that ‘this is not who I want to be.’ Uprooting those sins through a good confession helps us to remind ourselves that God’s plan for us is holiness.

Father Lance Warren, associate pastor of Saint Francis of Assisi in Oklahoma City said no matter our failures, we become accustomed to our sinfulness. Sometimes we might even begin to define ourselves by it,” he said.

“I carry with me an image of the prodigal son who is being embraced by his father after returning home broken and ashamed. This is the perfect image of God’s relationship with us. Always ready and eager to meet us with love and mercy.”

“Go Make Disciples

Rediscover the Sacrament of Penance

Find a guide on confession at www.usccb.org.

To locate a parish, go online to www.archokc.org and click on “Directory.”

Pope appoints Oklahoman Msgr. Peter Wells as Nuncio of South Africa, Botswana

Pope Francis has appointed American Monsignor Peter Bryan Wells, who currently serves as Assessor for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State, as the Holy See’s new Apostolic Nuncio in South Africa and Botswana.

The Holy Father has at the same time elevated Msgr. Wells to the titular see of Marcianopolis, with the dignity of archbishop. He is believed to be the first Oklahoman to be named an archbishop.

“We are very proud of the Archbishop-elect! He and his family are well-known in the archdiocese. His parents, Larry and Dodie, are members of Saint Mary’s parish in Guthrie and his brother, Bill, is director of Our Lady of Guadalupe Youth Camp. Archbishop Wells has been well-prepared through his years of service to the local Church and to the universal Church to assume these new and weighty responsibilities. I am grateful for his generous response to this call,” said the Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley, Archbishop of Oklahoma City.

Archbishop Wells was born in Tulsa. He completed his studies in philosophy at Saint Meinrad Seminary College in Indiana. He completed his studies in theology as a student at the Pontifical Gregorian University, later gaining a licentiate in theology at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family in Rome, in
School choice, education savings accounts help children reach full potential

"Our generation will show that it can rise to the promise found in each young person when we know how to give them space. This means that we have to create the material and spiritual conditions for this full development; to give them a solid basis on which to build their lives; to guarantee their safety and their education in every way."

Education, as Pope Francis says above, provides the solid basis on which our children build their lives. It is the way we seek to ensure our children have the full basis — academically, professionally, morally and spiritually.

For that reason, the Catholic Church always has been involved in learning at all levels, from elementary to research universities. Those institutions provide individuals with a route to achieving the material and spiritual conditions required for their full development.

Catholic schools, of course, are not the only route for that development and growth. Many Catholics find fulfillment and a good education just as readily in public schools, non-faith based private schools, through home-schooling or even online virtual schools. Likewise, non-Catholic make use of all these options.

The key word is “options.” All children are different. Some have special needs or learning disabilities that are best addressed in custom educational settings. Some are geared toward technology-based, online learning. Others are best-served by the public school nearest them, and are happy with the education that it provides.

Families, like children, are also different. For some, it is essential for faith to be incorporated in their child’s daily learning. For others, it is not.

That is why I long have been a supporter of school choice — the collective act of policies and programs that give children and parents access to a variety of educational options, including charter schools, faith-based schools, private tutoring and other educational channels.

It also is why I am encouraging our legislators to support educational savings accounts, or ESAs.

ESAs give every qualifying parent a debit account that can be spent on educational expenses. The amount varies, but both ESAs plans being considered in the state legislature this year would provide parents with several thousand dollars. That account could be used to hire a tutor, enroll a child in a religious course; and, of great importance to many Catholics and me, send a child to a faith-based private school.

This plan does not require more state spending. Instead, it reallocate some of the several billion dollars in funding already going toward education in Oklahoma.

More importantly, it empowers parents to make good decisions on behalf of their children. It would lift some children out of desperate circumstances, and provide them with a broader educational options.

It allows for the next generation of Oklahomans to build a stronger, more solid foundation for them, as they work to reach their full potential.

To make your donation to the APEF, go online to www.apxef.org.

Correction

An article in the Feb. 7 issue of the Oklahoman misidentified the possible Oklahoma City Catholic school as a Jesuit school. While the Cristo Rey model was developed by the Jesuits, not all schools in the Cristo Rey Network are Jesuit. Many are sponsored by other religious orders or endorsed by a local diocese. All Cristo Rey schools are Catholic, college preparatory high schools. For more information about them, visit www.cristoreynetwork.org.

Find more news on the website

From the Vatican, Oct. 4, 2015, Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi –

Mary, the image of a Church that evangelizes because she is evangelized

In the Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, I asked that “the season of Lent in the Year of Mercy be lived out not only as a special season of repentance (cf. Mt 9:13), but as a genuine manifestation of a profound dialogue with the faith which each Christian is called to proclaim (cf. Acts 1:8).”

Mary, the image of a Church that evangelizes because she is evangelized, is the perfect icon of this mandate.

In the first place, she is on the path of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the Father’s Footsteps XX Catholic Men’s Conference, 9 a.m., Embassy Suites Hotel and Conference Center, Norman

Mar. 3 – Confirmation, 7 p.m., Saint Francis of Assisi, OKC

Mar. 5 – Confirmation, 7 p.m., Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Kerrville

Mar. 6 – Mass and blessing of new rectory, 11 a.m., Saint Joseph, Ada

In this June 5, 2015, file photo, the crucified Christ is depicted in a mosaico at Saint Domiciano in Chinyu, Chinyu, Man, China. (AP photo/Lance Wheeler, with him. In Jesus crucified, God shows his desire to draw near to sinners, however far they may have stayed from him. In this way he hopes to soften the hardened heart of his Bride.

The works of mercy

God’s mercy transforms human hearts; it enables us, through the experience of a faithful, love to become merciful in turn. In an ever newer miracle, divine mercy where faith is whole in lives, inspiring each of us to love our neighbor in order to devote ourselves to what the Church, in her tradition calls the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

These works remind us that faith can find expression in everyday actions meant to help our neighbors in body and spirit: feeding, clothing, comforting and instructing them. On such things we will be judged.

In the light of this love, which is strong as death (cf. Song 8:6), the real poor are revealed as those who refuse to see themselves as such. They consider themselves rich, but they are actually the poorest of the poor. This is because they are separated from God and his love which leads them to use wealth and power not for the service of God and others, but to stifle within their hearts the nascent fires of faith, hope and charity.

They consider themselves powerful, the greatest of thieves to build their wealth. Their wealth grows. It can even reach the point of being blind to sin which they are beggaring at their doorstep (cf. Lk 16:20-21).

Lancini, the prophet, is a figure in the Old Testament, who prophesies that people will court salvation. As such, he represents the possibility of conversion which God offers us and which we may well fail to see. Such blindness often is accompanied by a deep interior blindness, which reflects in a sinister way the decadent and non-merciful character of God (Gen 3:5) which is the root of all sin.

This illusion can likewise take social and political forms, as shown by the totalitarian systems of the twentieth century, and, in our own day, by the ideologues of monopolizing thought and technoscience, which would make God irrelevant and reduce man to raw material to be exploited. This illusion can also be seen in the sinful structures linked to a model of development based on the dilatory of money, which leads to lack of concern for the fate of the sick, the rejects, the disabled, the elderly, and societies; they close their doors, refusing to see what is needed in order to live.

For all of us, then, the season of Lent in this Year of Mercy is a favorable time to overcome our existential alienation by listening to God’s word and by practicing the works of mercy.

In the works of mercy we touch the flesh of Christ in our brothers and sisters who need to be fed, clothed, sheltered, cured. In the works of mercy — spiritual works of mercy — counsel, instruction, forgiveness, admonishment and prayer — we can reach directly our own sinfulness.

The corporal and spiritual works of mercy must never be separated. By touching the flesh of the crucified Jesus in the suffering, sinners can receive his forgiveness, and find “touch more directly our own sinfulness. By taking this path, the ‘proud,’ the ‘powerful’ and the ‘wealthy’ spoken to in the Father’s Footsteps XX Catholic Men’s Conference can also be embraced.

In this way, Holy Thursday and Good Friday are not just the commemoration of the suffering of Jesus, but also the celebration of the love of God and the love of his people.

The burning desire to be saved from sin, from evil and darkness, and to flee from the diabolical “you will be like God” (Gen 3:5) which is the root of all sin.

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Finding Christ in Lenten practices

During the Lenten Season one year, I was physically exempt from Ash Wednesday and Good Friday fasting obligations, but I still gave up two of my favorite foods. I ate as plain of food as I could and made much more challenging than the last as I was constantly discovering the old standbys of steamed broccoli and plain rice. By the end of Lent, I liked all food. Much to my surprise, I found this was not my most successful Lent. When I look back at my other Lenten disciplines, I’m not sure those years weren’t much better — abandoning prayer practices, vague and overly ambitious goals or the fasts left me feeling empty. If I ever had complete success with my Lenten practice, it has been few and far between.

Another year brings another Lent and a chance to love this penitential season again. Once again, I am invited to grow in virtue and to grow more closely at every way as the mini monk I may fail in observing Lent. Sometimes the failure to keep up with my Lenten practices paradoxologically leads to the most successful Lenten season. Unlike the idea that the goal of my Lenten efforts is not self-improvement, but it is greater union with Christ. The failure to observe Lent means that I intended making my own weaknesses and inadequacies clear. My thoughts, however, the excises I make for myself, and my poor self-control are brought to the forefront, heightening my need for God. If I let it, this leads to greater reliance on Him.

This is not to say that we must fail to practice Lent’s disciplines for Lent to be successful. God wants us to have self-control and to grow in virtue, not as a self-improvement project but to better love and serve Him.

The prescribed Lenten disciplines of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are suggested by the Church to help us grow in virtue. Virtue leads us to that which is truly good, which is God Himself. Growing in virtue, we are freed from the things that keep us from love of God, and the freedom that grows from this leads us to the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.

After defining the works of mercy as charitable actions by which the Church helps the neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities, the Catechism of the Catholic Church stresses on the following in paragraph 2448: “…merrily elicited the compassion of the Savior, and with their heart willingly took it upon himself and identified himself with the heart of his brethren. Hence, those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church, which, persevering in this, and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has always endeavored to aid and defend the defenseless. Fraternal charity is the way to a love or charity which never be without reward. In the Bible, it is, in addition to being a physiological need, a sign of our need for God. …For, “O God, you are my God, you are my God.” For you, O Lord, my soul thirsts, in a land parched, lifeless, and without water.”

Make such mighty efforts as you can to give drink to the thirsty: Smart corporal Works of Mercy

By Pedro A. Mores, OFM, MRE

“Thirst” — Atlas 19:28

When on Good Friday we are given the opportunity to pray, Jesus’ Last Words from the cross, I am filled with a great enthusiasm with which I approach the Gospel of John, which is the fifth work. There are so many words in which I could meditate, but it never had occurred to me to meditate it in such a way. The St. John of Lavina, in this Holy Year of Mercy, I have to make this connection.

In John’s “Bulla of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee, Jesus said: “I thirst. If a person thirst, I will give them living water. The water I will give them will become a spring of water in their soul, and it will never be thirsty again.” (John 4:13-14). This is the essence of my reflection for the current year. This message is the key to any reflection on the spiritual meaning of Lent. With this spirit, let’s proceed to a reflection on Lent in John’s words: “I thirst.”

Lenten disciplines aid us love more fully: We are better able to attune to those around us rather than being distracted by our own needs.

As spiritual writer Jacques Philippe says, “The desire for perfection is a good thing; it is a sign that it can be ambiguous. What do we really mean by perfection? We would like to be experienced, irreproachable, never make mistakes, never fall, possess unending good judgment and unimpeachable virtue. This is to say we would like to have no more need of forgiveness or mercy, no more need of God and His help. If at bottom our dream of perfection is to be able to manage without God, we are no longer on the path of the Gospel.”

Anna Marie Biddick

File photo, Oklahoma Catholic

Looking more closely at the ways my neighbors are invited to grow in virtue and not as a self-improvement project but to better love and serve Him.

Something that drains you, some-thing of steamed broccoli and plain rice. When given the opportunity, say thank you because someone can see how much better — abandon the things that keep us from love of God, and the freedom that grows from this leads us to the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.

The prescribed Lenten dis-}

Radio host Sister Ann calls faithful to ‘Say yes to God’

Sister Ann Shields, S.G.D.C.

“Say yes to God.”

During this Year of Mercy, ask God how He wants you to use your gifts to help the neighbor. When given the opportunity, say thank you because someone can see how much better — abandon the things that keep us from love of God, and the freedom that grows from this leads us to the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.

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Human organs from pigs – Is it kosher?

Diane Clay

The Scooter Catholic

“Food for the Journey”

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The Scooter Catholic

Most Reverend

Archbishop of Oklahoma City

Paul S. Coakley

Diane Clay

Editor

Oklahoma City, OK 73123

Ph: (405) 721-8180

E-mail: tsp@archokc.org

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2245, Oklahoma City, OK 73123

Visit us online at www.soonercatholic.org

On February 21, 2016

Father Ted Pacholczyk, Ph.D

Radio host Sister Ann calls faithful to ‘Say yes to God’

Sister Ann Shields, S.G.D.C.

“Food for the Journey”

The Scooter Catholic

Oklahoma City, OK 73125.

Visit the archdiocesan websites at www.archokc.org

Oklahoma City, OK 73132.

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Commentary

The water that quenches our thirst in the desert is living water. God Himself and finding water is a sign of being given life and filled with His presence.

Eating of living water, a sign of God, our full being and our Baptism, when we satiate and thirst that we did not even know we had, the thirst for the living God.

Pope Francis calls us in his latest encyclical Laudato Si’ to take care of this precious life that we never lost in our healing and redeeming liquid.

This whole world has a grave social debt toward the poor who lack access to drink-}

Making Sense of Bioethics

Catholic.

This comes into focus when we recognize, for example, how animals have been used to study. For example, use of animals to add-}

Despite our initial hesitations, this comes into focus when our disciplines for Lent

Growing in virtue, we are freed

Virtue leads us to that which

The Scooter Catholic is supported by the Archdiocesan Development Fund.

The new building housing Catholic Archdiocese of Oklahoma City at 1323 S. Canadian Blvd. next completion. The new offices are expected to open in late spring.

Diane Clay

The Scooter Catholic

Sister Ann Shields, S.G.D.C.

“Food for the Journey”

www.soonercatholic.org

Visiting Address: P.O. Box 2245, Oklahoma City, OK 73123

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Commentary

Some scientific agencies like the National Institutes of Health and in collaboration with other research funds for the study of human/animal chimeras because of those and other considerations, seeking to levy such pressure so that these agencies like the National Institutes of Health and in collaboration with other research funds for the study of human/animal chimeras because of those and other considerations, asking for the use of animals to add-}
Catholic school finance 101: Education savings accounts

Fortunately for me, Catholic school finance is not rocket science. The two main drivers of school budgets are tuition and salaries. The operation of schools is labor intensive, and the bulk of the gap between tuition and the actual cost of education is subsidized by the parish and supplemented by local fundraising efforts such as the school auction. The lower the enrollment the higher the gap that must be filled by the parish and by fundraising activities. It is a sad truth that over time, we are beginning to see the "specialization" of parochial and private education. As costs continue to rise, middle class and low income families are increasingly finding themselves unable to afford tuition, and parishes are finding themselves more and more stretched to meet the gap. This is especially concerning since research says students who attend Catholic schools through high school are more likely to stay with the Church, and valuable in their vocation. They volunteer more often, and are more likely to be committed to public service. Furthermore, they overwhelmingly attend and finish college.

Recently, Mount Saint Mary High School and Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School hosted a town hall meeting about upcoming problems for the need to offer Education Savings Accounts or ESAs. Contrary to what we hear, ESAs won't rob parishes of students. They have the potential to lessen the pressure felt by our public school brothers and sisters as they face increasing class sizes and diminished budgets. This is how it works. Let's say the public school budget to educate a child is $10,000 per child. Under the ESA legislation, a percentage of state funding would follow the child, say $5,000. That fund would go on a debit card given to a parent who would choose where the child attends school. The remainder of $5,000 will remain with the local public school district for a child they no longer have.

It also is a myth that there will be a mass exodus from public schools. In states where ESAs are available, many people have elected to stay with their local public school. We need public education and it must be non-sectarian. Public education serves a noble cause, but why can't we be open to letting parents make that choice? I know many parents who at times have attended the town hall meetings were disappointed to learn that the legislation won't offer the ESA debit card to children currently enrolled in private schools. But, this is a start. We have to keep in mind the common good. We can't throw out the whole idea just because it doesn't meet present need for each person.

The truth is ESAs help count less families who crave a Catholic education for their children. In addition, the lower the enrollment, the higher the gap. Adding more students will lessen the gap and perhaps stabilize tuition prices for all families. Including kindergarten students would qualify, and in 12 years, all of our schools will have children who qualify for the ESA debit card. Furthermore, I believe educational choice is one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time. Why should families who can't afford to leave their neighborhood with a poor performing school have their choice revoked? A core Church teaching is that parents are the primary educators of their children. Let's give families the tools they need to make choices in the best interests of their children.

Sister Mary Eloise Morrison

Sister Mary Eloise Morrison died Jan. 31 at Mercy Health Center Convnet in Oklahoma City. She was age 96.

Sister Mary Eloise was born Feb. 2, 1919, in Philadelphia, Pa., to Patrick Morrison and Margaret O’Callaghan. At an early age, she moved with her family to Oklahoma City. She was age 96.

She was educated at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Edmond donated fund to the parish Samaritan House. Photo provided.

Catholic Schools Week Pre-K students at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Edmond

By J.E. Helm

In 1978, the Blessed Sacrament Thrift Shop opened its doors in the basement of the church in Lawton, and all clothing was priced at $1.50 per item. The pastor, Father Elmer Rohsrett, opened the store with the help of parishioner Katie Stollnitz in response to the needs of Vietnamese immigrants coming to Oklahoma at that time.

Today, prices are still reasonable, and free items are given to those truly in need.

In 1999, the store moved to its current location in the building with the parish ball. Open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the store receives donations throughout the day.

Glennda Turner is one of the many volunteers who keep the thrift shop operating. She said with the large selection of men’s, women’s and children’s clothing, they have “just about everything,” and “better prices than even other thrift stores.”

Geraldine Jackson is the store manager, and organizes the volunteers who all wear a blue shop apron with white lettering that says “Thrift Shop.” Mary Monroe Patricia Vance and Anna Rowland are two of the many volunteers who work the back room — sorting, checking and pricing all incoming merchandise. Clothing is organized in various categories such as men’s, women’s, children’s, shoes, and accessories.

For tears or missing buttons, and anything electrical is plugged in to make sure it works.

Every Monday and Friday, a different group of volunteers take the locked items and places them on display. All sorts of things come in besides clothing: the store currently has exercise equipment.

Volunteer Arthur Hampton helps by picking up items from people unable to come in, and taking larger items like furniture or appliances to Goodwill.

His wife, Marilyn Hampton, is the store treasurer, and she has been working in the thrift shop for more than 20 years. Hampton said that some people “bring in donations and then shop.”

Turner said the store’s profit is donated to seminarian education, Birth Choice, Catholic Charities, Oklahoma Catholic Broadcasting, and more.

In 2013, Blessed Sacrament Thrift Store donated $21,800 to various agencies and was able to assist with the purchase of playground equipment for Saint Mary School.

Twice a year, on a Saturday, everything in the store goes on sale for $2.50 per item. Anything not sold in taken to Goodwill, who in turn provides assistance vouchers to Blessed Sacrament for the benefit of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society.

Parish administrator, Father Michael Chapman, said the success of the thrift shop “is a real complement to all the volunteers who work here” and a blessing to the Lawton community.

J.E. Helm is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Blessed Sacrament Thrift Shop
(580) 581-1309
www.blessedsacramentlawton.org/
Thrift-Shop

Volunteers Mary Monroe and Patricia Vance sort and price clothing at the Blessed Sacrament Thrift Shop. Photo J.E. Helm.

Pro-life Rose Day celebrated at State Capitol

Pro-Life Rally • Wednesday, February 3, 2016

Eric Burkhardt and Aishah Greene of Oklahoma City, present roses to Amber Jeanes, public affairs liaison for Gov. Mary Fallin at Rose Day at the Oklahoma State Capitol. Left, Jennifer Hobbs with daughter Violet listens to her husband Brian give testimony about their decision to choose life for their child.

Photo Theresa Bragg
Saint Ann’s Retirement Center celebrates Mardi Gras

Residents of Saint Ann Retirement Center in Oklahoma City celebrate Mardi Gras with music and dancing. Photo: Cara Koenig

Mardi Gras (French for “Fat Tuesday” and also known as Carnival) is the last day before the beginning of Lent, a period of fasting and repentance leading up to Easter, which celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Traditionally, it is the day for eating up the last of the rich foods that remain in the house and for having a big celebration before a long period of discipline and repentance.

Visiting the sick on Ash Wednesday

Above, Pauline Hanger receives ashes from Deacon Jeff Willard from St. Joseph’s Parish during a home visit on Ash Wednesday.

Below, Fr. Danny Grover blesses the ashes on the altar at St. Joseph’s in Norman on Ash Wednesday.

Bottom, Adam Hames and Rita Ille receive ashes from Fr. Grover.

Photos Theresa Drigg.
"An intimate relationship with God"

By Judy Hilinsky
For the St Francis Co

To understand God, it is vital for Catholics to understand how to live as God would have us to live, to have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, as author and professor, Edward Sri, reaffirmed in his lecture on Eucharist theology at St. John's Seminary on Feb. 21.

In his lecture, Sri described what an intimate relationship with God would mean. The first step will be to listen to the words of Christ, who speaks to us through the Word of God and through his actions of the Eucharist. The second step will be to reflect on the words and actions of Christ, to hear him calling us to a deeper understanding of God.

Edward Sri has written a book on the topic of Eucharist that can be found in Catholic bookstores or online at www.edwarsri.com.

"If you were asked what comes to mind when you think of Eucharist, "King of Kings" and "Lord, have mercy," what would be your response? For most of us, the answer would be "Mass." But what if we were to think of Eucharist as a love letter from God to us? What if we were to see Eucharist as a moment of intimacy between God and us, a moment when we are able to experience the love of Christ in a personal way?

This is the essence of the intimate relationship with God that Sri described. The Eucharist is a moment when we are able to experience the love of God in a personal way. It is a moment when we are able to reflect on the words and actions of Christ, to hear him calling us to a deeper understanding of God. It is a moment when we are able to experience the love of Christ in a personal way.

The second half of the lecture was taken from his book, "Eucharist and the Francis of the Gospel: Rediscovering the Heart of a New Pope!" He said, "I am a sinner upon whom the Lord has turned his gaze.

Sri challenged the audience to recognize that Christ is speaking to us personally through the Eucharist. He said, "If you are willing to listen to the words of Christ, you will be able to hear his call to you, to hear his call to you to a deeper understanding of God.

The homily was published in the March 6 edition of Crossroad, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Denver.

At the beginning of the prayer, the Lord tells us to extend our hands as a sign of our faith. This is a sign of our faith, a sign of our belief in the words of God, in the words of Jesus. It is a sign that we are willing to receive the words of God, in the words of Jesus. It is a sign that we are willing to receive the words of God, in the words of Jesus.

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La libre elección de escuela y las cuentas de ahorro para la educación ayudan a los niños a alcanzar su pleno potencial

“Nuestra generación se mostrará a la altura de la promesa que nos hace en cada joven cuando sepa ofrecerle espacio. Esto significa tutelar las condiciones materiales y espirituales necesarias para su pleno desarrollo. Las Escuelas Católicas, por supuesto, no son la única salida para el desarrollo y el crecimiento. Muchísimos católicos encuentran satisfacción y una buena educación en las escuelas públicas, escuelas privadas no religiosas, a través de la educación en casa o incluso en línea con escuelas virtuales. Del mismo modo, los no católicos hacen uso de todas esas opciones.”

En el sur de México, el papa advierte de la disminuida importancia de la familia

“En el Evangelio según San Mateo, capítulo 25: "Entrén al Rey dirá a los que tuvieron sus necesidades y se apropiaron de esa opción: ‘Buenos, hijos míos, en el nombre de Dios’”. Los católicos, por supuesto, no estarán solos en este reto. La educación es la quinta palabra. Hay tantas cosas que han cambiado el enfoque de nuestra vida como padres, maridos y esposos. En la vida de familia no siempre era fácil —y es habitualmente temerosa por eso—. Por eso, muchísimos hemos sido un partidario de la libre elección de escuelas — el conjunto colectivo de profesores que den a los niños y las niñas el acceso a una variedad de opciones educativas, incluyendo escuelas virtuales, escuelas religiosas, clásicas particulares y otras canales educativos. También es por eso que estoy animando a nuestras comunidades para que aporten dinero para la cuenta de ahorro para la educación, o ESAs para los estados involucrados.”

El arzobispo visitó con estudiantes de San Carlo Borromeo en Oklahoma City el Miércoles de Ceniza.

“La palabra clave aquí es “opciones.” Todos los niños son diferentes. Algunos tienen necesidades especiales o discapacidades de aprendizaje. Otros acuden voluntariamente al programa de aprendizaje personalizado. Algunos están orientados hacia el aprendizaje basado en la tecnología, en línea. Otras mejor se comportan por cuenta de la escuela pública más cercana a ellos, y están contentos con esa opción.”

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Lecture by Visiting Notre Dame Professor

The Oklahoma City Notre Dame Club and St. Gregory’s University present a 2016 Krebs Lecture Series: Speaker, Fr. Ron Nuzzi, senior director of communications for Catholic Education (ACR). Fr. Nuzzi will speak on Catholic Schools and the New Evangelization” on Saturday, Feb. 27, at 3 p.m. in the Patrick Flannagan Room, Rockwood Room on the main campus of Oklahoma City. The event is free and open to the public, but RSVPs are appreciated. oklahomacity.president@alumni.org.

BMCHS bingo night

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School’s BMCHS will host its annual Irish Family Bingo Night on March 6. The event will be held in the BMCHS Commons. Dinner at 5:30 p.m.; bingo at 6 p.m. Adults and children are invited to attend. There will be 10 bingo games played with prizes awarded for each game. There are also a raffle drawing. Bingo packs are $20 for 10 games for pre-registration and $25 at the door. Deadline is March 5. Raffle tickets $1 each or $5 for $20. Go online to www.bmchsmhs.com.

Register for Faith Community Nurses’ Conference

Nurses who have worked in healthcare and anyone interested in gaining skills in a caring ministry. The conference is March 4 at Crossings Community Center, 10255 N. Pennsylvania Ave., OKC. Visit the FCNA website at www.fcnak.org or contact Marla Runyan at (405) 340-0691, Ext. 197, parnurse@stjohn-catholic.org.

Dance concert

Beginnings and Endings: Spring Dance Concert will be an evening of original choreography by St. Gregory’s University students focusing on the cycle life. Arial dance featured as well as modern, ballet, jazz and tap. Performances March 4-6 at Skelton Performing Arts Center, OKC. Tickets at www.datetime.com or contact (405) 623-3409.

Save the Date

There will be a showing of “As Long as God Wants: The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola,” on March 6 at 3 p.m. in the McManus Theatre on the main campus of Catholic Pastoral Center. This docudrama film about the formation of Retreat in Distress Life Outreach, Oklahoma, is a lecture exclusive interviews with Sister Jan Futsell, OSF, DMin, and Dr. Rev. Bob Gardiner III, DMin. Photographs by Donna Scholler with photography by Cara Korong.

Life of the Party Gala

Life of the Party Gala—wine, music, food, fun! to host Life of the Party Gala fundraiser with dinner, dancing and live and silent auction. The gala will be at Sklarin Hilton on Saturday, March 5, 2016. Guest speaker is Kathleen Eason Bravo. Black tie optional. Tickets are $225 per person. Tables are available. Contact Carrie at (405) 608-8426.

Black and Indian Mission collection

On March 13, a special collection for Catholic radio will be held in the Black and Indian Mission Office will take place throughout the archdiocese. The archdiocese receives more than $150,000 in contributions collected through annual and special grants for evangelization of American Indian and African Americans in our archdiocese. During this Lenten season, please pray for the success of this very important ministry.

Communication workshop

The Central Region Conference of Catholic Women announced an exxy for 7th and 8th grade students. 1st price $1000; 2nd prize $750; 3rd prize $500. This contest, titled “How I am Living to love this Year of Mercy?,” Essays must be one page, typed double spaced, and judged by teachers or parents. Students will be assigned a book or church/school on the topic of “Living to love this Year of Mercy?” Contact March 12 at 6 p.m. in OKC.

Catholic sites tour

Trip to the Suburban Monastery, Ave Maria Grotto, St. Paul the Apostle Cathedral, EWTN studio, the Most Blessed Sacrament and Lady of the Rosary Basilica in Ypsilanti, and Woodstock in Arkansas. Teenagers and Alabama, April 18-22. Cost is $599. Contact Michael Zink at (405) 314-4120, Michael-jj@cox.net.

Catholic shrines of Wisconsin

Unfaltering Love in a Peaceful Land: 10-16 of the shrines of Wisconsin, including New Franciscan and the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, the only Vatican-appointed Marian apparition in the United States. Diocese of Green Bay Catholic River Cruise, tour of Marquette University, the shrine of St. Joan of Arc, Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, of the National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians, the Shrine of St. Philomena, National Shrine of St. Joseph at St. Norbert Abbey, Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Shrine of St. Philip Neri at St. Mary’s Abbey, and the Old Rockford Shrine. Cost is $900. Contact Fr. John DeLorenzo at (708) 595-2148, jdelorenzo@ck annota. org.

Pilgrimage to Italy

Join Father Bill Pruett of St. John in Edmond on March 6 and from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 18. Traveling in a Mass with combined choirs. Contact (405) 721-8944. These and more events, go online to www.okarchdiocese.org.

Part-time newspaper assistant

The Sooner Catholic newspaper is seeking a part-time assistant to handle invoicing, bulk electronic communications and photography by Cara Koenig. Call (405) 721-8944.

CCHD internship

An internship available at Catholic Charities with the Catholic Campaign for Human Development and the diocesan Catholic Charities Office. This flexible paid position will be for two days a week, Monday through Friday. Internship to begin April 18 through June 30. Contact Human Resource Director Nancy Largent at nlargent@archokc.org.

Job Boss

Read the full calendar online at www.okarchdiocese.org.


3/25 Tony Bradut and Chris Steire- nart of Casting Nets Ministries to present St. Monica Lenten mission. Mission begins March 4 at 7 p.m., and March 5 at 5 p.m. and 11 a.m., with breakfast served. Call Carrie Harkery, (405) 359-2700.

3/24 First Friday Sacred Heart Mass at the OPC. Donation to the Blessed Sacrament at 5:30 p.m. Mass at 7 p.m.

3/18 2nd Charity Catholic prayer meeting, 7 p.m. at the Catholic Pastoral Center, C-1. Visit www.spiritokc.org.

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More than 700 take next step to join Church

By Madeline Hecker
For the Sooner Catholic

More than 320 catechumens and 390 candidates from more than 40 parishes in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City celebrated the Rite of Election Feb. 14 at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Among them were Lisa and Jason Weigel, a young couple from Saint John the Baptist in Edmond, who described their journey as candidates to answer a divine calling and respond to God’s love.

“We are doing this for our 1-year-old daughter, Philomena,” Lisa Weigel said. “It’s a challenge, but at the end of the day, it’s worth it.”

They will become official members of the Catholic Church on Easter Sunday.

The Rite of Election is a celebration of the faith and devotion of those who chose to answer God’s calling. The ceremony is a pivotal moment in the lives of those undergoing the conversion of faith. After the celebration on Sunday, the catechumens became the elect. Next, they will become the neophytes, the newly baptized. The candidates for the profession of faith were called to continuing conversion in their faith.

The catechumens will receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist during the Easter Vigil Mass. The candidates, already being baptized, will receive the sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist at Easter.

Each of the catechumens and the candidates are chosen by God out of love and are given the virtue of faith.

When asked about the most rewarding aspect of this spiritual journey, Jason Weigel said, “It’s bringing us closer together. We wish we had done it sooner.”

Madeline Hecker is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Catechumens and candidates are presented to the archbishop at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Below right, Archbishop Conkle signs the Book of the Elect. Photos Cara Koenig.

Sunday Holy Hour
St. Mary, Medford, will have a Holy Hour every Sunday afternoon during Lent from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Prayer will focus on the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Close with Benediction. All are welcome.

St. Monica Lenten mission
Tony Brandt and Chris Stewart of Casting Nets Ministries will present the St. Monica parish Lenten mission on March 4 and 5. The topic is “Change yourself, change the world: The three pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving in the light of the new evangelization.” The mission begins on March 4 at 7 p.m. and March 5 at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., with breakfast served. Call Carrie Harkey at (405) 359-2700.

Living Stations of the Cross
At 5:30 p.m. Friday, March 4, and Friday, March 18, the youth of St. Andrew the Apostle, 800 N.W. 5 in Moore, will present The Living Stations of the Cross. The youth also will prepare Lenten meals following each presentation. The proceeds from meals benefit youth ministry summer activities. Meals $8 per person age 12 years and older; $5 per child ages 3-11 years; under age 3 free. Reservations welcomed, but not required. Reserve tickets at (405) 799-3334 or purchase tickets after the stations.

CPC women’s Lenten retreat
The Women of Faith/Women of Action are having a Lenten retreat on Saturday, March 5, at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway. Special guest speaker is Mother Miriam of the Lamb of God (formerly known as Sister Rosalind Moss). Registration is $30 or $15 for high school youth and includes box lunch. Retreat is 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Confessions during lunch, Mass at 5:30 p.m. at Epiphany of the Lord. Contact Chris Thomas at (405) 306-5187, thomaschrisl@sbcglobal.net.

St. John Lenten mission
Paulist Father John Hurley, a Missionary of Mercy appointed by Pope Francis for the Jubilee Year of Mercy, will speak on “The Joy of God’s Mercy” at all weekend Masses at St. John in Edmond on March 5 and 6, and from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on March 7, 8 and 9. Call (405) 340-0691.