HUNTINGTON, Ind. (CNA) — Pope Benedict XVI has used his pontificate to advance the New Evangelization and to speak to the modern world, said the president of a leading Catholic publication.

"During his eight-year pontificate, he used the Chair of Peter as a pulpit from which to address the challenges and the hopes of modern society," said Greg Erlandson, president and publisher of Our Sunday Visitor.

"His three encyclicals ... all spoke to his concerns and revealed both a solicitude for modern men and women in the midst of immense cultural transformation and an unshakable faith that our hope remained always and essentially in Christ."

On Feb. 11, Pope Benedict announced his decision to resign from his papal duties, effective Feb. 28.

The Holy Father cited concerns of advancing age and declining strength, saying that, for these reasons, he is unable to "adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me."

Erlandson said the pontiff has been a "great gift" to the Church. He noted his collaboration with John Paul II, and the continuity between their pontificates.

"He continued and made a cornerstone of his pontificate the New Evangelization first proclaimed by John Paul II. He saw clearly that the Church itself needed to be reinvigorated and renewed, and it was in this spirit that he assembled the recent synod of bishops in October."

The publisher believes that Pope Benedict's papacy will be remembered both for his travels, including those to the United States, U.K., Lebanon and Cuba, as well as for his writings.

"He wrote with great intellectual and stylistic clarity, which made him one of the most accessible and widely read popes of the last century," said Erlandson.

His efforts to address the clergy sex abuse scandal, both as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and as Pope, will also be part of his legacy.

"Ultimately, however, we will miss him as much for his humility as for his wisdom, humility embodied in his decision to resign from the papacy for the good of the Church Universal," concluded Erlandson.

"A monumental theologian of the 20th century, and the first new pope of the Third Millennium, we believe that Pope Benedict will be remembered for his dedication to the renewal of the Church and its people."

PHOTO BY VINCENZO PINTO (AFP/GETTY IMAGES)
Put Out Into the Deep
Luke 5:4

An Invitation to Prayer

Since the surprising announcement on Feb. 11 that our beloved Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, would resign from office on Feb. 28, the Church and the world have grappled to find appropriate words and gestures to respond to this new reality. Only twice before, in 1294 and 1415, has something similar occurred.

Questions immediately arise: practical questions. When I met with the media on the day of the announcement I was asked, “What will he be called after his resignation?” and “What will he wear?” There were also more probing questions: “What will be the legacy of Pope Benedict XVI?” “What happens next?”

And many other questions have been on the minds of many Catholics as well as people of other faiths and no faith at all. The interest surrounding this unlikely event reminds us of the importance of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, not only for Catholics but for people of other faiths as well.

The preoccupations that have filled the minds of many during the early days following this announcement, such as his title (post-resignation) or even his legacy, are certainly not the questions that the Holy Father spent time pondering in arriving at his decision. As he himself acknowledged, this was a decision made before God, and God alone. It was based solely on what Pope Benedict determined was best, not for himself, but for the Church. Having recognized that his strength, due to his advancing age and attendant physical weakness, was no longer adequate to fulfill the responsibilities and the selfless care with which he has led us as Successor of Peter and Your Vicar on earth.

I am proposing that all of the priests, deacons, consecrated women and men, and all the faithful of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City join together in prayer during these days. I ask that we begin a novena on Tuesday, Feb. 19, and conclude on Thursday, Feb. 28, the day of the Holy Father’s resignation. The same prayer of gratitude and petition can be used following that date until the election of a new pope has been accomplished.

The prayer, developed by the Supreme Chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, Archbishop William Lori, ought to be used to conclude the Universal Prayer (Prayers of the Faithful) at each Mass. It can also be prayed personally, in the home, in parish gatherings and in schools.

Thank you for accepting this invitation to pray for the Church. At this moment our hearts swell with gratitude for the ministry of Pope Benedict XVI. We entrust the future of the Church and the fee of Peter to Christ, the Good Shepherd who promised never to leave his flock unattended.

The following events are part of Archbishop Coakley's official calendar.

**March 10** — Confirmation, 11 a.m., St. Mary Assumption Church, Waukomis

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**Archbishop Coakley’s Calendar**

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The following events are part of Archbishop Coakley’s official calendar.

Feb. 24 — Confirmation, 10:30 a.m., St. Anthony of Padua Church, Okemah
Feb. 25 — Visit Ministerium at St. John Vianney Seminary, Denver

Feb. 27 — Blessing of Memory Care Unit, 6:30 p.m., St. Katharine Drexel Retirement Center, El Rino

Feb. 28 — School Mass and Classroom Visits, 8:30 a.m., St. Mary School, Ponca City

March 2 — Mass of Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference, 8 a.m.
March 3 — Confirmation, 10:30 a.m., St. Rose of Lima Church, Perry
March 5 — Saint Ann Retirement Center Board Meeting, 8 a.m., Catholic Pastoral Center
March 6 — Pentecost Board Meeting, 2 p.m., Catholic Pastoral Center
March 6 — Envisioning Leadership Team Meeting, 10 a.m., Catholic Pastoral Center
March 7 — School Mass and Classroom Visits, 8:30 a.m., Saint Peter and Paul School, Kingfisher
March 7 — Seminary Committee Meeting, 10 a.m., Catholic Pastoral Center
March 8 — Catholic Charities Green Tie Gala, 6 p.m.
March 9 — Birth Choice Life of the Party Gala, 6 p.m.
March 10 — Confirmation, 11 a.m., St. Mary Assumption Church, Waukomis

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**Prayer for the Church**

O Lord Jesus Christ, Supreme Pastor of Your Church, we thank you for the ministry of Pope Benedict XVI and the selfless care with which he has led us as Successor of Peter and Your Vicar on earth.

Good Shepherd, who founded Your Church on the rock of Peter’s faith and have never left your flock unattended, look with love upon us now, and sustain Your Church in faith, hope and charity.

Grant, Lord Jesus, in Your boundless love for us, a new Pope for Your Church who will please You by his holiness and lead us faithfully to You, who are the same yesterday, today and forever.

Amen.
Fathers,” he explained. “The council of the media, not that of the council that got through to the people,” said Pope Benedict of Cardinal Frings of Cologne which he first attended as a special adviser to Cardinal Francis Spellman, to decide. While Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone leaves his position as secretary of state, with the interregnum the real work begins for his position as camerlenghe or chamberlain of the Holy Roman Church, during the period when there is no pope, he is charged with administering the temporal goods of the church.

On Feb. 28, is one of the few remaining cardinals who sought a decentralization of the church, he said. “So, dominant and more efficient, this council of the media was accessible to all,” said Pope Benedict. He also said that this was the case for the liturgy with no interest in it as an act of faith, but as something to be made understandable, “similar to a community activity, something profane.”

“Two, dominant and more efficient, this council of the media was accessible to all,” said Pope Benedict. But it was obvious that the media controlled the content through the eyes of the media instead of the eyes of the faith, he said. “In the Constitution, the categories of the media of today, within the world of faith but within the categories of the media of today, are those that are outside of the faith, with different hermeneutics … a hermeneutics of politics,” added Pope Benedict.

Conclave

desired to commence the voting process behind closed doors no sooner than 15 days, but no later than 20 into the “sede vacante” period.

Gren the unexpected circumstances of the Pope’s planned resignation on Feb. 28, however, Father Lombardi stated that the date could be moved forward.

“In the Constitution, it says between 15 and 20 days, but this period is to ‘wait,’ that is to give those who need it the time necessary to reach the Vatican. In the eventuality that continued from Page 1

the cardinals were already all here, the Constitution could be interpreted in a different way,” said the press office director. Father Lombardi said it would be in the hands of the College of Cardinals, led by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, to decide.

He also revealed that Pope Benedict XVI will likely be spending two months at the papal residence in Castel Gandolfo following his resignation. He will be wanting there for renovations to be completed on Mater Ecclesiae monastery. Joining him at the property within the Vatican gardens will be his personal secretary, Archbishop Georg Ganswein, and members of his key household staff. Meanwhile, preparations continue for the final papal general audience on Wednesday, Feb. 27.

Vatican Radio reported that thousands will be “locking” to St. Peter’s Square, where they will be able to attend Pope Benedict XVI’s last great appointment with the People of God.

Business As Usual — Almost

Some Vatican Offices and Positions Suspended Until New Pontiff Reconfirms Them, But Work Goes On

By Cindy Wooden

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — When Pope Benedict XVI officially leaves office at 9 a.m. Feb. 28, most of the top-level Vatican officials lose their jobs, but that does not mean the majority of Vatican employees get a vacation.

Although Catholics may not realize it, much of what is done under the leadership of the Pope is made understandable by the new Pope, who says the work of the new Pope is to help with the conclave to elect a new pope.

On Feb. 7, 2015, Pope Francis met with the cardinals and said that work of the new Pope is to help with the conclave to elect a new pope. He also said that this was the case for the liturgy with no interest in it as an act of faith, but as something to be made understandable, “similar to a community activity, something profane.”

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The pontiff, who will give up office on Feb. 28, is one of the few remaining witnesses of the council. “The media saw the Council as a political struggle, a struggle for power between different currents within the Church,” he recalled.

But it was obvious that the media would take the side of whatever faction … the true council has struggled to be realized," he stated. In his analysis, Pope Benedict said that the virtual council is stronger than the real council, but the real strength of the council was present.

“It has slowly emerged and is becoming the real power which is also true reform, true renewal of the Church,” he said.

Pope Benedict XVI greets the crowd after lighting the Angelus from the window of his apartment overlooking St. Peter’s Square on Feb. 17. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)
Pope Says Lent is a ‘Spiritual Battle’

By Esterdiana Aguirre
Catholic News Agency/RWTN

VATICAN CITY — Pope Benedict XVI used his second to last Angelus to tell thousands of pilgrims gathered in St. Peter’s Square that Lent is a “spiritual battle.”

Lent, he said, “always involves a battle, a spiritual battle, because the spirit of evil naturally opposes our sanctification and seeks to divert us from the way of God.”

Pope Benedict has just days left as head of the Catholic Church until his almost unprecedented resignation takes effect Feb. 28.

The Pope, stepping from the window of the Apostolic Palace, explained that the Lenten “spiritual battle” is the reason why the Gospel of the first Sunday of Lent relates each year to Jesus temptations in the desert.

He reflected on the Sunday gospel, which tells how Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil after having received the Holy Spirit in his baptism at the Jordan River.

“Upon starting his public ministry, Jesus had to expose and reject the false images of the Messiah that the tempter proposed,” said the Pope. “But those temptations are false images of man and during all times undermine the conscience, disguised and proposed as affordable, effective and even good.”

Pope Benedict said the evangelists Matthew and Luke reveal three temptations of Jesus, but differ only in the order in which they present them.

He said the core of these temptations is always to exploit God for some lowly ends, giving more importance to success or to material goods.

Pope Benedict said that faith is what is ultimately at stake in temptations because God is at stake.

“But in hindsight we are at crossroads — do we want to follow the ‘T’ of God? The individual interest or the real good and what is really good?” said the Pope.

Pope Benedict said that, as more and more people become disillusioned with the values that protect human dignity and peaceful coexistence, Pope Benedict XVI saw Jews and Muslims as natural allies.

During his pontificate, Pope Benedict visited synagogues in three countries and mosques in three others. However, despite his efforts to promote new forms of dialogue, the lack of will to act on the part of states and religious leaders continues to be a challenge.

His relationships with the world’s Jewish community was not always smooth either; primarily because of his decision in 2009 to lift the excommunication of a traditionalist bishop who denied the Holocaust.

As recently as last October, Pope Benedict affirmed the church’s teaching about the importance of dialogue with and respect for Jews, Muslims and members of other religions, but he did so with a caveat.

In an essay published on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Benedict wrote about the ongoing importance of “Nostra Aetate,” the declaration on relations with other religions, for Catholics in increasingly multi-religious societies.

When some 300 religious leaders joined him in Assisi, Italy, in October 2011 to mark the 25th anniversary of Blessed John Paul II’s prayer for peace meeting, Pope Benedict said that, as more and more people became convinced religion is a major source of tension in the world, religious believers have to be honest about their communities past and present.

“On a Christian I want to say at this point: Yes, it is true, in the course of history, force has also been used in the name of the Christian faith. We acknowledge it with great shame. But it is utterly clear that this was an abuse of the Christian faith, one that evidently contradicts its true nature,” he told the religious leaders.

At the same, he insisted that history also has shown the danger of denying God’s existence because “when man no longer recognizes any criterion or any judge above himself,” he feels free to unleash his fury to obtain what he wants.

During his May 2009 visit to the Holy Land, Pope Benedict visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, prayed at the Western Wall — Judaism’s holiest site — and met with Israel’s chief rabbis and with Jewish leaders from throughout the country.

He used his meeting with leaders of the Jewish community as an occasion to reaffirm the fact that “the Catholic Church is irrevocably committed to the path chosen at the Second Vatican Council for a genuine and lasting reconciliation between Christians and Jews.”
Pope's Legacy One of Linking Education With Love For God

By Carl Bunderson

Catholic News Agency/KNX

DENVER — Pope Benedict XVI left a lasting mark on Catholic education by showing how reason and knowledge can lead to an essential love of God, reflected scholars at leading Catholic universities.

“This is the chief idea of Pope Benedict about higher education. It isn’t our job just to provide information about God, but that the university should be a place where God is in our midst,” John Garvey, president of Catholic University of America, told CNA.

“In his writing, this emphasis on coming to the love of God is essentially connected to what universities do... for Benedict there is the essential and intrinsic connection (between) knowing God and loving God.”

Garvey reflected that Pope Benedict has tirelessly taught that Catholic universities should bring their students “not just to know, but to love God.”

That perspective is part of the vision shaping Catholic University of America, Garvey said. He noted that students are formed in virtue while there, and that integral life is “essential...not accidental” to the life and work of the university.

During his 2008 address to Catholic educators, which he delivered at the DC-based university, the Pope emphasized the importance of Catholic identity at institutions of higher education.

This address, in concert with the efforts of American bishops, Garvey said, has had “real, noticeable effects on the attention that Catholic higher education pays to the Catholicism of our universities.”

He noted first a “lessening of suspicion” within the academic community about the role bishops play in connecting Catholic universities to “this life of the Church.” He also mentioned a “greater willingness” among Catholic universities to “be comfortable” in saying they are Catholic.

The final effect that Garvey thinks Pope Benedict has had on U.S. Catholic universities is an increase in efforts “to carry out their mission as Catholic universities” in the areas of student formation and in the intellectual life.

Another important point in the Pope’s thoughts about Catholic education, Garvey said, is that faith, alongside reason, is a path to knowledge of the truth.

“Benedict argues...that faith has an essential part in what we come to know at universities,” Garvey discussed Pope Benedict’s 2006 Regensburg address, in which he argued that theology does arrive at truth — and therefore belongs in the academy — and is not mere opinion or speculation.

Faith and reason “are not separate enterprises...a university that ignores itself to discussions of faith and the role of faith in coming to know, is narrowing itself in an unacceptable way,” said Garvey. That universities must have a place for both faith and reason is one of Pope Benedict’s enduring gifts to the intellectual treasury of the Church, he explained.

Related to this point at Pope Benedict’s wish to reaffirm the great value of academic freedom, as he said at this 2008 address at Catholic University of America.

Counter to “unfair characterizations,” Garvey said, the Pope has upheld the necessity and indeed preeminence of academic freedom.

Pope Benedict affirms that the human person can, with the use of both reason and faith, come to know the truth. “Academic freedom,” he wrote in his book The Nature and Message of Theology, “is freedom for the truth, and its justification is simply to exist for the sake of the truth.”

Garvey said there is a tendency to mistake the belief that “there really are false and true ideas...for a decline in academic freedom.” Pope Benedict’s writings, in contrast, highlight that truth as the only content in which academic freedom can arise and have meaning.

The value of academic freedom is that it allows truth to win out over falsehood in any “free and open encounter” between the two, as the 17th-century English poet John Milton said.

Garvey reflected, “The idea that there are true and false ideas are themselves the original basis for protecting...academic freedom. To imagine that Benedict doesn’t believe in it, because he believes that there is a truth we can find about God, is both to misunderstand Benedict, and to have a kind of funny notion of what academic freedom means.”

A little-noticed document of Pope Benedict’s final months in the popemobile will likely have a lasting effect on Catholic education. Only two weeks before announcing his resignation, the Pope released two documents “on his own initiative” that drastically reduced the workload of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

The Congregation was relieved of oversight on catechesis and seminary formation. The Congregation for Catholic Education in October and said he was “blown away” by the “scope of their responsibility.” He noted that the Congregation is left with the responsibility for ordering studies in philosophy and theology, and that the priests working there will now have more time to devote to the work they have been relieved of on extraneous tasks.

Susan Hanssen, a professor of history at the University of Dallas, also discussed the significant work of the Congregation for Catholic Education under the reign of Pope Benedict.

She found the Congregation’s 2013 decree reforming the philosophical department of Catholic universities to be the clearest affirmation of the dignity of human reason since the Second Vatican Council.

She told CNA Feb. 13 that the decree emphasizes there are “personally valid” truths that are accessible by reason, and shows that “an important part of being a Catholic is to affirm the dignity of human reason and what we can know by reason — and these are essential points for Catholic education.”

The affirmation of reason and its capacity for truth was a theme of Pope Benedict’s Regensburg address.

Hanssen noted, that point is important, she said, because it allows Catholics to engage moral problems — such as abortion and contraception — with the public squares on the basis not of “biblical truth” but of “natural truth,” accessible to all persons.

Hanssen said the Regensburg address was important because it sought to engage the “academic establishment,” which by and large has “lost its faith in reason” and reason’s “capacity to actually arrive at truth.”

“Benedict XVI had a very clear grasp of the problems with Catholic education, and particularly with Catholic higher education — intellectual problems that had infected the universities,” she said.

“The understanding of academic freedom was always the freedom to pose questions about the ultimate things, about the origin and destiny of man, about religion and ethics.”

The dangerous notion of academic freedom as a refusal to engage questions of man’s origin and destiny, “lost we discover any truth about them,” Hanssen said, is what Pope Benedict referred to as “this dictatorship of relativism.”

She added that with his Regensburg address and his 2005 lecture at Catholic University of America, Pope Benedict “diagnosed the problem of secularization” in Catholic education.

His accomplishment, and what she believes will be his enduring legacy, was “his revitalizing the base” and “apposing directly to the laity” alongside Blessed John Paul II.

She discussed how Pope Benedict has influenced parents who are helping their children to choose from among universities. His public ministry proclaims the importance of Catholic identity and of both faith and reason is easily accessible online for parents, and for prospective university students.

“Parents are much more informed consumers after this decade,” she said. “They are no longer fooled by Catholic labels but are looking for ‘vibrantly Catholic’ universities.”

Hanssen described “trending bands of Catholic parents, well aware of their parental right to educate their children, determined to spend their money wisely, market-educated by listening to talk shows, reading up on colleges on the John Henry Newman Society website, combing through Catholic college websites, faculty web pages and university curricula for that rare commodity — a genuinely Catholic education worth its weight in gold.”

Those well-informed parents, together with the proliferation of “smaller, newer, more vibrantly Catholic institutions” such as Wyoming Catholic College, “are...the legacy...of Benedict XVI,” she said.

Pope Benedict has inspired parents in the “pretty serious moral debates,” which “God has entrusted to them,” of guiding their children to make good decisions about their education, Hanssen reflected.
The Legacy of Benedict XVI

At his election in 2005, some thought of him as a papal placeholder: a man who would keep the Chair of Peter warm for a few years until a younger papal candidate emerged. In many other ways, and most recently by his remarkably self-effacing decision to abdicate, Joseph Ratzinger proved himself a man of surprise. What did he accomplish, and what was left undone, over a pontificate of almost eight years?

He secured the authoritative interpretation of Vatican II that had been begun (with his collaboration) by his predecessor, Blessed John Paul II. Vatican II, the Council in which the Church came to understand herself as a communion of disciples in mission, was not a moment to deconstruct Catholicism, but a moment to re-energize the faith that is “ever ancient, ever new,” precisely so that it could be more vigorously proposed.

He helped close the door on the Counter-Reformation Church in which he had grown up in his beloved Bavarian countryside, and thrust open the door to the Church of the New Evangelization, in which friendship with Jesus Christ is the center of the Church’s proclamation and proposal. As I explain in Evangelical Catholicism: Deep and Widespread (Basic Books), Benedict XVI was a hinge man, the pivot on which the turn into the evangelical, mission-driven Church of the third millennium was completed.

He accelerated the reform of the liturgy, accentuating the liturgy’s beauty. Why? Because he understood that, for postmoderns uneasy with the notion that anything is “true” or anything is “good,” the experience of beauty can be a unique open and spacious human world, a world in which it is once again possible to see things as are, in fact, true and good (as others are, in fact, false and wicked).

He proved an astute analyst of contemporary society’s discontents, as he also correctly identified the key 21st-century issues between Islam and “the rest.”Can Islam find within itself the religious resources to warrant both religious tolerance and the separation of religious and political authority in the state?

He was a master catechist and teacher, and, like John Henry Newman (whom he horrified) and Ronald Knox, his sermons will be read as models of the homiletic art, and appreciated for their keen biblical and theological insights, for centuries.

For the incomplete and the not-done:

Benedict XVI was determined to rid the Church of what he called, on the Good Friday before his election as pope, the “filth” that marred the image of the Bride of Christ and impeded her evangelical mission. He was successful, to a degree, but the week of renewal, in the wake of the sexual abuse scandal, remains to be completed. This is most urgently obvious in Ireland, where the resistance of an ingrained hierarchical re-establishment is a severe impediment to the re-evangelization of that once-Catholic country.

And the next pope must, in my judgment, be more Siegried than his two predecessors in dealing with bishops whom the evidence demonstrates were complicit in abuse cover-ups — even if such an approach was considered appropriate at the time by both the counseling profession and the legal authorities. The Church has higher standards.

Joseph Ratzinger had extensive experience in the Roman Curia and it was widely expected that he would undertake its wholesale reform. Not only did that not happen, things got worse, and the Curia today is, in candor, an impediment to the evangelical mission of the pope and the Church. A massive housecleaning and redesign is imperative if the Church’s central administrative machinery is to support the New Evangelization, which, for the Ursas, is not a matter of creating a new bureaucratic office but a new cast of mind. (Evangelical Catholicism contains numerous suggestions for how that might be done.)

And then there is Europe. The man who named himself for the first saintly patron of Europe tried his best, but, like his predecessor, the best he could manage was to stir the flickering flames of renewal in a few parts of Catholicism’s historic heartland. Its re-evangelization remains an urgent task.

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

‘Storming the Heavens’ With Prayer For a Miracle

By Denise Bossert

Catholic Bryne

On Jan. 14, I prayed for my new-born granddaughter to make it. I have seen the power of intercession.

I asked them to lay this petition before Blessed John Paul II. I asked everyone to pray and had become a beggar of prayers. Clergy, the curia, seminarians, countless orders of men and women religious, faithful Catholics, and perfect strangers agreed to pray for Eliana. I asked for prayers through Facebook and LinkedIn. I asked them to lay this petition before Blessed John Paul II. These prayers were storming the heavens.

Eliana means “God answers prayer.” Her parents chose the name last summer. They prayed throughout the pregnancy that their little girl would give glory to God.

Outside the chapel is a sketch of John Paul II with a quote: “I want the young boys and girls being taken care of at Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital, and all sick children everywhere to know that the Pope prays for each one of you.”

The next evening my son, his fiancée and I went to Cardinal Glennon Hospital, and there aren’t sure if she’s going to make it.”

Weigel is author of the popular book God’s Shadow Boxer (Basic Books), Benedict XVI was a master catechist and teacher, and, like John Henry Newman (whom he horrified) and Ronald Knox, his sermons will be read as models of the homiletic art, and appreciated for their keen biblical and theological insights, for centuries.

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Catholic Men Stand Upon the Solid Rock of Faith

By Steve Gust
For the Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — Lent got off to a good start Feb. 16 as about 700 men attended the 17th annual In the Father’s Footsteps Catholic Men’s Conference held at the Embassy Suites.

The day’s event, titled “Upon this Rock,” featured two special guest speakers, Gabe Ikard and Blake “The Belldozer” Bell, as well as many other speakers.

Ikard — Character and Faith are Everything

NORMAN — It was a young man’s luncheon at the In the Father’s Footsteps Catholic Men’s Conference with two special guest speakers, Gabe Ikard and Blake Bell.

Ikard and Bell are both Catholic and football players for the University of Oklahoma. Ikard, a Bishop McGuinness graduate, is an All American offensive lineman, while Bell has earned fame over the past two seasons as the “Belldozer” for the Sooners.

Ikard and Bell are also the only Catholics on the team, but they are not alone in their faith.

They spoke to about 100 young men at the luncheon.

“What’s most important to me is to be a man of faith,” Ikard said. “Your character and your faith are everything,” he added.

Ikard and Bell said they are almost the only Catholics on the team, but they are not alone in their faith.

The two were asked about what it was like to play last season against traditional Catholic football powerhouse Notre Dame. Both admitted they were recruited by Notre Dame and respected the program. However, each was still a bit disappointed by the loss in Norman last October and looked forward to next year’s game at Notre Dame.

Ikard and Bell both attended Mass at St. Thomas More in Norman, just south of the Gaylord Family Memorial Stadium on campus.

And how does Bell feel about his nickname, the Belldozer?

“Belldozer? That’s my name,” he said. “I earn it as the best offensive guard in the nation.”

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And how does Bell feel about his nickname, the Belldozer?

“I’m not sure I fully understand it,” he said. “It’s not a name that I chose, but I like it.”

Ikard and Bell both attended Mass at St. Thomas More in Norman, just south of the Gaylord Family Memorial Stadium on campus.

And how does Bell feel about his nickname, the Belldozer?

“I’m not sure I fully understand it,” he said. “It’s not a name that I chose, but I like it.”

Ikard and Bell both attended Mass at St. Thomas More in Norman, just south of the Gaylord Family Memorial Stadium on campus.
Oklahoma Catholics’ Dedication to Life Blooms at Rose Day Event

Oklahoma Catholics made their presence known again as they joined with thousands of other pro-life supporters from various faith communities to fill the state Capitol during the 22nd annual Rose Day event. Rose Day was Feb. 6 and again served to bring together Catholics and Protestants in an effort to convince lawmakers to support pro-life legislation. This year’s keynote speaker was Lila Rose, who several years ago was a young college student at UCLA exposed the true agenda of Planned Parenthood.

Tony Lauinger and Kevin Celery of Oklahomans for Life, Inc. were also present to address legislators and other pro-life advocates about the state of the pro-life effort. Her mother chose to put her up for adoption rather than aborting her.

As for Lila Rose, her story in the pro-life movement began as a young Catholic teenager.

Across Oklahoma

St. Eugene’s Lenten Mission
OKLAHOMA CITY — St. Eugene’s Church will host a Lenten Mission with Father Nick Rice. The mission will be March 4 to March 8 with sessions at 8 a.m. following Mass and 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. each day. Confessions will be heard after the morning sessions.

Father Rice is from the Archdiocese of Louisville. He was ordained in 1997 and has served as president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and two terms as president of the Conference of Priests.

The theme for the mission is the Church’s work to share faith, to open our relationship with the person of Jesus Christ and what role it plays in our daily lives. The theme for March 5 will be “Treasurer the Church” and will explore the meaning and role of being the Body of Christ made visible through our life, sacraments, service and sanctification in family and work life. On March 6, the theme will be “Witness Your Faith,” with a focus on translating the supposed of God’s love into daily actions and building a world that reflects God’s abiding presence.

Child care will be available during all sessions.

“Ladies of Grace”
OKLAHOMA CITY — Christ the King Catholic Church will again present its annual “Ladies of Grace” conference on Saturday, March 9, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The conference sessions will include “Embracing Christ” and will explore our relationship with the person of Jesus Christ and what role it plays in our daily lives. The theme for March 5 will be “Treasurer the Church” and will explore the meaning and role of being the Body of Christ made visible through our life, sacraments, service and sanctification in family and work life. On March 6, the theme will be “Witness Your Faith,” with a focus on translating the supposed of God’s love into daily actions and building a world that reflects God’s abiding presence.

Child care will be available during all sessions.

OKLAHOMA CITY — Francisc of Assisi Parish, 1321 NE 15th St., will host the Master Class event March 3.

Two famous requiems will be featured at the concert. Neither composition uses the traditional text, but both have been huge artistic successes and among the most popular throughout the world.

The performance, including the choirs of cathedral and full orchestra, will begin at 7 p.m. at the diocese’s Historic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The concert is free, but donations are appreciated.

Parish Ministry Series

Across Oklahoma

Church of St. Bonaventure, Oklahoma City
Father Rice is from the Archdiocese of Louisville. He was ordained in 1997 and has served as president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and two terms as president of the Conference of Priests.

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Parish Ministry Series
Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat Offers Healing for Those Affected by Abortion

OKLAHOMA CITY — “Come back to me with all your heart, your broken heart, your troubled heart.” Through the prophet Joel, God calls to each of us with those words on Ash Wednesday. Through a very special healing ministry in our Archdiocese, God calls uniquely to those who are suffering from the pain of abortion … their own abortion or that of a family member or friend.

This healing ministry is open to women and men, mothers and fathers of a child who was aborted, grandparents, other family members or friends affected by an abortion. Mercy, forgiveness and peace is God’s desire for each of us. Come to a Rachel’s Vineyard Retreat and have an opportunity to grapple the loss of this child and experience the peace and happiness you seek. The next retreat in the Oklahoma City area will be May 24 to May 26.

Please contact the Rachel’s Vineyard team through the confidential phone line or email with your questions. Phone: (405) 623-3844. Email: rachel.vineyarddc@yahoo.com. Also, the international website has a great deal of information about the retreat, location and dates of the retreat throughout the country. Website: www.rachelsvineyard.org

Late-Term Procedure Blamed in Woman’s Death

BALTIMORE (CNS/WN) — Fiscal advocates are urging an end to third-trimester abortions in response to the death of a 29-year-old woman who underwent the procedure at a Maryland clinic run by Dr. Leroy Carhart.

“They are too tragic. This family had to lose not only their clearly full-term child, but also their wife, daughter and sister,” said Michael Martelli, executive director of the Maryland Coalition for Life. “What more is appalling is that the State of Maryland refused to hear the pleas of this community and has allowed this man to continue to butcher women and children.”

The pro-life group said that, on the same day the woman died, the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene announced on its website that it saw an abortion license to Carhart’s clinic without inspecting the facility.

It also noted that Carhart was recently portrayed as a “hero” in the documentary “After Tibs,” which debuted at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival earlier this year.

The documentary featured Carhart as one of only four doctors in America who perform third-trimester abortions. It claimed to show the great care that these doctors exercise with regard to their patients.

However, Martelli said in a Feb. 8 statement that the woman’s death was a “senseless tragedy” that resulted from a false sense of health care and “the quackery of the pro-abortion Maryland state government.”

On Feb. 1, a woman died at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital in Rockville, Md., after reportedly beginning a multi-day abortion procedure at Carhart’s Germantown Reproductive Health Services in Germantown, Md., the previous Sunday.

The Maryland Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the Montgomery County Police Department are investigating the woman’s death, the Washington Post reported.

According to Operation Rescue, pro-life witnesses outside the clinic said the woman had come from New York for a third-trimester abortion. She visited the clinic each day through Wednesday and appeared “pale and weak.”

The woman reportedly began suffering short pains and other discomfort on the morning of Feb. 7. She unsuccessfully tried to reach Carhart, and her family took her from a hotel to the hospital at about 5 a.m. Thursday morning.

Hospital staff members were also unable to contact Carhart or get assistance from his clinic, Operation Rescue said, citing an anonymous source. The woman suffered massive internal bleeding and died about 8:30 a.m.

“The avoidable death of this young woman dramatically illustrates the dangers of third-trimester abortions that are done outside of the safety of rehospital standards.” Operation Rescue president Troy Newman said Feb. 8.

“It is time for medical boards to put restrictions on late-term abortions. If they do not, we can only expect Carhart and his associates to send more women to the marquis.”

He charged that the incident showed “shoddy practices” and “patient abandonment” that rose to the level of criminal conduct.

However, Montgomery County Police Department spokesman Capt. Paul Starks told the Washington Post that there is not yet any indication of criminal activity in the case.

Newman urged the immediate passage of a late-term abortion ban “to protect other women and their unborn babies from unnecessary injury and death.”

Carhart had previously sparked controversy as a defendant in the U.S. Supreme Court case Gonzales v. Carhart, which resulted in the 2007 ruling that some legislative limits on partial-birth abortion are constitutional. He relocated much of his practice to Maryland from Nebraska after the state tightened restrictions on late-term abortions.

CORNERSTONE

Supporting Seminar Education

The Seminarian Bursar Fund at the Catholic Foundation continues to ensure financial resources are available for seminarians of the Archdiocese. Last year, contributions of $265,000 did not cover the expenses of more than $885,000 to support our seminarians during their graduate educational years. Income from the Fund helps to make up the difference. Your gift to any of the named Burses or the general Seminarian Burse Fund at the Catholic Foundation will help to ensure we can educate an abundance of seminarians for our Archdiocese in the future. The Foundation’s mission is to continue to invest in the future of our faith. It takes your planned gift to ensure that future. Please give serious consideration to include the Catholic Foundation when making your estate plans.

For more information on Planned Giving, contact:

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma, Inc.
P.O. Box 2226, Oklahoma City, OK 73101
(405) 721-4131 or www.catholicfoundationok.org

Please Remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Your Estate Plans

Refugee Crisis Continues as Vatican Officials Arrive in Jordan

BY DAVID UEBBING CNA/WTN News

AMMAN, Jordan — Cardinal Robert Sarah, president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, is visiting Jordan to take stock of the serious refugee situation created by the Syrian conflict and to assess how Catholic charities are responding.

“The humanitarian situation in Syria and throughout the region is unacceptable. Some estimates speak of 1 million refugees, more than 2.5 million displaced persons, and almost 100,000 deaths directly attributable to violence,” a Feb. 10 press release from Cor Unum says.

The Pontifical Council is responsible for overseeing the international Catholic relief agency Caritas, distributing funds to disaster victims and coordinating Catholic charitable efforts.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to assess humanitarian aid provided by Catholic charities, including Caritas, to refugees and victims of the violence in Syria.

The scale of the refugee crisis is vast. Jordan, Israel, Lebanon and Turkey have all received people trying to escape the fighting between government troops and opposition forces. The U.N. estimates that 5,000 people are leaving Syria every day, although other reports indicate the actual number could be significantly higher.

As of Feb. 15, the number of refugees in Jordan had reached 555,000. On Monday, the Jordanian border guard force reported that 1,279 people had crossed into the country in the last 24 hours alone.

The stream of refugees pouring into Jordan "has exceeded all expectations as the number of Syrians crossing the border between the two countries during the first week of the new year has come to 8,850 refugees, whereas the number in December was 22,000."

A Syrian boy stands in front of his family’s tent at the Zaatri refugee camp in the Jordanian city of Mafraq, near the border with Syria. The United Nations urged neighboring countries to keep open their borders to civilians fleeing the intensifying conflict in Syria. More than 300,000 refugees, including 70,000 children, have fled the country this year. (CNS photo/Muhammad Hamed)
Catholic Foundation’s Named Funds Accomplish Philanthropic Goals of Many Catholic Donors

The Catholic Foundation was established to seek and receive endow-
ment and capital gifts for the benefit of the Catholic Church in Central and
Western Oklahoma. It is also charged with investing and managing these funds
so that periodic distributions can benefit specific programs and causes in
parishes, schools and organizations throughout the Archdiocese. In all cases,
the wishes of the donor are executed as the donation agreement stipulates.

For 44 years, the Catholic Foundation has maintained specific
Named Funds that accomplish the philanthropic goals of our Catholic
donors. Many donors have given gifts to benefit their parish or a specific
Catholic School. Others have given gifts that establish scholarships for
Catholic students in the Archdiocese, and others have acted as advisors
in a donor-advised fund that provides flexibility in giving wishes from
year to year. In all cases, the donors have given with an open heart, with a
sense of stewardship and responsibility to generously give back the gifts that God
entrusted to them. The endowed spirit of their gifts means that the gift continues
to give year-in and year-out. The Catholic Foundation saluted the spirit of giving by including
the stories of a few of the Named Fund donors who were recently featured in its Annual Report.

Named Funds in the form of Scholarship Funds, Memorial Funds, Endowment Funds or Donor-Advised Funds can be created at the Catholic Foundation with a gift as little as $5000. Contact the Foundation office if you would like more information about creating a Named Fund through a direct
gift, a deferred gift or a legacy gift from your will or trust.

Meet Some Foundation Donors

Carolyn (“Carole”) M. Brown, wife of Bill Brown and mother of eight,
grandmother of twenty-eight, passed away in June of last year. Carole’s life
work, as she so blissfully described it, was raising her family. She was a de-
voted mother and grandmother, and likewise had a real devotion to all
mothers and children. She never saw a baby she didn’t want to hold in her
arms. She truly loved and was forever grateful for the gift of family. Along
with Carole’s eight children, Bill set out to find a way that they could prop-
erly honor Carole’s memory. Given Carole’s affinity for family, they contacted Birth Choice of Oklahoma and asked how they could help that organization accomplish its mission in help-
ing mothers and children throughout our community. Barbara Chistole,
executive director of Birth Choice, indicated that the organization needed
operating and program funds most of all. Last fall the Brown Family es-
tablished the Carol M. Brown Memorial Fund as an endowment and pro-
gram fund for Birth Choice. This Fund will help meet the operating and pro-
gram needs of Birth Choice, not only now, but for years to come.

Tom and Judy Love be-
lieve in education and more
importantly Catholic educa-
tion. They knew that it is
important that Catholic
Schools are affordable to all
Catholic students. In 2011 they
established the Ed-
mand A. McCarthy Schol-
brship Fund for Bishop
McGuinness Catholic High
School students. This fund
honored Judy’s brother, Ed
McCarthy. They followed
up last year with the estab-
lishment of the Tom & Judy
Love Scholarship Fund to
provide additional scholar-
ships for McGuinness stu-
dents. The first scholarships were awarded last fall to the high school
students. Although Tom graduated high school from St. Gregory’s, Judy
and their four children are all Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School
graduates. Currently five of Tom and Judy’s grandchildren have graduated
or currently attend McGuinness. As longtime supporters of many Catholic
crises, Tom and Judy Love put their faith into action with these Endowed
Scholarship Funds.

In 1922, at the age of 35, Joseph Danne
penned his last will and testament on his farm
near Kingfisher. His will was an enthusiastic
as his devotion to experimentation and plant
breeding. In the 8-page handwritten docu-
ment, no detail was left to chance – for Joseph
Danne wanted to accomplish two things when
he left this world: First he wanted no one to
profit financially from his experimentation.
And, secondly, he would bequest all of his
worldly possessions to establish the Joseph
Danne Foundation, with one intention – “to
benefit mankind as much as possible, through
the Roman Catholic Church.” Danne went on to develop a wheat strain
he called “Triumph” – which at the time of his death was sown on two of
every three acres of Oklahoma wheat farms. Joseph Danne was as much
a genius as he was a visionary. An eccentric living like a hermit, with little
more than an elementary school education – Joseph Danne’s greatest “Tri-
umph” was the impact his well planned legacy continues to have as an En-
dowment Fund at the Catholic Foundation.
12 February 24, 2013 Sooner Catholic

Lanzate a lo más Profundo (Lk 5:4)

Una Invitación a la Oración

Desde el sorprendente anuncio del 11 de febrero de que nuestro amado Santo Pedro, el Papa Benedicto XVI, dimitiría de su Oficio el 28 de febrero, la Iglesia y el mundo han llorado para encontrar palabras y gestos apropiados para responder a esta nueva realidad. Sólo en dos ocasiones anteriores, en 1294 y 1415, algo similar ocurrió.

Las preocupaciones que han llenado la mente de muchos durante los primeros días después de este anuncio, tal como su título (después de la dimisión) lo incluye en su legado ciertamente no son las preguntas que el Santo Padre puede tiempo pensando en llegar a su decisión. Como el mismo reconoció esta fue una decisión tomada delante de Dios, y sólo Dios. Se basó en su conocimiento de la diócesis de esta fue una decisión tomada delante de Dios, y sólo Dios. Se basó en su conocimiento de la necesidad, no para él, pero para la Iglesia. Tras reconocer que su fuerza, debido a su avanzada edad y la debilidad física concomitante, ya no era adecuada para cumplir con las responsabilidades y asumir la carga de su Oficio, el resolvió renunciar al sucesor de Pedro, y tu Vicario en la tierra.

Siervo de los Siervos de Dios ha hecho el "Señor Jesús, en tu infinito amor por nosotros, concedid, Señor Jesucristo, Supremo Pastor de Tu Iglesia, un nuevo Papa para tu Iglesia que te agrade por su santidad y nos guie fielmente hacia Ti, que eres el mismo ayer, hoy y siempre. Amén.

Encuentro Matrimonial Mundial

Los padres que se aman tienen el doble que ofrecer.

Que sus hijos valoran para siempre.

Que les darán un gran beneficio en sus vidas…

Que sus hijos, después de esta noticia, han sido cambiados. Un regalo muy personal. En el nombre de los que han sido bendecidos, te damos gracias por el ministerio del Papa Benedicto XVI.

Una Invitación a la Oración

Gracias por aceptar esta invitación a orar por la Iglesia. En este momento, no estamos de luto por la muerte de un Papa. Nos ofrece una oportunidad para expresar nuestra gratitud de varias maneras.

Oración por la Iglesia

Señor Jesucristo, Supremo Pastor de Tu Iglesia, te damos gracias por el ministerio del Papa Benedicto XVI y el generoso cuidado con el que nos ha guiado como sucesor de Pedro, y tu Vicario en la tierra.

Buen Pastor, que fundaste Tu Iglesia en la piedra de la fe de Pedro y nunca dejas a tu rebaño desatendido, miranos con amor ahora, y sostén a tu Iglesia en la fe, esperanza y caridad.

Concede, Señor Jesús, en tu infinito amor por nosotros, un nuevo Papa para tu Iglesia que te agrade por su santidad y nos guíe fielmente hacia Ti, que eres el mismo ayer, hoy y siempre.

Amén.

Los próximos años darán una oportunidad adecuada para evaluar el legado del papado del Papa Benedicto XVI y sus otras contribuciones importantes como sacerdote, teólogo, obispo y cardenal. Este momento, sin embargo, es un momento para dar gracias. Aquí no tenemos algún paradigma determinado a seguir. A pesar de que present va a renunciar, él todavía estará con nosotros. No estamos de luto por la muerte de un Papa. Nos ofrece una oportunidad para expresar nuestra gratitud de varias maneras.

Estoy proponiendo que todos los sacerdotes, diáconos, mujeres y hombres consagran días y fechas de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City se unan en oración durante estos días. Las que despertara novena el martes, 19 de febrero que concluye el jueves, 28 de febrero, el día de la dimisión del Santo Pedro. La misma oración de gratitud y de explicar puede ser utilizada después de sus fechas y hasta que la elección de un nuevo Papa se haya logrado.

Martes 12 de septiembre de 2013 y martes 19 de septiembre de 2013 en la St. Joseph’s Parish

Está programado que todos los Reyes Magos sean consagrados, y todos los fieles de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City se unan en oración durante estos días. Las que despertara novena el martes, 19 de febrero que concluye el jueves, 28 de febrero, el día de la dimisión del Santo Pedro. La misma oración de gratitud y de explicar puede ser utilizada después de sus fechas y hasta que la elección de un nuevo Papa se haya logrado.

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Amén.

Encuentro Matrimonial Mundial

Los padres que se aman tienen el doble que ofrecer.

UN REGALO SIN PRECIO...

Por más de 40 años, el Encuentro Matrimonial ha estado ayudando a buenos matrimonios a volverse mejores matrimonios. Dese la oportunidad de vivir la experiencia de un Fin de Semana de Encuentro Matrimonial y descubra lo que más de 3 millones de Parejas sus familias y Sacerdotes han experimentado—comunicación íntima, perdón y entrega.

Martin y Emma Barcenas (918) 557-7275 (405) 923-8744 Arzobispo Pablo S. Coakley

Edgar y Nancy Morales (405) 517-2451 (405) 602-6950
Por Pedro A. Moreno, OP
Director de la Oficina del Ministerio de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City

A las 5:30 AM, mi rutina de oración y estudio comenzaba, una vez más, con el estudio de la Biblia. No era algo que tuviera que hacer, sino que era una práctica que formaba parte de mi vida diaria. A lo largo de los años, he desarrollado una forma de estudio que me ha permitido profundizar en el sentido que la Biblia tiene para mi vida.

Hay un texto en la Biblia que me ha sido muy beneficioso. Se trata del pasaje de Lucas 6:48-49, que dice:

"Y si te es dada en tu casa, perdonarás; y si te es dado en tu camino, guiarás a quien anda en la senda errante.

Por lo tanto, si te es dado en tu casa, procura en su perdón, y si te es dado en tu camino, guiarás a quien anda en la senda errante."

Este texto me ha enseñado la importancia de ser misericordioso, perdonador y guía para aquellos que atraviesan dificultades. La oración es un buen aliado para este tipo de trabajo. A través de la oración, puedo comunicarme con Dios y pedirle que me guíe en mi estudio de la Biblia.

Antes de empezar mi estudio, paso por un proceso de reflexión en el que reviso lo que he aprendido en los pasajes anteriores y cómo se relacionan con el texto que estoy estudiando en ese momento. Esto me ayuda a enfocar mi atención en lo que realmente es importante y a profundizar en el sentido que el pasaje tiene para mi vida.

Una vez que he terminado mi estudio, paso por un proceso de reflexión que me ayuda a integrar lo que he aprendido en mi vida diaria. Esta reflexión no sólo se centra en mi vida personal, sino también en cómo puedo ayudar a aquellos que me rodean. La Biblia es un libro lleno de lecciones que pueden ser aplicadas en diferentes contextos de la vida.

En resumen, el estudio de la Biblia es un proceso que implica reflexión, oración, atención y aplicación. Es un camino que me ha llevado a un mayor conocimiento de Dios y de mi propia vida. A lo largo de estos años, he aprendido mucha cosas y me siento afortunado de poder compartir lo que he aprendido con otros.

Cortesía de "El libro de los profetas" de Eduardo Sánchez, Obispado de Astorga, en el seminario de la Universidad de Oviedo.

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Hoy tocamos un tema dentro de la mentalidad protestante, que se ha caracterizado por su crítica y desacredito de la autoridad católica. En el texto de hoy, analizaremos cómo podemos entender este fenómeno y cómo podemos responder una forma constructiva.

El texto que queremos�ar es 2 Corintios 5:9, que dice:

"Y cuanto nos quedarse en el mundo, de hecho no tenemos casa; pero estamos en el cielo eternamente, y hacemos nuestras cosas allí, como a quien nos ha presentado como Padre de los santos en Cristo Jesus, según la voluntad de Dios, para que en Cristo seamos unidos por nuestra participación en su esencia." (2 Corintios 5:9)

En este pasaje, el apóstol Paul nos está pidiendo que pensemos en la vida eterna y en nuestra participación en la gloria de Dios. La mentalidad protestante se centra en el mundo material y en la búsqueda de la felicidad en este mundo. Sin embargo, el pasaje de 2 Corintios nos invita a pensar en la vida eterna y en nuestra participación en el reino de Dios.

En resumen, el estudio de la Biblia es un proceso que implica reflexión, oración, atención y aplicación. Es un camino que me ha llevado a un mayor conocimiento de Dios y de mi propia vida. A lo largo de estos años, he aprendido mucha cosas y me siento afortunado de poder compartir lo que he aprendido con otros.

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Cortesía de "El libro de los profetas" de Eduardo Sánchez, Obispado de Astorga, en el seminario de la Universidad de Oviedo.
Trivia Night Benefits Red Envelope Fund

EDMOND — A night full of fun, fellowship and trivia, that’s how supporters of Saint Elizabeth’s Ann Seton spoke on Friday night in early February. A group of volunteers, all with students at SEAS, organized the second annual Trivia Night. Alumna of St. Elizabeth’s worked together to facilitate the evening. Proceeds from ticket sales, food donations and raffle donations went to benefit the Red Envelope Fund.

The Red Envelope Fund is a tuition assistance program to help families with tuition. Twenty-seven families benefited from the $60,000 fund for the 2012-2013 school year. This is the only active fundraiser for the SEAS Tuition Assistance Fund. The church and school also take a “Red Envelope Collection” to benefit the fund. This year’s trivia event brought in nearly $6,000 to go toward the tuition assistance fund.

Archbishop Urges House to Extend HHS Mandate Conscience Provision

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The chairman of the U.S. Bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty has urged the House of Representatives to extend long-standing federal conscience protections to the Affordable Care Act’s new coverage mandate for private health plans.

Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore made the request in a Feb. 15 letter to members of the House. Saying the tradition of conscience rights in health care “has long enjoyed bipartisan consensus,” and noting that the questions of whether an exemption is appropriate “are no different than questions of whether we tolerated exemptions in the civil rights era,” Lori compared present controversy to lawsuits against religious schools that paid women less than men because of religious beliefs that men are the heads of households.

“Those are the kind of antiquated, vicious discrimination” and not “discrimination,” he said. “We’re seeking to foster equality, but also to end the stigma that has been associated with all that discrimination.”

In response, Rassbach said “discrimination” is everywhere: people exercise religious freedom, “even in the broad brush of discrimination.”

But if its simple approach to be believed, then “discrimination” is everywhere: people exercise religious freedom as they choose, whom they associate with, where they go to school, etc. “It is not an issue of equal rights,” he said.

During her remarks, Melling also acknowledged to the ACLU membership meeting that the “ACLU leadership and its members have played a significant role in this country and in a whole different range of ways we said ‘no’ to,” in response to the ongoing debate over religious freedom.

ACLU’s Opposition to Religious Exemptions Discriminates Against Believers, Attorney Says

By Kevin J. Jones

Catholic News Agency

WASHINGTON — The American Civil Liberties Union’s opposition to religious exemptions will discriminate against believers.

Eric Rassbach, deputy general counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, said the ACLU supports restrictions that “would relegate many religious citizens into second-class status.”

This is shown by efforts aimed at “desacralizing them from many parts of public life, including providing certain kinds of social services or even running a larger business,” he told CNA Feb. 11.

The attorney’s remarks come in reaction to an address by Louise Melling, counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union’s Religious Liberty Project, who said the ACLU’s opposition to religious exemptions will discriminate against believers.

Melling “attempts to tar religious organizations with the broad brush of ‘discrimination,’” Rassbach said. “It is not an issue of equal rights, but rather, an issue of different rights.”

“Those are the kind of antiquated, vicious discrimination” and not “discrimination,” he said. “We’re seeking to foster equality, but also to end the stigma that has been associated with all that discrimination.”

Melling also questioned the Obama administration’s recent changes to the mandate, which the administration has presented as an accommodation that addresses religious and moral objections from organizations, including Catholic archdioceses, colleges, health systems and charities.

“I don’t really know what Obama was thinking when he made those accommodations, or if he thought this was going to satisfy these adversaries,” Rassbach said.
February 24, 2013  15

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

0:30 p.m., St. Eugene Parish, Oklahoma City
5:30 p.m., St. Francis of Assisi, Oklahoma City
7:30 p.m., St. Eugene Parish, Oklahoma City
8:30 p.m., St. Francis of Assisi, Oklahoma City
9:30 p.m., Lakeview United Methodist Church, Oklahoma City
10:30 p.m., St. Francis of Assisi, Oklahoma City
12:30 a.m., 1:30 a.m., 2:30 a.m., 3:30 a.m., St. Eugene Parish, Oklahoma City
1:30 a.m., St. Eugene Parish, Oklahoma City
2:30 a.m., St. Eugene Parish, Oklahoma City
3:30 a.m., St. Eugene Parish, Oklahoma City
4:30 a.m., St. Eugene Parish, Oklahoma City
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Rite of Election Brings More Than 700 to Cathedral

By Rex Hogan
For the Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — More than 700 people from throughout the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City made their way to the Rite of Election services on Sunday, Feb. 17, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Conducted by Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, the Rite of Election is the first step in the Lenten journey of full membership in the Catholic Church. The journey will come to completion at the Easter Vigil Mass when the Catechumens and Candidates are accepted into the Church.

The Archbishop conducted three separate Rite of Election ceremonies, all filling the Cathedral. Those making this journey of faith came from as far as Guymon or as close as Oklahoma City. The stories of how they have come to this point in their journey to the Catholic Church were as varied as the communities from which they hail.

For instance, Pam McSpadden of St. Joseph’s Parish in Union City is a Candidate. She said her father was a Catholic, but she and her sister, Meredith Coburn of Tulsa, never attended Mass while they were growing up.

Some months ago McSpadden said she felt the calling that she wanted to become a Catholic. She started attending RCIA classes. Shortly after she started the classes, she called her mother and told her she was becoming a Catholic. To her surprise, her mother said, “Guess what? Meredith is too.”

McSpadden said her sister is scheduled to take part in the Rite of Election in the Diocese of Tulsa.

And then there was Kyle Ross, 25, who made his way to the Cathedral from St. Mary’s Parish in Ponca City. For some time Ross said he has felt there was something missing in his life. He believed it had to do with his spirituality.

“I started my journey going to other churches but I never got that ‘I’m at home’ feeling,” Ross said. “I did some research on the Catholic Church and realized a lot of what the Church stands for, I stand for.

“I went to a Mass and loved it. Everybody there made me feel at home,” Ross said.

Sitting two people down from Ross was his mother, Patricia Ross. She came to the Rite of Election as a Candidate, too, and plans to join the Catholic Church with her son.

Daniel Guerra is 7 years old and attends St. John Nepomuk in Yukon. He was sitting next to his father, Joe Guerra.

“We’ve waited awhile for this,” said the elder Guerra. “We’ve moved around a lot so we are so happy now that this day is here,” he said.

Archbishop Coakley told the Candidates and Catechumens that while those taking part in the election come from “many parishes and many communities,” they all have one thing in common, “a sense of God’s calling. This is not about your election, it’s about God’s election,” the Archbishop said. “He has chosen each of us, through no merit of our own because he loves us.”

Over the last several years, the number of people coming into the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City has grown steadily. More than 750 people are making the journey this Lenten season.

Figures listed are from the Archdiocesan Office of Worship and Spiritual Life.