Faith In Action
Training to Help Build Catholic Outreach in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY — Faith In Action, a Parish Social Ministry regional training program, will feature speakers from across the United States to share knowledge to develop, support and expand parish social ministries. The training is open to anyone who wants to fully live their baptismal call.

The workshop will be held May 2-4 at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Speakers will include leaders from many national organizations with knowledge and ideas that can foster spiritual renewal for local parishes.

The cost is $95, which includes two and a half days of training, receptions and meals. Lodging is available at the Pastoral Center and reservations can be made by calling Catholic Charities at (405) 523-3009.

“Speakers include Jack Jezreel, the founder of JustFaith Ministries; Sister Simone Campbell, executive director of Network, a public policy and advocacy organization; Father Clarence Williams, director of Racial Equality and Diversity Initiatives; and Father Larry Synder, president of Catholic Charities USA,” said Becky VanPool, director of Parish Outreach and Program Development for Catholic Charities. “Topics include ‘What Does it Mean to be a Parish?’ and ‘Working Together in Multicultural Settings’.”

Catholic Charities Celebrates Works, Honors Supporters

EDMOND — Volunteers, employees, religious and organizations were recognized for their contributions to the works of Catholic Charities at its Annual Meeting and Recognition Celebration held here Feb. 18 at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church.

About 150 people attended the event which began with Mass celebrated by Archbishop Eusebius Beltran. A reception and program followed.

“We express our gratitude to St. John the Baptist Church for hosting our celebration and for all those who attended,” said Tim O’Connor, executive director.

“The annual meeting is an opportunity to celebrate our accomplishments and recognize those who have made worthwhile contributions to Catholic Charities and those we serve,” he added. “We also thank guest speaker Pat Fennell, CEO of Latino Community Development Agency, for her remarks and the LCDA’s support and collaboration with Catholic Charities.”

The 2007 award recipients recognized included Buland Group Construction Services, Corporation of the Year; Rev. Lowell Stieferman, Pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Del City as Clergy of the Year; Ray Haefele of Edmond, Volunteer of the Year; and Zanka Nikolic-Subotic and Maleeha Siddique, Servant Leaders of the Year (Employees of the Year), Oklahoma City. Also recognized were Sister BJ’s Pantry of Oklahoma City (Sister Barbara Joseph Foley), Church Organization of the Year, and Tom and Judy Love of Oklahoma City, recipients of the Archbishop Eusebius Beltran Award.

Judy and Tom Love accept the Archbishop Eusebius Beltran Award. More coverage, Pages 6-7.
The Good News

At this time of year, I take advantage of the opportunity the Church offers us in the use of the General Intentions which we often call the “Prayers of the Faithful.” I regularly insert a prayer asking God to grant us a successful ADF appeal. I do so most sincerely and ardently as I realize that all the ministries, programs and services of the Church of this Archdiocese are funded primarily through the ADF. Therefore, I invite you also to join with me in prayer for this important appeal.

The ADF also generates other opportunities for prayer. Last year, thousands of people returned a prayer card which I had included in the appeal information. Those were requests from the donors asking me to pray for their intentions.

Those prayer cards have two parts. The first consists in checking some of the ordinary or regular prayers we offer such as prayers for vocations or health or peace. The second part has blank lines where other personal requests can be made.

As the ADF staff processes the appeal returns, they gather the prayer request cards for me. I take these requests and read each one before placing them in a special basket in front of the tabernacle in my chapel. Then, each time I come to the chapel, I am automatically reminded of your requests. Then, each time I ask Almighty God to hear our prayers for these needs and intentions. These prayer cards remain there before the Lord for a full year until the next ADF appeal.

Although the 2008 ADF appeal was begun just one month ago, I have already placed several thousand of these cards in the “prayer basket.” In reading these and in offering them up in prayer, I am very moved. In both the part where a check mark was made and in the part where specific personal intentions are written in, by far, the most common and frequent request for prayer is for “family.”

Many of the “family” requested prayers are for unity and strength and God’s blessing on particular people (husband, wife, children). Many are ardent requests to pray for family members who have strayed from the faith or have left the Church completely.

Another area of concern are the requested prayers for the people who feel “lost in life.” These are people of faith struggling with the daily difficulties of life seemingly alone. They feel abandoned by family and friends. They question the Church as they often do not sense its support. They wonder about their own relationship with God. To all of these, I encourage you. Do not fear, the Lord is truly with you. Together, let us pray as the Gospel tells us: “Lord, I do believe! Help my unbelief!”

I am very grateful that so many of you have requested that I pray for you. That you would take the time to open your hearts to me is most humbling. That you would share with me your deep concerns urges me to serve you more enthusiastically.

Your monetary contributions are important for the continuing work of the Church and they are clear signs of your personal faith. But the ultimate goal is the strengthening of that faith. Remember, God created us in His own Image and Likeness so that we would know, love and serve Him. Why? In order that someday we can rejoice with Him forever in heaven. As the Scripture says: “What profit is there for a person to gain the whole world and to suffer the loss of his immortal soul?”

I am so pleased that in the Providence of God, I have come to be your Archbishop. Therefore, as I walk with you on this pilgrimage of faith, I promise to pray for all of you and your intentions, especially you who have requested my prayers. Your requests given with your ADF response are in my heart as well as in my chapel, before the Eucharistic Lord. Together, therefore, may we walk safely, joyfully and gratefully before the Lord.

... ADF……Prayers

I am very grateful that so many of you have requested that I pray for you. That you would take the time to open your hearts to me is most humbling. That you would share with me your deep concerns urges me to serve you more enthusiastically.

Sooner Catholic

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Sooner Catholic

Archdiocesan Development Fund.

Seminary Burses

A $150 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse by Christ the King Parish, Oklahoma City.

A $100 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse by the parishioners of St. Matthew Church, Elk City.

A $200 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse in memory of Jerry Cebulski.

A $2,500 donation was made to the Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse by an anonymous donor.

A $25 donation was made to the Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse by an anonymous donor.

A $500 donation was made to the Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse by Carlos A. Troncoso, MD.

A $2,500 donation was made to the Bishop Stephen A. Leven Seminary Burse by an anonymous donor.

Though most burses are in memory of a deceased priest, burses can be established in honor of an active priest. Such a burse has been started for Father Stephen Bird, pastor of Epiphany Church in OKC. An anonymous donor contributed $10,000 to establish this new burse. To donate to Father Bird’s burse or to any of the existing burses, make the check out to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, in the memo section note the specific burse and mail it to Vocations Office, P.O. Box 32180, OKC 73123.
Hahn Tells Oklahoma Catholics Heaven Found in Mass

By Eliana Tedrow

For the Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Before his conversion, Dr. Scott Hahn was described as one of the most anti-Catholic seminarians out there. Yet it was Dr. Hahn’s curiosity of the Catholic faith that got the best of him, and while studying for his Ph.D. at Marquette University, he found himself in a basement on campus, observing the Catholic Mass for the first time. A man fluent in both Greek and Hebrew, who had studied with some of the most famous theologians and scholars of our time, Hahn soon found himself mesmerized by the beauty and the familiarity of the Catholic Mass.

“Where have I seen this before?” he thought to himself, and he was startled by his answer: The Book of Revelation.

Within hours, Hahn says, he was back in the book of Revelation, and reading the writings of early church fathers, when he discovered what he explains to be the “obvious” correlation between what, on the surface, appeared to be mere symbolism of the apocalypse, to that of a real Eucharistic celebration revealed to John by Jesus Christ in Revelation.

St. Eugene Catholic Church in Oklahoma City invited Hahn to speak at Bishop McGuinness High School on Feb. 9, the first of a series of guest speakers the parish hopes to bring to Oklahoma. More than 700, including priests and nuns from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City attended.

Dr. Hahn published his findings in his book The Lamb's Supper: The Mass As Heaven On Earth (in addition to numerous other books and publications he has written) and has convinced numerous people, including former classmates from protestant seminary, that the Eucharist is, in fact, real, and that “the Catholic Mass allows us on earth to share in a communion with the angels and saints in heaven,” all of whom partake in the Eucharistic meal of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Pope John Paul II “called the Mass ‘heaven on earth,’ and explained that ‘the liturgy we share on earth is a mysterious participation in the heavenly liturgy,’” Hahn cites in his book.

Phrases Catholics hear every Sunday Mass in like “This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant” can be traced back to Revelation. Prayers chanted every Sunday such as “Holy, Holy, Holy, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest,” can be correlated to the book of Revelation. Yet, for so many people, including Catholics, the Book of Revelation still seems like indecipherable “symbols” of the apocalypse and not a realistic interpretation of the heavenly Mass, a Mass Catholics have been partaking in on earth for centuries.

“It’s so exciting to know that we are singing the same prayers and songs as the angels,” Hahn exclaimed to the captivated crowd. “The fact is we all want to go to heaven … we just don’t want to die first. As Catholics, we don’t have to die, all we have to do is go to Mass and heaven is where we are.”

After the morning session, people rushed to purchase books by Dr. Hahn, where he waited patiently to sign each copy given to him.

“I just wanted to finally see him in person,” said Hector Cardenas, “and to see the dynamic of his speaking. I’ve seen him on TV and heard his CDs, but to see the mystery of Christ’s presence. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. He does in every Eucharist.

Christ the King Honor Society Recognized for Efforts

OKLAHOMA CITY — Christ the King School chapter of the National Junior Honor Society has been designated an Honor Council for the year 2008-2009 school year. The main duty of the Presidential School Chapter for the 2008-2009 school year. The main duty of the Presidential School Chapter for the 2008-2009 school year. The main duty of the Presidential School Chapter for the 2008-2009 school year. The main duty of the Presidential School Chapter for the 2008-2009 school year.
Oklahoma, Guatemalan Catholics Continue to Build Ties That Bind

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — A bullet ended the earthly life of Father Stanley Rother in 1981, but it did not end the good works of the Catholic Church of Oklahoma as it continues to this day to provide prayers and support to the people of Guatemala. A strong bond has developed between the Catholic people of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and Guatemala and this bond is helping both to better live out their Catholic faith.

Recently, Father Pedro Gabriel, pastor at Saint James Parish in Santiago Atitlan, and Felipe Coche Pablo, parish secretary, visited Oklahoma City to say thanks to Oklahoma Catholics and to lend their support to the canonization efforts on behalf of Father Rother.

Father Anthony Taylor, pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Oklahoma City, hosted the two men and served as their translator.

Father Taylor said the Church is accomplishing what it set out to do many years ago when missionaries from Oklahoma first arrived in Guatemala. He said the goal from the beginning was to help the Catholic Church in Guatemala to function on its own. Father Taylor said that day has arrived.

“They are in the driver’s seat,” Father Taylor said. “They are in charge. We will continue to support their works but they are the ones making the decisions and that’s how it was always intended.”

Oklahoma Catholics indeed continue to support the Church in Santiago Atitlan, including the Father Rother School that educates children from kindergarten to the ninth grade.

The school building is very small. This requires the younger children to attend school only in the morning, making room for the older children to occupy the building in the afternoon. The dream is to one day have another building and to add a high school.

Oklahoma volunteers are being sought to help teach English in Santiago Atitlan. Father Taylor encouraged anyone interested in teaching there to contact him by e-mail at: fathertaylor@yahoo.com.

To help support the Father Rother School, The Priest Council of the Archdiocese voted to establish an endowment of $100,000. This endowment is being coordinated through the Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma Inc. and should provide $5,000 per year in support for the school. The Priest Council also made a one-time donation of $50,000 to the parish of Saint James. Several capital projects are under way there, including repairs to the bell tower at the Church which was built in 1547. The parish is home to 20,000 Catholics and Father Pedro is the only priest. He celebrates a vigil Mass on Sunday and five Masses on Saturday. About 2,000 people attend each Mass at Saint James, but as Father Taylor said, “They don’t need as much room as Catholics in the U.S.”

Others contributing to the support of Saint James in Santiago Atitlan include the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Sacred Heart of Oklahoma City, Saint John Nepomuk of Yukon, Saint Monica of Edmond, the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women and Holy Angels Parish of Oklahoma City.

Father Pedro said this support will help his parish establish an alcohol treatment center for men. Alcohol and drug abuse plagues the population, described by Father Pedro as very poor. Father Taylor said a typical worker in Guatemala earns in a day what a worker in Mexico earns in an hour. “A worker in Mexico earns in a day, what a worker in the United States earns in an hour,” he said.

Father Taylor said teaching is about the only career opportunity available to the people of Guatemala, other than agriculture, which is often very difficult in the mountainous terrain. Teachers earn $120 per month, while administrators earn about $97 per month.

A program coordinated with Mount St. Mary High School will bring two students from Santiago Atitlan to study at the Oklahoma City school. The students will be immersed in English for a semester. Father Taylor said the plan is to have them return to their native country and teach English to their fellow Guatemalans.

Students at Yukon Parish School Receive Visit From Father Pedro

YUKON — In a special visit during morning assembly at St. John Nepomuk Catholic School, the pastor and principal of the Father Stanley Rother Catholic School in Atitlan, Guatemala, personally thanked the students, faculty and families of St. John for a donation they made last year to the school. Father Tony Taylor of Sacred Heart, Oklahoma City, translated as Father Pedro Gabriel Chachal Mus shared with the students how the money they gave enabled the Father Rother School to make the desperately needed repairs to their school roof. Principal Felipe Coche Pablo presented each grade at St. John with hand-drawn thank-you cards and pictures from the students in Guatemala. A beautiful gift of an original oil painting by Juan Sisay was dedicated to St. John and now hangs in the lobby of the school. In return, Father Mus and the principal were presented with a portrait of Father Stanley Rother painted by seventh-grade student, Darby Heard.
Holy Eucharist Joins Us Together With Christ Our Lord

This is another in a series of stories intended to help explain the Mass.

By Father Tom Margevicius

After the “Great Amen,” everything looks the same: the appearance of bread and wine, a regular man in unusual garments and a gathering of common people of various ages, races, languages and states in life.

On the surface, it all seems ordinary. But our faith affirms that Jesus Christ is really present. The bread and wine have actually become his body and blood; the priest is acting in Christ’s person; and we, the assembly, are given God’s Spirit so we also become the body of Christ.

What happens next?

Obviously, we do what Jesus does. He said, “I always do what is pleasing to him [the Father]” (John 8:29), and that continues now in heaven where Jesus intercedes at the Father’s right hand. He’s still praying to his Father, and in the Eucharist — his real presence — we join our prayer to his and with Jesus we say, Our Father.

That’s what the Communion rite is all about: joining ourselves as intimately as possible to Jesus. How much closer can you get than having the sharing of parents and actually sharing someone’s body and blood?

Just as husband and wife become one flesh in the sacrament of marriage, in the sacrament of the Eucharist we are joined in the wedding banquet of the Lamb of God, when he takes his bride — the church — to himself.

Notice that this is a communal experience. Receiving the Eucharist is not just about me and Jesus; it’s us and Jesus. I like the double meanings of both the terms body of Christ and Communion: They both simultaneously refer to the Eucharist and the church.

This is why the Catholic Church cannot offer the Eucharist to those not united with us. Only those in Communion with the Catholic Church receive Communion in the Catholic Church. While Protestants, Catholics not in full Communion and others are welcome to join us in prayer, only Catholics in good standing receive the Eucharist, though rarely bishops — the overseers of Catholic Communion — can make exceptions.

Truth be told, even Catholics in full Communion and a state of grace are not always ready for intimacy with the body of Christ. We sin against God and neighbor.

Hence, we must make peace with them. Jesus said, “If you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother or sister has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23-24). This is the purpose of the sign of peace.

Ritual behavior is restrained and modest. Just as in the Eucharist, we don’t eat and drink until we’re full and drunk, so too the sign of peace should be sober and dignified, offered to a few persons immediately around us. It is not a free-for-all time to empty the pews for chatting with buddies; it’s a sacred moment. We symbolically do what our hearts intend: to be at peace with God and neighbor.

Neither is it a time to literally ask forgiveness for sin; that’s what the sacrament of reconciliation is for. Sometimes our offending of God and/or neighbor are serious enough that we may not receive Communion without first going to confession.

And even after ritually making peace, we dare not presume to be perfectly reconciled, which is why we next call out, “Lamb of God, have mercy on us.” As we behold the one who takes away the sins of the world, like the centurion, we know we’re not worthy to have him come under the roof of our souls. But he speaks a word — he is the Word — and we are healed.

Receiving Communion is the symbolic consummation of a wedding banquet, when the church-bride is so united to her divine groom that she becomes like him. St. Augustine observed that unlike ordinary eating, when the food becomes assimilated into our bodies, when we eat and drink at the Eucharist, we are changed into what we receive: the body of Christ.

Such a holy uniting calls for reverent behavior and the General Instruction of the Roman Missal asks all communicants to make a sign of reverence before receiving Communion. In the dioceses of the United States, our bishops have determined that to be a reverent bow of the head. While genuflecting, bowing profusely and kneeling are worthy ways to show reverence, overly showy displays distract others’ attention from the Eucharist onto the recipient and thus can disrupt Communion.

Whether one receives on the tongue or in the hand (the choice is up to each communicant), the most important thing is to be dignified and reverent. Say “Amen” (not “Thanks, Father!”), step aside and lovingly consume the eucharistic Lord.

Then return to your place and spend silent moments in prayer with him who is now within you in the most intimate way. Now is not the time to rush out of the church to beat the crowd out of the parking lot!

Father Tom Margevicius is instructor of liturgical theology at St. Paul Seminary School of Divinity.

Foundation Golf Classic Targets Rising Tuition Costs

OKLAHOMA CITY — Over the past six years, the Catholic Foundation has contributed all proceeds from its annual Golf Classic to the Catholic Schools Endowment targeting Archbishop Beltran’s vision of capping, Schools Endowment targeting Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

The 2008 golf tournament, set for Monday, June 9 at Twin Hills Golf and Country Club in Oklahoma City, will provide more than just academics and a Catholic education as one of the most important ministries of the Catholic Church, because “for so many, a Catholic education has benefited not just the church but our society as a whole, and a Catholic education provides more than just academics through its formation in the faith.” Increasingly, more families are choosing a Catholic primary or secondary education for their children, but at what point will tuition costs reverse this current trend. The end goal of the Catholic Schools Endowment is to stabilize both enrollment and tuition rates.

The Catholic Foundation

Progress So Far

Originally established in 1976 as the Archdiocesan Educational Trust, the fund made little progress during its first 25 years in existence. Then in 2002, renamed as the Catholic Schools Endowment, the Catholic Foundation began championing the cause through its first Golf Classic event.

Since that time, heightened awareness has led to additional gifts through annual giving, bequests and the assignment of undesignated proceeds to the endowment. In 2007, a $1 million pledge and a $1 million annuity benefitting the Catholic Schools Endowment were received by the Catholic Foundation.

With a fund balance of $1,620,000 ($750,000 of $1 million pledges due in equal installments in June 2008-2010) at Dec. 31, 2007, the Catholic Schools Endowment is 60% of its initial goal of capping Catholic school tuitions in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. However, plans are under way for a comprehensive Endowment Campaign to benefit Catholic education through the Catholic Foundation.

To learn more about the Catholic Schools Endowment or participate in the 2008 Catholic Foundation Golf Classic, contact the Catholic Foundation at (405) 721-4115 or tcasso@archdioceseokc.org. Registration forms are also available through your parish office.
Catholic Charities 2007 Awards

Catholic Charities recognized the following recipients at the Annual Recognition Celebration and Annual Meeting held on Feb. 18 at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond.

Corporation of the Year

This award recognizes a corporation or organization that has contributed material, financial or human resources to promote the mission of Catholic Charities.

Buland Group Construction Services

Buland Group Construction Services of Omaha, Neb., has worked with Catholic Charities and Mercy Housing Services during the past two years to plan and construct the renovation of Columbia Square Apartments in Lawton. These apartments serve 64 low-income families and meet a critical need for housing in the community.

The company has taken great measures to ensure the highest quality of construction so that the children and families living at Columbia Square have a safe, clean and energy-efficient home. Buland consistently has demonstrated care and concern for our residents by attention to detail in the construction process. They have worked to assure that each apartment is as well finished as possible. They have never taken a short cut for their convenience and have displayed an attention to quality that one might find in the construction of a $1 million home.

Clergy or Religious of the Year

This award recognizes an outstanding priest, religious brother, religious sister or deacon who has promoted the mission of Catholic Charities through service and advocacy.

Father Lowell Stieferman

Director of Vocations

For two years, Father Lowell Stieferman has helped plan and implement a summer internship program for seminarians at Catholic Charities.

The internship program has not only been successful in orienting seminarians to the ministries of Catholic Charities, but also has had a positive impact on staff and volunteers. It has helped seminarians understand how Catholic Social Teaching is carried out in the agency.

Seminarians experience a broad range of activities including refugee resettlement, document translation, public relations and administrative tasks. Father Stieferman also serves on the Program Evaluation Committee. He is currently the pastor of Saint Paul the Apostle Church in Del City.

Volunteer of the Year Award

This award recognizes a person who directly assists the work of Catholic Charities through a specific service or advocacy project.

Ray Haefele

After retiring as a corporate executive, Ray Haefele came to Catholic Charities to offer his expertise in the promotion and development of the agency. He has a special interest in marketing analysis and strategies and has given many hours of service in developing a memorial gift program.

Ray, member of St. John the Baptist Church in Edmond, has been especially helpful in connecting Catholic Charities to St. John’s Parish. In the past year, Ray personally initiated several Catholic Charities fundraising projects at St. John’s.

He is a tireless worker on the St. Patrick’s Day Grand Marshal Ball. Ray has a natural way of building trust among all groups and his efforts show, not only in increased financial support but in goodwill and volunteerism.
**Servant Leaders of the Year**

This award is given to a Catholic Charities employee in recognition of outstanding service and leadership at Catholic Charities.

Zanka Nikoli-Suboti and Maleeha Siddiqui

Last summer, 40 refugees arrived in Oklahoma City to begin their new lives in America. As case managers in Refugee and Resettlement, Zanka Nikoli-Suboti and Maleeha Siddiqui were committed to helping the new arrivals in every way possible. Zanka was born in Croatia and Maleeha was born in Afghanistan, and they became U.S. citizens this past year. They have a deep-rooted understanding and compassion for refugees who have fled their home countries due to religious, ethnic or political reasons.

When refugees arrive, many times with little advanced notice, Zanka and Maleeha have always been quick to respond and help refugees and their families get settled in their new environment. They are patient and sensitive to refugees’ needs, knowing they are people of vastly different cultures, languages and life experiences. In cooperation with the entire department, Maleeha and Zanka work to help refugees become self-sufficient. The job may entail greeting families at the airport at midnight, providing housing, food, clothing and household goods, and assisting with educational opportunities.

Zanka and Maleeha have been with Catholic Charities Refugee Department for four years. They are willing to serve others and work cooperatively with their co-workers, volunteers and refugees. They put into practice the Gospel values of justice, love, compassion and hope in the lives of people who live marginally.

**Parish or Church Organization of the Year**

This award recognizes an outstanding parish, parishes or voluntary group, including social ministry groups or community organizations, that works with Catholic Charities.

Sister BJ’s Pantry

Sister Barbara Joseph Foley, C.S.T., established Sister BJ’s Pantry three years ago to provide special support to homeless persons in downtown Oklahoma City. Two days a week, the pantry is open to serve breakfast, provide sack lunches and offer other help to men, women and children in the downtown area. Many volunteers in our community support this ministry.

Sister BJ has increased the presence of Church ministry in the inner city through this pantry. She has challenged Catholic Charities to develop additional services for the homeless, and has supported our case management program to assist persons with immediate and long-range needs. Sister BJ’s Pantry serves as a portal whereby people can come face to face with the poor and offer unconditional love.

Through Sister BJ’s Pantry, Catholic Charities has found a way to directly connect with homeless persons so that long-term needs of the inner-city homeless may be met. This project also has given JustFaith groups and parish ministries new opportunities to serve.

**St. Pat’s Ball to Help Support Homeless Services**

OKLAHOMA CITY — Tickets are now on sale for the 2008 St. Patrick’s Day Parade Grand Marshal Ball which will be held Saturday evening, March 8 at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club, said Toby Booth, co-chair of the event. Proceeds from the ball will benefit Catholic Charities Homeless Services.

Artist Lucille “Lou” Flanagan Ackerman, 2008 St. Patrick’s Day Parade Grand Marshal, will be recognized at the event. The charity ball will feature dinner, a live and silent auction and an evening of dancing to music by Classic Swing Big Band. The evening will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Individual tickets for the ball are $125 per person. Individual tables and corporate tables are also available. Corporate sponsorships include seating at the ball and promotion on the Web site, program, posters and media publicity. Corporate sponsorships are Emerald Isle ($10,000); Gold Sponsor ($5,000); Crystal Sponsor ($2,500); and Linen Sponsor ($1,250).

The lead corporate sponsorship is Emerald Isle sponsors — Teleflora and Meinders Foundation. Crystal sponsors are Ray and Lou Ackerman; American Fidelity Country Stores Inc.; LSB Industries Inc.; Mass Architects Inc.; Mercy Health Center; Meyer Architecture Plus, LLC; MidFirst Bank; Michael and Patricia Milligan; OGE Energy Foundation; AT&T; BancFirst; Louise and Clayton Bennett; Chesapeake Energy Corp.; Cummings Oil; Dolese Brothers; Durham Supply Inc.; Everest Brothers; First American Bank; Fremont Exploration Inc.; Grace Living Centers; Kelley & Kelley, P.C.; Love’s Travel Stops and Corp.; Oklahoma City University; The Oklahoman; Mark and Manda Ruffin; SandRidge Energy Inc.; SSM Health Care of Oklahoma (St. Anthony and Bone and Joint hospitals); Union Bank and RoseRock Bank; United Way of Central Oklahoma; and W & W Steel Co.

Linen sponsors are Bank of Oklahoma; Central Liquor Co.; Cox Oklahoma; Chris and Marie Engel; First National Bank of Oklahoma; Bill and Kris Frankfurt; Image Works of Oklahoma; Integris Health; Jones Public Relations Inc.; Mark and Carol Lester; Lippert Brothers Inc.; Oklahoma Natural Gas Company; Presbyterian Health Foundation; First National Bank of Oklahoma; and Kevin and Patty Trosper.

The ball is held each year to raise money for Catholic Charities and to recognize the St. Patrick’s Day Parade Grand Marshal. The parade will be Saturday, March 15 in downtown Oklahoma City.

No tickets will be sold at the door. To purchase tickets or corporate sponsorships, contact Jane Moon at (405) 526-2319 before Feb. 25.

For more information on the St. Patrick’s Day Grand Marshal Ball, go to www.catholiccharitiesok.org.
Shrine Opens Speakers Program

EDMOND — The National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague will bring nationally known speakers to the community in an effort to promote better understanding of the Catholic faith. The inaugural presenter will be Steve Ray.

Ray brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm in speaking about how the Lord led him from his Baptist beginnings into the Catholic Church. Since his conversion, he has traveled around the world sharing this message of hope and the witness of truth. He is the author of three books: Crossing the Tiber (which details his conversion), St. John’s Gospel (an in-depth study of the Fourth Gospel), and Upon This Rock (a consideration of the Church’s claims concerning the papacy). He has also produced the acclaimed Footprints of God: The Story of Salvation from Abraham to Augustine DVD series. Ray also gives much time to Catholic Radio and is a frequent guest on shows such as Morning Air and Catholic Answers Live. You can learn more about Steve Ray at his Web site, Defenders of the Catholic Faith (http://www.catholic-convert.com).

Ray will be at the National Shrine in Prague on Friday, March 14 and Saturday, March 15 to speak on the following subjects: his conversion story, the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Papacy and the Holy Eucharist. He will be speaking at 7 p.m. on Friday and will resume on Saturday at 9 a.m. There is no charge, although a free will offering will be taken. Lunch will be provided at no additional charge. However, to accommodate preparation needs, pre-registration is requested. Contact Rhonda Bartos or Father Tier. He is a member of Order of Preachers (now the Franciscans) and was confirmed in 1992.

Mardi Gras Queen Recalls Colorful Event Held at Coronado Club

By Ammanda McCabe
Sooner Catholic

EDMOND — The first Mardi Gras Ball held by the Coronado Club was 70 years ago, but Teresa Baker remembers it very well.

“It was a wonderful time,” she said. “A very special evening. The Skirvin Tower was flooded with people.”

The ball was held Feb. 28, 1938, in the Silver Room at the Skirvin Tower in downtown Oklahoma City. Teresa Baker, then Teresa Dixon, wanted to run for Mardi Gras queen, but since she was only 17 years old and a senior in high school, she was afraid she would be too young. “All the other girls were 18,” she said. Still, she wanted to do her best to represent her parish of Corpus Christi and her school of Corpus Christi Catholic School. After being encouraged by her parish priest, she put her name into the election. All the candidates’ pictures were printed in the Southwest Courier (now the Sooner Catholic) and voted on by the entire diocese. Miss Dixon was elected by a landslide.

The ball itself was “the largest Catholic event of that sort,” Baker, now living in Edmond, said. “I don’t think there has been anything like it since.” More than 1,000 people attended, most of them in costume to reflect the theme of “America 1776.” The Colonial Costume Shop provided the clothes for the king and queen and their court (which consisted of 40 attendants and two crown bearers), and the jeweled crowns were sent from New York City.

“We came down a beautiful staircase to be crowned on stage,” Baker said. “Everything was silver and sparkling.” After the coronation, there was dinner and dancing to the music of the College Ramblers from OU. Baker remembers the balls continued on a smaller scale until the war, but there wasn’t another like the first.

“Everybody had a lovely time,” she said. “It was a wonderful time.”

Saint Monica Scout Earns Rank of Eagle

EDMOND — Stewart Shelden, 17, a member of Troop 331 from St. Monica Church, has earned the rank of Eagle Scout. His Eagle project involved refurbishing the playground at St. Monica Church, replacing the border and adding a thick layer of mulch to the playground, making it a safer place for the children to play.

Stewart is the son of David and Susan Shelden. The family attends St. Monica Church. It is here that Stewart has been an altar server and was confirmed. He has served as quartermaster, assistant patrol leader and patrol leader for Troop 331.

The Scout has earned the Light of Christ and Parvuli Dei religious awards, as well as the International Scouting religious award. He has attended Scout camps at Slippery Falls and Camp Hale in Oklahoma, Ben Delatour in Colorado and Camp Orr in Arkansas. He has attended the BSA High Adventure camps at Philmont and Northern Tier.

Other Scout awards he has earned include BSA Lifeguard, CPR certification, Arrow of Light, Polar Bear, Totin Chip, Fireman’s Chit and Junior Leadership Training. He has his 50-mile hiking patch and has canoed over 75 miles.

Stewart is a junior at Edmond North High School and active in the Photography Club. He is a member of the Oklahoma Earthbike Fellowship and the International Mountain Bicycling Association.
Students Vow Silence, ‘Speak’ For Voiceless

By Eliana Tedrow
For the Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Madi Alexander was sitting in her religion class when students were given the assignment to come up with a challenge on how they could reflect or do something about a topic relevant to today’s world. Horrified by the acts of killing, Madi presented this challenge to her class: “We need to do something about the issues of abortion by remaining quiet.” The rules of the day were basic: write “LIFE” or “PRO-LIFE” on a piece of red duct tape, put it on their mouths (or clothes) and stay silent for one entire day. Red tape was used to symbolize “blood and life.” Teachers who participated wore red in order to continue classroom discussions.

Students used the quote “Are you willing to lose your voice in remembrance of those who never had one?” as motivation for the day. Soon, the official title “The Pro-Life Day of Silence — Raising Awareness of The Tragedy of Abortion” was given. Originally intended for a small group of students in a religion class, the “Day of Silence” became a huge success, affecting the entire school community.

She was stunned, Madi said, when student after student walked into her class and requested a piece of tape. “I think more people have realized that it’s pretty simple to voice their opinion,” Madi said, “but I never thought that so many people would stand up for what they believe in.”

Many people are still unaware of exactly what goes on during an abortion, Madi said, and she urges fellow students to research what happens when a baby is aborted. “This day made us not only aware of aborted children,” she said, “but of everyone who does not have a voice in this world.” The students hope to continue this type of demonstration next year.

WARNING - The Life You Save May Be Your Own

Since Terri Schiavo’s death in March 2005, her brother, Bobby Schindler, has been fighting for the lives of people who are cognitively impaired or dying, but not dying “fast enough” to suit their family members or caregivers. In the Feb. 18 Washington Times, Schindler wrote in response to a judge’s recent decision to order the dehydration death of Lauren Richardson — a young woman, much like Terri, who sustained a serious brain injury in 2006. She is one of the thousands of conscious and unconscious patients who will die by deliberate dehydration this year. Schindler contends, but “we only hear of the cases in which there is family disagreement.” He continues: “For reasons I still struggle to understand, deliberately dehydrating persons with brain injuries really doesn’t seem to catch the ire of most Americans.”

The same day, a retired professor of religion and social ethics conveniently illustrated the lack of ire. Writing in America, she questioned the wisdom of the Holy See’s August 2007 statement against withdrawing assisted nutrition and hydration (ANH) from patients who are in a so-called “permanent vegetative state.”

That statement of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), approved by Pope Benedict, one of the thousands of persons who are dying or cognitively impaired reveals more about our humanity and dignity than it does about theirs. As John Paul II reminded us in 2004: “Even our brothers and sisters … in … a ‘vegetative state’ retain their human dignity in all its fullness. The loving gaze of God the Father continues to fall upon them, acknowledging them as his sons and daughters, especially in need of help.”

Susan Wills is assistant director for Education and Outreach, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities. Go to www.usccb.org/prolife to learn more about the bishops pro-life activities.
**Tet 2008**

**Parishes Bring in New Year with Celebrations of Holy Eucharist**

**By Rosemary Griffis**  
*For the Sooner Catholic*

OKLAHOMA CITY — “Chuc Mung Nam Moi.” “Happy New Year and Good Luck,” Archbishop Eusebius Beltran greeted the Vietnamese communities at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and at St. Andrew Dung-Lac parishes during the recent Tet holiday season.

This year, the Year of the Rat, began on Feb. 7, the same day as the Chinese lunar New Year. Tet is an abbreviation for Tet Nguyen Dan, which means “the first morning of the first day of the first period.” As the beginning of a new year, the Vietnamese celebration is a time of renewal. Celebration with family and friends usually lasts a week to 10 days.

Father Dominic Hung Hoang, pastor of St. Andrew Dung-Lac, said that the Year of the Rat is good. “It is a time for hard work, activity and renewal,” he said. This is especially true as St. Andrew’s continues its effort to construct a new church building.

All around were symbols of spring and new life. In each church, banks of yellow and red flowers surrounded the altars flanked by hoa mai trees. These trees bear small yellow blossoms, signaling spring and a new beginning, and are traditionally decorated with gold-colored greeting cards and monetary gifts in lucky red envelopes. The urn-shaped thurible at the foot of the altar held burning incense, symbolizing prayers wafting up to God.

Archbishop Beltran reminded each congregation that “our call to holiness is rooted in the gift of new life we receive through Jesus in baptism. As Catholic people celebrating Tet, we should thank God for this new and more abundant life that Jesus gives us. This is the life that reaches fulfillment and life everlasting in heaven.”

As the altar was prepared to begin the celebration of the Eucharist at each Mass, traditional liturgical dancers, wearing colorful red and gold ao dai, led the Offertory procession up the center aisle, fluttering flower-decorated fans and incense sticks. Then, amid the flowers, fans and incense, family groups offered the products of the earth — baskets and trays of fruits and cakes, along with the bread and wine.

At the Cathedral, men carrying large fans displaying the words: Vinh, Hoa, Phu, Quy, Ve, Xuan, Nam, Moi, Hanh, assembled in front of the altar, their fans held high. Father Thanh van Nguyen, associate pastor of Our Lady’s Cathedral said, that “depending on the placement of the individual fans, the words expressed, ‘Thank you, God, for Blessings in the New Year,’ and ‘God, Bless Us in the New Year.’”

After each Mass, the archbishop, pastor, visiting priests and deacons were presented with gift envelopes and flowers. Archbishop Beltran expressed his honor at being invited to each celebration and praised the Vietnamese communities for their faith and generosity.
Oklahoma Catholic Men Overcome Frigid Weather to Attend Annual Conference

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Frigid temperatures and a steady mix of cold and often frozen rain falling across the state could not keep more than 650 men away from the 12th annual Oklahoma Catholic Men’s Conference held Feb. 16 at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School.

Presented by the Oklahoma Fellowship of Catholic Men, the conference carried the theme of perseverance. Throughout the day the men listened as speakers testified that faith in God is the key to finding peace and strength in a world that too often glamorizes evil and promotes self-satisfaction above all else.

“The devil is alive out there,” Richard Lane told the audience. “He wants everyone to live in pain.” The son of Hall of Fame footballer Dick “Night Train” Lane, Richard Lane described growing up surrounded by celebrities such as Joe Louis, Jesse Owens and Sammy Davis Jr., but what he really wanted was a father who would spend time with him.

“I waited 35 years to hear my Dad tell me he loved me,” the younger Lane said. He said he forgave his father, because “he never knew how to be a father.” Born in the late 1920s in Austin, Texas, “Night Train” was abandoned by his biological mother at 3 months of age. “His mother threw him away in a trash can,” Lane said. His father was rescued and raised by a loving woman, but he never experienced the love and guidance of a father.

Lane, a convert to Catholicism, has faced great challenges himself. He told the audience how his young daughter started experiencing convulsions that doctors were unable to explain. One day at Mass, his daughter started shaking; he cradled her in his arms and in the back of the church began to pray The Lord’s Prayer over her.

“I prayed for God to put her pain on me,” Lane said. That was several years ago and his daughter has not experienced a convulsion since. “I said that day, ‘God, you said you would heal and I believe you.’” Lane said it was the Eucharist that drew him into the Catholic Church.

“How much more of a personal relationship can you have with Jesus Christ,” he said. “Everything we need is in our beautiful Catholic faith and yet we still have doubts. Fear blocks our blessings, fear blocks our blessings.”

Lane said fear is erased when we turn our lives over to Christ. “The Holy Eucharist gives us the strength to persevere,” he said.

Bob Jacobson came to the conference from Saint Mary Church in Clinton. He brought with him his son, Doug Jacobson, and his future son-in-law, Scott Dawkins. This was the second Men’s Conference for the elder Jacobson.

“These speakers give us a great example,” Bob Jacobson said. “They say the things we are all thinking, but are afraid to say out loud in public.” Mass celebrated by Archbishop Beltran concluded the conference.
Registration Under Way for Catholic Summer Camp

Registration is under way for Catholic Summer Camp at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Camp. Seven one-week camp sessions will be offered beginning June 8 and running until July 20.

Any youth who has finished the third grade through the 12th grade is eligible to attend the camp and non-Catholic friends are welcome.

“At camp our emphasis is on developing faith and making new friends while having a lot of fun,” said Nancy Housh, director of the Archdiocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Camp provides all kinds of summer activities, including crafts, hiking, swimming (in-ground pool), fishing, water sports, volleyball, softball, canoeing, archery, talent show, soccer, campfires, drama and more.

Campers arrive Sunday evening between 5 and 6:30. The week ends the following Friday with checkout at 4 p.m. Cost for the camp is $210 per person and includes lodging, meals, snacks, camp T-shirt and insurance.

For more information, contact the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at (405) 721-9220 or (405) 721-5651 Ext. 115, e-mail: aguillotte@catharchdioceseokc.org, or go to www.catharchdioceseokc.org and click on the Summer Camp button.

Catholic Youth Urged to Attend Rally

SHAWNEE — The Archdiocesan Youth Rally will be held at Saint Gregory’s University on April 5 and will feature National Catholic youth speaker Mike Patin. Youth from throughout the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City are encouraged to make their way to this event.

“Our keynote speaker is one of the best we’ve ever heard,” said Nancy Housh, director of the Archdiocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. “We hope parishes will take advantage of Mike Patin coming to Oklahoma.”

Patin, who lives in Lafayette, La., mixes humor and motivation to help create a lively and faith-filled experience for young Catholics. His presentation promises to be uplifting and thought-provoking. Housh said she is encouraging parishes throughout the archdiocese to bring their youth to this exciting event.

“All of us agree on the theme of the rally is ‘God is my GPS.’ Parishes should have registration forms and the cost is $25 per person, including dinner, a T-shirt and entertainment including a dance and games. The rally runs from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information, contact your parish youth director.

Catholic Family Event Set June 7

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Catholic Family Conference will be held June 7 at Bishop McGuinness High School. Built around the theme of Pope John Paul II’s quote “As the family goes … so goes the whole world,” there will be programs for children and teens, adult workshops and speakers.

The speakers include Father Bernie Gorges, spiritual director and priest for the Diocese of Wichita as well as founder of the Catholic youth program Totus Tuus; Stephanie Wood, daughter of Steve Wood and coordinator of “Next Wave Faithful,” a young adult division of Family Life Center International, and host of the worldwide radio show “Next Wave Live” on EWTN Global Catholic Radio Network; and Phil Lenahan, director of finance for Catholic Answers, president of Veritas Financial Ministries and author of “Seven Steps to Becoming Financially Free.”

The conference will conclude with Mass celebrated by Archbishop Beltran and Bishop Slattery from the Diocese of Tulsa.

Conference coordinator Jeff Finnell said with the large attendance at the recent men’s and women’s conferences, there is “a hunger” for more such events in Oklahoma, and he anticipates a large enthusiastic turnout. For more information, call (405) 225-4343 or e-mail ORCatholicFamily@aol.com.

Changes Set for Catholic Radio

OKLAHOMA CITY — Listeners will find some changes beginning in March to the Catholic radio schedule at KTLR AM 890. KTLR is a “daylight only” station, which means it can expand programming as the days get longer. Catholic Answers Live is usually heard in a pre-recorded format in Oklahoma City, but by March 3 it will actually be heard live from 5 to 7 p.m. Listeners from Oklahoma will be able to call in and participate with questions and discussion.

On Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 3 to 4 p.m. will be the new program, The Journey Home, hosted by Marcus Grodie. Grodie is a former Presbyterian minister who returned to his earlier Catholic faith. He talks about his own faith journey and interviews others who have “come home” to the Catholic Church.

On Thursdays and Fridays, the 3 to 4 p.m. slot will be filled by the return of Good News Sunday, with Fred Pope and Deacon Larry Sousa from Norman. They will preview and discuss the readings for the upcoming Sunday Mass.

Another addition to the schedule is the call-in show Kresta in the Afternoon, heard from 4 to 5 p.m. daily. Kresta in the Afternoon, hosted by Al Kresta, broadcaster and author of several books including Why Do Catholics Genuflect? And Answers to Other Puzzling Questions About the Catholic Faith, looks at all areas of life through the lens of Scripture and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

For more information, visit the Catholic Broadcasting Web site at www.okcatholicbroadcasting.com.
Faith Over Fear

The recent arrest and placement in the Oklahoma County Jail of the Hispanic American citizen from Capitol Hill, covered in a recent edition of the Sooner Catholic, leaves some disturbing thoughts for me, as a Hispanic American citizen, and of the relationship I have with my fellow non-Hispanic American Catholics. This was further brought to mind when I attended a Mass in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Jan. 20, and the Sanctity of Life Mass at the Cathedral on Jan. 23, both life-affirming events.

The governor of this state assured every American citizen in Oklahoma that no citizen need fear HB 1804 when it became effective last Nov. 1. The attorney general of this state told reporters that he thought HB 1804 was legal and not moral. HB 1804 is a second effort by a national lobbyist group to override federal authority and to lay down a second level of legislation which creates new burdens on law enforcement, punishes the business community for laxness or episodic negligence in hiring practices, creates economic inflation by raising the cost of doing business, and to now place, as your article revealed, that not every Hispanic American citizen is protected from arrest and imprisonment in a society which has undermined our basic values of justice, compassion and charity with a philosophy of fear following 9/11 and the rhetoric associated with the war on terrorism.

It is an institution like the Catholic Church in the United States, of which I am a baptized American Catholic citizen, which is challenged most because of her founder and His believers. If Catholic legislators and Catholic constituents without serious examination of faith in conscience can pride themselves in supporting HB 1804, and its successive proposals such as making English the state’s official language, and confiscating the property of those who give aid and comfort to illegal immigrants, then the authenticity of the Church itself is undermined in the secular society and Christ’s presence is concealed in political expediency and fear-mongering.

Our beloved archbishop, who championed the cause of civil rights in the Deep South 40 years ago, now champions the cause of the stranger God has put in our midst. Alongside him stand priests like Father Tony Taylor, young people such as those at Mount St. Mary’s, and many other Catholics who warn us of the cheap bargain of exchanging our fear for faith.

If an American Catholic is afraid of loving their neighbor who is a stranger and who cannot speak the same language as he or she, during this Lenten season a serious examination of conscience must be undertaken to see if by our good intentions we are turning away Christ just because his native land cannot give him what he needs to live.

All the laws generated by a million legislatures and courts loaded with good intentions cannot build a wall high enough to eclipse the Light of the Son of God.

Mike Chavez
Del City

Letters

Across Oklahoma

Bingo at Saint James

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bingo at St. James Catholic Church, 41st and South McKinley Avenue, will be held March 27. Food and beverages reasonably priced will be served at 5:45 p.m. Bingo begins at 6:30 p.m. All games including two blackouts are $10. Door prizes and special recognition for all players born in January, February and March. All bingo players get an entry for a HDTV flat screen television to be given away in October. Come on down and make it a party.

Renew Group to Host Fish Fry

CHANDLER — The Renew Group at Our Lady of Sorrows, 409 Price Avenue, is holding its annual Lenten fish fry on March 7. There will be two sittings, lunch from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and dinner from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Cost is $6, proceeds will benefit church programs. Carry-out is also available. Come enjoy a great dinner and make it a party.

Seminarians on Deans List

CONCEPTION, Mo. — Three Oklahoma seminarians at Conception Seminary have received academic honors. John Paul Lewis of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Billy James of St. James the Greater Parish in Oklahoma City and Brian Buettner of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Norman have been named to the fall 2007 Dean’s List for earning a grade point average of 3.25 or better.

Parish Hosts Poetry Contest

CHICKASHA — In an effort to encourage the sacred arts, Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church and the Catholic Campus Ministry Project at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma are sponsoring a poetry contest. Poets are encouraged to submit work that explores themes and images common to Catholic life and thought. Non-Catholic poets are welcome to participate. The winning poem will be published in the Sooner Catholic. In addition, the winning poet will receive a $100 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble. Prizes will also be awarded to second- and third-place finishers. To enter, send no more than three previously unpublished poems to Dr. Brenda Brown, c/o Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church, P.O. Box 748 Chickasha, Okla. 73023. Submissions must be received no later than April 1, 2008.

St. Patrick’s Day Parade

The 26th Annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade will be held Saturday, March 15. The parade begins at 1 p.m. at Walker and Sheridan, and will proceed east on Sheridan to Bricktown. Honored as this year’s Grand Marshal will be artist Lucille “Lou” Flanagan Ackerman. Lou and her husband, Ray are parishioners at St. Eugene Parish in Oklahoma City.

“It is an honor and privilege to be chosen as this year’s Grand Marshal,” Lou Ackerman said. “I think it one of the nicest things that has ever happened to me. I am very proud of my Irish heritage. On my first visit to Ireland several years ago, I fell in love with the country, my ancestry and the people,” Lou added.

Parade attractions will include entries from local car clubs, school bands, equestrian groups, the Knights of Columbus and Catholic Charities.

Mass in Tagalog

DEL CITY — St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church will celebrate Mass in Tagalog (Filipino) at 7 p.m. each Saturday. A potluck dinner will occasionally follow Mass. All are welcome.
Author Weigel Says Christians Must Stand Up


★★★★★

This book is not an easy one to read. Some readers will need to keep a dictionary nearby while reading this book since George Weigel uses “big words,” but this should not keep anyone from reading this book. Weigel’s message is very timely in our world of today with the war on terrorism. He does not hold back from expressing his views on how to live with and confront jihadism. He calls Islamists and Muslim fundamentalists, jihadists. His views are not only his but also of many world Christian leaders and intellectuals of the West. One of these leaders is Pope Benedict XVI, who discussed the issue of peaceful dialogue between Christians and Muslims in his September 2006 lecture in Regensburg, Germany. This lecture was answered later by riots and violence in the Muslim world and protest against it as being intolerant. The press also does not have to fear violence because most often Christians are not going to kill them, while if Muslims are offended, they might kill or harm them. There is no equality here. This is also known as relativism. Political correctness comes into play too. One has to be tolerant when Christ or Christ’s prophet is not being attacked or insulted. Weigel and others are saying that this is not just or reasonable. There should not be any bashing of any religion or ethnic group.

Weigel examines Sunni and Shiite jihadists. The Sunni radicals are made up of various groups, most notably al-Qaeda. Shiites radicals are made up of various groups and a nation, Iran. Iran also supports Hezbollah, which fought with Israel in Lebanon in the summer of 2006. These two “groups” fight with each other. Radicals in each group are a threat to world peace. Weigel shows that the West needs to support and encourage moderate Muslims in order to combat radical Muslims. He shows how this can be done, he also presents what other leaders and intellectuals recommend should be done to turn the tide. Some of these are Pope Benedict, former CIA director R. James Woolsey, former secretary of state Henry Kissinger, Bernard Lewis, Alain Besançon and others. He also presents some historical Muslims and events that were more tolerant toward others and prove that this tolerance can help Muslim society to be prosperous and at peace. Jihadists, though, wish that all the people of the world should be Muslims. Weigel presents the fact that Christianity and Judaism is much more tolerant of other religions than is Islam. In Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia, churches cannot be built, while in Rome the pope encouraged the building of a mosque. Christians have to be secret about their religion in Muslim countries. If a Muslim converts to Christianity or Judaism, he or she might be killed for it. If a Jew or Christian converts to Islam, that person is not going to be killed for it. Many Muslims are not tolerant of other religions. Weigel points out what the Taliban did to the statues of the Buddhas in Afghanistan. Weigel and others are encouraging Westerners, especially Christians, to stand up for their faith against Muslim extremists and secularists who are inadvertently supporting the jihadists or at least the radicals.

Weigel makes it clear that not all Muslims are violent or follow the jihadist point of view. He highly supports moderate Muslims who want peace and prosperity. His message is directed at Westerners, especially Christians. He points out that Christians are too tolerant or even too silent about outrages to Christianity. His book has no bibliographic index. It does have endnotes. It is highly recommended to those interested in relativism, the war on terror, Muslim-Christian dialogue and jihadism.

Weigel is the distinguished senior fellow of Washington’s Ethics and Public Policy Center. He is a Newsweek contributor and analyst on the Vatican for NBC News. He is the author of the forthcoming Against the Grain: Christianity and Democracy, War and Peace (April 2008), God’s Choice (2006), The Cube and the Cathedral, America and Politics Without God (2006), Without Roots (2006), Witness to Hope: the Biography of Pope John Paul II (2005), and many other books and articles.

Weigel says that the so-called “Abrahamic” religions really are not that connected as some would have us to believe. Judaism and Christianity are much closer than they are to Islam. Christianity is founded from Judaism. It is false to say that Islam came out of Judaism and Christianity. Weigel shows that the Qur’an’s version of Jesus does not depict him as Christians do. Christians hold him as the Son of God while Islam holds him up as the last Jewish prophet and that Christianity has transformed his message from what it actually was. Jews and Christians are called the “people of the Book” and are treated as second class citizens if they do not convert to Islam.

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proved his point that for some Muslims there can only be a one-way discussion in favor of Islam. In 2007, Muslim religious and secular scholars and leaders invited the pope and other Christain leaders to begin dialoguing.

More than anything in my life — I want to live the Serenity Prayer! I want to let go and let God.

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Brother Benet Exton is a Benedictine Monk at St. Gregory’s Abbey in Shawnee. Among other duties, he serves as the librarian there and writes book reviews regularly for several Catholic publications, including the Sooner Catholic.
Memo to Marthas: ‘There is Need of Only One Thing’

In preparation for my first TV interview, I hit the Mall of America. I had a mission: to find a top. The Top. A TV top like the anchors wear.

I always experience sensory overload at MOA. It is a lot to process. Caricatures and characters. Mohawks and midriffs. Runny noses and roller coasters.

So I when I slipped into a fitting room, I was ready to soak up a little silence.

And yet, as soon as I closed my door, I heard the woman in the next stall talking on her cell phone. Something about her husband’s retirement. I focused my attention back on the shirts at hand, until an “It’s A Small World” ringtone pierced the air, and the woman to my other side began describing her outfit, evidently intended for Friday.

That’s when it struck me. Our most private places are eroding.

Before cell phones entered our purses and pockets, a fitting room was a personal space. Sure, its halls hosted heated debates between moms and daughters, with friends waiting in the wings. But what happened inside a stall’s cramped quarters was a private exchange, an unfinching showdown between woman and mirror, birthing hard-to-swallow epiphanies like “I have gained weight” and “This looked better on the hanger.”

African Women Deserve Better Than Congressional AIDS Plan

By Richard M. Doerflinger

In a Congress known for partisan conflict, one consensus achievement has been the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Over five years this bipartisan program has provided nearly $19 billion to prevent and treat AIDS in the neediest countries of Africa and elsewhere. To reduce sexual transmission, the program adopted the “ABC” model: promote Abstinence before marriage, then Being faithful to one partner, with Condoms as a last resort. To keep this priority intact, it allocated 33 percent of prevention funds for abstinence programs. This has enabled Catholic programs, which do not endorse or promote condoms, to play a major role in prevention without compromising their values.

The result is a notable success, though much more funding and effort is certainly needed. As Dr. Norman Hearst of the University of California testified to Congress last September, “the few successes in turning around generalized HIV epidemics, such as in Uganda, were achieved not through condoms but by getting people to change their sexual behavior.” Catholic Relief Services and other faith-based organizations have been instrumental in the program’s success.

A happy ending, you might say: A bipartisan consensus, a sound emphasis on responsible behavior, and a medical success story that is saving millions of lives. The greatest need is for expanded funding along these lines.

So of course, Congress is now in danger of smashing the program to bits.

The threat comes from provisions in a draft reauthorization bill to be marked up by the House Foreign Affairs Committee. The bill removes any allocation for abstinence and behavior change, so condoms could take up the entire budget for preventing sexual transmission. New provisions call on PEPFAR programs to “integrate” and “coordinate” with contraceptive programs — even, ironically, the “C” of contraceptives, as condoms are already funded as part of HIV prevention). Mother-to-child transmission of HIV will be prevented not so much by providing effective anti-retroviral medicine to mother and child, but by marketing contraceptives to HIV-positive women. A program for preventing the next generation of Africans from getting AIDS could become a program for preventing the next generation of Africans.

Even those who do not hold the Catholic moral stance on contraception should be able to see what a disaster this may become. Consider the following:

First, a mandate that grantees “integrate” with clinics like those run by Planned Parenthood (which often provide abortions alongside contraceptives) will push Catholic grantees to the margins of the program. In many rural areas, Catholic health care institutions are the only source of AIDS prevention and treatment. If they lose funding because they can’t “integrate” with contraceptive programs, no one will replace them, and more people could die of AIDS.

Second, all three aspects of the ABC program are undermined by current provisions as they undermine contraceptives — even, ironically, the “C” of condoms. Due to the false sense of security given to men and women by drugs for preventing pregnancy, consistent condom use is notoriously rare among those using hormonal contraceptives — especially the injectable or implantable contraceptives favored by population control enthusiasts.

Third, a solid body of medical evidence indicates that due to biologic effects on the uterus, hormonal contraceptives can increase the risk that a woman exposed to HIV will contract the virus and the disease. Facilitating access to these drugs to reduce AIDS is like promoting prostitution to reduce AIDS.

Any of these factors should make Congress think twice before endangering the success of the PEPFAR program this way. The three taken together suggest that the new bill will show an alarmingly casual attitude toward African women’s lives.

Advocates for this change of direction in PEPFAR condemn their critics for putting “ideology” over an “evidence-based” approach to AIDS. To foster a dangerous neglect of the evidence, however, they need only look in a mirror. The women of the Third World deserve better than this. To find out how to help them, see www.nchla.org/actiondisplay.asp?ID=260.

Doerflinger is associate director of the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. To learn more about the bishops pro-life activities, go to www.usccb.org/prolife.
Buenas Noticias...

El Señor está verdaderamente con ustedes. Juntos somos como el Evangelio nos dice: "Creo, ¡pero ayudé mi poca fe!"

Arzobispo Revoredo

El Señor está abandonado por la familia y amigos. Cuestiona a la Iglesia porque no se sienten apoyados. Se preguntan qué hace con sus jóvenes. Pese a todo esto, los animo a que no tomen.

El Señor está verdaderamente con ustedes, juntos somos como el Evangelio nos dice: "Creo, pero ayudé mi poca fe!"

Estoy muy agitado de que muchos requieran que nos por un lado. Estoy agitado de que tenemos tiempo para abrir nuestras orejas hacia mí de una manera muy humilde. Estoy agitado de que compartamos congoja, pero que nuestras preocupaciones, por lo que me urge servir con más emoción.

Es bueno conocer las dificultades que tienen para vivir la fe completamente y sus arduos deseos de atrapar a sus sueños cuando al presagiar la resurrección de la fe que nos lleva a la vida eterna en el cielo. Esta información no permanecerá sin respuesta.

Ahora, esto se convirtió en parte de mis oraciones diarias por una sola vez hasta que por su requerimiento especial.

Les aseguro, el verdadero objeto de nuestra colecta del ADF no se cuenta en el dinero. Más bien, la medida real del éxito del ADF consiste en la renovación de nuestras vidas. Sus contribuciones económicas son importantes para el trabajo de la Iglesia y son el claro signo de su propia fe. Sin embargo, la última meta es el fortalecimiento de esa fe.

Recuerden, Dios nos creó a su imagen y semejanza para que lo conozcamos, amemos y servamos. ¡Por qué? Para que alguien sea alegre con el mismo para siempre en el cielo. Como las Santas Escrituras dicen: "Dejé envío a un sierra ganado el mundo entero, pero se ha destruido a sí mismo!

Estoy muy complacido con que en la Providencia de Dios, haya venido a ser su Arzobispo. Por tanto, mientras caminé con ustedes en este pontificado de X, prometo recorrer por todas partes y sus urgencias, especialmente por aquellas personas que requieren más oraciones.

Sus requerimientos han dado con su respuesta al ADF, están en mi corazón como también en mi capilla, ante la Eucaristía del Señor. Juntos, podemos caminar con seguridad, alegría y agradecimiento a este Señor.

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Habla su presidente, Mario J. Paredes

Nace la Asociación de Líderes Latinos en Estados Unidos

ROMA, GENS10602 — En Estados Unidos, 45 millones de personas hablan español y el 60% ha nacido allí. Entre ellos, muchos son hijos en el mundo empresarial, financiero, académico político... Y para ellos se crea la Asociación de Líderes Latinos, llamada CALL (Catholic Association of Latino Leaders), con sede en San Antonio, Texas. El presidente de la Junta Directiva de esta asociación, Mario J. Paredes, revela que el objetivo es "trabajar con la Iglesia para el bien común" y "servir a las comunidades latinas de los Estados Unidos".

Paredes, director del Departamento de Negocios de la Comunidad de Merrill Lynch & Co., Inc., indica que la identidad de los católicos hispanos en Estados Unidos es muy clara y fuerte. Hoy por hoy creo que la identidad del mundo hispano, en Estados Unidos es muy clara, es muy abierta, es muy fuerte a pesar de todas las corrientes que se han dado últimamente en contra de los inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos, añade este entrevistador realizado en Roma, durante la cual ha presentado la asociación a varios miembros de la Crónica romana.

El objetivo de esta asociación es impulsar la cultura latina para renovar la vida pública americana.

La iniciativa fue presentada por primera vez el 16 de enero de 2008 en San Antonio, Texas, en un acto al que asistieron monseñor José H. Gomez, 2TD, arzobispo de San Antonio y monseñor Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M., Cap. Arzobispo de Denver, además de algunos asociados y reconocidos líderes latinos de negocios de otras partes del país.

"La integración lo permite a los hispanos a mantener su lengua, su cultura, su identidad, su presencia y al mismo tiempo lo hace entrar en la vida de la Iglesia en los Estados Unidos, asumiendo roles responsabilidades", a juicio de M.J. Paredes.

"El mundo que vives y vives con el catolicismo popular, con la religiosidad popular, con la cultura religiosa popular", Paredes, que subraya lo que la asociación quiere ser un lugar de encuentro para hombres y mujeres que, en el mundo profesional y de negocios que realizan un impacto a nivel nacional en Estados Unidos.

El 25 de marzo, en Denver, tendrá lugar la próxima presentación nacional de CALL, que se está dando a conocer por varios estados. En el día de su nacimiento público se hicieron presentes con siendo nombrado coadjutor cardenal Daniel D'Nardo, arzobispo de Galveston-Houston, y el mundo apostólico de Benedicto XVI en los Estados Unidos, el arzobispo Pietro Sambi, quien hizo llegar los "saludos cariñosos y paternal de la corona espiritual" del Papa.

La carta concluye diciendo: "El Señor te da a esta iniciativa la bendición de la comunidad católica latina a una dedicación renovada en busca de la sanidad y un trabajo comprometido a la defensa del Evangelio".
Ilustre visita desde Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala
Nos recuerda que somos un solo Cuerpo con una sola Misión

Por Mauro Yam es
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — La parroquia Santiago Apóstol está ubicada en el pueblo de Santiago Atitlán en Guatemala. Desde hace mucho años, la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City ha mantenido una estrecha relación con esta parroquia. En esta comunidad sirvieron misioneros que hicieron una gran labor evangelizadora. Entre esos misioneros se encuentra el mártir Padre Stanley Rother, quien fue asesinado por defensores suyos que protegían al pueblo indígena de las atrocidades cometidas por el gobierno de esa localidad.

Por invitación de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City estuvieron visitándonos, a finales de febrero, el Padre Pedro Gabriel Chachalbus, actual párroco de Santiago Apóstol y el secretario de esta parroquia, el señor Felipe Coche Fabio, quien es el secretario de la parroquia Santiago Apóstol en Santiago Atitlán. Estos ilustres visitantes vinieron a consolidar los planes de formación y trabajo misionero entre la parroquia Santiago Apóstol y la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City.

"El Padre Rother me quiso mucho", dijo el padre Pedro Gabriel Chachalbus, quien ha tenido mucho tiempo de formación y trabajo con el padre Rother en Oklahoma City. "El padre Rother me quiso mucho y me ayudó mucho en mi formación. A lo largo de mi vida he estado pensando en él y en cómo puedo seguir su ejemplo."

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1960 y 1986. Por lo que, el pueblo Santiago Atitlán testimunó el primer momento de la guerra civil. Los viejos hechos de esa cruel guerra se remontan a la década de los ochenta, cuando a las personas que protestaban la religión católica se les consideraba comunistas o subversivas.

"En Santiago Atitlán todo el mundo sabe y se sabe que el pueblo Santiago Atitlán sólo tiene a un pueblo Sant matchmaking a lo largo de su historia. Todos saben que el pueblo Santiago Atitlán es un pueblo unido y que trabaja para la paz y la prosperidad.

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Galardonadas como mejores empleadas del año en Caridades Católicas

Por Mauro Yam es
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Por su trabajo dedicado para ayudar al prójimo, capacidad creadora, lo diligente, lo cumplido, lo puntual y por todos esos años de servicio, las caridades Católicas decidieron otorgarles un reconocimiento a sus mejores empleadas del año, ellas son la señora Linda Nikolai Subotić y la señora Maleasha Siddiqui.

Después de acostumbrarse más anual en homenaje a su trabajo de Caridades Católicas, se efectúa una ceremonia en las áreas sociales de la Parroquia San Juan Bautista de Edmond. Allí se hizo un balance de lo que se ha logrado en beneficio de los más vulnerables y necesitados.

Cabe señalar que la señora Linda Nikolai Subotić y la señora Maleasha Siddiqui, coordinan las actividades de la Oficina de Finanzas de la iglesia de la parroquia Santiago Apóstol, siempre han trabajado con gran dedicación y responsabilidad.

En el acto, se dieron gracias a las caridades Católicas por su labor de ayuda y a la señora Linda Nikolai Subotić y la señora Maleasha Siddiqui por su compromiso y dedicación en beneficio de los más necesitados.
Accountant
Archdiocesan Business Office is seeking a degreed accountant. Great Plains Software experience a plus. Interested candidates can fax a letter of interest, resume and references to Davis Johnson at (405) 709-2711 or by mail to P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City 73123.

Youth Ministry Coordinator
Holy Spirit Church in Mustang, a friendly, growing parish, seeks a full-time, mature, experienced, practicing Catholic to be youth coordinator for all youth, DRE for grades 9-12, coordinator of Confirmation program, and Whole Community Catechesis team member. Bachelor’s degree in theology or religious education, or CMD certification or desire to obtain same required. Mail resume, references and letter of interest to Father Jim, Holy Spirit Church, P.O. Box 246, Mustang 73064.

Elementary School Principal
St. James School in Oklahoma City is seeking a principal who will be a faith leader as well as academic leader. St. James has pre-K through eighth grade and enrolls approximately 190 students. Applicant must: 1) be a practicing Catholic; 2) have a master’s degree in educational administration or a related field or be working toward such a degree; 3) have a minimum of three years teaching experience, preferably in a Catholic school. Salary is based on qualifications and experience. Position available June 1. For an application, contact the Office of the Superintendent, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City 73123, call (405) 721-4202, or mdubey@catharchdiocese-okc.org.

Elementary School Principal
St. Mary’s School in Ponca City is seeking a principal who will be a faith leader as well as academic leader for the school. St. Mary’s has preschool through eighth grade and enrolls approximately 150 students. Applicant must: 1) be a practicing Catholic; 2) have a master’s degree in educational administration or a related field or be working toward such a degree; 3) have a minimum of three years teaching experience, preferably in a Catholic school. Salary based on qualifications and experience. Position available June 1. For an application, contact the Office of the Superintendent, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City 73123, call (405) 721-4202, or contact mdubey@catharchdiocese-okc.org.

Summer Camp Help Wanted
Experienced child-care givers are needed for full- and part-time positions beginning May 26 to Aug. 1, 2008. We offer a daily camp program for ages 3 years to sixth grade. Those with a high energy level and a love for children are needed to perform classroom activities, supervise field trips and other camp-related activities. Safe Environment training is required. Teachers and college students are encouraged to apply. If interested, call or e-mail Angela Liddiard at 751-7115 Ext. 118, or aliddiard@steugenes.org.

Sacred Heart Catholic School
Cafe Manager
Sacred Heart Catholic School, Oklahoma City, has an opening for a cafe manager with a start date of March 24. SHCS is a PK-eighth-grade school with 165 students. The successful candidate must possess excellent verbal and written skills in English (Spanish skills would be an asset), the ability to use Microsoft Word, Outlook and other basic computer programs, and the ability to multi-task while interacting positively with students, parents, teachers and guests. Salary is dependent on education, experience and relevant job skills. To apply, send resume to Principal Suzyette Williams, 2400 W. Hefer, Oklahoma City 73120, or e-mail SWilliams@steugenes.org.

Catholic School Secretary
St. Eugene Catholic School is seeking a full-time secretary. The successful candidate must possess excellent verbal and written skills in English (Spanish skills would be an asset), the ability to use Microsoft Word, Outlook and other basic computer programs, and the ability to multi-task while interacting positively with students, parents, teachers and guests. Salary is dependent on education, experience and relevant job skills. To apply, send resume to Principal Suzyette Williams, 2400 W. Hefer, Oklahoma City 73120, or e-mail SWilliams@steugenes.org.

Director of Campus Ministry
Dean, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee 74804. Review of applications will continue until the position is filled.

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

Director of Campus Ministry
St. Gregory’s University is seeking qualified applicants to serve as Director of Campus Ministry. Responsibilities include oversight of a comprehensive campus ministry program (as articulated in the USCCB’s Empowered By The Spirit), coordination of student liturgies, implementation of ongoing catechetical and faith formation activities, coordination of service and mission trip opportunities for students, and direction of fall and spring retreats. The Director of Campus Ministry also serves as consultant/supervisor for the Buckley Team, a student-led retreat ministry to area parishes and high schools. The successful candidate will be a practicing Catholic with a master’s degree in theology or pastoral ministry. She will have a mature understanding of the Catholic faith tradition, an ability to communicate this tradition creatively to young adults and a willingness to work in a collaborative ministry environment.

Previous campus ministry experience, CCMA certification and instrumental music ability (especially keyboard or guitar) are desirable. Interested qualified candidates should send a cover letter, resume and references to hr@stgregorys.edu or St. Gregory’s University, Human Resources Director, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee 74804. Position open until filled.

V.P. of Institutional Advancement
St. Gregory’s University, Shawnee, invites nominations and applications for the position of Vice President of Institutional Advancement. The vice president reports directly to the president and will be responsible for planning and direction of all philanthropic initiatives for the university. The vice president will plan and lead all advancement initiatives to capitalize on the university’s success story, engage a broad range of constituents and grow the endowment. The vice president will work closely with staff, senior administrators and board members to identify priorities for fundraising and manage a portfolio of major gift prospects. A master’s degree is preferred. It is strongly preferred that this individual be a practicing Catholic with knowledge of Benedictine spirituality. Electronic applications are preferred, and should include a cover letter and resume. Requests for the complete position specifications may be sent directly to Shingi Goto, Executive Vice President, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee 74804, or sgoto@stgregorys.edu, or (405) 878-5435.

Groundskeeper needed
National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague has an opening for a groundskeeper/facilities maintenance person. Responsibilities include: maintain the Shrine grounds including trees, shrubs, grass, sidewalks, parking lots; snow removal; painting; general handyman and other duties as needed. Must be physically able to lift at least 200 pounds and willing to work outdoors in all weather conditions. Some weekend and evening hours may be required. Salary commensurate with experience. To apply, send resume to National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague, P.O. Box 488, Prague 74864, or shrine_io@hotmail.com.
### Prayer Encyclopedia Published

**Prayer Called Vital to Keep Culture From Disintegrating**

*By Antonio Gaspari*

ROME, Feb. 2008 (Zenit.org). — A culture that has no space for prayer becomes a place of vulgarities and violence, says Cardinal Georges Cottier in the preface to a new encyclopedia of prayer.

"*Encyclopeda Della Preghiera,*" printed in Italian by the Vatican Publishing House, was presented Tuesday at Rome’s Pontifical Lateran University.

Echoing the words of German poet Friedrich Novalis, the encyclopaedia’s authors, C. Rossini and Patricio Sciadini, say “prayer is in religion what thought is in philosophy. The religious sense prays as the organ of thought thinks.”

Beginning with the Bible, continuing through the centuries and traveling through the history of diverse geographical areas, the work aims to interpret the conversation of men with God.

In the preface, Cardinal Cottier, retired theologian of the pontifical household, recalled the radical criticism of prayer proposed by the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who considered “useless and arrogant the pretension of obtaining from God the renunciation of his wise plan in favor of a passing benefit for us.”

On the other hand, in the catechism of St. John Vianney, he sustains that “the task of man is beautiful: to pray and to love. If you pray and love, this is the happiness of man on earth…”

According to Cardinal Cottier, “our idea of prayer depends on our knowledge of God. Moreover, and as a consequence, it reflects an anthropological concept.”

“Prayer is the vital respiration of the soul, in which our human and Christian identity is expressed,” he said.

Since “Novo Millennio Ineunte” through the apostolic exhortation “Sacramentum Caritatis,” the recent magisterium has insistently “highlighted the centrality of prayer in the life of the people of God,” the cardinal wrote.

And Benedict XVI, in his first encyclical “has confirmed the centrality of prayer in Christian life,” he added. "The need for prayer flows from human nature itself, inasmuch as man, in a more or less clear and explicit way, is conscious of his condition as creature and his dependence on God as the fount of everything good.

“Moreover, prayer finds in beauty its natural environment. It is itself a fount of beauty. Between art and prayer, there exists a singular affinity.

“A culture in which there is no space for prayer converts itself into a spiritual desert, a place of vulgarity and violence.”

Cardinal Cottier thus concluded, “Besides its specifically religious relevance, the ‘Encyclopedia of Prayer’ is a very valuable contribution to culture. It promises to come to be for many a companion for life.”

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### MARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The 29th Annual Mexican Dinner, sponsored by the Mount St. Mary Key Club, will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the school cafeteria. Parking is located on SW 28th, two blocks east of Western. The dinner is being catered by Chelino’s. All tickets purchased at the door will be $8. For further information, call 631-8865.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Eucharistic Adoration at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, NW 32nd and Western, every Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The Rosary is said every weekday at 2:30 p.m. All are welcome.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Holy Family Home Mass, 11:30 a.m., Holy Family Home, 6821 Eddie Drive, Midwest City, (405) 523-3000.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>First Friday Adoration at St. Francis of Assisi in Oklahoma City. After the 7:30 a.m. Mass, and concludes at 5:30 p.m. with closing prayer and Benediction. This is open to all. St. Francis is located at 1910 NW 19th, (just two blocks east of Penn), Oklahoma City.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>First Friday Sacred Heart Mass at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is at 5:30 p.m. with the Sacrament of Reconciliation available prior to Mass. Mass is at 7 p.m. Those wanting to learn more about First Friday Devotion and the practice of consecrating the family and home to the Sacred Heart of Jesus will find materials available after Mass. For more information, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944 or Diane Grim at (405) 528-6252.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7-9 Discernment Retreat. This discernment retreat weekend will consist of prayerful reflection and guidance for your journey in understanding God’s call in the Church today. This retreat, designed especially for single Catholic women ages 18-45, will be conducted by the Sisters of Mercy at Our Lady of Mercy Retreat Center. For more information, call 634-1968.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>The 2008 St. Patrick’s Day Grand Marshal Dinner, Ball and Auction will be held at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club. Artis Lucille “Lou” Flanagan Ackerman, 2008 St. Patrick’s Day Grand Marshal, will be recognized at the event. The charity ball will feature dinner, a live auction and an evening of dancing to a live band. The evening will begin at 6:30 p.m. Individual tickets for the ball are $125 per person. Individual tables and corporate tables are also available. For information, contact Jane Moon at Catholic Charities, 523-3000.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Taste of Sacred Heart. Tickets to the 11th annual Taste of Sacred Heart, El Reno, to be held from 6 p.m. to midnight, are on sale now. Taste of Sacred Heart is Sacred Heart Catholic School’s major fundraiser for the year. The theme for this year’s event is “Hollywood - What’s Your Dream?,” and includes dinner, live and silent auctions, music and dancing. Tickets are $25 and can be purchased at Ross Seed Company, My Sister’s Closet and Sacred Heart Catholic School. For more information, call the school office at 262-2294.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>The Benedictine Oblates of Red Plains Monastery will meet from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. They join the Community for Vespers, followed by a potluck dinner. For more information, contact Sister Eunice at 373-4565 or <a href="mailto:osbok@iomet.net">osbok@iomet.net</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lenten Penance Service at St. Francis of Assisi, OKC, at 7 p.m.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Lenten Penance Service at Sacred Heart, OKC, at 6:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lenten Penance Service at St. Paul, Del City, at 7 p.m.</td>
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<td>13-15</td>
<td>April 17 Pre-Cana in Spanish. A day for couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. A specially prepared volunteer team of married couples and a priest, share their experiences and information with the intention of enabling engaged couples to be more aware of the privileges and responsibilities of marriage. To register, contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.</td>
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<td>13-15</td>
<td>April 17 Basic Preparation Course for faith community nurses. The two-weekend course will be held at Saint Peter Catholic Church in Guymon. Functions of a faith community nurse include health educator, advocate, coordinator of volunteers, referral agent, integrator of faith and health, counselor and developer of support groups. Registration is limited to 15 people. Tuition for the entire basic course is $450. Scholarships are available. For more information, call Marilyn Seiler, Faith Community Resource Center at (405) 526-3006 or e-mail Marilyn Seiler, <a href="mailto:mseiler@catholiccharitiesok.org">mseiler@catholiccharitiesok.org</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lenten Day of Reflection. The Office of Worship and Spiritual Life is offering a Lenten Day of Reflection titled Walking Together in Mystery. The presenter will be Sister Mary Kevin Rooney, ASC, March 15 at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Cost for the day is $15 which includes lunch and refreshments. To register or for more information, call the Office of Worship and Spiritual Life at (405) 721-5651 Ext. 158.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Palm Sunday</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Taize Prayer, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Red Plains Monastery, 728 Richland Road SW, Piedmont. For more details, call 373-4565. Optional video on Taize prayer at 6 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 16   | The Community of the Secular Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus - Oklahoma Community and Province of St. Therese meets at St. Joseph Carmelite Monastery in Piedmont from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call Janet Mildfelt at (405) 848-6275 or Deacon Jim
Tulsa Firm Restores Chalice Pope Will Use During U.S. Visit

By Marilyn Duck
Eastern Oklahoma Catholic

TULSA — Don Taylor, refinishing department manager of F.C. Ziegler Co., admits he’s a bit more anxious and excited about his current project — restoring a 1938 chalice that will be used when Pope Benedict XVI celebrates Mass during his April 15-20 visit to the United States.

“When you get a piece like that, and you know who will use it and who has used it in the past, I’m absolutely nervous, yes,” said the parishioner of St. Cecilia Church in Claremore.

The chalice has been housed in the papal nunciature, the Vatican’s embassy in Washington, D.C., and has been used by previous popes who made pilgrimages to the United States including Pope John Paul II and Pope Paul VI.

A Ziegler’s customer who lives in Washington, D.C., and has worked with the apostolic nuncio recommended the family-owned Tulsa firm as “the best in the industry,” Taylor told the Tulsa World.

He and his team will remove the rubies, sapphires and glass medallions that adorn the chalice and clean and polish it before recoating the sterling silver chalice with a 24-carat gold finish.

Taylor estimated it would cost perhaps $12,000 to $15,000 to create such a chalice today. The chalice was manufactured in London in the spring of 1938.

The restoration work was to be complete and the chalice back on its way to Washington, D.C., by Feb. 19.

The chalice is typically cleaned once or twice every week by nuns, Taylor said, and the finish simply has been worn off.

Pope Benedict XVI is due to arrive in Washington, D.C., April 15, where he will meet with President George W. Bush and celebrate Mass both privately and in public.

Taylor, who kept the chalice in a safe at the downtown Tulsa Ziegler’s office, promised “it’ll look like it did when it was new” when the restoration work is complete.