Bishop Offers 10 Ways to a More Spiritual Lent

WASHINGTON — Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay, Wis., chairman of the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), offers “10 Things to Remember for Lent”:

1. Remember the formula. The Church does a good job capturing certain truths with easy-to-remember lists and formulas: 10 Commandments, 7 sacraments, 3 persons in the Trinity. For Lent, the Church gives us almost a slogan — Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving — as the three things we need to work on during the season.

2. It’s a time of prayer. Lent is essentially a prayerful act of prayer spread out over 40 days. As we pray, we go on a journey, one that hopefully brings us closer to Christ and leaves us changed by the encounter with him.

3. It’s a time to fast. With the fasts of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, meatless Fridays, and our personal disciplines interspersed, Lent is the only time many Catholics these days actually fast. And maybe that’s why it gets all the attention. “What are you giving up for Lent? Hot dogs? Beer? Jelly beans?” It’s almost a game for some of us, but fasting is actually a form of penance, which helps us turn away from sin and toward Christ.

4. It’s a time to work on discipline. The 40 days of Lent are also a good, set time to work on personal discipline in general. Instead of giving something up, it can be doing something positive. “I’m going to exercise more. I’m going to pray more. I’m going to be nicer to my family, friends and co-workers.”

5. It’s about dying to yourself. The more serious side of Lenten discipline is that it’s about more than self-control — it’s about finding aspects of yourself that are less than Christ-like and letting them die. The suffering and death of Christ are foremost on our minds during Lent, and we join in these mysteries by suffering, dying with Christ and being reborn.

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More Than 700 Take Part in Rite of Election

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was filled to capacity three separate times on Sunday, Feb. 26 as those making their journey into the Catholic Faith arrived to celebrate the Rite of Election. Archbishop Paul S. Coakley welcomed the catechumens and the candidates who traveled from throughout the Archdiocese to take part in the ceremony.

Their journey into the Catholic Church will be complete when they are accepted in their home parishes at the Easter Vigil. The Archbishop told the participants that the Rite of Election does not focus so much on us choosing God, but the Church’s acknowledgement that God has elected to call to each of us. He said we are all called by name to repent, to believe in the Gospel and to turn away from sin. “All of us share in the mission to evangelize,” Archbishop Coakley said.

He said we are “to be witnesses with our lives to the gifts we have received.” Some 48 parishes from across the Archdiocese sent catechumens and candidates to participate in the Rite of Election.

The three ceremonies took place at 2 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and at 7 p.m. According to the Office of Worship and Spiritual Life, 268 catechumens participated, while 455 candidates were involved in the Rite of Election. In total, that’s 723 people coming into the Church at the Easter Vigil.

Each person was introduced to the Archbishop. He greeted each one with a handshake, welcoming them and encouraging them on their journey of faith. Sacred Heart Church in Oklahoma City had the largest number of participants with 25 catechumens and 25 candidates.
I have heard that when a lobster is placed in a pot of water and the temperature is increased incrementally, the poor creature does not sense what is happening until, well, until it is too late! For quite some time there have been incremental restrictions imposed by the government on religious freedom in our great country. Most of us have taken this little notice. It seems, however, that we have finally reached the boiling point. Suddenly nearly everyone recognizes that we are on hot water. Unless we act now to turn down the heat, it may be too late.

The recent HHS mandate has become the Red Queen in Through the Looking-Glass that has awaken[ed] many Americans to the dangers of government intrusion on religious liberty and its failure to protect the conscience rights of its citizens. We are witnessing a growing conscious ownership among people of faith and good will that the HHS mandate is not only an attack on Catholics’ free exercise of religion, but on all people who treasure the God-given right (which is protected by the United States Constitution) to religious liberty. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and I, as a member of the Conference, have objected strenuously to this mandate for two principal reasons. First, we object because it forces private health plans, by the stroke of a pen and executive whim, to cover sterilization, contraception and abortion-inducing drugs as preventive services. All of the other mandated “preventive” services prevent disease. Pregnancy is not a disease! Moreover, forcing insurers plans to cover abortion-inducing drugs violates already existing federal conscience laws.

Second, we recognize that the mandate will impose a burden of unprecedented severity and ready on the conscientiousness of those who refuse these “services” immemorial! We are forced to pay even if indirectly by a sort of shell game, for services which are contrary to Catholic moral teaching. The exceedingly repressive religious exception to this mandate barely covers churches. It provides no exemption to our Catholic institutions such as universities, hospitals or even Catholic Charities. It does not exempt most nonprofit religious employers, the religiously affiliated insurer, the self-insured employer, the for-profit religious employer or other private businesses owned by people who rightly object as a matter of conscience or religious principle to paying for sterilization, abortion-inducing drugs or contraceptives.

These signals coming from the administration are troubling. On its own initiative, it is redefining religious liberty as a mere exemption to provide a religious employer or an employer, the religiously affiliated insurer, the self-insured employer, the for-profit religious employer or any other private business owned by people who object as a matter of conscience or religious principle to paying for sterilization, abortion-inducing drugs or contraceptives.

We have much work to do in this important struggle. As Catholics we have to remember who we are, and act accordingly. We must act with courage, but with respect and charity even for those who oppose us. Please contact your legislators and ask them to support the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act, which can be done through the action alert at www.usccb.org/conscience. You can also access usccb.org/conscience from our website at www.archokc.org.

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The Sooner Catholic (USPS 480-951) is published biweekly except for once in July and twice in December by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Subscriptions rate $50 per year for all who are not members of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Periodical postage paid at Oklahoma City, OK 73025.

The Sooner Catholic is supported through the Archdiocesan Development Fund.
Journey
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resurrected in a purified form.

6. Don’t do too much. It’s tempting to make Lent some ambitious period of personal renovation, but it’s best to keep it simple and focused. The three motivating elements of the Lenten formula are fasting, almsgiving and prayer, the last of which can include private devotions and public participation. To these three, we add meditative prayer.

7. Lent reminds us of our weaknesses. Of course, even when we set simple goals for our- selves during Lent, we still have trouble keeping them. When we fast, we realize we’re all just human and our willpower is limited. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, and we desire to do the same. The fast reminds us of our human frailty, our limitations and our need for God's strength.

8. Be patient with yourself. When we’re con- fronted with our own weakness during Lent, the temptation is to get angry and frustrated. “What a bad person I am!” But that’s the wrong lesson. Jesus is calling us to be patient and to see ourselves as he does, with unconditional love.

9. Reach out in charity. As we experience our weaknesses and suffering during Lent, we should be renewed in our compassion for those who are hungry, suffering or otherwise in need. The third part of the Lenten formula is almsgiving. It’s about more than throwing a few extra dollars in the collection plate; it’s about reaching out to others and helping them without question as a way of sharing the experience of God’s un- conditional love.

10. Learn to love like Christ. Giving of our- selves in the midst of our suffering and self-denial brings us closer to loving like Christ, who suffered and poured himself out unconditionally on the cross for all of us. Lent is a journey taken up from the desert to the foot of the cross on Good Friday, as we seek him out, ask his help, join in his suffering, and learn to love like him.

For more resources for Lent from USCCB, visit www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-resources/lent.

Bishops Clarify Myths Concerning HHS Mandate

By Nancy Frazier O’Brien
Catholic News Service
WASHINGTON — Exaggerations and outright misrepresentations about the Department of Health and Human Services’ contraceptive mandate have been appearing in White House “fact sheets” and mainstream media. Here are some of the more fre- quently cited claims and the facts to counter them:

Myth: Self-insurance is a seldom-used method of providing health insurance to employees, used mainly by church organizations to avoid having to pay for abortions or birth control.

Fact: A majority of Americans who have private health insurance are in self-insured plans, according to separate reports by the Congressional Research Service and the Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research Service and the Kaiser Family Foundation. The percentage was 44 percent in 1999, 55 percent in 2008 and had increased to 60 percent by 2011. Employees in large companies (those with 200 or more employees) were even more likely to be covered by a self-insured plan. Eighty-two percent of workers at large firms, and 96 percent of those who work for a company with 5,000 or more workers, were in a self-insured health plan.

There is no precise count of how many of the employees working for Catholic organizations or institutions are in self-insured plans, but the number is believed to mirror that of the general population.

Myth: Twenty-eight states already require employers to cover contraceptives for their employees, so the situation in those states will not change.

Fact: Self-insured plans are excluded from state contraceptive mandates, but not from federal requirements. In addition, all but three states — California, New York and Oregon — include a broader religious exemption than the HHS one, which sets four criteria for an exemption: that it primarily serves people who share the employer’s religious beliefs, that it is a nonprofit corporation under certain sections of the tax code. Twelve states do not require that the organization’s purpose be the religious tenets, but it’s best to keep it simple and focused. There is no precise count of how many of the employees working for Catholic organizations or institutions are in self-insured plans, but the number is believed to mirror that of the general population.

Myth: Eight states exempt virtually any religious employer with moral objections to providing coverage of contraceptives to its employees. Illinois and Missouri extend that exemption to non-religious employers who object. Other states have passed laws that do not define what constitutes a religious organization or have de- clined to enforce existing laws.

Fact: Adding contraceptive coverage to health plans will be cost-neutral, because those-covered by the mandate will have fewer unin- tended pregnancies.

In addition, the assumption that greater contraceptive use results in fewer abortions has not been proved.

Myth: The mandate will increase costs, 20 percent thought the mandate would increase costs, 20 percent thought it would be cost-neutral and none predicted that it would save money. More than 30 percent said they didn’t know what the effect would be.

Several respondents also raised the question of whether the mandate to provide contraceptives free of charge would require them to give away brand-name medications, even when generics are available.

In addition, the assumption that greater contraceptive use results in fewer pregnancies and fewer abortions has not been proved. A 2003 study in the journal International Family Planning Perspectives pur- ported to show such a link, but found that levels of abortion and contraceptive use rose simultaneously in Cuba, Denmark, Netherland, the United States, Singapore and South Korea.

Abortion went down as contraceptive uses increased in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Bulgaria, Turkey, Tunisia and Switzerland, the study found.

Myth: Ninety-eight percent of Catholic women have used contracep-
tives.

Fact: The figure comes from an April 2011 Guttmacher Institute report based on the 2006-2008 National Survey of Family Growth. Twenty-five percent of the respondents to the survey self-identified as Catholic, but 40 percent of those women and 40 percent of those who never attended Mass or attended less frequently than once a month. The survey looked at women between the ages of 15 and 44 and asked about contraceptive use only among those who had had sex in the three months prior to the survey and were not pregnant, postpartum or try- ing to get pregnant. Ninety percent of those women — and 98 percent of the Catholic respondents — said that they had used some form of contraception at least once in their lives.

The survey did not ask the women about their current contracep-
tives.

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For more resources for Lent from USCCB, visit www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-resources/lent. March 4, 2012 • Sooner Catholic 3
OKLAHOMA CITY — Sister Catherine Powers, CND, has always told the principals who oversee Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City to identify teachers on their staff who could someday replace them.

No one can accuse Sister Catherine of not practicing what she preaches.

Recently, Associate Superintendent Dr. Cris Carter was named to replace the retiring Sister Catherine. Carter has served as superintendent of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese for the past 16 years. June 30 will be her last official day.

Dr. Carter has worked side-by-side with Sister Catherine for the past 10 years. She was named associate superintendent of Catholic Education in 2002. This has allowed her to see the joy the position can bring, as well as the stresses.

Sister Catherine said Dr. Carter is prepared to step in.

But actually, it wasn’t Sister Catherine who named Dr. Carter to serve as the next superintendent of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. That decision was made by Archbishop Paul S. Coakley.

The Archbishop said he is extremely grateful to Sister Catherine, or Sister Kay as she is known. He said she is also excited about the future of Catholic education with Dr. Carter at the helm.

“I am very grateful to Sister Catherine (Kay) for her leadership in Catholic education during these 16 years,” said Archbishop Coakley.

“She has been an excellent Director of Education and Superintendent of Catholic Schools. She comes to us very well-prepared, having served as a Catholic school principal in the Archdioceses as well as the Associate Superintendent,” the Archbishop said. “Her education, professional experience and knowledge of our Archdioceses were very important in her selection. I have great confidence in Dr. Carter.”

Obviously, the Archbishop saw the same leadership qualities in Dr. Carter as did Sister Catherine.

“I am pleased that Dr. Cris Carter has been named Associate Superintendent for Catholic Education in the Archdiocese,” she said.

More than 20 years ago, Carter was named principal of Saint Mary’s School in Guthrie. She served as principal at Saint Mary’s for six years when the archdiocesan position became available.

Before taking over the principal duties at Saint Mary’s, Carter was an English and drama teacher in the Midwest City public school system. She said her son attended Saint Mary’s and that’s how she became interested in Catholic education.

“I was impressed with the impact Catholic education was having on our son that I realized that was the kind of merging of faith and education I wanted to have in my life,” she said.

Carter said she converted to the Catholic faith while in junior high school. Her family was Presbyterian, but “we didn’t really practice too much.” She said her parents encouraged her to explore other faiths. She came across “a very holy priest” in Vacaville, Calif., and this led her to the Church. “I felt very at home, very comfortable in the Catholic Church, and my entire family came into the Church with me,” she said.

Sister Catherine said Dr. Carter shares the same basic philosophy of what Catholic education should be and how it should impact the lives of children.

“I’ve always said if we’re not different than the public schools, then we should shut our schools down,” Sister Catherine said. Dr. Carter agreed, saying the Catholic identity must “be the strongest element” within our Catholic schools.

“We are here to be the voice of Christ through everything we do,” Carter said. She said students must see Gospel values in action throughout the school, from the principal to the teachers and including those who volunteer in different areas of the school.

“Toward that end, Dr. Carter said she will follow closely the path Sister Catherine designed concerning principal retreats and formation days for new teachers. Each year, Catholic school principals travel to Subiaco Academy in Arkansas for a retreat and before the start of each school year, new teachers gather at the Catholic Pastoral Center. This is especially important for non-Catholic teachers who are joining the staff at our schools.

Sister Catherine said at these retreats the non-Catholic teachers learn that Catholic education first and foremost is a ministry.

“We had one non-Catholic teacher come up to us after the retreat and she was so excited,” Sister Catherine said. “She said she always wanted to be a minister.”

Dr. Carter smiled. She knows her new position will be exciting and challenging.

Sister Catherine said following her departure from the superintendent’s position, she will spend several weeks in a retreat setting in New Mexico where she will pray and seek guidance from God as to what direction she should pursue. She and Sister Elizabeth Koesel, CND, have lived in community here since the 1990s. Sister Elizabeth serves as an assistant director in the Saint Joseph Counseling Service at Catholic Charities.

“I would like to stay in Oklahoma and be involved in a ministry,” Sister Catherine said. “I don’t know what that might be, but the Good Lord will show me.”

Sister Diane Floyd, principal at Saint John Nepomuk School in Yukon, has been named Associate Superintendent. She will begin her duties on July 1.

Sister Catherine Powers, CND, and Dr. Cris Carter
The Catholic Foundation will award summer camp scholarships to two Catholic youth in the Archdiocese. Applications are available at your parish youth office or download a PDF version at the Archdiocese website at www.archokc.org under the Youth and Young Adult Office tab, then click on Summer Camp.

The Robert A. Streets Family Endowment Fund for Our Lady of Guadalupe Youth Camp was established in 2000 for the benefit of the Catholic Youth Camp. This is the second year that the fund will award a scholarship to a camper. Mr. Streets was enthusiastic about helping to make sure all Catholic youth in the Archdiocese had the camping experience.

The Jacob Meier Memorial Endowment Fund was established by family and friends in memory of Jake Meier, a former camper and counselor at the Youth Summer Camp, who passed away in 2009. Jake began attending camp while in junior high school when the Catholic Youth Camp was located at Lake Murray. The next summer when he was 15 years old, he applied for the camp staff and was hired as a kitchen assistant. In his application for a camp counselor position the next summer, Jake stated, “Since my first summer at Lake Murray I have learned more and more about my faith while having more and more fun each year as well. The more I go to camp, the more my eyes are opened to Christ’s light of the world.” Jake was a counselor-in-training in 1999 and a counselor in the 2000 camp session (the first year of the new camp at Our Lady of Guadalupe). Although his life ended way too early, the scholarship in Jake Meier’s memory serves as a reminder of a talented, loving and caring young man whose faith guided him in the right direction. His camping experience was a great part of that faith formation. In sharing that experience with more young campers, Jake continues to do God’s work even after he has left this earth.

If you would like to apply for a scholarship from either the Robert A. Streets Family Endowment Fund or the Jacob Meier Memorial Endowment Fund for Camp Scholarships to Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Youth Camp, please fill out the application form and return it to the Archdiocese Youth Office, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123 before Friday, March 30, 2012.

If you have questions, call the Youth Office at (405) 721-9220.
Catholic Charities Celebrates 100th Anniversary

OKLAHOMA CITY — Archbishop Paul Coakley celebrated Mass with Archbishop Emeritus Eusebius Beltran and priests from throughout the Archdiocese concelebrating as Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City celebrated its annual meeting and 100th anniversary.

The Mass was celebrated Feb. 20 at St. Joseph’s Old Cathedral in downtown Oklahoma City. Following Mass, a reception and awards ceremony was held across the street at the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum.

Catholic Charities supporters were welcomed by Molly Herbert Bernard, president of the Catholic Charities board of directors. Tim O’Connor, executive director, presented the awards and Archbishop Coakley offered a blessing and closing remarks.

The Archbishop said Catholic Charities in Oklahoma City has for 100 years worked to promote the gospel values of faith, hope and charity. He said that commitment will continue into the future.

Oklahoma City storyteller Glenda Carlile gave a dramatic presentation of the life of Kate Barnard, a Catholic and Oklahoma’s first commissioner of Charities and Corrections. Carlile co-authored with Bob Burke the book Kate Barnard, Oklahoma’s Good Angel.

The following awards were presented:

2011 CLERGY/RELIGIOUS AWARD

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

Sister Marie Ballmann, O.S.B.

Sister Marie Ballmann has served on the Catholic Charities board of directors and chaired the Program Services Review Committee. She has provided spiritual guidance to staff members at Catholic Charities staff retreats.

2011 VOLUNTEER AWARD

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

Mike Duffy

Nominated by five different Catholic Charities programs, volunteer Mike Duffy helps set up apartments for arriving refugees. He assists property manager Mike Caruso with pickup and delivery of furniture donations and helps with general property maintenance. Mike never asks for recognition, but has given more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time in the past two years.

2011 ORGANIZATION AWARD

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

St. Peter Parish - Woodward

St. Peter Parish in Woodward collaborated with Catholic Charities’ Faith Community Nursing Program in 2011 to establish a model for a parish health care ministry. The St. Peter model program was recognized for its Best Practices by Catholic Charities U.S.A.
2011 CORPORATION AWARD

This award recognizes a corporation, business or organization that has contributed material, financial or human resources to promote the mission of Catholic Charities. Dave Ragan accepts the award for Cattlemen’s.

Cattlemen’s Steakhouse

Cattlemen’s Steakhouse in Oklahoma City’s historic Stockyards City has actively supported Catholic Charities’ Sanctuary Women’s Development Center since the center’s inception. Cattlemen’s has provided holiday meals for the homeless women and children of the Sanctuary and financial support for the center throughout the past three years. Cattlemen’s is our goodwill ambassador in the Stockyards community.

2011 SERVANT LEADER AWARD

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

Disaster Recovery Center Staff

These Catholic Charities employees are recognized for their willingness to step in and assist during the aftermath of the tornadoes of May 24, 2011. They gave up evenings and weekends to be available at four Federal Emergency Management Agency Disaster Recovery Centers. Their help and sacrifice gave comfort to those who had suffered loss. The cooperation of the following employees enabled Catholic Charities to maintain a continual presence in Chickasha, Blanchard, Piedmont and Guthrie:

Damon Brittton, Erica Cardiel, Amy Hampton, Nancy Largent, Kirsten Lee, Tim O’Connor, Aimee Ryan, Malesha Stilekus and Becky VanPool.

2011 ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS EUSEBIUS J. BELTRAN AWARD

Since 1998, this award has been presented annually to a Catholic lay person who has made a significant contribution to improving quality of life in Oklahoma through outstanding leadership and community service.

Janet L. Peery

CEO, YWCA Oklahoma City

Janet L. Peery is Chief Executive Officer of the YWCA Oklahoma City. During her 15-year tenure at the agency, she established the YWCA SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) program for Oklahoma County which includes partners from law enforcement, prosecution, medical and forensic agencies. She helped establish the agency’s dating violence prevention education program, the OK County Task Force on the Prevention of Domestic Violence, and a shelter for abused elderly persons.

Janet has been instrumental in establishing the YWCA as a leading provider of domestic violence and sexual assault services in Oklahoma. She is a member of St. James the Greater Parish in Oklahoma City. She serves on the advisory board for the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women and Oklahoma City University’s Members School of Business. She is a founding member of the Oklahoma Women’s Coalition and serves on the board of directors for Mount St. Mary High School and Homeless Alliance.

Janet has received The Every Woman Award from the State of Oklahoma and was selected as one of The Journal Record’s “50 Making a Difference” in 2006 and 2008 and OK Most Admired CEOs in 2011 and 2012. She is a graduate of Oklahoma City University and has been married to Greg Peery for 39 years and has two sons, two daughters and eight beautiful grandchildren.
Priest Serves Recipe of Faith at Conference

By Traci Chapman
For the Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — As families face issues of loss and separation, one priest has made it his vocation to bring healing and faith back to the table through food.

“Food and healing go hand in hand, food and mercy go hand in hand,” Father Leo Patalinghug told attendees of the Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference, held here Feb. 18. “We must clothe our children in grace and feed them the food that will heal them.”

During a two-part presentation filled with laughter and stories of faith, Father Patalinghug shared how he started down a road that’s led to a national following.

“This all started out — it was a joke,” Father Patalinghug said. “It was something that turned into more than I ever would have believed.”

That joke became Grace Before Meals, a vocation that has spawned a website, cookbook, speaking engagements and television appearances on EWTN. As the Grace Before Meals train speeds on, Father Patalinghug said it was important to remember the roots of faith and food.

“There were two other major foodies — Jesus and our Blessed Lady,” he said. “The Blessed Mother — she wants to correct a diet problem within us. She will feed us 100 percent food and 100 percent truth,” Father Patalinghug said. “You take something lifeless, and you turn a dinner with within us. She will feed us 100 percent food and 100 percent truth,” Father Patalinghug said. “You take something lifeless, and you turn a dinner with

healing power.”

Father Patalinghug said the message has remained the same all along.

“Each step has led to something else.”

As Grace Before Meals has evolved and grown, so has the sphere of its message — from speaking to strictly Catholic audiences to secular groups and even a throwdown against Iron Chef Bobby Flay. Father Patalinghug faced that challenge with his signature humor and faith — and he won.

“I cheated, I put holy water in the marinade,” he said with a laugh.

“Each step has led to something else.”

That includes an upcoming 13-episode television show still in the planning stages. Already completed is his first cookbook. Conference attendees’ reaction to the book illustrated the priest’s popularity, as more than 100 people waited in line to purchase it, take photos with him and get his autograph during the lunch break.

“We sold out and it looked like there was going to be a fight over those CDs,” he said during the second session. “I’m glad the message is going to people.”

Father Patalinghug said the message has gone beyond his lay apostolate, the Eucharistic Apostles of the Divine Mercy.

As he continues to reach out to families and teenagers, in particular, Father Patalinghug said the message remains the same all along.

“It’s an amazing thing what food can do — here we learn the greatest lesson of life — love,” he said.

Edmond resident Katie Gordy also works to mend troubled family ties. Speaking about living joyfully, the St. Monica pastoral associate spoke to those people in each attendee’s life who was hurting and needed help. Gordy has made it her mission in life to help others — with a master’s degree in human relations and an emphasis on chemical dependency, Gordy has taught both junior and high school levels.

After years of being a self-professed “worry queen,” Gordy said she learned to let go.

“It’s difficult but we must all learn to let go of what we can’t control and give it over to God,” she said.

Annie Karto lent her own voice to the conference — through song. The Massachusetts singer and composer said she hopes to “stir the flame” in the church through the gift of music.

“The healing mercy of God is what compels me, it helps me to bring the Divine Mercy message throughout my travels,” Karto said.

Like Father Patalinghug, Karto’s message has gone beyond her lay apostolate, the Eucharistic Apostles of the Divine Mercy. She travels worldwide to deliver her musical message, has appeared several times on EWTN and has recorded award-winning CDs.

March 4, 2012

Sooner Catholic
Father Bill Pratt of St. James the Greater Church, on the role of the faith community and advocacy Richard Klinge, Associate Director of Advocacy, Outreach and Legal Services for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, will give tips on how to speak with legislators and report on the status of current legislation. Deacon Jim Smith of Christ the King Church will discuss the application of Catholic Social Teaching in advocacy for the common good.

Additionally, at noon following the program, Klinge will facilitate a discussion about religious freedom, conscience rights and the HHS Rule mandating insurance for sterilization, contraception and abortifacient drugs.

“The call for justice and social action is a basic teaching of our Church,” states Koorie, “and it is important for Catholics to understand the current legislation and ensure that it reflects the U.S. Bishops teachings regarding our role as authentic moral agents. … It is critical we find our legislators’ names are available at http://www.oklegislature.gov.

Breakfast will be provided for parishioners and their legislators at 8:15 a.m. The Advocacy workshop will begin at 9 a.m. Reservations are due by March 16. The program will include:

- “The call for justice and social action is a basic teaching of our Church,” states Koorie, Associate Director of Advocacy, Outreach and Legal Services for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, will give tips on how to speak with legislators and report on the status of current legislation. Deacon Jim Smith of Christ the King Church will discuss the application of Catholic Social Teaching in advocacy for the common good.

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Across Oklahoma

Adoption Reunion

We are looking for those that have adopted through Catholic Charities over the years. We are having our Adoption Reunion. A Celebration of 100 Years of Adoption on Saturday, May 5. Please contact Stephanie Storozyszyn if you are interested in coming and for more information. The Adoption and Post Adoption Office number is (405) 523-3012, or you can call the toll-free number, 1 (800) 375-8514 and Post Adoption Office number is (405) 523-3012, or e-mail jenfen@cox.net, or Sandy Poe, (580) 421 6554, or e-mail sandy-poe@ymail.com.

Essay Contest for Catholic Students in Seventh and Eighth Grade

The OKC Central Region Council of Catholic Women is sponsoring an essay contest. The topic is “How Will My Catholic Faith Help Me to Live a Better Life.” The essay should be one page long, double spaced. Mail to Carol Watchcock, 9009 Ashley Place, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73130. Must be postmarked by March 20, 2012. The first-place winner will receive a $100 Savings Bond. The second-place winner will receive a $50 Savings Bond. The third-place winner will receive a $25 Savings Bond. The three winners will be notified by March 22, 2012.

The Catholicism DVD series was created by Father Robert Barron. It is described as “simply the most vivid catechism ever created, a high-def illustrated manuscript for the 21st century; the best-ever film about the Catholic Faith.”

The OKC Central Region Council of Catholic Women, 700 NE 23rd St., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73105, will host the video presentation of “Catholicism - A Journey Around the World and Deep Into the Faith.”

The presentations will be held at 5:30 p.m. on March 16 and March 30.

The OKC Central Region Council of Catholic Women, 700 NE 23rd St., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73105.

Please call Kathy Arambula at (405) 623-3844 or email rachelsvineyardokc@gmail.com The cost is $75 for meals, a private room and all retreat materials. Payment plans and financial assistance are available. For a description of the retreat and a complete list of other retreat dates and locations, call 1-877 HOPE 4 ME or visit the international website at www.rachelsvineyard.org.

The OKC Central Region Council of Catholic Women, 700 NE 23rd St., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73105.

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Some Understand Bishops Speak For The Faith, Some Don’t

In a Feb. 14 note to his people, Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I., the Archbishop of Chicago, commented on the question of “who speaks for the Catholic Church,” which had become a subject of public controversy thanks to the Obama administration’s “contra- ceputive mandate” — which is, of course, an abortifacient and sterilization mandate as well. The cardinal noted the administration’s crude attempt to play divide-and-conquer with the Catholic Church in the United States, a ploy in which some normally Catholic groups quickly acquiesced. Yet something important in all of this was being missed, the cardinal suggested: “the bishops of the Church make no attempt to speak for all Catholics they never have. The bishops speak for the Catholic and apostolic faith, and those that hold that faith gather around them. Others deserted.”

The departure, in this case, was entirely predictable: Calumet and politicians who had questioned the administration’s mandate, and organizations and associations that had raised serious questions about it when it was first announced, quickly fell back into line when the administration, on Feb. 10, announced an “accommodation” that was an obvious shell game, a ruse that didn’t change the moral issue that was an obvious shell game, a ruse that was an obvious shell game, a ruse that was an obvious shell game, a ruse that was an obvious shell game.

But what about the diaspora: these Catholic individuals and organiza- tions that re-embraced the admin- istration as soon as Caesar announced his “accommodation”? These individuals and as- sociations, typically thought of them- selves as “liberal Catholics,” a self- description prominently trumpeted by one of their spokesmen, Washington Post columnist E.D. Hirsch Jr. Thomas, I suggest, the opposite is true: a least a revealing, and an even greater tragedy.

The most significant contribution to the universal Church of pre-concil- iary liberal Catholicism in America was the development of a Catholic theory of religious freedom — which led, in due course, to Vatican II’s epic Decla- ration on Religious Freedom, to the post-conciliar Church’s history- changing defense of human rights, and to the Church’s crucial role in democratic transitions around the world. This achievement, in which the debate on religious freedom at Vati- can II was pivotal, unfolded in close collaboration with the U.S. bishops. It was Cardinal Francis Spellman of New York, for instance, who brought Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., to the Council, where Murray became one of the intellectual architects of the Declaration on Religious Freedom. And it was Murray (now falsely en- listed post-mortem into the pro- Obama camp of the Catholic diaspora) who, with the U.S. bishops and others, worked the Council process so that it became clear to a critical mass of the world’s bishops that religious freedom was indeed consistent with what Cardinal George called “the Catholic and apostolic faith.”

That liberal Catholics of the 2012 diaspora refuse to concede the grave threat to religious freedom posed by the administration’s mandate, and that they have given political cover to a gross infringement on religious freedom by a federal government that looks ever more like Hobbes’ Leviathan, is a grave breach of eccle- sial communion in itself. It also re- presents a tragic betrayal of the best in the liberal Catholic heritage in the United States, even as it illustrates the utter incoherence into which post- conciliar liberal Catholicism in America has tragically fallen.

George Weigel is a Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington. D.C. Weigel’s column is distributed by the Denver Catholic Register, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Denver.
Our faith is a living and a caring relationship with Heavenly Father. He can help us cope with the trials and tribulations of life. Our Lord God loves and accepts us unconditionally and is able to cope with these fears and stresses caused by how we feel and how we react in a fight or flight response to danger. He can help us to react to being attacked by a saber-toothed tiger. Fear then stimulated the amygdala and hypothalamus, which released adrenaline, which in turn stimulated the respiratory, cardiac and other biological systems so early humans could react in a fight or flight response to an impending attack.

Today’s stressors are nowhere near as physically threatening, however, their frequency and lack of resolution seem to result in higher levels of anxiety disorders today. Today we face societal stress as many of us cope with the stress of being a good man and a good woman. In this atmosphere, we experience anxiety which we are not able to cope with. These beliefs result in the fear and anxiety of being seen as unsucessful and unworthy and feeling humiliation and shame. Our ability to cope with these fears and stresses is affected by how we were socialized and brought up by our parents. If our parents and their social groups used the right approaches and appropriate ways, and had the belief that things will work out, the chances are we will be the same. If, however, they coped with anxiety in inappropriate and even traumatic behaviors, chances are we will react in similar ways. In fact, many of these inappropriate ways of coping and inappropriate behaviors further aggravate today’s beliefs we are not good men and women.

It’s as though we as adults today are living as 8- and 10-year-olds with good men and women, and that somehow we are flawed and unloved. These beliefs result in the fear and anxiety of being seen as unsuccessful and unworthy and feeling humiliation and shame. Our ability to cope with these fears and stresses is affected by how we were socialized and brought up by our parents. If our parents and their social groups used the right approaches and appropriate ways, and had the belief that things will work out, the chances are we will be the same. If, however, they coped with anxiety in inappropriate and even traumatic behaviors, chances are we will react in similar ways. In fact, many of these inappropriate ways of coping and inappropriate behaviors further aggravate today’s beliefs we are not good men and women.

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**Calendar**

**MARCH**

- 4-6 Lenten Parish Mission at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Rev. Jim Guey will present The Passion of Jesus of John. Cornerstone Center, 3310 Lake Avenue, Oklahoma City, March 4 from 5 to 7 p.m., March 5 and 6 from 7 to 8:30 p.m.
- 5 Penance Service. St. John the Baptist Parish, Edmond, at 6:30 p.m.
- 5 Lenten Mission at St. Eugene Catholic Church, 2400 W. Hefner Rd. Author and speaker Father Richard Fragomeni will present the "Living Stones" Morning sessions March 5-7 will begin with Mass at 9 a.m. and be followed by 10-minute teaching sessions. The evening sessions will be from 7 to 8:30 p.m. March 5-7.
- 6 Penance Service. St. Francis Xavier Parish, Edmond, at 7 p.m.
- 7 Penance Service. St. Patrick Parish, Oklahoma City, at 6 p.m.
- 7 Penance Service. St. Monica Parish, Elk City, at 7 p.m.
- 7 Penance Service. St. Teresa Parish, Oklahoma City, at 6:30 p.m.
- 8 Christ the King Church will host the video presentation of "Catholicism - Journey Around the World and Deep Into the Faith." The presentations are five and child care is available by emailing Carrie at nursery@ckokc.org. The presentations will be shown March 8, 15 and 29. All presentions will begin at 6:30 p.m. For more information, contact Kathy Arambola at 242-8314 or kathy@ckokc.org.
- 8 Penance Service. St. John Nepomuk Parish, Yukon, at 6:30 p.m.
- 8 TAP INTO FAITH - open to all adults, married and single, at least 18, second & Western in Edmond at 7 p.m. Meet and greet, order food, drinks, etc. 8-9 p.m. talk with speaker Father Marvin Levan. Top: The Athlete. For more information, contact marythul@oumail.com or text or call at (405) 461-4105.
- 10 Chili Dinner, with three kinds of award-winning chili served starting at 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. Potato soup will also be served and to-go orders will be taken. Pay one price for all one can eat. The dinner will be at the gym calisthenics behind St. John School at 600 Garth Brooks Blvd. in Yukon.
- 10 The Benedictine Oblates of Red Plains Monastery will meet from 1 to 3 p.m. in Room 125 at the Pastoral Center. 7501 NW Expressway in Oklahoma City. For more information, contact Jenny Pennock, (405) 721-0832, or e-mail jennyfcox.net, or Sandy Poo, (505) 423-0554, or e-mail sandypoo68@ymail.com.
- 11 Charismatic Healing Mass, 5:30 p.m. at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, 3901 S.W. 29th St., Oklahoma City. For more information, call the church office at (405) 485-4806.
- 12-14 St. John the Baptist Family Lenten Mission with Father Joshua Wagner on The Four Phrases That Will Touch and Change Your Life! From 7 to 8:30 p.m. every evening. Reception to follow on Wednesday. Child care is available. The church is located at 9th and Broadway, Edmond.
- 12 Penance Service. Christ the King Church, OKC, at 6:30 p.m.
- 14 Penance Service, St. Joseph Oblate Cathedral Parish, OKC, at 6 p.m.
- 14 Penance Service, St. Thomas More Parish, Norman, at 6:30 p.m.
- 14 Penance Service, St. Matthew Parish, Elk City, at 7 p.m.
- 14 Penance Service. St. Mary Parish, Medford, at 6 p.m.
- 14 Penance Service, Holy Name Parish, Chickasha, at 6:30 p.m.
- 15 Penance Service, St. Mary Parish, Guthrie, at 6:30 p.m.
- 15 Living Stations of the Cross Meditative Prayer by the St. Andrew Life-Team youth of the St. Andrew the Apostle Church, 800 NW 5th. Presentations will be held at 5:30 p.m. on March 16 and March 30. Reservations would be appreciated. Meals are $8 per adult and $5 per child, 4 and under eat free. For reservations or more information, call 799-3334.

For a full calendar, go to http://archokc.org/sooner-catholic and open the Calendar Page.

**Jobs Box**

**Elementary School Principal - Guthrie**

St. Mary Catholic School in Guthrie seeks a principal who will be a faith leader as well as academic leader of a small Catholic parish elementary school. St. Mary Catholic School is fully accredited by the Oklahoma Catholic School Accreditation Association which is recognized by the state of Oklahoma. Candidates for principal must be a practicing Catholic willing to assume responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the school, as well as assist in developing long-range goals for the school. Excellent communications skills and enthusiasm for developing and maintaining a top grade academic and religious-oriented school are a must. Candidates must hold a master’s degree in educational administration or related field and a minimum of five years educational experience. Position is available for the 2012-2013 school year. An application may be obtained from Office of the Superintendent, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, 73123, or call (405) 721-4202 or email mdubye@archokc.org.

**Elementary School Principal - Yukon**

St. John Nepomuk Catholic School is a Pre-K through eighth-grade school located in Yukon. St. John Nepomuk Catholic School is fully accredited by the Oklahoma Catholic School Accreditation Association which is recognized by the state of Oklahoma. Candidates for principal must be a practicing Catholic willing to assume responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the school, as well as assist in developing long-range goals for the school. Excellent communications skills and enthusiasm for developing and maintaining a top grade academic and religious-oriented school are a must. Candidate must be a practicing Catholic and hold a master’s degree in educational administration or related field and a minimum of five years educational experience. Position is available for the 2012-2013 school year. An application may be obtained from Office of the Superintendent, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, 73123, or call (405) 721-4202 or email mdubye@archokc.org.

**Behavioral Interventionists**

**Good Shepherd Catholic School at Mercy**

St. Paul the Apostle Church, 800 NW 5th. Good Shepherd Catholic School at Mercy is in need of several behavioral interventionists. A behavioral interventionist is an individual who works one-on-one with children with disabilities to provide academic and behavioral support for children on the autistic spectrum. The position is part time and hours are negotiable. The school is in session from Monday through Friday (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.). If you are a very patient person and interested in working with children with disabilities, contact Principal De Donna Koons at (405) 752-2284.

**Part-Time DRE**

St. Paul the Apostle Parish in Del City has a position open for a part-time DRE beginning July 14. The position is for 12 hours per week. Applications are due by May 15 for interview in June. The R.E. Building includes classrooms, a library and a spacious office. The enrollment is about 100 students. Present DRE is moving to another position. Contact the church office at (405) 366-8743.
Relics of Saints

continued from Page 16

Universal Church as a witness to our faith and unity. Then, as the altar was prepared for the Eucharistic sacrifice, peace passed throughout the church, originating from the altar, as is customary in the Maronite liturgy. The poetic Eucharistic prayer of the Maronite tradition followed, including the traditional Institution Narrative in Syriac-Aramaic, the language of Jesus. All Catholics present in the church came forward to receive the Body and Blood in communion with God and each other. The paten containing the Eucharist was brought to the forefront of other visitors in a blessing, demonstrating the desire for unity among all.

The liturgy concluded with the presentation of the relics, beginning with a rosary containing the relic of St. Rufqa given to Archbishop Coakley. After expressing his thanks for this gift, Archbishop Coakley represented the congregation in a procession with the relics, a tree inscribed with Psalm 92: “The righteous shall flourish as the palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar of Lebanon.” Processions are a central part of the Maronite tradition because of their persecution throughout history; as each time they had to move, they could only save their relics and icons. As Father Sami said: “Prerecessions reflect those processions, and the saints and prayers that saved us and kept our tradition as Christians in the Middle East.”

Applause greeted the Archbishop as he re-entered the sanctuary with the relics, the altar servers and Father Abdullah. Archbishop Coakley was joined by Mayor Cindy Rosenthal, representatives from the sheriff’s department, Deacon Paul Albert of Elk City, and priests from the Roman parishes at the head table. Both visitors and parishioners left with satisfied stomachs, an invitation to the Lebanese festival on April 29, and a gift bag containing information on the Maronite saints.

Father Sami echoed the Archbishop’s words concerning the importance of the saints. “What can we give to our visitors? Our saints.”

At right: The three saints whose relics were installed at Our Lady of Lebanon Church in Norman.

CRANSTON, R.I. (CNS) — A local school committee voted it won’t appeal a federal court ruling that called for the permanent removal of a Cranston public high school’s prayer banner in place for almost 50 years.

More than 700 people attended the committee meeting, many of them wearing signs bearing the directive “Appeal,” while others carried placards supporting their position. Before the meeting, several thousand supporters of the prayer banner sang “God Bless America,” while during the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, a large number in the audience shouted “Under God.”

Joseph V. Cavanagh, a First Amendment attorney and member of the legal team which represented the city of Cranston in the ACLU suit, told those gathered that he’d received hundreds of calls about the case, mostly in support of keeping the banner on the wall of the auditorium where it has hung since 1963 when it was presented as a gift from that year’s graduating class.

“This is not about prayer in public schools,” Cavanagh emphasized, citing that a 1963 Supreme Court decision stipulates that prayers cannot be recited in the auditorium.

Cavanagh said that while he believes that the Cranston banner is a “historic relic,” Cavanagh said that a 1963 Supreme Court decision stipulates that prayers cannot be recited in the auditorium.

Cavanagh said that while he believes that the Cranston banner is a "historic relic," it would not solve the issue of God being removed from the public arena.

The attorney said during the past 50 years, most students "never realized it was there" and that the inscription was never used as a prayer.

Lawyers representing Ahlquist have asked the city to pay $273,000 in legal fees to the ACLU.

Cavanagh estimated it would cost up to $500,000 to appeal the case to higher courts, and noted that if an appeal was denied by the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston, the U.S. Supreme Court has discretionary power to refuse to hear the case.

Describing the banner as a "historic relic," Cavanagh said that while "prayer is important," the case would not solve the issue of God being removed from the public arena.
Relics of Saints

Archbishop Coakley Celebrates Mass, Installs Relics in Norman Lebanese Parish

By Anamaria Scaperlanda
For the Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — Archbishop Paul S. Coakley installed the relics of three Lebanese Saints at Our Lady of Lebanon, a Maronite Catholic Church here, on Sunday, Feb. 5. Father Abdallah Zaidan, M.L.M., celebrated the ancient liturgy amidst an overflowing church of parishioners, visiting Roman Catholics and others. Father Sami Chaaya, pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon, Archbishop Coakley and Father Thomas Bower of St. Mark’s concelebrated. In addition to the priests, deacon and altar servers, the opening procession included the Knights of Columbus, who attended in full regalia.

The Mass was celebrated close to the Feast of St. Maron, patron of the Maronite Church. St. Maron, a contemporary of St. Patrick, was a 4th century priest who attracted people to his godliness, many of whom desired to live under his spiritual guidance. The monastery Beth-Maron was built near St. Maron’s tomb, and this monastery became the nucleus of the community. As the opening prayer of the liturgy said of St. Maron, his “life was a hymn of knowledge and love.” The prayer of forgiveness, where the faithful are called to remember their sins and present them on the altar of the Lord, further commemorated St. Maron: “In humility he carried his cross; in dedication he became a hermit in the world; in simplicity he praised God on the mountaintop.”

In his homily, Archbishop Coakley used the Feast of St. Maron and the installation of the relics to remind the congregation of the importance of the saints. He said, “The place of saints in the life of the church bears witness to the common call to holiness. All are called and created to be saints: nourished by the word of God, the sacraments and the life of the saints.”

Archbishop Coakley continued by reminding visitors of our need for people to guide us, as is necessary in any endeavor. “Saints are those who from different vocations show what it means to be holy, take up the cross, to live the Paschal mystery in our own lives.”

At the conclusion of the homily, three gifts were brought to the altar, in honor of the three modern-day saints whose relics were installed in the church. The first gift was a lantern in honor of St. Charbel, whose lantern was lit by water when the oil ran out. A great many miracles have been attributed to St. Charbel, whose life was marked by heroic virtue amidst ordinary circumstances.

A stethoscope was brought forward in honor of St. Rafqa, the patron of sufferers. St. Rafqa, or St. Rebecca in English, experienced some of the agony of Christ’s passion. The last 20 years of her life were spent in physical suffering; by the final 14 years of her life she was blind and paralyzed. She lived her life of affliction in total union with Christ. For this reason, she is an example to all the faithful, especially those who suffer.

The third gift was a book in commemoration of St. Hardini, who “was so enraptured by God he spent most of his time in prayer and study.” St. Hardini was the mentor of St. Charbel. After his death, the monks opened his tomb and found his body incorrupt. After the gifts were brought forward, all present recited the Nicene Creed of the continued on Page 15