A few minutes before 9 on the morning of April 19, 1995, Father Louis Lamb backed his car from the garage at Saint Joseph's rectory at NW 5 and Harvey Avenue and drove past the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building headed to the bank.

He stopped for pedestrians at the front doors of the federal building and then continued. Behind Father Lamb at the end of the block, bomber Timothy McVeigh sat in the Ryder truck, lighting the second fuse on the truck bomb that two minutes later would deface the nine-story building, killing 168 innocent people and traumatizing a community, state and nation.

“I was sitting in the drive-thru at the Bank of Oklahoma a block away and we heard this big explosion. The teller asked me ‘What was that?!’ I knew what it was. It was a bomb.”

Father Lamb drove back to the rectory and walked inside the church, which was directly across Harvey from the federal building.

“It was chaos. All of the windows on the north side were blown out except the ones behind the choir loft. The rectory was shattered. I was shook up,” he said. The only items left undisturbed were the crucifix and the sanctuary candle, which remained lit.

Father Lamb was unaware that his secretary, Sonia Estrada, had gone to the rectory shortly before the blast and was lying on the floor unconscious. A large wooden beam had struck her on the head and she’d passed out.

“It has always been hard for me to talk about this; I just go back to that morning. Getting to the office, no one else being there. I hear the explosion and I can feel all that glass hitting me all over again. I remember waking up, opening my eyes and looking outside the window and seeing all that mess, and that smell … a smell that I will never be able to forget. I looked to the window that faced the federal building and I remember seeing (visions of) both my children, and that was the reason I knew I had to get out,” Estrada said.

Estrada began to yell until a man helped her from the rectory and into a police car that took her to the hospital.

“It has been 20 years, but there are some things you don’t forget. And no matter how painful, I thank God for letting me be here with my family. I pray for all those lives lost and their families and for whatever he has in store for me.”

On the same morning, Bud Welch was at home when he felt the impact of the explosion. He soon learned that a bomb had

The Oklahoma City Bombing: Finding hope 20 years later

Editor’s Note: In 1995, Diane (Plumb- er) Clay was a cub reporter at The Oklahoman assigned to the police beat.

It’s hard to fathom that many of our co-workers, children and friends were mere toddlers in 1995, or perhaps not even born. We have raised an entire generation of Oklahomans who view the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building as part of a history class. It is important, as we commemorate the 20th anniversary, that we share our experiences from that fateful day and fulfill our promise to Never Forget.

The morning of April 19 was a beautiful spring day that started like any other. It was a Wednesday.

As we dressed for work, live footage flashed on TV, showing a large plume of smoke rising from downtown Oklahoma City. It appeared to be a fire or a gas line explosion. The truth was inconceivable.

My job at the time was to cover fires, traffic accidents or anything that skipped across the scanner, so I sped downtown behind a police cruiser.

When I arrived within minutes of the explosion, I noticed glass blown from nearly every building, and blinds flapping against the outside of high rises where windows used to be. Car alarms wailed, and several vehicles were damaged.

As I walked east toward the Murrah Building on NW 5, white bits of paper began to fall like snow, and the air was thick with ash. Workers with shredded white shirts and blood-stained skirts held each other as they dragged down the street, blood trickling across their faces and arms. One woman in a wheelchair was crying and pointing toward the building, but we didn’t understand what she needed.

Then, I walked around the west end, and turned to look at the front of the federal building.

Through breaks in the smoke, you could see it. The face of the building was gone.

Straight ahead, in the middle of Fifth Street, was a multi-story pile of concrete and granite. To the left,
Let mercy season justice

Like most Americans old enough to remember April 19, 1995, I recall the moment when I learned of the devastating blast that destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. It was the worst act of terrorism ever committed on U.S. soil. At this moment, claiming the lives of 168 innocent people. A remarkable spirit of kindness, hospitality and care for one another and for strangers was on display before the world. That spirit of solidarity has come to be known as the Oklahoma Standard. It was a light shining in darkness.

That terrible event brought this community to its knees, literally and figuratively. We could have been destroyed by it. Instead, building on the foundations of deep religious faith, an indomitable spirit, and strong leadership, this community has risen from the ashes to become the kind of city that would have been difficult to imagine 20 years ago. This 20th anniversary of the bombing invites us to remember reverently those who lost their lives that day, and renew our support for those families and friends who still grieve their losses.

It invites us to renew our appreciation for those who are always ready to stand in the breach with those who experience hardship and suffering during emergencies and crises of whatever sort. We have a beautiful world where we can live in safety and in peace and in freedom to help keep memory alive and to hand on the lessons learned from those dark days 20 years ago.

The healing continues. I am so proud to be a part of this community today, even as I so admired it from afar 20 years ago.

What will the next 5, 10 or 20 years bring? My hope and prayer for our community is rooted, at least in part, in an experience that has left me unsettled for the past 18 years. As a parish priest in Wichita, I brought our youth group here to Frontier City for a summer outing in June 1997. It was the very day that the jury returned its verdict in the penalty phase of the trial of convicted bomber, Timothy McVeigh.

As the public address system at the theme park interrupted its soundtrack to broadcast the decision, a reverent silence fell over the crowded park. It was a silence filled with a tangible sense of the pain and loss that city bad endured. I shared in that moment of anticipation.

I don’t know what I expected, but I was not prepared for what followed the announcement that McVeigh had been sentenced to death.

From a reverent silence in which you could hear a pin drop there emerged an outpouring of corrosive applause. Perhaps it was a cathartic moment, and nothing more. But it was deeply disturbing. Certainly this man deserved a just sentence for his terrible crime. But, all too often what is unleashed in such situations is not the cry for justice, but rather a call for vengeance. It’s a tragic and dangerous line. Justice is something the demand for vengeance diminishes all of us. Violence begets more violence.

That experience helped shape my own convictions on the difficult question of the death penalty. I am firmly opposed to it. I pray that our community, our state and our nation will come to recognize that today the use of the death penalty is no longer necessary or justifiable.

There is a better way. While the death penalty may be legitimate in principle, it is hard to find hard circumstances today when it is legitimate to apply that principle. When there are non-lethal means to protect society and exact due punishment for serious crimes we ought to pursue these means.

We have just come through the sacred Paschal Triduum. In the Cross we have seen the perfect balance of justice and mercy. God suffers with us. He takes the pain of our sin on himself by sending his Son to die for us. In his death and resurrection we share in his victory. Thus, the cycle of sin and death is broken and we are restored.

Enough of violence! Let mercy season justice. As Pope Francis said in his first Angelus address after his election, “A little mercy makes the world less cold and more just. We need to understand properly this mercy of God, so as to practice it.”

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley
How do we welcome returning Catholics?

An ethical Rubicon was crossed when the first in vitro fertilization (IVF)-conceived baby came into the world in 1978. With human reproduction no longer limited to the embrace of a man and a woman, people empowered to father their own sperm and eggs, or those of others, and create their much desired children bit-by-bit. When they mixed and matched, those cells, they were drawn into other wines and tomes of the advancing technology, including screening the genes of their test tube offspring and enzymatically segregating out any undesired embryonic characteristics that could be "stereo-typed". While cloning involves swapping out the nucleus of a man's egg with a replacement nucleus to form an embryo, three-parent embryos rely on delivering human reproduction from the marital embrace into the petri dish and replacing some of the maternal genetic structures (i.e. genes) in the same way that unsuccessful embryo transfer is possible when the female egg is surgically removed and replaced with a replacement egg.

As children born by assisted reproductive technologies often come them, and encourage them to become an intentional disciple, and being free. Routines are re-tested and those in RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) are the opportunities for spiritual testimony part as part of their regular opportunities to hear communion and to maintain catechetical structures (i.e. going straight to second-base)? Or do we see them as a singular opportunity for spiritual growth and maturity in their personal relationship with God. Are they part of the faith? Should it also be reasonable to assume that people who leave the Church do not come to faith in a different way of the path of spiritual discipline when they were there for the thing: what can we do to help them get traction in their discipleship when they return?

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Priest for a day’ is a wish that came true

By Dave Luxenberg
St. Louis Review

Bishop Ed Weisenburger
Archbishop Ed Weisenburger.

ST. LOUIS – Make-A-Wish requests often involve meeting athletes, attending sporting events or traveling to amusement parks or beaches.

When it came time for 11-year-old Brett Boudreaux of south St. Louis County to make his wish, he not only listed none of those things, but had no request at all.

“I didn’t want anything,” explained his mother, Eileen. “They had to keep asking him. What would you like to do? Do you want to meet anybody? What do you want to be when you grow up?”

The answer to the last question became part of his wish. What Make-A-Wish calls “wish enhancement” to complement the main wish.

The sixth-grader at St. Mark School wants to be a priest, a doctor or an engineer. Project was No. 1.

“I said, ‘I really want to be a priest,'” he said.

So, on Holy Thursday, at the invitation of Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, Brett took his place beside the altar at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis as “Priest for a Day.”

Brett served not one, but two Masses — the Chan...
Holy Week 2015

**Chrism Mass**

“...send the power of your Holy Spirit, the Consoler, into this precious oil, this soothing ointment, this rich gift, this fruit of the earth.” (from the Blessing of the Oil of the Sick)


**Holy Thursday**

Fr. M. Price Oswalt, pastor of St. Joseph Old Cathedral, washes a child’s feet. Above, parishioners bring gifts of wine. Photo Cara Koenig.

**Easter Vigil**

Christ yesterday and today the Beginning and the End the Alpha and the Omega All time belongs to Him and all the ages To Him be glory and power through every age and for ever. Amen. (Rite for Preparation of the Paschal Candle)

Fr. Timothy Fuller and Deacon Steve Majstrik pray before the Easter fire at St. Philip Neri Church in Midwest City. Above, Fr. Fuller blesses the baptismal water with the paschal candle. Photo Cara Koenig.

**Good Friday**

My people, what have I done to you? Or how have I grieved you? Answer me! Because I led you out of the land of Egypt, you have prepared a Cross for your Savior. (The Reproaches, traditional antiphons for Good Friday)

Fr. Prakash Madineni, pastor of St. Teresa of Avila Church in Harrah, holds the cross for veneration. Photo Cara Koenig.

Parishes of St. Thomas More University Parish as well as students and faculty participate in Stations of the Cross on the University of Oklahoma campus. Photo Cris Porter.
A Review: Joy in living the liturgical year

By Anamaria Bragadendi Bidichi
For the Slovak Catholic

The Church offers us periods of simplicity and repentance followed by celebration, and rejoicing, allowing us to join in Christ’s journey on earth. The rhythm of the liturgical year us...
Dejenos que la justicia sea sazonada con la misericordia

Como la mayoría de los estadounidenses de edad suficiente para recordar el 19 de abril de 1995, recordamos los primeros minutos de la devastadora explosión que destruyó el edificio federal, el Edificio Federal de Oklahoma City. Fue un peor acto de terrorismo jamás cometido en el suelo estadounidense. En ese momento, cayó la vida de 168 hombres, mujeres y niños, muchas de ellas de familias y amigos que aún lloran lo que han perdido.

Las familias y amigos que aún lloran lo que han perdido, la gente que siguió la historia al pie de la letra, la gente que rezó, la gente que ayudó en el rescate y la gente que colaboró con los servicios de emergencia, la gente que corrió a acudir a la escena, la gente que derramó una gran cantidad de sangre, no lo olvidarán nunca.

Desde un renglón, la gente fue reconocida en el evento que no podía olvidarla nunca; en un momento, se hizo visible un sentimiento terrible en todos los corazones de esta nación.

La violencia engendra más violencia. ¿Por qué no tomamos estos alimentos como si no creemos que son verdad las cosas que en- cuentran en ellos? Y no vivimos como Cristo nos enseñó. Si no cree que son verdad las cosas que encontramos en ellos, no puede que sean ciertas que el alegato del que preside el pan y por todos los demás dondequiera que estén, en santas misas, debemos perseguir estos medios.

La violencia engendra más violencia. Si no cree que son verdad las cosas que encuentran en ellos ¿Cómo puede decir que las reman de los pecadores y las penas que reciben la muerte? Al ver esto, se puede que menos violencia.

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Consecrated life celebration centers on journey with Christ

By Anamaria Duty
For the Sooner Catholic

SHAWNEE – Saint Gregory’s Abbey and University celebrated the year of Consecrated Life on April 12 with vespers in the Abbey Church.

During vespers, three oblates to Saint Gregory’s Abbey took novice vows and four oblates took vows of full obligation. Anne O’Day, one of the oblates who took vows of full obligation, said she was “so excited to continue in her journey with Christ.”

Following vespers, Fr. Rev. Lawrence Stueartney, Oblat of Saint Gregory’s Abbey, spoke about what it means to discern a call to religious life to representatives from the Carmelite Sisters of Saint Therese, members of a youth group from Saint Monica in Edmond, and a number of Saint Gregory’s students. His presentation was filled with light-hearted stories and his own discernment process and how his discernment led him to be a witness to the faith.

Abbot Lawrence discussed how each of the faithful is consecrated to Christ and His Church. It is through Baptism that we are given the grace to become followers of Christ and be a witness to the faith.

St. Gregory’s to host author night

Tash Smith on Monday, April 20, at 7 p.m. in the James J. Kelly Library, located on the second floor of Benedictine Hall. Smith is a professor at SGU and assistant director for religious education for the Diocese of Oklahoma City.

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma Inc.

Supporting the church with a legacy gift is a life-long favor to the Church. It is a tax-free, planned gift to the Catholic Church that helps sustain the mission of Saint Gregory’s University and the work of the Abbey. It also provides you the opportunity to plan your financial future, so you can choose to name the Catholic Foundation as a beneficiary on your life insurance, retirement plan or other assets.

For more information, contact the foundation office at:

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma Inc.
5024 N. Grove Ave., OKC 73122.
(405) 721-4115
www.cfoo.org
email@ cfoo.org

Please remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in your estate plans

Briels

For information or to register, contact Leann Hoflund at (405) 613-2277.

St. Gregory’s panel to discuss artificial womb

The St. Gregory’s University Pro-Life team will host a free panel to discuss the ethics of the artificial womb developed in Japan. Dr. Richard Meloche will moderate the panel with Fr. Boniface Copelin, Vocations director for the Saint Gregory’s Abbey, and Dr. Richard Copelin. The panel will be held at 7:30 p.m. on April 21 at the Shawnee Community Room. It is open to the public.

St. Teresa of Jesus celebration

Celebrate St. Teresa of Jesus’ 500th birthday and learn more about this wonderful saint and first woman doctor of the Church with Fr. Stephen Hoenrich, O.C.D. and Fr. John Magdalene Suertram, O.C.D. These talks on St. Teresa: “Charity of St. Teresa of Jesus,” “Who was Teresa?” and “Life of prayer according to St. Teresa of Jesus” will be held on Saturday, April 25, from 8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Guadalupe Center at Little Flower Catholic Church, 1225 S. Walker Ave., OKC. The event is free and open to the public. Lunch provided. Register by calling or texting Barba at (405) 826-3860.

Retirement center open house

The Sooner Catholic will host its annual health fair and open house on Wednesday, April 29, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This great event will take place in the Grand Theater and atrium areas, 7510 W. Britton Road. Health screenings and snacks will be served and entertainment provided by licensed practical nurses, senior moments to Remember and piano player Gary Johnson. Representatives from health organizations will be available to discuss health, wellness and other resources. Payment plans and financial assistance available.

Knights of Columbus state golf tournament

Catholic Diocese of Stillwater invites all Knights, family members and friends to the State Annual Golf Tournament at Camnarr Trails Golf Course in Perkins. Proceeds support the Oklahoma Special Olympics. The event will be held in a four-player scramble format, shotgun start at 1 p.m. Registration is $75 per player, and includes green, cart, range balls, lunch and gift bag. Deadline to register is May 31. Pedro Velasquez at (405) 614-4585.

Job Box

Director of religious education

St. Charles Borromeo in OKC is seeking applicants for its director of religious education position. Qualified applicants must be practicing Catholics in good standing with at least a bachelor’s degree in education with certification in religious education. Interested candidates should hold a bachelor’s degree in religious education and have at least 5 years of teaching experience in religious education. This is a full-time position. For more information, contact Fr. Adam O’Toole at (405) 721-6450 or adam@stcharlesborromeousk.com.

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The Sooner Catholic will host its annual health fair and open house on Wednesday, April 29, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This great event will take place in the Grand Theater and atrium areas, 7510 W. Britton Road. Health screenings and snacks will be served and entertainment provided by licensed practical nurses, senior moments to Remember and piano player Gary Johnson. Representatives from health organizations will be available to discuss health, wellness and other resources. Payment plans and financial assistance available.

Knights of Columbus state golf tournament

Catholic Diocese of Stillwater invites all Knights, family members and friends to the State Annual Golf Tournament at Camnarr Trails Golf Course in Perkins. Proceeds support the Oklahoma Special Olympics. The event will be held in a four-player scramble format, shotgun start at 1 p.m. Registration is $75 per player, and includes green, cart, range balls, lunch and gift bag. Deadline to register is May 31. Pedro Velasquez at (405) 614-4585.
The Holy Mass in the writings of Church fathers

After the Scriptures they are our best witnesses

By Pedro A. Moreno, OP, MRE
Director of Hispanic Ministry

Among our great treasures in the Church are the many witnesses to the central aspects of our faith, beginning with Christ himself. The apostles and other disciples walked with Jesus, heard his words and witnessed his miracles, especially the great miracle of his resurrection. Many witnessed what happened and, thank God, some of them put these facts in writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In addition to the testimony of the apostles and other disciples, we also have other great witnesses who deserve our attention. These other witnesses probably did not witness the sanctity of Christ, but are witnesses of the great works and messages of the first generations of Christians.

These witnesses, great teachers for us in the Church are known as the Fathers of the Church. They help us to better understand the historical reality of the Church and its teachings from the origins of Christianity. Originally the title of Father of the Church was reserved for eight great saints, four of Eastern, or Greek, and four in the West, or Latin.

The four major Greek Fathers are:
• Saint Athanasius of Alexandria
• Saint Basil the Great
• Saint Gregory Nazianzen
• Saint John Chrysostom

And the four major Latin Fathers are:
• Saint Ambrose of Milan
• Saint Augustine of Hippo
• Saint Jerome
• Saint Gregory the Great

Today, the list of the Fathers of the Church includes many other teachers and saints who lived between the third century and the eighth century. The importance of Jesus Christ, but are witnesses of the

Saint Ignatius of Antioch (first century)
He was the first to refer to the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament as “Eucharist.”

“I find no pleasure in the food of corruption or pleasures of this life. The bread of God is what I want, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, from the seed of David; I want to drink his blood, which is incorruptible love.

Gather together in one faith and one Jesus Christ. ... Breaking bread which is the medicine of immortality, remedy so we may not to die but live forever in Jesus Christ.”

Saint Justin Martyr (first century)
An early Christian apologist. Here I offer a few selections from his letter to the Emperor Antoninus Pius.

“The day we call day of the sun a meeting takes place in one location for all who live in the city or in the countryside. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read. When the reader has ceased, the presider speaks to incite and urge everyone to imitate these beautiful things. Then we get up and pray for ourselves ... and for all others wherever they are, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments to attain eternal salvation. ... Then, bread and a glass with wine mixed with water is taken to the presider. The presider takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and gives extensive thanks because they have been judged worthy of these gifts. ... When the presider has given thanks and the people have responded ‘Amen,’ those who are called deacons distribute that bread and wine that has been ‘eucharisticized’ to all who are present.

“No one is permitted to participate in the Eucharist, unless they believe the things they teach and have been purified in that bath that gives the remission of sins and regeneration, and lives as Christ taught us. Because we do not take these foods as if they were a common bread or ordinary drink, but just as Christ, our Savior, took on flesh and blood and became the cause of our salvation, in the same way we have learned that the food on which was recited the thanksgiving, which contains the words of Jesus and that feed and transform our blood... and flesh, is precisely the flesh and blood of that Jesus who became incarnate.”

Saint Augustine of Hippo (fourth century)
He was called “Doctor of Grace.”

“If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive. To that which you are you respond ‘Amen’(yes, it is true!) and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words, ‘the Body of Christ’ and respond ‘Amen.’ Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your Amen may be true.”

Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington celebrates a Mass of thanksgiving at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter’s Basilica. The bronze chair containing St. Peter’s original chair is flanked by statues of four Doctors of the Church, St. John Chrysostom and St. Athanasius from the East, and St. Augustine and St. Ambrose from the West. CNS photo/Paul Haring

Finding hope continued from page 1

roof of the Journal Record building was gone and the parking lot was full of crushed and burning vehicles. The water resources building and a smaller brick structure were missing chunks of their façade and were dotted with puncture holes.

Looking back at the Murrah Building, it was difficult to trust your eyes. Colored wire, rebar and pipes jutted from exposed floors, and corners of desks, file cabinets and office chairs rested eerily off the edges.

Dozens of employees from near-by buildings rushed to dig through piles of broken concrete and save anyone who was trapped or too injured to walk out.

One group led by an employee from the county assessor’s office heroically pulled five adults and two children to safety. They were
dazed and haunted by a woman buried in the rubble whose hand jutted through the broken concrete just enough for her wedding ring to capture and radiate the only light in the darkness. The men were unable to save her, or the remaining children in the daycare whose devastating injuries you can’t unsee.

By 10:15 a.m., rescue workers had gathered at the back of the building where they carried injured adults and children from the daycare, and moved in and out of the standing portion of the structure. During the rescue operation, a nurse ran from the building, frantically waving her arms and yelling, “There’s another bomb! There’s a second bomb! Run! Run!” Her call was seconded by ATF agents, police officers, firefighters, the FBI and medical personnel as they ran from the building, reluctantly leaving patients behind.

Strangely, as dozens of officers and agents rushed by, I stood frozen. My legs wouldn’t move. I knew there was no way we were going to outrun another bomb if the first one had caused this much destruction. Images of my 1-year-old daughter flashed before me in rapid succession. I was sure I was going to die.

Before I knew what was happening, two national guardsmen grabbed my arms and pulled me down NW 4. They dragged me until I got my feet underneath me and ran with them, jumping a concrete wall into a parking area for protection from the blast. That’s where we huddled until agents realized the threat wasn’t real and allowed everyone to return to the scene. We were relieved that more people wouldn’t lose their lives, but the emotional damage was done. It has been 20 years since that day, and despite the unimaginable horror so many Oklahomans experienced and the anxiety many still deal with today, we learned about our strength, our community and our faith.

An act of evil reinforced fully what it means to value each and every life, every day, and to dedicate ourselves to make better the lives of others. We must appreciate every day God has given us and thank him repeatedly for blessings of family, children, health, freedom, friendships, faith, rainbows, divine love and a heart for service.

God bless the children and the innocent, and may we Never Forget.

Diane Clay is the editor of the Sooner Catholic.