Pope Benedict XVI on American Soil

The pontiff made his first trip to the U.S., April 15 through April 20.

More coverage on Pope Benedict's historic first visit to the United States on Pages 10 and 11.
The Good News

Jesus established the Catholic Church to continue His mission and ministry of salvation for all people until the end of time. He commissioned His Apostles: “Go therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always, yes, to the end of time.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

This empowerment of the Church was the fulfillment of an earlier promise Jesus made when He told Saint Peter that He would build His Church upon him. Jesus designated Peter, the rock, the leader, His vicar on earth.

Earlier this month, we rejoiced to welcome Peter, the rock, the leader, the Vicar of Christ, to our beautiful and blessed country in the person of Bishop-elect Anthony B. Taylor, the four new bishops who had just been consecrated Bishop of Little Rock and/or New York to meet with the Holy Father, to concelebrate with you the Pope’s mass at the White House.

“From the dawn of the Republic, Americans’ quest for freedom has been guided by the conviction that the principles governing political and social life are intimately linked to a moral order based on the dominion of God the Creator. The framers of this nation’s founding documents drew upon this conviction when they proclaimed the ‘self-evident truth’ that all men are created equal and endowed with inalienable rights grounded in the laws of nature and nature’s God. The course of American history demonstrates the difficulties, the struggles and the great intellectual and moral resolve which were demanded to shape a society which faithfully embodied these noble principles. In that process, which forged the soul of the nation, religious beliefs were a constant inspiration and driving force, as for example, in the struggle against slavery and in the civil rights movement. In our time, too, particularly in moments of crisis, Americans continue to find strength in a commitment to this patrimony of shared ideals and inspirations.

Mr. President, dear friends: As I begin my visit to the United States, I express once more my gratitude for your invitation, my joy to be in your midst and my fervent prayers that Almighty God will confirm this nation and its people in the ways of justice, prosperity and peace. God bless America!”

How blessed we are as Catholic people of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City! May the words and encouragement of our Holy Father continue to guide us on our pilgrimage of faith. Let us rejoice in the Good News as Jesus assured us: “I am with you always, even to the end of time.”

May the words and encouragement of our Holy Father continue to guide us on our pilgrimage of faith. Let us rejoice in the Good News as Jesus assured us: “I am with you always, even to the end of time.”

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Sooner Catholic, P.O. Box 32160, Oklahoma City, OK 73123.

The Sooner Catholic is supported through the Archdiocesan Development Fund.

Sooner Catholic

Most Reverend Eusebius J. Beltran
Archbishop of Oklahoma City

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Bishop-Elect Says Social Justice Important for Catholic Faith

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bishop-elect Anthony Taylor met with the Oklahoma City media on April 11, the day after it was announced he had been named to lead the Diocese of Little Rock, Ark. The gathering was held in the Chapel at the Connor Center at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Bishop-elect Taylor told reporters he was excited and humbled by his appointment. He said he would miss his family and friends in Oklahoma, but added, “Little Rock is only five hours away.” He said he had received more than 100 e-mails and phone calls from well-wishers. “This is glowing.”

Not one to shy away from a social justice issue, Bishop-elect Taylor said he would continue to “preach the Gospel” and would continue to work for the rights of those who live on the fringes of society. As pastor at Sacred Heart Church in Oklahoma City, Father Taylor was out front in challenging laws such as HB 1804, the anti-immigration law that targets the Hispanic community in Oklahoma. He said the Diocese of Little Rock is home to a large Hispanic community and he looks forward to working there to help ensure their God-given rights are protected.

Bishop-elect Taylor said Catholics who work for social justice understand that while Christ was indeed humble, he “was courageous and not timid” when it came to speaking out for justice and protecting the weak.

“Jesus faced death, with the greatest claim on us.” For his motto, Bishop-elect Taylor said he has chosen “The Humble Shall Inherit the Earth.”

The assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. 40 years ago, he said, played a great role in shaping his views toward religion and social justice. He told reporters, the death of the civil rights leader showed him “Christanity is about more than saying: ‘My kingdom is on earth.”

The choice is not between science and ethics, but between science that is ethically responsible and science that is not.

Euthanasia & Assisted Suicide

Pope Benedict XVI:

• The freedom to kill is not true freedom, but a tyranny that reduces the human being to slavery.
• More and more lonely elderly people exist in big cities, even in situations of serious illness and close to death. In such situations, the pressure of euthanasia is felt, especially when a utilitarian vision of the person creeps in. In this regard, I take this opportunity to reaffirm once again the firm and constant ethical condemnation of every form of direct euthanasia, in accordance with the Church’s centuries-old teaching.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

• Euthanasia and assisted suicide can appear a reasonable and even compassionate solution to the suffering of individuals and families struggling with illness or the dying process. Yet these are not real solutions — they are already healing other conditions than any approach using embryonic stem cells.
• The choice is not between science and ethics, but between science that is ethically responsible and science that is not.

Embryonic Stem Cell Research

Pope Benedict XVI:

• Research involving the destruction of human embryos... is not truly at the service of humanity... History itself has condemned such a science in the past and will condemn it in the future, not only because it lacks the light of God, but also because it lacks humanity.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

• Among important issues involving the dignity of human life with which the Church is concerned, abortion necessarily plays a central role. Abortion, the direct killing of an innocent human being, is always gravely immoral (The Gospel of Life; No. 57); its victims are the most vulnerable and defenseless members of the human family. It is imperative that those who are called to serve the least among us stand that while Christ was indeed humble, he “was courageous and not timid” when it came to speaking out for justice and protecting the weak.

“Jesus faced death, with the greatest claim on us.” For his motto, Bishop-elect Taylor said he has chosen “The Humble Shall Inherit the Earth.”

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U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

• Euthanasia and assisted suicide can appear a reasonable and even compassionate solution to the suffering of individuals and families struggling with illness or the dying process. Yet these are not real solutions — they do not solve human problems, but only take the lives of those most in need of unconditional love.

Deirdre McQuade is the chief spokesperson on pro-life issues for the Catholic Bishops of the United States.

Quotes From Pope Benedict and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

On the Fundamental Right to Life

Pope Benedict XVI:

• God’s love does not differentiate between the newly conceived infant still in his or her mother’s womb and the child or young person, or the adult and the elderly person. God does not distinguish between them because he sees an impression of his own image and likeness (Gen 1:28) in each one.

• [Lif.]e is the first good received from God and is fundamental to all others; to guarantee the right to life for all and in an equal manner for all is the duty upon which the future of humanity depends.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

• [T]he failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the ‘rightness’ of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community. If we understand the human person as the “temple of the Holy Spirit” — the living house of God — then these latter issues fall logically into place as the crossbeams and walls of that house. All direct attacks on innocent human life, such as abortion and euthanasia, strike at the house’s foundation. These directly and immediately violate the human person’s most fundamental right — the right to life. Neglect of these issues is the equivalent of building our house on sand. Such attacks cannot help but kill the social conscience in ways ultimately destructive of other human rights.

Abortion

Pope Benedict XVI:

• Children truly are the family’s greatest treasure and most precious good. Consequently, everyone must be helped to become aware of the intrinsic evil of the crime of abortion. In attacking human life in its very first stages, it is also an aggression against society itself. Politicians and legislators, therefore, as servants of the common good, are duty bound to defend the fundamental right to life, the fruit of God’s love.

• As far as the right to life is concerned, we must denounced its widespread violation in our society... Abortion and embryonic experimentation constitute a direct denial of that attitude of acceptance of others which is indispensable for establishing lasting relationships of peace.

• [E]ven in the most difficult circumstances, human freedom is capable of extraordinary acts of sacrifice and solidarity to welcome the life of a new human being.

• This new frontiers reached in bioethics do not require us to choose between science and morality; rather, they oblige us to a moral use of science.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

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Lawmakers Support Unborn With Override

The Oklahoma state Senate was deluged with e-mails from pro-life Oklahomans on April 17, and your pleas for the unborn child were heard loud and clear.

The Senate late that morning override Gov. Brad Henry's Wednesday night veto of the pro-life bill, SB 1878. By noon, the House had followed suit, the veto had been overridden in both chambers, and the pro-life bill had become law.

It was the first time in 14 years that an Oklahoma governor's veto of a bill had been overridden by the Legislature.

The Senate vote in favor of the override was 37-11.

The House vote in favor of the override was 81-15.

You deserve tremendous credit for this victory for unborn children, pregnant women, pro-life health-care professionals, and persons with disabilities.

We want to thank the members of the Senate and the House who supported the override of the governor's veto. All 24 Republicans in the Senate supported the pro-life bill, and 13 of the Senate's 24 Democrats did, as well.

In the House, 56 of 57 Republicans voted for the pro-life bill, as did 25 of the 44 House Democrats.

Thank you very much for your steadfast support for the unborn child. The enactment of this law is a wonderful affirmation of the sanctity of human life.

Tony Lauinger
State Chairman, Oklahomans For Life

Dear Oklahoma Catholics,

Each year the Sooner Catholic asks you to partner with the Archdiocese in helping to support this information ministry and each year you respond with generosity. It is time for us to ask once again.

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We are again asking you to send $20 to help support this ministry. As in the past, anyone who wishes to receive the newspaper will, regardless of whether or not they send a contribution. Over the years, many of you have sent extra money to help cover those Catholics who cannot afford to support this ministry, but want and deserve the newspaper. Some have been extremely generous in this area. We say thank you.

Thank you for your support, thank you for your input about the paper and most of all, thank you for your prayers.

Ray Dyer
Editor

To change info on our mailing list, fill out the form below and return it to the Sooner Catholic. For any changes, we need the old and new info.

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Address change Name change Remove Add

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City, Zip

For more information, contact S. Angela Houaska at 1-877-216-3258 Ext. 1408, or S. Ursula Schones at the same number, Ext. 1461.

Adorers Welcome Nine to Serve as Associates in Norman Ceremony

NORMAN — Nine persons committed themselves to becoming Associates in Sister Adorers of the Blood of Christ United States Region on April 12. The ceremony took place at St. Thomas More Parish. There are three centers in the region that serve as central offices for the Associate program: Columbia Pa., Ruma III, and Wichita. The Associates that made their commitment at St. Thomas More belong to the Wichita Center. Six of the Associates will belong to the group at St. Thomas More: Liz Gilmor, Janis Hereford, Becky O’Dea, Maria Ozment, Thuy Pham and Janice Wilson. Three of the group will belong to St. Andrew Parish, Moore; Sharon Corcoran, Don , and Vanetta Crabtree. We have had a group of Associates in Moore since 1984.

Since Vatican II, there has been a movement to reaffirm, support and encourage the lay faithful to assume more authority and service in the Church. There is a call to all baptized persons to share in the Church’s three functions of teaching, governing and sanctifying. The ASC Associate program is one of the ways that the lay faithful have to develop and share their gifts and services to the Church. The ASC Associates participate in the spiritual life and mission of the congregation. They live the spirit of the religious community by adapting it to their individual vocation and according to their life situation. This includes men and women (married, single or ordained.) There are no financial obligations. It is a mutual support for God’s kingdom. They learn to focus their spirituality in the Precious Blood. This spirituality is centered in the Blood of the Cross, present and alive in the Eucharistic mystery and in each other. This spirituality also thrusts persons forward to take action in current arenas of justice and peace.

Associates participate in monthly meetings and in other ASC community gatherings. ASC stands for the community initials and is the abbreviation for the Latin translation of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ (Adoratrices Sanguinis Christi).

For more information, contact S. Angela Houaska at 1-877-216-3258 Ext. 1408, or S. Ursula Schones at the same number, Ext. 1461.

Church Tackles Child Abuse

Throughout the United States, April has been designated as Child Abuse Prevention Month. In addition to the volunteer activities of Catholics throughout the Archdiocese in support of the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program for children (see Sooner Catholic, April 13, 2008) and the Child Abuse Response and Evaluation Center Inc. (C.A.R.E. Center), Oklahoma City (see Sooner Catholic, December 17, 2007), Jennifer Goodrich, Archdiocesan Safe Environment coordinator, participated in Oklahoma’s Child Abuse Prevention Day at the state Capitol on April 8, 2008. The Archdiocese is also an active member of the Oklahoma Child Abuse Prevention Action Committee, the District VII Child Abuse Prevention Task Force and the Oklahoma County District Attorney’s CARE Center Task Force. On April 17, 2008, the Archdiocese sponsored an annual workshop for parish facilitators and others ministering to children and youth, which was held at the Catholic Pastoral Center. New Safe Environment training notebooks were distributed to participating facilitators and the 2008 USCCB/Office of Child and Youth Protection audit of the Archdiocese and parishes and best practices for providing a safe and nurturing environment for children and youth were topics.

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St. Greg’s Issued $1.5 Million Challenge

SHAWNEE — St. Gregory’s University has received a challenge grant in the amount of $1.5 million from the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation Inc. The challenge grant, a conditional grant based on future dollars raised, would provide funding toward construction of new student resident halls for SGU.

“Building new residence halls is an integral part of our strategic plan, and this grant would significantly help us in achieving that goal,” said Dave Wagie, Ph.D., president of SGU. “We are extremely grateful to the Mabee Foundation for this opportunity and grateful to our donors for getting us this far.”

SGU has pledges totaling $5.2 million toward the $10.2 million project. When the university comes up with an additional $1.5 million in pledges, the Mabee Foundation will complete the funding with its $1.5 million grant. The foundation has set a deadline of April 9, 2009, for SGU to come up with those additional funds. SGU has plans to break ground on the new residence halls in August and estimates a completion date by the fall of 2009.

“This grant is significant because it not only provides us $1.5 million in additional money, but it also provides our donors incentive to make their pledges in the coming months so we can complete the project,” Wagie said.

The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation Inc., a Delaware nonprofit corporation, was formed in 1948 by John E. Mabee and his wife, Lottie E. Mabee, with its office in Tulsa. As stated in its charter, the purposes of the foundation are to aid Christian religious organizations, charitable organizations, institutions of higher learning, hospitals and other organizations of a general charitable nature.

The geographical area of interest of the foundation includes the states of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. In its 60 years of existence, grants by the foundation to various educational, religious and charitable institutions have totaled in excess of $800 million.

The Mabees were natives of Missouri. They had no children. Mr. Mabee died in 1963 and Mrs. Mabee died in 1965, leaving a substantial portion of their personal estates to the foundation. The bequests of this foundation are evidenced throughout the southwestern United States and many edifices bear their name, including the Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art and the Mabee Aerobic Center on the SGU campus.

Established in 1875, St. Gregory’s is grounded in the tradition of Catholic educational excellence and Benedictine values. SGU’s distinctive integrative degree program consists of three major components—a common core curriculum, a disciplinary core curriculum, and an area of concentration. Its new common core curriculum features a four-semester core text (“Great Books”) sequence of discussion-based seminars titled “Tradition and Conversation.” A unique feature of SGU’s integrative degree program is its flexibility in allowing students to “custom design” an area of concentration.

SGU was recently recognized by the Cardinal Newman Society as being among the top 10 percent of Catholic colleges in the U.S., and has been featured in such publications as Our Sunday Visitor, the National Catholic Register and the Catholic World Report. SGU is the only Catholic university in Oklahoma and the oldest institution of higher education in the state.

All gifts to SGU are tax deductible. Checks may be made to Joe Murgo, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, 1900 W. MacArthur St., Shawnee, Okla. 74804.

For information on the student housing project and other giving methods, contact Murgo at (405) 878-5420.

ABC’s of a Charitable Gift Annuity

A Charitable Gift Annuity is a contractual agreement between a donor and the Catholic Foundation in which the donor transfers assets in exchange for a promise of annuity payments for life.

By donating through a Charitable Gift Annuity, you: 1) contract for a fixed payment for yourself, and 2) make a gift to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. If you itemize deductions on your tax return, savings from the charitable deduction reduce the net cost of your gift to the Archdiocese.

Can a Charitable Gift Annuity work for you? After reviewing the chart below, contact the Catholic Foundation for additional information on the mutual benefits of donating through a Charitable Gift Annuity.

Sample Rate Chart for a $10,000 Single Life Charitable Gift Annuity

<table>
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<th>Age of Annuity</th>
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<th>65</th>
<th>70</th>
<th>75</th>
<th>80</th>
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<td>6.50%</td>
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<td>$650</td>
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<td>$800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charitable Deduction</td>
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<td>$3,335</td>
<td>$3,788</td>
<td>$4,319</td>
<td>$4,834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Deductions vary with periodic changes in the IRS Discount Rate — Assumed Rate is 4.4%.

THE CATHOLIC FOUNDATION

7501 North Triana Expressway, Oklahoma City 73132
405-721-4115 Office - 405-721-4114 Fax
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Investing in the Future of Our Faith

Seeing Jesus in the Face of the Poor

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul members have been privileged to visit hundreds of families in their time of need. Each family has a different story and need. We listen to them, we pray with them, and we help monetarily and materially when possible. Here are some of their stories….

A young father has sickle cell anemia, and has been on disability most of his life. His wife left their two daughters at a day care center and has never returned. She has just been found in another state and a divorce is pending. He is trying to get legal guardianship of the girls, and the legal expenses have taken the money that normally would pay utility bills.

Susan is homeless and fighting breast cancer. Before her illness, she had a respectable job, but no insurance. She met an abusive man who had a respectable job, but no insurance. She needs food, a place to live and the legal expenses have taken to get legal guardianship of the girls, and a divorce is pending. He is trying to get legal guardianship of the girls, and the legal expenses have taken the money that normally would pay utility bills.

Tom has just been released from alcohol treatment and has the promise of a job in a few days. He lives in an old trailer and his car is a non-working 1989 model. There is no food and no money for car repairs.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society is a Catholic lay organization made up of men and women who join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person services to those who are needy and suffering, in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul.

There are 35 parishes in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City that have a St. Vincent de Paul Society (each parish could share the same stories, just different names), they would all welcome new members. If you have a desire to help those in need, call Andrew Browne, executive director of the Archdiocese Institutional Advancement, at (405) 602-0031 for the location of the nearest St. Vincent de Paul Conference.

Speak Lord,
For your servant is listening.
Catholic High Schools Will Implement New Drug Test Policy

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Both Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City will implement mandatory random drug testing of the entire student body beginning next fall. In making the announcement, Bishop McGuinness Principal David Morton and Mount Saint Mary Principal Talita DeNegri called the tests another tool in the effort to help teens make good choices and lead healthy and productive lives.

Both McGuinness and Mount Saint Mary have used groups consisting of students, parents and faculty to study the issue and both received positive responses from surveys asking for input.

“We’re very proud of this policy,” DeNegri said. “It fits the needs of our school and is a proactive step to help kids make good decisions.”

Morton said McGuinness initially

looked at drug testing about six years ago, but at that time he admits he did not think much of the idea. As a counselor for many years at the school he originally believed such tests infringed on the rights of the students and eroded the level of trust. He has since changed his mind and now fully supports the effort.

“It’s about health,” Morton said. “It’s not punitive and it gives kids and their families a reason to say ‘no.’ He said the data is clear, when a drug test policy is in place, drug use declines. If there is no drug testing, use goes up. “You can’t argue with the data,” DeNegri said.

Morton said the drug testing fits in perfectly with the school’s expanded focus on wellness. Both McGuinness and Mount Saint Mary will be adding an extra counselor to their faculty and both are making an even greater commitment to health and what it means to live a healthy lifestyle. Morton said they are being added at McGuinness and Mount Saint Mary recently dedicated a new fitness center on campus.

In developing their drug-testing policies, the two schools studied more than two dozen schools in Oklahoma and neighboring states. Both McGuinness and Mount Saint Mary will use urine tests and students will be selected on a random basis each month to participate in the tests. Students and parents must agree to the tests or they will not be allowed to enroll at the schools. “It’s part of our contract,” DeNegri said. She said the Mount will test 10 students per month, while Morton said the tests at McGuinness will involve 30 to 35 students per month. The cost for each test is $20 and will be paid by the schools.

If a student does test positive for a substance other than a prescribed medication, the first step would be counseling and an assessment of what other treatment might be necessary. There is no “three strikes” or similar language in the policies, but Morton said, and DeNegri agreed, if a child has a serious addiction, the schools could not allow him or her to remain on campus.

DeNegri said support for the new drug-testing policies has been strong, according to the principals. Students and parents have been enumerated for such a proactive measure. DeNegri described the new policies as “A light that leads you in the right direction.” She said Sister Catherine Powers, archdiocesan superintendent of schools, and Archbishop Beltran fully support the new policies.

Pope Calls for Christian Unity at Prayer Service

NEW YORK (Zenit.org). — Here is the address Benedict XVI delivered at an ecumenical prayer service at St. Joseph’s Parish.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

My heart abounds with gratitude and welcome, and I warmly greet all those engaged in ecumenism:

...
15th Biennial Convention of the Oklahoma City ACCW
Bringing Light to Our Global Society

Catholic Women to Host Meetings in OKC

The Oklahoma City Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women is hosting a national workshop, a convention and a meeting of NCCW Region 2 in May. What a special time for us all to come together in the month of our Blessed Mother. All of these events will take place in Oklahoma City at the Pastoral Center.

The Region 2 meeting will be hosted by the president of Region 2, Eunice Washa of Austin, Texas. It will be held Thursday, May 15 with dinner at 6 p.m. in the Pastoral Center Cafeteria and you must register with Eunice for this event. After dinner the meeting will move to the convention meeting rooms (C1). The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. and last approximately two hours. Eunice will be setting her agenda and getting the word out for all of Region 2.

Leadership Development Training is a new leadership program planned by the NCCW program committee. Registration will begin at 8:15 a.m. Friday, May 16, with the workshop beginning at 8:45 a.m. Breaks for Mass will be at 11:30 a.m. with lunch to follow. The workshop will conclude around 3 p.m.

The Oklahoma City ACCW Board will meet at 4 p.m. in the hospitality area on the second floor. The board will go to dinner and return to the Pastoral Center for a prayer service in the chapel at 8 p.m.

The 15th Biennial Convention of the Oklahoma City ACCW, “Bringing Light to Our Global Society,” hosted by South Region, Barbara Wann, chairman, will begin with registration on Saturday, May 17 at 8:30 a.m. in the convention center area. President Pamela Kennedy said the program will start at 9 a.m.

Speakers will include Dr. Anne McGuire, head of the Department of Theology and Philosophy at St. Gregory University, and from the Theological Commission of the Cause for the Canonization of Father Stanley Rother. Father Marvin Leven will also be a speaker.

Eunice Washa, Region 2 vice president, will speak just before Mass and lunch. After lunch the day will continue with Joe O’Brien, Center of Family Love, Okarche, and Deacon Lee Hunt will speak on the Peru Mission. The banquet will be on Saturday evening at 6 p.m. and the guest speaker will be Archbishop Eusebius Beltran. Fundraisers will be a silent auction and a raffle for all the lovely gifts affiliates and regions bring. Raffle tickets are in the newsletter and you need not be present to win.

Registrations are available for all events. The forms are in the latest edition of the ACCW Newsletter, March 17, 2008, or at its Web site (address below).

 Lodging is also available at the Pastoral Center for one night or three. The rooms have two beds and the cost per night is $17.50 per person. Reservations for spending the night at the center should all be made with Barbara Wann. Cost is $17.50 per night if you are sharing a room, $25 for a private room. Send the name of the person you will be sharing the room with, for how many nights (Thursday, May 15, Friday, May 16, and Saturday, May 17), and your check to Barbara Wann, 302 East Ohio, Walters, Okla. 73572. Her phone number is (580) 875-2278 and her e-mail is wann@bogglobal.net.

All registration forms are available at http://okaccw.tripod.com.

Speaker Lineup Set for

The 15th Biennial Convention of the Oklahoma City Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women will be held Saturday, May 17 at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway, Oklahoma City. The convention’s theme is Bringing Light to Our Global Society and will include:

Dr. Anne McGuire will be the keynote speaker. She serves as head of the Department of Theology and Philosophy at St. Gregory University. After serving in parishes as a liturgist and music director, Anne pursued her doctorate at the University of Notre Dame. She moved to Oklahoma in 2004 to take the position at St. Gregory’s. In addition to her work at St. Gregory’s, Dr. McGuire has taught in the Diaconate Formation Program, the Little Rock Theology Institute and the CWA program at SGU. She and her daughter belong to St. Benedict Parish in Shawnee, where she is active in the liturgical and RCIA programs. Dr. McGuire is on the Theological Commission of the Cause for Canonization Commission for beatification of Father Stanley Rother.

Father Leven will talk on the Cause for Canonization of Father Stanley Rother, the book, “The Shepherd Cannot Run” (available from the Sooner Catholic) and the Guatemala Mission.

Eunice Washa (NCCW Region 2 vice president), will talk about Water for Life. NCCW today is facing many challenges. As Region 2 vice president, Washa will work with the national board and all affiliates to keep the organization strong and vibrant. Her 25 years of service to the council has provided her with the skills and leadership qualities to aid NCCW in meeting these challenges.

Deacon Lee Hunt will talk about the Peru mission. Deacon Hunt and his wife began sponsoring a family in Piura, Peru, in 2000. He went on his first mission trip to Peru in 2003 and has gone every year since. He started a ministry at St. Monica to families in Piura in 2006. St. Monica now sponsors about 90 families, sponsors a chapel in a village and feeds breakfast to the children of that village.

Joe O’Brien will talk about Center of Family Love in Okarche.

The banquet will feature keynote speaker, Archbishop Eusebius Beltran.

The deadline to register is May 1. To register for more information, contact Pamela Kennedy at (405) 317-1009 or e-mail to PKennedy2620@yahoo.com.

Father Rother’s Life and Death

Father Stanley Rother, born March 27, 1935, grew up in Oklahoma and was ordained a priest in 1963. Five years later, he received the call to serve in the Oklahoma mission in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala.

Through the years, Father Rother learned the local Tzutuhil dialect, served the people with devotion and was deeply loved by the parishioners. Political unrest swept the country in the 1970s and in 1980, four priests were killed in Guatemala.

In his Christmas letter of 1988, Father Rother wrote: "The shepherd cannot run at the first sign of danger." Nevertheless, as conditions worsened, he came back to Oklahoma. After a short time, despite the danger, he returned to the mission because of his love for the people.

On the night of July 28, 1981, three men entered the rectory and shot Father Rother. Father Rother’s heart is buried in the church in Guatemala and his body is buried at Holy Trinity Cemetery in Okarche.
2008 Archdiocesan Spelling Bee Winners

Grades first and second: 1st — Rachel Pham (St. Philip Neri); 2nd — Brian Le (Rosary); 3rd — Hannah Nealy (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton); 4th — Rendon Chambers (Rosary); 5th — Isabella Carling (All Saints).

Grades third and fourth: 1st — Jami Nguyen (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton); 2nd — Brooklyn Moore (St. Mary's, Lawton); 3rd — Ralph Romea (All Saints); 4th — Emily Morely (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton); 5th — Tommy Lu (Rosary).

Grades fifth and sixth: a six-way tie for first place: Emily Pham (Bishop John Carroll); Emily Walker (Rosary); Tesa Dauwasautoso (St. Eugene's); Courtney Labe (St. Mary's, Lawton); Mary Schauger (St. Mary's, Ponca City); Anna Rivas (St. Philip Neri).

Grades seventh and eighth: 1st — Jeff Dauwasautoso (St. Eugene's); 2nd — Vina Nguyen (Bishop John Carroll); 3rd — Nate Yokell (St. Elizabeth Ann Seton); 4th — Daniel Carteright (St. James); 5th — Nathan Nguyen (St. James).

PONCA CITY — Three eighth-grade students from St. Mary's Catholic School recently participated in the Northern Oklahoma College Interscholastic Contest and took home awards in the Spanish I category. Pictured from left are Betty Kreger, Spanish teacher at St. Mary's; Jenna Miller, a student teacher of Spanish from Oklahoma State University; Dr. Nadine Olson, associate professor, School of Teaching and Curriculum Leadership and Foreign Language supervisor at Oklahoma State University; and contest winners Katherine Caughlin, third place, Marissa Schmauch, first place, and Teresa Connelly, fourth place. The students competed in a field of 42 students from 19 different high schools and junior high schools in the vicinity. Schmauch and Connelly also placed sixth and 12th, respectively, in the Algebra I category.

OKLAHOMA CITY — Daniel Francis O'Connor and Yasmin Vizcaino, members of St. Eugene Parish and international baccalaureate students at Classen School of Advanced Studies, have been recognized as valedictorians in their graduating class.

Daniel is the son of Mike and Catherine O'Connor. Yasmin is the daughter of Jose and Cristina Vizcaino. Daniel is also a 2008 Oklahoma Academic Scholar. The purpose of the Oklahoma Academic Scholar program is to recognize the outstanding academic achievements of graduating seniors in compliance with state law which became effective in 1986.

Yasmin is a highly active member of St. Eugene Parish. She has shared numerous hours of her time and talent in various roles of the Religious Education program, including Confirmation, Children’s Liturgy of the Word, RE class for grades K-8, vacation Bible school, retreats and the youth program. She has also given of her time and talent volunteering several summers in the Health Center of The Fountains at Canterbury retirement community.

Daniel and Yasmin have also been recognized as Scholar Finalists by the College Board’s National Hispanic Recognition Program. The National Hispanic Recognition Program, established in 1983, is a college board program that provides national recognition of the exceptional academic achievements of Hispanic high school seniors and identifies them for postsecondary institutions. Students enter the program by taking the Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test as high school juniors and by identifying themselves as Hispanic. From more than 196,000 students nationwide, 4,000 have been recognized as National Hispanic Scholars or honorable mention finalists based upon their PSAT/NMSQT scores and their academic achievements.

Daniel and Yasmin will attend Oklahoma State University, where they have been awarded full scholarships. They have also been accepted into the Honors College.

Catholic Students Tops in Class at Advanced Studies School

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Students Help Hot Dogs for the Homeless Into New Home

By Kelly Matteson
For the Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — For Rick Swyden and his fellow volunteers, delivering hot dogs to the homeless is a means of showing human compassion to the less fortunate. Swyden plans to continue his work for a long time to come, but he will do so from a new location.

Hot Dogs for the Homeless will still operate from Quail Creek Plaza at Hefner and May, but it has moved to Suite 10964, which is on the north side of the shopping center between GNC and Camillias.

Tom Morris of Morris Enterprises has provided Hot Dogs for the Homeless space in Quail Creek Plaza free for the past year, and he will continue to do so in the new location.

“I can’t even begin to describe my gratitude to him (Tom Morris),” Swyden said. “Thank God he helped me because I don’t want to stop doing this, ever. We really do a lot of good for a lot of people.”

According to a March 3, 2008, statistic on www.hotdogsforthehomeless.com, 72,490 hot dogs have been served since Jan. 5, 2003. But according to Swyden, his group offers far more than food for the hungry.

“It’s not about the hot dogs. It’s never been about the hot dogs. It’s about human compassion. I hug every one of these homeless people and ask them how they are doing,” Swyden said.

It is this connection with the people, the ability to show them that someone cares, that Swyden believes makes the difference.

Volunteer Andrew Goode, a Bishop McGuinness sophomore, agrees.

“It’s fun to do,” Goode said of volunteering at Hot Dogs for the Homeless. “It’s a fun, easy way to help out the community or those who are in need. The way that they react when you help them — they’re so grateful.”

Goode volunteered for the first time in December 2007, and he said he has continued volunteering because of the satisfaction he found. He believes just making the hot dogs is not enough.

“It is a lot more beneficial for someone who is volunteering to actually go downtown and hand (the hot dogs) out,” Goode said. “They all have their tales of how they got on the streets, and they’re willing to share them.”

On Sunday, April 13, Goode and five other students helped move the equipment and supplies for Hot Dogs for the Homeless to its new location. Assisting with the move were Taylor Large, a Mount St. Mary’s sophomore, and Bishop McGuinness seniors Cameron Bryan, Travis Cunningham, Shane Oltean and Clay Williamson.

“The kids from McGuinness have been a joy,” Swyden said. “It’s been really nice to see them get something out of this.”

Sawyden said the students leave the experience with a new appreciation for life.

“It opens their eyes to life on the streets, and it opens their eyes to how human they are,” Swyden said. “It gets to them. They see a new side of life and maybe realize that their problems aren’t so big. They walk away with a new compassion for people that they didn’t know existed.”

This experience is what keeps Swyden going.

“What I love is that every week I get to go out and get this feeling. It’s very addictive, actually. Every week I get to go out and do something amazing for people,” Swyden said.

Hot Dogs for the Homeless began five years ago. The first time Swyden and his wife, Susan delivered hot dogs, they made 16 in their kitchen and delivered them downtown. Swyden thought he would start with 16 hot dogs and add another package each week. His neighbors learned of his efforts, and the next week when he returned home from church, he found 96 hot dogs waiting on his front porch.

Today, Swyden and volunteers make and deliver anywhere from 280 to 300 hot dogs each week. Swyden said sometimes it is just he and his business partner, Mike Velte, making and delivering the hot dogs, while other times they have as many as 50 volunteers. Ideally, Swyden likes to have a minimum of five volunteers in addition to he and Velte.

Those interested in volunteering should meet at the new location at noon on Sundays.

By Kelly Matteson
For the Sooner Catholic

Mount St. Mary student Taylor Large and McGuinness student Cameron Bryan help Rick Swyden move a refrigerator to the new home for Hot Dogs for the Homeless.

Bishop McGuinness student Andrew Goode prepares hot dogs for the Sunday delivery.

Mount St. Mary student Taylor Large and McGuinness student Cameron Bryan help Rick Swyden move a refrigerator to the new home for Hot Dogs for the Homeless.

At right, McGuinness students Andrew Goode and Travis Cunningham unload a kitchen range at the new location, while Shane Oltean leaves the cab to help.

Photos/Kelly Matteson
Mass Celebrated by Pope Brought ‘A Surge of the Heart’

By Ammanda McCabe
The Sooner Catholic

As an English literature major, I couldn’t help but think of Chaucer’s line, “Whan that April with his shoures soote…” as I made my way on my own April pilgrimage. But I wasn’t going to Canterbury; I was on my way to Yankee Stadium in the Bronx, along with over 57,000 other pilgrims!

What started as a chilly and gray day as I went past barricades, security and vendors selling Pope T-shirts and bobble-head dolls, turned warm and sunny when I found my seat and took in the beautiful surroundings. The vast stadium was transformed with white, purple and yellow draperies, with an elaborate white and gold altar over second base and the papal seat covering the pitcher’s mound.

Music, from opera singer Marcello Giordano, Irish tenor Roman Tynan and Harry Connick Jr., among others, filled the air. Just before the Mass began, hundreds of doves were released and Pope Benedict entered the stadium in his pope-mobile. A great cheer went up as the crowd waved white and yellow handkerchiefs. As he smiled and waved back, slowly circling to the altar, I thought of what St. Therese called “a surge of the heart.” It was an amazing feeling of belonging to a worldwide community of believers.

In his homily, Pope Benedict addressed the issue of unity, and the fact that as Americans we must use our freedoms wisely in service to our faith. He called the Mass “a summons to move forward with the firm resolve to use wisely the blessings of freedom, in order to build a future of hope for coming generations.”

At the end of the service, after over 500 priests dispensed Communion, the Pope processed out slowly to Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy,” amid more cheers and cries. Then the crowd filed slowly out. This marked the third, and last, time a pope has been at Yankee Stadium. The historic stadium is being replaced after the 2008 season. I can’t think that it has ever held a more joyous and uplifting event.
Pope: Catholic Education a Matter of Conviction

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Zenit.org).— The most important point made by Benedict XVI to Catholic university presidents is that education is not a matter of numbers but of conviction, said the president of Franciscan University of Steubenville.

Father Terence Henry, a Franciscan of the Third Order Regular, spoke with ZENIT about the meeting Benedict XVI had with presidents of U.S. Catholic colleges and universities and directors or superintendents responsible for Catholic education in elementary and secondary schools.

"The Holy Father continued with his two themes of hope and authentic freedom," said Father Henry. "He stressed to Catholic educators that universities can be instruments of hope."

The pope also addressed those "who think that academic freedom means the freedom to question everything, but he said freedom cannot contradict the truth or else it contradicts the heart of the Church. Universities need to be at that heart," Father Henry explained.

Conviction

"The most powerful point he made in his entire speech," said the Franciscan, "is that Catholic education is not just a matter of numbers, but conviction. That, in other words, knowledge is not just an intellectual understanding of facts, but it is a lived expression of reality."

"That is what I see so present on our campus every day, that because our students are convicted, they want to bring their whole selves to the playing field. To have three Masses a day packed with 500 students in each one, is a living out of the conviction."

Father Henry said the Holy Father also explained, "The fullness of truth opens up for a young person the adventure of life. To see life as an adventure, as something that comes to you, then it is exciting. I think one of the chief causes of death for young people is suicide. They despair because they are drowning in the secularism and materialism. And for those who don't despair, they are bored without knowing the adventure of life with Christ."

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"Chesterton described life as an adventure," continued the priest. "An adventure is a thing by its nature, something that comes to you. The most exciting adventure is being born. When we are born it is the middle of a great epic, in the middle of a drama, and then it unfolds."

Future

Before the pope spoke, said Father Henry, "There were some in the room speculating whether they were going to get rebuked or not, but the Holy Father was more subtle in his approach, keeping with the theme of hope and yet challenging them. He was not going for sound bites, he was sowing the seeds of a turnaround for the next 20 or 30 years."

"Several times during his talk he reminded the educators that they have a responsibility and that their missions are precious. They can offer so much to the world and to education in general. If they try to mainstream, they are going to miss that which is so important to them, the ecclesial union. The proportion of that union is the proportion to which they are effective."

At the end of his address, the pontiff challenged members of religious communities not to desert the apostolate of teaching. Since 2000, over 1,000 Catholic schools have closed in the United States. "I hope," Father Henry concluded, "that religious communities, who were the pillars of it, don't abandon education. The formation of young people is the greatest contribution that we can make."
Poll Shows U.S. Bishops Earn High Marks for Leadership

WASHINGTON — More than eight out of 10 Catholics are satisfied with the leadership of Pope Benedict XVI, according to a poll of Catholic adults in the United States. Eighty-seven out of 100 are equally satisfied with the leadership of the U.S. bishops, a 14-point jump, from 58 to 72 percent, since 2004.

The same poll found that among those who attend Mass at least once a month, millennial Catholics (born after 1981) are more likely to receive ashes on Ash Wednesday (91 percent), observe Lenten practices. More than three-quarters of those who attend Mass at least once a month hold “very” important that their children celebrate First Reconciliation, First Communion or the Sacrament of Confirmation, most likely among the millennial generation, as well as practicing Catholic faith (55 percent).

Other findings included:

- Respondents with children are more likely to say it is “somewhat” or “very” important that their children “very” important their sense of what it means to be Catholic. The challenge for church leaders is to help them see what Catholicism really means.
- More than three in four (77 percent) agree at least “somewhat” with the statement: “I am proud to be Catholic” (56 percent agree “strongly”).
- More than eight in 10 (81 percent) consider their Catholic faith to be important in their daily life (41 percent say that is either “among the most important part” of their life or “the most important part” of their life).
Letters

Weigel A Fundamentalist
I have read Brother Eaton’s report on George Weigel’s book, Faith, Reason and the War Against Jihadism: A Call to Action. Brother Eaton wrote, “Weigel makes it clear that not all Muslims are violent or follow the jihadist point of view. He high-
ly supports moderate Muslims who want peace and prosperity. His message is directed at Westerners, especially Christians. He points out that Christians are too tolerant and even too silent about outrages to Christianity.”

To me, Weigel defines “outrages to Christianity” as jihadism, Muslim riots and violence after Pope Benedict’s lecture in Germany, Muslim uproar after sacrilegious cartoons were printed in the Danish press, the Muslim threats to those who insult Islam, and the fact that Christian Churches cannot be built in Saudi Arabia.

In what way does Weigel qualify as “ou-
trages to Christianity?”

Is starting a pre-emptive war with a Muslim country a “crusade” an outrage to Christianity?”

Is the killing of Muslim women and children as collateral damage an “outrage to Christianity?”

Is torturing Muslim prisoners an “outrage to Christianity?”

Is Christian silence while the Muslim religion is insulted an “outrage to Christianity?”

Weigel calls Islamists and Muslim fundamen-
talists, “jihadists.” Do we have such a word as “jihadists” for Christian fundamentalists? Are some of the things said by Christian fundamentalists outrageous to Catholics? St. Francis of Assisi said, “Good manners should be like the rain that falls on everyone.” I wonder, what would St. Francis of Assisi say?

Tom Lucas
Saint John Nepomuk
Yukon

Church Does Lead
Regarding Joanne Ellinger’s letter, “Church Can Lead,” might I suggest that Ms. Ellinger sell all of her possessions and give the proceed to the poor before she requires the same action from any other person or institution. The logic behind her state-
imply that the “Vatican,” more appropriate-
ly referred to as the Holy See, does not contribute to the relief of the suffering of the poor. This logic is unquestionably false. One can easily research the myriad of ways the Church imputes her Lord in service of the poor. I believe Ms. Ellinger’s state-
ments is more of a reference to the Holy Father’s recent use of liturgical fashioning from the Church’s historic tradition. These vestments wear by popes throughout the centuries are meant to remind the faithful of the hope of the Heavenly Jerusalem. St. Francis, Who Ms. Ellinger cites as an example of a “frugal lifestyle,” had a deep devotion to the beauty of the Liturgy including sacred vest-
ments and vessels. The Church is not forced to choose between the beauty of the Liturgy and care for the poor. It was Judas, not Christ, who objected to the woman’s anointing with expensive ointment.

Ryan McKee
Okahoma City

Pastoral Ministry Summer Course Enrollment Opens
Summer is just around the corner. Try some-
thing new to keep cool this summer. Come to an air-
conditioned, comfy classroom to study with others. Learn more about our history and tradition. The Pastoral Ministry program is offering two courses during summer 2008.

Formation and Methodology for Catechists offers students a deeper look at what it means to be a cate-
chist. Emphasis will be placed on the personal and spiritual development of those called to the cate-
chetical ministry; introduction to and exploration of the Catechetical documents and literature, as well as practical hands-on classroom ideas and teaching methods, for those working with either youth and/ or adults.

This course will meet for eight weeks, June 2 to July 21, 5 to 10 p.m., at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Peggy Dooley is the instructor.

History of the Papacy explores the rich history, tradition and role of the papacy. Beginning with St. Peter and continuing through the papacy of Benedict XVI, the course will consider the evolution and development of the papacy through significant time periods in history, as well as individual popes, key concepts and papal documents. This course will meet for six weeks, June 3 to July 22, 6 to 10 p.m., at the Catholic Pastoral Center. John Braniff is the instructor.

To register or for more information, call or e-mail the Office of Pastoral Ministry: (405) 721-4208 or 1-800-721-5651. Ext. 131, or cgrimes@catholic-
dioceseseok.org. The full schedule and more informa-
tion is available at catharchdioceseok.org. Click on Chancery Offices, then Education, then Pastoral Ministry.

Across Oklahoma

Faith In Action
OKLAHOMA CITY — Faith In Action — a Parish Social Ministry regional training program, will feature speakers from across the U.S. who will share their knowledge to develop, support and expand parish social ministries. The workshop, which is open to the public, is May 2-4 at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Cost is $85. Lodging is available, make reservations by calling Catholic Charities. To register, call Becky Van Pooi at (405) 523-3009 or pop@catholiccharitiesok.org.

Anniversary to be Celebrated
OKLAHOMA CITY — The Filipino Catholic Community will celebrate the first anniversary of the Mass in Tagalog and give thanks and blessings to all graduates of 2008 at 7 p.m. May 3 at St. Paul Church. Potluck will follow. All are welcome.

Performance Set May 4
OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Master Chorale will perform Joseph Haydn’s Mass in the Time of War at 7 p.m. on May 4 at St. Joseph Old Cathedral, 307 NW 44th. All are invited to this free performance.

Celebrating Nurses
OKLAHOMA CITY — The first week of May is a time to honor the nurses in our community. On May 11, Mercy Health Center and Catholic Charities will sponsor an evening of appreciation for our many nurses. Mass will be celebrated begin-
ning at 5:30 p.m. in the chapel at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 NW Expressway. Dinner will follow along with entertainment and a speaker.

The evening is free, reservations are required by calling Catholic Charities, Donna Bullock, 523-3009. Seating is limited. Deadline for registrations is May 7.

Chicken Dinner Set
NICOMA PARK — Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Daughters will host a fixed chicken dinner from 5 to 8 p.m. May 10 at the Church Hall, NE 20th and Myers Circle. Cost is $5 for adults and $3 for children and includes coffee, tea and desserts. Proceeds to benefit the court’s charitable efforts in the community. For more information, call Jane Neely at (405) 769-7692.

Faith Community Nurse Course Set
GUTHRIE — Registration is under way for The Basic Preparation Course for Faith Community Nursing to be held May 15-17 and June 5-7 at Our Lady of the Lake Retreat Center in Guthrie. Both weekends are required to complete the course. The course is open to registered nurses of all faith traditions. Cost is $525, includes lodging; $485 is without lodging. No refund after May 13. Contact Marilyn Seiler for registration forms at (405) 523-3006 or mseiler@catholic-
charitiesok.org.

Adoption Seminar May 17
Catholic Charities extends an invitation to anyone interested in learning more about adoption to register for a free seminar sponsored by Oklahoma Adoption Coalition and Hope Ministries.

The seminar is May 17 from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Crosspoints Church, 2601 24th Ave. SE in Norman. Sessions on foster care, domestic adoption, inter-
national adoption, legal issues and other topics will be offered. To register, go to www.oklahoma-
adoptionscoalition.org. Catholic Charities can also be contacted about adoption at (405) 523-3012.

Marriage Encounter Opportunity
OKLAHOMA CITY — Spend a weekend with your spouse that will change your marriage. Marriage Encounter invites you to spend a week-
end learning a communication technique that will strengthen your relationship. Next weekend date: June 6. For information, call Dan and Joan Forgue at (405) 760-0390 or e-mail partspeople@msouc.net.

Archbishop to Celebrate Mass
OKLAHOMA CITY — Memorial Day Mass at Resurrection Cemetery, with Archbishop Beltran, May 26 at 9 a.m. Everyone is invited to attend this Mass as we remember the deceased on this national holiday.

Cemetery to Host Memorial Mass
Annual Memorial Day Mass at St. Patrick Cemetery, May 26 at 10 a.m. Located one-half mile west of Council Road onburger Mill Road. A potluck luncheon will follow the celebration of the Mass. Bring a lawn chair for seating for you and your family, along with a covered dish. In case of rain or storm, Mass will be held at St. Monica Church at 2001 N Western, Edmond.
Author Answers Questions From A to Z Concerning Papacy

One of the deeper issues underlying the tension between liberals and conservatives in the Church is the tension between the kenotic and the triumphant Christ, the tension between the Christ who empties himself to become a slave and the Christ who rises triumph over death and rules the world.

I remember an incident at our Oblate General Chapter in Rome in 2004 that illustrates this. Our chapter, with myself in a questionable objectum, was concluding and we were trying to write a document for our missionaries around the world. There were people in the room from nearly 70 countries and so our experience was pretty curious. One of the delegates from Western Europe stood up and said something to this effect: "I live in a culture within which there is a lot of anti-clericalism and a lot of resentment towards the church, triggered not just by the sexual abuse crisis but by a history of ecclesial privilege. The only Christ I can preach right now is a kenotic one, a Christ who self-effaces, self-effaces, who isn't in anyone's face, to radiate a God who doesn't need to be apologized for or soft-soaked and to celebrate and proclaim our faith.

But that's half of it. On the other hand, Scripture also tells us that God comes into this world as a helpless baby in the straw, unable to feed himself, and he grows into the Christ who refuses all earthly power, glory, trappings, religious dress, and everything else, other than a deep life of prayer and private integrity, that would set him apart from the rest of humanity. The God who is born into this world is also the God who self-effaces and empties himself to become a slave. This is the God of love, the God of love to the point of dying in cancer wards and mental hospitals and other places where the passion of Christ is actually being lived out. Christ is both, a self-emptying and a triumphant God. We need to radiate both. There are times to shout our truth from the rooftops, to march publicly in processions, to proclaim a God who doesn't need to be apologized for or self-effaced and to celebrate publicly and colorfully our faith.

And there are times too to be self-effacing, not to be in anyone's face, to radiate a God who was born helpless, an anonymous baby in the straw, empty of all worldly trappings and so to celebrate and proclaim our faith.

That Pope John Paul II during the Holy Year 2000 apologized for the mistakes and bad things that the Church and its leaders had done in the past. He presents what a cardinal is and the history of cardinals. Then he examines what happens when a pope dies. He presents the reality of the election or selection of a new pope and how that has changed and developed over the years. After this, Bellitto discusses the various selections of the popes and the formation of the Vatican because it owns many pieces of art and several buildings and other things. The Catholic Church is seen as rich, which he explains is true to a certain extent, but much of that wealth the Church holds in stewardship. Next, Bellitto explores the questions as to why the pope wears certain clothes, why does he change his name, why did popes use to wear a triple crown and other such questions.

Part 3 is about all kinds of things connected with the papacy, either factually or fictiously. One of these is the legend of Pope John. Who was the oldest or youngest pope? Has a son ever succeeded a father as pope? Which popes have been given the title “The Great?” How many popes are saints? Bellitto ends with an epilogue which is the 101st question which deals with the good and the bad of the papacy. This is followed by a list of the popes and the anti-popes (those who were not really popes), endnotes and a short bibliographical list. There are no illustrations in this book. On the front cover is a famous image of Jesus giving St. Peter the keys to bind and to loose as presented in Matthew's Gospel. This book is highly recommended to those interested in the history of the popes and the papacy, Church history, or who are curious about things papal.

Dr. Christopher M. Bellitto is author of The Church, the Councils, and Reform (June 2008), Church History 101 (2008), Ten Ways the Church Has Changed (2006), General Councils (2002), Renewing Christi- annity (2001), Nicholas De Clamanges (2001). He has written articles for various magazines and journals and appears on CNN, MSNBC, The News Hour, and various newspapers.
Breast Augmentation: The Pursuit of Plastic Perfection

In the last 10 years, the number of women undergoing breast augmentations has increased dramatically. During 2007, nearly half a million women opted for this elective surgery. Many seem convinced that breast implants are an easy way to whip up their self-image. As one woman put it, “I got implants so that I could gain back confidence and feel good about myself.” The growing popularity of this kind of plastic surgery, however, raises a constellation of health concerns, ethical questions and personal/spiritual issues that may need to be confronted whenever the temptation to pursue elective breast augmentation arises.

As a general rule, there should be a compelling therapeutic reason whenever we elect to undergo breast augmentation, because surgery and anesthesia are serious business — real surgery with real side effects and strange things that can go wrong. Such implants can rupture, have capsular contractions, or develop leaks. Moreover, they are clearly not a permanent solution. They need to be replaced periodically. The decision to get implants is a very personal one, and is an almost certain guarantee of more surgeries later on.

Choosing to increase the size of otherwise healthy breasts raises a number of ethical — and moral and ethical concerns as well. Implants may increase diagnostic difficulties associated with dying mammograms. Some women report that breast implants make self-examinations harder. In the past, implants were often filled with silicone, and when they would rupture, some women developed immune reaction problems which were attributed to the release of silicone into their bodies. Implants and implant surgery can also affect the purpose and proper functioning of the breast, by causing lactation insufficiency and other complications associated with breast-feeding.

Women who feel a strong need to augment their breasts may also be struggling with deeper personal and spiritual issues regarding their own self-image. All of us are keenly aware of the way that people react to us when they first meet us, and whenever they respond negatively to our appearance, it can damage our self-esteem. In our society, attractive people often end up receiving preferential treatment, and this especially true for women.

The result is a peculiar kind of pressure on women: on the one hand, they are valued for their beauty and feel compelled to conform to the societal ideal. On the other hand, elective breast augmentation seems to go far in an era when body image is everything. It seems to cross an ethical line by saying that women should alter their healthy bodies in very radical ways in order to conform to what is portrayed on television and glossy women’s magazines.

The escalating use of pornography among men may also be contributing to this pressure to conform to the digitally enhanced and hyper-sexualized images of the computer screen. As one woman put it, “If you have friends who gossip about your flat chest, you need new friends, not new breasts.” In the face of so many dissatisfied and unreasonable pressures, undergoing an augmentation may even be construed as a form of unethical self-mutilation in the name of some other perceived good.

A further difficulty is that such surgery frequently does not address the real self-image problems that a woman may be struggling with. Some who pursue this so-called “plastic perfection” may be prone to self-discontentment to begin with. Aiming to make one’s body match up to an external, visual measure of beauty can seem to open up a new level of attention and affirmation from others. But it can also lead to a shallowness and an unhealthy self-focus. I recall the story of a young man who got seriously involved with bodybuilding and weight lifting. He worked many long months to build up his muscle tone and bulk up his physique by working out on various exercise machines. Soon he realized that his focus had become so intense that it had managed to turn into a completely self-centered behavior, so that whenever he would pass by a mirror, he couldn’t help flexing his muscles to see whether they too had gotten any larger since the last time he checked. A similar self-centeredness and shallow ideal. It seems to be a hallmark of the woman who focuses too much on her figure.

After doing an augmentation, there can be a “honeymoon period” where a woman may be pleased with the result and feel good about it. But then the real test is always possible to fixate on something else that needs changing before we will allow ourselves to feel good about ourselves and to accept what we have been given.

There is often something embarrassing, perhaps even scandalous, in the realization that women really want to do these elective procedures. The psychological flaw here, one might argue, is even uglier than any perceived chest size flaw. A negative self-image can be very tough to overcome, and implants too easily tempt with a kind of false answer. Ultimately, faulty notions of beauty are likely to be at play as well in these debates about breast implants. I think it was Albert Einstein who remarked that beyond what we perceive with our eyes, “there is something that our mind cannot grasp and whose beauty and subtlety reaches us only indirectly.”

The temptation to reduce feminine beauty to a kind of plastic and exterior measure is surely a failure to realize how a woman’s physical beauty is meant to be but a gentle hint, a pointer to the inner — the soul that makes her really beautiful. Christina Capecchi is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. ChristinaCapecchi@gmail.com.
Buenas Noticias...

El Sucesor de Pedro!

Jesús estableció la Iglesia Católica para continuar su misión y ministerio de salvación para todos los pueblos hasta el fin del mundo.

Además, se encontraron los cuatro nuevos obispos que designó el Papa en la actualidad, para su misión y ministerio.

Para que sean lo que los misioneros del Papa lo fueron a hacer lo mismo.

Donde los alcancen la República, la búsqueda de la libertad de América ha sido guiada por la confianza de que los principios que gobiernan la vida política y social están irremediablemente relacionados con un orden moral, basado en la fe de Cristo.

En su homilía, el Obispo de Little Rock, mencionó la labor de los misioneros en nuestro país, y su importancia en el servicio de la fe.

Hispanopolitantes lo recordarán

Ultimo adiós al Padre Flushe

Será ordenado el 5 de junio

Obispo para la diócesis de Little Rock

La parrilla del Sagrado Corazón está organizando el viaje para los feligreses que desean asistir a la ordenación del Obispo de Little Rock. Se anima a todos a asistir.

El Padre Street Mate o fue planeando en asegurar las redes en español en nuestro ministerio y también trabajar por las comunidades. Pasó a sus reinos.

Señor Presidente, queridos amigos: al comenzar nuestra misión en los Estados Unidos, deseamos expresar un voto de gratitud por su hospitalidad, ya agradezca a nuestro país por la misión de seguirlos en esta tarea.

Y que los misioneros sean nuestros hermanos en el camino de la fe.
Una histórica visita del Vicario de Cristo a los Estados Unidos
Su Santidad Benedicto XVI intercede por los inmigrantes

Por Mauro Yanes


El Papa Benedicto XVI habló en su visita del desafío que causan los secuestros de abuso sexual a los niños. Abogó por la protección de los niños y por la protección de la vida. El Papa también habló sobre la importancia de la diversidad y el respeto a las diferencias culturales y sociales. En su discurso, el Papa dijo: "No se pueden tratar a los inmigrantes como si fueran animales para ser sacrificados. Necesitamos un sistema de migración que sea justo y respete los derechos de los inmigrantes."

El Papa Benedicto XVI también se referió a la importancia de la paz en el mundo. "Necesitamos paz y no guerra", dijo el Papa. "Necesitamos trabajar juntos para construir un mundo mejor".

En su visita a los Estados Unidos, el Papa Benedicto XVI también invocó a los países a trabajar juntos para el bien de todos. "Necesitamos un mundo en el que todos podamos vivir en paz y tranquilidad", dijo el Papa.

El Papa Benedicto XVI también se refirió a la importancia de la educación y de la formación. "Necesitamos que todos los niños tengan la oportunidad de aprender y crecer", dijo el Papa.

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Summer Camp Bus Driver Needed
St. Eugene's Summer Camp Program is looking for a part-time bus driver who is certified to drive a standard, passenger bus for up to 40 children. Copy of certification and Safe Environment a must. The position would begin June 2 and go through Aug. 1. For more information or to apply, call 751-7115 Ext. 118 or e-mail aliddiard@steugenes.org.

Part-time Business Manager
St. Thomas More University Parish, Norman, is seeking a part-time business manager to coordinate the functions and operations of the parish office and its ministries. Hours are flexible with the possibility of full time. For more information, contact Gloria Olivero at 321-0990 or gloria@ftm-ou.edu.

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 60 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 498, Prague, Okla. 74846, or e-mail shrine_infj@sbcglobal.net.

High School Coach Openings
Mount St. Mary High School, Oklahoma City, is currently seeking qualified candidates for the following coaching positions: head volleyball coach, assistant volleyball coach, assistant girls basketball coach, assistant football coach and head track coach for the 2008-2009 school year. Teaching fields are: advanced science, languages (full time and part time), math (full time), art (part time), and girls physical education (part time). Applicants can fax letter of interest, resume and copy of teaching certificate to Talita DeNegri at (405) 631-9209 or by e-mail to tdenegri@mountstmary.org.

Third/Fourth Grade Teacher
St. Peter and Paul School in Kingfisher is seeking a teacher for the 2008-2009 school year for a third/fourth grade combined class. Applicant must have state certification. Send resumes to Kim Higgins at 232-4286.

Cafeteria Manager
Sacred Heart Catholic School, OKC, has an opening for a cafeteria manager for the 2008-09 school year. SHCS is a PK through eighth-grade school with 165 students. Manager is responsible for menu planning, ordering, preparing and serving of food, and supervising, training and evaluating cafeteria staff. Experience working with the federal lunch program is preferred. The position has excellent pay and benefits. Call Joana Camacho at (405) 634-5673 for an application. SHCS is located at 2710 S. Shartel.

Early Childhood Teacher
Villa Teresa School in Oklahoma City has an opening for the 2008-2009 school year for a 2/3-4-5 year-old classroom. Applicant must have state certification. Send resumes to Villa Teresa School, 1216 Classen Drive, Oklahoma City 73103, or call Sister Veronica Higgins for an interview at 232-4286.

Part-Time Music Teacher
Bishop John Carroll School in Oklahoma City is seeking a part-time music teacher for the 2008-2009 school year. Applicant must be enthusiastic and willing to motivate students to do their personal best and have the ability to work with the director of music at the Cathedral for school Mass. Liturgy planning and basic liturgical skills would be helpful. Contact Connie Diotte at (405) 525-0956 or fax resume to (405) 523-3053.

Elementary School Principal
St. Mary's School in Putca 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 is based on qualifications and experience. Position available June 1, 2008. For an application, contact Office of the Superintendent, P.O. Box 21140, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123, call (405) 721-4292, or contact mduhe@faitharchdioceseokc.org.

Teacher Needed
Volunteer English teacher needed for the Father Rother Parochial School in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala. Room and board provided. For more information, contact Father Tony Taylor at (405) 517-2303.

Teacher Sought
Sacred Heart Catholic School in El Reno is seeking a pre-kindergarten teacher. Applicants must have a license or certification in Early Childhood. Submit resumes to Principal Shannon Starrett, 210 S. Evans, El Reno, Okla. 73036, or fax to (405) 262-3818.

Women's Basketball Coach
St. Gregory's University, a Catholic Benedictine university which competes in the SAC of the NAIA, seeks a women's basketball coach. Qualifed candidates will have thorough knowledge of coaching basketball and experience in recruiting, fundraising, scheduling and summer camps. Evidence of successful coaching experience, ability to work with culturally diverse population, excellent communication skills required. A bachelor's degree is required/master's degree preferred. Send cover letter, resume and three references to Human Resources, St. Gregory's University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804, or e-mail hrb@stgregorys.edu.

Controller
St. Gregory's University has an immediate opening for the position of controller. Position is responsible for maintaining, analyzing and summarizing general ledger accounts, preparing financial statements, coordinating year-end audits, overseeing and verifying reconciliations on a monthly basis for payroll liability accounts, including taxes and benefits. Applicant must be familiar with GAAP and have a general understanding of financial aid compliance issues. Strong supervisory skills required. Excellent organizational, management, interpersonal and communication skills required. Send cover letter, resume and references to St. Gregory's University, Human Resources Director, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee 74804, or e-mail hrb@stgregorys.edu.

Admissions Counselor
St. Gregory's University has an immediate opening for the position of admissions counselor. Must have exceptional communication skills as well as a great sense of humor. Must be flexible with the possibility of full time. For more information, contact Gloria Olivero at 321-0990 or gloria@ftm-ou.edu.

Financial Aid Director
St. Gregory's University has an immediate opening for a financial aid director. Responsible for managing all federal, state and institutional student aid programs; supervising loan programs; and supervising, training and evaluating financial aid personnel. Bachelor's degree required, with advanced degree desired. Minimum of two years experience in financial aid work at the college level. Excellent organizational, management, interpersonal and communication skills required. Send cover letter, resume and references to St. Gregory's University, Human Resources Director, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee 74804, or e-mail hrb@stgregorys.edu.

Assistant Professor, Political Science
St. Gregory's University is seeking qualified applicants for a full-time, tenure-track position in political science, beginning August 2008. Ph.D. in political science (or related field) is strongly preferred; ABD will be considered. Teach Government of the U.S. and upper level political science electives. Also develop/supervise courses in public administration, economics, sociology/social change/community organization is desirable, knowledge of Catholic social teaching, willingness to facilitate Tradition and Conversation seminars. Candidates must be willing to contribute to the Catholic and Benedictine identity of the university. Send letter of application, vita, transcripts, statement of teaching philosophy and three letters of recommendation to Father Robert A. Buech, Ph.D., VP for Academic Affairs. Applications and materials may be sent to hr@stgregorys.edu.
A Pope Calls for continued from page 6

mala — symbols — which articulated the essence of the Christian faith and constituted the foundation for the unity of the baptized. (cf. 1 Cor 15:3-5; Gal 1:6-9; “Unitatis Redintegratio,” 2).

My dear friends, the power of the kerygma has lost none of its internal dynamism. Yet we must ask ourselves whether its full force has not been attenuated by a relativistic approach to Christian doctrine similar to that found in secular ideolo-
gies, which, in alleging that science alone is “objective,” relegate religion entirely to the subjective sphere of individual feeling. Scientific discover-
ies, and their application through human ingenuity, undoubtedly offer new possibilities for the betterment of humankind. This does not mean, however, that the “knowable” is limited to the empirically verifiable, nor religion restricted to the shifting realm of “personal experience.”

For Christians to accept this faulty line of reasoning would lead to the notion that there is little need to emphasize objective truth in the presentation of the Christian faith, for one need but follow his or her own conscience and choose a community that best suits his or her individual tastes. The result is seen in the con-
tinual proliferation of communities which often eschew institutional structures and minimize the im-
portance of doctrinal content for Christian living even within the eu-
emonic movement. Christians may be reluctant to assert the role of doctrine for fear that it would only exacerbate rather than heal the wounds of division. Yet a clear, con-
vincing testimony to the salvation wrought for us in Christ Jesus has to be based upon the notion of norma-
tive apostolic teaching: a teaching which indeed underlies the inspired word of God and sustains the sacra-
mental life of Christians today.

Only by “holding fast” to sound teaching (2 Thess 2:15; cf. Rev 2:20-29) will we be able to respond to the challenges that confront us in an evolving world. Only in this way will we give unambiguous testimony to the truth of the Gospel and its moral teaching. This is the message which the world is waiting to hear from us. Like the early Christians, we have a responsibility to give transparent witness to the “reasons for our hope,” so that the eyes of all men and women of goodwill may be opened to see that God has shown us his face (cf. 2 Cor 3:12-18) and granted us access to his divine life through Jesus Christ. He alone is our hope! God has revealed his love for all peoples through the mystery of his Son’s passion and death, and has called us to proclaim that he is indeed risen, has taken his place at the right hand of the Father, and “will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.” (Nicene Creed).

May the word of God we have heard this evening inflame our hearts with hope on the path to unity

April 27, 2008 • Sooner Catholic 19

APRIL

28 McGuinness home baseball game vs. Northeast, 4:30 p.m.

MAY

1 JustFaith graduate presentation will be held at the Catholic Pastoral Center at 7 p.m. Jack Jezreel will speak.

2 JustFaith clergy luncheon at St. John Nepomuk at 11:30 a.m. Jack Jezreel with the five JustFaith ministers will be the keynote speaker.

2-4 Faith In Action: Parish Social Ministry Regional Training, a Parish Social Ministry regional training program. The workshop, which is open to the public, will be held at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Oklahoma City. Cost is $95, which includes two and a half days of train-
ing, receptions and meals. To register, contact Becky Van Pool, Parish Outreach and Program Development at Catholic Charities, (405) 523-3009, or popd@catholiccharitiesok.org. The workshop brochure can be accessed at www.catholiccharitiesok.org.

2 Holy Family Home Mass, 11:30 a.m., Holy Family Home, 6821 Eddie Drive, Midwest City, (405) 523-3000.

2 First Friday Adoration at St. Francis of Assisi in Oklahoma City. After the 7:30 a.m. Mass, and concludes at 3:30 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.

2 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 prior to Mass. Mass is at 7 p.m. For more information, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8844 or Diane Grim at (405) 528-6252.

3 Anger, Conflict and Forgiveness, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sister Marie Baldwin, OSB. This spiritual approach helps you to identify the unresolved anger and conflicts that affect your relationships. Come to the library at Red Plains Monastery, southwest of Piedmont. Call 373-4739 to register. Send your $35 to reserve a place. Bring a sack lunch.

3 A Labyrinth Retreat, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sister Melissa Anna Letts, OSB. We each have a sacred center of God within us. Enter the sacred circle of the Labyrinth on a pilgrimage to your center and into the heart of God. Come to the Art Barn at Red Plains Monastery, southwest of Piedmont. Call 373-4739 to register. Fee: Mail in $35 to reserve your place. Bring a sack lunch.

4 Ascension of the Lord - Holy Day of Obligation

6 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 everyday at 2:30 p.m. All are welcome.

9 Bingo at St. Joseph’s Church in Norman. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with the serving of a light dinner. First session of games begins at 7; second session at 8:30. Come enjoy a buffet of popcorn, candy coffee, soft drinks and desserts. There are drawings for door prizes. An elegant prize will be given to one lucky winner on May 9, the night of our fourth anniversary celebration.

9-10 Engagement Encounter Weekend. To register, contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8844.

10 Convalidación. A Spanish-language marriage preparation program for couples that are married civilly or through common law and want to have their marriage blessed by the Church. To register, contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8844.

10 The Benedictine Oblates of Red Plains Monastery will meet from 2:30 to 4 p.m. They join the Community for Vespers, followed by a potluck dinner. For more information, contact Sister Eunice at 373-4565 or osboolk@ou.net.

10 Meditation and Watercolor: Free your imagination workshop, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Glenda Day, artist and meditation guide, will provide an experience of freedom with colors, using both watercolor and meditation. All materials provided. Come to the Red Art Barn at Red Plains Monastery, southwest of Piedmont. Call 373-4739 to register. Fee: $50, includes a non-refundable deposit of $15. Bring a sack lunch.

11 Pentecost Sunday

13 Celebrating Nurses Mercy Health Center and Catholic Charities will sponsor an evening of appreciation for our nurses. Mass will be at 5:30 p.m. in the chapel at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 2501 NW Expressway. Dinner will follow along with entertainment and a speaker. The evening is free, reservations are required by calling Catholic Charities Parish Outreach, Donna Bulllock, 523-3009. Deadline for registrations is May 7.

17 Adoption Seminar for anyone interested in learning more about adoption. Register for a free seminar from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Cross- pointe Church, 2601 24th Ave. SE in Norman. To register, go to www.oklahomadoptcoalition.org. Catholic Charities can also be contacted about adoption at (405) 523-3012.

28 McGuinness home baseball game vs. Northeast, 4:30 p.m.
Saint John The Baptist, Other Parishes Reach Out to Peru

By Steve Gust
For the Sooner Catholic

EDMOND — For years it's been one of the archdiocese's greatest success stories — St. John's Catholic Church and other metro parishes reaching out to thousands in Peru, making life perhaps that much easier for the needy there.

St. John's joins with many other parishes in foreign mission work that literally means the difference between life and death for many who live so far from our borders.

Don't get the impression that the poor in and near Edmond are forgotten. St. John's is deeply involved in a host of ministries, ranging from the HOPE Center to Sister B.J.'s Pantry, that give assistance to many.

Yet for the past 10 years, there has been a special mission to Piura, Peru, about 600 miles north of Lima, Peru, in South America. St. John's has adopted Santisimo Sacramento as a sister parish. The church, with its many chapels, has more than 30,000 parishioners. The pastor there is Father Joe Uhen, who grew up in Oklahoma City and graduated from Bishop McGuinness High School.

Each summer, Father Uhen will return to Oklahoma City and brief many in Edmond and St. John's on the charitable work done in his parish for thousands. A lot of it wouldn't be done without the help and donations from parishioners in the archdiocese.

Making his first trip to the mission over spring break was St. John's associate pastor, Father Dan Letourneau. It generally takes about a full day of being on a plane to reach Piura.

Seven students from Bishop McGuinness and four adults made the trip.

"We saw a lot of poverty," Father said.

If you want to feel better about your situation, consider the elements facing those in Peru.

High gasoline prices? Father Letourneau said most didn't drive where the mission was at in Peru. It's mostly bicycles and small vehicles. Most couldn't afford personal automobiles aren't the norm.

Mortgage crisis? One of the adults making the trip was Anne McGarry of Edmond, who also works at McGuinness.

"We saw a lot of dirt floors — a lot of dirt floors," she said.

And indoor running water?

"Most of the homes don't have indoor plumbing," she said. "This one village we went to, it looked like they had a public latrine somewhere in the back. It didn't look as nice as what the Boy Scouts would have."

The students from McGuinness, including her son, Mitch, helped to build four new homes for the needy.

Are you depressed over the high cost of health care?

In this part of Peru, many of the people wait for an annual mission of medical experts from Edmond and the metro area, who visit once or twice a year. Then the Peruvians are able to get such luxuries as aspirin or a tooth pulled.

Lives have literally been saved by trips such as this.

"We take for granted a lot of what we have," Father said.

Yet at the same time, Father Letourneau and the group noticed that we're not all that different from our friends in Peru.

"A lot of them are very spiritual and value their faith."

He recalled visiting a blind gentleman and the expression of happiness the man had at the simple act and gesture of someone visiting.

There is also the issue of clothing. Annually, crates of clothing are shipped to Peru — much of it coming from parishes in the Oklahoma City area, including St. John's.

"It's something to drive down the street and see someone wearing an OU or Eskimo Joe's shirt," Father said.

This time of year is summer for Piura as temperatures topped out over 90 degrees most of the days.

"The kids were going back to school," Father said.

He had a special deal for one group. For 25 children, the missionaries took them to their first movie ever — complete with popcorn and all.

"That was a big treat for them," Father said.

It's a region where thousands have probably never seen ice, that so many of us accept as every day. But they have seen love — lots of it and aren't shy about sharing.

"There are lots and lots of hugs," McGarry said. "I remember bringing a bag of groceries to one family and they were so happy, they cried."

Neither McGarry nor Father Letourneau had the Spanish language skills, but they understood very well the impact they were having on the lives of many.

For Father, he also anointed the sick and prayed for many. He also was present for Palm Sunday and had actually cut palms down. The Mass is the Sunday before Easter and it marks Christ's triumphant return to Jerusalem — right before the crucifixion. Father Uhen actually rides a donkey in the street in an observance, which re-creates the event.

It's that spiritual impact, which is felt not only there but later when missionaries return to Edmond.

Almost to the person, those who make the long trek to Peru generally come away changed for the better and learning it is more blessed to give than receive.