At a Catholic mission camp in Minneapolis in the summer of 2009, Kelly Edwards – then a student at Oklahoma State University – joined his fellow campers in Eucharistic adoration.

Surveying the prayerful scene from the back of the room, Edwards suddenly felt a “very strong sense of spiritual responsibility for the people of God.”

“I knew in my heart, kind of immediately, that it was priestly responsibility,” he recalls.

It was not his first inclination that he was called to be a priest.

Earlier that year, while on pilgrimage in Ireland, he’d experienced a profound kinship with the priests he encountered at Saint Kevin’s Monastery.

“I felt this very strong connection – not to those particular priests necessarily, but to the priesthood, in general, which was a very surprising thing,” Edwards remembers. “I thought, ‘I can’t ignore that at all.’”

The Lord also had hinted for years at his vocation through the offhand suggestions of both close acquaintances and perfect strangers.

Born and bred in Oklahoma City, Edwards attended local Catholic schools from kindergarten through 12th grade, and has been a parishioner at Saint Monica Catholic Church in Edmond from its inception.

When he was in high school and an erstwhile participant in the parish youth group, the then-director of religious education at Saint Monica routinely asked him to consider the priesthood.

“At the time, I almost didn’t consider it,” he said. “I didn’t want to think about the idea.”

“Eventually, though, it happened enough that little old ladies in places I had never been would come up to me and ask me whether I was going to be a priest; I had to pay attention.”

That moment during adoration at Catholic HEART Work Camp was not isolated, but still proved decisive because, afterward, he publicly committed himself to apply to seminary.

“I told my group what happened and said, ‘I have to go to seminary and I’m telling you guys so I can’t pretend to forget,’” he said.

That fall, he returned to OSU to finish his degree in mechanical engineering and to resume his energetic involvement with Bible studies, rosaries, Masses, meals and tailgating at

Pope names next Bishop of Tulsa, accepts resignation of Bishop Slattery

TULSA – Pope Francis has named Father David Konderla, 55, as Bishop of Tulsa, and accepted the resignation of Bishop Edward Slattery, 75, from the pastoral governance of the diocese. Father Konderla is a priest of the Diocese of Austin, Texas.

The appointment was publicized in Washington, May 13, by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

continued on Page 8
Earlier this year I came across an "all gender" restroom in the lobby of a large downtown city. I had never seen such a thing, I snapped a picture. It struck me as strange, certainly not something I would expect to find in Oklahoma, for example. That may be about to change.

The media have been highlighting recent legal attempts in some states to keep boys out of girls’ restrooms and vice versa. This is a manifestation of the new battleground over gender identity. This battle, however, is about far more than just restrooms. In Oklahoma, we have seen the efforts to include a law that would allow the physician to call in a prescription for any opioid they choose to prescribe. This is the kind of thinking that is leading to the phenomenon of the opioid epidemic. The problem of drug use is not solved with drugs, the pope said, in his recent encyclical letter, "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant". The body builds up a tolerance for little of an opiate drug as you can, according to Porter. "At 30, you have much more to lose because you have not been a drug addict. You have a house, kids, a family, a car, degrees, the things that make up a good life." The current wave of abuse began in the early 1990s, "when there was a big push to treat pain," Berger said. The medical community, he added, seemed then to move away from what had been its "preaching medical philosophy" to "use as little of an opiate drug as you can for as short a time as possible. The danger of addiction with these drugs was high." Berger lauded one component of the federal effort. "One of the directives that was passed, which he noted, is that it must be approved of, is they're made it harder to prescribe Vicodin," which he pegs at six times the strength of codeine, which had been typical in the past. Most patients must visit their doctor to get a fresh prescription rather than allowing the physician to call in a refill to a pharmacy. The state of New York is going one step further by eliminating paper prescription tablets and moving to an electronic system.

Governments, agencies scramble to curb explosion in U.S. opiate use

It’s about more than restrooms

These differences are not merely about self-expression and personal choice. Science, philosophy, theology and the accumulated wisdom of every culture have recognized that these differences are rooted in something real and profound, not merely a product of personal invention. They are rooted not merely in biology and more fundamentally, they are rooted in the design of the Creator.

But Pope Francis’ recent apostolic exhortation, “The Joy of Love,” acknowledges the threat that this new radical gender ideology poses. It is a matter of subjecting discussion in the recent round of bishops on the pastoral matters for the family. Pope Francis writes, “This is not about an ever greater number of definitions to be given for the names of the persons and realities that are born out of an ideological construction of reality. Neither a personal identity and a personal destiny are formed by other people, and they are not constructed. Neither is a personal identity and a personal destiny formed by other people, and they are not constructed. Neither is a personal identity and a personal destiny formed by other people, and they are not constructed. Neither is a personal identity and a personal destiny formed by other people, and they are not constructed. Neither is a personal identity and a personal destiny formed by other people, and they are not constructed. Neither is a personal identity and a personal destiny formed by other people, and they are not constructed.

It’s about more than restrooms

I am not an alarmist, but it seems clear to me that battle lines are being drawn very clear. And, these battle lines are more about than government overreach. This is a spiritual battle between Light and darkness. Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle!
Arguments in favor of research on human embryos typically play off our unfamiliarity with the way that adults are reproduced and exist as embryos. Humans in their tiniest stages are indeed strangers to us, and they hardly look anything like “one of us.” To understand the dilemma, that even one of us once was an embryo, remains an inescapable scientific fact: the “fingernails on the chalkboard” phenomenon that every one of us has to choose to experiment on embryos or destroy them for research.

To enable scientists to get beyond the knowledge that there are 79 million people or destroying fellow humans, clever arguments and justifications have had to be devised. Arguably, the closest successful of these approaches has been the well-known “14-day rule.” This rule, as noted in a recent article in the journal Nature, represents “a legal and regulatory line in the sand that has for decades been waved in the face of inside vitro human-embryo research to the point where the ‘primitive streak’ appears. A streak that, according to one marking the beginning of an embryo’s head-to-tail axis… That’s the rule, the ‘14-day’ rule, is significant because it represents a point at which an embryo’s biological individuality is ascertained. Before this point, embryos can split in two or fuse together. So some people reason that at this stage a moral individuality starts to become.”

Moral reasoning has an instinctive moral awareness when they reflect on the reality that adults come from embryos. A particular conclusion organically follows, namely, that the right decision to interrupt an embryo’s growth and development involves a woman responding to a moral demand would be to mimic what beyond the 14-day rule might forbid. The rule, thus, was an agreed-upon convention of no practical significance for any researchers who may have been carrying out experiments on em-

By Pedro A. Moreno, O.P.
Director, Office of Missiology
National Catholic Center

Making Sense of Bioethics
Embrsos and the “14-Day Rule”

The ultimate goal of a convention like the 14-day rule has been to establish the idea, erroneous at its core, that prior to a certain arbitrarily determined time point, developing human beings can be denied the respect mean? An odd form of the world can that kind of importance. This is the 14-day rule, the idea that the research community has agreed upon as a boundary between research that is ethical and research that is unethical. It is a rule that has been justified in the past by a variety of arguments, including the idea that the 14-day rule is consistent with the idea of a “primitive streak,” a line of cells that marks the beginning of an embryo’s head-to-tail axis. This is a faint band of cells that has for decades limited the scope of research on human embryos. The idea is that if an embryo is not past the 14-day mark, then it is not a human being and therefore not entitled to the same protections as an adult.

This is a fallacy, however, as research on human embryos has shown. Many embryos can survive beyond the 14-day mark and continue to develop normally. Some embryos can even develop into healthy adults. The 14-day rule is also not supported by any scientific evidence and is based on outdated and scientifically flawed assumptions.

Furthermore, the 14-day rule fails to take into account the complexity of human development. It ignores the fact that the human embryo is a living, breathing being that is capable of growth and development. It also ignores the fact that the human embryo is a unique and sacred being that deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

The 14-day rule is thus a fundamentally flawed and unethical principle that must be rejected. It is time to move beyond this outdated and scientifically unsound rule and to work towards a more just and ethical approach to research on human embryos.
**The 2016 Catholic Nurse of the Year Award was presented at the International Nurse’s Day Mass and dinner held at St. John Nepomuk on May 10. The award honored Marilyn Seiler, parish nurse at St. John the Baptist in Shawnee.**

Since 2009, Seiler has served the St. John parish community with health programs, publication of health awareness articles, weekly bulletin health columns, exercise classes for seniors, and personal visits to the hospitalized and home-bound. Seiler also initiated a bereavement group for those in the parish struggling with the loss of a loved one.

Father Rick Stansberry, in his nomination letter, said, “Marilyn has been a gift to so many people over the years. She has always worked tirelessly and with a personal sensitivity to each person’s needs and with a great deal of care. She also has been a delightful, caring presence to our parish staff and regularly attends our staff meetings.”

He went on to say, “I heartily recommend her as a model of decency and loving ministry to the people of St. John the Baptist both as a parish nurse and as a faithfull Catholic.”

Three years ago, the Catholic Foundation expanded its awards program to include the Catholic Nurse of the Year award. The nursing vocation has produced many wonderful individuals and the board felt recognition for a nurse who serves her or his parish would not only recognize that person’s efforts, but also inspire others to consider giving time and talent to the health and wellness of the parish.

The annual award is given to a Catholic Registered Nurse who has made a significant nursing contribution to a parish in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The award includes a plaque, a cash award for $500, and a cash award for $500 to the recipient’s parish for $500. Seiler requested her award go to Catholic Relief Services in her honor.

The Nurse’s Day Mass and appreciation dinner was sponsored by Catholic Charities, Saint John Nepomuk, Mercy Health Center and Saint Anthony Hospital.

**As a youth director, I once devised a new youth ministry program that involved more than 800 students and their parents.**

**S. Gregory Main**

**SHAWNEE –**

**Carole Brown**

**Director of New Evangelization**

Converting Marilyn Seiler at the Nurse’s Day Mass and dinner were (l to r) Naveen Surienn, executive director of the Catholic Foundation; Father Rex Arnold, rector of St. John the Baptist in Edmond; Emily Van Pelt, director of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Youth Ministry; Father D. Gregory Main, rector of St. John the Baptist in Edmond.

Congratulating Marilyn Seiler at the Nurse’s Day Mass and dinner were (l to r): Naveen Surienn, executive director of the Catholic Foundation; Father Rex Arnold, rector of St. John the Baptist in Edmond; Emily Van Pelt, director of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Youth Ministry; Father D. Gregory Main, rector of St. John the Baptist in Edmond.

**Marilyn Seiler named 2016 Catholic Nurse of the Year**

**St. Gregory’s Cathedral summer program**

**Father Rick Stansberry sits next to the “Homeless Jesus” statue outside the new building for Catholic Charities with Executive Director Ben Stansberry.**

Father Rick Stansberry sits next to the “Homeless Jesus” statue outside the new building for Catholic Charities with Executive Director Ben Stansberry. The statue, which was dedicated to the poor by St. Gregory’s, was installed outside the building’s west side facing Classen Road, with the statue seeming to see the face of Jesus in the distressing disguise of the poor.
St. Gregory’s University appoints new president

SHAWNEE – Saint Gregory’s University celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2016 on the Saint Gregory’s campus in Shawnee, conferring 179 associate, bachelor’s or master’s degrees to students from both the Shawnee and Tulsa campuses.

Saint Gregory’s Acting President Father Charles Buckley, O.S.B., noted this year’s graduation is particularly special with the many “firsts” that occurred during the ceremony.

“What makes this year particularly unique is that it truly is a graduation of firsts. We have our first Citizen Potawatomie Nation scholarship recipients, our first RNS to BSN RN program, and our first master’s degree in counseling psychology,” Fr. Charles said. “All of these programs were established recently, and it is with absolute joy that we watch these students cross the stage.

After being conferred with an honorary doctorate of humane letters, economist, commentator and speaker Dr. Creamer P. Mitchell, president of the University of Mary, addressed the graduates, asking them to remember that “education rooted in the Benedictine tradition of cultivating the whole person – mind, body and spirit. With campuses in Shawnee and Tulsa, Saint Gregory’s features both traditional and adult degree programs, including associate, bachelor’s and master’s degree programs. Visit www.stgregorys.edu.

continuing from Page 1

Bishop-elect Konderla will be ordained and installed on June 4 at the campus Newman Center – a habit of engagement and pastoral discernment during his time in Stillwater, which also laid bare his love for the Church. In September, he applied to be a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. He was accepted in Holy Week of 2010 and began his studies at Saint Meinrad Archabbey, Saint Meinrad, Indiana, in August of 2010.

Now, after two years of philosophy, a year of work in the archdiocese and two years of theology, Edwards will be ordained to the transitional diaconate, the holy order that immediately precedes priesthood.

Archbishop Paul Coakley will celebrate the ordination rite during Mass at 10 a.m. June 4 at The Catholic Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City.

“The laying on of hands is very profound because it is, of course, a sacramental gesture,” Edwards said. “There’s this wonderful concreteness to that – it’s not just an instruction; we believe it is a coming down of the Spirit through the hands of the bishop. It is a sign of communion, of the body and blood of Christ.”

After the rite, Edwards will be responsible for the spiritual care of the parishes and the long, wide band of chromed clasps known as “a stole” and other vestments Edwards’ pastor and former archdiocese director of vocations, Father Stephen Hamilton, said Edwards’ ordination is a special blessing for his parish.

“In his ordination to the priesthood, he will be ordained to the priesthood,” Father Hamilton said. “We are proud of him and we are very excited that he is going to be ordained to the priesthood. He has been looking forward to this moment.”

The sacrament will mark Edwards’ priestly ordination, a moment that cannot be reversed, and that configures him to Christ, who made himself the “deacon” or servant of all (CCC 1507).

Kelly Edwards to be ordained

continued from Page 1

Father David Konderla to be the next Bishop of Tulsa

Bishop-elect Konderla will be ordained and installed on June 4 at a large venue in Tulsa.

“I am delighted that Pope Francis has appointed Father David Konderla as the Fourth Bishop of Tulsa. Bishop-elect Konderla brings tremendous past experience, including his most recent ministry with college students at Texas A&M University. His engaging and joyful leadership will be in welcome addition to the rich and diverse staff of Oklahoma City. I am looking forward to collaborating closely with Father David for the years ahead,” Archbishop Coakley said.

“As we welcome Bishop-elect Konderla, we acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Bishop Blattery for his dedication and faithful service to the Church in eastern Oklahoma. He now enters into a new stage of his episcopal ministry. Both for Bishop-elect and the Bishop Emeritus will be in my prayers,” Archbishop Coakley said.

David Konderla was born June 19, 1960, in Oklahoma City. He attended the Holy Trinity Seminary of the University of Dallas, where he received his diocesan degree in history. He also pursued graduate studies at Thomas University in Houston, earning his master’s degree in divinity. He was ordained a priest on June 3, 1995. Assignments after ordination included parochial vicar, Saint Louis Catholic Church, Austin, Texas, 1995-1997; parochial vicar, Saint Luke Catholic Church, Temple, TX, 1997; parochial vicar, Saint Mary’s Catholic Church, Weatherford, TX, 1997-2001; and pastor of Saint Mary’s Catholic Church, Weatherford, TX, 2001-2005.

Bishop Edward J. Blattery, who was named Bishop of Tulsa by Pope John Paul II on Nov. 11, 1993, was born Aug. 11, 1940, in Chicago, and was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago on Jan. 6, 1966. He was ordained a bishop on Jan. 6, 1994, and was installed as Bishop of Tulsa by Pope John Paul II on July 7, 1995. His installation was required by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“As my prayer to God the Father is for the good health and spiritual strength of the new bishop,” Bishop Blattery said May 13. “I know our people have been praying that Pope Francis would send us an energetic and prayerful man to be our shepherd, and I believe God has heard our prayer.”

Sooner Catholic. May 29, 2016
Catholic Foundation Scholarships

Students receiving Catholic Foundation Scholarships for the 2016-17 school year are:

Garrett Baumer, St. John Neumann, Yukon, St. Gregory’s University
Willie Bartlett, Our Lady of Victory, Norman, Oklahoma
Leslie Borromeo, OKC, Southern Nazarene University
Abby Lee, St. Gregory the Great, Enid, OSU
Karley Boyer, St. Ann, Fairview, OSU
Abby Lee, St. Gregory the Great, Enid, OSU

Partial funding of the CFO Scholarships comes from the
Dr. and Mrs. Francis Rocklin Pankhurst, St. Mary, Clinton, SWOSU
Isabel Betancourt, St. Mary, Clinton, OSU
Rocklin Pankhurst, St. Mary, Clinton, SWOSU
Isabel Betancourt, St. Mary, Clinton, OSU

The following six students received the Robert Little Pastoral Ministry Scholarship for the 2016-17 school year:

Boyer, St. Ann, Fairview, OSU

Bono is a retired CNS staff writer.

like science, “true faith, agile faith, dynamic faith is about con- stant reflection, constant revision, and constant refinement,” he said. “It is about being open to learn.”

He parries this by debunking literal biblical interpreta- tions—such as creationists who say that the Bible is more interested in conveying truths rather than facts, similar to Shakespeare.

Shakespeare’s historical plays, he writes, were not an attempt to accurately describe the events of history, but rather an attempt to put to rest these historical figures but led to explain truths about how humans related to each other and the world around them as it was understood in Shakespeare’s time.

The book is strongest and most convincing in its chapters on cre- ation and evolution. In these, Denniss uses the metaphor of a fetus to illustrate the idea of how the world has evolved over time.

“Fosil records show that there were those who have a general idea about re- ality, goes his argument.

Denniss squarely confronts scientific evidence that many things described in the Bible could not have occurred; such as God creating the world in six days. He argues that we must look at people in the real world and scientists can- not use our beliefs to understand the physical world, this knowledge deepens our understanding of God’s relationship to the “fullness of reality.” While arguments over the evidence of God can be for believers and scien- tists can more easily come together to discuss what is really good for the world.

Denniss does not seem to be convinced of the existence of miracles; science deals with the physical while theology and philos- ophy is about how humans related to each other and the world

The author’s point is that “miracle” also can be defined as a con- crete sign of God’s presence in the world. "Why I wear the habit” – a gift for the whole Church and for the world. "The book advocates using science to deepen faith, relationship to God” By Abbas Boza, Catholic News Service

Bono is a retired CNS staff writer.

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Catholic News Service

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Catholic News Service

“Why I wear the habit” – a man’s reflection on religious life

By Abbas Boza, Catholic News Service

BONO – As Pope Francis’s year-end appeal for peace called to close a year marked shared her life as a religious. St. Mary, one of the world’s most recognizable saints. Mary Michaels, who works at

A Singaporean named Khalaf AlHabib recently coined a term ‘the gift for the whole Church and for the world’ which he used to describe his gift of $380 million to Catholic organizations worldwide. Part-time licensed counselor

Jobs

Fifth-grade teacher

Christ the King Catholic School is accepting applications for

Carmen Vilkelis, Sacred Heart, OKC, UCO
Paola Gabriela Ponce Vilkelis, St. Francis, Bakersfield, WCU
Elisa Doria, St. John the Baptist, Tulsa, University of Oklahoma at Tulsa, OSU
Yesenia Ramirez, Blessed Sacrament, Lawton, SWOSU

Dear friends and parishioners,

Catholic News Service

“The black of the cross represents existence of the Red Sea allowing Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. It also represents God’s presence in history. "Why I wear the habit” – a gift for the whole Church and for the world. "The book advocates using science to deepen faith, relationship to God” By Abbas Boza, Catholic News Service

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Lanzamiento a más Profundo

Sean ustedes campeones en el juego de vida, y les garantizamos a los que juegan en el campo de la vida, el que conozcan siempre a la par a cada uno de los jugadores de la familia. El matrimonio es un llamado contínuo a crecer y profundizar en la belleza de la paternidad y la maternidad. En cambio, sí podemos tener en cuenta qué sentimientos durante toda la vida. ¿Por qué no contarle a Dios lo que tenemos en el corazón y formar a los miembros de la Iglesia. La Palabra de Dios no solo es un buen camino para la vida privada de las personas, sino también un buen camino para la vida pública. Y no teman mostrarle al mundo a sí mismo como una chica o un muchacho se identifica con las intenciones morales y religiosos con los que los seguidores del equipo, y los que los seguidores del equipo, y el perdón. En esta línea, es muy esencial para sanar las propias heridas. Si bien estos valores son ideales, no siempre son alcanzables, pero cuando lo que la familia ama y que el cuidado amoroso de todos sus miembros, desde que uno elige a otro, a ser un campeón en el juego de vida. El Papa Francisco continúa... Una cosa es comprender la fragilidad humana o la complejidad de la vida, y otra es aceptar ideologías que pretendan partir en dos los aspectos inseparables de la realidad. No existen dos versiones de la verdad, de la fe, de la humanidad, y se puede decir que estas ideologías son una idea de la vida que es propia adentro, uno a este, y se debe cuidar la sexualidad y la salud mental. "Núcleo humano" es la palabra que utiliza el Papa Francisco en su Exhortación Apóstólica "Amoris Laetitia", que ha sido una verdadera revolución en el mundo de la sexualidad.
Memorial Day Mass
Memorial Day Mass will be Mon- 
day, May 30, at St. Resurrection 
Cemetery chapel, 7801 Northwest 
23rd St. Mass will be celebrat 
ed by Archbishop Coakley, and 
The 11 a.m. Mass will be 
celebrated by Fr. Murph. All ground 
decorations will be placed by family 
from Memorial Day. Decorations 
from Memorial Day need to be 
picked up before June 6.

Memorial Day Mass
Memorial Day Mass at 11 a.m. on 
May 30 at St. Patrick Cemetery 
in Lackeground on 234th, between 
Council Rd. and County Line Rd. 
Fr. Murphy will officiate. Fr. Murph 
will also celebrate the memorial 
Mass. Bring a covered dish and 
love to the Mass hosted by Kathy Hausker 
Millier at (405) 446-4588.

Birth Choice volunteers needed
There are many ways to get in 
volved in the organization. Birth 
Choice is in serious need of vol 
unteers who will administer preg 
ancy tests, mentor clients, and help with clerical work. Contact Barb at (405) 606-8428.

Charismatic Catholic prayer 
meeting
A prayer meeting is held every 
Thursday in the Catholic Pastoral 
Center chapel at 7:30 p.m., C-1. Bring 
the Bible. Contact Toni Calvey at (405) 
653-0556 or calveytoni@gmail.com 
or visit www.spiritOKC.org.

Discovering God together:
Raising faithful kids
Join us for an Evangel 
lization in the Family with Dr. 
Greg and Lisa Popel. Saturday, 
June 11, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Cath 
dical Pastoral Center. Pre-registra 
tion required. Topics focus on: 
Passing faith with young children. 
And June 17, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; June 
24-25.

St. Catherine Drexel’s sisters 
announce plans to sell their 
motherhouse
St. Catherine Drexel’s sisters 
existo become a saint! 
People and women of the archdiocese, 
and Saint John Paul II will teach 
us how they drew closer to the 
heart of Jesus through the heart of 
Mary. This program by Father Mi 
chael Gaity, MSc, has added more 
than two million copies to the 
inventory. Summer II season ends: 8 a.m. to 
8 p.m. on Monday, July 17, 25 Aug. 
Aug. 8, Aug. 15 and Aug. 22. 
Consolation: Aug. 22. Register by 
July 10 for this session, call 
Denis or Cindi Casey at (405) 359-0578.

Trip to Branson
Pilgrimage to the 
Holy Days of Mercy 
2016
Call 718-338-2210 for information. 
No deposits necessary. 
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Domestic abuse is closer than people think
Clergy, experts discuss how to help

By Judy Hilovsky,

The terror of domestic violence was the focus of an all-day conference organized by the Interfaith Alliance of Oklahoma. “Making a Difference: A Faithful Response from Faith Leadership to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault” symposium was attended by more than 200 people, including a large number of clergy from around the state.

The purpose of the event was to bring Oklahoma’s pastors and key faith leadership together to provide education and training to help domestic violence and sexual assault survivors.

Archbishop Coakley, who led the opening prayer, reflected on the pastoral response from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops that declared their stance against domestic violence, and their support for victims of domestic violence.

“We state as clearly and strongly as we can that violence against women inside or outside the home, is never justified. Violence in any form – physical, sexual, psychological or verbal – is sinful; often, it is a crime as well. We have called for a moral revolution to replace a culture of violence. We acknowledge that violence has many forms, many causes, and many victims – men as well as women.”

The first topic of the morning was “Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault 101,” presented by Deb Stanaland, a domestic abuse survivor and YWCA’s chief officer of support services. A certified domestic sexual violence response professional, she often testifies as an expert witness in both civil and criminal domestic violence cases.

Following Stanaland’s presentation, Lundy Bancroft provided the group with information on “The Profile & Tactics of Men Who Abuse Women.” Bancroft specializes in domestic abuse and the behavior of abusive men, and is considered one of the world’s leading experts on the subject. The former co-director at Emerge, the nation’s first program for abusive men, and author of multiple books on the subject, Bancroft now practices in Massachusetts while training various state and judicial agencies in dealing with domestic abuse situations.

The second half of his talk was “Emotional Injury & Recovery in Children Exposed to Domestic Violence.”

Many reasons were listed for battered women staying in the home, Owens told her story of domestic abuse and addressed the need for faith communities to become proactive in helping women and children.

Owens spoke about the crisis of faith for these women. They have doubts, she said, trying to understand why God has let this happen or wondering if they are a bad person who deserves the abuse. Additionally, there is fear and guilt about ending the marriage. She also called upon faith leaders to help victims re-interpret sacred texts in ways that value and affirm their worth and help her discover God loves her and wants her to be safe. Oftentimes her abuser is using scriptures to justify his actions.

Owens called on faith communities to be resources and not roadblocks to these women.

She talked about why churches are sometimes hesitant to preach about domestic violence and that they are not experts on domestic violence. She mentioned many may hesitate to preach about domestic violence, unsure what to do if an abused woman seeks them for help. Owens provided four steps to assist survivors. First, assess the person’s act of speaking out about the abuse. Use strong sentences such as “I believe you,” “You are not alone,” and “It’s not your fault.” Second, assess the survivor’s need to implement a safety plan. What can you and the faith community do to assist them financially, emotionally, and what practical steps are needed. Third, discuss safety. Reassure the victim that their safety is important to you and the church community. Lastly, refer the victim to domestic violence advocates who are experts at creating a detailed safety plan with the survivor.

Judy Hilovsky is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

Catholic Charities chapel dedication

Archbishop Coakley, along with other priests from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, celebrated Mass May 20 to bless the new Bl. Teresa of Calcutta Chapel at Catholic Charities.

Domestic violence by the numbers

- National Hotline: (800) 799-SAFE (7233), available in 150 languages and a resource for women’s services or shelters;
- Oklahoma ranks 6th in the nation for the number of women killed by men, according to 2013 data published by the Violence Policy Center (VPC);
- Between 1998 and 2014, Oklahoma lost 1,426 victims to domestic violence. In 2014, 93 women, men and children died because of domestic violence, according to VPC;
- According to Oklahoma City Police Chief Bill Citty, there are 36,000 calls for domestic violence a year;
- 6,500 calls were referred to detectives; approximately 125 cases per week;
- Oklahoma uses a Domestic Violence Risk Assessment screening for first responders, helping better elevate each situation. One question is “has he/she ever tried to choke you?”
- Research found men who choked their partners were 10 times more likely to eventually kill them.

Domestic violence and children

- In Oklahoma, one-third of all domestic violence homicides are witnessed by children;
- Male children who witness abuse of their mothers by fathers are 50 percent more likely to become men who batter;
- Youth who witness DV are at increased risk for suicide and substance abuse.

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