Dear Oklahoma Senators, we ask you to support the override of Gov. Brad Henry’s veto of HB 1326.

HB 1326 prohibits the killing of embryonic human beings for research. The bill protects human embryos, living members of our species, homo sapiens, from being destroyed for the purpose of harvesting their stem cells.

The crassest kind of commercialism has led some to conclude that killing human embryos is good for business in Oklahoma. (Auschwitz, no doubt, still sees tourist dollars each year — but from people whose mindset is “Never again,” not from people encouraging more of the same.)

Adult stem cells have benefited patients suffering from more than 70 different disorders. By contrast, embryonic stem cells have never benefited a single human patient.

All of the advances with stem cells have come from sources other than human embryos: adult cells,
The Good News

A Happy Mother’s Day!

To every mother in our Archdiocese, I send very, very special greetings. I pray that Mother’s Day will be for each of you a special day filled with God’s grace and blessings. On my part, I will begin a special Novena of Masses for all mothers on Saturday, May 2, culminating on Mother’s Day. During that nine-day period, I will be celebrating Masses at 10 different churches located all over our Archdiocese. Therefore, mothers, you are being remembered and prayed for daily. A blessed and happy Mother’s Day!

Some years ago, I was introduced to the fine work being done by Birth Choice. I recognized that Birth Choice was doing outstanding ministry, reaching out to help the poorest and most abandoned mothers among us. Those were generally young, single, unemployed pregnant women. Some were only teenage girls. Many were abandoned. All were in need.

The Birth Choice and volunteers were reaching out with true compassion but they too needed help. Therefore, I authorized a special collection to be taken up at all Masses in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City on Mother’s Day. Each year I receive a report and a grateful acknowledgment from Birth Choice. It is so wonderful that through our parishes, every Catholic person in the Archdiocese can assist in this beautiful, effective, pro-life effort. The problem, however, is that the amount we collect, while appreciated, is never adequate. In fact, last year the amount collected decreased!

It is my firm conviction that the Birth Choice ministry is very helpful, very effective. It is an expression of the love we have for God and for neighbor. It is a sign of our willingness to collaborate and to reach out to the truly needy. Therefore, with a hope to increase the support for this Birth Choice ministry, I recently wrote to our priests. I now share the main thrust of that letter, hoping it will encourage you to help.

“I am writing to you today about an important ministry and soliciting your assistance and support. For the last 36 years, Birth Choice has been a most effective pro-life service here in Oklahoma. Founded and staffed by dedicated lay persons, it is a model of people putting their faith into practice. Birth Choice has saved many babies from abortion. Birth Choice has guided, assisted and inspired suffering and confused girls and young women from desperation to hope. Birth Choice has proclaimed the Gospel of Life throughout our communities. Birth Choice people don’t just speak about charity, love and compassion, they practice it every day.

During the past year, Birth Choice has struggled to provide necessary services to the many women who seek their assistance. They have hardly been able to continue operating Rose Home, which houses and serves needy girls and young women and their babies and children. The financial help that Birth Choice needs is not for luxuries but for life!

Each year, I direct all pastors to have a second collection at every Mass on Mother’s Day to assist Birth Choice. Last year the total proceeds from all parishes in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City was $46,459.90, which was $6,000 less than the previous year. Therefore, this year I am asking you to take up the Mother’s Day special collection once again. However, I urge you to solicit the support and generosity of your people. I know, as you and your parishioners know, the economic downturn is affecting everyone, but especially those like the clients of Birth Choice who are the most vulnerable. Please, therefore, ask your people to be generous to the May 10 Mother’s Day collection.”

And again, I am asking every Catholic person of this Archdiocese, please be generous. Please make a financial contribution to next Sunday’s Mother’s Day collection at your parish. Thank you and God bless you.

I pray that Mother’s Day will be for each of you a special day filled with God’s grace and blessings.

Override

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pluripotent stem cells through “cell reprogramming,” in which ordinary human skin cells are transformed into “induced pluripotent stem cells.” This breakthrough, which does not require destroying human embryos, was deemed so important that the journal Science named it the scientific breakthrough of the year for 2008.

Japan’s Shinya Yamanaka is the scientist who made the original breakthrough; it was his ethical concern about avoiding lethal experiments with human embryos that led to his discovery. “When I saw the embryo, I suddenly realized there was such a small difference between it and my daughters … I thought, ‘We can’t keep destroying embryos for our research. There must be another way’.”

Exploit embryonic human beings by mining them for parts, and we diminish ourselves as we destroy them. Please override the veto of HB 1326 to have it become law.

Thank you.
God, Country, Notre Dame?

By Anthony J. Lauinger
Vice President
National Right to Life

Carved in the stone of Notre Dame’s Basilica of the Sacred Heart is an inscription: “God, Country, Notre Dame.” Simple, edifying, profound, those words, and what they represent, have inspired Notre Dame students for almost two centuries. Generations of alumni have lived by these words. More than a few have died for them.

The order is not random; it’s no accident that “God” is first. God has always come first at Notre Dame. At least, until March 20, 2009, that was the day Notre Dame suffered an institutional identity crisis, the day Notre Dame stopped giving precedence to the eternal, the day the Fighting Irish quit fighting for what is right.

March 20, 2009, was the day the Creator, the Author of Life, was replaced as Notre Dame’s top priority by our nation’s leading destroyer of life: President Barack Obama, it was announced that day, will speak at commencement, and, to add insult to injury, be granted an honorary Doctor of Laws degree by the University of Notre Dame.

There is special irony that it is a Doctor of Laws degree with which President Obama is to be honored, for it is in the precise area of law that he has most directly repudiated the bedrock values of Notre Dame. As Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Houston explained, “Particularly troubling is the Honorary Law Degree, since it recognizes that the person is a ‘Teacher,’ in this case, of the Law.” Is it for the pro-abortion laws that he has championed, or the pro-life laws that he has opposed, that Notre Dame is honoring Mr. Obama?

The media downplay is what so offends pro-life Americans. It’s not simply President Obama’s “views” about abortion; it’s that Barack Obama has declared war on the unborn child, a scorched-earth, take-no-prisoners war in which he is aggressively, zealously, relentlessly attempting to wipe out three and a half decades of hard-fought, pro-life gains, while his policies simultaneously annihilate countless human beings at home and abroad.

Not only abortion on demand, but also embryo-destructive, stem cell research. As Bishop John D’Arcy of South Bend has said of Obama, “While claiming to separate politics from science, he has in fact separated science from ethics and has brought the American government, for the first time in history, into supporting direct destruction of innocent human life.”

The president’s vacuous, self-serving claim about “science” is absurd on its face. Does the name Josef Mengele ring a bell? Tuskegee? Steve Chapman of the Chicago Tribune observes, “Science can tell us how to build a nuclear weapon. But science can’t tell us whether we should use it.”

While John Paul II preached the Gospel of Life, Barack Obama advances the Culture of Death. While the bishops direct Catholic institutions not to honor pro-abortion politicians, Notre Dame bestows its highest honors on the abortion industry’s number one champion who, in 75 days, has done more grievous harm to the cause of life than Bill Clinton did in eight years. And Mr. Obama is consistent, the same at home as at the office. In Johnstown, Pa., last year he famously said: “I’ve got two daughters ... if they make a mistake, I don’t want them punished with a baby.”

The invitation to Mr. Obama makes a mockery of Notre Dame’s Catholic character.

Letter: Mary Ann Glendon Refuses Notre Dame Honor

April 27, 2009
The Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.
President
University of Notre Dame

Dear Father Jenkins,

When you informed me in December 2008 that I had been selected to receive Notre Dame’s Laetare Medal, I was profoundly moved. I treasure the memory of receiving an honorary degree from Notre Dame in 1996, and I have always felt honored that the commencement speech I gave that year was included in the anthology of Notre Dame’s most memorable commencement speeches. So I immediately began working on an acceptance speech that I hoped would be worthy of the occasion, of the honor of the medal, and of your students and faculty.

Last month, when you called to tell me that the commencement speech was to be given by President Obama, I mentioned to you that I would have to rewrite my speech. Over the ensuing weeks, the task that once seemed so delightful has been complicated by a number of factors.

I am writing to ask that the university’s decision to award the Laetare Medal to another recipient not go forward. The decision that the university made to award the Laetare Medal to another recipient is disappointing. The decision was made in the light of the university’s own principles and I strongly believe that the Laetare Medal is the university’s most important award.

I hope that you will reconsider the decision to award the Laetare Medal to another recipient. I believe that the Laetare Medal is an important symbol of the university’s commitment to excellence and I hope that the university will continue to award the Laetare Medal to individuals who embody the university’s values.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Glendon

Glendon Rejects Invitation To Irish Graduation

South Bend, Ind., April 27 (CNA). — Less than a month before Notre Dame’s commencement, the former Vatican ambassador, Mary Ann Glendon, has written President Jenkins to refuse the university’s Laetare Medal, rebuffing his claim that her acceptance speech would somehow “balance the event.”

Glendon, a pro-life feminist and Harvard professor, today released an open letter to Notre Dame President John I. Jenkins, in which she told Jenkins that she could not speak alongside President Obama at the May 17 commencement exercises.

The former Vatican ambassador took exception to Father Jenkins’ “talking point,” that awarding the Laetare Medal to her would “balance the event.”

President Jenkins responded to the criticism by saying Notre Dame is “disappointed” with Glendon’s decision and that the university intends “to award the Laetare Medal to another recipient.”

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Lenin’s Idea of Faith and Politics Not the American Way

By Francis Cardinal George
Archbishop of Chicago

During the meeting of the Conference of Bishops in Chicago last month, a TV reporter asked me if I believed that the religious faith of a politician should be private and have no influence on the judgments that he or she makes as a public figure. I answered that the very nature of religious faith lies in its being a total response to God, influencing every dimension of a believer’s life. The reporter mentioned President John F. Kennedy, who once indicated that he embraced a total separation of faith and politics during his campaign for the presidency. I wasn’t quick enough in the press conference to point out that President Kennedy had also added that, should a conflict arise between his religious faith and his public responsibilities, he would resign from public office. That statement at least saved JFK’s personal integrity, although it didn’t solve the problem.

A Chicago journalist who was raised Catholic later wrote about my comment on faith and politics with some alarm, but I don’t understand why any American would want to live in a country where religious faith must remain entirely private and where public life and the decisions which shape it must be free of any religious influence. We have known such a state in our lifetime. It was called the Soviet Union. Lenin, the founder of the governmental organization of the Soviet Union, put freedom of religion into the Soviet Constitution. What it meant in practice, however, was that anyone could believe what he or she wanted, so long as they kept quiet about it and it never in any way influenced public life, which was entirely secular to the point of being atheistic.

One could even go to church in the Soviet Union, since the government saw to it that a few churches remained open. But religion was entirely confined to one’s own mind and heart and to a church building. Faith was private and was systematically excluded from influencing public life. It’s odd to hear Lenin’s solution in the minds and mouths of American journalists.

The first amendment to the U.S. Constitution stops the government from establishing an official religion or state church, such as they have in England, Scotland, Norway and Denmark. Evidently those countries manage to be free without the institutional separation of church and state. There are, however, no state churches in Catholic countries, and I don’t know any Catholics in the United States who hanker after one here. The first amendment to the U.S. Constitution does protect the free exercise of religion, however, and says nothing about excluding religious faith, including Catholicism, from public life. To speak of every influence of religion in public matters as a “church-state” problem is to misuse the English language. When a person of religious faith comes to decisions about public policy in the light of that faith, the church is not institutionally involved with the state nor vice versa. The faith of citizens is, however, involved in their public life, as it should be. If a religious person abstracts from her personal convictions when it comes to politics, such a person violates her own conscience and is not to be trusted.

Our American solution presupposes, of course, that the state does not control all of public life. We are supposed to have limited government. That principle has also been weakened in recent decades as more and more dimensions of human experience come under government control, especially through the courts and regulatory agencies at every level of government. The Supreme Court has taken on a role so disproportionate in our government and now has such an influence over daily life that the current argument over nominations to the Court has the importance of a life or death decision. As, in fact, it is. “There ought to be a law,” the old saying has it. Those who demand legal solutions to every human problem, however, have no right to complain that our lives are ruled by judges and lawyers.

It strikes me that our approach to pluralism in race and culture furnishes the paradigm for approaching religion in public life. If someone suggested that an African-American had to keep his race confined to his house and wear a white face in public, the suggestion would be immediately condemned as racist and bigoted. A healthy public life welcomes diversity in public and then figures out ways to share differences among peoples so as to enrich everyone. The question of religion is more complicated, of course, because religion is a way of life with moral demands, and moral demands overlap with law and politics. But the solution is not to put religion in a private closet, because that imperils the freedom of everyone. American “separation” of church and state is supposed to encourage the practice of religion as part of the common good, respecting every difference and oppressing none.

Sometimes I think that the fear of religion going public is really a fear that someone or some event will tell us to change, to convert. A call to change one’s ways is an insult to those wed to the status quo. A religious challenge can be more easily ignored by simply labeling it unconstitutional. Religious people and institutions, however, cannot quietly acquiesce in their own marginalization from public life. The nature of faith forbids that solution.

(Reprinted with permission. The Catholic New World, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Chicago. This article first appeared in 2005.)

Dear Fellow Oklahoma Catholics

We are asking for your support.

As you know, each year the Sooner Catholic asks you to consider contributing $20 to help support our archdiocesan newspaper. And each year you respond in a generous way. Many of you actually send more than the $20 to help those Oklahoma Catholics who can’t afford to contribute, but still need and want the Sooner Catholic. This is a true ministry of sharing and is greatly appreciated.

If you cannot afford the $20 contribution, you will still receive the paper. Archbishop Beltran and the Sooner Catholic staff want every Catholic in the archdiocese to receive the paper. So please, if you know of someone who is not receiving the Sooner Catholic and would like to have it, let us know. Sharing the Good News is the ministry of this archdiocesan office.

The Sooner Catholic publishes 24 issues per year, sent to approximately 35,000 addresses. The archdiocesan paper can also be read online at www.catharchdioceseokc.org. Just click on the Sooner Catholic link to access the paper.

Thank you for the generous support you have provided the Sooner Catholic in the past. We look forward to sharing the Good News with you in the coming years and we would like to thank you especially for your prayers.

Sincerely
Ray Dyer
Editor

To change any information on our mailing list, fill out this card and return.

Address change Name change Remove Add

For any changes, we need both the old and new information.

Old Information

Name
Address
City, Zip

New Information

Name
Address
City, Zip

Sooner Catholic, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, OK 73123
Red Plains Monastery Merges with Mount St. Scholastica

“We have given up everything and followed you. What will there be for us?” This question of Peter is heard in the Gospel at the first vespers on the Feast of St. Benedict. It’s a familiar question for Benedict’s followers, but a special question this year for 10 Sisters from Oklahoma hearing it in the chapel of Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kan.

It was a question they had asked themselves many times in their lives. For the oldest of them, professed more than 60 years ago, it had been in a monastery in Guthrie, which was in the process of moving to Tulsa when they were young. That community had already moved once, leaving Creston, Iowa, in 1892. Coincidentally, it was the Atchison Sisters who had taken responsibility for the Iowa school when they left and, in fact, their first prioress had eventually transferred to Atchison and died there many decades ago.

In the 1960s, some of the Tulsa Sisters asked the question again, and found themselves beginning a new venture in the Oklahoma City area. Their answer became known as Red Plains Monastery in Piedmont, a valued presence for its monastic prayer and the spiritual direction and retreats offered there.

Some new members came, and life was good, but the realities of the past few years were making the question important once again. The Sisters were well aware of the decreasing size of religious communities, the economic and personal demands of their aging population, and the need to actively plan for the future. They decided to start seeking a community with whom they could integrate. Sister Joanne Yankauskis said, “We especially considered the prayer, style and spirituality, ministry, social justice work, interest in women’s issues and the availability of an infirmary.”

They began a discernment process with the Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica, with whom they felt compatible in spirit and in mission. According to Sister Janice Futrell, their prioress, “We believe we have a good fit. Like us, Atchison has a long reputation for its commitment to spirituality and education, with a special focus on the needs of women.”

After visiting the Mount, Sister Miriam Schnoebel re-lected: “There was such a joy in the house. I sensed it during my visit. That spirit of joy was attractive to me.” Some of the Sisters had attended college in Atchison and there were other common bonds stretching back many years.

Sister Anne Shepard, prioress at the Mount, felt it too. “When the monastic council and I first visited the Sisters at Red Plains Monastery, we were in awe of the holy place. The women we met were striving to be very holy and authentic.” She also felt encouraged by her conversation with Archbishop Naumann. “He really understood,” she recalls, “and he was pleased to hear from me that the decision was a pastoral one, not a ‘business’ one.”

The Oklahoma Sisters forged ahead with courage. Hard as it was, they were making decisions and accepting them, choosing to be active shapers of the future rather than its victims. Sister Anne remembers that Archbishop Beltran of Oklahoma City was also a strong supporter, praising the Sisters for “doing this right, in prayerful deliberation, and maintaining a sense of hope and service to the Church.”

A postulant from Red Plains, Christine Dormann moved to Atchison to continue her formation. Three others, Sisters Roberta Schachle, Gertrude Nagel and Elena Hernandez also arrived in recent months. There was lots of travel back and forth to consolidate resources, and two Mount Sisters, Mary Beth Niehaus and Rita Claire Judge, went to Piedmont to assist with ministries there.

All these steps had led to that moment on March 20, 2009, when the assembled Sisters of both communities heard Peter’s question. Then they heard a reflection on it by Sister Janice, at the end of which she stood humbly before Sister Anne and turned over the copy of the Rule of St. Benedict that was the symbol of her authority. The next two hours in the monastery dining room were spent listening to each Piedmont Sister tell the story of her community and its journey to this point.

March 21, the Feast of St. Benedict — a time when Benedictines the world over recall their 1,500-year history, its extraordinary founder, the joy and pain, the waxing and waning of a timeless call to holiness ... 10 Sisters, from among the thousands celebrating the feast, stood in the aisle between the wood choir stalls of one chapel, their hands outstretched to receive a blessing. From the stalls, the raised hands of a chapel full of Sisters confirmed their welcome. “As the Sisters join us,” said Sister Anne, “they do not change their monastic promise; they deepen it. Our promises are also deepened as we welcome these Sisters into our community. Together we move forward.”

The day ended with vespers and another chapter of the story. Before the liturgy, Sister Esther Fangman of the Mount, who is also the president of the Federation of St. Scholastica to which both monasteries belong, read a proclamation. She affirmed that, all necessary canonical steps having been taken, Red Plains Monastery would cease to exist and become one with Mount St. Scholastica. The assembly sang their “Te Deum,” and processed out of the chapel, led by the newest members.

Thus, Peter’s question had found an answer once again. The Piedmont Sisters could return to their ministry in Oklahoma, knowing more of what they would have. They would continue to have a thriving presence at the Red Plains spirituality center. They would have their continued life of prayer and community, their love for one another and the people of God. They would also have the bond with more than 150 other Sisters who were now their community. They would know that their elders were being well cared for and they faced a more secure future.

Sister Melissa Lets, the youngest of the community, is awed. “These amazing women have chosen to face their circumstances, determined to stay together and do what they needed to do.” She says that she never doubted that her own commitment was God’s call, in spite of all that has happened. “I was looking for a small community when I first entered! This is certainly different than what I expected, but it doesn’t intimidate me now as it would have then. I am just so glad that we are all together.”

So it is, whenever Peter asks that hard question, Jesus is quick to respond, “Everyone who has given up houses or lands or family for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life.”
Leadership Appreciated

A joyous thank you to Archbishop Beltran for his strong letter to Notre Dame in defense of the right to life.

What is wrong with the so-called Catholics in the United States and in the world?

Mrs. Cecil Parkhurst
Saints Peter and Paul, Hobart

Horses and Humans

Not long ago we read that some states are considering abolishing the death penalty because of the high cost of killing the convicted. There are many studies that show the cost of executions as compared to life without parole. For what we spend to put a person to death we could put three convicted killers in prison for the rest of their lives with no chance of parole.

I'm not so sure that all of our attorneys want to see the death penalty go away. Attorneys on both sides of this tragedy can earn tremendous amounts of money, taxpayer dollars, from this process, with appeal after appeal going on for years.

With life without parole, there are no endless appeals, no special hearings, therefore, we, the taxpayers, are saved millions and are no longer a part of the killing process.

Oklahoma, as well as some 35 other states, still hold fast to the “hang 'em high” mentality. Who cares that more than 120 innocent people have been released from death row around the country? Eight of these innocent people were here in Oklahoma! Studies show that as many as 25 actually innocent people have been executed! How can we as a Christian community continue to be a part of this premeditated killing process?

There is more argument being raised at the Oklahoma State Capitol about who can trim horses hooves and grind down their teeth than there is about getting rid of the death penalty in Oklahoma!

What have we come to? Get rid of the death penalty.

Jim and Ann Fowler
Saint Charles, Oklahoma City

Give Work a Chance

This letter is in response to the letters written by Ms. Kobzdej and Mr. Morris in the April 19 issue of the Sooner Catholic, regarding work being done by the Oklahoma Sponsoring Committee (OSC) to improve the lives of families in our area. Reflecting on their comments, I’m reminded of a quote by Dom Helder Camara, a Catholic archbishop in Brazil during the 1970s. It was a time of severe repression for his people, and he himself was the target of death squads. He said, “When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a Communist.”

Archbishop Beltran has called for those interested in reflecting more on the Church's role in works of charity and justice to read Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical Deus Caritas Est. It adds considerably to the Church's rich tradition on these subjects. The pope refers to the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, published in 2004, which is a comprehensive review of those teachings. Neither Deus Caritas Est nor the Compendium contain anything opposing what the OSC plans to do. There are strong cautions that all of our work to help others must be motivated by Jesus' command to love your neighbor as yourself. Pope Benedict also states that “the formation of just structures is not directly the duty of the Church, but belongs to the world of politics, the sphere of the autonomous use of reason. The Church has an indirect duty here, in that she is called to contribute to the purification of reason and to the reawakening of those moral forces without which just structures are neither established nor prove effective in the long run.” This is precisely what the OSC will do — it will work to reawaken the moral forces that protect our families and the dignity of life.

Some have assumed wrongly that the OSC already has some type of liberal, partisan agenda in mind. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, one of the things that attracted congregation leaders to the model which the OSC will use is the fact that it is based on a bottom-up method of first building community within each participating Church. That process identifies specific issues which place pressures on local families and impedes them from being reflections of Christ in our community.

The Archdiocese already has a rich tradition of non-partisan advocacy in the political arena on important issues. Catholic Charities, for example, has worked tirelessly on such things as protection of the unborn, abolishing the death penalty, promoting a living wage and compassionate immigration reform.

There is a place in the Church's mission for works of charity and justice, both of which must be motivated and inspired by our love of others. Yes, we do need saints — people who are willing to give food to the poor, and people who are also willing to ask why the poor have no food.

Deacon James Smith
Christ the King Church

Across Oklahoma

Dresses and Suits Needed

OKLAHOMA CITY — National Nursing Home week is May 10-17. Saint Ann’s Home has decided to have a Senior to Senior Prom. We are in need of party dresses and suits. We are asking if anyone would like to donate them to us. Call for more information at (405) 728-7888.

St. Charles Free Garden Class Rescheduled

OKLAHOMA CITY — “How to Build a Raised Bed Garden” is rescheduled for May 16 from 10 a.m. to noon. The class will be taught by Bruce Edwards, Urban Harvest Director at the Regional Food Bank. Meet at the Dorothy Day Center, 4909 State St., on the southeast corner of St. Charles Borromeo Church grounds. Child care available. Call 887-1487 to register or e-mail stcharlesgarden@cox.net.

Bridges to Contemplative Living

PIEDMONT — May 16 with T. Merton, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with Joanne Yankauskis, OSB. Book 8: Seeing That Paradise Begins Now. Place: Library at Red Plains Spirituality Center. Call (405) 373-0804 to register. Fee: $45, includes book ($10 deposit). Bring a sack lunch.

The Spirituality of Imperfection

PIEDMONT — Retreat, May 16 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. with Melissa Anna Letts, OSB. Learn how to live lovingly with who you are. Place: Lucy’s Guest House at Red Plains Spirituality Center. Call (405) 373-0804 to register. Fee: $40 ($10 deposit). Bring a sack lunch.

Parish Liaison Forum

OKLAHOMA CITY — May 21, Catholic Charities Parish Liaison Forum. This session is on Family Support Services at Our Lady’s Cathedral at 7 p.m. RSVP by May 15 at (405) 523-3009.
Oklahoma Priest, Veterans Team to Create Catholic Post

By Rex Hogan
For the Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Father Price Oswalt is a former U.S. Army Reservist. Last November he was visiting relatives in Colorado Springs, Colo.

“I saw the whole (Air Force) Academy in review. I thought, I wish I could join a veterans group. As a reservist, I didn’t fit into the other veterans organizations because I had not been in active duty or served overseas.”

So Father Oswalt started doing some research. He found just the ticket with the Catholic War Veterans organization.

“Basically, the criteria is you have to have served in the military or are serving in the military. If you no longer are serving, you have to have an honorable discharge and you have to be a practicing Roman Catholic,” said Father Oswalt, associate pastor at the Epiphany of the Lord Church.

To create a Catholic War Veterans post, 15 people are needed. Father Oswalt had already located “22 or 23 people” who were interested and came to the first meeting. Now the organization has grown to 30 and is known as Oklahoma CWV Post 902.

Lynn Jones, an Army and Air Force veteran, doesn’t belong to any other service-related organization. “This is the first one I’ve ever joined,” Jones said. “I never really never had a great interest in veterans organizations. When I found out about this one, I thought this is an opportunity to join an organization that’s not set up to run a bar for their membership, but to perform a service to their community and to one another,” she said.

Barbara Myer, a 28-year member of the Air Force National Guard, decided to join CWV after a friend telephoned her and told her about the group. She too had never joined a veterans organization before.

“It sounded like something I would be very interested in, being a Catholic,” she said.

Bob Steward, a retired Army lieutenant colonel, had participated in the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, but for him the CWV is more meaningful.

“None of the other organizations have the principal that the CWV have in respect to life and family and our faith in God and our country. An organization like this has the three main things in life that drives where I’ve tried to go for the past 67 years,” he said.

Father Oswalt said the CWV gives its members special needs that the other organizations can’t provide.

“This is about putting God first. It’s head and shoulders above the rest,” he said.

The CWV was started in 1935 in Long Island, N.Y., by Father Edward J. Higgins, a commissioned Army lieutenant chaplain.

Letter

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First, as a longtime consultant to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, I could not help but be dismayed by the news that Notre Dame also planned to award the president an honorary degree. This, as you must know, was in disregard of the U.S. Bishops’ express request of 2004 that Catholic institutions “should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles” and that such persons “should not be given awards, honors or platforms which would suggest support for their actions.” That request, which in no way seeks to control or interfere with an institution’s freedom to invite and engage in serious debate with whomever it wishes, seems to me so reasonable that I am at a loss to understand why a Catholic university should disrespect it.

Then I learned that “talking points” issued by Notre Dame in response to widespread criticism of its decision included two statements implying that my acceptance speech would somehow balance the event:

* “President Obama won’t be doing all the talking. Mary Ann Glendon, the former U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, will be speaking as the recipient of the Laetare Medal.”

* “We think having the president come to Notre Dame, see our graduates, meet our leaders, and hear a talk from Mary Ann Glendon is a good thing for the president and for the causes we care about.”

A commencement, however, is supposed to be a joyous day for the graduates and their families. It is not the right place, nor is a brief acceptance speech the right vehicle, for engagement with the very serious problems raised by Notre Dame’s decision — in disregard of the settled position of the U.S. bishops — to honor a prominent and uncompromising opponent of the Church’s position on issues involving fundamental principles of justice.

Finally, with recent news reports that other Catholic schools are similarly choosing to disregard the bishops’ guidelines, I am concerned that Notre Dame’s example could have an unfortunate ripple effect.

It is with great sadness, therefore, that I have concluded that I cannot accept the Laetare Medal or participate in the May 17 graduation ceremony.

In order to avoid the inevitable speculation about the reasons for my decision, I will release this letter to the press, but I do not plan to make any further comment on the matter at this time.

Yours Very Truly,
Mary Ann Glendon
St. Francis Helpers Spruce Up Women’s Development Center

By Becky Hardin
St. Francis of Assisi

OKLAHOMA CITY — About 30 parishioners from St. Francis of Assisi Church participated in helping to clean up in and around Our Lady of Guadalupe Women’s Development Center, prior to the grand opening on April 7.

The participants were taking part in ShareFest OKC 2009. This is the fourth year for the program and St. Francis has participated every year.

ShareFest is an annual event that unites metro area churches for a day of community service to show God's love in practical ways. This one-day emphasis on serving highlights what the faith community already does on a daily basis and allows the city to “see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven.”

ShareFest is an opportunity for churches to create a spirit of trust and understanding in their community that transcends social, economic and cultural barriers and to build bridges of spiritual influence.

A wonderful man, Scott Manley, organized this event the last four years, sadly, he died earlier this year. But his spirit lives on in this event that celebrates people of all denominations reaching out to others in their community, all in one day!

St. Francis has done many things as part of ShareFest — from picking up trash in the neighborhood, to cleaning yards of elderly or disabled parishioners, painting rooms at the Salvation Army shelter, and more, to this year’s project.

The Our Lady Women’s Center is a Catholic Charities effort. It will serve as a place where homeless and low-income women and children can come to get back on their feet, develop skills for living better lives, and be referred to other services they may need.

More than 30 volunteers took down and painted window grates, painted fence posts and fences, planted trees, cleaned out flower beds and added new flowers and mulch, leveled ground where water lines had been replaced, mowed and edged the lawns, and created a large community garden.

The weather was great for working outdoors and so much was accomplished, including several new friendships being forged! The age of participants varied from 1 year to 71. Even the youngest kids dug in the dirt, filled wheelbarrows, fetched supplies and shared in the wonder of God’s creation as they played with worms and helped plant vegetables.

Church Transformed

“You don’t have to be homeless to use the resources here,” said Woods.

In a welcoming statement, Annette Jacobi, president of the Catholic Charities Board, said the women’s development center is intended to “better the lives of women and children.” She praised Archbishop Beltran and the entire staff of Catholic Charities for “taking a leadership role” in addressing a great need in the Oklahoma City area.

Tim O’Connor, executive director of Catholic Charities, said while the church and Catholic Charities have driven the project, it has received much support from other faith partners as well as community-building organizations. He specifically mentioned United Way, the City Rescue Mission, Scott Allen from Grace Rescue Mission and Michael Jackson from TEEM Ministries.

O’Connor said thanks also goes to members of the clergy and religious who have given much support to the effort. O’Connor said those who deserve the most thanks are “the people who we will help here. They are the ones who are really helping us to understand our interdependence on one another and our total dependence on God.”
Mom always said, “When the time comes that I shouldn’t live alone, I want to go to Saint Ann’s.” With that decision, a deposit was placed to help build the new Catholic Independent Living Center and her name was on the list for future residents. Several years passed and eventually “the time” came, and surrounded by her family; oldest to youngest, boxes were lifted from the familiar and placed in the new. The hard part was leaving a home full of love and memories; the best part was no longer being alone. Our mother is now always safe and surrounded by friends, some old and many new. Birthdays, holidays and even ordinary days are celebrated with special events, parties, music, games and even dancing. There are always opportunities for everyone to feel needed by helping a neighbor, even if it is as small as a touch or a smile. Saint Ann’s is much more than a sunny apartment, a nice dining room or a beautiful chapel, it is a family.

Kay Brown, proud daughter of Margaret Lee

Two years after my wife died, I decided to move to an independent living center. I visited several centers and decided to move to Saint Ann’s. I have lived here for 5 1/2 years. That fact alone should tell you how much I enjoy living at Saint Ann’s. There are a number of activities to enjoy each week. One that I enjoy is going out to eat at a nice restaurant. I also enjoy the monthly party and dance. For those that don’t drive, there is a bus available to transport them to shop and doctor’s appointments. But the best thing about Saint Ann’s is the residents and staff. Since I no longer have a home of my own, Saint Ann’s is the place for me. I love it.

Jim Busey

Seven years have passed since I’ve become a resident at Saint Ann’s. I’ve enjoyed my time here — not only enjoyed it, but I’m loving it! When I entered Saint Ann’s, I was amazed at how lovely the facility appeared. I enjoy attending daily Mass, which enriches my personal relationship with God. I would recommend this home to anyone who is looking for a pleasant, comfortable environment full of choices. I thank God for giving me the opportunity to spend my days here. I am at peace.

Helen Pickett

Our names are Oscar and Jean Hinson. We have been married 62 years. Early in the year of 2007, Oscar was admitted to the VA Medical Center in Norman. It was a wonderful facility, but we spent two years of being without each other. The first of March, we got back together in another wonderful facility called Saint Ann Assisted Living.

Our apartment here is wonderful and all the staff is so loving and helpful. We have wonderful food and amenities. Best of all, there is a beautiful chapel in the building. Oscar and I are able to attend Mass together like we did with our six beautiful children at St. Philip Neri Catholic Church years ago. Thank you for this wonderful care that relieves our minds and that of our children.

Oscar and Jean Hinson

It is an absolute joy to live and enjoy Saint Ann Assisted Living Center! The apartments are perfect with space and windows. The food items (morning, noon and night) are perfect! It is a pleasure to spend time with the friends and families at Saint Ann’s.

Betty Burns

I am very happy here, love the companionship of loving people - and the staff makes me feel safe, secure and “cared for.” Doris Long
Saint Ann Retirement Center

“*My brothers, sister and I all feel mom is very lucky to be part of such a wonderful Catholic community.*”

Frances Smith Savely,
dughter of Mary Frances Smith

I have been here since July 1, 2005, and feel real safe here at Saint Ann’s. Having the opportunity to attend Mass every day is so special. The food has been very good along with the men and women who serve the meals. The housecleaners and those that wash our bed linens do a great job as well as the maintenance crew. We are blessed with a very sociable group of residents here at Saint Ann’s. I am pleased to be a resident at Saint Ann Retirement Center.

John D. Carl

My Dad has been at Saint Ann’s for three months and his health and outlook on life has improved 100 percent. Since the first day my husband and I walked into Saint Ann’s just to take a look around, we were impressed with the warmth and happiness we felt as we walked through the front doors. The following day my father and I had lunch with Richard Amend after touring the facility again and deciding on an apartment for Dad. I knew Saint Ann’s was going to be a fantastic place for him. I was most impressed not only with the quality of food and cleanliness but the friendliness and professionalism of the wait staff. All the residents were smiling and having a great time. All of the employees we encountered were very friendly and enthusiastic. I knew at that precise moment my dad would be very happy as part of this community and I would have peace of mind he would be safe and well cared for.

JoAnn Rogers, daughter of Joe Saenz

As an ambassador and resident of Saint Ann Retirement Center, it has been such a joy to watch the transition of our new residents from self-independence to assisted living. Some are determined not to accept this new way of life as shown in the following story.

Dusty Klaus was one of these new people. She was so homesick, she became ill and was bedridden for one week. After Dusty came out of her apartment and became acquainted with all Saint Ann had to offer, including the wonderful food, the care, and how we all accepted her, she now raises her arms and says loudly, “I’m staying here forever.” Her big smile is a full testament of her experience here at Saint Ann Retirement Center.

Belle Davis

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Belle Davis

I am a retired widow and I was tired of trying to maintain a 40-year-old home with a large yard. Then, Archbishop Beltran announced the building of Saint Ann Retirement Center. I knew it was the place for me. St. Joachim Chapel is a holy and beautiful place. Father Price Grimes has been our pastor from the beginning. He has daily Mass, Confession by appointment, Sacrament of the Sick each first Friday and Stations of the Cross during Lent. He makes hospital calls when possible. I am happy to have Saint Ann my home. My standard of living is excellent.

Mary Frances Smith

Come and Join Our Beautiful Family of Residents

Saint Ann Retirement and Assisted Living Center is owned and operated by The Catholic Archdiocese and is a non-profit organization.

Our mission statement is “To enhance the lives of our residents by providing a safe environment that strives to meet their spiritual, social and nutritional needs.”

We are blessed with a beautiful St. Joachim Chapel where Mass is held daily by Father Price Grimes.

We are located at 7501 W. Britton Road in Oklahoma City. We currently have a few apartments available in Independent Living as well as Assisted Living.

For further information, please contact Richard Amend, mission director at Saint Ann Retirement Center, (405) 721-0747.

I looked at several places and decided that Saint Ann’s was the place for me. We are all happy to live here. Margo Cowden
Brian’s Gift: Teen Learned Great Life Lesson From Young Camper

By Casey Hawkins

I have been a counselor at Our Lady of Guadalupe camp for two years. I consider this place to be the ultimate teacher in religion. Pencil and paper isn’t their tool for teaching, but human interaction instead. I receive the delight of making a child’s summer all that it can be. I become their hero whenever their parents leave and hopefully make a great impression on their lives. But again it was I that received the greatest reward. I had the pleasure of watching a very special young man with Down syndrome named Brian. He was by far my favorite camper. At first I thought that my hands were going to be full the whole week and I was not going to have any fun. But to my surprise, that week was the finest week of my life. Because of his condition, Brian was restricted from doing many of the things that the other campers were doing. But he did not care: He loved watching them paddle in the canoes, play with bows and arrows, and dodge balls in Four Square. I think he had more fun than they did! He loved to play Connect Four (which he always won) and going fishing. But the one thing that I will never forget about him was the three words he said to me when he was getting in his car to leave. If these three words were said to everyone we ever meet, then the world would be a fantastic place in which to live. The words were said by the greatest person of all time, Jesus Christ, but sometimes we forget to say them. The model of our life told us to say this to our enemies, friends and family, but still we forget. These words could be the most powerful words a person could say if said in the right context. “I love you.” Crying, I told him the same. I may never see him again and he probably will not remember me, but I will always remember him. God sent me Brian to open my eyes and see that this job was not about me, but about the children that I come into contact with.

That was the best religious lesson that I have ever learned.

Editor’s Note: (This is an excerpt from an essay Casey Hawkins wrote as an assignment at Mount St. Mary High School)

Registration Under Way for Catholic Summer Camp

Registration is under way for Catholic Summer Camp at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Camp. Any youth who has finished the third grade through the 12th grade is eligible to attend the camp and non-Catholic friends are welcome.

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

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

Campers arrive Sunday evening between 5 and 6:30. The week ends the following Friday with checkout at 4 p.m. Cost for the camp is $250 per person and includes lodging, meals, snacks, camp T-shirt and insurance.

For more information, contact the Youth Office at (405) 721-9220 or e-mail to aguillotte@catharchdiocese okc.org, or go to www.catharchdiocese okc.org and click on the Summer Camp button.

2009 Camp Registration Form

Name: ________________________________
Address: _____________________________________________
City, State, Zip: _____________________________________________
Home: ________________________________ Office: ________________________________
Cell: ________________________________ E-mail: ________________________________
Parent/Guardian: _____________________________________________
Parish: _____________________________________________
School: _____________________________________________
Grade (2008-2009) _____ Age: ______ Male/Female

First time camper: Yes  No

Youth T-shirt size: S  M  L
Adult T-shirt size: S  M  XL  2XL  3XL

Please circle camp week of your choice:
Camp 1 - June 7-12 - Grades 6-7
Camp 2 - June 14-19 - Grades 4-5
Camp 3 - June 21-26 - Grades 5-6
Camp 4 - June 28- July 3 - Grades 7-9
Camp 5 - July 5-10 - Grades 4-5
Camp 6 - July 12-17 - Grades 7-8
Camp 7 - July 19-24 - Grades 9-12

Send registration and $135 deposit to: Catholic Youth & Young Adult Office, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123
(Make checks payable to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City)
Buenas Noticias...

Mis queridos Hermanas y Hermanos en Cristo:

A cada madre en nuestra Arquidiócesis le envío una muy, muy especial felicitación. Rezo para que el día de las madres sea para cada una de ustedes especial, lleno de gracia y bendiciones de Dios.

De mi parte, yo comenzaré una novena especial en las misas por todas las madres, el sábado 2 de mayo, terminando en el día de las madres.Durante este período de nueve días estaré celebrando misas en diez diferentes iglesias, localizadas alrededor de toda nuestra Arquidiócesis.

Por lo cual, madres, serán recordadas y rezaremos por ustedes diariamente. Un feliz y bendito día de las madres.

Algunos años atrás, fui introducido a un buen trabajo hecho por la Organización Escoger Nacer (Birth Choice). Reconoci que Escoger Nacer está haciendo un trabajo extraordinario, ayudando a las madres más pobres y abandonadas entre nosotros. Estas, generalmente, son jóvenes, solteras desamparadas, mujeres embarazadas. Algunas son adolescentes, muchas fueron abandonadas. Todas tienen necesidad.

La organización llamada Escoger Nacer y sus voluntarios están trabmando con verdadera compasión pero necesitan ayuda.

Por esto, autorizé una colecta especial para ser recogida en todas las misas de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City en el día de las madres. Todos los años, recibo un reporte gratificante y satisfactorio de Escoger Nacer. Es tan maravilloso que, a través de nuestras parroquias, cada católico en nuestra Arquidiócesis pueda asistir con este bello, efectivo y gratificante esfuerzo en pro de la vida. El problema sin embargo, es que el monte que colectamos, siendo apreciado es aún insuficiente. De hecho, el monte colectado el año pasado bajó.

Es mi firme convicción que el Ministerio de Escoger Nacer sea ayudado de manera eficiente. Es una expresión de amor que todos demos-tramos hacia Dios y hacia nuestro vecino. Es una señal de disposición de colaborar y ayudar verdaderamente a los necesitados.

Por esta razón y con el deseo de incrementar el apoyo para Escoger Nacer, yo recientemente, le escribi a nuestros sucedores, ahora compartiendo con ustedes el contenido básico de esa carta deseo así animarlos a que ayuden.

“Los católicos escribiendo hoy acerca de un importante Ministerio y solicitándoles su asistencia y apoyo. En los últimos 38 años, Escoger Nacer, ha sido un de los servicios más efectivos a favor de la vida, aquí en Oklahoma. Fundado y compuesto por personas de leyes, dedicadas, es un modelo de personas que ponen su fe en práctica.

Escoger Nacer, ha salvado a muchos bebés del aborto, Escoger Nacer, ha guiado, asistido e inspirado a jóvenes confundidas y sufridas, llenas de desesperación y les ha dado esperanza. Escoger Nacer, ha proclama el Evangelio de vida a través de comunidades. La gente de Escoger Nacer no sólo habla de caridad, amor y compasión, ellos lo practican cada día.

Durante el año pasado, Escoger Nacer estuvo limitado económicamente para proveer los servicios necesarios a muchas mujeres que buscaron su asistencia. Con mucho trabajo ha continuado funcionando la Casa Rose para mujeres jóvenes, sus bebés y sus hijos. La ayuda financiera que Escoger Nacer necesita es para obras sin para vivas.

Cada año, hacemos una segunda colecta en cada misa del Día de las Madres para apoyar a Escoger Nacer. El año pasado, el total de lo recaudado en todas las parroquias de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City fue de $46,459.90, los cuales fueron $6000.00 menos que el año anterior. Por esto, este año les pido que en el Día de las Madres, se haga de nuevo una colecta especial, la cual les ruego y pido les soliciten a sus feligreses, su generoso aporte para apoyar a esta organización.

Se, al igual que ustedes y sus feligreses que la situación económica afecta a todos, pero especialmente a aquellos de Escoger Nacer, quienes son los más vulnerables.

Por favor pídale a su gente, que sean generosos el 10 de mayo en la colecta del Día de las Madres”.

Estoy pidiendo nuevamente a cada Católico de esta Arquidiócesis, que por favor sean generosos. Por favor hagan una contribución financiera e donación el próximo domingo, Día de las Madres en la colecta de su parroquia. Gracias y que Dios los bendiga.

El Papa presenta cinco nuevos santos a una sociedad desorientada

VATICANO ZENIT

Benedicto XVI proclama a cinco nuevos santos, cuatro italianos y un portugués, modelos para una “sociedad desorientada y muchas veces herida”, en los que puede encontrar inspiración incluso para superar la crisis económica.

Al repasar sus biografías, durante la celebración eucarística que presidió en la plaza de San Pedro del Vaticano prácticamente llena de fieles, el Papa invitó a “liberar a Dios de las prisiones en las cuales lo han confinado los hombres.”

Los nuevos santos son todos religiosos y los menos uno han fundado congregaciones religiosas, se trata de Nuno de Santa María Álvares Pereira (1360-1431), héroe nacional portugués, Arcangelo Tadini.

Al evocar la homilía, la vida de san Arcangelo Tadini (1846-1912), sacerdote de Brescia, mostró las iniciativas que impulsó a la luz del amor por Jesús, presente en la Eucaristía, para resolver las graves situaciones creadas por la crisis económica de su época, motivos de inspiración para la actual.

Luego evocó la figura de Bernardo Tolomei (1272-1348), abad, fundador de la Congregación de Santa María del Monte Oliveto de la Orden de San Benito, a quien el Papa presentó como “auténtico mártir de la caridad”. Entre los nuevos santos también se encuentra Nuno de Santa Maria (1580-1431). Tras la muerte de su esposa, entregó sus bienes y entró en un convento de carmelitas que él mismo había fundado.

Al recordar a la nueva santa Gertrude Comencini (1847-1903) el Papa explicó que fundó el Instituto de las Hermanas del Santísimo Sacramento “para traducir la ‘caridad contemplada’ en el Cristo Eucarístico, en ‘caridad vivida’, dedicándose al próximo necesitado”.

Por último, el Papa presentó el modelo de santa Catarina Volpiello, fundadora de la Congregación de las Esclavas del Sagrado Corazón, “quien se esforzó por ‘ser de Cristo, para llevar a Cristo’ a cuantos encontró en Nápoles a finales del siglo XIX, en un tiempo de crisis espiritual y social.”
Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — La vida de todo ser humano debe ser respetada y dignificada desde el momento de la concepción hasta su muerte natural y eso es la posición de la Iglesia Católica alrededor del mundo. El tema del aborto ha tomado fuerza en estos días ya que actualmente el Presidente de los Estados Unidos, Barack Hussein Obama, decidió tomar conscientemente medidas ofensivas hacia el mundo cristiano, especialmente hacia los Católicos. Una de esas medidas la prometió en su campaña electoral y dijo que lo haría en sus primeros 10 meses de gobierno. Efectivamente, autorizó el uso de fondos federales para programas de salud y educación, dentro y fuera de Estados Unidos, que incluyan la información sobre anticonceptivos, y para la investigación de las células madre derivadas de embriones humanos. Parece que para Obama el aborto es más importante que la legalización de los indocumentados y el respeto a la vida de aquellos seres humanos que están por nacer.

En Oklahoma, los Católicos hispanos se han sentido muy tristes de ver que hay líderes seculares en nuestra sociedad que le dan prioridad al tema del aborto y sencillamente ahora se propone el cumplimiento de la promesa de cumplir la promesa de legalizar a los indocumentados y dignificarlos como seres humanos. Los hispanos Católicos jamás y nunca, negociaron o negociaron la posición de favorecer el aborto a cambio de una supuesta legalización de los indocumentados. La vida es el fundamento de nuestra fe Católica. El aborto es un acto horrendo.

Al respecto, Oscar Jiménez, quien es ciudadano estadounidense de origen hispano y residente del estado de Texas y quien estudia actualmente su maestría en literatura latinoamericana en la Universidad de Oklahoma, nos dijo lo siguiente: “Me profesa Católica y veo el aborto como un pecado mortal, y eso porque es quitara la vida de un ser humano inocente. Con respecto a la política y la presencia del Presidente de los Estados Unidos en la Universidad Católica de Notre Dame en mayo, creo que los estudiantes católicos que están enojados tienen razón de estar enojados, igual el presidente de la universidad no debió haber invitado al Presidente Obama a dar la charla de graduación, hubiera invitado a otra persona aunque no fuera Católica, pero que por lo menos estuviera de acuerdo con los aspectos de nuestra fe y con la situación actual de nuestro país. Veo que para nosotros que estamos en contra del aborto, no solamente tenemos que luchar en formas adecuadas y apropiadas en nuestro gobierno, pero también tenemos que educar qué es exactamente el aborto, cómo ocurre y cómo podemos convenir a los demás a cambiar de posición. Veo que el país va en mala dirección. Veo que llegará un momento en que los menores de edad no necesitarán permiso de sus padres para ejecutar un aborto. A los jóvenes les digo que se informen cómo ocurre y quién ofrece los servicios de aborto y pónganse manos a la obra y recen sus rosarios frente a las clínicas abortivas, que reca en privado, que hablen sobre la base cristiana con la gente de su edad sobre lo malo del aborto”.

El joven Oscar Jiménez es un ejemplo de la buena formación Católica que se debe llevar en la vida, él apenas tiene 27 años, está soltero y simplemente desea ver los cambios prometidos sobre la base cristiana.

Otra estudiante que nos habló sobre el tema del aborto es Yolany Martínez, quien nos dijo: “Soy Católica y estoy en contra del aborto porque desde el momento de la concepción ya tenemos a un ser humano y abortar sería asesinar a un niño indefenso. Yo creo que hay que hacer conciencia en la gente, ya sea estableciendo leyes o haciendo mucha labor de comunicación, es decir enfocándose en las masas, en los medios de comunicación, para que de esa forma la gente, especialmente las mujeres tengan una mayor conciencia y responsabilidad, porque no es tanto salir de un estado físico sino las implicaciones humanas y cristianas que tiene el aborto. Les digo a los jóvenes que sean responsables. No es tan difícil aceptar un embarazo, es muy saludable para una mujer experimentar ser madre”.

Yolany Martínez es una joven, oriunda de Honduras y ahora está viviendo en Oklahoma, ella también es una estudiante de maestría en la Universidad de Oklahoma. Sin duda alguna, la visión de estos dos jóvenes nos hace reflexionar que sus posiciones son correctas y alineadas a los preceptos de nuestra Iglesia Católica y sobre todo al libre albedrío de ser fieles a Dios. El aborto es un tema delicado y debe ser abordado con mucha seriedad y respeto a los valores cristianos. Tratar de intimidar a quienes se oponen al aborto y llamarlos extremistas para mezclarnos con los perpetradores de la discriminación, crímenes de odio, violencia, racismo y con el tema de inmigración, es una acción errónea.

Los Estados Unidos es un país de libertades civiles y sobre todo donde impera la ley, la libertad de culto y la independencia de poderes. La Iglesia Católica no está al servicio de ningún partido político, sino sencillamente es la institución que está al servicio de Dios.
Jobs Box

Elementary Teacher Openings

All Saints Catholic School in Norman is currently accepting applications for the following full-time positions for the 2009-10 school year: pre-K teacher, junior high religion teacher and technology teacher. The pre-K teacher must hold early childhood certification by the state of Oklahoma.

The technology teacher will work in cooperation with the school's computer and network administrator. The teacher is responsible for teaching computer curriculum for students in pre-K through eighth grade.

The junior high religion teacher is responsible for teaching religion as well as elective courses to 140 students in grades 6, 7 and 8. Oklahoma certification is highly recommended, must be an active, practicing Catholic and Archdiocesan Religious education certification must be completed within three years.

Please send a resume, attention to Ms. Leslie Schmitt, principal, to 4001 36th Avenue, NW, Norman, Okla. 73072, or fax to (405) 447-4600.

New Center of Family Love Openings

The Center of Family Love in Okarche has immediate openings for the following: DCTs - Certified is great, if not we will train. Shifts available are 3 to 11 p.m., 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. and float. Dietary aide - Help prepare meals following recipes and menus. Full-time hours available. HTS - To provide specific training to developmentally disabled adults that live in the community. Full-time and part-time hours available. Garden Center manager - Responsible for managing both our greenhouse and gift shop. Background in horticulture, accounting or business preferred. To apply, call 263-4658, fax 263-4718, e-mail alemk@cfavc.org or in person at 635 W. Texas, Okarche, Okla. 73762.

Full-time Music Teacher Opening

Christ the King School in Oklahoma City has an outstanding music program and it needs an enthusiastic leader with creative energy and talent. Contact Karen Carter, Christ the King Catholic School, 843-3909, or kcartier@ckokc.org.

Second Grade and Preschool Openings

Villa Teresa Catholic School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for teaching positions for the fall 2009-2010 school year, second grade and preschool. Applicants must possess an Oklahoma state certificate in the area of elementary or early childhood (for the preschool position). Please call Sister Veronica (232-4286) for an interview.

English Teacher

Mount St. Mary Catholic High School (Oklahoma City) is currently seeking qualified candidates for the 2009-2010 school year for an English position with experience in AP and pre-AP. 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. EOE

Coaching Openings

Mount St. Mary Catholic High School (Oklahoma City) is seeking qualified coaches in the following fields for 2009-2010: volleyball, track and football (assistant with experience). 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. EOE

Fourth Grade Teaching Position

Sacred Heart Catholic School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for a fourth-grade teacher for the 2009-2010 school year. SHCS is a PK4 through eighth-grade school. Please call the school office at (405) 634-5673 for an application or send a resume to Joana Camacho, SHCS, 2700 S. Shartel Ave., Oklahoma City 73109.

Part-Time Cafeteria Worker

Bishop McGuinness High School cafeteria has a part-time job available starting immediately. The hours are 8 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Marguerite Claybaugh, cafeteria manager, at (405) 842-6656 Ext. 257 or e-mail her at mclaybaugh@bmchs.org.

Part-Time Music Teacher

Bishop John Carroll School has an opening for the 2009-2010 school year for a part-time music teacher. BJCS is a pre-K through eighth-grade school. Call the school office at (405) 525-0956 for an application or send resume to Connie Diotte, 1100 NW 32nd St., Oklahoma City 73118.

Executive Director

Saint Vincent de Paul Society Oklahoma Archdiocesan Council Board has a part-time position open for an executive director. Understands, interpreters and applies rules/policies of the Society. Coordinate and manage the day-to-day operation. Assist the board in performance of their various roles. Serve as a mentor and monitor for conference presidents to ensure the maintenance of effective local organizations consistent with the Rules of the Society. Is an active member of their Catholic Parish. Possess excellent verbal, written and computer skills. Please mail your resume to St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store, 3031 NW 23rd St., OKC 73107, or e-mail stvincentokc@gmail.com.

Assistant Professor (English)

St. Gregory’s University, a Catholic and Benedictine liberal arts community with over 130 years of educational excellence, seeks qualified and enthusiastic applicants for a full-time, tenure-track position in English, beginning August 2009. Ph.D. in English (by August of 2009) is required. A specialization in English composition/rhetoric and/or secondary English education is highly desirable. We are committed to excellence in undergraduate teaching and the ideal candidate will demonstrate that value. The successful candidate will teach English Composition I and II (a common core requirement) and upper-level English courses (including young adult literature, children’s literature and teaching writing/literature). Candidates must be supportive of and 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 the attention of Father Robert A. Busch, Ph.D., Dean, College of Arts and Sciences. Application materials may be sent electronically to hr@stgregorys.edu or via mail service to Human Resources Department, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur Drive, Shawnee 74804. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until position is filled.

Dean of Enrollment Management

St. Gregory’s University in Shawnee invites applicants for the position of Dean of Enrollment Management. Position responsible for the development, implementation, maintenance, analysis and general supervision of all programs related to the recruiting and retaining of undergraduate students. Involves developing and implementing the university’s strategic enrollment and marketing plan and recruiting goals for the College of Arts and Sciences. This position manages the budget for the office and supervises the admissions counselors and office support staff. In addition, this position will coordinate and support the contracted recruitment companies. Applicants must possess an understanding of and willingness to support the St. Gregory’s University Catholic and Benedictine mission. Master’s degree is required. Experience as an admissions counselor and a minimum of two years experience in the director's or assistant position is preferred. Electronic résumés are preferred, and should include a letter of application describing experience, qualifications, vision and record of achieving/exceeding enrollment goals at one's recent institution. Dr. Richard Ludwick, Provost, St. Gregory's University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804, rludwick@stgregorys.edu, (405) 878-5350.

Volunteers

The Good Samaritan Health Clinic needs volunteer physicians, nurses, dieticians, social workers, Spanish translators and receptionists from 9 a.m. until noon on Saturdays. Volunteering will be less than once per month. The application process and other clinic information is on the clinic Web site, goodsamaritanofedmond.com. The state of Oklahoma has the largest rate of uninsured residents in the nation and about 8,000 to 21,000 live in Edmond.
5 Eucharistic Adoration at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, NW 32nd and Western, every Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The Rosary is said every weekday at 2:30 p.m. All are welcome.

7 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at Epiphany Parish, in the chapel every Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and daily (M,T,W,F) from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. All are welcome. Epiphany is located at 7336 W. Britton Road, Oklahoma City 73132.

8 BINGO at St. Joseph’s Parish, Norman, is scheduled for the second Friday evening of every month. A light dinner is served at 6:30 and two sessions of games are played, the first at 7 p.m. and the second at 8:30 p.m.

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

12 Catholic War Veterans (of any war/conflict) will meet the second Tuesday of each month in the community room of St. Ann Retirement Center at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Father M. Price Oswalt at Epiphany, (405) 722-2110.

13 A Mass in Appreciation of Nurses at 5:30 p.m. at Christ the King Church, 8005 Dorset Drive, OKC. Dinner will follow in the atrium. RSVP to Mercy Community Outreach at 936-5226. Deadline for reservations is Friday, May 1.

15-16 Engagement Encounter Weekend For more information or to register, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

16 Spanish Pre-Cana. A day for couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. For more information or to register, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

16 Retreat: Bridges to Contemplative Living, with T. Merton, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with Joanne Yankauskis, OSB. Book 8: Seeing That Paradise Begins Now. Place: Library at Red Plains Spirituality Center. Call (405) 373-0804 to register. Fee: $45, includes book ($10 deposit). Bring a sack lunch.

16 Retreat: The Spirituality of Imperfection, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with Melissa Anna Letts, OSB. Who demands perfection? Is it God? Or is it you? Place: Lucy’s Guest House at Red Plains Spirituality Center. Call (405) 373-0804 to register. Fee: $40 ($10 deposit). Bring a sack lunch.

17 Monthly Novena to the Infant Jesus, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, Nat’l Shrine of the Infant Jesus, Saint Wenceslaus Church, SH-99 7 miles N. I-40 or 20 miles S. I-44 at Stroud exit, Prague, (405) 567-3080.

17 The Community of the Secular Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus - Oklahoma Community and Province of St. Therese meets at St. Joseph Carmelite Monastery in Piedmont from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call Susan Staudt at (405) 282-6624 or Sister Silvia Negrete at (405) 232-7926.

17 Taize Prayer, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Red Plains Monastery, 728 Richland Road SW, Piedmont. For more details, call 373-4565. Optional video on Taize prayer at 6 p.m.

17 The Secular Franciscan Order of St. Francis Fraternity meets at 1:15 p.m. at St. Anthony’s Hospital chapel. For more information, call Jim Disbrow at 830-8688.

For a full calendar, go to catharchdioceseokc.org

Authors Take Readers on Journey Through Church History


★★★★★ This is a very good book that is both informative and entertaining. The reader will learn that William the Conqueror and his Normans were not the only Normans invading parts of Europe. Two Norman brothers invaded Sicily and southern Italy. The reader will learn where the Normans originate and where they ended up. Francois Neveux presents the views of other historians about various issues about the Normans, like where they originated from, their methods of war and their society and culture. Neveux shows that the Normans made a major impact on Europe that we today take for granted, like words in English, architecture, and place names. The Norman rulers were good about using the clergy to advance their causes. They were also notorious about wanting their way even when the clergy pointed out that this was not good. Some like St. Thomas Becket ended up having to spend time in exile. Even popes had trouble with them, especially when Normans became rulers of southern Europe, but they also found them useful when they pitted them against German rulers. There is a centerfold of various illustrations concerning the Normans. There is a chronology and a bibliography and index. There are maps in the front of the book. On the front cover is an image of the famous Bayeux tapestry, which shows the Battle of Hastings where William the Conqueror defeated the Anglo-Saxons under King Harold of England on Oct. 14, 1066. Francois Neveux is a leading medieval historian in France and has written several books on the Normans. He is a professor of history at Caen University. This book is part of Running Press’ Brief History series. This book is highly recommended to those interested in medieval history, the history of England, France and Italy.


★★★★★ This book on the history of the popes of the Roman Catholic Church is very informative. It is not a pious rendition of the history of the papacy. Warts and all are shown. Roger Collins does not present a history or biography about each individual pope. That would require several volumes. Instead, Collins mentions most of them, but focuses on some of the more important popes like St. Peter, Innocent III, St. Gregory the Great, St. Gregory VII, Boniface VIII, Alexander VI, Julius II, Bl. Pius IX, and several others. The history of the papacy is of course intertwined with the history of Europe and the world, which involved the pope and various leaders interacting with each other for good or bad. Collins shows how human the papacy is and that only through the work of the Holy Spirit has the Church been preserved from error as Jesus promised the first pope, St. Peter. This is not a quick read, but it is not meant to be. It is not a dry history book and will be of great interest to those interested in a serious history of the Catholic Church, European and world history, and the papacy. On the book jacket is Jacopo Vignali's painting of the baptism of Constantine the Great by Pope Sylvester. There is a centerfold of illustrations, a list of the popes, a bibliography and an index. There are three maps in the book.

Roger Collins is an honorary fellow at Edinburgh University. He is on the advisory board of The Journal of International History. He is the author of several books on medieval history.
Foster Parents Can Help Change a Child’s Life Forever

By Robin Jones

You may not be able to change the world, but you can change the world for one child.

Hundreds of children have had their worlds changed by the Ray and Walter Merchant family of the Church of the Epiphany. The Merchants have 11 children (eight adopted and three biological), a number of foster children, and the ever present newborn. Their home doesn’t seem quite right unless a newborn is there, even if only temporarily. Over the 30 years of providing foster care, they have provided love and care for 168 babies.

At one point in her life, Ray wanted another child and asked her prayer group to pray that she would become pregnant that very day. That didn’t happen. A little less than a year later, she was taking care of a new foster baby. When Walter first saw the baby, he immediately decided the baby was probably conceived; in fact, it might have been on the very night Ray asked her friends to pray for a baby.

Rita Williams, who attends St. James Catholic Church, works as a resource family recruiter for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. She has a heart for helping change the lives of children and giving back to her community. In the Hispanic community, there has always been a sense that when a child needs to be taken care of, you simply did it. Families open their arms and hearts for these children and in most foster homes, you can’t tell which ones are the homegrown or which ones are the temporary kids. But there is still a need for Hispanic foster families.

Anna (not her real name) was 6 years old and had been in several placements. For a variety of reasons, they weren’t working out. A younger couple took Anna in and although they had only planned to be foster parents, they decided to adopt. Beyond the genuine love and commitment this couple had for Anna, the adoptive mother had been a foster child and wanted to give back to those who had loved her.

Both Ray and Rita think one of the greatest fears that prevent people from considering foster care is thinking they don’t want to get emotionally attached to a child, only to have them leave in a short time. The sadness you will have when the child leaves will be worth it when you realize what an impact you have had in their lives. There is also the realization that you are encouraging the birth families as you have the opportunity to build relationships and help bridge resources.

In these two stories, more than 180 children’s worlds were changed, by just a handful of adults. Today the opportunity to change the world of a child is ever present.

Personally being a foster parent or professionally recruiting foster parents may seem like too big of a commitment for some families, but there are a variety of ways to express love and support for these precious children. The Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) has created a list of “Top 10 Ways You Can Help A Foster Child” to encourage your family and parish involvement in the various needs associated with foster care. The ideas range from hosting a baby shower to collecting school supplies to offering respite care for foster families.

In Oklahoma, more than 9,000 children are in “out-of-home care” and live in a world that you can help change. These children, through no fault of their own, are from families who are in crisis and unable to provide for their essential well-being.

May is Foster Care Awareness Month with May 11-17 designated as Change A Child’s Forever Week. OFBCI, in partnership with foster care ministries and providers, invites all churches to acknowledge Change A Child’s Forever Sunday on May 17.

For a list of ways your parish can participate or to request quantities of the “The Top 10 Ways You Can Help A Foster Child,” visit www.faithlinksok.org or call (405) 522.0606.

(Robin Jones is director of the state Office of Faith Based Initiatives)

God, Country, Notre Dame?

The invitation to Mr. Obama makes a mockery of Notre Dame’s Catholic character. His 2012 re-election campaign already under way, he is cynically exploiting and manipulating Notre Dame for his own political purposes: seeking legitimacy with Catholics, co-opting the Catholic vote, undermining respect for the teaching authority of the bishops regarding the primacy of the pro-life issue, inoculating himself against the charge — the fact — that he is a radical pro-abortion extremist.

University spokesmen have excused the invitation by mentioning that presidents from both political parties have spoken at Notre Dame. Either they just don’t get it, or they are creating a straw man to divert attention from the reason for the outrage. (Surely, university officials are able to think critically, to judge, to evaluate. Surely they understand the difference between matters of prudential judgment, on the one hand, and intrinsic evils — the chief of which is abortion. What we’re getting from Notre Dame are amateurish excuses, red herrings, evasions, non-sequiturs and moral incoherence.) The outrage is not because Mr. Obama is a Democrat. It’s because he is doing more to promote the destruction of innocent human lives than anyone else on the face of the earth.

One assistant vice president has been widely quoted as saying the criticism the university has received “is nothing beyond what we expected.” One has to hope he was misquoted, for if what he said is true, it is a devastating indictment of those responsible for the decision. For it means they went into this with their eyes wide open, realizing full well the damage it would cause to the Church, to the university, to the respect of the faithful for the sanctity of innocent human life.

It means they knew the decision would rip asunder the confidence and trust of the Catholic community in the people and the institutions they look to for faithfulness, leadership and guidance in matters of moral truth.

My wife, Phyllis, and I entrusted our eight children to Notre Dame. Ten degrees earned, 35 school years spent there, our youngest due to graduate May 17 ... what a bitter ending this tragedy constitutes to our long and deep relationship with Our Lady’s University.

Notre Dame’s president, Father John Jenkins, was ill served by those with whom he conferred about this invitation. He would benefit greatly by hearing from those of you who believe it was a mistake. The phone number for his office is 574-631-3903. His e-mail address is president@nd.edu. The Notre Dame switchboard number is 574-631-5000. Father Jenkins could still reverse this decision and withdraw the invitation.

There’s still time for Notre Dame to send back to the White House the 30 pieces of silver.