A Harvest of Faith

Two Ordained to the Priesthood During June 5 Eucharistic Celebration at Cathedral of Our Lady

Long Pham places his hands between the hands of Archbishop Beltran during the promise of obedience.

Archbishop Beltran lays hands on William Lewis.

Story and photos, pages 8 and 9.

Inside

Office of Family Life Partners With State to Help Build Better Marriages

Shrine of Infant Jesus Receives Unexpected Support From Foundation
Orations to Priesthood  
Cathedral of Our Lady  
June 5, 2009

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

With great joy and with gratitude to Almighty God, we gather together here tonight for the ordination of two new priests.

William Lewis and Long Phan, I congratulate you and I welcome you and your parents, your families and friends to the Cathedral of Our Lady.

You have both spent many years in prayer, study and various ministries discerning God’s call. I, too, on behalf of the Church of this Archdiocese, have sought to fulfill the Lord’s Will with regard to your vocation. Tonight, therefore, with confidence and joy, I shall ordain you through the traditional imposition of hands and the Power of the Holy Spirit. It is my conviction, along with yours, that the Lord Jesus is calling you to become His holy, Catholic priests. I said that you have both spent a long time preparing for ordination.

Now, there are countless ways that people reckon time or measure its passage. There are calendar years and fiscal years. There are school years, basketball seasons and other business, scholastic and sports times. But here in Oklahoma — without even realizing it — we also have a Bible year!

Because we have millions of acres planted in wheat and the annual wheat crop is important in our economy, even those of us who are not farmers or ranchers watch and observe the wheat phenomenon. From the freshly plowed bright red soils receiving the wheat seed in September to the sparkling green blades shining forth through the snow and cold of winter to the rapid growth of springtime and the maturing and ripening of the golden waves in May and June, we watch and judge and comment. Is the weather right? Has there been enough rain? Did the hail damage the crop?

Throughout this whole annual cycle, we witness the fulfillment of the Scriptures’ example we just heard:

“Unless the grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” (John 12:24)

William and Long, you have appropriately selected this Gospel passage for your ordination. In the years of your priesthood that lie ahead of you, as you drive throughout Oklahoma, you will be reminded of this Scripture passage and I ask you to reflect on it constantly. It is more than just a pleasant thought or story. This Bible verse reveals the plan of God for all His people reborn in baptism, but especially for both of you who are about to be ordained and the rest of us who are priests.

Our Catholic faith is founded and centered on the Person of Jesus. He is the eternal Son of God. He is our Lord and Savior. He is the High Priest. Almighty God, the Father Himself, has established His Son Jesus as the eternal High Priest. Saint Paul, inspired to speak the Word of God, proclaims: “You are My Son, today I have fathered you. You are a priest forever.” (Heb. 5:4)

Priesthood is therefore a gift bestowed on the humanity of Jesus by the Father. In the very moment that God was made Flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Father looked upon His Son with infinite satisfaction. He acknowledged Jesus as the One Mediator between heaven and earth, a priest forever. Priesthood is the Father’s divine gift to His Son Jesus and therefore human beings have no claim or right to priesthood. Indeed, no one can take this honor upon himself. It requires a call from God.

William and Long, tonight, through the Church, God is calling you to become His priests. He is inviting you to share in His ministry. Just as on the first Christian Pentecost, the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to preach, to teach, to baptize, so does that same Spirit of God come to you tonight to ordain you and commission you as priests of Jesus Christ.

On this occasion, as your archbishop, ordaining you priests for the service of the Church of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, I ask you to reflect once more on the Gospel you yourselves selected for this Mass.

“Our Catholic faith is founded and centered on the Person of Jesus. He is the eternal Son of God. He is our Lord and Savior. He is the High Priest.” (John 12:24)

Unless the grain of wheat dies, it remains just a grain of wheat.” You are the grains of wheat tonight. You must die to selfishness and sin.

You must rise with the life of Jesus to Whom you are configured. Each of you is to become another Christ. Tonight you are consecrated to God.

Our Catholic faith is founded and centered on the Person of Jesus. He is the eternal Son of God. He is our Lord and Savior. He is the High Priest.

Priesthood must be modeled on the example of holiness that the great Doctor of the Church, Saint Therese of the Little Flower, gave us. Her life is a model of holiness that is practical. It is faith put into action. We can all be saints if we take Therese’s example. Today, the Holy Spirit has told us the same thing, “You are priest forever.”
Ordination Homily

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Liseux, described when she said: “I have been called to love.” William and Long, you are called by God to become His priests. Therefore, you must love God totally and completely.

In nature when the grain of wheat is planted in the ground, it changes radically as it receives the moisture and the nutrients needed to grow. It can rightly be said it dies unto itself as it is changed and grows and produces much fruit. So it is with the priest who, at ordination, gives himself totally to Christ. He dies unto himself and thus becomes an “alter Christus,” another Christ. From then on, the ministry of the priest must always be the ministry of Jesus working in and through him. We are not ordained to promote ourselves but to proclaim the Good News of Jesus which we can do only if we love God completely and are truly united with Jesus.

Jesus came, as He said, to serve and not to be served. Indeed, all ministry is service and priestly ministry is the service of Jesus as accomplished through the instrumentality of the ordained priest. The liberating proclamation of the Good News and the reality of the sacraments depend upon the power and grace of God. A priest then ministers to people in the Name of Jesus, in the Person of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit. The greatest human effort and work devoid of the love of God will amount to nothing lasting, nothing saving. Therefore, a priest, to be effective, must die to himself so that God works in and through him and produces much fruit.

William and Long, tonight through the ministry of the Church and by the Grace of God, you will indeed be ordained priests. Thereafter, tomorrow and next week and next year and all the years of your lives, you must be men of prayer; men who love God; men who are for the poor; men who work for justice and peace. You must always seek to serve and not to be served. You must strive daily to grow as good and holy and faithful and happy priests because God says to each of you tonight: “You are a priest forever.” (Hebrews 5:4)
NORMAN — EWTN’s Dr. Marcellino D’Ambrosio of EWTN fame will be the guest speaker at the first ever “Women of Faith, Women of Action” Conference and Workshop on Saturday, Aug. 22 at St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church in Norman. Dr. D’Ambrosio will speak on spirituality, both in a morning and afternoon general session at the conference, which is open to all Catholic women as well as men.

The aim of the conference is to empower women in spirituality, service and leadership. The event will open at 7:45 a.m. and include additional speakers, a priest panel, vendors and Pastoral Center services. Registration is $30. A catered box lunch will be provided for an additional $10.

In addition to D’Ambrosio, other “Women of Faith, Women of Action” speakers include Maria Scaperlanda, author of numerous books about Mother Mary; Father Juan Molina of the National Catholic Relief Services Office; and Eunice Washa, vice president of the National Council of Catholic Women.

In addition, attendees will have their choice of three breakout sessions in the afternoon on “Spirituality,” “Service” and “Leadership.”

St. Mark Rev. Tom Boyer, national seminar speaker, will head the “Spirituality” workshop, discussing the Arts interpretation of death and the Resurrection. National speakers, Father Juan Molina (CRS), will lead the Service workshop and Eunice Washa (NCCW) will present the Leadership workshop.

A priest panel will entertain questions from attendees and include Revs. Tom Boyer, Jim Goin and Paul Gallatin. Rev. Phil Seeton of Oklahoma City will lead the Byzantine morning and closing prayer and music services. The event will conclude with a Mass to begin at 5:30 p.m. at St. Mark.

To register via PayPal or for more information, visit http://okaccw.tripod.com/woa/index.html. For mail-in registration, contact Karen Ritz, (405) 350-2239, or karenritz@cox.net.

For general information, contact Chris Thomas at (405) 306-5187 or thomaschrisL@sbcglobal.net.

The Oklahoma City Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women Board and Regions are sponsoring this exciting event.

WASHINGTON — Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Migration, expressed the committee’s support for the Reuniting American Families Act (S. 1085) introduced May 20. He did so in a June 2 letter to Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.)

The act proposes reforms to the family-based immigration system that would allow immigrant families to more quickly reunite in the United States.

“Family reunification has represented the cornerstone of the U.S. immigration system, and should remain its central tenet in the future,” Bishop Wester said. He stressed that the United States “should resist proposals which would erode the family-based immigration system.”

Bishop Wester emphasized the importance of ensuring that the nuclear family stays together. “It is extremely important that barriers that keep the nuclear family — husband, wife and child — divided are removed as soon as possible,” he said, adding that S. 1085 “achieves this goal.”

Bishop Wester also issued a second letter indicating that the bishops Committee on Migration is not supporting similar legislation in the House. In a June 2 letter to Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA), Bishop Wester wrote: “As you know, the USCCB supported H.R. 6638, similar legislation that you introduced during the 110th Congress. Unfortunately, however, while the bishops support many of the provisions in the Reuniting Families Act, your decision to include in the bill the Uniting American Families Act (UAFA), which would provide marriage-like immigration benefits to same sex relationships, makes it impossible for the bishops to support this year’s version of your bill.”

Bishop Wester noted that UAFA “would erode the institution of marriage and family” and called it “a position that is contrary to the very nature of marriage which pre-dates the Church and the state.” Consequently, he indicated the committee is instead offering its strong endorsement to the Senate version.

Among other provisions, S. 1085 would enable the immediate relatives (husbands, wives and children) of legal permanent residents to legally enter the country more quickly; re-capture family visas from prior years that were lost to bureaucratic delay; reduce family-visa backlogs from sending countries; and ensure that the widows and orphans of legal permanent residents are able to remain in the United States.

Bishop Wester also said that “Positive changes in the family-based immigration categories, such as those included in S. 1085, should be a central feature of any comprehensive immigration reform effort.”
Bishop From India Visits Parishes in Archdiocese

By Alex Lee
St. Benedict Catholic Church


Bishop Moses took the occasion to celebrate Masses on the weekend of May 16-17 with the parishioners of St. Benedict Church and to inform the congregations about the social work his diocese performs in India.

The Shawnee Parish was one of many stops on Bishop Moses’ itinerary, who was in the U.S. to observe firsthand the clergy from India presently serving in this country and to raise awareness and to seek financial support for the humanitarian services his diocese in India engages in.

Because of the nationwide shortage of priests in the U.S., there are currently 30 priests from the Diocese of Nellore in India performing pastoral work in Catholic churches throughout Oklahoma, Texas and Pennsylvania, Bishop Moses said. The Indian priests are on a five-year tenure.

There are 10 Indian priests from the Diocese of Nellore serving in Oklahoma, one of whom is the Rev. Chinnapa Reddy Konkala, who has been associate pastor of St. Benedict Church since last June when St. Gregory’s Abbey withdrew all Benedictine monks from Pottawatomie and Seminole counties. Other Indian priests are serving in churches in Harrah, Guymon, Woodward, Altus and other state parishes.

Bishop Moses was ordained into the priesthood on April 7, 1983, and was appointed bishop on Aug. 28, 2002. Prior to arriving at the Diocese of Nellore, he was bishop at Kadapa for more than four years.

Bishop Moses said the Diocese of Nellore serves some of the poorest of the poor in India. Because of its geographical location and climate, the area is prone to drought and famine. The eastern coastal region is also subject to heavy flooding during the monsoon season. The area was heavily ravaged by the deadly tsunami in 2004. Most of the families are poor, landless agricultural laborers who go on seasonal migration in search for work, often leaving their children and elderly members behind.

Ministry Created by Sister Sponsa Beltran Continues

The ministry begun decades ago by Sister Sponsa Beltran of caring for the disabled and discarded children of Liberia, Africa, is continuing through the help of a U.S.-based charity.

Sister Sponsa, sister to Archbishop Beltran, founded Our Lady of Fatima Rehab some 30 years ago. The center has cared for thousands of disabled Liberian children over the years, many taken in after being abandoned by their families.

Although Sister Sponsa, 84, is no longer physically able to manage the center, she now lives in a nursing center in Reading, Pa., the ministry is continuing under the direction of the Teach Peace Foundation, headquartered in Davis, Calif.

If you would like to help support the ministry begun by Sister Sponsa, you can do so by making a check out to the “Teach Peace Foundation.” Checks should be sent to Kevin Rockensies at 47 Harford Avenue, Shaverton, Pa. 18708. All contributions are tax deductible.

Correction

The photo of Bishop McGuinness graduate William Brezny was inadvertently left out of the May 31 issue of the Sooner Catholic.

William Brezny
Northern Oklahoma College
Across Oklahoma

Concert Set in Woodward
WOODWARD — June 19, Michael John Poirier will be in concert at St. Peter Church in Woodward starting at 7 p.m. Join us for an evening of songs and stories for the soul.

Food Fest at Parish
OKLAHOMA CITY — St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Oklahoma City is hosting the seventh annual International Food Fest June 20 at 6 p.m. in the T. Phil Kierl gymnasium. The dinner benefits the Rosary School Scholarship and Endowment Funds and celebrates the diversity of our faith community. St. Francis of Assisi is located at 1901 N.W. 18th St. in Oklahoma City. Dinner tickets will be sold for $20 each. Call Mary Lalli for ticket information, 947-2947.

St. James to Host Bingo
OKLAHOMA CITY — Bingo at St. James Catholic Church, 41st and South McKinley Avenue, will be June 25 in the gym. Food and beverages reasonably priced will be served at 5:45 p.m. Bingo begins at 6:30 p.m. All games including two blackouts are $10. Door prizes and special recognition for all players born in June. A HDTV flat-screen television will be given away Oct. 22. Each time you play you get an entry ticket into the TV drawing.

St. Paul Focus of Retreat
SHAWNEE — A pilgrimage with St. Paul, June 26-28, presented by St. Gregory’s Abbey in Shawnee. This retreat is an ideal way to bring to a close the Jubilee Year of St. Paul and will focus on five principle themes from the writings of St. Paul. The retreat will be presented jointly by James Shelton, Ph.D., and monks of St. Gregory’s Abbey. Several members of the monastic community will contribute to the retreat as well.

Participants will stay at St. Gregory’s University residence hall. Meals will be in the monastic dining room. Participants will be able to use the swimming pool, the aerobic center and the Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art during their free time. Cost for the retreats is $80 per person in advance and $85 for those not pre-registered. This fee includes lodging, meals and registration fee. The cost for those not needing lodging is $50. For further information, consult the abbey Web page, monksok.org, or contact Father Charles at cjbuckley@stgregorys.edu or (405) 878-5462.

Centennial in Buffalo
BUFFALO — St. Joseph Catholic Church will be celebrating 100 years of faith and worship on June 28. All are invited to join Archbishop Eusebius Beltran, as well as past and present priests and parishioners, for the festivities which will begin at 4:30 p.m. with the Blessing of the Centennial Tree and dedication of the new church sign. Group pictures of clergy, descendants of founding families and the current congregation will take place at 5 p.m. At approximately 5:45 the church bell will begin ringing 100 times in honor of the 100 years of families, faith and fidelity to the Lord that have been present at St. Joseph’s. Centennial Mass will be celebrated at 6 p.m. followed by a dinner in the Parish Hall.

Golf Tourney June 29
WOODWARD — June 29, Rev. James Knight Memorial Golf Tournament at Boiling Springs Golf Course, Woodward. The format is a four-person scramble with a shotgun start at 10 a.m. Cost: $50 per person or $200 per team. Deadline for registration is June 22. For more information, call (580) 256-5305.

NFP Prayer Scheduled
OKLAHOMA CITY — An evening of reflection and prayer for couples who utilize Natural Family Planning (NFP), those who teach NFP and those interested in learning more about NFP. Father Shane Tharp will talk on A Divine Design, July 23 at 7 p.m. at Epiphany Parish in Oklahoma City. Child care will be provided for those who RSVP by July 20 to (405) 721-8944.

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Knights of Columbus Council 1038 Santa Fe Family Life Center is open for summer fun. The beautiful junior Olympic swimming pool, completed at the end of summer last year, is open for its first full summer season. The Knights of Columbus obtained the Santa Fe Family Life Center in October of 2006. More than $1.3 million in improvements to the center have taken place since then, including the pool and three NBA quality basketball courts. The Knights of Columbus offer a special membership price to Catholic families. The parish rate is $300 per summer which includes membership to the fitness club. This summer many of us will stay at home rather than go on a vacation out of town. A new term has cropped up, “staycation,” a vacation at home. The value offered Catholic families at the Santa Fe Family Life Center is unmatched anywhere. There is sand volleyball, a huge baby pool, junior Olympic pool, great sunbathing areas, and air-conditioned building with cable television. Come and swim and meet your fellow Catholics from all over the area. There are five scheduled parish pool parties already. If your parish would like to book a party, call Pam at the Santa Fe Family Life Center at 840-1817.
Edmond School Uses Live Performance to Enhance Education

By Kacee Van Horn
For the Sooner Catholic

EDMOND — All the world’s a stage at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School as sixth-grade students stepped back into medieval times and gave new life to Shakespeare.

Teachers Joan Krauss and Joanne Oltean know learning Shakespeare can be challenging for middle schoolers. Their answer was to involve their students in live performances of some of Shakespeare’s better-known works. Marking the 11th year of sixth-grade Shakespearean productions at St. Elizabeth’s, “Julius Caesar” was presented in May to the entire school.

Krauss and Oltean used cross-curriculum integration to teach both literature and social studies, highlighting the Middle Ages and medieval times through Shakespearean productions and a Medieval Faire. Fourth-quarter grades were based on activities associated with the two projects.

Former students say performing their sixth-grade play helped them have a lifelong love of Shakespeare. “Every student always remembers their sixth-grade play,” says Krauss. Her first group of students, now graduating from college, always mentioned their play, asking her, “Don’t you think our play was the best?”

Once a play is selected, students go through it scene by scene, discussing settings, characters, plots and theme. They write scene critiques and summaries, create play invitations and design poster advertisements. Auditions begin in early March, giving them five weeks to work on the performance. Plays usually run about an hour and include all the important scenes and lines.

Part of play preparation is a field trip to Shakespeare in the Park in Edmond. Here students participate in a variety of workshops including costuming, acting and stage combat techniques. If available, the class also watches a video production of the play they will be performing.

Every production is totally student-driven. The children come up with the ideas for props, sound, lighting, costumes and makeup. Each student has the opportunity to try out for a stage role, but everyone plays a part.

“I tell the students that without the backstage and behind-the-scenes crew, the production would not be possible. No part is more important than the other,” Krauss said.

All the students pitch in wherever needed. Tim Rosencrans and Connor Dugan helped with special effects and carried props. Dugan also had a stage part.

“I helped carry Caesar out after he was killed,” said Dugan. Erin Holsted, a scene announcer, provided a fog machine and strobe light and helped set up the stage.

The role of Brutus was played by Chelsea Green.

“Memorizing the lines was the hardest part. If you mess up, it’s nerve-wracking,” said Green. She didn’t need to worry. She delivered her lines perfectly, stepping effortlessly into the part. Nathan Blagg as Marc Antony and Finnian Bender as Caesar also demonstrated thorough knowledge of the subject matter.

“My favorite part was my speech at the end,” said Blagg.

“Acting it out makes it easier,” said actor Katie Kersgieter. Katie Howard, whose soothsayer costume was enough to frighten even Caesar, adds, “It’s a great experience. It really prepares you for drama in high school.”

In conjunction with the Shakespearean production, the sixth grade hosts the Medieval Faire the same afternoon. The students get their ideas from attending the OU Medieval Faire in Norman during the first week of April. They design their own booths, games, make their own costumes, and prepare food items and arts and crafts.

Through this hands-on experience, the students are learning about more than a historical time period and a renowned playwright. They are learning a spirit of cooperation. They are learning the lead actors can’t play their roles without stage managers, scene announcers, prop designers and special effects crew. They are learning what it means to support one another and work as a team.

Sisters of Charity Celebrate 200th Anniversary of Service in U.S.

CINCINNATI — She was a widow and mother of five children who went on to found a religious community. The life of Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American-born saint, is told in two articles in the July issue of St. Anthony Messenger, timed for the 200th anniversary celebrations of the Sisters of Charity.

Two books on Elizabeth are “Elizabeth Ann Seton: A Profoundly Human Saint” by Elizabeth Bookser Barkley and “St. Elizabeth Seton: Mother to Many” by Sister Judith Metz, S.C., who is the historian/archivist for the Sisters of Charity in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Barkley praises Seton for being “a well-rounded woman who knew how to love deeply and was always a person for others.” The daughter of a New York doctor, she married a rich merchant. Elizabeth nearly died in childbirth in 1789 and also took care of six of her husband’s younger siblings.

Through the kindness of Antonio Filicchi, the Italian partner of William’s business, Elizabeth was introduced to the Catholic Church. Antonio’s wife invited her inside a church where, Barkley says, “she was amazed by worshipers’ belief in the Real Presence in the Eucharist, a belief foreign to her experience as an Episcopalian.”

Metz picks up Seton’s story when, at age 30, back in New York, she decided to join the Catholic Church, a church of poor immigrants. She moved her family to Baltimore to open a school for girls. “It was here that women from various cities around the country began to join her,” Metz says. “Gradually, and with the endorsement of Bishop John Carroll, the idea forming a religious congregation began to take hold.” Within one year of its July 31, 1809, founding in Emmitsburg, Md., the community had grown to 12 women.

Elizabeth died in 1821, but the religious sisters she gathered, Metz says, “were the mustard seed that has produced great abundance for our Church and society over the last 100 years.”
Archdiocese of OKC Welcomes Two New Priests to Work in Fields of Faith

OKLAHOMA CITY — A harvest of faith was gathered on June 5 as several hundred Catholics took part in the Eucharistic Celebration of Ordination to the Priesthood of Father William Michael Lewis II and Father Long Ngoc Phan.

Archbishop Eusebius Beltran celebrated the Mass and Sacrament of Holy Orders at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Dozens of priests from throughout the Archdiocese celebrated and welcomed their two new brother priests.

The Archdiocesan Choir, directed by Oliver Douberly, provided inspiring and beautiful music from the opening procession when the archbishop, the priests, deacons and candidates to the priesthood were welcomed into the cathedral with “Come Now, Almighty King.” A deeply moving “Gift of Finest Wheat” was chosen as the Communion hymn. The verses alternated between English and Vietnamese.

Father Lowell Stieferman, in his last official act as Vocations director for the Archdiocese, presented the candidates to Archbishop Beltran. Father Steiferman has served as Vocations director for 11 years. He is believed to be one of the longest serving Vocations directors in the nation.

Following Father Steiferman’s recommendation, Archbishop Beltran declared his approval and his intention to ordain the candidates.

“Relying on the help of the Lord God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, we choose these, our brothers, for the Order of the Priesthood.”

At that moment, the assembly erupted in great applause. Some were moved to let out shouts of joy.

Moments later, following the Rite of Ordination, the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City would have two new priests. The Catholic faith in Oklahoma would have two more men willing to work in God’s fields of faith.

Later, the families of Father Lewis and Father Phan would share in the joyous occasion. The obertory gifts of bread and water were delivered by Donna and William Lewis, parents of Father Lewis, and by Bao Phan and Xuan Huyn, parents of Father Phan and by his aunt, Minh Nguyen.

In his homily, Archbishop Beltran said the two new priests were like the wheat seeds that the Gospel spoke about. The same kind of wheat seeds, that by dying each year, provides so much to our way of life in Oklahoma. Read by Deacon Herb Vance, John 12:24-26 was quite fitting for the ordination, the archbishop said.

"Unless the grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit." (John 12:24)

“William and Long, you have appropriately selected this Gospel passage for your ordination,” Archbishop Beltran said. “In the years of your priesthood that lie ahead of you, as you drive throughout Oklahoma, you will be reminded of this Scripture passage and I ask you to reflect on it constantly. It is more than just a pleasant thought or story. This Bible verse reveals the plan of God for all His people reborn in baptism, but especially for both of you who are about to be ordained and the rest of us who are priests.

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“Priesthood is therefore a gift bestowed on the humanity of Jesus by the Father. In the very moment that God was made Flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Father looked upon His Son with infinite satisfaction. He acknowledged Jesus as the One Mediator between heaven and earth, a priest forever. Priesthood is the Father’s divine gift to His Son Jesus and therefore human beings have no claim or right to priesthood. Indeed, no one can take this honor this honor upon himself. It requires a

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Letter

We All Must Encourage Vocations

I attended Clergy Days June 3-5 at the Pastoral Center and the topic for this session of continuing education of the clergy was Fishers of Men. Father Jerry Francik, Director of Vocations for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, was our guest speaker, who stimulated much conversation among the priests about how to promote vocations to the priesthood within our Archdiocese. Before actually discussing how to get more men into the seminary to study for the priesthood, Father Jerry presented some amazing statistics from a survey of current priests and how they view their own vocation. I do not remember the exact statistics, but the overwhelming majority of priests serving today find great happiness and fulfillment in their ministries. Over 75 percent of those surveyed said that a priest played an important role in their decision to enter the seminary, but over 95 percent said their vocation was fostered by active participation in the Church and support from their parents. If we want to maintain the Catholic Church as we know it today in Oklahoma, parents must take a more active role in helping their sons realize what a tremendous opportunity and gift it is to serve God and his people as a Catholic priest. I pray for vocations at every Mass I celebrate. This year, which has been named “Year of the Priest” by our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, not only will I pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood at every Mass, I will also include the parents of all young men that they will foster within their sons a notion of serving God and His Church as good and holy priests.

Father Kirk Larkin
Pastor, Holy Family Church - Lawton

New Priests

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call from God.

“William and Long, tonight, through the Church, God is calling you to become His priests. He is inviting you to share in His ministry.

“On this occasion, as your Archbishop, ordaining you priests for the service of the Church of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, I ask you to reflect once more on the Gospel you yourselves selected for this Mass.

“Unless the grain of wheat dies, it remains just a grain of wheat.” You are the grains of wheat tonight. You must die to selfishness and sin.

You must rise with the life of Jesus to Whom you are configured. Each of you is to become another Christ. Tonight you are consecrated to God. This is what celibacy and priestly commitment are all about. It means that you freely, joyfully and totally unite yourselves to God forever. But how can you make such a radical and permanent commitment? There is only one way. It is the way that Jesus tells us when He says love God first and foremost and your neighbor as yourself. Upon these two commandments is based the entire law and the prophets. It is all a matter of love of God.”
U.S. Could Learn Lesson on Embryos from Germany, Italy

When I give talks on stem cell research or in-vitro fertilization, people invariably ask, “What should be done with all the frozen embryos?” It is usually asked with a sense of urgency, even desperation, as they reflect on the fate of the hundreds of thousands of human embryos cryopreserved in liquid nitrogen at fertility clinics. The simple answer is that ethically there is very little we can do with the frozen embryos except to keep them frozen for the foreseeable future. No other morally acceptable options seem to exist.

The question of what to do with the frozen embryos, I sometimes remind my audiences, is not in fact the most pressing question we face. A much more urgent issue is how to stop the relentless manufacturing and freezing of new embryos which is occurring each day, with clockwork-like regularity, in every major city in the United States.

The infertility industry has become an embryo mass-production line with virtually no oversight or national regulation. To start bringing this into check, strong parental desires, it is a multi-billion dollar business aptly described as the “wild west of infertility.” To do so, we need to stop the relentless manufacturing and freezing of new embryos which is occurring each day, with clockwork-like regularity, in every major city in the United States.

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Frozen embryos, clearly, can never be donated to science. Such a decision would amount to handing over not cadavers, but living human beings, for dismemberment at the hands of stem cell researchers. This would always be a radical failure in the parents’ duty to protect and care for their offspring.

These considerations indicate the difficulty of answering the question about the disposition of frozen human embryos. We are reminded how sinful choices have consequences, and how the original decision to violate the moral law by doing IVF invariably has grievous repercussions, including the kinds of quandaries considered here, for which no moral resolution is apparent.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, ncbcenter.org.

Book Explores Saints of the Bible and Their Feast Days


Here is a quick reference book on some of the saints of the Bible. The saints covered are mainly from the New Testament. Theresa Doyle-Nelson presents from a page and a half to two pages on a biblical saint. Some of the saints she discusses are the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Twelve Apostles, St. Paul, St. Stephen, St. Barnabas, the Holy Innocents, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Lazarus and his sister, St. Martha, St. Philemon and several others. She arranges the saints in the order of their feast days, starting with Mary, the Mother of God (Jan. 1) and finishing with the Holy Innocents (Dec. 28).

The general reader will enjoy this book and others can use it as an introduction into the study of the saints of the Bible. Doyle-Nelson has a two-page bibliography which includes books and Internet sites. She researched her topic by using many sources like books on the saints, dictionary of saints and Internet sites. Many of these sources are in her bibliography. The author provides not only the current date of the feast of the saint, but if the feast day has been moved, she shows the old date. She also provides what the saint is patron of. She begins her biography of the saint with a short quote from Scripture on the particular saint, and at the end of the biography, provides some citations as to where to find more Scripture quotes on the saint. There is also a chart before the bibliography that has the saint’s name, what the name means, date of feast, patronage of and Scripture reference. This book is highly recommended as an introduction to saints of the Bible.

Brother Benet Exton is a Benedictine Monk at St. Gregory’s Abbey in Shawnee. Among other duties, he serves as the librarian and writes book reviews regularly for several Catholic publications, including the Sooner Catholic.
Pro-Life America

Several years ago, the abortion advocacy organization, NARAL, decided to drop the word “abortion” from its name. Originally founded in 1969 as the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws, NARAL changed its name in 1973 to the National Abortion Rights Action League when Roe v. Wade legalized abortion nationwide. In 2003, the “A-word” must have become too distasteful or ineffective in promoting “reproductive rights.” NARAL dropped mention of abortion altogether but kept its acronym, calling itself “NARAL Pro-Choice America.” Now “NARAL” presumably doesn’t stand for anything.

It seems increasingly clear that “Pro-Choice America” doesn’t stand for anything either. According to recent nationwide opinion polls, support for abortion is waning, and America is trending decidedly pro-life. The trend started in the early ’90s during the public debate on partial-birth abortion — in which the Catholic community was highly visible. Support for Roe peaked in 1991 and has been falling ever since.

The Gallup Poll’s Values and Beliefs survey released May 15 shows that Americans are taking a dramatic turn toward greater opposition to abortion. For the first time, a 51 percent majority of adults identified themselves as pro-life — an 8-point increase over the previous year. Only 42 percent called themselves pro-choice. Women have embraced the pro-life position more, and this is the first time in nine years that significantly more men and women are pro-life than pro-choice. A total of 75 percent think that abortion should be illegal under all circumstances (22 percent) or legal only under certain circumstances (53 percent). Only 23 percent think abortion should be legal under any circumstance.

Thus, fewer than one in four agrees with the current status of abortion law under Roe v. Wade, which allows abortion on demand throughout the nine months of pregnancy. Other polls conducted by Gallup, the Pew Research Center and Quinnipiac University have similar findings.

It’s encouraging that we live in “Pro-Life America.” This is a real sign of hope for women and their children. But the polls are not surprising because we’re seeing these results confirmed by an upsurge in grassroots pro-life activism. Pro-Life America has mobilized in three recent major campaigns thanks to the hard work of a small crew at the bishops’ partner organization, National Committee for a Human Life Amendment (NCHLA).

Over 34 million postcards to Congress were distributed during the campaign against the introduction of the so-called “Freedom of Choice Act” (FOCA) or similar legislation. Millions spoke up to defend the hard-won pro-life laws that have saved countless lives since Roe — laws like public funding bans and parental involvement requirements.

Then Pro-Life America got to work again, sending over 340,000 messages to the Department of Health and Human Services urging continued protection for the conscience rights of health-care workers. Over 73,000 of these were sent through NCHLA’s online Grassroots Action Center. In May, that same action center facilitated tens of thousands of comments to Congress and NIH opposing destructive embryonic stem cell research and calling for ethical alternatives.

As we raise our voices to our policymakers, we must also pray that they will make wise decisions for the common good. The Pro-Life Secretariat has posted suggested prayers at www.usccb.org/prolife/prayer/liturgy/liturgicalprayers.shtml.

It is time to be boldly and lovingly pro-life — not just because we’re in the majority, but because families are literally dying to hear the hope we have to share.

Deirdre A. McQuade is assistant director for Policy & Communications at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, www.usccb.org/prolife.

Letter

Tone it Down

Although I am not comfortable with controversy, I am compelled to write in support of the views expressed in Loren Gatch’s recent letter, “A Threatening Tone.”

I want Gatch to know that there is at least one other Catholic in the diocese who shares the same concerns.

In my opinion, too many articles in the Sooner Catholic have a mean-spirited, political slant. Please use your editorial discretion to print more even-handed, less inflammatory coverage of moral issues.

Sue Ann Johnson
Christ the King
Oklahoma City
Buenas Noticias...

Homilía del 5 de junio de 2009.
Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo:

Con gratitud y mucha alegría hacia Dios Todopoderoso nos reunimos aquí, en esta noche para celebrar la ordenación de dos nuevos sacerdotes.

William Lewis y Long Phan, los felicito y les doy la bienvenida a ustedes y a sus padres, familiares y amigos a la Catedral de Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro. Ustedes han estado rezando, estudiando, haciendo ministerio y discerniendo la llamada de Dios. También yo, en representación de la Arquidiócesis, he estado buscando cumplir la voluntad del Señor en lo que respecta a sus vocaciones. Por lo tanto, en esta noche con mucha confianza y alegría, los voy a ordenar a través de la tradicional imposición de las manos por el Poder del Espíritu Santo. Tengo la convicción al igual que ustedes que el Señor Jesús los está llamando para que se conviertan en sacerdotes Católicos.

He dicho que ustedes se han preparado por largo tiempo para esta ordenación. Hoy en día existen innumerables maneras en las cuales la gente considera o mide el tiempo en la vida. Hay calendarios anuales y años fiscals. También hay años escolares, temporadas de basquetbol y más. ¡Pero aquí en Oklahoma, sin darnos cuenta, también tenemos el año de la Biblia! Además tenemos millones de acres con plantaciones de trigo y de maíz que tienen su temporada de cosecha y que son importantes para nuestra economía, importancia que le compete incluso a aquellos que no son rancheros o campesiños.

De las tierras frescas que tienen un rojo fuerte, las cuales son aradas para recibir las semillas de trigo en el mes de septiembre, hasta que pasa el invierno, vemos como las hojas verdes germinadas que brillan de las cosechas a pesar de la nieve y el frío se maduran sobre la dorada primavera a pesar de los vientos de mayo y junio. Entonces vemos, consideramos y comentamos sobre esto: ¿Son las condiciones del tiempo apropiadas? ¿Llevó lo suficiente? ¿El granizo habrá dañado la cosecha? A través de su temporada de cosecha, testimoniamos el cumplimiento del ejemplo de las Escrituras: “En verdad digo: Si el grano de trigo no cae en tierra y muere, queda solo; pero si muere, da mucho fruto” (Juan 12,24).

William y Long, ustedes han escogido apropiadamente el pasaje del Evangelio para su ordenación. En los años de su sacerdocio que les están por venir, ustedes manearán a lo largo de Oklahoma, por lo que recordarán este pasaje bíblico y lo reflexionarán constantemente y lo tomarán más que como una guía para el presente y el futuro.

En esta ocasión, como su Arzobispo que soy, los ordeno sacerdotes para el servicio de la Iglesia de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City. Les pido que reflexionen una vez más sobre el Evangelio que ustedes mismos han seleccionado para esta Misa. “Si el grano de trigo no cae en tierra y muere, queda solo”. Ustedes son el grano de trigo esta noche. Ustedes deben morir del pecado y el egoísmo. Ustedes deben resucitar con la vida de Cristo y a quien uesdtes están configurados. Esta noche está consagrados a Dios. Esto es lo que el celibato y el sacerdocio se comprometen. Esto significa que ustedes viven libremente, con alegría y totalmente se unirán a Dios para siempre. ¿Cómo harán ustedes este compromiso? Hay una sola forma de hacerlo y es cuando Cristo nos dice amar a Dios por sobre todas las cosas y amar a tu prójimo como a ti mismo. Aunque estos dos mandamientos son basados en la ley y los profetas, se trata del amor a Dios. El sacerdocio debe ser un modelo ejemplar de santidad, tal como Santa Teresa de Lisieux, Doctora de la Iglesia, nos lo describió con sus palabras cuando dijo: “Oh... te amo, mi Dios, te amo”. William y Long, ustedes han sido llamados por Dios para que lo amen total y completamente.

En la naturaleza cuando el grano de trigo es plantado en la tierra, éste cambia radicalmente cuando recibe los nutrientes y la humedad necesaria para que crezca. Se puede decir que muere y deja de ser un grano para convertirse en fruto. De igual manera, el sacerdote, en la ordenación, se entrega totalmente a Cristo. Desde ese mismo momento, el ministerio del sacerdote debe siempre ser el ministerio de Cristo trabajando en y a través de Él. No hemos sido ordenados sacerdotes para promovernos nosotros mismos, sino para proclamar la Buena Nueva de Cristo Jesús y sólo podemos hacerlo si amamos a Dios completamente y con verdadera unidad con Jesucristo.

Jesús vino, tal como Él lo dijo, para servir y no ser servido. Todos los ministerios son un servicio, sin embargo, el ministerio sacerdotal es el servicio de Cristo que se alcanza a través de un sacerdote ordenado. La proclamación de la Buena Nueva y la realidad de los sacramentos dependen del poder y gracia de Dios. Entonces, un sacerdote hace ministerio para el pueblo en Nombre de Cristo, en la Persona de Cristo y por el poder del Espíritu Santo. El mayor de los esfuerzos y trabajo humano desprovisto del amor de Dios se convertirá en nada duradero, nada que perdure. Por ende, un sacerdote para ser efectivo, debe morir a sí mismo para que Dios trabe en y a través de él para que produzca frutos. William y Long, esta noche a través del ministerio de la Iglesia y por gracia de Dios, ustedes serán sacerdotes ordenados. Luego, mañana, la próxima semana, el próximo año y todos los años de sus vidas deberán ser hombres de oración, hombres que aman a Dios, hombres para servir al pobre, hombres para trabajar por la justicia y la paz. Ustedes deben simplemente buscar servir y no ser servidos. Ustedes deben crecer en la bondad, santidad, fidelidad y felicidad sacerdotal porque Dios les dice a cada uno de ustedes esta noche: "Tú eres sacerdote para siempre" (Hebreos 5,4).
Segundo Congreso Juvenil en la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City
Jóvenes le dicen no a la violencia y sí al encuentro con el Señor

Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Alrededor de trescientos jóvenes se reunieron en el auditorio de la Escuela Preparatoria Católica “Bishop McGuinness” para orar, meditar, cantar y alabar al Señor y hacer conciencia de la importancia de la invocación del Espíritu Santo en la vida diaria. El encuentro permitió que nuestra juventud valore más los preceptos de nuestra Iglesia y se alejen del pecado y de toda forma de violencia y malos hábitos que van en contra de los valores morales de la sociedad y de los mandatos de Dios y la doctrina de la Iglesia Católica. Participaron jóvenes Católicos de casi todas las parroquias hispanas de la Arquidiócesis. Pese a que estos jóvenes son bilíngües, ellos decidieron llevar el encuentro en español, preservando sus valores de identidad cultural.

Comenzaron Carnavales de Verano
Parroquia de los Santos Ángeles inicia jornadas de alegría para nuestro pueblo

Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Las fiestas de carnaval de nuestras parroquias hispanas son eventos de larga tradición que permiten recaudar fondos para el mejoramiento de las infraestructuras y ministerios en las parroquias donde estas festividades se efectúan. En esta ocasión la feligresía de los Santos Ángeles se organizó para dar lo mejor a la comunidad y hacer momentos de recreación amena en los espacios de su parroquia. Los próximos carnavales están pautados en el Sagrado Corazón el día 21 de junio donde habrá una rifa de una camioneta nueva del 2009, en la Florecita para el día 28 de junio donde también tendrán una rifa de una camioneta nueva 2009 y en San Carlos de Borromeo el 12 de julio.
Jobs Box

Part-Time Positions Available

Sacred Heart Catholic School in OKC is currently accepting applications for the following part-time positions for the 2009-2010 school year: music teacher for grades kindergarten through eighth, Title I reading teacher, and after-school care director. Please send a resume to Principal Joana Camacho, 2700 S. Shartel Ave., Oklahoma City 73109, or e-mail to principal@sacredheart-okc.org.

Third-Grade Teacher Needed

Bishop John Carroll School in Oklahoma City is taking applications for a dynamic, energetic teacher for third grade. Please send resume to 1100 NW 32nd St., Oklahoma City 73118, Attn: Connie Diotte.

Part-Time Teacher Openings

St. John Nepomuk Catholic School in Yukon has two part-time teaching positions available for the 2009-2010 school year. The two positions are to provide art education and vocal music education to students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Applicants may possess either an Oklahoma state teacher certification or a college degree/experience in an art/music related field. Applicants should contact Principal Diane Floyd at (405) 354-2509 to submit a resume and application.

Teacher Openings

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

Faith-Filled First-Grade Teacher Needed

St. Eugene Catholic School in Oklahoma City is in need of a first-grade teacher. If you are an early childhood teacher who would like to teach in a life-giving, pre-3 through eighth-grade school, please send resume to Suzette Williams, St. Eugene Catholic School, or e-mail Swilliams@steugenes.org.

Dynamic Director for Extended Care

St. Eugene Catholic School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for an energetic and joyful director to supervise staff and manage a very vital ministry of our school. This position is for the person who has experience with child care and a zeal for creating a program that is true to our mission. Please send resume and application to Suzette Williams, St. Eugene Catholic School, or e-mail Swilliams@steugenes.org.

Part-Time Youth Minister

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish in Duncan is seeking a dynamic individual to minister to our youth through fun and fellowship. Responsibilities include planning and leading activities, trips and conferences in a Christian environment. Bilingual preferred. For more information, see our Web site at www.assumptionparishonline.org. Send résumé with references to “Youth Minister Search Committee,” Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, 711 W. Hickory Avenue, Duncan, Okla. 73533, or e-mail to duncancatholic@sbcglobal.net.

Fifth-Grade Teacher Sought

Sacred Heart Catholic School, El Reno, is accepting applications for a fifth-grade teacher. The teacher must hold certification in elementary education. Please send a resume, attention to Principal Shannon Statton, to 210 S. Evans, El Reno, Okla. 73036, or fax to (405) 262-3818.

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.

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

Maintenance Opening

Trinity Gardens and Villa Isenbart Senior Apartments, 3801 NW 19th St., (405) 947-4143, are seeking a full-time maintenance person. A clean background check and good work history is required. Will be required to live on site in provided 2-bedroom apartment. HVAC experience a plus. Pay will be based on experience. Please fax resume to (405) 947-4199.

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 p.m. to 11 p.m., 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. and float. CMA - Certified Medication Aide to work weekend doubles. Dietary aide - Help prepare meals following recipes and menus. Operational workshop accountant - Must be detail-oriented with experience in Microsoft Excel, inventory control, and reviewing P/L statements. To apply, call 263-4658, fax 263-4718, e-mail alemkestcfinc.org or in person at 635 W. Texas, Okarche, Okla. 73762. EOE

Financial Representative Openings

The Knights of Columbus has an opening for a financial representative in the Oklahoma City, Lawton and Stillwater areas. This is ideal for a determined, high energy, high expectation, professional, self-disciplined, independent individual desiring to serve others, yet earn a better than average income. We provide top-rated financial products to our members and their families and will provide excellent benefits and training. Please contact Kevin W. Pierce, general agent, for more information or an interview at 4001 NW 122nd St. No. 827, Oklahoma City 73120, by phone at (405) 514-7660 or by e-mail at Kevin-Pierce@kofc.org.

Health Clinic Needs Medical Volunteers

The Good Samaritan Health Clinic of Edmond has a full appointment book every Saturday from 9 to noon. More health care providers are needed to maintain operation and to expand in the future. Please contact us if you are a physician or ARNP in family or internal medicine or pediatrics. Deacon Lee Hunt, 348-9461, DeaconLee@cox.net, or goodsamaritanofedmond.com.

For an up-to-date jobs box, visit us online at catharchdioceseokc.org
16 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.

17-25 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.

18 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.

19 Michael John Poirier in concert at 7 p.m. at St. Peter Church in Woodward. Join us for an evening of songs and stories for the soul.

20 International Food Fest at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Oklahoma City at 6 p.m. in the T. Phil Kierl gymnasium. St. Francis is located at 1901 N.W. 18th St. in Oklahoma City. Dinner tickets will be sold for $20 each. Call Mary Lalli for ticket information, 947-2947.

20 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.

20 The Office of Family Life is excited to announce our next PREP (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program) titled “REAL Y PARA SIEMPRE,” entirely in Spanish, at the Catholic Pastoral Center. The day begins with sign-in at 9:30 a.m. and the program is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. PREP is designed to help in such areas as: speaker/listener technique, problem solving and ground rules for handling conflict and other issues that can help couples with their communication skills. For this event, there will be limited baby-sitting so reservations are required. Space is limited, lunch is included.

21 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 to 4 p.m. For more information, call Susan Staudt at (405) 282-6624.

21 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.

21 Sr. Florentia Riebel Celebrates 75th Anniversary

Sister Florentia Riebel, ASC, celebrated her 75th anniversary of first profession as an Adorer of the Blood of Christ on May 24, 2009, at the Wichita Center in Wichita, Kan.

Sister Florentia Riebel was born in Schoenen, Kan. Sister has served in health ministry primarily as a physical therapist, spending most of her time in Enid. After completing her nursing studies at St. Mary’s Hospital, she also ministered there at various times for a total of 23 years. She also ministered at Enid Memorial Hospital (five years) and as a physical therapist for the Enid Public Schools (13 years). She just recently moved to the Wichita Center where she is living mission in later life.

THERE IS NO COST!! But you must RSVP to Lisa at (405) 709-2709.

La Oficina de Vida Familiar se coloca en anunciar el programa “Real y para siempre” que sirve para ayudar a mejorar y fortalecer la relación matrimonial. Este programa presenta las herramientas necesarias para resolver conflictos en el matrimonio, obtener una mejor comunicación entre la pareja y prevenir el divorcio. Este programa se efectuará el día 20 de Junio en el Centro Pastoral, el cual está ubicado en: 7501 NW Expressway en Oklahoma City. El programa es completamente en español y es gratuito. Comenzará a las 10 de mañana hasta las cuatro de la tarde y habrá guardería para los niños. Para registrarse o para conseguir más información, favor llamar a Lisa Carrasco al Telf. (405) 709-2709.

21 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.

21 Pilgrimage Sunday, 10:45 a.m. Anointing of the Sick, 11 a.m. Mass, noon lunch, 1 p.m. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Prayer of the Chaplet and Litany of the Infant Jesus. Nat’l Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague is located in St. Wenceslaus Church, SH-99 7 miles N. I-40 or 20 miles S. I-44 at Stroud exit, Prague, (405) 567-3080.

23 Questions about Catholicism and the process of joining the Church? Inquiry sessions will be available at Yukon’s St. John Nepomuk Catholic Church, 600 Garth Brooks Blvd. We will meet at 7 p.m. on June 23, July 14 and Aug. 4. For more information, contact Ann Cook in the parish office at 354-2743 or pastoral@sjnok.org.

25 Bingo at St. James Catholic Church, 41st and S. McKinley Ave., will be June 25 in the gym. Food and beverages reasonably priced will be served at 5:45 p.m. Bingo begins at 6:30 p.m. All games including two blackouts are $10. Door prizes and special recognition for all players born in June. A HDTV flat-screen television will be given away Oct. 22. Each time you play you get an entry ticket into the TV drawing. Come on down and make it a party.

26-28 St. Paul Focus of Retreat presented by St. Gregory’s Abbey in Shawnee. This retreat is an ideal way to bring to a close the Jubilee Year of St. Paul and will focus on five principle themes from the writings of St. Paul. The retreat will be presented jointly by James Shelton, Ph.D., and monks of St. Gregory’s Abbey. Cost for the retreats is $80 per person in advance and $85 for those not pre-registered. This fee includes lodging, meals and registration fee. The cost for those not needing lodging is $50. For further information, consult the abbey Web page, monks-ok.org, or contact Father Charles at cj Buckley@stgregorys.edu or (405) 373-7856.

26-28 Retreat: Healing the Inner Child, June 26-28 with Marie Ballmann, OSB, and Jeanette Bollman. Here is a chance to come away to a safe place to begin healing the wounds of your childhood. Place: Monastery Library of Red Plains Monastery, southwest of Piedmont. Call (405) 373-0804 to register. Fee: $150 residential, $100 commuter ($25 deposit required.)

27 Chew on This: Tour of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at 6 p.m. Following the tour, there will be an ice cream social, pizza will also be served. This event is hosted by the Religious Education Board of Our Lady’s Cathedral. To RSVP or for more information, contact Faith Reilly at 523-3057 or freilly@ cathedralokc.org. The cathedral is located on NW 32nd Street, two blocks east of North Classen Blvd.

29 Rev. James Knight Memorial Golf Tournament at Boiling Springs Golf Course, Woodward. The format is a four-person scramble with a shotgun start at 10 a.m. Cost: $50 per person or $200 per team. Deadline for registration is June 22. For more information, call (580) 256-5305.
Delivering a Miracle

Shrine of Infant Jesus Receives Unexpected Support from Foundation

By Rex Hogan
For the Sooner Catholic

PRAGUE — Volunteers working at the National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague have been hearing for years about miracles for those who have prayed at the Shrine.

Recently the Shrine itself received a miracle.

While opening mail one day last December, workers discovered a $30,000 check made out to the Shrine. It was from the Stephen and Mary Birch Foundation, located in Delaware.

Rhonda Bartos, director of the Shrine of the Infant Jesus, said no one associated with the Shrine or with St. Wenceslaus Church knows why the foundation decided to make the gift.

“It just showed up in the mail,” said Bartos. “The letter with it only requested that we tell them what we spent the money on. There were no strings attached.”

The Shrine now has a hospitality room thanks to the foundation’s generosity. The room helps accommodate the estimated 30,000 to 40,000 visitors who come to the Shrine each year, Bartos said.

The renovated area includes new furniture, an area designed especially for children, a coffee bar and a flat-screen television on which travelers can view weather reports. Also included is a cell phone battery recharging station.

The Shrine is already the number one visitors attraction in Prague. And the local chamber of commerce recently promised to do more to promote the Shrine, said Bartos.

The National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague got its start in 1947 when Father George Johnson was appointed pastor at St. Wenceslaus Church in Prague. That same year, his mother, who lived in California, became ill and he traveled there to visit her.

His mother was in a hospital managed by the Sisters of Mercy. The Sisters asked Father Johnson if the parishioners back home made devotions to the Infant Jesus of Prague. The Sisters asked him if he would accept a statue dedicated to the Infant Jesus. The statue arrived in Oklahoma later that year.

St. Wenceslaus parishioners in Prague had been praying some time for the funds to build a new church. Father Johnson was praying one day when he thought about the stories his parishioners had told him about the miracles that occurred after their devotions to the Infant Jesus of Prague.

Father Johnson prayed for financing for a new church and promised he would help build a Shrine to the Infant Jesus. Money soon started coming to the parish from all across the United States.

Two years later the church was dedicated.

The next pilgrimage weekend to the National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague is June 21 starting with 10:45 a.m. Anointing of the Sick, 11 a.m. Mass, noon lunch, 1 p.m. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, prayer of the Chaplet of the Infant Jesus and the Litany of the Infant Jesus. Nat’l Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague is located at St. Wenceslaus Church, SH-99 7 miles N. I-40 or 20 miles S. I-44 at Stroud exit, (405) 567-3080.