Archbishop Beltran Ordains Three Men to the Priesthood

See story and more photos on Pages 10 and 11
The Good News

... Don’t Take Faith For Granted

Each year, I visit 70 to 75 of our churches. Most of these visits are for Confirmation, school Masses or special occasions. I am very pleased that I can share in the active faith practice of so very many of you. You are to be commended for your participation and enthusiastic practice of our Catholic faith.

At the same time, I sometimes sense a certain apathy on the part of some people, especially younger members and young adults. Thus, my constant refrain is “Don’t take your Catholic faith for granted. Live the fullness of your faith!”

Faith is a gift from God. Most of us received it in seed fashion when we were baptized as infants. Through the efforts of our parents, that seed of faith was nurtured and began to grow. As our parents introduced us to God and the Church expanded, Faith is the gift that leads us safely on the pilgrimage of life on this earth to the happy fulfillment of life in heaven. Thus it is a life-long effort that must be made to bring that faith to fulfillment. This means prayer, study and sacrifice.

Prayer is communication with God. It is a way to give praise and thanks to God. Through prayer we discover the plan of God and obtain the help needed to accept and follow God’s plan. Prayer unites us to God in a personal loving way.

Study is the effort we make to learn. It is enhanced by reading and listening but always requires thought and response. When we study about the Catholic faith, we learn about God and His Revelation. We discover the reality of who we are and why we are here on this earth. We learn how we should live on this earth in order to arrive and live with God forever in heaven.

The two great tools for studying about faith are the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The failure to read, study and discuss the contents of these two books results in an inadequate knowledge and formation in faith.

Faith is a great gift from God. It will grow and develop into a vibrant relationship with God if we cultivate it through prayer and study. Faith will wither, become weak and even die if we simply take it for granted.

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The Good News

Faith is a great gift from God. It will grow and develop into a vibrant relationship with God if we cultivate it through prayer and study.

Seminary Burses

A $600 donation was made to the Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse by the parishioners of St. Philip Neri Church, Midwest City.

A $300 donation was made to the Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse by the parishioners of St. Charles Borromeo Church, OKC.

A $300 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse by the parishioners of St. Mary Church, Ponca City.

A $250 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse by the parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi Church, OKC.

A $200 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse by the parishioners of St. Benedict Church, Shawnee.

A $200 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse by the parishioners of Our Lady’s Cathedral, OKC.

A $550 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse by the parishioners of Little Flower Church, OKC.

Father Joseph Beltran
Seminary Burse
$76,768.16

Father Denis Blackledge
Seminary Burse
$8,336.95

Father Stephen Bird
Seminary Burse
$10,000

Father Wade Darnall
Seminary Burse
$5,545

Father Bernard J. Havlik
Seminary Burse
$26,610.01

Father James A. Kastner
Seminary Burse
$9,919.99

Bishop Stephen A. Leven
Seminary Burse
$59,627.73

Father John A. Petuskey
Seminary Burse
$11,849.99

Father Clement E. Pribil
Seminary Burse
$5,251.42

Father Stanley Rother
Seminary Burse
$178,801.99

Archbishop Charles Salatka
Seminary Burse
$185,945

Father Gerald Ucker
Seminary Burse
$8,570

Totals as of 4/30/2008
Life After Retirement...
Retired Teachers Could Be Gift to Catholic Schools

By Charles A. Benke
For the Sooner Catholic

LAWTON — A superintendent of a small public rural school of the 1950s once told me that his greatest expense in those days was propane. Today, schools spend more than 80 percent of their budget on salaries.

If the 22 Catholic schools in our archdiocese are to continue to thrive and reach more students, they must do it with the dwindling buying power of today’s economy. Enter the retired public schoolteacher. There are hundreds of us around who have left the public school arena and we still hold teaching certificates. We have a monthly retirement income and paid health insurance. Some of us are even receiving Medicare and Social Security.

Most of us support Catholic education through our parish donations, but time and talent spent in the Catholic school system is worth 10 times what our donation dollars are worth in the collection plate.

What Catholic school can’t use a certified school nurse, before or after-school art and music programs? What school can’t use a certified substitute in the office at 8 a.m. to cover teachers with flat tires, traffic jams or morning sickness? What Catholic school can’t use a Latin or foreign language teacher for their electives program? What school can’t use a special education teacher or a home economics/life skills teacher? What school can’t use a half-day assistant principal for curricula or discipline, or a vocation counselor? With new Oklahoma mandates for physical exercise for middle school students, many schools may need some added part-time P.E. help.

What classroom teacher can’t use some certified help with routine paperwork, test grading, duplicating or lesson planning? What teacher, having special needs, EDD, ADHD or alcohol syndrome students in the classroom, can’t use a certified aide? Or what teacher with more than 18 students in one room wouldn’t love to have a certified aide on a regular basis?

This is not just an Oklahoma problem. The superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of Washington wrote in the Feb. 24, 2008, edition of Our Sunday Visitor, “Nationwide, we all need ... to seek new ways to sustain Catholic education for future generations.”

Our 22 Catholic schools in the Oklahoma City Archdiocese are planning next year’s schedule. They know there are many retired certified teachers who could step to the plate and donate time and talent instead of money, but our principals don’t know who you are, what you are certified to teach, or when you would be available. Why not drop by your closest Catholic school and introduce yourself? Who knows? You just might re-find the joy of teaching that you lost in that conundrum called public education.

Benke is a retired public school-teacher who now teaches language arts to middle school students at St. Mary’s Catholic School in Lawton. He just renewed his state professional teaching certificate.

Corpus Christi Parish Hits Streets to Spread God’s Word

OKLAHOMA CITY — Nearly 70 parishioners from Corpus Christi Catholic Church took to the streets May 12 to spread God’s word. Approximately 100 homes were visited and about 50 New Testament versions of the American Catholic Bible were given to neighbors in the community around Corpus Christi, along with other materials about the Church and community resources.

“We began training for this effort five weeks ago and decided to move into the community to do what our faith calls us to do — share the Good News of Jesus Christ,” said Corpus Christi Deacon Dunn Cumby, DDS. “We’ve had a good return on our investment of time and energy. This is not something new. It’s something that many of us remember from our youth and it’s something we felt we could do to better serve our community and parish family.”

The Corpus Christi Catholic Church Community Evangelization Team is divided into three groups: a hospitality group that stays at the Church to make a meal to serve others on the team; the praying group that stays in the Church sanctuary praying for those working on other teams; and the community walking teams that walk the designated neighborhoods, visiting people who are home.

The walking teams travel in pairs when visiting homes. They check on the needs and concerns of those they visit and they pray with those who want prayer.

One gentleman who lives about four blocks from the church had just lost his wife of many years and was very pleased to have someone stop, visit and pray with him. He said it was just what he needed.

The Corpus Christi Evangelization team plans on visiting about 70 to 100 homes each week.

“It’s one thing for us to gather for Mass on Saturdays and Sundays.” Cumby said. “However, we grow our faith when we visit our neighbors across this parish to let them know who we are, what we stand for and that we are willing to help them meet many of their personal, emotional and spiritual needs.”

Knights Lend a Hand

Knights from Duncan Council 5168 and Chickasha Council 1808 participated in the painting of a Habitat for Humanity home in Duncan in early May. The Knights contributed some 60 hours of volunteer time and effort to the project. Pictured, front from left, Grand Knight Dave Carney, Mark Gildon and Jimmy Conway. Standing from left, Bill Havron, Lance Warren, Larry Acker, Allan Jech, Bob Sepulvado and Richard Muller.
***Catholic Youth Help Restore Storm-Damaged Gulf Area***

**EDITOR’S NOTE: Faith Reilly wrote this article for the parish bulletin at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Parish teens spent a week working to help storm victims along the Gulf Coast. The group will be honored at the Oklahoma Statewide Preservation Conference to be held in Ponca City.

By Faith Reilly**

Our Young Neighbors mission team of 18 youth and five adults spent the week in the Abbeville, La., area. This program is a work and learning immersion experience. At our site, there were youth groups from San Antonio, Green Bay and Mequon, Wis. During the day we were assigned to various projects such as preparing and painting houses, cleaning up flooded sites, building signs, hanging doors and ceiling tiles, etc. When the teams returned to the camp at the end of the workday, they had some free time to clean up, write in their journals, nap and get to know the youth from the other cities.

Evenings were filled with group games and activities that helped them learn about the principals of Catholic Social Teaching (see below). Our young neighbors were challenged each day to make a connection between what they believe as Catholics and the work they did at the sites. Getting to know the residents at the site and people in the community was just as important as cleaning, painting and repairing the properties.

One of the things that I kept hearing from the people in this area was that they felt like the “Samaritan” left on the side of the road. They told us thank you over and over for coming to help them. They were genuinely surprised that we met is positive and hopeful.

The economy of this mostly rural area has been devastated. Two years later, the rice farmers cannot use their fields; the fresh water is still being tested and not potable in many areas and many families lost livestock and pets. The restoration of homes, other buildings and businesses is slow due to red tape, lack of funding and not enough labor to get the work done. On warm days, the smell is foul. When the area flooded, the sea life was imbedded in the sub soil and continues to decay. The upside is that in a few years this will be incredibly fertile farmland! While this seems somewhat depressing, the attitude of the people that we met is positive and hopeful. They support and take care of each other and are still very proud of their communities. Our young neighbors have been welcomed at every site and been fed well.

A trip like this is only as successful as the leadership and WOW — these adults are great leaders. They kept the teens involved in the work and played just as hard. The adults on the trip were invaluable and great fun to travel with. Chris Wright and Pat Reilly did a great job of sharing their home maintenance skills, patience and more patience when things don’t fit right. Joanne Kurjan and Denise Wright shared painting and organizational skills that kept the attitudes and teams working smoothly.

I am always moved by the deep faith and sense of tradition that our young people embody. It is a blessing to be part of this Church Militant and I firmly believe that our Catholic tradition is in very good hands.

Our Young Neighbors have taken the time to write about the work they did for the Abbeville communities, what they learned about themselves and Catholic Social Justice Teaching. I hope you will take the time to pray for these young missionaries and the people that they helped. Our young represented the Cathedral, St. Francis and Christ the King parishes very well!

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**Preservation Honor Won by Youth Team**

During the summer of 2007, Our Lady’s youth group participated in a mission trip to Abbeville, La. Our youth and adult leaders worked on historic homes damaged by the floodwaters of Hurricane Rita and the tornadoes that came afterwards. The story of our work was captured on a nine-minute DVD, produced by one of the youth, Nolan Reilly.

This DVD now has a life of its own!

In June 2008, members from the mission trip will give a presentation about involving youth in historic preservation projects at the Statewide Preservation Conference in Ponca City. This is an annual event that brings together 200 leaders from throughout the state. It is co-sponsored by the Oklahoma Historical Society and the Oklahoma Main Street Center. At the awards banquet following our presentation, the youth group will receive a 2008 State Historic Preservation Officer’s Citation of Merit. This award is given to individuals, organizations, agencies or firms that have made important contributions in the preservation of Oklahoma’s rich heritage. However, for our award, this goes to our youth as special recognition for their work in southern Louisiana!

Not only did Our Lady’s youth group provide critical services to those in need on our mission trip, but we also are now getting to tell our story, show our DVD and receive accolades. All of this inspired youth to quickly sign up for this summer’s mission trip to Omaha, Neb.!

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Ron Frantz
Oklahoma Main Street
Architect

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School coaches hold their respective state championship trophies. The school won a record-breaking eight state championships this year along with academic championships in girls cross country and girls track. Pictured from left, back row, boys golf coach Gary Savel; boys basketball coach Tondreil Durham, baseball coach Bryan Wade and football coach Kenny Young. Middle row, tennis coach Vicki Connelly and girls soccer coach Sally Cole. Seated in front is Trevor Swink, who captured two trophies, girls cross country and girls track.
Catholic Foundation Elects New Officers for Fiscal Year

OKLAHOMA CITY — At the May 16 quarterly meeting of its board of directors, the Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma Inc. elected new officers for the upcoming fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008.

Ralph Fredrickson, a bank executive from St. Monica Catholic Church in Edmond, was elected president. Ben Byers, a financial adviser from Christ the King Catholic Church, was elected president-elect, and Susan Moran, an attorney from Christ the King Catholic Church was elected vice president. Retiring president, Phil Brockhaus, a certified public accountant from St. Joseph Catholic Church in Norman, will remain in an advisory capacity as immediate past president. Archbishop Eusebius J. Beltran serves as chairman of the board.

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma Inc., incorporated in 1965, is a nonprofit entity established to provide a means for individuals and organizations to ensure the long-term financial stability of charitable, religious and educational institutions throughout the archdiocese. With the spiritual leadership and guidance of the archbishop of Oklahoma City, the foundation is managed by a board of directors, consisting of priests and professional lay men and women. Their efforts are directed principally toward the wise and sound management of the foundation’s financial resources.

The mission statement of the Catholic Foundation is to inspire Catholics throughout the archdiocese as good stewards to make charitable gifts for the investment, management and distribution of funds in order to advance the works of our Catholic faith.

In carrying out its mission, the Catholic Foundation:

- Provides estate planning and charitable giving information and assistance.
- Provides gifting vehicles in which the church and/or related entities are designated beneficiaries.
- Serves as a central clearinghouse for pooled investments through management services for parishes, schools and related entities custodial funds.
- Distributes earnings on its endowed funds to designated archdiocesan entities and for activities which would further the development of the Catholic Church (primarily college scholarships and grants to parishes and schools for educational purposes).
- Other members of the Catholic Foundation board of directors include Rev. Rex Arnold, Clinton, Tom Avant, El Reno, John Baransy, Woodward, Judge Steve Bonner, Norman, John (Pete) Dimond, Ponca City, Morris Gonsoulin, Ada, Ray Haefele, Edmond, Carol Hopper, Yukon, Charles Joy, Elk City, Dr. Charles Lawrence, Enid, Thomas Linville, Lawton, Mary McAnulty, Oklahoma City, Rev. John Metzinger, Edmond, Deborah Moon, Chickasha, Jacqueline Nisbet, Edmond, Doug Oliver, Oklahoma City, Dr. Joe Otto, Ponca City, Eugene Schwarz, Yukon, Leonard Taron, Shawnee, and Tony Tyler, Norman.

To learn more about the Catholic Foundation and Investing in the Future of our Faith, visit its Web site at www.cfook.org or call (405) 721-4115.

Father Stephen Bird to Lead Pilgrimage

Father Stephen Bird will lead a pilgrimage to seven historic missions of central California Sept. 10-15. The archdiocesan director of Worship and Spiritual Life, Father Bird has led earlier pilgrimages to the historic missions in both southern and northern California. The pilgrimage set for September will focus on the remaining missions in central California.

“Some of the most interesting places in the United States are the 21 old Spanish missions in California,” Father Bird wrote in a letter to those who have taken part in earlier pilgrimages. He said the highlights of the upcoming pilgrimage will be visits to the following missions: Nuestra Senora de la Soledad built in 1791; San Antonio de Padua built in 1771; San Miguel Arcangel built in 1797; San Luis Obispo de Tolosa built in 1772; La Purisima Concepcion built in 1787; Santa Ines built in 1804; and Santa Barbara built in 1786. Also included are visits to other attractions in the area, including a tour of the Hearst Castle, the private estate of art collector and publisher William Randolph Hearst.

Cost for the pilgrimage is $1,235 for double occupancy, age 65 and older. The cost is $1,295 for single occupancy under the age of 65. For older. The cost is $1,295 for double occupancy, age 65 and older. The cost is $1,295 for single occupancy under the age of 65. For single occupancy, an additional $400 will be charged.

Space is limited and a $300 deposit must be paid by July 15. The deposit must be paid by July 15. The balance is due by Aug. 1.

Send deposit to Office of Worship, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123-0380.

ABCs of a Charitable Gift Annuity

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

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

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

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

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<th>Age of Annuitant</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>65</th>
<th>70</th>
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<td>6.0%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
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<td>$650</td>
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<td>$3,335</td>
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<td>$4,319</td>
<td>$4,834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Investing in the Future of Our Faith
Catholic Charities Helps Burmese Refugees

By Connie Blaney and Aimee Ryan

Catholic Charities

OKLAHOMA CITY — With the recent attention to the devastation of Myanmar and the failure of the military to attend to the needs of the victims, a recent Sooner Catholic article highlighted Archbishop Beltran’s authorization of parish support for disaster relief.

Aimee Ryan, Director of Refugee Resettlement for Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City, stated, “The cyclone has brought to light the struggles of the Burmese people and its refugees and role of Catholic organizations worldwide who seek to relieve victims of ethnic, religious and cultural persecution.”

Catholic Charities Refugee and Resettlement Department have been resettling Burmese clients in the past year in both Oklahoma City and Tulsa and have a unique understanding of the citizens and the circumstances within their country of Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. In 2007, the first Burmese refugees began the process of resettlement to new countries. Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City and Catholic Charities of Tulsa jointly resettled 103 refugees during the first year. Both offices of Catholic Charities hope to resettle close to 140 Burmese clients in 2008, many of whom will arrive between June and September.

The country of Burma, renamed Myanmar by the military junta, is approximately the size of the state of Texas and is the largest country by geographical area in mainland Southeast Asia. Democratic rule ended in 1967 and for 31 years, the country’s military has been subjecting many of its citizens to ethnic and cultural attacks that include labor camps, imprisonment and abduction of children as soldiers (BBC reports 70,000) and open fire on peaceful demonstrators. More than 3,200 villages have been destroyed. Thousands have fled to avoid the violence. Those who have sought refuge have been forced to settle in Thailand and Malaysia coasts. Years were spent trying to open the camps for possible refugee resettlement in other countries. There were many delays for the Burmese refugees due to changes in the Homeland Security Act that prevent terrorists or terrorist supporters from refugee assistance. Many of the Burmese refugees are single men who are targeted by the junta for involuntary military service. Some of the men who arrived last year are married and were forced to resettle without their wives and families due to the threat of conscription.

One Burmese refugee who recently has arrived in Oklahoma City said, “I never dreamed I would be able to come to America. Freedom is so precious. We are learning English and wanting to work hard for a better life,” Nang Sian Khai said.

Catholic Charities Refugee and Resettlement assists refugees by helping them find a place to live, furnishings, household items and employment. Interested persons wishing to help the program can contact the Refugee Resettlement Department at (405) 523-3002. Donations of twin beds and used furniture (within the metro area), household supplies and toiletry items can be made by groups or individuals.

Nursing Recognized for Ministry

OKLAHOMA CITY — More than 90 nurses were recognized recently at the Catholic Pastoral Center for an evening of appreciation for their nursing vocation and service to their communities, said Mary Diane Stellenkamp, coordinator of Faith Community Nursing Program.

Father Stephen Bird and Father Jack Feehily concelebrated Mass which was followed by a candlelight dinner. Di Smalley, CEO of Mercy Health Systems, and Tim O’Connor, executive director of Catholic Charities, sponsors of the celebration, expressed their appreciation to the nurses for their dedication to the profession.

“The gift of nursing remains a part of your lives, whether you have just graduated, are actively serving or have retired from nursing practice,” said O’Connor. “On behalf of all of us who have been the recipients of your ministry, we come tonight to thank you.”

Plans are under way to make this an annual event for nurses in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, which serves central and western Oklahoma.
Immigrants in Oklahoma Are Children of God

OKLAHOMA CITY — Recent increases in immigration have spurred anti-immigrant sentiments, particularly in some cities and rural areas of Oklahoma that have previously seen few immigrants. Due to the diversity of backgrounds encountered in the immigrant population of Oklahoma, racist policies have varied widely. The recent Oklahoma state law, HB 1804, was justified with one or more arguments and claims about immigrants. The immigration debate has generated negative feelings and claims that immigrants are taking over white Anglo-American society, especially in Oklahoma. Actually, anti-immigrant sentiment expressions may be used to describe individuals, groups or movements which oppose significant levels of immigration into Oklahoma. Opposition to immigration in Oklahoma is based on fears the immigrants do not share American values. Sometimes immigrants are to blame because of government expenses, but this argument that immigrants are an economic load is not proven and immigration is linked with an improvement in our economic conditions in Oklahoma because immigrants spend money on products and services just like everybody else.

The anti-immigration sentiments assumed in Oklahoma that immigrants want to isolate themselves in their own communities and refuse to learn the English language. Our U.S. history recalls that the use of the English language was a political and an emotional issue as early as the 1750s. Now in Oklahoma, a few people have sought to eradicate minority languages with English-only legislation and discourage bilingualism wherever it could be found. Complaints about non-English speakers became less common in Oklahoma, however, some people tried to support a state constitutional amendment making English the official language of Oklahoma. Jesus provides us with examples of compassion and love. Jesus said to his disciples: “Love one another even as I have loved you.” (John 13:34). The Catholic Catechism teaches us that in the realm of immigration law, all governments have essential duties, which must be carried out and neither of which can be ignored.

Our Catholic Social Teaching prescribes that we as people of God need “to welcome the foreigner out of charity and respect for the dignity and rights of the human person. Persons have the right to immigrate and thus government must accommodate this right to the greatest extent possible, consistent with its other obligations to the common good. The right to immigrate is therefore a qualified, rather than an absolute right. Nevertheless, all nations and especially financially blessed nations are called to make every possible effort to assist persons who are compelled by their circumstances to migrate.” (The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000, No. 2241).

As Catholics, we should advocate for the protection of basic human rights and the dignity of the human beings. The United States Catholic Bishops Conference (USCCB) believes that meaningful immigration reform must properly balance the right to migrate and the right to regulate migration. Thus, the USCCB opposes “enforcement only” immigration policies because they lack proper accommodation of the right to migrate. Instead, the USCCB supports “comprehensive” immigration policies that pare valid enforcement laws with fair and generous legalization measures.

Immigrants have been working hard for the development and prosperity of Oklahoma. They are working hard to help their families and ourselves. Furthermore, they introduced many things such as food, customs, family values and traditions to enrich our archdiocese of Oklahoma City and our beautiful Oklahoma. Many of them are good Catholics. Immigrants are human beings and they have feelings and sometimes they have problems because they don’t have the opportunity to make a difference because our immigration system is broken. Immigrants sacrifice a lot of things to be in Oklahoma and find the peace of God. Let’s be optimistic for a moment and assume that some issues about immigration could be resolved with the love of God and the goodwill of the people of the United States.

Mauro Yanez is Spanish editor for The Sooner Catholic.

Bipartisan Efforts Help Pass Law Against Modern Slave Trade

OKLAHOMA CITY — Legislation to hike the penalties for modern-day slave traders was signed into law by Gov. Brad Henry last month.

Two women serving in the Oklahoma Legislature, who led the charge to punish human traffickers, said they were pleased the bill finally became law after four years of work.

“Human trafficking is the slave trade of the 21st century,” said state Rep. Marian Cooksey, R-Edmond. “For too long, people have been smuggled into Oklahoma and forced into prostitution or exploited as unpaid laborers.”

“It has taken four years of work to build support for this measure. Many people didn’t realize the slave trade didn’t end with the Civil War, it just went underground,” said state Rep. Rebecca Hamilton, D-Oklahoma City. “Today’s slave trade doesn’t discriminate based on race. Instead, it exploits the weak and tramples their spirits, especially poor women from Third World countries.”

Both women authored human trafficking legislation this year and joined forces to see the combined proposal become law. The two legislators had each authored similar legislation in both 2006 and 2007 as well.

House Bill 1021, by Cooksey, creates new penalties for anyone convicted of human trafficking “for forced labor or forced sexual exploitation,” who relies on the “use of force, fraud or coercion” to trap victims.

Under the bill, those convicted of human trafficking will face at least five years in prison and/or a fine of up to $10,000 for each conviction.

Anyone convicted of human trafficking involving victims younger than age 14 will face at least 10 years in prison and/or a fine of up to $20,000.

Those convicted of the crime could also be ordered to pay restitution to their victims and the bill allows law enforcement officials to seize trafficker’s property — including aircraft, vehicles and money — to help offset the state expenses of prosecution.

Although it took several years to approve a human trafficking law in Oklahoma, past efforts were not wasted, Cooksey and Hamilton said. Every year the bill was fine-tuned to make it more effective and the constant drumbeat helped build support.

“They say nothing worth having comes easy, and that was true for this legislation,” Hamilton said. “It was always frustrating to see this legislation derailed in the past, but it is just as rewarding to see it now become law and know that we will have helped potentially save the lives of trafficking victims.”

“Slave traders don’t differentiate between Republicans and Democrats when they kidnap their victims, so the battle against human trafficking should not break down along partisan lines,” Cooksey said.

“I am pleased this was a bipartisan effort and an occasion where lawmakers worked together for the good of all Oklahomans.”

A September 2004 Human Rights Center report titled “Hidden Slaves: Forced Labor in the United States,” found that at any given time, more than 10,000 forced laborers are working in the United States. Most of them work in prostitution, domestic services, agriculture and sweatshops.

In 2003, the Department of Justice reported the largest concentrations of trafficking survivors who received federal assistance lived in California, Texas, New York and Oklahoma.

Pope Benedict to Meet Young People at WYD

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI will meet some of Sydney’s disadvantaged young people during World Youth Day Sydney 2008 (WYD08).

World Youth Day organizers revealed that the Holy Father will share a private meal with 12 young people from around the world and hold a special Mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral with invited seminarians and young religious people.

WYD08 coordinator, Bishop Anthony Fisher, OP, said these occasions would allow the Holy Father to connect with young people from different walks of life on a personal level.

Bishop Fisher said the Holy Father had especially requested a meeting with some of Sydney’s disadvantaged young people.

“Those he will meet are young people alienated from the many positive messages that WYD promotes. This will not be a one-off experience for them, but something that links them into the ongoing healing mission of the Catholic Church.”

Bishop Fisher said the Holy Father would travel to an inner-city suburb to meet the disadvantaged young people.

Pope Benedict XVI will make his first visit to Australia for WYD08. The event is expected to attract up to 500,000 people at some events from July 15-20.
DeNegri named Person of the Year by Notre Dame Club of OKC

OKLAHOMA CITY — Mount St. Mary High School Principal Talita DeNegri was named the Notre Dame Club of Oklahoma City Person of the Year at its annual banquet on May 8 at the Waterford Hotel. DeNegri joins an exclusive group of past winners, including Father Stanley Rother in 1982, Director of Catholic Charities Tim O’Connor in 1993, former governor Frank Keating in 2000, former OSU president Dr. James Halligan, and last year’s recipient, Archbishop Eusebius Beltran. DeNegri continues the legacy established by her father, Pete Córdova, who also received this award upon his retirement from a 38-year career at Mount St. Mary High School.

Mike Milligan, past president of the Notre Dame Club of Oklahoma City, was involved in the selection of DeNegri. “Himself a former club Person of the Year, Milligan described the characteristics for this award. “Each year we recognize a person in the community that epitomizes the ideals of the University of Notre Dame. These areas include academic excellence, religious leadership and community service. In recognition of Talita’s outstanding performance as principal of Mount St. Mary High School, her servant leadership skills and her commitment to Catholic education, she was the ideal choice for this prestigious honor.”

DeNegri expressed her excitement upon receiving this award. “I am honored to be chosen as this year’s recipient. When you look at the past winners of this award, I am humbled to be named among that select group that includes my own father. Receiving this award is really a reflection of the great things that are happening at Mount St. Mary High School. Being the principal at The Mount is a calling I am proud to answer. I want to thank the Notre Dame Club of Oklahoma City for this honor, because the Mercy values of excellence in academic achievement and service mirror the values of the University of Notre Dame.”

St. Mary’s Church to Dedicate Restored Organ

PONCA CITY — St. Mary’s Church has replaced and restored its 1981 Reuter pipe organ. The $63,500 restoration project was completed in May. A re-dedicated recital is schedule for 7 p.m. June 22 and the public is invited.

The restoration project was directed by Larry Pickering of Wichita, Kan., and Glen Rucker of Abilene, Texas.

The guest organist for the re-dedication will be Brett Valliant. Valliant has toured throughout the United States, New Zealand and Australia, performing at notable venues. He is the artist-in-residence for Wichita Theatre Organ Inc. where he plays the world-renowned New York Wurlitzer organ installed in Century II Civic Center.

Valliant has been a featured performer on National Public Radio’s PIPE DREAMS and performed at national conventions of the American Theatre Organ Society and the American Guild of Organists.

Besides playing on the largest pipe organs in Kansas and overseeing a music department seen by thousands across the Midwest on the Church’s award-winning television program, he is known for accompanying dramatic films such as King of Kings, Phantom of the Opera, The Ten Commandments and The Eagle. He currently has two recordings to his credit.

Wichita to Host Summer Institute Focusing on Hope

Pope Benedict’s message about hope is the focus of the Summer Theology Institute. “In Hope We Are Saved” features national and local scholars, July 17-19 in Wichita.

Modern culture is too often a contradiction where increased prosperity and health clashes with growing levels of unhappiness and discouragement. Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI spoke about this hunger during his recent visit to the United States and in his newest encyclical on hope. More than simply mere optimism, Benedict teaches us that hope is the powerful virtue that steers us through the greatest difficulties and challenges of life. Hope changes everything.

During the 10th annual 2008 Summer Theology Institute titled “In Hope We Are Saved,” a nationally recognized faculty embraces and explores the theological virtue of hope in a unique, dynamic and supportive environment. The Institute takes place July 17-19 at the Spiritual Life Center in Wichita, Kan.

“This will be an extraordinary opportunity for people from throughout the Midwest to rediscover the meaning of hope — its place in our spiritual life and how hope affects our call to live justly,” explains Jeri Holladay, Director of Adult Education at the Spiritual Life Center and the driving force behind the Institute.

“I am delighted with our faculty members who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to bear in this unique and exciting learning experience.”

The Institute’s keynote speaker and main presenter is visiting scholar Anthony Lilles, Ph.D., Academic Dean at St. John Vianney Seminary in Denver, who serves as assistant professor of moral and spiritual theology.

Dr. Lilles will open the 2008 Institute on Thursday, July 17 at 7 p.m. with a talk titled “Fire of Hope: Encounter with Christ.” He will then teach courses on Friday and Saturday called “Beginning to Pray” and “Mary, Star of Hope.”

Two popular, well-known presenters join Dr. Lilles on the Summer Theology Institute faculty: Father Bernard Gorges and Chris Stewart.

Father Gorges is pastor of Holy Name Parish in Winfield and founder of the highly acclaimed Totus Tuus youth formation program. He is also in demand as a speaker for audiences around the country, including the Midwest Catholic Family Conference. Father Gorges’ courses revolve around the theme of “Justice and Hope” and are titled “False Hopes: Marxism, Fascism, Nazism,” “Justice in the Catholic Tradition” and “Justice and Eternal Life.”

Chris Stewart, M.T.S., is chairman of the Theology Department at Kapaun Mt. Carmel Catholic High School in Wichita. Stewart offers three courses under the umbrella title of “Hope Changes Everything.” They are: “Hope Changes Me,” “Hope and Eternity” and “Hope Changes the World.”

The Summer Theology Institute is an intense religious education program with nationally recognized scholars filled with energy and inspiration designed to introduce and explore the Catholic Tradition. Created in 1999, the Institute offers catechists, RCA team members, Catholic schoolteachers, DREs and all those deeply interested in their faith an opportunity to learn in a dynamic and supportive environment.

Earlybird discounted registration for the Institute is now under way and available through June 20 and all registration ends July 3.

A registration fee structure is available for both commuters and residents. A meal plan is included and residents of the Institute and commuters may pick and choose their own meal plan.

A brochure with a complete listing of details on cost, times and more can be viewed and downloaded at www.slwichita.org.

A hard copy can be acquired by calling the Center in Wichita at 316-744-0167.
Sisters of Benedict to Offer Retreat in Daily Life

Are you experiencing a pull or a call to deepen your relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ? One way to answer this call is participating in the life-changing experience of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius offered in the Retreat In Daily Life by the Sisters of Benedict of Red Plains Monastery.

St. Ignatius spent two years developing the Spiritual Exercises in the 16th century to help men spiritually discern their participation in the Society of Jesus or the Jesuit Order of Priests. At that time the Spiritual Exercises were experienced within a 30-day retreat. The Sisters of Benedict have since adapted the Spiritual Exercises into a 30-week Retreat In Daily Life consisting of one hour of prayer a day, weekly group sharing with six to eight other retreatants, and bimonthly sessions with a spiritual director. The retreat is offered at six locations throughout the Oklahoma City area, Stillwater, Edmond, Norman and Guthrie.

The Retreat In Daily Life is not a class nor a Bible study. The retreat is a conversion experience that facilitates retreatants putting on the mind of Christ. What characterizes the Spiritual Exercises is the sense or experience of a series of deep internal movements, leading to a personal commitment to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Spiritual Exercises are focused primarily on passages from the four gospels of Our Lord Jesus Christ and provide retreatants an immersion in Christ’s teachings and in his ministry. As a result, retreatants experience a more focused commitment to seeing and making decisions the way in which Jesus Christ sees and makes decisions. Retreatants experience spiritual and emotional growth through a new and deeper awareness of God’s unconditional love and an increased self-knowledge and self-awareness as a follower of Our Lord Jesus Christ. These new awarenesses and graces, emanating from God’s unconditional love, contribute to a movement from the false self toward freedom, peace, joy and happiness in the true self.

As a retreatant and having a deep awareness of God’s unconditional love, you will experience a better understanding of how sinfulness and disordered attachments separate you from God’s love. You will learn about the two strategies of Christ and Satan and the struggle we all experience in choosing between the two. You will learn about the Daily Examen of Conscience and how this daily review brings you closer to God.

As a retreatant you will learn about discernment of spirits in your prayer life. Movement of evil spirits result in anxiety, stress, disturbance, tribulation and sadness. And when we experience the good spirits in discernment, we experience peace, inspiration, relief and love. In discernment of spirits, retreatants will be better able to make decisions the Church would want.

The series of movements within the Retreat In Daily Life enables retreatants to experience, within, a closer relationship with God in becoming the person one is meant to be with an increased clarity of purpose and meaning in one’s life as a follower of Jesus.

It would be good for those of you considering the retreat to begin now contacting your spiritual director or the Sisters of Benedict at 373-4566. The retreat begins in October and ends in April, however, group facilitators will begin interviewing and preparing those interested after July 4. Fees are $90 for each of the seven months plus $30 for supplies. Call now and receive a brochure about the retreat.

This is the 25th year the Sisters of Benedict have offered the Retreat In Daily Life and more than 1,200 retreatants have experienced these wonderful Spiritual Exercises. I hope you will sincerely consider this retreat as a way to enrich your life and deepen your relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ as it has done for me.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Joe Froehle has many years of experience in marital, individual and family counseling. He serves in the Counseling Center at St. John the Baptist, Edmond. He can be reached at (405) 359-8539 or by e-mail at jfroehle@swbell.net.


This book examines the history of sexual abuse perpetrated by a small percentage of the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States before the U.S. bishops meeting in Dallas in 2002 where the bishops created the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, also known as the Dallas Charter and Norm. Nicholas P. Cafardi is a loyal Catholic who is a Canon and civil lawyer. He was the second chairman of the National Review Board. He presents this historical synopsis of the sexual abuse in the Catholic Church from the days of the Early Church up to 2002.

In Chapter 1, Cafardi presents the history of how the Catholic Church dealt with sexual abuse of children by its clergy. He starts with the New Testament down to the 1983 Code of Canon Law, which is the current edition of Canon Law. He shows in clear terms how the Church dealt with abusers of children. The investigation, trial and punishment varied over time. He shows that the 1983 Code of Canon Law is not as clear about how to deal with this problem.

In Chapter 2, Cafardi examines the sexual abuse cases in the U.S. starting with the 1984 case in the Diocese of Lafayette, La., then with cases in the dioceses of Santa Fe, N.M., in 1991, Fall River, Mass., in 1992, Dallas in 1997 and Boston in 2002. There were of course other cases during this period.

In Chapter 3, Cafardi examines why the U.S. bishops did not use the Canon Law process to remove abusive clergy. Much of the problem was that Canon Law became harder for the bishops and U.S. Canon lawyers to understand how to prosecute an abuser under the 1983 Code. The American bishops and canon lawyers were familiar and comfortable to use it when it involved marriages and such, but were uncomfortable to use it to prosecute abusive priests since they were not as familiar with this part of the Code. Another problem was that the victims of abuse needed to be involved with the process. The victim would have to tell their abuse and many did not want to put the victims through that again.

The Diocese of Dallas also testified that any case was not sought. The bishops also were encouraged by their civil lawyers not to use it. The investigation often began with the abuser or the abuser’s wife. The investigation was not systematic. The investigation was not sought. The bishops also were encouraged by their civil lawyers not to use it. The investigation often began with the abuser or the abuser’s wife. The investigation was not systematic. The investigation was not conducted with any kind of purpose or method.

In Chapter 4, Cafardi examines what the bishops did do to help prevent abuse or to deal with situations when abuse was reported. The national bishops conference in the 1990s set up a committee to investigate what could be done about this problem on a national level and to present possible policies to remedy this problem. Unfortunately, the committee’s recommendations were not accepted by the national conference since the media light on abuse had switched to other items. Some bishops, though, decided on their own to create policies for their dioceses based on the committee’s recommendations, but ignoring those recommendations would come back to haunt many bishops in 2002.
Archdiocese Blessed With Three Newly Ordained Priests

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City was blessed May 30 when Archbishop Eusebius J. Beltran ordained Joseph Patrick Schwarz, Christopher Hai Tran and James Andrew Wickersham priests of the Roman Catholic Church.

The joyous ceremony drew a full house to the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help as well as an army of priests from throughout the archdiocese who concelebrated Mass.

Celebrated on the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Rite of Ordination featured a choir directed by Oliver Douberly that delivered beautiful hymns in both English and Vietnamese. Especially beautiful was the Communion hymn “Gift of Finest Wheat,” which alternated between the languages.

Father Lowell Stieferman, vocations director for the archdiocese, presented the three candidates for ordination to Archbishop Beltran and requested on behalf of the whole Church that they be blessed with the sacrament of Holy Orders.

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

“Thanks be to God,” came the enthusiastic response from the faithful in attendance. Loud and sustained applause then broke out.

“We gather together tonight in faith and with great joy,” said Archbishop Beltran in his homily. “By the grace and power of God, these three young men, your relatives and friends, are to be ordained priests of Jesus Christ. Their lives will be changed forever as will the lives of the people whom they serve through their priestly ministry.”

The archbishop said priests are “called by God and ordained by the Church to serve God’s people.”

He reminded the faithful that all of us, not only priests, are called to love and serve God by living lives of holiness.

“God created every one of us in His own image and likeness. We were created for a purpose, namely, to live and rejoice with God forever in heaven. Therefore, we must first meet the Lord and come to know Him in faith here on earth. Through faith and knowledge of God, we grow in the love of God. Love of God is not a vague term or a nebulous concept. Love of God is the awareness of and gratitude for God’s goodness. It is the reality of right living which is why Jesus identifies Himself as the Way, the Truth and the Life. It is our gracious response to God who loves us first, thereby making it possible to love Him in return. It is this love which we have for God which propels us to love our neighbor. This is what Christian service is all about — love God first and foremost and your neighbor as yourself.”

Speaking directly to the three candidates, Archbishop Beltran called on them to love and serve God by loving and serving His people.

“Dear young men of faith about to be ordained, you and all God’s people are called to a genuine holiness of life and to dedicated generous Christian service. But you have also been ordained deacons, which entails further service. Moreover, tonight, through the imposition of my hands, you will be ordained priests, which demands yet additional service. In more than one place in the Gospel, we hear Jesus saying: “I have come to serve and not to be served.” It is precisely this total, sacrificial service you must practice as Catholic priests of Jesus Christ.

“Jesus came to save us from sin. Jesus came to bring us new life.

“Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. This is the mission of the ordained priest. And the essence of the priest’s mission is to know Jesus Christ and to make Him known. The work being entrusted to you is not your private domain. You are to be the ambassadors, the ministers, the servants of God. The forgiveness you bring to the people in the Sacrament of Penance is the forgiveness and mercy of God. The life you share in the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist is not your life but God’s life. You will change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus, not by your own power and authority but in the name of Jesus and on His authority and by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the anointing of the sick, it is the healing power of God for which you pray.

“God will work through you not only in the sacramental acts just mentioned but in these and countless other ways. Like Jesus, who called Himself a teacher, you are to teach about the Kingdom of God. Like Jesus, who shared the Good News with His listeners, you too must be an evangelizer, proclaiming the Good News of Jesus to all people. Like Jesus, who reached out to the poor, the sick, the needy, so you must maintain a priority for the poor and the troubled.

“Since you, as priests, will be ministers of the Lord and you will share in His mission and act in His Name, the Church will call each of you “an alter Christus.” This title carries with it a perpetual challenge to be like Christ but, remember, you are not “The Christ.” You are His instrument. Thus, wherever you are sent, whatever the Church asks you to do, you are sent and appointed to do the work of God. If you seek the credit or impose your own desires, you will no longer be doing the work of God but simply your own activity. The great danger in ministry is to transform God’s work into personal work or an agenda. It is then that difficulties, rivalries or disobedience begin and God’s grace ceases.

“Joseph, Christopher and James Andrew, tonight we are giving you a tremendous applause. Tonight we sincerely congratulate you. We are proud and happy for you and for the Church of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

“Indeed, what you are doing tonight is very, very important. Your genuine and generous response to God’s call is worth a great applause. But, more important than what you or I do here tonight is what God is doing.

“It is God who took the initiative and action. He created you out of love. He redeemed you and promises you eternal life. Indeed it is God who, through the Holy Catholic Church, calls you and commissions you as His priests to live and to proclaim the Good News of Jesus who is the Eternal High Priest. This Jesus is our one and only Lord and Savior. To Him be all praise and glory now and forever.”

The newly ordained priests are vested for the first time by two priests who have been influential in their lives.
The newly ordained priests gather around the altar for the first time to celebrate the Eucharist.

Father Joseph Schwarz blesses his parents.

People were asking the new priests to sign their Mass booklets as souvenirs of the ordination.

Father Wickersham blesses his grandparents.
DENVER, Colo. (Zenit.org).—The archbishop of Denver is wishing the group “Roman Catholics for Obama” good luck in their endeavors to change their presidential candidate’s position on abortion. He says they’ll need it.

Archbishop Charles Chaput dedicated Monday’s column in the Denver Catholic Register to “Thoughts on Roman Catholics for Obama.”

He began his reflection noting his own change in attitude regarding pro-abortion politicians.

“For forty years this month Bobby Kennedy was still alive and running for the Democratic Party’s 1968 presidential nomination,” Archbishop Chaput recalled. “I was a seminarian in Washington, D.C. I was also an active volunteer on Kennedy’s campaign. [...] After RFK [was assassinated], the meaning of the 1968 election seemed to evaporate. I lost interest in politics.

“I didn’t get involved again until the rise of Jimmy Carter. Carter fascinated me because he seemed an untypical politician. He was plain-spoken, honest, a serious Christian and a Washington outsider. So I supported him during his 1976 campaign when I was a young priest working in Pennsylvania. [...] Carter had one serious strike against him. [...] I knew Carter was wrong in his views about Roe v. Wade and soft toward permissive abortion.

“But even as a priest, I justified working for him because he wasn’t aggressively ‘pro-choice.’ True, he held a bad position on a vital issue, but I believed he was right on so many more of the ‘Catholic’ issues than his opponent seemed to be. The moral calculus looked easy. I thought we could remedy the abortion problem after Carter was safely returned to office.”

Archbishop Chaput recounted how his outlook on the abortion issue in politics began to change.

“Carter lost his bid for re-election, but even with an awkwardly pro-life Ronald Reagan as president, the belligerence, dishonesty and inflexibility of the ‘pro-choice’ lobby has stymied almost every effort to protect unborn human life since,” he noted. “In the years after the Carter loss, I began to notice that very few of the people, including Catholics who claimed to be ‘personally opposed’ to abortion, really did anything about it. Nor did they intend to.

“For most, their personal opposition was little more than pious handwringing and a convenient excuse — exactly as it is today. In fact, I can’t name any ‘pro-choice’ Catholic politician who has been active, in a sustained public way, in trying to discourage abortion and to protect unborn human life — not one. I knew Carter was wrong in his views about Roe v. Wade and soft toward permissive abortion.

“Some talk about it, and some may mean well, but there’s very little action. In the United States in 2008, abortion is an acceptable form of homicide. And it will remain that way until Catholics force their political parties and elected officials to act differently.”

Archbishop Chaput explained that he was speaking of his experience because the group “Roman Catholics for Obama ‘08” used his own words in an explanation of their current position regarding the potential Democratic nominee for president, Barack Obama.

The group quoted the archbishop as saying: “So can a Catholic in good conscience vote for a pro-choice candidate? The answer is: I can’t, and I won’t. But I do know some serious Catholics — people whom I admire — who may. I think their reasoning is mistaken, but at least they sincerely struggle with the abortion issue, and it causes them real pain.

“And most important: They don’t keep quiet about it; they don’t give up; they keep lobbying their party and their representatives to change their pro-abortion views and protect the unborn. Catholics can vote for pro-choice candidates if they vote for them despite — not because of — their pro-choice views.”

But Archbishop Chaput clarified in Monday’s column that the next sentence of the quoted piece adds a key element to his position.

“It said: ‘But [Catholics who support ‘pro-choice’ candidates] also need a compelling proportionate reason to justify it. What is a ‘proportionate’ reason when it comes to the abortion issue? It’s the kind of reason we will be able to explain, with a clean heart, to the victims of abortion when we meet them face to face in the next life — which we most certainly will. If we’re confident that these victims will accept our motives as something more than an alibi, then we can proceed.’

“The Denver archbishop noted how “Roman Catholics for Obama” say they have “arrived at the conclusion that Senator Obama is the candidate whose views are most compatible with the Catholic outlook [...] despite our disagreements with him in specific areas.”

“I’m familiar with this reasoning,” Archbishop Chaput said. “It sounds a lot like me 30 years ago. And 30 years later we still have about a million abortions a year. Maybe Roman Catholics for Obama will do a better job at influencing their candidate. It could happen. And I sincerely hope it does, since Planned Parenthood of the Chicago area, as recently as February 2008, noted that Sen. Barack Obama ‘has a 100 percent pro-choice voting record both in the U.S. Senate and the Illinois Senate.’

“Changing the views of ‘pro-choice’ candidates takes a lot more than verbal gymnastics, good alibis and pious talk about ‘personal opposition’ to killing unborn children. I’m sure ‘Roman Catholics for Obama’ know that, and I wish them good luck. They’ll need it.”

Silent Suffering: Italian Researchers Say Unborn No Strangers to Pain

By Father John Flynn, LC

ROME (Zenit.org).—A topic receiving more attention recently in debates on abortion is the question as to whether a fetus can suffer and feel pain. A book just published brings together a variety of evidence by experts, mainly Italian, on the subject.

“Neonatal Pain: Suffering, Pain and the Risk of Brain Damage in the Fetus and Unborn” (Springer) is edited by Giuseppe Buonocore and Carlo Bellieni, who are both members of the Department of Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Reproductive Medicine at the University of Siena.

The contributions from the large number of experts who contribute to the book agree in affirming that a fetus can feel pain before birth, the two editors explain in their introductory essay. “Recognizing human dignity and human suffering from life in the womb is a clinical duty in the service of better treatment,” they declare.

The contributions, a joint effort by nine experts, looks at the evidence obtained from ultrasound techniques. The introduction of three-dimensional and four-dimensional ultrasonography has enabled a far more detailed evaluation of the fetus, thus allowing the observation of how it reacts to specific stimuli, they observe.

The uterus is a protected, but not isolated, environment and touch is the first sense that the fetus develops. By week 10 of pregnancy an unborn child can be observed bringing hands to its head, opening and closing the mouth, and swallowing.

As well, recent experiments show that newborns have functional memory, development of which began in the womb. The authors note that, in fact, newborns remember tastes and odors perceived in the uterus and these perceptions might have an influence on future preferences. Sounds, also, are heard by the unborn, including the mother’s voice. Newborns have even been shown to recognize music that the mother listened to during pregnancy.

Another joint article examines the specific question of fetal pain. The team of medical experts who authored the piece starts by noting that the unborn child is a protagonist, promoting cellular traffic with the mother, and so the fetus needs to be considered a patient, whose well-being is taken into consideration by doctors.

There is evidence, they observe, that acute or chronic pain, or even prolonged stress, can be dangerous for the fetus, especially if it happens during a critical period of brain development. Possible negative effects range from a lower pain threshold to an increase in age-related memory impairments.

Based on experiments with primates, the article hypothesizes that fetal pain can even impair the functioning of the body’s immune system, with long-term implications for infections and autoimmune diseases.

Regarding stress, the authors cite a study on a group of mothers who suffered stress and compared them to a control group. The babies of the stressed mothers were characterized by a lower birth weight, smaller head circumference and a lower gestational age at birth when compared with the babies of the control group.

The authors observe that some medical experts don’t consider the fetus can feel pain because it is not conscious, and also because it is normally asleep in the womb. The article on neonatal pain in Buonocore and Bellieni’s book replies to this by saying there is considerable scientific evidence showing that fetuses are sensitive to a variety of sensations in the uterus: sound, changes in light, touch and pressure, and changes in balance.

Moreover, even if a fetus were not to recognize pain consciously as we do, it still remains an unpleasant experience for the unborn, they add.

Another chapter of the book looked at other effects of stress on the fetus. Two members of the Institute of Reproduction and Developmental Biology at Imperial College London, Kieran O’Donnell and Vivette Glover, explain that maternal stress is very much related to the development of the fetus.

In addition, in cases of medical intervention carried out on fetuses, there is evidence showing a response to an invasive stimulus from the age of 16 weeks gestation. Even at the age of 12 weeks, a fetus will move away if touched. Nevertheless, O’Donnell and Glover admit that we still do not know exactly when the fetus starts to feel pain or when it becomes conscious.
Families Foster Vocations

In the May 11 Sooner Catholic, we were informed of the priest assignments for the Archdiocese effective June 17, 2008. These changes occur almost every year and are normal happenings within our Archdiocese, but we should take note of two things — some parishes are going to mission status (will not have a resident priest) and the actual closing of other churches. The parishioners of both types are in need of our prayers and support.

These changes should not come as a surprise. We have heard from our archbishops for several years that the number of priests is dwindling and at a given time some drastic steps would have to be made. That time has arrived. The listed changes are for this year only, what will happen next year or in five years? I fear looking down the road of time.

We have been given a helping hand with the generosity of other countries sending priests to us, we are forever grateful. A word of caution here, we relied on priests from Europe years ago to establish the church here in the United States and we are forever grateful. A word of caution here, where the responsibility to foster vocations.

A quick and easy answer, but a wrong one, is that it rests on the clergy. They are trained and best able to recruit and pick candidates, if it were only that simple. No, that is not the answer. Priests can influence and guide most certainly, but when they only see young men at Mass for one hour a week, if that, it will take much more than that.

So where do we go — THE PEWS. The families in the pews, the fathers, mothers, children, relatives here is the true source of vocations. The Catholic family can produce vocations now as it did years ago, what is required is prayer in a home focused on Catholic beliefs and families devoted to God and each other.

PARENTS — when is the last time you talked about a religious vocation with your children?

All Catholics must pray that vocations will increase, our future as Catholics is at stake!

Pope Benedict XVI, on his recent tour to our country, said during his talk with the clergy, priestly vocations are a sign of the local church’s health.

Charles S. Tanner
St. Mary’s, Ardmore

We Come First

Bravo to Nancy Crice (Letters, May 25 edition), I applaud her comments. Our governments and churches first priority should be to take care of our own citizens, not immigrants living and working illegally in this country. You are making progress, but if immigrants want to live in America, they should do it legally and adopt our way of living. Is that not why they came to America? Evidently they are not willing to stay in their own country and fight to make necessary changes to improve their own living conditions. Our church and government leaders seem to want the American public to change our way of life to fit the needs of non-citizens.

It makes me very angry that American companies are adopting Spanish as an alternate language to English. If people choose to immigrate to America, they should be willing to learn our language, we should not be forced to have another language shoved at us daily. It is a sure bet that when American citizens choose to live in foreign countries, those countries do not change to accommodate us, nor do we ask them to.

Sharon Croom
St. Paul the Apostle
Del City

Across Oklahoma

Seminarian Dean List

Conception, Mo. — Seminarians Robert Miller of St. Charles Borromeo in Oklahoma City and Brian Buettner of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Norman have been named to the fall 2007 Dean’s List for earning a grade point average of 3.25 or better.

Miller, a junior, is the son of Larry and Regina Miller. Buettner, a Pre-Theology I student, is the son of Larry and Deidre Buettner.

Coloring With God

PIEDMONT — A Spirituality Workshop for age 6 to 11 on Saturday, June 14, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Christine Dorman, experienced teacher and supervisor of Sylvan Learning Centers, will help children use art as a way to pray and introduce them to God as Creator and Artist. Through art and color in prayer, the children will discover the artist within themselves, as well as God within, who loves to play and create. Come to the red Art Barn at Red Plains Monastery, southwest of Piedmont. Call 373-4739 to register. Fee: Mail in $35 to reserve a space. All materials provided. Bring a sack lunch.

Garage Sale

OKLAHOMA CITY — June 19-21, garage sale to benefit Christ the King Social Ministries at 2717 Somerset (east of May, one block south of Wilshire). For more information, contact Linda at 496-0033.

Pete Córdova Golf Classic

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Pete Córdova Golf Classic for the benefit of Mount St. Mary High School, sponsored by Mercy Health Center, will be held June 16 at The Greens Country Club in Oklahoma City. For information on sponsorships and registration, contact Chris Stiles at cstiles@mountstmary.org or at (405) 651-8865.

International Food Fest

OKLAHOMA CITY — St. Francis of Assisi Parish is hosting the sixth annual International Food Fest June 21 at 6 p.m. in the T. Phil Kierl gymnasium. The dinner benefits the Rosary School Scholarship and Endowment Funds. The dinner also celebrates the many cultures that blend together to make the faith community known as St. Francis, 1901 N.W. 18th St. Dinner tickets will be sold for $20 after all the Masses starting the weekend of May 31. Call Mary Lalli for ticket information, 947-2947, or Michelle McGannon at 947-0161.

Parish Festival

OKLAHOMA CITY — Annual Parish Festival at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, June 21 at 6 p.m. Mexican dinner, $5 for adults and $3 for children. After the dinner, Mexican Loteria (bingo) will be held in the school cafeteria. On June 22 the festival continues at 8 a.m. in the grounds of Mount St. Mary’s High School until 8 p.m. Games, food and fun for everyone.

Iglesia Catolica Del Sagrado Corazon

Oklahoma City, Sabado: Junio 21, alas 6 p.m. Cena Mexicana, $5 por Adulto y $3 par nñio. Despues de la cena, Loteria Mexicana (Bingo) sera en la cafeteria de la Escuela. Domingo: Junio 22, Continua el Festival en los terrenos de la Escuela, Monte Santa Maria High School, hasta las 8 p.m. Juegos, Comida y Diversion para todos.

40 Years of Service

OKLAHOMA CITY — On June 21, come to the 40th anniversary celebration of Sisters of Benedict, Red Plains Monastery, at Church of the Epiphany of the Lord, 7336 W. Britton Road, Oklahoma City. 11 a.m. Mass with Archbishop Eusebius J. Beltran, Celebrant. Reception immediately following in Bryce Hall.

Knights Set Tourney

YUKON — Knights of Columbus golf tournament, Saturday, June 28, Surrey Hills, 11340 Surrey Hills Blvd., Yukon. Cost is $75 per player, 8 a.m. shotgun start, par 3 contest and longest drive contest, hole sponsorship available. Call David Peitzmeir at (405) 315-6252 for information and entry. Proceeds support council charitable activities.
**My Arms, My Legs, My Hero**

The Story of a Father's Sacrificial Love for His Disabled Son

I am the third oldest of nine children and was born with spastic cerebral palsy. Throughout my life, I was always physically dependent on my father. Dad was 30 years my senior. Throughout much of my life, Dad was my arms and legs. I have always needed others to bathe, shave and dress me, and for most of my life, Dad took responsibility for that care.

One year while our family vacationed at the New Jersey shore, my brothers and sisters bought me a shirt that said it well: “When I’m in trouble, I call Dad!” The gift really hit me hard. Reflecting on my total dependency on my father, I seldom wore the shirt. Who needs to wear a constant reminder of one’s dependency on someone else?

I eventually came to realize that in many ways we all are dependent. My disability has allowed me to recognize our heavenly Father in my dad’s actions. Dad would always say: “The reality is that none of us could do it on our own.”

Dad took responsibility for that care. Dad was my arms and legs. I have total dependency on my father, I call Dad!” The gag gift never wore the shirt. Who needs to wear a constant reminder of one’s dependency on someone else?

My disability has allowed me to recognize our heavenly Father in my dad’s actions. Dad would always say: “The reality is that none of us could do it on our own.”

As a child, I hoped to become the next Vince Scully, the sports announcer who anchored Major League baseball’s “Game of the Week” on the NBC television network for many years. Dad coached my brothers’ Little League teams. I often brought a toy building block to the baseball game and pretended to broadcast the game. The block was my microphone. And my brothers and most of their teammates humored my role-playing as I “interviewed” key players after each game. Dad knew this role-playing was a great way to develop my language skills and speech.

But on one occasion, when I was 10 years old, Dad got his hands on some tickets and took us all to Philadelphia to the ballpark. It was the summer of 1964. The Phillies would break the hearts of every Philly fan young and old as they lost the National League pennant by one game to the St. Louis Cardinals.

I remember the season well, but it was what happened at that baseball game that burned into my heart the fact my father was truly a hero.

Our seats were high above in the top row of the stadium, and I recall with love and amazement 44 years later how Dad physically carried me to my designated seat. I wore braces on my legs then, and it couldn’t have been easy for him to carry me that high.

The day of Dad’s funeral, March 22, 2001, our Blessed Lord gave me a rare privilege. I, the disabled son, the one my Dad had covered nightly, pulled the blanket to his shoulders as his coffin was closed and Mass was celebrated.

On this day, I finally saw our roles reversed.

Happy Father’s Day!

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** Bill Zalot is a freelance writer who lives in Levittown, Pa. Although afflicted with spastic cerebral palsy, he writes extensively for Catholic publications. His columns will appear in *The Sooner Catholic* from time to time. Bill Zalot can be reached at bill-zalot@comcast.net.

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**Christ Delivered to Us the Many Faces of the Eucharist**

Christians argue a lot about the Eucharist. What does it mean? What should it be called? How often should it be celebrated? Who should be allowed to fully participate?

There are lots of views on the Eucharist:

* For some it is a meal, for others it is sacrifice
* For some it is a ritual act, sacred and set apart, for others it is a community gathering, the more mess and kids there the better.
* For some it is a deep personal prayer, for others it is a communal worship for the world.
* For some its very essence is a coming together, a communion, of those united in a single denominational faith, while for others, part of its essence is its reaching out, its innate imperative to wash the feet of those who are different from ourselves.
* For some it is a celebration of sorrow, a making present of Christ’s suffering and thus the place where we can break down, for others it is the place to celebrate joy and sing alleluia.
* For some it is a ritual remembrance, a making present of the historical events of Jesus’ dying, rising, ascending and sending the Holy Spirit, for others it is a celebration of God’s presence with us today.
* For some it is a celebration of the Last Supper, something to be done less frequently, for others it is God’s daily feeding of his people with a new manna, Christ’s body, and is something to be done every day.
* For some it is a celebration of reconciliation, a ritual that forgives and unites, for others unity and reconciliation are pre-conditions for its proper celebration.
* For some it is a vigil act, a gathering that is essentially about waiting for something else or someone else to appear, for others it is a celebration of something that is already present that is asking to be received and recognized.
* For some it is understood to make present the real, physical body of Christ, for others it is understood to make Christ present in a real but spiritual way.
* Some call it the Lord’s Supper, others call it the Eucharist, others call it the Mass.
* Some celebrate it once a year, some celebrate it four times a year, some celebrate it every Sunday, and some celebrate it every day.

Who’s right? In truth, the Eucharist is all of these things, and more. It is like a finely-cut diamond swirling in the sun, every turn giving off a different sparkle. It is multivalent, carrying different layers of meaning, some of them in paradoxical tension with others. There is, even in Scripture, no one theology of the Eucharist, but instead there are various complementary theologies of the Eucharist.

For instance, we already see variations among the apostolic communities as to how they understood the Eucharist, what it should be called, and how often it should be celebrated.

Some early communities called it the Lord’s Supper, connected its meaning very much to the commemoration of the Last Supper, and celebrated it less frequently.

Whereas the apostolic community that formed around John connected its theology and practice very much to the concept of God feeding his people daily with manna and they celebrated it every day, given that we need sustenance daily.

As well, we see some of its paradoxical elements right within its central symbols, bread and the wine: Both are paradoxical: Bread is both a symbol of joy, togetherness, health and achievement (the smell of fresh bread and the primal beauty of a loaf of bread) even as it is made up of broken kernels of wheat that had to be crushed in their individuality and be baked in fire to become that bread. Wine is both a festive drink, the drink of celebration, of wedding, even as it is crushed grapes and represents the blood of Jesus and the blood and suffering of all that is crushed in our world and in our lives.

How does one put this all together? That depends upon how one defines that.

During my theological training, I took three major courses on the Eucharist and, afterwards, decided that I didn’t understand the Eucharist. But the fault was not in the courses, which were excellent. The fault, which is not a fault at all but a marvel, lies in the richness of the Eucharist itself. In the end, it defies not just theology professors, but metaphysics, phenomenology and language itself. There is no adequate explanation for love, for embrace, and for the reception of life and spirit through touch. Certain realities take us beyond language because that is their very purpose.

They do what words cannot do. They also are beyond what we can neatly nail down in our understanding.

And that is true of the Eucharist. Any attempt to nail down its full meaning will forever come up short because it will always eventually get up and walk away with the nail!

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. He can be contacted through his Web site, www.ronrolheiser.com.
Where God Sees a Child, Some Only See a Mistake

My work can be very solitary. I might spend days alone in our firm's library pouring over transcripts or researching law for legal briefs. I enjoy it. But when things get dry, my mind starts to drift. And I enjoy that, too. We all do. Dreams provide a healthy escape from boredom and drudgery. But our dreams also give us purpose, the reason to reach for something better. Everyone should have dreams.

It's only natural that as parents, we have big dreams for our kids. Unfortunately, not all dreams come true. Stumping for votes, Barack Obama recently said that he plans to teach his girls about morals and values, “but if they make a mistake, I don’t want them punished with a baby.” A daughter pregnant before marriage? It’s every parent’s nightmare. The candidate’s comment tells us much about his views about the right to life. And it calls us to examine our own.

Until abortion was legalized, civilized society held sacred the belief that no child may be killed for the sins of her father (Deut 24:16). The reason is apparent. Children have no hand in their parents’ sins. A pre-born child does not choose to be involved in an act of rape, incest or premarital or extra-marital intercourse. So where is the justice in killing her? Abortion is capital punishment of the truly innocent. And what does our allowing abortion teach our children? It teaches them that they need not face their mistakes. They can kill them. That’s hardly a lesson in Christian morals and values.

Ironically, Obama’s desire to spare his children from “punishment” may inflict a punishment far more horrendous. Why? This can be worse than making a mistake is compounding it. Abortion kills. Although an abortion ends a woman’s pregnancy, it does not erase the woman’s memories of her child or her action. They stay with mother, all the better to haunt her. That’s the devil’s way. It wants the worst for even those it lures into sin. Guilt and regret are abortion’s constant companions.

Ask Jo Woodgate. At age 27, she aborted her child. Now 67, she cannot shake the memory. Watching a niece cradle her newborn, tears filled Jo’s eyes. She found herself “being transported back in time almost 40 years.” She could still smell disinfectant and see disapproving hospital workers. Until recently, Jo was afraid to admit, “All I could think about was the baby I’d killed and what might have been.” The wound has festered, not healed, over time. “With each year that has passed I’ve only felt a growing sense of guilt and regret over my actions. Jo now understands the problem. “Like so many young girls, I just saw it as an easy way out of a messy situation. With maturity, I’ve realized that life is complicated, and that getting rid of a baby to solve an immediate problem is not always the obvious solution it appears to be.”

Jo’s suffering is not unique. A study published in 2007 in BMC Pyschiatry found that post-abortive women experience high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder. About 20 percent of the women experienced PTSD symptoms within one month of their abortions. The number climbed 61 percent by the third month. These figures support a 25-year New Zealand study concluding that women having abortions are more likely to become severely depressed. And a 2004 U.S. study found that post-abortion women were 30 percent more likely to suffer emotional problems than women who did not have an abortion.

What does it all mean? Subjecting anyone to an abortion exposes her to a possible lifetime of problems. It is a needless risk because adoption is always an alternative. Thousands of couples would love the chance to raise someone’s “mistake.” A woman is not “punished” by having a child. She is punished by having an abortion. Christian compassion calls us to give women something better than abortion.

Perhaps more than anything, Obama’s comment challenges us to examine our own beliefs about God’s power and love. As much as we’d like to think that we create children, we really don’t. Only God does. No child is ever conceived without God’s permission. None. We are here because He allows us to be here. Is he mistaken?

Strange as it may sometimes seem, God has His reasons. For God dreams, too. When He’s not smiling at our folly, He’s dreaming of our potential. To God, no child is a mistake or a punishment. Each and every child is a gift of His boundless love. And regardless of the circumstances of a child’s conception, God has given each one a purpose — to serve Him. Maybe it’s by sheltering the homeless, feeding the hungry or healing the sick. Perhaps it’s by fighting for justice in a world gone nutty. Or maybe just being a needed friend. Imagine all the contributions to society made by the “mistakes” of the world, mistakes allowed by others to live. God’s ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8). If we see each child through God’s eyes, we will realize that every child is the sweet dream of a loving Father. Punishment? Not on your life.

Our country will be far more Christian when those who seek to lead it truly appreciate that God doesn’t punish anyone by creating human life. And God doesn’t make mistakes. We do, when we try to play God. So maybe we should let God be God. He does a much better job of it.

And boy, can He dream!

Paul V. Esposito is a Catholic lawyer who writes on a variety of pro-life topics. He and his wife, Kathy, live in Elmhurst, Ill., where they raise their six children.

National Migration Conference to Feature Cardinal Mahony

WASHINGTON — Cardinal Roger Mahony, archbishop of Los Angeles; Edwidge Danticat, Haitian immigrant and author; U.S. Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.), a longtime advocate for global human rights and assistance to victims of human trafficking; Immaculee Ilibagiza, Rwandan genocide survivor and author; Marcelo Suarez-Orozco, renowned migration expert and university professor on globalization; and representatives of the U.S. Departments of State, Health and Human Services and Homeland Security are all part of this year’s program of the National Migration Conference.

With the theme Renewing Hope, Seeking Justice, the conference is sponsored by the Migration and Refugee Services Department of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (MRS/USCCB) and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc. (CLINIC), and will take place July 28-31 in Washington.

As the keynote speaker, Cardinal Mahony will assess the role and importance of church involvement in the national immigration debate. He will speak on global migration to the theme of the conference, “welcome the stranger.”

With maturity, I’ve realized that life is better. Everyone should have dreams. Perhaps it’s by fighting for justice in a world gone nutty. Or maybe just being a needed friend. Imagine all the contributions to society made by the “mistakes” of the world, mistakes allowed by others to live. God’s ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8). If we see each child through God’s eyes, we will realize that every child is the sweet dream of a loving Father. Punishment? Not on your life.

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Comunidad Latinoamericana en Oklahoma

Buenas Noticias...

...La fe no se puede dar por sentada

Jesus dijo: "¿De qué le sirve a uno si ha ganado el mundo entero, pero se ha destruido a sí mismo?"

Renovando la fe y buscando la justicia en la conferencia sobre migración 2008

WASHINGTON, USCE — La Conferencia Nacional sobre Migración 2008 tendrá como tema Renovando la Fe, Buscando la Justicia. Entre los principales ponentes se encuentran el Cardenal Roger Mahony, Arzobispo de Los Ángeles, verdicto Damián, migrante y escritora italiana; Christopher Smith, Representante republicano de Nueva Jersey, y tradicional defensor de los derechos humanos y de asistencia a las víctimas del tráfico de personas; Immaculee Ilibagiza, superviviente del genocidio de Ruanda, escritora; el doctor Marco de Siqueiros-Orozco, profesor de Trabajo Social y especialista en la migración en el Departamento de Salud y el Departamento de Seguridad de Estados Unidos.

La Conferencia tendrá lugar en Washington, D.C. del 26 al 31 de julio y se centrará en temas de migración, refugio y protección de derechos humanos.
Sábado en que la juventud católica glorifica al Señor en el Centro Pastoral

Encuentro de Jóvenes tuvo un rotundo éxito en la Renovación Católica

Las oraciones, alegrías y aleluyas fueron los característicos del encuentro.

Por Mauro Yanes
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Ha sido un gran acontecimiento el encuentro para jóvenes que se celebró el pasado sábado 31 de mayo en las instalaciones del Centro Pastoral Católico de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City. El evento contó con la participación de alrededor de 500 personas, entre quienes se contaron los jóvenes y ayudantes del evento. El espíritu joven y alegre de William Portillo, quien vino especialmente desde California, permitió esbozar a nuestros jóvenes con su testimonio de vida para luego incubar la esperanza de los "Señor mío" en los corazones de quienes estuvieron presentes.

Antes de finalizar el encuentro de jóvenes, Portillo hizo gala de su talento como cantante rapero para deleitar con temas que van dirigidos al encuentro con el Señor. Nuestros jóvenes en Oklahoma deben tener presente que existen tendencias sincretistas que les hacen creer que tienen todas las respuestas. Pero la verdad es que la única respuesta a la vida es sí en Cristo. Es importante que los jóvenes aprendan a valorar y a proteger la vida y que promuevan de esta manera la cultura de la vida y digan no a la violencia y no al desprecio por nuestro prójimo.

Celebración de fe presidida por el Arzobispo Eusebio Beltrán

Tres nuevos sacerdotes fueron ordenados en la Arquidiócesis

Joseph, Patricio, Schumack y Christopher Hertz, y James Andrew Abbottson fueron ungidos por el Espíritu Santo como sacerdotes. Con una eucaristía preparación para la vida sacerdotal, los tres nuevos predicadores servirán al pueblo de Dios.

La Catedral de Nuestra Señora del Paraclete Sooner alberga una gran cantidad de amigos, familiares y seguidores, que llegaron para acompañar a los tres sacerdotes en este momento tan especial de su vida espiritual.
Center of Family Love Openings

The Center of Family Love in Okarche has openings for Habilitation Specialists (HTS), to provide training to developmentally disabled adults that live in the community. Hours vary and must have reliable transportation. There is also openings for production floor supervisors, supervising our clients as they work in our Kingfisher and Okarche workshops. There is also an opening for full-time dietary cooks, to prepare meals, follow recipes and menus and cleaning. For more information, call (405) 263-4658 or fax résumé to (405) 263-4563 or apply in person at 635 Texas, Okarche, Okla. 73762.

Director of Religious Education

Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Oklahoma City, is seeking a director of Religious Education. Contact the Search Committee at 1901 NE 18th St., Oklahoma City 73106, or call 528-0485.

Full-time Director of Religious Education

St. Philip Neri Catholic Church in Midwest City is currently looking for a full-time DRE to coordinate the religious education program. The position will be available July 1. Candidates will also be required to administer the Safe Environment program of the parish. Salary will commensurate with experience. Send résumé to Father Timothy M. Fuller, St. Philip Neri Catholic Church, 1107 Felix Place, Midwest City, Okla. 73110

Coordinator of Youth Ministry

St. John Nepomuk, Yukon, a vibrant and growing parish of over 1,200 families in Yukon, seeks a coordinator of youth ministry. The coordinator will ensure that a faith formation and catechesis program is provided as an engaging, age-appropriate ministry for the youth in our parish, grades 7-12. The coordinator will also engage parental and volunteer support and involvement and will have the responsibility of maintaining an environment that meets the ethical and legal standards and policies of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. It is required that all candidates of this position are practicing Catholics. The ideal candidate should have some experience in youth ministry, preferably with a degree in theology (not required), and previous catechetical training. This is a full-time, year-round, salaried position that includes some evening and weekend work. The coordinator of youth ministry also serves as a supervisor of volunteers. Salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Position includes a great benefit plan. Potential candidates should send resume and letter of intent to St. John Nepomuk Coordinator of Youth Ministry Search Committee, P.O. Box 850249, Yukon, Okla. 73085.

Institutional Advancement and Alumni

St. Gregory’s University has an immediate opening for the position of associate director of Institutional Advancement and Alumni. Qualifications include an assertive, personal, self-starter with proven selling skills/experience to assume a position in institutional advancement in a non-profit fundraising office. Although experience in fundraising environment is preferred, selling or marketing experience could provide the necessary background. The ideal candidate will have direct responsibility in developing and nurturing prospective donors, making and closing gift requests and stewarding the donors. This is a wonderful opportunity for the right individual to advance in a career in philanthropy fundraising. Bachelor’s degree required, master’s degree preferred.

Financial Aid Counselor

St. Gregory’s University, College for Working Adults, Tulsa campus, a private institution of higher education in the Catholic and Benedictine tradition, has an immediate opening for a financial aid counselor. Candidates must be able to advise students about financial aid eligibility, applications procedures, aid programs and indebtedness and work closely with accounting and student service staff. Qualifications: Bachelor’s degree preferred and financial aid experience, knowledge of data processing and computer tracking systems required. Applicants must be supportive of the university’s Catholic and Benedictine identity and mission. Send cover letter, resume and three references to hr@stgregorys.edu or mail to: Att: HR, 5801 E 41st St., Tulsa 74135, or fax, 918-610-1111.
Fetal Pain

continued from page 12

In a concluding chapter, Marina Enrichi urges readers to value prenatal life. A better knowledge about prenatal conditions and the development of the fetus will bring with it a perception of fetal life as something precious, resulting in greater respect for the developing embryo and the woman bearing it, she argues.

One of the consequences of this, Enrichi argues, is that all of us and society itself will begin to wish to create a more protective environment for the unborn baby and the mother.

The Italian medical experts are not the only ones convinced of the need to pay more attention to the pain suffered by the unborn. On Feb. 10, the New York Times ran a major feature article reporting on the findings of other doctors on this topic.

The article started by citing the experience of Kanwaljeet Anand, who, while a medical resident in a British hospital, saw the significant harm caused to premature babies when they were operated on without anesthetic. At the time, 25 years ago, doctors thought the nervous systems of the babies were too underdeveloped to sense pain.

Through trials, Anand clearly showed this was not at all the case and that once the babies received anesthe sia, the mortality rate dropped from 25 percent to 10 percent. Pain relief for premature babies soon came to be standard, the article said. Anand continued his observations in this area and noted that babies as young as 22 weeks demonstrated a reaction to pain even when pricked by a needle.

The consequence of this observation was the consideration that the fetus might feel pain. This became an important question with the development of fetal surgery, since whether the unborn feels pain is an important consideration for the surgeon.

Anand, now a professor at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and a pediatrician at the Arkansas Children’s Hospital in Little Rock, told the New York Times that he believes fetuses can feel pain by the 20th week of pregnancy, and possibly even earlier.

The article also cited Nicholas Fisk, a fetal-medicine specialist and director of the University of Queensland Center for Clinical Research in Australia. Fisk has carried out research showing that fetuses as young as 18 weeks react to an invasive procedure with a spike in stress hormones and a shutting of blood flow toward the brain. This is a reaction also present in infants and adults and is designed to protect a vital organ from threat.

The New York Times article acknowledged that the question of whether the fetus does feel pain has obvious implications for the abortion debate. In fact, medical evidence is showing they do feel pain, and as time goes by, researchers are pushing back more and more their estimation of the age at which the fetus is affected by pain.
Partnership Brings Mount, College Hill Neighbors Together for Service Projects

EDITOR’S NOTE: Connie Blaney serves as public information director for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. As part of her master’s program at the University of Oklahoma, she helped coordinate a partnership project between Mount St. Mary High School and the nearby College Hill Neighborhood Association. In this article written by Blaney, she describes how the partnership came together and the good it created in the Oklahoma City neighborhood.

OKLAHOMA CITY — Residents in the College Hill Neighborhood Association experienced the “spirit of community” this school year among the faculty and students of Mount St. Mary High School, said Mary Sosa, president of the neighborhood association.

“This year, our neighborhood was fortunate to have partnered with Mount St. Mary High School on several service and community projects,” Sosa said. “We appreciate the caring attitude of the students and faculty in helping us this school year in our neighborhood. Our getting to know each other was beneficial for everyone.”

During the 2007-08 school year, two Christian Service Days were dedicated to helping the neighbors around the school with various household projects such as window washing, mowing lawns, cleaning up yards, raking leaves, pulling weeds, and other small projects. The projects involved the sophomores in October and the freshmen in February. Adult sponsors and the students were divided into teams to work on neighbors’ homes. Approximately 25 households were helped by the students and sponsors during the school year.

One elderly neighbor expressed gratitude for the students’ help. “I cannot get out in my yard anymore, but I love for it to look nice. The students worked hard and were so polite,” she said. Another neighbor, Barbara Burrows, who teaches at Sacred Heart Elementary, said, “The students and adult sponsors did a wonderful job on my yard. What a nice act of kindness.”

Another important aspect of this year’s partnership between the neighborhood and the high school involved the formation of a Community Advisory Council, composed of College Hill neighbors, MSM student leaders, educators and members of the Capitol Hill business community. Other partnerships included El Centro de Oportunidades at Mount St. Mary, Sacred Heart School and Parish, Possibilities Inc., Oklahoma City Schools and University of Oklahoma. The Community Advisory Council met three times in 2008 to address issues of the school, neighborhood and community. The needs assessment compiled by the council can possibly be used at a later date to address some of these issues.

The Class Service Days and the Community Advisory Council were an important aspect of both the Class Service Days and the Community Advisory Council. “As our future leaders, it is important for our students to get involved in civic engagement and Christian service. We live out our Christian faith by serving others. Our mission at the Mount is to live lives of service,” said Ned Berghausen, Christian Service coordinator and sophomore teacher.

Brian Boeckman, head of the Religion Department at Mount St. Mary, said the partnership this year with College Hill Neighborhood Association has been a success. “We hope this connection with our neighbors will strengthen and grow next school year, as we look for ways to continue to work together for the betterment of our school and community.”