Young Catholic Men Make Trek to Emmaus Days Retreat

By Brian Buettner

In the Sacred Scriptures, Luke tells us of the two disciples that were journeying to the town of Emmaus after Jesus Christ’s body was discovered to be missing from the tomb on that first Easter Sunday. As the confused disciples left Jerusalem, a stranger approached them and accompanied them on their trek. The disciples must have been disappointed to see the man they thought was the Messiah, beaten and crucified before their eyes. However, on the journey the stranger walked beside them and helped unlock the Scriptures for them. He also instilled in them hope, that must have seemed distant as they had begun their journey. After inviting the stranger to stay with them that evening, the stranger broke the bread and immediately the disciples realized that the stranger was the Risen Christ.

Just as Christ accompanied the two disciples in their sorrow and confusion, He also accompanies each of us. On one of the warmest days in July, 15 young men from around the state of Oklahoma went on their own journey for answers. This journey led them to the 2008 Emmaus Days Retreat sponsored by the Vocations Office of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. By listening to priests from around the state share their own stories and interacting with priests and seminarians, the young men were able to catch a glimpse of what the life of a priest encompasses.

During a light-hearted question and answer session, several priests shared their own joys and hardships that come with being a priest. After agreeing that the business aspect of running a parish was one of the most difficult challenges, they also agreed that living a life devoted to doing God’s Will allows them to focus their whole lives on Christ and bringing God’s people to the peace that only flows from continued on Page 10
The Good News

With school back in session, I don’t know about parents, but I’m sure most children are saying “How quickly the summer has passed!” Indeed it has! The traditional school year now has begun and children of all ages are back to the books, the computers and the schedule of classes.

School bells, like church bells, were designed to call people together to learn, to socialize and to pray. As instruments, bells have been an important part of our cultural heritage. Though bells have been replaced and villages and towns have grown to cities and metropolitan areas, the school year concept is still a valuable force in our lives. The school year brings us back together after a summer of travel and rest. It reminds us — not only children, but all of us — of the importance of learning. The need to study, to think and to mature must be ongoing. As human persons we are always students!

In the religious sphere, we describe the purpose of our existence simply but profoundly, saying God made us to know Him, to love Him and to serve Him on this earth so that someday we could rejoice with Him forever in heaven. We believe in Jesus and we accept all that He has revealed to us. It is precisely because of this faith in Jesus that every single one of us has the serious fundamental obligation to learn, to study and to discover the fuller meaning of our faith. Only in this process of knowing Jesus can we love and serve Him. Therefore, I extend a challenge to every Catholic person of this Archdiocese a practical, useful instrument or tool for your faith development.

To make a positive effort during this school year to learn more about your Catholic faith, I invite you to listen to Jesus and His teachings. Do not take your faith for granted. Do not let your faith stagnate because of laziness or indifference.

What can you do? What should you do?

Next Saturday, Aug. 23, symbolically, school bells will ring for our entire Archdiocese. Next Saturday, representatives from every parish in our Archdiocese will gather at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School. The staffs from our Archdiocesan Offices of Education and Pastoral Ministry and I will welcome your parish representatives to an exciting learning session. There, through your parish representatives, we will introduce you to the many resources and opportunities that are available to you right now for your faith development.

Each representative will receive a copy of the Resource Manual for Faith Development. Our goal is not to give you a fancy folder. Our intention is to present to you and to every Catholic person of this Archdiocese a practical, useful instrument or tool for your faith development.

We want you to come to know, love and serve God. We want you to participate in the remarkable and wonderful opportunities that are available for you and your families and your fellow parishioners right now here in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Sooner Catholic

Most Reverend Eusebius J. Beltran
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
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Hispanic Editor
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Edmond Parish to Host Benefit to Help Poor of Peru

Archbishop Beltran

Sooner Catholic

EDMOND — The Peru Ministry Subcommittee of Saint Monica Parish is holding a fiesta on Aug. 30 to benefit Father Joseph Uhen. Father Joe is the pastor and only priest at Santisimo Sacramento Parish in Piura, Peru, where he serves more than 35,000 faithful.

In addition to dinner and danceing, there will be a live and silent auction.

The fiesta will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall at Saint Monica Catholic Church, 2001 N. Western, Edmond. To donate auction items or for more information, contact John Robin at (405) 752 2265 or (405) 850-4816.

Visit us online through the Archdiocesan Web Page at www.catharchdioceseokeo.org.
Brother Copelin to be Ordained Aug. 21 at St. Gregory’s

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

SHAWNEE — If Brother Boniface Copelin had not had the courage years ago to follow his heart, there’s a good chance today he would be an ordained Roman Catholic priest. But, because he did have the courage to follow his heart, there’s an even better chance that this week he will become an ordained Roman Catholic priest.

Confused?

There was a time when Brother Boniface admits he was as well.

The Benedictine deacon is scheduled to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders on Aug. 21 when Archbishop Beltran celebrates Mass and ordains him a Roman Catholic priest of the Benedictine Order at Saint Gregory’s Abbey.

This solemn and beautiful sacrament will be conferred some 18 years after Brother Boniface was dispensed from his vows. At the time he wasn’t sure he was prepared to continue in monastic life and rather than make a mistake, he chose another path.

Years later, after following that path, it led him back to a familiar place, Saint Gregory’s Abbey. It was there that the Benedictine monks welcomed him home, back into the fold. And now, Brother Boniface Copelin knows he is where he belongs,

where God has called him to serve.

Brother Boniface said if he hadn’t chosen to walk away when he did, he would not have become the person he is today, a man confident that God is calling him to give himself entirely to the priesthood.

As Brother Boniface explains, he “went back into the world” in 1989 when he asked to be dispensèd from his vows at Saint Gregory’s Abbey. He struggled with the decision, but in the end realized if he was not 100 percent sure, he had to walk away. Eventually he would come to realize he could never completely walk away. Whether he was pitching high-tech equipment to research universities and hospitals throughout the country or selling homes as a real estate agent in Ohio, there was always “something missing” as the personable Boniface puts it.

As a salesman, he was often traveling, making calls and living in motels. It was in the quiet of the motel room that he would find himself constantly watching EWTN.

“I would be channel surfing and there would be Father Benedict Groeschel discussing the writings of the church fathers,” Brother Boniface said. He said he found himself time and again, no matter what city, no matter what hotel, returning to the Catholic programming offered by EWTN. With so many channels, he could have watched anything and everything, but it was Mother Angelica’s Eternal Word Television Network that captivated him.

The 47-year-old Benedictine deacon was born to Logan Edward and Inez Yrcot Copelin in Marietta, Ga., on May 1, 1961. An only child, his mother lives in Oklahoma City, while his father is deceased.

As a child, Brother Boniface was enrolled in elementary school at Villa Teresa Catholic School. He became very close to the Carmelite Sisters who operate the school. His mother, baptized in the Episcopal faith, agreed that he could join the Catholic Church and he did in 1973 while attending school at Saint Charles Borromeo. He would graduate from Bishop McGuinness High School in 1979 and would attend college at Loyola University in Chicago. He found himself attracted to the structure provided by the Benedictines and entered as a Novitiate at Saint Gregory’s Abbey in 1981. He earned an associate's degree there and then moved to New England where he graduated from Saint Anselm College in Manchester, N.H., in 1985. Brother Boniface then found himself at Ohio State University where in 1989 he earned a master's in zoology.

He knew a few months later the doubts in his mind could not be ignored. He knows today it was for the best.

“If I had stayed when I was in my 20s, I would not have been who I am today at 47,” Brother Boniface said.

Following his ordination, Father Boniface will return to the Pontifical Athenaeum of Saint Anselmo where he will continue his studies toward the Licentiate in Sacred Theology specializing in the History of Theology.

Couples Strengthen Marriages Through Encounter Ministry

ONTARIO, Calif. — More than 850 Worldwide Marriage Encounter couples made a strong statement here promising a lifetime commitment to their marriages. The couples signed a banner at the Ontario Convention Center which also affirmed their belief in traditional marriage between a man and a woman.

The words “Forever Yours” were written in large print at the top of the banner. Thousands of participants at the convention squeezed into the very large convention lobby to participate in the signing.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter couples were meeting in Ontario to celebrate the 40th anniversary of this grass roots movement that has spread to 90 countries.

The event saw a turnout of about 2,900 people from all over the world, including 850 married couples, 250 children, 70 priests and several bishops from the San Diego and San Bernardino dioceses.

“This is a way for us to reinforce the permanence of our marriage vows and the sanctity of the sacrament of matrimony,” said Tony and Cathy Witzak and Father Emile Frische, the U.S. leadership team of Worldwide Marriage Encounter.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend events start on a Friday evening and ends on Sunday afternoon. Participants hear presentations by a couple and a priest and later write their thoughts and feelings to share in the privacy of their room. There is no group discussion. Weekends are held in various locations, including hotels and retreat centers.

There is a cost for the weekend, but in the 40-year history of Worldwide Marriage Encounter, no couple has ever been turned away from attending a weekend because of lack of money.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter is a nonprofit organization and all donations are used to continue offering additional weekends throughout the country and the world.

Married couples who want to learn more about making their “good marriages, better” can find Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekends that are presented all over the United States.

For more information, contact Dan and Jean Forgue at (405) 760-0390 or e-mail partsppeople@att.net.
Cursillo Helps Connect People to Christ Through Others

By Ammanda McCabe
The Sooner Catholic

Cursillo was founded in Majorca, Spain, in 1944 by Bishop Juan Hervas and his lay assistant, Eduardo Bonnin. It was seen as a way to train lay people to become effective leaders in the Church over a course of three-day weekends. In 1957, the first U.S. Cursillo was held in Waco, Texas, and it quickly spread across the country. The first Cursillo in Oklahoma was held in 1980.

But these facts can’t convey where the real strength of Cursillo lies, which is with the people whose lives it touches. “Cursillo is what people do,” Father Don Wolf said. “It’s a movement from person to person, bringing Christ into everyday life.”

Father Wolf has worked with Cursillo since 1981, and is very enthusiastic about the people involved and the way they bring Christ and the Scriptures to the world through sharing their own experience. “It’s really the only program for spiritual growth in the Spanish-speaking community,” he said, adding that many of Oklahoma’s Catholic Hispanic leaders have come up through Cursillo, including several deacons. “It has definitely lived up to its origins as a lay movement!”

In the last 27 years, Father Wolf has seen the movement grow, with more people signed up for each event. The recent gathering at Red Rock Canyon saw more than 200 people participating in Mass and communal meals, and listening to speakers tell about their experiences of what Cursillo has done for them. Their next event will be in Guymon over Labor Day weekend.

Annie Lombardo has been a part of Cursillo since 1991. She and her husband, Angelo, were originally invited to Cursillo by their friends, Ken and Carol Lowery. “The method of Cursillo is to make a friend, be a friend, and then bring that friend to Christ,” she said. “Cursillo gave us an opportunity to learn about our faith and to experience the love and support of a Christian community through prayer and service. In Oklahoma, Cursillo is offered in English and Spanish, following the same method.”

She encourages everyone to check the Web site at www.okccursillo.com. “The Web site helps us connect with each other, and to find out about Cursillo events. It gives us an opportunity to learn about the team that will be working the Cursillo and an opportunity to pray for them, and for the candidates that will be living the Cursillo for the first time.”

“Cursillo is transforming the face of Hispanic ministry in Oklahoma,” Father Wolf said. “It is very impressive!”

Student Grateful for CFO Support

Gratitude describes Camila Herrera’s emotions regarding the support the Catholic Foundation Scholarship has provided her in her quest to become an architect at the University of Oklahoma.

“I would like to thank you for your generous contribution to my education...” Camila said. Camila is from Oklahoma City where she graduated from Mount St. Mary Catholic High School. She is beginning her fourth year at OU in the department of architecture. When asked how she was turning her gratitude into action within her community, she noted her two summer volunteer opportunities where she was able to “directly make a difference in other people’s lives.” One was as an intern, being a part of the TAP architecture team to rebuild a porch for a lady who requested help from Rebuilding Together. This is a national nonprofit that rehabilitates homes for low-income families, particularly the elderly and disabled. Her second opportunity came when she volunteered with Freedom by Design, another nonprofit which helps to remove the barriers for the low-income disabled which keeps them from being as mobile and self-sufficient as possible in and around their home. “I was able to lead a team of students to build a handicap-accessible ramp for a lady in Slaughterville, who otherwise could not afford this vital home modification. I am very excited to be a part of this important initiative and have successfully completed our first project.”

Hardworking and highly motivated are also descriptors of Camila. This fall she said she would be going to school, working at the Modern Languages Laboratory doing graphic design and being a student assistant for the Golf Lecture Series at the College of Architecture. Camila concluded with another expression of gratitude, saying, “Without your help, it would be extremely difficult for me to afford my education. Thank you!”

Disaster Volunteers Needed

Did you know that Catholic Charities serves as a disaster relief agency for natural and man-made disasters that affect the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City? Over the last several years, Catholic Charities has served communities that have had tornadoes, floods, ice storms, and resettled hurricane victims. “You would never have thought we would be impacted by a hurricane, however, families were settled all across the United States,” said Charlotte Nowakowski, disaster coordinator for Catholic Charities.

“We’ve found that there is an immediate need to gather information from those affected in order to get them connected with services through Red Cross, FEMA and for long-term care through Catholic Charities,” Nowakowski said. “We are looking for volunteers who can be contacted when needed in order to assist with this immediate response when a disaster hits.”

Volunteers are needed to serve as intake staff, data entry and logistics assistants. All disaster response positions will be on-call as needed and would decide when and how much they are able to work.

Training and equipment will be provided. The first volunteer orientation and disaster training program will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 21 at Catholic Charities, 1501 N. Classen Blvd. Volunteers will be required to attend training and participate in the Safe Environment Training.

Volunteers will be trained to assist parishes and communities that are affected by disaster. “It is not a matter of ‘if’ but ‘when’ we will have another disaster that hits here in Oklahoma,” said Nowakowski. “We’re trying to prepare so that those who are affected by the disasters get immediate assistance from trained, warm and compassionate people.”

As Mother Teresa said, “The fruit of Love is Service.”

To register and obtain additional information and volunteer applications, contact Becky VanPool at 523-3009 or e-mail bvanpool@catholic-charitiesok.org.

Parish Plans Centennial Celebration

BUFFALO — St. Joseph’s Catholic Church will be celebrating its Centennial on June 27, 2009. The St. Joseph’s Centennial Committee is inviting past and present clergy and parishioners to share their memories via stories and/or photographs of their time at St. Joseph’s. These narratives will be included in the St. Joseph’s Centennial Booklet. When thinking about how to share your families’ story, the following questions may be helpful.

1. When did your story at St. Joseph’s begin and what brought you here?
2. What sacraments and events did your family experience in Buffalo?
3. What do you remember most about your time at St. Joseph’s?

This booklet will pay tribute to the past 100 years, documenting historical data, founding families, current and past clergy United States, said correspondence is welcomed and should be sent by Oct. 15, 2008, to Debbie Robison, Rt. 1 Box 19, Buffalo, Okla. 73854, or babeerobison@yahoo.com.

A St. Joseph’s Centennial Fund has been established to assist in the development of the booklet as well as updating and repair of the church and Parish Hall. All donations are gratefully appreciated and may be sent to Dee Dee Mundell, Centennial Chairman, Rt. 1 Box 116, Rosston, Okla. 73855.
Archdiocese to Host National Catholic Education Conference

OKLAHOMA CITY — Sister Catherine Powers, CND, said she is very excited that the annual meeting in Oklahoma City Oct. 26-29. “I’ve been trying to get them for years and now they are coming,” said Sister Catherine, superintendent of Catholic Education for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

The meeting marks the 100th anniversary of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) department that represents superintendents of schools, directors of religious education and other educational leaders serving in dioceses throughout the country. Some 350 people are expected to attend. Conference sessions will be held at the Sheraton Hotel.

Archbishop Beltran will celebrate an opening Mass at Saint Joseph’s Old Cathedral in downtown Oklahoma City. Bishop Slattery of Tulsa is expected to concelebrate, Sister Catherine said.

A new publication, “Leaders in Times of Trial and Eras of Expansion” by Jack Augenstein, Ph.D., will be released at the meeting. The book traces CACE history from 1936 to 1971 and is the second of a series of three publications dealing with the organization’s history.

The conference theme continues the thread of a “Vocation of Leadership” theme begun several years ago.

Robert Wicks, psychologist and professor in the graduate program in the pastoral counseling program at Loyola College of Maryland, will deliver the keynote address on remaining passionate in Catholic education. Wicks is the author of more than 40 books, including his recent “Riding the Dragon: 10 Lessons for Inner Strength.”

Two-dozen breakout sessions will deal with issues such as emergency response plans, university and diocesan partnerships, partnering to create a vocation culture, and generational issues and their effect on Catholic schools.

Bishop Gregory Aymond of the Diocese of Austin, Texas, and a former chairman of the NCEA board of directors, will lead the closing general session discussing the document “Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord,” the U.S. Catholic bishop’s statement on lay ecclesial ministry.

The Diocesan Superintendent’s Academy, a two-day course covering critical skills necessary for success as a superintendent, will be held Oct 24-25, just prior to the annual meeting, at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Oklahoma City. The course is recommended for new or aspiring superintendents, or seasoned superintendents needing a refresher.

Established in 1904, the NCEA is the largest private professional education organization in the world, representing 200,000 Catholic educators serving 7.6 million students in Catholic elementary and secondary schools, in religious education programs, in seminaries and in colleges and universities.

Top Essay: What Catholic Education Means To Me

By Kody Bollenbach

Editor’s Note: Kody Bollenbach, son of Kevyn and Bob Bollenbach of Kingfisher, is an eighth-grade student at McGuinness Catholic High School. He received the Stinger Award, which recognizes an eighth-grade student’s essay describing the importance of Catholic education in his or her life. The award was originally the Clint Sigl Award, in remembrance of a 10-year-old who died of cystic fibrosis. Award winners are chosen by the Rasty Sanders family. Winners are chosen from their essays, an application and recommendations from three community leaders. Kody’s essay is printed below.

KINGFISHER — Although I could have studied math, English or science in any school, it was at Sts. Peter and Paul School that I learned life lessons that will stay with me forever. It was here that I learned the importance of caring for others through the Big Brother - Big Sister Program. It was here I learned the value of friends and a church community. The greatest thing I learned, though, was the power of community service.

Community service is so important because it has showed me how to help others in need. Whenever I have done community service, I feel really good about myself because I know I have made a difference in someone else’s life. For that reason, the tradition of community service that I first learned here at Sts. Peter and Paul will remain a part of my life even after I graduate.

One of my first memories of being a volunteer was helping with church and school chores. I started to school here when I was only 4 years old. At that age I didn’t get to do a lot of volunteer work, but I did see parents, teachers and people in the parish pitch in to help with school cleanup days, making repairs, working concession stand and being on playground duty. I’d see the older kids serving Mass. I hope all students who serve Mass know how much the younger kids look up to them and want to be just like them!

When I got older I had the chance to do community service projects for youth group, like work the turkey dinner. Once I collected over 200 bottles of water to donate to Sister B’s pantry, and then we went there on a field trip and worked in the food and clothes pantry. Even though that was a school project, I still donate bottled water to the food pantry whenever I can.

What’s cool about learning the importance of community service is that you can reach out even farther than just the school. Through youth group I got to help with Kingfisher In Lights and I helped clean up after the flood. Sometimes community service goes even beyond my local town. I now volunteer at OSU for two big events every year — Family Health and Safety Day and the Juvenile Diabetes Walk. Those two charity events have hundreds of volunteers and participants, and they help people all over Oklahoma.

Next year I will attend Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School, where once again community service is very important. As a student there, I will be asked to log in at least 90 hours of community service and volunteer work. I think that will be an opportunity to continue the service work that I learned to do so well while being a student at Sts. Peter and Paul.

It was said many years ago in Aesop’s Fable, The Lion and the Mouse: “No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” So whether I am sweeping the gym floor after a basketball game, delivering food baskets to the firemen or serving at a funeral Mass, I know that the community service I have learned from my teachers, parents and with the help of my friends here at Sts. Peter and Paul will serve me well for the rest of my school years and throughout the rest of my life.
**Sacred Heart Teacher Takes Trip Back to Colonial Days**

**OKLAHOMA CITY — Twenty-seven Oklahoma teachers walked in the footsteps of America’s patriots and British colonists during the Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute held recently in the restored capital city of 18th-century Virginia. Among the teachers participating was Rebecca Johnson, who teaches fifth grade at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Oklahoma City.

“Attending the Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute allowed me to step though the pages of history and walk in the footsteps of our founding fathers,” said Johnson. She said the experience will be invaluable in the history classes she will teach this fall.

“I experienced the challenges, struggles and triumphs that our leaders faced, not only in their daily lives and in their relationship with Britain, but also in the formation of the United States of America,” Johnson said. “What a powerful site, to stand in Jamestown, the birthplace of America, and see where it all started and then stand in Yorktown where Britain surrendered in the Revolution and America became a free and independent nation.”

The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence selected teachers to receive all-expense-paid trips to the summer institute in Williamsburg, Va., as well as $300 stipends for classroom materials. In addition, participants received a one-year subscription to the Colonial Williamsburg Electronic Field Trip series, which combines Internet activities and live television broadcasts to help bring the Colonial Williamsburg experience to the classroom.

While at Colonial Williamsburg — the world’s largest living history museum — Oklahoma teachers met character interpreters of 18th-century people and were immersed in early American history through hands-on activities and re-enactments of historic events. The week’s lessons were built around the theme “Becoming Americans.” Participants also visited Jamestown, the site of the first permanent English colony in America, and spent a day at Yorktown visiting the battlefields where the Continental Army forced the British to surrender.

This marks the 16th year that the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence has coordinated Oklahoma’s participation in the Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute. The Oklahoma program was founded and supported through the fundraising efforts of late Oklahoma City businessman Edward C. Joullian III. A trustee of the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence and former board member of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Joullian died in 2006. Graduates of the institute now receive lapel pins and certificates designating them as Edward C. Joullian Oklahoma Scholars. Joullian’s family, along with a group of loyal donors, continues to support the program, which has transformed the way many Oklahoma educators teach early American history.

The Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to recognizing academic excellence in Oklahoma schools. In addition to its Colonial Williamsburg programs, the foundation sponsors an academic awards program, provides training and resources for new and established public school foundations, administers grants to teachers for professional development and coordinates a statewide school-based mentoring initiative.

For more information, contact the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence at (405) 236-0006.
Rising Gas Prices Impact Catholic Parishes and Schools

By Eileen Dugan

Parishes and schools of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City are facing the same difficulties individuals and families have been enduring when it comes to high fuel prices. As Catholic churches and educational institutions seek to cope with the financial realities of the times, change is inevitable.

Sister Veronica Higgins, C.S.T., principal of Villa Teresa School in Oklahoma City, has both lost and gained students as the price of gas has crept upward, she said. She is not sure yet whether higher gas prices will force the curtailment of any of Villa Teresa’s extracurricular activities during this next school year.

Father Tom Boyer, pastor of Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish in Norman, is not aware of any negative impacts the price of gasoline has had, thus far, on All Saints School. “I have seen no changes at this time except for my own driving habits,” he said.

Father now organizes his schedule so that he only needs to drive four days a week. “I group and plan my errands (bank, post office, groceries, even hospital and nursing home visits), and I plan the route I shall take. I avoid driving up to Oklahoma City, and when I need to get things to the Pastoral Office or pick up something, I know members of the parish who work near there and ask their help. My personal travel has been minimal. I would not drive anywhere for one errand. It would wait,” he said.

Sunday Mass attendance at Saint Mark’s has not fallen off this summer as it has in previous years, Father said. He suspects that participation at Mass has remained constant because people are staying home on weekends because of higher gas prices.

To try to save on energy costs, the pastor at Saint Mark’s carefully monitors, and reduces where possible, the use of energy in his church’s buildings. “There is not much more we can do,” Father Boyer said.

Joana Camacho, principal of Sacred Heart School, Sacred Heart Parish, Oklahoma City, thinks that new families in her parish are hesitant to enroll their children at her parish school and take on another expense because of the rising costs of gasoline and food.

She foresees the need to charge each student a dollar or two to help cover the cost of the gas each time a school/church bus is used for field trips.

“We have not charged in the past,” she said. Joseph Sine, principal of Saint Charles Borromeo School, Saint Charles Borromeo Parish, Oklahoma City, said his school might have lost some students who live further away because of gas prices, but that is not known for certain. Those who have withdrawn from Saint Charles School this summer did not give higher gas prices as the reason for their departure.

Sine thinks several changes will be necessary during the coming school year to counter the rising cost of gasoline. “We have a bus for field trips and will ask each child to bring more money for gas. I’m sure there will be decisions made on where to go, or whether or not to go, based upon the price of gas,” he said.

“Personally, I’m riding my bike to work on days that I don’t have to be at a meeting this summer. I will not do that when school starts, though. I might have to do the unthinkable and carpool with my wife to school,” Sine joked.

Suzette Williams, principal of Saint Eugene Catholic School, Saint Eugene Parish, Oklahoma City, said due to the rising cost of gas and groceries, her school has had to raise milk, breakfast and lunch prices, just to break even.

Williams said she would have to wait and see what effect gas prices had on volunteerism and field trips at her school this year.

“At Saint Eugene’s, we are very aware of the sacrifices each family makes in order to attend our parish school,” she said. “Our School Advisory Committee works faithfully with our Friends of Saint Eugene Committee to raise funds to help those who financially would not be able to attend our life-giving school. These funds will need to increase this year to be able to help those who have suffered the most with the high prices of everyday commodities.”

The major impact that Angie Howard, principal of Saint Elizabeth Seton Catholic School, Saint John the Baptist Parish in Edmond, has seen at Saint Elizabeth’s is an increase in the cost of school supplies and shipping costs due to higher gas prices.

Cost is always a consideration at Yukon’s Saint John Nepomuk Catholic School when making decisions about activities, purchases, etc., said Principal Diane Floyd. “We have had to be thoughtful when considering increases in our tuition and lunch programs because, while rising costs have been passed on to our school, we know that parents have felt the pinch in their homes, as well.”

To help out, this year, Saint John Nepomuk School will offer tuition assistance to several families now in need, who, in previous years, did not require such help, she said.

So far, Saint John Nepomuk has not seen a noticeable impact on its school sports, volunteers, field trips or travel, in general, because of the high cost of gasoline, but Floyd says her school needs to prepare for several possible difficulties when school opens.

First, she sees transportation to and from Saint John’s sports programs as a major concern.

“Here at our elementary school, transportation is provided by parents because we do not have a school bus. Rising gas prices may make it more difficult for parents to transport children for anything ‘extra’ outside the typical ‘drop off’ and ‘pick up’ times from school.

“We need to be prepared for a loss of participation in our athletic programs. To participate in CGSAA-sponsored sports, we typically must play at venues in the Oklahoma City area. For instance, soccer is played on both Saturday and Sunday. This means two extra trips for a family into Oklahoma City over one week-end, maybe more, if there is more than one child playing in a family,” Floyd said.

Floyd hopes that parents will continue to support her school’s sports programs in spite of the gas crisis, but she also hopes that CGSAA might consider scheduling two games on the same day in order to limit the number of days team members must travel to play sports.

Floyd also sees the recruitment of quality teachers as problematic as gas prices skyrocket. “If candidates do not reside in the Yukon area, they must strongly consider the commute that they may have should they accept a teaching position with us. Connecting families and teachers who may be able to carpool together is one way that we can help,” she said.

Note Questions concerning the impact of rising fuel costs were sent to all Catholic schools in the archdiocese.
College Students Provide Helping Hands to St. Vincent de Paul

By Steve Gust
For the Sooner Catholic

College volunteers didn’t mind a bit lending a hand at the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Shop in Oklahoma City, even on a morning when a fiery August sun shot temperatures easily past the 100-degree mark.

The group from the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond were there for one reason — the work is needed and is part of Christ’s ongoing mission here on earth.

“We have always needed this. I think it’s just a part of what we need to do,” said Andrew Browne, executive director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

On this visit, Browne was there with some from the UCO Catholic Student Center as well as others.

One of them was Drew Stephenson. "Andrew asked if I could come and it wasn’t a problem," the senior student said while going through clothes. "I’ll probably be back again some day and see how people put their faith in action."

Back at the shop, going through the various donations is not an easy task.

“Andrew asked if I could come and it wasn’t a problem,” said Andrew Browne, executive director of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

On this visit, Browne was there with some from the UCO Catholic Student Center as well as others.

One of them was Drew Stephenson. "Andrew asked if I could come and it wasn’t a problem," the senior student said while going through clothes. "I’ll probably be back again some day and see how people put their faith in action."

Future trips are definitely on the agenda for some UCO students.

“I’ve already talked to other church youth groups on campus and think they’ll be helping as well,” Browne said.

Also helping from the Catholic Student Center were Danny O’Neill and Nicole Naugle.

The shop, in business since November 2003, always needs and deeply values the help, manager Kathy Vance said.

“Whatever you can donate to the thrift shops, from volunteers, to items to prayers,” she said. “You know, though, we are very grateful for everything we receive and we get so much here — from volunteers, to items to prayers,” she said.

It’s all wonderful and so very much appreciated. We are a Catholic presence here and I think that’s great.”

During this session, the UCO students worked for hours making a difference with their manual labor.

In addition to the clothing, the group sorted through toys, priced items and cleaned merchandise. There was lots for them to do.

At first glance some may not see the importance of the thrift shop, where many shop for low-cost household items. For others, it’s simply the difference between life and death.

“We always get people who need coats,” Kathy said. “There are so many, especially in this part of town, who rely on us.”

She was very impressed with the work done by the UCO students.

“They were just wonderful and did a great job,” she said later. “I found out three of them had prayed a rosary earlier in the day at an abortion clinic.”

The mission continues.

“We would like to perhaps have a building donated to us some day for storage,” Kathy said.

"Yet we get so much now and are so appreciative of everything.”

The thrift store is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Donations are accepted from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Whatever you can donate to the thrift shops, call Kathy at (405) 602-0011, or visit the store some day and see how people put their faith in action.

Villa Teresa School Sets Date for Open House

Villa Teresa Catholic School is hosting open house as part of our 75th anniversary celebration. Come and see what makes us different! In the midst of the Dust Bowl Days, the Carmelite Sisters of St. Therese saw a need to serve working parents and actually cared for Oklahoma City that provided before and after care and actually cared for children as boarders whose parents were away. In the midst of the Dust Bowl Days, the Carmelite Sisters of St. Therese saw a need to serve working parents and actually cared for Oklahoma City.

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Villa Teresa School has always been a service-oriented school taking time to make cards for the sick and dying. Children are encouraged through various projects to help those in need — children who are sick and the homeless.

We welcome you to come and visit Aug. 16 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Villa Teresa School at 1216 Classroom Drive. We especially welcome former students and families to see how we are growing! For more information, call 232-4286 or look on our Web site, villateresaschool.com.

Cruz in Concert

Classical guitarist Edgar Cruz will perform Aug. 17 in a benefit for Mobile Meals of Oklahoma County. The concert will be at 3 p.m. at the Church of the Servant United Methodist, 14943 N. MacArthur. Several Mobile Meals receive support from several Oklahoma City Catholic churches.
Emmaus Days

continued from Page 1

Christ. By dedicating their lives to this end, they have been able to find peace and purpose in their vocation. Archbishop Eusebius Beltran echoed these same ideas while celebrating Mass. Following Mass, the young men were able to spend time with Archbishop Beltran and were also able to share with him their enthusiasm for following Christ in whatever vocation God has called them to follow.

The retreatants were also able to listen to fascinating talks given by Fathers Ray Ackerman, William Novak, James Goin, Kirk Larkin and Shane Tharp. They each shared their own vocation stories and explained how they heard God’s call and answered it. Likewise, many of the seminarians shared their own journey of what led them to believe that they may have a calling to the priesthood. They also explained how they were taking an active role in discerning God’s will in their lives by attending a seminary. Of course, a retreat at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Camp would not have been complete without playing football and water volleyball as well as staying up late and talking with seminarians about life in the seminary and pondering how God was calling them to live their lives.

Just as the Risen Christ walked with the two disciples toward Emmaus, it is apparent that Christ still walks with each of us throughout our lives. The Emmaus Days Retreat allowed the young men to ask the questions that have been on their minds and surfacing in their hearts. It is our hope that the Holy Spirit will enlighten their minds and inflame their hearts to continue reaching for Christ and, in turn, finding the vocation that God has willed for them since before their births.

Is God calling you?
Saint Teresa Breaks Ground for New Youth, Parish Center

HARRAH — Parishioners at Saint Teresa of Avila gathered around Father Alan J. Loth following Mass on Aug. 10 to help break ground for a building project that has been in the planning for more than five years. Joe Tytanic, chairman of the Parish Council, said the building project, estimated at $1.3 million, will enlarge the parish hall and create a new youth center, as well as a new welcoming center. The groundbreaking ceremony was perfect timing for Father Loth, who celebrates his 40th anniversary of ordination on Aug. 17.

Our Lady Statue Visits Oklahoma

Catholics from throughout the Archdiocese are turning out to see the Our Lady of Fatima statue that is being presented at parishes during August. The statue of Our Lady was brought to Oklahoma by the International Pilgrim Virgin Statue Foundation Inc. Here, the statue is displayed at Sacred Heart in El Reno where more than 200 attended a prayer service and rosary prior to the vigil Mass. Catholics placed prayer petitions in a box at the foot of the statue asking the Blessed Virgin to pray for their cause. The statue is scheduled to be in Oklahoma until Aug. 22.
Sister Annette Roach Celebrates 60th Anniversary of Final Vows

The Dominican Sisters of Hope announce the following anniversaries of Sisters who have served, or are currently serving, in the Diocese of Oklahoma City.

Sister Annette Roach, OP, (Sister Mary Daniel), a native of Fall River, Mass., and currently residing in Cotuit, Mass., celebrated 60 years in religious life. Since 1996 she has been director of Faith Formation at the Parish of Christ the King in Mashpee Mass. Sister’s teaching ministries included Dominican Academy in Fall River, Mass. (1948-50, 1951-56 and 1968-70), St. Peter’s School in Plattsburgh, N.Y. (1950-51 and 1956-61). She was assistant principal and teacher at St. Bernadette School in New Haven, Conn. (1961-66) and principal of Sacred Heart Elementary School in Acushnet, Mass. (1967-68 and 1973-79). Sister Annette was assistant director of the Model Cities Program in New Bedford, Mass., where she trained teacher aides to serve in seven public schools (1970-75). In the early ‘80s, Sister volunteered for the Dominican Sisters United for Ministry project, the purpose of which was to empower the Cheyenne-Arapaho people of northwest Oklahoma to reach their full potential. She then joined the faculty at St. Michaels Indian School for the Navahos in St. Michaels, Ariz., where she was a reading specialist (1981-87). Sister was director of religious education at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Warwick, R.I. (1988-92). From 1992-1995, Sister Annette was Parish Priestess of the Dominican Sisters of Fall River, Mass.

The Congregation of Dominican Sisters of Hope was founded in 1955. The Sisters’ commitment to proclaiming hope spans a variety of ministries in several dioceses throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Their ministries include education at all levels, health care, spiritual renewal, parish and pastoral work. Their Web address is www.ophope.org.

Saints Celebrates Feast Day, Principal and Playground

OKLAHOMA CITY — Brenda Arambula looked out on the more than 300 parishioners eagerly awaiting one of her “famous” Indian tacos — and wondered if there would be enough for everybody. “I saw the line extending around the parameter and out the door,” she said, “and I wondered if we would have enough to feed everyone." But sure enough, they did. By the end of the festivities, everybody had been fed, some had seconds, and there was still food left over.

The celebration on July 27 marked an important time for the parish of St. James, which included the introduction of the school’s new principal, Debbie Taber, the commemoration of the Feast Day of St. James The Greater, and the unveiling of the school’s new preschool playground equipment. The day included the Indian taco dinner and ice cream, water slides and an obstacle course for the kids.

As children swirled around her, vying for their turn at the water slide, Principal Taber commented on the people in her midst. “I am amazed at the community turn-out,” she said. “This shows that the community of St. James is supportive, helpful and kind.”

Taber comes to St. James from Rosary, where she was a teacher. Her main goal, she told those in attendance at Mass, would be to promote gospel values, a Christian attitude in kids and parents, and to create an open environment where “service, justice and faith” are the most important values.

Nearby, Estella Kuzmic, a member of the St. James family since 1979, watched her granddaughter, Samantha, 5, play on the water slide.

“This is what we need,” she said. “We need to get together, to socialize, to find out about each other so we can help each other.”

Kuzmic’s grandchildren mark the second generation of Kuzmics who have chosen to send their children to St. James The Greater School. Her daughter, Elaine, graduated from St. James in 1996 and now her children attend the school.

The new playground, designed specifically for children ages 2-7 (preschool through first grade), was opened for play. Arambula, the school’s development director, said the money from the school auction funded the playground. The eight pieces of playground equipment were selected because each one requires the children to use their upper or lower body strength to spin, ride, bounce, etc. Therefore, they are getting exercise while having fun. A bouncy yellow school bus, spinning tubs, a tricycle built for five, a choo-choo train and other pieces make the playground different than the usual traditional playground pieces most schools have.

“The preschool program has grown tremendously over the past couple of years,” Arambula said. “In addition to the excellent academic learning program, this new playground designed just for the little ones will be very enticing to parents looking for a preschool for their children.”

Holy Family Home Hosts Fatima Statue

Catholic Charities Holy Family Maternity Home will host the traveling International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima on Aug. 19 from 4 to 5:30 p.m., said Mary Jane Webster, director of Holy Family Maternity Home.

“We invite the public to share this wonderful opportunity to see the world-famous statue and tour our facility during open house,” Webster said. A short prayer service will be held by Father Lowell Stieferman. The celebration coincides with the ninth anniversary of the home’s dedication. Refreshments will be served.

The Holy Family Maternity Home is located at 6821 Eddie Drive in Midwest City. For additional information about the Holy Family Maternity Home or the open house, contact the staff at (405) 741-7419.

By Eliana Tedrow
For the Sooner Catholic

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Letters

To the People of the Archdiocese of OKC:

On behalf of men and women religious throughout the United States, I extend heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to the annual appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious in 2007. Your generous donations totaled $117,657.10. We know this represents quite a sacrifice for many of you in these difficult economic times, and we are deeply grateful.

Your generosity helps to provide care for more than 37,500 religious in the United States who are past age 70, including more than 5,000 who need skilled nursing care. These women and men pray daily for your intentions, asking God to bless you abundantly.

The funds from the 2007 appeal were distributed to religious institutes at the end of June, and I am confident that they will be received with profound gratitude for every donor. Our annual report details the distribution of funds, and it will be available on our Web site on Sept. 1.

We invite you to visit www.retiredreligious.org.

Sister Janice Bader, CPPS
Executive Director National Religious Retirement Office

Dear Archbishop Beltran,

God give you peace!

I am in receipt of your check No.138021 in the amount of $60,779.70, representing the gifts of the people of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City to the Jerusalem Mother Church for the 2008 Good Friday collection. This gift will not only assist in the preservation of the Holy Places but will also help the people to whom the Franciscan Friars of the Holy Land Custody minister.

In the name of the Friars and those to whom they minister, I express our deepest gratitude to you, Archbishop, and to our Sisters and Brothers in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, who continue to give most generously to help those who are in need! May God bless and reward all of you.

Under the Fourth Commandment, “Honor thy Father and Mother,” the catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us CCC 2239, “We are called to contribute along with civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity and freedom.” To not defend our nation in solidarity with immigrants is an injustice. Many of them are our Catholic family. CCC 2235, “Political authorities are obligated to respect the fundamental rights of the human person. No one can command or establish what is contrary to the dignity of persons and natural law.” When a 15-year-old mom can’t go to the hospital to have her baby because she is afraid, then the laws commit sin. We are the laws, we are a democracy, and we make the laws. We are sinning against the Holy Spirit with our laws. We finally have a chance to make history different. We need to be open to the spirit of truth instead of the spirit of fear.

To live only as American Catholics is dangerous. The Catholic Church is universal by definition. Our teachings come from Christ himself. We must never forget why we help people. We help them not down piece by piece, the Spaniards were here before us. Unless you are an American Indian, then you are the offspring of an immigrant. Mary and Joseph were immigrants in Egypt. Does there need to be reform with immigration laws? We all know something needs to be done. The laws must be made to be just and humane for our brothers and sisters.

Being called to the feast calls us to live in solidarity with all people on Earth. American Catholics are called to a greater responsibility worldwide. We cannot put land boundaries on our faith. We are called to a greater responsibility worldwide. We are called to the feast also. In fact, the only commandment Christ himself gives is to “Love thy Neighbor.” Who are we to love? Illegal immigrants are our neighbors as is the unwell mother, the AIDS patient and even the woman caught in adultery. Jesus tells the people that he who is without sin is the first to throw the stone. The stones are being thrown today. The unjust laws being passed are the stones. They are immoral laws.

Brother Joe Rogenski, OFM
Commissary of the Holy Land
St. Louis Region

Catholic in any Language

Our Catholic faith has a strong teaching of justice. We hear the word justice many times in the Word of God. Justice is an action, a way of life. Justice does not have land boundaries or finical boundaries. In fact, our Catholic faith is also a faith that does not have boundaries. We are one in the breaking of bread. Christ comes to us globally in the Sacrament. When we wake daily, we are both grateful to be American Catholics. Immigrants brought our faith and are open to the spirit of truth instead of the spirit of fear. We are one in the breaking of bread.

Across Oklahoma

International Food Festival

OKLAHOMA CITY — Corpus Christi Catholic Church, 1005 N.E. 15th St., is sponsoring a second annual International Food Festival on Sept. 13. The event runs from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tickets are $20 for adults and $10 for children 6-12. There will be silent and live auctions featuring a seven-night vacation for eight, complimentary nights and dining at several local hotels, and many great prizes as well as food tasting from over eight different countries. For further information, contact Cynthia Hollier at 229-7801 or 478-2619.

Luncheon Set at CPC

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma City Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women is hosting a luncheon on Tuesday, Aug. 26 at the Catholic Pastoral Center, in honor of the presidents and representatives of the 33 affiliations from the North, Central and South Regions. This is a luncheon to thank those women who have volunteered to carry on the works of our Oklahoma City Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women.

Registration will be at 11 a.m. with Mass celebrated at 11:30 a.m. The luncheon will follow in the dining room of the Pastoral Center. The new presidents include Shirley Stricklan and Desdive Milasek, North Region; Patti Freseley, Central Region, and Barbara Wann, South Region. Our province director is Karen Painter and our spiritual moderator is Rev. Robert T. Wood.

Birth Choice Seeks Women

OKLAHOMA CITY — Calling all young women. Are you concerned about moral issues of the day? If so, here is your golden opportunity to share your insights and inspirations! It is our honor and privilege to invite you to the Young Women’s Initiative, Thursday evening, Sept. 18 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., 4701 S. Western, Oklahoma City Wine and cheese will be served. This event will be hosted by Birth Choice, Barbara Chishko, Ruth Blakley, Jan O’Neill and Carrie Rossow. Reserve your place now by calling O’Neill, 606-8426, or e-mail joneill@birthchoice.org.

The mission of Birth Choice, a nonprofit organization in existence since 1973, is to provide pregnant women with the means and opportunity to choose life.

August 17, 2008 • Sooner Catholic 13
Choices: The Pearl of Great Price and Its Cost

A woman I know tells this story: She married a man she loved but, early on in the marriage, was too immature to responsibly carry her part of the relationship. One night she went to a party with her husband, drank too much, and left the party with another man. Eventually she sobered up and repentantly found her way home, fully expecting the marital skies to be ripped asunder with anger. But her husband, though hurt and shaken, was calm, philosophical, direct.

When she walked sheepishly into the room, he demanded neither an explanation nor an apology. Ultimately, what is there to say? He simply said to her, “I’m going away for a few days to see you on your own. That’s the nature of choice. That’s the nature of renunciation. Every choice is a renunciation. Thomas Aquinas said that and it helps explain why we struggle so painfully to make clear choices. We want the right things, but we want other things too.

Every choice is a series of renunciations: If I marry one person, I cannot marry anyone else; if I live in one place, I cannot live anywhere else; if I choose a certain career, that excludes many other careers; if I have this, then I cannot have that. The list could go on indefinitely. To choose one thing is to renounce others. That’s the nature of choice.

In most areas of our lives we do not feel this so painfully. We choose and there isn’t a lot of sting to the loss. But the area of love is more sensitive. Here we feel the sting of loss more strongly and here we often find it hard to accept the real limits of life. What are those limits? They are the limits that come with being an infinite spirit in a finite world.

We are fired into this world with a madness that comes from the gods and has us believe that we are destined to embrace the cosmos itself. For nothing, we thought, is everything. That’s a simple way, though a good one, of saying something that Christianity has always said, namely, that in body and soul we are meant to embrace everyone and we already hunger for that. Perhaps we experience it most clearly in our sexuality, but the hunger is everywhere present in us. Our yearning is wide, our longing is infinite, our urge to embrace is promiscuous. We are infinite in yearning, but, in this life, only get to meet the finite.

That’s what makes love difficult. We are overcharged for our own lives. We have divine fire inside us, want everything, yearn for the whole world, and yet, at a point, have to commit to one particular person, at one particular place, and in one very particular life, with all the limits that imposes. Infinite desire limited by a finite choice, such is the nature of real life and love.

Life and love, beyond the abstract and beyond the grandiosity of our own daydreams, involve hard, painful renunciation. But it is precisely that very renunciation that helps us grow up and makes our lives real in a way that our daydreams don’t.

In trying to explain some of the deeper secrets of life, Jesus gives us this parable: The Kingdom of God is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who goes and sells all that he owns and buys that pearl. That, the pearl of great price, the value of love and cost, is in essence the challenge that young husband put to his wife when he told her to sort out the question: “Are you a married woman or are you something else?” For what are you willing to renounce others? What is your own pearl of great price? Are we willing to give up everything in exchange for it? Are we willing to live with its limits? Until we are clear on these questions, there is forever the danger that, like the wife who left the party without her husband, we will act out in dangerous and hurtful ways.

Thoreau once said: “The youth gets together materials to build a bridge to the moon or perhaps a palace or a temple ... at length the middle-aged man concludes to build a woodshed with them.” So too in love and life: The child sets out to make love to the whole world and the adult eventually concludes to marry a single person, in essence, to build a woodshed. But it is only in that woodshed where life and love are real in this world.

In Humanae Vitae, giving an ecclesiastical example of a profile in courage, Paul VI reaffirmed the immorality of recourse to artificial means of birth regulation. While Pope Paul VI and the Catholic Church practically stood alone in reaffirmation that the procreative and unitive ends of the conjugal act could not morally be arbitrarily separated, it is important to remember that up until the early 20th century this was also the constant teaching of all other Christian ecclesial bodies — Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant.

Of course, the Church is not against sexual pleasure as some of her opponents allege; but, more importantly, we are for the happiness of the human person. The fostering of that happiness requires understanding the gift of our sexuality as God has intended it. Sex, in God’s plan, is more than just a “recreational activity.” As Catholic feminist and philosopher Janet Smith says: “...sex is for babies and bonding. If people are not ready for babies and bonding, they ought not to be engaging in acts of sexual intercourse.” And what are nuptials but the public expression of a couple’s readiness to do just that?

A careful rereading of Humanae Vitae — especially in the light of the “sexual revolution” unleashed in society over the past 40 years — can help us appreciate how prescient the pope was in his warnings of the dire consequences that a “contraceptive mentality” would have on society. The numbers of unwanted pregnancies and abortions did not decrease with the widespread acceptance of contraception — they increased. And the “pull,” far from freeing women from male domination, made them more likely to be victims of sexual exploitation by men. The breakup of families and the epidemic of divorce in our culture, the increasingly high incidence of women bearing children

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Humanae Vitae: True 40 Years Ago and True Today

By Bishop Thomas G. Wenski

This past July 25 marked the 40th anniversary of Pope Paul VI’s controversial and still little-heeded encyclical, Humanae Vitae (On the Regulation of Birth). Many both within and without the Church — heady from the many changes initiated by the Second Vatican Council — fully expected that the Church would change her clear and constant teachings on human sexuality and procreation. Proponents of change then argued that the development of the contraceptive pill required understanding the gift of our sexuality as some of her opponents allege; but, especially in the light of the “sexual revolution” unleashed in society over the past 40 years — can help us appreciate how prescient the pope was in his warnings of the dire consequences that a “contraceptive mentality” would have on society. The numbers of unwanted pregnancies and abortions did not decrease with the widespread acceptance of contraception — they increased. And the “pull,” far from freeing women from male domination, made them more likely to be victims of sexual exploitation by men. The breakup of families and the epidemic of divorce in our culture, the increasingly high incidence of women bearing children

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Sex and Our Little Pills: Viagra and Birth Control

A prominent politician was recently pressed by reporters to comment on the “unfair situation” of health insurers reimbursing for Viagra but not for birth control. The politician declined to reply, and the ensuing firestorm led to accusations of gender bias (and even misogyny) on his part. Other commentors took the argument and ran with it: Why should men be able to get drugs so they can have sex, but women cannot be given the same access to needed drugs so they can have sex safely and without the risk of becoming pregnant? Do men somehow have more of a right to sex than women, as implied by the unequal coverage of these drugs?

Behind these questions are some misguided views about sex, pregnancy and morality, as well as some basic confusion over the respective actions of these two drugs. Viagra and birth control should not be used to make a strained analogy between men and women — these powerful drugs serve two different purposes, and each one has its own unique ethical considerations. Viagra, at a minimum, treats an actual dysfunction, while birth control does not. In fact, one might say that Viagra fixes a broken system, while birth control breaks a perfectly working system.

Whenever the pill is used as birth control (its major use in America today), rather than as a treatment for irregular cycles or bleeding, it tosses a wrench into a healthy, properly functioning biological system, and enables a married couple to act against their own natural fruitfulness. A grave moral violation occurs whenever we turn marital sexuality into a radically lifeless transaction through the use of contraception. In our society, pregnancy and fertility are too often seen as if they were some kind of health anomaly. Fertility, clearly, is not a disease at all, and does not need to be treated as if it were a pathological state. Pregnancy is the normal, healthy physiological process by which human beings enter the world, and every normal, healthy physiological process by which human beings enter the world, and every

Humanae Vitae

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out of wedlock, the flight from adult responsibility and the extended “adolescence” of men, all point to — in hindsight — the rightness of Paul VI’s and the Church’s teaching on human sexuality.

The Church condemns artificial contraception because it is intrinsically evil (and because it is evil it has bad consequences). Contraception is evil because it violates the very purpose and nature of the sexual act — and in doing so violates the dignity of the human person.

Pope John Paul II reaffirmed Humane Vitae throughout his pontificate. His “Theology of the Body” has sought to represent the perennial teachings of Church on human sexuality in an age too often hostile to our contemporaries. The sexual act, he teaches, implies self-giving, a self-giving denied in the very act of contraception. One’s “body language” should mean as much as one’s words do. Happiness and human flourishing cannot be built on insincere language or lies. Contraception — like pre-marital or extra-marital sex — is a lie because it denies the unconditional “yes” of one to another implied in the very act of love-making.

Bishop Thomas Wenski, bishop of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, www.ncecenter.org

Reprinted with permission from The Florida Catholic.
Buenas Noticias...

Muy queridos Hermanos y Hermanas de Cristo,

Con la temporada escolar a punto de comenzar, no es que deseen las pilas de libros, pero estoy seguro que los niños están hambrientos. ¡Qué rápido ha pasado el verano! ¿De hecho ha sido así? El año escolar se ha acelerado. Ahora los niños se inician en las edades escolarizadas, algunas de sus inquietudes en la escuela. Para el asesoramiento de las niñas y niños, hemos establecido la Escuela de Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City. Les ruego que hagan un esfuerzo positivo durante este año escolar para que aparezcan más sobre su fe Católica.

...¡La Campana Escolar!

La campana se ha acelerado en la escuela. En alusión a esto, hay que recordar que no todos los niños tienen la misma nutrición. La educación de los niños y niñas es fundamental para apoyarlos en su desarrollo. Además, las escuelas son un espacio para que se expresen sus ideas y emociones. Es importante que sepa que aunque la escuela puede ser complicada, los profesores están ahí para ayudarles.

A la sombra de la ignorancia se afianza el abuso en contra de los más débiles

Por Mauro Ynclón
Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — Cualquiera que sean las razones, la arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City y el respeto a su Santidad, el papa, nos piden que nuestro pueblo y los ciudadanos de nuestro país se unan en oraciones por el bienestar de los niños y niñas. Dios quiere un mundo mejor.

En Oklahoma, particularmente, esto es muy acertado. Y para pensar en lo que puede hacer, puede ser útil pensar en lo que Dios y su iglesia pueden hacer. Pero también conocer nuestros derechos y deberes en esta sociedad, como cristianos y como seres humanos de una sociedad. Nosotros somos más que nada por lo que somos y no por lo que somos. No hay nada más que no sea origen de la humanidad, en una sociedad que nos ve como una herramienta de la que se hace uso. La arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City nos invita a reflexionar sobre los derechos de los niños y niñas.

Aprender más de la Palabra de Dios. Existen en nuestras parroquias y colegios católicos, en todos los lugares, una serie de actividades para fomentar la cultura de los niños y niñas. En el Colegio Católico de Oklahoma City, los niños pueden aprender sobre la historia, la literatura y la música. En el día después de la escuela, los niños pueden participar en actividades de teatro, música y deporte. En el día después de la escuela, los niños pueden participar en actividades de teatro, música y deporte. En el día después de la escuela, los niños pueden participar en actividades de teatro, música y deporte.
Con un destacado pasado que abre un prestigioso futuro a la diversidad
50 años de establecida celebró la Iglesia Católica San Eugenio

Por Mauro Yanoz
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Hace 50 años el Obispo Victor Reed, erigió bajo consenso previo en el mes de junio del año 1958, la parroquia San Eugenio. El nombre de San Eugenio se impuso ya que se buscaba homenajear al Obispo Eugenio McCullene, cuyo patrono fue el Papa San Eugenio I, quien presidió el Papiro desde el año 554 hasta su muerte en el año 557. Por lo tanto, el Papa San Eugenio I es el Santo Patrono de esta hermosa parroquia. La parroquia San Eugenio ha tenido desde su establecimiento un número determinado de acorderos que han llevado su misión evangélica con éxito hasta lo que es hoy en día esa parroquia, la casa de Dios con una diversidad plena.

En esta parroquia los hispa- nos católicos que hablan español como lengua madre han desempeñado una importante tarea evangélica desde principios de la década de los años 60, bajo la supervisión del Padre Bill Pruett.

En esta parroquia han pasado diversas congregaciones de monjas. Sin embargo, una de esas congregaciones, la Congregación de las Hermanas Carmelitas Misioneras de Santa Teresa, dejó un gran legado que permitió por gracia de Dios el fortalecimiento en el trabajo integrador de evangelización de los hispanos inmigrantes.

Ahora en los actuales momentos la parroquia San Eugenio cuenta con una directora laica para su ministerio hispánico, ella es la señora y maestra Gloria Fantazois, quien nos dijo: “Uno de los grandes logros de esta parroquia es tener su propia Misa Dominical en español, la cual se celebra a las doce del mediodía. Además, también tenemos un diario hispánico, el señor Alejandro Randolph, quien por cierto ha estado ayudando mucho a fortalecer el ministerio hispánico en esta parroquia.”

Cree que el progreso de este ministerio se debe al trabajo de todos los que deseamos que se hagan las cosas bien aquí y son innumerables las personas que nos ayudan. Pero aún así, hay mucho por hacer porque los recursos son escasos pero las ganas de trabajar son abundantes. Estamos preparando para el 7 de septiembre el Festival de las Américas y para el 6 de septiembre una gran fiesta nocturna que antecede al festival”.

El Arzobispo Eusebius Boltrin celebró el pasado mes de junio junto a varios sacerdotes y diáconos una Misa en el día del Santo Patrono de esta parroquia, que es el 2 de junio de cada año.

La parroquia San Eugenio actualmente tiene como párroco al Padre Joseph Jacobi, quien habla español y se ha ganado el afecto de los hispanos de esa parroquia desde el mismo momento que llegó hace poco años a este templo. El Padre Jacobi ahora tiene un gran reto y ambicioso proyecto por delante, y es el de construir una nueva sede física para la Iglesia San Eugenio. Este arduo proyecto requiere la ayuda de todos los católicos y la buena voluntad de servir a Dios.

Para mayor información sobre cómo hacemos miembro y participar de esta grandiosa feligresía, de las clases de catecismo, de los requisitos para contraer matrimonio eclesiástico, bautismo, confirmación, primera comunión, etc. Pueden contac- tar a Gloria Fantazois al teléfono (405) 771-7115.
Jobs Box

Openings for Help with Adults with Developmental Disabilities

Shawnee

The Center of Family Love in Okarche has immediate openings for the following: LPNs — full-time shifts available (3 p.m. to 11 p.m. and weekend doubles). Individual Program Coordinator — must have good communication skills interacting with our clients, their families and the community. Qualified Mental Retardation Professional — Bachelor’s degree, or to be preference. Prior experience working with developmentally disabled. Laundry aides, housekeeping and dietary aides — full-time positions available. To apply, call 263-4658, fax 263-4563, e-mail alemen@findc.org or in person at 635 W. Texas, Okarche, Okla. 73062. EOE.

Parish Openings

St. Andrew’s in Moore needs Music Director and Adult Formation Director. The music director position requires keyboard skills in piano and organ, knowledge of Catholic choral repertoire and related church documents.

With appropriate credentials, the compensation and benefits would be generous, commensurate with experience and training. The music director has responsibility for providing leadership for our choirs, ensemble and bell ringers as well as accompaniment at our three weekend Masses, Holy Days and special occasions. Parishioners sing robustly and know a broad repertoire of hymn tunes and sings from Gather Comprehensive (second edition) and Spirit and Song. We are seeking a faithful Catholic who is open to becoming an active member of our parish family. This part-time position is available immediately. Please apply by sending a resume to fjacks@cox.net or to the pastor at 800 N.W. 5th St., Moore, Okla. 73160.

The Director of Adult Formation is responsible for providing leadership for our ongoing Christian formation programs for grownups and for coordinating our RCIA program. We have been offering three six-week seminars each year for the past several years that have been well attended and which employ a variety of short course offerings. This part-time position is available immediately.

For an applicant who possesses qualifications for both positions, this would be a full-time position. Please apply by sending a resume to fjacks@cox.net or to the pastor at 800 N.W. 5th St., Moore, Okla. 73160.

Temporary Full-Time Activity Director

Saint Ann Retirement Center will have an opening Sept. 1, 2008, for a full-time activity director. This position is a temporary position for four months. The position is responsible for scheduling and providing activities for all residents on a daily basis, and having scheduled activities periodically in the evening hours and on weekends. Insures that transportation is arranged for all residents for outings, scheduled activities and physician appointments as necessary. A valid driver’s license is required. Applicants can fax letter of interest to Sid Espinosa, Executive Director, at (405) 724-0747.

Holy Trinity Catholic School is seeking an adult who is 18 years or older who can work as our extended care program provider for the 2008-2009 school year. The position pays $125 per week. Experience with children is preferred. Hours of service are 3 to 5:30 p.m. each school day. Please contact the school office at 263-4422 to apply.

For an up-to-date jobs box, go to catharcdioceseokc.org

Father Shane Tharp, along with tour guides and noted Catholic speakers Steve and Janet Ray, will be leading a 10-day journey to the Holy Land May 8-17, 2009.

The Rays are the well-known writers, producers and hosts of the Footprints of God documentary series and have been to the Holy Land more than 50 times as registered guides. The highlights of the tour include Mass at many locations such as the Primacy of Peter Church on the Sea of Galilee; the Grotto of Annunciation; St. Peter’s House; the Tomb of Christ in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; the Mount of Beatitudes; and the Garden of Gethsemane. There are also special opportunities for the Renewal of Wedding Vows at the Wedding Church in Cana, Renewal of Baptismal Vows in the Jordan River, and praying at the Western Wall. These are only a few of the sites on the tour.

The tour is meant to roughly coincide with the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the National Shrine of the Infant Jesus in Prague, Father Tharp said. “It seems most fitting to bring people to the place where God made his plan of salvation most clear!”

The tour cost of $3,499 includes round-trip airline from New York; accommodations of three nights in Tiberias and five nights in Jerusalem; dinner and breakfast daily; luxury coach and transfers; certified guides Steve and Janet Ray as well as local assistants; tickets to all sites; Steve Ray’s 110-page Pilgrim’s Handbook to the Holy Land and a DVD of pilgrimage highlights; daily private Masses at holy sites; Steve’s teaching, prayers and songs; and meditations by Father Tharp.

For more information or to obtain a brochure, call (405) 567-3404 or go to www.- stevegoes.com.
Imagine if your state of residence put a price tag on your life. Though it sounds like something out of "The Twilight Zone," that's exactly what happened to Randy Stroup and Barbara Wagner, both cancer patients residing in Oregon, home of the nation’s only taxpayer-funded, doctor-assisted suicide option for the terminally ill. Uninsured and battling prostate cancer, Stroup applied to his state-sponsored health insurance plan to fund his chemotherapy. He was shocked to receive a letter saying they would not cover his chemotherapy drug, but would cover the cost of physician-assisted suicide. "It dropped my chin to the floor ... [How could they] not pay for medication that would help my life, and yet offer to pay to end my life?" said Stroup. The same offer to cover assisted suicide instead of treatment was made to Wagner, who is battling lung cancer. Their stories compel us to consider the effects of legislation like this, where it may lead us, and how we should react.

Physician-assisted suicide laws contribute to the overall devaluing of human life. Rather than recognizing the inestimable worth of every individual, they promote the erroneous idea that life is a commodity up for cost analysis by the state. These laws perpetuate the idea that instead of protecting our citizens’ right to life, government should encourage and facilitate the eradication of those deemed a financial burden to society. These stories reveal a zero sum mentality of rationing resources, instead of an attitude of abundance and generosity for our suffering brothers and sisters.

With the exception of Oregon, all other attempts to legalize assisted suicide in states have failed, but efforts continue and may eventually succeed. Washington state voters will likely face such a ballot initiative this fall. If other states follow Oregon’s example, the "slippery slope" may expand our notion of who is falsely considered a financial burden to society. The Swiss group Exit International recently agreed on a resolution to vote in 2009 on expanding its criteria for assisted suicides from "terminally ill" to include those "being tired of old age." As bioethicist Wesley J. Smith has observed: "Once one accepts the premise that suicide is an acceptable answer to the problems of human suffering and ennui, there are no boundaries that will hold for long." In 2001, for example, after the Netherlands legalized euthanasia, the Dutch Minister of Health suggested suicide pills for elderly persons who are tired of living.

We must resist the spread of assisted suicide. Stroup fought back and won coverage for his chemotherapy drug, and a pharmaceutical company will donate Barbara Wagner’s needed drugs, so we can see that there is hope in the fight.

Learn what the Church teaches on end-of-life issues. Pray for increased respect for all human life. Stay alert for legislative efforts in your own state which threaten those who are elderly, sick or dying. We all are obliged to continue and teach that every life, regardless of age or condition of dependency, is a priceless gift.

Mary McClusky is Special Projects Coordinator at the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.
Prayers of the Ages
Antique Rosary Collection Displayed at OKC Gift Shop

By Cara Koenig
The Sooner Catholic

It’s amazing how the act of praying the rosary, touching each bead in turn, links us to generations of Catholics throughout history and around the world. Some of that shared history can now be seen at Sacred Relics in downtown Oklahoma City. Diane Culbertson, the store owner, has procured a museum collection of antique rosaries dating to the 1700s.

The rosaries are an example of an extinct art form. Each bead had to be hand cut. Each rosary had to be hand strung. The medals and crucifixes hand crafted and painted. Many have different images on the front and back of the cross which was common in the 1700s. Some of the rosaries have relic boxes instead of crucifixes. Many of the rosaries have been re-strung, having been broken with continual use. Many have lost some beads.

Each of the rosaries are vastly different, from what we would call high end today made with coral beads to more commonly used glass beads, each today worth far more than their original cost. One of the more interesting rosaries is from a World War I soldier. It appears to be made out of the same medal as dog tags with the same beaded style. Some even have an extra decade, common in some religious orders.

The rosaries are on display and some will eventually be for sale. For now they are on display daily at Sacred Relics, 333 N. 5th St.