The Good News

This article of mine will be printed in the Sept. 14 issue of the Sooner Catholic, our archdiocesan newspaper. I titled it “Sacred Ground,” for on that very day, Sunday, Sept. 14, I will celebrate Mass in the Garden of Gethsemane in Jerusalem.

On Friday, Sept. 5, a group of 36 people, mostly from Oklahoma, will accompany me on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We plan to visit the shrines and historical-religious sites of our Judeo-Christian heritage. Above all, we are eager to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We will commemorate many of the religious events narrated in the Bible and faithfully observed in the practice of our Catholic faith.

Weeks before we departed from Oklahoma City, I met with these pilgrims as part of our preparation. For most of them, this was their first opportunity to make a Holy Land pilgrimage. They were excited to be preparing to travel to the place where Jesus was born, where He lived, suffered and died. They were thrilled as they realized they would visit the Holy Sepulchre where Jesus was buried and where He rose from the dead. In anticipation of all this, they were indeed happy because they know that each of these shrines has been built on Holy Ground and we would actually tread on these sacred places.

In the course of our meeting, while not diminishing the uniqueness of the shrines in the Holy Land, I reminded these pilgrims that they must not look at sacred places in a magical or superstitious way. Indeed, where Jesus walked, where He lived and died, are very, very sacred and holy grounds. However, in reality, all of creation is sacred. Everything that God made is good. We are greatly blessed and fortunate to enjoy the sacramental Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. By His own design and institution, Jesus planned to stay with us. “This is My Body,” He said, “Take and eat. This is My Blood, take and drink and you shall have life everlasting.”

The altars in our churches are specially consecrated and the tabernacles blessed to hold the Sacred Body and Blood of Jesus. Our churches are therefore sacred places. There we stand on Holy Ground! We who have been created in God’s Image and Likeness, we who are redeemed by Jesus, we are invited to communion with Him. “Take and eat. Take and drink.” Through Him we are sanctified. With Him, wherever we are, we stand on Sacred Ground.

During our days in the Holy Land, we pilgrims will be reminded over and over about the goodness and love of God who came here to be with us, to save us, to sanctify us.

Like my 36 pilgrim companions, all people of faith are on a pilgrimage. We are all pilgrims walking to the real Holy Land, the truly most sacred ground, the place we call heaven. Is it really a “place”? Is it ground or land, sea or sky? Does it take up space? Have dimensions? What exactly is heaven?

For as far back in history as we can determine (actually to Adam and Eve), human persons have been pilgrims seeking answers and direction to life. In each age we learn much but we also forget much. In the midst of our confusion, Jesus came and proclaimed the Good News that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Then He told us that He came and died that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

When we, in God’s time, enter into the fullness of life that Jesus promised, then our pilgrimage will be joyfully completed. Then we will be in heaven, in God’s presence, where we will see Him as He is.

In the meantime, we, the Oklahoma pilgrims now in the Holy Land and you, the Oklahoma pilgrims now in our Archdiocese, must continue to walk confidently because all of us live now, not by sight but by faith. Faith in the person of Jesus Christ, who is our Lord and Savior.

“Take and eat. Take and drink.”
Through Him we are sanctified.
With Him, wherever we are, we stand on Sacred Ground.

... Sacred Ground

Sooner Catholic

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Sooner Catholic

Seminary Burses

A $100 donation was made to the
Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse by the Carmelite Nuns of St. Joseph Monastery.

A $250 donation was made to the
Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse by St. Gregory’s Abbey.

A $100 donation was made to the
Father James E. Kastner Seminary Burse by Adele E. Crump.

A $100 donation was made to the
Father Bernard J. Havlik Seminary Burse by Elizabeth (Pribil) Dinkler.

A $300 donation was made to the
Father Clement Pribil Seminary Burse by St. Gregory’s Abbey.

A $100 donation was made to the
Father Pribil Seminary Burse by Elizabeth (Pribil) Dinkler.

A $50 donation was made to the
Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse by Angela J. Quirke.
As you do for others, you do for Christ.

2008 Catholic Charities Appeal

The Good News

. . . Catholic Charities – The Ministry of Jesus

Catholic Charities is Good News because Catholic Charities is an extension of the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus came to serve and not to be served. All who are baptized in Christ receive that great commission to share in this ministry of love and service. To accomplish these works of charity, much more can be done if we do so as a prayerful people. Therefore, first and foremost, I sincerely ask for your prayers. Pray that our efforts to help people in need will be effective and successfully accomplished. Pray that those in need will be blessed and benefit from our efforts.

Catholic Charities is the practical and united effort of the Catholics of the Church. Here in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, works of charity are provided throughout central and western Oklahoma and the Panhandle. On any given day, this is what happens.

Hundreds of people wake up to a new day after sleeping in a clean, safe environment at Trinity Gardens and Villa Isenbart in Oklahoma City, at Villanova in Lawton, at Holy Family Home in Midwest City, at the Elizabeth House, Seton Home, Marian Manor and various other residences provided by Catholic Charities throughout the Archdiocese.

On any given day, counseling services and referrals will be provided to a variety of people in Clinton, Enid, Lawton and Oklahoma City. These will include children who have been abandoned or abused, rebellious disturbed teenagers, people suffering trauma, divorce, the death of a loved one, anger and confusion.

On any given day, a number of immigrant people will legally come to our country sponsored by Catholic Charities. Undocumented people will be guided by a case worker toward a resolution of their status. Families and individuals will be assisted with food or clothing, medical assistance, rent and utilities.

These and many other direct services will be given not just on any day but on every day. Catholic Charities has operated on a daily basis for more than 100 years now. To continue this service to assist people in need, we conduct an annual campaign appeal for the funds necessary. Some of you may have already received a letter from me. Others will receive a letter later. All of you, however, will hear the plea next weekend. I have asked our pastors to play the Catholic Charities Appeal tape at all Masses next weekend.

The goal for this year's appeal is $2.4 million. This is the amount of money needed to provide the above-mentioned services and to expand in other necessary areas. For example, after several years of preparation and extensive work, we are hopeful that our day shelter for the homeless will become a reality this year. Likewise, we are evaluating other new locations for our services.

It is true that many of you are experiencing economic difficulties because of inflation, food expenses, gasoline prices and medical expenses. However, we also realize that there are many people much worse off than we are. These are the people we are obliged to help through our Catholic Charities. Therefore, I ask you to make a pledge of financial support for these works of charity. I ask you to make a pledge which can be paid on a monthly basis during the coming year. Please contribute in a spirit of faith and generosity and be assured of my gratitude and my prayers.

A Message from the Executive Director

The Good News: Catholic Charities is an extension of the ministry of Jesus.

Catholic Charities is Good News because Catholic Charities is an extension of the ministry of Jesus. Catholic Charities has operated on a daily basis for more than 100 years now. To continue this service to assist people in need, we conduct an annual campaign appeal for the funds necessary. Some of you may have already received a letter from me. Others will receive a letter later. All of you, however, will hear the plea next weekend. I have asked our pastors to play the Catholic Charities Appeal tape at all Masses next weekend.

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As we begin our 2008 appeal, I first thank each person who has helped support Catholic Charities, especially during the past year. You have given our volunteers and staff a tremendous opportunity to serve and to represent your intentions to reach out to children, families and individuals who deserve to have their human dignity restored. Secondly, thousands of persons will again be helped this year through the efforts of Catholic Charities and I ask on their behalf, that you consider making a financial sacrifice that will express your intent to place their basic needs for food shelter and clothing ahead of your own wants and desires. With the help of every person, we can meet our goal of $2.4 million. The rising cost of fuel, utilities and food have a much greater impact on those who have less income. Lastly, please continue to pray the works of Catholic Charities will follow the Gospel and rebuild the relationships which separate the strong from the weak, the rich from the poor, the powerful from the lowly and the first from the last.

God Bless You

Tim O’Connor

September 14, 2008 • Sooner Catholic 3
Darcey Family Created By ‘Instant’ Love for Children

On a beautiful August morning in the small chapel of Catholic Charities, a happy couple met their new baby girl for the first time. Taking her in their arms, they instantly bonded with their child — a glorious moment that touched everyone who was present for the adoption ceremony. “Catholic Charities employees always enjoy this celebration because it truly is such a happy occasion. It reveals to us the miracle of a child’s birth and God’s many blessings,” Sabra Ruminer, coordinator of the Adoption Program, said.

Pete and Pat Darcey, who have been married for 52 years, know that feeling of excitement and anticipation and joy. The couple, who always wanted a big family, initiated their willingness to adopt children in the 1950s when Msgr. A.A. Isenbart was executive director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. “We filled out the application and then anxiously waited to hear from him,” Pat Darcey said.

It wasn’t too long when Msgr. Isenbart called them with their first baby. “It was such joyous news. We were ecstatic,” Pete and Pat said. The Darcey family grew quickly with a total of six children adopted through Catholic Charities and two children by birth.

They smile when they reflect on their relationship with Msgr. Isenbart and his dedication to meeting the needs of each child he helped place for adoption. “Father never made it easy for us to adopt these children. He made us fill out the application for every child — an indication that we were serious about our desire to bring another child into our family,” Pat said. Following the adoption of their second child, Pete and Pat shared that Msgr. Isenbart told them, “This is your last child.” The Darceys, who were determined to have more children, still placed another application for a third child. Less than a year later, they received another call from Msgr. Isenbart that he had another baby for them. Again, after their third child, he repeated his comment about this being their last baby from Catholic Charities. Six babies and six years later, he told them again, “Now this is it! No more!

After their sixth adoption, Pat went to her medical doctor for a routine checkup. Due to some complications, she was advised by her doctor to have minor surgery. Within a few years of surgery, she found out she was pregnant. When the baby was born, she sent a baby announcement to Msgr. Isenbart with a touch of humor. The note read: “We went above your head this time!” Pat gave birth again four years later, rounding out their family to eight children.

As loving parents, they believed in supporting their children and teaching them values of honesty and integrity. “When we are gone, we want our children to have each other — a support system,” they said. The Darcey family has grown. In addition to the eight children and their spouses, the couple now has 12 grandchildren. This summer in Colorado, a family reunion was held with almost everyone in attendance. “It was great to be together,” they said.

When Pete and Pat were asked about their philosophy on adoption versus biological, the couple said, “When you pick up that child, there is instant love, no matter whether you gave birth to that child or not. There is no difference. We love all of our children.”

Mallory Darcey Hamilton, one of their four daughters, said, “I believe I can speak on behalf of all my siblings when I share that our parents were loving and supportive and have always been there for us. It was especially meaningful for me this past year, when we needed to locate my birth father for medical reasons. Their love for each other and for us has been a wonderful example of what it means to be a family.”

Catholic Charities Adoption Program has been in existence for almost as long as Catholic Charities has been in existence. The beginning of Catholic Charities ministries was in 1910 when Bishop Meerschaert secured a piece of property in Bethany, for the development of St. Joseph’s Orphanage. The tradition of caring for children and families has continued since then, even though the orphanage closed. The Catholic Charities Adoption Program offers adoption services and searches.

For more information about adoption services, contact Ruminer at (405) 523-3012. Catholic Charities also offers housing for pregnant teens at the Holy Family Maternity Home in Midwest City.

I felt I had a good career and should give back to my community. However, I then came to the realization that I needed to be more involved in my church’s activities, thus I applied with Catholic Charities.

While the work may not be the most glamorous, it definitely is very rewarding and I have had the privilege of meeting some very dedicated people who truly are trying to make a difference in their community.

— Bob Lastowski, St. James the Greater Church, Oklahoma City

166 volunteers
donated 3,719 hours
of service last year to
Catholic Charities.
Search for Birth Parents Aided by Catholic Charities

Without her mother's encouragement and husband's insistence, Mallory Darcey Hamilton is not sure whether she would have ever searched for her birth parents. She ponders whether her hesitation was the fear of the unknown, or experiencing a sojourn that could be wrought with pain or regret.

“I never felt like there were any missing pieces in my life. I have been blessed with the best set of parents anyone could wish for — adopted or not,” Mallory said. Mallory took the risk out of a deeper love — not for herself, but for her two children — daughter, Harley, 12, and son, Wyatt, 10.

Mallory's motivating factor was the security of lifelong medical care for her daughter, Harley, who was born with Down syndrome. The family lives in Alaska where the medical services for American Indians are some of the best in the country. “It was a risk I was willing to take for my daughter,” Mallory said.

The search began when Pat, Mallory's mother, visited Sabra Ruminer, adoption coordinator at Catholic Charities, and asked her to begin a search for Mallory's birth father. Sabra offered to start the process, but explained to her that it may take some time. Her first and only call to the Osage Nation in Pawhuska struck gold when she explained to the tribal staff member that she needed to locate a man named Nelson Carter. She was told they would look at their rolls and give him a message if they could get in touch with him. It turned out that Nelson was not only a member of the tribe, but also employed by them.

The following business day, Sabra contacted the tribal rolls, but very proactive in reconnecting the two families. “Sabra helped us make this a positive experience. We are grateful for her help and support.”

Mallory is thankful for how her search began and ended. “The whole situation could have been so different. We are fortunate it has worked out so well. Catholic Charities has done a tremendous job in helping all of us work through this process, especially Sabra. She truly cares and is committed to the families she serves. She is a godsend.”

Numbers for Adoptions and Searches

Since January of 2000, 38 adoptions have been made. In 2007, three babies were adopted. In 2008, so far, three babies have been adopted.

Beginning in June of 2002, over 70 family searches have been completed. Out of the 70 searches, there have been 48 reunions. In 2008, so far, 11 family searches have been completed.
As you do for others, you do for Christ.

Client Gets Help From Enid’s Regional Office of Catholic Charities

By Connie Blaney
Catholic Charities

When coming to America over a year ago with her new husband, “Cato” realized she had not been able to escape the one thing she hoped to leave behind — her haunting memories of her childhood robbed of innocence by an abusive relative.

Learning the English language, adjusting to marriage with her husband and adapting to the American lifestyle were comparatively easy compared to knowing how to face her dark past and seek the help she needed. Cato and her husband knew that counseling might be the answer.

“We both thought making an appointment with a counselor would be so easy, but it didn’t take but a few phone calls to find out differently. I had several strikes against me — no Social Security card, very little money, and I am not an American citizen. For these reasons many private counselors and agencies turned me away,” Cato said. One agency even made an appointment, but later canceled, telling her not to call back.

In despair and losing hope, she made one last phone call — this time to Stacy Kurtz, program coordinator and counselor of Catholic Charities in the Enid office. “Stacy immediately put me at ease and scheduled an appointment with me. When I stepped into her office for the first time, I was so relieved that Stacy took time to listen with compassion and understanding and treated me with dignity,” Cato said.

What had been roadblocks for Cato in the past were now opportunities. “It was as if a light of hope had brightened my path allowing me the faith and strength to move forward,” Cato said. “Since I started counseling one year ago at Catholic Charities, my relationships have improved, especially my marriage. Counseling has allowed me to see other people’s point of view, face my feelings, cry if I need to, deal with my problems and then move on. Stacy has been a rock for me. I don’t know how I would have done this without her support,” she noted.

In addition to counseling, Catholic Charities has assisted Cato with obtaining her Social Security card and driver’s license, and gaining part-time employment. She has also had the courage to join a support group for incest survivors, which has been helpful for her and others. Cato says she is aware that there could be setbacks, but believes that her physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health are on the road to recovery. “I am blessed that I walked through the doors of Catholic Charities,” she concluded.

You can contact the Enid Catholic Charities Office at (580) 237-7352. The office is located at 528 W. Broadway, Enid, Okla. 73701.

Editor’s Note: Catholic Charities respects the privacy and confidentiality of all its clients. A client’s real name is only used with permission. It is the request of this client that her real name not be used for this story. “Cato” is a pseudonym.

During my time volunteering for Catholic Charities, I have had the opportunity to see the efforts of many of the departments. I was able to see, in different ways, how the agency assists people in a real way on a daily basis. Volunteering myself, I was able to actually see how my efforts, as well as the employees, touched people’s lives in the most basic way. When I think things are not going right in my world, I only have to look at those less fortunate to set my thinking straight. I just can’t sit back and think I’m going to coast into heaven. Being able to help with the Christmas program and the refugee department has made me feel that personal connection.

— Debbie Storey, Epiphany of the Lord, Oklahoma City
Saint Joseph Counseling Builds Network to Help Community

By Ray Dyer

The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Counseling, support and education are the three areas of focus for Saint Joseph Counseling Service. Saint Joseph has been a part of the ministries provided by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City since 1990.

Dr. Louie Lepak serves as director for Saint Joseph. He joined the ministry in 1994 and has also served as a member of the Catholic Charities board of directors.

Sister Elizabeth (Betty) Kehoe, CND, serves as assistant director at Saint Joseph’s. She has been involved in the counseling ministry since the ministry’s inception. According to Lepak, Sister Betty “is an incredible person with great compassion and understanding.”

Monica Palmer, administrative assistant, joined the Saint Joseph team in 1992. New counselors Lourdes Lopez and Paola Flores-Sparkman have joined Saint Joseph, Lopez a year ago and Sparkman this past summer following an internship with Saint Joseph. Both are the first bilingual counselors for Saint Joseph, a talent Lepak said will be put to great use.

“It’s wonderful to have Spanish-speaking counselors,” Lepak said. “It’s the first time in our history that we’ll have someone who can answer the phone who speaks Spanish.” He said the Hispanic community is overwhelmed with issues requiring some sort of emotional support. There aren’t enough Spanish-speaking counselors and social workers to address the needs of the growing population.

“How long does it take for the Hispanic community to raise up its own counselors, social workers and attorneys,” Lepak said in a rhetorical manner. “It takes generations, so in the meantime we’re going to do what we can.”

One way Saint Joseph will work to address these needs, as well as others, is by working more closely with parishes and schools within the archdiocese. Lepak said priority will be given to those people who are referred by either a parish or one of our Catholic schools.

The Saint Joseph staff will provide counseling and other services on a “short-term” basis and then through a growing network of professionals, help those people who need more long-term assistance, Lepak said. A number of professional counselors and social workers have agreed to make up the network and their services will be provided for little or no fee. Many of the professionals offering these services are Catholic.

“We’ve asked a number of people to help with this and so far I don’t believe anyone has told us no,” Lepak said.

Lepak said having this professional network in place will help provide for more in-depth counseling and support for those with long-term needs.

Saint Joseph will also continue to work with clients on an ability to pay basis.

With Dr. Lepak, Sister Betty and Monica Palmer in place for years, the Saint Joseph Counseling Service provided by Catholic Charities has an experienced team of professionals available to assist those with needs. Lepak said the addition of the bilingual Lourdes and Flores-Sparkman provides Saint Joseph with even more resources to offer the faith community.

Catholic Charities: Services and Programs

Mission Statement

To put into practice the Gospel values of justice, love, compassion, and hope through service, empowerment, and advocacy.

Our Focus

* Providing direct services to people of all faiths, races, and socio-economic backgrounds
* Supporting parish ministries in the Archdiocese
* Collaborating with faith-based and community organizations
* Speaking for the poor and vulnerable through advocacy and social justice

Who We Are

Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, is a faith-based organization that practices the values of Catholic Social Teachings. It is the arm of the Catholic Church which fulfills the mission of providing social services to children, families and individuals in Oklahoma. The agency, in collaboration with local churches, communities, and public and private organizations, works to serve those facing poverty, social problems, and disaster, and to promote dignity of life through advocacy.

How We Serve

Providing Direct Services

More than 50 social programs and services are offered to individuals, children and families including but not limited to:

Family Support Services

Family HOPE
Maternity Counseling
Adoption Services
Disaster Relief

Housing

Affordable Housing for the Elderly
Transitional Housing
Holy Family Maternity Home
Parish Housing

Migration and Refugee Services

New Arrival Assistance
Case Management
Growth and Development Assistance
English As Second Language Classes
Employment Assistance

Immigration Assistance Program

Consultation and Legal Advice
Violence Against Women Act Petitions
Assist with Citizenship Status
Asylum
Permanent Resident Status (Green Card)
Family-Based Petitions

Counseling Services

Individual, Marital and Family Counseling
Bilingual (Spanish) Counseling
Community Education Presentations

Supporting Parish Ministries

The parish is the foundation for the works of mercy and justice. Catholic Charities is a resource for pastors and parishes to collaborate in the works of social ministry.

Parish Outreach and Program Development

Parishes Social Ministry
Adopt A Family Project at Christmas
Loaves and Fishes (HIV/AIDS Ministry)
Faith Community Nursing
Training and Education
Volunteer Development & Services

Collaborating With Faith-Based and Community Organizations

Strong partnerships with others strengthens our ability to serve those in need.

Educational Outreach
Partnerships with United Way Agencies
Parish-Based Housing
St. Vincent de Paul Society

Advocacy

Using the principals of Catholic Social Teaching, Social Action works for justice for the poor and marginalized advocating in the public arena and at the Legislature.

Social Action
Legislative Advocacy
Education on Social Issues and Catholic Social Teaching
Archdiocesan Commission on Justice and Human Development
Catholic Charities Helps Parishes Prepare for Disaster

Approximately 30 people from across central and western Oklahoma attended a volunteer orientation and disaster training on Aug. 21 in Oklahoma City hosted by Catholic Charities.

“We were pleased that this many people expressed an interest in learning more about disaster training, how to be involved as a volunteer, and how to prepare for disasters in their own communities,” Becky Van Pool, director of Parish Outreach for Catholic Charities, said.

Kirsten Lee, director of Family Support Services, and Charlotte Nowakowski, disaster coordinator for Catholic Charities, presented to the group ‘Disaster 101,’ which was an overview of how disasters are handled in Oklahoma, agencies and organizations involved, and the role of Catholic Charities in disaster relief. Debi Wagner, volunteer coordinator, and VanPool discussed volunteerism, parish outreach and how Catholic Charities can help parishes and communities during disasters.

“We are looking for volunteers who can be contacted to assist with an immediate response when a disaster hits. This orientation allows us to begin connecting to interested volunteers across the state and to create an awareness of the importance of preparation, coordination, and an organized response effort,” Nowakowski said.

Volunteers who participated in the orientation and training represented the following parishes: Epiphany, St. John the Baptist, Christ the King, St. John Nepomuk, St. Mark’s, St. James, St. Joseph’s Cathedral, St. Peter’s in Woodward, Holy Angels, St. Eugene and St. Anthony of Padua.

Catholic Charities serves as a disaster relief agency for natural and man-made disasters that affect the archdiocese. Over the last several years, Catholic Charities has served communities which have had tornadoes, floods, ice storms, and resettled hurricane victims.

“Volunteers who participate in the training program will be offered in about six months. All volunteers must also participate in the Safe Environment Training.”

A second volunteer orientation and disaster training program will be offered in about six months. All volunteers must also participate in the Safe Environment Training.

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

Louisiana Evacuees Helped by Catholic Charities

OKLAHOMA CITY — As Hurricane Gustav moved across the Gulf Coast on Labor Day, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City provided information and humanitarian relief to evacuees taking shelter locally. Staff and volunteers were on hand for several days at the Lucent Evacuee Center in Oklahoma City serving the needs of those in the shelter. The main responsibility of Catholic Charities was to staff the information center.

“Catholic Charities was an integral part of the joint effort by law enforcement, social service agencies and other organizations in helping the 1,700 evacuees from Louisiana who resided at the shelter,” Becky Van Pool, Parish Outreach Director for Catholic Charities stated. The Lawton office and Oklahoma City office also helped additional evacuees who visited the offices in person or called on the telephone.

Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City serves as a disaster relief agency for natural and man-made disasters that occur both within the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City as well as throughout the nation. During the Gustav evacuation, the agency partnered with United Way agencies and faith-based organizations to provide information and resources needed for the evacuees.

Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City also operated in concert with Catholic Charities USA. Catholic Charities USA deployed teams into the affected areas to make damage assessments and to identify unmet needs in the communities following the storm’s impact. These assessments will help Catholic Charities determine how best to tailor their response efforts in the days, weeks and months to come.

During the past year, Catholic Charities has assisted individuals and communities responding to ice storms, tornadoes, floods and hurricanes. During June 2008, Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City staff traveled to Iowa to train residents in principles of long-term disaster recovery. The agency recently provided disaster relief training to around 30 Oklahoma volunteers, who will assist in recovery efforts in Oklahoma communities.

“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 remarks. Volunteers are needed to serve as intake staff, data entry and logistics assistants.

All disaster response positions will be on-call as needed with flexibility for the volunteers to decide when and how much they are able to work. 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,” says Nowakowski.

“We’re trying to prepare so that those who are affected by the disasters get immediate assistance from trained, warm and compassionate people.”

Catholic Charities helps at Evacuee Center in Oklahoma City during the Gustav hurricane evacuation.

Pictured are Yuniati Liman and Karen Oaks.

Karen Oaks.
JustFaith: Program Helps Catholics Ponder, Act on Today’s Social Issues

By Becky VanPool
Catholic Charities

Through the JustFaith program, parishioners across the archdiocese are experiencing a spiritual journey into compassion and applying their faith to everyday social justice issues.

JustFaith is a national organization that develops small-group “transformational” processes, through a 30-week adult formation program. “This program meets everyone where they are in their faith,” says Becky VanPool, director of Parish Outreach and Program Development, “and gives them the knowledge and spiritual support to look at social justice issues in our world and find their role in these issues.”

JustFaith is an educational experience, a formation process and a spiritual journey, which grounds participants in the Catholic Social Teachings. Over seven to eight months, participants gather weekly for prayer, discussion of books and videos, presentations by guest speakers, retreats and immersion experiences. It is facilitated by participants and groups of five to eight are recommended.

“JustFaith has been offered in our archdiocese for the past six years and continues to be a grass roots effort to grow strong and faithful parishioners,” says VanPool. JustFaith groups are being organized at St. Thomas More, St. Joseph Old Cathedral, St. Eugene, St. Charles, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Philip Neri and St. Peter of Woodward. Previous participating parishes include Christ the King, Our Lady’s Cathedral, Corpus Christi, St. John the Baptist, St. John Nepomuk and three ecumenical churches, Church of the Servant, Mayflower Congregational Church and the First Oklahoma City Church of the Nazarene.

“JustFaith also offers several other programs which offer shorter timelines and focus on current issues such as the environment, prison ministry and Engaging Spirituality. The newest program, Engaging Spirituality, is a 21-week process to experience and explore Christian spirituality and Gospel justice,” explains VanPool. “This pilot program will be offered in the archdiocese and it is our goal to attract representatives from parishes who will then take the program back to their churches. Prior participation in JustFaith is not required.”

For additional information about JustFaith programs, contact VanPool at (405) 523-3003 or bvanpool@catholiccharitiesok.org.

Social Action and Catholic Faith

Representing the archdiocese and Catholic Charities in an advocacy role, Richard Klinge, associate director of Social Action for Catholic Charities, is responsible for making the Church’s voice heard on various legislative issues either promoting or negatively impacting, as the case may be, human life, human dignity and social justice.

Another important role of Klinge is to keep other interested persons aware of those issues and how Catholic Social Teaching impacts or addresses those issues and to encourage their participation in that quest for justice.

“Hopefully, this information-sharing will cause others to raise their voices on these issues as the political process struggles to find solutions which will both reflect justice and serve the common good,” Klinge said. “I periodically share information on those issues through the mailing of Action Alerts which identify these issues, discuss the impact of Catholic Social Teaching and a recommended course of action,” he added.

As an example, Action Alerts in July 2008 addressed the USCCB Statement on stem-cell research, poverty issues to be dealt with at the G8 meeting in Japan, economic trends in Oklahoma and health insurance issues to be dealt with by a healthcare task force appointed by the Speaker of the Oklahoma House.

Anyone interested in receiving the Action Alerts by e-mail can e-mail Richard Klinge at rklinge@catholiccharitiesok.org or Kyle Meade, administrative assistant, at kmeade@catholiccharitiesok.org. For additional information, contact Catholic Charities at (405) 523-3000.

“I encourage people of all faiths to consider being on the Action Alerts distribution list,” Klinge said. “Once you are on the distribution list, please share your comments with me about the content or the issues addressed in an Action Alert. I improve my understanding of issues through dialogue with others,” he added.

Klinge noted that it takes all of us, working together, to make a difference on behalf of the unborn, the poor, the marginalized and anyone impacted by legislative action or non-action relating to human life, human dignity and social justice.

“Through this process we will help ensure that people of faith will be a part of that ‘spiritual reawakening’ and that we will not ‘remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.”

Catholic Charities Joins in Effort to Battle Poverty in U.S.

As part of the Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America, Catholic Charities USA is joining 19 other national faith-based organizations in an interfaith week of action, Sept. 9-16. The goal of the week is to elevate the issue of poverty in the 2008 election debate. It will urge candidates for local, state and national office to outline what, if elected, they will do in their first 100 days in office to address poverty in America.

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City joins in the national effort of fighting poverty with many ministries, especially its work with the homeless. Richard Klinge, associate director of Legal Services and Advocacy for Catholic Charities, who advocates at the Capitol on poverty issues, says it is the responsibility of all of us to be educated and responsive to the unmet needs and unjust social conditions of others.

“We are called to live the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, which are about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. One of the principles is advocating for the poor and vulnerable,” Klinge said.

In addition to advocacy, Catholic Charities is serving the homeless living in the streets and in homeless shelters in Oklahoma City. Catholic Charities’ homeless coordinator, Kim Woods, in collaboration with Sister BJ’s Pantry, TEEM Ministries and City Rescue Mission, is offering case management services to adults, children and families.

A pilot art program, fresh stART, co-sponsored by Catholic Charities and Homeless Alliance, was implemented in the spring of 2008 for adults interested in learning and participating in drawing, painting, and other mediums of art.

“We hope everyone will join us by getting involved at the grass roots level. By coordinating our messaging, holding joint events and promoting partnerships with other faith groups, we hope to enhance our work to build the political and public will to end poverty,” Klinge said.

To learn more about the Fighting Poverty with Faith: A Week of Action, go to www.fightingpovertywithfaith.com.
Lawton Office of Catholic Charities Continues to Expand

LAWTON — A fixture here since 1992, the Lawton Regional Office of Catholic Charities is working to expand its services of programs through community collaborations. “Catholic Charities saw a need to have a presence in southwest Oklahoma,” said Andrea L. Farmer, office coordinator. “For many years Catholic Charities just provided counseling services, but in the past few years we’ve been able to expand our programs to include the Family HOPE case management program, adoptions, disaster relief, housing through Columbia Square Apartments, and emergency financial assistance. This kind of growth would not be possible without the vision of the board of directors, the hard work of our Lawton staff and the support of parishioners and other agency partners.”

For the first time, the Lawton Regional Office has become a partner agency through the United Way of Lawton-Fort Sill. “It means something to see that United Way logo,” said Andrea. “It indicates that our agency has met a standard of excellence and integrity and that the community as a whole recognizes the unique contributions Catholic Charities makes to Lawton and the surrounding areas. Our resources stretch farther when we are working with our partner agencies.” She noted the publicity of being a partner agency has made a tremendous impact on the ability to educate the community on what Catholic Charities does.

Eileen Jensen, executive director of the Lawton-Fort Sill United Way, stated, “It was a community decision to support Catholic Charities. Our partners looked at the needs in the community and saw that Catholic Charities had the programs to fill those voids. Catholic Charities can provide comprehensive care to the families that it serves.”

One way that the Lawton Regional Office is able to directly impact the community is through its one-time utility assistance program. “We’ve been able to reach out and serve a great many more families this year by providing utility assistance,” said Melissa Cryer, case management assistant. “A lot of people are embarrassed to have to ask for help. We don’t ever want anyone to feel that way. People don’t have control over gas prices, utility costs or rising food prices. Even if they could economize every spending purchase they make, the cost of living is still rising,” she added.

Melissa explained that once the staff meets with the client and looks at his or her situation, they are better able to make referrals and recommendations to help that person. Clients are made aware of programs such as low-cost phone service, where to get prescription assistance, or where to find clothing resources. Besides direct help on a bill, the agency provides a connection to the other community resources available.

“All the immediate need of the pending bill is taken care of through the HOPE program, the client can learn the decision-making and life skills to avoid these crises in the future,” Andrea said.

Another highly visible project in the Lawton community has been the redevelopment of Columbia Square Apartments. The unique feature of this HUD residential program is an on-site resource coordinator. Pauline Harris, Family HOPE case manager and resource coordinator, has been working with the residents of Columbia Square since January. “Working with the residents is an awesome adventure,” Pauline said.

“Catholic Charities saw a need to work on-site resource coordinator. Pauline Harris, Family HOPE case manager and resource coordinator, has been working with the residents of Columbia Square since January. “Working with the residents is an awesome adventure,” Pauline said.

Columbia Square to positively impact not just the residents in the complex, but to also impact those neighborhoods around the apartments,” said Andrea.

“We plan to offer to the residents programs addressing such issues as safety, gang awareness and drug abuse which we hope will domino into the surrounding community.”

“Our programs are not restricted to just Lawton,” Andrea added. “In June, we traveled to Altus to partner with Jackson County DHS to help after the torrential rains caused power outages throughout the county. We were able to provide direct relief in terms of food vouchers, plus connect people with other resources as they worked to get their lives back to normal.”

The Lawton Regional Office will continue to expand into Altus and Duncan through the Family HOPE case management program. Case manager Brenda Toehay will soon be traveling to both areas regularly.

**Columbia Square Dedication Set for November**

A dedication will be held this fall to celebrate the completion of Columbia Square’s affordable housing complex, Tim O’Connor, executive director, has announced. The dedication, which will be open to the public, will be held Nov. 20 at 10 a.m.

During the dedication ceremony, the new name for Columbia Square will be announced, O’Connor stated. “This is an opportune time to rename the complex as we celebrate new beginnings for our residents and for the Lawton community,” the executive director said.

The 64-unit Columbia Square Apartments, which was originally built in the 1970s, began demolition of individual units in June 2007. The affordable housing apartment complex, which is being completely rebuilt, features the latest in environmentally safe and energy-efficient living. The new complex offers affordable two- and three-bedroom apartments under HUD Section 8 guidelines.

**Sooner Catholic**

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“Working with the residents is an awesome adventure,” Pauline said.

“It is exciting getting to know families at Columbia Square. So far, we’ve done fun things like a Valentine’s Day party and an Easter egg hunt. But we are also working to provide educational opportunities for the residents. We’ve had two great presenters teach the residents about nutrition and job readiness,” she added.

The agency’s goal is to help the residents improve their lives physically, financially and emotionally. Several families needing help have been referred to available community resources. “We want our services at The Lawton Regional Office is gearing up for the Christmas Adopt-A-Family program. Anyone interested in participating, or for more information on any of Catholic Charities’ services, contact the office at (580) 353-1811 or cclawton@sbcglobal.net.
2008 Catholic Charities Appeal in Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Set at $2.4 Million In an Effort to Help Those Who for Whatever Reason Need Support From a Loving and Faith-Filled Catholic Community

Why Give to Catholic Charities?

All that we have is a gift and to follow Christ we are called to share with each other.

The gap between the wealthy and the poor is steadily increasing. There are many persons in our community who do not have the basic things required for human decency: food, housing, health care, jobs.

Support of this Annual Appeal goes to people in Oklahoma — our neighbors. This money is used to support more than 50 different programs and services. The work is overseen by a voluntary board of directors that helps ensure that money is directed to the areas of greatest need, and that administrative expenses are minimal.

Family Support Services provided case management in 2007 to 986 individuals and responded to 9,740 telephone requests for help.

Catholic Charities ministry unites us in our journey of faith to help others in need. Your sacrificial gifts — prayers, volunteer time and financial support are appreciated. Thank you for participating in our ministry and helping Catholic Charities meet its 2008 Annual Appeal goal of $2.4 million.

■ The Annual Appeal provides 57 percent of the total budget of Catholic Charities.

■ Catholic Charities revenue sources include the Annual Appeal, United Way designated funds, fees and grants, special events and other contributions.

■ The money raised from the 2008 Catholic Charities Appeal stays right here in Oklahoma to help people in need throughout the Archdiocese (central and western Oklahoma).

■ Please consider pledging one hour’s salary per month to the CC Appeal.

■ Catholic Charities employees are available to speak to church groups and community groups about the agency’s programs and services.

How does Catholic Charities serve?

1. Direct Services — Catholic Charities offers counseling; supportive services to pregnant women and poor families; adoption; immigration legal assistance; resettlement of refugees; and transitional housing for families and unwed mothers.

2. Support to Parishes — Every parish is called to reach out to its members and its neighborhood or community to assist others in need. Catholic Charities helps organize and train leaders and volunteers in parishes in this important work. By acting on their faith, members experience spiritual growth in doing Christ’s work. The agency nurtures and supports the social ministries in every parish (St. Vincent de Paul, visitation to the homebound, etc.)

3. Community Collaboration — Catholic Charities works with other civic and faith-based service providers to address larger community issues, like homelessness, disaster response and domestic violence.

4. Social Advocacy — Catholic Charities advocates on legislation and social policy to speak on behalf of the poor and to address the causes of social poverty and discrimination.

For us, Catholic Charities embodies the challenging message Our Lord outlined in the Beatitudes — feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the afflicted. Through their many and varied actions, Catholic Charities is “the hands and feet” of Christ in Oklahoma. We feel blessed to help and serve in this way.

— Marie and Chris Engle, St. John the Baptist Church, Edmond

Catholic Charities Annual Appeal 2008 Pledge Card

Name: ____________________________________________

Address: ____________________________________________

City:________ State: _______ Zip:________

Telephone:________ Parish:__________________________

E-mail Address:__________________________________________

Have you moved or changed parishes in the last year? Yes    No

Can Catholic Charities publish your name as a donor? Yes    No

Annual sacrificial gift: $_________

Amount paying today: Check   Cash $________ Balance: $_____

I will pay my balance by August 2009 in the following way:

___ 10 payments (Nov. 2008 - August 2009)
___ Quarterly (4 payments)
___ Semi-Annual (2 payments)
___ Credit Card *
___ Electronic Funds Transfer *

Signature:____________________ Date:________

Make checks payable to “Catholic Charities Appeal.”

Address: 1501 N. Classen Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73106-6699

For alternative methods of payment (such as electronic or credit card), contact Catholic Charities at 405-523-3000.
McGuinness Dedicates New Gymnasium, Athletic Compound

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School officially dedicated its new athletic facilities during a ceremony Aug. 24 at the McCarthy Gymnasium. The $4.5 million project was part of McGuinness’ rebuilding campaign known as Phase II. Campaign co-chairmen were Tom Casso and Greg Love. Construction began in early 2007 and was completed by late spring of this year.

Over 150 guests watched as Archbishop Beltran blessed the renovated McCarthy Gymnasium, the St. Therese of Lisieux Auxiliary Gymnasium and finally the Casso/Love Field House.

The new gymnasium is named for Edmund McCarthy, father of McGuinness alum Judy McCarthy Love, ’55. The interior of the gym received a complete makeover including a new training room, new lighting, speakers and bleachers. The gym floor was refinished and named in honor of Father David Monahan. Father Monahan started the Bishop McGuinness boys basketball tournament in 1961 and later became school principal. On the south side of the gym, the entrance was completely renovated with new ticket booths and an expanded lobby named in memory of McGuinness alum Shaun David Walters, ’89. The lobby boasts of a new concession stand, new restroom areas and a new Hall of Fame room.

Added to the west side of the existing gym is the St. Therese of Lisieux Auxiliary gym named in honor of the Carmelite Sisters. The new auxiliary gym provides additional practice space for volleyball and basketball. Also added was a wrestling room, locker rooms and coaches offices.

The Casso/Love Field House is named in honor of campaign chairmen Tom Casso and Greg Love. It is home to the David Rice Weight Training Center, named in memory of McGuinness alumni David Harlow Rice, ’88. Locker rooms and coaches offices are also located in the field house.

Visitors returned to the McCarthy Gymnasium for a brief reception. Each guest received a container of shard glass from the inaugural game on Jan. 4, 2008, when Daniel Orton shattered the backboard.

Archbishop Beltran and altar servers make their way to the newly renovated McGuinness athletic facilities.

Faithful gather for the blessing of the new field house.

The spacious and modern weight room will help Irish teams stay in top physical condition.
Saint Mary’s Express Begins Journey of Growth for Parish

By Rex Hogan
For the Sooner Catholic

CLINTON — You might say Saint Mary’s Church here is on the right track.

The parish is growing and that’s a good situation, but it means the parish needs more room.

“We’re starting a building project at St. Mary’s,” said Father Rex Arnold, pastor at Saint Mary’s. “We don’t have the size or capacity to bring everyone together.”

At least not yet.

On Aug. 23, St. Mary held a kick-off fundraiser, which featured an 18-mile train ride, 40 minutes to and from Clinton to Custer City. About 100 people paid $30 each to ride the “Saint Mary’s Express.” Many riders on the Farmrail excursion train, dubbed the “Saint Mary’s Express,” dressed in “period” costumes, including Father Arnold. At the Custer City park passengers were given a box lunch before Father Arnold celebrated Mass outdoors.

Father Arnold said the exact cost of the parish expansion is unknown, but construction probably will include 6,500 square feet, which will cost $120 to $150 per square feet.

Alan Aneshansley, a member of the parish building committee, said the committee is looking at plans to build an entryway and a parish hall.

“We don’t have a facility that when it’s time for us to have a parish-wide event, we don’t have a facility to get everyone inside,” Aneshansley said.

“About 50 percent of our parish is Hispanic,” Father Arnold said. “Because we also have a Spanish Mass, we don’t see each other very much. So this facility is primarily to give us space where we all can come together as a parish and say, have a meal together.”

Oklahoma City architect Duane Mass is working on the project. Mass is a parishioner at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Mass said the St. Mary’s Building Committee has presented his firm with “ideas” about what the parish wants and needs, but no drawing has been completed.

“You have put a lot of dreams and aspirations into our hands,” said Mass. “St. Mary’s is going to be around a long time so what you are doing is building for generations to come,” he said.

The kickoff fundraiser generated more than $3,500. Also, Bernardo Fuentez, Grand Knight Council 3101, Clinton, presented the parish with a $1,500 check.

“We know what we want in size,” Father Arnold. “And we want to strengthen ourselves as a community and that’s what this project will help us do,” he said.

Saint Mary’s is definitely on the right track.

St. Mary’s priest, Father Rex Arnold, with Emma Hernandez and Abbie Spiers, walking to the picnic grounds.

Father Arnold. And we want to strengthen ourselves as a community and that’s what this project will help us do, he said.

Saint Mary’s is definitely on the right track.

Top left, St. Mary parishioner Kathy Aneshansley greeted participants at the park. Top right, Duane Mass, who is working with St. Mary’s Parish on the building project. At left, Council 3101 Grand Knight Bernardo Fuentez presents Father Arnold with a $1,500 check.

Rachael, Jessica and Robin Mass of Oklahoma City in period costumes aboard the St. Mary’s Parish fundraiser train ride.
Catholic Education Develops Resource to Assist in Formation

By Eliana Tedrow
For the Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Department of Catholic Education has issued a new resource binder to all parishes and missions within the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The binder, titled the “Adult Faith Formation Resource Binder,” is a result of two years’ work by local volunteers and comes as a result of the 1999 “Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us” plan for Adult Faith Development from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

On Aug. 23, nearly 80 priests, deacons, Sisters and religious educators gathered at Bishop McGuinness High School to receive words of encouragement from Archbishop Beltran and to undergo a brief training seminar concerning the release of the Adult Faith Formation Binder.

In an introductory letter, Archbishop Beltran told religious educators this was the “most valuable resource for the ongoing faith formation for the people of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.” When he addressed the crowd he said, “There are thousands who participate at Mass on Sundays but we don’t follow up with them [and] enforce the faith,” stressing the importance of continual education on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. “Live the fullness of your Catholic faith,” Archbishop Beltran solemnly told the crowd. “Catholic Faith is about being a person of Jesus and living in unity with Him … We find identity in that through continual education.”

In 2006, the Department of Catholic Education formed an Adult Faith Formation Task Force in order to formulate a way to promote and support ongoing faith formation of adults in the archdiocese. The task force was comprised of 15 volunteers from various parishes and four staff members from the Department of Catholic Education. The resource binder was created to assist and support RE’s efforts as they provide ongoing faith education to their parishes. It encompasses all topics and all areas of education including, but not limited to: abortion, addition/recovery, Catechesis, RE, Catholicism, evangelization, end of life, parenting, theology, prison ministry and RCIA.

The new resource binder holds the names of dozens of individuals who have offered their various experiences and talents to any parish within the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. These people have offered to speak at parishes or organize retreats focused on a topic(s) in which they have expertise. Sister Diane Koorie, RSM., one of the task force’s main organizers, said parishioners could obtain more information about resources offered by contacting their local religious education office or by contacting the Office of Religious Education directly.

Archbishop Beltran is urging religious educators to find out about their own parishes — where even economic and ethnic identity can change or impact spiritual identity. Archbishop Beltran encouraged religious educators to take into account their parish’s ethnic, cultural and economic needs. “These are all fundamental units of our parishes,” he said. “We need to realize this and find out how to reach them. Archbishop Beltran stressed his gratitude to the committee, which, so diligently, worked on putting these resources together.

“This is not curriculum,” Angela Schmidt, associate in the Office of Religious Education, stressed to the crowd, “This is a resource.”

Catholic Foundation Provides Funds for Curriculum Project

A recent request by Sister Catherine Powers, Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, was met with overwhelming approval by the Catholic Foundation board of directors. The request was for financial assistance in providing both training and Web-based documentation to support the development of a Curriculum Map for mathematics.

Background. The Department of Education at the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City consulted with Catapult Learning (the largest, most experienced provider of contractual educational services in the country) to provide mentoring, professional development and workshops related to Curriculum Mapping. Mathematics was selected as the initial core-curriculum subject area to be mapped by both Catholic grade schools and high schools in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

At the high school level — instructors at Bishop McGuinness and Mount Saint Mary’s will document and track various curriculum components in relationship to fellow instructors, as well as those at the other high school. These same instructors can also view the curriculum components being taught at the various grade schools, and suggest curriculum enhancements based on strengths and weaknesses observed in students. The grade school instructors have the ability to do the same via the Web-based documentation available to them as well.

“This vertical alignment is long overdue,” commented Bishop McGuinness Principal David Morton, “Curriculum Mapping will have a positive affect on all students by allowing instructors to both affect what is being taught in the grade schools and gear high school programs to their strengths. All students will essentially be on a level playing field when entering the ninth grade.”

What’s Next. In addition to mathematics, the other core-curriculum subject areas will be added to the process in the future as well. In the beginning, Catapult Learning will assist in developing the mathematics Curriculum Map — working closely with school administrators to ensure all steps in the process are met. Additionally, workshops and in-school coaching will be provided to assist instructors in understanding the rationale for developing the curriculum map and aid in the implementation of the curriculum map once it is completed. Continual oversight will be provided to keep the process active and feedback from participants will be collected to monitor progress.

The Catholic Foundation provided $25,000 from its Directors Endowment to assist the Department of Education with the comprehensive cost of consultation, implementation and follow-up associated with the Curriculum Mapping services. “Investing in the Future of Our Faith’ is our tagline at the Catholic Foundation,” said executive director Tom Casso. “What better way to show our support of Catholic education than through this vital Professional Development initiative.”
Scout Troop Provides Service to Saint Monica Parish

EDMOND — On Aug. 23, the Boy Scouts from Troop 331 were involved with a service project for St. Monica’s Catholic Church. St. Monica’s is the sponsor organization for Boy Scout Troop 331. Total service hours spent were 146 in all. The event was the annual St. Monica Parish Festival. The Boy Scouts set up a monkey bridge for the children to walk across. A monkey bridge is made using a series of lashings and knots supported by several large tree limbs. In addition to the bridge, the Scouts built a troop gateway (entrance) into a mock campsite and several dining flies were put up to give the parishioners shelter and shade. We wanted to give parishioners some idea of what Scouting is like with Troop 331. The Scouts put up several of the troop tables for seating and cooked cherry cobbler in Dutch ovens.

Here is a list of the participants from Troop 331 that attended the St. Monica Parish Festival. The adult leaders were Scoutmaster Tony Zabloudil; Assistant Scoutmasters Tony Blatt, Phil Swart, Rockie Yardley and Rick Sykora; advancement chair, Kathy Zabloudil; committee members, Tom Fleck, Becky Swart, Andrew Roewe, Bob Porter, Clay Van Meter and Ken Banks.

Scouts in attendance were Markus Doyal, Andrew Zabloudil, Alec Warren, Matt Bailey, Kyle Van Meter, Conner Blatt, Max Yardley, Austin Sykora, Tom Swart, Cale Mainprize, Seth Dauenhauer, Vincent Po and Nate Clark.

Saint John Students Experience Retreat

YUKON — Students at St. John Nepomuk Catholic School in grades sixth through eighth recently participated in an all-middle school retreat during the second week of school. The retreat was held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Youth Camp, over the length of a school day.

The retreat was coordinated and led by middle school teachers Marilee Talbot, Denise Heard and Chuck Mickett. Principal Diane Floyd and Pastor Father William Novak also attended the day-long event. The main focus of the retreat was faith and community building among the middle school students. This event is planned annually to coincide with the start of school to help ease the transition of students entering middle school. The principles of teamwork practiced during the retreat will be used throughout the year in the classroom setting to strengthen unity among the students and to develop leadership skills.

A second focus of the retreat was the activities within the “House System” used at the school. The House System is based on the ancient systems found at Oxford and Cambridge universities. Every sixth-grade student and new student entering middle school at St. John is assigned to one of three separate houses, each named for a religious person. The houses are Drexel House, for Saint Katherine Drexel; Aquinas House, for Saint Thomas Aquinas; and Rother House, for Father Stanley Rother of Okarche.

Each house has its own color, mascot, prayer, motto and banner. The houses compete against each other in various activities throughout the year, including academics, athletics, service and church ministry. Students receive points for participating. The house with the most points at the end of the school year wins the honor of holding the silver John House Cup for the next school year and also receives a special grand prize.

During the retreat, the new students were sorted into their new houses and pledged, along with current members, to work together for common goals, support one another and share their gifts and talents to ensure the success of their house. After concluding the day with the celebration of Mass, the new students proudly wore their new house T-shirt home and looked forward to beginning a new year at St. John in pursuit of an excellent educational experience and the coveted House Cup. Rother House is the current John House Cup holder.

Father Joe Uhen visited Edmond recently with Ginet Ambulay and Freddy Cornejo of his parish in Peru. For 10 years, Edmond’s St. John the Baptist Catholic Church has sponsored Father Uhen’s work in Peru. A dinner was hosted for Father Uhen and his mission team at the Knights of Columbus Family Life Center.
Sister Diane Named to Board

Sister Diane Koorie, RSM, has been appointed to the board of directors of the National Association for Lay Ministry effective Aug. 5, 2008. She is filling a vacancy created when Mary Leising of the Archdiocese of Denver resigned from the board of directors due to a health issue. The term ends in May 2012.

Sister Diane is director of the Office of Pastoral Ministry for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, a position she has held since January 2001. Her NALM involvement includes serving as chair of the NALM lay ministry formation director’s forum, which plans the annual Lay Ministry Formation Director’s Institute.

The National Association for Lay Ministry is a professional organization that supports, educates and advocates for lay ministers and promotes the development of lay ministry in the Catholic Church. Formed in 1981, it has 1,300 members serving across the country. NALM members include lay ecclesial ministers, volunteer ministers, religious, priests, deacons and bishops all interested in supporting the development of lay ministry.


What Does Christ Expect From Religious Leaders?

By Fr. Matthew Habiger, OSB

In Matthew’s 23rd chapter, we find Jesus taking issue with the church leaders of his day, the Scribes and Pharisees. Seven times Jesus uses the phrase “Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees.” “Woe to you” means that the person addressed will have to give an accounting for himself, for his words and his teachings. If he failed in the duties of his office, which is to clearly proclaim to the people God’s plan for all important human affairs, then God will hold him accountable for the failings of the people. “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” asserts the prophet Hosea 3:6. “For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts,” says the prophet Malachi 2:7.

Today we can presume that Jesus’ words are addressed to all bishops, priests and deacons, to Protestant ministers, Jewish rabbis and Islamic imams. God wishes that His word and His plan for us be given to every man, woman and child. Thus, his warning, “Woe to you,” continues to echo down through the centuries.

Take just one of the serious warnings: “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If any one swears by the temple, it is nothing; but if any one swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind men! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred?” Is not Jesus alluding to the mistaken notion that gold and money are more important than God’s moral law, the moral law that is to be found in the temple? What are we to think about the pastor who is more concerned about a possible drop in the weekly collection, than in proclaiming the full richness of God’s moral law? What are we to think about the pastor who arbitrarily decides for himself which parts of God’s plan for marriage and spousal love are safe to preach on, and which parts are not? Or perhaps even which parts of that plan are still valid, and which are not? Jesus is asserting that only God determines, and defines, the moral order and that it is the explicit duty of the “man of God” to proclaim His moral order.

But teaching the moral order and bringing the moral values of the Gospel to the broader society is not just the responsibility of the religious leaders. To engage the culture with the values of the Gospel is largely the task of the laity, who are the vast majority of the Church. Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver has been talking about this extensively, and recently published a book, “Render Unto Caesar: Serving the Nation by Living Our Catholic Beliefs in Political Life.”

“No only does religion have a place in the public square, a democracy needs the input of religious morals and convictions to remain healthy and strong,” he said. “Taking religion out of that plan is the fastest way to destroy a democracy.”

“In the name of being good citizens, a lot of Catholics have bought into a very mistaken idea of the ‘separation of Church and state.’ American Catholics have always supported the principle of keeping religious and civil authority distinct. Nobody wants a theocracy, and much of the media hand-wringing about the specter of ‘Christian fundamentalism’ is really just a particularly offensive scare tactic. The Church doesn’t presume to run the state. We also don’t want the state interfering with our religious beliefs and practices — which, candidly, is a much bigger problem today.

“Separating Church and state does not mean separating faith and political issues. Real pluralism requires a healthy conflict of ideas. In fact, the best way to kill a democracy is for people to remove their religious and moral convictions from their political decision-making. If people really believe something, they’ll always act on it as a matter of conscience. Otherwise they’re just lying to themselves. So, the idea of forcing religion out of public policy debates is not only unwise, it’s antidemocratic.”

Briefs

Mass Schedule Set

DEL CITY — St. Paul the Apostle will celebrate Mass in Tagalog at 4 p.m. each Sunday. Following Mass, a potluck dinner will be hosted.

Catechetical Congress

OKLAHOMA CITY — This year’s Catechetical Congress is on Saturday, Sept. 27, 2008, at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Catechists, youth ministers, catechetical leaders and volunteers are encouraged to join together to listen to a faith-filled message from national speaker, Lee Nagel. Exhibits and refreshments begin at 7:45 a.m. Welcome and opening prayer start at 8:30 a.m. Archbishop Beltran will close the event with the celebration of Mass at noon.

4th Annual Young Adult Mass and Cookout with Archbishop Beltran

OKLAHOMA CITY — Sunday, Sept. 28, 2:30 to 7 p.m. at the Catholic Pastoral Center. This invitation is extended to all young adults from around the Archdiocese between the ages of 18 to 39. This year’s theme is Faithful Citizenship. Come for the presentation and stay for Mass and dinner with Archbishop Beltran. Rain or shine. To register, call your local parish young adult contact or the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office at (405) 721-9220 or e-mail Bjaime@catharchdiocese- okc.org. Register by Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2008.
In the United States, only about half of those who were eligible to vote actually cast ballots during the last national election. I admit I have not always voted in the past. When I attempted not to vote, however, I think back to a story I once heard about a certain Aunt Katherine who died a few years ago. She was blind during the last months of her life, but she had her daughter read the ballot to her and fill it out on her behalf. She was careful to sign the ballot and make sure it was mailed. It was one of the last things she did before she went to the Lord. She believed that voting was important, and it was one way she manifested her concern for others and for the society she was a part of.

We face the daunting task of evaluating many hot-button issues and sorting through various candidates’ positions whenever we vote. We may have to consider energy policy, access to health care, education, Social Security, the problem of homelessness, taxes, farm subsidies and inner city violence, to mention just a few. Some issues, however, merit greater attention than others. The life issues — extending from abortion to embryonic stem cell research to euthanasia — are, objectively speaking, the most critical issues to weigh in on as we cast our vote, because they address the basic good of life itself. Even if we strongly approve of a candidate’s position on Social Security and taxation, would that ever allow us to vote for him if we knew that he condoned and promoted human slavery? Even if we strongly agreed with a candidate’s position on health care and education, would that allow us to vote for him if we knew he supported the genocide of Jewish people? Certain kinds of evils, known as “intrinsic” evils, can never be permitted in a society, and candidates who promote such evils need to be shown the door by our votes, regardless of their positions on other, lesser issues. In the words of Father Brian Bransfield, a truthful conscience will wince whenever it “hears a candidate claim that he can fix health care, but still agree that a child in the womb can be killed. Conscience knows that if a candidate favors human embryonic stem cell research, which always includes the killing of a human person, then our neighborhoods can never be free of violence — life in the womb is, by definition, completely innocent, while the criminal in the electric chair (or the unjust wartime aggressor threatening a sovereign state) is no longer innocent, but is guilty of serious wrongdoing, beyond any reasonable doubt. Inasmuch as an accused criminal or a wartime aggressor is guilty of radical evil, war and the death penalty may at times, and in limited circumstances, represent a legitimate societal response. War and capital punishment, then, cannot be deemed intrinsically immoral. Any direct attack on innocent human life — whether through abortion, embryonic stem cell research or euthanasia — will always remain intrinsically immoral. Voting for a candidate who supports war or capital punishment in very limited circumstances is not the moral equivalent of voting for a candidate who supports the killing of innocent human life in the womb or the research laboratory.

Would it ever be morally justifiable to vote for a candidate who supports abortion or other intrinsic evils? Possibly. To vote this way, however, would require a proportionate reason for doing so. We can begin to understand what is meant by a “proportionate reason” if we consider a hypothetical case of two candidates running for president of the United States, one of whom favors a law that would authorize the killing of all Muslims living within the country (because the candidate claims that a small percentage of them might pose a terrorist threat someday). The second candidate, meanwhile, opposes any such genocide, but supports and encourages the killing of the unborn through abortion. It might be permissible to vote for this pro-abortion candidate, not to support his pro-abortion agenda, but as a means to prevent the killing of Muslims. Roughly 1 million children are killed annually by abortion in the United States, while there are about 5 million citizens who are Muslims. Insofar as a vote for the pro-abortion candidate would help prevent the unjust killing of nearly five times as many Muslims as unborn humans, one could safely say that there was a “proportionate reason” to vote in this way. One might prefer to refrain from voting altogether in these circumstances, considering that both candidates are supporting intrinsic evils in their platforms. We must exercise caution, however: Abstaining from the voting booth can unintentionally lead to support for the more evil platform. We should probably refrain from voting only when the platforms of all candidates support intrinsic evils to a similar degree.

In sum, voting is an indispensable duty within our democracy. The attention we focus on protecting innocent human life when we cast our votes will determine, in large part, whether we promote a just or an unjust society for our children and grandchildren.

For more on Faithful Citizenship, visit the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Web site, www.faithfulcitizenship.org

![Faithful Citizenship](image)

Sister Honorata Alcarese Dies at 101 Years of Age

ASTON, Pa. — Sister Honorata Alcarese, OSF, died in Assisi House on July 28, 2008. She was 101 years of age and had been a professed member of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for 74 years. Sister Honorata Alcarese (Rose Eleodora) was born in Baltimore, Md., where she was a member of St. Vincent Parish. She graduated from Eastern High School and taught kindergarten at St. Vincent School before she entered the congregation in 1931. Sister Honorata earned a B.S. in English from Mount Saint Mary College. She ministered primarily in elementary education.

Her leisure activities included crocheting, knitting and sewing. She made beautiful baby sets that were sold in the gift shop at Assisi House.

Letters

A Platform of Common Good

Where the work and words of the fathers of the Church and the work and words of the founding fathers can find common ground, there is a solid foundation from which an American Catholic can move confidently forward. Philadelphia proved itself to be that common ground and the subject was the Common Good or, as was written in 1776, “the General Welfare.”

The Convention for the Common Good met July 11-13 to ratify a platform for the Common Good and to offer panel discussions on issues relevant during the coming local and national elections. NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, along with more than a dozen Catholic social justice organizations, convened the gathering. The choice of location symbolized the mission of the convention: The creation of a document inspired by faith and built on the founding ideals of the nation as specified in the Preamble to the Constitution. Over 800 Catholics from around the country attended.

The platform ratified in July in Philadelphia is the synthesis of issues from participating parishes around the United States. Oklahoma was represented by input from the state office of Catholic Charities and St. Charles Borromeo Parish from which I attended. The full five-page platform is a comprehensive document. The one-page summary, though abbreviated, gets to the heart of the platform. Both documents can be read at www.votethecommongood.com.

The goals of the convention were to call political candidates and citizens to work together for national and global justice by placing “the General Welfare” before partisan agendas and to ratify a platform that concretely puts these issues into the political arena to be addressed. The purpose of the Platform for the Common Good is three-fold.

A document for candidates.

Catholics are 26 percent of the voting population: The Catholic vote is critical.

To be able to present this full platform to local and national candidates as an expression of the political will of the largest group of swing voters would have a powerful effect. Currently, 4,350 voters have signed their support of the platform. A document for voters.

The framework of the platform is the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States and Catholic Social Teaching. It provides vocabulary and perspective for evaluating political action and intention in a society of shifting standards. A document for empowerment.

The spirit of this idea for the Platform for the Common Good, which reminds candidates and voters to promote the general welfare, is a reminder that one vote is a voice raised but as members of a community, we need not be “a voice crying out in the wilderness” but a chorus of voices “crying out prepare the way of the Lord.” “By the Common Good is meant the sum total of those conditions of social life which allow people as groups and as individuals to reach their proper fulfillment ... The most complete realization of the Common Good is found in those political communities which defend and promote the good of their citizens and of intermediate groups without forgetting the universal good of the entire human family.” (Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, No.407-10). The liturgies and the speakers at the convention were a celebration of the spirituality and the practicality of Catholic Social Teaching. Included in the schedule were columnist E.J. Dionne Jr.; professor, Dr. M. Shawn Copeland; activist and author, Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ. Also addressing the delegates through written correspondence and video message were Sen. Robert P. Casey Jr., Arlen Specter, Bono and Barack Obama.

Kathy Judge
Saint Charles Borromeo

Across Oklahoma

Red Mass Sept. 21

NORMAN — Since the 12th century, the Catholic Church has celebrated a special Mass to pray for the legal community as the fall court year begins. This year’s Red Mass, so called because the priest wears red vestments, will be observed Sunday, Sept. 21 at 5 p.m. at St. Thomas More University Parish. Drew Kersh has been asked to be the speaker.

Fundraiser Sept. 21

PONCA CITY — St. Mary’s annual Fall Fest, Saturday, Sept. 27 from 6:15 to 10 p.m. Family fun featuring game booths, inflatables, silent auction, live auction, bratwurst and more. No admission charge. St. Mary’s is located at 721 S. Seventh St. This is a fundraiser for St. Mary’s School.

Catholic Women to Meet

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Central Region Council of Catholic Women will host its quarterly meeting Sept. 23 at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 N.W. Expressway. Registration opens at 9 a.m. and the meeting convenes at 9:30. Father James Goin will speak on “Gifts of the Holy Spirit.” Mass will be celebrated at 11:30 a.m. followed by lunch. Registration is $7.50 and includes lunch. Reservations are necessary and can be made by calling Jeanne Ferguson at 341-4396.

Czech Mass

YUKON — St. John Nepomuk Catholic Church will host people of Czech descent with a Mass on Sunday, Sept. 28 at 10:30 a.m. Father John J. Michalecka of St. Mary’s Parish in Ponca City will celebrate the Mass along with Father William Novak, pastor of St. John’s. The homily will be presented in Czech as well as English. Everyone is invited to dress in their Czech Krog. After the service, St. John’s Altar Society will host a reception in the Marion Hall to honor the nationality of the saint of whom the parish was named. Coffee and kolaches will be served.

Kolache Sale

YUKON — The Altar Society of St. John Nepomuk Catholic Church in Yukon will be selling kolaches on Friday, Oct. 3 from 3 to 7 p.m. in the school gym. Yukon’s annual Czech Festival is being held on Saturday, Oct. 4. You can beat the rush and avoid the crowd at the Czech Festival by buying on Friday evening. For more information, call Sheryl Parizek at 354-2743.

Parish Carnival

SHAWNEE — 55th annual St. Benedict Church Carnival, Saturday, Oct. 4, 632 N. Kickapoo, Shawnee. Breakfast will be served by Granny’s Attic. There will be a 500-family garage sale and silent auction starting at 8 a.m. The carnival begins at 10 a.m. with food, fun and entertainment for all ages. The carnival ends at 8 p.m.

Arts and Crafts Sale at Saint Ann

OKLAHOMA CITY — Saint Ann Retirement Center, 7501 W. Britton Road, will host “Come to the County Fair — Arts and Crafts Extravaganza” from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 8. More than 30 arts and crafts booths will be set up and there will also be a food court and bake sale. A cake walk will be held and tours of the community will be available. For more information or to reserve a booth, call Richard Amend at 721-0747.
Buenas Noticias...

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo:
Este artículo que escribo será publicado en la edición del 14 de septiembre del Sooner Catholic, nuestro periódico arquidiocesano. Le puse como título “Tierra Sagrada” porque ese día, 14 de septiembre, será un día domingo, estaré celebrando una Misa en los Jardines de Gethsemane.

El viernes cinco de septiembre, un grupo de treinta y seis personas, la mayoría proveniente de Oklahoma City, me estarán acompañando en mi peregrinaje por la Tierra Santa. Planeamos visitar los relicarios y sitios históricos religiosos de nuestra Judeocrisiana historia. Sobre todo, estamos ansiosos de seguir los pasos de Jesucristo. Conmemoraremos muchos eventos religiosos narrados en la Biblia y fielmente observados en la práctica de nuestra religión Católica.

Semanas antes de nuestra partida desde Oklahoma City, me reuniré con estos peregrinos como parte de nuestra preparación. Para la mayoría de ellos, es la primera vez que tienen la oportunidad de hacer un peregrinaje a Tierra Santa. Ellos están muy emocionados con los preparativos de su visita al lugar donde Cristo nació, vivió, sufrió y murió. Estos peregrinos se maravillaron cuando se les dijo que visitarían la Sagrada Sepultura donde Jesucristo fue sepultado y donde resucitó de la muerte. En anticipación a todo esto, ellos están muy profundamente felices porque van a conocer cada uno de esos relicarios que fueron construidos sobre Tierra Santa y nosotros los consideramos como lugares sagrados.

En el transcurso de nuestras reuniones, acordamos no dejar de visitar estos únicos relicarios en la Tierra Santa y les recordé a estos peregrinos que me acompañarán, que no vean estos lugares sagrados como sitios de magia o de una manera supersticiosa. Más bien, son los lugares donde Cristo caminó, vivió y murió, por lo tanto, son muy pero muy sagrados. Aunque, toda creación es sagrada. Todo lo que Dios crea es bueno. Estamos bendecidos y afortunados de disfrutar la Presencia sacramental de Jesús en la Santa Eucaristía. Por disposición e institución de Dios, Él planeó su estadía entre nosotros. Cristo dijo: “Tomad y comed todos de él, porque esto es mi Cuerpo “; Tomad y bebed todos de él, porque éste es el cáliz de mi Sangre. Sangre de la alianza nueva y eterna, que será derramada por ustedes y por todos los hombres y mujeres para el perdón de los pecados”.

Los altares de las iglesias están especialmente consagrados y los tabernáculos están bendecidos para mantener el Sagrado Cuerpo y Sangre de Cristo. ¡Nuestras iglesias por lo tanto son lugares sagrados! Son lugares donde podemos decir que estamos sobre Tierra Santa.

Hemos sido creados a Imagen y Semejanza de Dios. Hemos sido redimidos del pecado por Cristo Jesús. Estamos invitados a comulgar con Él. “Tomad y comed todos de él, porque esto es mi Cuerpo “; Tomad y bebed todos de él, porque éste es el cáliz de mi Sangre. Sangre de la alianza nueva y eterna, que será derramada por ustedes y por todos los hombres y mujeres para el perdón de los pecados”. Cuando hemos sido santificados con Cristo, donde quiera que nos encontremos estaremos en Tierra Sagrada.

Durante los días en Tierra Santa, peregrinaremos para ser recordados una y otra vez sobre la bondad y amor de Dios, quienes vino aquí para estar con nosotros y poder salvarnos y santificarnos.

Así como los treinta y seis peregrinos que me acompañan, todos los que profesamos la fe estamos en un peregrinaje. Peregrinando hacia la verdadera Tierra Santa, el lugar más sagrado y el cual llamamos cielo. ¿Es el cielo un lugar? ¿Es qué acaso ese cielo es tierra, mar o espacio? ¿Qué es exactamente el cielo?

Reflexionando en nuestra historia, determinamos que Adam y Eva fueron seres humanos que estaban peregrinando buscando respuestas y sentido a la vida. En cada era, los seres humanos aprendemos mucho pero también olvidamos mucho.

En el medio de nuestra confusión, Cristo vino y proclamó la Buena Nueva diciéndenos que Él es el Camino, la Verdad y la Vida. Luego Cristo nos dijo que Él vino para que tengan vida y en abundancia. Cuando, nosotros en tiempo de Dios, entramos en la plenitud de la vida que Cristo nos prometió, entonces, estaremos en el cielo, en la Presencia de Dios, donde veremos a Dios y estaremos junto a Él.

Ahora, los peregrinos y yo estamos en Tierra Santa, pero ustedes los peregrinos de nuestra Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City, deben continuar caminando con toda confianza porque vivimos ahora, no por un sitio, sino por nuestra fe. La fe en la Persona de Jesucristo, quien es nuestro Señor y Salvador.

El festival de las Américas de la parroquia San Eugenio todo un éxito por la gloria de Dios
Más Buenas Noticias...

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo:

Caridades Católicas es parte de la Buena Nueva, porque sencillamente Caridades Católicas es una extensión del Ministerio de Jesús.

Jesucristo vino a servir y no a ser servido. Todo aquel que se ha bautizado en Cristo, recibe la gran encomienda de compartir este ministerio de amor y de servicio.

Para cumplir estas palabras de caridad, muchas cosas se pueden hacer como pueblo piadoso. Por lo tanto, primero que nada, le pido sinceramente sus oraciones.

Recen para que nuestros esfuerzos puedan ayudar de un forma efectiva a la gente que se encuentra en estado de necesidad. Oren por todos aquellos que necesitan ayuda y para que estas personas sean bendecidas y beneficiadas por nuestros esfuerzos.

Caridades Católicas es un esfuerzo de unidad de los Católicos de la Iglesia. Aquí, en la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City, el trabajo de Caridades Católicas se provee en el centro y noreste de Oklahoma. En cualquier día se puede socorrer a la gente. Cientos de personas se pueden despertar con un nuevo amanecer después de encontrar refugio en un espacio limpio y seguro en las villas que llevan por nombre “Los Jardines de la Trinidad y Monseñor Isenbart” en Oklahoma City. Asimismo, pueden encontrar amparo en Villanova en la ciudad de Lawton, en la Casa de la Sagrada Familia en la ciudad de Midwest City o en la Casa de Elizabeth o en el Hogar de Seton o en las diferentes residencias donde Caridades Católicas ayuda en la Arquidiócesis.

Cualquier día, diversos servicios son ofrecidos a una variedad de personas en las ciudades de Clinton, Enid, Lawton y Oklahoma City por Caridades Católicas.

Entre esos servicios se pueden encontrar ayuda para aquellos niños que han sido abusados o abandonados, adolescentes que están desorientados por su rebeldía, gente que ha sufrido por situaciones traumáticas como el divorcio, la muerte de un ser querido, por angustia o por confusión.

Cualquier día, un número de inmigrantes puede conseguir venir legalmente a este país patrocinados por Caridades Católicas. La gente indocumentada puede buscar a un trabajador de los servicios de inmigración de Caridades Católicas para ver alguna solución de su estado migratorio.

Familias pueden ser asistidas con comida, ropa, servicios médicos, pago de la renta y servicios como gas y electricidad de su hogar.

Existen muchos otros servicios que no solamente se pueden dar en cualquier momento, sino más bien todos los días. Caridades Católicas ha estado operando todos los días desde hace más de 100 años.

Para continuar con este servicio de auxilio a la gente en estado de necesidad, tenemos que hacer una colecta de fondos todos los años para cumplir con los servicios ofrecidos. Algunos de ustedes han recibido una carta mia. Otros recibirán una carta posteriormente. Sin embargo, todos ustedes escucharán una rogatoria el próximo fin de semana.

Les he pedido a sus sacerdotes que coloquen y le permitan oir un audio pregrabado para la colecta de Caridades Católicas.

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Para continuar con este servicio de auxilio a la gente en estado de necesidad, tenemos que hacer una colecta de fondos todos los años...

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Caridades Católicas en plena acción ante crisis económica

Los desamparados y los programas de esperanza familiar y vivienda temporal

Por Mauro Yanez
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY— Indudablemente la crisis económica ha incrementado las necesidades de las familias en Oklahoma. Por supuesto que la Iglesia Católica ante estas circunstancias, envía un mensaje de esperanza para un mejor mañana fundamentado en Cristo. En la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City, a través de Caridades Católicas, se han expandido dos programas que se les conoce en español como esperanza familiar y vivienda temporal.

“Aquellas familias que hablan español y el inglés se les dificulta y están en una emergencia catastrófica, como por ejemplo a punto de perder su casa. Ahora tienen una ayuda más sólida y directa en Caridades Católicas en español”, así lo dijo Nancy Martínez, quien es una de las trabajadoras sociales bilingües encargada de administrar estos dos programas. La señora Nancy Martínez dijo: “Para calificar a la ayuda que damos, se debe tener una familia formada y en estado de necesidad, es decir, por ejemplo un padre o una madre o ambos con sus hijos menores de edad donde uno de los padres haya perdido su trabajo o donde el grupo familiar haya sido desalojado de su hogar. Cada caso es estudiado con detalle para dar las respuestas y recursos disponibles para ayudarlos”.

La señora Nancy Martínez comentó que hay algunas casas ya listas para atender y alojar temporalmente a las familias desplazadas. Ella también dijo que se ofrece ayuda y orientación para sobrevivir la crisis económica que estamos viviendo.

“Es una tragedia el hecho de que una familia pierda sus ingresos porque alguno o ambos de los padres hayan quedado desempleados y no puedan sustentar a sus hijos menores y para rematar pierdan su hogar porque no pueden pagar la renta o los servicios de electricidad, gas o teléfono”; agregó la señora Martínez.

Finalmente, la señora Nancy Martínez dijo que ella y el personal bilingüe encargado de estos programas pueden ser contactados por el teléfono: (405) 523-3000.
Votar según la conciencia
Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles para votar

El siguiente escrito es del Padre Brian Bransfield, quien trabaja para el Secretariado de Evangelización y Catequesis de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos.

La única diferencia entre la cabina de votación y la conciencia es que normalmente tenemos que esperar en la fila para poder entrar a una de ellas. Aparte de eso, se supone que sucede lo mismo en ambos lugares, pues en ese pequeño cubículo nos revelamos a nosotros mismos.

Usted y yo sólo podemos votar una vez en las elecciones de este otoño. Sin embargo, es de esperar que antes de hacerlo hayamos visitado repetidamente nuestra propia conciencia. Mi conciencia es lo que separa a la máquina de votación de una máquina tragamonedas, y sólo la conciencia humana puede asegurarse de que a la boleta de votación no se la trate como un juego de apuestas. Los Obispos de Estados Unidos enfatizan el papel de la conciencia en el documento: “Formando la Conciencia para Ser Ciudadanos Fieles”, una guía para los católicos que se preparan para votar en las elecciones de 2008. ¿Qué es la conciencia? Es esa parte de mí que es mayor que yo. Muchos asuntos demandan atención: la inmigración, la educación asequible, la guerra, la violencia en los barrios; el cuidado de la salud, el aborto, el hambre, las personas sin hogar, el medio ambiente, la investigación genética sobre embriones humanos; la dignidad del matrimonio entre un hombre y una mujer como la institución más reconocida de la historia; la desigualdad económica, los precios de la gasolina y la lista es interminable. El malentendido más común es que la conciencia equivale a “lo que yo pienso” sobre un tema. La conciencia no es sólo “lo que yo pienso”, sino que soy yo “pensando sobre lo que es justo” y verdadero. No se trata de una valoración parcial basada en las palabras de un predicador, de un político o en las pasiones. El sentido moral interior no se construye a base de la suma total de lo que yo pienso, sino que es una manifestación relacionada con la verdad en sí misma independientemente de mis preferencias.

La conciencia no permite a un ciudadano olvidarse de que, ante todo, es una persona. Me dice que soy persona y, como tal, debo considerar los dilemas de acuerdo a un cierto orden: ¿Cómo es que este acto, aquí y ahora, en mí mismo, va de acuerdo con el ser humano y no simplemente con precios más bajos? La conciencia insiste en que los dilemas humanos son asuntos morales mucho antes de que se conviertan en puntos de vista políticos. La conciencia me dice que ser libre debo aceptar que algunos actos son inevitablemente malos y que ninguna clase de circunstancias o intenciones pueden, de algún modo, hacerlas buenas. La conciencia quita todos los velos: conoce la diferencia entre acertado y equivocado, entre el bien y el mal, pero no basada en la verdad de las circunstancias o las mejores intenciones sino, sobre todo, en la verdad de las cosas en sí mismas. La conciencia debe formarse. Como tal, debe mirar en tres direcciones al mismo tiempo: a uno mismo, al dilema moral que se presenta, y considerar la verdad de ambos sin favoritismos. Muy a menudo, el votante apela sólo a las primeras dos categorías: yo y el dilema. La mera opinión sustituye entonces a la conciencia. Tomar una decisión en conciencia significa consultar con la verdad de las cosas en sí mismas. La conciencia empieza de afuera hacia adentro. La realidad objetiva me llama a la responsabilidad y forma la coordinada central de la conciencia. La conciencia debe comenzar con el bien verdadero. Este punto de partida asegura que la libertad y la verdad no sean enemigas.

Existe una facultad en lo profundo de mi interior que no he creado. No está programada. Esta región es más que el súper-ego o una convención social. Sin embargo, ésta se forma. El sentido moral de la conciencia debe moldearse, no desarrollarse simplemente con sentimientos, opiniones, circunstancias, intenciones o movimientos, sino con el sentido moral profundo del que participamos por el hecho de ser humanos y dotos de razón. La conciencia no decide simplemente lo que es feliz o triste, sino que distingue entre el bien y el mal. La conciencia organiza los dilemas en orden de tamaño y ve las semejanzas. El matrimonio, el racismo, el medioambiente, el hambre, el aborto, no son asuntos que compiten entre sí. Están profundamente relacionados. La conciencia se niega a que ninguno de ellos se convierta en un asunto de opinión.

La conciencia da un respingo cuando escucha a un candidato decir que tiene la solución para el sistema de salud pública y, sin embargo, está de acuerdo en que un niño en el vientre puede ser asesinado. La conciencia sabe que si un candidato está a favor de la investigación de células madre en embriones humanos, lo cual siempre implica matar a una persona humana, nuestros barrios no estarán libres de violencia—pues acabaremos de votar por la violencia. El sentido moral sabe que si tratamos el medio ambiente como de da la gana de tarde temprano tendríamos que recibir tratamiento a causa del medio ambiente. La conciencia se da cuenta de que si apoyas la tortura estás plan- tando la semilla de una guerra dentro de veinte años. La conciencia tiene miras amplias. Rompe las burbujas, aparta los cortinajes, tira de la palanca y con el peso de la verdad honesta puede cambiar y transformar el mundo.

Rito para la celebración de quince años se publicará ahora en septiembre

WASHINGTON — El ritual para la Bendición al Cumplir Quince Años, el rito de la quinceanera aprobado por la Conferencia de Obispos, será publicado el próximo 19 de septiembre. Este rito bilingüe puede celebrarse tanto dentro como fuera de la misa.

El Mexican American Cultural Center en San Antonio, Texas, desarrolló el texto original del rito en 1999. La oficina de publicaciones de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos adquirió los derechos del texto en 2007 y ha colaborado con el Secretariado para el Culto Divino para completar el texto final. El sacerdote jesuita, Padre Allan Deck, director ejecutivo del Secretariado de Diversidad Cultural en la Iglesia, resaltó la importancia de desarrollar ritos que “ayudan a los católicos latinos a celebrar su herencia cultural y a construir nuevos puentes con otros católicos en sus comunidades”. El Padre Deck hizo referencia a un estudio conjunto de Pew Hispanic Project y Pew Forumon Religion and Public Life en abril de 2007 que dice que aproximadamente un tercio de todos los católicos en Estados Unidos en estos momentos son latinos y que el segmento de la población latina seguirá creciendo. El Padre Deck afirmó que el rito para la celebración de quinceañeras será uno entre “muchos recursos que los Latinos pueden usar para preservar su identidad católica y cultural”.

Monseñor Anthony Sherman, director ejecutivo del Secretariado para el Culto Divino de la Conferencia, dijo que el rito para quinceañeras puede ayudar a los jóvenes católicos “a aprender más sobre la importancia de mantener las promesas bautismales en un espíritu de acción de gracias”. El ritual de la quinceanera es una tradición de “presentación en sociedad” o paso a la adultez de las jóvenes adolescentes, pero la participación del clero, los padres y otras personas en esta celebración comunitaria “permite a éstos involucrarse también y realizar la misma clase de compromiso agradecido”, afirmó Mons. Sherman.

El rito ofrece la oportunidad para que los padres de bautismo, u otras parejas que sirvan de padres para la ocasión, presenten artículos religiosos a la quinceañera.

El libro de la Bendición al Cumplir Quince Años estará disponible el 19 de septiembre y puede adquirirse vía Internet en http://www.usccbublishing.org.
**Jobs Box**

**Chapel Staff Openings**

Tinker Air Force Base Chapel has the following positions to be filled: Catholic coordinator, Evangelization coordinator, Religious Education coordinator, choir director, choir director/musician, and organist for Mass. The Statement of Work, explaining the position and necessary qualifications, is available at the Base Chapel weekdays. If interested, please submit resumes no later than the close of business on Sept. 22. Once all resumes are collected, the applicants will be contacted to set up an interview time with the selection committee. Upon completion of the interview, valid applicants will be asked to formulate and submit a bid. The committee will score applicants and their bids on the basis of skills, education, experience, organization/administrative ability and motivation, ministry focus, people focus, and whether bids are reasonable/within budget and value received for the amount paid. If you have any questions, please contact the chapel at 734-2111.

**Spanish Teacher**

Bishop John Carroll and St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Schools in OKC and Saint John Nepomuk Catholic School in Yukon have an opening available immediately for the 2008-2009 school year for a Spanish teacher. This full-time position is currently shared between the three schools. Spanish instruction will be for grades K-8. The grade range may vary by school. Oklahoma State Teacher Certification in this subject area is preferred, but other types of experience may be accepted. If interested, please contact and/or submit resume to Connie Diotte, 525-0956, Diane Floyd, 354-2509, or Joe Sine, 789-0224.

**Openings for Help with Adults With Developmental Disabilities**

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, master’s preferred. Prior experience working with developmentally disabled. Laundry Aides, Housekeeping and Dietary Aides — Full-time hours with possible rotating weekends. To apply, call 263-4658, fax 263-4563, e-mail alemke@cflinc.org or in person at 635 W. Texas, Okarche, Okla. 73762. 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 songs 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 grown-ups and for coordinating our RCIA program. We have been offering three six-week semesters 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.

**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 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 services 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 At: HR, 5801 E. 41st St., Tulsa 74135. EOE

**Dean of Enrollment Management**

St. Gregory’s University in Shawnee invites applicants for the position of Dean of Enrollment Management. Position responsible for the development, implementation, maintenance, analysis and general supervision of all programs related to the recruiting and retaining of undergraduate students. Involves developing and implementing the university’s strategic enrollment and marketing plan and recruiting goals for the College of Arts and Sciences. This position manages the budget for the office and supervises the admissions counselors and office support staff. In addition, this position will coordinate and support the contracted recruitment companies. Applicants must possess an understanding of and willingness to support the St. Gregory’s University Catholic and Benedictine mission. Master’s degree is required. Experience as an admissions counselor and a minimum of two years experience in the director’s or assistant position is preferred. Electronic resumes are preferred, and should include a letter of application describing experience, qualifications, vision and record of achieving/exceeding enrollment goals at one’s recent institution. Shingi Goto, Executive Vice President, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804, sngoto@stgregorys.edu, (405) 878-5435.

**Provost**

St. Gregory’s invites nominations and applications for the position of provost. This executive level position is the chief academic and student oversight officer under direction of the president, and is the administrator of academic affairs, student life, intercollegiate athletics and enrollment management. The successful candidate will provide visionary leadership in these areas, prepare and oversee budgets, ensure athletic program compliance with NAIA regulations, oversee the academic programs offered by the College of Arts and Sciences and the College for Working Adults, and ensure the academic integrity of all programs and adherence to the university’s academic policies, regulations and procedures. The provost supervises the deans of the College of Arts and Sciences and the College for Working Adults, the registrar, the library director, the director of the Student Exploration Center, athletic director and the admissions director. St. Gregory’s University, located in Shawnee, was founded in 1875 by Benedictine monks. A doctorate degree is required in a discipline represented among our academic programs and an academic background sufficient for tenure. This individual must be a practicing Catholic with knowledge of Benedictine spirituality. Salary and benefits are commensurate with experience. Electronic applications are preferred, and should include a cover letter and resume. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position has been filled. Nominations, expressions of interest or requests for the complete position specifications may be sent directly to the university: Shingi Goto, Executive Vice President, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804, sngoto@stgregorys.edu, (405) 878-5435.

For a full and up-to-date jobs box listing, go to catharchdioceseokc.org and click on Jobs Box
Sister Mary Rosina Higgins, FSM, Dies Sept. 5 in Missouri

Sister Mary Rosina Higgs, FSM, died Sept. 5 at St. Mary of the Angels Convent (Franciscan Sisters of Mary), Richmond Heights, Mo. She was 97.

Sister Rosina was born in Marshall, Okla., on June 17, 1911, the second child of four born to Riley and Victoria (Behle) Higgs. In 1933, Idella Catherine Rose Higgs entered the congregation now known as the Franciscan Sisters of Mary and professed her final vows in 1936.

In 1939, Sister Rosina obtained her nursing certificate from St. Anthony School of Nursing. She received her bachelor's in nursing education in 1942 from St. Mary's College in Leavenworth, Kan., and her master's in nursing education from St. Louis University in 1948. In 1993, she was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Oklahoma City University.

Sister Rosina served as an instructor and supervisor at St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City during the 1940s, and as education director from 1954 to 1955 and from 1963 to 1964. During the 1970s, she established an employee health clinic there.

In the early 1950s, she served four years as an instructor at St. Anthony's School of Nursing, then as director of the nursing school from 1955 to 1963. From 1975 to 1983, she was interim director, then director of the nursing school. Always a strong advocate for professional nursing education, she was a guiding force in the transition of St. Anthony School of Nursing to the baccalaureate nursing program at Oklahoma City University in 1983.

Sister Rosina held a number of leadership positions in the order; from 1967 to 1970 she served as superior general for the Sisters of St. Francis of Maryville, Mo. In 1987, this congregation joined with the Sisters of St. Mary to become the Franciscan Sisters of Mary.

Sister Rosina served on numerous local, state and national professional boards, organizations and committees. She was listed in Who's Who of American Women and Who's Who in American Education.

She received a meritorious service award in 1963 from the U.S. government for her work as an instructor in the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps; an award in 1983 from the American Red Cross for 40 years of service; and a Byliner Award in 1993 from the Oklahoma City Chapter of Women in Communication for Health.

From 1985 until her retirement in 1993, she was a powerful force in the Foundation and Development Department at St. Anthony's Hospital. She saw challenges always as an opportunity to grow, and she never lost her care and concern for the poor.

After visiting St. Mary's Ringling Convent in Baraboo, Wis., Sister Rosina began a mission of sewing clowns and stuffed animals for the Sisters Fund, a joint venture with the Salvation Army in Oklahoma City aimed at helping people who couldn't afford their medications.

Sister Rosina always said, “My life has been touched and made richer by the people in my life.”

In her retirement years she built a ministry of prayer and support for her family, friends and the members of her congregation. She will be deeply missed by those who knew her.

Sister Rosina is survived by a sister, Alma McCubbin of Guthrie, and her loving nieces and friends.

The funeral Mass was celebrated Sept. 9 at St. Mary of the Angels Convent, with burial in Resurrection Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the Franciscan Sisters of Mary Tribute Fund, 1100 Bellevue Avenue, St. Louis, Mo. 63117.
Lo que haces por tu prójimo, lo haces por Cristo.

CARIDADES CATÓLICAS
Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City

COLECTA ANUAL DEL AÑO 2008

Ilustración: "Jesús lavando los pies de Pedro" por Ford Maddox Brown, Tate, London/Art Resource, NY