A Saint Among Us

Cause of Canonization for Father Stanley Francis Rother Will Officially Begin Oct. 5 With Mass and Commissioning of Committee at Holy Trinity Church in Okarche

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKARCHE — Inside Okarche’s Holy Trinity Catholic Church, the same church where two days after his birth on March 27, 1935, Stanley Rother was baptized, Oklahoma Catholics will come together Oct. 5 in celebration of the Holy Eucharist and to again pray for the canonization of their beloved priest. On this night they will witness the formal beginning of the journey to sainthood as the Canonization Committee for the Cause of Sainthood for Reverend Stanley Francis Rother is commissioned.

Archbishop Beltran will commission the Canonization Committee. Deacon Norman Mejstrik, a parishioner at Saint Philip Neri Church in Midwest City, has been named to serve as coordinator for the committee. Carol Davito will serve as assistant coordinator.

“It really is such an honor and a privilege in some small way to be connected with such a holy man as Father Rother,” said Deacon Mejstrik. “Just learning about his life, his faith, the decisions he made and how he lived his life just has to profoundly influence me and influence all of us.”

Father Rother was shot to death in the early hours of July 28, 1981, in the rectory at his church in Santiago, Atitlan Guatemala. The government of Guatemala was placing blame on the Catholic Church for unrest in the country. Many priests and religious lost their lives and thousands of civilians were kidnapped and killed during the years of state-sponsored oppression. Even though Father Rother knew his life was in danger, he chose to remain with the people he had grown to love during the more than a dozen years he lived there.

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Father Stanley Rother among the people of Santiago, Atitlan Guatemala during the annual festival celebrating Saint James, the patron saint of the town and parish.
The Good News

My father was born in Spain in 1902. At the age of 18, he came to the United States, traveling by ship for eight days to reach New York. He lived in this country until his death in 1961. During that time, he never left the United States nor had he ever been on a plane.

These thoughts came to me as I stood in line waiting for the air bus I was about to board for a nine-hour flight from Brussels, Belgium, to Monrovia, Liberia, on the west coast of Africa. As I watched, I was captivated by the amount of cargo being loaded onto the plane. The several hundred passengers and all our hundreds of bags (tons of luggage) being put on board was not all as the contents of eight very large pallets and containers were also put into the hold. Each of these held at least as much freight as a very large pickup truck could carry. Not only was I captivated by the huge tonnage but also by the ease and speed with which it was loaded. With the proper equipment, it required only two men which it was loaded. With the proper equipment, it required only two men to handle the hundreds of bags and two other men to load the pallets and containers.

When my father boarded his ship in 1929, I wonder what he would have thought and said if someone described the scene and activity before my eyes? From the deck of his ship, still seven and a half days from New York, it would have seemed like science fiction, if they even used that term back then! What would have been a dream or a vision for my father was a real scene that I watched and that I took for granted.

I wondered what scenes and experiences the thousand young people I confirmed this past year will value their experiences. Certainly they will far surpass people I confirmed this past year will value their experiences. What would have been a dream or a vision for my father was a real scene that I watched and that I took for granted. What would have been a dream or a vision for my father was a real scene that I watched and that I took for granted. What would have been a dream or a vision for my father was a real scene that I watched and that I took for granted.

All of us, men and women of every age, of every background are foolish if we rely on technology and science and human achievement and do not acknowledge the Almighty, Eternal and all-Glorious God who created and sustains everything.

All of us are blessed when we humbly, sincerely and joyfully turn to the Lord and exclaim: “My God and my All” for “Eye has not seen, ear has not heard what God has ready for those who love Him. Spirit of love, come give us the mind of Jesus, teach us the wisdom of God.”

Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is the Lord of all! Unlike all other reality, He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is the eternal, all good and gracious God. Jesus is Lord of all!

For us who live by faith and not by sight, human life is appreciated as a unique and marvelous gift because it is a sharing in the Divine Life. God created us in His own Image and Likeness. He made us to receive His love and to love Him in return. He made us for a purpose. He has a plan for us. God so loves the world that he sent His Son Jesus to save us. Jesus reveals to us this plan of God. He reminds us of the joy of heaven that awaits us who believe.

For us He lived, He suffered and He died. Jesus rose from the dead to return. He made us for a purpose. He has a plan for us. God so loves the world that he sent His Son Jesus to save us. Jesus reveals to us this plan of God. He reminds us of the joy of heaven that awaits us who believe. For us He lived, He suffered and He died. Jesus rose from the dead to return. He made us for a purpose. He has a plan for us. God so loves the world that he sent His Son Jesus to save us. Jesus reveals to us this plan of God. He reminds us of the joy of heaven that awaits us who believe. For us He lived, He suffered and He died. Jesus rose from the dead to return. He made us for a purpose. He has a plan for us. God so loves the world that he sent His Son Jesus to save us. Jesus reveals to us this plan of God. He reminds us of the joy of heaven that awaits us who believe.

Life is a journey. For those with no faith, it is a dead end. It has no purpose beyond the grave. Everything must be experienced here and now as there is no eternity. But, for us who believe, each day, each step, every problem, every solution offers us the experience of God’s presence. We are constantly learning. We are discovering new ways to take up the cross of daily living. We see beyond material reality to that reality that never ends. We long for peace and love which can never be found in things or wealth or fame. But we do discover real and lasting peace and joy and fulfillment in Jesus. He is the Way. He is the Truth. He is the Life. He is the one and only Lord of all.

I would be foolish to cross the ocean in the boat my father took to New York. Future generations will be foolish if they only rely on the jumbo jets of today. All of us, men and women of every age, of every background are foolish if we rely on technology and science and human achievement and do not acknowledge the Almighty, Eternal and all-Glorious God who created and sustains everything.

All of us are blessed when we humbly, sincerely and joyfully turn to the Lord and exclaim: “My God and my All” for “Eye has not seen, ear has not heard what God has ready for those who love Him. Spirit of love, come give us the mind of Jesus, teach us the wisdom of God.”

Seminary Burses

A $200 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Cebulski.

A $150 donation was made to the Father Joseph Beltran Seminary Burse by Our Lady’s Cathedral, OKC.

A $100 donation was made to the Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse by the Carmelites and parishioners of Little Flower Parish, OKC.

A $10 donation was made to the Father Stanley Rother Seminary Burse in loving memory of Genevive Stotler by Clara Schwarz.

A $300 donation was made to the Father James Kastner Seminary Burse by Adele E. Crump.

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Father Rother’s Cause Aided by Efforts of Father Monahan

By Eileen Dugan

The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — As the Oct. 5 Mass marking the beginning of the canonization process for Father Stanley Rother draws near, the contributions of Father David Monahan to this endeavor should not be underestimated.

Father Monahan’s longtime office manager, Joan O’Neil, said her boss spent hours upon hours writing and researching about the life and death of the martyred priest, “Father Monahan had a good nose for a story,” O’Neill said. As a former editor of the Sooner Catholic, he wrote repeatedly about Santiago Atitlan, the Guatemalan mission where Father Rother spent much of his adult life and where he died.

O’Neil said Father Monahan admired Father Rother for what he was doing. “He was fascinated by the courage it took for him to keep going down there,” she said.

After Father Rother was killed in 1981, as Father Monahan fleshed out the story of his friend’s murder for the newspaper, he realized that there was a wealth of communication between Father Rother and his friends and relatives in the form of letters.

Of particular interest to the editor-priest and, he thought, to the public, these letters chronicled the tense months leading up to Father Rother’s assassination. Father Monahan contacted the recipients of these messages and received from them permission to gather the letters into a book. He called the collection The Shepherd Cannot Run.

This publication details in Father Rother’s own words the dangers he endured and the courage he displayed as he chose to stay with his American Indian American congregation even as his life was threatened.

“The Shepherd Cannot Run took nearly a year to complete,” O’Neill said. Because Father Monahan admired Father Rother, he was eager to get his words out there so people could read them.

O’Neil said there was so much more to admire about Father Rother the person, that Father Monahan wanted to document the rest of his life as well. Soon Father was putting together a manuscript on the whole of Father Stanley Rother’s life, a complete biography.

O’Neill said Father Monahan thought Father Rother would be declared a martyr, so he wanted to record as much information as possible before people’s memories faded. He knew that his interviews would be useful and necessary in the canonization process. For Father Rother’s biography, he interviewed 101 people in Oklahoma and Guatemala, she said.

Tragically, before his manuscript could be published, Father Monahan fell quite ill. His interviews conducted on Father Stanley Rother’s behalf, however, have provided valuable information to the canonization committee as it analyzes the Oklahoma martyr’s life for possible advancement to sainthood.

Father Monahan spent 20 years (1974-1994) as editor of the Sooner Catholic. During that time, the archdiocesan newspaper received numerous awards for journalistic excellence. Several were for stories on Father Rother.

Father David Monahan retired in 1994 and currently resides at Saint Ann Nursing Center in Oklahoma City.

To learn more on Father Stanley Rother or to order a copy of Father Monahan’s book The Shepherd Cannot Run: The Letters of Father Stanley Rother, go online to catharchdioceseokc.org and click on Our History

A Saint Among Us—

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Archbishop Beltran will head the Canonization Committee. He will be joined by Father Anthony B. Taylor, Ph.D., who will serve as Episcopal delegate; Father Edward J. Weisenburger, V.G., JCL, who will serve as Promoter of Justice; Sister Kathryn Olsen, IHM, JCL, and Anne Kirby, JCL, who will serve as Notaries; Marcia Dubey, BS, will serve along with Kirby as Scribes; George Rigazzi, JCL, Cara Koenig, BA, and Loutitia Eason, JD, will make up the Historical Commission. The Theological Commission will be comprised of Father Charles H. Schettler, JCD, STL; Right Reverend Lawrence Staaszeny, OSB, STD, and Dr. Anne McGuire, Ph.D.

Because Father Rother was killed in Guatemala, his Cause for Canonization normally should have been undertaken there. But because the Church there lacked the resources for such an effort, Archbishop Beltran requested a transfer of jurisdiction to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The Guatemala Conference of Bishops agreed to the archbishop’s petition and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints gave this competence to the Archdiocese.

“This is a time of prayer that God will inspire His Church,” Archbishop Beltran said. While Father Rother has not been officially proclaimed a saint by the Church, Archbishop Beltran said he firmly believes “Father Rother died for the faith” and he considers him a martyr. “Thus we believe he is in heaven,” the archbishop said. “We hope and pray that the Church will someday officially proclaim that Father Rother is indeed a saint.”

According to Dr. Andrea Ambrosi, named by the Vatican as the postula for this canonization case, three prerequisites must be met for a person to be named a martyr.

1) The person who committed the assassination must have had the motive of killing the victim only because of the victim’s faith.

2) The person who was killed must have accepted to die for the faith.

3) The death of the person must have been violent.

In a July 4 meeting with Dr. Ambrosi, several members of the commission made arguments that the circumstances surrounding Father Rother’s death would satisfy all three requirements.
Archbishop to Address Evil of Domestic Violence

The importance of the faith community in the fight against domestic and sexual violence is not being overlooked by those on the front lines of this societal epidemic. The Oklahoma Domestic and Sexual Violence Coalition, a group formed in 1981, will feature, Oct. 12, in Oklahoma City, special segments directed specifically at members of Oklahoma’s faith communities. The segments are designed to educate and empower those within the faith community to understand and recognize relationship violence and to be able to assist victims. Archbishop Beltran is scheduled to speak at the conference. His topic will be “Violence Against Women: Sinful and Evil?”

As pastors of the Catholic Church in the United States, we state as clearly and strongly as we can that violence against women, inside or outside the home, is never justified. Violence in any form — physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal — is sinful; often, it is a crime as well. We have called for a moral revolution to replace a victim’s right to batter. We acknowledge that violence has many forms, many causes and many victims — men as well as women.

The Catholic Church teaches that violence against another person in any form falls outside that person’s ability to be one worthy of love. Instead, it treats the person as an object to be used. When violence occurs within a sacramental marriage, the abused spouse may question, “How do these violent acts relate to my promise to take my spouse for better or for worse?” The person being assaulted needs to know that acting to end the abuse does not violate the marriage promises. While violence can be directed toward men, it tends to harm women and children more.

In this update of our 1982 statement, we again express our desire to offer the Church’s resources to both the women who are abused and the men who abuse. Both groups need Jesus’ strength and guidance.

We focus here on violence against women, since 85 percent of victims of reported cases of nonlethal domestic violence are women. Women’s greatest risk of violence comes from intimate partners — a current or former husband or boyfriend.

Violence against women in the home has serious repercussions for children. Over 50 percent of men who abuse their wives also beat their children. Children who grow up in violent homes are more likely to develop alcohol and drug addictions and to become abusers themselves. The stage is set for a cycle of violence that may continue from generation to generation.

The Church can help break this cycle. Many abused women seek help first from the Church because they see it as a safe place. Even if their abusers abuse other social contacts, they may still allow them to go to church. We recognize that violence against women has many dimensions. This statement is not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather to be an introduction, along with some practical suggestions of what dioceses and parishes can do now.

An Overview of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is any kind of behavior that a person uses to control an intimate partner through fear and intimidation. It includes physical, sexual, psychological, verbal and economic abuse. Some examples of domestic abuse include battering, name-calling and insults, threats to kill or harm one’s partner or children, destruction of property, marital rape and forced sterilization or abortion.

Younger, unmarried women are at greatest risk for domestic violence. According to a U.S. government survey, 53 percent of victims were abused by a current or former girlfriend or boyfriend. One-third of all victims were abused by a spouse, while 14 percent said the offender was an ex-spouse. Women ages 16 to 24 are nearly three times as vulnerable to attacks by intimate partners as those in other age groups; abuse victims between ages 35 and 49 run the highest risk of being killed.

Some who suffer from domestic violence are also victims of stalking, which includes following a person, making harassing phone calls and vandalizing property. Eight percent of women who abuse their wives have been stalked at some time in their lives, and more than 1 million are stalked annually. Stalking is a unique crime because stalkers are obsessed with controlling their victims’ actions and feeling a sense of power over them. Extreme stress, rage, depression and an inability to trust anyone.

Domestic violence is often shrouded in silence. People outside the family hesitate to interfere, even when they suspect abuse is occurring. Some people still argue — mistakenly — that intervention by outside sources endangers the sanctity of the home. Yet abuse and assault are no less serious when they occur within a family.

The Church Responds to Domestic Violence

Religion can be either a resource or a roadblock for battered women. As a resource, it encourages women to resist mistreatment. As a roadblock, its misinterpretation can contribute to the victim’s self-blame and suffering and to the abuser’s rationalizations.

Abused women often say, “I can’t leave this relationship.” Thalia, Biblically, says it would be wrong.” Abusive men often say, “The Bible says my wife should be submissive to me.” They take the biblical text and distort it to support their right to batter.

As bishops, we condemn the use of the Bible to support abusive behavior in any form. A correct reading of Scripture leads people to an understanding of the equal dignity of men and women and to relationships based on mutuality and love. Beginning with Genesis, Scripture teaches that women and men are created in God’s image. Jesus himself always respected the human dignity of women.

Men who abuse often use Ephesians 5:22, taken out of context, to justify their behavior, but the passage (v. 21-33) refers to the mutual submission of husband and wife out of love for Christ. Husbands should love their wives as they love their own body, as Christ loves the Church.

Men who batter also cite Scripture to insist that their victims forgive them (see, for example, Mt 6:9-15). A victim then feels guilty if she cannot do so. Forgiveness, however, does not mean forgetting the abuse or pretending that it did not happen. Neither is possible. Forgiveness is not permission to repeat the abuse. Rather, forgiveness means that the victim decides to let go of the experience and move on with greater insight and conviction not to tolerate abuse of any kind again.

Finally, we emphasize that no one is expected to stay in an abusive marriage. Some abused women believe that church teaching on the permanence of marriage requires them to stay in an abusive relationship. They may hesitate to seek a separation or divorce. They may fear they cannot remarry in the Church. Violence and abuse, not divorce, break up a marriage. We encourage abused persons who have divorced to investigate the possibility of seeking an annulment. An annulment, which determines that the marriage bond is not valid, can frequently open the door to healing.

A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women

EDITOR’S NOTE: In 2002, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops spoke out against the evil of violence against women. The following is part of that statement. For the full statement, go to www.usccb.org/laitly/help.shtml.

Violence against women in the United States, we state as clearly and strongly as we can that violence against women, inside or outside the home, is never justified. Violence in any form — physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal — is sinful; often, it is a crime as well. We have called for a moral revolution to replace a victim’s right to batter. We acknowledge that violence has many forms, many causes and many victims — men as well as women.

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The conference will be held in Oklahoma City at the Clarion Meridian Hotel and Convention Center. This year, the Archdiocesan Office of Family Life is part of the partnership committee hosting the conference. Others involved include the Office of the Attorney General, the Oklahoma Coalition Against Domestic Violence and several other agencies. The Office of Family Life sponsored “When I Call for Help,” the Church’s response to domestic violence. Since that gathering, 90 people representing 22 parishes have attended training sessions and have begun to implement the Safe Place Faith Community around the state. Kent Peters and Deacon Glenn Vecchiotto from the Safe Place Faith Community in San Diego, Calif., where the program originated, are to speak at that conference. They are scheduled to address the upcoming Oklahoma conference as is Julie Owen from the Faith Trust Institute. The “Safe Place Faith Community” is an ecumenical program and all faith communities are invited to attend the conference and other training in order to better respond to victims of domestic violence and bring about an awareness of the issue from within parishes and communities of all faiths.

Safe Place Faith Community works hand in hand with already established domestic violence programs and agencies located within the local community.

For more information about Safe Place Faith Community, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721 8944 or e-mail susanlepak@yahoo.com.

The conference will feature 43 workshops and c o n t i n u i n g education units are available. To register, go online to regonline.com/121248 by Sept. 26.

The fee for the conference is $35. Registration is available at the conference with check or credit card only.

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Catholic Pastoral Center. Archbishop Beltran celebrated Mass and a reception and dinner followed. Pictured with Archbishop Beltran, are, left to right, Father Adrian Voderlandeht, OSB, 40 years; Father Larry Gatlin, 40 years; Father John Metzinger, 25 years; Father Wilbur Moore, 50 years; Father George Parachal, 40 years; Father Charles Schettler, retirement; and Father Elmer Schwarz, retirement. Not pictured but celebrating anniversaries are Father Donald Moore, retirement, and Father Basil Keenan, OSB, 40 years.

Enrollment Reaches 100

When temperatures climb above 100, it’s not too enticing to move a truckload of living essentials up five flights of stairs into a room with no air conditioning. Nonetheless, the dedicated young men in pursuit of priestly formation here at Conception braved these stifling conditions in order to get settled in before the beginning of the semester. Actually, there were five additional days of “settling in.” A rigorous orientation schedule comprised of days of “settling in.” A rigorous orientation schedule comprised of days of “settling in.”

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Adoration Credited With Enrollment Increase at Seminary

About the time of year when the summer sun struggles to land a few final parting shots on our region of the globe before it slinks away into the flagging days of fall, schools around the country are busy gearing up for yet another academic year. As a school for future priests, Conception Seminary College is no exception to this buzz surrounding this time and setting; only this year, the buzz is a little louder due to an increase in enrollment and a few personnel and other changes.

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Many other dioceses, in fact, have observed this same correlation between an increase in Eucharistic adoration and vocations. The Archdiocese of Omaha, which has the largest representation at Conception with 12 men, also observes this phenomenon. Father Ralph O’Donnell, vocations director, stated, “I would say that prayer and Eucharistic Adoration are definitely central to developing a climate that is conducive to vocations in a diocese. It is important to remember that Christ continues to call men to ordained ministry as he has ever called them, through the grace of the Holy Spirit and the encouragement of the Church. I see the work of Vocation Ministry to help the individuals hear and discern that call, in the midst of a sometimes hectic and ever-changing world.”

Of course, as Father O’Donnell indicated above, there are also other resources vital to vocations work. In his comments to me, Father Barry also mentioned the hard work of vocations committees of the parishes and groups such as the Serrans as well as the bi-annual “Encounter with God’s Call Weekend” that Conception hosts for young men thinking about the priesthood. It seems the bottom line to vocations promotion comes down to understanding the Lord of the harvest’s notion of supply and demand — the more he is sought out in prayer and the Eucharist, the more laborers He supplies to work in his vineyard.

One diocese’s presence at Conception has increased by 350 percent since last year. The diocese of San Angelo, Texas — a diocese that serves around 83,000 Catholics across 37,433 square miles of western and central Texas — has gone from two seminarians at Conception to nine. When asked about the reasons behind such an increase, San Angelo vocations director Father Barry McLean’s first response had Eucharistic adoration as its subject. He said many felt the availability of the devotional practice had something to do with the increase. It affords a time of quiet where people can not only talk to God but also listen.

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City seminarians at Conception Seminary, left to right: Brian Buettner, Andrew Horn, Robert Miller, Billy James, John Paul Lewis, Danny Grover and Cristobal Deloera.
Pro-Life Effort Needs Every Man, Woman and Child

By Mary E. Jaminet

The post-Labor Day rush has begun. It is a time of transition and a time to look ahead and plan the rest of the year and into the next. What projects will we take on before the year is out, and what goals will we accomplish? Before your agenda is full, consider adding a pro-life event to your calendar.

As Pope John Paul II explained in The Gospel of Life, “Everyone has an obligation to be at the service of life.” Each one of us has a gift to use for this purpose. To what is God calling you?

On Oct. 7, the Church will celebrate Respect Life Sunday. Check with your diocesan pro-life office to get involved in local programs and events. Look through the annual Respect Life program materials at usccb.org/prolife/programs/clp to get new ideas and educate yourself on the issues.

Get involved as a pro-life citizen. Sign up for Action Alerts from the National Committee for a Human Life Amendment, www.nchla.org. NCHLA has great resources on federal legislation — fact sheets, backgrounders, vote tracking and everything you need to call or write your members of Congress on issues important to the Church.

Consider a pilgrimage to Washington, D.C., for the annual National Prayer Vigil for Life on Jan. 21-22, 2008, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. See usccb.org/prolife/-anniversary.shtml for more information. While you are in town, attend the annual March for Life on the Mall at noon on Tuesday, the 22nd of January, the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision, and make an appointment with your congressman and senators while on the hill.

Getting involved could be as simple as setting aside weekly prayer time for the intention of ending abortion and increasing respect for all human life. Here are a few other ideas:

■ Organize a monthly Holy Hour for Life in front of the Blessed Sacrament at your parish.
■ Run a diaper drive at your place of work for a local crisis pregnancy center.
■ Host a “Truth Booth” with footage of 3D and 4D ultrasounds at your local mall (see www.truth-booth.org).
■ Read Page 4 of each Respect Life Program article for more ideas of how you can take life-affirming action.

The hearts and minds of Americans are steadily becoming more pro-life, and it is important for each of us to get involved to keep that momentum going. From praying in front of abortion facilities to visiting the sick and elderly in nursing homes, we are all called to become a part of an ever-growing network of generous support for the gift of others, the gift of life. Providing loving service and life-affirming witness to people in our communities will bring about a culture of life where all are accepted and welcomed. Now is the time for each of us to answer the call of the Gospel of Life!

Mary Jaminet is special project coordinator at the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Birth Choice 15th Annual Celebration of Life on Oct. 7

In conjunction with Respect Life Sunday, the 15th annual “Celebration of Life” will be held once again at the Myriad Gardens on Sunday, Oct. 7. Located between Reno and Sheridan and Hudson and Robinson in downtown Oklahoma City, parking on Sunday is never a problem. This marks the 12th year the event has been held at the gardens. Come show your support for life and see just how beautiful the gardens are!

The annual event is one of the main fundraisers for Birth Choice.

The Celebration of Life helps provide funding for Birth Choice centers in Bethany, Edmond, Norman and south Oklahoma City, including the ultrasound program and prenatal assessment program in Edmond, along with Rose Home, a Birth Choice shelter for homeless pregnant women. All services are provided at no charge.

Be sure to mark Oct. 7, 2007, on your calendar today and join in the fun!

For more information, call Jan O’Neill at 606-8426.

Mercy Named Top Hospital

OKLAHOMA CITY — Mercy Health Center has been named one of the top hospitals in the nation by the National Research Corporation (NRC), the nation’s leading consumer health-care study. As a Consumer Choice Award winner, Mercy will be listed as one of the hospitals most preferred by patients in this week’s Modern Health Care magazine.

“We are honored to be named one of the top hospitals by the country’s largest and most comprehensive study of its kind,” said Diana Smalley, president and CEO of Mercy Health System of Oklahoma. “It means that Oklahomans recognize Mercy as having the highest quality and image.”

The 2007/2008 NRC Health Care Market Guide study surveyed nearly 200,000 households nationwide, asking consumers to answer more than 200 questions about health care in their community. The study looked at everything from overall quality to the level of care given by nurses and doctors.

“Consumers play an increasing role in selecting their health-care facilities and services,” said Michael D. Hays, CEO of NRC. “As more health-care quality information is made publicly available, we expect this trend to increase. These organizations are selected for the Consumer Choice Awards by the community residents they serve. We are pleased to honor these facilities for their dedication to quality health care in the eyes of their patients.”

Integris Health was the only other Oklahoma hospital named a 2007/2008 Consumer Choice Award winner. Both Mercy and Integris were the hospitals most preferred by patients in the Oklahoma City market.

Mercy Health Center, the first magnet hospital in Oklahoma, is a member of Mercy Health System of Oklahoma and the Sisters of Mercy Health System. Magnet-designated facilities report higher patient satisfaction rates, deliver better patient outcomes, provide more nursing care at the bedside of patients and consistently outperform non-magnet organizations.

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Please Remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Your Estate Plans
Host Food Conference

Government’s Faith-Based Office to Host Food Conference

OKLAHOMA CITY — Hunger is an everyday reality in Oklahoma. The “I was Hungry and You Fed Me…” conference will address the various ways faith-based and community organizations can address this issue and serve the Oklahoma populations that experience hunger on a daily basis.

“The conference is designed to provide food for thought for faith-based and community organizations that want to intentionally influence their communities by reducing the incidence of hunger,” said Robin Jones, director, Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI).

Hosted by the OFBCI, U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service and the Oklahoma Departments of Human Services, Education and Health, the all-day conference will be held Nov. 7 at the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma, 1304 N. Kenesha Avenue in Tulsa. The conference will also be held Nov. 8 at Castle Falls Special Events Center, 820 N. MacArthur in OKC.

Workshop topics will include components of both a silent and live auction. Auction items will be highlighted by a one-week golf package in Scottsdale, Ariz., an OU tailgate party, exclusive handcrafted items by members of The Mount family, and a trip to New Orleans that includes accommodations and Hornets tickets. In addition, there will also be a dessert auction, a wine pull and a gift card pull. Lastly, one lucky football fan can bid on a chance to design and call the first play to open the Rockets 2008 football season.

Cost for the evening is $80 per person and corporate sponsorships are available. Tickets and/or sponsorships may be purchased by contacting the Advancement Office at Mount St. Mary High School by phoning us at 631-8865 or by e-mailing us at taverty@mountstmary.org. Come join us as we celebrate the sacred traditions, the Catholic heritage, the engaging mission and the bold vision of this Oklahoma City Catholic high school.

Four Irish Students Named National Merit Semifinalists

Officials of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation announced that four seniors from Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School have been named semifinalists in the 53rd annual National Merit Scholarship Program. They are Brittney Bierschenk, daughter of Joe and Catherine Bierschenk of Oklahoma City; Candice Gillies, daughter of Robert and Elizabeth Gillies of Oklahoma City; Erin Smith, daughter of Patrick and Julie Smith of Oklahoma City; and Emily Woner, daughter of Kent and Julie Woner of Edmond.

More than 1.4 million juniors in over 21,000 U.S. high schools entered the 2008 Merit Program by taking the 2006 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which serves as an initial screen of program entrants. The nationwide pool of semifinalists, which represents less than 1 percent of U.S. high school seniors, is made up of the highest scoring entrants in each state. The number of semifinalists in a state is proportional to the state’s percentage of the national total of graduating seniors.

To become a finalist, semifinalists must have an outstanding high school academic record, be endorsed and recommended by their school principal and submit SAT scores that confirm earlier qualifying test performances. In addition, the student and school official must submit a detailed scholarship application, which includes the student’s self-descriptive essay and information about the semifinalist’s participation and leadership in school and community activities. About 90 percent of the semifinalists are expected to fulfill all requirements to become finalists. The names of the finalists will be released in the spring.

Four Irish Students Named National Merit Semifinalists

Events at Mount to Offer Crack at Winning a New Car

OKLAHOMA CITY — Mount St. Mary High School is preparing to host its annual fundraising dinner and auction on Nov. 17, in downtown Oklahoma City at the Petroleum Club. The Magic at The Mount theme this year is “Bright Lights, Big City, Bold Vision.” Proceeds from this year’s Magic at The Mount are earmarked for cafeteria and kitchen upgrades and improving science classroom technology and science laboratory resources.

Co-chairpersons Christina Short and Rosanne Mogg, along with dedicated volunteers and Principal Talita DeNegri, are working to make the event a success.

An added addition to this year’s Magic at The Mount is an opportunity for contestants to purchase raffle tickets prior to the event that will give them the chance to win a brand new car from Eskridge Honda or $10,000 cash. “We are thrilled to have a drawing for the car raffle to add to the excitement of the evening,” said Christina Short. “We have only 1,000 chances at $50 each.” Raffle tickets are going on sale now.

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OKLAHOMA CITY — Aug. 16 was back to class time for the students of Christ the King School. This year a new twist was added for the junior high students with the introduction of the House System. The students were divided into six houses that are a combination of sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders, with each house named for a saint. Chris Carter, principal, and Amy Feighny, assistant principal, led the ceremonial division of the students into houses on the first day of school when the students gathered in the gym and received their house assignment and T-shirts.

“[The main purpose of the House System is to build a community feeling for the students by working together as a group creating teamwork through prayer, service projects, activities and goals,” said Carter. “This is an exciting time at Christ the King School and I believe this new aspect for junior high will enrich the overall school experience for these children.”

Christ the King School is affiliated with Christ the King Church, a member of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The school was founded in 1949. Financial aid is available to those who qualify. For more information on the school, visit www.ckschool.com.

Christ the King Students Take Part in House Themed Retreat

YUKON — Students at Saint John Nepomuk Catholic School in grades sixth through eighth recently participated in an all-middle school retreat during the first weeks of school. This retreat was held at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Youth Camp. Father William Novak celebrated Mass at the retreat.

The retreat was coordinated and led by middle school teachers Abby Bailor, Marilee Talbot, Jay Luett kemeyer and Denise Heard. Assistance in facilitating the retreat and leading activities was provided by Principal Diane Floyd, as well as Father Novak. An additional team of parent volunteers worked as a “kitchen crew” to provide snacks to the students throughout the day.

A portion of the retreat focused on building a Community of Faith. Activities allowed students to focus on their faith and participate in challenges that required a willingness to work together as a group. The teachers timed the retreat with the start of the school year to help ease the transition students experience when entering middle school and to build community among the three grades who are often looked to as the leaders of the school. The principles of teamwork practiced in the retreat format will be used throughout the year in the classroom setting as well.

The students spent the remainder of the retreat participating in activities within their “house.” The House System is based on the ancient system found at Oxford and Cambridge University. Each student in the sixth through the eighth grade was assigned to one of three separate houses. Each house was named for a religious person. The houses are Drexel House, named for Saint Katharine Drexel, Aquinas House, named for Saint Thomas Aquinas, and Rother House, named for Father Stanley Rother. Each house has its own color, mascot, 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 in these activities and the house with the most points at the end of the year wins the House Cup and a special grand prize.

During the retreat, students recommitted themselves to a program that is designed to encourage students to work together and to share their gifts, not just to benefit themselves but for the success of their house. Students then participated in the annual sorting ceremony. At the sorting ceremony, new students learned what house they would be a member of and were given a house T-shirt which they will wear every other week at house meetings.

In the House

Saint John Nepomuk Students Learn Teamwork, Discuss Faith During Retreat to Open School Year

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Two Students With Two Very Different Paths

Visitors to the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris will soon be able to ponder a commemorative marker carrying this inscription:

“Was born Jewish. I received the name of my paternal grandfather, Aaron. Having become Christian by faith and by baptism, I have remained Jewish as did the Apostles. I have as my patron saints Aaron the High Priest, Saint John the Apostle, Holy Mary full of grace. Named 139th archbishop of Paris by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, I was enthroned in this cathedral on February 27, 1981, and here I exercised my entire ministry. Passers by, pray for me. +Aaron Jean-Marie Cardinal Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris.”

In the early 1950s, two young men whose names would become familiar throughout the world attended the same political science lectures at the Sorbonne. One was the son of Polish-Jewish parents; the other came from Cambodia. One had lost his mother in a Nazi concentration camp; the other had converted to Catholicism; the other had converted to Marxism. One would live to become the “choice of God” (the title of one of his best-selling books) and the “choice of God” for a genuine humanism, the choice for a life without fear of final oblivion — the fear that was one root of the lethally different choice his Cambodian classmate had made. One was named Aaron Jean-Marie Lustiger. The other was named Pol Pot. A novelist of sufficient imagination could turn that scene — Lustiger and Pol Pot, in the same Parisian classroom — into a gripping tale about divergent roads taken, and the consequences that followed. I’m not a novelist, but I am very grateful for the privilege of having had Jean-Marie Lustiger’s life intersect with my own.

We first met in Washington in 1986 or so, when he was visiting America with a group of young aides. After a formal session at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the cardinal and I fell into more informal conversation, and I asked him whether this was his first trip to the United States. Oh no, he answered, he had once hitchhiked across the country. I asked him when. “1968,” he replied. I suggested that he might have chosen a more tranquil year.

Cardinal Lustiger was very helpful to me as I was preparing Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II, and we stayed in touch over the years. Early in 2006, one of his assistants, Jean Duchesne, told me that the cardinal, quite ill with cancer, wanted to see me before he died, in order to share some memories of, and reflections on, the last years of John Paul II. We spent 90 minutes together in the cardinal’s modest Paris apartment last December and had a conversation that I shall always remember for its Christian lucidity and tranquility in thinking about death, in the very face of death. I asked for the cardinal’s blessing as I left; I shall always cherish the memory of his hands on my head and his thin arms drawing me into a final embrace. Here was a man of God; here was a man. The first explained the second.

Like John Paul II, Aaron Jean-Marie Lustiger believed that the biblical story — the story that begins with God’s self-gift to the People of Israel and that continues in the Church — is in fact the story of humanity, rightly understood. The biblical story and the human story don’t run on parallel tracks; the biblical story is the human story; read in its true depth. For Cardinal Lustiger, the “choice of God” (the title of one of his best-selling books) was also the choice for a genuine humanism, the choice for a life without fear of final oblivion — the fear that was one root of the lethally different choice his Cambodian classmate had made.

Cardinal Lustiger, who wrote with great insight about worship and prayer, knew that at the heart of culture is cult. Everyone worships; the question is whether the object of our worship is a worthy one. Having lived and died in the conviction that worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Jesus is true worship, Aaron Jean-Marie Lustiger became a blessing for the world.

George Weigel is a senior fellow of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. Weigel’s column is distributed by the Denver Catholic Register, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Denver. Phone: (303) 715-3215.

Event to Help Support Pilgrimage for University Students

By Melissa Davis
Saint Thomas More Church

NORMAN — This Christmas season, dozens of local Catholic students will receive the gift of a lifetime.

Thanks to funds raised by an annual gala, scheduled for next month in Norman, those students will embark on an unforgettable mission trip to Arteaga, Mexico. The St. Thomas More Student Center at the University of Oklahoma sends a crowd of young members on the big journey every year.

“We journey to Mexico to experience God in a different way than how we encounter him here in Norman, Okla.,” explains Erin Cleto, campus minister at St. Thomas More.

“Any day we can do and have the chance to serve the Lord in different ways. The Lord has done so much for us and our center. We are excited to give back; it’s about being a community, a family. That’s what the trip is all about.”

Approximately 40 students will fly on December 4th to Arteaga, a town located in the Mexican state of Coahuila. Students will live in a Catholic community home for the week and participate in various community outreach activities like serving at the hospital, working at local schools, and helping build homes.

Sister Patricia M., who has served in Arteaga for over 20 years, will welcome the students to the community and guide them throughout their week of service.

After the week of service is over, the students will take part in a Mass with local parishioners. At the end of the week, the students will experience Arteaga’s Rosary Procession, a religious experience unique to the area.

“Why not this experience? They go down there expecting to see a lot of poverty, and they’re going to experience a lot of love,” says Eric Anderson, associate professor of art and visual art and visual communications at OU and a long-time faculty representative at the university Catholic student center.

“They go down there expecting to share their vision with the poor, misfortunate people of Mexico and wind up being the ones who are most grateful for the experience.”

“They get a real sense of faith being the binding core of a community.”

In Arteaga, a mountainous region known as “the Switzerland of Mexico,” residents hold community church services every week but — because they rely on traveling priests — enjoy formal Mass only once a month. On those special occasions, Anderson says, the town virtually shuts down so that everyone can take part.

“These are incredible experiences. It’s a different culture, a different language, a different way of being. I think it’s incredibly meaningful and spiritual.”

Cleto tends to agree.

“This is truly a pilgrimage,” she says. “It is a journey to a sacred place both physically and also spiritually. “Along the way, we will see, hear and meet God in all.”

Pope Hopeful for Solution to Darfur

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy, (Zenit.org) — When receiving Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, Benedict XVI expressed hope that upcoming U.N.-backed peace talks will end the humanitarian crisis in the country’s western region of Darfur. Peace negotiations are set to begin Oct. 27 between the Sudanese government and rebel forces, to be held in neighboring Libya.

More than 200,000 people have died and 2.5 million have been uprooted since ethnic conflict began between African rebels in Darfur and the Arab-dominated Sudanese government in 2003.

The Holy See said in a communiqué: “Discussions focused on the country’s political and religious situation, with particular reference to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and to the situation in Darfur.”

“The Holy See and the Pope are convinced that any solution to the crisis in Darfur must be based on the rule of law, the respect for human rights and the disarmament of all parties to the conflict.”

It is the Holy See’s heartfelt hope, said the statement, “that these negotiations prove successful in order to put an end to the suffering and insecurity of those peoples, ensuring them the humanitarian assistance to which they have the right, and initiating development projects. Attention also turned to the regional aspects of the crisis.”
Saint Peter Claver Celebrated at Corpus Christi Church

OKLAHOMA CITY — On Sept. 9, Catholics at Corpus Christi Church celebrated the life of Saint Peter Claver, the Jesuit priest who for 40 years ministered to Africans who were captured and sold as slaves during the 1600s. Archbishop Beltran celebrated Mass and commissioned new members of the Knights of Saint Peter Claver Auxiliary during the Mass. He encouraged young people to read and study about Saint Peter Claver.

Deacon Dunn Cumby delivered the homily, focusing on Saint Peter Claver and how he allowed God to lead him to his ministry even though history portrays him as quite timid and passive.

Deacon Cumby described the sordid conditions the African slaves were subjected to as they made their way across the ocean from their native land to what was then known as Cartagena, modern day Colombia.

“Many of his African interpreters were unable to endure the stench and fainted at first contact with the appalling atmosphere,” Deacon Cumby said, describing the conditions inside the ships where the slaves were held captive. More than one-third of the 1,000 or so slaves aboard each ship would die during the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. Deacon Cumby said Saint Peter Claver would descend into the bowels of the ship and gently calm the Africans who had become crazed by their terrible ordeal. He would tell the few followers he could depend on to help him, “We must speak to them with our hands before we try to speak with our lips.”

Cumby said Saint Peter Claver developed a “partnership with God” that enabled him to carry out his ministry. “How is it possible for a person to dedicate 40 years of his life serving in the most deplorable conditions imaginable?”

He said Saint Peter Claver accepted the Africans held captive on board the ships “just as they were,” the same way Jesus Christ accepts us “just as we are.

“No matter what you have done, or what kind of life you have led to this point, God will forgive you and accept you ... He not only forgives you, but He forgets. It is by God’s grace and mercy that we are saved.”

Workshop to Feature Gospel Music

OKLAHOMA CITY — A soulful music experience awaits those who participate in the “My Being Proclaims the Greatness of the Lord” workshop Sept. 28-30 at Corpus Christi Catholic Church.

The workshop will lead participants through the development of the black religious music tradition, showing how the values of African and African-American spirituality are expressed in its musical heritage. The richness of black folklore will be traced from the field songs, to church hymnody, anthems and gospel tradition. The workshop will investigate the development of gospel music — traditional gospel, contemporary gospel and gospel rap as it continues to address the black experience today.

Facilitators will be Kenneth Louis, a noted composer and music arranger from Washington, D.C.; Valeria Foster, an award-winning vocalist and minister of music, Silver Spring, Md.; Rev. Fernand Cheri III, choir director of the Althoff Gospel Crusaders, Belleville, Ill.; and Bonita Franklin, assistant professor of music at Langston University and music director at Corpus Christi Catholic Church.

The workshop begins at 4 p.m. Friday, with an opening service followed by a workshop, choir rehearsal and dinner concluding at 9 p.m. Saturday. Workshop activities begin at 9 a.m. and include a day full of workshops. A free rehearsal concert will start at 8 p.m. and is open to the public. On Sunday, workshop participants will perform the music they have learned in a Eucharistic celebration at Corpus Christi at 10 a.m. Archbishop Eusebius Beltran will celebrate Mass, and Rev. Cheri will be the homilist.

The $50 registration fee includes three meals and a portfolio. Send checks payable to MBP Conference to Corpus Christi Catholic Church, 1005 N.E. 15th St., Oklahoma City 73117. People of all faiths and races are encouraged to participate. For more information, call Magnolia Cumby at (405) 521-9786.
Concerned Youth Call for “Community Conversation,” Fight Anti-Immigration Law

“People are scared to walk their kids to school because they don’t know where and when the authorities are going to question them.”

By Eliana Tedrow
For the Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Beatriz Meyer teaches English as a Second Language for El Centro de Oportunidades program at Mount St. Mary High School. She is witnessing firsthand the impact HB 1804 is having on her students and their families, well before the controversial immigration reform law takes effect in November. She said the law, considered by many to be the toughest state-sponsored immigration measure in the United States, is causing many Hispanics to live in fear and confusion.

On Sept. 6, a crowd of more than 100 people gathered in the auditorium of Mount St. Mary, called together by the League of United Latin Citizens Youth Council (LULAC). Immigration attorney Stan McKay opened the meeting by asking, “How many of you have been very concerned about 1804?” Nearly every hand went up in the air, half of which were Oklahoma youth.

LULAC’s Youth League is comprised of high school students who are concerned about current issues involving and affecting youth, and engaging and creating dialogue with other youth about those issues. At this particular gathering, HB 1804 was the issue.

McKay and Rey Madrid, the Oklahoma state director of LULAC, answered questions, while Gicell Friaz, a member of LULAC and a translator, interpreted the meeting in English and Spanish.

“The reason we did this tonight is because the youth decided they wanted to speak about immigration because they are concerned about the problems in schools,” Madrid said.

Among the schools represented were students from Capitol Hill, Mount St. Mary, Dove Science Academy, Santa Fe South, Southeast, Westmoore, OSU/OKC and others.

“You have a constitutional right to attend public schools if you live in the United States if you live in the district you live in. It doesn’t matter what your immigration status is,” said McKay. He was clear and to the point when it came to immigrants’ rights regarding education. “If you have a birth certificate from wherever and proof that you live here, that is enough.”

The Oklahoma Department of Education has ruled that schools are not supposed to give an undocumented person an I.D. card unless it says that this is valid identification for school use only. Students should make sure their card has some sort of language on it that designates the I.D. is for school use only. This also applies to college I.D. cards.

Some are concerned about being asked to write their Social Security number on enrollment forms, to which McKay explained, “No one has to put a Social Security number on their enrollment form.”

“They have a constitutional right to attend school because they are considered citizens of the United States, is causing many Hispanics to live in fear and confusion.”

“People are scared to walk their kids to school because they don’t know where and when the authorities are going to question them.”

By Eliana Tedrow
For the Sooner Catholic

Region X Hispanic Ministers Meet in OKC to Plan

OKLAHOMA CITY — Diocesan and archdiocesan directors of the Office for Hispanic Ministry from Region X, which includes Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma, met in August at the Catholic Pastoral Center. The objective of the meeting was to be in communication with one another and to support the participation of leaders in the region for the first Region X Hispanic Conference for Parish Leaders. All parish leaders are encouraged to attend this conference, to be held in Fort Worth, Texas, at the Cursillo Center, Oct. 13-14.

The conference will be focusing on three points: discovering God’s call to leadership, discovering the gifts as followers, and discovering the gifts as leaders.

Future plans are for Region X Leadership Conference to be held in San Antonio, Texas, in 2008, and in Oklahoma City in 2009.

For more information, contact the Office for Hispanic Ministry, (405) 721-5651 Ext. 152.

These young women helped organize the meeting at Mount Saint Mary High School. They are, left to right, Rocío Gomez, Roxana Herrera, Alma Vasquez, Anahi Angelas, Janet Jiménez and Marina Zaagosa.

Sister Rosario Martinez, CMST, director of the Office of Hispanic Ministry, is pictured with Region X Hispanic ministers, from left to right, Al Mirabal, Diocese of Dallas; Jesus Abrego, Diocese of Beaumont; Gil Leija, Diocese of Austin; Andres Aranda, Diocese of Fort Worth; and Father Hector Madrigal, Diocese of Amarillo. Photo/Sooner Catholic

for Líderes Parroquianos en la Región X. Se extiende la invitación a todos los líderes parroquianos a esta conferencia que se llevará cabo en el Centro de Cursillos de Cristiandad en Fort Worth, Texas del 13 al 14 de Octubre, 2007.

Tres puntos importantes se tomarán en cuenta: el descubrimiento del llamado para ser servidor de Dios como líder, como compartir a Jesús a través del liderazgo, y como profundizar las habilidades como líderes.

La meta para alcanzar en esta conferencia regional será compartir entre líderes como Dios ha llamado a servirlo y descubrir juntos las habilidades que Dios da para prestar un mejor servicio a la comunidad parroquial.

Para más información favor de comunicarse a la Oficina del Ministerio Hispano al teléfono (405) 721-5651 Ext. 152.

Los planes para el futuro son celebrar la Conferencia Hispana de la Región X en el año 2008 en la ciudad de San Antonio, Texas y en el año 2009 en Oklahoma City.
Migration, an opportunity for the ecumene

Recently, a book titled “Globus” was published in Italy. In this volume, the author, Franz Rosenzweig, makes a rapid but well-studied, original and significant reconstruction of the whole world history. The first part of the publication is titled “Ecumene,” seen from the point of view of relationships between earthly forces that push toward the unification of the world.

“If millennia were needed for us to acquire theoretical awareness of the spherical form of the earth,” the author affirms, “we cannot be surprised by how slow world history walks toward unity of the globe. Yet, God created only one sky and one earth. Ecumenism is the final goal of humankind’s journey,” a sign of which is migration, indeed an opportunity for the ecumene.

Today, in fact, migration is one of the most important and most complex challenges of our modern world. Consequently, social transformation, caused by welcoming immigrants, is discussed in public hearings, such that the question of “migration” appears as one of the top issues in the international agenda.

The migration phenomenon is therefore analyzed in relation to development. Migrants’ contribution to the labor market is studied, leading to the conclusion that they are important for world economy. A witness to this is the First Global Forum on Migration and Development, recently held in Brussels, last July 9-11.

In spite of this, however, many governments are adopting more restrictive measures to counter immigration, especially if irregular. Researchers on the migration phenomenon, on their part, are for the opening of frontiers, not simply to solve contingent problems, but to situate the process in a global scenario. Migration has indeed become a structural phenomenon. This does not mean, however, that a vision of a “total” and “indiscriminate” freedom to immigrate is being adopted. It is rather the task of governments to regulate the magnitude and the form of migration flows. They should, however, take common good into consideration, so that immigrants would be worthy welcomed, and the population of the receiving countries would not be put in a condition that would lead them to reject the newcomers. This would have unfavorable consequences both for immigrants and the local population, as well as for relations between peoples. Naturally, national common good must be considered in the context of universal common good. This brings us back to that vision of the “ecumene” that I mentioned at the beginning of my talk.

Our task, however, is that of identifying facts and aspects of migration that would help us understand the value of the phenomenon itself. This will enable us to interpret this “sign of the times” [1] from a Christian perspective, and to offer our pastoral service to the world of human mobility in its totality, in its universality. And for you, this is true for Europe.

There has always been solicitude

Community Conversation

continued from page 11

There are problems with privacy and many do not do it because of identify theft.

McKay told the audience they should never sign anything that says they are a U.S. citizen if they are not. “If you do you will never be legal in the United States. Manslaughter, drug offenses, violence, you might be able to get a pardon. Just by claiming or saying you’re a U.S. citizen, never!” he said. McKay said this new law will affect students filling out financial aid applications, for instance.

Regarding the cost of tuition at the college level:

- You have the right to attend Oklahoma schools and pay in-state tuition if you attended Oklahoma high schools, public or private, for at least two years and graduated from an Oklahoma high school.

- If you have less than two years in Oklahoma or a GED degree, then you’re going to have to pay out-of-state tuition.

- If you have an application pending with immigration for residence, then you are eligible for any in-state tuition plus state scholarships and loans.

- If you do not have documentation and you have no pending adjustment application, and you sign a promise to file an application within one year of the time Congress lets you, you can get in-state tuition but not state scholarships or loans. (Many schools have private foundations, endowments, funds, scholarships that are not state money, so be sure to ask the financial aid office of the school you will attend).

“We just see that our community is struggling … I don’t see much at my school but I know there are some students at other schools who are afraid to speak out and tell what they feel,” said Anahi Angelas, president of the LULAC Youth Council.

Roxana Herrera, one of the student organizers, said she and others feel they must speak out because families are suffering.

“What encourages us to do something like this is the fact that when we hear about cases like three kids: the sister, the brother and another sister, and then their parents get deported. It makes you mad because you can’t do anything about it … so we try to do everything we can,” she said.

Adults in the audience had numerous questions, primarily regarding the transportation/harboring of illegal immigrants. McKay stressed the guideline “Don’t ask, don’t tell.” Many are also concerned about the role law enforcement will play.

“Area businesses are feeling the impact because people are afraid to shop in their favorite stores down SW 29th because they fear that ICE (immigration) agents will be raiding the place or waiting nearby to apprehend them,” Meyer said.

Leaders are urging Hispanics to show up at the polls and vote, their weight is forgotten when it comes time to pass legislation, Friaz stated. Latinos must start voting in order to effectively flex their political muscles.

“They [ESL students] are on pins and needles waiting for November to see if things get better or worse and if worse, how much worse,” Meyer said. “We all hope and pray that a fair immigration reform will miraculously appear and help these good law-abiding people legalize their immigration status and someday become U.S. citizens.”

Angelas stressed, “We want to tell the students not to be afraid to come out. It may seem boring but it really isn’t. They need to know what is out there. They really need to be educated so they can know what they can do for themselves, for their families and for their friends. We definitely need to do something else to get the youth more involved.”

If you are a student and would like to become involved or get information from LULAC’s Youth Council, contact Anahi Angelas at (405) 625-0565.
Letters

A Curable Cancer

Our Oklahoma Legislature has a curing power that our medical community does not. Our Legislature can remove the cancer we know as the death penalty from our state. This barbaric form of punishment has done nothing more than to make killers of us all.

We, as civilized human beings, are losing our respect for the sanctity of life. Each time a person is killed at the state prison in McAlester, we the citizens who make all of this possible with our tax dollars, are becoming participants in the actual killing. Could the misuse of tax dollars to perform these homicides at McAlester place the taxpayers in jeopardy for a charge of felony murder?

Our Legislature can break this cycle of violence by removing this cancer we know as the death penalty from our state and Oklahoma will soon become a community which respects all life.

Pray that our Legislature will do away with the death penalty and make more use of a sentence of life without parole. This will not only make us a more civilized community but will remove the terrible and very real possibility of killing an innocent human being.

Jim and Ann Fowler
Saint Charles Parish

Support Appreciated

Dear Archbishop Beltran,

With this letter I offer my sincere thanks for the generous help provided by your faithful in support of the mission ad gentes for the year ending December 2006. Such gratitude is made in the name of the millions of people around the world who directly benefit from this missionary generosity.

The donations for 2006 include: $144,423 for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and $770 for the Society of St. Peter Apostle. For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2006, offerings to the Holy Childhood Association were $221.

Although there are many financial challenges and economic realities that confront the Church in the United States, we continue to reach out to support the worldwide mission to make Christ known among all nations and peoples.

Your personal leadership in designating a diocean endowment for the Pontifical Mission Societies who collaborates and participates in programs coordinated by our national office, especially World Mission Sunday, and your own example in animating the people of your archdiocese to accept the missionary vocation given them in baptism are greatly appreciated by myself and by all in our “one family in mission.”

Thanking you for your ongoing support of the mission ad gentes and asking God to bless you in all your many activities and responsibilities, I remain

Gratefully in our Lord,
Rev. Msgr. John E. Kozar, National Director

The Power of Participation

Earlier this summer, Pope Benedict gave permission to all priests who so desire to use the Latin Missal of 1962 “in Masses celebrated without the people.” He also indicated that such Masses may be “attended by the faithful, who of their own free will, ask to be admitted.” Since there is no such thing as a “Solemn High Mass” celebrated without the people, I am confused by the publication of your invitation to such a Mass in Kingfisher.

I don’t remember reading anything in the pope’s document that made provision for the public promotion of this rite, but I’m sure the archbishop has the authority to do so if he chooses. I am concerned that it is likely to cause confusion, or at least curiosity, among many Oklahoma Catholics who have little or no knowledge of such a rite. They could understandably ask, “why would anyone want to celebrate Mass in a language no one understands,” or, “is there something wrong with the Mass we have been celebrating all or most of our lives that we should want to go back to an older form of it?” And among those of us who remember that older form well, we could ask, “why would we want to celebrate a Mass with the priest looking away from us and in which he says all the prayers himself save for a few responses by an altar boy?”

From my reading of the motu proprio (on his own initiative, St. Michael, the Archangel, will be celebrated at 6 p.m. Sept. 27. Food and beverages reasonably priced will be served at 6 p.m. Bingo begins at 6:30 p.m. All games including two blackouts are $10. Door prizes and special recognition for all players born in September. All bingo players get an entry for a 27-inch flat screen television to be given away at the October bingo.

OU to Host Student Conference

NORMAN — The Oklahoma Catholic Student Conference will be at the University of Oklahoma Sept. 28-30. The theme of this year’s conference is iGod: Searching the Soul of Generation Y. The keynote speaker is Frank Santoni, and the topic of his talk is Integrating Faith and Life: Asking the Tough Questions. There are also three workshop presenters, Father Robert Busch, Erin Cleto and Denise Phillips. Their topics are Catholics and Evangelicals, Can We Disagree With the Church, and Exploring the Spirituality of Intimacy. Cost of the event is $30. We need RSVPs as soon as possible. You can register by contacting Erin Cleto at (405) 321-0990 Ext. 205.

Welcome Back Catholics

OKLAHOMA CITY — Saint Charles Church, 5024 N. Grove, will host a series of meetings titled “Welcome Back Catholics.” The gatherings will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. every Tuesday in October. The series is intended to help Catholics who have been away from the Church, feel more comfortable and answer any questions they may have.

Across Oklahoma

Parish to Host Bingo

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bingo at St. James Catholic Church, 41st and S. McKinley Ave., will be held Sept. 27. Food and beverages reasonably priced will be served at 6 p.m. Bingo begins at 6:30 p.m. All games including two blackouts are $10. Door prizes and special recognition for all players born in September. All bingo players get an entry for a 27-inch flat screen television to be given away at the October bingo.

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Pilgrimage Support Set

NORMAN — The St. Thomas More Student Center at the University of Oklahoma will host its annual “Some Enchanted Evening” gala on Oct. 12. The big fundraiser, which will finance a student mission trip to Mexico, is a costume party with a “Roaring Twenties” theme. The event will feature dinner, live music and both silent and live auctions. It will take place from 6 p.m. to midnight at the Molly Shi Boren Ballroom in the Oklahoma Memorial Union at the main OU campus. Tickets are $65 per person, $125 a couple or $500 for a table of eight. Those interested in attending should call Debbie Kohls at (405) 321-0990.

Marriage Encounter

OKLAHOMA CITY — Marriage Encounter invites you to spend a remarkable weekend learning a communication technique that will enhance and strengthen your relationship. The next event is Nov. 2-4. For information, call John and Tena Franklin at (405) 209-3512 or e-mail partspeople@cox.net

Mass Set for Law Enforcement

OKLAHOMA CITY — The annual Blue Mass for law enforcement personnel will be celebrated at 6 p.m. Sept. 24 at the Epiphany of the Lord Catholic Church, 7336 West Britton Road. The Mass, which celebrates the patron saint of law enforcement, St. Michael, the Archangel, will be celebrated by Father M. Price Oswalt, associate pastor of Epiphany parish and associate chaplain to the Oklahoma City Police Department.
Mother Teresa’s Darkness Sheds Light on Her Incredible Faith

A recent book on Mother Teresa, Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light, makes public a huge volume of her intimate correspondence and in it we see what looks like a very intense, 50-year struggle with faith and belief.

Again and again, she describes her religious experience as “dry,” “empty,” “lonely,” “torturous,” “dark,” “devout of all feeling.” During the last half-century of her life, it seems, she was unable to feel or imagine God’s existence.

Many people have been confused and upset by this. How can this be? How can this woman, a paradigm of faith, have experienced such doubts? And so some are making that judgment that her faith wasn’t real.

Their view is that she lived the life of a saint, but died the death of an atheist. For doctrinaire atheists, her confession of doubt is manna from the abyss. Christopher Hitchens writes: “She was no more exempt from the realization that religion is a human fabrication than any other person, and that her attempted cure was more and more professions of faith could only have deepened the pit that she dug for herself.”

What’s to be said about all of this? Was Mother Teresa an atheist? Hardly! In a deeper understanding of faith, her doubts and feelings of abandonment are not only explicable, they’re predictable:

What Mother Teresa underwent is called “a dark night of the soul.” This is what Jesus suffered on the cross when he cried out: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” When he uttered those words, he meant them. At that moment, he felt exactly what Mother Teresa felt so acutely for more than 50 years, namely, the sense that God is absent, that God is dead, that there isn’t any God. But this isn’t the absence of faith or the absence of God, it is rather a deeper presence of God, a presence which, precisely because it goes beyond feeling and imagination, can only be felt as an emptiness, nothingness, absence, non-existence.

But how can this make sense? How can faith feel like doubt? How can God’s deeper presence feel like God’s non-existence? And perhaps more importantly, why? Why would faith work like this?

The literature around the “dark night of the soul” makes this point: Sometimes when we are unable to induce any kind of feeling that God exists, when we are unable to imagine God’s existence, the reason is because God is now coming into our lives in such a way that we cannot manipulate the experience through ego, narcissism, self-advantage, self-glorification and self-mirroring. This purifies our experience of God because only when all of our own lights are off can we grasp divine light in its purity. Only when we are completely empty of ourselves inside an experience, when our heads and hearts are pumping dry, can God touch us in a way that makes it possible for us to inject ourselves into the experience, so that we are worshiping God, not ourselves.

And this is painful. It is experienced precisely as darkness, emptiness, doubt, abandonment. But this is, in fact, “the test” that we pray God to spare us from whenever we pray Matthew’s version of the Lord’s Prayer — “Do not put us to the test.”

Our deeper presence is usually given to those who have the maturity to handle it, spiritual athletes, those who pray and truly want a searing “purity of heart,” people like Mother Teresa. They ask Jesus to experience and feel everything as he did. He just answers their prayers!

Henri Nouwen, in a book titled, In Memorium, shares a similar thing about his mother: She was, he states, the most faith-filled and generous woman he had ever met. So when he stood at her bedside as she was dying, he had every right to expect that her death would be a serene witness to a life of deep faith. But what happened, on the surface at least, seemed the exact reverse. She struggled, was seized by doubts, cried out, and died inside a certain darkness. Only later, after prayer and reflection, did this make sense. His mother had prayed her whole life to die like Jesus — and so she did! A common soldier dies without fear, Jesus died afraid.

In a remarkable book, “The Crucified God,” Jurgens Moltmann writes: “Our faith begins at the point where atheists suppose that it must end. Our faith begins with the blankness and power which is the night of the cross, abandonment, temptation, and doubt about everything that exists! Our faith must be born where it is abandoned by all tangible reality; it must be born of nothingness, it must taste this nothingness and be given it to taste in a way no philosophy of nihilism can imagine.”

Mother Teresa understood all of this. That is why her seeming doubt did not lead her away from God and her vocation but instead strengthened her faith with it to a depth and purity that, more than anything else, tells us precisely what faith really is.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher and award-winning author, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. He can be contacted through his Web site www.ronrolheiser.com.

St. Gregory’s Announces Dance Academy Dates

SHAWNEE — Enrollment has begun for St. Gregory’s Dance Academy, a program initiated by SGU Dance. The academy is slated to run on Saturdays from September to May 3, unless those Saturdays coincide on Saturdays.

Enrollment is open to students age 4 and up. Various levels of ballet, tap, jazz and hip hop will be taught, depending on the age group.

Classes will be taught by current students and faculty of the SGU Dance Program.

Liz Reiter, SGU dance director, said the academy will benefit both teacher and student.

“It’s a win-win situation,” Reiter said. “The dance students here at SGU are very knowledgeable and will gain much-needed experience as instructors. I think the academy students will relate well with such youthful teachers and, in turn, develop a real appreciation for dance.

“More importantly, the parents can feel confident that their children are receiving proper technical training by professionally trained instructors.”

The instructors, who are current students at SGU, will be receiving their bachelor’s degree in dance in May, 2008. Reiter and academy director LaTasha Hinex are both professionally trained, degreed instructors.

Reiter said the academy will be centered on dance technique and may serve as a supplement to current dance classes or as the primary dance class. Tuition is $35 a month and is due on the first Saturday of each month. There is also a $20 non-refundable registration fee. Reiter said there are no recital, theater or competition fees.

For more information on the SGU Dance Academy or to register, contact Hinex at 878-5178.

Bishops Concerned Over Death Threats Against Peruvian Bishop

WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops voiced concern over death threats against a Peruvian bishop who is a native of Chicago in a Sept. 11 letter to Most Rev. Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte, O.F.M., Archbishop of Trujillo, president of the Episcopal Conference of Peru.

The letter was sent by Bishop William S. Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., president of the USCCB, to express concern for the safety and well-being of Bishop Daniel S. Turley, O.S.A. of Chulucanas.

“Our conference has noted recent reports of Bishop Turley being the object of death threats against him. It is deeply troubling that any bishop, especially one as well known and respected as he is, should be subjected to such threats,” Bishop Skylstad said.

Bishop Turley has spent most of his ministry in Peru. Last year his residence was the object of death threats against him. When he uttered “My God, why have you forsaken me?” the words he meant them. At that moment, he felt exactly what Mother Teresa felt so acutely for more than 50 years, namely, the sense that God is absent, that God is dead, that there isn’t any God. But this isn’t the absence of faith or the absence of God, it is rather a deeper presence of God, a presence which, precisely because it goes beyond feeling and imagination, can only be felt as an emptiness, nothingness, absence, non-existence.

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True Compassion Missing in the Midst of Tragedy

As the floodwaters were rising in the days after Hurricane Katrina, the situation went from bad to worse at Memorial Medical Center in New Orleans. When the electricity failed, flashlights became necessary to carry out simple tasks. There was no running water. Human sewage streamed through the hospital corridors. Many patients could not be evacuated, were crying out, and suffered greatly in the stifling heat. Much of the medical staff had already left. The few who remained began to think they might never be rescued.

The conditions were “less than third world,” according to Dr. Anna Maria Pou, who was accused of administering lethal doses of morphine and another sedative to nine patients in the hospital. Many who have learned of her actions have called her a hero, believing she was motivated by true compassion. Louisiana’s attorney general, however, after consulting with a panel of medical experts, concluded that she perpetrated a multiple homicide.

While the debate continues as to what Dr. Pou did or did not do, compassion and heroism should never be confused with intentionally overdosing patients or loved ones in order to end their lives. The act of directly taking innocent human life is always incompatible with true compassion.

Upon further examination of the facts of the case, experts suggest that Dr. Pou was not simply managing the pain of her patients by providing them with a medically indicated dose of morphine. Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, past president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, was one of the five experts brought in by the state of Louisiana to analyze the deaths. He described the situation this way: “The complete hospital records, autopsy protocols and postmortem toxicological analyses of the nine patients who died were thoroughly reviewed by several highly experienced forensic pathologists, a toxicologist and other medical experts. We unequivocally concluded that the cause of death in all these cases was acute combined drug toxicity and that the manner of death was homicidal.”

These same experts also concluded that the possibility of the deaths being due to a tragic medical mistake was statistically unlikely. “Accidental overdoses would have to occurred nine times between 12 noon and 3:30 p.m., all on one floor, to every patient who was left on the floor,” observed Dr. John Young, former president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. After looking into the matter, however, a Louisiana grand jury nevertheless chose not to indict Dr. Pou following a series of closed-door hearings.

In looking at this case, it seems that many have hesitated to call a spade a spade. When I participated in a radio interview earlier this year on this topic, a number of listeners were aghast at what Dr. Pou had allegedly done. Two people, however, called into the show to defend her, and I believe their comments were representative of how many people think about cases like this. “I commend Dr. Pou,” one of the callers said, “for her courage and compassion towards those terminal patients who more than likely wouldn’t ‘survive’ the horrid conditions they were in anyway due to an ‘act of God,’ not man. By looking at her patient’s condition and the circumstances around her, she did what needed to be done, keeping her patients comfortable and easing their suffering, I pray that if I were ever in their shoes, I would have a doctor as conscientious and compassionate as Dr. Pou.”

Making Sense

Out of Bioethics

Father Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D.

To understand the moral argument in this case, however, it is important to grasp the distinction between killing and allowing to die. It is also important to understand the real meaning of the word compassion.

“Compassion” has a Latin origin meaning “to suffer together with another.” To be compassionate, in the proper sense of the term, means to take another’s pain and suffering upon ourselves, onto our own shoulders, so that we suffer with them in some way. We seek to be present to them, and accompany them in their trials and tribulations as best as we are able.

True compassion as the floodwaters were rising would not mean pulling a massive dose out of the vial, looking the person in the face, in their weakness and fear, and thrusting a needle deep into their skin or into their IV tube to cause the light in their eyes to falter and go out. That is not mercy or compassion, and to call it such is a lie. Mercy and compassion would rather seek to care for each patient in the face of difficulties, trying to move them to a higher floor if the waters were rising, and if that were impossible for some reason, then to sit attentively at their bedside, holding their hand and making them as comfortable as possible. True compassion would mean praying with them, and allowing to die. It is also important that the cause of death in all these patients or loved ones in order to end their lives. The act of directly taking innocent human life is always incompatible with true compassion.

Workshop to Focus on Spiritual Healing

TULSA — Pre-registration is required for the Oct. 20 workshop on spiritual healing and recovery from sexual childhood abuse through an ecumenical partnership between the Diocese of Tulsa and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Tulsa.

Anyone interested in attending the workshop is asked to register as soon as possible by sending a $50 check to Dr. Mary Parker, 3223 E. 31st St., Suite 201, Tulsa 74105. A limited number of scholarships are available. Also working on the event is Msgr. Patrick Gaalas, vicar general and director of ecumenism.

Organizers are inviting people from all over the state to the event, which will be presented by officials of Mary’s Hope Workshops, a Colorado-based ecumenical organization that offers education, healing and recovery from spiritual wounds left in the wake of profound sexual abuse.

“Introudcory Workshop, Spiritual Healing and Recovery” will be from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 20 at Good Shepherd, 8730 E. Skelly Drive. The fee covers workbook, materials, coffee breaks and lunch.

The session is designed for victims who have begun their psychological healing and is of great value to mental health professionals, clergy, religious, victim service workers, pastoral care professionals, foster and adoptive parents and other caring individuals who walk the healing journey with abuse survivors. More information is available at www.maryshope.org

Society Should Aid Young Families, Says Pontiff

VATICAN CITY (Zenit.org) — Governments should promote economic and social policies that help married couples to raise their families, says Benedict XVI. The pope said this when receiving in audience the new ambassador of Slovakia to the Holy See, Jozef Dravec, who presented his letters of credence.

Benedict XVI highlighted education as “a key approved item of the Basic Agreement.” The pope said: “It is important that states continue to guarantee the Church the freedom to establish and administer Catholic schools, affording parents the opportunity to choose a means of education that fosters the Christian formation of their children.”

When natural disaster strikes, we do not abandon those in our care, or ignore them, but betrays them by taking their lives in the name of a false and violent compassion. Human beings are not like horses or other animals, needing to be shot when they break a leg or suffer a misfortune. The reason for this is that our pain and suffering have a redemptive purpose and a deeper meaning for all of us, as well as for those around us. Shoving true compassion toward those who suffer ends up transforming both us and them in deep and ennobling ways.

For doctors and health-care workers who have been entrusted with powerful tools over life and death, this truth is central to their identity. More than 2,000 years ago, the renowned physician Hippocrates pronounced this when he said: Primum non nocere (First, do no harm). The truly compassionate doctor will strive to use his tools and medicines to attend to the medical needs of his patients, humbly recognizing that those tools may not be able to stave off death in every case. He may have to step aside as the shadow of death draws near and the mortal existence of the person he has been tending to comes to its natural close.

Above all, the compassionate physician can never violate his inner being and identity by becoming one who directly kills others, especially those who, in their most needful and fragile moments, find themselves entrusted to his care.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D., earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org
Comunidad Latinoamericana en Oklahoma

Buenas Noticias...

Mi querido Hermano y Hermana de Cristo:

Hace un tiempo, cuando estaba en España, fue un día muy especial. Fue el día en que conocí a mi futuro padre, el Señor de los Cielos. Desde ese momento, mi vida cambió por completo. Mi corazón se abrió de par en par para recibir el amor de Dios y ser una fiel adoradora de su nombre.

Estoy bendecido cuando humilde, sinergia y alegremente nos dirigimos hacia el Señor

...Una Reflexión


Según una encuesta

Los hispanos en Estados Unidos están cambiando el rostro de la Iglesia

WASHINGTON, GEORGIA — La iglesia que más se asemeja a la que predican, aman, o toman en sus brazos al niño en sus brazos para que cuando nazca, a su vez, también pueda ser bendecido.

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**Feligreses de la parroquia San Eugenio lo celebraron**

**El Festival de las Américas en el gran centenario de Oklahoma**

Por Mauro Yanes
**Sooner Catholic**

OKLAHOMA CITY — Después de una ardua jornada de trabajo y de semanas de preparación en la parroquia San Eugenio se celebra el Festival de las Américas.

La actividad cultural se concentra en una celebración sacerdotal, danzas, música y mucha comida de diferentes países hispanoamericanos. Diversos conjuntos folclóricos participaron en la fiesta que inicia la celebración del mes de la Hispanidad en nuestra Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City. "El festival de las Américas es una fiesta popular que nos permite reflexionar sobre la relación entre la cultura hispana y la Iglesia Católica", precisó Arzobispo Valdez, quien ha sido organizador del festival por muchos años.

Los fondos necesarios para esta celebración serán utilizados para desarrollar y ampliar el ministerio hispano paroquial.

En este año se celebra el centenario de Oklahoma y esta actividad cultural hispana de nuestra Iglesia es un aporte y una oportunidad para la diversidad de Oklahoma.

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**Iniciado proceso de documentación e interrogación**

**El proceso de la Causa de Canonización del Padre Rother**

Por Mauro Yanes
**Sooner Catholic**

OKLAHOMA CITY — Muchos reconocen al Padre Stanley Rother como modelo de conducta para los cristianos, lo que ha despertado una admiración que se traduce en una devoción abierta por parte del pueblo católico de Oklahoma. Sin embargo, la Iglesia Católica tiene que dar su aprobación para el culto público. Para eso se debe dar inicio al proceso de canonización. La causa del Padre Rother debe ser presentada oficialmente al Arzobispado de Oklahoma, para que se inicie una exhaustiva investigación de la vida, obra misionera y muerte de este santo servitor.

El proceso de canonización se compone. Se debe tener mucho esfuerzo y se debe hacer un esfuerzo para lograr que el Padre Rother sea canonizado por el Papa.

El proceso de canonización involucra muchos pasos, entre los cuales se encuentran los siguientes: la promoción por parte de quienes consideran santo al Padre Rother, los tribunales de investigación, los estudios y análisis de los informes de los ejemplos que se involucran en la causa. En este proceso se debe tener presente el patronazgo de los que se conocen como el "abogado del diablo" y el abogado de la causa. Durante el proceso de la causa se realizarán un sin número de consultas dentro de la Iglesia. Por qué es que el estudio de las diferentes fases de la canonización del Padre Rother se realiza en el Papa, porque únicamente el Papa puede otorgar el poder de declarar al Padre Rother servitor de la Iglesia.

La causa puede tomar años. Hay dos años para llegar a la declaración de canonización, la vida de virtudes heroicas y la vida de mártir.

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La Iglesia Católica busca establecer si el Padre Rother puede ser declarado Santo por sus virtudes cristianas en grado héroes, o si ha sufrido martirio por causa de su fe. Se espera que el Arzobispado de Oklahoma y el Pontífice de la Causa pidan iniciar el proceso de canonización. Ellos presentarán ante la Santa Sede un informe sobre la vida y las virtudes del Padre Rother.

La Santa Sede, por medio de la Congregación para las Causas de los Santos, examina el informe y dicta el Decreto diócesis que nombra el Papa de canonización. El Decreto de "Nihil obstat" del Arzobispado dicta el Decreto de "Nihil obstat" del Arzobispado.

En los últimos años se ha formado la Comisión Histórica del Papa para la Causa de la canonización del Padre Stanley Rother, el cual ha recibido el ministerio de la Iglesia, entre las cosas de mayor relevancia:

1. Documentos creados por el Padre Rother (cartas, diarios, homilías, escritos, etc.).
2. Visitas o grabaciones a sitios históricos del Padre Rother.
3. Cartas donde se establecen las relaciones del padre Rother por parte de personas que lo conocieron.
5. Información o cartas relacionadas a los misioneros que trabajaron con el Padre Rother en su misión en la Misión MICATOKILA.

Si usted tiene alguna información, por favor, contacte a la Comisión Histórica al teléfono (405) 721-5651 extensión 127. Deje su nombre y número de teléfono en español para ser contactado por la Comisión Histórica.
Adjunct Faculty
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Qualifications: Master’s degree in Theology or Pastoral Ministry is preferred. Bachelor’s degree and experience in Youth/Young Adult Ministry will be considered. Mature understanding of the Catholic faith tradition and ability to communicate the tradition creatively and pastorally to young adults.

Practicing Catholic in good standing. Good communication and social skills are essential. Willingness to work as part of a collaborative ministry environment. Willingness to work some evenings and weekends. Instrumental music ability (especially guitar or keyboard) is desirable. Completion of Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Safe Environment training program and requirements.

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The vice president reports directly to the president and will be responsible for the planning and direction of all philanthropic initiatives for the university. The vice president will plan and lead all advancement initiatives to capitalize on the university’s success story, engage a broad range of constituents and grow the endowment. The vice president will work closely with staff, senior administrators and board members to identify short- and long-term priorities for fund-raising and manage a portfolio of major gift prospects. The university is currently in the silent phase of a major capital campaign.

The successful candidate will possess the ability to embrace and communicate St. Gregory’s unique attributes and mission while leading a broad advancement program and enhancing the existing relationships with constituents across the country. A master’s degree is required.

It is strongly preferred that this individual 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 is filled. Nominations, expressions of interest or requests for the complete position specifications may be sent directly to the university: Mr. Shingi Goto, Executive Vice President, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee 74804, sngoto@stgregorys.edu or by phone at (405) 878-5435.

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VATICAN CITY (Zenit.org) — The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome taught that “administration of nutrition and hydration to people in the so-called vegetative state is, with rare exceptions, morally obligatory.”

The document and accompanying note, released today and approved by Benedict XVI, came as an answer to questions presented to the Vatican by the U.S. bishops in 2005.

The questions were sent just months after Florida woman Terri Schiavo, who was living in a vegetative state after having sustained brain damage, died 13 days after having her feeding tube removed.

Schiavo’s estranged husband requested that her feeding tube be removed, but her Catholic parents said this would constitute murder. After years of legal battles, a judge decreed that the tube should be removed.

Edward Furton, ethicist and director of publications for the Philadelphia-based National Catholic Bioethics Center, told ZENIT that the Vatican statement “speaks directly to the Terri Schiavo case, stating flat out that the removal of food and water from her was not the right thing to do.” He added that the statements “are a reaffirmation of John Paul II’s 2004 statement which calls Catholics to provide food and water to patients in PVS [persistent vegetative state]. It affirms that food and water are ordinary care and not considered medical treatment.”

Furton explained that there has been “considerable debate about this issue among theologians in this country, with two different schools. Many thought that after John Paul II’s statement, the case was closed, but doubts persisted.”

He continued: “Some said John Paul II was breaking with Pius XII’s teaching, which is mentioned in the Vatican clarification. Pius XII had a lot to say about these issues and was well ahead of his time. ‘But the [Vatican] commentary makes pains to say that there is no contradiction between what John Paul II said and what Pius XII taught. Pius XII was speaking about patients who were near death or even already dead. John Paul II was talking about patients who are not dying.’

The U.S. Bishops Conference published a question-and-answer commentary on the Vatican statements that explains the exceptional cases when the administration of nutrition and hydration can be halted.

The U.S. bishops gave as an example patients dying of stomach cancer. They said a patient could refuse nutrition “because it causes pain and gives little benefit.”

Dominican Father Augustine Di Noia, undersecretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, told Vatican Radio today that the clarification affirms the value and dignity of life.

‘What we’re seeing here is that the quality of life is not a judgment that is in our hands to make,’ he said. ‘Life is a gift from God, and the Church has consistently taught that it is a gift that is not subject to the determination and decision of anyone, including the person himself or herself who is ill.’

Father Di Noia affirmed that the human person has a ‘dignity which perdures through all of the various physical states which each person experiences in life from the existence in the womb to the final moments before death. At no point can life be terminated for any reason.’

A statement from the Terri Schiavo foundation said: ‘It is our fervent hope that the clergy, religious and those who administer Catholic health care, as well as the laity who persistently ignored the basic right to life of our daughter and sister, Terri, and who persist to this day to dissent from this basic moral teaching of the Church by claiming that Pope John Paul II’s March 20 allocution is ‘up for discussion,’ will begin to open their eyes and hearts to the immutable and incontrovertible truth reaffirmed by the Holy See today.’

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Regarding Immigrants— continued from page 12
on the part of the Church for migra-
tion — we have to take note of this.
Involvement in various forms con-
firms its ability to interpret this
rapidly changing reality. Active eccle-
sial commitment, especially at a
pastoral level, naturally includes
socio-humanitarian action so that
the foreigner would be accepted and in-
tegrated in society, through an itiner-
ary leading to authentic communion,
where there is due respect for
diversity. It is, however, necessary
to remember that rights and duties
come together, also for migrants.

Regarding respect for the funda-
mental rights of the human person,

hence also of those who are involved
in human mobility, the Church is con-
tinuously dedicated to this at
various levels and in different areas.
Specific initiatives, messages of the
Holy Father, action to build aware-
ness among international entities and
governments of migrants’ countries of
origin, transit and destination, define
the Church’s “strategy.” This is based
on the central position and “sacred-
ness” of the human person, to be
upheld particularly when he/she is
unprotected or marginalized. This
“brings to light certain important the-
ological and pastoral findings that
have been acquired. These are: [...] the
defense of the rights of migrants,
both men and women, and their
children; [the question of the migrant
family]; the ecclesial and missionary
dimension of migration; the reap-
pearance of the apostolate of the laity;
the value of cultures in the work of
evangelization; the protection and
appreciation of minority groups in the
Church; the importance of dialogue
both inside and outside the Church;
and the specific contribution of emi-
gration to world peace.” (EMCC No.
27). In all this, we can clearly see a
basis for an ecumenical commitment.

Indeed, the recent position of the
Holy See regarding migration shows
that attention is given to the continu-
ous transformation of the phenome-
non of human mobility and to the
current exigencies of people in con-
temporary society. This is because
it wants “to respond to the new
spiritual and pastoral needs of
migrants,” bearing in mind “the ecu-
menical aspect of the phenomenon,
owing to the presence among
migrants of Christians not in full
communion with the Catholic Church,
and also the interreligious aspect,
owing to the increasing number
of migrants of other religions, in
particular Muslims.” (EMCC No. 3).
We cannot ignore the fact that “recent
times have witnessed a growing in-
crease in the presence of immigrants
of other religions in traditionally
Christian countries.” (EMCC No. 59).
The great diversity of immigrants’
cultural and religious origin poses
new challenges and leads toward new
goals, putting dialogue at the heart of
pastoral care in the world of migra-
tion. After all, it certainly is part of
the mission of the Church.

The instruction “Erga Migrantes
caritas Christi” carefully proposes
programmes that are appropriate for
the various phases of the life of the
migrant. It distinguishes “between
assistance in a general sense (a first,
short-term welcome), true welcome in
the full sense (longer-term projects)
and integration (an aim to be pursued
constantly over a long period and in
the true sense of the word).” (No. 42).
In this case, it is important to give a
sensible direction to an issue of great
significance. I am referring to the
difficult concept of integration, and its
even more difficult application, keep-
ing in mind also its ecumenical and
interreligious aspects, particularly
in societies hosting migrants. This
concept is being seriously analyzed.
We refuse to see it as a process of
assimilation, but stress the aspect of
cultural meeting and legitimate
exchange. We are practically insisting
on a concept of intercultural societies,
meaning those that are capable of
interacting and producing mutual
enrichment, going beyond multi-
culturalism, that can be contented
with a mere juxtaposition of cultures.

This gradual itinerary — as I was
saying — provides, first of all, for
“assistance or ‘first welcome’” (EMCC
No. 43), but this is not enough to
express the authentic vocation to
Christian agape, also because it might
be confused with philanthropy.
As a result, our itinerary offers a
wider horizon, providing for “acts of
welcome in its full sense, which aim at
the progressive integration and self-
sufficiency of the immigrant.” (ibid.).
Here, too, we cannot fail to consider
the ecumenical and interreligious
dimensions.

In his Message for the World Day
of Migrants and Refugees this year,
Benedict XVI stated that the Church,
through its various institutions and
associations, “has opened centers
where migrants are listened to,
houses where they are welcomed,
offices for services offered to persons
and families, with other initiatives set
up to respond to the growing needs in
this field.”

Also through these services in the
context of human mobility, the
Church offers its assistance to every-
one, without distinction of religion or
nationality, respecting everyone’s in-
alienable dignity as a human person,
created in the image of God and
redeemed by the blood of Christ.
On July 28, 1981, Father Stanley Rother, a priest of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, was murdered in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala, in his rectory. He was murdered by supporters if not members of the military of Guatemala who were ruling the country at that time. Father Rother was considered a subversive by the corrupt government because he tried to help the people of his parish. He was not a person interested in politics; he was interested in his people for whom he had come to serve. He was considered by many to have been a kind and gentle soul.

The Catholic Church in Oklahoma (Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and the Diocese of Tulsa) under Bishop Victor J. Reed decided to sponsor and staff a mission in Guatemala. Santiago Atitlan was the mission chosen. In 1964, Father Ramon Carlin was the first pastor of the mission, known as “Micatokla,” which means Mission Catholica Oklahoma or the Catholic Mission of Oklahoma. In 1968, Father Stanley Rother became the second pastor of the mission. He was the pastor until his death in 1981.

Father John Vesey, a priest from Brooklyn, N.Y., succeeded Father Rother three years after his martyrdom. Father Vesey invited his friend, Father Henri Nouwen, the renowned Dutch author, to come to Santiago Atitlan to pray with him. Nouwen agreed to come if he could bring his photographer friend, Peter K. Weiskel. Vesey agreed to this. Nouwen and Weiskel arrived in Guatemala in the late summer of 1984. They saw many beautiful sights and many ugly things too. They heard and witnessed beautiful events and heard about the evil things that had happened and were still happening.

Vesey asked Nouwen to write a book on Father Rother and the events surrounding his martyrdom and the aftermath. Nouwen agreed to do this and also included some material on Vesey too which he had not asked Nouwen to do. He wanted the book to be on Rother and the people of Santiago Atitlan. This portion on Vesey, though, showed what was still going on in Guatemala. Nouwen collected information in Guatemala, from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Father Rother’s family and friends and other sources. He quotes from these various sources throughout the book. There are several black and white photographs by Peter Weiskel and from other sources that are of Father Rother. The first edition was published in 1985. The second edition was published in 2006 to mark the 25th anniversary of Father Rother’s martyrdom. Father Vesey and Peter Weiskel added some new material and subtracted some old material. Henri Nouwen had died in 1996. They unfortunately did not mention that Father Thomas McSherry succeeded Father Vesey in 1984 and was the last priest from Oklahoma to serve at the mission. He left in 2001. On the front cover of the second edition is a large crucifix leaning against a white wash wall. The crucifix is one that you would most likely find in Guatemala. There is a brightly colored striped shawl around Jesus’ waist.

Love In A Fearful Land is a very readable book. The reader will find themselves reflecting on the events that Nouwen is presenting. Nouwen did a great tribute to this holy martyr. He also mentions other Central American martyrs like Archbishop Oscar Romero and the four American women murdered in El Salvador. The book is highly recommended to those interested in Father Stanley Rother, the Church in Guatemala, and as an example of the atrocities committed in Central America during the 1980s.