In April 2008, the United States was blessed by the pastoral visit of Pope Benedict XVI. Americans discovered in our Holy Father a man of immense intellectual gifts, great wisdom and an unparalleled knowledge of today’s geopolitical, social and cultural realities. They also discovered a kindly, gentle priest imbued with humility, with holiness and love.

In his meeting with the Catholic bishops of the United States, Pope Benedict affirmed that our country “is marked by a genuinely religious spirit,” but this spirit is all too often confined to our places and times of worship: “The subtle influence of secularism can ... color the way people allow their faith to influence their behavior. Is it consistent to profess our beliefs in church on Sunday, and then during the week to promote business practices or medical procedures contrary to those beliefs? Is it consistent for practicing Catholics to ignore or exploit the poor and the marginalized, to promote sexual behavior contrary to Catholic moral teaching, or to adopt positions that contradict the right to life of every human being from conception to natural death?

The answers to these questions are obvious. But have we really considered the consequences of this gap between our profession of faith and our living it out? Pope Benedict explains: Faith continued on page 2

By treating religious faith as an isolated set of beliefs that is irrelevant to our personal and political decisions, Americans have allowed a culture of death to take root and spread.
Respect Life

continued from page 1

becomes a passive acceptance that certain things “out there” are true, but without practical relevance for everyday life. The result is a growing separation of faith from life: living “as if God did not exist.” This is aggravated by an individualistic and eclectic approach to faith and religion: far from a Catholic approach to “thinking with the Church,” each person believes he or she has a right to pick and choose, maintaining external social bonds but without an in-tegral, interior conversion to the law of Christ. Consequently, rather than being transformed and renewed in mind, Christians are easily tempted to conform themselves to the spirit of this age. (cf. Rom 12:3).

By treating religious faith as an isolated set of beliefs that is irrelevant to our personal and political decisions, Americans have allowed a culture of death to take root and spread. While it is easy to cite politicians who publicly sever their “personal” religious beliefs from their voting behavior, each of us falls short of living out our beliefs perfectly and consistently. What is meant by the expression “culture of death?” It is a pervasive attitude that accepts the intentional killing of an innocent human being as a solution to a social or economic problem. The broad acceptance of abortion, “mercy” killing, assisted suicide, population control measures, abortifacients marketed as “contraceptives,” and the destruction of human embryos for research signal how far we still need to go to build a society where all understand that every human life is sacred because each of us is created, loved and redeemed by God.

The Good News

... The Single, Most Important Issue

Not too many weeks ago, we welcomed to Oklahoma City the long lines of buses bringing thousands of people from New Orleans in advance of a threatening, dangerous hurricane. It was a blessing that we were able to house those unfortunate people in the large former Lucent building.

Immediately, Catholic Charities, the Red Cross, the Baptist Conference and many, many others rushed to assist our displaced brothers and sisters. They had left their homes, cars and most of what they possessed. But they had life! In fact, that was the only thing that really mattered. They were told to evacuate, otherwise they might suffer worse or even die. They quickly responded with one concern — to remain alive.

In a similar more recent catastrophe, thousands of people fled Galveston Island in the path of Hurricane Ike. Again, it was a matter of survival, a matter of life. The civil authorities knew that and so did the evacuees. Their lives were much more important than houses, cars, property or possessions.

In both instances and in other tragic events, most people seem to recognize and to seek one goal — the reality of staying alive. Without life, everything else is useless. Money, food, housing, property, cars, etc., cannot help the dead but only the living. Life itself is first and most fundamental and trumps everything else.

Likewise, in 1776, when our nation was in the throes of seeking independence, it was clearly recognized and proclaimed that life is an inalienable right. Life is a gift from God. Human life is created by God in His own Image and Likeness. God makes us to know, love and serve Him so that we can rejoice with Him forever. In other words, God creates us so that we can receive His love and love Him in return.

Human life, which begins at conception, is the first and most fundamental of all rights. It is given us by God to be cherished and respected always. Human life, since it reflects God, is most important and very beautiful. Every human life, therefore, must be respected and protected.

As a national election is now only weeks away, all citizens should be reminded of the natural, God-given right to life. All citizens, regardless of religious affiliation, should reflect on the nature and destiny of the human person. All should be challenged to recognize the absolute need we all have to protect, to nurture and to assist human life. We do this every time there is a catastrophe. When storms or floods or fires threaten human lives, rightly do we expend great efforts and amounts of money to evacuate, to resettle, to help and save human lives. The only tragedy that does not get priority or fair treatment is the tragedy of abortion.

Abortion kills a living child in the womb. It is a violent action against both the mother and the child. It is a serious failure of a father to protect his own child. Those performing the abortion act unjustly and with violence. How then can any politician support the evil of abortion? How can any citizen vote for a politician who is pro-abortion?

In the coming weeks, I urge all people of our Archdiocese to pray that we and our fellow citizens will uphold the first and most fundamental human right, the right to life itself. There is no other issue more important. All other issues are moot if the right to life is not respected and protected.

Human life, which begins at conception, is the first and most fundamental of all rights. It is given us by God to be cherished and respected always.
Adult Stem Cells Offer True Hope for Patients/Society

By Maureen Condie, Ph.D.

Most Americans know someone afflicted with an incurable medical condition. The possibility of stem cell “cures” has given hope to many who face such suffering and loss. Unfortunately, there is a tremendous amount of misinformation about stem-cell therapies. To make sound decisions about this rapidly advancing field of research, it is important to understand what stem cells are and what promise they actually offer patients and families.

A stem cell is simply any cell that, when it divides, can make another cell like itself or make different kinds of cells with specialized functions. Because stem cells replace themselves at every cell division, they may be medically useful for replacing tissue damaged by injury or disease. Following a heart attack, for example, many cells of the heart die, leaving the heart weakened and less able to pump blood. Heart muscle cells produced from adult stem cells can be used to repair the heart and restore normal function.

The earliest stem cells are found in the human embryo during the first few days of life. They give rise to all the tissues of the mature body. To obtain embryonic stem cells (ESCs) for research and for possible future therapies, however, the embryo must be destroyed. This raises the critical ethical question: Should the life of one human being be sacrificed to advance scientific research or to benefit the health of an older human being?

In contrast to ESCs, many sources of stem cells do not raise ethical problems. Stem cells can be obtained from a patient’s own bone marrow or other tissues, and from a variety of birth-associated tissues, including placenta, amniotic fluid, umbilical cord and cord blood. All of these non-embryonic sources of stem cells are referred to as “adult” stem cells, to distinguish them from stem cells obtained by destroying human embryos.

Thirdly, recent work has shown that stem cells can be produced easily and without controversy by introducing a small number of factors into ordinary adult skin cells to “re-program” the mature cells into stem cells that, like ESCs, are able to generate all the cells of the body. Unlike embryonic stem cells, however, these “induced pluripotent stem cells” (or “iPSCs”) are genetically identical to patients and are generated without destroying human embryos or using human or animal eggs.

Apart from the grave ethical problem of destroying human embryos for research, there are three significant scientific problems with ESCs that must be overcome before they could be considered safe for use in human patients. First, when transplanted into mature tissues, ESCs form tumors that can be fatal if they form in vital organs. They are generally “benign,” i.e., not cancerous, but recent work has shown that ESCs are also genetically unstable, and tend to accumulate mutations that convert them to cancer cells. Thus, the “advantages” of ESCs (their flexibility and rapid proliferation) also cause these cells to form tumors and convert to cancer.

A second serious hurdle is the problem of immune rejection. ESCs will be rejected by the patient’s immune system unless a very close match is made. Yet, unlike conventional organ transplant, stem cells disperse throughout the body and cannot be removed if the patient’s body rejects them.

Also, millions of embryonic stem cell lines would be required to find a good immune match for most patients. Thus, stem cell therapies would almost certainly require the intentional production and destruction of millions of embryos.

Finally, despite more than 25 years of research, no one has been able to coax embryonic cells to become mature, stable cell types that are useful in the clinic. While it is relatively easy to make cells in the laboratory that have some of the properties of mature cell types, laboratory-produced cells generally do not survive when transplanted into mature animals. If not fully mature when transplanted, they often produce fatal tumors.

These three problems can all, in theory, be solved. Yet solving these problems is likely to take decades of research and billions of dollars before benefits could be realized for patients.

Adult stem cells can be derived from many of a patient’s own tissues, including bone marrow, muscle tissue, nasal mucosa and even fat. Stem cells from more mature tissues present significant advantages for use in medical therapies. First, these stem cells do not form tumors and are not genetically unstable. Because adult stem cells and their derivatives can be safely transplanted to patients, more than 1,500 clinical studies are currently under way, testing the medical usefulness of adult stem cells for diverse medical conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, Lou Gehrig’s disease, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, sickle cell disorder and many types of cancer. In contrast, in the quarter century since their discovery, not a single clinical study has been approved for ESCs, due to the serious safety concerns.

Also in contrast to ESCs, stem cells from more mature tissues can be more easily immune-matched to patients because cells taken from a patient’s own tissues are a perfect match and those from birth-associated tissues are widely compatible. When it is not possible to obtain stem cells from the patient directly, donor registries, similar to the bone marrow registry, could provide a wide range of immune matches. Finally, with over 4 million births in the United States every year, stem cells from birth-associated tissues could provide immune matches for the great majority of American patients.

Lastly, while stem cells from mature tissue may be more limited in the kinds of mature cells they can produce, the flip-side of this “limitation” is that the cells produced are more likely to be fully mature and therefore clinically safe and clinically useful.

In the fall of 2007, three independent research groups stunned the world by showing that adult skin cells could be converted directly into stem cells having all the important properties of human ESCs. By providing patient-matched stem cells, the iPSC technique solves the problem of immune rejection. Reprogrammed iPSCs are therefore superior to ESCs on both ethical and scientific grounds. While the problems of tumor formation and correct differentiation remain for iPSCs, just as they do for ESCs, reprogrammed iPSCs have already proven medically useful in an animal model of human sickle cell anemia. Currently, iPSCs are produced using viruses that could pose additional risks for patients. These safety concerns can almost certainly be addressed, however. Scientists already have found ways to eliminate the most risky virus used in iPSC production and have shown that small modifications of the procedure greatly improve iPSC safety.

On purely practical grounds, embryonic stem cell research is not the most effective use of research money, and does not offer the greatest hope to patients. On a more fundamental level, we must not be so blinded by our concern for patients and their families that we ignore the moral cost of scientific research. Medical stem cell research must operate within the constraints of ethical principles, with the first principle being “do no harm.” Research on human ESCs involves the intentional destruction of human life at its earliest and most vulnerable stage. Regardless of any potential benefit this research may offer, as citizens and as Christians, we must ask ourselves: Can medical cures justify the price of destroying human life?
We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men . . .
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless . . .
Remember us - if at all - not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.

T.S. Eliot, “The Hollow Men” (1925)
By Vincent M. Rue, Ph.D.

Abortion has become a personal and social eraser of choice for our unwanted, ill-timed and “defective” offspring. With mainstream mental health professional associations encouraging this procedure by advising that it is psychologically safe, women and men have embraced abortion as a stress reliever. Yet the evidence is mounting that abortion carries serious and significant mental health risks for many women.

What about the impact of abortion on men? With some 45 million abortions in the U.S. since 1973, this is not a rhetorical question. The sheer numbers represent a potential mental health shockwave of personal and relational injury.

More than anything else, the U.S. Supreme Court has shaped the role of men in abortion. The Court has held that a woman’s right not to procreate trumps a man’s right to procreate, making his involvement in the abortion decision irrelevant. In Planned Parenthood of Missouri v. Danforth (1976), the Court dismissed the validity of a husband’s involvement in his wife’s decision. No state allows a husband to be informed of his wife’s impending abortion.

Growing interest in how abortion impacts individuals, their relationships and families is evident today. The first-ever conference on men and abortion took place in 2007, 34 years after the Supreme Court legalized abortion. Since then, media reports highlighting various aspects of this subject have appeared in The Los Angeles Times, The Nation and other publications.

Men’s responses to abortion are varied, like men themselves. How abortion impacts men is complicated by the decision-making that precedes the abortion.

For men who pressure or encourage the women they care about to have an abortion, troublesome feelings can emerge later on. In Evangelium Vitae, Pope John Paul II made it clear that by leaving her alone to face the problems of pregnancy, he indirectly encourages such a decision on her part to abort. (No. 59).

In a national Web-based study of 135 men who have experienced an abortion, 48 percent of men stated that they opposed their partner’s abortion and 69 percent reported moderate to very high stress following the abortion. (Rue, Coyle and Coleman, 2007).

While there is much we don’t know about men and abortion, there are some 28 studies on men’s reactions to abortion that are informative. In one study, most men felt overwhelmed, with many experiencing disturbing thoughts of the abortion (Shostak & McLouth, 1984). Research evidence suggests that men are also less comfortable expressing vulnerable feelings of grief and loss, instead either saying nothing or becoming hostile. And of course, because no abortion occurs in a relational vacuum, the consequences of these two factors have considerable implications for men’s relationships with women.

In a review of how abortion impacts relationships, Coleman, Rue & Spence (2007a) reported: (1) Men tend to exert greater control over the expression of painful emotions, intellectualize grief, and cope alone; (2) Men are also inclined to identify their primary role as a supporter for their partners, even after an abortion, and even if they opposed the decision; (3) Men were more likely to experience feelings of despair long after the abortion than women; and (4) Men are more at risk for experiencing chronic grief.

The best evidence indicates that a minimum of 10 to 30 percent of women who undergo an abortion report pronounced and/or prolonged psychological difficulties attributable to the abortion. These adverse psychological outcomes include guilt, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance, relationship problems, substance abuse, symptoms of post-traumatic stress, and increased risk of suicide. Male responses to a partner’s abortion include grief, guilt, depression, anxiety, feelings of repressed emotions, helplessness/voicelessness/powerlessness, post-traumatic stress, anger and relationship problems. (Coyle, 2007).

Psychological injury in men following abortion is likely underestimated due to men’s propensity to avoid self-disclosure. Preliminary findings in a new study found four out of 10 men experienced chronic post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, occurring on average 15 years after the abortion. Certain factors predict whether men are more likely to experience abortion as traumatic: where the pregnancy was desired by them or their partner, where someone else pressured their partner into abortion, where the abortion occurred against his wishes or he didn’t know about it until afterwards. (Rue, Coyle & Coleman, 2007).

Research evidence suggests that men are more likely to feel despair after a pregnancy loss, including a pervasive sense of hopelessness, one of the signs of chronic grief (Stinson et al., 1992). It is apparent that men’s lives contain greater attachments and are more profoundly affected by fatherhood than has usually been assumed.

Contemporary reliance on abortion as a “contraceptive backup” may in fact be promoting male detachment, desertion and irresponsibility. According to Morabito (1991), abortion can actually encourage sexual exploitation of women. In this scenario, the male may view his partner’s pregnancy as a “biological quirk corrected by abortion.”

When a relationship experiences an abortion, it is likely that the following occur:

(1) A reduction in self-disclosures by both partners, which decreases the intimacy necessary for relationship survival;

(2) Increased use of defensive communication behaviors (e.g., interpersonal hostility);

(3) The development of partner communication apprehensiveness (fear translated into avoidance behaviors), the erosion of trust, and the evolution into a closed system of interaction as opposed to an open and dynamic one;

(4) A loss of spiritual connectedness to God and to one’s partner with the advent of guilt, shame and isolation.

There is a considerable price for both men and women when men feel they cannot talk about their experience of a partner’s abortion.

One of the sad realities of abortion is how caring men, who try not to hurt the women they love, in fact hurt them by saying nothing when abortion is first mentioned in the crisis decision-making process. Wanting to please, these men are rejected because they were judged deficient in true love for their partners.

Abortion leaves indelible footprints in the texture of masculinity, in the recesses of a man’s heart, and in his reproductive history. A father is a father forever, even of a dead unborn child. In the aftermath of abortion, the real choice for men is whether to accept this biological reality, grieve the loss and seek forgiveness, or to continue denying what is inwardly known and swell the ranks of the hollowed men. Irrespective of the law, both man and woman co-created the pregnancy, and both will live with the aftermath, regardless of how some may try to celebrate “choice.”
Safe Environment to Sponsor Workshop on Trauma

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Archdiocesan Office of Safe Environment will sponsor a two-day workshop for mental health professionals and pastoral personnel designed to help them better treat adult survivors of childhood abuse and neglect.

The workshop will be held Oct. 22-23 at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 N.W. Expressway.

The workshop is being presented by Father Kenneth Schmidt and Trauma Recovery Associates. TRA is comprised of mental health professionals with experience in treating adult survivors of childhood abuse and neglect. TRA uses the core concepts of the internationally recognized Trauma Model situated in the ambience of prayer.

The objectives of the workshop:
Learn how to offer better support to trauma survivors and how to make effective referrals for their care; understand the dynamics of trauma during childhood and its effects in adulthood; understand the core concepts of the Trauma Model; understand the nature and process of forgiveness; understand the role of therapeutic neutrality in trauma recovery; participate in experiential activities.

Statistics show on the low end that one out of four females and one out of six males will be sexually molested by their 18th birthday, said Jennifer Goodrich, director of the Office of Safe Environment. She said statistics also show that less than one in 10 will tell anyone about it.

“This means that there are literally millions of individuals in our society who have never dealt with the effects of what happened to them as children and all of us come in contact with those individuals every day,” Goodrich said. “This is an opportunity for a variety of people, from nurses to counselors, to advocates and anyone interested in learning more about the Trauma Recovery Program which encourages effective living in the present. It provides skills in how to offer better support to trauma survivors, an understanding of the dynamics of trauma during childhood and its effects in adulthood, and learn the core concepts of the Trauma Recovery Program. It is a real opportunity to address a major issue in our society that does not receive the attention or priority it deserves as the effects of unresolved childhood trauma affect every facet of our society and is a major contribution to many social problems.”

WHAT IS THE TRAUMA RECOVERY PROGRAM?

Trauma is an event or series of events combined with an individual’s vulnerability that creates an obstacle in normal human development.

The Trauma Recovery Program encourages effective living in the present rather than recovery of repressed memories. Healing occurs with the processing and integrating of feelings, thoughts and behaviors. Current research indicates that memory recall is, at best, unreliable; healing does not take place at the level of memories.

The treatment goal of the Trauma Recovery Program is to help individuals improve their functioning by helping them to stabilize, using new tools learned in the group setting. This model helps group members identify conflicts and unlearn specific distortions related to the effects of trauma.

The model focuses on exercises that foster the development of self-awareness and processes the trauma on a feeling level with an emphasis on regulating those feelings. The model also teaches the importance of learning about the effects of trauma and why it continues. Finally, the context is always prayer and the desire for divine healing and interpersonal forgiveness.

Cost of the workshop is $75 which includes a training manual, your right to make copies, certificate of attendance, LPC and LMFT CEU’s (10 hours) have been applied for. Please complete a separate registration form for each person who will attend. Make check payable to Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. To register or obtain more information, contact Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Attn: Office of Safe Environment, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73123-0380. Phone (405) 721-5651, Ext. 150. Registration is due Oct 10.

Trauma Recovery Workshop Registration

Name: ________________________________
Position: ______________________________
Organization: _________________________
Address: ______________________________
Home Phone: ___________________________
Office Phone: ___________________________
Fax Number: ___________________________
E-mail: ________________________________

Any medical needs or dietary restrictions?

Birth Choice Annual Walk For Life Set for Oct. 12

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Organizers hope the 16th Annual Walk for Life attracts a record number of participants to the Oct. 12 event. Barbara Chishko, president of Birth Choice of Oklahoma Inc., said last year some 700 people took part in the walk that raises awareness and funds for the pro-life organization. She said it is hoped this year’s event will draw as many as 1,000 walkers.

The Walk for Life provides support for Birth Choice offices in Oklahoma City, Norman, Edmond, Bethany and the Rose Home, a home for unwed mothers.

Chishko, who helped found Birth Choice following the 1973 Supreme Court decision that made abortion on demand the law in the United States, said the Walk for Life is more than a fundraiser. “This is a time when we all come together,” she said, referring to the volunteers who give their time and resources to promote life over abortion. “It’s such an alone thing we do, working one-on-one with expectant mothers. We need to come together to understand we’re not in this alone.”

Last year, Birth Choice provided 683 ultrasounds so women could see the development of their unborn child. Also provided, without charge, were 2,245 pregnancy tests. “I would say we’ve seen an increase of 20 percent in the number of women and young girls coming into our offices,” Chishko said. She attributed the increase to volunteers spreading the word as well as a new Web site and some advertising on some bus benches.

At the Oct. 12 event, the recipient of the Dr. Paul Kaldhal Memorial Scholarship will be announced. The late doctor served for several years as medical adviser to Birth Choice.

Registration opens at 1 p.m. and the one-mile walk starts at 2 p.m. Live music, food, games and T-shirts will be available for participants.
Catholic Charities 2008 Annual Appeal

Villa Isenbant Residents Reflect on Their Lives and Catholic Faith

By Connie Blaney
Catholic Charities

Villa Isenbart and Trinity Gardens Apartments, owned by Catholic Charities, offer retirement living for people 62 years of age or older. The independent-living complex is located on NW 19th Street in Oklahoma City next to St. Patrick’s Catholic Church. The apartments are one or two bedroom with kitchen, bathroom and living/dining room. Two residents, Ada Josephine Zurline and Flora Melton, share their stories about their lives and their appreciation for independent living at Villa Isenbart.

Both women have many things in common — from growing up Catholic to raising six children to now being residents of Villa Isenbart. But it is the differences in their lives that make their stories unique and interesting.

Josephine Zurline smiles when she talks about her six grown children and grandchildren, and her memories of her husband, Joe, who died in 1996. At the age of 82, Josephine appreciates the good times and believes the tough times made her strong and determined.

As a child growing up, life was not easy. She lived in several foster homes and with relatives. On a few occasions in the summer, she would spend time with her sister who was living in the St. Joseph’s Orphanage in Bethany. One of her saving graces was receiving one of two scholarships to St. Joe’s Academy in Chickasha for her high school years.

“I appreciated the love and support from the priests and nuns who looked after me like family,” Josephine said. “It is as if now that I am living at Villa Isenbart, I am ‘reconnected’ to the Catholic community, but in a little different way.”

Josephine graduated from high school during World War II. She rented an apartment from a former foster parent and began to look for a job. “Father James Garvey called me and told me he had job for me. I interviewed with Mr. Quinn, editor of the Southwest Courier newspaper (former Sooner Catholic). The next day I was hired for a clerical position,” she said.

In this position, Josephine interacted with many people in the Catholic community, and assisted the priests and nuns with routine business related to the paper and the Archdiocese. “I really enjoyed this job and even wrote some stories for the paper,” she said.

In 1946, she began dating her high school friend, Joe Zurline. Later that year they got married. The couple lived on a farm outside Chickasha where they raised their six children. “We had a good life — we worked hard and taught our children the importance of believing in themselves.”

Josephine was a “stay-at-home” mother until all her children were of school age. She decided to go back to school to earn a nursing degree. Upon completion, she worked as a nurse at Chickasha Hospital. Joe was a farmer but also worked in Chickasha at the Cotton Oil Mill and Feed Company.

“We tried to instill confidence and a strong work ethic in our children. All my children are professionals and very successful,” she said proudly. She is also proud of her 14 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

After retiring, Joe and Josephine moved to Baptist Retirement Home in Oklahoma City until his death. She moved to Maysville for a few years working as a nurse at a local nursing home, and volunteered for the Foster Grandparent Program. In 2003, she moved to Villa Isenbart in Oklahoma City. “I always loved Oklahoma City and was glad to be back in the city and within walking distance of a Catholic church,” she said. Josephine added, “I appreciate living at Villa Isenbart for safety reasons, for the interaction with the residents, and it is affordable living.”

Josephine is also grateful to Catholic Charities. “It if had not been for Catholic Charities in my life throughout these many years, my life would not have been so successful. I appreciate their loving support all these years,” she said.

Flora Melton is glad to be back at Trinity Gardens and Villa Isenbart. Several years ago, she moved into Trinity Gardens for a short time. Following surgery on her knee, she decided to move in with her daughter for a while in Moore. After three years, she made the decision to move back to senior housing.

“Living with my family was great, but I missed the daily interaction with friends my own age and being involved in so many activities,” Flora said. “We also have a sense of family here because we look out for each other.” Just the day before, she had introduced herself to her new neighbor, talking for hours about things they had in common, including a knee replacement.

Flora, 82, also likes her independence. Her one-bedroom apartment is cozy with a bookshelf full of mementos and photographs of her big family. She loves talking about her six grown children, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. “I have a wonderful and supportive family, and always enjoy visiting them,” she said.

Flora is active in both St. Patrick’s Church and Little Flower Church. She was born in south Oklahoma City, attending Little Flower Elementary and Little Flower Catholic Church. “I was baptized and married at Little Flower Church and have been an active member for many years,” she said. She attended Roosevelt Junior High and Central High School.

Over the years, Flora has been active in her Hispanic community helping others in need. Two jobs she enjoyed were working for Healthy Start Program, which helps pregnant teens, and being a social worker. She is treasurer of a local Red Hat Club and a former member of the Catholic Social Action Club. She has served on the Governor’s Board for Hispanic Affairs and the Mexican Culture Center Board.

Flora has performed for years as a member of a folklore Mexican dancing group, an activity she says has kept her “young at heart.” Sewing is her favorite pastime, especially making clothes for herself and others and sewing clothes for dolls and stuffed animals. A collection of dolls, stuffed animals and red and purple hats were on a table next to her sewing machine — all awaiting her final touch and approval.

“This is a great place to live and I appreciate the hard work of Kathy Pitt, housing manager, and the entire staff for all they do for us,” Flora Melton said.
Catholic Charities Helps Refugee Build New Life in Oklahoma

By Connie Blaney
Catholic Charities

It is almost impossible to eliminate “first day jitters” when taking a new job. Although every person’s experience is unique, the fear of the unknown is one of the biggest challenges for most people. Van Ceu Uk, a refugee who fled to Malaysia from his home country of Burma in 2004, would describe his first day at work in America as a bit overwhelming.

Van, 25 years old, was welcomed to Oklahoma two months ago by the Catholic Charities Refugee and Resettlement Department. One of his first tasks in his new country was to meet with refugee staff during orientation and to find employment. After meeting with Van, Kelly Barneche, job developer, took Van for a job interview at Clements Foods. They met with Greg Davis, director of human resources, and Don Thoreson, production manager. Several days later, Kelly received the news for Van that he had landed the job and would start the next week.

His first day on the job was not without adventure. His first obstacle was getting to work. Without a driver’s license, his only mode of transportation would be a bicycle he had obtained a few weeks earlier. After riding two and a half miles to work, he parked his bike near the back door of the building and went inside. Clements Foods’ staff welcomed Van and helped him get oriented to his new job responsibilities and meet his co-workers. By early afternoon, they discovered that someone had stolen Van’s bike. “We all felt so bad that Van had only been on the job for a few hours and his bicycle had already been stolen,” Greg Davis said. “It was all we could do to figure out who had taken it and how we could get it back,” Don Thoreson added.

In the next 24 hours, Van’s new co-workers were already taking up a collection to get him a new bike. Fortunately, with some help from their own security cameras and the OSBI cameras across the street, they found out who had stolen Van’s bicycle. Don Thoreson, with help from law enforcement, retrieved his bike and brought it back to Van at work. “This was quite an experience for all of our employees. We really felt bad that this had happened to him and we wanted to rectify it as soon as possible. I was touched by our employees’ caring attitude,” Thoreson said.

Van’s new supervisors have commended his work ethic. “Even though he has limited English skills, he is eager to learn his job on the production line and improve his English,” Thoreson said. Davis added, “This is our first time to hire a refugee from Catholic Charities, but we believe it will be a beneficial partnership for all of us. We support Catholic Charities’ role in helping refugees, and we are glad to share in this endeavor.”

Kelly Barneche commended Clements Foods employees, especially Greg Davis and Don Thoreson. Shortly after Kelly had sent letters to several businesses in the metropolitan area seeking employment for refugee clients, one of her first phone calls showing interest was from Greg Davis. Davis, who is Catholic and a member of St. Joseph’s Cathedral in downtown Oklahoma City, was enthusiastic and supportive. “I was so happy to receive Greg’s call. I believe that Clements Foods will be a great employer for our clients, and I know that our clients will be an asset to their business,” Kelly said.

Employment for refugees is an important first step in helping these individuals gain self-sufficiency, explains Kelly. “We have a total of about 20 employers who currently have hired our clients,” Kelly added. Some of these businesses include API Inc., Courtyard by Marriott, Delaware North Companies (at the airport), Musashi’s, Sushi Neko, Target and The Oklahoman. “I would encourage other businesses to give these refugees an opportunity to work. It has been a win-win for Clements Foods and can be for other businesses as well,” Davis said.

A majority of the job placements are built on carpools with other refugees, since few obtain licenses as quickly as they are employed and the limitations of the Oklahoma City public transportation system.

Catholic Charities Refugee and Resettlement program is the only agency in Oklahoma City with state and federal funding to resettle refugees. This program is in cooperation with the USCCB, which administers the program at the national level as part of the Catholic Church’s commitment to serving those who, by definition, are victims of persecution based on religious, racial, cultural, ethnic and political affiliation. The program plans to resettle a little over 200 refugees and asylees in 2008. If you are interested in helping with employment, donations or volunteer activities, contact Barneche at (405) 523-3002.

Catholic Charities Appeal 2008

Name:________________________________________

Address:______________________________________

City, State, Zip:_______________________________

Phone Number:________________________________

E-mail:________________________________________

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Concerning Iraq: Catholics Should Ponder Moral Questions

By Stephen M. Colecchi

The war in Iraq remains a major issue for voters in this election year. For U.S. Catholic bishops, however, Iraq is not primarily a partisan or political matter. For them, the war is a moral and human concern.

In late 2007, the bishops offered pre-election moral guidance on Iraq and a range of important issues facing our nation in their statement, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship.

They stated: “The war in Iraq confronts us with urgent moral choices. We support a ‘responsible transition’ that ends the war in a way that recognizes the continuing threat of fanatical extremism and global terror, minimizes the loss of life, and addresses the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, the refugee crisis in the region, and the need to protect human rights, especially religious freedom. This transition should reallocate resources from war to the urgent needs of the poor.”

This statement marks the most recent of several that the bishops have issued reflecting their consideration of Iraq. In a letter and three statements issued prior to the war, the Conference of Bishops repeatedly “raised serious moral questions” regarding the possibility of war and expressed concerns for the “unpredictable and uncontrollable negative consequences of invasion and occupation.”

Pope Benedict XVI, and the bishops, have questioned whether the resort to war could meet the strict conditions in Catholic teaching on the use of military force. In particular, they questioned the moral legitimacy of “preventive war” to counter gathering threats. As the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church teaches: “[E]ngaging in a preventive war without clear proof that an attack is imminent cannot fail to raise serious moral and juridical questions.” (§ 501)

We should continue to learn from the decisions that were made prior to the war. However, now that our forces are in Iraq, we face new moral questions and responsibilities toward the Iraqi people.

“Perhaps if enough voters ask the right moral questions, a new Iraq policy might engender broad bipartisan support. It could even help our next president unite our nation on a path to peace.”

The bishops use the term “responsible transition” as a shorthand way to refer to a moral framework regarding the war. This framework is rooted in the Church’s commitment to protect the life and dignity of the human person. The word “responsible” refers to our obligations to minimize loss of life and to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. The word “transition” reminds us that our nation should withdraw its troops as soon as possible.

Achieving a responsible transition will not be easy. The surge in U.S. troop levels has reduced large scale military conflicts and created openness for political reconciliation in Iraq. However, smaller, decentralized acts of violence remain widespread. Out of a total population of about 27 million, more than 2 million Iraqis are internally displaced from their homes, and another 2 million are refugees who have fled the country. A disproportionate number of displaced families and refugees are Christians and other religious minorities.

For more than two and a half years, the bishops have called for bipartisan cooperation to break the political stalemate in Washington. They have urged leaders of both parties to find ways to promote a “responsible transition” that minimizes further loss of human life and addresses the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and the region-wide refugee crisis. An effective plan will promote political reconciliation and engage international support, including that of Syria and Iran, to stabilize Iraq.

The bishops are acutely aware of the sacrifices of military personnel. In addition to our responsibilities toward Iraqis, our country has moral obligations to provide for the human, medical, mental health and social needs of military personnel and their families.

The bishops’ moral framework does not provide a detailed roadmap out of Iraq, but it does suggest important moral questions for Catholic voters to ponder. For example, in light of the traditional moral principle of “probability of success,” we should ask: Is it likely that a given course of action will contribute to a “responsible transition” and withdrawal as soon as possible? Will it save lives, promote reconciliation, protect religious freedom and help stabilize Iraq?

The bishops’ moral analysis has some practical relevance. The bipartisan Iraq Study Group explicitly promoted “responsible transition.” Some members of Congress have attempted to craft bipartisan approaches.

Perhaps if enough voters ask the right moral questions, a new Iraq policy might engender broad bipartisan support. It could even help our next president unite our nation on a path to peace.

Pro-Life Chair To Congress: ‘We Can’t Reduce Abortions By Promoting Abortion’

WASHINGTON – Writing to all members of Congress on September 19, Cardinal Justin Rigali warned against enactment of the proposed "Freedom of Choice Act" or "FOCA" (S. 1173, H.R. 1964).

"Despite its deceptive title," he wrote, "FOCA would deprive the American people in all 50 states of the freedom they now have to enact modest restraints and regulations on the abortion industry. FOCA would coerce all Americans into subsidizing and promoting abortion with their tax dollars."

Cardinal Rigali, chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, wrote that under FOCA "abortion on demand would be a national entitlement that government must condone and promote in all public programs affecting pregnant women." While some have said the bill would simply codify the Supreme Court’s 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade, he added, supporters of FOCA say it "would sweep away hundreds of anti-abortion laws [and] policies" that are now in effect because they do not conflict with Roe. These include bans on public funding of abortions as well as "modest and widely supported state laws" protecting women’s safety, informed consent and parental rights.

"Members of both parties have sought to reach a consensus on ways to reduce abortions in our society," wrote Cardinal Rigali. He cited laws restricting and regulating abortion, and "bipartisan legislation providing practical support to help women carry their pregnancies to term, such as the Pregnant Women Support Act (S. 2407, H.R. 3192)," while noting evidence that programs promoting access to contraception do not generally reduce abortions.
The American Workplace: Economic Policy, Moral Dimensions

By Thomas Shellabarger

American families face a changing workplace in a shifting economy. No doubt this fact is the cause of anxiety as we debate whether or not the economy is in recession. It probably will be one factor in how people vote this coming November. The impact of the economy on family life is a moral issue and a legitimate concern for voters.

Take the impact of growing unemployment. The U.S. Department of Labor reported that 62,000 jobs were lost just in the month of June, bringing the number of job losses to 438,000 for the first half of 2008. The unemployment rate appeared to remain steady at 5.5 percent, but many economists point out that is because many people have just stopped looking for work and are no longer counted in the unemployment rates. Meanwhile, Congress attempted to ease the pain by extending for additional 13 weeks unemployment insurance for workers who have exhausted the traditional 26 weeks of benefits. Unfortunately, the majority of American workers are not eligible to receive the complex federal-state unemployment insurance benefits.

Whether the issue is unemployment or unpaid overtime, loss of benefits, corporate relocation, part-time work, contracting work, declining wages, international competition, limited training resources for laid-off workers or dwindling low-skill job opportunities — all these changes to local economies diminish the prospects of good jobs for U.S. workers. For too many people, work puts added pressure on family life rather than strengthening it. Voters should ask candidates how their economic policies will enhance — rather than diminish — family life.

Work is the most significant way people directly interact with the economy. In Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, the bishops wrote, “The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation.” (#52). Catholic social teaching points to the interconnectedness between family life and work. Work is the foundation, a necessary condition, for the formation of family life. The family shapes the social and ethical dimensions of human work. It is the starting point for establishing the conditions of the workplace.

“Catholic voters need to test the policies of government and candidates’ positions with Catholic principles of Catholic teaching.”

Beginning in early 1970, family income, while still growing, started to favor those at the very top of the wage scale. Union membership began to level off. By the turn of the 21st century, workers at the very top on the earnings scale consumed all of the economic growth and most other workers just held on or fell behind. This present disparity is the greatest wage divide since the Great Depression of the 1920s.

The Catholic Church recognizes the incredible busyness of family life and the demands of work that overwhelm families. Many pressing problems confronting family life are due to broad social forces, particularly economic strife. The decision of a man and woman to marry and raise a family is a significant one with many considerations involved. Yet today, without a job that pays a family wage, marriage and starting a family seem impossible.

To be sure, economic policies are complex and economic issues overlap. For example, employment policy affects housing. As of July 2008, the minimum wage is $6.55 an hour or $13,624 a year. For a family of two, the poverty line is $13,167. For a parent and two children, the poverty line is $16,079. The annual income needed to afford a national fair market rent for a studio apartment (zero-bedroom) is $19,320 according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition publication Out of Reach; for a one-bedroom, $22,360; for a two-bedroom, $26,520. The study concludes: “In no community in the U.S. today can someone who gets a full-time job at the minimum wage reasonably expect to find a modest rental unit he or she can afford. While planned increases in the minimum wage over the next two years may put affordable housing closer within reach for some households, they will not close the gap between full-time earnings at the federal minimum wage and the income needed to afford prevailing rents in most markets.”

Catholic voters need to test the policies of government and candidates’ positions with Catholic principles of Catholic teaching. The bishops urge Catholic voters to focus not on political questions such as “Are you better off than you were two or four years ago?” Rather, each of us should enter the voting booth focusing on the ethical and moral dimensions of public policies that affect the entire community.

Thomas Shellabarger is the policy adviser for Urban and Economic Issues in the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Shellabarger holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan and has done graduate work at Florida Atlantic University.

Bishops Call on Catholic Families to Discuss Election Issues

By USCCB

Using Faithful Citizenship with your family involves thinking creatively, planning interesting family activities and taking advantage of opportunities that present themselves. Here are some suggestions.

Use TV as a resource: Look for shows that in some way address one of the issues mentioned in the statement. An example may be a news show or a documentary; it might also be a sitcom that is treating some current political or social topic. The key is to check out the show ahead of time and then to watch the show together. It’s often effective if you just “wander in” and sit down while your children are viewing it. Or it may be necessary to decide ahead of time that you will watch a specific show together. However you do it, the most important thing is to talk about the show’s topic. As mentioned above, share your thoughts and listen to their thoughts without being judgmental. Sometimes the only talking you can do is at the TV, but that’s OK. They’ll hear it.

Question, question, question: The bishops statement lists “Goals for the Campaign.” Rephrase these goals as questions, so young people can relate to them. For example, “I wonder how much money the person who sews the clothes we buy earns, or how much the farmer who grows the food we eat receives of the price we pay?” “Why are some people poor when so many people are rich?” “I wonder where we would go for health care if we didn’t have insurance?” If the questions lead to further discussion, you or your children may need to do a little research.

Look at billboards and television advertisements for various candidates, and critique the advertisements as a family. Do the candidates address any of the issues mentioned in the statement? How well?

Pick out a few short excerpts from the statement, rephrase them for children and post them on your refrigerator. Here are some possibilities: “The answer to violence is not more violence.” “Every child should have the opportunity to be born and to feel welcomed.” “Make the needs of the poor a priority.” “Safe and affordable housing should be available for all.” Try to find candidates or elected officials who support these positions by their policies and actions.

As a dinner prayer in the days leading up to election day (usually the first Tuesday in November), read one of the scriptural passages referenced in the statement.

For more ideas to get your family talking, go to faithfulcitizenship.org.
Ponca City Celebrates Bishop Anthony Taylor Day

PONCA CITY — Mayor Homer Nicholson declared Sunday, Aug. 31 as Bishop Taylor Day here in honor of the recent consecration of Bishop Anthony Taylor as bishop of the Diocese of Little Rock. Mass was celebrated at Saint Mary’s Church with Bishop Taylor, Fathers Michalicka and Schwarz concelebrating. A reception was held later in the Parish Hall. Parishioners, former classmates and local neighborhood friends joined in the celebration. The Mayoral Proclamation was given at the Mass honoring Bishop Taylor.

WHEREAS, Anthony Basil Taylor was born April 24, 1954, in Fort Worth, Texas, to Basil and Rachel (Roth) Taylor; and

WHEREAS, the Taylor family moved to Ponca City in 1960 where his parents and two of his six siblings and their families still live today; and

WHEREAS, Anthony was a member of the 1972 Ponca City High School graduating class; and

WHEREAS, he was ordained a priest at St. Mary Parish in Ponca City, his home parish, on Aug. 2, 1980, and has served as pastor in rural and urban parishes in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City; and

WHEREAS, Father Taylor served as vicar for ministries and as minister to priests, with Hispanic ministry a major feature; and

WHEREAS, Father Taylor was named by Archbishop Beltran as the Episcopal delegate for the canonization process of the martyred Oklahoma priest, Father Stanley Rother; and

WHEREAS, Pope Benedict XVI appointed Father Anthony B. Taylor as the seventh bishop of Little Rock, Ark., on April 10, 2008.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Homer Nicholson, Mayor of the City of Ponca City, do hereby proclaim Aug. 31, 2008, as Bishop Anthony B. Taylor Day in Ponca City and urge all residents to join me in sharing our joy at his appointment and extending our best wishes to him in his new role.

Irish Students Named National Merit Semifinalists

OKLAHOMA CITY — Officials of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation announced that two seniors from Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School have been named semifinalists in the 54th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. They are Katie Reap, daughter of Mark and Angie Reap of Oklahoma City, and Zach Yokell, son of Dr. and Mrs. Richard Yokell of Edmond.

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 their earlier qualifying test performance. 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.
Knights Make Annual Fair Trip With Special Children

By Rex Hogan
For the Sooner Catholic

The Oklahoma State Fair ended Sept. 21, and that means the Knights of Columbus Council 1038 has completed its 62nd straight year of taking special children to the fair.

Ernie Chastain, Council 1038 treasurer, said the group hosted 118 special needs students from six schools.

“We expected kids from eight schools, but two didn’t show up. They didn’t give me a reason, but I’m assuming it has to do with transportation, the cost of gasoline,” Chastain said.

The schools that sent students to the fair to be with Council 1038 members are Norman High School, Taft Middle School, Classen School of Advanced Studies, St. Anthony’s, Northwest Classen and Putnam City High School.

The Knights of Columbus Council 1038 started the project in 1947, when the council took children from the now-closed St. Joseph Orphanage in Bethany.

“We take special education kids to the fair, most have some mental disability and some have physical disabilities,” Chastain said.

He said 10 Knights from Council 1038 chaperoned the students through the fair. There also were teachers from the schools who walked with the students, he said.

“I’m not sure who gets the most out of the deal, us or the kids,” said fellow Knight Patrick McGuigan.

Mildren, Edmondson Honored by Knights Council 1038

By Cara Koenig
The Sooner Catholic

Serving Him by Serving Others is the motto of Knights of Columbus Council 1038.

Each year the council recognizes individuals who embody this motto with the John F. Kennedy Community Service Award. This year, Oklahoma Attorney General Drew Edmondson and the late Jack Mildren received the award. The presentations were made Sept. 18 at a dinner in Conner Center at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

President Kennedy was a member of the Knights of Columbus. His commitment to serving his country and others gave a generation of Americans an example to live up to and a challenge to better the world around them.

Edmondson said he took the late president’s words to heart, commenting that Kennedy was the first president he met. Edmondson said he met President Kennedy twice, once in Washington, D.C., and again when he visited Oklahoma.

Edmondson comes from a family with deep roots in Oklahoma politics and is described as “a fierce defender of the rights of Oklahomans, a defender of the voiceless in Oklahoma working with programs for victims of domestic violence, and a defender of the environment.”

Jack Mildren, who died May 22 from stomach cancer, is best remembered as a star quarterback at the University of Oklahoma.

But as his son, Drew Mildren, said in accepting the award, “My father was a student athlete, not an athlete student.” He said his father went to the University of Oklahoma to learn and to help make a difference in the world.

Mildren served as lieutenant governor of Oklahoma in 1990, later making a run for governor.

Barry Switzer presented the award. The legendary football coach recalled the days when he was recruiting Mildren for OU and the lifelong friendship that developed.

“Jack Mildren was one of the best quarterbacks to ever play college football,” Switzer said. “As good a football player as Jack was, he was an even better man. His life after football was all about community service. He always looked after his teammates and Oklahoma, the university and the state, were Jack’s team,” said Switzer.
Priest Leads 40 Days For Life Effort in Oklahoma City

Oklahoma City — Catholics joined with other pro-life Oklahomans on Sept. 24 as well as many other communities across the nation to kick off the 40 Days for Life campaign.

Father Howard Remski of the Latin Mass Community in Bethany is serving as spokesperson for the Oklahoma City 40 Days for Life campaign.

40 Days for Life is an intensive pro-life initiative that focuses on 40 days of prayer and fasting, 40 days of peaceful vigil at abortion facilities, and 40 days of grassroots educational outreach. The 40-day time frame is drawn from examples throughout Biblical history where God brought about world-changing transformation in 40-day periods.

“As people here in Oklahoma City join with others from across the country to pray and fast and take courageous action for 40 days to end the tragic violence of abortion, we look forward to seeing what kind of transformation God will bring about in our city and throughout America,” said Father Remski.

“40 Days for Life has already generated proven lifesaving results in cities across America,” said David Bereit, national campaign director for 40 Days for Life. “During the fall of 2007 and spring of 2008, dozens of communities joined together for nationally coordinated 40 Days for Life campaigns. The efforts of thousands of people of faith helped make a tremendous difference. Numerous cities reported a significant drop in abortions. Some abortion facilities either closed altogether or scaled back their operations during the campaign. New volunteers got active in local pro-life efforts. Churches of different denominations worked together to work for an end to abortion in their cities. Many post-abortive women begin programs to heal from the pain caused by previous abortion experiences. With such a strong track record of results, we are excited to see what God has in store for this fall.”

“We are expecting great things for our local 40 Days for Life campaign,” said Father Remski. “It is exciting for our city to be a part of something that can have such lifesaving impact, and we can’t wait to begin.”

To learn more about 40 Days for Life campaign, visit www.40daysforlife.com. For information about the Oklahoma City campaign, visit www.40daysforlife.com/oklahomacity

For assistance or for more information, contact okc40daysforlife@gmail.com or call (405) 593-9041.

Protestants Show Interest in Catholic-Based NFP

AUSTIN (CNA) — Citing a desire to let their faith in God guide their sex lives and to trust Him in every aspect of their existence, some Protestants have become practitioners of Natural Family Planning (NFP). Eschewing contraceptives, some are now joining Catholics in fertility classes and returning to traditional Christian teaching.

The Austin American-Statesman reports that the number of NFP practitioners who are Protestants is difficult to quantify. However, Rev. Amy Laura Hall, a Methodist minister and associate professor at Duke Divinity School, says there appears to be growing interest.

She said that, as a Protestant scholar writing about reproductive issues, she frequently fields questions about family planning. Hall explained that some ask how to avoid preoccupation with finances and social advancement and instead welcome children as gifts from God even if children disrupt the parents’ life plans.

Historically, some Protestant perspectives grew from an antipathy toward Catholic and fundamentalist families, she claimed. The Anglican Communion, which includes the Episcopal Church in the United States, in 1930 changed its teachings which formerly forbade contraception, while Methodist literature after World War II advocated limiting the number of children to an ideologically two-child, sex-balanced family.

This history has not prevented all Protestants from considering using NFP.

Phaedra Taylor, 28, told the Austin American-Statesman that she ruled out taking birth control pills after reading claims that the pill can cause abortions by rendering the womb hostile to a newly conceived human life.

“I just wasn’t willing to risk it,” she said, explaining she wanted her faith to guide her sexual and reproductive decisions after her marriage, before which she had been abstinent. She added that her avoidance of artificial contraception is consistent with her efforts to eat seasonal, locally grown foods and to be a good steward for the earth.

Her husband, David Taylor, 36, who was arts minister at their nondenominational church, Hope Chapel, said family planning reveals “a fascinating examination of God’s sovereignty and human free will.”

“What does it mean to submit your physical bodies to God’s sovereign care? ... God has given us power and freedom to exercise that decision. We can say, ‘God, we’re going to respect the rhythms you have given us.’”

Both spouses said the NFP method draws them closer, stating they want to wait a few months before trying to conceive.

Megan Tietz, a 31-year-old Oklahoman Baptist and a mother of two, told the Austin American-Statesman “...for me, using hormonal birth control indicates that I don’t really trust God with every area of my life.”

“It is an effort on my part to control something that I really believe God can be trusted with,” she continued.

Katie Fox, 31, is a member of Hope Chapel along with the Taylors. “I feel like it really works in harmony with the way that God designed our bodies to work,” she commented. “In contrast with the pill, which works by altering and suppressing our natural systems, NFP works by supporting those systems in harmony with their functions. It goes with the flow, so to speak. There is a wisdom and a rightness to that which I really appreciate.”

Fox has a 1-year-old daughter, explaining that NFP worked until she and her husband “got lazy” one month and had marital relations during her fertile period. She said the pregnancy helped remind them that God was ultimately in charge.

According to the Austin American-Statesman, experts say that, when used to avoid a pregnancy, NFP can fail at rates as low as 1 percent, though that rate rises to 25 percent when the method is not followed perfectly.

Hall said that some Protestant couples face difficulties when talking to their pastors about the spiritual issues of human reproduction with some, in Hall’s words, being told that they’re “crazy or irresponsible to consider not being on the pill.”

David Taylor agreed that pastors have difficulty addressing the issue, saying, “My guess is that most churches are not talking about sexuality.”
Parish Plans Saint Francis Feast Celebration

On Oct. 4, people everywhere will celebrate the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Born in the 12th century, Francis is the patron saint of animals and ecology. Many stories that surround his life deal with his love for all living things. He believed that the world was created good and beautiful by God, and it is man’s duty to care for and protect each other and our environment. St. Francis also believed that violence and war were wrong, and urged people to use peaceful dialogue with each other, to be instruments of peace and healing.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Oklahoma City celebrates this feast each year. On Saturday, Oct. 4, we will celebrate Mass in the church (Shrine of St. Francis) at 8 a.m.

Later that morning, at 10, animals will be blessed in the Prayer Garden, just north of the church. This is an annual tradition, and pet owners are requested to bring animals on leashes or in carriers.

On Sunday, Oct. 5, the Rosary School Home and School Association will sponsor the parish’s annual Oktoberfest. The celebration will begin at 1 p.m. with the 20th Anniversary Rosary Run, a two-mile race through the historic Gatewood Neighborhood. This year’s race is dedicated to Tom Murphy, a longtime parishioner and volunteer. Everyone is welcome to enter the race and prizes are awarded in several categories. Please register as soon as possible. Call the school office (525-9272) for details. The day continues with great food, games and prizes, rides and entertainment. All are welcome to come join the fun!

On Oct. 7 we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. This feast honors Our Lady and the gift of the Rosary, for which our school is named. We will be learning more about the rosary and will pray it more often throughout the month. Children who do not own a rosary will be presented with one.

Mission Planned in Yukon

YUKON — No One Whose Name I Know Will I Lose, St. John Nepomuk Parish Mission, fall 2008. How are we, as individuals, a part of God’s plan for mankind? What does “eternity” mean to us as Catholic Christians? When do our everyday lives and the sacred connect? Father Paul Gallatin will lead us in discussing and contemplating these questions. Please save these dates:

Sunday, Nov. 9 at 4 p.m. (men and women, age 16-plus). Monday, Nov. 10 at 7 p.m. (women only). Tuesday, Nov. 11 at 7 p.m. (men only). Wednesday, Nov. 12 at 7 p.m. (men and women, age 16-plus). Each session will last approximately one hour. Baby-sitting will be provided.

Priest to Lead Pilgrimage

Father Price Oswalt announces a 15-day pilgrimage to Greece and Turkey to celebrate the anniversary of the 2000th birth of St Paul. The dates are June 9-23, 2009, and the itinerary includes two nights in Istanbul, one night each in Kavala, Thessaloniki, Kalambaka and Delphi; and four nights in Athens. A three-day cruise to Mykonos, Rhodes, Patmos and Ephesus is also included. Cost is $4,655 each. Deposit is $450 each with final payment due by March 9, 2009. The package includes air from OKC, TUL, DFW, daily breakfast and dinners, first class hotels, air-conditioned motorcoach and English-speaking guide. An early booking discount is available. For additional information and brochures, call John Tagnesi, toll-free, at 1-888-544-4461.

Across Oklahoma

Book Donations Needed

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bishop McGuinness recently introduced a new program benefiting the library. The Book of the Month Club seeks donations of new or good quality used books based on the Dewey Decimal System. The program covers the entire school year beginning with September in the 100 series which is Philosophy and Psychology. This category includes Paranormal, Optical Illusions, Feelings, Emotions, Logic, Animal Rights, Logic and Ancient to Modern Philosophy. October is the 200 series, November the 300 series and so on. However, books from any category will be accepted anytime. Books are requested to be published within the last five years and be in good shape. Donations that are in poor condition cannot be accepted. Items may be dropped off in the main office or in the library at Bishop McGuinness, 801 N.W. 50th. Donations are tax deductible and a donor recognition label will be placed in the donated book. For more information, contact Patricia Hudacko at (405) 842-6638 Ext. 239 or hudacko@bmchs.org.

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Living in the Moment: Allowing God Into Our Lives

“Life happens while you are planning” seems to be in my awareness lately. I am noticing that much of the time I am hurrying to get wherever I am going, only to realize that once I get there I am thinking about and hurrying to get somewhere else. Little am I really enjoying the process of just getting there. Little am I enjoying being in harmony with God in the present moment, in the now.

I hurry up to make the coffee and prepare the oatmeal so I can enjoy reading the newspaper. Then, while reading the newspaper, I begin thinking about wanting to pray and meditate, and while praying and meditating, I find I am thinking I need to hurry and exercise or walk so I can shave and shower and get to my first appointment. Whew!

This is crazy!!! And yet our lives seem to be filled with so much, especially those of you with full-time jobs, children and elderly parents. We are so busy doing, we are not enjoying the experience of being. And then we wake up in our 50s or 60s and wonder where did it all go???

Perhaps the first step to enjoying our lives more is to be aware that we could be enjoying our lives more, that living hurried and fast-paced lives is normal and that most of the time we will continue just as we are.

However, we can pause and wonder how we can bring God more into our lives and enjoy his presence more in the present. Here are a few of the innumerable ways we can notice and enjoy the moment and be with God in the now.

We can notice ourselves driving with the radio off, feeling the wind on our skin, the smells in the air, the noises of life, the feel of our bodies in the seat. And while driving we can notice if the hurried anxious feelings are softening and if we are feeling more peaceful and calm. And if so, we can just enjoy God's presence in the now.

We can notice ourselves listening attentively to a friend who is sharing his/her sadness, hurt, pain, grief or anxiety, and we can just be with them, loving them, letting them know we are hearing them. And we can notice that we are being a friend, notice what we are feeling and be aware of God's presence.

We can enjoy the moment by watching a child at play, as they are fully and attentively into their imaginary world, being totally engrossed in what they are doing, being totally happy. And we can notice if we are feeling God's peace, quiet and happiness.

We can be in the moment having a cup of coffee on the patio and enjoying the cool breeze across our skin, the sound of the birds or the wind rustling in the trees, the lovely flowers, the green plants, the smell of honeysuckle, and we can be with ourselves feeling peaceful, calm, serene. And we can know that God is with us.

We can enjoy the present when shopping, wandering through the mall, seeing others talking with one another, a couple holding hands, a child looking longingly at a doll, a man shopping for jewelry. We can peacefully wonder where God is in the scene and allow ourselves to feel peaceful, grateful and happy.

We can notice ourselves washing dishes, the warm water flowing across our skin, scrubbing food off the pan, putting silverware into the dishwasher, pouring soap in the dispenser and be at peace knowing we are doing what is in front of us, we are doing God's will.

We can notice ourselves mowing the yard, feeling the hot sun on our skin, the sweat sticking to our clothes, the smells of the outdoors, the resistance in making the turn, knowing in a while we can rest with some ice tea, smelling the new cut grass, feeling a sense of achievement and gratitude that it is done and feel comfortable and at peace.

The more we enjoy these and other innumerable experiences, the more we are living in harmony with our God within, in the present moment, in the now.

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

The Struggle to Love: Being Human Doesn’t Help

After his wife died, Jacques Maritain published her journals. In the preface to that book, Raissa's Journal, he talks about her death, brought on by a stroke, and then several weeks by sheer force of intelligence and will, all deep communication remained cut off. And subsequently, after a relapse, she could barely articulate words. In the supreme battle in which she was engaged, no one here on earth could help her, myself no more than anyone else. She preserved the peace of her soul, her full lucidity, her humor, her concern for her friends, the fear of being a trouble to others, and her marvelous smile (that unforgettable smile with which she said thank you to Pere Riquet after Extreme Unction) and the extraordinary light of her wonderful eyes.

To everyone who came near her, she invariably gave (and with what astonishing silent generosity during her last two days when she could only breathe out her love) some sort of impalpable gift which emanated from the mystery in which she was enclosed. And throughout that time she was being implacably destroyed, as if by the blows of an axe, by that God who loved her in his terrible fashion, and whose love is only 'sweet' in the eyes of saints, or of those who do not know what they are talking about."

God's love is sweet only to those who are already saints and to those who do not know what they are talking about. That is true not just of God's love, but of all love.

Love isn't easy, except in our daydreams. We do not even need to look at the superficiality of the cheaper romantic novels or movies to see the truth of that. It suffices to go to church regularly: I go to Mass every day and I go there with good people, who are sincere, committed, honest and full of faith. But they (along with myself) are also human and thus, as we stand together in a circle of faith, we are not always the idyllic picture of harmony and love of which our church hymns speak. We may be gathered in faith, but we are human and we cannot but feel certain things in each other's presence: jealousy, irritation, hurt, paranoia, distrust, the sense of not being fully valued. And so beneath our rhetoric of love we also feel tension, distance and even hostility sometimes. We sing brave songs that proclaim how open our hearts are and how we welcome everyone into this space, but invariably there are parts of us that don't quite mean those words, at least as they apply to some people.

And this isn't an anomaly; it's true for all congregations, of every gathering, except those where everyone is already fully a saint. Love, this side of eternity, is not easy, at least not if we try to actually embrace everyone and not just our own kind.

The older we get, the more we sense what love actually demands. It continued on page 15
Marriage: The Glue That Holds Civilization Together

By Christopher West

It is clear, based on our culture’s rampant rates of sexual promiscuity, divorce, cohabitation, out-of-wedlock births, and the ease with which the homosexual lifestyle is being embraced in the media, school systems and legislation, that our nation is in desperate need of re-education in the nature, meaning and purpose of marriage. What is marriage? This column marks the first of a series in which we will explore this crucial question.

What happens to a society when it fails to understand what marriage is? Songs often pop into my head when I’m trying to make a point, and right now I’m hearing R.E.M.: “It’s the end of the world as we know it ...” (Together, everyone shout: “Leonard Bernstein!”).

OK, I’ve returned from my ’80s flashback. In all seriousness, redefine marriage and you redefine civilization at its root. What is the root of civilization? Pope John Paul II put it this way: “[The] shared life of men and women ... makes up the pure and simple guiding thread of existence. Human life is by its nature ‘co-educational’ and its dignity as well as its balance depend at every moment of history and in every place of geographical longitude and latitude on ‘who’ she shall be for him and he for her.” (TOB 43:7).

The sexual relationship — and by that I mean the relationship of man to woman and woman to man, the relationship between the sexes — is the foundation stone of life itself. All human relationships are the fruit of this root. This is why John Paul wrote elsewhere that it’s “an illusion to think we can build a true culture of human life if we do not ... accept and experience sexuality and love and the whole of life according to their true meaning and their close inter-connection.” (Evangelium Vitae, 97).

Let’s try to bring this into sharper focus. To put it more bluntly, at the root of civilization is the civilization of the sexual urge. The sexual urge is one of the most potent forces on the planet. When properly oriented, it builds up and edifies. When disoriented, it tears down and destroys. In other words, when this root is “civilized,” the fruit is “civilization” — well-ordered human relationships working together for the common good. But when this root (the sexual urge) is not properly civilized, well ... I’m hearing R.E.M. again in my head.

What does it mean to “civilize” the sexual urge? Among other definitions of the word, Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (11th edition) says that one is civil who shows “high-minded and self-sacrificing behavior.” One is civil who shows “courteous attentiveness, especially to women.” And — I’m not making this up — one is civil who observes “the forms required by good breeding.”

Throughout the ages, in virtually every culture known to man, the relationship that results from the proper civilization of the sexual urge has been called marriage. So, when we ask the question, “What is marriage?,” we should ask ourselves: What form of human relationship most civilizes the sexual urge? In other words, what kind of sexually active relationships show “high-minded and self-sacrificing behavior?” What kind of sexually active relationships show “courteous attentiveness, especially to women?”

What kind of sexually active relationships observe “the forms required by good breeding?”

I offer the following not to scandalize nor offend, but some things must be said in times of great crisis: Does sodomy civilize the sexual urge? Does it build up or destroy? Does it serve the common good? These are questions that must be asked. Can a man marry a man? Can a woman marry a woman? Can a man simultaneously marry several women, or a woman several men? Can a man simultaneously marry several men, or a woman several women? Can a man marry his sister or his mother? His brother or his father? Can humans marry animals? (Does anyone remember my column on the woman who reportedly “married” a dolphin?)

All of these questions are now on the table in our culture. They cannot be properly answered unless we first know what marriage is. As Catholics, we have an incredibly rich body of teaching to draw from in order to understand the nature, meaning and purpose of marriage. We’ll begin unfolding that teaching in the next column.

Struggle to Love

continued from page 14

isn’t easy to say the words “I love you” and actually back that up.

What does it mean to love someone? I’m pretty cautious now about what kind of words I put around that. Maybe I would use just two words, fidelity and respect. Love means keeping your word, staying with a relationship and not walking away. And love means fully respecting someone else, not violating anyone’s freedom, and positively blessing and helping others to grow according to their own internal dictates. What we actually feel when we do those things is sometimes less than warm, but love, as we know, is not a question of feeling but of fidelity.

And partly that is a gift, something from beyond us, from a God who can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, namely, remain together inside of family and community. In the end, that is what church and Eucharist are meant to do.

On the night before he died, Jesus sat down with his disciples and what he found there was what we too find whenever we go to church, a sincere bunch of people struggling to not let the jealousies, irritations, self-preoccupations and wounds of life drive them apart. We come to church and to the Eucharist to ask God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, love each other.

Maritain is right: Love is only sweet for those who are already saints and for those who are dangerously naive. Since we are neither, it’s good to be humble, admit our struggle, and to go to those places that can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. Visit www.ronrolheiser.com.
Buenas Noticias...

Muy Reverendo Eusebius Beltrán, Arzobispo Metropolitano de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City.

Mis queridos Hermanos y Hermanas en Cristo:

Hace pocas semanas, acogimos en Oklahoma City a miles de personas que vinieron en autobuses y hicieron largas líneas. Estos autobuses venían con personas de la ciudad de Nueva Orleans que salían de un amenazante y peligroso huracán. Fue una bendición que pudieramos darle albergue a ese grupo de personas que se aglutinaron en el edificio Lucent.

Inmediatamente, Caridades Católicas, la Cruz Roja, la Conferencia Bautista y muchas, pero muchas otras organizaciones prestaron la ayuda con urgencia a estos hermanos y hermanas que estaban desplazados. Ellos dejaron sus casas, automóviles y sus pertenencias más importantes que poseían. ¡Sin embargo, ellos tenían vida! De hecho, esa fue la única cuestión que importaba. A estas personas se les dijo que evacuaran porque si no lo hacían podrían haber sufrido e incluso haber perdido sus vidas. Ellos respondieron con una única preocupación en sus mentes, sobrevivir.

En una catástrofe muy similar, miles de personas dejaron la isla de Galveston porque ellos se encontraban en el recorrido del huracán Ike. Nuevamente, el propósito fue sobrevivir, un problema de vida. Las autoridades civiles sabían que para esos evacuados, sus vidas eran más importantes que sus casas, posesiones materiales o propiedades.

En ambas instancias y en otros trágicos eventos, la mayoría de la gente busca y reconoce una meta, que es realmente sobrevivir. Sin la vida, nada tiene sentido. El dinero, la comida, la vivienda, las propiedades, los automóviles, etc. No son parte de la muerte sino son cosas para vivir. La vida es el primer y único invento fundamental que se haya hecho.

Del mismo modo, en 1776, cuando nuestra nación estaba buscando nuestra independencia, se reconoció claramente y proclamó que la vida es un derecho inalienable. La vida es un regalo de Dios. La vida humana es creada por Dios a su imagen y semejanza. Dios nos creó para que lo conociéramos, amáramos y le sirviéramos para que así pudiéramos alegrarnos con su presencia para siempre. En otras palabras, Dios nos ha creado para que recibíamos abundante amor de Él y lo amáramos en reciprocidad.

La vida humana, la cual comienza desde su concepción, es el primer y más fundamental de todos los derechos. La vida nos ha sido dada por Dios para que la apreciemos y la respetemos siempre.

La vida humana, es reflejo de Dios, es muy importante y muy bonita. Toda vida humana por lo tanto debe ser respetada y protegida.

Apenas estamos a pocas semanas de la elección presidencial, todos los ciudadanos deben ser recordados naturalmente, que el derecho a la vida es dado por Dios. Todos los ciudadanos, sin importar la afiliación religiosa, debemos reflejar la naturaleza y destino de la persona humana. Todos los ciudadanos debemos tener el desafío de reconocer la absoluta necesidad que tenemos todos de proteger, nutrir y asistir la vida humana. Hacemos ésto todo el tiempo que hay una catástrofe, cuando hay inundaciones, fuegos o cualquier amenaza a la vida humana. Gastamos grandes cantidades de dinero para evacuar, reubicar, ayudar y salvar vidas humanas. La única tragedia es que no le damos prioridad a solucionar la tragedia del aborto.

El aborto mata la vida de un niño en el útero. Es un acto violento en contra de un niño y de su madre. Es una gran falta del padre progenitor de no resguardar a su propio hijo. El aborto es un acto injusto y con violencia.

¿Cómo un político puede apoyar el diabólico acto de abortar? ¿Cómo cualquier ciudadano puede votar por un político que apoya el aborto o es pro-aborto?

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La Oficina de Vida familiar de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City realizó simposio en Madill
Maternidad y paternidad bajo los principios de Cristo vitales para la existencia humana

Se instruyó como comprender y clarificar los sentimientos de los hijos

Las claves del éxito de un matrimonio son darle el valor y respeto a la familia.
El aborto es un ataque contra la vida humana

Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles para votar

El siguiente escrito es de Deirdre McQuade, quien es directora adjunta de Política y Comunicaciones en el Secretariado Pro-Vida de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos.

El aborto es el ataque directo contra la vida humana inocente más extendido en Estados Unidos. Hoy día, uno de cada cuatro embarazos termina violentamente en un aborto. Como una de las principales amenazas contra la dignidad humana, con consecuencias políticas y sociales de gran alcance, el aborto requiere una consideración seria antes de ir a votar este otoño.

Los católicos en especial están llamados a examinar las posiciones de los candidatos sobre este tema a la luz de su conciencia, una conciencia que se forma adecuadamente mediante la enseñanza de la Iglesia. Lejos de ser solamente la elección de una madre, el tener un aborto implica cuestiones de justicia y compasión para todos los involucrados: los niños aún por nacer y sus madres, pero también sus padres, hermanos, abuelos y el carácter de nuestra sociedad.

Más de 35 años han pasado desde Roe vs. Wade, la decisión de la Corte Suprema de Justicia en 1973 que legalizó el aborto por casi cualquier razón durante los nueve meses de embarazo. Aproximadamente, 48 millones de vidas indefensas se han muerto natural. En Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles, ellos afirman que el aborto es un acto intrínsecamente malo, lo cual significa que el aborto "siempre se opone al bien auténtico de las personas" y no está nunca justificado por las circunstancias. El aborto "siempre se debe rechazar y ser objeto de oposición y nunca se debe apoyar o aprobar" (Ciudadanos fieles, n. 22).

Los obispos abogan por políticas constructivas para ayudar a que el aborto se convierta en algo impensable en nuestra sociedad: También proponemos una cultura de la vida al apoyar leyes y programas que promueven el nacimiento de los niños y la adopción en lugar del aborto, al buscar soluciones a la pobreza, brindar cuidado médico y ofrecer otros tipos de ayuda a las mujeres embarazadas, a los niños y a las familias (Ciudadanos fieles, n. 65).

Los católicos no son los únicos que se oponen al aborto. El New York Times, MTV, y CBS News copatrrocinaron una forma de asesinato y mencionan el dolor, el sufrimiento y la depresión que reportan muchas mujeres que han tenido uno.

Las autoridades gubernamentales, sin importar su afiliación política, deberían tomar la postura valiente de proteger al niño no nacido y a sus madres del aborto. Cuando dejan de honrar el derecho básico a la vida – e incluso lo abandonan en nombre de la "libertad de elección" – ellos minan la base de todos los demás derechos humanos.

Los ciudadanos merecen conocer la postura de los candidatos sobre el aborto para poder votar con la conciencia bien informeda. Los obispos dicen que una conciencia debidamente formada reconocerá que todas las cuestiones no tienen el mismo peso moral y que la obligación de oponerse a actos intrínsecamente malos tiene una relevancia especial en nuestra conciencia y acciones" (Ciudadanos fieles, n. 37).

El aborto es un tema central de cara a las próximas elecciones estatales y nacionales. A largo plazo, esperamos el día en que la ley de los Estados Unidos proteja la vida humana desde su concepción hasta la muerte natural, en el que los padres reciban a sus hijos sanos o no planeados, y en el que las heridas del aborto hayan sanado. Una cultura en la cual el aborto es algo impensable es una en la que toda vida será respetada.

The Hispanic Cultural Institute created to learn the Spanish language and understand Hispanic culture

Everybody is invited every Tuesday night from 7 to 9 pm at Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Norman. The first portion of the course will offer a Cultural Presentation by a visiting Scholar (most from the University of Oklahoma), and the second portion will consist of Spanish language class, mostly taught by OU Instructors.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining, enrollment is currently open and will continue until October 7, 2008. The enrollment fee per semester is of $25 (made payable to St. Joseph’s Catholic Church). For questions contact the Parish Office (405.321.8080), and for email: mariadep-ruiz@ou.edu or irmiz4@att.net.
Jobs Box

Maintenance Supervisor
St. Ann’s Home in Oklahoma City is looking for a maintenance supervisor. St. Ann’s Home is a 120-bed, long-term care facility. Must have knowledge in electrical, plumbing and carpentry. Must be able to organize and multi-task with contractors. Organizational skills and communication a must! Knowledge in long-term care a plus. Please apply in person at St. Ann’s Home, 9400 St. Ann’s Drive, Oklahoma City 73099.

Chapel Staff Openings
Tinker Air Force Base Chapel has the following positions to be filled: Catholic coordinator, Evangelization coordinator, Religious Education coordinator, choir director, choir director/musician and organist for Mass. The Statement of Work, explaining the position and necessary qualifications, is available at the base chapel weekdays. Once all resumes are collected, the applicants will be contacted to set up an interview time with the selection committee. Upon completion of the interview, valid applicants will be asked to formulate and submit a bid. The committee will score applicants and their bids on the basis of skills, education, experience, organization/administrative ability and motivation, ministry focus, people focus, and whether bids are reasonable/within budget and value received for the amount paid. If you have any questions, contact the chapel at 734-2111.

Openings for Help with Adults With Developmental Disabilities
The Center of Family Love in Okarche has openings for the following: LPNs — Full-time shifts available (3 p.m. to 11 p.m. and weekend doubles). Individual Program Coordinator — Must have good communication skills interacting with our clients, their families and the community. Qualified Mental Retardation Professional — Bachelor’s degree, master’s preferred. Prior experience working with developmentally disabled. Laundry Aides, Housekeeping and Dietary Aides — Full-time hours with possible rotating weekends. To apply, call 263-4658, fax 263-4563, e-mail alemke@cfinc.org or in person at 635 W. Texas, Okarche, Okla. 73762. EOE

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

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

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

For a full and up-to-date jobs box listing, go to catharchdioceseokc.org and click on Jobs Box

Bishops to Take Up Abortion and Politics at November Assembly

WASHINGTON — The Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops said the full body of U.S. bishops will discuss the practical and pastoral implications of political support for abortion during its annual assembly, Nov. 10-13, in Baltimore.

At the conclusion of its Sept. 9-10 meeting in Washington, the Administrative Committee, which is the highest authority of the USCCB outside the conference’s plenary assemblies in November and June, cited concern for recent misleading remarks about Catholic teaching by Catholic politicians. The statement follows.

In light of recent comments by Catholic politicians misrepresenting Catholic teaching, the Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops affirms the statements that have been issued by Cardinal Justin F. Rigali, chairman of the U.S. Bishops Committee on Pro-Life Activities, and Bishop William E. Lori, chairman of the U.S. Bishops Committee on Doctrine. We confirm the Catholic Church’s constant teaching about the sanctity of all human life from the moment of conception and the intrinsic evil of abortion. As the teachers of the faith, we also point out the connectedness between the evil of abortion and political support for abortion. We plan to discuss the practical and pastoral implications of these serious matters at the U.S. Bishops Nov. 10-13, 2008, general meeting in Baltimore.
Calendar

October

1 All-Day Adoration. Every Wednesday at St. Eugene Church, 2400 W. Hefner Road, Mass at 6:30 a.m., Exposition of Eucharist at 7 a.m., Confessions from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., Anointing of Sick at 3 p.m. Adoration all day and devotions conclude with multi-lingual Evening Prayer and Benediction at 7:30 p.m. Contact: Barbara Curcio, 755-9163. To confirm that Mass will be held that day and for directions, contact HFMH at 741-7419.

2 vs Alva, 7:30 p.m. Football game.

3 Mount St. Mary homecoming football game vs Alva, 7:30 p.m.

4 Holy Family Home Mass, 11:30 a.m. To confirm that Mass will be held that day and for directions, contact HFMH at 741-7419.

3 First Friday Adoration at St. Francis of Assisi in Oklahoma City. After the 7:30 a.m. Mass, and concludes at 5:30 p.m. with closing prayer and Benediction. This is open to all. St. Francis is located at 1910 N.W. 19th, Oklahoma City.

3 First Friday Sacred Heart Mass at the Catholic Pastoral Center. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is at 5:30 p.m. with the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to Mass. Mass is at 7 p.m. For more information, call the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944 or Diane Grim at (405) 528-6252.

5 Respect Life Sunday

5 Rosary School’s annual Oktoberfest from 1 to 5 p.m. Come help celebrate the 20th anniversary of Oktoberfest and the Rosary Run. For more information, call Giselle Leon at 514-0265.

6 Dr. Vince Orza to speak to Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School students during a morning assembly. The public is invited to attend.

6 Weekly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Christ the King Catholic Church, located one block north of Wilshire, halfway between Penn and May at 8005 Dorset Drive, every Monday beginning at 7 a.m. and concluding with Benediction at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Linda at 496-0033.

7 Eucharistic Adoration at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, N.W. 32nd and Western, every Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The Rosary is said every weekday at 2:30 p.m. All are welcome.

9 LMC meeting at St. Monica’s in St. Stephen’s Room.

9-12 Artist Way Class. Would you like to get closer to God the Creator, in whose image we are made, by developing your own creativity? Come join the facilitator, Katie Gordy, for a 10-week course based on the book The Artist’s Way. This course is FREE and only requires participants to buy the book. The course runs on Thursdays from Oct. 9 (no class on Nov. 27) to Dec. 18 from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Baby-sitting would be available if five or more children need it. Call Katie Gordy at 359-2700 to register.

10 Bingo at St. Joseph’s Church in Norman. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with the serving of a light dinner. First session of games begins at 7; second session at 8:30. Concessions serve popcorn, candy, coffee, soft drinks and desserts. There are drawings for door prizes.

11 Pre-Cana. A day for couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. To register, contact the Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944.

11 The Benedictine Oblates of Red Plains Monastery will meet from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. They join the Community for Vespers, followed by a potluck dinner. For more information, contact Sister Eunice at 373-4565 or osbokc@ionet.net.


12 The American Catholic Experience. Stephen Reel explores the history of the Catholic Church in America. This is a five-part class beginning Oct. 12 following the 10 a.m. Mass in Room LL3 at Christ the King in Oklahoma City. For more information, contact the RE Office at 843-4766.

16 Mount St. Mary home football game vs Perry, 7:30 p.m.

For a full and up-to-date calendar, go to catharchdioceseokc.org and click on Calendar of Events.
Mount Names Stadium For Priest Considered Father of Rocket Football

By Rex Hogan
For the Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Father Kenneth Fulton started the football program at Mount St. Mary’s High School in a cow pasture. How times have changed.

At the Rockets first 2008 home football game earlier this month, a large sign attached to the scoreboard announced that the Mount St. Mary’s football field would now be known as “Father Kenneth Fulton Field.”

It’s an honor many have wanted for quite some time.

Father Fulton was the school’s first athletic director and in 1951, he brought football to the school.

“This has been long overdue,” said 1954 graduate John Swinhart, who was among the first male students admitted to Mount St. Mary’s in 1950. Mount St. Mary’s was an all-female school when it opened in 1903.

Father Fulton started teaching at Mount St. Mary’s in 1950. He was a recently ordained priest and an associate pastor at nearby Sacred Heart Parish, when he was hired to teach religion to the school’s first co-ed classes.

Father Fulton, 84, who now lives in Tulsa, recalled the early days of the athletic program.

“I was told I would teach the ninth grade and 10th-grade religion,” he said. “I started in this very room. There were 52 students.

“I knew you couldn’t keep boys without athletics. I said one day that we needed to start an athletic program and someone said, ‘Why don’t you do it?’”

Father Fulton said the school received some encouragement when a man from Tulsa, who had heard about Mount St. Mary’s plans to start a football team, pledged $500 to the school.

“He thought it would help start a football program at (Tulsa) Bishop Kelley. I never did get the $500,” Father Fulton said.

Before the football game, a group of students who graduated from Mount St. Mary’s in the 1950s held a reception for Father Fulton. The reception was in the school’s library, which was a classroom in 1950 where Father Fulton first taught.

Father Fulton, 84, who now lives in Tulsa, recalled the early days of the athletic program.

“‘We’d beg or borrow old equipment and uniforms from other high schools,’” he said. “‘No two helmets looked alike,’” Father Fulton said.

Swinhart remembers the hard work the priest put in during the early days.

“They didn’t give him a budget. He had to go out and scrounge to get it going and he did,” Swinhart said.

Chris Stiles, Mount St. Mary’s advancement director and an assistant football coach, said stories are still being told around St. Mary’s about Father Fulton’s work in the athletic program.

“They called him the ‘Robber with the Roman Collar’ because he was relentless. You couldn’t say no to him,” Stiles said.

Tommy Swyden coached Mount St. Mary’s first football team in 1951.

“We only had 15 boys out. We’d play whoever would pay us $35,” he said.

Swyden was a graduate of Southeast High School and knew several high school coaches.

“We’d beg or borrow old equipment and uniforms from other high schools,” he said. “No two helmets looked alike,” Father Fulton said.

The team practiced in a cow pasture next to the school. Players dressed in the barn where the Sisters of Mercy kept their milk cows.

Stiles said two years ago, an alumni group asked Father Fulton to return to Mount St. Mary’s so they could honor his contribution to the school.

“They gave him a plaque at halftime of a game, but that didn’t seem worthy enough for what he had done,” Stiles said.

“So they started a campaign to name the football field after him. It was a two-year process and they raised $100,000,” Stiles said.