Sooner Catholic

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Archbishop to Address Statewide Conference on Domestic Abuse

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma’s largest educational conference regarding domestic and sexual violence will feature a faith-based tract, designed to educate and empower those within the faith community to understand and recognize relationship violence and to be able to assist victims within the faith community. Archbishop Beltran will be the keynote speaker during the portion of the conference dealing with the faith community. The conference is Oct. 3-4 and will be held at the Clarion Convention Center on Meridian Avenue in Oklahoma City. Early bird registration is $35 (deadline is Sept. 26).

This conference will help prepare individuals who wish to begin the Safe Place Faith Community program at their parish. CEUs available. For more information, contact the Archdiocesan Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944. Register online at www.regonline.com/121248
The Good News

It is amazing to me that so much can be accomplished with so little resources except that this is a Catholic mission conducted by people of faith, love and true dedication.

I'm writing today about an exciting mission experience I just completed in Liberia, West Africa. Although it was only one week long, my visit to Our Lady of Fatima Rehab Center in Monrovia will never be forgotten.

Over the years, I have had wonderful mission experiences in many parts of our own country as well as in Guatemala and Africa. This recent experience at Our Lady of Fatima Rehab Center was the most inspiring and challenging of all.

This rehab center has evolved into its present structure and location because of many circumstances of time and place over the past 35 years. However, I am convinced that basically and fundamentally, it was formed by Divine Providence. It began in Cape Palmas, Liberia. Then, due to the civil war and later because of looting and terrorism, it was twice exiled to the Ivory Coast. After the war, the center relocated in rental units in Monrovia. It was less than 10 years ago that the rehab center began anew at its present location outside Monrovia.

During these past few years, Our Lady of Fatima Rehab Center has developed and grown far beyond any human plans. This is the reason I believe it has and continues to be inspired and sustained by Divine Providence. God works wonders inspired and sustained by Divine Providence. It began through human beings who have faith and live in accordance with the Great Commandment of love.

Sister Mary Sponsa, the foundress and director of Our Lady of Fatima Rehab Center, is a Bernardine Franciscan Sister whose community sent her to Africa as a missionary in the early 1970s. Since she was a registered nurse, she was placed in the early 1970s. Since she was a registered nurse, she was placed in charge of the clinic. As soon as the rehab school opened, children from the surrounding areas asked to be admitted. Now grades pre-K through 12th have almost 1,000 students attending school every day!

The present clinic on the rehab grounds is scarcely twice the size of my garage. In this small, ordinary garage-like building, 30 to 75 people are helped daily. Medical services are not limited to pre-natal care. Anyone who is sick or injured and doesn’t require hospitalization will be served if medications and supplies are available. However, mothers and babies are the largest number of patients. It is immediately evident that there is an urgent need for a larger and better equipped clinic. Unable to get corporate or agency funding for the new clinic (estimated cost is $200,000), Sister Sponsa and the residents of the rehab center trust in prayer. So far they have put in the foundation and a few walls. When money is available, they buy a few bags of cement or other building materials. I know their prayers will be answered by God through generous people “who hear the cry of the poor.”

With improved pre-natal care, newborn babies have a greater survival rate. However, if the babies don’t continue to receive proper nutrition and care as they grow up, they are prone to sickness and ill health. To offer a positive approach to this problem, the rehab center now sponsors a weekly “baby day.” On Thursdays mothers can bring their babies (up to the age of 3) to receive a supply of nutritional foods, vitamins, clothing and other items to help improve the quality of their young lives.

Every Thursday more than 200 babies are greeted at the Prayer House of the rehab center “for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Every day, all day long, there is a constant stream of women and girls coming to the rehab center to fill their buckets and water containers. As I talk with them at the pump and watch them draw the life-giving water they need, then carry it away on their heads, I cannot help but think of a Gospel scene. I think of Jesus with the woman at the well. To the Samaritan woman, He said: “Give Me a drink.” She wondered and questioned Him and He replied: “Everyone who drinks this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst.”

The sick, the poor, the hungry, the thirsty and the handicapped come to Our Lady of Fatima Rehab Center Seeking food, water, medicine and therapy, which they get. But they also get more. Here they learn about Jesus through His generous people and dedicated co-workers who follow the admonition of Saint Francis: “Preach the Gospel always—sometimes, even use words!”

I began this report by saying how amazed I was that so much can be accomplished with so little. Certainly everything relies upon the Grace of God. But God’s Grace works through His people. This mission is conducted by people of faith and love who are truly dedicated. It is supported by generous people of faith and love.

For more information, visit www.ourladyoffatimarehab.org.

... Sometimes, Use Words!

Every Thursday more than 200 babies are greeted at the Prayer House of the rehab center “for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Archbishop Beltran

The Sooner Catholic is supported through the Archdiocesan Development Fund.
August 2007

When I hear the gospel about the prodigal son, I am reminded of my own father, and particularly his death, which occurred almost 10 years ago. The story of the prodigal son is proclaimed during Lent, and little did I know that this would be the last gospel my dad would hear in March 1998. I sat between my parents at Mass at St. Ann’s Nursing Home, where they had relocated because of declining health.

The story conjures up both memories and wonder as I reflect on the characters in the parable, and the timing of this gospel in my life. I recall times when I, like the prodigal son, needed forgiveness from my dad, and he was sitting right next to me. There were times when I too wanted to have my share of what he had with no strings attached, and now it was all there for me. There were times of waste and times of missed opportunities, and in this moment we were together in a nursing home chapel, where he had surrendered his independence. How could I be so blind not knowing that my father had always been there to listen and to assist as best he could?

The gospel proclaimed on the weekend of the Catholic Charities Appeal is again the parable of the prodigal son. The parable is perhaps the best-known one in all of Scripture, and its message draws all of us into the mission of Catholic Charities. Our relationship with God is discovered when we share with others. God calls each of us of Catholic Charities. Our relationship with God is a visible expression of our faith reaching into the hearts and souls of people who suffer physical, mental or emotional pain. Daily, Catholic Charities works to rebuild relationships that separate the strong from the weak, the rich from the poor and the powerful from the lowly.

In this annual appeal, we invite all people to participate in the extensive work of Catholic Charities in our archdiocese. Our goal of $2.4 million represents two-thirds of all expenses for those who need material help, housing or counseling, and for assisting parishes with their social ministries. Our help is directed to children, adults and families living in Oklahoma who are trapped by poverty, fleeing from persecution or battling depression. Strong support from this appeal gives Catholic Charities an edge in responding to needs that other organizations cannot meet.

We remain grateful for the many benefactors who are invested in the mission of Catholic Charities and who reflect God’s love in their good works and generosity.

2007 Annual Appeal Goal is $2.4 Million

Christ calls us to follow in His footsteps. Jesus demonstrated His love and compassion for others. He helped the poor, fed the hungry, sympathized with the lonely, healed the sick, prayed for sinners, and shared His Father’s love with people of all races and religions. Is it not our task to do the same? We are called in different ways to follow Him. Catholic Charities ministry unites us in our journey of faith to help others in need. Your sacrificial gifts, prayers, volunteer time and financial support are appreciated. Thank you for participating in our ministry and helping Catholic Charities meet its 2007 Annual Appeal goal of $2.4 million.

Information About the Annual Appeal and Catholic Charities

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

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

The money raised from the 2007 Catholic Charities Appeal stays right here in Oklahoma to help people in need throughout the archdiocese (central and western Oklahoma).

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

English and Spanish brochures and pledge envelopes in English, Spanish and Vietnamese have been distributed to all parishes across the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

In the 116 churches and missions across the archdiocese, more than 7,500 individuals donated to Catholic Charities last year. Every donation, no matter how great or small, makes a difference.

The St. Patrick’s Day Grand Marshal Ball raised more than $49,000 this year for Catholic Charities.

Catholic Charities video, History of Giving, Stories of Hope, is available to provide more information about Catholic Charities (five-minute and 20-minute versions). A representative from CC is available to speak and present the video to any group.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who does Catholic Charities serve?

A: Over 20,000 people of ALL faiths, races and socio-economic backgrounds are helped each year by Catholic Charities. The works of Catholic Charities, with the support of Catholic churches and communities across the archdiocese, reaches out to many people in need throughout central and western Oklahoma.

Q: How can I find out if I qualify for services provided by Catholic Charities?

A: For information about services, call our main office in Oklahoma City, (405) 523-3000 or 1-800-375-8514 or any of our regional offices. A staff member will be happy to visit with you on a personal basis. We are also able to refer you to other resources for help.

Q: How can I help Catholic Charities?

A: Your time, talent and treasures are invaluable. Volunteers, financial support and in-kind donations enable Catholic Charities to serve so many people in need across the archdiocese. By sharing in the works of Catholic Charities, your contribution, no matter how great or small, makes a difference. All financial contributions are tax deductible. To get involved, contact Catholic Charities or a local Catholic Church.

Q: How do I know my financial contribution is used wisely?

A: Compared to many nonprofit organizations, our Catholic Charities has very low administrative and fund-raising costs (about 7 percent). This allows us to use a majority of our annual budget on direct services and programs.
Who We Are

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

Our History

In 1910, a piece of property in Bethany was purchased for the development of St. Joseph’s Orphanage. This commitment to services for those in need is the origin of Catholic Charities, which was originally called Catholic Social Ministries. Over the years, the works of Catholic Charities has continued to change and grow to meet the needs of individuals, children, families and the elderly.

Our Revenue Sources

Catholic Charities is supported by the people of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The Annual Appeal and voluntary donations from individuals and organizations are the primary source of revenue for all our programs. Other sources of revenue include designated United Way funds and grants. A majority of the annual budget is spent directly on programs and services. Only a small portion of the budget (7 percent) is spent each year on administration and fund-raising.

Charity Navigator Awards Catholic Charities 4-Star Rating

By Connie Blaney

Catholic Charities

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Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, has twice earned national recognition recently for achieving the highest standards of professional practice for a nonprofit charitable organization, said Tim O’Connor, executive director.

The New York-based Council on Accreditation (COA) recognized Catholic Charities with official accreditation status on June 30 for meeting all COA standards and criteria for a nonprofit organization. Catholic Charities was also spotlighted for achieving a 4-Star rating for sound fiscal management by Charity Navigator, America’s premier charity evaluator.

“It is an honor for Catholic Charities to be recognized at the national level for both accreditation and the 4-Star ranking,” O’Connor said. “The scope of the accreditation process was extensive. Our staff members, board of directors and volunteers have worked very hard to help make this goal a reality.” Catholic Charities is one of two nonprofit organizations in Oklahoma City serving children and families to earn accreditation status.

The accreditation process began with Catholic Charities’ application in 2006. The next step was to conduct a thorough self-study to determine if the agency was in compliance with all standards and procedures recommended by the Council on Accreditation. A site-visit and program review by the Accreditation Peer Review Team was conducted in July of 2006. The site team’s responsibility was to review agency records including financial, governing body, personnel, service providers, programs and services, and other materials pertinent to the operation of the organization. In the following months, the agency worked with the accreditation site team to address programs and procedures with completion in the spring of 2007. The agency was notified it had earned accreditation status in June of this year.

Charity Navigator’s 4-Star rating of Catholic Charities is significant for several reasons. The New York Times, NPR and the Chronicle of Philanthropy, among others, have profiled Charity Navigator for its unique method of applying data-driven analysis to the charitable sector. It has been known to evaluate 10 times more charities than competitors and currently attracts more visitors to its Web site than all charity rating groups combined, thus making it the leading charity evaluator in America. Charity Navigator designated Catholic Charities of OKC with one of its highest ratings, indicating the agency outperforms the majority of nonprofits in America with respect to fiscal responsibility.

Charity Navigator President Trent Stamp said, “This exceptional designation from Charity Navigator differentiates Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, from its peers and demonstrates to the public the agency is worthy of their trust.” Catholic Charities is spotlighted on the Charity Navigator Web site at www.charitynavigator.org.

Enid Office Helps Mother and Children Get A Fresh Start

By Connie Blaney

Catholic Charities

ENID — She felt trapped, hopeless and lost. Her husband was becoming more abusive with each day’s passing. The days were blurring into years. She couldn’t remember when she was last happy in her marriage.

On a hot July day one year ago, her husband snapped. “Our baby was very sick and crying. When my husband got ugly and screamed at us and called the baby names, I decided that day to only give him one more chance. The very next day I knew we were in serious jeopardy when he became even more violent and threatened to shoot me,” the mother of four said.

“Grace” realized she and her children were no longer safe. That afternoon, she packed their suitcases and she and her four kids hit the road. Their first stop was a women’s shelter in south Texas. In just three weeks, her husband had found them. As her fears escalated, she prayed for help. She refused to leave the shelter. “I knew at that moment that life was the most important thing and that material things were no longer that important. I had to let go of my false sense of security of a home, money and my old life,” Grace said.

“Grace is a very important turning point for me.” Her prayers were answered when a friend near Enid came to her rescue. She and her children fled again — this time to Oklahoma. “We left with very little and I let God provide the rest,” she said. For a few weeks, she and her children lived in the Enid Crisis Center. Another prayer was answered when her aunt and uncle came to Oklahoma to help her family. The couple helped them find a home and helped them get settled in their new community.

Grace’s next step was to find a job and begin supporting her own family. After finding a job, she still was struggling financially. “It was a scary time and I still needed help. I looked in the phone book and called Catholic Charities Enid office. I heard this friendly voice at the other end of the line and knew the Lord had answered another prayer,” Grace said.

Stacy Kurtz, coordinator of the Enid office of Catholic Charities, scheduled Grace an appointment. In addition to weekly counseling, Catholic Charities has helped Grace find the resources needed for her and her family. Catholic Charities has assisted with financial help for utility bills, clothing, diapers and household items. Stacy has also helped Grace connect to other agencies such as Salvation Army and other organizations.

“I am very thankful for all that Stacy and Catholic Charities have done for me and my children. Through counseling, I am learning forgiveness and how to work through my grief and sadness,” Grace said. “We have been blessed to have this support from Stacy and Catholic Charities,” she said.

Grace is now divorced from her husband.

Grace has faith in God that He will guide her in the days ahead. She has found a church close to her home and is thankful to God for His “grace” in bringing good people into her life to help and support her and her children.

For information about services, volunteering or how to help at Catholic Charities Enid office, contact Stacy Kurtz at (580) 237-7352.
Woman Adopted Through Catholic Charities Finds Missing Piece of Her Past

By Connie Blaney
Catholic Charities

Sometimes we find the missing pieces to our puzzle. Sometimes we don’t.

In 2003, I found a wonderful piece to a puzzle in my life,” said Mary Ann Honeman.

With the help of Catholic Charities, Honeman, a resident of Hooker, began searching four years ago for her biological parents. Since she was adopted as an infant through Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Sabra Ruminer, adoption coordinator, was able to begin the search process immediately. It took only eight weeks to locate her father, Doyle Niemann, who lives in Arizona.

“Since the adoption coordinator and her father, other pieces to the puzzle have been revealed. In 2005, she met her two half brothers and their adult children. One brother lives in Arizona, the other lives in Maryland. Recent family reunions have included holidays, a niece’s wedding, and Mary Ann’s brother, Doyle’s, 60th birthday celebration in his hometown of Mt. Rainier, Md. “While in Maryland, we went to Annapolis to the State House and watched Doyle in action on the floor as a member of the House of Delegates. I was very proud,” she said.

“My new extended family has been so warm and accepting. It has been so awesome,” Mary Ann said. Her father feels the same. “Mary Ann means so much to me. It has been wonderful meeting her after all these years. The whole family has been so accepting. Mary Ann is now one of the family,” he said.

Adoption Coordinator Shares Experiences About Adoption Searches

By Connie Blaney
Catholic Charities

It can be an emotional roller coaster at times, but Sabra Ruminer believes in her heart that her role in Adoption Services at Catholic Charities is rewarding, in spite of the many challenges she has faced throughout the years.

Since June of 2002, Ruminer has conducted 50 adoption searches at Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. “It is gratifying to experience the tears of joy when a couple adopts a child and becomes a family. It is also very exciting to reunite an adult adoptee to a birth parent or siblings,” said Ruminer.

From the beginning of Catholic Charities’ St. Joseph’s Orphanage in 1912 to the present day, hundreds of children have been adopted through Catholic Charities. For many of these people, there is a special place in their hearts for Catholic Charities.

In the past five years, Adoption Services has arranged for 24 adoptions and has completed 50 searches for a birth parent or an adult adoptee. Ruminer said the search process has its rewards and its disappointments.

“To search for a birth parent or an adult adoptee is a position we approach very carefully. This is such an emotional decision to come to the point of wanting to make that choice. So many lives are affected when that decision is made to start this process,” she said.

The adoption coordinator notes that the expectations of the person who desires the “search” are very important. It takes maturity and stability in an individual to accept the person’s decision of whether one wants a reunion or not. “Television tends to show the positive sides of reunions between birth parents and adoptees, but in reality it doesn’t always happen like that,” Ruminer noted. Most adoptees (if the adoption was not open) have a little piece missing. Meeting the birth parents gives them closure, whether they feel a connection between the birth parent or not,” Ruminer suggested.

The adoption coordinator said that locating the birth parent can be frightening for some adoptive parents, but it will never take the adult adoptee away from the parents who raised them. “Most adult adoptees have told me, ‘Searching for my birth parent only brought me closer to my parents.’

“I used to be surprised when an individual would tell me, ‘No, I do not want to make contact and please do not call me again.’ She explained that in most cases it is the birth parent who refuses contact but in the majority of the searches she has completed, most individuals want to make contact. Out of 38 searches for birth mothers, only seven did not want contact.

“It appears that in many of the cases where the birth mother refrains from making contact with her adoptive child, it is just too painful. It is a shock when they receive a call from me saying the child they placed for adoption wants to locate them. It took years for them to bury their secret, and now I’m asking them if they would like to open up to their current family about a child out there they have not seen since birth,” Ruminer said. “It is understandable, but painful.

There are times when Ruminer says she cries with her clients. “Although it is very emotionally draining at times, I do love my job.”

For more information on adoptions or searches, contact Sabra Ruminer, Catholic Charities Adoption Services, Oklahoma City, at (405) 523-3012 or one of the regional Catholic Charities offices in Enid, Clinton or Lawton. See Web site www.catholic-charitiesok.org
Catholic Charities Plays Major Role in Development of Homeless Day Center

By Connie Blaney
Catholic Charities

In the downtown area of most large cities, the faces of the homeless are as unique as their stories. In Oklahoma City, it is estimated more than 2,000 children and adults are considered homeless.

Catholic Charities, in partnership with several organizations, is taking an active role in addressing the homeless by developing a day shelter in downtown Oklahoma City. Kim Woods, new homeless service coordinator since July, is already hard at work in the field meeting and helping the homeless.

Who are the homeless? “The typical stereotype is a single, elderly, unkempt man with drug or alcohol problems,” Woods said. “But this is not necessarily so.” The homeless may be a single mother with children who has left her husband due to physical and mental abuse. It may be a college graduate, male or female, who has lost his/her job due to substance abuse. It may be someone who has faced a major crisis or has lost everything in a disaster. What they have in common is no support system. What is most important is that each person is a human being who deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

While planning continues for Oklahoma City’s day shelter, Woods has been helping the homeless at the City Rescue Mission. She also will be working some days each week at Sister BJ’s Pantry in the downtown Oklahoma City area. “We begin by assessing their needs, whether it is temporary housing, health services, job training or employment,” Woods said. Other needs are state identification, legal assistance, financial education, counseling, clothing, food and so much more.

One of the biggest issues is affordable housing. “Either the rental property is of poor quality, or the neighborhood is unsafe,” Woods said. The City Rescue Mission is at over-capacity. On any given night, there are several hundred people sleeping at the mission. “There are so many needs and not enough people or resources to help everyone. We need more community education,” she said.

Catholic Charities has offered support services for the poor and homeless since 1912. In the past two years, Tim O’Connor, executive director of Catholic Charities, has been networking with other organizations to develop a homeless day center to care for the city’s homeless population.

Catholic Charities in 2005 convened an ecumenical committee to advise in the development of the day shelter. Catholic Charities intends to provide sponsorship for the project and enlisted the cooperation and support of faith communities in serving the homeless. The bishops of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma and the United Methodist Oklahoma Conference endorsed their support of this project on July 1, 2005.

In addition to the three faith-based organizations, the Homeless Alliance is already reaching out to the homeless. We are fortunate to have Kim Woods already serving our homeless population. She is a very caring and dedicated employee who cares about those in need,” O’Connor said.

“Besides my belief in the Catholic Charities Mission and Focus, there are two primary reasons that I support Catholic Charities. First, I know that Catholic Charities has an excellent history of using the money it collects to fund its ministries. Second, I admire the dedication of the Catholic Charities staff, volunteers and board who on a daily basis put into practice the Gospel values of justice, love, compassion and hope.”

Tom Butler, Christ the King Church
2006 St. Patrick’s Day Grand Marshal
Faith Community Nursing Program Expands Across Oklahoma

By Jane Moon
Catholic Charities

Faith Community Nursing is the fastest-growing nursing specialty nationwide and Catholic Charities Oklahoma-grown program is on the leading edge. What began in the 1990s with a single, part-time nurse assigned to Saint Patrick's Parish in Oklahoma City has evolved into a statewide training and resource center for more than 150 nurses of all faiths.

With a $125,000 start-up grant from the Butterfield Memorial Foundation, the Catholic Charities program for Faith Community Nursing (FCN) — formerly called Parish Nursing — has expanded to new offices that will house training materials, a resource center and a statewide statistical database.

Faith Community Nurses are registered nurses who minister to the whole person — physically, socially, emotionally, and especially spiritually. They serve as health educators, personal health counselors, resources for church and community services, advocates for those in need and facilitators of volunteer health ministers. The program is a collaborative effort of Catholic parishes and other faith communities, Catholic Charities, nursing schools and hospitals.

Marilyn Seiler, who recently was hired to manage the FCN Resource Center, said the nurses have increasingly filled a unique ministerial niche in Catholic parishes and other religious groups are quickly discovering the benefits of the vocation.

Seiler, who said she always dreamed of being a missionary, noted how the Catholic Church historically has ministered to the needs of the mind and body as well as the soul. “Catholic missionaries build hospitals and schools to touch the body and mind, and they build churches to touch the soul,” she said, stressing that this holistic integration of ministries is the goal of faith community nurses.

Seiler has worked for 27 years in home health around the state and was partial owner of a home-health business in Stillwater until last year. Just as Seiler was selling her business, FCN Coordinator Mary Diane Steltenkamp persuaded her to enroll in the basic training course offered through Catholic Charities. After completing the training, Seiler learned the training program coordinator position would soon be open. Her master’s degree in nursing, along with experience as an administrator and spiritual director, qualified her to take over the training program. Seiler praised the ecumenical nature of Faith Community Nursing.

“The most beautiful thing about the training program is the way everyone comes together wanting to merge mind, body and soul. Participants are often of different faiths but we all have the same purpose and the same values. Everyone shares each other’s faith perspective,” she said.

In her new job as resource center manager, Seiler will continue to coordinate the semi-annual training course. She also will provide consultation to churches, synagogues, mosques and other congregations interested in establishing FCN programs; maintain statistics about programs around the state; and serve as an advocate on health issues.

Seiler said that most Faith Community Nurses in Oklahoma currently are volunteers. Only about 10 percent work in paid positions. She said she hopes to build a database to record outcomes of the programs to document the impact of the nurses in each community. “It’s a valuable ministerial position and churches need to see that,” she said.

Seiler said Catholic Charities will assemble a Faith Community Nursing advisory council this fall that will include people from around the state representing various groups and religions.

She encourages any registered nurses who may have completed the training in another state and would like to get involved in the Oklahoma network, or anyone interested in enrolling for the next training scheduled Oct. 28 to Nov. 4, to phone her at the FCN Resource Center at Catholic Charities, (405) 523-3009, or e-mail mseiler@catholiccharitiesok.org.

Faith Community Nurse Retreat Scheduled for September 20-22

The seventh annual Parish Nurse Retreat (now Faith Community Nurses) is scheduled for Sept. 20-22 at Our Lady of the Lake Retreat Center in Guthrie. This year’s theme is “To Heal as Jesus Healed.” This time will be one of prayer and reflection as well as nurturing found among a community of nurses. The retreat begins with a gathering at 5 p.m. Sept. 20 and the retreat closes after lunch on Sept. 22. Cost of the retreat with room and board is $75. Please register early by contacting Glenda Bronson, RN, at Mercy Health Center, (405) 936-5226 or gbronson@ok.mercy.net. There is a limit of 15 persons. This retreat is sponsored by the Faith Community Nurses Association (FCNA OK,) Mercy Health Center and Catholic Charities.

Vietnamese Services Continues at Catholic Charities

By Jane Moon
Catholic Charities

OKLAHOMA CITY — When waves of Vietnamese refugees poured into Oklahoma in the 1970s and ’80s, Catholic Charities was there to help them find homes, jobs and education so they could become self-sufficient citizens. Now, as those first arrivals care for their parents and grandparents, Catholic Charities is helping them address the unique needs of elderly family members.

Reba Dawson, Vietnamese services case manager, has worked with Vietnamese refugees since the early 1980s. Today, Dawson says, the greatest need for Vietnamese services rests with the elderly family members who still struggle with the English language and need help communicating with doctors and other senior service agencies.

In her position at Catholic Charities, Dawson works closely with the Asian Senior Citizen Association to complete paperwork for nearly 100 participants to enjoy a meal each month sponsored by the Oklahoma County Senior Nutrition Program.

During the monthly luncheons, a volunteer nurse conducts blood pressure, weight and blood sugar checkups. Six times a year a nutrition specialist presents programs using printouts in English and Vietnamese. Health and safety tips are also provided. About 200 people enroll each year.

A valuable byproduct of the ministry is the companionship it provides elderly participants who might otherwise remain isolated in American culture, Dawson said. She leads a weekly English class at Catholic Charities in which Vietnamese seniors practice reading, writing and conversation skills. Dawson also arranges periodic field trips to local restaurants, museums and other sites that allow participants to learn more about their adopted homeland.

Anyone needing information about Vietnamese services or other refugee assistance programs may contact the Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Resettlement Department at (405) 523-3002.
More Services
Supporting Parish Ministries
The parish is the foundation for the works of mercy and justice. Catholic Charities is a resource for pastors and parishes to collaborate in the works of social ministry.

Parish Outreach and Program Development
Parishes Social Ministry
Adopt A Family Project
Loaves and Fishes (HIV/AIDS Ministry)
Faith Community Nursing Training and Education

Volunteer Development and Services
Collaborating With Faith-Based and Community Organizations. Strong partnerships with others strengthens our ability to serve those in need.

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

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

Social Action
Legislative Advocacy
Education on Social Issues and Catholic Social Teaching
Archdiocesan Commission on Justice and Human Development
Sanctity of Life Mass
Rose Day

Scherler Helped Expand Role at Lawton Office

Lawton resident Virginia Shaw Scherler retired June 30 from the board of directors for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

During Scherler’s six years on the board, the Lawton office of Catholic Charities increased its programs and expanded its reach in the region. The office provides counseling, case management and adoption services to clients in Lawton and surrounding counties.

The agency made news recently when it implemented plans to rebuild the run-down Columbia Square Apartments in Lawton into a new 64-unit apartment complex for low-income residents. Catholic Charities and Mercy Housing, a non-profit national housing developer, collaborated with several public and private entities to ensure that the project provides a safe, affordable atmosphere for residents. Construction is expected to be completed in December 2008.

Scherler said she joined the board in 2001 at the urging of her now late husband, real estate appraiser John Scherler, who served five years on the board of directors of Columbia Square. Over the years, she said, wear and tear and encroaching crime in the area left the apartments an eyesore. Scherler’s husband and others in the community envisioned a better future for the site.

The rebuilding project was my husband’s baby. I am so glad it has finally taken shape,” she said. Besides the new building, Catholic Charities will provide a resident services coordinator who will help residents obtain counseling, job training and other services offered by various community agencies.

Scherler, a certified registered nurse anesthetist, is leaving the board to focus on her private practice at Southwestern Medical Center in Lawton. She said she is pleased with the growth in programs offered by the Lawton Catholic Charities staff. “They are making inroads not only in Lawton but surrounding towns, including Altus. They have a very good reputation.”

Scherler’s post will be filled by Lawton attorney Charles E. Wade Jr., whose law practice primarily deals with business, banking, real estate and school matters. He has served as president of the Lawton Chamber of Commerce and on the boards of directors of United Way, Arts for All and Armed Services YMCA.

Out With The Old, In With The New

Columbia Square Housing in Lawton is being torn down to make way for new apartment units. Sixty-four units will be built to replace the old apartments. The first apartments are planned for completion in December 2007. Catholic Charities and Mercy Housing have been the lead partners in this endeavor.
Respect for Maternity Home Residents Inspires Gift of Symbolic Tree

By Jane Moon
Catholic Charities

Through foresight, generosity and a little luck, two men have provided a symbol of hope for teenage girls in crisis pregnancies.

This summer, Bobby Bankston entered a drawing at a golf tournament to win a sapling grown from the seed of the “Survivor Tree” which weathered the 1995 downtown bombing and now thrives at the site of the Oklahoma City National Memorial. Bankston says he did not expect to win, but bought a chance in reverence for the prize: the offspring of the elm tree that survived destruction and emerged as a sign of strength and grace for people around the globe.

Rahe Oldham, who raised the sapling from a seed he collected in 1997 from the ground at the bomb site, provided the tree for the drawing along with free planting and two years of care. Oldham said 600 of the seeds he gathered survived the first growing season and nearly 400 have been transplanted nationwide.

When Bankston won the drawing, he donated the 7-year-old sapling to the Catholic Charities Holy Family Maternity Home in Midwest City. Oldham planted it in July in an arbor near the home’s backyard patio.

Holy Family Maternity Home provides shelter and services for unwed, pregnant and parenting, 12- to 17-year-old girls and their babies. Staff members counsel and assist residents, family members and birth fathers. The home is licensed by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and is staffed 24 hours a day to help mothers and children discover their strengths, goals and gifts.

Bankston says he was compelled to donate the Survivor Tree’s offspring to the home out of his respect for the girls who live there and his hope for their babies. “The girls are kind of survivors, too,” he says. “It was the perfect place for it.”

The home serves people of all faiths regardless of ability to pay. Services include residential care for expectant and new mothers; opportunities for spiritual growth; individual, group and family counseling; access to education for vocational training; access to health care; life skill training; parenting classes; adoption counseling and legal services; and continuing follow-up care.

Bankston’s wife, Gina, works closely with the home’s staff members and residents through her job as a counselor for at-risk teens in the New Beginnings program at Mid-Del Technology Center. The program allows pregnant high school students to continue their core classes while also receiving child-care training during the semester their babies are due.

Mary Jane Webster, director of the home, said a resident who chooses to participate in the New Beginnings program has the option of returning to regular high school after childbirth and placing her baby in the Mid-Del center’s child-care facility.

“The New Beginnings program is a valuable resource to us because it helps our girls stay in school,” Webster said. “The instruction they receive is good for them as well as their babies.”

Anyone wanting more information about Holy Family Maternity Home and its services may contact Webster at (405) 741-7419.

Stroke Prevention Course Credited With Saving Woman’s Life

By Mary Pinzon, RN
Catholic Charities

This summer, Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Oklahoma City, she immediately recognized that she was having symptoms of a stroke, and knew exactly what to do. Recalling the instructions from the course, she “knew to get to the hospital right away,” and told her daughter, “Let’s go to the hospital now” (10 minutes away).

“Our evaluations were so positive. In fact, many asked that more programs be offered. Churches play a significant role in health promotion and educational programs such as these can be so helpful.”

Upon arrival at the York District Hospital emergency department, her evaluation and treatment did indeed confirm the diagnosis. (“They said my CT scan showed two ‘spots’ on my brain definitely showing a stroke”). Altendorf said the staff of the emergency department at the hospital was amazed at her level of stroke knowledge, commenting, “Does everyone in America know as much about stroke as you do?” Her response was “No, I just had a course on stroke at my church!”

When asked why she attended the stroke course, Altendorf replied, “I’ve always been interested in medicine, planning to go to medical school until I fell in love, got married and had nine children.” However, recent changes in her own health made her determined to learn how to protect herself from stroke, and to be able to recognize the symptoms and act urgently.

The stroke course she attended at Saint Francis was titled “A Parish Approach to Stroke Prevention,” an educational program provided through the local American Heart Association called “Nurses In Churches.” Parish nurses are given stroke prevention updates and resources for use in their congregations to educate their own members about stroke awareness and risk reduction.

Mary Diane Steltenkamp, RN, Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Nurse and Faith Community Nursing Program coordinator at Catholic Charities, and Mary Pinzon, RN, Community Education nurse for the Integris Stroke Center of Oklahoma coordinated the six-month course. Local specialists assisted in the presentations.

“Our evaluations were so positive. In fact, many asked that more programs be offered. Churches play a significant role in health promotion and educational programs such as these can be so helpful,” said Mary Diane.

Now back home in Oklahoma and returning to her daily activities without weakness or deficits, Altendorf has some strong recommendations for others to benefit from her experience. “I don’t want it to happen again — anywhere.” For this smart stroke survivor, knowledge is power to beating a stroke.

For more information about health programs and the Faith Community Nursing Program, contact Mary Diane Steltenkamp, Catholic Charities, at (405) 523-3000.
Lawton Has New Catholic Charities Office

LAWTON — The Lawton Regional Office of Catholic Charities has a new home and an exciting future. As of Aug. 1, the office has moved to 11 N.W. 44th St., Suite C.

“We couldn’t be more pleased with our new location,” said Andrea L. Farmer, office coordinator. “We outgrew our old space and desperately needed something bigger. As we are continuing to grow and add new staff, we can now easily serve more clients.”

The new office has a multifunctional conference room that can be used for meetings and small group gatherings.

Another positive feature of the new location is its proximity to both the parishes in Lawton — Blessed Sacrament and Holy Family. “We’re just about at the halfway point between the two, and we hope that, we will be more available to our parishioners. And as we add more staff, we can start having a presence again in other communities in south- west Oklahoma, such as Duncan and Altus,” Farmer said.

Volunteers Share Importance of Giving of Their Time

One of Catholic Charities most valuable assets is its growing team of dedicated volunteers. Utilizing volunteers who are able to supplement staff time and fill gaps in services is one way the agency is meeting ever-increasing client needs without increasing expenditures. So, who volunteers at Catholic Charities and what do they do? There really is no single answer to this question. Volunteers come to Catholic Charities for a variety of reasons and there’s no such thing as a “typical volunteer.” Board members, disaster team, student interns and office assistants are all volunteers and their contributions are all extremely valuable.

Volunteer coordinator Debi Wagner sees the concept of volunteerism changing as baby boomers approach retirement and younger generations embrace service learning concepts. “These volunteers are educated and have diverse abilities and want to contribute in ways that are meaningful and valuable,” Wagner said. “Volunteers are being asked to contribute greater skill and are given more responsibility than ever before.”

The volunteer ministry at Catholic Charities is evolving to reflect these trends. Available volunteer positions include Web designer, disaster team and refugee resettlement assistant in addition to traditional clerical and direct service assignments.

A group that is traditionally overlooked in discussions about volunteers is board members. At Catholic Charities, the board members are very active volunteers, providing assistance and support to staff in many ways.

Saint Joseph’s Old Cathedral parishioner Molly Bernard is a perfect example. Managing partner of Allied Strategies, an HR consulting firm, Bernard has been a member of the Catholic Charities board of directors for the past three years. In addition to typical board member duties, she shares her particular expertise with the staff by offering trainings in various areas relating to HR issues. After one such training, Bernard was asked why she volunteers with Catholic Charities.

“I had been looking for a way to volunteer that put my skills to good use, as well as balancing my profession and my faith. Volunteering enriches your professional life and provides an extremely valuable contribution to the agency you serve.” To Bernard, one of the best things about Catholic Charities is the devotion of the staff to their clients. “These are people who really want to make a difference for others,” she says. Something she found surprising is the relatively small percentage of Catholics in the archdiocese who actually support the Catholic Charities campaign. She attributes this to Catholics not having a good sense of the scope and volume of services the agency provides. “We need to do a better job of letting people know what it is we do here, people who understand that we will definitely want to get involved.”

“Usually people seeking help come to us, but sometimes we have to go to them,” said Wagner. Disaster team volunteers traveled to Biloxi, Miss., in January to provide hurricane recovery assistance. Team members completed a variety of projects in a week, including reroofing an entire house. “Sometimes the best benefit is not in the shingles or drywall, but in the renewal of hope,” Wagner said. “The church group who had hosted the team in Mississippi called to be sure all had gotten home safely, and to tell us they had heard from the woman whose roof we repaired.”

During Katrina, the client’s home had 7 feet of water in it, and since the storm she has lost both her husband and her mother. After seeing her new roof, she said, “Those people from Oklahoma turned my life around. I had lost all hope of ever getting back into my house, and they gave me a starting point and a sense of hope for the future.”

Of course there is much work to be done at the office itself. Retired DHS employee Debbie Story is a parishioner at Epiphany and one of Catholic Charities’ new MVPs. Story comes in one day a week and assists with everything from data entry to setting up refugee apartments. She said that when she retired she was determined to make positive use of her time. Her skills and abilities are much in demand at Catholic Charities, and she knows she is making a difference. “I feel like it’s something I need to be doing. When you retire, you can’t just sit on the couch and quit growing as a person. You have the time, what are you going to do with it? If you start feeling sorry for yourself, you just need to go help someone else.”

For more information, call Debi Wagner at 523-3009 or e-mail dwagner@catholiccharitiesok.org.
Catholic Charities is a major provider of services to children and families in central Oklahoma. Last year, 1,890 clients were served in our Family Hope and Disaster Assistance programs.

- 512 people received marriage and family counseling at the St. Joseph’s Counseling Center. Counseling for our parochial schools was provided by Catholic Charities.
- Catholic Charities is seen as a leader in the community working to develop day services for the approximately 4,000 homeless people in central Oklahoma. The agency is working with other faith communities to respond to the need for case management and daily living needs of the homeless.
- Over the years, the Catholic Charities Parish Nurse Program — recently renamed Faith Community Nursing — has expanded to more than 50 faith communities of 20 denominations. In 2007, in cooperation with other health care organizations, Catholic Charities will establish the Faith Community Nursing Resource Center, a resource and training center for faith community nurses statewide.
- Regional offices in Enid, Clinton and Lawton serve our parishes and communities outside the OKC metropolitan area. This year, Catholic Charities, in partnership with other organizations, began the rehabilitation of Columbia Square affordable housing complex in Lawton which will house 64 low-income families when completed.
- Catholic Charities does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion or ability to pay.
- Most people served by the agency are non-Catholic.
- 1,600 individuals received Christmas gifts in Oklahoma City in 2006.
- 556 wildfire victims and Hurricane Katrina evacuees were helped with disaster relief.
- Social Action advocates for workers rights, welfare reform, pro-life issues.
- Five infants were placed this past year in permanent adoptive homes and 20 teenage mothers were served at the Holy Family Maternity Home.
- 116 senior residents were served at Villa Isenbart and Trinity Gardens.
- Volunteers donated 3,100 hours of service last year to Catholic Charities.

“Whatever you do to the least of My people, you do for Me.”

cf Matthew 24:40

Please consider pledging one hour’s salary per month to support the works of Catholic Charities.
Back To School
Learning the Ropes

MIDWEST CITY — Middle school students at Saint Philip Neri Catholic School spent their first two days of the new school year getting to know each other and building unity among the classes. Teacher Monica Schmidkofer believes that the activities the students participated in will help them to understand that the middle school is made up of many parts but together they are one body with no part being greater than the whole. Students were treated to a spiritual retreat led by youth minister, Frank Cleary. The students participated in games and activities that focused on integrity and building teamwork and cooperation. In the afternoon the new students and the sixth-graders took part in the annual hat ceremony that divided them into a house system modeled after Harry Potter. Students got to practice the principles they learned at the retreat by attending a ropes course. They were placed in their houses to work as a team on the ropes course presented by the University of Oklahoma. The students were challenged by choice to climb 40 feet up a pole and complete a maze of obstacles, jump from 20 feet in the air into a net, try solving physical mind puzzles, and scaling walls. The students thought the activities were very challenging but it was rewarding to work together and to see what they could accomplish. They learned the importance of relying on each other and working together.

Enrollment Up in Our Catholic Schools

Superintendent of Education Sister Catherine Powers, CND, said Catholic high school education is alive and well in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Sister Catherine said enrollment at the two Catholic high schools in Oklahoma City together is up by 63 students over last year. The total high school enrollment is 1,000 students with 681 students enrolled at Bishop McGuinness and 319 at Mount Saint Mary.

Bishop McGuinness’ enrollment is the highest since 2002, while the number of students attending Mount Saint Mary is “the highest since I have been keeping these figures from 1996,” Sister said.
Summer Changes Improve Sacred Heart School

By Eileen Dugan
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — Newly painted surfaces, the latest flat-screen TVs mounted on the walls of the classrooms, and a state-of-the-art bar code system up and running in the library are just some of the changes that greeted students on their first day back at Sacred Heart Catholic School.

All exterior classroom doors and the previously drab metal awnings outside Principal Joanna Camacho’s office and the computer lab have been painted a bright “Sacred Heart red,” guaranteed to energize the students.

The exterior walls of the second and third-grade building and the one housing the library and the parish office now sport a fresh coat of cream while a “cheery yellow” lightens up the previously faded walls of the room where the fifth-graders do their work.

Guy Nievas, Sacred Heart’s maintenance director, and his assistant, Mario Nievez, did most of the painting.

Also exciting is the technology Sacred Heart has purchased and installed. Thirty-seven-inch TVs mounted on the walls of the classrooms, and a state-of-the-art bar code system up and running in the library are just some of the changes that greeted students on their first day back at Sacred Heart Catholic School.

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Important changes have also taken place in Sacred Heart’s library. “It was painted a cheery yellow, new shelving was added, and an automated check-in and check-out system was put in place,” Camacho said.

Camacho was disappointed when the new library shelves could not be delivered until just before school started. There would be no time to install them before students arrived for the first day of school.

“To surprise me, Guy Nievas and his wife, Jill, the school secretary, showed up on the Sunday before school opened and installed the shelving so it would be there when school started. It was incredible. I was surprised and very grateful,” Camacho said.

Other changes in the library are due to the hard work of Debra Krausse and Kim Riley, Sacred Heart’s amazing library volunteers. They spent the last 10 months preparing bar codes for all of the library’s more than 6,000 books.

“The bar codes make the library check-out system much easier. It is a much more effective and efficient way to know what books we have in the library and to learn quickly which students are overdue with books,” Krausse said. “We can also tell which books are the most popular so we can purchase more copies of them or more books in that series.”

Krausse and Riley also purged the library of books students never read. Now they are in the process of entering all those bar codes into the school’s computer.

“I think Debra and Kim’s commitment to Sacred Heart is phenomenal. Both volunteers have spent an incredible amount of time organizing and maintaining the library. They want the best for our students. They are here every day from 8-3, keeping the library open and up to date. They have made it a wonderful, welcoming place,” Camacho said.

Sacred Heart has been working hard to find extra money to purchase new books for the library. They have spent $10,000 for new books over the last two years.

“We got the money from several sources: grants, our personal money and the school library store. Our store sells books, pencils, paper, erasers and novelty items, a little bit of everything. We use the profits to buy new books for the library,” Riley said.

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“The bar codes make the library check-out system much easier. It is a much more effective and efficient way...
Program Helps People of Faith Develop Passion for Justice

JustFaith is a parish-based social-action program begun in Louisville, Ky., in 1989 by Jack Jezreel, a former RCIA facilitator turned parish social minister. The JustFaith Mission Statement sums up the organization’s purpose: “JustFaith Ministries strives to provide faith formation processes and resources that emphasize the Gospel message of peace and justice, Catholic Social Teaching and the intersection of spirituality and action. The aim of JustFaith Ministries is to enable people of faith to develop a passion for justice and to express this passion in concrete acts of social ministry.”

The need for such a program became evident to Jezreel in 1988. He had just been put in charge of social ministry at a 1,200-household Kentucky parish. When he put out the call for parishioners to help him help the poor, he was appalled at the lack of response.

“I was dissatisfied not only because our numbers were small and the needs great, but also because of what such a situation revealed about the formation of the community. It seemed to me that as a Church we had not been called, challenged, nurtured or empowered to be a people who cared significantly about the poor and vulnerable,” Jezreel writes on his Web site. “I wanted to prepare my parishioners to become prophets and shakers of social ministry, not only in the parish but also in the greater Louisville area.”

When Jezreel introduced the first JustFaith program to his parish in 1989, 12 people signed on for the seven-month program. By the end of that time, this JustFaith dozen had been changed in fundamental ways.

* They became church leaders. They became the movers and shakers of social ministry, not only in the parish but in the greater Louisville area.
* They became chairpersons of the Hunger and Poverty Committee, got on the board of Habitat for Humanity, and initiated a relationship with a parish in the Third World.
* They became experts on a variety of subjects, from deforestation to the causes of revolution in Latin America.
* They changed jobs in order to do work more socially redeeming.

JustFaith Experience Opened Heart to Work in Social Justice

By Connie Blaney

Catholic Charities

About two and half years ago, Dick Klinge began a faith journey that has led him to a new outlook on life and a new career. He claims his JustFaith experience was a turning point in his life. In retrospect, he believes he has come full circle.

From growing up Catholic to his new position at Catholic Charities as director of Advocacy, Outreach and Legal Services, Klinge brings to the Catholic community his Catholic faith, his legal expertise, his enthusiasm and passion to promote Catholic Social Teaching in his new social action ministry.

“In July, I was given the privilege and honor to begin serving Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. I look forward to representing the Catholic Church advocating and educating on issues which are either consistent with or in opposition to Catholic Social Teaching,” Klinge said.

“I attribute my JustFaith experience to leading me to Catholic Charities.”

In 2005, Klinge joined a JustFaith group at his church, Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond. He was one of five parishioners who completed the program in 2006. “It was transformational. I realized I wanted to spend the rest of my legal career advocating for the poor and underprivileged,” Klinge said. Following JustFaith, he joined the Pastoral Ministry Program to gain a further understanding of the Scriptures.

Each step in Klinge’s faith journey has brought him closer to his current responsibilities at Catholic Charities. “I firmly believe that to do social justice work, you have to have an orthodox understanding of the church’s teachings, then push it to the edge. If we understand our biblical roots, it’s all about social justice.”

One of his primary roles is advocacy on legislative issues related to pro-life, immigration, poverty, fair wages, living wage, death penalty and other social justice issues. Klinge also plans to promote JustFaith and help educate Catholics (youth and adults) on the scope and breadth of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. He will also handle general legal issues for Catholic Charities. In addition to Social Action, he oversees Immigration Services and Parish Outreach and Program Development.

Klinge, who has practiced law since 1974, has extensive legal experience in the areas of environmental, health care, business, products liability and Internet law. He has split his career between extensive courtroom experience and as general counsel for three Oklahoma-based corporations. From 1993-2002, he owned his own law firm, Richard Klinge & Associates. In his most recent position (2002 to 2007), he served as legal counsel for the Schuster Group. He also served five years on the Edmond Public Schools Board of Education and has served on the board of directors for Kansas Newman University.

He was raised in Wichita, Kan. He graduated from Kapaun High School, a Jesuit institution, and from Kansas Newman College, a Catholic University located in Wichita. His law degree is from Washburn University in Topeka.

Dick and his wife, Maureen, have been married for 33 years and have two daughters, Amy, 28, who is married to Steve Bowman, and Kristen, 23. Dick and Maureen are members of Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church. Dick serves on the board of the Social Ministries Committee.
JustFaith: It’s About Working for Justice Because of Our Faith

By Eileen Dugan
The Sooner Catholic

Before taking part in JustFaith, Barbara Hietpas of Saint John Nepomuk Parish in Yukon had always wondered why, if God is all powerful, He does not do something about the tremendous suffering in the world.

“The JustFaith program helped me to see that God has done something. He has put you and me on this earth,” Hietpas said. “In JustFaith, you learn that God is calling each of us to do something to carry on the work that Jesus began when He was here. We are called to follow in His footsteps.

“To be entrusted to carry on Jesus’ work is humbling and powerful. God is putting us on almost the same level as Jesus. Jesus is not the Supreme Being up in the sky. He is here. He walks with us. We walk together,” Hietpas said.

“With JustFaith, some people may be called to do great things, but it’s OK to do little things. The key is to do,” she said.

Hietpas and seven others from Saint John’s became interested in JustFaith two years ago, after hearing Jack Jezreel, creator of the program, speak at the Catholic Pastoral Center in Oklahoma City. The eight parishioners were so inspired by Jezreel’s explanation of JustFaith they went home and started a JustFaith group.

Some 30 weeks later, all say they have been changed. Five of the eight were transformed in ways significant enough to compel them to take on new responsibilities in their parish and community. Hietpas joined with another JustFaith participant to start a social-ministry group at Saint John Nepomuk. Another person became a Stephen’s Minister, one especially trained to help people in crisis. A St. Vincent dePaul thrift store, while another person became a social-ministry group at Saint John the Baptist Parish.

A fourth participant started working at the Dorothy Day Center on church property. It is a food storage facility that stores food for different organizations until they can distribute it to the poor. A third JustFaith person became deeply involved in St. Vincent dePaul work, becoming the individual people call when help is needed.

At Corpus Christi Parish, Debby Bennett recently completed that parish’s first JustFaith program as a co-facilitator.

“JustFaith taught me that poverty affects us all. I realized that I don’t do enough. I need to look at what I consume and where I put my money, for these things affect other people.

“JustFaith made me rethink the whole idea of poverty. It’s not an easy thing to address. It made me look at institutional sin. It made me realize the problem is much deeper than immediate need. Our policies and laws affect peoples’ lives, and it takes a lot of political will to change them for the better,” Bennett said.

Like Hietpas from Saint John’s in Yukon, Bennett thinks “There’s always something everyone can do to help.”

“We should all be doing something in ‘our little neck of the woods’,” she said.

Bennett marvels at how her JustFaith group has bonded with another. “We realized that our strength was in numbers,” she said.

Bennett’s JustFaith group that ended earlier this month is already thinking about what they can do as a group to work toward social justice.

“Taking part in the JustFaith program is a life-changing experience. I look at things differently now. I feel compelled ‘to do’. If you are not doing anything, you are part of the problem, not part of the solution,” said Hietpas.

JustFaith: How to Get Started

JustFaith is a life-changing 30-week program you can experience through your parish.

Judy Reilly, assistant director of Parish Outreach and Program Development at Catholic Charities, calls it “a process of social-justice formation and education.”

If your parish registers for JustFaith, it will receive a detailed syllabus, facilitation training and direction, prayer materials, retreat instructions and follow-up opportunities.

JustFaith participants read 11-13 books over a seven-month period. They also participate in two retreats and several “hands-on experiences of the poor,” learn new and traditional forms of prayer, watch videos and take part in focused discussions on all of the above.

If JustFaith sounds like something you and your parish would be interested in, call Judy Reilly at Catholic Charities at (405) 523-3009.

There is a very significant spiritual element to JustFaith. I have never been through a conversion process as powerful as the one in this program,” said Linda Clark of Saint Charles Borromeo Parish.

“JustFaith taught me that poverty is not part of the solution,” said Hietpas. “If you are not doing anything you are part of the problem.”

“I look at things differently now. I feel compelled ‘to do’. If you are not doing anything, you are part of the problem, not part of the solution,” said Hietpas. Our family believes in and supports the mission of Catholic Charities. While our home parish does a great job in our local community of reaching those in need, Catholic Charities is able to reach those in need in all corners of our diocese. They are an excellent example of our Catholic faith in action across Oklahoma.

Ray and Irene Haefele
Saint John the Baptist Parish, Edmond
Eagle Scout Eases Wait for Those Needing Doctor

By Monica Knudsen
Parishioner of Saint Charles

OKLAHOMA CITY — Michael Johnson saw patients standing in line on the front porch waiting area of the Saint Charles-Catherine McCauley Free Health Clinic. He thought there must be a more comfortable way for people who were sick or injured to wait for a doctor or nurse.

Thus was born the 16-year-old’s Eagle Scout project. Johnson, a parishioner at Saint Charles Borromeo and member of Scout Troop 179, designed and built the benches on the front porch and sides of the white frame house on State Street, east of the church building.

The clinic has operated for 14 years, and provides care for about 1,200 people annually. It is sponsored by Mercy Hospital and staffed by volunteer doctors and nurses of all faiths. Free walk-in, non-emergency medical care is available on Mondays for anyone who is economically disadvantaged or without health insurance. Clinic director Barbara Trimble said patients should arrive at the opening time of 4:30 p.m. in order to be sure of seeing a doctor or nurse. Specialty clinics, such as the one for diabetes management, are available by appointment.

Besides the waiting area, Johnson also noticed a neglected garden, and improved the landscaping. He spent two work days pulling trees, shrubs and weeds, building benches and planting flowers. Total time for planning and presenting the proposal, design and labor, was about 100 hours.

Helpers on the project included Vince Brady, Saint Charles director of Religious Education, Scouts from Troop 179 and their parents. With donated materials and purchased lumber, the project cost about $200. He raised the funds by donations from family and friends.

“You have to plan on compromises,” Johnson said. “If one thing doesn’t work, you have to find another way to do it. I also had to learn myself how to build, and then show other people. It teaches you how to handle situations and people skills, also leadership and teamwork.”

Barbara Trimble was delighted with the improved curb appeal and patient comfort. “It has made the front of the clinic look so pleasant,” she said. “It’s welcoming, and there is lots more room for people to sit.”

For further information or an appointment at the Saint Charles-Catherine McCauley Free Health Clinic, call the Parish Office at 789-2595.

Scouts/Camp Fire Youth Prepare for Annual Retreat

Your prayers and support help make a difference in the life of our youth involved in the Archdiocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting and Camp Fire (ACCSCF).

Each fall ACCSCF hosts an outdoor Retreat at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Camp that focuses the youth on their gifts from God, service projects and how they can continue to grow in their Catholic faith. Youth group members, Scouts, Camp Fire and entire Confirmation classes attend the retreat. It is a lot of fun for the kids and the adults.

Oct. 12 marks the beginning of this awesome weekend in 2007.

The retreat hosted by ACCSCF is sponsored by various organizations including the Knights of Columbus and other Catholic friends like Dairy Max. Donations are a vital part of our success in reaching more youth so we can keep the cost low and achieve maximum attendance to this inspiring weekend of fun, faith and friends for your youth.

Feeding more than 100 hungry youth three times a day gets expensive fast! We are grateful for all those who support our Scouting/Camp Fire efforts.

Each year, youth attending the retreat work on projects to make OLOG Camp more beautiful and inspirational. They have planted trees around the pond, dining hall and pavilion, constructed and placed Stations of the Cross markers along the path to the chapel, and created and sent handmade cards to the homeless.

Catholic Adult Education

Classes Set at Epiphany

Catholic adult education sessions are set for the fall at Epiphany starting Sept. 20. Father M. Price Oswalt, associate pastor at Epiphany, and Lay Apologist Rhett Brotherton will be the facilitators for the “This Is Our Faith” sessions. Father Oswalt said, “These sessions are open to any adult wishing to learn more about their faith, especially the Catholic experience of Christianity.” This year’s sessions will focus on “Bible Basics.” The sessions will be held in Bryce Hall at Epiphany Parish, located at 7336 W. Britton Road, Oklahoma City, and will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. on the first and third Thursdays of each month. “We hope to be able to build upon what was started last year, when we did ‘The Basics of the Faith’ sessions,” Father Oswalt said. “These sessions were a big success, with over 100 people coming for more than 24 weeks. We hope others will join us,” Brotherton said.

Pope Benedict has called the Church to celebrate a special year dedicated to Saint Paul beginning on June 29, 2008, and so we thought the logical thing to do would be to study his letters. But before we can do that, we need to make sure folks have a basic understanding of Scripture,” Father Oswalt commented.

“So we want to use this year to build the foundation of Scripture, so that next year folks might be better equipped to study Saint Paul’s writings, since he wrote the majority of the New Testament.”

The “This Is Our Faith: Bible Basics” sessions are open to everyone and baby-sitting will be provided.
Catholic Voice Needed to Help Shape U.S. Farm Policy

By Robert Gronski
Policy Coordinator National Catholic Rural Life Conference

Q: How are low-income families able to put food on the table for their children?
A: Nutrition programs in the U.S. farm bill.

Q: How are family farms able to keep farming when crop prices are below the cost of production?
A: Farm support programs in the U.S. farm bill.

Q: How can we help protect farmland from environmental harm?
A: Conservation programs in the U.S. farm bill.

Q: What can the people of God do to feed the hungry, assure fair treatment of producers, and protect God’s creation for present and future generations?
A: Improve the U.S. farm bill.

The Church has a stake in the farm bill. In setting farm and food policies for our nation, the farm bill has a crucial impact on how food is grown, what foods are grown, who grows the food and who is able to eat good, nutritious food.

The Gospel calls all of us to feed the hungry, help the vulnerable among us, and care for God’s creation. Many people do so through charitable work in their communities and towns. But it is possible to greatly expand our charitable work by shaping public policy and letting Congress know how we feel about the farm bill.

The time to act is now. The House completed their work on the farm bill in late July; the Senate takes up the farm bill in September. Faith and social justice groups are raising their voices and calling for policies and programs that can truly revitalize and sustain family farms. This is good for rural America and good for all who eat.

But aren’t family farms virtually gone? It is true that many who want to farm cannot continue to do so or, if young adults, unable to get started. Farmland is expensive and land rental rates keep increasing, not to mention high costs for machinery, fuel, fertilizers, seeds and other inputs. New policies can be set in place that will replenish the countryside with a multitude of sustainable farmers and ranchers. This can happen in tandem with financial incentives to conserve our natural resources and new programs to revitalize a healthy food system for all.

**Farm Bill Policy Priorities**

**Maintain strong nutrition programs**

A top priority is a strong nutrition program that reauthorizes and improves the food stamp program, the nation’s first defense against hunger, and bolsters the efforts of the emergency food assistance system. Ask Congress to maintain full funds for nutrition, but without pulling funds from crucial farm programs.

**Make farm payments fair**

Income support payments provide a safety net for farmers who grow crops subject to persistent low prices. However, these payments encourage overproduction and do not fix the low price problem. The House bill continues a failed policy where most payments go to the largest operations. A major first step is to limit the amount any farm operation can receive so that more dollars are available to other agricultural and rural development programs. Ask Congress to support payment limitation and better target support for family farms.

**Reward good land and water conservation**

The farm bill does not receive the funding needed to adequately conserve land and water on all eligible farms and ranches. The House bill did increase funding for some programs, but improvements and targeting are still needed. The Senate should enact conservation provisions that better support family farms while promoting land stewardship. Ask Congress to accelerate the conservation of working lands, God’s creation, and substantially increase conservation funding, but limit the amount any farm or ranch operation can receive.

**Ensure fair and competitive agricultural markets**

There are few remaining open and competitive markets where farmers and ranchers can sell their crops and livestock. Markets are increasingly controlled by large multinational corporations. For many farmers attempting to sell their crops and livestock, they must enter into contracts with these corporations. The House bill does not provide sufficient protection against unfair market practices. As a first step, the Senate bill should include a fair competition livestock provision that ensures contracts are fair and markets are open to independent producers.

**Restore regional farm markets and local food supplies**

The farm bill can help expand the opportunities for farmers and ranchers to sell their products locally and provide fresher and more nutritious foods. In addition, policies increasing public awareness about healthy foods will help build local and regional food systems.

Visit www.ncrlc.com to learn more about these agriculture and food policies and how to talk to congressional representatives about a fair and just farm bill.

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**The Catholic Foundation**

**CORNERSTONE**

**Planned Giving**

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma is people ... people who have a concern for God’s work on earth ... people who are willing to express their commitment through the financial support of projects and programs that make a real difference in the lives of others and the future of our Catholic faith.

Ultimately, we need to return to God a portion of all that we have received in life. Through Planned Giving, you can ensure the long-term financial viability of the Catholic parish, school or charitable institution of your choice. The final act of Giving is in the action of Planning.

For more information on Planned Giving contact:

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma, Inc.
P.O. Box 32180
Oklahoma City, OK 73123
(405)721-4115  www.cfook.org
tcasso@catharchdioceseokc.org

Please Remember the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Your Estate Plans
Letters

The Good Old Days

In response to the article on the Coronado Club of Oklahoma City, I thoroughly enjoyed reading the “beginnings” of the club. What I remember about the Coronado Club in OKC occurs from the late ’40s into the ’50s. During that time I lived and worked in Tulsa and was a member of the Catholic Activities group. We had many happy encounters with Coronado Club members through our bowling teams. I recall that the late (Father) Don Smith was president of Coronado Club at one time. Of course both clubs were set up, I believe, for young men and women of the Catholic faith to meet others of the same faith while being away from their homes. Many marriages came about for both Coronado and Catholic Activities members. So I say congratulations to all Coronado Club members who are now celebrating 60 years of wedded bliss.

Those were truly the good old days.

Dorothy Hardesty
Shawnee

Across Oklahoma

Fall Fest Sept. 22

PONCA CITY — St. Mary’s Church will celebrate its Annual Fall Fest on Saturday, Sept. 22 from 6:15 p.m. to 10 p.m. Family fun featuring game booths, inflatables, silent auction, live auction, raffle, bratwurst and more. No admission charge. This is a fundraiser for St. Mary’s School. St. Mary’s is located at 721 S. Seventh St. in Ponca City.

Festival Sept. 22

NORMAN — St. Joseph’s ECDC Fall Family Festival will be held from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Sept. 22 at 421 E. Acres (St. Joseph’s gymnasium). Activities include dinner, inflatable rides, petting zoo, pony rides, balloon artist, carnival games with prizes, concessions, raffle baskets and silent auction. For more information, contact Maureen Dolan at 447-8608.

Reception to Provide Information

OKLAHOMA CITY — Catholic Charities is hosting a reception for the Downtown Conference of St. Vincent dePaul from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 23 at Trinity Gardens apartments, 3825 NW 19th St. The reception is to provide information about the St. Vincent dePaul Conference and explain how volunteer teams reach out to the community by providing emergency assistance to clients in need. The St. Vincent dePaul Society operates two thrift stores in the Oklahoma City area. These stores sell donated goods at very reasonable prices and the proceeds are used to provide assistance to SVDP clients.

St. Vincent dePaul conferences, located in many parishes in the archdiocese, are always in need of dedicated volunteers to assist in this ministry of compassion and service.

Please come for a fun afternoon and you may find a new way to put your faith into action. Call 9272. St. Francis and Rosary are located at 1910 Meridian Avenue in Oklahoma City. Early bird registration is $35 (deadline is Sept 26).

Saint to be Remembered

DEL CITY — St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church will celebrate Mass in Tagalog on Sept. 24 at 6 p.m. The Mass will be dedicated to St. Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino saint. Children interested in participating as an angel or candle bearer should contact Julie at 420-5818 for details.

Archbishop to Address Statewide Conference on Domestic Abuse

OKLAHOMA CITY — Oklahoma’s largest educational conference regarding domestic and sexual violence will feature a faith-based tract, designed to educate and empower those within the faith community to understand and recognize relationship violence and to be able to assist victims within the faith community. Archbishop Beltran will be the keynote speaker during the portion of the conference dealing with the faith community. The conference is Oct. 3-4 and will be held at the Clarion Convention Center on Meridian Avenue in Oklahoma City. Early bird registration is $35 (deadline is Sept 26).

This conference will help prepare individuals who wish to begin the Safe Place Faith Community program at their parish. CEUs available. For more information, contact the Archdiocesan Office of Family Life at (405) 721-8944. Register online at www.regonline.com/721248

Beat the Kolache Crowd

YUKON — The Altar Society of St. John Nepomuk Catholic Church will be selling kolaches on Friday, Oct. 5 from 3 p.m. until 7 p.m. in the school gym. The Altar Society has been making kolaches for this event for more than 37 years. Yukon’s annual Czech Festival is being held on Saturday, Oct. 6. You can beat the rush at the Czech Festival by buying on Oct. 5.

Carnival Oct. 6

LAWTON — Blessed Sacrament Church will host its “CAR”nival from 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 6. The event will be at 6th & Gore Boulevard and plans call for the fun to be held outdoors. There will be game and food booths and bingo.

Annual Event Oct. 7

OKLAHOMA CITY — St. Francis Catholic Church and Rosary School will celebrate the 19th annual OKTOBERFEST on Sunday, Oct. 7. The fun begins at 1 p.m. This event is held each year on the first Sunday in October. This is the 80th anniversary of Rosary School. The event begins with a 2-mile Fun Run through the historic Gatewood Neighborhood and continues through the afternoon with great food, music and entertainment. There will be fun activities for families and people of all ages, including games, prizes, rides and much, much more! Please join us for an afternoon of fun and fellowship! For more information or to register for the 2-mile Fun Run, please contact the Rosary School office at 525-9272. St. Francis and Rosary are located at 1910 NW 19th St.
Priest: Mother Teresa’s Emptiness, Silence Makes Her Greater

VATICAN CITY, Aug. 27, 2007 (Zenit.org). — Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta’s dark night of the soul kept her from being a victim of the media age and exalting herself, says the preacher of the Pontifical Household.

Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa said this in an interview with Vatican Radio, commenting on previously unpublished letters from Mother Teresa, now made public in Doubleday’s book “Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light,” edited by Father Brian Kolodiejchuk, postulator of the cause of Mother Teresa’s canonization.

In one of her letters, Mother Teresa wrote: “There is so much contradiction in my soul. Such deep longing for God — so deep that it is painful — a suffering continual — and yet not wanted by God — repulsed — empty — no faith — no love — no zeal. Souls hold no attraction. Heaven means nothing — to me it looks like an empty place.”

Father Cantalamessa explained that the fact that Mother Teresa suffered deeply from her feeling of the absence of God affirms that it was a positive phenomenon. Atheists, he contended, are not afflicted by God’s absence but, “for Mother Teresa, this was the most terrible test that she could have experienced.”

He further clarified that “it is the presence-absence of God: God is present but one does not experience his presence.”

Martyrdom

Father Cantalamessa contended that Mother Teresa’s spiritual suffering makes her even greater.

He said: “The fact that Mother Teresa was able to remain for hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament, as many eye-witnesses have testified, as if enraptured ... if one thinks about the condition she was in at that moment, that is martyrdom!”

“Because of this, for me, the figure of Mother Teresa is even greater; it does not diminish her.”

The Capuchin priest further lauded Mother Teresa’s ability to keep her spiritual pain hidden within her. “Maybe, this was done in expiation for the widespread atheism in today’s world,” he said, adding that she lived her experience of the absence of God “in a positive way — with faith, with God.”

A Letter to Emily, a Prayer for a Teen

Once in a childhood, a girl encounters a cool baby sitter. She has a funky wardrobe and a fabulous nail polish collection. She lets you stay up past your bedtime and play with her hair — even if your French-braid attempt results in a tangled disaster.

For me, this was Aunt Kathy. She could draw bubble letters and turn cartwheels with ease. And she told suspenseful plots around Care Bear characters.

In her honor, I vowed to become a cool baby sitter. Julie Andrews nurtured my ambition. I resolved to be one part Mary Poppins, one part Fraulein Maria: gliding down banisters, serving spoonsful of sugar and providing musical comfort during thunderstorms.

So when Aunt Jan went into labor on Thanksgiving of 1990, delivering my first maternal cousin, I was thrilled. We gathered around the fireplace at Grandma’s house, praying for the baby’s safe arrival.

“We’ll love it no matter what,” I declared with an 8-year-old’s earnestness, “even if it has a third foot.”

The subject of that prayer was a round baby named Emily. She took a while to talk and even longer to sprout hair, but she soon demonstrated all that I needed: functional ears and a fertile imagination. When we slept over at Grandma’s, I told her stories about Queen Cleopatra and St. Rose of Lima, painting my heroine’s with all the color I could conceive.

Emily attended my soccer games, greeted me with hugs and picked up my clarinet when I graduated from band. She grew up in a blink, transforming into a beautiful teenager with a quick sense of humor, a gracious demeanor and a sharp fashion sense.

Emily slept over at my first apartment, and we stayed up late talking about boys and eating cookie dough. The next day, I styled her hair and drove her to Target, where we donated silly accessories and asked random shoppers to photograph us.

Last fall when I called to see if she passed her driving test, Emily asked me to be her confirmation sponsor. That night I began brainstorming the advice I could share with her.

I remember the trials of adolescence in painful detail. Crying to the dermatologist. Arguing with Mom in the fitting room. Curbews and crushes and Cosmo quizzes. And that unforgiving mirror, where minutes melt into hours and sisterly dynamics sizzle with the curling iron.

It seems even harder for teens today, who have to deal with bald Britney, imprisoned Paris and the ubiquitous digital camera.

So here are my thoughts.

Dear Emily,

I know how much you want to be pretty and popular. I did, too. As a teenager, I engaged in a relentless pursuit of perfection. Yet all the hair-spray in the world couldn’t hold everything in place. Some days my life felt as chaotic as my bedroom, the pitiful pathway of Hurricane Christina.

Here’s my advice to you: Focus on character more than achievement or appearance. When you are kind to others, your virtue will shine through, lighting up your face.

Be kind to yourself, too. God has amazing plans for your life that will unfold according to his infinite wisdom and perfect timing. So if the picture looks foggy now and if progress feels slow, be patient.

I see that you can laugh at yourself, and I’m glad. Humility is holiness, and laughter is its echo. Never take yourself too seriously.

This month you’ll be confirmed in your Catholic faith, the greatest gift you can carry along during those bumpy high school years. Let it be your guide.

In the meantime, don’t try to be That Girl. Just work at being you. Because God exceeded my prayer 17 years ago: You are absolutely perfect.

Christina Capecci is a freelance writer from Inver Grove Heights, Minn. E-mail her at christinacap@gmail.com.
Buenas Noticias...

...Y de ser necesario, usa palabras

Estoy escribiendo en el día de hoy acerca de una emocionante experiencia misionera que he completado en Liberia, país ubicado al oeste de África. Aunque se traslada solamente una semana, mi visita al Centro de Rehabilitación de Nuestra Señora de Fátima fue inolvidable.

A través de los años, he tenido maravillosas experiencias en muchas partes de nuestro país, como también en Guatemala y África. Sin embargo, esta experiencia en el Centro de Rehabilitación de Nuestra Señora de Fátima en Monrovía fue la más inspiradora y la más desafiante de todas.

Este centro de rehabilitación, diseñado especialmente para ser de fácil acceso por varias razones, es esencial para el éxito de los niños. No obstante, estoy convencido de que si está bien formado por la Divina Providencia.

El centro se inició en Cabo de Palma, Liberia. Luego, debido a la guerra civil, las escuelas del territorio, y el centro fue trasladado al oeste de Costa de Marfil. Después de la guerra, el centro fue rehabilitado en un edificio antiguo.

En el centro, hay un centro de cuidado para niños que están en tránsito y cinco años. No obstante, estoy convencido de que si está bien formado por la Divina Providencia.

Durante los últimos años, el Centro de Rehabilitación de Nuestra Señora de Fátima ha crecido y se ha desarrollado más allá de los propios horizontes.

En este centro, hay un centro de cuidado para niños que están en tránsito y cinco años. No obstante, estoy convencido de que si está bien formado por la Divina Providencia.

Dios trabaja maravillosamente a través de él, como una misión de amor.

Hoy, María Spona, religiosa de la Congregación de las Hermanas Bernardas Franciscanas y directora del Centro de Rehabilitación de Nuestra Señora de Fátima, fue enviada por su congregación como misionera al comienzo de los últimos años.

Durante su visita, le fue conferida la responsabilidad de dirigir la clínica del centro. Fue allí donde se dio cuenta de que había una inmensa necesidad de proveer cuidados pronatales a un gran número de mamás y de niños desamparados en el país. Fue el momento en que se dio cuenta de la importancia de este centro.

El Centro de Rehabilitación de Nuestra Señora de Fátima se encuentra ubicado sobre un terreno en donde está cercado de cambios y sonidos de la ciudad. Fue la única propiedad que se podía comprar.

A la primera vista, este terreno no se ve muy atractivo, porque es oscuro y lleno de ruidos. Pero, lo que sí, es que el centro es la esencia del trabajo de Dios a través de quien hace su ministerio en su Nombre.

Aunque el lugar donde se encuentra el centro no es perfecto, la clínica se convirtió en un lugar muy importante. Allí hay una clínica con la personalidad de Cristo en el Santuario de Santimán.

Todos los domingos, hay un servicio de una parroquia cercana para celebrar la Misa a los miembros del centro de rehabilitación. Aunque la parroquia está a pocas millas del cen- tro, se hace un camino largo por las calles de la ciudad, por lo que tiene una hora llegar a la parroquia.

Pero, imagínense que difícil sería, si no estuviera transportado a seis docenas niños desamparados. Además de la Misa Dominical, cuando viene algún servicio de visita, los niños se reúnen al menos tres veces en la capilla para orar.

Durante la semana, bien temprano, S'Onnea deja el centro alrededor de las cinco de la madrugada para asistir a la Misa mañana de las siete de la parroquia.

Los dormitorios de los niños varían de ser destruidos por un incendio hace algunos años atrás. Estos dormitorios estaban reconstruidos y ahora albergan numerosos niños. Cada dormitorio tiene una habitación para niños y un niño. Los dormitorios están diseñados para albergar a una gran cantidad de niños. Los niños desamparados que se encuentran en el centro, se cuidan y se tienen bajo la atención de los niños desamparados. Lo que se ha logrado en un gran sacrificio y esfuerzo para alcanzar esta meta.

Debido a que no se puede lidiar con los cortes de electricidad, los niños desamparados no pueden tener la clínica.

La actual clínica del centro es tan pequeña que puedo decir que su tamaño apenas duplica la dimensión del edificio. En ese pequeño espacio trabajan tres personas todos los días.

Los servicios de esta clínica no se limitan sólo a los cuidados prontos, sino que también atienden a todos los enfermos o heridos que no requieren hospitalización, por supuesto, y siempre que haya medicamentos para curar.

No obstante, las mamás son las pacientes más activas de la clínica. Se hace evidente que se requiere urgentemente de una clínica más grande y un doble de equipos médicos adecuados.

Pero no como se puede reco- mendar una recreación o instituciones privadas para la construcción de una nueva clínica cuyo costo se estimó en unos docenas mil dólares.

Por lo tanto, es evidente que se requiere de una clínica más grande y un doble de equipos médicos adecuados.

Así, ellos aportan asesor de Cristo a través de su generosidad y dedican las mejores personas que siguen el camino de San Francisco: "Pedro el Evangelista en todo momento, y de ser necesario, usa palabras".

Comenzó este relato diciendo que no era tan emocionante, y no se había escrito nada de lo que se podía hacer en poco tiempo.

Ciertamente todo no es sobre la Granja de Dios.

Pero la Granja de Dios trabaja a través de su pueblo. Esta misión, conducida por gente de fe y amor, quienes realmente están dedicados.

Esta misión apoyada por un grupo de personas de fe y amor.

Para más información: www.edia.org/fecharisanublib.org.
Bajo la dirección del Padre Bruce Niele de la congregación Paulista

Parroquia San José invita cordialmente a una misión espiritual

Por Mauro Yanes  
Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — La comunidad católica hispana de la parroquia San José estaría invitiando a todos los hispanohablantes de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City para que asistan a una jornada evangélica que se efectuará el 17 al 19 de setiembre con la concesión del padre Bruce Niele.

Este evento religioso lleva como tema central: "Resarcimiento al Espíritu. Para los inmigrados en Oklahoma, los últimos meses han sido tumultuosos debido al debate público sobre inmigración. Sin embargo, hispanohablantes católicos han promovido la reconciliación y de la paz, lo que supone el entendimiento de una nueva realidad histórica de carácter demográfico y cultural en Oklahoma.

La misión en Norman forma parte del desarrollo espiritual que debemos tener para afrontar las diferencias de la vida diaria. Para buscar soluciones a los conflictos en cual-

Para más información: favor llamar al teléfono (605) 221-8080.

Presentada en México el pasado 28 de agosto

La Declaración de los derechos humanos del no concebido

MÉXICO, (SINTONIZ) — Un consenso de especialistas en derecho, bioló-

gica, medicina, educadores y otros actores sociales se están reuniendo en un tema de lo que es el desempeño del aborto, que coincide con el nacimiento de la vida. La promoción de tan importante documento fue impulsada por la Asociación Derechos del Concebido (Comunicación con Criterio A.C.).

Monseñor Pedro Agustín Rivera Díaz en la presentación de la Declaración reconoce que anteriormente no se planteaba el deber de reconocer los derechos del concebido. En consecuencia, hemos tenido en cuenta que, en términos generales, no se ha fijado nada más que el derecho de su viabilidad biológica hasta el nacimiento, es decir, de su capacidad para la vida, así como de las condiciones

La declaración está presentado ante las Cámaras de Diputados y Senadores, la Asamblea Legislativa del Distrito Federal, la Suprema Corte de Justicia, de la Suprema Corte General de la República, la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, la Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano, la Organización de las Naciones Unidas, la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO) y otros organismos, hasta obtener un aval universal.

En la definición de términos se señala como a partir de la evidencia científica se puede determinar con exactitud el momento del inicio del embrión que coincide con el nacimiento de la vida. La promoción de tan importante documento fue impulsada por la Asociación Derechos del Concebido (Comunicación con Criterio A.C.).

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La declaración está presentado ante las Cámaras de Diputados y Senadores, la Asamblea Legislativa del Distrito Federal, la Suprema Corte de Justicia, de la Suprema Corte General de la República, la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos, la Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano, la Organización de las Naciones Unidas, la Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (UNESCO) y otros organismos, hasta obtener un aval universal.

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Adjunct Faculty
The College for Working Adults at St. Gregory's University on the Shawnee campus has openings for adjunct faculty at the undergraduate and graduate level: General Education, Business and Business Law, Computer Science, Professional Development and Psychology. A master's degree is required, preference for candidates with experience teaching adults. Candidates must be supportive of and willing to contribute to the Catholic and Benedictine identity of the university. Send a cover letter, vita and transcripts to hr@st-gregorys.edu or mail to Dr. Denise Short, Associate Dean, St. Gregory's University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804.

Campus Minister
St. Gregory's University in Shawnee is looking for a campus minister. Responsibilities: Oversee and implement a comprehensive Catholic and Benedictine campus ministry program. Coordinate student-led retreat ministry as an outreach to area parishes and high schools (Buckley Team). Coordinate student liturgies and student liturgical ministries and assist in the planning of campus-wide liturgies. Provide catechetical and faith formation activities such as Bible study, Lectio Divina, discussions on Catholic social teaching, small faith groups, etc. Develop service and mission trip opportunities for students. Maintain a pastoral presence among students, faculty and staff.

Qualifications: master's degree in Theology or Pastoral Ministry is preferred. Bachelor's degree and experience in Youth/Young Adult Ministry will be considered. Mature understanding of the Catholic faith tradition and ability to communicate the tradition creatively and pastorally to young adults. Practicing Catholic in good standing. Good communication and social skills are essential. Willingness to work as part of a collaborative ministry environment. Willingness to work some evenings and weekends. Instrumental music ability (especially guitar or keyboard) is desirable. Completion of Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Safe Environment training program and requirements.

V.P. of Institutional Advancement
St. Gregory's University in Shawnee is looking for a vice president of Institutional Advancement. St. Gregory's University was founded in 1875 by Benedictine monks. It was originally chartered as the Catholic University of Oklahoma in 1916, and is a private, Roman Catholic university founded in the Benedictine tradition. The university's educational mission quickly expanded, and today St. Gregory's serves a diverse population of Catholics and other faiths from many states and foreign countries. We offer a number of majors across the spectrum including Natural Science, Social Science, Arts, Business and Theology. As a Catholic university, St. Gregory's does not avoid the difficult questions of our day, but rather prepares students to confront these questions creatively and objectively while striving for their destiny with faith and hope.

St. Gregory's University in Shawnee, Oklahoma's Benedictine, Catholic University, invites nominations and applications for the position of vice president of Institutional Advancement. The vice president reports directly to the president and is responsible for the planning and direction of all philanthropic initiatives for the university. The vice president will lead and plan ad all advancement initiatives to capitalize on the university's success story, engage a broad range of constituents and grow the endowment. The vice president will work closely with staff, senior administrators and board members to identify short- and long-term priorities for fundraising and manage a portfolio of major gift prospects. The university is currently in the silent phase of a major capital campaign.

The successful candidate will possess the ability to embrace and communicate St. Gregory's unique attributes and mission while leading a broad advancement program and enhancing the existing relationships with constituents across the country. A master's degree is required. It is strongly preferred that this individual be a practicing Catholic with knowledge of Benedictine spirituality. Salary and benefits are commensurate with experience. Electronic applications are preferred, and should include a cover letter and resume. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Nominations or requests for position specifications may be sent directly to the university: Shingi Goto, Executive Vice President, St. Gregory's University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804, sgoto@stgregorys.edu or by phone, (405) 878-5435.

Job Coaches
The Center of Family Love is looking for job coaches. Best described as a mentor for our community-based clients, helping them to get to their jobs as well as helping them to understand what their employer needs and expects from them. Competitive wages, training and a paid time-off program. For more information, call John Isenegger at the Center of Family Love at (405) 263-4658 or fax your resume to (405) 263-4563.

Caregivers Sought
The Center of Family Love is looking for a house leader (HTS) to help assisted-living clients with daily living chores. This would include meal prep, getting to appointments as well as to work. The Center of Family Love also has several openings for Direct Care Technicians (DCT). These openings are at both the ICF M/R and the Loosen Center. We have a significant shift differential, competitive wages, training and a paid time-off program. For more information, call John Isenegger at the Center of Family Love at (405) 263-4658 or fax your resume to (405) 263-4563.

Bishops Call on Amnesty International to Reverse Abortion Support
WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops decried Amnesty International’s recent decision to support abortion, calling the change in the organization’s longstanding position divisive and an affront to “people in many nations, cultures and religions who share a consistent commitment to all human rights.”

The bishops also urged the organization to reverse its policy to correct its error. Their position was outlined in an Aug. 23 statement from Bishop William S. Skylstad, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The statement follows.

A Statement of the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Bishop William S. Skylstad

After nearly a year of dialogue with leaders of Amnesty International (AI), the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops strongly protests the recent action of AI’s International Council to promote worldwide access to abortion. This basic policy change undermines Amnesty’s longstanding moral credibility and unnecessarily diverts its mission. In promoting abortion, Amnesty divides its own members (many of whom are Catholics and others who defend the rights of unborn children) and jeopardizes its support by people in many nations, cultures and religions who share a consistent commitment to all human rights.

Amnesty International’s action will lead many people of conscience to seek alternative means to end grave human rights abuses, fight injustice and promote freedom of conscience and expression. The essential work of protecting human life and promoting human dignity must carry on. We must continue to oppose the use of the death penalty and the crushing effects of dehumanizing poverty. We must continue to stand with prisoners of conscience, refugees and migrants, and other oppressed peoples. But we will seek to do so in authentic ways, working most closely with organizations who do not oppose the fundamental right to life from conception to natural death.

To some, the action of Amnesty International may appear to be a compassionate response to women in difficult situations of pregnancy, but this is a false compassion. True commitment to women’s rights puts us in solidarity with women and their unborn children. It does not pit one against the other but calls us to advocate on behalf of both. As our conference has argued, a far more compassionate response is to provide support and services for pregnant women, advance their educational and economic standing in society, and resist all forms of violence and stigmatization against women. The Catholic Church provides these services to many women around the world and will continue to do so.

We call upon Amnesty International once again to act in accord with its noblest principles, reconsider its error and reverse its policy on abortion.
9 St. Peter Claver Celebration. Corpus Christi Catholic Church will host the statewide Saint Peter Claver Day Mass. Archbishop Beltran will celebrate the 11 a.m. Mass, a lunch will follow Mass.

10 Mount Saint Mary home volleyball game vs. Bethany, varsity, 6 p.m.

14 Mount Saint Mary home football game vs. Crescent, kickoff at 7:30 p.m.

14 Bingo Night at St. Joseph’s Church in Norman. Light supper served at 6:30 p.m. Games begin at 7 p.m. with a first session; second session at 8:30 p.m. $5 per session, no limit on blackout cards, group photo of all the winners.

16 Third Annual Young Adult Mass and Dinner with Archbishop Beltran at the Catholic Pastoral Center. All young adults 18-39, single or married are invited to celebrate our Catholic faith, with Mass, great food and conversation! To register contact the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office at (405) 721-9220 or by e-mail: Bjaime@catharchdioceseokc.org. Registration deadline is Sept. 11.

16 Red Mass. St. Thomas More University Parish will host the 28th Annual Red Mass for law students and lawyers at 5 p.m. at 100 E. Stinson. The liturgy asks God’s blessing for those who administer law. After the Mass will be a wine and cheese reception for lawyers and law students.

16 Taize Prayer, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Red Plains Monastery, 728 Richland Road SW, Piedmont. For more details, call 373-4065. Optional video on Taize prayer at 6 p.m.

16 The Community of the Secular Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus — Oklahoma Community and Province of St. Therese meets at St. Joseph Carmelite Monastery in Piedmont from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call Janet Mifteld at (405) 848-6275 or Deacon Jim Breazile at (405) 377-9478.

17-25 Monthly Novena to the Infant Jesus, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, Nat'l Shrine of the Infant Jesus, Saint Wenceslaus Church, SH-99 7 miles N. I-40 or 20 miles S. I-44 at Stroud exit, Prague, (405) 567-3080.

20 Mount Saint Mary home volleyball game vs. Hennessey, varsity, 6 p.m.

22 Catechetical Congress 2007 hosted by the Catholic Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Office of Religious Education at the Catholic Pastoral Conference Center. This event is for all Catechist teaching in the parishes this year. There is no charge to attend, but please register through your parish catechetical leaders (DRE or youth minister) by Sept. 12. The day begins with exhibits and hospitality at 7:45 a.m.

22 Fall Fest at St. Mary’s Church in Ponca City from 6:15 to 10 p.m. Family fun featuring game booths, inflatables, silent auction, live auction, raffle, bratwurst and more. No admission charge. This is a fundraiser for St. Mary’s School. St. Mary’s is located at 721 S. Seventh St. in Ponca City.

22 Festival at St. Joseph’s. ECDC Fall Family Festival in Norman will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. at 421 E. Acres (St. Joseph’s gymnasium). Activities include dinner, inflatable rides, petting zoo, pony rides, balloon artist, carnival games with prizes, concessions, raffle baskets and silent auction. For more information, contact Maureen Dolan at 447-8608.

23 Reception to Provide Information for the Downtown Conference of St. Vincent dePaul. Catholic Charities is hosting the reception from 2 to 4 p.m. at Trinity Gardens apartments, 3925 NW 19th St. The reception is to provide information about the St. Vincent dePaul Conference and explain how volunteer teams reach out to the community by providing emergency assistance to clients in need. Call 523-3009 to R.S.V.P.

29 Weaving the Fabric of Your Life, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Karen Bullock, Benedictine Oblate, will be the presenter. Reflecting on the life of Jesus Christ, as woven by artist Linda King of Colorado. Join Karen at the red art barn at Red Plains Monastery, southwest of Piedmont. Call 373-4739 to register. Fee: $50, non-refundable deposit of $15. Bring a sack lunch.

For an extended calendar, go to www.catharchdioceseokc.org and click on Calendar of Events

High Mass to be Celebrated

A celebration of a Solemn High Mass according to the 1962 ritual of the Mass (the Tridentine Mass) will be held on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross at Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Kingfisher, at 6 p.m. Sept. 14. A reception will follow in Ross Hall.

The choir from St Michael’s Chapel in Bethany will be singing Spanish composer Tomas Luis de Victoria’s (1548-1611) “O Quam Gloriosum,” a rarely heard polyphonic masterpiece from the golden age of classical church music. Everyone is invited to attend to mark Pope Benedict’s recent instruction allowing the celebration of both forms of the Holy Mass in the Roman Catholic Church (both the 1962 Mass and the Novus Ordo Mass). Both forms of the Holy Mass are privileged expressions of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that “the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows.” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 10).

For both those who remember the 1962 Mass and those who have never experienced it, this will be a unique opportunity to visit and to participate in one aspect of the Church’s rich spiritual treasury. “For it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, the work of our redemption is accomplished, and it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 2).

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to unite for this special event.

Academy Plans Open House

SUBIACO, Ark. — Subiaco Academy, a Catholic college preparatory, residential and day high school for young men located in western Arkansas, is hosting a Discovery Weekend and an Open House Sunday for prospective students and their parents on Oct. 5-7.

Beginning in the fall of 2008, Subiaco Academy will be extending its educational offering to young men in the eighth grade. The Discovery Weekend is open to those in grades 7-10. All activities are free.

Visiting students will have an opportunity to experience dorm life, join in activities with current students and take the placement exam. Activities for parents include information sessions with faculty and current parents, classroom visits, campus tours and other fun activities.

Families have the option of visiting for the weekend or on Sunday only.

Established in 1887 by the Benedictine priests and brothers of Subiaco Abbey, the academy offers a challenging college preparatory curriculum for young men in grades 8-12 with emphasis on honors and Advanced Placement courses. The academy’s college placement rate is 100 percent with students attending some of the finest universities in the nation.

Students are also encouraged to develop their abilities in art, music and drama. Athletic teams in football, basketball, track and field, soccer, baseball, tennis, cross country and golf compete with other schools statewide. Subiaco Academy develops men in mind, body and spirit.

The academy is located on Arkansas Highway 22 approximately 45 miles east of Fort Smith and just south of Clarksville and Interstate 40.

For more information about the Discovery Weekend or to reserve a place, please contact the admissions office at 1-800-364-7824 or e-mail admissions@subi.org.
CARIDADES CATÓLICAS
APELO ANUAL 2007
Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City

Cualquier cosa que hagas con alguno de los más pequeños de Mi gente lo haces por Mi.”

cfMateo 25:40