DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST

Saint Mary’s parish is participating in One Church, Many Disciples, along with every church in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. This first ever major campaign will build a Shrine for Blessed Stanley Rother, support faith formation ministries and strengthen local parishes, including St. Mary’s. We join with faithful from across the archdiocese who are also helping to ensure our local church is strong and vibrant for generations to come.

As an archdiocese, we form a faith community of 200,000 Catholics in central and western Oklahoma; we truly are One Church, Many Disciples! With the Beatification of Blessed Stanley Rother, each of us has the opportunity to share in his legacy. What an occasion to live Jesus’ call to missionary discipleship.

Please take a moment to review the impact One Church, Many Disciples will have on St. Mary’s. This campaign has my full support and, as your pastor, I hope you will embrace this opportunity here at St. Mary’s.

Rev. Carson Krittenbrink

OUR PARISH ROOTS

Soon after the opening of the Cherokee Strip in September 1893, Fr. Felix DeGrasse, a Benedictine from Sacred Heart Mission in Guthrie, began coming to Ponca City to offer Mass in various Catholic homes. He was the pastor in Guthrie, and was in charge of all the territorial missions along the Santa Fe railroad. Under his direction, construction of a parish church began in November 1893. Bishop Theophile Meerschaert, bishop of Oklahoma and Indian Territory, along with Fr. DeGrasse, dedicated the church on May 27, 1894 under the patronage of St. Felix. By the late 1900s, St. Felix had about 40 families, was badly in need of repairs, and had a debt of nearly $500.00. Under the guidance of Fr. Ranier Seven’s, St. Mary’s Institute, a parochial school, was started. The Sisters of Divine Providence staffed the school. In 1913, Fr. Peter Kamp became pastor and St. Felix Church was destroyed by fire in 1916. A new Church was built and dedicated, this time to St. Mary, on October 15, 1916 and St. Mary’s Institute became St. Mary’s Academy. By the early 1950’s, the Church served nearly 400 families. The present Church building was dedicated by Bishop E.J. McGuiness assisted by Msgr. Reid, Fr. Martin Reid and Fr. Elmer Robnett on October 6, 1954.
PARISH LIFE TODAY

Saint Mary’s Parish continues to be a warm and welcoming faith community. The Art & Environment Committee, Women’s Guilds, Knights of Columbus and the Fr. Rother Society work to serve the needs of the parish as well as the community of Ponca City. The Fr. Rother Society acts as stewards of parishioners’ donations as they assist and guide those less fortunate in our town. We have Bible studies throughout the week, and evangelization efforts to equip parishioners in the Church’s goal of making disciples. Our school educates 121 children from Pre-K to 8th grade, and Religious Education and RCIA programs ensure that children and those new to the faith are well-informed and well-prepared for their sacraments, and also ready to answer Christ’s call in their lives. The Dorothy Foster Smith Manor offers affordable housing to our elderly parishioners, and our Hispanic community continues to grow and become more active.

OUR CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION

Saint Mary’s welcomes the opportunity to participate in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City’s campaign, One Church, Many Disciples. This campaign will enable the building of a shrine for Blessed Stanley Rother, and will fund shared ministerial needs. Through participating in this campaign, St. Mary’s will raise significant funds toward needs of beloved community. We are seeking five-year pledges to achieve the parish campaign goal of $1,170,000. St. Mary’s will receive 20% of all funds we raise up to the goal, totaling $234,000. Plus, 50% of every dollar raised above the goal will be returned to St. Mary’s.

OUR SHARE OF THE FUNDS

Through the One Church, Many Disciples campaign, we will not only play a significant role in this historic moment in the Church’s history, but we will also be able to support exciting new projects at St. Mary’s.

With St. Mary’s share of the funds we will begin to plan for a new parish hall located on the corner of 7th and Ponca in the currently vacant lot. This will allow us to host larger gatherings, wedding receptions, classes, school assemblies and provide much needed space for meetings, RE classes, youth activities, parish activities, bereavement meals, and any other functions St. Mary’s will host. The space will include a large assembly area, a full kitchen, meeting rooms and other areas to make this new building truly functional and usable by all!