Center calls for Catholics to join The Love Challenge

By Sally Linhart
The Sooner Catholic

Oklarche – Entering its fourth year, The Love Challenge is an appeal created by The Center of Family Love designed to further the inclusion of individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities in Oklahoma.

The goal of The Love Challenge is to connect each one of the residents of The Center of Family Love with a “family” outside of the center. Because the number of residents who do not have regular involvement from their family is so high, the “challenge” offers residents an amazing opportunity to feel a greater sense of belonging and involvement in their community.

Debbie Espinosa, president and chief executive of The Center of Family Love, explained that the ability to partner with parishes all over Oklahoma is the perfect opportunity to connect their residents with those who already have a heart for service.

“When a church embraces an individual, they immediately become part of a large family. These parishioners are a true example of God’s love in action,” she said.

Some residents already have been paired to specific parishes in Oklahoma. Saint Monica, Saint John Nepomuk, Christ the King and Saint Andrew are just a few of the parishes who have accepted the challenge and adopted a resident through the program. However, there are nearly 100 residents still waiting.

Kitty Belden, a parishioner at Saint Eugene, is part of a team that has adopted a resident. Belden said one of the greatest things about the challenge is knowing how much happiness it brings to the residents.

“When they find out they have been adopted, they are so excited,” she said.

Belden also praised the parishioners of Saint Eugene for their generosity and participation in the challenge.

“We are very fortunate, and it’s a blessing to be involved in the work the CFL does. They provide magnificent care to God’s most vulnerable.”

What makes the challenge unique is the exceptional level of support and guidance provided. The CFL works closely with each team to determine realistic goals, offer access to training materials, action plans, ideas and even step-by-step instruction, to ensure a successful relationship between the team and their adopted resident.

Because The Love Challenge does not have a

donaldations for Sanctuary Women’s Development Center, a ministry of Catholic Charities that provides resources and support for low income and homeless women and children. Donations can include personal hygiene products, baby

National speakers featured at 2020 Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference

Oklahoma Catholic women are invited to hear inspiration and motivational speakers at the 2020 Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference on Saturday, March 28, at the Embassy Suites in Norman.

Reconciliation, adoration, vendors and a silent auction also will be available for participants. Registration and vendors open at 7:30 a.m. The conference begins at 8:30 a.m. and concludes with a Mass at 4:30 p.m. celebrated by Archbishop Coakley.

The registration fee is $65 through March 1. After March 1, registration will be $75.

Participants are encouraged to bring donations for Sanctuary Women’s Development Center, a ministry of Catholic Charities that provides resources and support for low income and homeless women and children. Donations can include personal hygiene products, baby

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Each year, the Church offers us the season of Lent as an invitation to set out on a journey of repentance and renewal. We begin our journey on Ash Wednesday. Though not a Holy Day of Obligation, Ash Wednesday scriptures are among the most popular and well-attended of the year. It resonates with a deep yearning and recognition that we need to set things right.

As we sign with ashes, we remind ourselves of our own mortality. We come from dust and to dust we shall return. We are called to repent and follow the Good News: God loves us. He sent his son Jesus to suffer and die for us. He震慑s from the dust and shares his life with us. This is the heart of the Gospel. Lent refocuses our attention on this message of salvation, this Good News.

From the earliest Christian centuries, Lent was the time of final preparation and penance for men, women and families preparing for Baptism. Even today, on the first Sunday of Lent at our cathedral and in cathedrals throughout the world, catechumens and candidates will participate in the Rite of Election and call to confirming communities in preparation for the celebration of Baptism and the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. In subsequent centuries, Lent became a season of special observance for all members of the Church who accompanied the catechumens by their prayers and prepared to renew their own Baptismal promises at Easter. This is the rich meaning and goal of the Lenten journey still today.

We begin the Lenten journey by being signed with ashes on Ash Wednesday. The journey leads to the glorious celebration of our victory over death in the Paschal Triduum. We share Jesus’ paschal journey through death to new life. Lent is a season of repentance during which we acknowledge our sins, seek mercy and pray for a change of heart. Unfortunately, we sometimes satisfy ourselves with nominal and superficial gestures during Lent. The Lord offers us the true grace of Lent in order to lead us to profound repentance and a rendering of all that is disordered and distorted by sin in our lives.

In the Gospel of the Mass of Ash Wednesday, Jesus challenge us to be sure that our religious observances flow from an interior disposition of heart that seeks to please God rather than impress others. “Do on guard against performing religious acts for the sake of people. Our Lenten observances need to have both an inner quality and an outer element to them. In that same Gospel, Jesus cites the three traditional practices of the Lenten season: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These practices are valid for Christians in every age. We can be creative in our Lenten observances, but it is important that our Lenten observances involve some aspect of all three.

Fasting is a way of expressing our prayer boldly while seeking freedom from self-indulgent appetites. Fasting is a time to discontinue pleasures that are not essential. We are obligated to fast and abstain from meat on certain days of Lent. But, fasting can be more. We can fast or abstain from other comforts and distracting habits such as social media, television, etc.

Self-denial in whatever form helps us grow in interior freedom. Turn away from sin and seeking pardon through the Sacrament of Penance is a fundamental element of Lenten preparation for Easter. Prayer is what gives us the courage and other works of mercy a true interior quality. Many individuals, families and parishes have their special Lenten customs. The traditional Stations of the Cross on Fridays are a tried and true way of accompanying the Lord on the journey of his bitter passion and entering deeply into the mystery of God’s love for us. Reflecting and praying with the Scriptures, especially the liturgical readings of each day, can make this a profoundly rich season of grace. Pondering God’s love and responding to it from our heart ought to have place of a way of prayer. Some make the commitment to ulterior worldly matters more frequently.

Almsgiving is so important that our spiritual exercise doesn’t leave us self-absorbed but rather help us reach out to others in mercy. The Lenten journey gives us the opportunity to express our repentance by opening our hearts both to the Lord and to our brothers and sisters, especially the poor. Fasting aside something for the poor as the fruit of our own self-denial is an important way of combining the disciplines of fasting and almsgiving.

The CRS Rice Bowl is a practical aid for families, parishes, classrooms and individuals to help us practice almsgiving. (There are even catechetical materials and a mobile app for the CRS Rice Bowl available at crs.org.)

Almsgiving focuses the corporal and spiritual works of mercy can guide our Lenten practice and make it even more fruitful. Fasting and praying with the Scriptures, especially the liturgical readings of each day, can make this a profoundly rich season of grace. Pondering God’s love and responding to it from our heart ought to have place of a way of prayer. Some make the commitment to ulterior worldly matters more frequently.

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The ways of observing Lent can be as varied as we are creative. Nonetheless, the Church asks that we be mindful of the serious obligation to abstain from meat on the Fridays of Lent and to fast and abstain on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Some of us are procrastinators. We may wait until the last minute to get our act together. Now is the time to prayerfully decide how the Lord is calling us to observe this season. What are the sins that we need to uproot from our lives? What are the virtues that we need to cultivate? What are the steps that we need to take to realize these desires? Start with these questions and formulate a simple and realistic plan.

Lent is a shared journey of faith. Let us pray for one another.

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Exciting set of guidelines for adopting a resident, teams can choose to support their resident in a variety of ways, depending on factors such as physical location, schedule availability and resources. Each team consists of a group of people with a designated team leader who serves as the main point of contact for the group, coordinating their efforts with the CPL. Building a relationship with a resident can start with something as simple as mailing a card or sending a gift. The level of commitment is up to the team.

Combining the time, talent and treasure of several people into one team benefits both the sponsor and the resident. Working together to come up with new and creative ways to support their resident gives each team an even greater opportunity with new and creative ways to support their resident outside the CPL. The ultimate goal of the challenge is not necessary to raise money, although financial contributions are an additional positive impact. With an approximate annual cost of $13,000 for each individual to reside at the center, fundraisers and special collections provide an opportunity for team members who are unable to contribute to still provide for their resident’s needs. “We want people to know that this is not a financial commitment. This is a friendship! We are just asking for friendship for our residents outside the CPL,” Espinosa said. “Our residents desire friendship and to receive him without truly understanding the people of my parish back into the grace of God through confession.

Why choose a life of sacrificial love?
God calls all of us to serve. I specifically choose the priesthood to serve God’s people and to sanctify life in order to gain the sanctity of souls for God.

To learn more about seminary, contact: Rev. Brian Buttner at bbuttner@archokc.org or (405) 721-9351.

For information about becoming a seminarian, contact: Holy Innocents’ Foundation, P.O. Box 22171, OKC 73123.

Becoming a Seminarian pen pal!
Our seminarians are away from home for months at a time during their formation. While at seminary, they would like to hear from people back home in Oklahoma! To become a Seminarian Pen Pal, go online to archokc.org/penpal, find their addresses and write a note.

Encounter with God’s call seminary visit
Are you a Catholic man open to God’s call in your life? Join Fr. Brian Buttner on a free visit to Conception Seminary College from March 28-30. Registration is open to young men in their junior or senior years of high school up to recent college graduates. Register today at (405) 721-9351.

If you are on the fence about joining us in our mission, I would love to have the opportunity to share more about the life of a priest with you.

If you are interested in learning more about the seminary, please contact me at bbuttner@archokc.org or (405) 721-9351.
When Mother Teresa visited New Bedford, Mass., in June 1965, she told those of us gathered at Saint Lawrence Martyr Church: “Abor- tion is the great evil of today.” Never one to mince words, Mother Teresa’s courage, truthfulness and charity were a two-way street: daily need inspired similar fortitude, honesty and love to be able to discuss the hard topic of unplanned pregnancies and the Catholic Pastoral Center with friends Father John Michalicka and Father Lowell Stieferman, delighting in pranks and sharing his familiary dry wit with the staff. He left this life on March 20, 2016.

I t is not merely offering advice, but being coercive in their moment of greatest need. Mothers and fathers may not have fostered close relationships with their daughters. They may have never discussed the possibility of an unplanned pregnancy to let them know ahead of time that, even if they act contrary to their advice and conceive a child, they will still be there for them.

“Quite often there’s a piece missing from the ‘talks’ parents have with their daughters and sons. Without knowing it, we are leaving no doors open for our children to come back to us should they stray. We are making good, strong cases for purity until marriage and yet neglecting to communicate the message of grace: that we are there for them no matter what, and should they make a mistake – in this case, get pregnant – it is safe for them to come to us for help and support.”

Today, more than ever, Christian children need to hear those supportive and reassuring words from their Christian parents. Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D., earned his doctorate in neurosurgery from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Mass., and serves as the director of education at The National Catholi- "Sooner Catholic" Christian girls and abortion

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Making Sense of Bioethics

T hroughout the archdiocese, Catholics are growing spiritually by ministering to others in need as Vincentians. Vincentians are members of Saint Vincent de Paul Conferences. They meet and talk with people in their community and neighborhoods who reach out for one-time, emergency help, usually with rent or utility assistance. By answering the call to be the “hands and feet of Christ in this world” and with the sup- port of their respective parishes, Vincentians meet with the working poor, seniors living on fixed incomes, grandparents unexpectedly raising grandchildren and others who need help and hope.

During Lent this year, all Catholics are invit- ed to participate in the work of Saint Vincent de Paul by serving as “Lenten Vincentians.” For those whose parishes have a Saint Vincent de Paul Conference, this might include joining them during Lent in prayer and spiritual reflec- tion at their regular meetings; reading along with a Saint Vincent de Paul Booklet and offering to send them; or giving a little more each week to the Poor Box that makes their work possible.

For those whose parishes do not have an SVDP Conference, the Vincentians can find the closest conference and offer to serve during Lent.

“The primary role of the Vincentians is not to pay the bills, furnish groceries or clothes some- one,” said such a Vincentian present at the Archdiocesan Council of Saint Vincent de Paul and member of the Saint Vincent de Paul Con- ference at St. Andrew in Moore. “The role of the Vincentians is to provide loving and compassionate interest in individuals. If that interest calls for food, clothing or other as- sistance, so be it. However, it is in loving where the contact with Christ emerges. That contact with Christ is what separates Saint Vincent de Paul from other social agencies.”
Archbishop Coakley celebrated Mass Feb. 1 at St. Andrew Dung-Lac in OKC to recognize Tét Nguyên Đán, the Vietnamese New Year. Photos Cara Koenig/Sooner Catholic.

Mount St. Mary Catholic High School students and staff participate in the March for Life in Washington D.C. Photo provided.

The grand opening of The Monks’ Marketplace at St. Gregory’s Abbey in Shawnee was Jan. 15. Photo provided.

Fr. Aaron Foshee prays during a Holy Hour and Eucharistic Adoration at St. Francis Xavier in Sulphur. Photo provided.

Parishioners at St. Peter in Lindsay held a Kermes to raise funds for the religious education youth. Photos provided.

Fr. Brian Buettner chalks the doors at St. Mary Catholic School in Lawton. Photo provided.

Mount St. Mary Catholic High School students participated in Hoops 4 Hope Jan. 3 and 4 at Cascia Hall High School in Tulsa. Photo provided.

Archbishop Coakley visits with students at St. Mary Catholic School in Lawton. Photo provided.

Fr. Linh Bui celebrates Mass with Archbishop Coakley at Cristo Rey OKC Catholic High School. Photo provided.

Mount St. Mary Catholic High School students and staff participate in the March for Life in Washington D.C. Photo provided.

Archbishop Coakley celebrates Mass with Fr. Linh Bui Jan. 31 at Cristo Rey OKC Catholic High School. Photo provided.

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Archbishop Coakley celebrates Mass Feb. 1 at St. Andrew Dung-Lac in OKC to recognize Tét Nguyên Đán, the Vietnamese New Year. Photos Cara Koenig/Sooner Catholic.

The 2020 Celebrating Catholic Education Breakfast featuring Fr. Ron Nuzzi was Jan. 28 in downtown Oklahoma City. Photos Diane Clay/Sooner Catholic.

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Archbishop Coakley celebrates Mass Feb. 1 at St. Andrew Dung-Lac in OKC to recognize Tét Nguyên Đán, the Vietnamese New Year. Photos Cara Koenig/Sooner Catholic.
Continued from page 1

We need to receive the Eucharist with a pure heart!

Feb. 26 is Ash Wednesday

By John B. Dobele
The Sooner Catholic

It has been said that “big things can come in small packages.” In each of us, God has given us a powerful tool that provides and strengthens our defense in support of the Church. This tool is faith!

Inside Suzie

Suzie is a story about a young, severely disabled girl, Suzie, and the gift of love she shares with others. The author, Ginny Pettit, is Suzie’s mother, and Joey Pettit, Suzie’s father. This is a beautiful collection of short stories, each one an exploration of the inner workings of the human soul.

The book contains the stories of 20 different little girls, each with a different gift. These girls are all connected in some way to Suzie, and their stories illustrate the power of love and hope in the face of adversity.

The book is a reminder that, no matter how small our acts of kindness can make us feel, they can make a big difference in someone else’s life. We are all called to be kind and compassionate, to love and support one another.

Book Review

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John B. Dobele

Sooner Catholic

“Filled with patience and joy!”

We need pure hearts to receive the purest of all bread, the Eucharist. It is even more beneficial for our venial sins or even our slightest imperfections.

So, as we approach this season of Lent, and through these 40 days prepare to celebrate the triumph of the Lord at Easter, I invite all my readers to start the tabernacle and ask Jesus’ help. Just say, “Thank you Jesus for the Eucharist. Help me Jesus to receive you always with a pure heart. Guide me to meet you and your loving mercy in the sacrament of Reconciliation.” Amen.

This spiritual habit is good for Lent 2020 and any time of the year.

John B. Dobele

The Sooner Catholic

February 16, 2020

Sooner Catholic
Lánzate a lo más Profundo

¿Cuál es su hoja de ruta Cuaresmal?

El Viaje a través de la Cuaresma

La Cuaresma es un viaje compartido de fe. Es un momento de reflexión personal y corporal. Es un tiempo de gracia profundamente interior. Muchas personas, familias y grupos se dedican a promover mejores liturgias hispanas, mientras que otros hacen lo que pueden para ayudar a los demás. "Tengan cuidado de no practicar más lo que se hace visible. Nuestras celebraciones de Cuaresma deben tener tanto una calidad interior como una expresión externa.

Las Sagradas Eucaristías contienen muchas invitaciones, pero una se destaca de una manera especial. El primer Jueves Santo, durante la última cena de Jesús, Jesús llenó de un intenso amor que busca entregarse, el Señor nos invita "tomar y comer". "Más tarde, el Señor habló con Dios en el altar y dijo: ‘Vengan a este precioso altar de amor, con células de sangre, para recibir la encarnación de su cuerpo. En este altar tenemos un momento de vida o muerte! Las Sagradas Eucaristías contienen muchas invitaciones, pero una se destaca de una manera especial. El primer Jueves Santo, durante la última cena de Jesús, Jesús llenó de un intenso amor que busca entregarse, el Señor nos invita "tomar y comer". "Más tarde, el Señor habló con Dios en el altar y dijo: ‘Vengan a este precioso altar de amor, con células de sangre, para recibir la encarnación de su cuerpo. En este altar tenemos un momento de vida o muerte!"

La verdadera gracia de la Cuaresma nos invita a una conversión profunda. El viaje a través de la Cuaresma nos da la oportunidad de llegar a la gloriosa celebración del Domingo de Pascua.

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Find this position to review:

**Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine**

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking an executive director for the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine. This position is responsible for the operation of the shrine, the outreach and the overall promotion of pilgrimages and other holy week activities. Bilingual in Spanish preferred. Send inquiries and resumes to nlargent@archokc.org. Contact (405) 721-4115.

**Join the Serra Club**

The Serra Club of Oklahoma City is a group of lay men and women who promote and pray for vocations in the Archdiocese. The next meeting is on the Tuesday of each month at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway. The next Serra meet- ing is Feb. 18 at 10:30 a.m. with speaker Dr. Maria Thomas, former Vice Chancellor of the Oklahoma Theological Seminary. All are welcome. Contact me today at (405) 721-4115.

**Jobs Box**

St. Anthony's Catholic School in Norman is seeking an elementary administra- tive assistant. Responsibilities include receiving and answering phone calls, typing, data entry and maintenance of supplies and mail. Experience necessary. Contact: Ms. Mary Terry at 234-2020.

St. Francis of Assisi, a grade K-8 school in Oklahoma City, is looking for a substitute teacher. Some evening and weekend experience preferred. Call at (405) 723-7679.

St. John the Baptist School in Oklahoma City is looking for a kindergarten teacher. Experience necessary. Call (405) 898-3331.

St. Joseph the Worker School in Edmond is looking for a paraprofessional. Some experience in working with children preferred. Call (405) 837-1080.

St. Joseph School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten to fifth grade. Call (405) 281-3711.

St. Mary of the Annunciation School in Shawnee is accepting applications for kindergarten to fifth grade. Call (405) 721-1223.

St. Mary School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten. Call (405) 886-5380.

St. Peter the Apostle School in Edmond is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 353-6750.

St. Pius X School in Edmond is accepting applications for kindergarten to fifth grade. Call (405) 353-6506.

St. Thomas More School in Norman is accepting applications for kindergarten to fifth grade. Call (405) 321-8800.

St. Teresa of Calcutta School in Norman is accepting applications for kindergarten. Call (405) 326-1015.

St. Gregory School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 271-4060.

St. James the Apostle School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 891-0030.

St. Mary School in Del City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 723-3851.

St. Paul School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 723-1600.

St. John Fisher School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 971-1000.

St. Alfred's School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 522-2500.

St. Andrew School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 378-6818.

St. Bede's School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 895-5733.

St. Sebastian School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 274-9350.

St. Joseph School in Ardmore is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (580) 225-2699.

St. Roch School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 727-6030.

St. Joseph the Worker School in Edmond is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 280-1000.

St. Alphonsus School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 277-6524.

St. Joseph School in Mustang is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 723-3636.

St. John the Baptist School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 723-7679.

St. David School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 222-9200.

St. Michael School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 843-4920.

St. Mary of the Annunciation School in Shawnee is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 723-1470.

St. John Fisher School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 971-1000.

St. Athanasius School in Edmond is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 837-4364.

St. Mary School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 596-6337.

St. Thomas More School in Norman is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 358-7999.

St. Mary of the Annunciation School in Shawnee is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 723-1470.

St. Clare School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 890-1555.

St. Francis School in Oklahoma City is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 793-3780.

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St. Peter the Apostle School in Edmond is accepting applications for kindergarten through fifth grade. Call (405) 353-6750.
Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2020

Catholic school students and staff members celebrated his life and legacy. Schools participated in parades and marches, collected stuffed animals to donate to Oklahoma County deputies to hand out to children, or volunteered for a day of service at The Center of Family Love, Curbside Chronicle, Holy Family Home, and St. Ann Retirement Center. Photos Cara Koenig/Sooner Catholic and provided.