Celebrating the life and work of
BLESSED STANLEY ROTHER

Cipla's
THE ORIGINAL DIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA was erected in 1905, became the Diocese of Oklahoma City and Tulsa in 1930, and was erected into the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in 1972. The Archdiocese is comprised of more than 120,000 Catholics in central and western Oklahoma and covers 46 counties and 42,470 square miles.

Our sacred purpose, as the people of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, is to joyfully witness to our Catholic faith in central and western Oklahoma through the teaching, sanctifying and governing ministry of Christ and His Church so that the Body of Christ is made present, the universal call to holiness proclaimed and all people are welcomed into the promise of eternal life.
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Apla’s Magazine. We hope this new publication will bring the story and heroic witness of Blessed Stanley Francis Rother to a wider audience and inspire the faithful to a life of virtue.

We chose the name of the magazine – Apla’s – after an affectionate nickname given to Blessed Stanley by the Mayan descendants of Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala. It means Francis in Tz’utujil. In each issue of Apla’s we will update you on the Cause for Canonization and construction of the beautiful Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine in south Oklahoma City.

In November, we broke ground at the future site of the shrine at S.E. 89 and Shields Boulevard during which I blessed the cornerstone and the future altar sites for the shrine. The shrine will include a 2,000-seat church and a chapel where Blessed Stanley will be entombed. It will be a building for the honor and glory of God whose goodness, whose holiness, whose faithfulness, whose mercy shown through the life of Stanley Rother. It is God who we glorify as God reveals himself in the lives of his holy ones. We do all of this as we do all things for the glory of God and for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I am grateful to the many faithful people of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and beyond who have labored diligently to advance this cause, and for the many people whose prayers and financial support have helped to make the shrine possible.

Blessed Stanley gave his life in pastoral service to his people. His example will inspire generations of faithful to seek what we all are called to be – saints!

I hope you enjoy Apla’s Magazine and may God continue to bless you and your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
HIGHLIGHTS OF SHRINE & SANTIAGO

Ceiling of the Church porch leading to the courtyard, Santiago, Atitlán Guatemala

Concept Rendering - Shrine Dome

Concept Rendering - Shrine Nave from the Sanctuary

PROJECT ACTIVITY/MILESTONE TIMELINE

Groundbreaking - Construction Start
Nov 2019

Demolition of 9017 I-35 S
Dec 2019
Shrine Church
Dedication

Event & Education
Design Development
Aug 2020 - Oct 2020

Spring 2021 - Spring 2022

Concept Rendering - Shrine Zocálo
Concept Rendering - Shrine Baptistry
Front of the Church, Santiago,
Atitlán Guatemala
Church Nave, Santiago,
Atitlán Guatemala

Concept Rendering - Shrine Nave

Church Construction
Apr 2020 - Apr 2022

Shrine Church Dedication
Jul 2022

Event & Education
Design Development
Aug 2020 - Oct 2020

Event & Education
Construction
Spring 2021 - Spring 2022
THE JULY 2019 pilgrimage to Guatemala was an opportunity to be with the people of Santiago Atitlan on Blessed Stanley’s Feast Day, and to witness the love and devotion they have for him – as a reflection of the love the shepherd showed for his Guatemalan flock. It is this love that we are called to show to one another.

“I was fortunate to have met Blessed Stanley in Oklahoma a few times. His quiet presence was very edifying. His missionary zeal is evident to this day.”

Seeing the devotion of the local people at church in Santiago Atitlan on Blessed Stanley’s Feast Day was inspiring. The joy and devotion to Blessed Stanley was so evident.
The pilgrimage introduced me to the beautiful country and amazing people of Guatemala. Santiago Atitlan is a remote small town in the highlands. The Catholic Church is the lifeblood of the town and Blessed Stanley’s work and service there still resonates with the people.

“Distributing the Body of Christ to the parishioners at Santiago Atitlan at the front door of the church is forever etched in my mind. They are a beautiful people; it’s easy to see how the ‘Shepherd Can't Run at the First Sign of Danger.’”
Blessed Stanley Rother lived a life of Christian virtue and died for the faith. His story is an important witness to the call of the Christian. The Shrine will be a key enabler in telling Blessed Stanley’s story not only to Oklahomans, but also to people of all nations, faiths and cultures.

The shrine and the groundbreaking remind us that, though many parts, we are all one body as Oklahomans in honoring our own Blessed Stanley for his life and death as a missionary disciple. He showed us how to live our mission to, “Go Make Disciples.”

The BSRS will be a vital part of our archdiocese’s evangelization to our state, country and world. Through the life of Blessed Stanley Rother, we can tell others about this ordinary man’s strong faith and remarkable witness to the poor and underserved of Guatemala. He is someone who can inspire us to service.”
Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

Bienvenido a la edición inaugural de la revista Apla’s. Esperamos que esta nueva publicación traiga la historia y el testimonio heroico del Beato Stanley Francis Rother a un público más amplio e inspire a los fieles a una vida de virtud.

Elegimos el nombre de la revista, Apla’s, después de un apodo cariñoso dado al Beato Stanley por los descendientes mayas de Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala. Significa Francisco en Tz’utujil. En cada edición de Apla’s lo actualizaremos sobre la Causa de Canonización y construcción del hermoso Santuario del Beato Stanley Rother en el sur de la ciudad de Oklahoma City.

En noviembre, empezamos a construir en el sitio futuro del santuario en S.E. 89 y Shields Boulevard, donde bendije la piedra angular y el futuro sitio del altar para el santuario. El santuario incluirá una iglesia de 2.000 asientos y una capilla donde será sepultado el beato Stanley. Será un edificio para el honor y la gloria de Dios, cuya bondad, santidad, fidelidad, misericordia demostrada a través de la vida de Stanley Rother. Es Dios a quien glorificamos cuando Dios se revela a sí mismo en la vida de sus santos. Hacemos todo esto como hacemos todas las cosas para la gloria de Dios y para nuestro Señor y Salvador Jesucristo.

Estoy agradecido a las muchas personas fieles de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma City y más allá que han trabajado diligentemente para avanzar en esta causa, y por las muchas personas cuyas oraciones y apoyo financiero han ayudado a hacer posible el santuario.

El beato Stanley dio su vida en servicio pastoral a su pueblo. Su ejemplo inspirará a generaciones de fieles a buscar lo que todos estamos llamados a ser: ¡santos!

Espero que disfrutes de la revista Apla’s y que Dios continúe bendiciéndote a ti y a tu familia.

Sinceramente tuyo en Cristo,

Reverendísimo Paul S. Coakley
Arzobispo de Oklahoma City

“El beato Stanley dio su vida en servicio pastoral a su pueblo. Su ejemplo inspirará a generaciones de fieles a buscar lo que todos estamos llamados a ser: ¡santos!”

DESDE EL ARZOBISPO
PRAYER FOR THE INTERCESSION OF BLESSED STANLEY ROTHER

O faithful shepherd, Blessed Stanley Rother, as priest and missionary, you tilled the soil with your hands and invited Christ Jesus to till the soil of your soul. You became a sign of love of Christ the Good Shepherd for your people, and blessed their lives by your ministry. You stood firm and did not run from danger, bringing glory to God and his Church in your martyrdom. Blessed Stanley, obtain from the heart of Jesus (here make your request...), and pray for me, that I too may be a sign of Christ’s love among his people. Teach me to faithfully till the soil of this life in the reality given to me by your Father, unafraid to stay with those God has given me, no matter the cost. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

PRAYER FOR THE CANONIZATION OF BLESSED STANLEY ROTHER

O God, fount of all holiness, make us each walk worthily in our vocation, through the intercession of your Saints, on whom you bestowed a great variety of graces on earth. Having graced your Church with the life of your priest and martyr, Blessed Stanley Rother, grant that by his intercession this humble flock may reach where the brave shepherd has gone. Grant that your Church may proclaim him a saint living in your presence and interceding for us. Through Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

ORACIÓN PIDIENDO LA INTERCESIÓN DEL BEATO STANLEY ROTHER

Oh fiel pastor, Beato Stanley Rother, como sacerdote y misionero, cultivaste la tierra con tus manos e invitaste a Cristo Jesús a cultivar la tierra de tu alma. Te convertiste en signo del amor de Cristo el Buen Pastor para tu pueblo, y bendijiste sus vidas a través de tu ministerio. Te mantuviste firme y no huiste del peligro, trayendo con tu martirio gloria a Dios y a Su Iglesia. Beato Stanley, obtén del corazón de Jesús (haga aquí su petición...), y ora por mí, para que yo también sea signo del amor de Cristo entre su pueblo. Enséñame a fielmente cultivar la tierra de esta vida en la realidad que el Padre me ha dado, sin miedo a quedarme con aquellos que Dios me ha confiado, sin importar el costo. Por Jesucristo nuestro Señor.

AMÉN.

ORACIÓN POR LA CAUSA DE CANONIZATION DEL BEATO STANLEY ROTHER

Oh Dios, fuente de toda santidad, nos hacen caminar dignamente en nuestra vocación, por la intercesión de sus santos, a quien has otorgado una gran variedad de graciosas en la tierra. Habiendo honrado a su Iglesia con la vida de su sacerdote y mártir, Beato Stanley Rother, que por su intercesión este humilde rebaño puede alcanzar donde el valiente pastor se ha ido. Concede que su Iglesia le pueda proclamar un santo que vive en su presencia e intercediendo por nosotros. Por Cristo nuestro Señor.

AMÉN.
BIOGRAPHY OF BLESSED STANLEY ROTHER

STANLEY FRANCIS ROTHER was born March 27, 1935, in Okarche, Oklahoma. The oldest of the children born to Franz and Gertrude Rother, he grew up on a farm and attended Holy Trinity Catholic Church and School. He worked hard doing required chores, attended school, played sports, was an altar server and enjoyed the activities associated with growing up in a small town.

While in high school, he began to discern the possibility of a vocation to the priesthood. He was accepted as a seminarian and was sent to Assumption Seminary in San Antonio, Texas. He completed his studies at Mount Saint Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and was ordained a priest on May 25, 1963. Father Rother served as an associate pastor for five years in Oklahoma. He sought and received permission to join the staff at the Oklahoma diocese’s mission in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala. He served the native tribe of the Tz’utujil, who are descendants of the Mayans. Although he struggled with Latin in the seminary, Father Rother learned Spanish and the Tz’utujil language in Guatemala. He celebrated Mass in their language and helped translate the New Testament.

Father Rother was surrounded by extreme poverty among the Tz’utujil, who were living in one-room huts growing what they could on their small plots of land. He ministered to his parishioners in their homes; eating with them, visiting the sick and aiding them with medical issues. He even put his farming skills to use by helping them in the fields, bringing in different crops, and building an irrigation system.

While he served in Guatemala, a civil war raged between the militarist government forces and the guerrillas. The Catholic Church was caught in the middle due to its insistence on catechizing and educating the people. During this conflict, thousands of Catholics were killed. Eventually, Father Rother’s name appeared on a death list. For his safety and that of his associate, Father Rother returned home to Oklahoma. He didn’t stay long, though, as he was determined to give his life completely to his people, stating that “the shepherd cannot run.” He returned to Santiago Atitlan to continue the work of the mission.

Within a few months, three men entered the rectory around 1 a.m. on July 28, 1981, fought with Father Rother and then executed him. His death shocked the Catholic world. No one was ever held responsible. The people of Santiago Atitlan mourned the loss of their leader and friend. They requested that Father Rother’s heart be kept in Guatemala where it remains enshrined today.

In 2007, his Cause for Canonization was opened. In June 2015, the Vatican in Rome voted to formally recognize Oklahoma’s Father Stanley Rother a martyr. The determination of martyrdom was a critical step in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City’s Cause to have Father Rother beatified, the final stage before canonization as a saint.

On Dec. 1, 2016, Pope Francis officially recognized Father Rother as a martyr for the faith. He is the first martyr from the United States and the first U.S.-born priest to be beatified. The Rite of Beatification was held on Sept. 23, 2017, in downtown Oklahoma City—an event attended by more than 20,000 people from around the world.

Blessed Stanley Rother’s story is the subject of various books, documentaries and an upcoming feature film. The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is in the final stages of design of a 2,000-seat shrine church, museum and campus in his honor, to be located in south Oklahoma City.

“ He was determined to give his life completely to his people, stating that ‘the shepherd cannot run.’”
Rite of Beatification for Blessed Stanley Rother

ON SEPT. 23, 2017, Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, celebrated the Rite of Beatification for Blessed Stanley Rother during a Beatification Mass in downtown Oklahoma City. Blessed Stanley is the first martyr from the United States and the first U.S. - born priest to be beatified.

Blessed Stanley Rother was an Oklahoma priest killed in Guatemala on July 28, 1981, in his rectory. The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City opened a Cause for Canonization for Blessed Stanley on Oct. 5, 2007. The archdiocesan phase of the Cause was closed on July 20, 2010.


On June 14, 2015, the Theology Commission of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints voted to formally recognize Oklahoma’s Servant of God a martyr.
PROCESS OF CANONIZATION

Making of a Saint

ALL SOULS IN HEAVEN ARE SAINTS. Formerly, the Catholic Church declared “saints” as people who were outstanding in holiness either because they died as witnesses for the faith (martyrs) or they lived a life of heroic virtue (confessors). The exact number of canonized saints is unknown because not all recognized as saints have been canonized officially. For the first half of the Catholic Church’s history, saints were canonized in various ways. Today, the process of canonization is very complex and thorough. A record number of saints have been canonized in the past 30 years, and about 2,000 candidates are being evaluated today.

SERVANT OF GOD:

The official process of canonization, called a Cause, does not begin until five years after the death of the candidate. This period of time permits the Church to verify whether the candidate enjoys a true and widespread reputation of holiness and of intercessory prayer. When a Cause is officially begun the candidate receives the title “Servant of God.”

Blessed Stanley Rother Cause Timeline

- **Sept. 23, 2017:** Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, celebrated the Rite of Beatification for Blessed Stanley Rother during a Beatification Mass in downtown Oklahoma City. Blessed Stanley is the first martyr from the United States and the first U.S.-born priest to be beatified.

- **Dec. 1, 2016:** Pope Francis recognizes the martyrdom of Father Stanley Rother of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, making him the first martyr for the United States. The recognition of his martyrdom clears the way for his beatification.

- **June 14, 2015:** Vatican commission approves martyrdom in the Cause of Oklahoma’s Servant of God Stanley Rother.

- **Sept. 3, 2014:** Servant of God Stanley Rother’s Positio is presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints by Archbishop Paul S. Coakley and Dr. Ambrosi.

- **June 27, 2012:** Congregation for The Causes of Saints names an official Relator for the Cause of Father Stanley Rother. The Relator together with the collaborator (Dr. Ambrosi) from outside the congregation will prepare the Positio (position paper) on martyrdom.

- **May 2012:** Congregation for The Causes of Saints affirms the “juridic validity” of the case of Father Rother.

Documents are reviewed to determine if the three questions for martyrdom have been answered. Was his life, ministry and death fully reviewed? Were the rules/guidelines followed? Were all the proper documents there?

Box of documents arrives at the office of The Congregation for the Causes of Saints at the Vatican.

- **July 20, 2010:** Closing of the archdiocesan phase of the Cause for Canonization of Father Rother.

- **Oct. 5, 2007:** Canonization Tribunal is sworn in and the archdiocesan phase of the Cause for Canonization of Father Rother begins.

USCCB votes to support opening a Cause for Canonization for Father Rother in Oklahoma.

Vatican approves the moving of the Cause of Father Rother from the Diocese of Sololá-Chimaltenango, Guatemala, to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Diocese of Sololá-Chimaltenango, Guatemala, approves the moving of the Cause of Father Rother from the Diocese of Sololá-Chimaltenango, Guatemala, to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.
The first stage of the process begins with the official opening of the Cause by the bishop of the diocese* where the Servant of God died and the appointment of a postulator to assist in its promotion. The bishop nominates various officials for a tribunal to gather all the evidence for and against the canonization. Two theologians examine the Servant of God’s writings to make sure there is nothing contrary to the faith and moral teaching of the Church. Afterward, they proceed to taking the testimony of witnesses who knew the candidate.

**VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD:**
- The second step toward canonization starts when all the evidence is studied by The Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. If the evidence reveals true holiness exercised by the Servant of God, the cardinal prefect of the congregation informs the pope that the Servant of God either was a true martyr or has lived a life of extraordinary and heroic virtue. The pope orders the congregation to issue the decree either of martyrdom or of heroic virtue, and the Servant of God is given the title “Venerable.” This means that the Servant of God either died as a true martyr for Christ or led a life of heroic virtue and is worthy of imitation by the faithful.

**BLESSED:**
- When the Servant of God has been declared a martyr, he or she may be beatified, that is, declared “Blessed.” If, on the other hand, the Servant of God has been declared to have lived a life of heroic virtue, it must be proven that one miracle has been granted by God through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God. Then, he or she is declared “Blessed.”

For a healing to be considered a true miracle, a tribunal to gather all the evidence is established in the diocese where the event took place. It must be determined that there is no scientific explanation for the cure and that the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God is proven. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints conducts its study and judgment of the cure by the testimony of medical experts that no scientific reason can explain the recovery, and of theological consultants to verify that the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God was requested. Once again the conclusions are presented to the pope who alone can declare that the event is a true miracle. Then the Venerable Servant of God may be beatified. When someone is declared “Blessed,” public ecclesiastical veneration is permitted by the pope, but only in the diocese or country or religious community to which the Blessed belonged. Churches may be dedicated to the Blessed, but only with the permission of the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship.

**SAINT:**
- For all those beatified, both martyrs and confessors, to be canonized, one miracle is required. It must be proven that this event took place through the intercession of the Blessed and after the date of his or her declaration from the pope.

When this has been proven, the pope proceeds to the ceremony of canonization, which is an act of the infallible teaching authority of the pope. By this act, the Church declares that he or she is a saint in heaven with God. It also means that the saint is worthy of public veneration by the universal Church and held up as a model for imitation and a powerful intercessor for all. Catholics do not “worship” saints but venerate them. United in the communion of saints, the faithful on earth ask the faithful in heaven, who are their brothers and sisters in Christ, to join them in presenting their needs humbly and prayerfully to God. ⚫

**COMPILED BY MSGR. ROBERT J. SARNO, CONGREGATION FOR THE CAUSES OF SAINTS, ROME, ITALY**

*Father Rother’s cause was given permission to be moved to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.