Lt. Cody Koelsch with the Oklahoma City Police Department said he owes his life to the Catholic chaplains office. He carries an extra layer of protection in addition to his bullet-proof vest—a special card with the prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel that he recites when he leaves home. “I supervise four other officers and due to the stresses of the position, I recommend that they seek help through the Wellness Program and or the Chaplain Program,” Koelsch said.

Koelsch said a week after Father Brian Buettner, pastor of Saint Joseph Old Cathedral Sooner Catholic soonercatholic.org archokc.org September 13, 2020 Go Make Disciples

During the past century, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City has served as a “safe place” for many Oklahomans during difficult and challenging times. CCAOKC has served the community through the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, World Wars I and II, the Oklahoma City bombing and numerous natural disasters. Clients at CCAOKC are not merely numbers, and the generous gifts received by our supporters are not merely numbers either. They all are part of the fabric that weaves hope and purpose into the lives of the community.

“Communion connects us. We are one in Christ.”

“I’m kind of a numbers guy. I like to tell the client statistics continued on page 8

In a video for Catholic Charities, Emmanuel Vargas shared how he was helped after a tornado by going to St. Joseph’s Counseling Center. Photo Avery Holt/Sooner Catholic.

Chandler – Kendra Miller from Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in Chandler was named the 2020 Archbishop Paul S. Coakley Religious Educator of the Year.

Catholic police chaplains bring faith to those in need

By Charles Albert
The Sooner Catholic

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Kendra Miller and Archbishop Coakley. Photo Fran Kozakowski/Sooner Catholic.

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COMMUNICATION CONNECTS US.
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COMMUNICATION CONNECTS US.
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Communion connects us. We are one in Christ.

In this issue of the Sooner Catholic, you will read several encouraging stories from clients of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City who sought assistance and found compassion in their times of need. They were helped by your support through the Catholic Charities Annual Appeal.

Every year, Catholic Charities assists those in our community who are underserved, without proper shelter, or who are hungry, desperate or fearful of their future. Extending Christ’s compassion through the corporal works of mercy, your Catholic Charities has more than 14 programs to assist families and individuals through crisis pregnancy, family counseling, disaster recovery and family services designed to alleviate the burdens of poverty and promote the dignity of every person.

2020 Catholic Charities Annual Appeal. Help us continue to tell life-changing stories of mercy, compassion and healing that express our Catholic faith in action.

Archbishop Coakley’s Calendar

The following events are part of Archbishop Coakley’s official calendar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 14</td>
<td>USCBC Pro-Life Committee and Religious Liberty Committee virtual meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 15-16</td>
<td>USCBC Administrative Committee virtual meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>- Renovations Committee meeting, 9 a.m., Catholic Pastoral Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>- Senior Staff meeting, 10 a.m., CPC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>- Mass, 11:30 a.m., St. Francis de Sales Chapel, CPC (live-streamed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 18</td>
<td>- Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma Board of Directors meeting, 1 p.m., CPC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 20</td>
<td>- Mass and dedication of Nercher, 11 a.m., St. Andrew Dunn-Loe, OKC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>- Pre-Synod Council meeting, 9:30 a.m., CPC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>- Mass, 11:30 a.m., St. Francis de Sales Chapel, CPC (live-streamed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 24</td>
<td>- Senior Staff meeting, 10 a.m., CPC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 24</td>
<td>- Catholic Charities Board of Directors meeting, 11:30 a.m., Catholic Charities Offices, OKC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 25</td>
<td>- Mass and keynote address for Catholic Schools Education Institute, 8:30 a.m., CPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 26</td>
<td>- St. Vincent de Paul Society annual Mass, 6 a.m., CPC</td>
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Additional coverage of Church and archdiocesan news and events, only on www.soonercatholic.org.

To send photos, event information or story ideas, e-mail tips@archokc.org.

A Blue Mass for First Responders will be at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 8 at St. John Nepomuk in Yukon. Reception to follow.

Archbishop’s Mass for Medical Professionals will be at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 15 at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oklahoma City. Reception to follow.

Speaker: Sister Mary Rachel Nerburn, RSM, M.D., St. Francis Hospital, Tulsa.

A Red Mass for Legal Professionals will be at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 29 in St. Thomas More University Parish in Norman. Reception to follow.

Speaker: Teresa Collott, J.D., University of St. Thomas School of Law.

Become 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/pray and become a pen pal.

WASHINGON – Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City and Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, respective chairmen of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committees on Domestic Justice and Human Development and International Justice and Peace, issued a pastoral message for the annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation: “Sept. 1 marks the five-year anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation in the Catholic Church. On this day last year, Pope Francis encouraged the faithful to observe the Season of Creation – an ecumenical initiative that begins Sept. 1 and ends on Oct. 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi – through increased prayer and a simpler lifestyle. Once again, we unite in prayer with the Holy Father, who reminded us that ‘every member of the human family can act on this yet unique and indispensable thread in weaving a network of life that embraces everyone.’ To weave the network of life, we set our sights on the Author of Life (Acts 3:15) and pray for help to heal our ailing planet. ‘We invite every Catholic and all people of good will who care for our common home in the United States to increase efforts toward ecological conversion during this Season of Creation. May our prayers and our witness reflect the words and deeds of Jesus, who ‘went about doing good and healing’ (Acts 10:38). Resources for responding to the moral and spiritual challenges of the ecological crisis can be found at archokc.org.

£ Said Archbishop Coakley.

Awards for the 10th year in a row. This means, our common faith in action.

This year, because of a global pandemic a new “disaster” crossed all our paths and added additional strain upon local resources. Your Catholic Charities was able to garner more funding (more than $500,000) to help aid the thousands of donors like you who stepped up to help their neighbors, which is why the theme for this year’s appeal is “Communion connects us. We are one in Christ.”

Thanks to your faith and belief in our mission of serving all, we will continue to care for the poor, the marginalized and the frail. “For,” as our Lord says, “whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me.”

Catholic Charities has been in Oklahoma City for 108 years and was recently acknowledged as the “Best Non-Profit” by the Oklahoma’s Reader’s Choice Awards for the 10th year in a row. This means, our common faith in action.

We are one in Christ.

By Judy Billinsky

The Sooner Catholic

At a recent Mass, Archbishop Coakley throned the past leadership team of the Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference for their years of service and welcomed new officers.

“The purpose of the conference allows women to come to know the Lord in a deeper way as well as their Catholic faith and to share their love for God and their Catholic faith together as women. Women should say ‘yes’ to God and ‘yes’ to spending time on themselves to help them grow in their faith, spend time with other women, to help them come to know who they are in the light of God’s love for them.”

Archbishop Coakley and Fr. Alex Roll will meet with new and former officers of the Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference. Photo Diane Clay/Sooner Catholic

Oklahoma Catholic Women’s Conference welcomes announces date, keynote speaker

The Sooner Catholic<br>...
O
n the occasion of the 100th anniversary of The Sooner Catholic, it is fitting to celebrate its role in the life of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. From its humble beginnings as a small newsletter distributed to members of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, The Sooner Catholic has grown into a vibrant weekly newspaper that serves more than 80,000 subscribers, providing authentic, trustworthy, and uplifting content to the faithful.

The Sooner Catholic began as a newsletter in 1918, distributed to members of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. In 1927, it was transformed into a weekly newspaper, The Sooner Catholic, which has since become a trusted source of news and information for the Archdiocese and beyond.

Today, The Sooner Catholic continues to provide a platform for voices from across the Archdiocese, offering a variety of content, including news, feature stories, opinions, and events. It is a place where the faithful can connect, learn, and grow in their faith.

The Sooner Catholic is also a resource for those interested in learning more about the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, its history, and its mission. Whether you are a long-time subscriber or a new reader, The Sooner Catholic is here to serve you.

The Sooner Catholic is available online at www.archokc.org, where you can access the latest issues and archives. You can also follow us on social media for updates and special features.

Join us in celebrating 100 years of The Sooner Catholic and the role it has played in the life of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

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When's the last time you visited a cemetery? Most of us don't frequent them, and it's probably the last place we would go to visit a real reason—attend a graveside ceremony after a funeral, visit the graves of a loved one, etc. I suppose it may sound morbid, but I have made it a practice of visiting cemeteries. I recently was up in the Saint Louis area speaking at a conference. As I prepared for an afternoon run one of the days I was there, I found a cemetery on my route, Mount Hope Cemetery in Belleville, Il. It immediately brought back memories of my college days when I used to run through a cemetery several times a week. There's something about a cemetery that helps me center, and more importantly remember what the important things in life really are.

I've made it a practice over the years whenever visiting one to search for a person who died at the same age I currently am. I found a couple in Mount Hope. It's sobering to call to mind that my life is fragile, and I am. I found a couple in Mount Hope. It's sobering to remember what the important things in life really are.

Sooner Catholic

By Br. Benet Exton, O.S.B.

The Sooner Catholic

Jim Beckman
Executive Director of the Diocese of Oklahoma Evangelization and Catechesis

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As I looked around Mount Hope, I saw one tombstone after another—some more impressive than others, but who was taking notice of this? In the end, that's all that is left of this life. A little piece of rock on the ground marking the years we lived. After all our accomplishments, all our built-up possessions, our popularity and expertise—just a tombstone with our name.

This time of year always marks the final stretch of what we call "Ordinary Time" in the Liturgical calendar. It culminates on the Feast of Christ the King in late November, and the new year starts on the first Sunday of Advent. If you listen closely at Mass in the coming weeks, the readings will focus more and more on death, dying and the end times. That scriptural theme fits with the end of the year, and also matches the fall season unfolding around us—leaves falling, trees turning bare, things turning first colorful, then brown and falling to the ground to die. In some ways, the Liturgical seasons try to focus our attention in the same way I started out this article. This earth is not our home, and this life is not what we were created for. There's so much more!

The real aim of life is to get to heaven, our real home. Throughout the history of the Church, many spiritual writers have taught about this and have helped define the path for how we get there. I had the privilege of teaching a class about this path to our diocesan this past Spring, what the Church calls the Spiritual Journey of the Soul.

Countless saints and spiritual writers have written about this journey, and what is quite striking is the amazing similarity in how they describe it. Through the centuries, three stages to the spiritual life have emerged from all these varied writings: the Purgative Way, the Illuminative Way and the Unitive Way. I used a text by Ralph Martin for the class I taught with the dreamers, "The Fulfillment of All Desires," it really is quite good, and I highly recommend it.

At close to 500 pages, though, it's not a quick read. It's more of a prayer-closer side table book that you will continue to read and reference for years.

"The Fulfillment of All Desire" is a compilation of writings from numerous saints and doctors on Christian spirituality—Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Therese of Lisieux, Saint Therese of Avila, Saint John of the Cross, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Saint Francis of Assisi, etc. It's a powerhouse of encouragement for our spiritual journey, with great quotes like this from Saint Bernard:

"We have seen how every soul— even if burdened with sin (2 Tim. 3:6)—is stamped in very manner by alluresments of pleasure, a captive in exile, imprisoned in the body, caught in the net of nature and without hope, has the power to turn and find it cannot only breathe the fresh air of hope of pardon and mercy, but also dare to aspire to the nuptials of the Word, not fearing to enter into alliance with God or to bear the sweet yoke of love (Mt. 11:30) with the King of angels" (pg. 101).

As we enter this fall season and approach Advent, it's a good time to reflect on your own end. You don't necessarily have to go visit a cemetery like I did. But, it could be good to prayerfully reflect on some questions like these: Would you be ready to go home if you were called? Have you been making progress on the spiritual journey toward your ultimate aim, heaven? What hindrances and obstacles are on the path for you?

As Saint Paul says, "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation!"
produced by each of our programs. So, it is really good for me to have that quote from Saint Teresa right outside my office,” said Patrick Raglow, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. “And to share with you these powerful stories of Emmanuel and Staffan for this year’s appeal because each of our big-number statistics refers to an even larger story: individual success. Thank you for partnering with Catholic Charities and our clients, witnessing miracles in the making.”

Many Oklahomans find themselves facing situations that seem hopeless or beyond their control. Without a way to understand and face these situations, they and their families may feel overwhelmed.

“I trust Catholic Charities with my life.”

- Emmanuel Vargas

Emmanuel Vargas

Emmanuel Vargas was an elementary school student when he came to CCOKC for counseling services. He had survived the 2013 Moore tornado and was experiencing trauma.

“I felt helpless and in complete despair. I felt alone and unloved by God. I felt like I was worth nothing. I was lost and in fear.”

Staffan Davis

Sanctuary Women’s Development Center supports basic human rights by offering homeless and low-income women and children resources, providing support and advocacy to alleviate the effects of poverty within the community and providing tools to overcome homelessness.

Staffan Davis entered Sanctuary in 2018 after being homeless for one year and 10 months. She had been living in her car in a Walmart parking lot.

“I felt hopeless, despair, sometimes I didn’t feel at all; Sanctuary gave me hope,” she said.

Staffan entered day classes at Sanctuary to establish goals and get her life back on track.

“She is now living on her own and has been able to find employment and housing.”

Staffan is a beautiful individual,” said Jessica Nuno, director of Sanctuary Women’s Development Center. “We are so blessed to have her as part of our Sanctuary family.”

“Catholic Charities serves anyone in need regardless of their faith, political party or cultural background,” Archbishop Coakley said. “It is our time, as Catholics, to come together and show one another mercy and compassion. Let us remind them what constitutes us by remembering we are all one in Christ.”

In May, Catholic Charities will celebrate five years of serving in the new building at 1232 N. Classen Blvd. in Oklahoma City and begin the next 10 years of impacting lives. Watch Emmanuel’s and Staffan’s stories at ccaokc.org.

Executive Director Patrick Raglow and Archbishop Coakley at Catholic Charities in Oklahoma City. Photo Avery Holt/Sooner Catholic.
“Through your gifts, Catholic Charities taught me new ways to deal with and understand my anger and anxieties. I use them even every day. I want to make sure you know our gift has transformed my life.” ~ Emmanuel

“My family was welcomed into Oklahoma so we started our new life. Catholic Charities helped us in every step of the way.” ~ T. Bwu

“Our family needed help with our immigration status. Catholic Charities staff was informative and helpful and the legal fees were affordable.” ~ R. Morales

“I want my children to learn to live, to save, give up, and to surround themselves with positive people like the people from Catholic Charities. Thank you for your compassion, for your donations, and for your faith in me.” ~ Tonga

PADRE NUESTRO ... OUR FATHER

When my first son was born, my wife and I had to make a decision. I was from Mexico and my wife is from Venezuela, so we spoke primarily in Spanish at home, but had to decide the language we were going to use to speak to our children.

We made the decision that I would speak only English to him, and my wife would speak exclusively Spanish. It is amazing to see how it has unfolded. He has something like a chip on his shoulder.

Whenever he is looking at me, he will speak English, but whenever he is looking at mom, Spanish will come out of his mouth. It doesn’t matter where he is or who else is in the room. So far, it has worked well. I tell the kids, be in fully bilingual, and we are proud of it. At end, being bilingual is a plus, not a minus.

This bilingual reality, however, wasn’t part of our Catholic life.

During his first years, we almost exclusively attended Mass in Spanish, he learned his prayers in Spanish, and at age 5, he was attending his kindergarten religious class in Spanish as well. Every night before bed, I was praying the rosary, and he would repeat what I say. Sometimes he Improvised faith – the three became the best of all prayers.

One night, when he was 5, I decided to change the game, and started the prayer in English. We knelt. I began, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." With a puzzled look, he instantly blessed himself repeating what I said. I then folded my hands; he did the same. I said, “Our Father, Who art in heaven ...” and he repeated.

After a moment he stopped, looked at me and said, in English, “Daddy, that is English, and we are praying, and prayer is done in Spanish,” and he laughed out loud at his daddy’s “mistake.”

As a father, my primary priorities are the education of my children, and the life of my family. So, his reaction left me thinking for days and now years. What is the ultimate goal in the education of my children? How will I know I have fulfilled my mission as a parent? Is parenting only about providing food, clothing, education, devices, etc.? Have I fulfilled my mission as a father if I get my son or daughter to graduate from school? Will I be satisfied if they are rich? What, ultimately, will tell me whether I did a good job as a parent?

Although I believe these are important, I’m convinced that my primary mission as a parent is that my children become saints.

Not only that they become men and women of kindness, like the rich young man of the Gospel (Mt 19: 16-22) who was a good man, but that they are saints – holy children, holy friends, holy professionals, holy priests or religious, holy spouses, and parents, wherever we are in every aspect of their lives. Simply put, that they go to heaven and enjoy eternal friendship with God. This is my primary mission as a parent. I want to do them justice, with their ticks, forever.

My concern for them is timeless. I don’t just care about their life here on earth, I care about their eternal life.

The experience of my prayer will eventually, will tell me whether I did the job right.

Heaven is where I want to be in the end. I don’t just want to be there, I want it to be a place where I can enjoy eternal friendship with God. We can pray, praise and thank God in English too. Thank goodness God is multilingual!

JOBS BOX

Cook – OKC

The Catholic Pastoral Center seeks an experienced cook for a part-time position. Flexible schedule (approximately 25 hours per week) during evenings and weekends. The successful candidate will have a minimum of five years’ experience in food service. Catering experience is preferred. Send resume to cookokc@yahoo.com. Applications are available during regular business hours at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway, Oklahoma City, OK 73132.

Maintenance director - OKC

Corpus Christi Catholic Church is seeking a maintenance director. This is a full-time position with benefits. Knowledge of plumbing, electrical, locks, carpentry, handyman work and lawn work are required. Contact Fr. Danny Grover at dgrv010@gmail.com.

Business manager – OKC

Mount St. Mary Catholic School is seeking an accountant to fill the school’s business manager position. The position reports directly to the principal. Accounting responsibilities include financial reporting, accounts of the general ledger, budgeting, accounts receivable, investments, accounts payable, accruals, and fixed assets. Personnel administration responsibilities include oversight of the payroll system, personnel records, and student financial aid applications. Experience is preferred, but not required. The position manages two business office employees. Applicants must hold a bachelor’s degree in accounting or finance, be proficient using Microsoft Office applications, making presentations, and have experience using accounting software. The position requires attention to detail, strong communication skills, accuracy, and the ability to work well with parents and school staff. Bilingual in Spanish preferred. Send inquiries and resumes to rfincler@okarch.org.

Caseworker level II – OKC

The Oklahoma City Diocese is seeking a caseworker (level II) to provide emergency assistance, primarily to families, with student support services. Applicants must hold a bachelor’s degree in education and special education certification required. Send resumes to Theresa Flannery at TFlannery@okarch.org.

Executive Director – OKC

Luis Soto is executive Director of the Oklahoma City Archdiocese’s Hispanic Ministry. He has four parishes, an office, and a team of 30.

“CATHOLIC CHARITIES ANNUAL APPEAL

ARC-W.COM/2020

10 September 13, 2020 Sonner Catholic
La comunidad nos conecta. Somos uno en Cristo.

En esta edición del Sooner Catholic, encontrarás varias historias conmemorativas de los 109 años de la Colegiata Católica de la Arquidiócesis de Oklahoma y las 2020. Ayúdanos a seguir contando historias agradecidos.

El texto de "Ciudadanía fiel" se puede descargar en Store.USCCB.org. El documento completo también está disponible en inglés y será el inglés, el inglés.

El lema de la Colecta de este año: “La comunión doméstica y desarrollo humano.

Año tras año, Caridades Católicas asiste a esos católicos que no tienen hogar, o los que están en riesgo de perder sus hogares, y dependiendo de nuestra ayuda para permanecer en ellas. El personal de Caridades Católicas siguió dando la caridad y sus propias generosidades para sufrir a todos los que cruzan por ellas. Todo eso es gracias a ti.

Caridades Católicas puede hacer todo este debido a las donaciones generosas de millones de personas como tú, que se pusieron de pie para ayudar a su pareja. De ahí viene el lema de la Colecta de este año: “La comunidad nos conecta. Somos uno en Cristo”.

Gracias a ti y a ese que crees en nuestra misión de ayudar a todos, continuaremos sirviendo a los más pobres, los marginados y los débiles. “En verdad, Jesús dijo al sacerdote: “cuando hicieste a uno de estos hermanos mios más pequeños, a ti me lo hiciste”.

Caridades Católicas ha estado en Oklahoma City por más de 108 años y los hizo galardonada con el premio a la mejor “Oportunidad sin fin de lucro” por parte del “Oklahoman’s Reader’s Choice Awards” por décimo consecutivo. Eso solo significa que nuestra comunidad apoya y reconoce el trabajo de Caridades Católicas.

En esta ocasión, el documento también va acompañado de una serie de cinco videos que destacan temas vitales de política pública. El documento completo también está disponible en línea, el inglés. La comunidad nos conecta. Somos uno en Cristo.

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Mass of Bl. Stanley Rother and the online to stanleyrother.org. To sup
items in the Heritage Gallery re
the archdiocese has produced a
Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine on
Shrine webcam
Learn more at archokc.org/
Catholic churches or schools.
new training program for volun-
ted with minors in the diocese’s
Coakley has issued a mandatory
place
The DVD set of the Beatification
Diocese of Oklahoma City” with
Building a Culture of Conversion
and mailing addresses for parishes
-need financial support from pa
capacity, parishes and priests still
quarantine and coronavirus at
other resources related to the
act of spiritual communion and
of Assisi Oklahoma City YouTube
Mass of Remembrance
of Assisi, 1901 N.W. 18 in OKC.
follows.
Cr:R’s: It’s more than a Rice Bowl!
rentals@monksok.org.
Silence at the Abbey” with Br.
early mass from Archbishop Coakley at
Cinco de Mayo, ccrprayers@gmail.com.
Pray the Rosary for Life, 6:30
p.m., 2453 Wilcox Dr., Nor
advocate can contact Julie Lewis
respectlife@archokc.org.
man and Oklahoma City. Sign up
for CRS: It’s more than a Rice Bowl!
is for single parents with a focus
Oklahoma City. This new ministry
Sept. 26 in the Benedict Center.
Granny’s Attic
be sold for a vintage German 1984
online auction bidding Sept. 15 -
Mustang will have their annual
parish will host their annual
Sept. 15 at St. Francis of
*pants at the Infant Jesus of Prague.
Jesus. Nine days of novenas
Feast of St. Robert Bellarm-
Pray the Rosary for Life, 6:30
p.m., 2453 Wilcox Dr., Nor-
advocate can contact Julie Lewis
respectlife@archokc.org.
40 Days for Life
lost to suicide. Everyone welcome.
Mass of Remembrance
of Assisi YouTube Live.
1901 N.W. 18, OKC.
will be 6 p.m. Sept. 15 at St. Fran-
cis of Assisi Oklahoma City YouTube
channel.
Oktoberfest
Holy Spirit Catholic Church in
Montrose will have their annual
Oktoberfest virtually on Sept. 26. Authentic German-
way Mass will be live-
streamed to the St. Francis Fac-
book page and on the Bl. Stan-
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downtown and a police chaplain, held his annual Blessing of the Badges in 2014, Koelsch was shot twice. He said his vest and the blessing protected him. The bullet impacted his chest near the badge that had been blessed by Father Buettner.

“I doubt I would be here today without that blessing,” he said. Koelsch said his officers have constant opportunities to go above and beyond the call of duty and “Go Make Disciples!” His officers and their families frequently help families in need, following the corporal works of mercy as their guide.

Father Buettner, who administered the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick in the emergency room after Lt. Koelsch was injured, has been a police chaplain since 2014. In addition, Father Buettner has the support from a number of retired police officers who have become deacons.

“It has been a great honor serving the police officers, dispatchers, their families and the wider community. I have been very impressed with the great love our officers have for the community they serve,” Father Buettner said.

“Many times when the police chaplain is called out, the officers need someone they can trust and talk freely to. The shootings, hostage situations and fatality wrecks that I have been called to have allowed me to accompany and minister to many people during very traumatic moments in their lives. I’m grateful to be a part of the law enforcement family.”

Captain Tom Krug with the Oklahoma City Police Department knows first-hand the balance of being a strong Catholic and a dedicated officer. He has been an officer for nearly 30 years and has a son, Father Jerome Krug, who is a Catholic priest. Tom Krug’s dad also was a policeman and remembers him talking about fellow officers struggles with the job, divorce, health issues, lack of sleep, etc., and how important faith is to keeping a proper balance.

“I encourage my officers to use the services of the Wellness Program and the chaplain’s office.” Krug said. “Over the years, the Catholic chaplains have earned a well-deserved reputation that they keep things confidential, whether you are Catholic or non-Catholic.”

To celebrate first responders and chaplains, the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City holds a Blue Mass each year. This year, the Blue Mass will be held Oct. 8 at 6:30 p.m. at Saint John Nepomuk Catholic Church in Yukon.

“The Blue Mass is an opportunity to intentionally pray for all of our first responders and to also bless their badges. This includes law enforcement, firefighters, paramedics, dispatchers and support staff,” Father Buettner. “It is normally celebrated on or near Sept. 29, the Feast of Archangels, since Saint Michael the Archangel is the patron saint of first responders.”

Charles Albert is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.