Many forms of charity take shape during the Christmas season

Saint Vincent de Paul Society members, Patti Crosby and Roy Symes, delivered gifts during Advent. Photo provided.

By Charles Albert
The Sooner Catholic

During Advent and Christmas seasons helping people in need has become part of our culture. The Saint Vincent de Paul Society works year-round to help those less fortunate or who are facing a food crisis.

“There are so many things Christ taught about serving the poor, there is nothing we won’t try to help, all people have to do is call,” said Noreen Valadez, council president of the archdiocesan council of Oklahoma City.

“Each conference responds to the needs of the individual community. Funding is primarily from the local parish. All money given by the parish, by friends of Saint Vincent de Paul from other churches, the community or from memorial gifts go directly to help people in need.”

Since no one agency can handle

continued on page 7

“Go Make Disciples”

“The shepherd cannot run”

A Christmas letter from Bl. Stanley Rother

Each year, Blessed Stanley sent a Christmas letter for publication in the two Oklahoma newspapers: The Sooner Catholic of Oklahoma City and the Eastern Oklahoma Catholic of Tulsa.

This unusually frank and haunting letter places side-by-side feelings of Christmas cheer with the violence happening to the people of Santiago Atitlán.

continued on page 10

“A silly but much-loved Christmas tradition at Father Zak Boazman’s house stems from his mother (me) buying little things throughout the year when they were on sale. These were things I thought would be fun or that family members would need. They were cheap little gifts, so inexpensive or insignificant it would be embarrassing for anyone to really give them as a gift at Christmas. I would save them up throughout the year and at Christmas I would wrap them up as gifts from the family dog, Mayzie. Even though Mayzie isn’t with the Boazman family anymore, the tradition continues. At the Boazman family Christmas gatherings, the celebration would not be the same without gifts from Mayzie!”

Janette Boazman

See more Christmas traditions on p. 20
With Mary and Joseph at Bethlehem

“O Come All Ye Faithful” is one of our most beloved Christmas carols. We repeat its joyful refrain throughout the hymn, “O come, let us adore him.” Christmas invites all the faithful to a renewed spirit of adoration and wonder before the mystery we celebrate: the Word has become flesh.

God has become a man born in the Virgin Mary. His name is Jesus. He has been born for us and for our salvation in the weakness and poverty of the stable at Bethlehem. The concrete reality of this astonishing mystery is illustrated poignantly in Bethlehem where pilgrims find a plaque on the earth in the Church of the Nativity announcing, “The Word was made flesh here!”

God’s humility, which is displayed so poignantly in the manger where the infant Jesus was laid by Mary, evokes astonishment and brings our restless hearts to silence as we ponder such a great and unexpected gift. The Gospels of the Church, from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, to St. John the Baptist, Edmond, to St. Gregory’s Abbey, Oklahoma City, to St. Gregory’s Abbey, Sulphur, invites us to adore him hidden in the weakness of a newborn child (CCC 563).

Wonders abound in the beautiful Gospel narratives of the Christmas season. Angels appear to shepherds, the birth of Jesus to shepherds as they keep watch in their fields and proclaim to them tidings of great joy: God has sent his savior and messiah to deliver his people! The shepherds, in turn, glorify and praise God for the concrete reality of this astonishing event. The shepherds, in turn, glorify and praise God for the concrete reality of this astonishing event.

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Mary and Joseph are the teachers. As we ponder with them the mystery of the Word made flesh, we find that our hunger for the Eucharist and our desire to encounter and adore Jesus deepens.

As we are drawn more deeply into friendship with Jesus through moments of adoration and our regular participation in the Eucharist, our lives become increasingly eucharistic. Our encounter with God’s love, which fills us to the point of overflowing joy and gratitude, we discover that what we have received as a gift we need to give as a gift. We become missionary disciples of mercy for others. All these mysteries converge beautifully in the Eucharistic liturgy, the Mass, which is the source and summit of our lives. As we celebrate the birth of Christ this Christmas season he ascertained of us his prayers and a daily remembrance at Mass for you and your loved ones throughout the New Year. God is with us!

The mystery of Bethlehem invites us to adore him. It is significant that, Bethlehem, the place of Jesus’ birth, means “house of bread.” Jesus comes to nourish the world by giving himself for all the world: later he proclaims, “I am the bread of life.” Jesus continues to give himself for us and for our salvation each time the Paschal Mystery is celebrated at Mass. He continues to nourish us in Holy Communion and to dwell among us truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. Bethlehem is our first school of faith. The School of Bethlehem invites us to learn the lessons of adoration and humility. It begins at the manger where Mary and Joseph are our teachers. As we ponder with them the mystery of the Word made flesh, we find that our hunger for the Eucharist and our desire to encounter and adore Jesus deepens.

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St. Gregory’s Abbey receives novice

SHAWNEE – Saint Gregory’s Abbey received Kyle A. Hankins into the community as a novice on Dec. 7. He received the name “Brother Matthew” during the ceremony.

St. Rev. Lawrence Stasyszen, O.S.B., abbot of Saint Gregory’s, explained, “In sacred scripture we read that God often bestows a new name upon individuals who are called to a change of direction in response to divine grace. Monastic tradition continues this practice to remind us each day of our responsibility to God’s call. A new name also gives us a patent saint whom we can invoke and imitate.”

Brother Matthew is named for Saint Matthew the Apostle and Evangelist. Brother Novice Matthew was born and raised in Chickasha and was an active member of Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church. He was a member of the parish choir, participated in the parish evangelization team and is a Fourth Degree member of the Knights of Columbus.

He also volunteered in several service organizations in the Chickasha community and recently was active with the Gospel of Life School and communities in Moore and Oklahoma City.

The novitiate is a period of one year of intense study, formation and discernment. Novices live at Saint Gregory’s Abbey study sacred scripture, monastic spirituality and history, the Rule of Saint Benedict, Church liturgy and other courses in human development. Novices participate in the full common life of the monastic community and are assigned various forms of work. Towards the end of the novitiate year, a novice may petition to profess temporary vows as a member of the community.

Shrine webcam! Watch construction of the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine webcam on a live stream of the construction of the Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine in Oklahoma City.

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

For the people who are unable to be with family and friends at Christmas, may they know they are not forgotten and are embraced by God’s love. We pray to the Lord, Lord, hear our prayer.

To 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/penpal, find their addresses and write a note.

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Throughout the colorful history of the Church in Oklahoma, there have been esteemed clerics whose presence is described as "difficult." Monsignor John (Jean) Metter most certainly would fit snugly into this category. Born in Lorraine-Lorraine, which was a disputed area that changed national identity between France and Germany three times between 1870 and 1914, he came to Oklahoma to be ordained for the Vicariate of Oklahoma in 1894, the third priest ordained for the territory. Full of zeal and energy as well as spirit, he began his career as an assistant in Guthrie and was then assigned as a blazing temper, he began his career as an assistant in Guthrie and was then assigned as a pastor of Norman for the duration of his priestly life. He started an elementary school in 1909 and a high school in 1909 staffed by the Benedictine Sisters of Guthrie. While achieving success on many levels, his skills with humanity were at times lacking. There were confrontations between him and the Benedictine Sisters. He became embroiled in a dispute (large- ly of his doing with the sisters, which led to their departure in 1914. He also had no interest in ministering to the Native American students of the University of Oklahoma. Because of his refusal, Bishop Moreschert was livid. From the bishop: "It is clear that the pastor's reason for refusing to look after the students is as much the desire to injure the bishop as to avoid responsibility." He did not remove him as pastor because of his ecclesiastical rank and, in kindness, did not want him to be humiliated by being sent to a smaller parish after 25 years in Norman. Oddly, as difficult as he could be sometimes, most in his parish were loyal to him and even those begrudgingly acknowledged his competence as a pastor.

Monsignor John (Jean) Metter be remembered as a significant part of Oklahoma history due to his involvement in the Sacramental Wine Case. The Bose-Dry Law that was passed in 1917 prohibited any alcohol in Oklahoma. Monsignor Metter arrived at the Sainte Fa line to retrieve a case of sacramental wine. He was denied delivery. The court case went all the way to the Oklahoma Supreme Court and smacked of anti-Catholic passions. Thankfully, the Church won, and alcohol was allowed for religious purposes. After a life of priestly ministry and maintaining a general tendency toward ill-tempered nature, Monsignor John Metter passed away at the age of 53 in 1923. His challenging personality but surprising effectiveness made him one of the most complex figures in the early Oklahoma history.

From the Archives:
A photo series from George Rigazzi, archdiocesan archivist.

The Sooner Catholic is supported through the Annual Catholic Appeal and Sooner Catholic Communications Appeal.
Members of the St. Vincent de Paul chapter at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church participated in the Sulfur Christmas parade on Nov. 29. Photo provided.

The inaugural “Advent Meal” patronal feast day celebration at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church was held Dec. 3 in downtown Sulphur. Photo provided.

Sooner Catholic

Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City has been named a "Best Hospital for Maternity" by U.S. News & World Report for its dedication to providing high quality, safe delivery experiences for mothers and babies. Mercy is the only hospital in Oklahoma City to receive this recognition.

This is the second independent organization this year to name Mercy Oklahoma City a "best maternity hospital.

Mercy Oklahoma City is one of the 237 hospitals on the U.S. News & World Report inaugural ranking of "Best Hospitals for Maternity" for 2021.

"Our Mercy Birthplace team is laser focused on best practices and the needs of our patients, and this recognition as a best maternity hospital reflects their dedication," said Dr. Chad Smith, Mercy Gil-Ross and chief medical officer.

"Our care team provides compassionate care and a special experience for patients welcoming babies into the world which has led to exponential growth in the number of moms choosing to deliver at Mercy."

The hospital’s labor and delivery and postpartum services have been at capacity for years, limiting Mercy’s ability to serve more patients. Work is underway on the new Love Family Women’s Center on the campus of Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City. The 175,000-square-foot, four-story facility, expected to open in fall 2023, will serve women and children. When construction is complete, the facility will have a total of 73 patient rooms, increasing the capacity for deliveries by 40 percent.

For more information, visit mercy.net.

continued from page 1

all requests at Christmas time, the Vincentians partnered with other Catholic organizations such as Knights of Columbus, Catholic Charities and Street People Ministry. In addition, local parish partners work to help with the huge demand.

A 15-year tradition, the giving tree program, has been established with the Vincentians and the parishioners of Saint John Nepomuk Catholic Church in Yukon. In Lawton, for more than a decade, Vincentians deliver 15 food baskets to families in need. In addition, they deliver 15 food baskets to Catholic Charities in Lawton for families.

Valadez said the Norman conferences serve their families in need with gift cards. At Saint Mark Catholic Church, the gift cards were donated by an anonymous Vincentian, while Saint Thomas More Catholic Church has gift cards donated by the pastor and parishioners.

In Harrah/McCloud, the Saint Teresa of Avila conference and Knights of Columbus Council #4592 partnered to have an Angel Tree program for more than 70 children. The Saint Andrew Catholic Church conference in Moore supported the parishioners’ Street People Ministry program, which provides winter clothing.

Parishioners at the Church of the Epiphany in Mustang deliver gift bags and sing Christmas carols at the senior apartment complexes.

"More and more of our neighbors are ‘neverly poor,’ and asking for help from strangers or applying for assistance is something they never, ever saw themselves doing, and it’s hard for them," Valadez said. "We are answering a call to be the hands and feet of Christ on earth."

Parishioners at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Anadarko held the fourth annual “Change for Christmas” collection.

Participants raised more than $2,600. Religious education students and parents went shopping for gifts to give to the local office of the state Department of Human Services.

Find more information at svdokc.org or contact Noreen Valadez at (405) 706-7060, oklahomacvdp@gmail.com.

Charles Albert is a freelance writer for the Sooner Catholic.

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Qualified Charitable Distributions from a

AN EASY GIVING TOOL

Qualified Charitable Distributions from a traditional IRA offer an easy way to support your favorite Catholic church, school, or ministry.

IRA owners who are 70 1/2 or older can use their Qualified Charitable Distribution to make gifts to a charity without that amount counting as taxable income.

The Catholic Foundation of Oklahoma can help with this.

For more information, visit: www.cfook.org/qcd
or contact Owen Canfield at 405-721-4115 or ocanfield@cfook.org.

Catholic Charities taking donations for tornado relief

Catholic Charities USA is accepting donations at catholiccharitiesusa.org. The site has a button to hit to donate for tornado relief.

The tornadoes swept across the South and Midwest Dec. 10. On Dec. 14, authorities said at least 70 people were dead in Kentucky; six died when a tornado hit an Amazon warehouse in Illinois; four were dead in Tennessee; two in Arkansas; and one in Missouri. Mississippi also got hit. Tornadoes were leveled and tens of thousands of people remained without power.

Susan Montalvo-Gesser, director of Catholic Charities of Diocese of Owensboro, Kentucky, said the agency had been in the process of rehousing Afghan refugees when the storms hit. She called the group’s natural assistance to those affected.

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma is here to help. Contact us (405)721-4115 or cfo@cfook.org. Visit our website for more information cfook.org.

Nearly 2 million pilgrims visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City

By David Ramos

The Archdiocese of Mexico said that more than 1,500 photos and more than 1,400 candles were placed in the shrine. The solemnity commemorates the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Juan Diego, an Aztec convert to Catholicism, in 1531.

Our Lady of Guadalupe made a request for a church to be built on the site where she appeared on Tepeyac, a hill northwest of what is now Mexico City. As a sign for the bishop, she left an image of herself imprinted miraculously on his tilma, a poor quality cactus cloth. The tilma should now Mexico City.

The apparition and its miraculous Marian image led to mass conversions of native American communities to Catholicism.

The Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City is the most visited Marian shrine in the world. The annual number of visitors to the basilica is second only to Saint Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City.
Merry Christmas! Peace in 1981!

May this holiday season be one of peace and love for all our friends. This year of 1980 has indeed been different here in our parish in Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala. The pre-Lent and Lenten seasons were normal. We suspended baptisms during all of Lent and gave the catechists an intensive course on the sacrament, the responsibility of both the parents and godparents etc. Parents and godparents are now given a lot more preparation and it is done by zones in town.

We had the pleasure of having Cliff and Gertrude Sousa of Bartlesville here for Holy Week and two weeks after Easter. They contributed their talents to various necessities such as maintenance and painting and also had time to take lots of pictures and watch the local ceremonies. We appreciate their efforts to tell about our work here in the 3-part series in the “Eastern Okla. Catholic” and their talks and slide shows to various groups. Also during the summer, Sisters Charlotte Kohl and Marian Wilson spent six weeks in the missions and we thank them for their help in the baptism index and getting the altar linens better organized.

The retableau was finished on schedule but the pictures and article that I promised haven’t been realized. I guess I am waiting for an expert such as Fr. Monahan to come down here and do the job for me. Don’t you have a vacation planned in this direction in the near future?

The parish hall is still in limbo, has not yet surfaced. We have bought the steel structure, have ordered and paid for the doors and windows, and have much of the steel we need, but haven't actually started building. We presented a petition to Adveniat (German bishops), and they promised us $22,000 and have given us the first half of the money. We are just not sure what to do with our present situation.

In most areas it is generally difficult to get the services of religious. In early May I had the pleasant surprise of a group of religious that actually came and asked for a place to work. After some quick arrangements and stretching the permission a little, they moved into their convent in early September. They are seven professed Indian Sisters, Missionary Carmelites of St. Teresa, along with a Mexican Sister and a Guatemalan as directors. Most of their work will be with the women, girls, the sick, alphabetization, catechism, liturgical music, banners etc. The Sisters have been victims of local thieves already, twice. Once the thief actually crawled thru a first-floor window into the Chapel. The convent and rectory are gradually being made more secure and are getting to look like a maximum security complex.

I am sure that many of you have heard rumors and saw articles about our area during the past month or two. Some is true, sad to say, some exaggerated, some false and some that hasn’t been told. The purported reason for the presence of the army in our immediate area is to drive out and protect us from communist guerrillas. But there aren’t any around here. A group did come into town in early June for about 2 hours and made some promises to those who were around. There seemed to be interest on the part of some in their presence here. So far we have ten men that have disappeared. The director of the radio was one of the first and then later the station was broken into and looted. There is no set pattern for those being taken. In our town are a number of informers who are paid by the authorities to be spies etc. They are paid for names turned in if these are later captured. The denunciations are sometimes because of envy, vengeance or just downright greed. A good friend of mine just happened to be in the wrong place when several others were picked up. He left a wife and three children. The wife and one child have active TB and the baby is only six-weeks-old. Another man left seven children.

The Sisters, the other priest and myself have not been threatened. My associate has felt that he has been followed etc. but no direct threats. We have to be careful where we go and what we say to anyone. A nice compliment was given to me recently when a supposed leader in the Church and town was complaining that “Father is defending the people.” He wants me deported for my sin. This is one of the reasons I have for staying in the face of physical harm. The shepherd cannot run at the first sign of danger. Pray for us that we may be a sign of the love of Christ for our people, that our presence among them will fortify them to endure these sufferings in preparation for the coming of the Kingdom. Thanks to all for your support and prayers for us in the past weeks and months.

“Peace”

Stanley F. Rother
A friend of mine recently observed that I am “always” recommending a new book. He seemed annoyed, but it was a somewhat humorous joke that’s true. I am typically reading two or three books at a time, often struggling to remember where I was in each of them. And, on the other side of a good read, I do find myself wanting to share what I have read with others. It’s kind of like evangelization! How could we help but share the great gift that we have received? (Col. 1:16).

If you’re still looking for a stockings stuffer, here’s a great idea! One book I have been reading the past year or so has been remarkable, “From Christendom to Apostolic Mission” (University of Mary, Bismarck, N.D.). I’ve talked about it in this column numerous times. I’ve given away a lot of books in my life, but never a couple thousand copies like I have with this book.

Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte “a new creature,” an adoptive son of God, who has become a “partaker of the divine nature,” member of Christ and citizen with him, and in temple of the Holy Spirit! (CCC, 1265).

Yet, doesn’t it seem that these “effects” are diminishing in our modern times. How can it be that these powerful effects, done by God and the work of grace, are not more evident in the world today? Father Raffaeo Cantalamessa, the papal household preacher, wrestles with this exact question and comes to the conclusion that the Sacraments of Initiation can become “tied up” in one’s life and the release of the power of the Holy Spirit! "In such a time as this" (Ezek. 3:7). "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3).

This is God’s answer to this malfunctioning that has grown up in the Christian life in the Sacrament of Baptism. The release of the power of the Holy Spirit is effective in reactivating the graces of baptism – like a "new birth".

Finally, man contributes his part – namely, he makes a choice of faith, prepared in repentance that allows the word of God to set itself free and to emanate all its strength. It is as if the plug is pulled, and the light is switched on. The gift of God is finally "united," and the Spirit is allowed to flow like a fragrance in the Christian life.

I pray that we all can let the full impact of this grace for ours this Christmas season. The new birth of Christ in us through the power of the Holy Spirit! "In such a time as this" (Ezek. 4:14), these apostolic times, these are the kinds of graces that are so desperately needed!

Happy Christmas to you and your family and Happy New Year!
### Jobs Box

**Director of development - Shrine**
The Bl. Stanley Rother Shrine is seeking a director of development for all aspects of fundraising and donor relations. The director will organize and manage all fundraising programs and services for the shrine, including direct mail, gift cultivation and solicitations, annual giving programs, planned giving, and management, planning, giving, and stewardship. The director will collaborate with pastors, include others to identify and cultivate gift prospects for special projects and programs at the shrine as well as create annual development initiatives. Bachelor's degree’s in business, non-profit management, or another related field required. Five years of development experience and the ability to be a practicing Catholic in integration with development effort is essential. Resume and cover letter to mmills@archokc.org.

**Receptionist - OKC**
The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking a full-time receptionist to manage the front desk and serve as the first point of contact for the archokc.org website. This position will greet visitors, answer the phone, handle voicemail, and maintain the archokc.org website. This position will require the ability to work in a fast-paced environment, assist with projects, and maintain a positive attitude. A high school diploma or equivalent is required. Submit resume and cover letter to msall@archokc.org.

**Associate director of development - OKC**
The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City is seeking an associate director of development to coordinate the implementation of the fundraising campaign strategy. This position will be instrumental in developing the vision, strategy, plans, program, member relations, and oversight of the fundraising and planning program; bachelor's degree in required field of study and experience. Bachelor’s degree in business administration or equivalent is preferred. Submit resume and cover letter to msall@archokc.org.

**Senior accountant - OKC**
Cardinal Newman Schools in Oklahoma City is seeking a senior accountant to maintain the financial records for the school. The senior accountant will be responsible for maintaining and updating the accounting records, ensuring compliance with financial regulations and standards, and assisting with the annual audit. This position requires at least a bachelor’s degree in accounting or related field and a minimum of five years of experience in accounting. Submit resume and cover letter to keisha@blacksheermountain.org.

**Substitute teachers - OKC**
Metro Performance Charter School is seeking long-term substitute teachers for theology classes. Candidates must hold a bachelor's degree in education and be a practicing Catholic. A high school teaching certificate is preferred. Submit resume and cover letter to keisha@blacksheermountain.org.

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**FATHER TED’ S NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY**

**Book Review:** *Kristof and the First Christmas Tree*

*By John H. Dolezal*

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Iglesia Católica enseña: “Pastor o mago, nadie tan grande e inesperado. El Catecismo de la y hace que nuestros corazones inquietos María colocó al niño Jesús, evoca asombro cia: “¡El Verbo se hizo carne aquí!” se ilustra conmovedoramente en Belén, donde silencio y la pobreza del establo de Belén. La para nosotros y para nuestra salvación en el invita a todos los fieles a un renovado espíritu nos allanamos en Belén, donde María y José son nuestra salvación cada vez que se celebra el adoración. Los pastores, a su vez, glorifican y alaban Dios se ha hecho hombre nacido de la Vir- milagrosa que guía a los tres reyes magos que a Dios por todo lo que tienen el privilegio de La Virgen nueva-}
Oklahoma Catholic Native Schools Project

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, the Diocese of Tulsa and St. Gregory’s Abbey have launched the Oklahoma Catholic Native Schools Project to better understand the history, educational value and experiences of native students in Oklahoma Catholic boarding schools from 1880 to 1965. To con-tribute documents, photographs or an oral history to the project, e-mailinfo@oknationalschoolproj-ect.org. Learn more at archokc.org/oknationalschoolproject.

Listening Sessions

Den. Roy Callahan and Susan Callahan with the American Indi-Canadian Outreach office are conducting Listening Sessions throughout the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and the Diocese of Tulsa to provide a forum for people to discuss their experiences in former Catholic Indian boarding schools in Oklahoma. Find the schedule at archokc.org/sessions. For more information, contact Den. Callahan at archokc.org/ or go online to archokc.org/oknationalschoolproject.

Sidewalk advocates

Anyone interested in becoming a peaceful and loving sidewalk advocate can contact Julie Lewis at norman@sidewalkadvocatesmol-den.com. Find more information at sidewalkadvocatesmorden.com.

Holy Innocents Chapel

The only freestanding 24/7 perpetual adoration chapel in Oklahoma City dedicated to the protection of all life from conception until natural death is seeking more than 1,000 volunteer adorers. The chapel is located at 6114 W.W. 63 in Warr Acres. Contact: Julie Mayfield. (405) 413-0272; Maria Santana (Spanish), (405) 664-3052.

Gospel journey through Advent

The “Gospel journey through Ad-vent” with the Gospel of Life Dis-courses is at 4:30 p.m. Dec. 19 at St. John Paul II Dwelling, 4113 S. Eastern Ave., Moore. Schedule: 4:30 p.m. Advent Gospel reflection with Ken Pedigo; 5:30 p.m. Sun-day Vespers (evening prayer); 6 p.m., supper; 7 p.m. Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration with medi- tative music and silence.

Altogether Lovely

The Archdiocese of Oklahoma City presents “Altogether Lovely! Tuedas Juntes Encantadoras!” 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Jan. 9 at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 Northwest Expressway in Oklahoma City. The free mother/daughter event will help prepare young girls for the life of service. Cost: $100/couple. RSVP through Mary and Joseph. Contact: Julie Mayfield (English), (405) 528-6252; Laura Lang (Spanish), (405) 787-5606. Cost $30 pre-paid or $35 at the door. Lunch included.

Day of Reflection

Day of Reflection, “Finding Joy in Lent” presented by Abbot Lawrence Shaw, O.S.B., is 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Feb. 26 at St. Gregory’s Abbey, 1900 W. Macarthur St., Shawnee. Limited seating. Masks are recommended, but not required. Attendees must pre-register by e-mailing retreat@ monokcs.org or call (405) 878-5606. Cost $30 pre-paid or $35 at the door. Lunch included.

Service of prayer, music

A service of prayer and music with John Michael Talbot will be held at 5:30 p.m. March 6 at St. Gregory’s Abbey, 1900 W. Macarthur St., Shawnee. Free will offering will be accepted.

Faith Community Nurses’ conferences

The 15th annual Faith Community Nurses’ conference “Growing Our Faith Community Nursing Ministry in March 2-3 online and in-person.” The fee is $125. For more information, call (405) 978-5605. Cost $30 pre-paid or $35 at the door. Lunch included. Find more briefs at archokc.org/briefs.

Feast of St. John Neumann

The Oklahoma Catholic Wom- en’s Conference is Feb. 26 at Em-bassy Suites, 2501 Conference Dr. in Norman. Speakers are Kimberly Halin, Leah Darby and Sr. Marie Veritas. Price $85; late price $95. Register at okchatholicwomen.com.

Oklahoma March for Life

The Oklahoma March for Life will be held on Saturday, Jan. 22, at 10:30 a.m. The march will begin at the state capitol build- ing and end at Myriad. Fea- tured speakers are Bishop David Konderla, Diocese of Tulsa, and Dr. Todd Fisher, DM. Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma executive director. Find more in- formation at archokc.org/march- forlife.

Sanctity of Life Mass

Archbishop Coakley will cele- brate the annual Sanctity of Life Mass on Wednesday, Jan. 26, at 6 p.m. at The Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Okla- homa City. More information will be posted soon at archokc.org/sanctity-of-life.

Day of Reflection

Day of Reflection, “Mercy with out Measure: The Language of Abo...
What is your Christmas tradition?

Chip Carter
President, Cristo Rey OKC Catholic High School

“We always watch Christmas Vacation at least once together as a family! We’ve seen the movie probably 20 times, but it’s just not Christmas until we’ve all watched it again. My wife Lori and I think it’s just as funny today as it was the first time! We also always go to the 4:30 p.m. family Mass at Christ the King on Christmas Eve and then come home and have a nice family dinner with my mother and Lori’s parents.”

Fr. Jim Goins
Pastor, St. Thomas More Catholic Church, Norman

“In my family, Christmas really began the evening my father brought home the bag full of oranges, pecans, hard candies, and English walnuts. He grew up in the depression, and fruit, nuts, and hard candies were Christmas luxuries. To this day, I must have English walnuts about the house before it begins to feel like Christmas.”

Brandon Seid
Executive director, Resurrection Memorial Cemetery

“We make and decorate cookies for Santa every year using a family recipe. And, we eat lasagna every Christmas Eve after Mass.”

Sr. Barbara Joseph
Superior, Carmelite Sisters of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus

“My family went to look at Christmas lights and then opened our presents on Christmas Eve, then attended Midnight Mass. After Midnight Mass, we had pancakes. Even now, when we get together, we do this!”

Diane Floyd, Ed.D
Director of admissions, Mount St. Mary Catholic High School

“Growing up, and even into adulthood with my own children, Christmas Eve was our big night of celebrating Christmas, which included Mass, dinner together and opening gifts, and then traveling to my grandparents’ home in Enid on Christmas Day. My dad, Jack O’Brien, was an Okie transplant having been born and raised in Boston. It was the O’Brien family tradition to have Chinese food on Christmas Eve. As a result, my parents continued this tradition with me and my brother.”

Sr. Barbara Joseph
Superior, Carmelite Sisters of St. Therese of the Infant Jesus

“Each Christmas Eve, our whole family gets together to have a posada. We sing songs to reenact the procession made by Mary and Joseph. Once inside, we pray the rosary and dress the baby Jesus in his garments before he is laid in the manger.”

Jennifer Goodrich
President and CEO, Pivot - A Turning Point for Youth

“One thing we do is get three special gifts for our kids. We don’t wrap them, and they are representative of the gifts of the Magi.”

Joe Castiglione
Vice-president for intercollegiate athletics, University of Oklahoma

“Christmas Eve: Italian food is always the annual tradition. Christmas Day: Turkey/ham dinner, eggnog and apple/cherry pies. Movies: We watch most Christmas movies at least once but Christmas Vacation, Elf, Santa Claus I and II get viewed several times. Christmas Eve tradition always includes watching “It’s a Wonderful Life” (our favorite). Everyone in the household has a stocking, including our three rescue dogs Lollie, Murphy and Rudy. Christmas decorations are a huge part of our Christmas tradition (Griswold family characteristic) and we hit at least two to three light displays in various areas around Oklahoma.”

Tony & Kimberly Yanda
St. John Nepomuk Catholic Church, Yukon

“We celebrate with family with a Czech dinner on Christmas Eve, which consists of salmon patties, creamed peas and fried potatoes, and we always attend Midnight Mass. Sometimes the little ones sleep right through it, but it is the most beautiful and peaceful Mass. We choose a charity as a family each year to donate time and talent.”

Merry Christmas!