Mount Students Stand Up for Unborn

OKLAHOMA CITY — At Mount St. Mary High School, there has never been any doubt about how the students feel toward the pro-life side of the abortion issue. Based on their faith, their morals and their education, believing in pro-life has been their only option. But until recently, led by an inspired classmate, a nationally organized effort and a supportive principal, Mount St. Mary students have made a decision to turn their feelings into action.

“Our students have always been pro-life, but they have been silent pro-life. Now they have been challenged to make a stand by being part of a movement to end abortion,” said Brian Boeckman, director of the MSM Religion Department.

Inspired by the passion of junior T.J. Krug’s letter, Principal Talita DeNegri chose Oct. 28 as the date in which MSM students would hold a silent vigil outside a northwest Oklahoma City abortion clinic.

“The response by our student body was overwhelming,” DeNegri said. “They were stirred to take action and were challenging their classmates to follow their lead. We literally had to turn students away because of our limitations to transport them that day.”

Fifty MSM students were bussed on that day to host a peaceful demonstration outside the abortion clinic.

The Sign of the Woman

Pregnancy changed everything. I set aside the junk food that had been the cornerstone of my diet. I was careful to take prenatal vitamins every morning, to get enough sleep, and to avoid dying my hair. Everything revolved around doctor’s appointments, and I followed each medical recommendation to the letter. Periodically, I studied the books that detailed the gestational changes taking place in my body and in the tiny life that I carried within me. I knew when the heart began beating and the toenails formed. I knew when the baby was developed enough to have the hiccoughs, suck her thumb or breathe on her own should she come early.

The Sign of the Woman

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Advent Begins November 30

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McGuinness Students Lend Hands To Habitat for Humanity

St. Thomas More Campus Ministry At OU Involves Students, Parish

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The following statement was drafted by Cardinal Francis George, president of the USCCB. It was written after lengthy discussion by all the bishops. It was the unanimous request of the bishops that this statement represent our faith concerns to President-elect Obama and his new administration.

STATEMENT of the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

“If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labor; if the Lord does not watch over the city, in vain does the watchman keep vigil.” (Psalm 127, vs. 1)

The Bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States welcome this moment of historical transition and look forward to working with President-elect Obama and the members of the new Congress for the common good of all. Because of the Church’s history and the scope of her ministries in this country, we want to continue our work for economic justice and opportunity for all; our efforts to reform laws around immigration and the situation of the undocumented; our provision of better education and adequate health care for all, especially for women and children; our desire to safeguard religious freedom and foster peace at home and abroad. The Church is intent on doing good and will continue to cooperate gladly with the government and all others working for these goods.

The fundamental good is life itself, a gift from God and our parents. A good state protects the lives of all.

The bishops are single-minded because they are, first of all, single-hearted.

Our prayers go to President-elect Obama and his family and those who are cooperating with him to assure a smooth transition in government. Many issues demand immediate attention on the part of our elected watchman. May God bless him and our country.
Cardinal to Bishops: Church Must Be True to Christ

Election of America’s First Black President Demonstrates Civil Rights Progress, but Unborn Remain Target of Legal Discrimination

Dear Brother Bishops:

At the opening session of the recently concluded Roman Synod on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church, Pope Benedict XVI reflected on Psalm 118, that magnificent chorus praising the law, the order, that unites us to God. “The Word of God,” the pope said, “is solid, it is the true reality upon which to base one’s life. Let us recall the words of Jesus: ‘...Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away’... It is words that create history, it is words that give form to thoughts ... the Word of God is the foundation of everything, it is the true reality. And to be realists, we must truly count on this reality.”

The Holy Father offered these reflections in the face of bank closures, the collapse of giant corporations, the uncertainty of political regimes, with full awareness of the insecurity and suffering of so many around the world. His words echoed what he had told us in our own country last April, when he constantly directed our thoughts and actions toward the Word of God made flesh, whom the pope called “Our Hope.”

The pope invites us to place our hope in what lasts forever. We have legal order, into better accord with universal human rights, God’s order. Among so many people of good will, dutiful priests and loving religious women, bishops and lay people of the Catholic Church who took our social doctrine to heart then can feel vindicated now. Their successors remain, especially among those who quietly give their lives to teaching and forming good and joyful children in Catholic schools in African American and other minority communities.

We are, perhaps, at a moment when, with the grace of God, all races are safely within the American consensus.

We are not at the point, however, when Catholics, especially in public life, can be considered full partners in the American experience unless they are willing to put aside some fundamental Catholic teachings on a just moral and political order. The hubris that has isolated our country politically and now economically is heard, but not usually recognized, in moral arguments based simply and solely on individual moral autonomy. This personal and social dilemma is not, of course, a matter of ultimate importance, for America is not the Kingdom of God; but it makes America herself far less than she claims to be in this world.

At our meeting last spring, we heard statisticians tell us that the Catholic Church is a laboratory for civil conscience. If the Supreme Court’s Dred Scott decision that African Americans were other people’s property and somehow less than persons were still settled constitutional law, Mr. Obama would not be president of the United States. Today, as was the case 150 years ago, common ground cannot be found by destroying the common good.

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Barack Obama was not asked to renounce his racial heritage in order to be president, as, effectively, John Kennedy was asked to promise that his Catholic faith would not influence his perspective and decisions as president a generation ago. Echoes of that debate remain in the words of those who reject universal moral propositions that have been espoused by the human race throughout history, with the excuse that they are part of Catholic moral teaching.

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time and in eternity. the Church in the years to come, for only in being authentically herself will the Church remain suffering. What is of major importance to us, as bishops of the Church, is that the Church remain true to herself and her Lord in the future, for only in being authentically herself will the Church serve society and its members, in time and in eternity.

In working for the common good of our society, racial justice is one pillar of our social doctrine. Economic justice, especially for the poor both here and abroad, is another. But the Church comes also and always and everywhere with the memory, the conviction, that the Eternal Word of God became man, took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, nine months before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. This truth is celebrated in our liturgy because it is branded into our spirit. The common good can never be adequately incarnated in any society when those waiting to be born can be legally killed at choice. If the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision that African Americans were other people's property and somehow less than persons were still settled constitutional law, Mr. Obama would not be president of the United States. Today, as was the case 150 years ago, common ground cannot be found by destroying the common good.

This is the 50th year since the calling of the Second Vatican Council by Blessed Pope John XXIII. The pope looked at a divided world and hoped that the Church could act as Lumen Gentium calls us, as the "sacrament of the unity of the human race." Those who would weaken our internal unity render the Church's external mission to the world more difficult if not impossible. Jesus promised that the world would believe in him if we are one: in faith and doctrine, one in prayer and sacrament, one in governance and shepherding. The Church and her life and teaching do not fit easily into the prior narratives that shape our public discussions. As bishops, we can only insist that those who would impose their own agenda on the Church, those who believe and act self-righteously, answerable only to themselves, whether ideologically on the left or the right, betray the Lord Jesus Christ.

We meet amidst enormous challenges to our Church, our country and our ministry, but that is, to some extent, always the case.

Our episcopal conference is given us in the Church's canon law so that we might have an instrument for shaping spiritual unity, for creating the bonds of affection that help us to govern in communion with each other, especially in a divided world and in a Church that knows dissent from some of her teachings and dissatisfaction with aspects of her governance.

As we all know, the Church was born without episcopal conferences, as she was born without parishes and without dioceses, although all these structures have been helpful pastorally throughout the centuries. The Church was born only with shepherds, with apostolic pastors, whose relationship to their people keeps them one with Christ, from whom comes authority to govern the Church.

Strengthening people's relationship with Christ remains our primary concern and duty as bishops. We extend that pastoral concern, especially at the beginning of a new administration and a new Congress, to Catholics of either major party who serve others in government. We respect you and we love you, and we pray that the Catholic faith will shape your decisions so that our communion may be full.

We meet amidst enormous challenges to our Church, our country and our ministry, but that is, to some extent, always the case.

Sometimes I've been tempted to think that bishops should be given, at their consecration, not crosiers but mops! What are we given before the crosier, if you recall, is the Word of God in written form, held above our head so that it may permeate our spirit.

With you, I pray that all the topics we consider in our meeting now and all we do in the difficult days to come will be done together in the charity of Christ, who is the source of our unity and our strength. In so governing, in calling all to join us in listening to the incarnate Word of God from within his body, the Church, what we do now will have consequences for eternity; and we will be good shepherds to our people, good servants in our society and good disciples of Our Lord.

Blessing for Child in Womb Approved

BALTIMORE — The U.S. Bishops approved the Order for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb for use in the dioceses of the United States with a 223-1 vote Nov. 11, at their general assembly here. The bishops also approved a Spanish version of the blessing with a 224-0 vote.

The Blessing of a Child in the Womb was prepared by the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities after receiving requests from dioceses for such a blessing and not finding an existing blessing for a newly conceived child. In March 2008, a blessing was prepared and submitted to the Committee on Divine Worship. The proposed blessing is distinct from the Blessing of Parents before Childbirth found in the Book of Blessings.

The Blessing of a Child in the Womb Within Mass and Outside Mass, in English and in Spanish, upon recognition by the Congregation on Divine Worship and the Sacraments in Rome for use in the dioceses of the United States of America, will be included in future editions of the Book of Blessings (de Benedictionibus) when the text is revised.

Dr. Alveda King — ‘The Dream’ is Not Yet Fulfilled

ATLANTA, Christian Newswire — Dr. Alveda King, Pastoral Associate of Priests for Life and niece of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., said that the struggle for unborn children's civil rights will continue.

“The election of an African American president sends a powerful and historic message that what was previously unthinkable can become reality,” said Dr. King. “The battle for equal rights has reached a major milestone, but Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of full equality remains just a dream as long as unborn children continue to be treated no better than property.”

"President-elect Obama has promised actions that will only increase the number of abortions. Pro-lifers, in turn, must promise to redouble our efforts to resist anti-life proposals, speak up for the babies, and, above all, pray,” added Dr. King. “We must pray with persistence and love that, in God's time, what is now deemed unthinkable will become reality — that all our brothers and sisters, from conception to natural death, will be protected in law and welcomed in society. The elections are over. The pro-life battle begins anew.”

Priests for Life is the nation's largest Catholic pro-life organization dedicated to ending abortion and euthanasia. For more information, visit www.priestsforlife.org.
November National Adoption Month

As The Oklahoma Adoption Coalition, we want to share a few salient adoption and foster care facts with you:

There are 1.5 million adopted children in the United States.
Approximately 60 percent of Americans have a personal connection to adoption.

Only 2 percent of unmarried women make an adoption plan for their child. The number of private, domestic adoptions has not been officially compiled since 1992.

Over 7,000 of Oklahoma’s children are currently in out-of-home care.

Catholic Charities of Oklahoma City is a licensed child-placing agency serving the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. For information about adoption services, adoption searches or the Holy Family Maternity Home for pregnant teens, contact Catholic Charities Adoption Services, (405) 523-3012.

For more information about the coalition, visit the Web site at www.oklahomadoptioncoalition.org.

Faith Community Nurse Course Set

OKLAHOMA CITY — Registration is under way for “The Basic Preparation Course for Faith Community Nursing” to be held Jan. 15-17 and 29-31, 2009, at the Catholic Pastoral Center.

Faith community nurses are registered nurses who provide holistic care to faith community members, facilitating optimal wellness and thereby reclaiming the healing ministry of the parish/congregation. The specialty is recognized by the American Nurses Association. The registration fee is $625 and includes all course materials, room and board, and nursing contact hours. A $50 non-refundable deposit is required by Dec. 15 when registration closes.

Those registered nurses interested in the program may contact Faith Community Nurse Resource Center Manager Marilyn Seiler at Catholic Charities, (405) 523-3009, or m-seiler@catholiccharitiesok.org.

Obituary

Father Maloney, OSB, dies Nov. 9

Rev. Timothy Lawrence Maloney, OSB, a monk of St. Gregory’s Abbey, Shawnee, died on Nov. 9 after years of declining health. He was 86 years old.

He was born Nov. 7, 1922, in Tulsa to James and Marian Bartley Maloney, the youngest of seven children. He was educated through high school by the Benedictine Sisters at Marquette School in Tulsa. He then attended St. Gregory’s College, completing an associate degree in 1943. That summer he entered the novitiate of St. Gregory’s Abbey. He made monastic profession on July 11, 1944, and solemn vows on July 11, 1947.

Father Timothy studied theology in preparation for the priesthood at St. Gregory’s, and was ordained to the priesthood on Feb. 25, 1950. During the time of his studies he taught business courses at St. Gregory’s High School.

Father Timothy served in pastoral ministry for many years, as associate pastor at St. Benedict’s Parish, Montebello, Calif., and Our Lady of Lourdes Church, East Los Angeles, Calif. He served as pastor at Sacred Heart Church, Konawa; St. Teresa’s Church, Harrah; St. Benedict’s Parish, Shawnee; and St. Joseph’s Church, Ada. During his years as a pastor in Oklahoma, he was active in the early days of the Catholic Charismatic movement.

Father Timothy retired from pastoral ministry in 1998 and returned to the monastery in Shawnee. For several years after this he served as Director of Oblates both at the parishes in California and at the Abbey. Father Timothy also led summer retreats at St. Gregory’s, during which he continued his interest in the Catholic Charismatic movement.

Father Timothy eventually had to limit his activity as his health declined, but enjoyed hearing from his former parishioners, retreatants, friends, oblates and members of his family.

He is survived by the monks of St. Gregory’s Abbey and several nieces and nephews.

The monastic community wishes to thank the Abbey Health Care staff and Mays House Cal/ Home Health for the attentive and supportive care they gave to Father Timothy in recent years.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Thursday, Nov. 13 in the Abbey Church with Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen, OSB, as the principal celebrant. Interment followed in the St. Gregory’s Abbey Cemetery.
Bishops May Wish to Consider Return to 1974 Stand on Life

By Charles E. Rice

In this presidential campaign, why did so many Catholics apparently reject the teaching of the Church on citizenship? The bishops and clergy presented clearly the Church’s teaching on abortion and voting. “Not all moral issues,” said Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, “have the same weight as abortion ... There may be a diversity of opinion among Catholics about war and the death penalty, but not on abortion and euthanasia ... A Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation with evil ... If he were to ... vote for a candidate ... because of the candidate’s permissive stand on abortion ... When a Catholic does not share a candidate’s stand in favor of abortion ... but votes for that candidate for other reasons, it is remote material cooperation, which can be permitted in the presence of proportionate reasons.”

With over 48 million surgical abortions and uncountable millions more by pill or other abortifacients, all authorized by law, Archbishop John J. Myers of Newark accurately concluded that “policies on welfare, national security, the war in Iraq, Social Security or taxes, taken singly or in any combination, do not provide a proportionate reason to vote for a pro-abortion candidate.”

The Obama campaign, as the Washington Post put it, reached out “aggressively” to Catholics, arguing “that the church’s teachings on social justice and poverty, the environment, health care and unjust warfare should guide Catholic voters as much as abortion ... The Democratic effort includes anti-abortion Catholic scholars who ... favor ... Obama [and] progressive Catholic organizations that have sprung up.” Some Catholic professors described Obama as the “pro-life” candidate, because he would reduce abortions by promoting pro-life attitudes and providing social services. You probably have to be an academic to believe that. The readiness of some Catholics to put abortion on a par with issues of lesser gravity and so find a “proportionate reason” to support a pro-abortion candidate could be an unintended consequence of a decision the bishops themselves made nearly three decades ago.

In Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court ruled that, whether or not the unborn child is a human being, he is not a “person” and therefore has no right to life. The Court acknowledged that if he is a “person,” the case for abortion “collapses, for the fetus’ right to life is then guaranteed by the [14] Amendment.”

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) promptly condemned the decision and urged “legal and constitutional conformity to the basic truth that the unborn child is a ‘person’ in every sense of the term from conception.” When four cardinals, Krol, Manning, Cody and Medeiros, testified before the Senate in 1974, they insisted that a constitutional amendment “should clearly establish that, from conception onward, the unborn child is a human person in the terms of the Constitution.” It should restore the “right to life ... to the unborn, just as it is provided to all other persons in the United States.” Cardinal Medeiros said, “A states rights amendment, which would simply return jurisdiction over the abortion law to the states, does not seem to be a satisfactory solution ... Protection of human life should not depend upon geographical boundaries ... Therefore, the prohibition against the direct and intentional taking of innocent human life should be universal and without exceptions.” If the unborn child were recognized as a “person” with respect to his right to life, abortion would still depend on state legislatures for its prohibition, but those legislatures would be bound by “the supreme law of the land” not to deprive the unborn child of that right to life.

During the late 1970s, support for the cardinals’ position eroded. In 1981, the bishops endorsed a states rights amendment. Archbishop John R. Roach, president of the NCCB, in endorsing the amendment, told the Senate that “[w]e are committed to full legal recognition of the right to life of the unborn child,” but the NCCB acknowledged that the amendment “places the extent of restriction and prohibition [of abortion] entirely in the discretion of the federal and state legislatures.” The Senate Committee on the Judiciary agreed that, under the amendment, a state legislature or Congress “could ... prohibit abortion or ... maintain ... abortion on demand [or enact] reforms that fall somewhere between these ... propositions.” Report, June 8, 1982.

The “states rights” approach affirms the holding of Roe that the unborn child is a non-person. If your life is subject to termination at the discretion of a state legislature or Congress, you are, in terms of the Constitution, a non-person. That goes beyond the limited recognition in Evangelium Vitae, No. 73, that a legislator “could ... support” an imperfect law on abortion when it is “not possible to overturn or abrogate a pro-abortion law.” Nor is “states rights” a return to the situation prior to Roe. Before Roe there had never been a ruling by the Court on personhood. Once the Court ruled in the negative, the only coherent response was, and is, to insist on the personhood of the unborn with respect to his right to life. That does not preclude the advocacy of effective restrictions on abortion.

The bishops continue in their support for “states rights.” One of the most eloquent statements by bishops in the 2008 campaign undermined its affirmation of the right to life by saying, “Roe is bad law. As long as it stands, it prevents returning the abortion issue to the states where it belongs, so ... the ... people can decide its future through fair debate and legislation.”

It is no surprise that some Catholics interpret, or use as a pretext, the bishops’ support of abortion to the evaluation and “discretion” of state legislators as an invitation to them, as voters, to make that same political evaluation with abortion as one issue on a par with others.

The technology of early abortifacients is making abortion a truly private matter beyond the reach of the law. To promote what John Paul II called a “culture of life,” it is more essential than ever to insist on the entitlement of every human being “to be respected and treated as a person from the moment of conception.” Introduction on Bioethics.

It involves no criticism of the bishops, whose witness is admirable, to suggest that it would be appropriate for them to reconsider the cardinals’ 1974 insistence on the entitlement of the unborn child to the right to life guaranteed to persons by the Constitution.

Charles E. Rice is professor emeritus at the Notre Dame Law School. He may be reached at rice.1@nd.edu.

Mount St. Mary Students

continued from page 1

“They demonstrated was loving and peaceful,” said DeNegri. “The students stood and prayed, held signs, and did not respond to any of the negative gestures or insults that were hurled in their direction.”

Mount students said the vigil opened their eyes and hearts to the call to not only speak of Gospel values, but to live them as well.

“It was invigorating when the public would drive by and share a positive response in the form of a wave or honk of their car horn,” said freshman Allison Keeley. “Most of the feedback that was directed our way was encouraging, but there were a few insults that we just ignored. It felt great to stand up for what you believe in.”

“It was great to see my classmates react to a need when they saw that something should be done to stop abortion,” T.J. Krug said. “I was not surprised at their response because of the values that are woven into our daily lives in every class at The Mount.”

Elaine Naugle, MSM parent and Oklahoma City organizer for the 40 Days of Life, said the vigil was a wonderful teaching experience.

“I think for the first time these students realized they had the power to change the world,” Naugle said. “What they did on this day was to participate in something that could trigger the beginning of the end of abortion. The Mount students realized it was their time to make a stand and be a witness to the beauty and sanctity of human life. They locked arms and stood tall today, and it made a difference in saving a life.”
Humans Struggle With Church Because of Human Weakness

Today a lot of people are struggling with the church and this is more complex than first meets the eye.

Statistics show that in the last 50 years, there hasn’t been a huge drop-off in the number of people who say that they believe in God. Surprisingly, too, there hasn’t been a huge drop-off in the number of people who name a church or a denomination to which they claim to belong. The huge drop-off has come mostly in one area, actual church-going. People still believe in God and their churches even when they don’t often go to church. They haven’t left their churches; they just aren’t going to them. We aren’t so much post-Christian as we are post-ecclesial. The problem is not so much atheism or even religious affiliation, but participation in the church.

Why? Why does our culture struggle so much with the church?

Liberals like to think that it is because the church has been too slow to change and that it is unhealthily out of step with today’s world. Conservatives like to think the opposite, namely, that people have grown disenchanted with the church because it has changed too much and been too accommodating to the culture. There is some truth in both views, but analysts suggest that there are other reasons, reasons to do with the general breakdown of family and public life.

It is not just church-life and parish-life that are in trouble today. Declining church attendance is paralleled everywhere: Families and neighborhoods are dissipating and breaking down as people guard their privacy and individuality more and more. Civic organizations and clubs are finding it hard to function as they once did and there is simply less of a sense of community everywhere than there once was.

No wonder that our churches are struggling. Churches and parishes are, by definition, communities that are not based upon private intimacy, that is, they are not made up of people who choose to relate to each other on the basis of being like-minded. Rather, churches and parishes are, by definition, made up of people who are called together despite their differences to meet around Christ and a set of values that molds them into a community beyond private preference. But that is not easily understood in a culture that believes meaningful community can only be formed on the basis of private choice and a personal need for intimacy. Today we don’t just bow alone, we also do spirituality alone.

People today tend to treat their churches in the same way as they treat their families, namely, they want them to be there for them, for rites of passage, for special occasions, and for the security of knowing they can be turned to if needed, but they don’t want them to interfere much in their actual lives and they want participation in them on their own terms.

People no longer feel they need the church. They admit their need for God and for spirituality, but not their need for the church. Hence, we have the popular notion that says: I want spirituality but not the church.

Finally, there is too the notion that the church as an institution is too flawed, too fraught with compromise, too narrow, too judgmental and too hypocritical to be credible, to be the institution that mediates salvation. Jesus is pure, but the church is flawed, goes the logic. Hence, a lot of people choose to relate to the church very selectively and very sporadically. I have never found a better answer to that than the one given by Carlo Carretto, the Italian spiritual writer, who loved the church deeply but was honest enough to admit its faults. Late in his life, he wrote this ode to the church:

How much I must criticize you, my church, and yet how much I love you! You have made me suffer more than anyone and yet I owe more to you than to anyone. I should like to see you destroyed and yet I need your presence. You have given me much scandal and yet you alone have made me understand holiness. Never in this world have I seen anything more compromised, more false, yet never have I touched anything more pure, more generous or more beautiful. Countless times I have felt like slamming the door of my soul in your face — and yet, every night, I have prayed that I might die in your sure arms! No, I cannot be free of you, for I am one with you, even if not completely you. Then too — where would I go? To build another church? But I could not build one without the same defects, for they are my defects. And again, if I were to build another church, it would be my church, not Christ’s church. No, I am old enough, I know better.

That’s an insight that can help all of us, both those of us who are going to church and those of us who aren’t.

Irish Students Earn Scholar Recognition

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School announces that 22 students and 32 graduates of the class of 2008 have been named AP Scholars by the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level AP exams. Only about 18 percent of the more than 1.6 million high school students worldwide who took AP exams in May 2008 performed at a sufficiently high level to merit this recognition as well as advanced placement in college.

Students take AP exams each May after completing challenging college-level courses at their high schools. The College Board recognizes several levels of achievement based on the number of year-long courses and exam.

AP Scholars with Distinction earn an average grade of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken, and grades of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams. Class of 2008 scholars include Brittney Bierschenk, Mollie Blanchard, Ashley Edwards, Lauren Forest, Candice Gillies, Courtney Iser, Olivia Lee, Katie Oliphant, Emma Rupert, Kathryn Schnrantz, John Scimeca, Erin Smith, Breanne Ward and current senior Tanya Watts.

AP Scholars with Honor earn an average grade of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken, and grades of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. These students are class of 2008 graduates Cathleen Brantley, John Goetzinger, Kristina King, Leah Norsworthy, Sarah Parrish, Sharhonda Pickett and Natalya Sebastian. Current seniors are Emma Land, Lauren Pinaroc, Katie Reap, John Vater and Zach Yokell.

The following AP Scholars completed three or more AP exams with grades of 3 or higher: Class of 2008 graduates Shannon Bass, Thomas Bishop, Adam Cooper, Chelsea Epps, Jordan Fritch, Jessie Kierl, Devin Luxner, Alyx Reesser, Ricky Schnrantz, Reilly Smith, Jacob Torbeck and Emily Wonen, and current seniors Courtney Bisson, Niki Bray, Nick Coffey, Remi Dalton, Colin Eggleston, Elle Fitzpatrick, Gabe Ikard, Brianna Kwasny, Laney Maguire, Frank Mass, Jaime Roman, Erica Romano, Ellen Rosencrans, Alyssa Shaffer, Kyle Thomas and Carl Walkup.

Adopt-a-Child for Christmas

ENID — There is no better way to renew the spirit than in giving to others during the Christmas season. This year, more than ever, there are children in dire need who will not be remembered without the kindness of others. The Enid Regional Office of Catholic Charities is hosting Adopt-a-Child for needy children at Christmas. You can sponsor a child or children, providing gifts to make an unforgettable Christmas for them and for yourself. If you can help, call (580) 237-7352.
Mount Lands
Grant from Foundation

OKLAHOMA CITY — Mount St. Mary Catholic High School has received a $20,000 grant from The Westerman Foundation to update the school’s library/media center collections. This past summer, the school’s library/media center underwent a $107,000 renovation project that included new lighting, heating and air, flooring, technological infrastructure and furniture.

“This grant will strengthen the strong foundation that we have built through our recent revitalization of our library/media center. The Westerman Foundation’s gift has advanced our momentum in this area in terms of the enthusiasm of our school community, our teacher support systems and our continued student achievement,” said librarian Geraldine Adams.

The Westerman Foundation was founded by Laura “Jane” Westerman, widow of the late H.G. Westerman Sr., in June of 2000. The foundation supports institutions and causes related to the Roman Catholic faith. Their mission is to provide financial support to educational institutions with emphasis on Catholic education; Christian-based organizations, which promote family unity and values; and programs which provide assistance to the poor and the abused.

“We are pleased that The Westerman Foundation has found us cause-worthy and has decided to partner with us on this vital project,” said Chris Stiles, Director of Advancement. “This is the first step in a five-step plan to totally replace all present library resource materials with newly updated resources and materials that will enhance student achievement. This project will cost an estimated $100,000 to complete and we will continue to seek grants, private donations, and use a portion of our yearly Mount Fund revenues to support this worthy cause.”

McGuinness Student Recognized for Volunteer Work

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School senior Greg Latta was named the Bishop McGuinness Volunteer of the Year in the 2009 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program. The award recognizes outstanding community service by young Americans. Latta is now eligible for the Oklahoma Youth Volunteer of the Year award that will be announced in February. He could earn up to $10,000 in monetary awards.

Greg was honored for his volunteer work with Friends of Bolivia, a local organization that provides medical assistance to the needy people of Bolivia. He helped raise approximately $20,000 for the trip and spent a week in Bolivia helping a group of doctors and nurses. He spent almost 200 hours on the project.

Irish Students Deliver Big In Annual Drive

OKLAHOMA CITY — Bishop McGuinness students strive to do their best. They did it again, setting an Oklahoma high school record by collecting 58,857 pounds of canned goods for the Harvest Food Drive. The annual food drive is sponsored by the Oklahoma City Regional Food Bank and provides food to Oklahoma families that are in need of assistance. Bishop McGuinness has been involved in the Harvest Food Drive since 1988.

Chairman of this year’s drive was senior Krystal Leyva, assisted by junior Nick Aguileria. “They were instrumental in the wide level of participation in the school,” said Principal David Morton. “Their leadership, combined with the efforts of Student Council sponsor Andrew Worthington, enabled our school to exceed our goal.”

Members of Student Council organized the traditional can sculpture contest between the classes at school. Results were, first place — juniors with Panama Canal; second place — seniors with Canfrancisco; third place — freshmen with Notre Dame Cathedral; and fourth place — sophomores with Leaning Tower of Peas-za. Students also competed by grade for number of cans collected. Winners were the sophomores with 12,171 pounds, followed by the seniors with 11,080 pounds, freshmen with 10,539 pounds and juniors with 9,719 pounds of canned food. The average amount collected per person was 84.93 pounds.

The Food Bank showed up on Thursday afternoon with two semi-trailers. As McGuinness students formed an assembly line to move cans, Food Bank employees filled both trucks with crate after crate of canned goods, rice, beverages and other food staples.

“Service is our gospel value for the 2008-09 year and our students have fully embraced this idea,” said Morton. “Once again our seniors have led the way. From the completion of the Habitat House to the canned food drive, their leadership has ensured the success of both projects.”
Life Builders
Irish Senior Class Constructs House For Habitat for Humanity

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School students perform hundreds of community service hours every year. This year for the first time, seniors participated in a senior exiting service project, Habitat for Humanity Blitz Build. Students worked with Habitat for Humanity to build a 1,500-square-foot house in southwest Oklahoma City. Construction began Oct. 13 and continued until Oct. 31. McGuinness students were involved in the entire building process from initial fundraising to painting of the house. Job duties included framing, installation of trusses, decking, siding, doors, windows and Sheetrock.

Organizing the event for McGuinness was senior class sponsor Stephanie Rigazzi and campus minister Anne McGarry. “In the 15 years that I have served as senior sponsor, the class of 2009 is the first class to take on a project of this magnitude. The students were enthusiastic about this great opportunity to work for Habitat for Humanity and put their faith into action,” said Rigazzi.

Habitat for Humanity welcomed the opportunity to work with Bishop McGuinness. “We were so excited to be working with the senior class at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School,” said Ann Felton, chairman and CEO of Central Oklahoma Habitat for Humanity, “and to be sharing such a special project — our 500th house — with these fine young people. Providing the manpower and funding to build a home is an outstanding accomplishment for any group. The efforts of these students made a tremendous impression on our homebuyer family and all who come into contact with this project.”

Senior committee members in charge of the project are Lauren Pinaroc, chairman, David Broussard, Ellen Burton, Rachel Cervenka, Tonya Watts, Greg Latta, Andi Evenson, Gabe Ikard, Brian Herritt, Kayla Lewis, Brianna Kwasny, Zach Yokell, Justin Wright, Courtney Bisson, Elizabeth Rescinoto, Edwin Miles, Natalie Hovde and Andrew Goode.

With their “Can You Spare a Square” fundraising efforts, the students raised almost $30,000 for the project. They also designed T-shirts to commemorate the project. The back of the T-shirts featured all donating sponsors. Other fundraising events included bake sales and casual dress days.
More than 200 youth and adults from throughout the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City worked, played and prayed at the annual Encampment Oct. 10-12. The event is sponsored by the Oklahoma City Archdiocesan Committee on Scouting and Camp Fire.

The theme of this year’s Encampment was “OUR GOD, THE GREAT I AM.” The opening camp fire began with a skit titled “I AM.” Boy Scouts Mitch Verdiccho, Brendan Atkins, Matt Grover and Dillon Warnecke, and Girl Scout Laney Gay relayed the workings of God from the formation of the world through the conclusion that “God continues to call us. Listen now for how God is calling you.”

Saturday began with a prayer service in the chapel. Then it was on to a hearty breakfast. The day’s events began with a humorous skit played by the committee staff. The scene depicted the confrontation between God and Moses when God wanted Moses to return to Egypt to free His people. Set in modern day language, Moses (played by Jacque Huff) tells God he escaped Egypt with his life, why would he want to go back. Because God wants him to go! Moses tells God, “They’ll kill me!” God says, “No, they won’t, give Pharaoh this.” With that, an angel (portrayed by Father Mike Wheelahan, committee chaplain) appears and presents Moses a large card. Moses responds, “Your business card, I presume!” On the card is written “I AM.” Moses heads off to Egypt to do God’s will.

Throughout the remainder of the day, everyone was divided into four groups. The groups rotated through four activities that included expressing on large paper sheets what the GREAT I AM meant to them. These were later posted in the dining hall for all to witness and enjoy.

Participants qualified for the Luminous Mysteries Patch created by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. Another fun event was named “Rosary Derby.” This involved dividing each group into four subgroups of 10 or so. Each subgroup was given a card with a heading saying, Joyful, Sorrowful, Luminous, Glorious Mysteries. They were also given five cards stating five different mysteries of the Rosary. These cards had been mixed up and it was each group’s job to get their mysteries from the other groups and sort them in proper order. According to Bernie Denker, class coordinator, “a good time was had by all!”

Another activity involved service projects for OLOG. The main event this year was building low maintenance landscaping to showcase the Ten Commandment tables located in front of the dining hall. The youth did themselves proud under the guidance of Connee Boeckman and Jim Coughlan. Additional work and refinement was given to the Rosary Garden that was undertaken at last year’s Encampment.

Lastly, everyone had the opportunity to create their own cross using crucifix nails as a reminder of Christ’s crucifixion and death. This project was under the creative eye of Jackie Henry.

Following a finger-licking good dinner of barbecue, everyone cleaned up and headed to chapel for Mass celebrated by Father Dan Latourneau. Youth provided the readings, choir and servers. Sharon and Jeff Goyette again provided inspirational music.

Speaking of music, following Mass, everyone listened and danced to the sounds of a deejay until it was time to end the evening with night prayer.

The weekend ended too quickly with pickup on Sunday morning, followed by Rose Ann’s famous cinnamon rolls! After hugs galore and high fives, everyone headed home, promising to return next year.
Catholic Charities Strives to Meet Annual Goal

In these tough economic times, Catholic Charities continues to help people in need across the Archdiocese. To meet all the needs, Catholic Charities is striving to reach its goal of $2.4 million in the 2008 Annual Appeal. God bless everyone who has made a sacrificial gift or who plans to do so before the end of the year. Your generous donation to the Appeal remains in Oklahoma to help sustain existing programs and services. Call (405) 523-3000 to make a donation or for more information. As you do for others, you do for Christ.
Catholic On Campus: OU Students Find Support With Catholic Peers, Parish

By Eliana Tedrow
For the Sooner Catholic

NORMAN — They come from all over the United States — young Catholic college students who have somehow found their way to the University of Oklahoma. But while college can be an exhilarating, independent time in a young person’s life, it can also be the most challenging. That’s what makes the students (and parishioners) at The St. Thomas More Student Center and University Parish here, so extraordinary. Offering one of the largest campus ministry programs in the United States, St. Thomas More provides college students a home away from home and the support of their peers — fellow students facing the everyday challenges of being a Catholic Christian on a secular college campus.

Erin Cleto is the campus minister for the St. Thomas More Catholic Student Association (CSA) at the University of Oklahoma, and says she knows firsthand the struggles these students face.

Being in the Bible Belt, Erin says it’s typical for Catholic and Evangelical students to be classmates or roommates. Posed with questions like, “Do you worship Mary?” or “Is the Eucharist cannibalism?” Catholic students on average find themselves engaged in theological conversations with their non-Catholic peers. This kind of exchange is good, Erin explains, and says it gives the students a mutual opportunity to learn about other Christian faiths.

Erin believes that many college students find themselves caught in a culture where there is a pervading misunderstanding that students are not at college to find meaningful relationships but to “hook up” through drinking and partying. “This goes head to head with students wanting to find intimate, lasting and meaningful relationships,” Erin admits. “So how do they find balance and navigate through something like that?” That’s why Erin believes it’s so important for incoming freshmen and their families to realize why they’re here.

Roughly 150 students comprise the Catholic Student Association at St. Thomas More, but the parish sees closer to 500 general Catholic students on the weekends for Mass. The CSA appointed six “Student Leaders” who serve under the spiritual direction of Father Ray Ackerman and who each have their area of specialty to serve the Catholic students at OU.

The University of Oklahoma has anywhere from 1,500 to 2,000 Catholic students, said Father Ackerman. Although St. Thomas More sees approximately 500 of these students regularly attend Mass, he says, they would always like to have all of them. But the program continues to get better and better every year. Both Father Ackerman and Erin are encouraged by the way the campus ministry program has taken off in the last few years, and say this is an exciting time for the organization.

One thing the Catholic Student Association has going for it is they’re one of the only Catholic campus ministries directly connected to a parish in the United States.

“There may be 75 other parishes like us in the United States,” Erin said. “This provides an environment where students can come and be a part of a greater family. At school you tend to become isolated. Here, students know they have a place where they can just come and be. People here really want them to be here.”

Members of the Catholic Student Association at OU receive an incredible backing from the St. Thomas More University Parish. Not only do students have the emotional support from veteran parishioners, but they receive financial support necessary to run a program of this magnitude. Having a strong relationship between the parishioners and the students has been an integral part of the success of the Catholic Student Association.

“We do things nearly every day of the week and it just takes the resources to get those kinds of things done,” said Ben Ballard, a student at OU and student leader with CSA. “We’re students, and we don’t really have the resources to do that so we really do depend on the parish to help us with a lot of the finances.”

Ballard said students hear all the time how much the parishioners of St. Thomas More love to see young people get involved in their faith. “It’s a really good relationship for the parish and the college students,” he says, “because a lot of the parishioners really like the energy that the college students bring. It’s really hard to put into words, but it’s a unique relationship for the parish.”

Through the financial support of the parish, students make an annual mission trip to Arteaga, Mexico (an alternative spring break to the Gulf) and other mission trips in the U.S. Students at World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, summer 2008.

OU students at the annual Auction Gala this October.

Student working with a child from Arteaga on their annual trip.

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But then I read a book titled *Mary, the Church at the Source* by Pope Benedict XVI writing as Cardinal Ratzinger. One passage caught my attention, and I actually put the book down for a few minutes and let the words sink in. “Only a conversion to the sign of the woman, to the feminine dimension of the Church, will bring about the new opening to the creative power of the spirit…” (59-60).

What does this mean? I remember saying that question out loud while sitting alone in my bedroom, the book open on my lap, my spirit sensing a fantastic mystery embedded in those words. For some reason, my thoughts turned for a moment to each of my pregnancies, and I considered what the Holy Father’s quote and the words sink in. “Only a conversion to the sign of the woman, to the feminine dimension of the Church, will bring about the new opening to the creative power of the spirit…” (59-60).

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Like pregnancy, there was something profound and mysterious and altogether procreative at the center of being converted to the sign of the woman.

Maybe one can never fully grasp what this teaching means and what it could potentially unfurl for the Kingdom of God, but I’m wondering, especially during Advent this year, what might happen if I truly embrace the challenge to be converted to the sign of the woman, if I focus everything on birthing Jesus Christ to the world. Of all the seasons of the year, Advent is infused with Marian mystery. If there is ever a season that lends itself to greater understanding of this special conversion, it is Advent.

To be like Mary, to give a yes with no strings, to offer a love with no bounds, to live a life of holiness, free of shadow or stain, that is how one is converted to the sign of the woman. I must realize that everything matters, what I eat (feast days and fast days), what I hear (homilies and homilies of saints), where I go (Adoration and Mass and Confession), how I fully engage the season of Advent (prayer without ceasing and daily offering myself to God and others). It is all-consuming and very much like the season of pregnancy.

There is a quiet joy and hope-filled anticipation in my spirit this year. If our ultimate mission is to birth Jesus Christ to the world — to do all and be all and give all for him — we can be sure the effort won’t be in vain. God will show up, like He did in Bethlehem, like He did when a simple virgin gave her Fiat to the Lord Most High.

Don’t take my word for it. The Holy Father says that a conversion to the sign of the woman will provide an opening for the creative power of the spirit. Doesn’t that get you excited? Doesn’t it make you want to find out for yourself what it might mean in your life? It doesn’t matter if you are male or female, young or old, married or single. We can all look to the Blessed Mother and begin to understand what it means to be converted to the sign of the woman.

This Advent, take the challenge and bring Jesus Christ to your world.

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**Letters**

**A Catholic Costume?**

Polling indicates that 50 percent of Catholics vote “Democrat,” no matter what the candidate’s stand on life issues, such as contraception and abortion. This is a disgrace to the Catholic Faith!

The Bishops of the Catholic Church are finally proclaiming that abortion is a great evil that has no other proportionate equal issue for faithful voting Catholics. Too little, too late, I fear. Will Catholics heed this dire warning about participating in this great evil? Will the confessional be full of Catholics the week after the election, so that good Catholics can receive the Eucharist with a clean heart? Watch for yourself!

Half of today’s Catholics wear their faith like their children wear Halloween costumes; hiding the real person underneath. Weak faith formation over decades has taken its toll in the clergy and people of God, allowing them to pick and choose what parts of the Catholic faith they like; even to the point of openly disobeying the pope on matters of faith and Church doctrine.

Ezekiel 2:18 — If you say to a wicked man: You are to die, and you do not warn him; if you do not speak and warn him to renounce his evil ways and so live, then he shall die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible for his death.

Matthew 18:6 — But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

In an attempt to reverse this trend, Texas Auxiliary Archbishop Rene Gracida recently e-mailed 2.9 million Hispanic Catholics warning them that voting for Barack Obama is participating in a great evil when there are pro-life candidates as an option for the faithful Catholic.

Separation of Church and State? Yes! Bring it on! Let’s have the government stop interfering with the free practice of our Christian faith! The threats of liberal ACLU lawyers and the "state" have intimidated the "shepherds" of the Catholic Church and other pro-life Christian denominations into silence — from openly teaching our faith. Will Christians be pushed back into the American catacombs? Or will we all grow weak like 50 percent of Catholics, and put on our Catholic costume on Sundays? Watch and see what happens to “Catholic hospitals” that refuse to perform abortions — against the teachings of the Church. "Freedom of Choice" and a "paternal" government have become the newest religion in a growingly Godless American society.

Frank Lipsinic  
**Christ the King Parish**  
**Oklahoma City**

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**St. Thomas**

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Coast), summer school in the Ukraine, where they teach conversational English, and in addition to everything for campus ministry: Sunday Suppers, which feed 100 of their college peers every Sunday, every Wednesday they give out meals which feed close to 50, and then there are Web site costs.

World Youth Day marked their most recent trip, a result of two years' worth of fundraising, and a time where six students ventured to Sydney, Australia, to be a part of the biggest international youth event in the world. This trip, along with the annual mission trip to Arteaga, Mexico, and to the Ukraine, is predominantly financed by the parishioners of St. Thomas More.

“We have about 375 active families,” Father Ackerman said, “and they know that this is one of the primary missions of St. Thomas More University Parish and they have bent over backwards, not just with a great deal of their own time and effort but also financially to support the good works that they’re doing and to support the future leaders of the church and our communities.” Father Ackerman is proud of his parish, in that in addition to supporting the CSA, they also support the regular ongoing operation of the parish.

“For that size of group to do what they do is absolutely phenomenal,” he said.

The students’ biggest fundraiser of the year, an auction gala, was recently held in the Oklahoma Memorial Union on campus. Dressed to match their favorite movie couple, more than 180 St. Thomas More parishioners came out in support of this year’s “Dancing With The Stars” themed-auction, which raised $35,500 for the OU students. The auction marks the largest annual fundraiser for the students by the parish, with most of the proceeds going to fund their annual trip to Arteaga, Mexico.

“Hundreds and hundreds of hours went into planning the event,” said Janne O’Donnell, chair of the auction committee. “But it has been so much fun because it’s for our students.” O’Donnell is one of 10 Student Association and St. Thomas University of Oklahoma or will be planning the mega-fundraiser.

If you are a student at the University of Oklahoma or will be attending OU and would like more information about the Catholic Student Association and St. Thomas More Parish, contact Erin Cleto at 321-0990 Ext. 205, or eceto@stm-ou.org. You can also visit their Web site at www.stm-ou.org/students.
Thanksgiving Brings Awareness of God’s Presence, Peace

Of all the holidays, Thanksgiving is about my favorite. And perhaps with all the financial turmoil, this particular Thanksgiving can be especially helpful to us in coping with anxiety, stress and worry.

Thanksgiving is the smell of turkey and dressing wafting throughout the house, kids running through the living room, families being together, women chatting in the kitchens, men watching NFL football, a crisp coolness in the air, and not having to worry about gifts. But the thing I most like about Thanksgiving is that it is about gratitude.

More than 400 years ago, the pilgrims were grateful to the American Indians for helping them settle into the new world, surviving the first winter, and growing and storing foodstuffs for the coming winter. They were grateful for having survived the hardships of crossing the ocean, for their faith in God and for the ability to worship as they wished. Hence — Thanksgiving — a holiday focused on thankfulness — on gratitude.

Gratitude is a key to peace and serenity, and here we have a holiday focused on being grateful for all the blessings in our lives. Being grateful for our Lord Jesus Christ who is the truth, the way, the light to our heavenly father who loves us no matter what. Being grateful for families, kids, grandchildren, parents, spouses and extended families. Being grateful for health, life, jobs, careers, love and many other blessings. And at Thanksgiving we formally give thanks for these blessings, humbly asking, “How can we be so blessed? What a wonderful holiday!!!

At Thanksgiving we don’t have to worry if Uncle Harry is going to appreciate the tie we give him, or if little Jeffie will like his toy truck, or if we are spending too much money on Game Boys, Ipods, jewelry, computers, TV’s, etc. We don’t have to feel guilty about receiving too much, having to return items to the store, or exchanging them for things we prefer and being concerned that someone’s feelings will be hurt. Here at Thanksgiving we can just be grateful for what we have and be a little less concerned about what we don’t have.

Thanksgiving is a time to realize that for most of us our essential needs are being met: We have food on the table, a home, clothing, medicines, jobs, running water, loving spouses and/or parents, faith in God, etc. There is a real message here — that most of us do have our basic needs met and we can be at peace with a loving God.

At other times, being grateful can help us cope with frustrations, anxieties, worries and being upset. These feelings are often caused by our not getting our way or being afraid of losing something we have. We may be upset we didn’t get that promotion, or that the bear stock market may delay retirement, or that our budget may not allow us to purchase something we really want. Or we may be building up in our minds worries that we may lose our job, won’t get a good grade, they may think less of us, we may not be able to pay the bills on time, etc.

We can reflect on the things we can be grateful for when we experience these anxieties, worries and frustrations. Being grateful helps us to humbly be in the moment, in the here and now where God is. It is in the present that we can experience calm, contentment and peace, knowing that God is with us. We can be in touch with the blessings in our lives and can be a bit more indifferent about the things we don’t have or may lose. What a blessing to reflect on and be grateful for the things we have and less concerned about the things we don’t have.

Gratitude truly does bring an awareness of God’s presence, peace, calm and the inner awareness that things will be just fine even in the current financial turmoil and bear market. We have been here before and things have turned out just fine. We may not get our way, but that’s OK. And gradually, gently, softly, a sense of acceptance, peace, serenity can enter us. This is the presence of God within...

By Mary E. McClusky
USCCB

In these turbulent times, our nation is focused on election results, financial crises and natural disasters which are all largely out of our individual control. Near-sightedness threatens to take over efforts to build up a culture of life and we end up living “of the world” rather than “in the world.” Yet as Catholics, we are called to be faithful and persistent no matter what happens here on earth.

A line from Aquinas’ Tantum Ergo — “Praestet fides supplementum sensuum defectui” (Let our faith supply what our senses fail to perceive) — points to what’s needed. Persistence in the pro-life cause requires a belief in realities that we cannot see: that with God all things are possible, that Christ’s death and resurrection has purchased our salvation, and that the battle is already won for us in heaven.

The Holy Father made “Christ Our Hope” the theme of his 2008 U.S. visit, reminding us that this virtue is an essential element of our journey of faith and our efforts to advance a culture of life. “The virtue of hope ... takes up the hopes that inspire men’s activities and purifies them so as to order them to the kingdom of heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude.” (CCC 1818). Eyes opened by this gift of hope are encouraged by the signs here on earth of Christ working in our lives.

One recent sign of hope is the success of grassroots efforts like the 40 Days for Life Campaign. The campaign reports that nationwide, within weeks, more than 400 babies were saved from abortion. There were countless tales of encouraging responses from passers-by. Many individuals took part in this ministry of prayer outside abortion facilities for the first time, and some plan to continue after the campaign. Such efforts have contributed to the decline in free-standing abortion facilities from over 2,000 locations to 749.

Another source of hope is Christ’s promise that His vicar, the pope, and the leadership of the Church will always be with us. Under the guidance of the Holy Father and the apostolic authority of the bishops, we have a framework and direction for our efforts. The Catholic bishops of the United States issued “The Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities” to serve as the model for national, diocesan and parish-level pro-life work. The Pastoral Plan calls on all the resources of the Church — “its people, services and institutions” — to work to restore respect and legal protection for all innocent human life through prayer and worship, education, public policy and pastoral care.

No matter how long we must endure Roe v. Wade, there will always be a need for efforts to promote life and human dignity. Instead of allowing the prevailing winds of politics and punditry to distract our focus, we should lift our hearts to the promises of Christ and pray for encouragement, strength and, most importantly, the gift of hope. Our hope is in the Lord, who will sustain us and transform our pro-life work.

Sign of Hope: Infants Saved Through 40 Days of Life Campaign

By Joe Froehle

One recent sign of hope is the success of grassroots efforts like the 40 Days for Life Campaign. The campaign reports that nationwide, within weeks, more than 400 babies were saved from abortion. There were countless tales of encouraging responses from passers-by. Many individuals took part in this ministry of prayer outside abortion facilities for the first time, and some plan to continue after the campaign. Such efforts have contributed to the decline in free-standing abortion facilities from over 2,000 locations to 749.

Another source of hope is Christ’s promise that His vicar, the pope, and the leadership of the Church will always be with us. Under the guidance of the Holy Father and the apostolic authority of the bishops, we have a framework and direction for our efforts. The Catholic bishops of the United States issued “The Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities” to serve as the model for national, diocesan and parish-level pro-life work. The Pastoral Plan calls on all the resources of the Church — “its people, services and institutions” — to work to restore respect and legal protection for all innocent human life through prayer and worship, education, public policy and pastoral care.

No matter how long we must endure Roe v. Wade, there will always be a need for efforts to promote life and human dignity. Instead of allowing the prevailing winds of politics and punditry to distract our focus, we should lift our hearts to the promises of Christ and pray for encouragement, strength and, most importantly, the gift of hope. Our hope is in the Lord, who will sustain us and transform our pro-life work.


Mary McClusky is Special Projects Coordinator at the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. To learn more, go to www.usccb.org/prolife.
Truthful Choices of Conscience Can’t Sway With Changing Wind

One recurrent theme in bioethical discussions is the idea that each of us possesses a basic awareness of the moral law. This distinctly human faculty, which western culture has referred to as “conscience,” helps us to choose correctly when confronted with basic moral decisions. Even children, when taught about right and wrong, instinctively seem to recognize a law higher than themselves. Deep within his conscience, man discovers that law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Conscience has been aptly described as man’s most secret core and his sanctuary.

As creatures of conscience, then, we are moved to pursue good and to avoid evil. Yet, in our fallen nature, we are also drawn, mysteriously, toward wrong and harmful choices. The dictates of conscience may become muted or drowned out by other voices around us. As we grow older we may even acquire a certain finesse in justifying personal choices that are not good, choices strongly contrary to the law of our own being. The inner sanctuary of conscience is delicate and easily transgressed, requiring great attentiveness on our part if we are to remain faithful to it.

I recall a powerful story about conscience involving a young couple who cohabitated for many years. Neither of them were thinking much about marriage, and one day the fellow learned that his girlfriend was pregnant. Being Catholic, he approached his priest. All three of them met one afternoon, had rather lengthy discussions, and finally reached a decision together. They decided that abortion was not an option. They talked about the possibility of marriage at some time in the near future.

Later the same day, the parents of the young woman came by the couple’s house. They had been fairly open and accepting of this ‘live-in’ situation. Over dinner it came out that she was pregnant. Things changed as a result of this revelation. After the meal, the mother pulled her daughter aside saying, “Look, you’ve got a life to live. You don’t want to spend the rest of your life with this guy. C’mon, dear, you’ve got to get an abortion.”

The next day, the young man and the young woman ran into the priest again. The fellow brought up the discussion with the mother and said they were reconsidering the abortion option. The priest replied, “We reached a decision on that already.” The young man quickly answered, “What do you mean? If I make a decision today, I can change it tomorrow.” The priest responded simply, “For certain kinds of decisions, you can’t change your mind. If you go back on your decision now, I won’t know who you are anymore…”

The young man was shaken by this answer, but when he reflected on it later, he understood that the priest was right. Certain kinds of personal choices touch us at the very core of our being. Accepting or rejecting a temptation to serious wrongdoing like abortion involves our hearts in a far deeper way than many of the lesser decisions we have to make each day, so that in the end, it is our moral choices that define who we are and what we become. By acting against an upright conscience, we violate who we are and become less human. That’s why the priest told the young man that he would not know who he was anymore.

I recall another true story about the gentle proddings of conscience that involved a mom with three children. When she found out she was pregnant yet again, she became fearful and began telling herself she couldn’t support the burden of another child. She finally decided it would be necessary to have an abortion. She arrived at her decision just before going in for her next checkup. The doctor, unaware of her plans, began a routine ultrasound to find out how the pregnancy was progressing. She had brought along her three children, and they were busy playing together on the floor of the examination room. As the doctor ran the scanner over her belly, her little son glanced up from his toy airplanes, pointed to the screen and said, “Look, Mommy — a baby!” She left the doctor’s office that afternoon with a new awareness that she couldn’t end the growing life within her.

Through the eyes and heart of a child we are often reminded of what a pure and upright conscience ought to look like. To form our conscience as adults means to learn virtue, by repetitively and determinately choosing what is good, true and moral. Doing so brings order to our lives and engenders peace in our hearts. Ultimately, we discover how to be fully human only to the extent that we faithfully follow that delicate voice of a properly formed conscience.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D., serves as Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org.

Author Gives Insight as to Why Popes Choose Particular Names


★★★★★

This is an unusual book in the positive sense. This book is about the history of the names of popes. Anura Guruge has computer software to create all kinds of tables and computations about the papal names and various details connected with them, like how many chose the name “Pius” or “Leo.” He tells the history as to who was the first pope after St. Peter to change his name and why. He reviews the history of the popes and why certain papal names are more popular than others and why possibly the particular names have only been used once or maybe twice.

People who love anything about the papacy and the popes will love this book. It has so much information in it that some of it is a bit mind-boggling when many numbers and mathematics come into play. Guruge has created Web sites to go along with this book, www.popes-and-papacy.com and www.papam.wordpress.com. He has also included black and white illustrations which really liven up the book instead of being only text, tables and charts. This is a skinny book, but it is very fascinating.

Guruge discusses why the popes have not taken the name “Peter.” He and others suggest that the name is too revered since it is the name Jesus himself gave to Simon. In the early days, many popes did not change their names, but one pope whose baptismal name was “Peter” decided he should change his name. Some popes changed their names because their original names were too pagan or were too profane. Sometimes popes changed their names to honor a previous pope who was a saint or a pope whom the new pope wanted to follow his example or to swipe at a political leader. There are many reasons popes have chosen their particular names. Anura Guruge will show these to the reader.

Anura Guruge has written other books on technology and this is his first on a different subject. This book is highly recommended to those interested in anything connected with the popes or the papacy. It has a lot of trivia and interesting information that the reader will find fascinating.

Brother Benet Exton is a Benedictine Monk at St. Gregory’s Abbey, Shawnee. Among other duties, he serves as the librarian there and writes book reviews regularly for several Catholic publications, including the Sooner Catholic.
Declaración del Presidente de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de EE. UU. Administración de Obama afronta posibles obstáculos a nuestra deseada unidad

El Cardenal Francis George de Chicago, Presidente de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos en Estados Unidos declaró:

“Si el Señor no construye la casa, en vano se esfuerzan los albañiles; si el Señor no protege la ciudad, en vano vigila el centinela.” (Salmo 127: 1)

Los Obispos de la Iglesia Católica en Estados Unidos reconocen este momento de transición histórica y esperan con interés trabajar con el Presidente-electo Obama y los miembros de nuevo Congreso por el bien común de todos. Debido a la historia de la Iglesia y la amplitud de su ministerio en este país, queremos continuar nuestra labor por la justicia económica y la oportunidad para todos. Nuestros esfuerzos están por reformar leyes sobre inmigración y la situación de la población indocumentada, procurar una mejor educación y servicios de salud para todos, especialmente para las mujeres y niños. Tenemos el deseo de resguardar la libertad religiosa y promover la paz en nuestro país y en el mundo. La Iglesia está dedicada en hacer el bien y continuará con gusto su colaboración con el gobierno y con aquellos que trabajan por estas buenas causas.

El bien fundamental es la vida misma, porque es un regalo de Dios y de nuestros padres. Un buen estado protege la vida de todos. La protección legal por aquellos miembros de la familia humana aún por nacer en este país fue removida cuando la Corte Suprema de Justicia decidió el caso Roe vs. Wade en 1973. Esta fue una mala decisión. El peligro que los Obispos ven en este momento, es que una mala decisión de la Corte Suprema podría ser analizada con una mala legislación que sería mucho más radical que la misma decisión de la Corte Suprema en 1973.

En el último Congreso, una propuesta de ley que aboga por la libertad de escoger abortar llamada - Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) fue introducida de tal manera que, si se presentara de la misma forma hoy, haría ilegal cualquier ‘interferencia’ en la realización ilimitada de abortos. Tal propuesta de ley privaría a los ciudadanos de poder consultar en sus respectivos estados sobre la libertad que tienen ahora de frenar y regular modestamente la industria de aborto.

FOCA forzaría a todos los ciudadanos y residentes a subsidiar y promover el aborto con dinero de sus impuestos. Arremetería contra todo sincero esfuerzo del gobierno o de otras entidades de buena voluntad por reducir el número de abortos en nuestro país.

Además, la notificación a los padres de familia y las precauciones para un consentimiento informado de un aborto estarían fuera de la ley, al igual suspendería las leyes que establecen procedimientos que protegen al niño por nacer, tales como los que prohíben abortos parciales, y que protegen a bebés para que sobrevivan un aborto. Las clínicas de abortos no serían reguladas. La Enmienda Hyde (Hyde Amendment) que restringe el uso de fondos federales para abortos sería eliminada. FOCA tendría consecuencias fatales para la vida humana prenatal. FOCA tendría un efecto igualmente destructivo sobre la libertad de conciencia que tienen doctores, enfermeras y trabajadores de la salud, cuyas convicciones personales no les permiten cooperar en la matanza privada de niños por nacer. Amenazaría a las instituciones Católicas de la salud y a Caridades Católicas. Sería una ley muy mala y dividiría a nuestro país mucho más. La Iglesia debe oponerse decididamente a este mal.

En este gran reto de lograr la protección legal de los niños por nacer, los Obispos, el pueblo Católico y las personas de buena voluntad tenemos un mismo sentir. También hay párrafos que han escuchado a mujeres cuyas vidas han sido disminuidas porque pensaron que no tenían otra alternativa que abortar a su bebé. El aborto es un procedimiento médico que mata y sus consecuencias sociológicas y espirituales están plasmadas en el dolor y la depresión de muchas mujeres y hombres. Los Obispos ven este reto con singular claridad en sus mentes y sobre todo con un singular sentir en sus corazones. Las elecciones recientes fueron decididas principalmente por la mera preocupación sobre la economía, la perdida de trabajos, casas y seguridad financiera de familias aquí y alrededor del mundo.

Las elecciones no pueden sermal interpretadas ideológicamente como un referendo sobre el aborto, la unidad deseada por el Presidente-electo Obama y por todos los estadounidenses es en este momento de crisis sería imposible de lograr. El aborto no sólo mata a los niños por nacer; sino que también destruye el orden constitucional y el bien común, el cual es asegurado sólo cuando la vida de cada ser humano está legalmente protegida. Una legislación pro-aborto agresiva u otras leyes y órdenes ejecutivas, alinearan permanentemente a decenas de millones de estadounidenses y serán vistas por muchos como un ataque al libre ejercicio de su religión. Esta declaración es escrita por la petición y dirección de todos los Obispos, quienes también quieren agradecer a todos aquellos que, con buena voluntad, trabajan en el ámbito político para proteger la vida de los más indefensos entre nosotros. Aquellos que en la vida pública realizan esta labor, muchas veces lo hacen con gran costo y sacrificio para ellos y sus familias, para ellos, estamos profundamente agradecidos.

Expresamos nuevamente nuestro gran deseo de trabajar con todos aquellos que atesoran el bien común de nuestra nación. El bien común no es la suma total de deseos e intereses individuales, se logra en la labor por una vida común basada en la buena razón y la buena voluntad para todos. Nuestras oraciones acompañan al Presidente-electo Obama y a su familia y también a todos aquellos que cooperan con él para asegurar una transición suave de gobierno. Muchos retos reclaman una atención inmediata de parte de nuestro "centinela" electo. (Salmo 127). Que Dios lo bendiga a él y a nuestra nación.

El Papa Benedicto XVI le pide a los laicos “más unidad” entre la fe y la vida

VATICANO.(ZENIT.org) — Benedicto XVI insistió en la necesidad de “mayor unidad entre la fe y la vida” como elemento fundamental de la misión de los laicos en el mundo y en la Iglesia, pero especialmente en la política, durante su discurso a los miembros y consultores del Consejo Pontificio para los Laicos.

El Papa recibió en audiencia a los participantes en la XXIII asamblea Plenaria de este dicasterio vaticano, que ha tenido lugar estos días en Roma con motivo del vigésimo aniversario de la Christifideles Laici, la exhortación apostólica de Juan Pablo II al término del Sínodo de los Obispos de 1987, y que se considera la Carta Magna del laicado católico.

En su discurso, Benedicto XVI recordó las enseñanzas de la Iglesia en los últimos años, a raíz del Concilio Vaticano II, y como la explosión del “asociacionismo laical” de las últimas décadas ha sido “un signo del Espíritu para la Iglesia”.

Como retos para el futuro, el pontífice insistió en la necesidad de una mayor y mejor formación, especialmente en los jóvenes, así como en una mayor “coherencia de vida”.

“Cada ambiente, circunstancia, y actividad es el que se espera que pueda resplandecer la unidad entre la fe y la vida está confiado a la dirección de todos los Obispos, quienes atesoran el bien común de su nación. El bien común no es la suma total de deseos e intereses individuales, se logra en la labor por una vida común basada en la buena razón y la buena voluntad para todos. Nuestras oraciones acompañan al Presidente-electo Obama y a su familia y también a todos aquellos que cooperan con él para asegurar una transición suave de gobierno. Muchos retos reclaman una atención inmediata de parte de nuestro ‘centinela’ electo. (Salmo 127). Que Dios lo bendiga a él y a nuestra nación.”
Obispo Anthony Taylor quiere prevenir lo que pasa en Oklahoma

Derechos Humanos de los Inmigrantes en su primera Carta Pastoral

La siguiente historia es una traducción realizada, editada y adaptada al español por Mauro Yanez, Hispanic Editor para el Sooner Catholic y fue tomada de un artículo escrito por Tara Little, quien es la Editora Asociada del periódico Arkansas Catholic y autorizada por dicho periódico.

Little Rock — El Obispo Anthony Taylor realizó una rueda de prensa el 5 de noviembre para dar a conocer su posición sobre su carta pastoral llamada: “Fui forastero y ustedes me recibieron: Carta Pastoral sobre los Derechos Humanos de los Inmigrantes” con fecha jueves, 5 de noviembre.

En una declaración memorable, él dijo: “Esto es una cuestión que está muy cerca de mi corazón y también es muy importante para los católicos en Arkansas”. El Obispo Taylor estima que el 55% de los católicos en el estado son hispanos.

Hablando a los reporteros y al personal de la Diócesis de Little Rock, el Obispo Taylor dijo: “Como ustedes saben vengo de Oklahoma, donde el año pasado fue promulgada por la legislatura una ley muy dura, debido al miedo y sin consideración alguna sobre los principios que Jesucristo y nuestra fe Cristiana ha dicho sobre este asunto”.

El Obispo dejó conocer su carta pastoral el 5 de noviembre. Ese mismo día lideró un día de estudio para discutir este asunto con 80 sacerdotes de todo el estado de Arkansas. El 7 de noviembre, el Obispo facilitó un evento muy similar con el personal de la diócesis. Un día de estudio está preestablecido con los diáconos para el 22 de noviembre.

El Obispo Taylor escribió la carta para que se pudiese estudiar en todas las parroquias durante la temporada de Adviento. Grabó una homilía para que fuese escuchada en todas las Misas a lo largo de la diócesis el 23 de noviembre, durante la Fiesta de Cristo Rey.

La diócesis imprimió 30 milm copias en un boletín de 64 páginas que es bilingüe y el cual será distribuido a los feligreses. Una síntesis de dos páginas de la carta también está disponible. Estos documentos, junto con la guía de estudio para el Adviento pueden ser bajados del internet: www.dolr.org

El Obispo Taylor presentó la carta pastoral a unos 1800 hispanos, el 8 de noviembre en el “Encuentro Anual Hispano”. Explicó de qué trata ese documento y las razones por las que escribió éste. Lo hizo durante la homilía que se efectuó ese día en la Misa de la tarde, que se celebró en las instalaciones del “Arkansas State Fairgrounds” en la ciudad de Little Rock.

En respuesta a la pregunta de un periodista, el Obispo Taylor dijo que quería prevenir a los legisladores de Arkansas para que no introdujeran una propuesta que se convirtió en ley en Oklahoma.

La ley HB1804 pasaron por la legislatura en Oklahoma y entró en vigencia el 1 de noviembre, 2007. Esa ley se cree que es la más severa en contra de la inmigración ilegal en el país, dicha ley convierte en un crimen el hecho de transportar o albergar a un trabajador indocumentado y requiere que los empleadores verifiquen que sus empleados estén legales aquí.

Antes que fuese nombrado Obispo de la Diócesis de Little Rock, en abril, el Obispo Taylor fue párroco de la Iglesia Sagrado Corazón en Oklahoma City. Una parroquia que tiene el 95% de feligreses hispanos. Él testimonió los efectos negativos de esa ley en sus parroquianos y describió cómo los hispanos fueron lastimados, atemorizados y por ende rechazaron esa ley.

“Ellos enviaron cartas a sus familiares contándoles lo que pasaba aquí”; dijo el Obispo Taylor. “Ellos trabajan arduamente con la esperanza de ganarse la confianza de sus patrones, enseñándoles que son buenas personas y que pueden confiar en ellos, para luego recibir a cambio una bofetada”. El Obispo Taylor describió lo que le sucedió a una familia cuando una persona, quien era madre de dos hijos, uno de seis semanas de nacido y el otro de 2 años, desapareció y nadie sabía del paradero de esta madre, ni siquiera su esposo, hasta que se enteraron que ella había sido deportada. El esposo y sus hijos estaban legalmente en los Estados Unidos, sin embargo, ellos no podían quedarse aquí porque los hijos tenían que estar con su madre, por lo que esa familia tuvo que regresar a México.

“Ahora, ese hombre no tiene trabajo, ni manera de sustentar a su familia. ¿Qué interés existe en hacer eso?” dijo el Obispo Taylor. Sin especificar que legislación, el Obispo dijo que lo que le gustaría ver ser rechazado por los legisladores de Arkansas para discutir el tema de inmigración como también con líderes religiosos alrededor de Arkansas”.

“Pienso que Arkansas podría aprender de la experiencia que se está viviendo en Oklahoma en no repetirla”, afirmó el Obispo durante sus comentarios. El Obispo Taylor dijo: “Me gustaría ofrecerles a nuestros legisladores y a nuestro pueblo un lenguaje reconciliador y la habilidad de entender el inmenso panorama que son los derechos humanos”.

“Por supuesto que los legisladores son seres como cualquiera de nosotros”, dijo el Obispo. “Entonces el lugar donde tenemos que comenzar a trabajar con todo ésto es en nuestros corazones, en nuestras parroquias Católicas y en nuestra propia manera de comportarnos con otra cultura o grupo de inmigrantes”.

La carta pastoral está acompañada de una guía de estudio que identifica cuatro principios fundamentales: el económico, el moral, el teológico fundamentado en el bienestar común y el espiritual.

“Tratar de deportar a 12 millones de indocumentados es un error histórico, social y económicamente imposible”, dijo el Obispo Taylor.

“Nuestra solución real sería facilitarles el proceso del bienestar común o hacerles en lo posible la vida miserable y atenernos a las indeseables consecuencias. Muchos americanos no se dan cuenta de las barreras imposibles de superar para alguien que quiere entrar legalmente a nuestro país”, dijo el Obispo.

El Obispo Taylor también afirmó: “La gente no quiere ser indocumentada, ellos entran a nuestro país de esa forma porque no tienen otra opción”.

El Obispo se refirió al principio espiritual y dijo; “Lo que creemos en nuestras mentes debemos tomarlo de las rutas de nuestros corazones para apreciar la diferencia donde nuestra conversión ocurre. Jesús nos está desafiando para que sobre el tema de inmigración dejemos que Él esté en nuestras mentes y corazones. Ustedes y yo tenemos el oportuno y único privilegio de compartir la mente y el corazón con Jesucristo en este importante y controversial asunto”.

“De ésto, Dios no usará para que no solamente seamos la luz de nuestra nación para iluminar a los demás sobre derechos humanos, el camino, la verdad y la vida, pero más importante Dios nos pide que seamos una fuente de amor”, concluye el Obispo Taylor.
Jobs Box

Third-Grade Teacher
Bishop John Carroll Catholic School in Oklahoma City has an immediate opening for a third-grade teacher to join an exceptional school community. Applicants must be certified in the state of Oklahoma. Please call the school office at (405) 525-0956 for an application or send resume to Connie Diotte, BJCS, 1100 NW 32nd St., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73118.

Art and Music Teacher
Villa Teresa Moore School is seeking an experienced art and music teacher to serve in our preschool program. Certification requested but not required. Hours not teaching art and music will be spent as a teacher assistant in classroom, helping on the playground and/or helping the front office. Call 691-7737 for an appointment, Beverly Sanchez, director.

Nurses Sought
Mercy Health Center, Mercy Convent Nurse (PT/Eves). Must be active RN or LPN licensed in Oklahoma. Experience in caring for geriatric patients preferred. Mercy Convent CNA (PT/Eves). Must have CNA, nursing assistant experience preferred. Interested candidates apply online: www.mercycareers.net.

Openings for Help with Adults with Developmental Disabilities
The Center of Family Love in Okarche has immediate openings for the following: LPNs — Full-time shifts available (3 p.m. to 11 p.m.). DCTs — Certified is great, if not we will train. Shifts available: 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. Program Coordinator — Four years experience working with people with developmental disabilities or degree combination. To apply, call 263-4658, fax 263-4718, e-mail alemke@cflinc.org or in person at 635 W. Texas, Okarche, Okla. 73762. EOE

Early Childhood Teacher
Christ the King Catholic School is seeking a certified early childhood teacher to serve in our new preschool program to open in fall 2009. Commit now and be in on the ground floor in planning for this new adventure. Call for an appointment, 843-3909, Karen Carter, principal.

Director of Institutional Advancement
St. Gregory’s University Office of Institutional Advancement has an opening for the position of Director of Institutional Advancement and Alumni. We are seeking an assertive, personable self-starter with proven fundraising skills_experience to assume a leadership position in managing the Institutional Advancement (IA) office. The ideal candidate will have responsibility for developing and implementing IA’s strategic vision, annual goals, and the necessary systems/procedures to ensure success. Strong planning, verbal and written communication, and creative application skills are necessary. The ability to motivate and mentor office members as well as develop and maintain relationships with university constituents is paramount. The ideal candidate should have a minimum of three years of senior fundraising experience and a bachelor’s degree. A master's degree and experience in higher education is preferred. Send cover letter, resume and references to St. Gregory’s University, Human Resources Director, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804, or e-mail hr@stgregorys.edu. EOE

Cook Needed
St. Charles Rectory seeking part-time cook, 20 hours a week, four hours a day, Monday through Friday. Contact Fr. Seeton at 789-2595.

Dean of Enrollment Management
St. Gregory’s University in Shawnee invites applicants for the position of Dean of Enrollment Management. Position responsible for the development, implementation, maintenance, analysis and general supervision of all programs related to the recruiting and retaining of undergraduate students. Involves developing and implementing the university’s strategic enrollment and marketing plan and recruiting goals for the College of Arts and Sciences. This position manages the budget for the office and supervises the admissions counselors and office support staff. In addition, this position will coordinate and support the contracted recruitment companies. Applicants must possess an understanding of and willingness to support the St. Gregory’s University Catholic and Benedictine mission. Master’s degree is required. Experience as an admissions counselor and a minimum of two years experience in director’s or assistant position is preferred. Electronic résumés are preferred, and should include a letter of application describing experience, qualifications, vision and record of achieving/exceeding enrollment goals at one’s recent institution. Shingi Goto, Executive Vice President, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804, sngoto@stgregorys.edu, (405) 878-5435.

Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue Studies Eucharist in Recent Session

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue added a study of the Eucharist to its discussions on the theme “Hope of Eternal Life.” The dialogue took place at St. Paul’s College, Washington, and was the sixth meeting of Round XI in the historic relationship that began 43 years ago at the end of the Second Vatican Council.

The dialogue has been exploring beliefs and practices related to Eternal Life in Jesus Christ since it began the new round in 2005. At the recent session, participants welcomed Msgr. John Radano, former undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, as part of a new discussion on consensus and disagreement on Eucharistic doctrine. This new initiative is the result of conversations between Pontifical Council and the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Rev. Dr. Mark Hanson.

“The Eucharist is the place of encounter with Christ who is Eternal Life,” said Father James Massa, executive director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and also one of the two staff coordinators of the dialogue. “I see it as particularly appropriate that we take up Bishop Hanson’s proposal precisely at a time when the dialogue team is talking about prayers for the deceased, as part of its overall treatment of Eternal Life. For many Christian believers, the Eucharist is the pre-eminent prayer of thanksgiving for Christ’s life-giving sacrifice, to which he joins all of the faithful, living and dead.”

The dialogue adopted a timeline for the conclusion of the current round, which includes a review process for successive drafts of a Common Agreement on Eternal Life. Drafters have already presented portions of a draft text that treat the topic from a biblical-historical, systematic and pastoral standpoint. “I expect the report, when completed, will be helpful to both pastors and members of parishes,” said Rev. Lowell G. Almen, Lutheran co-chair of the U.S. dialogue and former secretary of the ELCA, in an earlier interview this year. The dialogue includes two participants from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger, executive director, Theology and Church Relations Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; and Rev. Dr. Dean Wenthe, president of Concordia Theological Seminary.

The next session of the dialogue will take place in Washington, March 12-15. At that time, participants will examine a complete draft of the common statement and also consider the contents and format of a possible publication that would include the statement along with a series of essays based on papers that have been presented over the course of the round.
23 Art Sale at St. Eugene’s Parish Hall from 6 to 8 p.m. Gently used paintings, sculpture, ceramics and crystal will be included in a silent auction with a wine and cheese tasting. Tickets are $10 each or $15 for two. For more information, call Julie at 755-9294 or Pat at 748-3125.

23 Organ Commissioning for St. Francis of Assisi, 1901 NW 18th, at 4 p.m. Featured guest organist, Rebecca Groom te Velde, M. Mus.


24 Weekly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Christ the King Catholic Church, located one block north of Wilshire, halfway between Penn and May at 8005 Dorset Drive, every Monday beginning at 7 a.m. and concluding with Benediction at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Linda at 496-0033.

26 Eucharistic Adoration at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, NW 32nd and Western, every Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to noon.


The Rosary is said every weekday at 2:30 p.m. All are welcome.

26 All-Day Adoration. Every Wednesday at St. Eugene Church, 2400 W. Hefner Road. Mass at 6:30 a.m., Exposition of Eucharist at 7 a.m.; Confessions, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.; Anointing of Sick, 3 p.m. Adoration all day and devotions conclude with multi-lingual evening prayer and Benediction at 7:30 p.m. Contacts: Barbara Curcio, 755-9163. O en Espanol, Gloria Pantazis, 751-7115.

27 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at Epiphany Parish in the chapel, every Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and daily (M,T,W,F) from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. All are welcome. Epiphany is located at 7336 W. Britton Road, Oklahoma City.

WASHINGTON — The Catholic Church resettled 17,823 refugees in 2008, through Migration and Refugee Services of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB/MRS) and its network of diocesan entities, representing 30 percent of the total refugees admitted to the nation. Overall, the U.S. government admitted 60,192 refugees during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30.

This number represents a 31 percent increase over last year in the number of cases handled by MRS. Generally, the largest percentage of refugees arrive in the United States during the last three months of the federal fiscal year, July through September. This so-called “bulge” creates an enormous impact and strain on the service capacity of receiving dioceses.

The Church is especially proud of its “Unaccompanied Minor” program. Ten dioceses — including Galveston-Houston, Texas, Jackson, Miss., Miami, Phoenix, Richmond, Va., Rochester, N.Y., San Jose, Calif., Salt Lake City, Seattle and Syracuse, N.Y. — found foster care placement for 190 unaccompanied children, plus 43 other children that have not yet arrived on U.S. soil. This was well beyond the 50 children expected in a typical year.

Refugee arrivals to the United States have been on an upward trend for the past several years, after coming to a significant reduction in refugee admissions after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001. All indications are that the next fiscal year will continue this trend.
Map of Faith

According to the 2008 Official Catholic Directory this is how the Catholic population looks in each state across the U.S.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Catholics</th>
<th>Percentage Catholic</th>
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