And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests”

Luke:2 13-14
The Good News

The Word Becomes Flesh!

May you enjoy a most blessed Christmas! May Christ’s love enter your hearts and grant you peace.

In just a few days, we will celebrate the birthday of Jesus. In the great feast of Christmas we acknowledge God’s goodness and love in sending His Son Jesus to our world to be our Lord and Savior.

In the Mystery of the Incarnation, God became Man! God literally accepted our human flesh and blood as His own. He became one of us in all things but sin.

As God and Man, Jesus lived among us. He suffered and died for us. He rose from the dead and redeemed us from the death of sin.

Through this redemption from sin and death, we now have a new opportunity to receive and respond to the presence of Jesus among us.

He is no longer distant or inaccessible. Jesus is present to us as He offers us that great gift of Christmas — for the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us.

“Do not be afraid. It is I,” Jesus says. “Take My Flesh and eat It. Take My Blood and drink It and you shall have life everlasting.”

Dear people of God, how blessed we are to have Jesus with us! To be able to receive Him in Holy Communion! To be forgiven and healed and nurtured and strengthened by Him Who is Lord and God, Savior and Redeemer!

May the celebration of Christmas this year enable each of us to respond with love and with joy to the Lord God Almighty. May this Christmas experience be a prelude for us to life everlasting in heaven because God is truly with us!

Advent About Our Loneliness and Our Longing

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin once suggested that peace and justice will come to us when we reach a high enough psychic temperature so as to burn away the things that still hold us apart. In saying this, he was drawing upon a principle in chemistry: Sometimes two elements will simply lie side by side inside a test tube and not unite until sufficient heat is applied so as to bring them to a high enough temperature where unity can take place.

That’s a wonderful metaphor for advent. What is advent?

Advent is about getting in touch with our longing. It’s about letting our yearnings raise our psychic temperature so that we are pushed to eventually let down our guard, hope in new ways and risk intimacy.

John of the Cross has a similar image. Intimacy with God and with each other will only take place, he says, when we reach a certain kindling temperature. We do that, as does a damp log inside a fire, by first sizzles and then warms up, holding, holding on, this motion, unlike a ship’s smooths and contains the rocker. It’s an inside kind — wrapped tight like skin. Then there is a loneliness that roams. No rocking can hold it down. It is alive, on its own. A dry and spreading thing that makes the sound one’s own feet going seems to come from a far-off place.

All of us know exactly what she is describing, especially the roaming kind of loneliness that haunts the soul and makes us restless, too restless to sleep at night and too uncomfortable to be inside our own skins during the day.

What we learn from loneliness is that we are more than any moment in our lives, more than any situation we are in, more than any humiliation we have experienced, more than any rejection we have endured, and more than all the limits within which we find ourselves. Loneliness and longing take us beyond ourselves. How?

Thomas Aquinas once taught that we can attain something in one of two ways: through possession or through desire. We like to possess what we love, but that isn’t often possible and it has an underside.

Possession is limited, desire is infinite. Possession sets up fences, desire takes down fences. To quote Karl Rahner, only in the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable do we know that we are more than the limits of our bodies, our present relationships, our jobs, our achievements, and the concrete situations within which we live, work and die.

Loneliness and longing let us touch, through desire, God’s ultimate design for us. In our longing, the mystics tell us, we intuit the kingdom of God. What that means is that in our desires we sense the deeper blueprint for things. And what is that?

Scripture tells us that the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, of simple bodily pleasure, but a coming together in justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, that is what we ache for in our loneliness and longing: consummation, oneness, intimacy, completeness, harmony, peace and justice. Sometimes, of course, in our fantasies and daydreams that isn’t so evident. God’s kingdom seems something much loftier and more holy than what we often long for. However, even in these fantasies there is present always a deeper desire, for justice, for peace, for joy, for oneness in Christ.

Our loneliness and longing are a hunger and an energy that drive us, always, beyond the present moment. In them we do intuit the kingdom of God.

Advent is about longing, about getting in touch with it, about heightening it, about letting it raise our psychic temperatures, about sizzling as damp, green logs inside the fires of intimacy, about intuiting the kingdom of God by seeing, through desire, what the world might look like if a Messiah were to come and, with us, establish justice, peace and unity on this earth.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. He can be contacted through his Web site www.ronrolheiser.com.

By Father Ron Rolheiser

May this Christmas experience be a prelude for us to life everlasting in heaven because God is truly with us!
Obituary
Father John William Scheller IV Dies at Age of 90

Rev. John William Scheller IV, 90, died Dec. 3, 2007, in Oklahoma City. Father Scheller was born July 2, 1917, in St. Louis, Mo., and was ordained on May 24, 1958, at Holy Family Cathedral in Tulsa by the Most Reverend Victor J. Reed. Father Scheller graduated from Central High School in St. Louis and attended Tyler Commercial College, Tyler, Texas, before entering St. Francis Seminary, Oklahoma City. Father Scheller attended St. Louis Preparatory Seminary and St. John Seminary, Little Rock, Ark.

Following his ordination, Father Scheller served the following parishes: St. John Parish, McAlester (associate pastor, 1958-1960); Sacred Heart Parish, Muskogee (associate pastor, 1960-1964); Saint John Parish, Bartlesville (associate pastor, 1964-1965); Church of the Good Shepherd, Boise City (pastor, 1965-1968); Saint Paul the Apostle Church, Del City (pastor, 1968-1978); Saint Joseph Church, Hennessey (pastor, 1978-1986); Saint Mary Church, Medford (pastor, 1986-1987). On July 1, 1987, Father Scheller retired but continued to serve as chaplain of St. Ann’s Home, Oklahoma City, until 1991. Father Scheller (“Tex” to his many friends) proudly served in the Army Air Forces in Italy during World War II and after his retirement served as a chaplain for Vance Air Force Base, Enid.

Father Scheller also served on the Council of Priests and as a vicar of Region VII. A thread that ran through Father Scheller’s many years as a priest was his dedication to the priesthood and his desire to do the will of God in serving His people. Father Scheller was pre-deceased by his mother and father, Mary Badaracco Scheller and John W. Scheller, and his brother, Thomas John Scheller and sister-in-law, Juanita Sken Scheller, and an aunt, Maude A. Hewitt of Tyler, Texas.

He is survived by his beloved twin brother, Joseph Francis Scheller, and his sister-in-law, Mary Lou Scheller of Oklahoma City; his nephew, John Mark Scheller and wife, Cheryl and their son, Kevin Ray Scheller of Oklahoma City; a nephew, Joseph Scheller and wife, Guela and their sons, Joseph Dalton and John Spencer Scheller of Tulsa; and a niece, Marie Scheller Hunt and husband, John of St. Louis.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at the Chapel at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 N.W. Expressway, Oklahoma City, on Thursday, Dec. 6, 2007, at 2 p.m., with interment following at Resurrection Cemetery, Oklahoma City.

In lieu of flowers, the family and friends of Father Scheller request that gifts and donations be made to St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804.

U.S. Bishops Welcome Pope’s Encyclical On Hope

WASHINGTON — Spe Salvi, the second encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, offers inspiration to all believers, said Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“Pope Benedict calls us personally and as a community to a hope rooted in Jesus,” he said. Cardinal George made his remarks on Nov. 30, the day the encyclical was released at the Vatican.

Spe Salvi instructs readers that the Christian message is not only “informativ” but also “performative,” that is, “the Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known — it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing,” Pope Benedict says. It is in receiving God through Jesus Christ that we receive hope. He illustrates this point narrating the life of the African slave, St. Josephine Bakhita.

The pope outlines the concept of faith-based hope in the New Testament and early church and says that Christianity did not bring to the Roman world a hopeful message of social revolution. Jesus, who died on a cross, brought a totally different kind of hope. He made possible an encounter with “the Lord of all lords, an encounter with the living God and thus an encounter with a hope stronger than sufferings of slavery,” which therefore transformed life.

This hope exceeds the physical laws of nature and evolution. It is ultimately not these laws that govern the world and mankind and have the final say; a personal God governs the universe — “reason, will, love — a person,” Pope Benedict says.

For the pope, Christian hope is not individualistic. It is community oriented — all of us are becoming the people of God — the body of Christ, he says. Because our hope is a hope that incorporates all men and women, this hope spurs us not only to obtain eternal life, but to also manifest this hope of eternal life here on earth. We do this by striving to make our life on earth a heavenly life — a life of productivity, justice, peace and goodness — a positive world order that prospers.

The Holy Father also notes the importance of Christian faith — hope in the modern age. In the encyclical letter, Pope Benedict analyzes the false utopian dreams of the modern age and points out the untold suffering they have caused human beings. From this point of view, redemption is no longer through faith in God’s saving action but from what human beings can achieve through the application of technical knowledge to all of society’s problems. A praxis-oriented science draws on an understanding of progress as the overcoming of all dependency to make room for a “kingdom” in which God is no longer at the center. Pope Benedict reflects that when reason renounces faith in revelation or the moral wisdom of the great religions, it has led to scientific developments which in some cases evoke fear among our contemporaries. Just as man needs God in order to sustain hope, reason needs faith to make the world a more human place. “Reason needs faith to be completely itself,” the pope says.

Pope Benedict also observes that prayer leads to hope. “A first essential setting for learning hope is prayer,” he says. “As our first and no longer to talk to anyone or call upon anyone, I can always talk to God,” he says.

He adds that action and suffering are also settings for learning hope. “We can try to limit suffering, to fight against it, but we cannot eliminate it,” he says. “It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it and finding meaning through union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love.”

A person “cannot accept another’s suffering unless he personally is able to find meaning in suffering, a path of purification and growth in maturity, a journey of hope. Indeed, to accept the ‘other’ who suffers, means that I take up his suffering in such a way that it becomes mine also. Because it has now become a shared suffering, though, in which another person is present, this suffering is penetrated by the light of love,” he says also.

Pope Benedict highlights the practice of praying for the dead, saying it reveals another important element of the Christian concept of hope. “As Christians we should never limit ourselves to asking: How can I save myself? We should also ask: What can I do in order that others may be saved and that for them too the star of hope may rise? Then I will have done my utmost for my own personal salvation as well,” he says.

Spe Salvi is the second encyclical of Pope Benedict. His first, “Deus Caritas Est,” (God is Love) explored the meaning of Christian love and personal salvation as well,” he says.

Spe Salvi can be found at http://www.usccb.org/bishops/spe_salvi.pdf.
Events Scheduled to Mourn Roe Vs. Wade

We are quickly approaching the 35th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, Jan. 22, 2008. An average of 4,000 babies are aborted six days a week in the USA every year. That means approximately 38,432,000 people are missing from families and our churches! And countless parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles suffer in silence at the loss of those people who could have made a difference in their families and in our world.

Join us on Jan. 22, 2008, at the Oklahoma State Capitol, Fourth Floor Rotunda, from 10 to 11 a.m. as Archbishop Beltran leads a peaceful (ecumenical) prayer vigil to remember all of the victims, living and dead, of this notorious decision to legalize abortion in our country. Let us show our solidarity as people who recognize our Creator as the sole authority over the dignity and sanctity of human life. We will gather for prayer and Scripture. More good is accomplished on this earth by prayer alone than any other method.

On Jan. 23, 2008, the Sanctity of Life Mass will be at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help starting with Mass at 6 p.m. with Archbishop Beltran as the principal celebrant. After Mass there will be two break out sessions, one for teens with Dr. Rick Boothe on Three Reasons to Choose Life, and a panel discussion for adults on Life Issues. The panel will consist of Father Ray Ackerman, Deacon and Mrs. James Young, Susan Lepak, assistant director of the Office of Family Life and Mary Jane Webster, director of Holy Family Maternity Home.

Refreshments will be served. For more information, call Judy Reilly at Catholic Charities at (405) 523-3009. The Ecumenical Prayer Vigil and the Sanctity of Life Mass is sponsored by the Archdiocesan Sanctity of Life Committee.

Williams Ends Run as St. Vincent de Paul President

By Eileen Dungan

The Sooner Catholic

Ross Williams, former head of the Archdiocesan Council for the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, stepped down recently after six years at the helm to make way for Bill James’ presidency.

“It has been really a grace in my life to serve for six years as SVdP Council president. It has also been a very humbling experience,” Williams said. “Now, Bill James is the right man for this position. He brings to SVdP his own ideas and experience which will help the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in our Archdiocese to grow.”

The Saint Vincent de Paul (SVdP) Society is a worldwide, Catholic, social-service organization that helps the poor. The group bases its charity on the works of French priest, Saint Vincent de Paul (1581-1660). In America, the SVdP Society is organized around archdiocesan councils with chapters called “conferences” located in many local Catholic parishes.

These SVdP parish conferences make visits to the homes of all those who seek their help. The conference members who make these home visits determine what the person seeking help needs. They, then, attempt to supply the needed aid. Persons the local conferences cannot help are referred to agencies or other groups that, hopefully, can meet their needs.

“During my six years as president, my biggest challenges were coming up with enough resources to help the poor and training conference members to make effective home visits,” Williams said. “It was also a challenge during the past year to bring the two SVdP thrift stores under the authority of the Archdiocesan Council. When the thrift stores were opened, they were incorporated separately. Now they are back under our Council’s influence.”

Williams’ greatest accomplishments as president, he thinks, were his “running of the organization” and “being there for the individual parish conferences when they needed help.” He is also proud of forming new SVdP parish conferences “when the pastors invited us in” and opening Oklahoma City’s first SVdP thrift store.

Before Williams was elected as president, the Archdiocesan Council for the SVdP Society had, for several years, been discussing opening a thrift store. When Williams became president, he and his executive board decided that Oklahoma City had waited long enough for its thrift store; it was time to act. “Finally, we just asked the Holy Spirit to guide us, and we made it happen,” he said.

“My executive board always helped me make important decisions. We would talk over ideas and they would help me decide what to do,” he said.

Bill James of Saint James the Greater Parish in south Oklahoma City will now lead the society’s Council and Williams called him the right man at the right time for the position.

“I had no problem handing over the running of SVdP to Bill James. We elected a good man. He will carry on now with his own ideas. It’s a good policy of the National Saint Vincent de Paul Society that council presidents can serve only six years.

“We need new people like Bill James to come in. They bring in fresh ideas, and that moves the organization forward,” Williams said.

Grant To Help Modernize Media Lab at McGuinness

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Westerman Foundation has awarded a $20,000 grant to Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School. The grant will be used to provide updated computers in the school’s Father Stanley Rother Media Center. The Media Center Lab is used throughout the day by classes for research and writing projects. It is also used before and after school by students to complete assignments, research topics, write papers and create media presentations.

“Technology changes so quickly and schools struggle to keep up. We are so fortunate to be able to update some of this lab, which is one of the most heavily used areas of our facilities,” said Principal David Morton. “We want our students to have access to the technologies which are integral in today’s learning environment. We are grateful to the Westerman Foundation for assisting us in this important area.”

According to Kathryn Marquis, library/multimedia specialist at Bishop McGuinness, “The lab is accessible to every student and is in use all day, every day. Some of our computers were too old to be upgraded.”
Second $1 Million Gift Provides Big Boost to Catholic Schools Endowment

The Catholic Schools Endowment gained another major gift on its way toward the $10 million mark required to cap the rising cost of Catholic school tuitions in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The first week of December, a $1 million Charitable Gift Annuity contract was signed with an anonymous donor couple. The gift will ultimately benefit the Catholic Schools Endowment. Earlier this year, the Catholic Foundation announced the receipt of a $1 million gift from an anonymous donor for the same purpose.

“Our goal is $10 million,” said Tom Casso, executive director of the Catholic Foundation. “This is the endowment balance required to generate the $750,000 to $850,000 annually necessary to cap the ever-rising cost of Catholic school tuition. Currently, our Catholic families pay approximately $17 million in tuitions at our 22 Catholic grade schools and two Catholic high schools combined, and tuition rates increase on average by 3 percent to 4 percent per year.”

With a current fund balance of $2,350,000, the Catholic Schools Endowment is well on its way toward the first of three major milestones: The first goal is to cap the cost of Catholic school tuition for our Catholic families, the second target is to start reducing the cost of Catholic school tuition over time, and the third and final objective is to completely eliminate the cost of Catholic school tuition in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City at some point in the future. “Obviously this is a very ambitious undertaking,” said Casso. “Yet it can be accomplished if donors fully understand and embrace the importance of our mission.”

“The two $1 million commitments this year came from donors who placed a high priority on the importance of educating upcoming generations in the Catholic tradition. These donors are “Investing in the Future of Our Faith” through their actions,” said Casso.

Archbishop Beltran established the Catholic Schools Endowment in 2002 with the vision of someday providing tuition-free education for our Catholic community. Previous growth of the endowment has been through the assignment of undesignated gifts, received by the Catholic Foundation and the archdiocese from bequests and other sources, for this purpose. Additionally, the Annual Catholic Foundation Golf Classic has earmarked all of its proceeds from the past six years for the benefit of the Catholic Schools Endowment.

To learn more about Planned Gifting to the Catholic Schools Endowment, contact the Catholic Foundation at (405) 721-4115.

El Reno Students Bloom in Improved Science Lab

EL RENO — Pam Coe, Sacred Heart Catholic School fifth- and sixth-grade teacher, is on a mission. She wants to make sure her students have the opportunity to get hands-on experience with a real science experiment. Her wish came true when the school finished its new $10,000 science lab upgrade. Sacred Heart received worm dissection kits, electricity labs, microscopes with pre-made slides, geology sets, atom magnet diagrams and many more experiment kits through a donation from an El Reno family.

The first science experiment Coe’s class performed was with plants. This eight-week lesson featured rapid-cycling Wisconsin Fast Plants™ as a vehicle for experimentation. These plants are Brassicas, members of the mustard and cabbage family, and they were developed by Paul Williams of the University of Wisconsin. These Past Plants are especially well-suited for classroom study because they are hardy, compact, thrive under artificial lights and complete their life cycle in about 40 days. The main objective of the experiment was to teach students how to design and conduct controlled investigative experiments. The fifth- and sixth-grade classes learned about key variables (water, fertilizer, light, pollination) that affect the life, health and reproductive capabilities of these plants. They then learned that they could manipulate those variables.

The class divided into teams to formulate a question they would like to attempt to answer through an experiment involving the variables, and then come up with an experimental plan. The students planted seeds of the Wisconsin Fast Plants™, and collected data daily to measure the effects of the manipulations of their chosen variable. “Pollination made more seed and it made the plant grow taller and greener,” said Rachel Hobson, one of Sacred Heart’s fifth-graders. One of the most popular parts of the experiment was the class using frozen bees to cross pollinate the Brassicas. Cara Romannose was excited “that the bees still had stingers!” After the experiment and life cycle of the plants were over, the class compared and contrasted their own data with the data from other team members. Then the teams attempted to draw conclusions and decide if they had answered their experimental questions. Each team presented an oral report on their findings, and the class did a Bee Pollination Play for the whole school.
Lawmakers Join Church, Business in Battle Over New Law

By Ray Dyer
The Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — An impressive coalition pulled together by faith, compassion, jobs and justice appears to be taking shape after two Oklahoma lawmakers announced they will file legislation in the upcoming session to reduce the impact of the law known as HB 1804. The lawmakers joined at their state Capitol news conference Dec. 6 by Father Anthony Taylor, pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Oklahoma City, and Richard Klinge, director of Parish Outreach, Education, Advocacy and Legal Services for Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Also standing at the podium with Sen. Harry Coates, R-Seminole, and Rep. Shane Jett, R-Shawnee, were several members representing Oklahoma’s business and industry and indications are strong that more voices will be added to the group in the coming weeks and months.

Sen. Coates said the law which targets illegal immigrants in the state is having a negative impact on the Oklahoma economy and he said much of the law is immoral. Coates was the only Republican member of the state Senate to vote against the original bill. He said he has had a number of fellow lawmakers indicate to him they regret having voted for the measure.

“They aren’t ready to say it in public yet, but they will,” Coates said.

Father Taylor, who was vigorous in his opposition to the measure when it was first introduced, said the law “does not reflect our values.” Klinge predicted more business and industry leaders will join in opposition to the new law as its impact is felt throughout the state.

Jett missed the vote in the House when the measure was passed last legislative session. He said at the news conference that “the unintended consequences” of HB 1804 are causing harm to families and business. Jett said he did not believe Rep. Randy Terrill, R-Moore, had evil intentions when he crafted the measure, but Coates disagreed, saying he believes Terrill holds “some racist ideas.”

Following the gathering, Father Taylor said Oklahoma’s Hispanic community is struggling to understand why the place they have come to know and love has suddenly turned against them. He said much of the problem stems from the lack of a clear and workable federal immigration policy.

“Immigrants come to Oklahoma with many hopes for a better future for themselves and especially for their children and they make great sacrifices in an effort to make their dreams come true,” Father Taylor said. “They invest themselves in the local community, teach their children to value the better life they have found here and come to love their new home. They write home describing Oklahoma in glowing terms, decide continued on page 7

Giving up on the American Dream

One Hispanic Family Explains
Why They Came, Why They’re Going Back

By Dave Crenshaw
Eastern Oklahoma Catholic

TULSA — Sergio Garcia is a man who has taken a tremendous risk — and lost.

Garcia and his wife, Lola, are illegal immigrants from Mexico. Because of HB 1804, they have made the difficult decision to give up the dream they have worked toward for the past eight years.

They planned to return to their hometown in Mexico on Dec. 7, leaving behind a house they bought and have renovated, Sergio’s job as a bricklayer, close family ties in Tulsa and the beginnings of a better life in America. Their two children, Hector, 2, and Sergio, 5, both U.S. citizens by birth, were to go with them to Tlachichila, Zacatecas, a town of about 3,000 people in Central Mexico.

Garcia said he is grateful for having had the opportunity to work in the United States.

“We have met a lot of good people here. We won’t remember the bad ones. We are just disappointed with the law. With the money I saved, I bought the house. It was a dream that burned across the street from the Sergio Garcia’s home on East 41st Place North in Tulsa. At the urging of his sister and brother-in-law, Garcia found work in Tulsa as a bricklayer and moved here.

He spent most of his life savings on the shell of a house and has spent the rest of his money and most of his free time making it livable for his family. The house passed final mechanical inspections at the end of November.

The Garcias and Ibarra spoke Nov. 29 about why they came to this continued on page 7
Orthodox Patriarch Says Unity an Obligation

By Miriam Diez i Bosch

ISTANBUL, Turkey. Zenit.org — It is an obligation to reclaim the spiritual, sacramental and doctrinal unity that Europe enjoyed prior to the schism of the East and West, said the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople.

Bartholomew I said this in a letter addressed to a delegation sent by Benedict XVI to Istanbul for the regular exchange of visits between the two churches for the feasts of St. Andrew, Nov. 30, and Sts. Peter and Paul, June 29.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, led the delegation.

Bartholomew I affirmed the presence of the delegation “both strengthens and seals the bonds of love and trust between our Churches, bonds which have been cultivated in recent decades, and which have been especially established by the visit” of Benedict XVI in November 2006.

The patriarch also emphasized “that the peaceful coexistence of Christians, in a spirit of unity and concord, must constitute the fundamental concern of us all.”

Bartholomew I recognized that in an age in which there is a rise of “secularism and relativism, or even nihilism, especially in the Western world,” we must derive inspiration from the example of the Apostle Andrew, who knew how to “remain upstanding through the strength of Christ” in spite of “numerous difficulties.”

The example of St. Andrew offers an opportunity to “pray together more intently for the restoration of unity within the Christian world,” urged Bartholomew I, adding that “the fracture of this unity has been the cause of so much trouble in humanity, while its consequences have proved tragic.”

Bartholomew I emphasized that the Enlightenment philosophy in the West and the French Revolution meant a true “cultural revolution aimed at replacing the previous Christian tradition of the Western world with a new, non-Christian concept of man and society.”

He said this “gave rise in many ways” to a “militant atheism and totalitarianism which, over the last two centuries, have unfortunately claimed the lives of millions of innocent victims.”

The patriarch continued: “Today, then, it is our obligation more than ever to reclaim the Christian roots of Europe and the spiritual, sacramental and doctrinal unity that it enjoyed prior to the schism of our two Churches.

“The re-evangelization of our peoples is ‘today, more so than ever before, timely and necessary, even within traditional Christian lands,’ as we admitted and confessed in common here exactly one year ago.”

Lawmakers continued from page 6

they want to spend the rest of their life here and pray for a change in immigration law that will allow them to adjust their irregular immigration status. They hope to earn the respect of their neighbors by their hard work and solid family values, and hope that their positive contribution to society be rewarded by laws that recognize their human dignity and value to society. And they do so in the context of national immigration policies that everyone acknowledges are inappropriate and unrealistic ... which leads people to expect that eventually the immigration laws will be straightened out, so as to facilitate the process of immigration in a way that is rational and corresponds to reality. And then along comes an irrational and unrealistic law like HB 1804 which does just the opposite, tries to prevent immigration rather than to facilitate it."

Father Taylor said the message Oklahoma is sending with this new law is causing great harm to families.

“Alienate people, tells them they are not wanted, that their sacrifices are unappreciated,” he said. “Immigrants are now discovering that they have fallen in love with a place that does not love them ... and as with any unreciprocated love; the pain of rejection is deep and the disillusionment great. People seem so sad these days, so insecure and worried, not only about themselves, but especially about their children, many of whom are U.S. citizens and are horrified to see their parents treated in such an inhumane fashion.”

Father Taylor said he is encouraged by the voices now beginning to call for change to this unjust state law, but said in the end, immigration must be dealt with at the federal level.

“I am pleased that the Church has stepped forward to support immigrants at this time ... after all they are only exercising their God-given right to immigrate if circumstances so require. The Church also has the task of preaching love and understanding even of those who persecute us — all the while condemning the evils that threaten the poor and the weak. Repealing HB 1804 would be a tiny but necessary first step, but it doesn’t do anything to correct the profound injustices of our current immigration laws ... and that’s where we most need to focus our efforts.”

American Dream continued from page 6

country and why the Garcia family was going back.

“They say Tlachichilca is the ugliest place on the planet, but it is my home. To me there is no place more beautiful. If I had opportunity there, I would go back,” said Ibarra.

But there are no factories there, nor any big stores where someone could find work either, according to Ibarra.

Minimum wage in Mexico is about $5 a day. Double that amount for skilled labor, and he might earn $50 a week or $200 a month.

Ibarra, who visits his home at least once a year, says that while rental houses or apartments can be found for $100 a month, many commodity prices are not much cheaper than in the U.S. Soda pop is $1 per bottle, gasoline only a few cents per gallon less than in the U.S., and a gallon of milk costs about $3.

“Where we come from, $200 a month is not even an option,” he said.

Legal entry into the United States is a long road that takes years to travel. When your family is hungry, Ibarra said, you don’t have time to wait.

“We know it’s wrong to cross the border illegally, but we had no other choice. It’s everyone’s dream here to have a green card and to be legal.”

Garcia spent about $20,000 rehabilitating the house that he will leave behind. He planned to try to sell the furniture, which consists of a couch and matching chair, a few tables and a refrigerator.

“I’ll go to Mexico with about $500. I want to leave because my record is clean. I want to try to come back legally someday.” Under current law, that will be at least 10 years from now.

He and his family will live with his parents in Tlachichilca until they can get back on their feet.

Because Ibarra is a citizen, he holds title to the reconstructed house, he will try to sell it. But the still-unfinished structure is in an area of north Tulsa where houses don’t sell quickly.

Both of the Garcia children are U.S. citizens and will need to obtain dual citizenship before they can attend school or receive services in Mexico. According to Ibarra, that will cost about $500 each. With no job prospects on the horizon for Garcia, he doesn’t know how long the children may have to wait to attend school.

Ibarra has seen other people leave.

“There’s nothing more frustrating than to see people leaving broken-hearted because their dreams are gone.”

Ibarra is a supervisor for a large plumbing contractor in Tulsa. He and his employer shared 26 hours of driving time to take the Garcias back to Mexico.

“This is affecting me as much as any illegal here,” Ibarra said.

“They’re going back. I have to deal with it every day. I believe that the law is bringing back racism. Right now, you can feel the racism on the street.”
The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

Preface: My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Several weeks ago, we, the Catholic Bishops of the United States, issued some very important teaching documents. At this time I present one of them, “The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship” to you, the people of our Archdiocese.

Please read and study this document. It will be helpful to us in our relationship with God and with each other.

Most Reverend Eusebius Beltran Archbishop of Oklahoma City

This brief document is a summary of the U.S. bishops reflection, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, faithfulcitizenship.org. It complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states. Our nation faces political challenges that demand urgent moral choices. We are a nation at war, with all of its human costs; a country often divided by race and ethnicity; a nation of immigrants struggling with immigration. We are an affluent society where too many live in poverty; part of a global community confronting terrorism and facing urgent threats to our environment; a culture built on families, where some now question the value of marriage and family life. We pride ourselves on supporting human rights, but we fail even to protect the fundamental right to life, especially for unborn children.

We bishops seek to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with the truth, so they can make sound moral choices in addressing these challenges. We do not tell Catholics how to vote. The responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience.

WHO IN THE CHURCH SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL LIFE?

In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. In today’s environment, Catholics may feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and few candidates fully share our comprehensive commitment to human life and dignity. Catholic lay women and men need to act on the Church’s moral principles and become more involved: running for office, working within political parties and communicating concerns to elected officials. Even those who cannot vote should raise their voices on matters that affect their lives and the common good.

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Making Moral Choices

Difficult political decisions require the exercise of a well-formed conscience aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with always opposing policies that violate human life or weaken its protection.

Those who formulate law therefore have an obligation in conscience to work toward correcting morally defective laws, lest they be guilty of cooperating in evil and in sinning against the common good.” (Catholics in Political Life, 2004).

When morally flawed laws already exist, prudential judgment is needed to determine how to do what is possible to restore justice — even if partially or gradually — without ever abandoning a moral commitment to full protection for all human life from
Faithful Citizenship

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conception to natural death (see Evangelium Vitae, No. 73).

Prudential judgment is also needed to determine the best way to promote the common good in areas such as housing, health care and immigration. When Church leaders make judgments about how to apply Catholic teaching to specific policies, this may not carry the same binding authority as universal moral principles but cannot be dismissed as one political opinion among others. These moral applications should inform the consciences and guide the actions of Catholics.

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE?

— SEVEN KEY THEMES

A consistent ethic of life should guide all Catholic engagement in political life. This Catholic ethic neither treats all issues as morally equivalent nor reduces Catholic teaching to one or two issues. It anchors the Catholic commitment to defend human life and other human rights, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental obligation to respect the dignity of every human being as a child of God.

Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates’ positions on issues and should consider candidates’ integrity, philosophy and performance. It is important for all citizens “to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest.” (Living the Gospel of Life, No. 33). The following themes of Catholic social teaching provide a moral framework for decisions in public life.

2 The Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person

Human life is sacred. Direct attacks on innocent human beings are never morally acceptable. Within our society, life is under direct attack from abortion, euthanasia, human cloning and destruction of human embryos for research. These intrinsic evils must always be opposed. This teaching also compels us as Catholics to oppose genocide, torture, unjust war and the use of the death penalty, as well as to pursue peace and help overcome poverty, racism and other conditions that demean human life.

Call to Family, Community and Participation

The family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental unit of society. This sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children must not be redefined, undermined or neglected. Supporting families should be a priority for economic and social policies. How our society is organized — in economics and politics, in law and public policy — affects the well-being of individuals and of society. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate in shaping society to promote the well-being of individuals and the common good.

Rights and Responsibilities

Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible. Each of us has a right to religious freedom, which enables us to live and act in accord with our God-given dignity, as well as a right to access to those things required for human decency — food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities — to one another, to our families and to the larger society.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

While the common good embraces all, those who are in greatest need deserve preferential concern. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us — the unborn, those with disabilities or terminal illness, the poor and marginalized.

Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, opportunities for legal status for immigrant workers, and the opportunity for all people to work together for the common good through their work, ownership, enterprise, investment, participation in unions, and other forms of economic activity.

Solidarity

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic and ideological differences. Our Catholic commitment to solidarity requires that we pursue justice, eliminate racism, end human trafficking, protect human rights, seek peace and avoid the use of force except as a necessary last resort.

Caring for God’s Creation

Care for the earth is a duty of our Catholic faith. We all are called to be careful stewards of God’s creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for vulnerable human beings now and in the future.

CONCLUSION

In light of Catholic teaching, as bishops we vigorously repeat our call for a renewed politics that focuses on moral principles, the defense of life, the needs of the weak and the pursuit of the common good. This kind of political participation reflects the social teaching of our Church and the best traditions of our nation.

1 For more on the moral challenge of voting, see Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, Nos. 34-39.

2 These themes are drawn from a rich tradition more fully described in the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005). For more information on these seven themes or on how we bishops of the United States have applied Catholic social teaching to policy issues, see www.faithfulcitizenship.org.
Archbishop Eusebius Beltran, along with a small group of Oklahoma pilgrims, attended the Consistory in Rome for the new cardinals. He is pictured greeting Pope Benedict XVI during the Nov. 28 Papal Audience in the Pope Paul VI Hall.

Bishop McGuinness Fighting Irish Take Back-to-Back State Championships

Bishop McGuinness capped a perfect 14-0 football season with a come-from-behind win over Glenpool on Dec. 1 to capture the Class 4A championship. Played at Gaylord Family Memorial Stadium at the University of Oklahoma, the title was the second consecutive championship for the Fighting Irish coached by Kenny Young. The 14-9 win over Glenpool not only gave the Irish their second state football crown, it also extended their winning streak to an amazing 28 games. Photo by Cher Casso
Saint Mary Students Tackle Chinese in Language Class

By Rex Hogan
For the Sooner Catholic

GUTHRIE — Young students at Saint Mary’s Catholic School are getting an educational leg up in learning what’s believed to be the foreign language of the future — Chinese.

Becky Bowen, a native of Taiwan, has been teaching Chinese to Saint Mary preschool students and this year her language classes have expanded to the second grade.

“I really don’t know how many schools there are in the state in which Chinese is taught, but I would think we are certainly one of the few, if not the only one where Chinese is taught to preschool and elementary school students,” said Saint Mary Principal Sheila Whalen-Guthrie.

Shelly Hickman, a spokesman for the Oklahoma Department of Education, said Whalen-Guthrie is right.

Hickman said there are about 30 schools in Oklahoma where Chinese is taught as a foreign language. The department could not find another preschool class where Chinese is taught.

Hickman said it’s difficult to assess some Chinese classes because in some elementary schools foreign languages are taught two or three “times a week for an hour or so.”

Hickman said there are no elementary schools or middle schools in Oklahoma City where Chinese is taught, but there are five or six elementary schools in Tulsa where students can learn Chinese.

She said Chinese is taught at five private schools in Oklahoma: Bishop Kelley, Cascia Hall and Holland Hall high schools in Tulsa, and Casady and at Heritage Hall in Oklahoma City.

Bowen came to the United States 11 years ago from her native Taiwan to attend classes at Oklahoma City University, where she earned a liberal arts degree.

She started teaching at Saint Mary’s because of her work with Robin Kelley.

Guthrie said, “We would love to have her teaching more language classes, but right now it’s a scheduling issue,” Whalen-Guthrie said. “We keep looking for ways to bring her into other classes,” the principal said. Bowen is currently working on her preschool certification at OCU.

Recently, Bowen’s students met for a celebration of sorts when Bowen received her U.S. citizenship papers.

Memory of ‘Million-Dollar’ Aunt Warms Christmas Spirit

By Kathy Neal

Mary Williams spent most of her life working at the Steele Canning Company. Every morning she showed up on time to stand at a conveyor belt the entire day picking out dirt, trash and vegetables unsuitable for canning from the harvest that arrived at the cannery. Day in and day out, she did this monotonous work for many years.

Mary and her co-workers were her friends and some were not. Mary was one of those people who were often made fun of; what we might call harassment on the job today. I often overheard her whisper to Mother the hurtful things said in teasing ways directly to Mary and then the more painful things she heard behind her back. As if she had no choice and the canning factory was her call in life, she took the ribbing in stride.

The truth: Mary had no choice. She had to provide for her mother and her sister who was sick with diabetes. There was no way out for her.

She would usually ride home with the neighbor.

One day we received a call from the local hospital. Mary had been in an accident coming home from work. She was riding home in a pickup truck. Failing to heed the stop sign, the driver thought he could make it across 71 Highway, but the truck was hit on the passenger’s side. Mary received brain damage and had to have neurosurgery.

Afterward, she couldn’t work for weeks and never learned to write her name properly.

Our families lived so close together that Mary was like a second mother to me. She was there to help mother after I was born and when my parents were gone, she was always available to watch me. In turn, mother was the chauffeur for the entire group to go shopping.

Many nights I spent with Mary during the summer months with no air conditioning, so we slept with the windows wide open. We lived on a remote country, dirt road. We could see the stars from inside the dark house and hear all sorts of noises from the woods: wolves, coyotes, whippoorwills.

Christmas is by far the holiday I remember best. Mother prepared a huge Christmas Eve dinner. We had turkey, dressing and all the wonderful, traditional Christmas food our family found heavenly and divine. Following dinner off, we went to my aunt’s house where dessert was served. Oh my! The cherry pie my grandma made was the best ever. I can still taste it in my imagination! Mary made her specialty, million dollar fudge, along with divinity, ribbon candy and all sorts of delectable sweets that made my eyes and sweet tooth only crave more.

The Christmas tree, cut from our woods, stood in one corner of the small living room. Tall and full, covered in billyow angel hair, it sparkled with a rainbow of light shining so softly. The star on top was big and cut from cardboard, then covered with tin foil. A clear light shining through a hole in the center emphasized the star effect. The tree and gifts beneath coveted the whole corner of the room. I could barely wait to open my presents!

My aunt always gave me a doll for Christmas. The one I remember and still have is named Judy. When I lifted her from the box and held her, examining her short, curly, black hair and pretty, blue eyes, oh how I loved her! She came with a suitcase full of clothes designed and handmade by my aunt. Lovingly my aunt labored many hours at her treadle sewing machine stitching a wardrobe of clothes for Judy. Hours of handwork followed sewing on snaps, hooks and buttons. Never, ever did a Christmas pass that I did not receive a doll from Mary.

Mary, whom I never called aunt, suffered terribly from arthritis, and I helplessly watched her suffer. She passed away one week after I underwent surgery, and I traveled from Little Rock to Lowell for the funeral. I really grieved over her death.

At the graveside service, one of my news papers took a photo of Mary amid the flowers on her coffin. The snapshot was taken years ago when she was young and full of life. She was smiling, happy and looked as if she didn’t have a care in the world. That picture warmed my heart because I knew that once she walked through the valley of death, she would see the face of God and smile like that forever. She lived a sainted, chaste, secluded life. As far as I know the longest distance she ever traveled was to Little Rock to visit me.

One thing found in her possessions at the nursing home was a rosary. I assumed someone from Saint Vincent de Paul Catholic Church had been to visit her and that made me grateful to God for watching over her when I could not. The rosary remains by my bed.

Kathy Neal is a freelance writer and columnist from Little Rock. E-mail her at thebetterpart@coxglobal.com.
WASHINGTON — The United States and its leaders must work together in a bipartisan fashion to bring about a responsible transition in Iraq that ends the war at the earliest opportunity and minimizes the loss of lives, American and Iraqi. This was the major thrust of a statement by Bishop William Skylstad of Spokane, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, that was affirmed by the full body of bishops at their general meeting on Nov. 12 in Baltimore.

“As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops gathers in Baltimore, our thoughts and prayers are with our military personnel in Iraq, their families, and all the suffering people of Iraq,” Bishop Skylstad said.

The statement decried the “political stalemate in Iraq that blocks national reconciliation” and “finds a parallel” in “the political and partisan stalemate in Washington.” Bishop Skylstad continued, “Our country needs a new direction to reduce the war’s deadly toll and to bring our people together to deal with the conflict’s moral and human dimensions. Our nation needs a new bipartisan approach to Iraq policy based on honest and civil dialogue.”

The statement noted that our nation faces important challenges and decisions about the terrible dilemmas in Iraq. “Our nation must focus more on the ethics of exit than on the ethics of intervention. The morally and politically demanding but carefully limited goal of responsible transition should aim to reduce further loss of life and address the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, the refugee crisis in the region, the need to help rebuild the country and human rights, especially religious freedom.”

A Call for Bipartisan Cooperation on Responsible Transition in Iraq

A Statement of the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Bishop William S. Skylstad, Bishop of Spokane

November 13, 2007

Our nation and its leaders face important decisions about the difficult challenges and terrible dilemmas in Iraq. As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops gathers in Baltimore, our thoughts and prayers are with our military personnel in Iraq, their families, and all the suffering people of Iraq. In this statement we seek to draw on our moral teaching to continue raising some ethical questions regarding the road ahead for our nation in Iraq.

Our church both ministers among our troops and shares deep spiritual ties to the church and people in Iraq. Pope Benedict XVI in his Urbi et Orbi Easter message of 2007 focused the world’s attention on Iraq, a nation “torn apart by continual slaughter.” As pastors and teachers, we are convinced that the current situation in Iraq remains unacceptable and unsustainable. Our conference offers once again the goal of a “responsible transition” as an overall ethical framework for national decisions.

The dangerous political stalemate in Iraq that blocks national reconciliation finds a parallel in our own nation. We are alarmed by the political and partisan stalemate in Washington. Some policy makers seem to fail to recognize sufficiently the reality and failures in Iraq and the imperative for new directions. Others seem to fail to recognize sufficiently the potential human consequences of very rapid withdrawal. These two forms of denial have helped contribute to partisan paralysis.

As pastors, we have been called for bipartisan action for almost two years. Our country needs a new direction to reduce the war’s deadly toll and to bring our people together to deal with the conflict’s moral and human dimensions. Our nation needs a new bipartisan approach to Iraq policy based on honest and civil dialogue.

Our conference encourages our national leaders to focus on the morally and politically demanding, but carefully limited goal of fostering a “responsible transition” and withdrawal at the earliest opportunity consistent with that goal. The moral demands of this path begin with addressing the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and minimizing further loss of human life.

We do not have specific competence in political, economic and military strategies and do not assess particular tactics, but we can, as teachers, share a moral tradition to help inform policy choices. Our Catholic teaching on war and peace offers hard questions, not easy answers. Our nation must now focus more on the ethics of exit than on the ethics of intervention. The grave moral concerns we and others raise prior to the war now give way to new moral questions. In the current situation, the traditional principles of “noncombatant immunity” and “probability of success” suggest these questions: How can we minimize the further loss of human lives? What actions will do the most good and least harm? What elements of a responsible transition are attainable?

How can they be achieved? What actions should be avoided? How can decision-makers take into account both the realities and setbacks in Iraq and the likely human consequences of rapid withdrawal? What are the financial costs and global consequences of continued war and occupation? And how can our nation effectively counter the perversion of religion and ideologies that support terrorism, which in all cases merits condemnation?

Catholic teaching has long held that peace is more than the absence of war; it is built on the foundation of justice. This moral insight means that building a just peace in Iraq requires far more than military action; it demands a comprehensive political, diplomatic and economic effort. This effort begins in Iraq, but it does not end there. For this reason, we believe sustained U.S. efforts to collaborate with the other nations, including Syria and Iran, are critically important for bringing some measure of stability to Iraq.

The responsibility for stabilizing and rebuilding Iraq rests primarily with Iraqis, but the United States as well as other nations have a practical and moral obligation to act. Given the extensive devastation in Iraq, the U.S. has a unique and inescapable obligation to continue to offer major and continuing support for economic development and reconstruction. Respect for Iraqi self-determination suggests that our nation should reiterate our pledge not to seek permanent military bases in Iraq, nor control over Iraqi oil resources.

A neglected policy priority is the dire situation of refugees outside the country, internally displaced persons within Iraq, Christians and other vulnerable minorities. The suffering of the Christian community has a particular claim on our hearts and consciences. We remain in solidarity with the suffering Catholic Church in Iraq and welcome with joy the naming of Chaldean Patriarch Emmanuel-Karim Delly to the College of Cardinals by our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI.

We recognize that Christians are not alone in their plight and we reiterate our concern for the whole of the Iraqi people. A staggering 2 million refugees have fled Iraq; another 2 million Iraqis are internally displaced. The U.S. should immediately make more substantial commitments to Iraqi refugees by expanding admissions, eliminating roadblocks to resettlement, and supporting countries in the region burdened with war-related refugee populations. Extensive aid should be provided to internally displaced persons. The protection and promotion of human rights, especially religious freedom, in Iraq remain critically important.

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### Across Oklahoma

#### Pastors Sought for Study

The University of Notre Dame, in conjunction with the Institute for Educational Initiatives, is conducting a national survey of pastors with oversight of Catholic schools. The current survey seeks to explore and understand pastors’ needs, perceptions and attitudes as they pertain to Catholic schools and Catholic education. The study will replicate elements of two previous national studies of pastors and respond to elements of the Notre Dame Task Force Report on Catholic Education. If you are a pastor with oversight of a Catholic school and wish to participate in the study, please contact Rev. Ronald J. Nuzzi at pastors@nd.edu or (574) 631-7730.

#### Christmas Concert Dec. 16

Musicians from The Center of Family Love will perform a Christmas Benefit Concert at 3 p.m. Dec. 16. The concert will be held at Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church in Edmond. Admission is $10 and all proceeds will go to the Center of Family Love.

The Knights of Columbus Council 6477 in Edmond helped initiate the “Instruments of Love” program that has resulted in a number of musical instruments being donated to the music program at the Center of Family Love. The program is supervised by Miho Fisher and her husband, Greg Fisher.

The upcoming concert will feature performances using some of the donated instruments, as well as the Center of Family Love’s handbell choir. For ticket information, contact Dale Sligar at 348-7562.

#### Save the Date

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women’s Biennial Convention, with a theme of “Bringing Light to Our Global Society” will be held May 17 at the Catholic Pastoral Center, 7501 NW Expressway. Registration opens at 9 a.m. The tentative agenda includes discussion about the work done by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in Guatemala and the Canonization process of Father Stanley Rother. The agenda will also include discussion about the Our Lady of Fatima Rehab School and Center in Liberia, Africa.

Participants are urged to buy or borrow a copy of the book “The Shepherd Cannot Run … Letters of Stanley Rother, Missionary and Martyr.” The book will be part of the discussion on Guatemala. The book, as well as the DVD “No Greater Love — The Story of Father Stanley Rother” can be purchased through the office of The Sooner Catholic. Cost is $10 per copy. Both are available in English and Spanish from the Sooner Catholic.

There is a $5 shipping and handling fee. Send your checks or money order to the Sooner Catholic History Account, Sooner Catholic, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123.

### Bishops Urge

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Iraq’s future stability is related to stability of the region. This is why U.S. leadership to advance a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians is critical. The continuing failure to achieve the vision of two states living side by side in peace and justice contributes to regional instability. Real progress toward a fair and just Israeli-Palestinian agreement would help the region and deprive extremists of a cause they exploit to promote hate and violence. In a recent letter to Secretary of State Rice, our conference has also expressed deep concern regarding the difficult situation involving our nation, the international community and Iran, and has urged caution, determination and restraint in the use of force. The volatile situations in Pakistan and Afghanistan also raise significant moral questions and require urgent attention if regional stability is to be enhanced.

In all military actions, ethical norms require protecting civilians, using proportionate and discriminate force, rejecting torture and fighting terrorism with nonmilitary means and the legitimate use of force when necessary. This is morally essential and also necessary for winning hearts and minds, especially in the struggle against terrorism.

Our concern for human life and dignity extends to the members of our own military. We support those who risk their lives in the service of our nation and recognize their generous commitment. U.S. policy must take into account the growing costs and consequences of a continued occupation on military personnel, their families and our nation. There is a moral obligation to deal with the human, medical, mental health and social costs of military action. Our nation must also make provisions for those who in conscience exercise their right to conscientious objection or selective conscientious objection.

Each course of action in Iraq should be weighed in light of the traditional moral principle of “probability of success.” In other words, will the action contribute to a “responsible transition” and withdrawal as soon as appropriate and possible? This principle requires our nation’s leaders to be more realistic about the difficult situation in Iraq and more concerned about the likely consequences of a withdrawal that is too rapid or not rapid enough.

The morally and politically demanding, but carefully limited goal of responsible transition should aim to reduce further loss of life and to address the humanitarian crisis in Iraq, the refugee crisis in the region, the need to help rebuild the country, and human rights, especially religious freedom.

We call on Catholics and others to persist in praying for peace and those most affected by the war and to engage these moral questions. To help our people reflect on the war, Bishop Thomas G. Wenski, chairman of our committee on International Policy, has prepared a summary of our conference’s perspectives on the war in question-and-answer format.

All of us must struggle with these moral questions, but in a particular way, our conference and individual bishops will continue to engage policy makers on the moral and human dimensions of this conflict. We pray and hope that policy makers begin to work together on a bipartisan basis to bring an end to this war and occupation at the earliest opportunity consistent with the limited goal of a responsible transition and the protection of human lives — Iraqi and American.

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**Sooner Catholic Deadline Schedule 2008**

The Sooner Catholic is published biweekly except for once in July and twice in December by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. News items, photos, stories and calendar submissions accepted by fax: (405) 721-5210, e-mail: rdyer@catharchdioceseokc.org and mail, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123. The newspaper is not responsible for unsolicited material.

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Our Story — Why We Oppose the Death Penalty

The last issue of the Sooner Catholic carried the story of how we became so involved in our fight against the death penalty. Our son, Mark, along with Billy Fox, was on death row for the terrible killings of three young men in an Edmond grocery store. Robert Miller was also on death row for killing my mother, Goldie Fowler, here in Oklahoma City. This all occurred in mid to late 1980s.

We pick up our story in early 1994 when the new DNA study was out, which is very effective on determining guilt or innocence when there is forensic evidence to study. Miller's attorneys had kept forensic evidence and submitted it for DNA study and the unthinkable happened. Miller was not the man who raped and killed my mother! We were stunned. I told my wife, “My God, we could have killed an innocent man!” From that moment we started researching the death penalty issue. For those who care, there is much to learn about this cancer we call the death penalty.


Many of the facts we have discovered come from the Death Penalty Information Center in Washington, D.C. * We learned that well over 120 innocent people have been released from our nation’s death rows. It also shows that eight of these innocent people were from Oklahoma’s death row.

The estimated cost of the death penalty is approximately $2 million more than to put a person in prison for the rest of their life. Life without parole takes us out of the killing business. There are many tough ways to die but let God take them when He chooses.

Our son, Mark, was killed by the state of Oklahoma on the night of Jan. 23, 2001, at approximately 9:04 p.m. Those of us who witnessed his execution had agreed to say the Hail Mary with him before the poison was released into his veins. His last word on this earth was “Amen.”

After Mark was pronounced dead we stopped to visit with the crowd that had gathered outside the prison gate for his vigil. We saw Father Tom McSherry passing out “string” rosaries his parishioners in Guatemala had made. We will never forget this.

There are simply too many mistakes with our death penalty process. The risk of killing an innocent human being is too high a price to pay. We believe in the Fifth Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Kill. * Death Penalty Information Center, 1101 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 701, Washington D.C. 2005, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

Jim can be reached at JA2bears @cox.net.

Book a Great Gift for Young Catholics With Questions

By Jim Fowler

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Our son, Mark, was killed by the state of Oklahoma on the night of Jan. 23, 2001, at approximately 9:04 p.m. Those of us who witnessed his execution had agreed to say the Hail Mary with him before the poison was released into his veins. His last word on this earth was “Amen.”

After Mark was pronounced dead we stopped to visit with the crowd that had gathered outside the prison gate for his vigil. We saw Father Tom McSherry passing out “string” rosaries his parishioners in Guatemala had made. We will never forget this.

There are simply too many mistakes with our death penalty process. The risk of killing an innocent human being is too high a price to pay. We believe in the Fifth Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Kill. * Death Penalty Information Center, 1101 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 701, Washington D.C. 2005, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

Jim can be reached at JA2bears @cox.net.

Young Catholic men and women who might be having problems with their faith or who know of a friend or someone who is will find this book very inspiring and helpful. This book is a collection of 21 true stories of young people who either converted to Catholicism, Protestants or atheists who had conversion experiences. The foreword is by Dr. Scott Hahn, the noted theologian who converted to Catholicism. The introduction by the editors begin their book with the story of St. Augustin of Hippo, who started out his life as a partier, a heretic and a father of a child who was conceived outside of wedlock. He had a conversion experience and eventually became priests. The editors include their own stories. Some of the authors’ names are actually pseudonyms to protect their privacy and that of others.

On the cover of the book is a picture of a young man walking to the left in what appears a tunnel. There is an exit sign pointing upward which is probably pointing to God. The book has a bibliography and endnotes.

Chris Cuddy is a research associate for the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology founded by Scott Hahn (www.salvationhistory.com) and a staff writer and apostolic for NextWave Faithful (www.nextwavefaithful.com). Peter Ericksen is co-founder of Neighborhood Communications LLC. This book is highly recommended to teens and young adults, those concerned with or who care for teens and young adults, and those who minister to them.

Brother Benet Exton, O.S.B.

Brother Benet Exton is a Benedictine Monk at Saint Gregory’s Abbey in Shawnee. Among other duties, he serves as the librarian and writes book reviews regularly for several Catholic publications.

Annual Homiletics Seminar Set Jan. 7-10 at University of Dallas

IRVING, Texas — The University of Dallas School of Ministry (SOM) will sponsor its third annual Tschope Homiletics Seminar from Jan. 7-10, 2008. This year’s seminar, titled “Always a New Event,” brings together experts in preaching with clergy, religious and laity for thoughtful reflection on the theology of preaching, as well as opportunities to sharpen practical homiletic skills. The seminar, co-sponsored by the Tschoppe Institute of the Diocese of Dallas, will be held at Holy Trinity Seminary on the university’s campus in Irving.

“We are excited to bring together a field of experts in preaching to further educate and inspire the clergy in our area,” said Brian Schmieseck, dean of the SOM. “Participants will learn from recognized scholars in the field and exchange ideas and experiences with other preachers. The addition of master classes this year will give participants a chance to work on the craft of preaching in very concrete ways.”

This year’s seminar will feature Monsignor Kevin W. Irwin, STD, dean of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America (CUA). The author of 14 books and more than 50 scholarly articles, Monsignor Irwin was named to the Walter J. Schmitz Chair in Liturgical Studies at CUA in 2001.

Monsignor Irwin will be featured at the opening plenary session, “Always a New Event: Preaching in Liturgical Celebration,” on Monday, Jan. 7. The session on Tuesday, Jan. 8 will feature Rev. Sean Martin, STD, associate professor of biblical studies at Aquinas Institute of Theology, speaking on the topic of “Preaching the Pauline Texts.” The third plenary session will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 9, with Dr. John Cavadini, chair of theology at the University of Notre Dame, speaking on “Patrician Preaching: Wisdom for Today.”

Daily sessions include breakouts on numerous topics, as well as optional “master classes.” Daily liturgy and preaching will be an integral feature of the seminar. A full list of presenters can be found at www.udallas.edu/ministry-homiletics.cfm.

For more information or to register, call the School of Ministry at (972) 265-5311 or e-mail jmasics@udallas.edu.
Author Captures Power of Christmas Love


There is a song in the musical Mame, "We Need A Little Christmas." Thinking of this song when I got this book a few days after Christmas, I said to myself, "Why not?"

What an awesome idea! Imagine an editor asking 12 friends to recall a Christmas gift that was much more than it seemed and the impact that this particular gift had on their lives.

This book is a marvelous collection of stories that speaks to the heart and spirit of Christmas.

Readers will gain a deeper appreciation of the traditions of this holy season. In the first story, "Christmas Shopping in the Mall of the Heart" by Kass Dotterweich, we are taken on a journey of treasures lost by family members throughout the year.

"When my son, Joseph, was 5 years old, she says, "he went on a shopping spree that none of us will ever forget. He certainly did not have the money to buy presents for both his parents and his five siblings. Nor did he have the crafty wherewithal to construct something homemade for each of us. Instead, Joseph did his Christmas shopping at home — and this was way before the advent of the Internet." (Page 13).

"Christmas morning dawned and, despite my apprehension, the festivities began. After the family went to Mass and shared a small breakfast, it was time to gather around the tree to see what surprises nestled there waiting to delight one and all. One by one, the presents were handed out, and one by one recipients pulled at bows, ripped at paper and glowed with satisfaction as some new treasure came to the surface."

"Through it all, Joseph was a bundle of anticipation ... and so was his mother. As the mountain of packages under the tree dwindled, Joseph's presents for others became more obvious — his wrappings of old newspaper and miles of adhesive tape set his gifts apart."

I dare say that Christmas, Joseph, was in essence, a recruit of Saint Anthony and family members were surprised by the lost treasures he found!

Another of the stories in this collection is "The Frequent Bald Sacraments of Love We Exchange" by Patrick T. Reardon. In his story, Reardon states that by measuring gifts solely on their material "value," we doom ourselves to disappointment from early childhood through adulthood. This is the story of how one family values the gift of one another, not only at Christmas but throughout the year.

"There is one gift, though, that I keep before me all the time. And it's the representative of the type of gift that never disappoints — the gift that always leaves me feeling loved, filled with joy and life, as happy as a lord-a-leaping."

Reardon is speaking of a treasured Christmas card that represents those personalized things that outweigh the value of material gifts, these personal items give worth to both the recipient as well as showing the worth of the one who "gave" the card or gift. It is very representative of the type of story that was written about in this wonderful collection.

There are a dozen reasons why this book should be added to the family library.

"Share it with those you love. After all, they may "need a little Christmas now!"

Letters

In Solidarity

The Nov. 9 issue of the National Catholic Reporter carried news of Archbishop Beltran's Pledge of Resistance to HB 1804. I also read the archbishop's letter in the online version of the Nov. 4 issue of the Sooner Catholic. I write to support and to stand in solidarity with Archbishop Beltran and all other clergy and people of God who stand on the side of Gospel values and reject the values and mandates exhibited in HB 1804. It is a day of joy, hope and courage when this public stand of the Church is with our brothers and sisters who are in need and are truly Christ in our presence.

Sister Imelda Maurer, CDP

Our Harsh Reality

Concerning Nathaniel Batchelder's letter "Photos Not Necessary," I agree with him that full color photographs of aborted babies are "a violent assault on the sensibilities" of others. They are also highly effective in showing people the ugly reality of abortion which is a violent assault on an unborn child. This reality is usually avoided in public discourse regarding abortion. Euphemisms for the act abound. The very label abortion proponents give themselves, "pro-choice," is meaningless because it fails to name the object of the choice.

In the course of his letter, Batchelder asks if pro-life proponents would accept vivid color photographs of dead soldiers and Iraqi citizens as a valid tactic in the public discourse on the current war. I would say yes, of course. The history of the civil rights movement in America might be very different had not average Americans been subjected to the spectacle of fire hoses and police dogs being turned on those marching peacefully in the streets of Selma, Ala.

Although some might find Batchelder's linking of abortion and the war on terror as something of a stretch, the two are linked more closely than many might expect. Last year while praying in front of an abortion clinic in Norman, our group was approached by a young man who was obviously in a state of agitation. Rather than scream and curse at us which is sometimes the case, he thanked us. He identified himself as a soldier who was leaving for the Iraq theatre in the next few days. His fiancé had become pregnant and, not knowing if he would survive to see his child born, he and his fiancé had decided on abortion. As they sat in the parking lot waiting for their appointment time, they saw us come to the clinic, open up our "offensive" signs, and begin praying. He told us when he saw the picture of the aborted baby, he realized he and his fiancé were contemplating an act of murder that, in his mind at least, would have made him as bad as the terrorists he was going to fight. That a child was saved by our "offensive" signs!

Any society that fails to protect its most vulnerable citizens is, in a certain sense, a terrorist society. The right to live in peace and freedom is meaningless if the fundamental right to life is ignored. That right is a little harder to ignore when a full color photograph of the consequences of its absence is staring you in the face.

Rhett Brotherton

Sooner Catholic on the World Wide Web

You can now read the entire Sooner Catholic newspaper on the Internet. Just go to the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City Web site at catharchdioceseokc.org and then click on Sooner Catholic. It's that easy.

You'll even find past issues of the Sooner Catholic. Just click on the button that says "Past Web Issues" and entire issues starting with the April 15 Sooner Catholic will be at your fingertips. This will allow readers to look up articles that have been published in previous issues of the archdiocesan newspaper.

We hope you enjoy reading your archdiocesan newspaper on the Internet and find it a convenient way to keep up with what's going on in your local Catholic community. You will still receive the Sooner Catholic through the mail twice a month, but now you will have another way to access the Sooner Catholic.

Catholic Radio is now on the air until 5:30!

"Catholic Answers Live" from 3 to 5 p.m.

Monday-Friday

Then continue listening to "Web of Faith" and "Defending Life" from 5 to 5:30 p.m.

on your drive home!

On KTLR 890 AM

Support Oklahoma Catholic Broadcasting, Inc.
okcatholicbroadcasting.com
Buenas Noticias...

...La palabra de Dios se hizo hombre

Más queridos Hermanos y Hermanas de Cristo:

Que el amor de Cristo entre en sus corazones y los conace paz.

En pocos días celebraremos el nacimiento de Jesucristo.

En la gran fiesta de la Navidad conocemos la bondad de Dios y el amor que nos demuestra cuando envió a Su Hijo Cristo a nuestro mundo para que sea nuestro Señor y Salvador.

Y en el Misterio de la Encarnación, Dios se convirtió en Hombre. Dios literalmente aceptó manifestarse en carne humana y sangre humana. Dios hace en nosotros como un niño, como un ser humano.

En pocos días celebraremos el nacimiento de Jesucristo.

¡Qué tengan una Santa Navidad!

Asamblea de Padres

San Agustín dijo que “nuestro corazón está llamado a descansar en el Señor”

Salvando en Cristo daremos vida ayudando a salvar a otros

Pot Mauro Yamaz
Sonora Catholic

NORMAN — Es alentador contemplar en esta navidad a los hermanos católicos en las diferentes parroquias de nuestro Archidiócesis y ver cómo testimonian su fe con empeño en Dios y en nuestra Iglesia Católica. Le damos gracias al Señor por todo lo que hace posible y en paz, por el trabajo incansable de nuestros seminaristas, diáconos, religiosas y gentes comprometidas con los afortunados de nuestra Iglesia.

El pasado 2 de noviembre nuestro estado de Oklahoma sufrió un enorme trágico con la implementación de la ley HB1804. Hoy continuamos el dolor de aquellos que están siendo separados por una ley que fue aprobada por el congreso de Oklahoma y ratificada por el gobernador sin ninguna objeción.

Estamos enfrentando una devastación enorme donde madres, padres, hermanas y hermanos, están siendo separados. Lamentamos este daño tan inusual e inhumano. Para quiénes sufren ahora, les digo que no están solos, todos los hermanos católicos y no católicos de Oklahoma, estamos con ustedes y rogamos a Dios que les contenga a través de este dolor. Para aquellos que más sufren, no lo hace todo en español, aquí en el Seminario Católico, y seguirá habiendo mientras Dios nos dé licencia para hacerlo. Sabemos que nuestro Señor y Salvador nos guiarán y nos mantendrá firmes en los días por venir. Amigos y amigos lectoras, continuaremos orando por esos que están siendo perseguidos y por los que ya se han ido del estado en contra de su voluntad. Y seguimos rezando por aquellos que siguen dañados de ello en los centros de recepción y recuperación de nuestros valores morales y espirituales en Oklahoma, y sobre todo, seguimos orando y apoyándolo aquellos que buscan y luchan por el respeto a la dignidad inmune del ser humano.

En estos tiempos difíciles en Oklahoma ha emergido un nuevo espíritu de esperanza, con tal vez unambio de corazón humana, la cual está traza da por Dios. Debemos reflexionar en esta navidad, como somos individuos, como comunidad, como una iglesia a conocer la verdadera libertad y justicia a este paso con Dios.

Y ahora tenemos la oportunidad de responder a la presencia de Cristo entre nosotros.

Jesús nunca está distante o inalcanzable. Cristo está presente en nuestra iglesia cuando se nos ofrece con el regalo de la Navidad. Para el mundo se hizo hombre y vivó entre nosotros.

“No temas” dijo Jesús. Repliquemos nuevamente Jesús nos dice: “El que come mi carne y bebe mi sangre, tiene vida eterna”.

¡jámado pueblo de Dios, cuán bendito somos de tener a Jesús con nosotros y de recibirla en la Santa Comunión!

Podemos pedirles, hermanos, nutrirnos y fortalecernos por El, quien es el Señor y Dios Salvador y Redentor.

Y que la celebración de la navidad en esto año le permita responder con amor y alegría a el Señor Dios Todopoderoso.

¡Qué tengan en esta Navidad una experiencia que sea un prodigio en cada uno de nosotros para vivir eternamente en ella porque Dios está verdaderamente con nosotros!

San Agustín dijo que “nuestro corazón está llamado a descansar en el Señor”.
**Diácono Mariano Martínez**

Será siempre recordado por su anhelo de servir al pueblo de Dios

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Por Mauro Yam es  
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — En nuestra Iglesia Católica aprendemos que la palabra de Cristo es la única compasión, para recibir el ministerio de la muerte. Este pensamiento estuvo de los corazones de quienes acompañamos a su última morada a nuestro humano y quedó Diácono Mariano Martínez. 

Decenas de personas se reunieron en oración ante los restos mortales de quien fue testigo de la gloria valiente que se debe poner en Dios en todos momentos. Mariano Martínez nació el 29 de enero de 1919 en Arkansas City, Kansas. Era el segundo hijo de una familia de ascendencia española. Tenía seis hermanos y tres hermanas. Besó matrimonio el 22 de mayo de 1944 con Consuelo Valdés, mejor conocida como Helen. De esa unión sacramental entre Mariano y Helen nacieron sus dos hijos, Victor y Anthony, quienes dieron 7 nietos para hacer ampliar la felicidad del matrimonio Martínez con 7 nietos. 

Mariano Martínez se ordenó como diácono por el Arzobispo Eusebio Elizondo en la Catedral de Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro, el 5 de noviembre de 1988. 

El Diácono Mariano cruzó con 98 inquebrantable en su misión de servicio, quiso un ejemplo de trabajadores y evangelizadores, un ejemplo de la forma en que unión de Dios en Cristo entre todos los hermanos de Oklahoma. 

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Este año adoramos y pedimos a la Virgen de Guadalupe su intercesión en Oklahoma

Nuestro pueblo hispano trabaja, reza y camina en busca de un futuro mejor

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Por Mauro Yam es  
Sooner Catholic

OKLAHOMA CITY — El pasado 12 de diciembre se celebró la fiesta de la aparición de Virgen de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Su imagen, ha sido un acompañante fiel de nuestra esperanza, de salvación a lo largo de nuestra historia. 

La Virgen María es símbolo de esperanza, por existencia de nuestra fe Católica en todo el continente Americano, por ser la Emperatriz de las Américas. La Virgen Santa María se apareció en el Tepeyac al Santo Juan Diego en 1531. Desde entonces su adoración ha sido incesante y se ha incrementado en el mundo. 

Aqui en nuestra Archidiócesis de Oklahoma City los hispanos católicos de todas las nacionalidades creemos fervientemente que lo podemos pedir que interceda en la aceptación y incremento de la diversidad única de Oklahoma. Este año 2007 ha sido muy duro y difícil para miles de familias hispanas en Oklahoma, por lo que rogamos a la Virgen de Guadalupe por la unidad fraternal y el buen destino de nuestro pueblo hispano en Oklahoma. 

En esta navidad del año 2007, rogamos a Santa María de Guadalupe para que ayude a nuestro pueblo hispano en Oklahoma a unirnos unidos por la senda de la paz. 

El Santo José María Escalante de Balaguer dijo en una ocasión: "Marias, Maestra del sacrificio, escondido y silencioso! Vedu, casi siempre oculta, colabora con el Hijo: sabe y calla". 

Amigos lectores, la próxima edición de enero del Sooner Catholic se ha anunciado especial en español sobre la nueva esperanza que nos trae la Virgen en nuestra propia inmigración en Oklahoma. Es importante mantener nuestras oraciones para que las buenas noticias que vienen se hagan una realidad bajo la voluntad de Dios. ¡Feliz Navidad!
**JOBS BOX**

**Elementary School Principal**

St. Mary's School in Ponca City is seeking a principal who will be a faith leader as well as academic leader for the school. St. Mary's has preschool through eighth grade. St. Mary's enrolls approximately 150 students. Applicants must: 1) be a practicing Catholic; 2) have a master's degree in educational administration or a related field or be working toward such a degree; 3) have a minimum of three years teaching experience, preferably in a Catholic school. Salary is based on qualifications and experience. Position available June 1, 2008. For an application, contact Office of the Superintendent, P.O. Box 32180, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73123, call (405) 721-4202, or contact mdubey@catharchdioceseokc.org.

**Groundskeeper needed**

National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague has an opening for a groundskeeper/facilities maintenance person. Responsibilities include: maintain the Shrine grounds including trees, shrubs, grass, sidewalks, parking lots; snow removal; painting; general handyman and other duties as needed. Must be physically able to lift at least 60 pounds and willing to work outdoors in all weather conditions. Some weekend and evening hours may be required. Salary commensurate with experience. To apply, send resume to National Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague, P.O. Box 488, Prague, Okla. 74864 or e-mail: shrine_top@hotmail.com

**Administrative Assistant**

Catholic Charities is seeking an administrative assistant for a new position. The successful candidate must have the following qualifications: a self-starter with the ability to multi-task; proficient in the use of PowerPoint, Word, Access, Excel and Publisher; excellent communication skills including composition and proofreading; excellent interpersonal skills including the ability to interact in a positive way with clients and donors. Salary is dependent on education, experience and relevant job skills. Bilingual candidates preferred. Resumes and salary history should be sent to: Human Resources, Catholic Charities, 1501 N. Classen Blvd., Oklahoma City 73106 or by e-mail to nlargent@catholiccharitiesok.org.

**Maintenance Employee**

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School is looking for a maintenance department employee. Resume and references should be mailed to L. D. McGowin, Maintenance Director, 801 NW 50th St., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73118. Any questions may be directed to 842-6638 Ext. 241.

**Network IT Personnel**

Bishop McGuinness and Christ the King Schools are seeking a full-time, professional IT person. Experience and/or certification with the set-up and maintenance of integrated PC and Mac platform/computer systems for this co-op position a must. Contact Trevor Swink, BMCHS Technology Director, (405) 314-3378 for information. Send resume to swinkx288@meguinness.k12.ok.us

**Teacher Sought**

Sacred Heart Catholic School in El Reno is seeking a pre-kindergarten teacher. Applicants must have a license or certification in Early Childhood. Please submit resumes to Principal Shannon Statton, 210 S. Evans, El Reno, Okla. 73036, or fax to (405) 262-3818.

**Bilingual Receptionist**

Catholic Charities is seeking a bilingual receptionist for the Immigration Assistance Program.

The successful candidate must possess excellent verbal and written communication skills in both English and Spanish, the ability to use Microsoft Word, Outlook and other basic computer programs, and the ability to interact in a positive way with clients, volunteers and donors. Salary is dependent on education, experience and relevant job skills. Bilingual candidates preferred. Resumes and salary history should be sent to: Human Resources, Catholic Charities, 1501 N. Classen Blvd., Oklahoma City 73106 or by e-mail to nlargent@catholiccharitiesok.org.

**Full-time Bilingual Counselor**

Catholic Charities/St. Joseph's Counseling Center is seeking a full-time bilingual (Spanish) licensed counselor to provide professional counseling and related services to individuals, couples and families. Services will be provided in the St. Joseph’s Counseling Center at Catholic Charities and at selected parishes within the community. Please submit a cover letter and resume to Human Resources, Catholic Charities, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, 1501 N. Classen Blvd., Oklahoma City 73106 or nlargent@catholiccharitiesok.org.

**Job Coaches**

The Center of Family Love in Okarche is looking for job coaches. This position is best described as a mentor for our community-based clients helping them to get to their jobs, helping them to understand what their employer needs and expects from them. For more information, call John Isenegger at the Center of Family Love, (405) 263-4568 or fax your resume to (405) 263-4563.

**Direct Care**

The Center of Family Love in Okarche is looking for direct care technicians. These openings are at both the ICF M/R and the Loosen Center. We pay well and have a significant shift differential. We provide training and have a paid time-off program. For more information, call John Isenegger at the Center of Family Love, (405) 263-4568 or fax your resume to (405) 263-4563.

**Soccer Coaches**

St. Gregory’s University, a Catholic Benedictine university and a member of the NAIA Sooner Athletic Conference, seeks a full-time head men’s soccer coach as well as a full-time head women’s soccer coach. Qualified candidates will have thorough knowledge of all phases of coaching soccer and experience in recruiting, fundraising, scheduling, must maintain field and summer camps. Evidence of successful coaching experience, ability to work with culturally diverse population, excellent oral and written communication skills. A bachelor's degree is required/master's degree preferred. Send a cover letter, resume and three references to St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804 or e-mail hr@stgregorys.edu. EOE.

**Adjunct Faculty**

The College for Working Adults at St. Gregory's University on the Shawnee campus has openings for adjunct faculty at the undergraduate and graduate level: General Education, Business and Business Law, Computer Science, Professional Development and Psychology. A master’s degree is required, preference for candidates with experience teaching adults. Candidates must be supportive of and willing to contribute to the Catholic and Benedictine identity of the university. Send a cover letter, vita and transcripts to hr@stgregorys.edu or fax to Dr. Denise Will, Associate Dean, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee 74804.

**Campus Minister**

St. Gregory's University in Shawnee is looking for a campus minister. Responsibilities: Oversee and implement a comprehensive Catholic and Benedictine campus ministry program. Coordinating student-led retreat ministry as an outreach to area parishes and high schools (Buckley Team). Coordinate student liturgies and student liturgical ministries and assist in the planning of campus-wide liturgies. Provide catechetical and faith formation activities such as Bible study. Lectio Divina, discussions on Catholic social teaching, small faith groups, etc. Develop service and mission trip opportunities for students. Maintain a pastoral presence among students, faculty and staff. Qualifications: master's degree in Theology or Pastoral Ministry is preferred. Bachelor's degree and experience in Youth/Young Adult Ministry will be considered. Mature understanding of the Catholic faith tradition and ability to communicate the tradition creatively and pastorally to young adults. Willingness to work some evenings and weekends.

Send cover letter, resume and references to St. Gregory's University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804, or e-mail hr@stgregorys.edu. EOE.

**V.P. of Institutional Advancement**

St. Gregory's University in Shawnee invites nominations and applications for the position of vice president of Institutional Advancement. The vice president reports directly to the president and will be responsible for the planning and direction of all philanthropic initiatives for the university, will plan and lead all advancement initiatives to capitalize on the university’s success story, will work closely with staff, senior administrators and board members to identify priorities for fundraising and manage a portfolio of major gift prospects. A master’s degree is preferred. Strongly preferred that this individual be a practicing Catholic with knowledge of Benedictine spirituality.

Electronic applications are preferred and should include a cover letter and resume. Review of applications will begin immediately. Nominations or requests for the complete position specifications may be sent directly to the university: Shingi Goto, Executive Vice President, St. Gregory’s University, 1900 W. MacArthur, Shawnee, Okla. 74804 or sngoto@stgregorys.edu, (405) 878-5435.
DECEMBER

16 Third Sunday of Advent

16 Taize Prayer, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Red Plains Monastery, 728 Richland Road SW, Piedmont. For more details, call 375-4565. Optional video on Taize prayer at 6 p.m.

16 The Community of the Secular Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel and St. Teresa of Jesus - Oklahoma Community and Province of St. Therese meets at St. Joseph Carmelite Monastery in Piedmont from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call Janet Mildfelt at (405) 848-6275.

17-25 Monthly Novena to the Infant Jesus, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. Nat'l Shrine of the Infant Jesus, Saint Wenceslaus Church, SH-99 7 miles N. I-40 or 20 miles S. I-44 at Stroud exit, Prague, (405) 567-3080.

23 Fourth Sunday of Advent

23 Pilgrimage Sunday, 10:45 a.m. Anointing of the Sick, 11 a.m. Mass, noon lunch, 1 p.m. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Prayer of the Chaplet of the Infant Jesus and the Litany of the Infant Jesus. Nat'l Shrine of the Infant Jesus of Prague is located in St. Wenceslaus Church, SH-99 7 miles N. I-40 or 20 miles S. I-44 at Stroud exit, Prague, (405) 567-3080.

25 Christmas - Holy Day of Obligation

JANUARY

1 Mary, Mother of God - Holy Day of Obligation

4 McGuinness Home Basketball

Scholarships Available From Catholic Life Insurance

SAN ANTONIO — Catholics working to earn a graduate degree in Religious or Pastoral Studies have until Feb. 15, 2008, to apply for a $2,000 renewable scholarship from Catholic Life Insurance.

Catholic Life is currently accepting applications for the Rev. Msgr. Larry J. Droll Fund from Catholic laymen and women who want to pursue graduate education in theology and church-related professions.

“Today many dedicated Catholics, who are not ordained clergy or women religious, serve parishes as parish coordinators or administrators, as pastoral associates, directors of Religious Education, youth ministers, liturgists and many other roles,” said Msgr. Droll. “This scholarship can help provide the funds to earn the advanced educational degree in theology or religious studies that is often required for these positions.”

Who Can Apply

The scholarship is open to students who are enrolled in Catholic graduate schools of theology or religious studies and who have already completed a bachelor’s degree. The applicant, who does not have to be a Catholic Life member, must be a practicing Roman Catholic and must reside in one of the states in which Catholic Life operates, Texas, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico or Mississippi. The scholarship funds are paid directly to the school where the student is enrolled.

“Students may attend any Catholic graduate school in one of the states in which Catholic Life operates,” said Msgr. Droll. “Applicants may also be enrolled in an extension program or in The Catholic University of America School of Canon Law.”

How Do You Apply

To obtain an application and an outlined list of eligibility requirements, call Catholic Life Insurance at (310) 825-9921 or 1-800-292-2548 or write to Catholic Life Insurance, Attn: Communications Department, P.O. Box 659527, San Antonio, Texas 78265-9527. You can also download an application from our Web site at www.cliu.com. Winners of the Msgr. Droll Scholarship will be announced in June 2008.

Benedict XVI Says Advent is Time to Prepare for Christ’s Birth

VATICAN CITY (Zenit.org). — Benedict XVI asked all believers be open to the call for conversion of heart this Advent so that the true meaning of Christmas will be celebrated on Dec. 25.

The pope said this before reciting the Angelus with the crowds gathered in St. Peter’s Square. In his reflection he spoke of St. John the Baptist, whose mission “was to prepare the way for the Messiah, calling the people of Israel to repent of their sins and to correct every iniquity.”

John the Baptist, said the Holy Father, “challenged the hypocrisy of those who felt secure simply because they belonged to the chosen people: Before God, he said, no one has a right to boast, but must bear ‘good fruit as evidence of conversion.’”

The pontiff continued: “As we pursue the journey of Advent, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, John the Baptist’s call to conversion resounds in our communities. It is a pressing invita-

For an extended calendar, go to catharchdiocesesokc.org and click on Calendar of Events
OKLAHOMA CITY — Patti Keeley needs teddy bears! She also needs small blankets and quilts, back packs and tote bags, and lots of items to fill the back packs and totes. She needs these items to help the abused children of the Oklahoma Care Center.

Keeley is the Family Concerns Commission chairwoman for the Board of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women (ACCW). The Care Center she wants to help is located in Oklahoma City far from courts and police stations. All the children who find their way to this center have been removed from their homes because of sexual or severe physical child abuse.

The name “Care Center” stands for Child Abuse Response and Evaluation Center. It is a place where professionals from many disciplines can interview and counsel abused children in as trauma-free a setting as possible.

Opened in 1993, the Care Center was created, according to its Web site, to provide “a child-friendly environment in order to allay some of the fears children experience when confronted with in-depth questions about a very personal trauma.” It is funded entirely by private donations. Five to 10 children are processed into the Care Center every day.

“When I first visited the center, it broke my heart to realize that most of these children would never get to go home again. Most of them would be placed in foster care by DHS,” Keeley said.

The Care Center struck a cord with Keeley because she was abused as a child.

“When I was 40, I forgave my parents for what they had done to my brother and me,” she said.

Last year when Keeley was appointed to the ACCW Family Concern Commission, she first heard of the Care Center. She asked those running the center what they needed to make the situation easier for the children staying there.

She learned that tote bags and teddy bears were needed for all the children; age-appropriate books were necessary for the older ones and small blankets and quilts for the babies.

“We started collecting teddy bears and tote bags to give to each child brought to the center. We filled the bags with what a child needs to spend the night away from home: a brush, a comb, a toothbrush, books, crayons and coloring books,” Keeley said.

She soon realized that if all of the young people at the center were to receive such a tote, she would need some assistance in getting together all the supplies. Perhaps helping children at the Care Center could become a project for ACCW?

Keeley broached the subject with the ACCW board of directors, and they loved the idea. They too began to spread the word that collecting donations for the center’s children was a worthy project. Then, women from Keeley’s own parish, Saint Eugene’s in Oklahoma City, heard about the project and offered their help.

These women banded together, 10 strong, to form a new organization at Saint Eugene’s. They called themselves the Guild of Saint Anne after the mother of the Virgin Mary.

Using items donated by other parishioners and their own sewing skills, they came together once a month to create beautiful tote bags for the children coming daily to the Care Center.

When Keeley dropped off that first load of tote bags the Guild had sewn for the center, “I was very sad to find out that the few tote bags I had brought were a drop in the bucket compared to what they needed.”

To help the situation, a second guild was organized at Saint Eugene’s. This one had six women members who named their guild after Saint Jane Frances de Chantel. Saint Jane was a French saint (1572-1641) who was known for helping those who suffered.

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Meanwhile, the 10 ladies of the Guild of Saint Anne redoubled their efforts to make even more tote bags.

As helpful as these intensified efforts were, they were still not enough. In order to supply each child who arrived at the Care Center with a teddy bear and a tote and to have enough books and small blankets and quilts for all those who needed them, even more help was needed.

Keely hopes Oklahoma Catholics will donate teddy bears, back packs and homemade or store-bought tote bags to the Care Center.

Keeley even envisions Catholics donating small blanket and quilts for the littlest inhabitants of the Care Center or money to buy the center necessary supplies.

She foresees whole parishes and Catholic schools getting involved in her Care Center project by sponsoring book and/or teddy bear drives.

“I encourage you to involve the children. Let them help a child less fortunate,” she said.

For more information about the Care Center, go to care-center-okc.org. To donate money or items, contact Patti Keeley of the ACCW Board of Family Concerns at (405) 749-0894.