



THANK YOU

**FALL 2021**



The eighth annual Archbishop's Dinner for Seminarian Education was the largest yet! Nearly 600 people attended the gala, honoring 21 young men answering a call to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. The event was Aug. 10 at the new Omni Hotel in Oklahoma City.

Seminarians, priests and other guests heard from Archbishop Paul Coakley about the importance of helping young people view their faith as a profound and personal relationship with Jesus.

"Young people today feel a lot of pressure and anxiety about the future, especially as our society moves out of a global pandemic," Archbishop Coakley said. "Much of this anxiety is about how to answer the question: What should I do with my life?"

"We need to help them begin to ask the question: What does God want to do with my life?" said Father Brian Buettner, vocations director for the archdiocese.

Father Buettner told those gathered at the dinner that he had reflected on the reality that Jesus has a plan for all eternity for how he calls men to be priests. Encouragement from other Catholics, he said, is vitally important for helping young men respond to the call and remain close to Christ.

"God is calling young men to the priesthood, but there is so much noise and distraction in our high-speed world of instant gratification that God's voice is easily drowned out if we aren't attentive," he said.

The newest priest in the archdiocese, Father Brannon Lepak, who was ordained June 26, spoke of the important role people played in his discernment by encouraging him to consider the priesthood. Father Lepak suggested that many men with a vocation to the priesthood or religious life aren't fully aware of it.

"They may have heard the voice of God inviting them to the religious life. They may have heard their own voice discerning the priesthood, but what is needed is that other voice," he said. "Whose voice? The voice of the Body of Christ—your voice. They need to be asked, and asked, and asked again by your voice."

A highlight of the evening was a question-and-answer session with the 21 seminarians in attendance. The answers revealed a group of men with strong faith, keen intelligence and good humor.



The dinner raised a record \$460,000 for seminarian education! Thank you!

Event chair Karen Kenworthy and her team were grateful and overjoyed by the response.

"This really is a great witness to our Catholic community here in Oklahoma," Kenworthy said. "We hope we can grow even bigger next year!"



The 2022 Archbishop's Dinner for Seminarian Education is scheduled for Aug. 11 at the Omni. Mark your calendar!



MOTHER-DAUGHTER BRUNCH

On Aug. 7, the archdiocesan Marriage and Family Life Office hosted "Wonderfully Made," a mother-daughter brunch to talk about being wonderfully made in the image and likeness of God.

Medical professionals and experts spoke on several topics, including an overview of fertility cycles and an introduction to "Theology of the Body." The brunch also included a questions-and-answer portion, prayer and a meal.

The keynote speaker was Paula Umana, the No. 1 tennis player in Costa Rica, who developed a neurological condition that rendered her paralyzed. She credits her ability to walk with the help of special braces to the prayers of her family and community. Her book is *40 Gifts of Hope: Encouragement in Times of Sickness and Suffering*.

The medical speakers for the brunch were Dr. Alyssa Penick, Dr. Alejandra de Santiago and Dr. Lauren Fehr. The "Theology of the Body" speakers were Connie Jackson and Noelle Garcia McHugh. Emcees for the event were Theresa

Van Ness and Maria de Loera. ASL interpreters Joan Blake and Rebecca Smith helped make sure the program was available in Spanish.

Learn more about "Theology of the Body" at archokc.org/theologyofthebody. Programs like the Wonderfully Made mother-daughter brunch are made possible by your support of the Annual Catholic Appeal. Thank you!



Construction continues on the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine church at S.E. 89 and I-35 with exterior walls being bricked and the dome in place.

Early on Thursday, Aug. 12, construction crews lifted the 45,000-pound dome (65,000 pounds with the rigging) onto the shrine church. The dome marks one of the largest construction milestones for the shrine, which is expected to be completed in late summer 2022. Thank you for your continued support that makes this possible!

The dome for the shrine was built on the ground using cold-formed metal steel before being lifted onto the church. The dome is 34 feet tall and has a circumference of about 40 feet. Crews used a crane that towered more than 200 feet into the air to lift it.



Visit the web camera at archokc.org/shrineconstruction to check the progress of construction and to view the live feed from the construction site.

To learn more and to provide support for the shrine, museum, and pilgrim center, visit rothershrine.org.



With the funds raised in the “One Church, Many Disciples” capital campaign and other local efforts, Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Mustang was able to build a magnificent new church!

The first Mass in the sacred space was celebrated on May 30, 2020, the Vigil of Pentecost. A dedication Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Coakley on Aug. 21.

Thank you to everyone who supported the “One Church, Many Disciples” campaign. To date, more than \$60 million in gifts has been received toward more than \$90 million in pledged gifts. In addition to the campaign funding the construction of the Blessed Stanley Rother Shrine, these funds have impacted parishes throughout the archdiocese.



TCS 2021

The Tax Credit Scholarship Program is excited to give away \$1,212,554.15 in scholarships this year! More than 400 students from the 19 Catholic schools of the archdiocese are directly benefiting from your support of the Tax Credit Scholarship Program.

416 
Students benefited

\$1.2 million
Awarded in scholarships this year

19 
Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese

Thank you to the hundreds of donors who have made a life changing gift to the Tax Credit Scholarship Program. Learn more at archokc.org/tcs.

Two recent retreats at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Youth Camp made clear that many young men and women in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City are open to pursuing life as a priest or religious.

The inaugural Fiat Retreat for young women discerning religious life drew 13 participants, ranging in age from 18 to 32. A few days earlier, 29 young men – from incoming ninth-graders to recently graduated college students – joined the archdiocese’s seminarians at a Quo Vadis Days retreat for three days of discernment.

Both events were made possible through gifts to the Annual Seminarian Education Appeal and the Annual Catholic Appeal. Thank you!

Attendees of the Fiat Retreat heard talks from consecrated sisters from four religious communities: the Dominican Sisters of Saint Cecilia in Nashville, the Marian Sisters of the Diocese of Lincoln in Nebraska, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Wichita, Kan., and the Sisters of Saint Francis of the Martyr Saint George in Alton, Ill.

Vanessa Baquera, the archdiocese’s coordinator for vocations to the consecrated life, said the first retreat was fruitful.

“The feedback received was very positive,” Baquera said. “This retreat, and being around the sisters, was an answered prayer that has helped young women in their discerning.”

The Fiat Retreat and Quo Vadis Days included daily Mass, adoration, talks about religious life and married life, and time for recreation.

You can learn more at okcvocations.com.



“Quo vadis means ‘Where are you going?’” Father John Herrera said. “The full question is ‘Quo vadis Domine?’ — Where are you going, Lord? The retreat is designed to create a place of encounter with Jesus and give the young men the opportunity to ask: What is your will for my life?”