

THE STILLWATER CATHOLIC

SERVING ST. FRANCIS XAVIER AND ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST PARISHES

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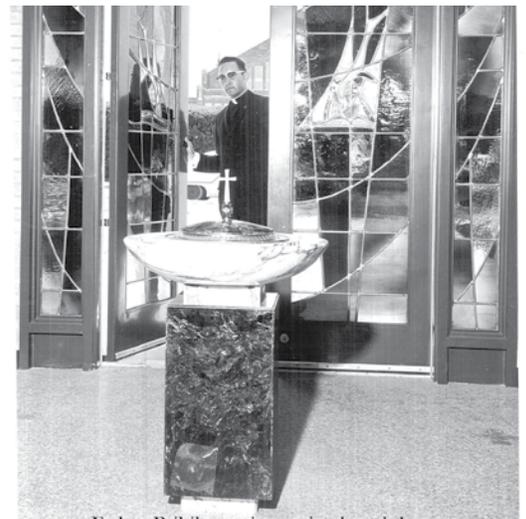
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A Community of Faith "Building for the Future": St. John the Evangelist University Parish and Catholic Student Center

By MARY DAVENPORT, Stewardship Committee Co-Chair

Although St. John the Evangelist and University Parish and Catholic student Center was not formally established until May 1965, the history of its mission is tied to the earliest days of Stillwater. Settlement occurred in what is now Payne County with the famous Land Run of 1889. That next year, the newly formed territorial legislature established Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and chose Stillwater as its home. Beginning in 1890, settlers arrived in increasing numbers, and as Stillwater and the College grew, so did the Catholic community.

Moving forward to the years between 1940-1947, student enrollment at Oklahoma A&M increased dramatically, and with it the Catholic student body. With no chapel on campus, the Catholic students attended Mass at St. Francis Xavier Parish. Fr. C.A. McGinty, Pastor from 1932-1939, and Mr. and Mrs. Val Schott, formed the Oklahoma A&M Newman apostolate in 1936—and through it, joined the National Newman Society. Herein the Oklahoma A&M College Newman Club was



Father Pribil entering main chapel door, leading directly to baptismal font.

established. The Catholic college students were served weekly meals prepared by Mrs. Schott and her small army of volunteers.

Fr. Beavers (1947-1957) quickly realized the need for a full-time priest in campus ministry. Fr. Celestine Pfannenstiel in 1948 was assigned as Assistant Pastor of St. Francis Xavier Parish and chaplain to the

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A Community of Faith “Building for the Future”: *St. John the Evangelist University Parish and Catholic Student Center*

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community of Catholic college students. He arranged the purchase of lots 13-26 on North Knoblock, where now stands St. John the Evangelist University Parish and Catholic Student Center.

On the site of the present-day church, once stood a small run-down frame house that the students zealously named “The Shack.” The house looked disreputable. Yet, it served as the center of activities for the Newman Club. In 1958, Fr. Clement Pribil became the Assistant Pastor at St. Francis Xavier and chaplain to the Newman Club. Fr. Pribil stated, “Newman work is becoming the most pressing area of concern in the Church in America today simply because of necessity.” He alone ministered part-time to over 900 Catholic students at what was renamed Oklahoma State University (OSU). Among his duties, Fr. Pribil, within the dilapidated walls of the Shack, taught classes in theology, celebrated Mass, and chaperoned dances. While Fr. Pribil was an encouraging and energetic force, one former student related he initially disapproved of the then-current rage, the “twist.”

Fr. Pribil and Bob Moon, a student majoring in architecture, gave much thought to the design of a permanent Catholic Student Center. One that would be functional and economical. Fr. Pribil believed “a Catholic Student Center need be a miniature Catholic College in the heart of the great secular Catholic universities.” There was one diocese in Oklahoma at the time. Bishop Victor



“The Shack”

Reed was hesitant about approving expenditures for a Catholic Student Center with the diocese in debt. However, Bishop Reed was well familiar with its need as having ministered to the parishioners and Catholic college students attending St. Francis Xavier Parish. Fr. Pribil’s vision came alive. Fundraising began in earnest in 1963. Nearly 100 students helped kick off their campaign to raise a minimum of \$30,000. “Building for the future” was their battle cry. They exceeded their goal!

Efforts continued through Catholic alumni and local parishioners raising \$120,000. On May 2, 1965, Bishop Reed dedicated and canonically established St. John the Evangelist University Parish and Catholic Student Center. Fr. Pribil became its first Pastor. By this time, the National Newman Society dissolved leaving campus ministries to function independently. Attesting to the benefit of fraternization among Catholic students was Bob Moon, meeting his wife,

Jean, through the Newman Club. Many marriages followed.

The Pastor with longest longevity serving at St. John the Evangelist Parish and Catholic Student Center was Fr. Robert Schlitt, more affectionately called Fr. Bob. He served from 1973 to 1987. For 14 years, Fr. Bob provided strong leadership and a sense of stability to the Catholic campus ministry. He was a familiar presence on the OSU campus, and willingly counseled students whether Catholic or not. Many men attending the university discerned the clerical ministry through Fr. Bob.

Moving through time, Fr. Kerry Wakulich is currently the pastor. Known as Fr. Kerry, he understands the vision of Fr. Clement Pribil – that is, a parish solely serving the Catholic students attending Oklahoma State University. Like Fr. Bob, he takes an outreach approach by often seen bicycling on campus to interact with students of all faiths. The future plans for the Catholic Student Center is an updated facility that meets modern-day standards and capacity for a growing Catholic Student population at OKSTATE.

A special thank you to Dolores Willett who put together the scrapbooks for St. John’s dating back to 1959. Information for this article is from these scrapbooks and an edited text by Fr. James D White, historian of the Diocese of Tulsa, who wrote a history text on St. John’s the Evangelist University Parish and Catholic Student Center. Thank you, Dolores Willett helping edit the article.

Resolve to Give Back to God in 2018

Dear Parishioners,

Another new year — 2018! There was a time when this date (and others) seemed so far in the future. It is amazing how those dates start to pile up and stream by, isn't it? We have reached a point where measuring one's life by the years and dates is not as significant as many other things.

We recall reading somewhere, "The world around us asks, 'What does a person own?' But God asks, 'How does a person use what he or she has been given?'" This month of January is one filled with reminders of holiness — the official end of the Christmas season; the Epiphany of our Lord; the Baptism of the Lord; and the return to Ordinary Time, which, as we know, is not "ordinary" at all.

At Epiphany we hear, "Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts" (Matthew 2:11), a reference to the Magi and their visit to the Christ Child. The image of the Magi kneeling before the infant Jesus and opening their gifts for Him is one we should all try to follow. Each of us is called to open our gifts before Jesus and offer Him what He needs. We heard a suggestion once that if you have a problem with this thought, you should perhaps keep one of the Magi from your Christmas Nativity set and place it on your desk as a reminder.

During the Baptism of the Lord, God makes it clear when He proclaims from the Heavens, "You are my be-

loved Son; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). God has given us the greatest gift He could give. He gave His only Son. When we think about the enormity of that gift of Jesus sent to save us, in addition to all the other blessings which God has entrusted to us, it is very humbling. God has given us so much. What do we give in return?

Making resolutions is common at this time of year. We will also hear this month about how Jesus called the first apostles. The Lord calls us as well to follow Him. Let us resolve to try to do that better — all of us. That does not mean we have to leave our work and our families behind, but we do need to put our service to Jesus. That should be our top resolution.

In *The Theology of the Hammer*, Habitat for Humanity co-founder Millard Fuller wrote, "The only truly safe investment one can make in life is what is given away." First and foremost, God wants us. That should be our real resolution — to give ourselves to the Lord. May we all do a better job of that in 2018. God bless you all.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Kenneth Harder and Fr. Kerry Wakulich
Pastors



Brought Home Through a Mother

“Once we started praying the Rosary, that’s when our true conversion began to take place — when our faith truly took off. Our Lady opened my eyes to her Son Jesus, really for the first time — a relationship that really is ongoing.”

— Deacon Glenn Collum

A mother is undoubtedly one of the most important influences in our lives. Nurturing us physically, emotionally and even spiritually, she helps us to grow into the person God created us to be. In Deacon Glenn Collum’s case, there’s no question that motherhood has played an essential part in his faith journey. Born and raised Baptist, it was Deacon Glenn’s mother who insisted on the importance of faith, taking her children to church regularly and remaining a continuous model of “love and compassion.”

Then as a young high schooler, Deacon Glenn was blessed to meet his wife, Laura, who first introduced him to the Catholic faith. One of six children, Laura grew up in a devoutly Catholic household. Laura’s mother, a true matriarch, made sure that each one of her children attended Mass every Sunday. And her daily example of faithfulness and prayer made a lasting impression on both Laura and her future son-in-law.

Yet, despite these models, faith remained distant for much of Deacon Glenn’s life. Busy providing for his family, he was content to allow

Laura to baptize and raise their own daughters in the faith without him. And then when he later attended RCIA classes and entered the Church, his faith remained limited to a somewhat surface level.

“During the early years of our marriage, Laura would always go to church and take the girls with her,” Deacon Glenn says. “I would support it, but I was in no way part of that faith. I allowed the girls to be baptized, but I would be out working. Then, through some difficult times, I started going to church more often with them and eventually joined the Church through RCIA. Yet, even still it took me a while to truly grasp the beauty of the Church. I was really just going through the motions, the way I think a lot of people get caught up in doing.”

In many ways, Deacon Glenn was the iconic Prodigal Son, squandering his gifts through self-absorbed living. He had no concept of faith as a relationship — no understanding of stewardship and the importance of giving back to God and his Church. Instead, faith remained almost entirely isolated to Sunday attendance, a tiny corner in his life. This all began to

change, however, thanks once again to motherly influences.

“Laura’s mother was really such an inspiration,” Deacon Glenn says. “She was someone who truly brought us closer to the Church by bringing us to the Blessed Mother. Once we started praying the Rosary, that’s when our true conversion began to take place — when our faith truly took off. Our Lady opened my eyes to her Son Jesus, really for the first time — a relationship that really is ongoing.”

Transformed, the couple began entering more fully into sacramental life and attending Eucharistic Adoration. They began tithing for the first time ever, trusting their finances and life to God’s care. They became increasingly involved in parish ministry and started attending a weekly prayer group, which included several permanent deacons and their spouses. And it was this Marian prayer group that first planted the seed for Deacon Glenn’s own vocation, eventually leading the couple to a seven-year discernment process.

“Sometimes, the Lord uses other people to show you His will,” Deacon Glenn says. “Yes, there was

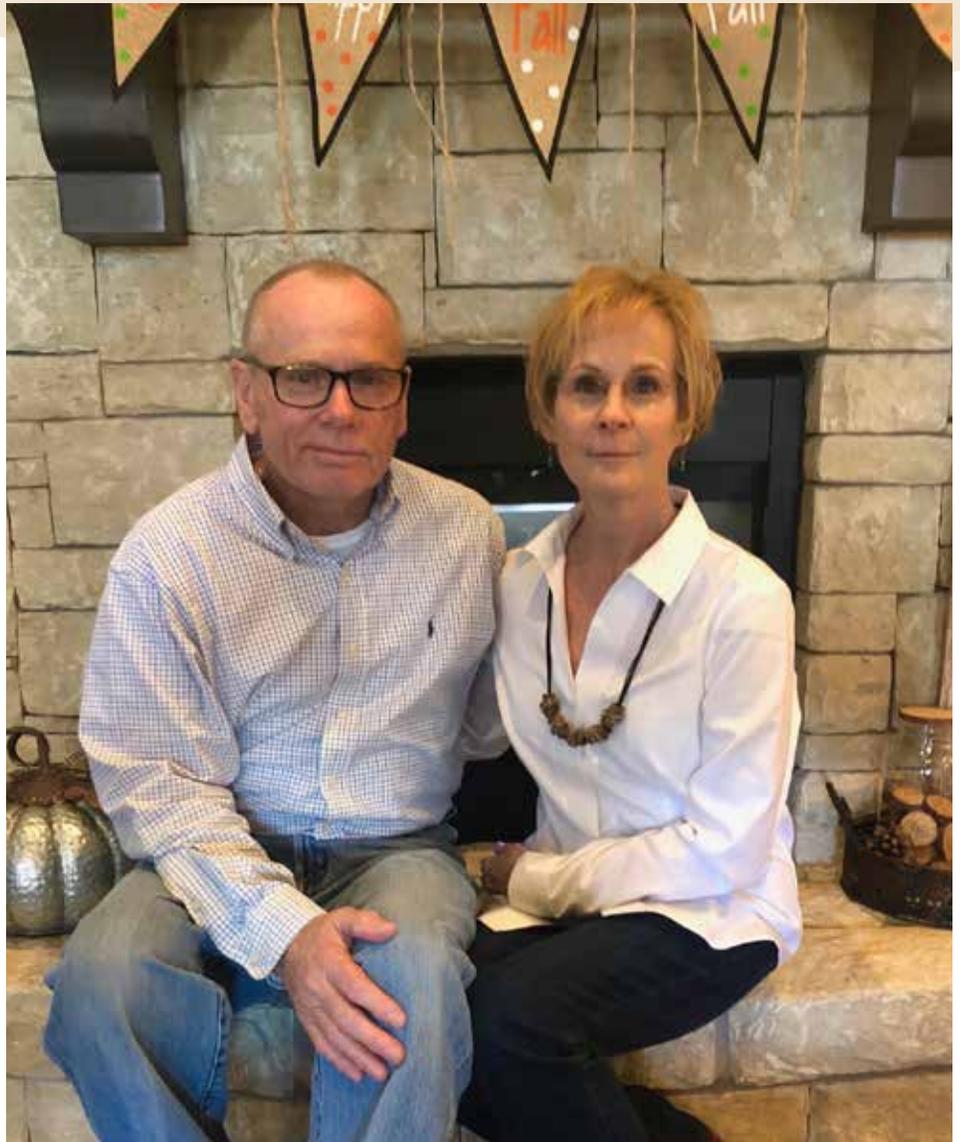
's Love: Deacon Glenn Collum's Journey

something going on in my heart at that time, but it was other deacons' words of encouragement that really helped confirm this was the Lord's will for my life. So, I began the journey toward the diaconate in 2000 and was eventually ordained in May 2007, after a lengthy process of discernment and formation."

This began a new chapter in the Collums' life, one devoted toward serving God's Church. And then they were thrown a massive curve ball when Deacon Glenn's employer for nearly 28 years filed for bankruptcy. Suddenly faced with unemployment in their mid-50s, the couple was challenged to trust God with their life and finances in a radical way. Yet, armed with Philippians 4:6, "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God," the couple cast out into the deep, leading them to form their family-owned business — Deeprrock Energy Resources.

Today, Deeprrock Energy employs more than 80 people and remains a family-owned business. The Collums continue to be amazed as they witness God's blessings in their lives. Yet, much like our heavenly Mother, it all began with a simple "yes" to the Lord's will — a response to His invitation.

"I truly can go on and on about how blessed we are," Deacon Glenn says. "I never would have predicted



Deacon Glenn and Laura Collum

or imagined my life going this way. To think of me, someone who has always been bashful and kind of quiet, getting up there and preaching on the Gospel — it all began with a simple "yes" and our Mother really

bringing us closer to Him. To this day, I can't go up there and proclaim the Gospel of the Prodigal Son without choking up. God has been so good to us and it has been such a beautiful journey."

An Update on Our New Church Project



Photo 1 – Dec 30, 2017, Ceiling ribs in the nave with reredos in background, looking north, by Larry Hoberock.

When we started this project five and a half years ago, we really did not fully appreciate the beauty and uniqueness of the facility we would have. We are now nearing the finish line and we acknowledge our exceptionally good fortune to have such a magnificent \$22 million facility. In spite of the generosity of parishioners at St. Francis Xavier and St. John the Evangelist, we were able to raise only about \$5 million in our capital campaign. Sales of assets – school and grounds, 42 acres on 12th Avenue, and projected sales of the SFX rectory and the CYO House – will bring in approximately \$1.5 million, such that the exceptional generosity of a very few individuals provided

the remaining \$15.5 million. There are likely few warm-blooded adults in Stillwater who are unaware of the grand and architecturally unique new facility at 711 N. Country Club Road. Many of us know that hardly a week passes without some non-Catholic acquaintance commenting with awe about the grandeur of the most significant architectural structure in Payne County.

Given all of this, however, our new facility is only a beautiful and functional tool to:

- Grow the faith and practice of our parishioners.
- Grow and strengthen the religious education, faith, and practice of our children, pre-teens, teens, and young adults.
- Re-evangelize Catholics who have drifted from the faith.
- Evangelize non-Catholics who may now be very curious about why we invested so much time, effort, and resources in such an iconic facility.
- Facilitate increased vocations to the priesthood and religious life.
- Increase our outreach and service, both domestically and internationally.

Clearly, there are many more positive ways in which we can use this new facility. However, if all we do is simply move into a larger,

more beautiful, and more functional church facility and do not use it for these purposes, we will have largely wasted \$22 million and the hard work and sacrifices of the hundreds upon hundreds of people who have been a part of this project. As we contemplate our exceptionally good fortune and gift from God, may each of us plan specific ways to use this gift to achieve the growth, education, evangelization, and service to others mentioned above.

At our recent Owner-Architect-Contractor bi-weekly meeting on December 6, Nabholz stated we were on schedule to assume occupancy the third full week in February 2018. However, there will still be some ongoing punch list items after

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Photo 2 – Dec 30, 2017, Tile installation on sanctuary floor and reredos structure wrapped in plastic, minus statues, looking northeast, by Larry Hoberock

An Update on Our New Church Project

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occupancy. As things currently stand, we plan to have the church dedication at 9 a.m. Sunday, March 11. **This assumes that Nabholz gets us occupancy by the third full week in February.** If all of this happens, we plan Easter celebration in the new church. If there is another delay in occupancy, we will not be able to dedicate the new church until after Easter. This is due to key people being unavailable on March 18, and church protocol that prohibits dedication on March 25 (Palm Sunday) or April 1 (Easter Sunday). Obviously, until the church is dedicated, we cannot have Mass there.

Installation of the ceiling ribs – the cause of our most recent delay – has been underway since last month's update, and is almost complete, as shown in Photo 1, with white ribs on blue background. Photo 2 shows the installation of tile on the sanctuary floor, with the main reredos structure in place and wrapped in plastic for protection. Statuary for the reredos and the main altar are on site and remain in storage. An outdoor sand volleyball court, built to national specifications for a full court, is well underway, as shown in Photo 3. Yet to be installed is a fence to contain players and balls, an outdoor shower, and pads along the concrete wall on the west side of the court.

Nine of the 10 bathrooms in the facility are finished, and the 10th (in the sacristy) is almost completed. All have the same décor, as shown in Photo 4 for the family bathroom near the teen lounge.

The exterior masonry work is essentially finished, except for some punch list items. Photo 5 shows the work being completed on the large tower adjacent to the main entrance to the church.

The bulk of the concrete paving work has been completed, and final asphalt paving is scheduled to be completed in early January 2019. After that, we expect curbing and guttering to be completed on the west, southwest and southeast parking lots.

Fr. Brian O'Brien, our incoming pastor, has appointed a Rectory Building Committee consisting of Ken Alexander, Jay Albright, Andy Arena, Nick Bidelspach, Ann Halligan,



Photo 3 – Dec. 8, 2017, partially completed sand volleyball court, looking northwest, by Andy Arena.



Photo 4 – Dec. 8, 2017, interior of family restroom near teen lounge, by Andy Arena.

Mona Pratt and Larry Hoberock. This new rectory will be located on the new church site, north of the wooded area and southeast of the southeast parking lots. It will face northwest or west, with rear and side views of the wooded area. Committee members are already at work putting

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THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF STILLWATER

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church

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Phone: (405) 372-6408

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St. Francis Xavier

Sunday Mass

Saturday Vigil, 5 p.m.

Sunday, 8 a.m., 10 a.m., 1 p.m. (Español)

Daily Mass

Tuesday - Thursday, 8 a.m., Friday, 12:10 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wednesday, 5:45 - 7 p.m.

Saturday, 3 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

St. John the Evangelist

Sunday Mass

Sunday, 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 5 p.m. during semester

Daily Mass

Mondays at 12:10 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 5:10 p.m.

Wednesday, 12:10 p.m. & 9 p.m. during semester

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Change Service Requested

An Update on Our New Church Project *continued from page 7*

together proposals for our priests to consider. Bishop Konderla has directed that all priests assigned to Stillwater live in the same facility, each with his own bedroom, study and bath, and that we should plan for at least two seminarians to be in residence in this facility during the summer months, each with his own bedroom and bath. After considering the Bishop's directives and planning for growth, estimates for this new rectory include — four priest suites with baths, two guest bedrooms with baths, great room, dining area, kitchen, powder room, small meeting room or chapel, rec room, and four-car garage. The exterior will have bricks to match those of the church, with a design that complements the church facility. We estimate this will require 6,000 to 6,500 square feet of interior space, with occupancy in one and a half to two years from now. Fr. O'Brien is in discussions on how this facility will be financed, since our current building budget does not have the capability to handle it.

We're in the home stretch on the church facility. Please continue with your prayers and financial support of this amazing project.



Photo 5 — Dec 30, 2017, Final wash-down of west tower masonry, looking north, by Larry Hoberock