



Annually, Catholic Charities of Tulsa provides assistance to more than 50,000 people.

# Seeking to obey Christ

## Catholic Charities of Tulsa serves poor and marginalized

By Mason Beecroft | Photography by Dave Crenshaw

**A**s we sift through the fallout from the most recent recession, several things are becoming clear. The middle class is shrinking. Poverty is on the rise. The number of families and individuals needing assistance to maintain a base level of existence in the U.S. is growing.

A U.S. Census Bureau report, “Income, Poverty and Health Coverage in the United States 2011,” released in September 2012, presented an alarming profile of poverty in America. A staggering 46.2 million people, 15 percent of the U.S. population, live in poverty.

The situation in Oklahoma is no exception. According to U.S. Census Bureau estimates, poverty is at a 10-year high, with more than 600,000 Oklahomans living below the poverty line. Of that number, more than 190,000 children under the age of 18 live in families unable to afford adequate housing, medical care or food. On average, Oklahoma has a 17.2 percent overall poverty rate and 23 percent of our children live in poverty.

The social teaching of the Catholic Church has long highlighted the “preferential option for the poor.” In short, the Church has advocated that preference should be given to the poor and powerless since Jesus

taught that each person will be asked on the Day of Judgment what he or she did to help the poor and needy. (Mt 25:31-46)

One of the ways that the Diocese of Tulsa responds to poverty is through the work of Catholic Charities of Tulsa. While the bulk of assistance is given from the Tulsa campus, outreach centers have been established across the diocese to aid those in outlying areas.

The facts and figures given on these pages are from the 2012 fiscal year and just a snippet of the work Catholic Charities of Tulsa does, and all without any financial support from either the Diocesan Development Fund or the United Way. Minimal government funds, only 8 percent of their total income, are accepted – and only for very specific programs. This allows Catholic Charities to operate independently from federal restrictions. According to their annual report, private grants, program fees, investment income, miscellaneous income, the

