"I shall reflect on myself and ask: 'What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought | do for Christ?" ~ St. Stanislaus Kostka

The Newsletter of St. Stanislaus Parish El Boletín de la Parroquia de San Estanislao



Spring / Primavera 2018

What's Your Faith Story? Put It in Writing!

by Nancy Viola

There's a new movie that hit the theaters this past March called I Can Only Imagine. I won't go into details about this marvelous film other than to say that whole movie wraps the audience completely around one man's Faith Story. What's YOUR Faith Story? Everyone has one.

Some people are gifted at putting down on paper how God has moved around in their lives, but it doesn't make their story better than anybody else's. Psychology 101 teaches that something happens to a person on the outside once they put down on paper what is going on in the

inside. Experts in this field have been bold enough to go as far as to say that writing it down with pen and paper, (versus typed on an iPad or computer), uses a different part of the brain; the part of the brain that houses our very souls. Some people writing down their thoughts and feelings as a way to clean their souls and declutter their minds. Unlike any other story

that we could share with others, our Faith Story comes from the deepest part of ourselves. Many Saints have written theirs down or have had them documented by others, creating marvelous books that move and inspire us.

So, where do you begin? How do you begin? First off, begin by giving yourself a break. Know right off that you are not about to write a Pulitzer Prize winning work of literary genius. You may, but it is highly unlikely. But you don't need to be the next C.S. Lewis! Now, with that pressure put aside, the way you begin is very simple. Find yourself a quiet spot where you can sit alone and collect

your thoughts. Invite God to help you with this little project. You can begin by asking Him what it is that He would like for you to write about. Maybe you already know. Maybe you have had the feeling of something inside of you bursting to come out and given a voice but haven't been able to get it out there. Talking it through with a close friend or relative can help, but writing it down takes it to a whole new level.

If you find yourself stuck of not knowing what to write about, answer some basic questions: Who is God to me? What is God's role in my life, today... yesterday...

> tomorrow? Where and or when have I sensed God in my life? Why do I trust God? Or, why don't I trust God? Do I believe in Jesus and who the Bible says He is? If yes, why? If no, Why not?

If you still can't get going on what to write, try to begin as if you are writing to a close friend who lives far away. Or begin your Faith Story with, 'Dear

God." After all, your Faith Story is supposed to be about you and Him. Even if it has felt that God has never been with you your whole life, try writing to Him. Ask Him why He has been so distant. Imagine HIS answers to you and write down whatever comes mind. Keep in mind that this doesn't have to be read by anybody but you.

After you have finished writing something, it is in fact best to keep it to yourself, at least in the beginning. Give it a rest. Walk away. Come back later and read it again. Do not look for mistakes or misspellings. Read it as if someone



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Logos: The Word of God

by Dan Miller

The Greek word *Logos* has many different meanings and translations. The main translation is "word," "account," or "reason." It began with the ancient Greeks and the writings of the philosopher Heraclitus, who took it to mean "a principle of order and knowledge." The Greeks used *Logos*, along with *ethos* (an appeal to authority) and *pathos* (an appeal to the emotions), as a mode of persuasion in their writings: when arguing a point, one needs logic, reason, and supporting evidence – this is *Logos*.

Later, in Hellenistic Judaism, *Logos* was used in a more divine sense to express religious conceptions. The Jewish philosopher Philo thought of *Logos* as an intermediary between God and His people, saying that "the *Logos* of the living God is the bond of everything, holding all things together and binding all the parts, and preventing them from being dissolved and separated." One of the most interesting aspects of our Faith is the way that we, as Catholics, spread the Good News through our words.

Logos is present in our faith in many ways: through religious writings and documents; through spoken communications like the Mass and television programs; and even through publications like the NewStan! These are all different ways that God inspires communication with others to spread his message of love. All of these messages come from one ideal – that of Logos, or the Word of God. We see many mentions of the Word of God in the Old Testament; the Jewish community considers the Torah preexistent, written directly through God's inspiration. One of the foundations of our Faith is that God divinely inspired the authors of the Bible, and He is still using His inspiration within our world today.

We believe that Jesus' words are not only messages to teach and inspire but are part of God Himself. This ideals of *Logos* with which we as Catholics identify is from the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (*John 1:1*). John's message is that God is a concrete, living being, personified in Jesus Christ, "The Word made Flesh." The Gospels tell the story of Jesus as the divine, incarnate *Logos*. Jesus was preexistent, and came to us on Earth to spread God the Father's message.

Jesus being "the Word made flesh" was a main argument for early Christians to persuade the Jews and Gentiles; that is why the same ideals were used within the epistles of Paul and the writings of the apologist Justin Martyr. The Church later affirmed *Logos* during the First Council of Nicea, and we have learned of *Logos* as the moral law written in human hearts from then on. We can trust that God will teach us this law through His words, because we know that Jesus' words came directly from God.

The Logos ideal is still important today. Pope Benedict XVI referred to Christianity as the religion of the Logos, saying "it is faith in the 'Creator Spiritus,' (Creator Spirit), from which proceeds everything that exists... We Christians must... live a faith that comes from the Logos, from creative reason, and that because of this, is also open to all that is truly rational." These words from a former church leader reiterate the importance that our Faith is built on the belief in the Word of God. We even end our readings at Mass by saying "The Word of the Lord." We all have many reasons to be thankful for the words of God that have been shared with us here on earth. These words inspire love, spread truth, give us hope for light in the darkness, and make our God easier to translate.*

The GIFT Program

The GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) Program began in 2004 when Sister Benedicte, Sr. Cecelia, and Dianne Spotts decided to fill a need to have ongoing, informed faith formation available for adult learners in RCIA and Landings once their formal program ended.

It was later opened up to the entire parish for anyone who sought continuing adult faith formation. Potential speakers and topics are put to a committee who then either accepts or tables the idea for another year. This approach has brought forth solid topics along with a mix of the arts. Now moderated by Deacon Anthony Bellito, much deliberation and prayer go into the selections and they are made with the attending audience in mind. With a few exceptions, the GIFT presentations take place the 2nd Tuesday of every month from September to June in the Parish Center lobby meeting room and are followed by light refreshments.

Keep an eye on the weekly bulletin for announcements about upcoming GIFT events.

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Parishioner Spotlight

Judy Sherman

by Dianne Spotts

Judy Sherman is a wife, mother, grandmother, and musician. She teaches voice, piano and the Amputee Peer Visitor Course, which is affiliated with Moss Rehab.

Judy was born in and lived most of her life in Lansdale. Her husband Ken owns The Lansdale Barber Styling Shop. They have a son Sean, a daughter Dana and two grandsons Jerome and Colin.

Judy was educated at North Penn and Anderson High School University in Anderson, Indiana, where she majored in Voice Performance. She has been teaching both voice and piano since her graduation. Many parishioners' sons and daughters have taken voice or piano lessons with Judy and have had the honor of performing at the Peter Becker Retirement Community in Harleysville at her Christmas or spring pageants – including our own Editor in Chief's children! She also teaches music at Bright Beginnings Nursery School.

She directed the choir at the Lansdale Church of God and has

been a guest soloist at many churches and service groups. If you've been to a funeral and *Ave Maria* was sung, chances are you had the distinct pleasure of hearing Judy Sherman's powerful voice as she is the St. Stanislaus Parish funeral organist, accompanying the Funeral Choir. She also sings and plays keyboard with our Parish Contemporary Music Group.

Judy's parents owned Fellman's Luncheonette at 518 North Broad Street from approximately 1949 until 1979, where you could probably get a burger, fries and a shake for under \$1.00. People in town knew them as "Aunt Betty and Uncle Ralph" and came back time and time again for the home-style cooking and tasty desserts. It is now the location of Valentino's Bistro.

Judy inherited her father's condition and was born without tibias in both of her legs. They were amputated when she was a baby and she was first fitted with a prosthesis at the age of 4. As she grew she was refitted every other year to allow for growth.

Eight years ago, Judy was able to get prosthesis with computer chips (microprocessor knees) which had added capabilities. To learn how to use them, she began to go to Moss Rehab, where she was invited to attend the support group. There she met Anne Wieland who heads up the Recreational Therapy at Moss who encouraged her to take

classes with her in Knoxville Tennessee so they could be trainers for the Peer Visitor Course, which is affiliated with The Amputee Coalition of America.

Ever since then, she and Anne have been helping seasoned amputees to go on with their lives in positive ways and give back to society by helping others.

Judy has interacted with amputees from all walks of life whose ages range from 9 to 90. She and Anne have traveled to several states, meeting with those who, whether from accidents or illnesses, are amputees learning how to encourage others. This has a reciprocal benefit, as Judy is also inspired by them.



Judy and Ken (who plays guitar and banjo) play and sing with a group of friends who travel to nursing homes in the area with parishioner Walter Kelly. This group also performs for the Christmas party at Moss each year.

Most Monday nights find the Sherman family enjoying a good home-cooked meal followed by one of Judy's signature Jello salads and playing Flinch: a card game that originated in 1901.

Judy Sherman and her family have been a big part of St. Stanislaus Parish and the North Penn Community for many years. Judy is my friend, inspiration and fellow scrabble addict. She is a gamer with quite a competitive spirit! I believe that her spunk, her faith and her positive attitude have helped her navigate the challenges of her life.

Our Pastor's Pen

In high school and college, writing was a tremendous chore for me. I would often pull "all-nighters" to finish a paper. I could agonize for an hour over a single sentence, going back and forth in my head, trying to decide which word or phrase best expressed the idea I wished to convey. I was a "good"



writer, but it was a task that did not come easy for me. I suspect it had something to do with writing being something very personal – an expression of one's self. To hand in a paper was to put yourself out there for judgment – very different than taking a multiple choice test.

So I had to wonder why God called me to a vocation in which I had to put myself out there every day with a short essay for a daily homily and a 4 to 5-page "paper" for the Sunday homily. But what I discovered was that writing about the faith was a totally different dynamic. Homiletic writing is not essentially an intellectual exercise or scholarly work. Writing about one's faith experience is not about me, per se, but about recounting what God is doing in my life. I don't have to be "creative" but rather be attentive to what the Creator is doing in my life.

This interaction between "word" and "life" becomes the springboard of prayer – awakening us to our deepest needs. From that place in our hearts – from the awareness of our need and dependence, we can speak like a little child to our loving Father. We only recognize God as the answer to our need when we are asking the questions that define us as human beings. This happens when we stop living on the surface of life and instead allow the reality of our circumstances – those things that are "given" to us, to open us up to the mystery of God. Faith is recognizing his presence in our life, in our concrete circumstances. Prayer is not about getting "answers," "reasons," or "directions" on how to deal with difficulties, but about recognizing Him who is with us in our difficulties.

Writing about faith is about writing about this experience of the encounter with the "Word that became flesh and dwelt among us." It is essential when we pray and when we write about our experience that we beg the Holy Spirit to come in the same way that the Holy Spirit came upon Mary at the Annunciation – so his word can take flesh in our lives.

I hope that this issue of the *NewStan* and the shared experience of our *NewStan* staff may be an inspiration to spend more time with the Word of God in sacred scripture and to not be afraid to write about the wonderful work the Lord is doing in our lives. For it is in the sharing of our lives together and witnessing to what the Lord is doing, that our faith grows and we verify the truth of the Gospel - that He is risen, He is risen indeed!! Peace and blessings,

Esther Silans

Surfing Around?

Have you visited the redesigned St.
Stanislaus website? You find current info about the parish, there and now you can read Fr. Forlano's past homilies at www.ststanislaus.com/ministries/homilies/



NEWSTAN

MISSION STATEMENT

In response to the St. John Paul II's call to evangelization, St. Stanislaus Parish started publishing *NewStan* to serve members of the parish community and the community at large, to inform parishioners and members of the North Penn region about new developments in the parish, and to serve as a channel for communications among St. Stanislaus parishioners and benefactors.

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> STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER Ed Kunze

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Those who wish to contribute items for publication should forward them to the *NewStan* mailbox in the St. Stanislaus Parish Center The inclusion of submitted material is subject to the judgment of the editors in consultation with Monsignor Tracy and the St. Stanislaus Communications Director. The editors reserve the right to edit all submitted material for length and content.

Visit St. Stanislaus Parish on the web at www.ststanislaus.com

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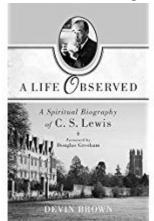
Have a question about St. Stanislaus Parish, or about the Catholic faith in general? Forward questions to the *NewStan* mailbox in the Parish Center, anonymously if desired. We will get them to the right person and publish the answers in a future issue.

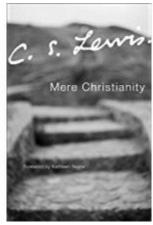
NewStan Book Reviews

A Life Observed: A Spiritual Biography of C. S. Lewis

by Devin Brown and

Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis





by Lorraine Miller

C.S Lewis is one of the world's best-known converts to Christianity. Many know him through *The Screwtape Letters* or "Narnia," the fantasy world he created that includes allusions to his religious beliefs. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,* the first book of the Narnia series is well-known to school children. His writings include poetry, allegory, science fiction, literary criticism, apologetics, and fiction.

A Life Observed: A Spiritual Biography of C. S. Lewis by Devin Brown gives a warm and personal description of his life. Brown wrote this biography, even though there are others, in order to give readers a sense of the real life of C. S. Lewis who was known to his friends as "Jack." He went to church and read his bible as a youngster. As an adolescent, he went from agnostic to atheist. His path to Christianity was long and filled with struggle. This book concentrates on this journey and his search for the object of mysterious longing he called Joy — a quest he claimed was the central story of his life. Joy to Lewis was not the normal sense of gladness or elation. He calls it 'a special kind of intense longing, unattainable, but wonderful.' He came to define it as a longing for heaven.

During WWII, his voice became the second most recognized in England. When the people of Britain were at war for the second time in twenty years there was much confusion and suffering. As a young man, Lewis had served in the terrible trenches of WWI. In 1940, when the bombing of Britain began, he was an air raid warden, and

gave talks to men in the RAF who knew they would not survive more than thirteen bombing missions. As a result, the BBC invited him to do a series of broadcasts on what Christians believe. The British people were certainly heartened by these talks. They were eventually published into a book: *Mere Christianity*. "The New Yorker" stated, "If wit and wisdom, style and scholarship are requisites to passage through the pearly gates, Mr. Lewis will be among the angels."

In *Mere Christianity* Lewis advocates a Christianity that is "humane, but not easy." He states the struggle for Christianity is within the human heart. Each day we face problems in our lives, and decide what sort of person we will be. Lewis was a member of the Anglican Church, but did not ask anyone to join it. He said that each of us must ask 'What is true? Is this path the true one for me? Each must decide his own path, and allow others to do the same.' This book must be judged in its historical context. It is one of the most popular introductions to Christian faith ever written. Lewis is articulate, humorous, and easily understood.

Both Brown's biography of Lewis and Lewis's *Mere Christianity* are books well-worth reading whatever the stage of our own spiritual growth. Faith can be the foundation of our existence. It is a gift from God. Accept it or ignore it, life is harder without it.

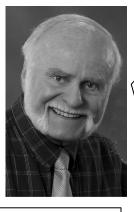
Faith Stories

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else wrote it. You may find yourself quite amazed by your own works. You may also feel different after writing it. Don't be alarmed or surprised if you laugh or cry or get angry or feel like a big weight has been lifted off your shoulders. No one knows exactly why, but many have discovered that writing our own Faith Story has great value, for ourselves and as well as for others with whom we have shared them.

Once you start writing down your own Faith Story, don't stop at one. Make it a habit. During the day, seek out topics to write about. Ask for God's help. He loves it when we sit down and write about Him and how He affects our lives, good or bad. Oh, and one more thing. Be honest. Writing down your Faith Story is not writing fiction. Leave that for the dreamers of this world. Besides, facts can be stranger than fiction.





Dan Miller joined St. Stanislaus parish with his family when he was in second grade, and has been a part of the parish community ever since. He got married last June, and he and his wife currently live in Lansdowne, PA. Dan enjoys writing for the *NewStan* as a refreshing reason to ponder on his faith and use his writing skills. He is glad to have the opportunity to reach his parish community in

Born and raised Cleveland, Ohio, Norm Berger moved to this area forty years ago as his wife was from Trenton. Norm has two grown children: Christina who lives with her husband and six-year twins (boy and girl) in Tampa, Florida, and Norm II, a CPA who lives in Perkasie. "I came into St Stan's Parish in 1983 from Our Lady of Mount Carmel. I chose to write for NewStan a few years ago because I like to write, work with words and communicate with people that way in addition to faceto-face communication."



Lorraine Miller is a retired Med School and Reference librarian. Widowed after 60+ yrs., she has seven children, seventeen grandchildren, and nine greatgrandchildren. She volunteers at St. Mary Center Chapel. "I write book reviews because I enjoy sharing an interesting author's knowledge or experience with readers."



This is Us

Writing Faith Stories is kinda what we at *Newstan* do every issue. As it is in line with this issue's theme, we thought we'd give you a glimpse at the people behind the newsletter and answer the question:

"Why do we write for NewStan.\\
■



50+ years ago, my family moved from Philly to Hatfield and St. Stanislaus. I joined the *NewStan* staff in 1998. Because I enjoy writing and sharing my faith, I have had some articles published in secular and Christian press. This past November, I took another literary leap and published a children's picture book: *Gabriel's Christmas Journey* (available on Amazon.com). – Dianne Spotts

My name is Ed Kunze and it has been a privilege to be the *NewStan* photographer since 2004. I have lived in Lansdale since 1960. I look forward to continue to work with the whole staff. We truly have gifted writers who together write exceptional and informative articles of varied topics of interest to all ages.



A St. Stanislaus parishioner for 18 years, I've been editor-in-chief of *NewStan* since 2002. Why? It's my steadfast belief that the more people know about our parish and its wonderful people, the more they will participate in it, allowing both they and it to grow. – Paul Cutajar

My Faith Story can be summed up in one line: "Life is hard, but God is good." – Nancy Viola

In formation to becoming a Secular Franciscan, I write for *NewStan* as a witness to all that the Lord has done for me on my journey. – Lino Viola

Parishioner's Pondering

by Norm Berger

Editor's Note: The Parishioner's Pondering feature was started in NewStan to give a forum to anyone in the Parish who has a reflection, an experience, or, as Nancy describes in our lead article: a Faith Story. The feature faded as we rarely received contributions. We hope this issue's focus on writing about one's faith inspires parishioners and we welcome potential items for future issues. If you are inspired, submissions should be up to 750 words and sent to ts.cutty@verizon.net or dropped in the NewStan mailbox in the Parish Center. We asked one of our veteran writers, Norm Berger to help get your started!

The staff at *NewStan* has decided to bring back the feature "Parishioner Pondering." As a "re-introduction" to this feature, I was asked to relate why I write for the *NewStan*. Well, it's not too complicated! I like to communicate with people and here I get to do it with whoever will spend the time to read an issue in which I'm involved. I also like very much to expand on my thoughts concerning a point of our faith, or do a short biography of one of our parishioners (which helps me get to know them personally if I don't already), or on some aspect of our parish doings and so on. Not sure how your writing can express yourself? Let's look at a couple of examples from other sources to see how the writer may set an all-important tone to their piece.

In the tone poem "In the Steppes of Central Asia" by the noted Russian composer, Alexander Borodin, the music starts out softly suggesting a slogging along of ox-driven carts in a caravan. Listening to the music, one can also see that caravan approaching in the distance, seeming lost in the vast plain that comprises the Steppes of Central Russia. The music gradually gets louder as the caravan "approaches" the hearer. We can imagine, now, the oxen straining to keep the carts or wagons moving and maybe the strange people in those carts as these details become clearer as the caravan approaches us and then slowly passes us by. Now, the composer introduces another theme, a haunting song, as it were, produced by a lone clarinet or an oboe against the background theme that generates a mood of loneliness: the loneliness of those who attempt to navigate vast distances where the lands stretch out in a flat expanse with no living being visible.

Then the original theme suggesting a trek re-emerges and gradually dies out as the caravan has now passed us and is retreating into the distance. Listeners may realize that this Svengali of a composer has left us in a place we weren't in

at the beginning of the piece. A writer may want to use a good choice of words to attempt to draw his readers in by creating a mood and then, like the composer, leave them as if "walking out on cat's paws."

Or, a writer may wish to draw his readers in quickly by a rush of words to get their attention and then keep the energy going! Using the metaphor of music again, in the composition, "Rodeo" a dance suite in four parts, Aaron Copland dishes up a rush of music in the fourth and final segment that pictures a group of cowhands and their dance partners joyously stamping around in a Saturday night hoedown. You might remember that music being used as a background in a long-ago ad by the American Beef Council showing all the ways that beef can be cooked (especially at a barbeque). The ad is concluded by a voiceover provided by the late actor Robert Mitchum intoning "Beef! It's what's for dinner!" accompanied by a rousing musical climax. Likewise, a good opening paragraph is a challenge to construct to get the reader's attention and/or a well-thought out closing paragraph so as to bring the reader to a emotional(or a thoughtful) response.

Another example that can used by a writer to fashion a piece comes to mind from presidential history. President Franklin Roosevelt was famous for his "fireside chats." The nation leaned into their individual radios and listened to the President talk to them about the nation's problems or the world situation in an informal folksy way seeming to say "Don't worry, we may be going through some tough times, but I've got some solutions if you'll help me." Doesn't that sound like a nice inspiration for a writer? So, depending on the topic of the article, I might try to associate myself with my readers by using a conversational tone as if leaning over an armchair with them sitting next to me and digesting (hopefully!) what I'm trying to communicate (if I'm successful). In both cases, the commonality is the challenge of creating a bridge to a person(s) who is/are not anywhere to be seen except with the imagination.

So, how 'bout it? Are you, Reader, ready to get out your artistic palette, not of colors, but of words to create your "masterpiece" for this column? We are ready to hear *your* music! \(\mathbf{H}\)

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Bell, Clvde Brinkos, Sandra Byrne, Regina Canton, Ann Conwell, James



Corrado, Charles MEWORIAM

Gibat, Harry Glass, Josephine Griffin, George

Honan, Catherine

Huttlin, Augusta

Kauflie, Henry

Ketterer, Marie Darlene

Larson, Arthur

Malfatto, Ethel

Mattingly, Charlotte

Mayer, Josephine Barbara

Mcnally, Thomas

Nguyen, Trang

Nugent, Ethel Mae

Serrao, Rose

Silvestri, Lucia

Verzilli, Andrew

Ward, Michael

Wenhold, Carl Williams, Carolyn

Wyatt, Arlene

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Juan Garcia Lozano Douglas Grant Brenden Guy Mercedes Hildalgo

Walter & Shannon Eric & Katherine Jaber Debra Lonergan Anna Lorence Grace Lorence Justin & Emily Lukens Leonard & Kathryn McCov Joan McMenamin Theresa Meredith Kathleen Novak Freddie Ortiz

Christopher & Jaclyn Pescatore Brian & Jerry **Pickett** Vanessa Recco Elizebeth Rivera Martinez Eileen Rodgers Tess Varley Ronald & Michele Williams Bryant Wilus



Vivian Winifred Elias Penny Laine Harkins Ryan Douglas Hennessey Leopold Ambroise Genevieve Margaret Hollenbach Aiden Conrad Koch Camille Karalee Koch Graciela Rose Lukens Charlotte Rose Mattingly

Ronan Alexander McNulty Reish Carlos Javier Garcia Rivera Meilani N. Romero Casey James Scherer Emma Viktoria Szekely Bryce Andrew Wallace



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