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





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

Spring 2024

# The Team Behind the Scenes

### by Dianne Spotts

The picture below shows Sister Barbara McGahan and her Social Ministry Team. We've featured Sister Barbara in the past, but now it's time to introduce the people behind the scenes who assist her.

Maria Borlando and her husband Javier were born in Argentina, where she was a psychologist. They came to the United States in 1996, and became parishioners at St Stan's in 1998. With family still in Argentina, they travel almost yearly. Maria has been helping Sister since 2019.

Janice Corcoran willingly helps when needed for Distribution Day and also during the busyness of Christmas. She works at St. Mary Manor a few days a week. She, husband Jim and their family moved here from the Philadelphia area 51 years ago. Jan is a retired nurse.

Ed Hitner, wife Linda, and family moved to Lansdale from Ardsley in 1976. They

had a family tire business before Linda passed away. Ed is happy to be part of Sr Barbara's team – schlepping is one of his specialties – that is when he isn't in Ocean City (you may spot his license plate *OCRunner* in the parking lot).

Cathy McGuire is the newest on the team and has been working with Sister Barbara for five years, just after she first registered at St. Stan's. She moved to the area from Springfield, Virginia, where her parish had a food pantry with the Knights of Columbus. She retired from serving as the Police Communications Assistant for 29 years in Springfield.

Fran Nangle lived in Fishtown, Philadelphia, before moving to the area with his wife and family. He is a retired Civil Servant, having been employed by the Federal Government for over 40 years, a career he valued. It is his 12th year of doing good to help people maintain their dignity in St.Stan's.

So how does this team work together? After Sister Barbara posts needed items in the bulletin, faithful parishioners cut out that list and even sometimes included it in the bags they

> donate filled with those items. The parishioners of St. Stans are very generous, usually giving over and above what is needed. Typically, bags are left in the Church vestibules; they are then transported down to the food pantry (in the lowest level of the Parish Center) by our reliable Sacristan, Bob Nuss. Cathy, Maria, and Janice then begin the job of sorting them.

Paper products, non-food items, and canned goods, are put onto respective shelves. They write the dates on each of the canned goods (bottom and top) so no outdated products are ever given out. Sister is also careful about foods too high in sodium or sugar.

Helping Sister Barbara in this ministry has its own rewards, including the shared camaraderie, but opening the donated bags can be adventure! At times interesting items appear: *continued on page 2* 

# A Celebration of Love and Marriage

### by Phil Ricciardi

St. Stanislaus Parish hosted the 6th Annual Valentines/ Marriage Celebration Dinner on Friday, February 9, in the Mater Dei School Cafeteria. The event was sponsored and coordinated by the Evangelization Committee. Forty-nine couples, both married and engaged, gathered for an evening of good food (provided by AAA Catering) and an uplifting and humorous talk by Father Sean's good friend Father Michael Speziale, Pastor of St. Ephrem's Parish in Bensalem and affectionately known as "Father Spazz."

Father Mike shared amusing anecdotes from his parents' marriage and invited those in attendance to come up to the front of the room and share learnings from their own marriages. Those brave enough to take the microphone shared stories that were funny, encouraging, and a few brought tears to everyone's eyes. Father also shared a very



*Couples young and old enjoyed the night!* special photo with us – a picture he took of a young Father Sean on the day he was ordained a deacon!

One of the fun traditions of the Marriage Dinner is the awarding of gift bags to the couples in attendance who were most recently married and married the longest time. The longest couple this year were married over 60 years!

Couples were given a small card to write down prayer intentions which were collected, blessed, and placed next to the Tabernacle for the following weekend's Masses. The evening concluded with all couples reciting a renewal of their marriage vows.



Father "Spazz" inspired and entertained the couples

This annual event is a wonderful opportunity to focus on your relationship for an evening, be enriched, and enjoy time with like-minded couples. If you have not attended this dinner in the past, please do yourself a favor and consider attending next year!

# **Team Behind the Scenes**

continued from page 1 slippers, flannel shirts, light bulbs and batteries, Spam, an occasional gourmet item, and once there was an overabundance of spices. On, another occasion they were surprised by an influx of donated sardines.

The ladies and gentlemen will place a variety of products into each of the bags that will be given to those who have registered for the program (at this time, approximately 70 people benefit). Besides food, items include laundry products, toiletries, cleaning and paper products. Transport of the bags to the Lobby Meeting Room in time for Distribution Day is usually handled by Ed and Fran. Sister Barbara assists with the early steps of the process, and greets those grateful receivers when they arrive on the 3rd Wednesday of each month: Distribution Day.

This is well-oiled organization, driven by love. The members of the team have expressed their respect Sister Barbara and her careful management of this important ministry. Almost as one voice, the team members agree that it's a privilege and pleasure to work with Sister Barbara, each other, and in this parish.

They are grateful for this opportunity to thank the generous parishioners who are on the front line of the team! $\blacksquare$ 

# **Parishioner Spotlight**

# Caroline Niesley

### by Norm Berger

Caroline Niesley was born in Washington, DC, where her father was working in the National Bureau of Standards (he held a Bachelor's, a Master's, and a Doctorate in physical chemistry). The family subsequently moved to Delaware County where the young Caroline attended St Dorothy's parochial school. During this time her mother encouraged her daughter in drawing.

Caroline graduated from Cardinal O'Hara High School. Having continued to cultivated an interest in art, Caroline pursued a Bachelor's Degree from Moore College of Art in Illustration. While there, she had an internship at Philadelphia

Magazine and after graduation, she began to do freelance work in illustration. She also did some work with the Pennsvlvania Stage Company, for whom she created advertising materials for TV Guide. However, as freelance work was often difficult to find, she eventually took a steady job as a legal secretary on the fourteenth floor of an office building at 6th and Chestnut Street, overlooking Independence Mall.



parishioners along with Caroline during procession to Cathedral of Sts Peter and Paul for the Archdiocesan Spanish Heritage Mass in the Fall of 2007. Sadly, no one now knows where it is. Did you know that the scene on the back of the manger structure appearing every Christmas season is also her work? Charlie and Caroline are now retired, so is Caroline taking it easy? Well, no, as Caroline can often be seen in the Sacristy

in Church serving as a Sacristan and at the altar as an occasional server at morning Masses and, at times, weddings and funerals. A busy lady indeed! This in spite of finding out in 2022 that she has non-small cell lung cancer. But she's a quiet fighter and continues on exercising the theological virtue of Hope, that is trusting in God's plans for her life and in God's love for her. She is a model for all of us who seek God's help in our lives and in carrying our crosses.

Another of Caroline's works was a pencil drawing of the Madonna and Child statue on Our Lady's side of the altar in the church. This drawing was reproduced in past bulletins and today can be seen on present parish offering C envelopes. The monstrance depicted on the Spiritual Bouquet cards offered in the Adoration Chapel is also her work. In 2007 she painted a portrait of Mary and the baby Jesus for the Parish of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Hilltown. It was used as

a banner carried by the

а

the

Sometime in 1998, Caroline responded to an ad in the St Stan's bulletin for someone to do a painting for the church

in connection with the upcoming Jubilee year. Caroline

answered the ad and was soon working on a three-by-six-

foot canvas of the Risen Christ holding a white resurrection

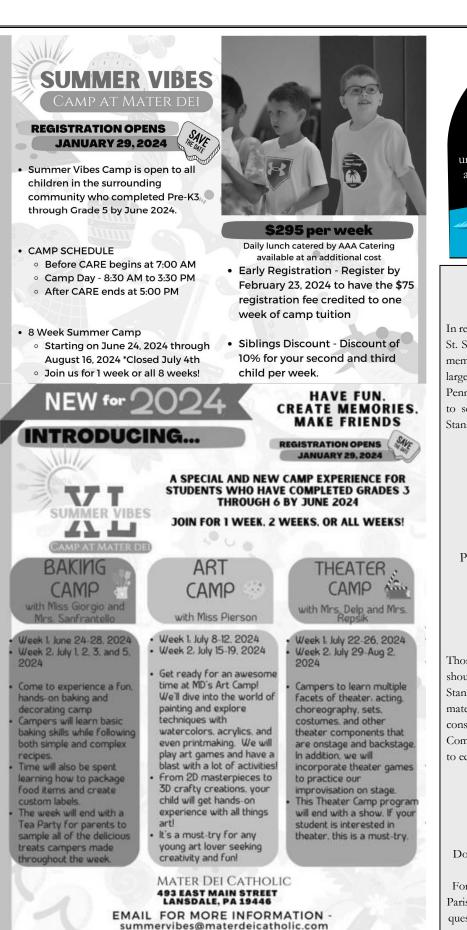
banner with a red cross on it. The finished painting was

hung in the church for the whole of the Jubilee year of 2000.

It now hangs in the chapel on Level 4 of the Parish Center.

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It was there that one day, going between floors in the elevator, she met a young man named Charlie. When the elevator opened on the ground floor, the young man asked her to join him for lunch. And this became a daily routine. Caroline said she enjoyed his depth and the fact that they shared an interest in the works of Charles Dickens. Eventually, as he was working as a contract engineer, Charlie left his job in the building for another assignment in Lansdale. Charlie then came to see Caroline in St David's where she was living with her parents. They got engaged and were married at St Katharine of Siena Parish in Wayne in 1995. The newlyweds set up housekeeping in Charlie's condominium in Lansdale. The stage was now set for the couple to worship at St Stan's.



## **Surfing Around?**

Sandy Sasso's biography of St. Thomas Becket intrigue you? Or sound familiar? *Murder in the Cathedral* is T.S. Eliot's classic play about how St. Thomas came to his unfortunate end. Learn more about the drama at https://tseliot.com/editorials/murder-in-





## 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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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 Father Sean 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 <u>www.ststanislaus.com</u> Follow us on Facebook: St. Stanislaus Lansdale **XXX** 

Do you have a question about St. Stanislaus Parish, or about the Catholic faith in general?

Forward your questions to the *NewStan* mailbox in the Parish Center, anonymously if desired. We will direct the questions to the right person and publish the answers in a future issue.

# St. Thomas Becket

### by Sandy Sasso

St. Thomas Becket was born in 1118, in London, England. He was educated first at the Augustinian Merton Priory, then in a London school, and finally in Paris. His faith was deeply influenced by a devout mother who, unfortunately, died at the young age of 21.

Thomas entered adult life as a city clerk and accountant in service of the sheriffs. After three years, his father introduced him to Archbishop Theobald of whose household he became a member. There he had an opportunity to meet distinguished political figures, a philosopher, a Roman lawyer, and several future bishops. Thomas won the confidence of Theobald, acted as his agent, and was sent by him to study civil and canon law at Bologna and Auxerre.

In 1154, Archbishop Theobald rewarded his service by appointing him Archdeacon of Canterbury, an important and lucrative post, and less than three months later recommended him to King Henry II as chancellor. Thomas showed his full brilliant abilities with razing castles, repairing the Tower of London, conducting embassies, and raising and leading troops in war. The king considered him a welcome companion, aiding the king in his policy of gathering all power into the hands of the monarchy, even when that policy went against claims of the church.

However, while serving the king, he neglected his duties as Archdeacon and most unfortunate was his failure to visit the dying Archbishop Theobald. He eventually became the king's right-hand man in public affairs. King Henry II returned to the program of Henry I, who had strict control over the Church, and this started creating conflicts with Thomas. With the death of Archbishop Theobald in 1161, King Henry hoped to appoint Thomas as Archbishop of Canterbury, and thus complete control.

Once consecrated as Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas changed both his outlook and his way of life and became devout and firm in embracing the integral program of the Papacy and its canon law. Thomas and the king started having a contentious relationship in the matter of serious criminal accusations of clerics. Thomas felt a guilty cleric could be degraded and punished by the bishop but should not be punished again by lay authority which was canonically arguable. King Henry's contention was that clerical crime was rife and that it was encouraged by the absence of drastic penalties.



St. Thomas Becket (used care of www.flickr.com/photos/chrisjohnbecket per www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/)

This continued disagreement turned into a crisis when at Clarendon, Wiltshire, in January 1164, the king demanded a global assent to all traditional royal rights, known as the Constitutions of Clarendon. This asserted the king's right to punish criminal clerics, forbade excommunication of royal officials and appeals to Rome, and the gave the King the power to influence episcopal elections. Thomas argued that the Constitutions contravened church law. Good relations with the king were now at an end and he was summoned to a trial at the Council of Northampton, October 1164.

Thomas fled in disguise and took refuge with Louis VII of France. Pope Alexander III also received him with honor but hesitated to act decisively in his favor in fear that he might throw King Henry in the arms of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I and his anti-pope, Paschal III. Thomas's exile lasted six years. Several attempts at reconciliation were fruitless. The Papacy endeavored to mediate with the King in 1169, only to part in anger. King Henry put out additions to the Constitution of Clarendon, withdrawing England from papal obedience. Ultimately, King Henry became concerned for England at his actions against the church and met with Thomas and agreed that Thomas should return to Canterbury and receive back all the possessions of his see. Neither party withdrew from their position on the Constitution.

# **Proverbially Speaking**

## by Dianne Spotts

My dad had a sign over his desk:

Better to keep silent and thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.

Mark Twain is claimed as its source. However, the Book of Proverbs covered it first...

Even fools who keep silent are considered wise; when they close their lips they are deemed intelligent. (Ch 17:28)

Technically, the Book of Proverbs is an "anthology of didactic poetry forming part of the sapiential literature of the Old Testament" OR in my language, it's a book to teach wisdom, at times more directed to the young and inexperienced but also to those who desire advanced training in wisdom, from the purely secular to the most lofty moral and religions truths.

Interspersed between the lofty truths are some verses that raise eyebrows, for instance:

It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a contentious wife. (Ch 25:24) or

A continual dripping on a rainy day and a contentious wife are alike. (Ch 27:23)

Of course countering these is The Proverbs Woman in Chapter 31 starting with verse 10: a diligent, hard-working wife who is praised by both her husband and her children.

There are many verses in the Book of Proverbs that feature readings about fathers and sons as well:

Listen, children, to a father's instruction and be attentive that you may gain insight...do not forsake my teaching. (Ch 4:1,2)

A wise child makes a glad father, but a foolish child is a mother's grief. (Ch 10:1)

Many authors' writings are contained in Proverbs, from the early part of the 5th Century BC. The book is a collection of quotes, instructions and warnings - some repeated by Jesus and the apostles. Some more familiar maxims are:

Anxiety weighs down the human heart, but a good word cheers it up (Ch 12:25)

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools suffers harm. (Ch 13:20)

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe. (Ch 18:10)

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Ch16:18)

The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Ch 1:7)

And a refreshing refrain for me and my peers:

Grey hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life. (Ch 17:31)

Now, a personal story: The love of the Scriptures was one of the best gifts God gave me through the conversion experience I've called The Baptism In The Holy Spirit. I felt "T" had uncovered a great truth!! This Book has been around for SO LONG and I'd just discovered it. Imagine: Lewis, Clark and Spotts!! I've been reading the Bible as my prayer book each morning for more than half of my life - a few verses each day continuing tomorrow where I finish today.

Years ago, during a situation at work that was causing me great anxiety, I knew I had to leave - and before I found another position. My salary would be missed. I prayed and sought counsel in the Word. My reading took me to Proverbs 27:23 to 27:

Know well the condition of your flocks and give attention to your herds; for riches do not last forever, nor a crown for all generations. When the grass is gone, and new growth appears, the herbage of the mountains is gathered. The lambs will provide your clothing and the goats the price for a field; there will be enough goats' milk for your food, and for the food of your household and nourishment for your servant girls.

I read and reread those verses. I could not continue past them - feeling certain there was a message there for me. I still do.

There's great wisdom for us in the Word of God – and in Proverbs 3: 13,14

Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding, for her income is better than silver and her revenue better than gold.

And I'll close with this from a plaque I have had on my desk for as long as I remember:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insights. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths. (Ch 3:5,6)₽

# How Can Anyone Say What is Right and What is Wrong?

## More Apologetics

## by Phil Ricciardi

In our last article in this series, we showed that you can know what is true. But just because something is true doesn't make it proper or moral. Is it possible for universal values to exist? You may hear people say that only you can decide what is right and wrong for yourself, and rules are made to be broken.

In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis states that it is interesting to hear people argue:

- ✤ "T've been on this line for 30 minutes, why should you cut in front of me?"
- "I shared my orange with you last week, why won't you share with me today?"
- ✤ "Leave him alone and pick on someone your own size."

People seem to assume that not only is there a moral code, but everyone should instinctively know it, and they get indignant when others don't follow it. We all have an inherent sense of proper behavior. If you ever speak with someone who believes there is no such thing as right and wrong, try an experiment. Take something of theirs and walk away with it. If they object, tell them if there's no right or wrong you can do what you want, and at this moment you want their stuff! I'll wager they'll find a moral code very quickly.

Different cultures may have variation in the details, but nearly all peoples do agree on the major points of a moral code. "No," to murder and "Yes," to altruism. "No," to stealing and "Yes," to charity. "No," to adultery and "Yes," to fidelity. "No," to lying and "Yes," to honesty. "No," to 'biggest bully gets his way' and "Yes," to justice through the rule of law. Even agnostics I have spoken to agree on these basic principles. A person may not believe in universal values, but isn't a lack of belief in values a value in and of itself?

The existence of universal values leads to an intriguing question of where they come from. Lewis believed that since we view beliefs and occurrences as either good or bad, the standard by which we are measuring the natural world must come from outside the natural world. Another being must be injecting the standard into our hearts. A being like a God.

If God has a sense of right and wrong, we should want to know what it is. Wrong values and choices can actually enslave us. True freedom comes from following the right path. And God promises to bless those who walk this path. "He who walks honestly walks securely, but he whose ways are crooked will fare badly." (*Proverbs* 10:9). Also, remember we do not judge those who reject our moral code. We leave the consequences of their choices between them and God, and we focus on how we conduct our own lives.

Where do we find the guidance to walk the right path? The Christian looks to the Bible. But can we really trust this ancient collection of documents? What proof do we have that the Bible actually is the eternal Word of God, and not a man-made fairy tale? Join us next time as we explore this question...

Apologetics is a genre of religious writing which involves the formation of reasonable, logical arguments for the truth of faith. As modern Catholics, we probably are confronted with tough questions from nonbelievers even more frequently than in the past. If you have any questions you'd like addressed, please drop them off in <u>NewStan</u> mailbox in the Parish Center. Note, we have decided to roughly alternate between our Bible Study feature and our Apologetics feature. We hope that together you find them a way to enhance your Catholic knowledge.- Ed.

# St. Thomas Becket

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Violent words from the king against Becket were taken literally by four leading knights of the court and they soon forced themselves into the archbishop's presence at Canterbury. With his refusal to obey their orders, they then followed him into the cathedral one evening, and after further altercations, they murdered him with their swords. His last words were an acceptance of death in defense of the Church. He died December 29, 1170, now his feast day as Chancellor of England (1155-1162) and Archbishop of Canterbury (1162-70). *NewStan* The Newsletter of St. Stanislaus Parish 51 Lansdale Avenue Lansdale, PA 19446

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### Parish Census Data for September 2023 – January 2024

Baptisms Nataly Yadira Gomez Argueta Harper Noel Bean Alexander Francis Beimler Charles Francis Buchter Natalia Ariela Castellanos Boya Rocco Ember	Morales Jhonathan Javier Jhonathan Javier Yanes Morales Mia Samantha Ramos Orellana Matteo Giuseppe Presta Camille Adeline Quigg Carlo Gael Ramirez Antonio Jalen Rodgers Axel David Manzanares Romero Jett Jutson Sanville Stephanie Marie Sarris Gwen Violet Slotter Emma Rae Steck Margaret Rylee Stinger Brody Joseph Stokes Johanna Christina Vaccarelli Eleanor Elizabeth Walbrandt Genesis Raquel Morales	Welcome Our <i>New</i> Members	William & Jamie Allen Michael & Tammy Babinchak Jennifer Blank Christian & Jamie Buchter Joseph & Rebecca Conte Dr. Roberto & Kelly Fratamico Jonathan & Kelly Gavala	Kristen Gambino Carlos & Auristela Gonzalez Steven & Julie Ann Graff Mitchell Harper Martin & Judy Jackowski Stephanie Lohwasser Laura McMenamin John & Courtney Mitchell William & Jennifer Morris Lisa Muscarella James & Jennifer Nuskey	Eugene Sell Jr. Edward & Linda Spiegle Kyle & Tiffany Thommen Alexander & Elizabeth Walbrandt Ronald & Colleen Wolkey Viviana Zavaleta
DiGiacomo Wesley Jack Edling Asher Hayes Feher Hailey Elizabeth Gary Patrick James Gray Logan Marie Gudowski Sofia Guerra Katherine Viviana Aguilar Hernandez Anna Marie Jochum Catherine Colleen Jochum Jacob Joseph Komatick Colette Suri McNulty Margot Ann Mick Arma Isabel		IN MEWORIAM	Walter Antonowsky Dr. Robert Byrne Richard Carickhoff Lucrecia Nereida Cyze John DeStefano Alfonso DiDonato Jr. Ralph DiGiondomenico Brian Donovan Sr. Theresa Evangelista Theresa Frizzle	John Gunder Sr. Vincent Habick Jr. Louise Kellar Philip 'Tom' Kelly Darren Kirby Elda Koch Lillian Mackey Dr. Edward McQuillen Meghan Melcher Victor Mitsch Jr.	Richard Nentwig Sr. Norma Nuss Rosario Ortal Maria Olivia Santos Gustavo Seminario Norma Singley Stephen Smyth Quentin Testone Geraldine Vona Regina White
		<u>Wédding</u>	Paul Joseph DiFede Ada Steinmetz-D Kevin Matthew Geu Amanda Lynn La Hunter Reed Hoffm Nicolle Disher Salvador Sanchez R Dorelis Ramirez I	e and Catherine Patrick I uffin Brian ueke and Victor M rkin Perla nan and Marlane John Ar Kathe amos and Sean Th	Michael Salamon and na Marie Roth Manuel Santana Segura and Perez Arzate thur Schulz and Mary erine Naydan omas Matthews and Peggy Bossert

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