



"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 Kostka



# New Stan

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

Autumn/Otoño 2020

## Thanksgiving and Eucharist

by Norm Berger

This past week's mail brought a special subscription offer for a magazine that I thought wasn't in circulation anymore. Do you remember the *Saturday Evening Post* with its many covers by the famed illustrator, Norman Rockwell? I used to love the picturing of American life in sentimental and sometimes poignant ways. With my thoughts on how to start this article, I looked at the series of paintings which Rockwell made to illustrate the Four Freedoms enumerated by President Franklin Roosevelt in his 1941 State of the Union Address. One in particular drew my attention: the one entitled *Freedom from Want*. It shows a family, young and old, gathered around the dinner table. At the center of the painting, in the background, is Grandfather looking down and beaming at the large, beautifully browned turkey being placed in front of him by Grandmother. The rest of the family, gathered around the table in the foreground, curiously enough at this moment, seem more interested in their conversations with each other than in the crowning moment of the dinner taking place at the head of the table.

I mention this as our editor-in-chief challenged each of us writers at the planning meeting for this issue to come with ideas for articles tackling a unique aspect of Thanksgiving.

My small contribution was to relate the Thanksgiving observance with the Eucharist. Just in case you are wondering how the two ideas could seemingly be connected, let me point out that the word "eucharist" comes from the Old French word *euariste*, which is itself based on ecclesiastical Greek *eukharistia* which means "giving thanks"!



So how do the two related – and what do they have to do with Norman Rockwell? Let's start with the preparation. Growing up, I remember the smells of the turkey being roasted starting in the late morning. Before dinner my younger sister and I would clean up and get into "good" clothes for the dinner. We would be told that each of us should think of something (or things) to give thanks for aloud during prayer at the table.

I would say this dressing for dinner and prayerful preparation is very reminiscent of going to confession and placing

getting oneself in a state of grace to "come clean" as it were in preparation for receiving the Lord.

Before a Thanksgiving dinner, in addition to the traditional grace before meal, someone might offer a special thanks for all the blessings having come to them or as family blessings through the Lord's beneficence. Some families

*continued on page 2*

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## Thanksgiving and Eucharist

*continued from page 1*

ask all the junior members of the family present to say what they are thankful for (in addition to the meal about to be consumed). These prayers at the table before dinner surely has its echo in the prayers before Communion at Mass. The Liturgy of the Word is the first half of Mass, preceding the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Communion is also preceded by the “Our Father,” the “*Agnus Dei*” and the Eucharistic prayer where we say “It is truly right and just, our duty and salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Father most holy, through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ.” A better “grace” before our remembrance of the Last Supper could not be made.

Finally, on Thanksgiving, everybody sits down to an enjoyable dinner with friends and family. As stated at the beginning of this article, the turkey is brought in with varying degrees of ceremony (or maybe none at all). Oh, I see. The astute among you readers might be thinking, “Yeah, the turkey is a focal point of the dinner, but how does a turkey ‘play’ into the Eucharist?” Let’s start with the custom begun with President Lincoln in 1863 when he, because of his son Tad’s pleading spared a donated turkey meant for Christmas dinner. Ultimately this led to President Truman’s 1947 “pardon” of a donated turkey destined for Thanksgiving dinner at the White House, an action became an annual presidential event.

The Eucharist, on the other hand, also involves a victim, but one who never received nor asked for a pardon for supposed “crimes” by the then ruling powers: the Jewish Sanhedrin and a Roman Procurator of whose fate he washed his hands. He went on to his death opening heaven for all repentant sinners. Thus we, at Mass, consume the Sacrificial Victim who at every Mass over and over again becomes a victim for us and gives us renewed hope for eternal life.

How appropriate then, as Grandfather and Grandmother present us with our meal each Thanksgiving for us to recall and indeed to give thanks in recollection of that sacred victim. Should we not, then, be always giving thanks not just at one special meal a year in our land, but always for the actions of one man who ages ago provided us with the “Bread of Life” for our journey to the eternal banquet in the halls of Heaven?✠

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## Father Sean’s Installation



On October 4, 2020, at the 11AM Mass, Father Sean English was officially installed as Pastor of St. Stanislaus Church in Lansdale, witnessed by Msgr. McCulken the Episcopal Vicar of Montgomery County.

In his typically humble way, Fr. Sean yielded the podium for his initial address to the Legacy of Life foundation speaker. When he did make some brief final remarks, he pointed out the uniqueness of the event which is normally at the start of a priest’s ministry at a parish but noting that having already been in the parish for a year, “I’ve been here with you. You’ve been here with me. We’ve buried our families together. We’ve celebrated our weddings together. We’ve celebrated many Masses together.”

Father Sean also declared “Today is not about the new Pastor, but it is about the success of the Parish.” Finally, equating the day to the Sunday Gospel reading of the Parable of Vineyard, he added, “It’s about the Lord who plants us here together, for our mission together.”

Although due to pandemic restrictions, a parish celebration was not practical, thanks to Trish Cunningham, and the Parish staff, a “meet and greet” took place after the Mass, and parishioners all received a gift bag containing a prayer for our parish to commemorate the latest landmark event in our parish history. ✠



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# St. Stanislaus Parish Raffle

The St. Stanislaus raffle has long been is one of the hallmarks of our Parish Festival. This year the Pandemic restrictions led to the cancellation our annual festival, but as a result we have created an even bigger and better raffle.

With an online raffle, we are allowing for greater participation which means a greater prize pool for our winners.

Our goal is to sell 1000 tickets at \$100.00 per ticket.

With a drawing on January 1, 2021, we hope to draw our biggest audience ever for the **largest first prize offered in parish history.**



If we sell 1000 tickets, the prizes are as follows:

**GRAND PRIZE—\$25,000 (1 winner)**

**SECOND PLACE PRIZE—\$5,000 (3 winners)**

**THIRD PLACE PRIZE—\$1,000 (10 winners)**

*All prizes are subject to IRS reporting requirements and are based on the sale of 1000 tickets.*

*Final prize amounts will be based on the number of tickets sold.*

**To purchase tickets, visit [go.dojiggy.io/stanislaus](https://go.dojiggy.io/stanislaus);**

**Or text the phrase stans5050 to 833-755-6550 from your SmartPhone.**

Raffle tickets make great holiday presents!

Imagine starting someone's 2021 with a \$25,000 boost!

Share with friends and families to make our Parish Raffle a success!

# Father Sean Says



We had a teacher in the seminary named Father Stephen Dougherty, who was one of the most joy-filled priests I have ever met. He taught a course on counseling in the priesthood, but was always around the campus to help seminarians in need. Fr. Doc, had an accident before ordination in which he almost lost his life. While on a cross-country trip, a car he was driving was struck by a train at an unmarked railroad crossing. He recovered, was ordained, and suffered tremendously throughout his priesthood. Yet, in meeting him, you knew that like Christ, his only concern was your pain and overcoming adversity through faith in Christ. When teaching, he would use repetitive phrases to help us remember the essentials of his lectures, and one of them was “Keep an attitude of gratitude.” He is an inspiration for enduring the trials of life with joy and gratitude.

Thanksgiving is essential to our lives as Catholics. As we read in Norm Berger’s article, the very word Eucharist means giving thanks. Christ prayed to His Father in thanksgiving for all He was given, even the Cross. This year, as we celebrate the secular holiday of Thanksgiving, we may be struggling with that very reality. We are suffering. Our world continues to be affected by Covid-19 and the many restrictions on daily routines. Many of us may not be celebrating with the families we are used to this year because of loss and/or out of safety. Many more are still unable to return to Mass.

A great meditation for thanksgiving in the midst of trial is the life of Christ. Consider reading “The Farewell Discourse and High Priestly Prayer” in John’s Gospel (*John 14-17:26*). This is the prayer of Christ after he is betrayed by Judas and before he is going to be handed over to be crucified. You will pray with Christ to the Father and notice no fear, no doubt, no anxiety. You will be overcome with joy, peace and a love within a heart that cannot be contained.

After his accident, Fr. Doc limped with a cane but his joy for life was never impeded. In sharing the Cross with Jesus, he found the attitude for gratitude.

May Jesus’s prayer be fulfilled in all of our hearts this Thanksgiving, and every day we walk with Christ.✠

## Surfing Around?

If you were inspired by Anne Kaler’s listing of autumn saints check out this story on how to commemorate the saints of the season at <https://aleteia.org/2020/10/06/7-ways-to-celebrate-this-fall-with-the-saints/>



## 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 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](http://www.ststanislaus.com)

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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.

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# Mater Dei Catholic School' Mission Undeterred

When the pandemic began in the spring, MATER DEI CATHOLIC SCHOOL immediately took action to begin a program of remote learning with the goal of not just riding out the school year but continuing the educational plan for its students. When school concluded in June, the administration and faculty did not go on a traditional summer break. Instead the summer was spent rising to the challenge of determining how school would look when it opened in September 2020 amidst the uncertainty that COVID-19 has brought to our lives.

In mid-May, the school established a twenty-five-person Task Force to begin working on a plan. Task Force membership included parents, teachers, administrators, the school nurse, and members of the Boards of Limited Jurisdiction and Home & School Association. Members possessed expertise in the medical field, safety, construction, and education. The Task Force's priority were the spiritual, emotional, and social features of reopening school in September to ensure the children felt the love and welcome that they always feel at Mater Dei.

At the end of July, the Task Force published the *Mater Dei Health and Safety Plan* with policies and procedures for the health and safety of the children and staff of the school in the face of the pandemic. The committee was guided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, "Considerations for Schools," and a resource published by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). It's become a living document, revised as new information and needs arise. The current version was published September 18.

As a result, Mater Dei opened in the fall offering two Catholic education options for the 2020-2021 school year:

- ❖ In-Person Instruction – full-time, five days a week
- ❖ eLearning Program – full-time, five days week

In order to fully socialize the plans, the school held a series of eleven Zoom Meetings throughout August for parents of all students from Pre-K to Grade 8, with special sessions held for students in the CARES program.

The response was overwhelmingly positive and school opened its doors with 487 students, 403 in-person and 84 learning virtually. Two brand new Pre-K classes were added and opened at the Saint Maria Goretti campus which already housed the Mater Day Child Care Center.

Given that our local North Penn School District opened with 100% virtual instruction, calls started flooding in for



students interested in attending Mater Dei. The school tried to accommodate as many as possible, but social distancing guidelines reduced the number of students in a classroom, so the school is currently at its safety capacity and many grades now have waiting lists for enrollment.

None of this could have been done without the tireless dedication shown by all of the teachers and administrators. It has long been known that Mater Dei faculty go above and beyond, but they outdid themselves this summer, learning new tools, adapting lesson plans, attending service days. In one of the latter ones, teachers put aside their work and spent a holy hour in Church for as President Diane McCaughan stated "We did all we could do, so what we needed to do was pray."

There are always challenges and adaptations – masks have greatly replaced the initially adopted face shields, for example – but school has proceeded successfully, with the health, welfare, and education of the students all provided for within the mission of Mater Dei.✝



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# The Season's Solstice of Saints

by Anne Kaler

Even in this pandemic, we are aware of the rhythm of nature's calendar swinging from season to season – spring, summer, fall, and winter – each season having to adjust to the earth's change in sunlight. The Church bolsters this natural progression of the celestial calendar year with the saints of the solstices whose feasts help us through the dark days of fall and winter. As the darkness of winter approaches, God sends us the solstice saints of light to fight the darkness.

Autumn begins on September 21<sup>st</sup> and soon after we have the feast day of the Archangels and Guardian Angels on September 29<sup>th</sup>: Those bright-winged messengers, St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael and our Guardian Angels arrive to help as the days grow shorter. Then in early October comes the cluster of consoling familiar saints like St. Francis of Assisi whose feast day is October 4<sup>th</sup> and St. Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower, whose brief life is celebrated with roses from heaven on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. When we really notice how the light of day is dying in the end of October, we have the Church's recognition of the final darkness of death with the Feast of All Souls and All Saints. What is scarier than Halloween, as a reminder of our mortality, than Hispanic tradition of the *Dia de Muertos* / Day of the Dead with its gaudy lights on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

St. Martin of Tours, a soldier who cut his cloak in half to give the other half to a freezing beggar., became the Bishop of Tours. We celebrate his feast on November 11.

Our own St. Stanislaus Kostka, has his feast day on November 13 which used to be within the week of the parish's annual Forty Hours devotion. St. Elizabeth of Hungary, educated and married into royalty, widowed early, and became a Franciscan tertiary. A basket of bread she smuggled from the castle turned into roses in the freezing weather. Surely her Feast Day of November 17 provides us with a promising hope for us. The early first-century Pope Clement was martyred by being thrown into sea with anchor around neck, becoming the patron of lighthouses. His feast Day is November 23.

St. Catherine of Alexandria, whose feast day is November 25<sup>th</sup> probably did not exist as a person. However, during the middle ages, her cult was a major one. because she was condemned to be torn asunder on a wheel of fire. Instead, the legend goes, angels destroyed the wheel before it could

touch her. Thus, the fiery wheel became a form of fireworks as well as the symbol of the textile trade for the women who used spinning wheels. Also, the sugary treat of Catherine Wheels are still eaten in remembrance of her. Finally, St. Andrew the Apostle has his Feast Day is November 30.

December starts with the sixth-century St. Eligius/Eloi was a goldsmith as well as a metal worker who shoed horses as a blacksmith. His feast is celebrated on December 1. Many a child gains hope from St. Nicholas. On his Feast Day December 6<sup>th</sup>, some children receive a small gift in their shoes – or a piece of coal. In his feast presages the coming holiday along with community awareness of the bright lights decorating our neighborhoods.

The beautiful feast of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception graces us on December 8<sup>th</sup> and is followed by the Feast Day of St. Juan Diego on December the 9<sup>th</sup>. Then there is the December 12<sup>th</sup> feast of St. Lucy, whose name means light, although she is often shown as blind. In northern countries, the St. Lucia is portrayed as a young girl wearing a crown of lighted candles. In southern countries the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is celebrated on December 12<sup>th</sup> in her appearance surrounded by stars. Legend has it that the reflection of St. Juan Diego and the bishop appear in the original picture on St. Juan's cloak.

As fall comes to an end, so do the week of advent, a fitting time to contemplate that the sun might never come back on earth. The Romans too suffered such fears so that they created the Saturnalia, that ten-day period from December 21<sup>st</sup> when the sun seems to halt in journey back to shed its light once more. That's why all the December's feasts of lights and joy burst forth in the bright light of the Star of Bethlehem on December 25<sup>th</sup>. We are assured by these saints that the sun will return as the Son has been born.✠



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# Psalm 42 and a Spiritual Invitation

by Dianne Spotts

I welcomed a long-time friend's invitation to meet her at a weekend retreat near a beach in New Jersey for a needed change of scenery and her companionship, which always warmed my heart. My spirituality needed a jump start. The retreat house was a short drive to a resort area in New Jersey I enjoyed as a girl. I looked forward to us walking along the beach during our free time and catching up.

The first thud: my friend was unable to meet me. I was devastated. However, I decided to go alone. Perhaps the weekend could be redeemed. The next thud: I learned it was a directed silent retreat: no chatting with other retreatants at meals or during free time. Silence. Not the friendly interaction I had longed for (along, of course, with the recharging of my soul).

The sadness I brought along with me pervaded through Saturday's breakfast. During a break in our schedule, I walked the grounds then drove over to the beach, strolling along the boardwalk. This only intensified my loneliness. Offering it up produced another thud.

Around 3:00 on Saturday afternoon, I was scheduled to meet with the priest leading the retreat. I recounted a Reader's Digest version of my sob story: why I longed to get away for a weekend and the disappointment of having to come without my friend.

He began to read verses from Psalm 42 and after only a dozen words, I could continue it. I KNEW it! Why didn't I remember to pray it during my struggles?

*"Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?"*

*"Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God."*  
(Ps 42: 5)

The priest suggested that I go into the chapel and find a comfortable place to sit, even if it was on the floor. He suggested I use the quiet to meditate on a scene from Jesus' life. I found a large pillow and a spot in the corner – in the back of the chapel. I began to pray and use my imagination to picture Jesus as he touched and healed people during His ministry. In spite of churning emotions, I enjoyed a lovely meditation until people started streaming in and my reverie was broken.

During the remainder of the weekend, I continued praying the verse from Psalm 42 and eventually began to believe it.

I didn't get the weekend I had hoped for but rather what I needed. Now, when I revisit Psalm 42 during my prayer time, I am reminded to use the tools the Lord gave me on that weekend: being in His Word and meditating on the scenes from His life. Thankfully, He understands that I need many reminders (that are planted throughout His Word) and invitations that surprise me.✠

## Religious Liberty and Thanksgiving

by Sandy Sasso

Every year it is our Judeo-Christian tradition in America on Thanksgiving to thank God for the freedoms as eluded in our founding document including *The Declaration of Independence*, which gave us our initial freedoms to address grievances from the dictates of a monarchy in Great Britain. Our founders established the United States of America by drawing up the *Constitution*, "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union..." We, as citizens of the United States, sometimes forget what the Christian underpinnings of those documents give us.

Thanksgiving is the day the pilgrims came and supped with the friendly Native Americans, and prayed and converted some to Christianity, practicing our faith as we wish and respecting the "free exercise thereof.." is part of that.

The U.S. State Department recently released its "Report of the Commission on Unalienable Rights." This document gave prominence to the role that religious liberty plays in the making of a free society. It partly states "Foremost among the unalienable rights that government is established to secure, from the founders' point of view, are property rights and religious liberty." There are numerous accounts of the hostilities towards Christianity that precipitated this report. Unfortunately, we see turmoil and chaos in the country today. Our religious liberty is threatened and sadly, there are churches that have been desecrated by burning and destruction of sacred statues and crosses. The founders wanted a more perfect union by addressing respect and human decency through the laws of nature and nature's God

We have always heard of Christian persecution which is still happening abroad, but the current rash of violence and hatred in our country must bring us to our knees in prayer this Thanksgiving.✠

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

- 1 *Thanksgiving and Eucharist*
- 2 *Father Sean's Installation*
- 3 *St. Stanislaus Parish Raffle*
- 5 *Mater Dei Catholic School' Mission Undeterred*
- 6 *The Season's Solstice of Saints*
- 7 *Psalm 42 and a Spiritual Invitation*
- 7 *Religious Liberty and Thanksgiving*

**Parish Census Data for July – September 2020**



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 Members

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 Elena Flores  
 Fatima Gonzalez  
 Anthony & Julia Lombard  
 Luis & Sylvia Lopez  
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 Timothy Miller  
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 Eugene & Katrina Orlando  
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Ediel Isaac Herrera Pina	Anne Pritchard
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