



"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

Spring / Primavera 2021

Life is a Series of New Beginnings

by Dianne Spotts

Thank God it's Spring – possibly the most welcomed Spring ever.

Seasons come and go, whether we're ready or not. Winter can feel too long, the summer can be too hot, heaven knows spring cleaning makes me shudder, and I don't want to think about autumn's fallen leaves. However, we should be on the lookout for 'ah' moments: gifts from the Lord that help us get



through, like the birds that brave the winter with song, and the bright clean whiteness of snow (even though you have had more than enough by now).

Our Lord uses His creation to speak to us.

Determined to complete this article in mid-February, I was distracted by a scene from my window. The barren tree dominating the foreground had spring life hidden within its branches. Just beyond that, my neighbor's towering spruce tree boasted a winter-defying green. And the



backdrop for this frame: a vibrant blue sky - a kodak moment, a seasonal collage on a sunny but frigid winter day. I felt the Lord provided me a perspective - a different lens through which I saw balance.

Last year, as fall was ending, the tree in the foreground held onto a few leaves - its last-ditch effort to delay winter. On one of those leaves, a lingering drop of rain from the previous night's rain caught the brilliant light of the sun, at a perfect angle. It was glowing like a 50-carat diamond! The pulsing brightness was uncanny – and so awesome I couldn't turn away from it. Thank you, Lord!

My husband had a favorite tool to get through the winter: His seed catalog. Resting comfortably with his morning cup of coffee, he planned his garden, longing for another chance to get his hands in the dirt. He would plan to prepare the soil by the strenuous job of rototilling, then add the nutrients needed for good fruits' and veggies' healthy growth. This was his prelude to spring. Remembering past growing seasons gave him hope to believe that during the coming summer tomatoes, peppers, and a host of other veggies would enrich our garden and delight us.

Life is a series of new beginnings, second chances and surprising ah moments. "Seize the hope that is set before us, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul" (Hebrews 6:18,19).

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Everything Old is New Again

An Interview with Father Sean about St. Stanislaus Church Upgrades

When we planned this article, the expectation was a dry, newsy update about some Church renovations. I'd noticed some pews had been removed. I'd heard at Mass about upcoming repairs to side doors (or did I...?). I reached out to Father Sean to get the skinny on the changes. However, Father relayed not simply news about these banal facilities-meeting agenda items, but revealed some of the subtle logistical as well as fascinating spiritual and historical concepts tied to the changes. To do justice to Father's often eloquent explanations, I decided to relay this in an interview format. I hope you find it as informative and inspirational as I did. - Ed.

Paul Cutajar: Father, one of the changes I've noticed recently is that pews seemed to have disappeared in the middle of the Church. Why?

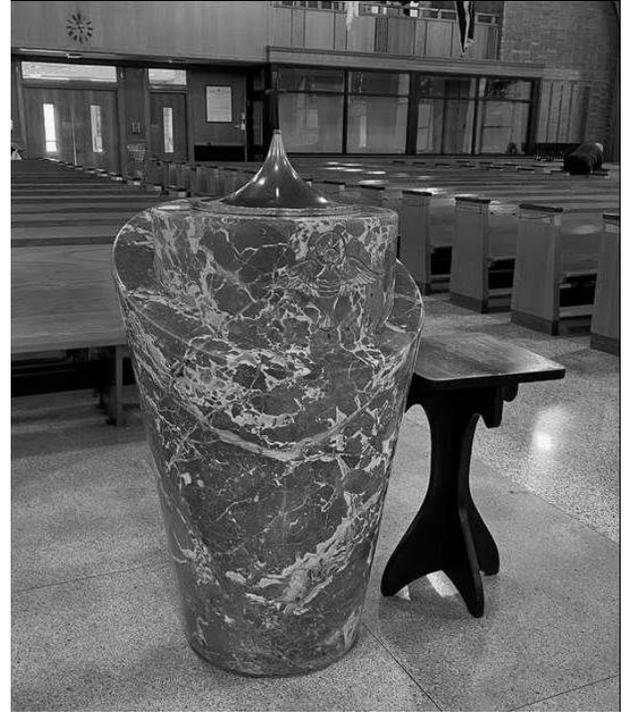
Fr. Sean: Actually, we removed what I call pew fronts, from the "break" section of the Church. Previously, in all of our seating that is designated for persons with disabilities and their families, only one section was accessible without a kneeler or pew front. With the removal of the pew fronts at the break, we created 4 more pews without kneelers, which make them more accessible and allow give people the freedom to sit in different parts of the church.

PC: Were there any other benefits to this?

FrS: It increased the space in the break to make it easier to process through the Church during funerals. The exit procession for a funeral with a casket, begins at the foot of the sanctuary and heads down the center aisle towards Main Street. They then make a left turn towards the parking lot. Before the removal of pew fronts, there wasn't enough space to allow for an easy procession with a casket and pall-bearers. Now, they can move freely and with the proper solemnity required when caring for the body of a deceased loved one.

PC: And clearly it also "paved the way" to reposition another major Church feature

FrS: Correct. We had to reshape the pews around the new placement for the Baptismal Font. The location of the Baptismal Font in Catholic Churches has changed throughout the Church's 2000+ year history. In the



beginning, people were baptized in rivers, like Jesus was. In early Rome, they would baptize new Christians in the Tiber. Early Churches had Baptistries, that is separate buildings or separate parts of churches dedicated to the sacrament of Baptism. They were designed with the theology of the sacrament, as well as the realization of a needed water source. Some were octagonal to represent the new Sabbath of the Resurrection, the 8th day of the week so to speak as the Jewish Sabbath was Saturday and Christ rose on a Sunday. The theology of the eight sides incorporated this passing through the waters of baptism on one side and rising from the water on the "eighth day" with Christ. In Baptism, we die and rise with Christ, so there was always an effort in the Catholic Church to provide this theology within the realization of her Sacraments (for example, altar rails were both practical for the distribution of Communion and also the physical barrier between the body of the Church and the Sanctuary, representing the chasm between life and death, earth and heaven, which is bridged by Christ, God and Man, in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood received at the Altar rail). Older Churches, even up to the last century and some built in modern times, kept the tradition of separate Baptistries, or even areas of the Church that were apart from the main body and also prominent. For some modern Churches, this was not incorporated, so they

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Parishioner Spotlight

Father Manny Flores

by Sandy Sasso

In July, 2020, we welcomed Fr. Manuel Joel Flores – or Father Manny as he likes to be known – to St. Stanislaus Parish. His first day on the job was a special day not just because of his new assignment – it also happened to be his 31st birthday!

Hence it was *exactly* thirty-one years prior to joining St. Stan's that Father Manny was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico. He came to the Philadelphia area with his mother at the age of five. He has many half brothers and sisters who are much older, as well as nieces, nephews, and other relatives all still living in Puerto Rico. His biological father has since passed away, although his step-father is alive.

Manny Flores attended public schools in various places in North Philadelphia, including the Elkins Elementary School from kindergarten to third grade, John H. Webster Elementary for 4th and 5th grade, and then John Paul Jones Elementary from 6th to 8th grade. He spent his high school years at Jules E. Mastbaum.

While in high school, Fr. Manny tried his hand at welding. It also was in high school where he started attending PREP classes. It was also where he became more inspired in the Catholic faith. He began attending Mass regularly. After high school he went on to work at the school district as a bus assistant, a role he held for 8 months.

While working at the district, he came across a reading in the Bible from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 12. This is the chapter where Jesus says to his disciples “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life – whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. For life is more than food and your body more than clothing...Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? And if worry can't accomplish a little thing like that, what's the use of worrying over bigger things?” (*Luke 12:22-26*). The reading seemed to give Manny a sense of peace and joy

that filled him with a desire to enroll at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in 2009.

While still in the seminary he spent about a year assisting at Our Lady Queen of the Universe parish in Levittown. He also spent his last year as a transitional deacon at Sacred Heart Parish, Oxford, PA, and assisted at Saint Rocco, Avondale, PA. After his eight years in the seminary where he earned his Bachelor of Arts, Master of Divinity (2017) and his Master of Arts (2018) degrees, he was ordained as one of six in the Ordination class of 2018. His first assignment was at Our Lady of Grace Parish in Pennel where he spent two years before joining us here at St. Stanislaus.

Father Manny says he found a different energy at St. Stan's as compared to his last assignment. He notes he found a “stronger friendly, faithful and loving” atmosphere in our Parish. How wonderful to hear!

The parish priests often have duties or activities in the parish elementary or high schools. Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, Father has

not been able to engage the children at MATER DEI CATHOLIC SCHOOL in speaking about their Catholic faith as much as he would like. Hopefully as the pandemic departs us he will be able to engage more with them.

Father enjoys basketball, and keeps in shape through other exercises as well. As many who have heard him preach at Mass know, he also loves watching Netflix. And he recently opened up his Lenten Sunday homilies with the proud declaration: “I like chocolate. But most of all in his free time, he loves his video games.

We have been blessed here at St. Stanislaus, to have young priests like Fr. Manny and Fr. Sean, to foster that “friendly, faithful and loving” atmosphere at St. Stanislaus, and keep it vibrant and accessible for years to come.✠



Father Sean Says

In the age of social media, it is increasingly easier to gauge what people are thinking. If you try to search for something in a search engine, you can easily be distracted by lists of the current “trending” topics from around the world.



What if we could do that with prayer? I for one would bet that over the last year, the top trending prayer intention would be an end to the pandemic. The pandemic has delivered immense suffering and loss, increased anxiety and fear, and an overwhelming sense of restriction. We want to be free again.

One of my prayers for our parish is that when we experience that new sense of liberation at the end of the restrictive pandemic, the freedom to return to worship will be paramount. Over this last year, we have been given many “freedoms” with regards to worship within the community. One in particular was the suspension of the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. As the world begins to emerge from the adopted norms of living during COVID-19, the return to Mass in the community may be hard for many.

So, what can we do?

For those who have been able to be physically present in Church, please share your experiences. Let friends, family and co-workers know of your journey with the Lord during this time. Talk about initial anxieties and how perhaps they were overcome during your time at St. Stanislaus. If there are still things that you worry about, feel free to share them with me as we anticipate a larger worshipping community in the months ahead. If you have been watching along at home, either our own Mass or another parish abroad, consider coming to Mass during the week where there is certainly a smaller crowd. Know, that we benefit from one of the largest seating capacities in the diocese (over 120 pews which were built to comfortably hold over 1200 parishioners). Even with spaced out seating, there is room to comfortably social distance, in a regularly cleaned church.

Ultimately, consider your relationship with Christ in the Eucharist. We receive the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord, who in His own Passion knew every fear, anxiety and moment of desolation we would encounter. That’s why He rose on Easter Morning, to share His Eternal Life, that we might be free again.✠

Surfing Around?

If Norm Berger’s article on page 7 made you curious about the San Damiano Cross, see: www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Damiano_cross. And if you’d like to read more about the Jewish mezuzah, check out: www.torahlive.com/courses/mezuzah-the-ultimate-connector/



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

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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.

Old is New Again

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chose to put the fonts in prominent places.

PC: Ours has been in the Sanctuary, up by the Altar at least since my family has been in the Parish.

FrS: Yes, I speculate some of the reasons were to be a focal point, to add symmetry with the Ambo on the other side of the sanctuary, and perhaps because our church architecture limited its placement anywhere else. However, the placement of the font in the sanctuary restricted the space where celebrants could sit, and also did not allow for enough room for wedding couples to sit within the sanctuary as prescribed for that Sacrament. An opportunity arose, very quickly, with anonymous donors who shared a similar passion to move the font to a more appropriate place in our Church.

PC: Growing up, my home parish had the font at the other end of the church.

FrS: Ideally, the font is somewhere near the main entrance of a Church so that as people enter, they are reminded of dying and rising with Christ, as they pass by the font on the way to their pew (same reason Holy Water is at each door). Our Church is unique in that we do not use the main entrance (on Main Street). Since the most used entrance is on the parking lot side of the Church, and because we greet the body for funerals at the break of the Church, the decision was made to move the font to its present location at the break. We removed half of three consecutive pews, rebuilt them to preserve the pews as they had donor plaques on them, and then placed the font in its new position. We had to get the approval of the Office for Divine Worship of the Archdiocese.

PC: Was that a problem?

FrS: No, they were thrilled about the new placement! It is in a prominent location of the Church, which gives the opportunity to walk past the font for some, on their way to their pews for Mass, and it also now allows us to draw water directly from the font to sprinkle caskets with at the beginning of funeral Masses. This makes a direct visual impact on the prayers the priests pray at the beginning of each funeral when sprinkling the casket with Holy Water: “In Baptism [Name of the deceased] died with Christ and rose with him to new life, may they now share with Him eternal glory). It also makes it easier to coordinate the Baptisms at 12:00pm in between the Masses. Previously, we had to wait until the area around the sanctuary cleared.

Now we are able to begin Baptisms on time with the new area. One day, I hope to add new tiles around the font on the floor to show the area is something prominent and capture the essence of the Theology of the Sacrament.



PC: It amazes me how what seems like mere structural changes can have such theological meaning. Is there a spiritual link to the door modifications?

FrS: There seems to be a miscommunication with the improvements to door entrance ways. Last summer, all of the door entrance ways were refinished by the Knights of Columbus. They donated the work, and the materials, to replace the drywall and repaint it. The door areas suffer from moisture and water which seems to rise from the ground during exceptionally heavy rain. As such, there was an unacceptable level of deterioration in the areas which have now been addressed. Recently, we communicated that we would be locking doors once Mass begins as part of an enhanced safety plan. I believe that due to our poor sound system, people heard that we were replacing the doors. This is *not* the case. However, the important change is that by restricting the points of entry during Mass to the two rear doors of the Church, we will effectively increase the level of safety of our Parish.

PC: Safety is always top of mind – and I have to admit when it comes to your comment about the sound system, I hear you loud and clear...or rather, I don't hear you loud and clear...um. Any possible improvements on that front?

FrS: As a matter of fact I do have some news there, and about some additional safety items AND some even bigger structural changes that will be front and center as well plans to move the...

PC: Father, I can't wait to hear it, but we seem to have run out of space on this page. Thank you for all this news and insight, but we'll need to include your additional updates in our next issue. So, it looks like we have one more new addition to New Stan: Our first ever article that is...

TO BE CONTINUED...✠

BREAKING NEWS: St. Joseph was a Techie!

by Anne K. Kaler

Who knew that Saint Joseph was a “*tektion*” which is the Jewish word for mechanic or a carpenter? In the lineage of King David, St. Joseph rightfully was born in Bethlehem, the city of David. At some point, he moved to the small fishing village of Nazareth where he became the humble worker of stone, woods, and metals. St. Joseph became one of the people of good will who work to support his family, becoming a hero chosen by God to protect His Beloved Son, Jesus.

Pope Francis apparently has had so special a devotion to St. Joseph that, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, he dedicated this year to the foster father of Jesus. “St. Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation,” the Pope said. “A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.”

Ah, yes, the earthly father who guided the Child Jesus into manhood and martyrdom. We know very little about just who Joseph was or why God chose him for this blessed duty. We are not sure of his exact age, his family, his work, or his feelings. Almost nothing about him personally appears in the Scriptures. We do know that Joseph was a good Jewish faith-filled man who listened to God’s requests in his dreams and obeyed. We also know that he refused to condemn Mary when many claimed she was having a baby out of wedlock. Most important of all, Joseph quietly and quickly responded positively to God’s commands. He managed to get Mary and her Son out of Herod’s plot to kill all the baby boys born in Bethlehem.

The few facts we know of Joseph are gleaned from the hints in the Scriptures and the general facts about a man of his times. He was a laborer, one who was valued for his technical skills and his fine technique. Living and working in Nazareth with his wife Mary and his foster son Jesus, Joseph took care to raise the child in the Jewish faith. (Except, perhaps, for that one time in a yearly trip to the Temple in Jerusalem when he “lost” sight of Jesus, thinking that the boy was with his mother...) When the twelve-year-old was found questioning the priests, in the Temple, Joseph allowed Mary to question Jesus about the boy’s behavior. No one knows how Joseph reacted to Jesus’ answer that he “must be about His Father’s business.” We can imagine the many threads of thought all three in that family had on the journey back to Nazareth.

St. Joseph, Pope Francis pointed out, was a model of a strong faith “which begins when we realize we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient...Let us hand over our fears to [God] so that he can conquer them.” Thus, with the old year now behind us and a new year ahead, we can be assured that St. Joseph will be our companion, our champion, our protector, and our “best buddy” in times of need. Just as St. Joseph took care of the family which God created for him, so also will he take care of our loved ones. May St. Joseph keep us safe all of our days. ✕



New Beginnings

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During my morning prayer time, when I’m not distracted by scenes from my window, I’m praying with my favorite seed catalog: The Bible. And my spirit is alternately anchored and lifted from the cold darkness of winter to the hope of a warm spring.

In spite of Covid-19 or whatever dark clouds still hover above, the barren tree reminds me that I can dare to hope, and believe: “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the convictions of things not seen,” (*Hebrews 11:1*). While praying with spring hope in our souls, we’ll hear the birds sing, picture the trees in all of their splendor, and see our world break out in color!

You’ve heard it said that if March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb. It certainly did not last year. In 2021? Well, that remains to be seen. Regardless, you can rely on the Lamb of God – and revel in His goodness in giving us times, seasons and ‘ah’ moments. ✕



A Christian Mezuzah?

by Norm Berger

A year or so ago, Patty and I started watching a series on Netflix called *Shtisel*. I was curious about it but was turned off at first by having to read the English subtitles to know what was going on because the series was produced in Israel and all the characters spoke Yiddish. I got used to this though because each episode was so interesting as it involved an ultra-orthodox or *Haredi* Jewish family living in Israel. I had to get used to seeing all the men wearing long black coats down past their knees and the black hats with broad rims along with side locks or ‘payes’ worn by the men. The series revolves around the relationship of Rabbi Shtisel and his grown son Akiva who lives with his widowed father and Akiva’s relationships with his married siblings, friends, and potential wives.

One of the actions that stuck out for me was when anyone entered their living quarters, they would reflexively touch a small hollow metal (or other material) object mounted on the inside entry doorpost and whisper a prayer. This is the mezuzah which is mounted in the doorway of many Jewish homes. It is a means for holding a small paper scroll containing a smattering of the Torah in Hebrew. Most often the scroll contains the Shema (*Deut. 6, 4-9* or *4-34*) the important Jewish prayer beginning with “Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.”

Great reverence is paid to this prayer by observant Jews. Verse 9 in Chapter 6 of The Book of Deuteronomy, gives the reason for the mezuzah: “Write them [the words of the Schema] on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.” The mezuzah, which literally means “doorpost” then, is the receptacle for the words of the Shema. These words are written on parchment in Hebrew characters by a *sofer* or scribe. That small parchment is then inserted into the mezuzah. The location of the mezuzah on the “doorpost” is reminiscent of the Exodus event when the Jewish nation was instructed to sprinkle the blood of a slain lamb on their doorposts so that the avenging angel of death would pass by their dwellings and affect only the first-born of their Egyptian overlords.

I liked the idea of the mezuzah and its usage and a thought occurred to me. Could something of this custom translate into a Christian custom? In other words, could I hang something on my entry doorposts that would have a Christian meaning, but could otherwise be treated like a mezuzah?



In my house I already had a small San Damiano cross (shown in the picture above) that I had purchased to hang on a wall from the Lord’s Shop on Main Street in Lansdale (If you are interested, they’re just \$3.95 plus tax at the shop).

Instead of on the wall, why could I not hang it like a mezuzah on the trim of the doorjamb?

And instead of a scroll with words from the Torah, I thought, why not some words related to the Cross?

I came up with the response that is part of the spoken words of the Stations of the Cross: “I adore thee and I praise thee, O Christ, because by thy holy cross, thou hast redeemed the world.” Typed on a small piece of thicker paper, this would be hung with the cross as a reminder of what is to be said while simultaneously touching the cross entering or leaving the house.

Of course, if you wished to follow my lead and help create the new tradition of the Christian mezuzah, you could use other meaningful words of Jesus from the New Testament instead.

“But what about the blood sprinkled on the doorposts before the Exodus?” you might be asking. The Christian mezuzah provides for a recollection not dissimilar to that of our Hebrew brethren. The Cross serving as mezuzah is a reminder of the Blood that was shed by our Lord before and on the Cross. The “Christian Mezuzah” then becomes way of expressing respect for the price paid for our salvation before and on the Cross as we touch it coming and going.✠

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Parish Census Data for October 2020 – January 2021

 <p>John & Devin Avellino Ryan & Kara Costello Kevin & Elizabeth Criscuolo Brian & Andrea Dempsey Louis & Elizabeth Dollarton IV Charles Galdi Daniel & Ixmucane Gonzalez James Hall David & Lisa Kinneman Enza Mancini Brian & Thea Mee Terrence & Denise Meehan Derek & Catherine Mihaly John & Ashley Prykowski Christopher & Lisa Ricco Maria Sagheddu Michael Schembri Caitlin Smith Eugene & Laura Soda III Eric & Lauren Stoll John & Rosina Strouse Daniel & Kathleen Thome</p>	<p>Michael F. Aucutt Frank R. Bartle Joseph Bonfiglio Mary C. Callaghan Joan M. Cordora Angela DiCristofano Anne E. Diehl Antoinette R. Donofrio Regina (Jean) M. Frusco Annemarie Gill Christopher V. Glackin John L. Hauck Sr. Joan Hitner Julia (Judy) Hoepfl Claire B. Hogue Regina M. Horan David S. Huck Russell Kaelin Charles G. Lamelza Cong Minh Le Dan P. Leonida</p> <p>Shirley A. Markley Mary Ellen McNally Rosaz Messina Mattia E. Morales Tillie R. Petrusky Mary E. Pinder Connie Pulli Michael Ralph Dorothy M. Rhoads Nelly A. Saldutti Stephanie A. Sarris Michael V. Scalzo Patricia A. Schuelkens Denise H. Spear James G. Stortenbecker Michael V. Tecce Mae C. Veneziale John Paul Vince Catherine (Kitty) Vizzard Irene A. Walsh Michael Joseph Wynne</p>	  <p>Tobias Joseph Affleck Kenya Gisselle Alarcon-Perez Aiden Alexander Benitez Louis James Dollarton V Sophia Leigh Dauke MacKenzie Marie Fry Anthony Garcia Sophia Gonzalez Daniel Alejandro Gonzalez, Jr. Anthony Gerald Lombard Emely Diana Monroy Fernanda Olivares-Velez Marielena Elizabeth Sanchez-DiOrio Elias Patrick Steiert</p>
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