

# The Anastasian

April 2017

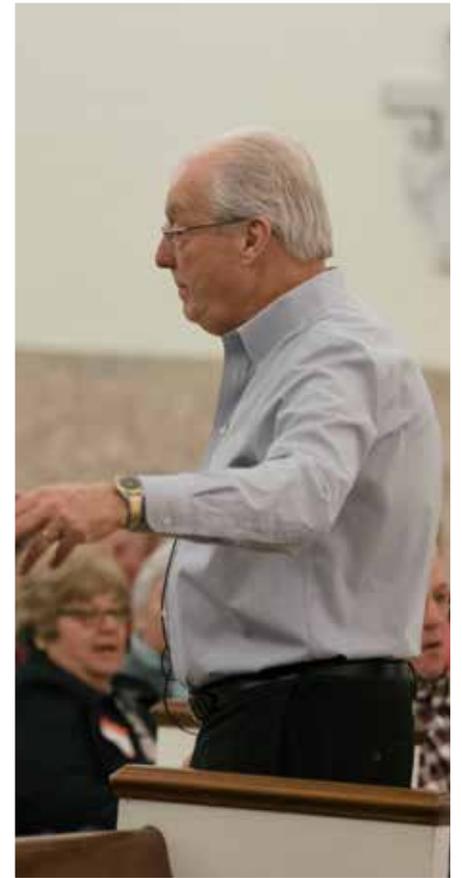
**St. John's Hospice**  
Serving Philadelphia's  
homeless since 1963

**Living in Love**  
Couples' Retreat

**Parish Mission**  
"Dare to Be Holy"

**STAT**  
St. Anastasia Teens

**What Is It?**





# THE Anastasian

Since 1935

Welcome to *The Anastasian*. We hope the readers enjoy this newsletter. St. Anastasia is a large, vibrant parish with many different groups engaged in wonderful activities that give life to the parish. We hope this newsletter will offer you the chance to learn more about the many ways our friends and neighbors in Christ engage with the parish to deepen their faith and enrich their lives. And you will see they are having a lot of fun too! Please let us know what you think and how we can improve. Please email us at [promotion@saintannies.org](mailto:promotion@saintannies.org). You can also "like" us on Facebook or follow Lucky on Twitter at [@luckycolagreco](https://twitter.com/luckycolagreco).



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Front cover image: Bill Wegner from Good News International Ministries  
Courtesy of Jim Murphy

#### Photo captions:

Parish Mission  
Courtesy of Carmen Smargiassi and Jim Murphy

Living in Love  
Courtesy of Carmen Smargiassi

St. John's Hospice  
Courtesy of Deanna Stagliano



# A Letter from Our Pastor Father Colagreco

Dear Parishioners of Saint Anastasia Parish,

Thank you once again to our Promotion Committee for another issue of *The Anastasian*. Our hopes and dreams of becoming “one parish community” are a little bit closer to reality with each venture like this. With a parish so large, it is always difficult to disseminate information and keep everyone abreast of the many varied and wonderful things going on here.

By now, our Parish Mission will have been completed. As I write this we are just making the final preparations for what will hopefully be a time of grace for everyone and an inspirational way to begin the Lenten season. Thank you to the Mission Committee which has worked long and hard the last few months.

Please note the feature describing STAT. Lizzie Huerich, our parish Youth Minister, has written about her work in a program called STAT which is an education/social/religious means to involve our young adults. It is always a challenge to provide an effective outreach to all of the diverse groups in the parish. It is our hope that through Lizzie and her associates we will be able to respond to the needs of our young parishioners who are the hope of the future, and the hope of the church!

Along the same line of reaching out to a vast and varied congregation, we are glad to be able to offer a retreat for married couples. The grand wedding happens! Then...life goes on. Maybe children come. Work challenges and stretches schedules and nerves. Bills need to be paid. On and on it goes. The Living in Love Retreat is a wonderful antidote to the rat race and hectic pace married couples may find themselves caught up in. Read about it and if you have an interest, pray about it. It might be for you!

While we live in a relatively affluent area, there are some people quite nearby who are not as fortunate. Our parish has been noted for our generosity to those in need. Be sure to read about one such arm of outreach by Saint Anastasia Parish to Saint John's Hospice. This particular program has been going on quietly and faithfully for many years, thanks to many of you.

All this and more await you in the current issue of *The Anastasian*. Again, I express the gratitude of all of us to our editors, writers, photographers and the many, many people who make Saint Anastasia Parish a presence of Christ in the Marple and Newtown Square communities.

Sincerely yours,  
Father Colagreco

[www.saintanastasia.net](http://www.saintanastasia.net)



# Living in Love



Bob and Ruth Arata share their experiences photo courtesy of Carmen Smargiassi

## by Ruth Arata

Saint Anastasia Parish held their annual Living in Love married couples retreat on February 25th and 26th. The retreat is an opportunity for married couples, regardless of how long ago they exchanged their wedding vows, to get back in touch with one another by spending an entire Saturday and Sunday just focusing on their relationship. There is a family picture frame that I have seen in stores that says, "It all started because two people fell in love." So often, the two people that fell in love find themselves stuck in the incredible busyness of life that is more hectic today than ever before. There is barely enough time for work and family, and even less time to spend alone together. Conversations are often centered around the children or the house and rarely about the two of them.



The Living in Love weekend gives couples the time needed to remember the dream that they once had for their marriage. Saturday, the first day of the retreat, couples get back in touch with what made them fall in love in the first place. They learn to realize what unconscious behaviors or cultural attitudes have allowed them to take the focus off of each other. This day helps the pair to knock down barriers that they may not have even realized crept into their marriage and gives them the opportunity to re-energize their relationship. On that evening, there is a loving candlelight dinner for the participants. The second day is a day of affirmation and dedication to a renewed vision. There are no group discussions or open sharing over the weekend. Most of the time is spent listening to presentations and breaking out for private, one-on-one conversations with your spouse. Discussion topics are introduced by couples in the parish who have previously attended the Living in Love weekend and who now wish to share from their own life experiences with the participants.





Deanna Stagliano, John Kyle and Clara Hilberts at St. John's Hospice

Saint John's Hospice, 1221 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA

# St. John's Hospice

by **Deanna Stagliano** "The staff serves all without judgment or discrimination."

*Saint John's Hospice seeks to be a community grounded in faith and service where homeless persons find dignity, respect, nourishment, and opportunities for new beginnings.*

This has been St. John's extraordinary mission for the last fifty-four years. Homeless men venture there for a warm meal, clean clothes, a place to sleep, and help finding a job or dealing with health issues. In comparison, our lives here in Marple-Newtown are relatively comfortable. So, why should we care about these men? Imagine finding yourself in a similar situation—no home, no job, no help. Now, imagine how you can make a difference in each one of the lives of these men!

Saint John's Hospice, a Catholic Social Services agency, is located in Center City at 1221 Race Street across from the Pennsylvania Convention Center. It was established in 1963 by Monsignor Anthony J. O'Neill (then Pastor of Saint John the Evangelist Church) and The Little Brothers of the Good Shepherd. Currently, the staff and numerous volunteers provide several crucial, life-sustaining services. As the website explains, the **Residential Program** furnishes a "drug and alcohol-free, 40-bed residence to men who are in transition from homelessness to independent living in the community." The **Good Shepherd Program** supplies a "drug and alcohol-free, 12-bed residence to medically fragile, homeless men, focusing on transition from homelessness to independent living." The **Coffee House** affords "27 chronically homeless men who typically avoid shelter living, a safe, overnight resting and sleeping environment." Through Day Services, the men are able to obtain clean clothing, shoes, toiletries, and

a nutritious, hot meal at noon each weekday. In a typical year, St. John's provides:

- A residence for over 250 homeless men in the Hospice and Good Shepherd programs
- Case management, medical assistance and counseling for residents and day services guests
- Mailroom services for over 900 men
- 160 showers each week
- Furnishes clean clothing, underwear, shoes and toiletries
- Over 3,000 meals each week to needy men
- Emergency shelter (example, Code Blue) in the Coffee House

The staff serves all without judgment or discrimination, striving to "provide the dignity and respect that offers each of our guests the strength to break the cycle of homelessness." The men are referred to and treated as guests. In turn, the men see St. John's as a holy place, as well as "a place to get assistance and nourishment."

*Saint Anastasia Church* is one of many parishes and organizations supporting St. John's mission. Over thirty years ago, former parishioners Mary and Joe Byers, established our program, nurturing and enriching it until they retired in 2009. The commitment is not time-consuming, but it is rewarding. Our parishioners prepare or purchase casseroles and donate clothing, toiletries, non-perishable food items, and money to the cause. Volunteers collect these items on the second Tuesday of every month in the lower school lobby. We need more parishioners to provide food and supplies for the men, as well as volunteers to commit to a two-hour time period to collect the donations each month. An announcement is published in the parish bulletin the Sunday before each collection date. Volunteers are the backbone of the St. John's community, supplying over 40,000 donated hours per year. Consult the St. John's website ([www.saintjohnshospice.org](http://www.saintjohnshospice.org)) to learn more about volunteer activities and how you can assist on their campus. View some very inspiring YouTube videos on the St. John's web page or Facebook page ([saintjohnshospice](https://www.facebook.com/saintjohnshospice)). A comprehensive list of supplies needed for the men can also be found there. Above all, commit to making a difference in the lives of these men. For more information, contact Deanna Stagliano (610-353-7972) or John Kyle (610-431-3881).

Parishioner, Pat Brown, receives donations from Liz Lain in the lower lobby of the school





Bill Wegner from Good News International Ministries

# Parish Mission

by **Jim Murphy**

"Bill Wegner came highly recommended and has been conducting missions for 20 years. What a fantastic find!"

What is a Parish Mission?

It is a challenge, it is an opportunity to revive your faith, it is a chance, as the theme of this mission states, to "Dare to Be Holy." For four nights in March, approximately 350 to 450 enthusiastic participants came each evening to be reminded of the challenge that Jesus lays before us, "...to love others as I have loved you." We were challenged to "Dare to Be Holy." There was an overwhelming feeling of faith filled enthusiasm for those who attended the 2017 Saint Anastasia Parish Mission.

The mission at Saint Anastasia took place from March 5th through March 8th, with evening sessions and shorter weekday morning sessions. The planning for this mission began a few years ago, with the Pastoral Council. Specific goals were set for a parish mission. It should be at the beginning of Lent, a time when Catholics are reminded of the sacrifices Jesus made for us. The Pastoral Council also wanted to engage a lay person to lead the mission. During this time, Father Colagrecio received a brochure with information about Bill Wegner and Good News International Ministries. Bill Wegner came highly recommended and has been conducting missions for 20 years. What a fantastic find!

During the mission, Bill Wegner was able to share, as a lay person with a grown family and having had a successful business  
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career, many experiences from his own life and how the message of Jesus challenged and changed him as a lay person. His story is not one with a "road-to-Damascus" conversion. He talked with us about "the feeling of something gnawing at him, in spite of the great life he had" which led to him becoming a full time missionary. His talks were not a series of fire and brimstone challenges; in fact, his message was offered as a conversation in the form of questions and stories. Bill challenged us to think about what Christ really meant by "love your enemies" and "do good to those who despise you." He also reminded us that it is hard to be a follower of Christ. It is not easy to weave the message of Jesus into the many responsibilities and distractions we face daily. But he was able to relate, through his own life experiences, that a life focused on Jesus is life's greatest reward.

There was a theme for each of the four days: Our Call to Holiness, The Challenge of Jesus, Reconciliation, and Questions of Jesus. These allowed us to contemplate Jesus in a particular manner. Each night, volunteers from different parish organizations assisted in greeting and in serving refreshments. On the third night, there was an opportunity to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and over 150 participants took the opportunity to receive the Sacrament. It was a night filled with grace. The final night of the Mission provided the most provocative challenge. Bill asked that we



consider Jesus' question to his followers, "Who do you say that I am?" This was a powerful end to our mission, challenging us to use this Lenten season to contemplate Jesus and to renew our faith by our actions.

The mission presented the Saint Anastasia Parish community an opportunity to grow in faith



Photos courtesy of Carmen Smargiassi

and holiness. Many of the faithful members of this community came out to be together and to pray as "one parish community."

For more information about Bill Wegner and his ministry, visit: [www.goodnewsinternational.net](http://www.goodnewsinternational.net)

" For four nights in March...enthusiastic participants came each evening to be reminded of the challenge that Jesus lays before us, 'to love others as I have loved you.' "

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# STAT St. Anastasia Teens

"STAT completed a service project writing letters to military service men and women and they hope to participate in another service day this spring."

by **Lizzy Heurich**

St. Anastasia Teens (STAT), the high school youth group, launched last August. The group meets once a month in the rectory meeting room from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. All high school students are welcome to attend STAT meetings - there are no sign up or registration fees. So far this year, the STAT group has discussed various topics, such as service and faith as well as social media and faith. They have also addressed seasonal and holiday topics like: Advent, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Ash Wednesday, and Lent. During the Christmas season, STAT completed a service project of writing letters to military service men and women and they hope to participate in another service day this spring.

STAT is led by Lizzy Heurich and Karen Arata Brown. Lizzy grew up in North Carolina and graduated from Villanova University. Since graduation, Lizzy has served as an Augustinian Volunteer and earned her master's degree in Higher Education Administration from NC State. Lizzy now works as the Associate Director of the Franciscan Volunteer Ministry, a faith formation and volunteer program. Karen grew up in St. Anastasia Parish and has been leading the middle school students in RESOLVE for the past two years. Karen works for Catholic Leadership Institute, a national apostolate that provides leadership training for priests, bishops, and lay leaders in the Catholic Church.

Lizzy, Karen, and the rest of the STAT members would love to see you at our next session! Contact Lizzy Heurich at [lheurich@saintannies.org](mailto:lheurich@saintannies.org) for more information.

Participants and Youth Minister Lizzy Heurich [photos courtesy of Katie Downey]





Photo courtesy of Joe Crimmins

# What Is It?

by **Joe Crimmins**

Have you ever noticed or wondered about the haloed eagle that supports the Lectionary and Book of Gospels on the pulpit?

In its "Primer to Catholic Symbolism," the Boston Catholic Journal states, "The eagle is the natural enemy of the serpent. The two Testaments are the two outspread wings of the eagle on which can often be seen a large open Bible." According to Catholic Answers website, the eagle "...is a symbol of Christ and His Divine nature, of regeneration by baptism; it is also an emblem of St. John the Evangelist." Because St. John, in his Gospel, "...soared upward in his contemplation of the Divine nature of the Savior," the eagle became his symbol. Also, "St. John dwells particularly upon the Divinity of the Redeemer and contemplates with the unflinching eye of an eagle the highest truths." Thereafter, in a broader sense, the eagle came to represent the inspiration of all the Gospels.

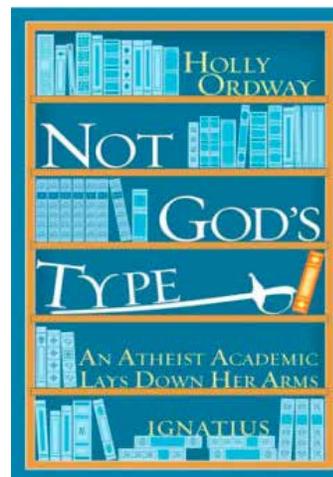
## A FORMED Opinion

[FORMED.org](http://FORMED.org) is a dynamic, web-based platform accessible for FREE to our parish community 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on any device with internet access. It is designed to deepen our faith, strengthen our hope and increase our love for Christ, our Church and one another. With all the rich content on FORMED, it can be hard to choose where to begin. Here is one FORMED opinion:

One of the best books that I have read recently is *Not God's Type* by Holly Ordway, published by Ignatius Press in 2014. It is the true story of how Ordway, an atheist English professor, comes to love Christ, and a few years later, enters the Catholic Church. Because she is an English professor, and has a lifelong love of reading classic literature, this book is well written and easy to read. Like so many people we encounter nowadays, Ordway grew up without any sort of faith and thought herself secure and happy in her atheism. She explains how the rational truth of Christianity broke down her defenses and how she experienced God's grace which brought her to a complete surrender to him. As Ordway describes it, "...this is the account of a glorious defeat." Katie Downey

Visit [FORMED.org](http://FORMED.org) and register with parish code GBVKP9

Rating **+++**



Do you have a favorite movie, book, audio, or program from FORMED that you would like to recommend? Please send in your review to [promotion@saintannies.org](mailto:promotion@saintannies.org) and it may be featured in the next issue of *The Anastasian*.



We, the parishioners of Saint Anastasia, are a strong faith based community, grounded in more than a century of Catholic tradition, rooted in worship and service. Compelled by the Good News of Jesus Christ, we are committed to growing in a deeper relationship with God and with one another. We strive to become a more vibrant parish by inspiring an atmosphere of belonging, of welcoming, and by promoting opportunities to share and spread our Catholic faith, so that we may be more united as one parish community.

