New England Jesuit Oral History Program

Rev. Stanley J. Bezuszka, S.J.

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AMDG

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL HISTORY

Oral histories are the taped recordings of interviews with interesting and often important persons. They are not folklore, gossip, hearsay, or rumor. They are the voice of the person interviewed. These oral records are, in many instances, transcribed into printed documentary form. Though only so much can be done, of course, in an hour or sometimes two, they are an important historical record whose value increases with the inevitable march of time.

For whatever reason, New England Jesuits, among others around the world, have not made any significant number of oral histories of their members. Given the range of their achievements and their impact on the Church and society, this seems to many to be an important opportunity missed. They have all worked as best they could for the greater glory of God. Some have done extraordinary things. Some have done important things. All have made valuable contributions to spirituality, education, art, science, discovery, and many other fields. But living memories quickly fade. Valuable and inspiring stories slip away.

This need not be. Their stories can be retold, their achievements can be remembered, their adventures saved. Their inspiration can provide future generations with attractive models. That is what Jesuit oral history is all about.

Publications

1. Fr. George W. Nolan
2. Fr. John F. Broderick
3. Fr. Joseph S. Scannell
4. Fr. Joseph G. Fennell
5. Fr. James F. Morgan
6. Fr. John V. Borgo
7. Bro. William J. Spokesfield
8. Fr. Lawrence E. Corcoran
9. Fr. John J. Caskin
10. Fr. William F. Carr
11. Fr. Alwyn C. Harry
12. Fr. John F. Foley
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14. Fr. Patrick A. Sullivan
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30. Fr. James W. Skehan
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76. Fr. Paul A. Schweitzer
77. Archbp. Lawrence A. Burke
78. Fr. William C. McInnes
79. Fr. Stanley J. Bezuszka
80. Fr. John B. Handrahan
81. Fr. Henry "Harry" J. Cain
82. Fr. William D. Ibach
83. Fr. Herbert J. Cleary
84. Fr. Martin F. McCarthy
85. Fr. Francis A. Sullivan
86. Fr. Robert J. Daly
87. Bro. Cornelius C. Murphy
88. Fr. Robert D. Farrell
89. Fr. James F. Bresnahan
90. Fr. Raymond G. Helmick
91. Fr. William J. Hamilton
92. Fr. John J. Paris
93. Fr. Donald J. Plocke
94. Fr. Joseph F. X. Flanagan
95. Fr. James J. Hosie
96. Fr. Robert R. Dorin
97. Fr. Michael A. Fahey
98. Fr. James W. O'Neil
99. Fr. George A. Gallarelli
100. Fr. Francis R. Allen
101. Fr. Walter R. Pelletier
102. Bro. Paul J. Geysen
103. Fr. Joseph T. Bennett

Interview with Fr. Stanley J. Bezuzska, S.J.
By Fr. Richard W. Rousseau, S.J.
September 8, 2008

FAMILY

RICHARD ROUSSEAU: Welcome to our interview.

STANLEY BEZUSZKA: Thank you.

RR: As we get started, would you tell us something about your family?

SB: I was born in Vilna, Poland, which is now Vilnius, Lithuania. My father was one of eleven children. Apparently my grandfather had a very large farm, and so all the children worked on the farm.

As far as I know, the only education they had was from itinerant ministers, usually rabbis, who came to my grandfather's house. In exchange for room and board, they would teach my father and some of the other children how to read and write. That was the only education my father had. Apparently he was a good learner, since he also picked up Russian, as did my mother. He also learned German; so he spoke German, Polish, and Russian rather fluently.

RR: Oh, good for him.

COMING TO AMERICA

RR: How did it happen that you came to America?

SB: My father had married once before and had two daughters. He came to America as a widower to look for a place for them all to live together. But, when he went back to Poland to pick up his daughters, they wanted to stay there with their grandmother. So my father stayed in Poland and remarried. When we came to America with him, we settled in Lowell, Massachusetts.

My mother had worked for some rather wealthy people in Vilna. There she picked up an awful lot of information about the world by hearing their conversations. I admired her very, very much, because she was a very perceptive woman and a great mother to me, and, when my sister was born, to her as well. I thought she was absolutely wonderful.

SISTER

RR: Was your sister the only other child?

SB: Yes, just my sister, Josephine. She was a very quiet girl and very protective of me—to put it mildly. She was a fairly good student. She went to parochial school and did extremely well. Then she went to Lowell High School and, again, did extremely well there.

I think she perhaps wanted to go into a career, especially nursing. She admired nurses very much, but I don't think my parents were too keen about it, because, at that time, of course, nurses weren't paid anything. My parents were afraid that maybe she would find it difficult to live, especially since my father was getting old, but my mother was still very active.

MY EARLY YEARS IN AMERICA

RR: Tell us a bit about yourself.

SB: I was born January 26, 1914, and we landed in New York on July 4 of that year. That day became our

family's anniversary. My father had come over earlier to find a place and found a home in Lowell, Massachusetts.

At that time, Lowell was a polyglot city. There were Irish, Italians, Greeks, Lithuanians, Polish, and Portuguese, so we all had our own little sections. We settled in the Polish and Lithuanian section, because, when people worked in the mills, they had to have somebody to take care of the children. Therefore, either the Polish or the Lithuanian people could take care of me, because the Lithuanian people spoke Polish, too, since Vilna was by then in Lithuania. It was very convenient; they went to work at five o'clock in the morning and came back at five o'clock at night. Both my mother and father worked in the mills.

RR: So they had to have somebody take care of you.

SB: Right. Well, actually not only me, but there would be a group of about seven or eight children being looked after in one home.

SCHOOLING

RR: How about your education?

SB: I went to a public elementary school until the second grade, and then to St. Stanislaus parochial school until grade eight.

PARISH

RR: Tell us a bit about your parish.

SB: My parish was Holy Trinity Parish. The pastor was Msgr. Stanislaus Alexander Ogonowski, who came from Poland. By the way, the pilot of one of the planes that crashed into the World Trade Center was John Ogonowski from the same family.

We knew everyone in the parish, and the parish was very active. The pastor was very concerned about the parish. It is still there under a pastor from Poland,

Msgr. Stanislaw Kempa. Before him Msgr. John Abucewicz was pastor for a long time.

RR: There must be still a number of Polish people there.

SB: Yes, but many fewer than when I was young.

RR: How was the parish school?

SB: We were very active. We had plays in Polish at the school and in the large hall at the city center. I acted in some of the plays.

CHOICE OF A COLLEGE

RR: When you had to choose a college, what did you do?

SB: As my friend, Walter Stoklosa, and I came to the end of high school, we spoke to our curate, Fr. Orzech, who was a very young fellow. We told him we would like to go to college. We asked him where he thought we ought to go.

Well, he looked at us and said, "What about Holy Cross?" I think at that time we were a little bit flippant as we asked, "Where is Holy Cross?" He replied, "Up in Worcester, only about forty miles from Lowell." We said, "Well, that doesn't sound very exciting." So he said, "Well, you could go to my college, St. Mary's College." We asked, "Where is that?" He said, "Detroit, Michigan." And we said, "That's where we would like to go!"

RR: Oh, really? Why was that attractive to you?

SB: The distance.

RR: Oh, the distance. [Laughter] All right. How were your college years?

SB: There were many connections with people from Poland. Of course, we were all bilingual at St. Mary's. We translated the Greek into Polish and Latin into Polish. We also studied Polish literature. We had a number of professors from Europe; a couple of them were Polish refugees from Russia.

RR: So I gather you speak Polish very well?

SB: Oh, yes. I had to speak Polish at home.

JOINING THE JESUITS

RR: How did you come to join the Jesuits?

SB: At St. Mary's College, I had a friend who joined the Jesuits. He was going to Detroit for interviews with the Jesuits. He'd come back and tell me all about the Jesuits. That was the first time, I think, that I had ever heard about them. I got more and more interested in the Jesuits; I especially liked what they were doing. They were a teaching order, and I was kind of inclined toward studying and teaching.

Walter Stoklosa entered the diocesan seminary, and I applied to the New York Province of the Society of Jesus, because I didn't know where else to apply. Fr. Tiverton, who was the Provincial of the New York Province, wrote back to me and said, "Well, since you're from New England, why don't you apply to the New England Province?" So I did. I was accepted and entered Shadowbrook on September 15, 1933.

MY EARLY YEARS IN THE JESUITS

RR: Tell us about your experience of the novitiate.

SB: My master of novices was Fr. Jack Smith. He was absolutely fantastic. I admired him an awful lot. The life with the Jesuits was extremely productive and interesting. We had a number of extremely interesting and bright people in our group.

In my time, they accepted high school students and college students, so the mixture was very, very effective, because you'd go out on a walk with the high school students and get one sort of conversation and then, on another occasion, you'd walk with the college students, and it would be completely different.

Of course, there was also learning how to speak Latin! All we had studied in college was Caesar, but you can't

talk like Caesar to tell someone to set the tables! It was an extremely interesting life, I thought.

RR: And then you went to the juniorate.

SB: Yes, during the juniorate I was again active in dramatics. I was also working on projects for the missions.

TO WESTON FOR PHILOSOPHY

RR: Then you went to Weston College to study philosophy.

SB: Yes, in 1937. Incidentally, while I was at Weston, Stan Gerry and I worked on the farm. In fact, we all worked on the farm, picking potatoes and vegetables. It was a very happy life; it was an active life.

Then, of course, several of us helped build Fr. Dan Linehan's seismology building, now called Weston Observatory. Through his radio program, Fr. Ahern was superb at raising the money for the Linehan building. Several of us scholastics went with Fr. Ahern to WEEI, a Boston radio station, and we sang songs. He was also a great lecturer. During my studies, I worked in the seismology department every morning, checking the records to see if there was an earthquake.

REGENCY IN SPECIAL STUDIES

RR: Where did you do regency?

SB: After the usual three years of philosophy, I was assigned to Boston College to study science. I studied with Fr. George O'Donnell in the physics and math departments. I got a master's degree in physics in 1942.

RR: How did you find living at St. Mary's?

SB: In general, well enough, but at the time, I lived next to a noisy elevator. There were a number of wonderful people there. After 1939 the college witnessed difficult times because of the war. When the army took over our Jesuit residence at St. Mary's, we managed.

THEOLOGY AND BACK TO BC

RR: Then back to Weston for theology studies?

SB: Yes, then I came back to Weston and began studying theology. But about six months later the Provincial, Fr. Dolan called me up and said, "Stan, I want you to go back to BC, because Dr. Frederick White was drafted and we need a physics teacher." So I was pulled back into teaching again, and lost a year, 1942-1943. [During the war BC emphasized science courses for the soldiers as part of their training.]

RR: After that year, you returned to theology?

SB: Yes, but I was then one year behind my entering class of 1933.

MATH IN A ROWBOAT

RR: Did you manage to keep up your math studies?

SB: Yes, while I was studying theology at Weston, I met a Canadian Jesuit, Eric O'Connor, who was a math teacher. He liked mathematics and was getting a doctorate in mathematics at Harvard. On Thursdays he would help us with math. Then during vacation we went to Keyser Island off the coast of Connecticut. As long as I rowed the boat for him, he taught me math. Whenever I stopped rowing, he stopped teaching!

ORDINATION

RR: What do you remember about your ordination?

SB: When I was ordained on June 22, 1946, my mother and my father were there. That was the one thing I worried about—whether my father and my mother would live to see my ordination. Bishop Emmett, S.J., from Kingston, Jamaica, ordained us.

RR: Did you mind having your ordination put back a year?

SB: Actually, it was most fortunate that there was a delay, because in 1996 the Pope invited all the priests in the world who had been ordained in 1946 to come to Rome

to celebrate their 50th with him.

It was a tremendous week of events at St. Peter's and St. Paul's. We had Mass and lunch with the Pope on Sunday. I especially remember kissing his hand after meeting him by accident while we were posing for the group photo. If my ordination had been in 1945, it wouldn't have happened. So it was absolutely fortunate that it happened that way.

TERTIANSHIP

RR: And then tertianship?

SB: Yes. Fr. Ray McInnis was tertian master. Some of the almost thirty tertians came from other provinces.

RR: Where did you do your pastoral work?

SB: I was chaplain at Georgetown Hospital for two months. I thought that was wonderful. I met Fr. Duff, who was a great guy. I used to spend the evenings with Fr. Sohon, a mathematician.

SPECIAL STUDIES

RR: What did you do after tertianship?

SB: After tertianship, I went to Brown University 1948-1953 for a doctorate in mathematical physics. I had made several friends at BC, who had also been accepted at Brown.

RR: How were the courses at Brown?

SB: They were very interesting. It was a different atmosphere completely. We had never heard of ultrasonics. The teachers would say, "After getting a master's in physics, you still don't know what ultrasonics is!"

We worked very hard with no free time for our own needs. We would be doing a lab at 2:00 AM. This was especially true while we were studying ultrasonics and couldn't be disturbed by noise.

TO BOSTON COLLEGE

RR: Where did you go next?

SB: I was appointed chair of the Math Department at BC.

RR: Did you teach other students than those at BC?

SB: For a time, I taught Raytheon and General Electric employees twice a week for two hours at night, after teaching all day. I was paid by the government.

RR: The Boston area saw tremendous growth in research after World War II. Did you get involved in that?

SB: Yes, I taught engineers at Polaroid for a while. That was really different, because their focus was on problem-solving. I did go on some field trips with Dr. Land.

I prefer theory and analysis over lab work. I spent most of my time doing the research for the data that other people had gathered. So, if you're an experimenter and you say, "Hey, Stan, will you help me with the data?" I'd say, "I'll be glad to!" But if I am asked, "Will you do my lab work for me?" I'd say, "No!"

MATH DEPARTMENT AND MATH INSTITUTE

RR: I understand you were chair of the Math Department.

SB: I was chairman 1953-1968. The development of the department began when Fr. [William] Van Etten Casey was dean.

RR: Tell us a bit about the Math Institute.

SB: It was begun, due to the money BC was receiving from the National Science Foundation. They liked the instructional programs we developed to improve teachers' mathematical content knowledge.

RR: So you were very busy then?

SB: Yes. Over the years, I gave many talks across the US. Many, many teachers got to know about BC. For example, Fr. Maxwell, the rector/president, would tell me he met teachers in Kansas, Texas, Washington, and Oregon. They would ask him if he knew me personally. So many teachers got to know about BC.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

RR: Did you have a sense of God's providence in your life?

SB: It's awfully hard to say I had a sense of that at each moment, but I most liked how the regular spiritual life of an ordinary Jesuit was sustaining.

RR: Well, thank you.

SB: You are welcome.

+ + +

Fr. Stanley J. Bezuzska, S.J.

Born: January 26, 1914, Vilna, Poland
Entered: September 15, 1933, Lenox, Massachusetts, St. Stanislaus Novitiate / Shadowbrook
Ordained: June 22, 1946, Weston, Massachusetts, Weston College
Final Vows: February 2, 1951, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, Boston College
Died: December 27, 2008, Weston, Massachusetts, Campion Health Center

1928 Lowell, Massachusetts: Lowell High School - Student
1932 Detroit, Michigan: St. Mary's College - Student
1933 Lenox, Massachusetts: St. Stanislaus Novitiate / Shadowbrook - Novitiate, juniorate
1937 Weston, Massachusetts: Weston College - Studied philosophy
1940 Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: Boston College
1940-1942 Studied physics
1942-1943 Taught physics, mathematics
1943 Weston, Massachusetts: Weston College - Studied theology
1947 Pomfret, Connecticut: St. Robert Hall - Tertianship

1948 Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University -
Studied mathematics and theoretical physics
1953 Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: Boston College
1953-2008 Taught mathematics
1953-1964 Taught physics
1953-1968 Chair, Mathematics Department
1957-2008 Director, Mathematics Institute
2008 Weston, Massachusetts: Campion Health Center -
Praying for the Church and the Society

Degrees

1939 Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy, Weston College-Boston College
1940 Licentiate in Philosophy, Weston College-Boston College
1940 Master of Arts, Philosophy, Weston College-Boston College
1942 Master of Science, Physics, Boston College
1947 Licentiate in Sacred Theology, Weston College
1953 Doctor of Philosophy, Theoretical Physics, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

Professional Appointments

Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts
Chair, Mathematics Department
Director, Mathematics Institute
Professor, Department of Mathematics

Other Professional Activities

Air Force, Cambridge Research Center, Bedford MA:
Investigator on Contract AF 19 (604)-1299, *Analysis of Rocket Data and Electron Density on the Ionosphere*.
Investigator on Contract AF 19 (604)-1926, *Study of Research Problems Concerning Negative Resistance Diodes*.

Polaroid Corporation, Cambridge, MA: Instructor of mathematics to personnel

National Science Foundation: Director of and Instructor of In-service, Summer and Academic Year Programs for Teachers of Mathematics.

School systems and districts in the United States and abroad: Professional Development Consultant.

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education: Reader, Research Bureau

William Sadlier, Inc., New York, New York: Consultant and author.

Science Research Associates, Inc., Chicago, Illinois: Consultant and author.

Creative Publications, Inc., Palo Alto, California: Author.

Dale Seymour Publications, Inc., Palo Alto, California: Author.

Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., Columbus, Ohio: Consultant.

School Science and Mathematics, Mathematics Teacher, Arithmetic Teacher, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Educational Materials Committee: Reviewer.

Professional Organizations: Offices Held

Association of Teachers of Mathematics in New England: President (1960-1962).

Northeastern Section of Mathematical Association of America: Chairman (1956-1957), Boston College Representative (1970-1977).

Mathematics Section of American Association of Jesuit Scientists, Chairman (1958-1961).

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Member of the Board of Directors (1963-1966); NCTM 1982 Yearbook Middle School Mathematics Advisory Panel; Task Force to Develop NCTM/NASA Space Mathematics

publication (1983-1987); Elections Committee (1986-1989).
Educational Policies Commission: Advisor (1963-1966).

Organization Memberships

Member of over thirty-five professional societies.

Workshops

Fr. Bezuszka gave over 1000 talks, workshops, and mini-courses in addition to his courses offered during academic years and summers.

Awards

1990 Recipient of the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics Glenn Gilbert Award for Outstanding Contributions to Mathematics Education.
1995 Recipient of the Mathematics Education Trust Foundation of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Lifetime Achievement Award for Teaching.
Member of Massachusetts Hall of Fame for Mathematics Educators, 2001.
November 2008, the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in New England instituted an annual award entitled, " The Rev. Stanley J. Bezuszka, S.J. Lifetime Service Award for Mathematics Teaching and Learning." Fr. Bezuszka was the first recipient of this award.
March 2009, the Association of Teachers of Mathematics in Massachusetts gave the first annual Rev. Stanley J. Bezuszka, S.J. Achievement Award for Excellence in the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics.

Publications (since 1970)

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setts: Boston College Press, 1970, 1986.

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Computapes, with Theresa Denman. Chicago, Illinois: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1972.

Transformations with Applications to Geometry, with M. J. Kenney (preliminary edition). Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: Boston College Press, 1973.

Calculus One for Individualized and Modular Study, with Lou D'Angelo. Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: Boston College Press, 1973.

Mathematics Learning System: *Levels PP-8*, with V. DeVault, H. Greenberg, and H. Frehmeyer. Chicago, Illinois: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1974. Revised edition, 1978.

Skills through Patterns: Level PP-8, with M. J. Kenney. Chicago, Illinois: Science Research Associates, 1974.

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Mathematics Teachers. pp. 240-249, 368-380.

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"Middle Grade Mathematics: An Overview," with M. M. Wheeler. *1982 Yearbook of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics*. Pp. 1-8.

Number Treasury: A Sourcebook of Problems for Calculators and Computers, with M. J. Kenney. Palo Alto, California: Dale Seymour Publications, 1982.

"Challenges for Enriching the Curriculum: Arithmetic and Number Theory," with M. J. Kenney. *Mathematics Teacher* Vol. 76, No. 4 (April 1983): pp. 250-252.

"Let's Try Some Egyptian Mathematics," *New England Mathematics Journal* (May 1983): pp. 5-6.

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"A Square Share: Problem Solving with Squares" with M. J. Kenney, *Mathematics Teacher* Vol. 77, No. 6 (September 1984): pp. 414-420.

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the Middle School, Vol. 3, No. 2 (October 1997): pp. 142-147.

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"That Ubiquitous Sum: 1 + 2 + 3 + ... + n," with M. J. Kenney, *Mathematics Teacher*, Vol. 98, No. 5 (December 2004, January 2005).

"Just Five Does It," with M. J. Kenney, *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School*, Vol. 12, No. 8, April, 2007.

"The Three R's: Recursive Thinking, Recursion, and Recursive Formulas," with M. J. Kenney, *Algebra and Algebraic Thinking in School Mathematics*, *70th Yearbook*, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2008): pp. 81-98.

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Excerpts from the June 2002 interview by Dr. David L. Roberts with Fr. Stanley J. Bezuszka, S.J., conducted under the auspices of the Oral History Task Force of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and done at the office of Fr. Bezuszka at Boston College

Introduction: Summary of Fr. Bezuszka's life and work

Stanley J. Bezuszka was born in Poland in 1914. He grew up in Lowell, Massachusetts, attending both public and parochial schools. His initial undergraduate education was at St. Mary's College near Detroit, Michigan. Here his interest in mathematics was awakened, while his inclination to-

ward religious service led him to join the Jesuits.

In 1946 he was ordained, and in 1948 he entered Brown University as a graduate student, earning a Ph.D. in theoretical physics in 1953. Fr. Bezuszka then returned to Boston College, where he was appointed chairman of the mathematics department and professor of physics. Later he was to teach mathematics exclusively.

In 1957 Fr. Bezuszka founded the BC Mathematics Institute, devoted especially to professional development for teachers of secondary school mathematics, through academic year and summer institutes. He became one of the most prominent public faces of the "New Math," giving numerous demonstration classes, and speaking at mathematics conferences and meetings across the country. In this interview Fr. Bezuszka reflects on these and other career experiences, and expresses his views on a variety of educational issues.

Interview

EARLY EDUCATION

DR: You mentioned St. Stanislaus School?

FB: St. Stanislaus was a parochial school run by the Felician Sisters. They were very, very good teachers—the upper division Sisters were excellent.

DR: What grades would this have been?

FB: Grades three through eight. I spent the first two years in public school.

DR: Do you have any particular memories of mathematics instruction that interested you at the time?

FB: Not exactly. It was mostly memorization. One thing that the parochial schools were particularly credited with is the training of memory, so that by the eighth grade learning algorithms in mathematics was no problem for me.

DR: How about any memories of mathematics instruction

at Lowell High School?

FB: I had the same teacher for Algebra I and Algebra II. It was, again, mostly work that required very little thinking and just following procedures, like factoring polynomials, multiplying polynomials, etc. There was not, if I recall correctly, much thinking going on there.

When we came to geometry, it was a different story. Geometry was not clear to me for about the first six weeks. What turned me on to geometry was this incident. I was talking to one of the boys in another geometry class and he was busily doing something. I said, "What are you doing?" He said, "Geometry." At that time I did not think much of geometry.

I said, "What are you trying to do?" He said, "I am trying to trisect an angle." Well, instead of telling me what he was doing, he asked, "Why don't you try it?" That remark turned me on to geometry.

Then I found that the tests were not too difficult after all, because I had learned quite a bit of geometry on my own, trying to trisect an angle. The tests typically consisted of one original problem and four theorems. In fact, the tests were simply a nuisance that occurred every six weeks. I did fairly well in geometry, to the surprise of my teacher and, of course, to myself, too.

DR: Did you enjoy mathematics during high school?

FB: There were too many other things that I was involved in. I was in the boy officers cadet group. I was on the baseball team and active in the debating society, and dramatics. I also wrote articles for the *Lowell High School Review*. There were too many distractions to develop an impression about mathematics.

After two years of algebra and one of geometry, in the senior year I took a course in physics, astronomy, and geology. There was also a solid geometry course, but for some reason I did not take it.

DR: Did you take any trigonometry in high school?

FB: No trigonometry.

DR: During your school years, did you do any outside reading, such as popular books on science and mathematics?

FB: No. Outside reading mainly consisted of books that we took out from the Lowell Public Library. There was a second-hand bookstore run by a Mr. Emory. I remember him vividly. He did a great deal to help the students read. But he had no mathematics books. I read the Frank Merriwell series and other typical books for boys.

HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

DR: When did you graduate from high school?

FB: In 1932.

DR: Right in the midst of the Depression.

FB: Right. I had graduated from St. Stanislaus School in 1928. Then I went to Lowell High School. I worked after school and in the summers in shoe shops in Lowell. Though known as a textile city, textiles in Lowell were not developing as much as the shoe factories. In 1932 I went to St. Mary's College at Orchard Lake, Michigan.

DR: What kind of a place was that?

FB: St. Mary's comprised a high school, a college, and a seminary. Classes were in Polish and in English. Some of the students were very proficient in Polish, because Detroit had a substantial Polish population. I had a very good teacher in mathematics, Fr. Wota.

He had won mathematical prizes in contests in Michigan. I had college algebra the first semester and trigonometry the second. The modern algebra was rather interesting. Trigonometry was mostly computational, using tables, and not very motivating.

One thing Fr. Wota taught me was not to worry

about the answer in the back of the book. He said, "If you know how to do the problem, do it according to your understanding. Then, you can check the answer. If the answers do not agree, that does not mean automatically that you are wrong, because the book could be wrong." Now, that was an innovation as far as I was concerned. I had been taught the book was never wrong. [Laughter]

EARLY LANGUAGE TRAINING

FB: One aspect of high school that I didn't like was how languages were taught, especially French. We overemphasized grammar and vocabulary. The only thing I recall is how to say "Good morning."

Latin was taught similarly. Only in senior year did we study the *Agricola* [by Tacitus], where it appeared to be a spoken language. I got sick and tired of the soldier sitting on the one hand and rising on the other hand. [Laughter] This changed at Shadowbrook, because we read Ovid and other great Latin writers. Certainly, some of the poets were fantastic.

I remember Horace, who wrote for his patron, Maecenas, who was a soldier; you could almost see the soldiers walking down the Appian Way in the opening lines: "Maecenas atavis edite regibus. O, et praesidium et dulce decus meum, sunt quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum." [Ode I, 1] This work changed my whole attitude towards the classics.

We also read, in Greek, the *Anabasis* [by Xenephon], the *Iliad,* and the *Odyssey.* There were a lot of wonderful passages. In one, Ulysses, adrift on a raft, turns to his companion and says, "Someday, we are going to look back on this and have a good laugh." Here they are, in the middle of the ocean! [Laughter] And he's talking about having a good laugh sometime. How are they even going to get out of there?

The Greek we took at St. Mary's was really great. We had Prof. Martusiewicz, who had escaped from being drafted in Russia. The first day he told us what class would be like: "I will call upon you alphabetically and you will recite for me. We will start with the Gospel of Saint John"—Koine Greek, not classical Greek—"and we'll see what happens." Being Bezuszka, I was first and I felt I didn't have to worry with all the Bibles around.

I got up, thinking I'd have it easy, and he said, "Translate chapter one." I asked, "Into Polish or English?" He said, "Suit yourself." So I rattled it off in English. He said, "Very good, excellent, excellent." Then, he crucified me for forty minutes: "'In the beginning was the word.' How would you say in Greek: 'If in the beginning there was a word'? Or, 'Should in the beginning there be a word'?" You could hear a pin drop when we walked out of that class. What an ordeal that was!

Our Latin teacher was superb, too. And the courses in Polish literature were an eye-opener. Some of the Polish poetry was absolutely wonderful; it was of a type that reflected the life of the poor people. I remember one Polish story about the earth in winter: "Ziemia matka kohana jak miezywa odpoczyma." "The farmer looked at the land and said, 'O Earth, Mother Beloved, like dead, you are only resting.'" There were a lot of thoughtful lines like that.

Later we spoke Latin all the time in our classes at Weston College. They were kind of interesting. The Romans never had underwear of any kind. At least, we weren't aware of it. [Laughter] The question was, how do you say "underwear" in Latin? It was very easy. *Sub* means "under," and *ubi* means "where": *sububis*. [Laughter] A pair of *sububis,* a pair of underwear. [Laughter] So we used to murder the language like that. We used to do that with German, too.

MEMORIZATION

FB: The one big lesson you learned at Shadowbrook was how to conserve time. In other words, you were given fifteen minutes to do this, a half an hour to do this, and you did it. On Sunday morning, we had English composition. You were told to write a sonnet in two hours. Well, if you think you can write a sonnet in two hours, forget it. In the first place, you have to pick a topic. The next thing you knew, the two hours were up. So you learned you just don't dillydally. You concentrate and you do it, period.

Also in Latin class, we didn't use the textbook, we memorized it, fifty lines at a time. So in class the teacher would say, "Recite the first five lines." You gave it from memory. Then he said, "OK, translate it." And, then, "Give us some of the grammatical structure." Trying to memorize fifty lines in about an hour seemed almost impossible at first. But after about a month, we could do it.

DR: Do you feel that memory drill is worthwhile?

FB: Definitely. You've got to memorize certain basic facts in mathematics. The big question is, what should you memorize? You memorize what you will be using frequently. Thus certain properties and algorithms are useful. There needs to be an appropriate balance between knowing and using calculators and computers. There are some things you don't have to memorize, but algorithms, sure.

DEGREES OBTAINED

DR: On your vita you have spoken about your bachelor's and master's degrees from Boston College. Those were all in mathematics?

FB: No. The BA was in mathematics, the master of science was in physics, and the MA was in philosophy. I also took several graduate mathematics courses while pur-

suing the master's degrees.

Fr. George O'Donnell, then the Chairman of the Math Department at Boston College, was an inspiration and one of the great movers that directed me more and more to mathematics.

I also enjoyed the theoretical physics courses. I had realized that I am not an experimentalist. I am just, frankly, impatient: I get upset when things don't work, especially, in equipment. So, I was tending towards the theoretical side of physics.

EARLY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

DR: Was this teaching experience in 1941 your first teaching experience?

FB: No. In the novitiate I taught a course in German, that I had had the previous year. During theology I tutored some seminarians in mathematics.

My first formal teaching occurred while I was taking courses at BC. After a year and a half, I had finished my work. The war had just about started, so I spent half a year teaching exterior ballistics and code sending to physics majors. That was most concentrated teaching before 1953, when I returned to BC as Chairman of Mathematics.

DR: So you spent the war years here at BC?

FB: From 1940-1942 I studied physics, and taught physics and math 1942-1943. I did theology at Weston 1943-1947, and was ordained June 22, 1946. During tertianship, 1947-1948, I was ill with an inner ear problem. The fall of 1948 I went to Brown.

Before arriving at Brown I had decided to work with Dr. Lindsay on theoretical physics as my field of concentration. I did enroll in several math courses. My thesis was on the mathematics of data gathered by someone else. It pertained to ultrasonic scattering of cylindrical fluids.

DR: So, your Ph.D. was actually in physics?
FB: Yes, theoretical physics.

RETURN TO BOSTON COLLEGE

DR: Then you returned to Boston College?
FB: Yes, I was assigned Chairman of the Mathematics Department.
DR: Despite the fact that you had gotten a Ph.D. in physics, you chose the Math Department?
FB: When I came to Boston College as Chairman of the Math Department, I was also given an assistant professorship in the Physics Department. It was a dual appointment. The Physics Department offered some theoretical courses, which I taught.

But after a while, something showed up which still persists, I think. If I had a math major taking the physics course, he knew the math, but didn't know the physics. The physics students in the course knew the physics, but didn't know the math. It was uncommon for students to excel in both. I don't know how this dilemma can be resolved.

At present BC offers several courses in introductory physics: physics with lab, physics without lab, physics with calculus and no lab, physics with calculus and lab and lectures. We are trying to accommodate the students' backgrounds.

BC MATH INSTITUTE

DR: Let's talk about the BC Mathematics Institute [BCMI].
FB: The BCMI began informally in 1953 with my teaching a new mathematics curriculum to the math mathematics majors. It was a fairly rigorous course based on my mathematics experience at Brown.

The new curriculum was not accepted too, too well, frankly. The students had a bit of difficulty getting adjusted to a new way of thinking: that mathematics

is a language, that it isn't just manipulating numbers and figures and letters, and that you had to *think* in mathematics.

We didn't call our new curriculum New Math; we just said that it was a better math than what students had been given previously. This change caused trouble, because we did have some students taking physics and others students taking chemistry.

We made the mistake —that later on was made with the New Math—that we tried to put in the revision of mathematics for all the students. Neither chemistry nor physics students wanted the type of structure that we were trying to teach. For example, about the first week of physics courses students needed trigonometry, because they were using the force table. The chemistry students needed logarithms, because this was their method of computation. So Prof. Krebs worked with the physics and chemistry departments, and a service course in mathematics was created to meet their needs.

ORGANIZATION OF THE MATH INSTITUTE

DR: Could you describe the initial organization of the BCMI and how many were involved in the '50s?

FB: We just had two or three support staff and a couple of instructors. By the time all programs were in operation about 1960, we had about six instructors, and about eight graduate and undergraduate students, and a few office staff. The course instructors were a combination of full-time department faculty and part-time adjuncts. The BCMI was successful in hiring people only for the summer.

DR: How much of the materials did you write?

FB: Well, it depended on which courses. For courses I taught, most of the material I had written myself. In the others, the instructors used formal texts.

HELPING TEACHERS LEARN

DR: Turning to this pamphlet, "An Analysis of New Mathematics Programs," you wrote that after trying to upgrade the freshman and sophomore math courses at BC, you recognized the widespread deficiencies in their high school preparation. The goal, then, became to reeducate high school teachers. Did this remain the primary goal of the BCMI program?

FB: Yes. Our funding was primarily for the professional development of teachers, grades seven through twelve. So we concentrated on developing their mathematical proficiency. But initially, to persuade the teachers that the content was adaptable for students, we had a demonstration class of seventh and eighth grade students. We chose youngsters who would speak out in class, so that the teachers could hear the interactions. They sat behind the students.

In some of the early institute courses we invited seventh and eighth graders from about twenty schools. We had about 110 students come to audition. Then, I presented a lesson. We watched for the extroverts who would raise their hands and shout the answer, give their opinions, or ask questions. We selected about thirty of those lively students. Were they the brightest? Not always. But, they were sure to talk in class. We conducted demonstration classes for several years.

After several years of this activity, the teacher participants said, "OK, cut out the demonstration classes. We can see that they understand." We had demonstration classes off campus, too, for example with the parents in Lowell, Massachusetts. I had six or seven students sit with microphones and about 300 parents came to a meeting. The parents were questioning the advisability of doing the New Math. Then I ran a discussion and the students with the six microphones would answer questions. The parents realized that, although,

they didn't understand what I was talking about, the students did understand it. The parents became convinced that the students could learn the new materials.

CRITIQUES OF THE NEW METHOD

DR: In another comment from this pamphlet, the NCTM committee criticizes what they refer to as a lack of attention to practical applications in the early development of the program. I wondered if you could say a little bit about that.

FB: Because I was also teaching a course in applications, using physics as a basis, it occurred to me that just as "Sets, Operations, and Patterns" was grounded in mathematical structure, perhaps a similar approach could be taken with applications in the physical universe. Although I worked on the project for some time, I never made sufficient progress to publish my ideas.

Regarding the use of mathematics in the real world, we do not make enough distinction between mathematics as it is used in the real world and the world of mathematics. It is the world of mathematics that many students find frustrating and difficult, while the mathematics in the everyday real world often seems too routine and boring to them. All students will continue as adults to be users of mathematics on an everyday basis, and many will perform the necessary tasks without real understanding. On the other hand some students will pursue the mathematics in the real world and will be successful accountants, actuaries, and so on. But the mathematics of the real world will never motivate those students who aspire to be mathematicians. They need to explore the world of mathematics deeply.

Take a look at accountants or the people at the checkout counters. They could work there for fifty years and know absolutely nothing about the properties of numbers. I know of no accountant who has discovered a

theorem. The real world will never produce mathematicians. It'll produce engineers, it'll produce accountants, sure. But, it will never produce mathematicians. This is my conviction.

DR: Also, in this pamphlet, the NCTM committee describes the BCMI as offering a "compromise between the 'tell them' and the 'let them discover' methods." Would you say that was an accurate assessment?

FB: To some extent. The issue was: How much time would we spend on telling and how much time would we spend on students discovering? Schools were then, as now, under the pressure of following a curriculum and testing. Obviously, discovery doesn't happen in two or three seconds. There is no instant discovery method.

We found out that, it is discovery that gives you the thrill of mathematics, even if it's something that you discover that has already been discovered years before. However, the amount of time it takes to teach students using a discovery approach effectively is impractical, given school constraints. So, we did show results to students and we did give students, occasionally, possibilities and opportunities to discover.

HISTORICAL VIEWPOINT

DR: I was also looking at another NCTM pamphlet called, "The Revolution in School Mathematics," from 1961, where it says of the BCMI that "the emphasis is on the structure of mathematics approached from the historical point of view." Would you expand upon that?

FB: What we did from the historical viewpoint was to introduce briefly the people who wrote the mathematics being studied. That was our historical approach. For example, when we talked about the solution of equations, we discussed how the Egyptians solved equations. They had a very interesting method, a sort of infallible guessing method for linear equations in one variable.

Similarly casting out nines and Napier's rods—these were different approaches to the operations of mathematics. Mathematics is a humanly created subject; it's not divinely revealed. Teachers and students need to be aware of this fact.

DR: Was it your experience that introducing these historical elements attracted the students to the material?

FB: To some extent and for some individuals. What they remembered most were stories and anecdotes about them: Archimedes, of course, running through the streets of Syracuse yelling, "Heureka, heureka! I have found it, I have found it!" But I also think teachers and students should know, for example, that Euclid lived at a certain period in history. There should be a timeline provided for them.

DR: Occasionally, I have seen it suggested that it might be a good idea to present mathematics somewhat in the historical order in which it occurred. I wondered if you had any thoughts about that.

FB: That is a question that has bothered me for quite some time. It's a challenge, a perplexing one. For example, let's start with the natural numbers: zero, one, two, three, four, five, six. Well, where do we go from there? We might ask how do you add them? But we could also ask how many of these numbers are there? This would lead to a discussion of infinity and the work of Georg Cantor. And there could be other orderings of topics to consider. The question reduces to which ordering is appropriate for a certain audience.

DR: Let me rephrase my question a little bit. What I was trying to get at is the suggestion that, if a certain concept came earlier in history, then, therefore, it should be taught earlier in the curriculum. Does that idea make any sense to you?

FB: Yes. Historically speaking, one thing that we learned early was the solution of equations, because they came

from everyday problems. So the solution of equations using manipulatives, pictures, tables, and graphs should be taught early.

CRITICISM OF MORRIS KLINE

DR: OK. Would you speak a little bit about Morris Kline.

FB: He was a very good critic with a tremendous command of English. To be a critic is one thing, but, to be helpful for the mathematics programs that we were working on—I don't know how helpful he was. We all knew what was wrong with the New Math.

When he wrote *Why Johnny Cannot Add*: *The Failure of the New Math* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), he pointed out most of the difficulties that we were aware of. But, just pointing out the difficulties without offering any solution was absolutely of no help to us. Constructive criticism was needed.

DR: Do you recall Kline sort of organized an open letter published in 1962 in the *Math Monthly* and in *Mathematics Teacher*. About seventy prominent mathematicians signed it. Do you remember that incident?

FB: Yes. I, personally, paid no attention to it. I was more concerned that the general public was rejecting the reform and realized the movement was not going to be successful at this time. It was unfortunate that we mathematicians didn't stick together, but even if we had, the effort would have failed.

DR: Some critics pointed to particular topics they thought were overemphasized—the number and numeral distinction, and doing arithmetic in bases other than ten.

FB: I remember we included work on bases, because IBM had come out with a monster computer. Not only were they using base two, but, base sixteen. So we wanted to point out this application and reaffirm the importance of base ten. Some people went overboard with base five, six, seven, eight, etc.

"THE NEW MATH"

DR: The set concept was what got some people upset, the emphasis on intersection, union, and so on.

FB: The set concept was abstract, but on the other hand it was useful for a number of topics, such as early stages of addition and problem solving. The initial treatment of sets in reform materials discouraged its use, but later modifications have helped to preserve some of the basic ideas and language of sets in texts at various levels of instruction.

DR: How did you feel at the time about the name, the New Math? Did that bother you at all? Some people, apparently, didn't like that very much.

FB: Frankly, I didn't particularly object to it, but, I just couldn't understand who would call it the New Math. This was the math that I had been studying all along, the math that I had been studying in graduate school. So it was very difficult for me to say that this was "new" math. It's the old math. All we were doing was just taking the good parts of math, of the old math, and saying, look, we've neglected this. We shouldn't have neglected it.

Therefore what they were referring to was the new curriculum, and not the New Math. The new curriculum, of course, yes. That I would have understood. But, calling it the New Math was just promoted either by the newspapers or by critics. I don't know who coined the word, but I just didn't get upset about it.

APPRAISING IN RETROSPECT

DR: Do you have a retrospective assessment of the New Math period, as a whole?

FB: There is one comment I would like to make with regard to the New Math movement and its impact on society. Those of us who tried to enact change at this time made a serious tactical error. Change in math-

ematics instruction affects everyone in society, and thus everyone needs to be involved and to buy into the proposed change, as well as feel some ownership in the endeavor. Those involved in the New Math reform concentrated on students and much less on teachers. But administrators, parents, and society as a whole were neglected.

I also think in our enthusiasm we came on too strong and had expectations that were too high. Some in fact were saying that we were teaching math as if all students were math majors. Our programs should have been designed to reach all students with some measure of success.

For a while, on the college level, just before the new curriculum, I would say, "I am a mathematician. What do you think I do?" Students would say, "Well, you solve equations. That is what you do all day long. You differentiate, you integrate." etc. That response is why we need to talk about discovery, and where the interest and fun of doing math comes from. Some of it comes precisely because all of a sudden you look at things and you make a sort of an induction. You say, "What if I did this?" What if? The "What if?" attitude in mathematics is not common among students. They should experience probing such as, "If it works for two numbers, does it work for three?" You look at them and say, "Well, if it works for two numbers, three numbers, four numbers, what about an infinite set of numbers?" We try to teach this to students, not because they are going to be mathematicians, but, just to show them a glimpse of what mathematicians are about.

MORE INFLUENCE IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS?

DR: Would it be true that the BC Math Institute materials and the BC Institute-trained teachers have had more influence in Catholic schools than elsewhere?

FB: My immediate response is no. While we had a fair number of teachers from Catholic schools in the various institutes, most teacher participants were from public schools. There were also some attendees from other private independent schools. We did not do follow-up questionnaires with all our participants to see if or how they used BC materials directly or indirectly in their classes. Our book records indicate about 40% involvement with Catholic schools.

DR: Would it make any sense to talk about a distinctive, Catholic response to the New Math?

FB: No. I don't think it makes any sense.

DR: I have heard it alleged that some people have claimed the Catholic schools retained the older curriculum more fully than the public schools during the New Math era.

FB: It would depend upon the district, cities, states, etc. I am not prepared to make any comment on that at all.

BEING A JESUIT PRIEST MATHEMATICIAN

DR: A very general question: what are the challenges and advantages of being a Jesuit priest in math education?

FB: [Laughter] At BC the number of Jesuits involved in teaching has gradually diminished.

I had one incident a few years ago. On the first day of class I walked into the classroom assigned to me. A girl in the front row, the only one that had come early, looked at me, dressed in my collar. She said, "Father, I think you are in the wrong classroom. This is a math class." Well, what did she expect? She thought I should be in philosophy or theology.

The whole historical development of the Jesuit order, where they were in education generally and particularly in sciences, is not known by most of our students as well as the public. There were few Jesuits like myself involved in mathematics or mathematics edu-

cation in my time and later. So that has meant a bit of a challenge to get support for a program or to initiate change on our campuses. In the larger community of mathematicians and mathematics educators, it really has been a non-issue.

DR: You were talking about the '70s.

FB: When social justice concerns became very prominent and generated interest, young Jesuits chose to work with people in a wide range of roles. That's when we started to see fewer training to be academics and a handful with mathematics as an objective.

EMPHASIS ON PROBLEM-SOLVING

DR: Do you have comments on the increased emphasis on problem solving in the 1980s?

FB: So much has been said and written about problem solving since the '80s. We continue to progress as there is a growing body of research on how children learn to solve problems. There are excellent resources of problems for students of all ages. We have made substantial progress in this area. One aspect that still needs attention is how to test for problem-solving ability effectively. Another is how to teach students to be effective problem makers, that is, how do they start with a situation, assess what needs to be done, articulate the problem, and solve it?

People distinguish between problems and exercises. Exercises are good, but we know the answer to them. I remember I gave a problem. A youngster asked, "Do you know the answer?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, isn't it enough for one of us to know it?" [Laughter] He thought, "Why do I have to know it if you know the answer?" In other words, if we have a solved problem, and you've solved it, well, why should anybody else want to solve it? We already have a solution. So, I said to him, "What do you want me to do?" He said,

"Why don't you get a problem that neither of us knows how to solve?" That's the attitude that should be encouraged. We don't want to be content with existing solutions.

USE OF CALCULATORS IN SCHOOLS

DR: Are you somewhat skeptical about the use of calculators in education?

FB: Not calculators, but graphing calculators. At least, they need to be used with care to achieve good, not misleading results by students. Eventually there will be a very good graphing calculator approach to calculus.

DR: What do you think about some critics' complaints that students treat the calculator as a crutch and so fail to learn basic material?

FB: It's true for some students, but, if you've got a broken leg, a crutch is certainly useful, isn't it? Young students need to acquire certain basic facts so their use of the calculator should not interfere with this acquisition. There are many other valuable ways for the calculator to enhance their learning. If high school students and beyond have computational problems, it's time for them to rely on the calculator for that purpose. The calculator should be used to facilitate problem solving for all students and remove unnecessary drudgery, so that students can focus on the ideas and concepts involved in the problem.

DIFFERENTIATING BY ABILITY

DR: What are your views on differentiating mathematics students according to ability or career goals? How early should this be allowed or encouraged?

FB: My concerns vary with the level. It does not make sense to differentiate students by ability at the elementary or middle school level. On the college level, there is no problem, because they can pick mathematics or not.

DR: The hard question, then, is what about in the secondary schools?

FB: When it comes to the secondary level, a variety of programs should be available, so that students who wish to pursue calculus as a terminal course in high school have that opportunity. I do not see how to avoid some degree of tracking in high school.

DR: Of course, this often gets discussed in the context of what to do with gifted children?

FB: There is some objection to the word 'gifted.' What do you mean by 'gifted'? The word 'gifted' is used very loosely. Often children who are really just bright are invited to participate in classes for the academically talented. This is fine, and for this type of student I would prefer to see horizontal enrichment offered and not vertical acceleration. The real problem is what to do with those who are truly outstanding in mathematics. Our education system is not adequately geared for that issue.

We also do not know enough about the really high achievers in mathematics at the secondary level. I have discussed this issue with colleagues regionally and nationally, and it's surprising that many of those who perform very well in contests and the Olympiads do not choose mathematics as a career.

US vs FOREIGN MATH EDUCATION

DR: Have you drawn any lessons from comparisons of mathematics education in the United States with such education in other countries?

FB: Not really. The basic mark of distinction in most overseas texts is that they present mathematics content as an integrated course of study. We are one of the few countries that has emphasized separate courses like algebra, geometry, etc. In recent decades here there is increasing support for an integrated approach to math-

ematics. Many current texts with titles like algebra and geometry contain a variety of topics that are not either of those subjects.

The basic distinction I have noticed amongst students is that those from overseas tend to take their studies more seriously than their US counterparts. At school level it is interesting to note the large number of foreign-born or first-generation immigrants that are class valedictorians and leaders. In mathematics competitions, many of the high-scoring students are this category of student.

They are a pleasure to have in your classroom, because they value education. For them, education is important. Then of course they have the support of the family, too, which is a very important motivating element. So I like to have those young people in class. Of course, I like to have all the others, too.

There's another famous analogy. A fellow walking by the seashore saw some fish that had flopped onto the sand. He threw one back in the water. There seemed to be an awful lot of fish on the shore. Another fellow asked the first guy, "What's the sense of your throwing that one back in the water when there are so many here on shore?" He said, "It matters to this one." The idea is carried over that, although you can only handle, perhaps, one of the poorer students, it means an awful lot to that individual. To reform the world, start by reforming one person at a time, and start with yourself.

RECREATIONAL MATHEMATICS

DR: Have you been much interested in what some call recreational mathematics?

FB: I learned my lesson from a student, to whom I said, "What is recreational math?" He said, "Recreational math is the math that I can do." [Laughter] The math

that I cannot do is, of course, not recreational math. Another time I told a student it was much better to do one problem ten different ways than to do ten problems the same way. So I assigned some problems and I left the room. I came back in about fifteen minutes. The student came up to me and said "I did this problem ten different ways." I was about to say "That's great," when he continued, "And here are the ten different answers." [Laughter]

I have always had an interest in recreational mathematics and have encouraged students in this direction. We maintain a substantial library for recreational mathematics materials and typically include problems as part of class content for all levels of students to motivate and get attention. In fact some of the materials written for use in the Institute programs were developed on the premise that presenting problems from recreational mathematics are a means of having students practice their basic skills, while in pursuit of a solution to the problem.

DR: What do you think about the work of Martin Gardner?

FB: I have met Martin Gardner several times. I have always admired his efforts to popularize mathematics, read his column in the *Scientific American* regularly ["Mathematical Games," which appeared 1957-1980], and pursued problems in his many recreational math books. He has made many positive contributions to mathematics education and to the public perception of mathematics. It is unfortunate that in recent years he has turned his energies elsewhere, but his books certainly remain popular.

DR: If someone asks you why they should study mathematics, what would you say?

FB: There are many responses depending on the age, goals, and circumstances of the individual. If it's a young student whose basic attitude is "Why should I study math?

What's it good for?", then the response revolves around the fact that just about everybody needs to know and do a certain amount of math to get by in today's society.

If it's a question from an older student thinking about a career choice, then I try to convey how important mathematics can be in certain career paths and how mathematics as a career in itself can be rewarding. I attempt to show how the mathematician is interested in increasing the body of knowledge that is mathematics and demonstrating the power of mathematics.

When I see something in mathematics, and I say, "What good is this?", my attitude always is: Can I make it better? This is my challenge. If you don't have that attitude, then it won't be interesting for you. In life, isn't that what we try to do? We are faced with a situation. What do we try to do? We try to make it better. We don't say, "What good is this situation?" We want to make it better. There is the challenge: How do you make it better? If you don't have that attitude, there is nothing I can say to you. Can you make it better? If you're not interested in making it better, fine.

US MATH EDUCATION

DR: What is your overall assessment of the state of mathematics education in this country now?

FB: It is somewhat in turmoil. It is not settled, and I don't think it will be for quite some time. One of the factors has been mentioned earlier: we do not have a national curriculum, so we cannot really talk about the status of mathematics education, because it varies from state to state. In some states, it is very poor, according to the assessments. We are trying to raise the level, very much so. But, imposing penalties may not be the way to do it. In other words, "If you people do not improve, we are going to close the school." That may not

be the way to do it. I am a little bit worried about that.

Since the NCTM Standards have been on the scene, there definitely has been more uniformity of curriculum. Also, the various standardized tests have helped to unify, and textbooks also help define a common curriculum. However, the number of those in education and outside who are opposing what the Standards propose is on the increase and has already made significant impact in some states. It is no secret they are trying to impose their views at the highest level of government and are attempting to discredit programs and policies that are counter to their beliefs.

There are other factors that impact curriculum of a less serious nature, such as the role of technology, but nonetheless create major problems that must be resolved. The question of assessment—how much and with what consequences—is another unsettling issue that affects mathematics education nationally.

DR: How do you feel about so-called high stakes testing?

FB: For some time we in the US have been aware of the high stakes testing that exists overseas, where the results of a single exam determines whether students matriculate into academic or vocational programs, proceed to university or pursue a different path. Few applauded this approach, yet many states now have high stakes testing programs in effect with similar outcomes.

This is the age of accountability: the student is held accountable, likewise the teacher, and, yes, the district. I believe we must all be accountable for how we perform in our jobs and I believe students must be accountable for their performance in school. But I do not agree that a high school diploma should be awarded on the basis of one test, even though multiple opportunities exist to pass that test. We need to come up with better solutions than those in place, and we need to examine a companion problem which is usually iden-

tified more with the college level but is really an educational problem at all levels—grade inflation.

The other question is, Why do you have this high stakes testing now, all of a sudden? Some say there are political reasons for this. I hope I don't find this to be true, that this is a political ploy, because we don't have enough people for ordinary jobs like sweeping floors and working in other menial positions.

DR: I presume you would admit that not all mathematicians agree with your views on mathematics education.

FB: Unfortunately. [Laughter]

TEACHING STYLE

DR: How would you describe your own teaching style? Has it changed much over your career?

FB: My teaching style varies by type of student. With university undergraduates, it is lecture interspersed with interactive discussion. With teachers in professional development programs, it is a little bit of lecture, followed by much work in groups on their part and discussion.

My teaching style has gradually changed over time, and it is more pronounced with undergraduates, because recent students are not as strong mathematically. They are more receptive and responsive but weaker. Thus, I expect less from them and cover less material, and do so in a way that is less rigorous. At one time attendance in class was mandatory and there were sanctions for those not following the rules. Now students are expected to attend, but if they choose not to attend there are no sanctions, unless they really abuse the system.

DR: Has your method of lecturing changed at all?

FB: Not too much. I use more examples and try to present mathematics so that it makes logical sense and embodies more connectedness.

USING JOKES IN CLASS

DR: I understand you have given many presentations over the years at NCTM meetings and elsewhere. Someone told me he thought you had started using more jokes in your recent presentations.

FB: [Laughter] The jokes, usually, are personal experiences or anecdotes, like this one that happened not too long ago. This occurred in the fifth grade. We were changing fractions to decimals. We changed ½ to .5, and so forth. A little boy said, "Yesterday my teacher said that 1/3 is .33333..., and this goes on forever and ever. What does that mean?" I looked at him and I said to myself, "what am I supposed to do?" Talk about infinite geometric series, which this is, or about the idea of a limit? "That is an interesting question," I said. "It's very important, but it might take some time to explain it." The little imp looked at me, grinned and blurted out, "You don't know, do you?" [Laughter] People call these jokes. But it's not a joke, really. It's a catalyst for asking, "What would you have said? How would you have handled this?" Is it true that 1/3 is equal to .33333...? And then the math follows. I don't often tell jokes in presentations. They are generally recollections with a message.

The same thing happened with "What is 1/3 plus ½?" This is a personal experience. I gave that in class, again in fifth grade or so, and this very bright boy said, "5/6." I said, "How'd you get it?" He said, "I think you look for the common denominator, blah, blah, blah," and all this other stuff. And I said, "Look, I think the answer is 2/5." He said, "But it's wrong." I said, "Wait a while. It's easier than your way, isn't it?" He said, "Yes, but it's wrong." So I said to him, "Wait a while. Who decides what's right and what's wrong in mathematics?" And he says, "The mathematicians." And I said, "Well, look, I'm a mathematician." The

little guy looked at me and said, "So am I. So what?"

OK, is that a joke? No, the kid is right. When he's doing mathematics, he's a mathematician, isn't he? And I was wrong. Why was I wrong? And yet, notice his answer was quite different from my fifth-grade teacher when I said this. I put down 2/5 when she sent me to the board to do it, and she said, "That's wrong." I said, "Why?" She said, "Nobody adds fractions that way." I had just added them that way. I didn't understand her logic. What did she want me to put down? 5/6?

What she didn't know was that every night after supper, the gang and I—we had about five or six boys growing up together—used to go downtown to the *Lowell Sun*, and they had the ball scores in the window. The Yankees were our heroes. Babe Ruth, in the first game, got one hit out of two times at bat. In the second game, he got one hit out of three. He had two out of five, he was batting .400. I did this day in and day out. I used to watch the Twilight League. The reporters added fractions that way, too. Here was this teacher trying to tell me that nobody adds fractions that way.

Who adds fractions that way? The butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker. Look, I was a kid growing up with baseball. This is the way we added fractions. Well, what she didn't know about little boys would have filled a book, frankly. But, you see, her different attitude: "You're wrong!" Period.

BC MATH INSTITUTE IN RECENT YEARS

DR: Could you give me a brief synopsis of the more recent history of the Boston College Mathematics Institute? It has existed since 1957.

FB: In the 1960s and 1970s the primary emphasis of the Institute was to provide veteran teachers with renewal programs to update and deepen their background in mathematics. Most programs were academic year, in-

service, and summer institutes funded by the National Science Foundation. Concurrently, Institute staff developed some supplementary instructional materials for use with students and teachers in grades K-12. More recently, the Mathematics Institute has been offering professional development opportunities for teachers during the summers at BC and other sites. The Institute staff continue to produce instructional materials for teachers and students in elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Institute staff members also collaborate with teachers in schools and school districts concerning professional development and curriculum.

DR: How many of you are working in the Institute?

FB: It all depends. During the year, we have about six people, not counting the three student assistants.

DR: Did you officially retire at some point?

FB: No. Theoretically, I am emeritus, but not retired. [Laughter] I'm teaching two-thirds of a typical load. Running the Boston College Mathematics Institute is equivalent to another course.

DR: What courses have you been teaching in recent years?

FB: Mostly calculus, because I was writing a book. But also vector analysis, number theory, differential equations, and seminars with varying topics.

MATH DEPT. VS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

DR: As we conclude I wonder if during your career you have encountered conflicts between the Mathematics Department and the School of Education (SOE)?

FB: There have been some conflicts. Similar conflicts exist at many other universities. One conflict relates to math faculty interest in the SOE. For the most part when I first arrived and the SOE was a new unit, the mathematics classes for students in SOE, Arts and Sciences (A&S), and the other professional schools met separately. The members of the department were assigned

to teach courses in the various schools, but most preferred to teach in the A&S exclusively. Most of the faculty that taught mathematics in SOE really did not much know—or care to know—what was happening in grades K-12 mathematics.

Another conflict centered around course offerings. Although it took time to settle the concern, it did not get fully resolved until the '70s when the University initiated a common core curriculum for all schools. Students from all schools now have the option to choose from a set of common mathematics electives. Mathematics majors in the SOE and the A&S also take their course together as one cohort. But most of the mathematics faculty are primarily interested in their own teaching and research interests, and are not generally aware of the reform initiatives in school mathematics—unless they happen to have school-age children. The SOE has attempted in the last few years to bring A&S faculty together twice yearly to share information and to encourage collaboration. Two of the math faculty are cooperating in this venture. I have taught courses in the SOE from its inception and some SOE students do enroll in my current courses. My continuous close contact with teachers is on the in-service rather than the pre-service level.

ANECDOTES

DR: Would recount that anecdote you told last night at dinner, with yourself, Max Beberman, and Ed Moise?

FB: We were working on some kind of a committee that the National Science Foundation (NSF) had wanted us to work on. We worked from about 9:00 AM until about 4:00 PM. Then, we were a little bit tired, so we went to the bar and ordered drinks. We were all alone in this little corner of the bar. Max Beberman turned to Ed Moise and said, "Ed, I hear you are an atheist."

Ed said, "Yes." Then, Max turned to me and he said, "Go after him." I didn't know for sure what he meant by this, but, apparently, I was to have some kind of a theological debate about the existence of God. So I turned to Ed and said, "Ed, how do you know that there is no God?" He looked at me rather stiffly and he said, "Why, Father, there are some things you just have to take on faith." [Laughter] At which point I and Max broke up, and that was the end of that discussion.

The other story was about Ed Moise meeting me on the bus in Chicago. When he got on the bus, I was sitting in the back of the bus. He yelled the length of the bus, "Father, do you remember Gödel's theorem?" At which point, the women all broke up and said, "Who are these two jokers here talking about girdles?" [Laughter]

One of the other stories that I think people enjoyed goes like this. After I had graduated from BC, I went to look for a summer job at Filene's. After the interview the personnel manager says, "OK, you have a job. Here's a broom, sweep the floor." Well, I guess being a little bit uppity, I said, "But, sir, I'm a college graduate." He looked at me with disgust and said, "OK, I'll show ya how." [Laughter]

The sequel to that story was that years later, when I applied to another department store and the personnel manager asked me for my qualifications. They were rather impressive, I thought. By this time, of course, I had graduated from college and I had had something like three years of philosophy, four years of theology, about eight years of Latin and five years of Greek. I had even sneaked in a year of Hebrew. He looked at me, patted me on the shoulder and said, "Sorry boy, I can't use you, but I'll tell you what, you would make a hell of a good Roman emperor." [Laughter] Unfortunately, that store did not need a Roman emperor. The

public, at that time, was not too impressed with college graduates.

DR: Well, thank you, Fr. Bezuszka.

SB: You're very welcome

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Homily for Fr. Stanley J. Bezuszka, S.J.
December 31, 2008
Campion Center, Weston, Massachusetts
By Fr. Harvey D. Egan, S.J.
Boston College Jesuit Community

First Reading (Numbers 12:3 ff, 1:17 ff)

Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all men that were on the face of the earth. And the Lord said to the people of Israel, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses; he is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech; and he beholds the form of the Lord.

And the Lord commanded Moses to number in the wilderness of Sinai the entire people of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go forth to war in Israel. Their whole number was 603,550.

Gospel Reading (Mt. 10:26 ff)

And Jesus said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are more value than many sparrows. So, take up your cross and follow me."

"Strengthened by the Church's sacrament and accompanied by the prayers of his Jesuit brothers, shortly before completing his ninety-fifth year, Fr. Stanley Bezuszka died piously in the risen Lord, on Saturday evening at 10:10 PM, December 27, at Campion Health Center, Weston. He had loved the Church, his religious order, family, friends, math, teaching, and teachers, and spent himself in their service." Good morning. I am Fr. Harvey Egan. I've had the privilege of knowing Stan the man Bezuszka for over thirty-five years, a person with whom I shared many, many breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. I'm pleased to be here to say something about this dear friend in the crucified and risen Christ.

Stanley's October 21, 2006 letter to the then Jesuit rector, Fr. Paul Harman, gives us a good summary of the spirit of this wonderful man:

> "Dear Fr. Harman,
>
> I do regret not being at Thursday's jubilee [his 60th as a priest]. We had an earlier sign-up for the Math Conference, which I could not miss. My friends tell me that the jubilee celebration was wonderful. Thank you, too, for your gracious gift, part of which may be used for a rose bush to plant before the statue of Our Lady in the garden.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Stan Bezuszka"

The Math Conference mentioned in the letter illustrates both Stan's love of mathematics and his professionalism. Not only is Stan admired and loved by his former BC students, but also by so many Massachusetts math teachers, who had contact with him. Let us remember, too, his international reputation, especially in the area of the so-called "New Math." I attended three of his lectures in the early

'60s and was mesmerized by Stan's teaching ability. He rightly belongs to a long line of distinguished Jesuit mathematicians. I've long considered him to be a "Missionary to the World of Mathematics."

The great German Jesuit theologian, Karl Rahner, once wrote (*Servants of the Lord,* p. 72 ff): "The priest is not an angel sent from heaven. He is a man, a member of the Church, a Christian. Remaining man and Christian, he begins to speak to you the word of God. This word is not his own. No, he comes to you, because God has told him to proclaim God's word. Perhaps he has not entirely understood it himself. Perhaps he adulterates it. Perhaps he falters and stammers. How else could he speak God's word, ordinary man that he is? But must not some one of us say something about God, about eternal life, about the majesty of grace in our sanctified being; must not someone of us speak of sin, the judgment and mercy of God?"

Stanley did this primarily through math, but also by baptizing, marrying, and burying some of those whom he had met at conferences and in his classroom. I used to tease him that the Word became flesh, not the number. But through his Jesuit priesthood, both the word and number became flesh.

A priest is a man, not an angel. Stan loved his basset hound, Freckles, whom he would bring to class. While writing a problem on the board, he would turn to Freckles and ask, "Is this right?" And Freckles would bark.

After Freckles died, another dog followed him to his office and Stan fed him. The dog spent the day with him, but went away that evening. The dog followed him the next day, the next day, and so on, until Stan—concerned about the owners—wrote a note and put it in his collar. In reply the owners also put a note in the dog's collar, which said: "My name is Rusty. I like to wander. Don't worry. I always go home afterwards." The owners later invited Stan to dinner, and they became good friends. When the owners moved

to a place that forbade pets, Stanley took Rusty in.

Recall his next words in the letter: "I do regret and thank you." Stan was polite, kind, and gracious to everyone he met. He was deeply grateful for what the Society of Jesus, his sister Josephine, his nephews Ralph and Stephen, his colleague Peg Kenney, and others did for him. I gave him a number of small things he spoke of needing—and was always given something in return. I have the marmalade jars to prove it. I long admired the way Stan would entertain anyone who sat with him at meals.

My favorite story: He told us how once, when he was chairman, in a fight with his secretary, he said in frustration, "Remember, I'm the boss." To which she replied, "Yes, backwards." He asked, "Boss, backwards? What does the first "S" stand for?" She shot back, "Stupid." More than one BC person has told me, "Oh, Fr. Bezuszka—the S.J. who always has a joke."

"The rose bush and the statue of Our Lady." There stands in the back of St. Mary's Hall a lovely garden and a Mary statue, thanks to the efforts of Stan, his sister, and his secretary. Students dedicated an impressive bench there in honor of "Fr. B." Stan once said, "I enjoy arranging flowers according to when they bloom and which colors and textures go together. I don't need a hobby; I have a garden, and this satisfies my artistic yearnings. The overriding goal is to have things in bloom all the time." Not only flowers bloomed in the presence of this man.

While walking past St. Ignatius Church on last Sunday's warm day, I observed that the bushes were filled with chirping sparrows. Whenever I see a sparrow, I cannot help but think of Stan feeding them daily. Jesus himself said, "Not one sparrow will fall to the ground without your heavenly Father knowing of it. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." Stan knew and lived our heavenly Father's love for us in the crucified and risen Christ, who mysteriously embraces our lives.

When I ponder Stan's Jesuit life and his priestly bearing to the very day he died, what comes to my mind is a section in Fr. Karl Rahner's stirring article, "Why Become or Remain a Jesuit?" Rahner writes: "I still see around me living in many of my companions a readiness for disinterested service carried out in silence, a readiness for prayer, for abandonment to the incomprehensibility of God, for the calm acceptance of death in whatever form it may came, for total dedication to the following of Christ crucified." This is Stan the man, the Jesuit, the priest, gentle and humble of heart.

Fr. Karl Rahner said, too, that "Old age is a great grace, a gift, but also a mission—not given to everyone. In an earlier age, the elderly were revered; in our age, often set aside and ignored." Rahner praised the Society of Jesus for designating its elderly as those who "pray for the Church and the Society." Stan not only prayed for the Church and the Society, but his presence here at St. Mary's Hall and Campion Center was a living prayer. And even during the almost final months of his life at Campion, he was also busy planting flowers, doing math problems, and explaining the wonders of ultrasound to the staff.

The Bible says that, if a person lives to be sixty, has a good family and friends, some of the good things of life, ages with grace, and dies quickly and painlessly, then that person has been greatly blessed by God. Stan had much of that. He led a full, Jesuit, priestly, human life. What a great gift! Ninety-five years young; 75 years a Jesuit; 62 years a priest; math professor at BC for almost 60 years. Behold the man, Stan the man, a model for growing old—a full human being.

Do I mourn Stan's passing to eternal life? Yes, but I grieve as a Christian filled with the hope I have from the risen Christ. Do I mourn Stan's passing to eternal life? No, because I really believe that the great Stan now lives a new, fulfilled, beautiful life in God. Now he not only sees God,

but he also sees himself as the beautiful person he has become through his full life filled with God's loving care. He is now not only with God, but is also with us in an even deeper way. The deeper anyone enters into God's life, the deeper he enters into the lives of all those whom God loves.

Do you want to experience Stan's presence now? He is in Christ. Speak with him anytime you receive Holy Communion. In fact, we are supposed to pray *for* the dead. It might strike you strange that I prefer to pray *to* those who have passed into eternal life in Christ. So, let us not only pray *for* but also pray *to* Stan. He is praying for us.

All this is the reason good Pope John XXIII could say: "Every day is a good day to be born; every day is a good day to die."

Stan, you did it. Congratulations! We'll miss you. You were an inspiration to us all. We'll see you in the Eucharist, for you certainly are in Christ. And to quote another great Jesuit who died not long ago: "It's a great old Soc.!" And Jesuits like you, Stan, make it so.

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Boston College Website

OBITUARY: REV. STANLEY J. BEZUSZKA, S.J

A funeral Mass for Rev. Stanley J. Bezuszka, S.J, a mathematics professor and department administrator at Boston College from 1939 until 2008, was celebrated on Dec. 31 at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit at the Campion Center in Weston.

Fr. Bezuszka, who had been the University's longest-serving faculty member, was also the director of the Boston College Mathematics Institute and a widely-recognized leader of national efforts to improve American math and science programs.

He died on Dec. 27, one month shy of his 95th birthday. Born in Poland and raised in Lowell, Fr. Bezuszka came

to Boston College as a Jesuit scholastic in 1939 and, with the exception of time spent in doctoral and advanced theological study, was a member of the University's mathematics faculty for more than 60 years.

"Since the summer of 1954, when I took my first course in mathematics with 'Fr. B', he has been a role model and friend," said Prof. Margaret Kenney (Mathematics), assistant director of the Mathematics Institute.

"He was truly a source of inspiration to thousands of mathematics teachers in this country and abroad," she said. "They attended his keynote sessions, courses and institutes."

Fr. Bezuszka authored or co-authored more than 50 scholarly works on mathematics over the past 40 years, and received numerous awards for his contributions to the field, including the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics' Glenn Gilbert Award for leadership in mathematics education and the Lifetime Achievement Award for Teaching from the Mathematics Education Trust Foundation of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Last November, the Association of Teachers of Mathematics of New England named its annual teaching and learning award in his honor. Fr. Bezuszka was the first recipient.

In addition to his renowned teaching skills, Fr. Bezuszka was well-known on campus for the basset hound dogs — "Rusty" and "Freckles" — that for many years accompanied him on his daily walks around campus, and for the beautiful rose garden at the southeast corner of St. Mary's Hall that he lovingly tended each spring and summer.

In 2003, in a tribute to his long service as a teacher and priest, a group of his former students donated a bench in front of that rose garden. The inscription on the bench reads simply: "Thanks, Fr. B."

Fr. Bezuszka also officiated at the marriages of scores of his former students and conference attendees, and later, baptized their children. "I used to tease him that the Word

became flesh, not the number," said Rev. Harvey Egan, S.J., in a homily he delivered at Fr. Bezuszka's funeral.

"His presence at Boston College and at Campion was a living prayer," Fr. Egan said. "Even during the almost final months of his life at Campion, he was also busy planting flowers, doing math problems, and explaining the wonders of ultrasound to the staff."

"His ideas about mathematics content and pedagogy continued to engage him until the end," recalled Kenney, who noted that Fr. Bezuszka was tutoring a local Boston high school student in basic math principles until shortly before his death. "He had just completed a manuscript as illness overtook him at the end of June.

"His particular interest in mathematics was number theory. He often remarked, 'The gift of number, like the gift of fire, has made the world much brighter,'" Kenney said.

Fr. Bezuszka leaves a sister, Josephine Kokoska, and several nieces and nephews. Burial was in Campion Cemetery, Weston. Donations in Fr. Bezuszka's memory may be made to the Jesuit Community, Campion Center, 319 Concord Road, Weston, Mass. 02493.

Reid Oslin
Associate Director for Public Affairs

(http://www.bc.edu/publications/chronicle/TopstoriesNewFeatures/news/Bezuszka.html)

Testimonials: Reflections

Anne M. Collins, Ph. D.
Director of Mathematics Programs
Lesley University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

My favorite Fr. B story goes like this: Fr. B was on a flight across the country and the plane hit terrible turbulence. All the passengers were rather frightened and one woman traveling with a young daughter who was crying called across the aisle to Fr. B. "Father, can't you do something to stop this?" Fr. B responded, "That is a problem for administration, I am in sales."

The Association of Teachers of Mathematics in Massachusetts (ATMIM) presented the first annual "Fr. Stanley J. Bezuszka S.J. Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics" in March 2009.

The Association of Teachers of Mathematics in New England (ATMNE) presented the first annual "Fr Stanley J. Bezuszka S.J. Award for Service to the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics" in Portland, Maine, November 7, 2008. Fr. B was the first recipient.

Don Collins, '65, Professor Emeritus
University of Western Kentucky

I have often thought about the miracle that Fr. B caused to happen. He brought three guys from three different parts of the country to BC: Les Winters, Fr. Jim Rath, and I. The three of us became close friends. After graduation with a master's degree from BC, I went into educational publishing at Laidlaw Brothers. It was tough there, but I hung on and in nine years learned the trade.

Then I joined Merrill Publishing Co. as managing editor of mathematics. My editor-in-chief there called me Merrill's last chance. I was to revise their algebra program and needed to put together a team of authors. That team

became my BC classmates Les and Jim, and my former office partner at Laidlaw, Alan Foster. Years later after we surpassed the Dolciani series in sales, the long-time market leader, Fr. B stood in the Merrill booth at a national math conference in Seattle telling passers-by "My boys did it." There were tears in his eyes and when I heard his words I had to leave the booth as my eyes clouded up too. These were not tears of joy but tears of pride for Fr. B.

What Fr. B pulled off by bringing the three of us together was indeed a miracle. Of course, the authors and I benefitted from this achievement, but all of the students who used the program benefitted from what Fr. B had taught us, his former students. The series now in its 10th edition is still the market leader.

Les, Jim and I all realize that Fr. B taught us much more than mathematics. For me in particular, Fr. B continued as my mentor, encouraging me through some tough times as I established Merrill's math editorial department.

After 21 ½ years I left publishing and earned my doctorate in mathematics education. My last working years have been spent as a university professor and author.

Nancy Philpott Cook, retired
Mathematics & Computer Science Teacher
North Eastham, Massachusetts

Father Bezuszka, the Father of Modern Mathematics, was the most wonderful professor of math I have ever had the privilege of knowing! Whenever I am asked who my hero was, or who inspired me the most in my life, I always answer, "Fr. B." I was so lucky to have been in his Demonstration Class at the Summer Mathematics Institute when I was 13 years old back in 1958. He made math so meaningful and so much fun! He taught us different base systems, such as base 8, which was the same as base 10, only you were missing 2 fingers! He taught us how to THINK math. He inspired me to teach math for 37 years, and I even taught

math in Spanish, although it was difficult to translate the word "googol." I have cherished in my scrapbook a letter he wrote to me back in 1990 when I became IBM Teacher of the Year - He always remembered his students. He was my inspiration to get an MA in Computers and to pass on his love of math to the younger generation.

Louis D'Angelo, '68
Mathematics Teacher, Archmere Academy
Wilmington, Delaware

I arrived at BC in the fall of 1964 with more than the usual anticipation that all college freshmen had. My high school math teacher knew Fr. Bezuszka and had talked him into giving me and one of my classmates an opportunity to work for him in the Boston College Math Institute. Our excitement peaked when we got the first note in our mailboxes that he needed us, and so we went for our first job—moving boxes of books in St. Mary's basement. That set the pattern for the next few semesters. When a new load of books came in or there was a leak in the storage area, we got the call and came running. More importantly, it began my education under Fr. B. He never asked us to do anything he would not do himself and do it better. He showed us how to more those boxes, and when time was critical he was there outworking us. With all his accomplishments he was always ready to do what needed to be done and never treated any job as beneath his dignity, but to him anyone who did a job well, no matter how menial, was deserving of being treated with dignity.

I did manage to do some mathematics and a few other things at the Math Institute over the next eleven years. I had already decided that I wanted to teach, but those years were my apprenticeship in the craft of education at the hands of a master. I observed him setting a standard for teachers at all levels. There were times when he could be gruff and short-tempered, but that was only with the incidental.

Whenever anyone needed his help or guidance, his basic kindness and humanity were evident, and his laugh was always just under the surface ready to appear any time.

When my future wife and I decided to get married in St. Joseph's Chapel in the dorms, there was no one else to ask to officiate but Fr. B. We were thrilled when he accepted. What amazed me on the day of the wedding was that he appeared more nervous than I was. At that time he had not done many weddings, other than his sister's. He typed out all the prayers for the mass and ceremony, including our names, and then managed to read one of the pages twice! It was a wonderful wedding and a high point in a friendship that stretched over 45 years.

I am in my forty-first year of teaching and my thirty-fourth at Archmere, a private high school in Delaware, a novice by Fr. B's standard. I can only hope that I have managed to be as positive an influence on a few of my students as Fr. B has been on so many of those who have known him during his many decades of service at BC.

Shirley M. Frye, Past President
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
Cave Creek, Arizona

Although Father Bezuszka devoted his life to classroom teaching, he was also a master teacher as a speaker to his colleagues in mathematics education. At local, state, regional, and national conferences through the decades, thousands of teachers of every grade level were drawn to the sessions in the programs that named Father Stanley J. Bezuszka as the presenter. He always delivered a message that enriched the teachers and subsequently their students. His overarching theme embracing the mathematics content was developing the love of learning.

With a twinkle in his eye and warmth in his smile, Fr. B displayed creativity and clarity in his unique way of making complex ideas understandable and meaningful to a

widely diverse audience. The members of his audiences knew that time spent in learning from Fr. B would energize them and enthuse their teaching. His sense of humor provided valuable insight into the tools of effective instruction.

Although we saw each other only at professional conferences, it was very special to communicate with Fr. B by sharing articles and problems. He always replied promptly with his insightful comments. I will always be grateful for having been blessed with Fr. B as a favorite teacher, an esteemed colleague, and a cherished friend.

Barnabas Hughes, OFM, Professor
California State University
Northridge, California

We cannot help being influenced by the people with whom we associate. During the first fifteen of now 55 years as a priest, I knew and worked with several Jesuits in Arizona, California, and Ohio. They were considerate and helpful. Standing head and shoulders above all of them, however, was Fr. Stan Bezuszka. Him I have known for more than forty years. Brilliant, creative, productive, farsighted, generous as he was, he made me feel good, worthwhile. This does not mean that he would not launch into you if you proposed some ridiculous, ill-developed, thoughtless, out-of-place idea. But it was the idea he attacked, not the person. Stan was kind. He always thought of the other person, how to help each person become better, think clearer, develop one's sense of well being. I remember well when I published my first book in math education. He was more delighted about it than I. The beaming smile on his obit card is genuine. It reflects the excellent character of Stan Bezuszka, S. J.

David R. Johnson, Math/Science Chairman, retired
Nicolet High School
Glendale, Wisconsin

I was chosen as the 1983 Presidential Awardee in Mathematics representing the State of Wisconsin and became involved in the Council of Presidential Awardees (CPAM). In December 2001, CPAM initiated the Mentor Recognition Program and its members began the practice of bestowing awards on the person(s) who had very strong and distinguished influence on the career of a Presidential Awardee. I chose Fr. Stanley Bezuszka because he met the criterion hands down. I presented the CPAM Mentor Award to him in 2002 with great gratitude.

Fr. B's inspiration and guidance in my career were very significant. My opportunities to write three books, to present at hundreds of seminars and speeches across the country, and my success as a mathematics instructor and chairperson at Nicolet High School are due in large part to his leadership and motivation. Fr. B's classroom teaching, conference presentations, and my many-mathematics related conversations with him, all contributed significantly to my successful participation in the mathematics education community activities.

In addition, the Boston College Summer Mathematics Institutes that Fr. B directed and served as an instructor, played a heavy role in my mathematical growth when I needed it most. Fr. B's strong commitment to mathematics excellence and meaningful professional development programs is most appreciated by me and I know by many of his former students.

This Award that I presented to Fr. B was in a small way a thank you for everything that he did to enhance my mathematics education career.

Anne Kavanagh, SSL, '74,
Leadership Team, Sisters of St. Louis
Ireland

A young Irish woman, a religious sister in her twenties, arrived in California from Ireland in the early '60s to teach mathematics in high school – she did a good job the old fashioned way, having had a great high school education. Then into her life jumped this quite unique entertainer cum professor cum lecturer – a Jesuit priest (with a name that was hard to spell and to say) . He came to speak at the national mathematics conferences in Santa Monica and Anaheim and Las Vegas just when "the new math" was being introduced to schools in the aftermath of Sputnik. And the spark of a new way of passing on to the next generations the heritage that is mathematics came alive in her.

I was that woman and Fr. Stanley Bezuszka was the teacher. My delight in his methodology at those conferences convinced me that, if ever I got the chance to do an MA in Mathematics, it would be at the Mathematics Institute in Boston College. That dream came true by means of an NSF grant in 1970 and for three summers I worked at mathematics during the week, taught my fellow students what I was catching from Fr. B and others in the afternoons, went to all the lectures on new theology and spirituality which were happening at BC, took advantage at weekends of half price fares for religious on Gray Line tours stretching from Vermont to the Cape. And we saved an extra sheet from the dorms to use as a blanket for our picnics when we went with the throngs to the Charles River to hear Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops.

I officially left academia at BC in 1974 but new friendships developed from my time there. Fr. B became a close personal friend to me over the years. And I treasure the memories I have had on my many return visits to Boston – the visits to the Museum of Fine Arts and Quincy Market, shopping for and cooking live lobsters, conversations about

Math Education and the young people today. My sister from England and her husband, my younger English niece too, were all cast under the spell of Fr. B on visits they made to Boston in the last ten years.

I returned to Ireland in 1985 and what a delight it was to host Fr. B on a memorable trip around Ireland in 1998. I associate the visit very clearly with the dreadful Omagh bombing on August 15, 1998. We drove through Omagh an hour or so after it happened and the horror of it brought violence in Northern Ireland very close to us. Thankfully all are living through more peaceful times now.

My last visits to Boston have always included a visit with Fr. B and pictures in his lovely garden, memories that live on and will continue to inspire me and give me energy to live life to the full all the days of my life.

In his illness, I took Fr. B's book off my shelf and I have been reading and reliving the gems of joy and humour he brought to education right to the end of his days. "From Heart and Mind: A Classroom Odyssey" truly summed up his values and his approach to everything he did.
Ní beid a leithead ann aris. Ar deis dé go raibh a-anam dílis.
(We will never see his like again! May his gentle soul rest in peace.)

Robert Kelleher, '45
Brunswick, Maine
My acquaintance with Stan goes back to the Fall of 1942, when he was a Jesuit scholastic (Mr. Bezuszka to us) and I was an undergraduate at BC. I have many fond memories of those two terms during WW2— fall of 1942 until June 1943— when most of us students went off to military (in my case Naval) service. In those days we took for granted his science and mathematics talents (he had not yet gotten his PhD from Brown) — what really impressed us was that he skated regularly with the BC varsity hockey team during their late afternoon practice sessions, and came back to

the physics labs in the Science building (where the rest of us were finishing experiments or working out problems) in an ecstatic state with nicks, scratches, bruises, and an occasional black eye, but a happy twinkle in whichever eye was still operating. Even thirty years later, when I took my son Michael to meet him, he told us that he still kept his hockey stick behind the door to his office in the basement of the Science Building. Even though Fr. B and I had seldom seen each other in the intervening years until his death, we always kept in touch at Christmastime, and his interest in my life and career, and in my family, was very precious to me.

Margaret J. Kenney '57, '59
Professor of Mathematics
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

It's impossible to capture the essence of Fr. B - my teacher, employer, coauthor, and friend of more than fifty years. Here are just a few traits that characterized him. He had more energy and enthusiasm at ninety than many folks had who were one third his age. In fact, 'enthusiasm' was a mantra for him. As an inspirational speaker at mathematics conferences throughout this country and abroad, he often ended his keynote with an exhortation similar to

"And if there is only one thing that you have to give to the young—Let it be enthusiasm—KINDLED BY CURIOSITY AND GUIDED BY LOVE."

Fr. Stan had a keen sense of the need for change on many educational fronts. He thrived on being a pioneer. He was the first department chair in the College of Arts and Sciences to hire a female full-time faculty member on the Chestnut Hill Campus - he actually hired 3 at the start - they joined the Department in 1955. He convinced the

President of BC that the University needed a computer and so the IBM 1620, the first one on campus, was housed in the Math Institute. He promoted student/faculty professional interaction outside of the formal structure of the classroom - by initiating informal seminars where the undergraduate students gave math talks and he provided sodas and cake.

Fr. B channeled much of his professional activity towards national leadership advocating change in mathematics education K-12. Under the auspices of the National Science Foundation he conducted numerous institutes that updated and strengthened the mathematics content knowledge of math teachers attending BC from just about every state in the union. In so doing, he sacrificed time and opportunity to advance his own personal mathematical research agenda.

It was great to collaborate with Fr. B in writing pursuits because his mathematical and pedagogical interests were so varied and typically were ahead of his time. His courses, talks and writings were all peppered with elements of the rich history of mathematics. He could always be counted on to include anecdotes, humorous stories, and quotes to enliven his work. His mathematical writings were routinely embellished with eloquent prose.

Fr. Stan was fascinated with gadgets both of his own making as well as ones others produced - at one point he received government funding to produce an 'instant response' machine for the math classroom that landed him on the Today Show. In this work he was far ahead of his time. Sleeker versions of that idea are part of currently used classroom technology.

Fr. B loved his life of serving God and serving others through his mathematical talents and was an excellent role model for those of us who worked with him.

Stephen M. Kokoska, '78, Professor
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania

One of Unk's most admirable characteristics was his unending curiosity, whether it was about mathematics, testing out a new plant for his garden, tasting some new exotic food, trying new technology or considering a new approach to an old problem. Perhaps this is one reason the young (and young at heart) enjoyed him so much; in many ways he looked at the world through the inquiring eyes of a child. Unk found the world around himself fascinating.

More personally, I enjoyed working with Unk on my middle school math and science projects. It seemed like he was more excited about building a seismograph than I was. I remember the photo paper blackened with a kerosene lamp, and his request of me to record an actual earthquake. We finally decided to position the equipment next to a train track, and kick it a little for effect. I also remember an elaborate device full of switches to represent Boolean algebra and logic. The original model caught fire due to a slight wire design flaw. However, his boyish enthusiasm was evident when I completed the final project.

At Christmas, Unk always gave me the coolest presents, like professional hockey gloves. And, I remember all the midnight masses at several convents in the area. As I grew older I was able to serve as an altar boy, and I remember his precise organization and attention to detail. His intense faith was clear to all present.

And, I will always remember that Thanksgiving day on which it snowed, a heavy wet snow. Unk and I were out shoveling our driveway while every household in the neighborhood had a turkey in the oven. Somehow, a tree limb on our property, very close to the driveway, within a snowball's throw, broke and severed a power line. The power went out and most people were stuck with half-cooked turkey. There are only two of us who really know how the tree limb broke.

After a lifetime of childlike curiosity, Unk now certainly has access to all the answers.

Evan Maletsky, Professor
Montclair State University
New Jersey

All of life is a wonder,
and a good life, well lived, all the more so.

Fr. Bezuszka's was even more special for he left his mark, his spirit, his energy, and his outlook on so many people. It is surely a great loss, but not so much one to be mourned as to be celebrated.

I've been trying to think of the last time I spoke to him, for I'm certain it was not that long ago. I remember well the brief campus tour he gave me when I spoke up at the BC/ Rutgers Discrete Math Conference. And I remember, as well, many years earlier when we met at an NCTM Annual Meeting in San Diego. Geneva and I had taken our then young son there for the conference, and we met him outside, while walking. After exchanging a few words, he instinctively bent down and carried on a brief conversation with Lorin, who could not have been more than 8 or 9, I believe, at that time. It was so natural and normal for him, even though he had never met this child before.

We just came back from visiting that child, now a Ph.D. in his eighth year teaching in the Engineering Department at the University of Kansas. We were there to celebrate his 39th birthday! Time does fly, faster and faster. Fr. Bezuszka was blessed with a really long life, yet I have no doubt but that it was full and fast moving, all the way. It seems to me that I knew him when I first started teaching, and that was 53 years ago. And I always looked up to him as a model teacher and person.

We have all been blessed with knowing this man.

Carolyn Shea O'Neil, '59, '65
Math Teacher
Mount St. Joseph's Academy
Brighton, Massachusetts

It was September 1955 in an overcrowded classroom at Boston College where I sat anxiously awaiting the arrival of my first college math teacher, Fr. Bezuszka. The bell had just rung when the door flew open and in rushed this wild-haired professor who shocked us all by saying we all couldn't be math majors! And he was right. Most of the class were planning to major in other areas of education but had been placed in this class because of their high school math records. He ascertained this information by asking those who were planning on majoring in math to raise our hands. At which point, eight or nine very timid hands slowly reached up.

After a rapid fire lesson that had our heads spinning, our first assignment was to define a number. Back we came to our second class, definitions in hand. Fr. B collected them all, shuffled through them, mumbled a few comments and threw them all in the basket. Our second lecture was as intense as the first and our second assignment was a repeat of the first. Only this time, we were instructed to find the Math Library in order to come up with some meaningful definition of number. Evidently, Webster was not good enough.

By the end of that first year, although classes were still a source of high anxiety, particularly for those of us who thought we wanted to continue in mathematics, we had grown accustomed to the brisk manner, fast-pace, mumbling style of Fr. Bezuszka. And seven of us made it through the end-of-the-year interview allowing us to continue on our path to becoming mathematics teachers.

Following the final exam week a group of us who had endured math with Fr. B decided to get together with him and unravel that first year experience. And the Misery Club was born. Our name was carefully chosen as a result of two

observations we all made. One was that "misery loves company" and that was sure true of those of us in that class. And our second observation was that anytime someone asked Fr. Bezuszka how he felt, he would respond: "Miserable, thank you." Over the next three years, as we completed our undergraduate program, we never had Fr. B for another math class but our friendship with him continued as we made him the unofficial moderator of The Misery Club.

During those undergraduate days, we were privy to the beginning of "The New Math" era. Through a number of National Science Foundation Grants, Fr. Bezuszka wrote, lectured and conducted classes preparing teachers to launch this new math in their classrooms. As assistants in these classes, the five remaining members of our original math classes were allowed to see firsthand the growing trends in teaching of mathematics. How exciting it was to meet each new group of NSF participants from all over the country, with varied backgrounds, ranging in classroom experience from 5 years to 35 years! After we graduated, some of us continued working with the Math Institute under NSF grants and as a bonus were able to receive our Masters Degrees from Boston College.

Over the years our ties with Boston College, Fr. Bezuszka and The Misery Club have remained constant. Fr. B has officiated at some of our weddings, baptized some of our children and attended a funeral of one of our members. Membership in our club has always been open to anyone who shares our belief that "misery loves company." We have managed to get together in varying numbers for the past 50 years. One special occasion occurred in the Spring of 2002, when a group of us gathered in back of St. Mary's hall at Fr. B's garden to dedicate a bench in his honor. As we walked back to the Math Institute Offices, I told him that since we couldn't afford to endow a chair in his honor, we thought a bench would be a worthy substitute. He smiled at me, proceeded to give us a mumbled lecture about the

statue of Saint Ignatius of Loyola that was planned for the area in front of Higgins, picked up his walking pace and we all tried to keep up with him...a feat we never mastered!

Elizabeth (Stoklosa) Parker
Parker & Associates
Loomis, California

Fr. Stan was a lifelong friend of my father's family. My Dad, my uncle, and Fr. Stan grew up together in the Polish community in Lowell, Massachusetts. Fr. Stan told me that it was actually my father who sparked his interest in science and mathematics. As the story goes, my Dad was taking science courses in college, and one weekend he brought home a microscope to use for a class assignment. Fr. Stan happened to be at the house that weekend and my father let him use the microscope. He was astonished and thrilled to discover the new world revealed under the microscope, and he was instantly hooked on science!

When I entered college in the early 1960s, our family connection brought a kind offer from Fr. Stan for me to work for him during the summer at the Math Institute. For four summers, I had the joy and the privilege to work for this brilliant superstar as he trained teachers from around the country in innovative methods for teaching mathematics. That experience put me on my own path to teaching and really shaped my entire career. Not only did I get to work with a math superstar, but even then – the early '60s – he was involved in the world of computers! At the time, I had no way of knowing how valuable the experience with computers would prove to be, but I certainly do now!

Fr. Stan was a dynamic, lovable genius who truly inspired the many, many teachers who faithfully came to the Math Institute every summer. He was the personification of energy as he literally flew around the B.C. campus, cassock billowing, with that faithful old dog Rusty going at full speed trying to keep up with him. He had a marvelous

sense of humor as well. I will never forget the dinner we hosted for the Math Institute participants one year, at which a very comical "Sister Mary Benjanees ("Bend Your Knees") made an appearance. Guess who was under the habit costume? Fr. Stan! Everyone just loved him.

I will always remember with great fondness this brilliant, kind, and loving man who was such a longtime, wonderful friend to our family.

Linda Silvey, Co-author
Sherman Oaks, California

I first met Fr. B in the early 1970s at a conference for mathematics teachers in Monterey, California. He was in the exhibit area regaling everyone with stories of his wonderful basset hound, Freckles. He would pull back his roman collar and expose the appliqué of a basset hound on his T-shirt over his heart. At the time I also had a basset hound and we immediately became great friends through the love of our dogs.

For more than thirty-five years it was my pleasure to experience Fr. B's awesome love for all things, starting with human beings, mathematics, all dogs and animals, the wonders of nature, and jokes that he delighted in sharing with everyone. In the mid-70's, he was an expert on Polish jokes and when John Paul II became the Pope in 1976 he immediately added Polish Pope jokes to his repertoire of entertainment. It was always great fun to catch up with Fr. B at a mathematics conference and hear his latest stories.

During the summer of 1977, I was at Boston College for a week working on a mathematics and design manuscript with Fr. B and Margaret Kenney. At the same time I was also working on a mathematics and humor manuscript with a co-author in Los Angeles and another in New Jersey. The New Jersey co-author came to BC so that we could go over the three-foot stack of materials I had collected and brought with me from Los Angeles. We were having so

much fun that Fr. B and Freckles decided they would "join" our team and help us review the math jokes. We welcomed Fr. B's input and suggestions, but it did slow down our work. When the book was finished we considered dedicating it to Fr. Bezuszka "without whose help it would have been completed much sooner". However, as a compromise we ended up with a cartoon version of Freckles on the cover of the book.

My last visit with Fr. B was during a week in August of 2005. Though somewhat frail by now, he toured us around BC showing off his garden and the 9/11 Memorial. We talked about mathematics and enjoyed his companionship on a "Duck Tour" of Boston, a water taxi ride throughout the Boston Harbor, visiting museums in the Boston area, and meals of Italian, Greek, and seafood variety.

Farewell Fr. B – You were one of the most amazing and remarkable people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. Blessings to you as you now look down on us all and continue to care for us so lovingly as you always did when you were here on earth. I feel truly humbled to have been your friend.

Mary M. Sullivan, '68, '70, Professor
Rhode Island College
Providence, Rhode Island

While a first-year mathematics major at Boston College, I was awed by Fr. Bezuszka and secretly relieved not to be in his Calculus section. I watched him from afar as he hurried across campus, his basset hound Rusty nearby, and recalled my high school math teacher who praised his brilliant mind for the "new math" she was learning in his institute. A few short years later, I experienced that mind firsthand during a vector analysis course. I was still awed, but glad to be there.

Not long thereafter, I started to work in the Mathematics Institute. Along with other math majors, I was a

teaching assistant for summer and in-service programs. During that time I began to notice other characteristics of Fr. B that made him seem much more human...his jokes and stories, his love of fun, and his enjoyment of gardening. While he remained a teacher for the many years I worked for him, along the way he became my friend. He officiated at my wedding to Paul, he baptized our children and participated in many occasions, happy and sad, that marked our life. It was an honor to share milestones in his life as well.

Fr. B has been an incredible mentor for me in the world of mathematics education. He had a gift of making important points with simple words that have profound impact. Many years ago when I gave him a solution to a numeration problem, he asked, "How are you sure you have them all?" With those few words, he made me realize that finding a solution was just one piece in solving problems. On another occasion, when I was deciding whether to accept a position with a lower-than-desired salary offer, he provided clarity with a simple question, "Mary, professionally speaking, can you afford not to take this job?"

Attending mathematics conferences was much more enjoyable when Fr. B was there. He knew so many people and could tell delightful stories. Rare was the meeting that a former student or institute participant or talk attendee did not join our conversation. It was clear that I was just one of many who were touched with his love of mathematics and teaching. At a NCTM conference three years ago he charmed my students with stories he told them about my student days.

Les Winters, MA '65
Mathematics Supervisor, LAUSD, retired
Northridge, California

I will never forget that 1964 Spring morning. It was a 5:00 AM phone call that caught me grading papers. What else

does a math teacher do at 5:00 AM? At the other end of the line was Fr. Bezuszka who asked, "Could you come to Boston College for the next school year for the Academic Year Institute?" When people say that the Los Angeles Unified School District with 700,000 students moves slowly, I remind them that I had an approval for a year sabbatical leave before that school day ended. It was a great honor to be selected.

The year spent at Boston College gave real direction to my life. I had the opportunity to spend the year with about thirty of the finest people who were outstanding math teachers. We were all there to get updated on the "Modern Math" that was beginning to sweep the country. Fr. Bezuszka had designed and developed the math program and it was a good one. I was so pleased that all the courses we took were math. We all came away with the feeling that we were now on the cutting edge of the Modern Math movement.

Our instructors were knowledgeable and wanted us to be successful. Fr. B taught us each semester. Dr. Bennett was a gentleman from a different era who dressed impeccably, asked permission from the ladies in class to remove his coat, and shrieked at our pronunciation of "Poincare" and "Fermat." Other classes were taught by various instructors who were very caring. Of course, there was Rusty, Fr. B's basset hound, that accompanied him to class daily and barked when it was time for a break.

I returned to Los Angeles and taught high school mathematics for thirty years before becoming the Secondary Mathematics Supervisor for the District. During this period of time, I taught many teacher in-services on the new math as well as several adult classes for parents. I loved it.

I owe the direction of my professional life to Fr. B. Had I not been selected for the Boston College program, I had planned to enter school administration. When I look back on my teaching career and realize how much I enjoyed every day of it, I can only say, "Thanks, Fr. B."

Testimonials: Snapshots

Fr. Stanley Bezuszka S.J. is one of my fondest memories of my time at BC. I totally enjoyed his class. I was lucky enough to experience him again in a National Science Foundation Grant class while I was teaching. He is unforgettable and will be missed.

Kathleen Harrington Bell '67, Massachusetts

We thought he would live forever! ... Praise God for Fr. Bezuszka's many talents and blessings that he shared so generously with all of us.

Albina Cannavaciolo, Connecticut

Fr. Bezuszka was a remarkable man. His love of math had me change my major to teaching math.

Pat Carty-DeLello,'60, Massachusetts

I'm saddened to hear the news about Fr. B. This is a huge loss for not only the math education community but also for all educators locally, regionally, and nationally. Fr. B was well known and respected by a host of educators from other disciplines. I often heard comments from other non-math colleagues who would refer "to the priest at BC who is a giant in mathematics"!! We will miss him greatly.

Joe Caruso, Massachusetts

He inspired generations (including mine) of teachers. It's a sad commentary on our field that people like him, with a dual passion for mathematics and teaching, are still so rare.

Al Cuoco, Massachusetts

Fr. Stan nurtured a generation of mathematics educators across the country. He will be missed by all. I have forwarded the obituary on the College's web-site on to our son Doug. He always looked forward to sitting with Fr. Stan at

the NCTM banquets, when Anne and I would end up at the head table. I remember finding them in the hallway once, outside a Presidential Reception, down on their hands and knees pitching pennies with a required bank of the coin off of the wall. He made an impression and taught many a lesson to all he met. We miss him!

John Dossey, Illinois

I doubt that he would have remembered me but he was important in my life—that's one of the enviable things about being a teacher, I think. I have thought of him often over the years and will continue to keep his memory.

June Robinson Downey, '60, Massachusetts

We have all lost a friend and another giant in mathematics education.

Carol Edwards, Arizona

Fr. Bezuszka was someone who devoted his life to mathematics and to ensuring that each and every young person had access to an excellent mathematics education. He was a former Chair of Mathematics and Director of the Mathematics Institute. Every one of us in the Mathematics Department is saddened by this news and will miss him. Though I personally joined the department after his retirement, he always had a smile and warm greetings for me, and this meant a lot to me. He will be truly missed, but his memory will live on in his words and deeds.

Solomon Friedberg, Massachusetts

Fr. B is an icon in math ed. What a major impact he has had in so many lives!

Susan Friel, North Carolina

I remember his many contributions to the Asilomar Conference of California Mathematics Council-North. We al-

ways credited him with the wonderful weather we had for the conference, and he always laughed and helped us have a good time there. I felt he made the world a better place and was proud to know him. I saw Sr. Rose Eleanor this summer and she brought back so many good memories of our times together with Fr. Bezuszka.

Kay Gilliland, California

It's very sad to lose such a giant in the field.

Karen Graham, New Hampshire

What a legacy he left—for many of us it was his sense of humility, humor, and compassion (not mathematics) that touched us.

Pete Hansen, California

Fr. Stan will be missed by his family and friends. He was a brilliant man, and we will miss his conversations, his ease for laughter, and his easygoing nature. Academia has also experienced a great loss, as I have been told many times by his mathematics peers and students.

Todd Kokoska, grandnephew, Massachusetts

I guess we thought he would go on forever like the energizer bunny! But what a wonderful, full life he led, and what a terrific mark he has left in mathematics education! I certainly will never forget the many times I heard him speak or the influence he had on my thinking. His enthusiasm and love of mathematics was contagious.

David McKillop, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Fr B: If all the people whose lives you touched say just one prayer for you each day, well—you do the math, for the number may be approaching positive infinity!

Christine Moynihan, Massachusetts

Fr. Bezuszka contributed to mathematics education by teaching at the university level, and was a frequent visitor to classrooms that ran the gamut from kindergarten to grade 12. He has led more than 900 presentations, workshops, and minicourses in mathematics education, both at the national and international level. His presentations display deep insight about content and the teaching and learning of mathematics, and are invariably punctuated with humorous stories and anecdotes pertaining to teachers, students, and their environment.

NCTM Website

I recall this about Fr. Bezuszka: he had a good sense of humor, and used it in his classes for math teachers. One of the popular jokes, well received by his teacher-students, was his comment that his favorite fraction was "a fifth."

Paul A Schweitzer S.J., Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Fr. B had an extraordinary life and was so involved in his academic career, as well of course in the Jesuit Order. I remember meeting him at the Blessing of the Graves in Dundalk, the day of the Omagh bombing—it must have been a shock for all to just have missed the bomb that day.

Phil Sheridan, Dublin, Ireland

Father was a gift to our son Aaron. His knowledge, and more importantly, his wisdom are treasures that Aaron will always have. May his soul soar swiftly to heaven and may he rest in peace.

Marla & David Smith, Massachusetts

There's a real void in all our lives, but Fr. B left so many good memories for so many of us.

June Yamashita, Hawaii

There wasn't a moment that I couldn't feel his passion for mathematics, and it will certainly be a long time before a man of his stature emerges on the scene once more!

Steve Yurek, Massachusetts

The editors are grateful to those who helped prepare this tribute to Fr. Bezuszka: Fr. Stephen Dawber, S.J., Peg Kenney, Josephine Kokoska (his sister). Those parts of the September 8, 2008 OHP interview have been omitted or summarized which had been covered more fully in the June 6-7, 2002 interview by Dr. David L. Roberts. For permission to use the 2002 interview, the editors are grateful.

Afterword

Recollections by Fr. Francis P. McManus, S.J.
Sacristan, Coordinator of Liturgies for the Community
Campion Residence
Weston, Massachusetts

I

In fall 1948 Fr. Stanley J. Bezuszka (Fr. Stan) began his doctoral studies in theoretical physics at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. During the academic years 1948 to 1953 Fr. Stan resided at the rectory of St. Joseph Parish in the Fox Point section of Providence. That parish had previously been in the care of the Jesuit fathers. The rectory and school (Cleary School) were built by Fr. William Cleary, S.J. [1837-1884, buried at the College of the Holy Cross].

During his years of study at Brown, Fr. Stan was also engaged in the parish life of St. Joe's, played basketball with the youth, and introduced the younger students to his "New-Modern" math. The students in these classes excelled in math

skills and by fifth grade were prepared for algebra.

Fr. Stan also celebrated the 10:00 AM Mass each Sunday morning, during which he preached a 'scriptural' sermon. Many students from Brown attended this Mass, and the church was always full for the 10:00 AM Mass.

St. Joseph Church and rectory are not far from the Sunshine Bakery, which was then operated by Mr. and Mrs. Suttack.

In the spring of 1993 I was in the Delta Terminal of the Hartsfield International Airport in Atlanta, Georgia. I had a layover between connecting flights and was browsing in the terminal bookstore.

While looking at a book, I overheard a conversation from the opposite side of the book display rack. Two men were talking, and, when I heard the words, "during our days at Brown," I grew more interested. I learned that these two men were psychiatrists, and that they were heading home after a psychiatric conference. They had been good friends during their years together at Brown, and they talked about places from their college years and my childhood neighborhood

> Dr. A says: "One thing I miss from my Brown days is Mass at St. Joseph Church. I went every Sunday to the 10:00 AM Mass. The Jesuit used to say the Mass. He gave great sermons. I haven't heard any sermons that good in recent years. I'm trying to remember his name, but I can't. We never called him by his real name. I think he was Polish."
> Dr. B says: "You went to the 10:00 AM Mass? I did, too. I don't remember seeing you there. Where did you sit?"
> Dr. A: "I sat near the back on the right side, near Fr. Bean's confessional."
> Dr. B: "Why did you sit back there?"
> Dr. A: "So I could leave before the Last Gospel and get

to the bakery to get the doughnuts. The lady always made fresh, hot doughnuts for the Brown students. I can't remember the bakery's name or her name. She was a big, smiley lady, and I think she was Polish, too."

From the other side of the book rack I spoke up, saying, "The Jesuit priest's name is Fr. Bezuszka, but you called him Fr. Stan. The bakery's name is the Sunshine Bakery, and the lady's name is Mrs. Suttack!"

I then turned away toward the wall looking out to the corridor. The two psychiatrists hastened out to the corridor, looking both ways, up and down, trying to find a familiar face of a person who could be responsible for the mystery voice. They were not successful.

So I headed to my gate and waiting plane. Walking by the two psychiatrists, I looked at them both. They were scratching their heads and revalidating each other that, indeed, they had both heard a mystery voice.

"Yes, that's right! The Jesuit's name was Fr. Stan."

The mystery voice had reminded them of the names of significant persons who continued to be part of their cherished college memories.

II

In fall 1948, Fr. Stan came to reside in the rectory of St. Joseph Parish. Earlier that same year, on Ascension Thursday, May 6, I had received my First Holy Communion. This was a very special day for me and my family. Not long after, however, I began anticipating receiving Holy Communion for the first time at Christmas Mass.

On Christmas 1948 our family attended 7:00 AM Christmas Mass at St. Joseph Church. The celebrant of this Mass was Fr. Stan. At Communion time he served me my first Christmas Communion.

Sixty years later, on Christmas morning 2008, I awoke early. The night before, on Christmas Eve, I had visited Fr. Stan, who was dying. Now at this pre-dawn hour I was moved to visit him and to bring the Holy Eucharist with me.

Entering his quietly lit room, I saw Fr. Stan lying peacefully in bed. Using a strong voice, I greeted Stan: "Merry Christmas, Stan. This is Frank." He moved his right hand. I took his hand, and again with a strong voice, spoke: "Stan, I have brought you Holy Eucharist. Would you like to receive Christmas Communion?" Fr. Stan opened his mouth.

Continuing with a strong voice, I began the prayers: "The grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ. . . May almighty God have mercy on you, forgive all your sins . . . Our Father, who art in heaven . . . give us this day our daily bread . . . Behold, this is the Lamb of God . . . Jesus Christ is the food for our journey . . . The Body and Blood of Christ . . . May the Lord Jesus Christ protect you and lead you to eternal life."

Fr. Stan squeezed my hand, and I concluded with the Christmas prayer: ". . . Your eternal Word leaped down from heaven in the silent watches of the night, and now your Church is filled with wonder at the nearness of her God . . ."

I sang the Christmas hymns, "Silent Night" and "Angels We Have Heard on High," and departed.

In the quiet hour before Christmas dawn, Fr. Stan Bezuszka, who had served my first Christmas Communion, received his last Christmas Communion as strength for his journey to the Eternal Banquet of the Lamb.

AMDG