

# SPIRIT LINK

St. Gerald Catholic Church † SpiritLink Newsletter † Volume 23 - Number 1 † Spring 2019

## Quiet Warriors

By Bonni Pulte

Marinell Garnatz and Mary Hoffman are two ladies who work quietly behind the scenes. You may have met them or seen them at church, but few know the years of service they have given to Saint Gerald. Both Marinell and Mary recently "retired" from the St. Vincent dePaul Society after 27 years of dedicated service.

Marinell Garnatz, who just turned 80 in February, and her husband, Warren, are in their 50th year at St. Gerald. They have been married since 1959 and have five children; Kathy, Mark, Jill, Tim and Patrick and three grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Marinell remembers attending church services at the Hillcrest Center in Ralston before the church on Lakeview was built.

As her children were growing up, Marinell decided she wanted to find something to do that would help people in the community. She heard that St. Vincent dePaul was starting a group at St. Gerald and decided to volunteer. She also worked for Omaha Steaks for 13 years.

St. Vincent dePaul assists people who have immediate needs of food, clothing, furniture and emergency financing. At St. Gerald all collections taken up on Holy Days of Obligation are contributed to the St. Vincent de Paul Society. As calls for assistance come into the office they are forwarded to SVDP. St. Gerald volunteers go out in pairs to assess how they can help the person in need.

Marinell remembers a call a few days before Thanksgiving, many years ago, where a young woman who was escaping from a bad relationship and expecting a baby needed help. She had no furniture, not even a bed and very little food. Marinell's daughter had some used furniture from her office that she donated and various neighbors gave food and a rollaway bed and even some

curtains for the windows. The food pantry provided some food. She said the community just came together and helped.

Marinell was the secretary for St. Vincent dePaul for the last 15 years or so. She has enjoyed working with all the volunteers for St. Vincent dePaul Society and has made many friends. She likes attending St. Gerald because the people are friendly and there are many programs offered. She helps out with the funeral luncheons, Stephen Center meals, Adoration and the back to school clothing drive at Holy Family Church. She also enjoys camping, spending time with her family and is a big fan of Creighton and Nebraska basketball.

Mary Huffman and her husband Robert have been attending St. Gerald since 1985. Their children are Sarah who is engaged to Bryan, their son Paxton, and daughter Morgan who is married to Ben. They also raised a great-great-niece and great-nephew for a number of years. Mary takes care of grandson Paxton while her daughter works.

Mary is originally from Omaha but moved around a lot when her Dad was in the Navy. She returned to Nebraska after high school graduation to attend college. Mary is a nurse by profession and has worked in that capacity for the past 38 1/2 years. She has done hospital nursing, worked for the VNA and has had various roles at Mercy Care center and is currently working on an on-call basis for CHI Priority Care clinics.

She remembers coming to help a parishioner sort clothing that had been donated and shortly after that the parish was organizing an official SVDP group. She was at a point in her life where she felt that she needed to help others in order to help herself. Her parents modeled helping others in need and she had a grandfather and aunt who were active in the SVDP organization and always saw it as meaningful. Mary joined



**Mary Hoffman and Marinell Garnatz**

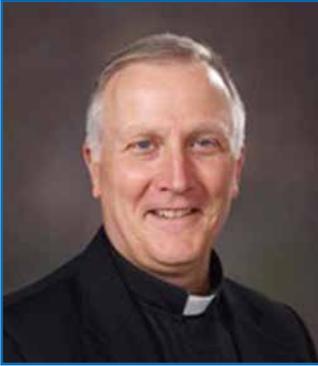
the group in January of 1991 and a little over a year later became the treasurer.

Mary always felt it was a privilege to be able to meet and help so many different people and also to work with such an awesome group of volunteers. She is amazed at the generosity of St. Gerald for donating to SVDP.

Mary especially enjoys the music ministry at St. Gerald and the many ways that people can get involved in something that fits with their comfort level. She volunteers to bake for the funeral luncheons and is involved in the Stephen Center ministry group that provides a meal monthly at the Stephen Center homeless shelter. She also volunteers for the Eastern NE Office on Aging Senior Help program. In the past, she has volunteered at St. Gerald school, sold HOPE certificates and helped with the flower gardens at the church. She has volunteered with ESL and tutoring programs for immigrants/refugees and is a past member of the Medical Reserve Corps. She was on the team that helped a refugee family from Myanmar that St. Gerald sponsored.

Marinell and Mary are examples of true humility as they share their life experiences and skills with others. They connect to the community around them in a quiet and unassuming way that benefits not only people in need but also their families and St. Gerald. We want to thank them for their years of making a difference in the lives of many, many people.

# Welcome Pastoral Council



Dear St. Gerald Family,

*I am excited to introduce to you our Pastoral Council members in this edition of the Spirit Link! We are thankful to the 24 parishioners who applied and interviewed! With many amazing, faith-filled applicants, it was quite difficult to narrow it down to just eight. The members you see below are meeting monthly together with our Servant Leadership Team (SLT), Fr. Michael and myself. As I shared with you previously, our council has been restructured into a new model of leadership whose primary focus will be to develop a long-term strategic plan (3-5 years) that will enable us to move our parish from merely being maintenance-oriented to mission-oriented. Please learn more about these members as you read their biographies below. And, please pray for us as we continue to strive to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit whose sole desire is to lead everyone into a deeper, transforming encounter with Jesus and a life of dedicated, intentional discipleship.*

- Fr. Mark Nolte



**Becky Tometich**

Becky has been married to her husband, Joe, for 31 years. They have been active members of the parish since 1987, also sending their two grown children through St. Gerald School. She says, "I know I am not just a member of St. Gerald, and am thankful 'I BELONG' at St. Gerald's. I love the sense of community I

feel when I walk into the church. I am excited to be a part of the Pastoral Council because I sense a very strong movement of the Holy Spirit here. I feel the love of Jesus in my soul and I want to be a part of the parish coming alive."



**Kevin Armshaw**

Kevin has been married to his wife, Chris, for 27 years and they have seven children. Kevin is a weekly adorer, serves as a lector, is a member of the Knights of Columbus and helps with the security team at St. Gerald. He is deeply grateful to be part of a welcoming parish that so quickly made his entire family feel a part of the greater

parish family. Kevin loves the sense of community at St. Gerald and the passionate preaching of the gospel. He says, "St. Gerald is not our 'Church', it is our home. Being part of the Pastoral Council is an honor. I am happy to serve."



**Dan Buck**

Dan and his wife D'Lynn have been married 25 years and have four children who all attended St. Gerald school. They moved to Omaha in 1998 and found a family at St. Gerald, feeling very blessed to be involved in such a faith filled community. Dan has had the privilege to serve in the choir, maintain the parish website, Cub Master, That

Man Is You, Alpha, and more. He says, "We have made so many friends who support us in tough times and also celebrate the good times with us. What a blessing to be able to come together to serve, worship, and journey together on our way to eternal life! I am excited to serve on the council because the vision of Archbishop Lucas, 'One Church, Encountering Jesus, Equipping Disciples, Living Mercy', has initiated a new springtime in our local church. We want to help our parish family encounter Jesus in a personal way and be activated as disciples!"

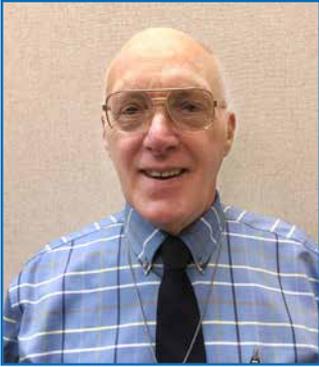


**Jennifer Tselentis**

Jennifer is an Omaha native, growing up in Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. She, her husband, Alex, and their three boys have been very active in St. Gerald Church and School since they became members in 2010. She is or has been on the Parish Finance Committee, School Advisory Board and School Recruitment Committee.

Jen works in accounting at Berkshire Hathaway. Jen feels blessed to sense tremendous community and knows that she and her husband have met many life-long friends. She also feels that being a part of Pastoral Council is an opportunity to be a part of something extraordinary at our parish – "a living transformation among all of us to become missionary disciples."

# Welcome Pastoral Council



## Ken True

Ken and his wife, Pam, have been married 53 years and 42 of those years they have been members here at St. Gerald. They have four children and nineteen grandchildren. He enjoys hunting and spending time with family. Ken is very knowledgeable about the history of the parish and has been involved with the Knights of Columbus, after

Mass Prayer Teams, That Man Is You, Guardian Angel Dinner, and has been a part of numerous construction and maintenance projects through Facilities Master Planning and Facilities Maintenance Committee. Ken has been active in C.E.C. (Christians Encountering Christ) and Kairos (prison) ministries. In summary, Ken says, "I try to know and serve the Lord daily."



## LuAnn Anglo

LuAnn has been a part of St. Gerald since 1994. She owns her own small business and is also a trained Life Coach. She and her husband Jeff can often be found at the Noon Mass with their children and grandchildren. She remembers a time when she could not afford to pay for religious education and was told, "We want your children more than

your money." It was that welcoming faith-filled attitude that drew her to St. Gerald. LuAnn says, "I am excited give back to a parish that has given me so much! I feel that in the last two years, God (though the works of our fabulous priests) has set me on fire! I have found a passion and an urgency to let others know the love of Christ. I feel that I can offer the perspective of the 'cradle Catholic' who for years 'went to church' but through the grace of God now 'experiences mass!'"



## Kris Jarecki

Kris and her husband, Michael, joined the parish with their six children in 2016. She is a wife and home schooling mother. Kris graduated from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has been very involved in her faith throughout the years. We are thankful for her gifts of intercession, spiritual direction, and healing, which

are now being put to use in the Pastoral Council setting. When Kris was asked what she most loved about St. Gerald she said, "I love the openness to the workings of the Holy Spirit and the desire to form authentic community."



## Deacon Steve Luna

Deacon Steve and his wife, Angie, just celebrated 40 years of marriage and have belonged to the parish since 1984. They have two children and six grandchildren! Retiring from telecommunications in 2009, he began serving in 2012 as the Director of Pastoral Planning and Human Resources for the Archdiocese of Omaha. He and Angie

both enjoy leading and teaching engaged couples through marriage preparation. Currently in a 3-year formation program to become a spiritual director, Deacon Steve looks forward to serving anyone wishing to deepen their love and relationship with the Holy Trinity. Deacon Steve and Angie love the many lasting relationships they have developed within the parish and are excited to see our parish becoming even more "vibrant, transforming lives and on fire for Jesus."

## St. Gerald Parish Mission Statement:

Led by the Holy Spirit, we are a Catholic community of faith whose primary purpose is to know Jesus, to love Him, and to serve Him in serving others. Sent to make disciples, we invite and welcome everyone to come and share our Master's joy.



**Junior High students portray the Holy Family and Shepherds during the Living Nativity December 16th. Parishioners also enjoyed refreshments in the Fellowship hall.**



**Mary Kay Grantsky and Sharon Brown serve refreshments during the Living Nativity.**



**Live animals are part of the Living Nativity. Children pet the donkey.**



**8th grade scholarship winners  
Left to Right: Alex Kosse - Gross  
Isabella Raczynski - Marian  
Natalie Pelan - Marian  
Jessica Cheblinski - Mercy  
Racel Tysdal - Gross  
Claire Wichita - Mercy**



**8th grade class with the Archbishop at the Cathedral for the annual 8th grade mass. All Catholic Schools participate in this mass each year.**



**Boy Scout Troop 377 cooks pancakes for the St. Gerald Home and School sponsored Catholic Schools Week breakfast on Sunday, January 27th.**



**Eric Weaver (5th)  
Lucy Digilio (2nd)  
Dawson Digilio (4th)**  
Students were asked to dress for the job they want.



**Jessica Chlebinski (8th) reading to Mrs. Schmitt's Kindergarten Class.**  
Middle School students were assigned to read to small group of students. Snacks were provided.



**Emma Covey (7th)  
Charleigh Prine (PreK)**  
Bowling in the gym. The items in the picture are donated items collected for the Tri-City Food Pantry.



An annual tradition on the Friday afternoon of Catholic Schools Week is that the 8th graders challenge the teachers and staff to a game of volleyball. Students are asked to wear a certain color to support the teachers or support the 8th graders. Rumor has it for the second time in the history of this tradition, the 8th graders beat the teachers.



The castaways from Gilligan's Island made it to the Guardian Angel Auction March 2nd.  
Left to Right: Vikki Batenhorst, Phil Carnahan, Bryan Reichmuth.  
Row 2, Stacy Reichmuth, Dan Batenhorst, Jen Carnahan, Chris and Tony Schmid

# Fletcher Family Togetherness

By Sherry Wachtler



**Terry and Norma Fletcher**

Head usher Terry Fletcher didn't have to look very far to find more ushers for St. Gerald Sunday masses several years ago. His first recruit was his older brother Ray who had previously ushered at St. John Vianney. Several years ago, Terry and Ray's sister and brother-in-law Rita and Sherm Adkins moved here from Colorado. It wasn't long before Terry asked them to usher at the 8 a.m. mass on the team with Ray and Terry. "We all get there early," Rita said, "so we can be ready for the mad rush before mass starts. Everyone is so friendly and so grateful for us holding the doors for them."

Helping out at church is nothing new for the Fletcher siblings and spouses. They're doing what they grew up doing. Working hard and playing hard. Together. Like for instance, Thanksgiving. For several years, Terry, his wife Norma, Ray, Rita and Sherm all arrive at the Salvation Army Kroc Center, 2825 Y St., at 9 a.m. on Thanksgiving. With other volunteers, they assemble 1,400 to 1,500 Thanksgiving dinners for the less fortunate which are delivered at noon. Of course, the Fletchers focus the attention on all the others who help. "It's not just us," Ray is quick to point out. "There are several St. Gerald people – lots of Knights of Columbus – and others helping. We're just part of a team," he said. Ray specifically pointed

out fellow Knight Mark Gerow who rounds up 300 dozen cookies from St. Gerald bakers that are delivered with the dinners. Afterward, the Fletchers and Adkins' enjoy a big Thanksgiving dinner together.

Fletcher family volunteering had its roots in the modest South Omaha home they shared with their parents and three other siblings, Dick, Larry and Sandy. They all attended old St. Wenceslaus School at 14th and Pine. Both parents worked, but they found time to help out at church. "Our parents instilled some great virtues in all six of us," Ray said. Terry, who was a St. Thomas More parishioner, and his wife Norma moved into St. Gerald's parish 20 years ago with their two children, James and Andrea. "St. Gerald was so friendly. I really liked Father Gary, Mary Clare's music and the choir, and everyone was so easy to get along with," he said. He became a familiar face around the parish lecturing, serving as EMHC and ushering. He has held numerous posts with the Knights of Columbus Council 9518, both on the local and state level. "I'm a people person," Terry said. "Probably due to the fact I worked 48 years for Walgreens, 40 years in management and 8 as a part time pharmacist. "Terry is a tough act to follow," older brother Ray said.

As busy as Terry is at St. Gerald, his wife Norma is just as dedicated to serving her church, Lutheran Church of the Master, where she leads bible studies, serves on the church council, lector, and Stephen Ministry. For 20 years Norma has been very active with the Women's Build for Habitat for Humanity putting in 1 or 2 days a week. Yes, the Fletcher family helps with her projects as well. Terry and Norma also enjoy time with their children and five grandchildren.

"Very friendly," is how Ray described St. Gerald. "I can't even think of anyone stuck up," he said. Ray enjoys "That Man Is You," and he, Terry and Sherm



**Sherm and Rita Adkins, Ray Fletcher**

can be found working the Knights of Columbus fish dinners, poultry bingo, Tootsie Roll, Red Cross, whatever the Knights need. It just seems that whenever someone asks for help, we just step forward," Ray said.

There is one time during the week they love to be alone. Ray and Terry both look forward to their hour of Adoration. "I started Adoration over at St. John Vianney and I just kept my same time at St. Gerald," Ray said. "I've been coming every Tuesday for 30 years."

When all the work is done, the siblings also enjoy getting together to play cards and something else their father taught them – golf. "I taught Norma how to play golf, and she taught me how to fish," Terry said. Sherm, a semi-retired PGA teaching professional who still does some work for Callaway, is right at home in this family. It was only natural they would help with the Father Foster Tournament every spring. It is no surprise that once they are done serving others, you can pretty much find them all – Terry, Norma, Ray, Rita and Sherm and sometimes other family members – on the golf course. Playing hard. Together.

# Fueled by Music and Faith

By Eric Olson



**Margaret and Dave Cotton**

Margaret Cotton jokes that when she was a little girl, she sang so loudly and enthusiastically at school Masses that her classmates would turn around and look at her.

"I didn't know if I was good or bad," she said, laughing, "so I quit singing."

Fortunately for us, she started singing again and hasn't stopped. Margaret has been a member of the St. Gerald choir since shortly after she and her husband, Dave, became St. Gerald parishioners about 28 years ago. She and her guitar are fixtures at the 8 and 10 a.m. Masses on Sundays, and her occasional solos inspire all.

Margaret was humble when it was suggested how joyful it must be for such beautiful spiritual music to flow out of her. Prodded, she said, "Sometimes I can amaze myself."

Dave and Margaret both grew up in Omaha, have been married for 37 years, are the parents of three grown sons. They also have two grandchildren. Dave has owned and operated Small Engine Services, Inc. in downtown Ralston for 40 years, and Margaret works for First Data Corp.

Dave has been an EMHC for about 15 years, and last year he joined the Knights of Columbus. He said he's

grown in his faith since the arrivals of Father Mark and Father Michael. He started participating in the annual Corpus Christi Walk, the parish mission, presentations on Eucharistic miracles and Father Michael's Lenten Detox series, among other activities. All this moved him to create a prayer room in his and Margaret's home, with the centerpiece being a Holy Face of Jesus painting.

Margaret has been playing guitar for about 45 years and is self-taught. A prolific song writer, she has recorded and sold two CDs, "Peace Prayer" in 2002 and "Breath of God" in 2008.

She has performed the national anthem, solo and with others, at the Ralston Fourth of July parade, the College World Series, Omaha Storm Chasers baseball games and sporting events at Creighton University and UNO. Margaret also has done concerts at the Holy Family Shrine southwest of Omaha along Interstate 80, the Knowles Mercy Spirituality Center near Waterloo, and nursing homes.

"I could do it all day every day... I just love to do it," she said.

## Mark Your Calendars

### LENTEN PARISH MISSION MARCH 17-20, 2019

St. Gerald has a Lenten Parish Mission planned! Join us each of the four evenings as Deacon Ralph Poyo shares engaging content meant to help transform our lives and our parish! Each night's presentation will start at 7:00pm, but feel free to come at 6:30pm for music and prayer. Deacon Ralph is the founder of New Evangelization Ministries. He travels the country preaching parish missions, training leaders, and is passionate about bringing people and churches into closer relationship with the Lord!

### ANNUAL FUNERAL LUNCHEON BAKE SALE APRIL 13 & 14

(Palm Sunday Weekend)

Look for homemade baked goods, jellies, frozen casseroles and raffle items after every mass during the weekend of Palm Sunday. Bake sale funds help support the cost of parish funeral luncheons.



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## ST. GERALD CATHOLIC CHURCH

[www.StGerald.org](http://www.StGerald.org)

### MASS TIMES

#### Church - 96th and Q Street

Saturday: 5:00pm Sunday: 8:00am, 10:00 am, 12:00pm  
Daily: 12:15pm (M-F), Rosary begins at 11:45am  
Holy Days: check the bulletin and online

#### Chapel - 78th and Lakeview

Sunday: 7:00am  
Daily: 8:15am (M-Sat), Rosary begins at 7:45am  
Holy Days: check the bulletin and online

### RECONCILIATION TIMES

#### Church - 96th and Q Street

Saturday: 3:00-4:30pm  
Monday-Friday: 12:00-12:15pm (First Fridays at 11:45am)

#### Chapel - 78th and Lakeview

Monday-Saturday: 8:00-8:15am  
(First Fridays & Saturdays at 7:45am)

### LENTEN 2019 SCHEDULE

#### PARISH MISSION:

March 17-March 20 at 7:00pm (Music @ 6:30)(96th & Q)

#### STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Fridays of Lent

following 12:15pm Mass and 6:00pm at 96th & Q

#### SCHOOL OF PRAYER:

First Saturdays 9:00-10:15am (Lakeview chapel)

#### CONFESSIONS:

Saturdays from 3:00-4:45 pm (96th & Q)  
Thursday, April 4: Penance service @ 7:00 pm (96th & Q)  
Monday, April 15: 7:00-8:30 pm (96th & Q)  
Tuesday, April 16: 7:00-8:30 pm (96th & Q)  
Wednesday, April 17: 7:00-8:30 pm (Lakeview Chapel)

**PRAYER MORNING:** No masses in the morning or at noon  
on April 18, 19 and 20. The Deacons will lead Morning  
Prayer at Lakeview each of those days at 8:15am.

**HOLY THURSDAY** † April 18 † Mass - 7:00pm. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 9:00-11:00pm - 96th & Q

**GOOD FRIDAY** † April 19 † Stations of the Cross - Noon. Divine Mercy Chaplet - 3:00pm. Service - 7:00pm - 96th & Q

**HOLY SATURDAY** † April 20 † Easter Vigil Mass - 8:45pm - 96th & Q

**EASTER SUNDAY** † April 21 † Masses: 7:00 am - Lakeview Chapel † 8:00am, 10:00am, Noon - 96th & Q

[Check the entire schedule online at stgerald.org](http://stgerald.org)