

**REDEMPTORIST NORTH AMERICAN SECRETARIAT FOR PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION
ONGOING FORMATION AND FAITH-SHARING
BLESSED KASPAR STANGGASSINGER
Time Frame: 90 minutes**

CENTRE OF BEAUTY:

- Mission Cross
- Cloth
- Icon or picture of Blessed Kaspar Stanggassinger, C.Ss.R.
- Candle
- Bible

HANDOUTS:

- "Blessed Kaspar Stanggassinger, C.Ss.R." (2-page biography)
- Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit

MATERIALS:

- Name Tags (if needed)
- Pens/pencils
- Paper

NOTES:

In preparation for this session, copies of "Blessed Kaspar Stanggassinger, C.Ss.R." are distributed to all participants, in order that they may read the short article before coming together.

SATURDAY MORNING OR WEEKDAY EVENING SESSION

GATHERING and WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER– Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit (attached)

Experience– Blessed Kaspar was very much the sort of teacher and leader that children and youth could look up to. They followed his example, and he was an effective and inspiring role model for them.

- Who have been the role models in your lives?
- Call these people to mind, and remember them with thanks.

Reflection– What is it that inspired you or made you look up to the people you have named as role models? Share your stories and insights with the group. If you wish, make a list on chart paper of the qualities that the members of the group named. Look over these in review at the close of the sharing.

Generalization–

Discuss the article which participants have read in preparation for this gathering: “*Blessed Kaspar Stangassinger, C.Ss.R.*” Some reflection questions were appended to the article. You might wish to use the following questions as a discussion guide:

1. What impressed you about Blessed Kaspar as you read and reflected on this article?
2. What can we draw from the spirituality of Kaspar that we could apply to our own lives or our own day?
3. As you read about Kaspar, was anything affirmed for you? If so, what?
4. Did anything you read challenge you? If so, what was it?

You might also ask:

5. From his youth, Kaspar was a leader, gathering other young people around himself to pray, share common life and activity and charitable work. When you consider your own vocation or career, can you discern its roots in your own youth?
6. Kaspar’s father opposed his decision to become a Redemptorist, and although he felt called to missionary work, he obediently followed the request of his Redemptorist superiors to work with the students in the minor seminary. Can you relate to this kind of obedience in your own life? How?
7. In addition to his responsibilities as a teacher, Kaspar was always available to the students, and gave generously of his time to provide pastoral assistance in parishes on Sundays. In your life,

you, like Kaspar, are busy about many things. How do you balance these? How do you establish and keep priorities?

Action: Name one thing that you will take home with you from tonight's session.

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: Saints have special intuitions", wrote Father Stangassinger. That which is important for me, who am not a saint, are the simple eternal truths: the Incarnation, the Redemption and the Holy Eucharist". Let us turn now to our God, bringing before Him all the needs of our community, our families and our own hearts...

1. For our Church, that we may continue to be faithful to our mission to make disciples and to teach; we pray to the Lord...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For teachers, that they may be ever mindful that they are fellow learners with their students; we pray to the Lord...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For youth ministers and all who work with young people, that they may listen with loving hearts and respond to the needs of the young Church of today; we pray to the Lord...

All: Lord, hear our prayer...

4. For an increase in vocations to all facets of the Redemptorist family: for dedicated priests, brothers, lay missionaries of the Most Holy Redeemer and Redemptorist associates; we pray to the Lord...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Spontaneous Intercessions...

Prayer: Faithful God, you called Blessed Kaspar to follow Jesus the Redeemer as a teacher and friend of youth. By his prayers, keep us faithful to you and hopeful in our future. We ask this in Jesus' name. Let us join all of our prayers together in the prayer that Jesus taught us.

Our Father

Leader: Let us offer a Sign of Peace to one another.

Sign of Peace

PRAYER OF ST. ALPHONSUS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT



L. You are **fire**;
R. enkindle in me your love.

L. You are **light**;
R. enlighten my mind with the knowledge of eternal things.

L. You are the **Dove**;
R. give me innocence of life.

L. You are the gentle **Breeze**;
R. disperse the storms of my passions.

L. You are the **Tongue**;
R. Teach me how to bless you always.

L. You are the **Cloud**;
R. shelter me under the shadow of your protection.

L. You are the **Giver** of all heavenly gifts;
R. animate me,

L. I beseech you, with your **grace**;
R. sanctify me

L. with your **charity**;
R. enlighten me

L. with your **wisdom**;
R. adopt me by your goodness as your child, and save me in your infinite mercy;
so that I may ever **bless** you, **praise** you, and **love** you;
first during this life on earth, and then in heaven for all eternity.

Amen.

BLESSED KASPAR STANGASSINGER, C.SS.R.

"Saints have special intuitions", wrote Father Stangassinger. That which is important for me, who am not a saint, are the simple eternal truths: the Incarnation, the Redemption and the Holy Eucharist".

Kaspar Stangassinger, born in 1871 in Berchtesgaden, in southern Germany was the second of 16 children. His father, a man respected by all, was a farmer and owned a stone quarry.

From his youth he had a growing desire to become a priest. In those early years Kaspar played at being a priest and "preached" short sermons to his brothers and sisters and used to lead them in procession to a chapel among the mountains near his home.

When he was ten years old he went to Freising to continue his schooling. He found the studies rather difficult. His father told him that if he did not pass his exams he would have to leave school. With a strong will, remarkable dedication and fidelity to prayer, he steadily made progress. In the years that followed he began, during vacation, to gather groups of boys around himself to encourage them in the Christian life, to form a community among them and to organize their free time. Every day the group went to Mass, took a walk or went on a pilgrimage. Kaspar's dedication to them was admirable and extended even to risking his life to save one boy in danger when mountain climbing.

He entered the diocesan seminary of Munich and Freising in 1890 to begin his study of theology. The better to discern the will of God he voluntarily followed a rigorous prayer schedule. Very soon it was clear to him that the Lord was calling him to live his vocation in as a religious. In fact, after a visit to the Redemptorists, he was inspired to follow their vocation as missionary. In spite of his father's opposition he entered the Redemptorist novitiate at Gars in 1892 and was ordained a priest in Regensburg in 1895. Kaspar Stangassinger had entered the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer with the intention of being a missionary. However, he was appointed by his superiors to form future missionaries as vice-director of the minor seminary of Durnberg, near Hallein. He dedicated himself completely to this responsibility.

As a religious he had made a vow of obedience and lived it in a very clear and consistent manner.

Each week he spent 28 hours teaching in the classroom and yet was always available to the boys. On Sundays he never failed to offer his help at the churches in the neighbouring villages, especially by preaching. Even with such a schedule of work he was always patient and understanding with the needs of others, particularly the students who saw in him more a friend than a superior. Although the rules of formation at that time were very strict, Kaspar never acted harshly, and anytime he had the impression that he had wronged someone he immediately apologized humbly.

Deeply devoted to Jesus in the Eucharist, he invited the boys and the faithful to whom he preached to have recourse to the Blessed Sacrament in times of need and anxiety. He encouraged them to go to Christ whether to adore Him or to speak with Him as a friend. His preaching was a constant reminder to the faithful to take the Christian life seriously, growing in faith by means of prayer and continual conversion. His style was direct and appealing, without threats of punishment as was common in the preaching of that time.

In 1899 the Redemptorists opened a new seminary in Gars. Father Stangassinger was transferred there as director. He was 28 years old. He only had time to preach one retreat to the students and to participate in the opening of the school year.

On September 26 his earthly journey ended because of peritonitis.

The Cause of his Beatification began, in 1935, with the transferring of the body into the side-chapel of the Church of Gars.

On 24 April 1988 he was proclaimed 'Blessed' by the Holy Father, John Paul II.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What impressed you about Blessed Kaspar as you read and reflected on this article?
2. What can you draw from the spirituality of Kaspar that you could apply to your own life or our own day?
3. As you read about Kaspar, was anything affirmed for you? If so, what?
4. Did anything you read challenge you? If so, what was it?
5. What do you think that Blessed Kaspar has to say to the Redemptorist Family today?