Sister Maria Francine Stacy interview for a Wright State University History Course

Elise Kelly
Maria Francine Stacy
On February 2nd, 2011, I interviewed Sister Maria Francine Stacy at her home. We conducted the interview in her dining room. Sister Maria Francine Stacy was born in East Cincinnati in 1954. She has four sisters, including one twin sister. Her father was an immigrant from Italy, and came to the United States when he was three years old. During the interview, she speaks about her father's difficult experiences of being an immigrant and how he faced discrimination during the earlier part of the twentieth century. Her father did not like to speak about his experiences of being an immigrant and she hopes her work as the director of the Dayton's Catholic Hispanic Ministry, can help the Hispanic immigrants not feel ashamed of being immigrants. Throughout her childhood, her family attended and participated in many activities with her local Catholic Church. As an adolescent, Maria attended Marian High School. During her high school years, Maria and her twin sister, Anita studied advanced Spanish at the college level. In 1972, both sisters began their studies at Thomas More College, where Maria majored in English and Spanish Education. Maria and Anita both met many Sisters of Notre Dame at the college because many of these religious sisters taught classes there. They participated in prayer groups and discussed religious life with these religious sisters during their last years at
After obtaining their degrees, both sisters decided to enter the vowed religious life and join the Sisters of Notre Dame. For more than twenty years, Sister Maria taught at Mount Notre Dame Academy, teaching English and Spanish to high school girls. During this time, she earned her Master's degrees in Education from Xavier University and Hispanic Civilization from the University of Cincinnati. While at Mount Notre Dame Academy, Sister Maria would take some of her students and travel to areas like Over-the-Rhine in Cincinnati, and teach English to poor, Hispanic communities. She also took mission trips with her students to El Salvador and Oaxaca, Mexico.

As the Hispanic population began to grow in Ohio, Sister Maria felt a calling to help these vulnerable, poor, immigrants. At the time, (2000-2002) there was a void in the Church with helping these migrants. Therefore, she felt that the "Church needed an expanded presence among Hispanics," and she knew that God was calling her to do this full-time, dedicated work. On June 16, 2002, Sister Maria became the full-time director of Dayton's Catholic Hispanic Ministry. Although she encountered difficulties first starting out, including living alone in a new city, she always felt that, "the Lord was going to help her and that, they we were in this together." She also felt that, "it really deepened her relationship with God." As the Hispanic population kept growing, the Catholic Hispanic Ministry became the largest Hispanic advocacy group in the area. On a daily basis, Sister Maria deals with a wide array of inquiries, problems, activities, and programs. A number of inquiries pertain to asking for advice on taxes, needing vouchers so that Hispanic immigrant children can register in schools and visa and legalization procedures. Dealing with and solving a plethora of problems which include: arrests, discrimination, and unfair work practices are just a few issues that she takes on, on a daily basis. She has worked extensively with Dayton's Police Chief Richard Biehl in order to stop Dayton Police Officers from asking people their immigration status. In 2007, there were many traffic stops and arrests of local Hispanics. Sister Maria has pointed out that "some people became very hesitant of the police and started to not report things because their experience was they would get into trouble." During the interview, she said that, "often during this time, she would have to go down to the police station and see if she could do something, but very often she was not able to do anything." In December of 2009, Police Chief Biehl "issued an executive order to his nearly 390 officers, telling them, citizens must feel free to call for police services without fear of undue repercussions." With the help and advocacy of Sister Maria, local Hispanic communities have been able to feel safe when calling the police. Because of these specific advocacy efforts, she was awarded in 2009 the Liberty Bell Award by the American Bar Association of Dayton. The Liberty Bell Award recognizes community

---

2 Sister Maria Francine Stacy, interviewed by Elise Kelly, The Selfless Way: An Oral History Interview with Sister Maria Francine Stacy, University Library, Wright State University, February 2, 2011.
3 Sister Maria Francine Stacy, interviewed by Elise Kelly, The Selfless Way: An Oral History Interview with Sister Maria Francine Stacy, University Library, Wright State University, February 2, 2011.
service that strengthens the American System of Freedom under law.

Sister Maria also plans and provides a number of activities and programs. Some of the activities and programs include: health care clinics, documentation fairs, discussion programs on immigrants and immigration, Catechism classes, and religious and cultural events (Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day, Way of the Cross, Mexican Youth Dance Groups). The health clinics draw many local Hispanic immigrants because they cannot afford to go to the doctor or the dentist. In August of 2003, she planned and served at a health clinic in New Carlisle. Migrant farm-workers, who she also teaches English too on Monday nights, were able to "have free examinations from one of the local ten doctors as well as a home-cooked catered meal."5 This February, Sister Maria planned another health clinic in Dayton, which provided examinations and consultations with eye doctors, dentists, and board of health members who conduct HIV/AIDS testing. The discussion programs and talks that she gives centers on educating non-Latinos about immigrants and immigration. During the interview, Sister Maria mentioned the concerns of immigrants. The two main concerns are legalization and discrimination. She hopes that these talks and symposiums that she participates and attends will educate and change the minds of people who are not welcoming the immigrant and who are fighting against immigrant legislation. In March of 2010, Sister Maria along with Hispanic parish members, marched in the immigration rally in D.C. She stated that, "she marched with the people of her community, proud to do so on the same day that Martin Luther King left Selma, Alabama in 1965—a march in which some of her Sisters participated for human rights as well."6 The religious programs are her favorite events to plan and help out with. In 2005, it was reported in The Catholic Telegraph that, “more than 300 members of the Hispanic Catholic Ministry of Dayton gathered during the day for Mass at Holy Family Church.”7 During this annual Feast Day, mass is celebrated, honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe. Re-enactments and dancing are performed as traditional folk music is played.

As an active community organizer and advocate, Sister Maria is the secretary of the Latino Connection, which is a Not-for-profit and Non-partisan Corporation which provides information, networking and educational opportunities to its members and the community at large. She is a member of Ethnic and Diversity Caucus at the University of Dayton and in 2006 she was awarded the Alma Latina (Latin Soul) Award. This award "honors a person who has furthered the advancement of the local Latino community."8 She is also a member of Dayton LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens). Dayton LULAC provides an after-school learning place for Latino students in the Dayton Public Schools and non-public schools. El Puente Learning Center is located at St. Mary’s Catholic Church, where the Catholic Hispanic Ministry is also located. She helps

facilitate El Puente’s activities and needs. In 2009, LULAC Ohio held its annual state convention and presented Sister Maria with the LULAC Latino Community Service Award.

It was an honor to able to interview a woman who is so self-giving, humble, and caring. As the director of the largest Hispanic organization in Dayton, Sister Maria was able to inform me about her experiences working with the Hispanic immigrant community. Although, I have known her for about three years now, I learned not only a plethora about her life, but also what it takes to be the director of an immigrant ministry and what struggles, obstacles and successes one encounters. Sister Maria has dedicated her life with educating, helping, and developing relationships with people. She has taught me the qualities of perseverance, faith, hope, and trust. I have learned from this interview, what it takes to seek justice for our fellow immigrants and what advocacy and community service entails and acquires.
Oral History Interview

Name of the Project: The Selfless Way: An Oral History Interview with Sister Maria Francine Stacy

Name of the project director: Marjorie McLellan, Department of Urban Affairs and Geography, Wright State University

Interviewee/narrator name Sister Maria Francine Stacy

Interviewer name Elise Kelly

Others present

Place 1073 Sherwood Dr., Sr. Maria’s house (Dining Room)

Date 02/05/11

Length of recording: 1:12:41

Original format: m4a

Key words:
Sisters of Notre Dame
El Salvador
War
Poverty
CRISPAZ
Hispanic
Immigrants
Way of the Cross
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Las Mañanitas
Lou Dobbs
Anti-Immigrant
Dayton Catholic Hispanic Ministry
9/11
Discrimination
Human/Civil Rights
Legal Rights
Acts of the Apostles
Book of Job
Government
Health Clinics

Indexed by Elise Kelly

Index

0:00:00-0:00:53 Introduction to the recording.
Information listed above.

0:00:53-0:06:11 Childhood
Sr. Maria discusses her somewhat unique childhood experiences. She had a twin sister and they did everything together. Talks about how her father was an immigrant from Italy and his experiences and her experiences growing up with a father who was an immigrant. Also discusses her strong faith and practice with the Catholic religion during her childhood.

Keywords:
Sisters of Charity
Immigrant
Italians
Holy Thursday
Good Friday

0:06:11-0:11:35 College Years
Sr. Maria discusses her study in Mexico and her religious service activities during her college years at Thomas More University. She also explains why she chose to study English and Spanish.

Keywords:
Mission Trips
Mexico
University of Wichita
College of Mount St. Joseph
English
Spanish

0:11:35-0:18:11 Discernment Time Period (Becoming a Catholic Religious Sister)
Sr. Maria discusses her discernment period, questioning if she wants to become a religious sister. Discusses the difficult time period in regards to identity and changes within religious life after Vatican II.

Keywords:
Sisters of Notre Dame
Community
Poverty
Prayer
Progressive
Traditional
Vatican II

0:18:11-0:31:20 Teaching Career
Sr. Maria discusses how she loved teaching English and Spanish in high school. She discusses her experiences working and teaching young women in the classroom. Also, she discusses her volunteer work with her students (teaching English to Hispanic immigrants) and the mission trips she took with her students to El Salvador and Mexico.

Keywords:
English
Spanish
Medieval Drama
Morning and Evening Prayers
Hispanic Communities
Migrant Camps
Over-the Rhine (Cincinnati)
El Salvador
CRISPAZ
Mount Notre Dame Academy
Oaxaca, Mexico
Orphanage
Poverty

0:31:20-0:43:10 Director of Catholic Hispanic Ministry of Dayton
Sr. Maria discusses the call she felt to help the Hispanic community more. She explains her experiences and the challenges she confronted when she started out as the director. She describes an array of activities that are involved in order to complete the work as a director of Hispanic ministry.

Keywords:
Hispanics
Spanish
Dayton Catholic Hispanic Ministry
0:43:10- 0:53:15 Hispanic Community’s needs and what American citizens can do to help them
She explains what the Hispanic immigrant’s main concerns are, which included legalization and discrimination. Describes the difficulties the immigrants face having to put their spiritual life and values on hold while living in a different country. (Don’t get married, while here because family not here. Would wait to get married after go back to their home country). Discusses the talks she gives about welcoming the immigrant. Also, explains what Anglos can do to reach out and help the Hispanic community.

Keywords:
Legalization
Discrimination
Human Rights
Legal Rights
Money
Faith
Values
Dayton Police Chief Richard Biehl
Combine Pastoral-Welcoming the Stranger among Us
Mexican and U.S. Bishops
Immigrants
East Dayton
Hospitality
Worshipping
Teach English
Lou Dobbs

0:53:15- 1:12:41 Director of Catholic Hispanic Ministry of Dayton
She discusses the most interesting programs and events that she’s involved with. Explains the frustrations she faces when doing community work for Hispanics and what she does to overcome these obstacles. Explains how the Catholic Hispanic Ministry has changed over the time she’s been director and discusses the most gratifying contributions. Lastly, discusses the lessons she has carried away from involvement with community and the advice she would give someone who is working in the similar field.

Keywords:
Way of the Cross
Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Mañanitas (the night before)
Mexican youth dance groups
Health Clinics
HIV/AIDS Testing
9/11
Lou Dobbs
Anti-Immigrant
Civil Rights
Government
Kelly: Ok, my first question for you is while growing up could you tell me about your childhood and adolescent experiences?

Stacy: Well my childhood was somewhat unique because having a twin sister we always say that we began as womb-mates and um and so we did almost everything together. In fact when we starting going to school, in public school, kindergarten they separated us and so my sister was found outside one time sitting on the step and she wasn’t in her class and the principle asked her, “what are you doing here?” And she said, “I’m waiting for my sister.” And so eventually they put her in a class that was across from mine so that we would be closer and when we got to grade school we only had in the Catholic school one, one grade each so we were always in the same grade. Luckily academically we were comparable and so there wasn’t competition or anything. I had a really good grade school experience I thought my teachers were models and so from the very beginning I wanted to be a teacher I was inspired by them. As an adolescent especially in high school we were very much prone to study and so we took physics and different things so that we were college prep. And then when we went to the university we were well prepared so I have really good memories. Our family is very, very small but close knit and so we would get together for family gatherings and things like that. I have two older sisters and so my dad always said that, “he raised two families with raising his baby-sitters first!” So that was what it was like growing up.  

Kelly: So, and could you tell me if you grew up - you grew up with your father was an immigrant from Italy?  
Stacy: Yes  
Kelly: And do you think – what was that like? Could you explain what that was like?  
Stacy: My father really didn’t speak very much about being an immigrant. He came when he was about three years old so he didn’t speak with an accent or anything. But he
didn’t really speak very favorably about Italy because all his siblings had died there and that’s why his father and he came over and his mom also. When he got to the United States he encountered a lot of prejudice against Italians, at that time they were the darker immigrants and more, well, I would say less disciplined whatever. So, often when people would ask him “where are you from?” He would say “Pennsylvania,” because that was his first port of entry. So now that I am dealing with the immigrants I always think, I really hope that what I’m doing helps immigrants to appreciate their being immigrants and appreciate their roots. Because had my father had a better experience well we might have even had Italian spoken at the home, we did have Italian food but it would have been a heritage that we would have really admired, whereas it was rather hidden in our house.

Kelly: It was?
Stacy: Yes.

Kelly: Ok, so you didn’t want to…
Stacy: It wasn’t until we went to high school and we had a history teacher talking about immigrants and he started talking to my dad about his experience and then my dad opened up. But before that it was like he never spoke about it because it wasn’t anything good and when he found somebody really appreciated it and it was something of historical value and interest, then I think it opened him up. But before that he didn’t speak about it. Well besides that, when his father got remarried he was sent to an orphanage. So he had a very sad childhood because his step-mother who was Italian as well, did not accept him into the family. So he didn’t have a lot of good things to associate with his childhood. In fact he always said that his life began when he married my mom.

Kelly: That’s so good. So can you – what kind of experiences did you have with the Catholic religion during your childhood?
Stacy: Well we were taught by Sisters of Charity and in grade school that was a wonderful experience and we were often up at the school helping and getting to know the sisters. My mom was a practicing Catholic and so we went to church all the time and we knew the parish priest very well and he was very friendly to us. Once when my sister had an appendectomy the sisters came over to our house to visit. And so it was a small school and a small parish and so we all knew each other very well. My parents were involved in the parish so we had a very close relationship with the people. They were for us imitators of the faith. So Holy Thursday, Good Friday, we would be up at church and so it was just a very good experience. I think that we learned about the Catholic faith and I think in college was when I really understood about the service element and the going out and practicing the Catholic faith.

Kelly: Yeah, and that leads to my other question. Did you – I know in colleges now they can do you know cultural excursions or mission trips. I don’t know if you or you know local service. Could you tell me or explain if you participated in those kinds of service things or was it local?
Stacy: No those things were pretty well unknown in my day in age (laughs). I went to Mexico to study and that was like, what are you doing this for? There was not in my college an offering to go to a foreign country to study. So I found in a magazine a university, a larger university that had the experience and so I signed up for that. My mom was saying “what are you doing this for?” “Why are you going all the way over there?” And she said, “I really do not want you to go unless you find somebody that I
know is going with you.” And so I wrote the company, it was the University of Wichita, and I wrote and I said, is there anybody else from this area? And it turned out that there was one teacher, Spanish teacher from the public school and there was one sister from the College of Mount St. Joseph who was much older but who was teaching Spanish at the university I think. So I made a point of meeting both of them before I went but that was very unusual to be taking.... The college had to figure out how to put it into the college credits I had. So the mission kind of trips... The kind of things that we would do for outreach in college was... Even though the sisters had left our school, the Franciscan brothers were there and we went back and we taught religion classes and things like that. So we were still involved with the school and that was an outside activity but even colleges of that day did not have... and this was a Catholic college, a small Catholic college did not have, like requirements for service or anything like that.

Kelly: Why did you- could you explain why you chose to study English and Spanish? English for teaching, English in high school and Spanish also?
Stacy: The Spanish I wasn’t intending to study at all. The English I wanted to study because I just really liked studying English and I knew – I thought it was going to be difficult to teach because sometimes its hard to get kids into reading that kind of thing but I thought that will be the challenge. But while I’m in college I would like to do something – I want to do something that I like to study, whereas my sister said she was going to study math. Then she says, “Well then we can teach at the same school” (laughs). I said I don’t remember her saying that but she swears that she said that (laughs). And I thought math would be fun to teach but I didn’t want to do all the studying in math cause it gets into all that detail. So I thought oh, English is definitely it. Well then I signed up for Spanish because in high school we had an advanced Spanish class, which was an independent study because it was a conflict, so just she and I did it with our Spanish teacher. So we were pretty advanced in Spanish because she had given us her college books to do in high school. So when I went to Thomas More we had – they put me into advanced Spanish right away and so I really liked the Spanish classes and I really liked the Spanish students that I was with. So I signed up-I tried to sign up for the sociology class thinking I need to take something else other than Spanish but as soon as I heard what they were doing in Spanish class, I switched back to the Spanish! (laughs) Then my mom kept on saying to me “what are you taking that for your never going to use that again?” “I know but I just like it” (laughs). Kelly: And so your interest just kept growing?
Stacy: Yeah, once-well you know how a lot of things have to do with the people you’re with so we had a very close knit... The English majors were more widespread but the Spanish majors you knew who they were because it was a smaller group. So we would do foreign language festivals, all kinds of different activities together. We had Spanish masses and we all did it planning together. We had this little lounge that all of us would go to and we just joked around and we had good camaraderie and the teachers were so close to us because they knew us so well. I remember one time, I brought a book and it was a novel that we had to read for class. The cover was on upside down and so I would go reading it and I would say, I’m so good in Spanish I can even read it upside down!(laughs) We were just a group that really got along well together even outside of class. So I thought it’s good to have something you can to teach with English and all the education people said “two languages are very good.” So I just thought I would do that
and that maybe I could minor in Spanish but it turned out that I majored in it anyway because I had enough by the time I was finished.

**Kelly:** Wow. Let's see... was it after college that you entered into the religious life?

**Stacy:** Yes.

**Kelly:** And so how did you realize that you wanted to become a religious sister?

**Stacy:** Well, people said to us when we were in high school, “we thought for sure you would enter into the convent because most people enter in high school- right after high school. We thought ha ha ha, everybody thought we would but no. I just- I really wanted to be a teacher and I wanted to be a model like my teachers have been for me. So I thought oh, I can be a lay teacher. I didn’t feel even though I had boyfriends, I didn’t feel like I was going to get married. But I thought religious life was changing and I thought no I don’t think that’s... when I was in grade school I thought it was what I would do all the time but then in high school I thought no. I had sisters that were older and they just didn’t seem to me as happy or something so I thought no. When I went to college, we went to a co-ed college. We could have gone to the all-girl college at that time probably for free because they gave scholarships to our high school. But we said no, no we want to go to a co-ed and so it was there that we met the Sisters of Notre Dame. We never had Sisters of Notre Dame before and we just found real peace with them. Then my sister’s physics teacher, who was a sister of Notre Dame, invited her to come and pray at the convent and I said, well you told her no, didn’t you? And she said “how could I tell her no!?” (laughs) But see we shared one car and so we both went. Eventually it was just... it was really the prayer that drew me because I felt that it was something that was really missing in my life, knowing how to pray. Then I think it was also the passage from Acts of the Apostles, where everyone gathered as community and shared all their belongings and prayed together. I felt religious life is really what the Early Christian community was. So, I was talking with one of the sisters and I said but I feel I can be a really good Christian in being a lay teacher. I really want to help to give them something spiritual. And she said “why do you think that you can give them spiritually if you’re not first nurtured inside?” And I thought that’s true. I have to have time and space and the discipline of the religious life is exactly what’s going to help me develop my relationship with the Lord, so that can flow out to others. So my sister and I took time not to talk about our personal decisions but just to pray and think about it. Then when we both had decided what we wanted to do we shared our decisions.

**Kelly:** And how did you share your decisions with each other? Did you both come about-thought that this is what we want to do? Or how did you...

**Stacy:** Like one time I think I said to her, do you think that you know what you want to do now? And she said “yes.” So then we shared. And so I said well I think I want to join the convent. And she said “that’s what I came up with too.” So then we could contact the sisters and see what that meant.

**Kelly:** Ok, wow. So, and I guess you wanted to join the Sisters of Notre Dame because you were - you met them when you were at Thomas More. Could you explain why it was the Sisters of Notre Dame?

**Stacy:** Well, it was pretty easy because at that time in 1976, it was still less than ten years after Vatican II and so some of the sisters had changed really, really a lot and the Sisters of Notre Dame were more traditional. Also I think a lot has to do with the personal - the people that the Lord puts into your life. So some of the sisters we were free to talk to
about religious life and we were at the time and we were really open to what – and they prayed with us and things like that.

**Kelly:** What were your feelings towards as the sisters were becoming more I guess progressive? What were your feelings towards that?

**Stacy:** Well that was a very, very difficult time because it was a time when sisters themselves were wondering what to do. So it was a time of uncertainty for all of us. For me of course, because I thought well, I joined these sisters because I thought they were more traditional and now they’re changing. I think that when you join religious life it’s just like when you get married. Your allegiance is to one person and so it’s really not in the externals. You might say well, I would prefer that we have all the same habit or something like that but the center is Jesus Christ. So the most important is the living of community, the prayer, things that really deepen your relationship with God. Yeah, it was something- one thing that I think our novice directors really taught us was that religious life is a way of offering yourself to Jesus. So the sacrifice is like an additional sacrifice that you can give to Jesus as an expression of love. Just like a wife would, you know when oh, well now we have to move. I think that would be the hardest thing, to move, because of the husband’s job or something. Well, that’s an expression for her love for him that she’s going to do that.

**Kelly:** Yeah, I agree. Could you tell me about your experiences of being able to teach English and Spanish to young women in high school?

**Stacy:** I absolutely loved teaching English and Spanish, I loved teaching in high school! It was a challenge (laughs). They always say the sophomore year is the biggest challenge because the freshmen are absolutely wonderful to teach. They’re excited to be there, they’re very easy to manage because they’re still afraid. The seniors sometimes have a bit of an attitude but basically they’ve been in the school so long, they’re part of the school. I did not have juniors very much at all so I didn’t have a whole lot of experience with juniors. But sophomores, I just thought they were wonderful. I had freshmen and seniors mostly when I taught English. English was probably the biggest challenge because most of the time because we had a master teacher that taught all the advanced placement, so usually I taught the lower levels. So it was difficult. But at the beginning I’m not sure that I reached so many people but as I began to learn about how to teach (laughs)... I remember there was this one student and she was always talking and she was just- I mean it was like you teaching class and it was almost like you were teaching directly to her because she was ready to respond. We just did different things like for the prayer to begin the class. We were studying medieval drama and they had in medieval drama two sides reciting sort of like the Evening Prayers and Morning Prayers. So one time I told her to stand up in class on one side and her friend was on the other side. They were like reciting the prayer and they just got involved. I remember that I had taken – I had substituted for a class for one of the other sisters. She said “don’t let these kids out of the room no matter what because I told them to bring all their lab equipment and their notebooks and everything and they should have it with them.” Well they didn’t and I was a beginning teacher. But she said don’t let them out of the classroom so I didn’t let them out of the classroom. So it was like oh, it was a fight, all the time because they are supposed to be doing something but they didn’t really have their materials. But see, I did not have enough confidence. Well that was the group that was in this English class and so when I saw them and they saw me the first day of class I thought oh, this is going to be a long
year. But it didn’t turn out like that at all because that’s when we did these activities and
we got to know each other. So I really think there is so much creativity in teaching and
that’s what I really like. I mean I would spend time and time on my lesson plans because
I thought I have to have at least if not every class, at least three times a week we have to
do something that they’re really going to like doing. For Spanish it was much easier. For
English a lot of times they could get together in groups or have something that was less
structured then just sitting and listening or whatever. But for Spanish we could have
games, we could have songs, we could have dances, we could have whatever. So it was a
challenge, but I think that if a teacher is well prepared academically and a teacher is well
prepared for her subject, that takes care of about 80% of the discipline problems (laughs).
So I found it just a wonderful experience and just with kids remembering- they don’t
really always remember what you taught them but they remember you. I think that that’s
something that I really feel privileged that I was able to be touched by them in a very
important part of their lives.

Kelly: When you were teaching these students, can you explain your experiences of
volunteering to help Hispanic communities with your students?

Stacy: Then it became en vogue. Then it was something to do because high schools
began having service projects. They didn’t- sometimes they needed service hours but
sometimes they just did it because they wanted to. The Hispanics started coming to our
area and I had always told them that a foreign language is not an academic pursuit. A
foreign language is like a code that can be unbroken so you can open up a whole new
world. You get to know people; you get to know a culture. So I would invite them on the
weekends, usually Sunday after mass in Northern Kentucky to go down to teach English.
They really, really liked doing it and sometimes they would come back and they would
say “golly, I spoke Spanish and somebody understood me!” They didn’t think if they
spoke Spanish somebody would understand them (laughs). So it really helped them to, I
think get into the study of Spanish as well as seeing the human element. These are the
human beings who are speaking Spanish, they’re coming in our area and they need help
and we’re the ones who can do it. So I had some Mexican students who of course were
learning more English then Spanish but they went to a migrant camp area and we gave
blankets to a family and we went and visited with them. That was a good experience for
them because they were more upper class Mexicans so they got to see another side of
their countrymen. Then eventually one of my best Spanish students, she went with me to
like Over-the-Rhine in Cincinnati. A woman there had organized a clinic for the Hispanic
population and the doctors were going to speak Spanish. They could come every
Saturday and get check-ups. So while she was giving-while they were waiting for their
check-ups, then we would teach English in the lobby. That was a good experience too.

Kelly: Do you think most of your students - I mean they’re mostly Caucasian, maybe
upper middle class? Could you explain if they had a kind of culture shock or an
awakening of helping these poor immigrants? Could you explain if they had - if you
knew what they were feeling?

Stacy: Yeah, I think in that particular case, the poverty wasn’t as apparent because you
don’t see their house or what they’re eating and things like that. But I think they got an
understanding of what it’s like to be in a foreign country and not speaking the language.
Now when we took the mission trips to Mexico and we took one to El Salvador that was
really life changing. The one to El Salvador was with CRISPAZ [A faith-based
organization dedicated to mutual accompaniment with the church of the poor and marginalized communities in El Salvador] and so it was extremely well organized. There were prayer experiences and they went to see places where the war was. And then they got to visit people in the village. The people in the village there, they’re always in Central America handing you a letter saying “we’re trying to build a church if your parish would you know support (laughs). But they could see that they didn’t even have- well they did have latrines but they didn’t have toilet tissue. It was- they really saw poverty in El Salvador and then there were people that were speaking about how their life was changed by working in El Salvador. They heard the people who were not complaining, who were relatively satisfied with their life. And they said “it just goes to show that you don’t need a lot of things to be happy.” So they really learned that in El Salvador and in Mexico as well. We went to various places. The most recent was with students from Mount Notre Dame. We went to Oaxaca and we went to an orphanage and that was just-the kids were... We had reflection periods, twice in the week that we went or something. They would say “these kids are helping each other, they are united, they are happy, and they have nothing, absolutely nothing. I mean even the clothes on their back is not theirs. They hardly have shoes.” They too came to that experience of what of all these things that we surround our selves with... So I think that those mission trips in particular were the ones that gave the idea of poverty and what is real wealth.

Kelly: And I’m assuming you learned the same-I shouldn’t assume but were you learning the same things as them, as you went with these mission trips? Or were you already aware of this?

Stacy: Well, I think that- I don’t know how I really would have learnt it but I knew there was a value in poverty because we take the vow of poverty. So things never seemed to be that important to me so it...I think what I learned more was about the human situation and the struggle with how can some people have so much and other people have so little? And like when we’re talking about material things that’s one thing, but when we talk about medicine and education...

Kelly: Essential things, yeah.

Stacy: You know opportunities that people are going to be stuck in at that same level unless they get more education or unless they have the medicine to help them to go on. A lot of the orphans were really orphans because their father had disappeared to go to the United States to work and so they were left and if something happens to their mother or whatever. Those kind things I would say, more systemic kind of questions. What’s going on in this world and how can there be a justice in the whole scheme of things?

Kelly: What did you do in the orphanage, that you and the students- How did you help them out, the orphans?

Stacy: Well, usually we cleaned up. They get an unbelievable amount of clothes donated so we would separate the clothes. Some of them that weren’t any good were burned and some of them that were good, really, really good, they started a little store after we started coming down. They would sell those to the neighbors and then the mediocre clothes would be stuff that would be set aside. Either they put them in big bags and sell them for like a couple of pesos or if they were children’s clothes they could use them, so that would be one thing. We cleaned the dormitory one time and then another time we cleaned the kitchen.
Kelly: So, what aspects did you enjoy? I know you’ve said what you enjoyed about teaching. Were there any aspects that you did not enjoy about teaching?

Stacy: Giving grades. I said that I would love to teach if there was a way to do it without grades because that’s when people become cantankerous (laughs) and more than that when people feel disappointed in themselves. And I said if you don’t give grades very few people are going to be motivated to study. But in giving grades it just seemed to me that it sort of wrecked the whole idyllic kind of experience that teaching was. So that was one of the hardest things and all the paperwork that went with it.

Kelly: Yeah, so you must have really enjoyed being a teacher. That must have been-how did you feel-well what made you decide to leave the academy and how did that make you feel having to make that decision having to leave something that you enjoyed so much?

Stacy: Well, I felt that there were other people that could do the teaching. In particular, I had one graduate that I had taught that was teaching and another one that eventually came. So there were like two kids that I had taught that were replacing me. So I felt good about that, that there were people that were pretty well following the same kind of trend or style. I just felt within me that there were more Hispanics coming. I felt that I liked working and I just felt like it was a call, that it was something that I need to do because there was void in the Church. These people were coming with a need and their needs were not being met. So it wasn’t as hard to leave knowing that you were doing something that you felt there was a need to do. But for a long time I didn’t go back because I just get this nostalgic feeling (laughs).

Kelly: So it was hard but you felt kind of compelled-not compelled but wanting to do it?

Stacy: Yes.

Kelly: So what was it like for you when you first began as the full time director?

Stacy: It was probably the hardest thing that I ever did (laughs). Because teaching Spanish and the words and the vocabulary that you have is completely different, the type of language that you meet with immigrants that are not necessarily well educated. But my Spanish is funny for them because the way I put words together is different from the way they would stream words together. So I had a lot of doubts. I thought well this might not work out. I feel like it’s what I am called to do and if it doesn’t work out then I always have a job back in the school somewhere. But I felt that almost everything in my life was changing because I came up here, I lived by myself. I’ve never lived by myself before. I was going to be not teaching, speaking Spanish, didn’t know if I would be accepted by the community and it was-instead of having a defined hours in the day it was very flexible scheduling. So most of what I was used to was sort of like the rug taken under your feet (laughs).

Kelly: So how were you able to cope with- it must have been very difficult all these things and challenges in your life. How were you able to cope with all these new...?

Stacy: Well, it turned out that I really enjoyed it. Because I felt that I was doing what the Lord called me to do. I felt, his constant presence. So I remember one time I was driving around and there was a domestic violence victim. So we were trying to get to her as soon as possible. I mean she wasn’t still in the house but she was upset, she didn’t know what to do, where she could go or anything. So I got the call and I had the directions of how to get there but the street ended and I wasn’t finding the number. So I just pulled over to the side and I said, ok Lord, if you want me to do this work, then you better help me out! So when I started up again I saw that the road just went over, it wasn’t a straight road but if
you went over some, that the road actually continues and I immediately found the house. It was just so many assurances like that that the Lord was with me that I really didn’t doubt that I was in the right place. Even when there were difficulties I felt that the Lord was going to help me and that we were in this together. So I felt actually that it was a very good thing. I felt that it was a way that I really deepened my relationship.

**Kelly:** Yeah, so how did you initiate or signify your presence to the Hispanic community when you came?

**Stacy:** There was already an office so the person-did you know Purisima?

**Kelly:** Yeah. [Kelly, shows article of Purisima [lay volunteer of Dayton’s Catholic Hispanic Ministry] and Sr. Stacy]

**Stacy:** Ok, the picture of her. So Purisima is there [pointing to picture] and she gave me telephone numbers of people to call like, who in Social Security helps out immigrants. I would just call and say, I’m a new person in the Hispanic ministry and so here is my telephone number if you ever need anything or I’ll probably be calling you when we need something. One of the greatest things was the Latino Connection [Latino Connection is a coalition that provides information, networking and training opportunities to those involved in helping the Latino population in the Miami Valley] because there were people that would go to these meetings that had-those wanted to network with the Latinos and so they had all kinds of you like realtors, or police, or churches. If there were opportunities- if somebody wanted to- sometimes like the health department would be there and if they wanted to do some tests or something. Eventually people came to us because we were the largest Hispanic group. So when the Hispanic presence little by little kept on growing, they would come to us and say “we would like to offer this program. Or what do you think about the Hispanic this or that.”

**Kelly:** Was it hard to- or was it difficult being able to reach out to immigrants who are from a different country? Was it hard to kind of get a trust?

**Stacy:** Yes build up trust.

**Kelly:** How did you build up trust with them?

**Stacy:** The best thing was that it was an obvious representative of the Church, so people would trust me. The thing was, not being Hispanic. They had to see- I think the acceptance level. I mean I still remember the first time that I was invited over to somebody’s house and I thought, oh, this is it! (laughs) And then as you serve people, they invite you over and then you meet more and more people. Any time you go to a person’s house for either a party or a meal, there’s other people there and they want to know...Oh I was going to call your office and I was wondering this or that and so it’s just like a snowball. It keeps on growing and growing and your contacts keep on picking up and up and up and as people see what your doing the trust is then...Somebody just came into the office the other day and he had not been paid for his work and he wanted to know what we could do. And it’s like really there’s not much I can do about that. I mean I had all the government contacts and everything and finally he said to me, “Well when my friend had the problem you called the employer and the employer started paying him.” And I said I did!? (laughs) I said, I don’t remember that? I said well, if that’s what I did then, I guess I can do it again. So I called the same employer who was doing the same thing again and who is a member of our church, and I said I’m just calling you because in the Bible it says that people should resolve their differences before going to court. So there is a gentleman that is saying this and so we started talking and who knows- I don’t
know if it worked or not. But people, tell people things that I don't even remember because there is so many people that come in similar kind of situations.

Kelly: Yeah, and this relates to my next question. You just gave an example of a typical day, could you describe a typical day?

Stacy: First of all there is no typical day (laughs). Often time people come in- the breadth, the scope of the problems or the help that people are seeking are just so broad. For example, it can be about education, people are thinking about vouchers now, so I got a number of calls about registering in schools so they can use the voucher. So people wanting something better for their kids with the education. Often times, calling about a clinic. Or if people need to be taken to court because they can't drive, or if people don't know where a clinic is. I used to take them to Miami Valley [Hospital], until Miami Valley had interpreters so I'm really glad they have interpreters and they should. Let's see, what else do they call for? Right now taxes, they're calling to ask for help for taxes. So we're forming a list for that. There's a woman's program so we've made some calls. The mom's that want to go, just to talks and see- well moms together talking about how they should raise their children or if a child does that is that good or bad? Or how do you curb this or that and then all kind of religious things. I had some with weddings that was a mixed marriage, an Anglo and a Mexican. So the Anglo mom—wife, wanted to or bride I should say, wanted to prepare for instructions.

Kelly: So it's a wide array?

Stacy: Yeah, it is very.

Kelly: You never know what you're going...

Stacy: That's very interesting to see!

Kelly: Yeah, definitely. So what do you think are the Hispanic immigrant's main concerns and needs?

Stacy: The main concern is legalization. It's not that we have all undocumented people coming to church, but even the one's that are documented, are thinking about relatives or they probably have somebody that they know that they would like legalization. It would help facilitate driving and things like that. So that is our biggest thing along with discrimination, the kind of injustices that can happen because people don't have full rights. Rights is also a thing that you have to-is it really a right for them if there here undocumented? So then we talk about human rights rather than legal rights. That is a big thing. Medical is always a big thing for the poor and how to get help at clinics and such. And of course a big thing is the spiritual, because a lot of people, the majority of immigrants when they come here, only are planning to stay for three years, four years something like that.

Kelly: Why is that?

Stacy: They just want to get enough money so they can go back and live better and have a house. Some kind of a little house or something, but they can do nothing but practically survive with the meager amount of what they earn there. So they come here, and they can earn some money, then they can go back and maybe have enough for a better education for their son or daughter. Or maybe a house, if they don't have a house, just so they have something that they know they are always going to have shelter. They say “well, we're not going to get married until we go back, because then our family will be there. We're not going to have the child baptized until we go back; we're not going to...” So everything in the spiritual life is put on hold. Then they really truthfully believe until
they’re here ten years, that they’re not here to stay- that they are here to stay. That is really a hindrance for the spiritual life. Although, in general, I would say they’re such faith-filled people because whatever happens they can take it in faith that something better will happen because God is working through this. But, I think that I would like to do something more with having them have a- I guess I see it as having less fear, having more joy in being able to celebrate their faith and having a community of faith so that people are united. I think- I remember one immigrant when he was leaving said “I came here looking for material wealth and what I found was spiritual.” I think that, to me, is what our mission is about.

Kelly: How does that make you feel when they say that “were only going to be here for three years and then we’re going to go back to Mexico?” Do you feel- How does that…? Stacy: I really think that’s better, because I think that really when they come here, they trade in their values. When they’re here, they’re coming here for their family. They’re coming here to work but then they become so work oriented and they become more materialized. So I think it’s better in a way that they get to return so they’re with their family. It’s hard for us because it’s very hard to set up a ministry when you’re going to train leaders and then they’re going to be gone. What people always say is “well you’ve trained the leaders so he can be a leader in his community.” And it’s like, well that’s really great, but this community here is never going to grow. But we have enough stable people, its ok to be able to train some. I think you just have to understand that it’s a different kind of ministry.

Kelly: How do you try to resolve the discrimination issues? I know you’ve worked with Sheriff Biehl

Stacy: Chief [Richard] Biehl [Chief of Dayton Police] and the police.

Kelly: Chief Biehl yeah, how do you try to resolve the discrimination problems that the immigrants face?

Stacy: When discrimination is unfortunately based more in emotions more than it is in reason- we give talks and sometimes we think we’ll give a talk to the people who probably don’t need to hear it. But I think that every time you do, your educating people that can educate others, and I think your making a difference. So I think one way is informing others and then just fighting legislation.

Kelly: Right, I know this is a one of your talks you gave [Kelly showing flyer of a talk Sr. Maria Stacy gave] and I was wondering- your talks centered on welcoming the stranger among us. Can you explain what you mean by this?

Stacy: Well that’s easy because welcoming the stranger among us is the pastoral from the bishops. So they wrote this and it was like 2001, 2000, 2001. It was a combine pastoral, the Mexican bishops and the U.S. bishops. It has directives in there of the churches and how they should welcome the immigrant that comes to their parish. Which is extremely difficult because I think in the past, immigrants must have been all in their own neighborhoods, whereas the Hispanic population is mixed in various…. You might have a pocket in East Dayton but its not like one street has all Hispanics on it. So a lot of times parishes will say “we don’t have any immigrants here in this parish.” It’s the invisible element that makes it a little more difficult but that’s what welcoming the stranger among us is how churches can reach out. Hospitality is very biblical and it’s one of the most admired and essential of virtues from Abraham giving hospitality to the angels. That’s what we’re trying to promote within the Church. So that’s directly from the Mexican and
U.S. bishops and trying to acquaint the Anglo population, Catholic, with what the bishops are saying.

**Kelly:** How can we - me as an Anglo reach out to...?

**Stacy:** Well just like your doing (laughs). One of the things that we were talking about at the symposium last weekend was worshipping, at the same worship spot that others in diversity. If you don’t go out and worship in another one, then you’re going to say there’s no diversity here, because you don’t see it. I would say offering to teach English, we have some volunteers that help sometimes transport people if they can’t drive. They’re some people that do office work with us but that’s a bit harder unless you’re bilingual, but those kind of things. I think reading too. I think it is very, very important to evaluate your forms of media. We have some people that think just because Lou Dobbs is on T.V. that he knows- he’s giving the whole story. So I think you have to... We have email lists and I think that one of the most valuable is for people to write when there’s legislation when it’s anti-immigrant. That’s very, very popular now just with this whole thing in Arizona. And I send out these emails and I have like, I don’t know, 50 people at least, and I think, I wonder if anyone is ever doing anything? An email it goes out to like that nebulous, heaven out there. The last time I got two responses, one saying that she wrote it and the other one saying “well I tried to call and I just can’t get through.” So I’m thinking there are people who are responding to this and I think that’s a great help to the immigrant if it’s just doing one email or one phone call.

**Kelly:** Yeah, definitely. So with all the things you do what do you think are the most interesting programs and events that you’ve been involved with?

**Stacy:** Most interesting?

**Kelly:** And it doesn’t even have to be-I mean what do you like the most or what was your- I know that you prepare the Guadalupe- what events are really...?

**Stacy:** I guess for me the Way of the Cross [re-enactment of Christ’s journey carrying the cross before his crucifixion] because it really came from the people. Also, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the mañanitas, the night before. What we’re really trying to do is get to the roots of what people did in their own countries and how we can bring that back, so that it sort of re-ignites the faith. The Way of the Cross was something that we were just talking about in somebody’s house and we said “why can’t we do it here?” Well, it’s extremely difficult to do it here because we don’t have Good Friday, everybody’s working, and the weather is terrible. But the people really get into the practice and the doing it. For me it’s just absolutely- the reenacting of the cross and one mother said to me one time “I can tell my son about what happened on Calvary, but when he actually sees it, he really knows what happened.” For Our Lady of Guadalupe when we have the native dances, there was this woman and she was almost in tears and I said oh, is there something wrong? And she said “this is just like we celebrated in my childhood.” I thought that’s the type of thing that I really want to bring back, is the kind of religious experiences, kind of re-awaken the faith and make that connection. Then another thing that I find exciting is the dance groups. The youth that are doing the Mexican dance, because the youth often go back to the U.S. culture because that’s how they get educated and their friends are Anglo. So they eat more food like hot dogs and hamburgers and sometimes they give up the Mexican cuisine. I think when I see them do the Mexican dance and celebrating Mexican culture that really excites me.
Kelly: What about—do you think the health clinics that you provide? Would you consider that an important event that you provide or program for...?
Stacy: Oh Yeah.
Kelly: How do you think it helps immigrants with the health clinics?
Stacy: With the health clinics sometimes I find that there's too much information and I don't think people are going to take the information. But when we put on a health clinic we really try to have it hands-on so that there's a doctor there. This past time, a couple weeks ago, we had an eye doctor and we had a dentist and I know those are the two important things. When we talked about, what are going to do for the clinic so that people will come? Well, I said think of the two biggest needs that they have, and we said we also need food and we also need prizes. So we put all those in and I think that a lot of people, they were very happy with the attendance for the health fair. I think there has to be things—the reason why we put on the health fair was because the people from the HIV/AIDS clinic wanted to do testing but we said “you’re going to invite them down to do HIV/AIDS testing and I don’t think anyone’s going to come. So we really had to find out what are the needs. Then after the health department had this other need to couple it with something that the people were really going to be interested in. I think it was a really big success. Not as exciting for me because it’s a whole lot of work (laughs). Then the first health clinic we did was with flu shots and it was the first time that people really got used to flu shots. Now they tend to do it every year and so now people are used to getting flu shots. I think that’s another thing that we saw, what are people going to come down for. The health department wanted to come down and do blood sugar and blood pressure, but flu shots was the drawing card because flu shots are so expensive. The health department was giving them as a donation or something. So yeah, it’s very, very much needed and I think the other thing is that they’re very interested in the tax clinics from UD. That’s the law students who are Hispanic— I mean I didn’t even realize there were that many Hispanic law students. But for them to be able to do that—people are very interested in that.
Kelly: Good. So throughout your time as the director, what are the frustrations and obstacles you face doing community work?
Stacy: I think the biggest frustration is the legislation. It just seems like we’re fighting the same thing over and over again and the anti-immigrant sentiment. 9/11 took a toll on us as people can’t even imagine. It was a catastrophe for the United States and so many people lost family members and everything. So for the United States it was a tremendous loss but it was also a loss of our sense of hospitality and our acceptance of the immigrant within us, because now we have so much fear. That’s what I think that we don’t realize, is how can we battle a fear that is among us because that’s what’s going to defeat us, is fear. And that’s what we were talking about the other day, that all the immigrants of 9/11 came with cards—with visas so they were all legal immigrants except for one who came from the northern border. Here we are having all this security all this along the southern border, all this against the immigrants coming in from Mexico and it’s an aftermath of 9/11. But it’s certainly misdirected because it’s people who we can easily attack. And that happens in all—look at the Japanese during World War II. So it’s normal, it’s a human reaction. How we get above that to a Christian reaction is such a constant struggle and it’s such a discouragement that you have to fight.
Kelly: How do you think about with all this negative media, with Lou Dobbs like you said? How do you hope to get your message across and not their message?
Stacy: Well, that’s another really difficult thing. We have the names of people who are the sponsors of Lou Dobbs, so we can write to them. I think even worse is the people say we should write editorials to tell people what it’s like, but as soon as you write an editorial you just get a whole-loads of anti-immigrant. So I say I can’t even write, plus the blogs, people are just so discourteous and it’s almost always the negative one. I said it must be that these people have much more time because the advocates and activists are going out doing various things. I said I wouldn’t have time to respond to all of these things. So, I find that one of the ways, unfortunately, is I don’t write editorials anymore because I feel like it’s just giving fuel for the fire. But that’s just sad because of what happens to the press. I think that the only way is to go out and give talks to different groups who are interested in hearing and little by little having that spread.
Kelly: I know you’ve given several talks, where do you give them? Churches?
Stacy: Yeah, we did one at Wright State, at the forum and then we did- we do it at various churches, we give talks. We got people to- the racial/injustice symposium at UD, there were people from the Hispanic viewpoint. So, on the university and church level mostly.
Kelly: So what helps you to overcome these obstacles or what motivates you to continue to do this work even though you’re facing constant bad media, negative media and the legislation keeps not going through as we would want?
Stacy: I think the book of Job (laughs), because you can pray for years and years and sacrifice for this legalization and a better situation for the immigrants and it just doesn’t come about. Then you read in the book of Job, “Do you dare question me? Do I not have the power to do all things?” So you just feel like it has to be- I think in the infinite wisdom of God and in the finite human error and finite human will, that they have the power to choose. That we just have to have hope, but it was funny because I was just thinking about that and the key note speaker last weekend said something about wanting to quit. I forget why but he said “then I saw- then I thought about my grandmother who saw marchers, people who were marching for civil rights.” He was a little boy, a little black boy, and he said “grandma what are they doing?” And she said “they’re marching so you can have rights.” And he said “it’s just like planting that seed that we may never see.” Like Lord all were doing and we’ll never be able to see the results. Well, maybe not but somebody else can begin from a point that is better because we’ve sewn some of the seed or readied the soil. So what we might do right now may seem imperceptible to us, but we’re really preparing the way so that others can have the success.
Kelly: Has the Catholic Hispanic Ministry changed over time since you have begun?
Stacy: Oh, definitely. It was a change that we wanted to make because before, it was people could come and get money maybe for education and it was very little. They could get clothes-it was sort of alleviating immediate needs. But now the Hispanic Ministry has more development programs for the spiritual, more retreats. Now the people are actually doing it and we’re trying to empower the people so that it’s not just one or two people who come in and are organizing. How this work can stay because people can teach each other. It’s not just giving clothes and food but seeing why people don’t have clothes and food and fighting for that justice.
Kelly: Ok, only about two more questions.
Stacy: (laughs).

Kelly: Ok, what do you think-what are the most gratifying contributions or accomplishments during your time as director?

Stacy: The most gratifying for me is being able to work with people. I wouldn’t say it’s an accomplishment but it’s a relationship and I think just learning from their faith and their values is just for me something that is really gratifying. For an accomplishment, I think just as we stated, is that people can start in leadership positions. That was extremely, extremely difficult because nobody wanted to be a leader because there was like a... I don’t know there was kind of an aversion to the fact that somebody would be called a leader because nobody wanted to be raised above the rest. Now that we have groups and now I think much more organization. I think just to try to savor the goodness that’s within them and to see that, and sometimes that has to come from outside because like a fish out of water, you don’t really realize the benefit of the water if you’re the fish.

Kelly: Yeah, do you think that- what’s it like- is it hard? I know it’s the most gratifying to be around people but is it hard to be around people so much, always needing you and is it-do you want time for yourself? Is it hard to... Do you know what I’m saying?

Stacy: Yeah, especially the time when there were so many arrests. So the telephone would ring- it was just that anxiety that somebody would be taken away from their family and running down to the police station and seeing if you could do something, very often not being able to do anything and suffering with the family. So that is difficult but I think that in religious life we have the benefit of having personal prayer everyday. So I think just being able to clear or trying to clear one’s mind and have time with the Lord, at the beginning of the day, there is that space to be apart. So that is the salvation and that I’m being nurtured.

Kelly: What lessons do you carry from your involvement in community and community service?

Stacy: Community, forming community is a messy business (laughs). If you have dominant personalities, well, often times they’re not going to get along. Both of them are good leaders but how do you get them to work together? Then you have community and you have people who want to be part of community but don’t want to participate in community. They want to be there but they don’t want to have the responsibility or the role of leadership. Those are the things that happen in every community and I don’t think anybody has really resolved it yet, but I think its part of the learning and part of the growing together. So I think that for community is extremely difficult part. What was the other part of that question?

Kelly: The only other part was, what advice would you give to someone who maybe working in the similar field as you?

Stacy: I think that it is a wonderful experience to work with the Hispanic population. I think that knowing-I think the good point, being an Anglo- I will never be totally part of the community but being Anglo, it does help me to be able to know the system. So I’m able to help people in a way that I couldn’t if I did not have the experience of what the government work is like, or how it’s structured, or where to go for help and things like that. I think that one of the good things, it just really, really makes you feel as if you’re doing what’s best when you can help people and you see that their lives have been improved because of what we’ve been able to do in the ministry.
Kelly: Oh, that was wonderful. Do you have any questions or did you want to add anything to what I had asked you or anything?
Stacy: I think you were pretty thorough (laughs).
Kelly: Ok, do you have any questions about the release form, any restrictions or anything like that?
Stacy: No
Kelly: Ok, well that was great. So I’m going to stop.

END OF INTERVIEW

Glossary (Any special terms, events, people referred to in the interview and/or transcript)
Sisters of Notre Dame
War in El Salvador
CRISPAZ
Way of the Cross
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Las Mañaitas
Lou Dobbs
Catholic Hispanic Ministry
9/11
Acts of the Apostles
Book of Job