

staying connected

a publication designed for alumni of Catholic full-time volunteer programs
brought to you by the St. Vincent Pallotti Centers

Volume 1, Number 2

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Former Volunteers are still... *Staying Connected* and Living Simply!

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For those of you who are joining us for the first time, *Staying Connected* is a free publication written for, with and about former volunteers and missionaries, as a support on the post-service journey.

We hope *Staying Connected* will bring former volunteers together and serve as a forum for discussions as well as an impetus for personal growth and spiritual development. *Staying Connected* invites you to re-connect with the people and the values you came to cherish as a volunteer.

One of those values, for most volunteer programs, is **simple living**. Often, volunteers live simply in order to be in solidarity with the people they are serving. Why do you make the choices you make now? We hope this issue of *Staying Connected* challenges you to think about your choices, helps you to consider their roots or sparks your creativity.

WHAT'S SIMPLE ABOUT SIMPLE LIVING?

Are you interested in exploring a simpler lifestyle? Are you already living simply? Simple living does not have a finite definition. For some, choosing a compact car over an SUV may mean simplifying their life. For others, simplifying may mean selling the TV or living in an intentional community.

In an online article titled "The Gentle Living Philosophy," the publisher and editor, Keith Heidorn, PhD, writes, "True simple living has no right or wrong ways, only a wide spectrum of guidelines for a process that ultimately generates contentment and fulfillment." Christians may add another component to

the definition that living simply is true to God's order, more in touch with Jesus' gospel message and respectful of our earth. One's personal definition of simple living often involves daily choices and decisions about what each of us consumes, how we treat others and how we steward God's creation.

In this issue of *Staying Connected*, we highlight three approaches to simple living. We recognize there are other approaches and even more combinations. We present just three as a starting point to a conversation and exploration of simple living:

Restoring Social Justice



All persons deserve respect and have a right to basic needs, no matter their economic or social status.



Environmental Stewardship

Since our decisions have a global impact, we are called to protect and preserve the natural resources of creation.



Answering God's Call

Putting God first and surrendering to God's care come before other worldly deeds.

"I have really tried to hold true to simple living by choosing to work for an organization that deals honestly and compassionately with people, an agency that ... [cares] about the reality of the human plight." ~ Kate Christou, Colorado Vincentian Volunteers

"The recycled postcard... cuts down on consumerism. Whenever I travel, I take along a good supply of 'cereal box postcards' [cut right from the actual box] and I never have to buy any. The maximum size is 4.25" x 6" for the 20 cent postage rate." ~ Jean Bruneau, Catholic Volunteers in Florida

Simply living for us means, "not spending all of our time making money. Rather, volunteering a large percentage of our time and effort, helping or sharing our God-given blessings with others."

~ Joe and Karen Harris (Sara, Julia, Rebecca and Luke), DC-AIM

"Lead with your dream and ask if your next act is of any value to the poorest person you know." ~ Mahatma Gandhi

"If you wish to know the Divine, feel the wind on your face and the warm sun on your hand." ~ Buddha

"Since it is impossible for me [working by myself]... to carry out everything I want to do for the glory of God, I will do it by performing acts of love... and offering these dreams and loving gestures before God, on behalf of God's poorest children." ~ St. Vincent Pallotti

Approach:

Formers' voices:

Prophetic voices:

Staying Connected:
Assisting in the
continued formation of
former lay volunteers

Editors: Andrew Thompson,
Alice Hogan and Sarah Coggins
Production Editor: Sarah Coggins
Advisors: Pallotti Center Directors:
Elisabeth Allen, Kate Carter,
Patrick Marcham and Joan Smith.
email: pallotti01@aol.com
webpage: <http://pallotti.cua.edu>

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**St. Vincent
Pallotti Center
for Apostolic
Development**

Mission: To promote lay volunteer service that challenges laity, clergy, and religious to work together in the mission of the Church. Our goal is to support lay volunteers before, during and after their term of service.

Local Pallotti Centers are in Boston, Paterson, St. Louis and Sacramento. The National Office is in Washington, DC.

The Centers take their inspiration from Saint Vincent Pallotti (1795-1850) who believed passionately in the laity, in each person as being an image of God and as called to be missionary.

**We want to hear
from you! Please
contact us:**
Pallotti01@aol.com
<http://pallotti.cua.edu>
1-877-VOL-LINK
or 202-529-3330

Simple Steps to Jump-start Your Simple Life-style

Have you ever said "If only there were 26 hours a day or 8 days a week!"? With our hectic life-styles, it seems that there is never enough time to get everything done! Do you really need a new daily planner or perhaps is it time to simplify your life just a little? We came up with a few simple steps to help jump-start your simple life-style. If you're already doing these, think of a few of your own that will help you to lead the life you want to live.

- ~ Allow yourself to "waste time," to just relax and do nothing. Actually mark off this time on your calendar or on your list of things to do.
- ~ For lives that are too busy, consider dropping whichever activity or pastime stresses you out or does you the least amount of good.
- ~ Identify one area in your life in which you can practice conservation (water, paper), sharing (books, tools) or recycling (plastic, aluminum, etc.).
- ~ At bedtime, make a journal entry of three gifts you've received from God for which you are thankful. After a few weeks, look at the list and see if there are patterns to help you recognize the priorities in your life.
- ~ Think about which aspect of creation (sunlight, stars, breeze, rock) most reminds you of one of God's qualities and use it as a daily reminder of God's loving presence.
- ~ Try a "brownout" night where you turn off all electrical appliances, TVs, phones, etc. This "electricity fast" allows you to be creative, slow down and appreciate the basics.
- ~ Don't forget about your public library or buying a reusable coffee mug or other simple acts that can make a small, but worthwhile difference in your life!



THE PAGES & THE LINKS

~ references for open minds ~



The Simple Life: A Guide to Scaling Down and Enjoying It by Elaine St. James (New York: Hyperion, 1996). Hundreds of brief yet practical suggestions on simplifying our lives right where we are.

Your Money or Your Life: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Achieving Financial Independence by Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin (New York: Viking, 1993). Filled with practical questions to help readers evaluate their assumptions about money and life-style, and align their choices with their values.

The Complete Tightwad Gazette by Amy Dacyczyn (Random House, 1999). This comprehensive guide is full of tips, crafts, recipes, suggestions on how to scale down your life-style and save money, too. Many formers have counted on this gazette for simple living guidance.

Check out the website: www.simpleliving.org which is an excellent source for great books, an online newsletter, information and links pertaining to a simple life-style.

www.earthministry.org is a site whose mission is to engage persons in "knowing God more fully through deepening relationships with all God's creation" by exploring simple living, environmental stewardship, and justice as well as other topics.

Co-op America: Economic Strategies for a Better World, is a great site that includes pages on: how to save money, socially responsible investing, how to connect to their "Green Pages" (listing of socially responsible businesses), advocacy and related topics. Check it out at: www.coopamerica.org (or call 800-584-7336 for more info).

Spirituality~ the search for the discovery of God's transforming presence in our lives.

**Living simply during your volunteer year takes discipline.
Living simply for a lifetime takes a spirituality.**

Simple living goes beyond the discipline of living cheaply or having a cluster of penny-pinching strategies, however helpful they may be. Rather, it stems from taking a big picture approach, often intertwined with one's spirituality and basic values.

A simple life-style spirituality provides a continual opportunity to free ourselves from the demands of our society and to examine and realize the impact of our daily choices. Simple living can help us remain in close union with God as we live out our faith through: peace, solidarity, stewardship, justice and prayer.

Listed below are three outlooks of a simple living spirituality.

Do you see yourself as a:

neighbor, prophetically promoting social justice...?

Following in Christ's example of honoring and accepting even the outcasts of society, this approach acknowledges the intrinsic value of all human beings beyond their economic or productive contributions.



* How would living a simpler life-style influence your purpose and goals? How would you treat others (both those close to you and those you don't know) differently?

global citizen, passionately caring for the earth...?

Native Americans are an example of a people living on the earth and being of the earth. With a deep reverence for the land and the seasons, Native Americans believe in the connectedness of all living creatures.



* When the U.S. NASA astronauts sent back from space the first picture of our living blue planet, it stirred many imaginations. How can this global perspective or the world view of the Native Americans enrich your spirituality?

creature, warmly relating to your Creator...?

A simple living spirituality often looks to the sacredness of our lives. It emphasizes that we are God's creation and called to an intimate connection with our Creator.



* Read Matthew 6:21. Where are your treasures and your priorities? What are you seeking? How do you relate to your Creator?

Editor's Note: Some information from Vol. 1, No. 1 regarding some Chicago gathering places has changed. The contact people are still the same, so give them a call. The "Volunteer Sightings" is a place for you to find out about gatherings or to give you ideas about starting your own. That info may change over time. Please update us with any changes that you see as we feature different cities. Thank you!

FORMER VOLUNTEER SIGHTINGS IN...



The Bay Area, CA



For this issue, we asked former volunteers in the San Francisco Bay Area about what's going on there for formers & to give us ideas to share!

Monthly former volunteer gatherings:

We didn't hear about any regular former gatherings. There are many formers in the Bay area, lots of them connected to JVC or the theological union in Berkeley. Lots of opportunities for connections but no organized activities specifically for formers.

Some parishes where "formers" attend:

- Holy Spirit Parish-Newman Hall in Berkeley (Paulist)
2700 Dwight Way, 510-848-7812
- St. Agnes in San Francisco (Jesuit)
1025 Masonic Ave, 415-487-8560
- St. Ignatius (on USF campus) (Jesuit)
650 Parker Ave, 415-422-2188
- St. Mary's-St. Frances DeSales in Oakland (ad hoc cathedral, Jesuit pastor) 707 Jefferson St at Eighth 510-832-5057
- In Sacramento: St. Francis of Assisi (Franciscan)
1066 26th at K St. 916-443-8084
- Cal. State University Newman Center
5900 Newman Court, 916-454-4188

Retreat opportunities:

- Mercy Center in Burlingame (SF) 415-340-7474
- Santa Sabina Center in San Rafael 415-457-7727
- San Damiano in Danville (East Bay) 510-837-9141
- Jesuit Retreat Center in Los Altos, 650-948-4491
- Presentation Center in Los Gatos, 408-354-2346

Peace and Justice organizations in the area:

- Catholic Charities of the East Bay houses the Social Justice Resource Ctr. and many other programs of interest to formers.
433 Jefferson St., Oakland, CA 510-834-5656

October Conference:

The third annual Fall Fest '99 is a gathering of young adults in the Archdiocese of San Francisco, Saturday, October 23 at USF. Contact info: 415-675-5900 or www.fall-fest.org/

Who to contact for more information on Bay Area gatherings:

For more information about any of these places and other connections to formers in northern California, contact Kate Carter at the St. Vincent Pallotti Center in Sacramento.
916-454-4320 or pallotti02@aol.com

**Next Issue: Former Volunteer Sightings in...
BOSTON, MA**

staying connected

In this Issue

Living Simply:

What does that mean for you? How does it relate to your spirituality?

Bay Area, CA formers... and much more!



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Leaders... Simply Ahead of Their Time

"Remember that the Christian life is one of action, not of speech and daydreams. Let there be few words and many deeds, and let them be done well."

~ St. Vincent Pallotti

Formers often ask us: Where did the name "Pallotti Centers" come from? Who was "Pallotti?" St. Vincent Pallotti was a man ahead of his time (1795-1850) who stretched his contemporaries' imaginations. As a priest, Vincent's life was guided by a progressive vision of the Church in which laity, religious and clergy worked together as a team he called the Union of the Catholic Apostolate (UAC). He also founded the Pallottines, the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, a religious community of priests, brothers and sisters who follow in his footsteps of ministry. Vincent was proclaimed a saint during the Second Vatican Council (1963), and due to his ecumenical vision of the church and promotion of laity, Pope John XXIII named him a special patron of the Council.

Vincent was a parish pastor, professor and spiritual guide for seminarians. Active in a local "mission," he established a food stamp program for the poor, started an adult ed program for the working class, and an orphanage for Rome's homeless girls. Although born in financial wealth, he lived very simply and austere, worked as an unpaid volunteer, his entire priestly life and raised funds for local causes and overseas missionaries. He was passionate in believing every person had talent and leadership to contribute to the community.

His life shows that leadership can take many forms. Using Pallotti's life as a springboard, here are some questions to imagine your own potential leadership paths.



Through his work with the poor, Vincent worked for social justice. What type of contribution(s) do you see yourself making to social justice issues?



As a tutor and guide for international students and overseas missionaries, Vincent had a keen sense of global awareness. In what way do you see yourself supporting the global environment, the earth's resources and/or its people?



Through his work in the confessional, Vincent was a convincing messenger that God is merciful and forgiving. What aspect of God do you see yourself bringing to others, now or in the future? Love? Hope? Simplicity?

For more information about St. Vincent and/or the Pallottines and today's UAC groups, contact the Pallotti Center.

Please Send Us Your Input for Our Next Issue of *Staying Connected*:

De-bugging and Celebrating the Millennium: We'll put aside the technical computer-bug issue and take it deeper. How will the beginning of the third millennium impact you? How are you grateful for 2000 years of Christ's presence with us? We'd like to know about your millennium concerns: personal, emotional, spiritual, regarding debt forgiveness or interpersonal reconciliation. Please drop us a line and let us know!



Boston former volunteer sightings -- Tell us where formers are gathering, going to church and attending other events of interest in the Boston, MA area!

Pallotti01@aol.com or call toll-free: 1-877-VOL-LINK