

# staying connected

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

Volume 2, Number 3

Fall 2000

## THE INSIDE SCOOP:

- Catholic Social Teaching, Issues and Resources... p.2
- Spirituality and Social Justice... p.3
- Former Volunteer Sightings in: the New York City area... p.3
- Social Justice Leadership... p.4

## Staying Connected... to Social Justice

For many of us "formers," our volunteer experience was a time of involvement, a time when we focused on justice. We witnessed all kinds of injustice. We forged friendships with people whose basic needs were not being met, no matter how hard they worked. We talked about the issues. We wrote letters to our legislators. We recycled.

How has working for justice been a part of your post-volunteer journey? Reflecting back to your volunteer experience, what issues were most important to you? What issues matter to you *now*? How are you challenged to stay connected to these values?

Think of ways to move your faith into further action. Thinking globally and acting locally (not as easy as it sounds) is one approach. Get involved with a group within your parish or local community. Stay informed and help inform others. Work for change, pray for strength, and celebrate justice!

## Formers Voice Their Thoughts on Social Justice... What Thoughts Resonate in YOU?

### Here's what social justice means to me

"To me social justice means everyone on this earth has access to food, shelter, health care, clean air, and clean water... a safe environment, as well as spiritual and intellectual nourishment."

### Environmental justice

"Social justice is closely tied to environmental justice for me.... The little decisions we make each day are as important as the big ones."

### I feel overwhelmed

"It is very difficult for me to prioritize the issues. I keep looking at the big picture.... I get overwhelmed. I can't decide what matters most. Unfortunately, it all matters too much."

### How do I work for justice?

"[This question] forces me to admit that I'm not doing enough.... I feel I've chosen a job that helps to bring about a just world. I am committed to raising my daughter to be compassionate and aware of this world and her responsibility to this world. That's a lot. But there is much more to do."

### I miss direct contact with the poor

"Sometimes I struggle with my work because it doesn't directly connect me to the [economically] poor; in fact, the majority of my students come from rather wealthy families... maybe more than anyone, these well-off kids need my attention so that they, too, can join the fight."

### I need community

"Promoting social justice through strong communities [is important] because communities working together have strength to create change - change that is real and meaningful..."

### Spiritual life is key

"Living social justice is the natural outcome of a healthy spiritual life. It moves spiritual beliefs into concrete action in the world... and makes me into my brother's keeper."

### How can I find resources and be involved?

"I would like to know of more resources about ways to be involved in justice issues.... It is very easy to become disconnected from direct involvement."

..... Thanks to the former volunteers who shared their comments, especially: .....

Mary Janelle Cady, Colorado Vincentian Volunteers, 98-99; Sue Marble Cuthbert, Jesuit Volunteers International, 90-92; Patricia Julianelle, Jesuit Volunteer Corps, 92-93; Dan Thibault, Mercy Sisters, 89-94; Mieke Walsh, Holy Cross Associates, 98-99.



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

**Editors:** Andrew Thompson,  
Alice Hogan and John Driscoll  
**Production Editor:** John Driscoll  
**Advisors:** Pallotti Center Directors:  
Kristelle Angelli, Anita Saira Morawski  
and Joan Smith.  
**email:** pallotti01@aol.com  
**webpage:** <http://pallotti.cua.edu>

These materials are copyrighted.

©2000 Volume 2, Number 3  
The Saint Vincent Pallotti Center

Unauthorized reproduction is prohibited. The Pallotti Center hereby gives permission to reproduce all or any of the contents of this publication so long as proper credit is given to The Saint Vincent Pallotti Center and so long as reproduced materials are distributed gratis.

**The 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, NJ, 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.

Please let us know if you are moving or no longer wish to receive *Staying Connected*. Each re-addressed or returned issue costs us 50 - 80 cents which we could well use to serve you better. Thanks!

## The Key Themes at the Heart of *Catholic Social Teaching*

**"Pssst... The Church's Best Kept Secrets - Broadcast Here!"**

### To live fully, every person needs...

#### to be treated with dignity...



**because:** everyone is made in the image and likeness of God; people are sacred and more important than things; **implications:** dignity of the person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching; **issues:** abortion, euthanasia, death penalty; **resources:** *Live from Death Row* by Mumia Abu-Jamal; *Made in God's Image - The Catholic Vision of Human Dignity* by Regis Duffy; OFM & Angelus Gambatese, OFM; *Good Care, Painful Choices - Medical Ethics for Ordinary People* by Richard Devine, CM; **on the web:** [www.amnesty-usa.org/abolish/index.html](http://www.amnesty-usa.org/abolish/index.html), [www.peopleforlife.org](http://www.peopleforlife.org), [www.spuc.org.uk](http://www.spuc.org.uk), [www.igc.org/cacp](http://www.igc.org/cacp), [www.ncadp.org](http://www.ncadp.org)

#### and live in a healthy society...



**because:** when one suffers we all suffer; people are not only sacred, but social, in that we depend on one another; **implications:** how we organize our society, its economics, laws, politics and policies, directly affects individuals' ability to grow and thrive. The family is the central social institution that must be supported, not undermined. People have a right and duty to seek the common good and well-being of all; **issues:** gun control, domestic violence, campaign finance reform, civil rights; **resources:** *Soul of the Citizen - Living With Conviction in a Cynical Time* by Paul Rogat Lobe; *God's Revolution: Justice, Community, and the Coming Kingdom* by Eberhard Arnold; **on the web:** [www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org), [www.catholiccharitiesusa.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org), [www.policy.com/community/advoc.html](http://www.policy.com/community/advoc.html), [www.commoncause.org](http://www.commoncause.org), [www.servicevote.org](http://www.servicevote.org), [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org), [www.sojo.net](http://www.sojo.net)

#### where human rights are protected...



**because:** each person has a fundamental right to food, shelter, health care, education and employment; **implications:** given that every person has a right to have one's basic needs met, then collectively, we have a duty to meet these essential needs of one another and of society; **issues:** poverty, hunger, affordable health care, education; **resources:** *Living No Longer for Ourselves: Liturgy and Justice in the Nineties* by Kathleen Hughes and Mark Francis; **on the web:** [www.hrusa.org](http://www.hrusa.org), [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org), [www.feedthechildren.org](http://www.feedthechildren.org), [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

#### especially the rights of our most vulnerable members...



**because:** how we treat our most vulnerable is a test of our society's moral worth; **implications:** our religious tradition affirms Jesus' teaching in the story of the Last Judgment (Mt.25: 31-46), urging us to provide for those most in need; **issues:** homelessness, children living in poverty, rights of AIDS victims, prisoners' rights; **resources:** *The Long Loneliness* by Dorothy Day; *Restorative Justice: Contemporary Themes and Practice* by Jim Considine and Helen Bowen; **on the web:** [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org), [www.dwb.org](http://www.dwb.org), [www.nccbuscc.org/cchd](http://www.nccbuscc.org/cchd), [www.justpeace.org](http://www.justpeace.org)

#### and the rights of workers...



**because:** the economy exists to serve people, not the other way around. Employment is not only about making a living, but making a valued contribution for and with others; **implications:** if the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected, including to have a fair wage, join unions and own private property; **issues:** minimum wage increase, child labor, sweatshops; **resource:** *Tenth Anniversary Edition of Economic Justice For All* by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, United States Catholic Conference; **on the web:** [www.behindthelabel.org](http://www.behindthelabel.org), [www.geocities.com/collegepark/3796/boycott.htm](http://www.geocities.com/collegepark/3796/boycott.htm)

#### regardless of ethnicity, race, ideology and economics...



**because:** we are called to work globally for justice; **implications:** the gospel teaching, to love one's neighbor, urges us to become our brother's and sister's keeper, and to expand our sense of family beyond narrow geographic limits; **issues:** international debt, immigration and border issues, banning landmines; **resources:** *Grace at the Table - Ending Hunger in God's World* by David Beckmann and Arthur Simon; **on the web:** [www.oneworld.net](http://www.oneworld.net), [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org), [www.coc.org](http://www.coc.org), [www.maryknoll.org/GLOBAL/global.htm](http://www.maryknoll.org/GLOBAL/global.htm), [www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org), [www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp](http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp), [www.care.org](http://www.care.org), [www.catholicrelief.org](http://www.catholicrelief.org)

#### and this dignity is extended to include stewardship of the earth.



**because:** the environment is God's creation and it's our job to protect it; **implications:** care of the earth is a requirement of our faith. God calls us to live in harmony with one another and in harmony with all of God's creation; **issues:** pollution of air, land and water, overpopulation, global warming, exploitation of animals, increased use of pesticides and fertilizers, recycling; **resources:** *The Dream of the Earth* by Thomas Berry; **on the web:** [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org), [www.wwf.org](http://www.wwf.org), [www.tnc.org](http://www.tnc.org)



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

Spirituality is a life-long journey which calls us to develop an integrated and wholistic vision of our lives. This means keeping ourselves "centered."

The bible's imagery of the Garden of Paradise, for example, symbolized perfect harmony among God, humanity and all of creation. Conversely, with the arrival of sin came the disruption of this harmony. The search for justice, the focus of this issue of *Staying Connected*, is the attempt to find the road back to the Garden. This biblical symbol in Genesis urges us to make whole all our relationships, with God, others and creation.

Consider a second literary symbol of this spiritual wholeness, provided by the classic Russian writer Dostoevsky. "My brother used to ask the birds to forgive him; that sounds senseless but it is right; for all is like the ocean, all things flow and touch each other; a disturbance in one place is felt at the other end of the world" (*The Brothers Karamozov*).

Perhaps this "disturbance" gives us an insight. Sin, greed, violence and injustice are symptoms of a negative disturbance experienced by all of humanity and creation. But the Karamozov brother reminds us that there are positive disturbances in nature, ones which acknowledge how all things flow and touch each other. These are positive ripples which move us toward healing and right relationships.

Perhaps your volunteer experience was also a set of disturbances, when you saw social injustices, personal suffering, oppression, as well as idealism, community life, and faith in action. Today, many formers still sense those disturbances. They report feeling tension about having taken a salaried job while others are homeless. Some feel removed and miss direct service with the disadvantaged. Many are challenged to keep a balance between their need to take care of themselves and their fear of giving in to consumerism.

## How can these tensions and feelings bring depth to a former's spirituality?

Many formers say that praying gives them perspective. Perhaps this is the point of the gospels' mention of Jesus' frequent withdrawing from the crowds, for prayer and centering. Jesus took time for centering, healing, calm, rest, vision, and strength.

One former noted that "if you don't have oil in your own lamp, you can't glow for others."

Another learned that in order to live lives of generosity, we need sustenance.

Other formers say time heals, as does sharing in a supportive community of 'justice seekers.'

Another counted as true blessings the heightened awareness of injustice and the desire to make choices that benefit the common good.

Perhaps embracing these tensions, and these disturbances, helps former volunteers nurture their spiritual vision. Through the eyes of faith, these challenges and lessons of life's connectedness flow together, like an ocean, where God, all of humanity and creation, are helping one another journey back to the wholeness of the original grace of the Garden.



## FORMER VOLUNTEER SIGHTINGS IN... the New York City area



For this issue, we asked former volunteers in the New York City area about what's going on there for formers and to give us ideas to share!

### Monthly former volunteer gatherings:

New York City has a huge number of former volunteers, and many often get together informally - although, at this point, there are no formally organized monthly gatherings. If you are looking to get connected with some former volunteers or would like to organize a monthly gathering, contact the Pallotti Center's national office in Washington, DC (toll-free: 877-VOL-LINK or e-mail: Pallotti01@aol.com) and ask about our *Network of Former Volunteers* - a great resource for getting in touch with other formers anywhere in the U.S.!

### Some parishes where "formers" attend:

- St. Francis Xavier Parish on 16<sup>th</sup> St. between 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.'s in Manhattan, 212-627-2100.
- Nativity Parish at 44 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Great parish for those fluent in Spanish. Contact Fr. Chris Derby, SJ (a former Jesuit volunteer) at 212-674-8590 or CDerbySJ@aol.com for more information about what's going on there.
- St. Paul the Apostle near Fordham University on 59<sup>th</sup> & Columbus in the Bronx. Check out the 9pm Sunday service.
- St. Joseph's in Manhattan near W. 4<sup>th</sup> and the Waverly Theater. "This parish has a nice feel," comments one former whose been there.
- St. Stephen of Hungary Church on E. 82<sup>nd</sup> St.
- St. Ignatius Loyola; a very socially conscientious Jesuit church on the upper-east side which organizes various activities and lecture series; contact Robin Zeamer at 212-288-3588.
- NYU (Washington Square Park). Contact Faith at 212-998-1212 or 212-998-1065

### Retreat opportunities:

- The Paterson, NJ St. Vincent Pallotti Center regional office organizes 4 *Day of Reflection* retreats each year for former and current volunteers in the New York City area. The next retreat is scheduled for Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup> in Manhattan. Contact Anita Morawski at 973-523-1544 for more information.
- The Fr. Judge Center (in Sterling, NJ) has a number of young adult ministries including weekend retreats and pilgrimages to Mexico City. Other ministries include: local volunteer opportunities, cultural events, bible study groups and social justice lecture series. Contact Sr. Gail Lambert at 908-647-7112 or visit [www.fjac.org](http://www.fjac.org)

### Peace and Justice organizations in the area:

- Pax Christi Metro NY, 135 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St. in Manhattan, 212-420-0250; organizes a peace walk on Good Friday. Check out their Youth Forum!
- Catholic Worker House (Mary House), 55 E. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., 212-254-1640, hosts Friday lecture series w/ speakers, discussion panels, & dessert!
- St. Francis Xavier Peace & Justice Committee. Contact Cynthia Chovan at 212-627-2100 or [windycindy@juno.com](mailto:windycindy@juno.com)

### Volunteer Opportunities:

- St. Joseph's Catholic Worker at 36 E. 1<sup>st</sup> St.; 212-254-1640.
- Nativity Mission Center has many opportunities for tutoring and mentoring; 212-477-2472.
- St. Francis Xavier Parish runs a soup kitchen on Sundays; 212-627-2100.
- Good Shepherd Services needs mentors; 212-475-4245.

### Other valuable resources:

- The Archdiocese of New York Young Adult Ministry is very active. Call 212-371-1011 or visit [www.yamny.org](http://www.yamny.org)

*We are grateful to everyone who contributed information to this section. Thanks for helping us support other former volunteers!*

## Next Issue: Former Volunteer Sightings in... the Portland, OR & Seattle, WA areas



# staying connected



The Saint Vincent Pallotti Center  
for Apostolic Development  
415 Michigan Ave., N.E.  
Washington, DC 20017

Change of Address Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
WASHINGTON, DC  
PERMIT NO. 3188



Staying Connected is printed on recycled paper. Please do your part by passing on your copy to another former volunteer or by recycling the paper. Thanks!

## Your Volunteer Experience: A Foundation For Social Justice Leadership Skills

What did you do when you volunteered? What did you see that *moved* you? Did you cradle unwanted foster children in your arms? Did you minister to marginalized HIV/AIDS victims who lacked adequate health care? Perhaps you taught at an inner-city school where resources were extremely limited. You may have confronted the plight of America's youth, as 25% of preschool children in this country are currently growing up while living in poverty conditions. You may have served meals in a soup line, frequented mostly by Native Americans, Hispanics, or legal immigrants, unable to find work that would provide a living wage - forcing them to meet their basic needs at the nearest charity.

The diverse experiences that we encountered while serving the economically disadvantaged, the marginalized and the vulnerable in communities in this country and villages around the world call us now, as formers, not only to be *concerned* about the issues, but to be *leaders* in working for social justice. Not only does our witness and direct experience with our disadvantaged neighbors give us a credible voice in the struggle for justice, but this mission is also central to our Catholic faith tradition, which states: *how we treat the most vulnerable members of our society is a test of its moral worth*. Former volunteers often are intimately aware of the issues, which is the first step in helping to build a culture of peace. With this foundation, our faith requires that we move beyond awareness and into the arena of responsible citizenship. Such participation is a moral obligation.

How do we participate? The 2000 presidential election is just around the corner, but involvement in the political process is often viewed as ineffective. "Voting can feel like rubber-stamping a dysfunctional political system that no longer serves the public's interest," columnist Arianna Huffington recently wrote. She went on to comment about one vicious cycle of American politics: "Politicians ignore young people because most of them don't vote, and most of them don't vote because they are ignored by politicians. So [young adults] looking for concrete results choose instead to volunteer -- which they are doing in record numbers." Perhaps our desire to volunteer was also motivated, in part, by a feeling of apathy toward the political system. But, perhaps our witness as volunteers is the experience we deeply need to inspire us enough to try and make a difference.

Consider the following questions: How have your feelings toward working for justice changed since your volunteer experience? In what ways do you feel you can engage in the struggle for social justice now? What are you aware of now and what post-volunteer skills have you developed that can make you a social justice leader? One possibility is to connect with other formers concerned with justice and lead together!



**We Want to Hear from YOU for Our Next Issue of *Staying Connected*!**

**Life-Long Learning & Life Transitions...** What transitions are you dealing with as a former volunteer? Grad school? Moving? Volunteering again? Getting married? Religious life? What resources and supports do you have to help you make these life choices? Give us your input!

*Please contact us with your insights, ideas and resources!*



**Portland, OR & Seattle, WA: former volunteer sightings** --What's brewing in the the beautiful Pacific, NW? Let us know where formers are gathering, going to church and attending other events!

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