

staying connected

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

Volume 5, Number 1

Winter 2003

Staying Connected To Meaningful Work *Which Face Is Mine?*

VERY HAPPY?



"I love my job! I can't believe that I found such a great place to work with such wonderful people."

MOVING ON?



"My job is great for now, but I can see myself needing to move on in a year or two."

RESIGNED?



"My job is fine. It pays the bills. It isn't what I love doing, but it is good enough."

STRUGGLING?



"I have some major debts and so I need to make some money. I can't afford to take a job that I really think I would enjoy. I feel guilty, as though I am settling or 'selling out.'"

CONFUSED?



"I know: my mom wants me to be a doctor and my dad wants me to go to law school. But what do I want to do??"

BORED?



"My job is a bit boring. I need something with more challenges, movement and excitement."

DESPERATE?



"How can I get out of this toxic work environment?? People treat me really badly and I feel like I don't count. I don't even like the work that I am doing. What can I do??"

"Formers" Are Hungry For Meaningful Work

The alumni of volunteer programs give high priority to finding meaningful jobs. In our recent survey, 26% said they were highly satisfied with their current jobs. The majority, 57%, said they were mostly satisfied. Based on interviews, we interpret the majority to be saying: "My job is o.k. for now, but I want to make a difference and be challenged. So down the road I probably will be moving on." This issue of *Staying Connected* provides suggestions for your lifelong search for meaningful work and ways to integrate it with your spirituality.

Finding Meaningful Work Is An Inside Job

You do not change if you merely change your exterior world. If you get yourself a new job or a new spouse or a new home or a new guru or a new spirituality, that does not change you. It's like imagining that you change your handwriting by changing your pen. Or that you change your capacity to think by changing your hat. That doesn't change you really, but most people spend all their energies trying to rearrange their exterior world to suit their tastes. Sometimes they succeed- for about five minutes-and they get a little respite, but they are tense even during that respite, because life is always flowing, life is always changing.
Anthony De Mello S.J., *Awareness*

De Mello starkly reminds us that the changes we make are futile without an accompanying inner journey. Similarly, in his letter to a young activist, Thomas Merton warned of, "using [your work], so to speak, to protect yourself against nothingness, annihilation," and reminded us of the interior work to be done (Merton, *Letter to a Young Activist*). What are the questions we need to ask ourselves in order to understand the motivation behind our actions, and therefore our choice of work? And how do we discover meaning in our workplace? Meaning making is, in fact, an inside job and if we don't commit ourselves to the interior job of creating meaning out of our work experiences, even a great situation (i.e. the perfect job) will lose its ability to inspire (Shea, *Works Newsletter* of the Crossroads Center).

The danger is that former volunteers, advocates for the poor, sometimes do not allow themselves the time and concern to get this inner work done. There's always someone worse off that needs help, right? And sometimes an unbalanced desire to "contribute", to "make someone's life better" and/or a crazy work schedule impede all efforts at attending to this search for meaning. And let's face it, there is much work to be done. However, this unbalance and the tendency away from reflection encourage us to look to superficial change for the answer.

Maybe a better work situation is part of the answer. But more importantly it's what we make of *any* situation that counts the most. Someone once said, "Don't ask yourself what the world needs, because what the world needs is people who come alive." So are we fully alive and able to give fully to others? Are we living a balanced life of action and contemplation?

This is what is meant by "the inner work to be done", by discovering that you are the creator of meaning in your life, and in your work life, you will develop practices that give meaning to each day, as well as seek the balance you and the world need.

ACTIVITY: Form A Search Party To Find Meaningful Work

Ask yourself the following questions. It may be helpful to write the answers down and take a day between answering each set of questions. Afterwards, share them with friends and ask them for their advice.

First, think of a time in your life when you felt most fully alive while engaged in some kind of activity. Remember when you felt your passions awakened either by a sense of awe, accomplishment, discovery, satisfaction, or blissful commitment. In other words, a time when everything felt right with the world. It could have been after you completed a long mathematical proof, while you roamed the streets of Paris or Lima, or after a special moment volunteering. Everyone will have their own unique experience of feeling fully alive, fully engaged and most of all, genuinely happy.

Sit with that for a moment and contemplate these questions:















- * If you could come up with one word to describe your mood and feelings during this time or activity, what would it be?
- * What specific aspect of this activity or time brought you the greatest joy?
- * Did the memory of such life experiences influence any of your career or life choices? If so, how? If not, why not?
- * What aspects, if any, of your daily routine (work and/or school, free-time etc.) include activities or jobs that provoke similar feelings?

Let some time pass before moving on to the next set of questions:

- * How can I incorporate more life-giving moments into my day at work? Is it something lost that needs to be regained? What would I have to change in order to feel closer to that sense of vitality?
- * Am I in a field of work that gives me joy? Am I in a job that gives me joy?
- * What is holding me back from taking on a new attitude towards my current job or from changing careers?

Let the answers to these questions put you on the path towards making the most out of your work life. Keep the written answers and return to them frequently for guidance. You're the only person that knows how to make it happen for yourself. But friends can give you great feedback.

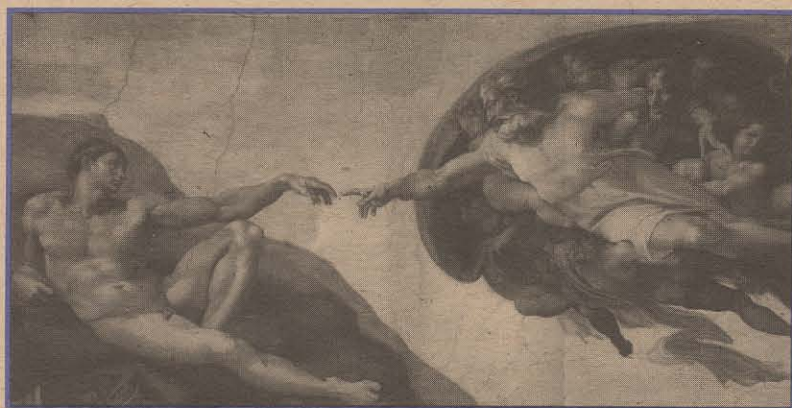
THE PAGES & LINKS ~ references for open minds ~

Pages:  Chope, Robert C. Ph.D. *Dancing Naked: Breaking Through the Emotional Limits That Keep You from the Job You Want*, 2000.  De Chardin, Teilhard *Building the Earth*, 1965.  DeMello S.J., Anthony *Awareness*, 1987.  Gallwey, W. Timothy *The Inner Game of Work*, 1999.  Leider, Richard J., and Shapiro, David A. *Repacking Your Bags* Second Edition, 2002.  Leider, Richard J., and Shapiro, David A. *Whistle While You Work: Heeding Your Life's Calling*, 2001.  McMakin, Jacqueline and Dyer, Sonya *Working From The Heart A Guide To Cultivating The Soul At Work*, 1994.  Mahan, Brian *Forgetting Ourselves On Purpose: The Ethics of Ambition and Vocation*.  Meshberger, Frank MD "An interpretation of Michelangelo's Creation of Adam Based on Neuroanatomy" *JAMA* 264: 1827-1841, 1990.  Merton, Thomas "A Letter to a Young Activist"  Palmer, Parker *Let Your Life Speak*, 1999.  Pope John Paul II, *On Human Work*, Encyclical letter, 1981.  Sheerer, Robin A. *No More Blue Mondays: Four Keys to Finding Fulfillment at Work*, 1999.  Vanier, Jean *Becoming Human*, 1998.

Links:  For results to the Meaning of Work Survey go to: www.pallotticenter.org/results_worksurvey.htm  For a reproduction of the Michelangelo painting, see: <http://sun.science.wayne.edu/~mcogan/Humanities/Sistine/Panels/adam.jpg>  Crossroad Center www.crossroads-center.org  Working From the Heart, Inc. www.wfth.org  www.pallotticenter.org/onmeaningfulwork.htm

~ Spirituality ~

THE SEARCH FOR THE DISCOVERY OF GOD'S
TRANSFORMING PRESENCE IN OUR LIVES



Michelangelo, *Creation of Adam*, Sistine Chapel Vatican City.

A Spirituality of Work

The vast majority (96%) of respondents to our recent "meaning of work survey" said they wanted work to be part of their spirituality. This was "definitely" true for 65% of respondents and "somewhat" true for 31%. They also said one aspect which made work meaningful for them was they believed their work involved helping others (30%), promoting social justice (23%) or building relationships (17%).

But what is the spirituality, the bigger picture, the context or set of beliefs which helps 'formers' make sense of life's activities, work included? One traditional spirituality of work is found in the creation stories told in Genesis. They suggest that working men and women are co-creators with God who made them "in the image of (God) himself" (1:27). From the very beginning, God assigned Adam to cultivate the garden (2:15). So, far from being a punishment for sin, this biblical spirituality sees work as one way men and women can participate in the image and likeness of God (1:26), namely as contributing to the on-going process of creating the earth.

One of the world's greatest artists, Michelangelo, depicted this insight in his 'Creation of Adam' which graces the very center of the ceiling of the Vatican's Sistine Chapel. For the past five hundred years, this painting contained a secret, revealed for the first time in the *Journal for the American Medical Association* (1990). A young surgical student pointed out that Michelangelo painted God the Father in the foreground engaged in the act of creating Adam, but the background details portray the image of a human brain (see pages & links, page 2 for the references). Today, visitors to the Sistine Chapel are given this explanation prior to their entering the Chapel.

One interpretation of Michelangelo's message is that all human work, whether of an artist, educator or day laborer, expresses the divine spark of life and creativity that God placed within each person. Work fulfills the worker's humanity and expresses the divine spark placed within each person. In the words of St. Irenaeus, the glory of God is the person fully alive.

Pope John Paul II's encyclical *On Human Work* affirms that our work to "subdue the earth" expresses who we are as an image of God: "... through work man not only transforms nature... but also achieves fulfillment as a human being... and becomes more of a human being (9)." This vision, that our work furthers creation and nurtures our own humanity, helps us center work within our spirituality. It also says that the creation of fully-alive persons participates in the work of God.

FORMER VOLUNTEER SIGHTINGS IN THE... PHILADELPHIA AREA



Some parishes where "formers" attend:

* St. John the Evangelist Center City - 13th Street between Chestnut and Market Streets, Phone: 215-563-4145 A capuchin parish that has an active young adult movement associated with it. See below: Jack's Yacs.

* Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul - 18th St. and the Benjamin Franklin Pkwy. Philadelphia, PA Phone: 215-561-1313 or 215-561-1314. The Cathedral has a young adult mass first Sunday of the month.

* St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church - 109 E. Price St. Germantown Philadelphia, PA 19144 Phone: 215-438-2925 Website: www.saint-vincent-church.org/

Retreat opportunities & spirituality centers:

* Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth - Box 223, Church Road Wernersville, PA 19565-0223 Phone: 610-670-3640 Fax 610-670-3650 Website: <http://www.jesuitspiritualcenter.org>

* Cranaleith Spiritual Center - 13475 Proctor Road Philadelphia, PA 19116 Phone: 215-934-6206 Email: Cranaleith@comcast.net Website: www.cranaleith.org/

* SSJ Center for Spirituality - 9701 Germantown Avenue Medaille Building Philadelphia, PA 19118-2694 Phone: 215-248-7222 Email: spiritualcenter@ssjphila.org Website: www.ssjphila.org/

* Franciscan Spiritual Center - 609 S. Convent Road Aston, PA 19014 Phone: 610-558-6152 Fax: 610-558-6122 Email: fsc@osfphila.org Website: www.fscaston.org/

Social justice organizations and communities:

* Brandywine Peace Community - P.O. Box 81, Swarthmore, PA 19081 Phone: 610-544-1818 Email: brandywine@juno.com Website: www.geocities.com/brandywinepeace

* Catholic Peace Fellowship - Philadelphia's Pax Christi chapter - 1341 S 46th St., Philadelphia 19143 Phone: 215-386-8250 or 215-665-0480 Email: torphila@aol.com

* The Catholic Leadership Institute - Ardmore, PA. Email: mmmanion@CatholicLeaders.org Website: www.catholicleaders.org/

Groups and clubs:

* Office of Youth and Young Adults/Young Adult Ministry of Philadelphia - 105 Argyle Road Ardmore, PA 19003 610-649-9476 fax: 610.649.9520 Website: www.ooya.org

* Stewart's Alliance Young Adult Group- offers an array of service opportunities and programs. Contact Michelle Edwards Brown at medwards@adphila.org. Phone: 215-587-3651

* YASKI - Young Adults of St Katherine and St Isaac's - does weekly Bible study and many social events. Email: yaskicoreteam@hotmail.com Website: communities.msn.com/YASKIONLINE

* Jack's Yacs Young Adult Community of St. John the Evangelist parish in Center City - Email: yacsocial@hotmail.com Website: www.geocities.com/jacksyacs/ Offers spiritual, service and social opportunities.

* University of Pennsylvania Newman Center Young Adult Community - Phone: 215-898-7575 / Fax: 215-386-5899 Email: newman@dolphin.upenn.edu Website: www.newman.upenn.edu

* Drexel University Newman Center Young Adult Community - Phone: 215-590-8760 Fax: 215-590-8634 Contact: Fr. John Flanagan, jflanagan@drexel.edu Website: www.drexel.edu/newmancenter/

* Philadelphia Sport & Social Club - www.phillysportandsocialclub.com/

Other:

* Weavers Way Cooperative Association - Community Food Cooperative. Website: www.weaversway.org/

* W-XPEN 88.5FM - University of Pennsylvania's public radio station. Has great music and community event listings Website: www.xpn.org/

* White Dog Cafe and Black Cat Gift Shop - is a socially-conscious restaurant and gift shop. Website: www.whitedog.com/

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

Visit our on-line community of former volunteers on our website: www.pallotticenter.org/ Click to the formers section where you can find lists of resources for the entire country, and add more ideas of your own... anytime!

staying connected

In this Issue

- ♦ Staying Connected to Meaningful Work:
- ♦ Tips for Meaningful Work & Living a Balanced Life
- ♦ Spirituality of Work
- ♦ Former Volunteer Sightings for Philadelphia
- ♦ Leadership



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

Change of Address Requested

Non-Profit Org.
Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage Paid
Washington, DC
Permit #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!

Yes, You Do Have Leadership Qualities.

Here are some pointers that may help you believe it. Consider these quotes and how they might apply to you.

1. *"Leadership is not something you learn once and for all. It is an ever-evolving pattern of skills, talents, and ideas that grow and change as you do."*

—Sheila Murray Bethel

What are some of the leadership skills and talents that you possess? How have they changed and evolved over time? What leadership skill would you say is a growth area for you at this time? What are the factors that encourage you to stretch and grow in this area?

2. *"Good leaders make people feel like they are at the heart of things, not at the periphery. Everyone feels that he or she makes a difference to the success of the organization. When that happens people feel centered and that gives their work meaning."*

—Warren Bennis

Have you ever had the experience of "feeling at the heart of things" in your work-life? Describe what that was like for you. In what ways do you invite others to feel "at the heart of things?" What are some ways you could go about doing this?

In what ways do you feel like you make a difference in your workplace? What conditions encourage or support this situation? What pieces of the situation are within your power to change?

What are your experiences regarding feeling centered at work? What conditions help promote feeling centered? How are those conditions generated? What is your part in creating those conditions?



Check this out ... Former Jesuit volunteer (JVC East 90-91) Mike Schaub, now career counselor and doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology at Georgetown University, confirms that to find meaning, we should look beyond our job. Read his article on our website at www.pallotticenter.org/onmeaningfulwork.htm



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

The St. Vincent Pallotti Center for Apostolic Development Editors: Andrew Thompson, Dani Clark Scano and Kaela Volkmer Production Editor: Dani Clark Scano
Advisors: Kristelle Angeli, Ryan Downs, Anita Saira Moravski and Maureen Cunningham E-mail: pallotti@pallotticenter.org Webpage: www.pallotticenter.org

These materials are copyrighted. ©2003 Volume 5, Number 1 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.

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. **Location:** Local Pallotti Centers are in Boston, Paterson, NJ, St. Louis and Sacramento.

The National Office is in Washington, DC. **Inspiration:** 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.