



# Staying Connected



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

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## Staying Connected to...Your Vocation, Part 2



The Pallotti Center welcomes you to the second issue of a two-part series on vocations and careers. In the last issue of *Staying Connected*, we encouraged you to think about vocations in a broad sense. In this issue, we focus on a specific aspect of vocations: employment. Some of you have returned from long-term service and settled into a fulfilling job. Others are still looking for a job that will help you live out your particular calling or vocation. For many, the search for the right job is not a one-time event, but something which happens many times as our needs, skills, and priorities grow and change. Wherever you are in your individual work life, we hope that this issue will offer some useful ideas and activities to help you live out your vocation through your work.

In this issue, you will find practical advice on identifying and summarizing your skills for your résumé and job interviews, as well as tools to help you take a broader look at what you see as your personal mission in life. We are happy to again include a guest article by Amy Potthast from [Idealist.org](http://Idealist.org), who shares her perspective on networking. Finally, we introduce you to the patron saint of workers and consider his important role in the Holy Family and the relevance of his approach to work in 2010.

### Networking as Community Service

*By Amy Potthast, Director of Service and Graduate Education Programs, Idealist.org (and Alum, Notre Dame Mission Volunteers AmeriCorps)*

Networking is such an essential fact of life in social impact work that it pains me to talk to volunteers and service corps participants who associate networking with awkward conversations, wearing business suits and swapping business cards, and angling to take advantage of somebody else.

If the idea of "networking" makes your skin crawl, I challenge you to consider a new way of thinking about building relationships with people — leaders, peers — in your field.

Imagine you have a friend who needs a new roommate, and you have another friend who is looking for a place to live. Of course you would want to introduce your two friends. Networking works the same way. The more people you know and the more you are aware of their needs, then the more you can play the role of connector.

And *voilà* — you are off to a life of giving back to your community. Not through a specific job, or a volunteer opportunity. Just through expanding the networks you are a part of, and being responsive to the needs of the people you know.

Networking is often the way nonprofit organizations, schools, and government agencies get things done. Organizations rely on their networks to make sure they are not wasting money:

- Communicating with each other ensures that two organizations do not replicate services when resources are limited. Each organization can specialize by offering the same services to different populations, or developing the expertise to meet different needs where there is a service gap.

- Collaborating on projects enable organizations with diverse skill sets, experience, resources, and reach to complement each other and create an impact that would be impossible on their own.

- Coordinating their activities ie. holding your fundraising event on a different night than a similar organization — cuts down on competition and makes it possible for everyone to get along given limited resources (in this case, an overlapping donor base).

Not to give you the impression that all networking is altruistic. You can rely on your networks to help meet your needs as well. It's about being part of a community. If you were the one looking for a roommate, and your friend knew someone who was looking for a place to live, you'd happily accept your friend's help.



*continued on page 2*

# Coping With Job Loss

While some economists and politicians are starting to talk about an end to the U.S. recession, unemployment and underemployment remain significant problems. At the time of this writing, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports an unemployment rate of 10%. Millions more Americans are struggling with involuntary cuts in pay or hours at their jobs. Even those who have satisfactory employment may feel insecure and worried over the possibility of losing their jobs. If you or someone you know is coping with job loss, the following ideas and advice may help.

**-Be gentle with yourself.** Job loss is stressful on many levels. If you have lost a job, you might be worried about how to pay your bills or support your family. You might feel grief for lost routines and camaraderie with colleagues. You might experience a crisis of identity without meaningful work to occupy your time. The stress of your situation might strain your relationships with family and friends. All of these feelings are valid and important. It may seem like you need to throw yourself into the search for a new position, but taking some time to care for yourself will actually preserve your energy for the hard work ahead. With that in mind...

**Ask for and accept the help that you need.** Some people feel uncomfortable accepting unemployment insurance and/or other public assistance programs. The reality is that the taxes you have paid during your working life have funded these programs and you have a right to access them when you have a legitimate need. Similarly, some people find it very difficult to reach out to friends, family, or community/church resources for support, but think of it this way: as a volunteer, you gave generously of your time and energy to help others in need. Now, as you experience your own time of hardship, it is okay to accept the kind of help you once gave.

**Accept the realities of the current job market.** These days, it may take much more work to find prospective jobs. When you apply, you may be competing against many other qualified candidates. You may send out many résumés to secure only a few interviews, or go on many interviews without securing a position. Try not to get discouraged or take these setbacks personally. Be patient and persistent. Remember that you have many gifts and skills to offer and the right opportunity will come along eventually. See the rest of this issue for great job search advice and tips.

## Writing Your Personal Mission Statement

Points of transition in our lives can be ideal moments to step back and reflect on our personal mission, priorities and purpose. Taking the time to write a personal mission statement gives each of us a means to assess the ways God wants to use our unique experience, skills and perspective in the world today.

### Five steps to writing a personal mission statement:

**Step 1:** Recognize past success. Thinking back over your schooling, your volunteer/mission service and your professional life, of what are you most proud? What are some cases in which your unique skills have been valued and utilized?

**Step 2:** Identify what you value most. Determine what your intentional priorities are. You may value certain virtues. Or maybe you most value particular relationships with another or a community. Give yourself time to examine what you truly value above all other demands in your life.

**Step 3:** Open yourself with gratitude and prayer. Looking back to Steps 1 and 2, you may see ways God has influenced your life thus far. Take some time to relax, letting go of the anxiety felt about looking at the bigger picture. Reflect on God's grace in your life thus far. Ask God to guide you as you continue to live the vocation to which you are called.

**Step 4:** Write your goals. You may want to divide this into two columns: one for goals in the next 12 to 18 months and the other for 3-5 year goals.

**Step 5:** Write your Personal Mission Statement. The previous four steps gave ways to identify where you are, where you have been and where you hope to go. Your mission statement should be concise, using no more than two sentences. Look back over the process to identify how you already live a mission. Articulate your mission statement by affirming the past, identifying your core values, staying open to God's grace and working toward the future.

**Try to see opportunities amidst your challenges.** Do you want to stay home with your children? Return to school? Change career fields? Maybe this is your opportunity to make your dreams a reality! Think creatively about what steps you can take now to achieve your goals. For inspiration, take a look at our article on writing a personal mission statement.

**Hold on to the lessons you learn during this time.** As difficult as the experience of job loss can be, it can also be an opportunity for learning, self-discovery, and growth. Perhaps this experience will lead you to discover personal resources and strengths you never recognized before. Perhaps you will develop a new understanding of the struggles of economically marginalized people. Perhaps you will grow closer to family, friends, or your faith community. Perhaps, once you are back on your feet again, you will be inspired to serve in new and greater ways. As you move through your experience of job loss, try to take some time to reflect on what you are feeling, discovering, observing, and learning.

### *Networking as Community Service, continued from page 1...*

Likewise, as you become more aware of your community connections, you should feel comfortable asking people you know to sit down with you for an informational interview, or to put you in touch with new people to conduct informational interviews with them.

In terms of future career transitions, it's your passing acquaintances who will be most likely to help you locate that next job. It's a documented fact that most people find job opportunities through "loose ties" — people who run in new and different circles than you typically do, who can breathe fresh air into what you know.

# Job Hunting 101 in 2010

If you are searching for a job in this economy, God bless you! Conducting a job search is never easy, but because of the state of the economy, many qualified people are finding it more difficult than it has been in the past. But take heart- we have some suggestions and resources on how to keep yourself current and motivated in this job market.

## Be sure your résumé is current and relevant.

- Tailor your résumé for each job that you apply to. Some of the information you include in your résumé and cover letter may not be relevant to the job you are seeking. Focus on skills that you may have gained that easily translate regardless of field. For example, highlight management or communication skills you may have obtained, even if the area differs from the job for which you are applying. A Résumé is a selling document- do not sell yourself short! Be proud of your achievements!

- Stay current. Even if you are unemployed, use this time to complete volunteer work or certification relevant to the jobs that you may want. This will show potential employers that you are motivated and will keep you from having a large gap on your résumé. Also, make sure to explain any gaps on your résumé. For more information on this topic, check out CareerBuilder.com: Worried About the Gaps on Your résumé? (Nov. 5, 2009)

## Make your job search your full time job!

- Be committed to your job search. Commit yourself to searching for new opportunities for an hour or so each day. This will keep you motivated and increase your opportunities for finding work.

- Use your time to network either in person with friends or on social networking sites. Do not be afraid to tell people you are looking for work. You never know what opportunities they may know of. Make sure to follow up on any contacts made through your networking. (See Amy Potthast's article on Networking, also in this issue!)

- Join a group like LinkedIn to post your résumé and find other people in your field whom friends and colleagues may know. Re-connect with any alumni groups you may be a part of through a university, volunteer program, or other organization. Most universities and colleges provide Career Services to alumni as well as enrolled students.



- Search for jobs outside of sites and media you usually browse. If you usually use the internet, try newspapers. Try new websites that friends recommend.

## Do not be discouraged.

- Updating your résumé and going through the interview process does not have to be a let down. Let it be a reminder of your achievements. Stay positive! You have more chance of successfully obtaining a position if you remain confident in your skills and keep a positive attitude.

## Resource Corner for the Job Hunt

### Websites:

[www.pallotticenter.org](http://www.pallotticenter.org)

- Sign up for the Pallotti Center Job Bank
- Download the "What's Next? Notebook"
- Check out "Translating your Volunteer Experience into Meaningful Work" in *Shared Visions Volume 19, Number 4*

[www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com) - good for résumé tips.

[www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org) - look for the online career book [Idealist Guides to Nonprofit Careers](#)

[www.knockemdead.com](http://www.knockemdead.com) - great interview techniques!

### Books:

[What Color is Your Parachute? 2010: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters and Career-Changers](#), Richard Nelson Bolles, Ten Speed Press, 2009

[Working World: Careers in International Education, Exchange, and Development](#), Sherry L. Mueller and Mark Overmann, Georgetown University Press, 2008

[101 Great Answers to the Toughest Interview Questions](#), 6th Edition, Ronald Fry, Thomson Delmar Learning, 2009



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[stayingconnected@pallotticenter.org](mailto:stayingconnected@pallotticenter.org)



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## St. Joseph the Worker



***“O glorious Joseph! Who concealed your incomparable and regal dignity of custodian of Jesus and of the Virgin Mary under the humble appearance of a craftsman and provided for them with your work, protect with loving power your sons [and daughters], especially entrusted to you.***

***You know their anxieties and sufferings, because you yourself experienced them at the side of Jesus and of His Mother.***

***Do not allow them, oppressed by so many worries, to forget the purpose for which they were created by God. Do not allow the seeds of distrust to take hold of their immortal souls. Remind all the workers that in the fields, in factories, in mines, and in scientific laboratories, they are not working, rejoicing, or suffering alone, but at their side is Jesus, with Mary, His Mother and ours, to sustain them, to dry the sweat of their brow, giving value to their toil. Teach them to turn work into a very high instrument of sanctification as you did. Amen.”***

This prayer to St. Joseph was written by Pope John XXIII.

As a carpenter, Joseph worked in a trade that did not provide him with the wealth or the acclaim that many desire. When we feel unsatisfied or under-appreciated in our work, we can look to Joseph in solidarity.

The dignity of human labor is a major tenet of Catholic social teaching. We remember especially those who are engaged in work where it is difficult to uphold such human dignity. Many undocumented immigrants in our country toil at back-breaking jobs and face abuse, exploitation and possible deportation as part of the daily struggle to provide for their families. Often, their working conditions are no safer than at the jobs they left behind in the developing world. Perhaps your volunteer work brought you into direct engagement with these individuals and allowed you to alleviate some of the suffering that these workers endure. Regardless of your own background, all of us can engage in advocacy to protect the rights of workers in our country and implement just immigration laws.

***St. Joseph the Worker, pray for us!***

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

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

**Inspiration:** The Center takes 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 visit our website, [www.pallotticenter.org](http://www.pallotticenter.org), for more information.