

SHARED VISIONS

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Volume 19, Number 4

— A publication to assist in the spiritual formation of lay volunteers — presented by the people who bring you **Connections** —

Taking Your Intentional Time of Service With You When You Leave

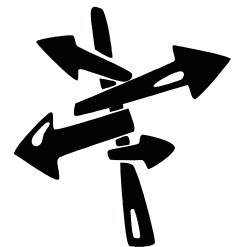


In addition to many of you finishing your own volunteer year, the Church will soon be concluding this special Pauline year on June 29. During the Easter season, we hear much from the Acts of the Apostles at Mass. Among the stories detailing the early Church contained in this book of Scripture is Paul's Farewell Discourse at Miletus near Ephesus (Acts 20: 17-38), which can be read in a modern context as Paul's testament to living a Christian life of intentionality – our theme throughout this year of *Shared Visions*. Speaking to the Ephesian presbyters, Paul reminds them of his own steadfast dedication to the Gospel (18-21), the "imprisonment and hardships" that he knows he will have to endure for the sake of the Gospel (22-27) and the threat of false prophets who will come after him (28-31). He

concludes his speech by attributing to Jesus an aphorism that is close to the heart of every missionary. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

At the end of his life, Paul could tell others what the intentional Christian life would entail: "proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching...be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry." (II Timothy 4:2, 5)

Paul goes on to say, "I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith." (II Timothy 4:7) Hopefully, you can look back on this year of volunteer service to the Church with that same confidence that you have made a difference in the lives of others. This final issue of Volume 19 of *Shared Visions* provides some final thoughts on intentional living and making the transition from volunteer service to the next point on your journey. Consider the ways in which you can take your service term of living intentionally with you as you set out in possibly new or different directions. Be sure to check out our website at www.pallotticenter.org for more activities and reflections on transitions!



Mourning The End of Your Volunteer Experience

For many volunteers, spring and summer are times of loss and change. Some volunteers are reaching the end of their term of service, and those who are continuing at their placements may be losing community members and/or co-workers. While these losses are difficult, they are an inevitable part of the volunteer experience and a valuable opportunity for personal and spiritual growth. In *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy* (Springer Publishing Company, 2008), psychologist Dr. William Worden proposes four "tasks" involved in mourning a loss. We

encourage you to take some time alone or with your volunteer community reflecting on these tasks and how they may apply to your volunteer experience.

Task One: To Accept the Reality of the Loss. The busy pace of life as a volunteer offers plenty of distractions from the reality that the volunteer experience will ultimately end. While

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Re-Entry Tools for Transitioning Out of Volunteer Service

Completing your term of volunteer service? The Pallotti Center offers a variety of free services to former volunteers, available through our website: www.pallotticenter.org (click on Former Volunteers). If you cannot access this information on the web, please feel free to call us at 1-877-VOL-LINK. Here is a brief summary of the resources for you:

- **Network of Former Volunteers** - The Network is a listserv of former volunteers all over the U.S. and the world. Former volunteers can use the listserv to find others who have volunteered in their area, program, or field of interest; to find and share advice or leads about housing, jobs, or graduate study; to promote social justice interests; and to schedule gatherings of former volunteers in their area. There are also several regional listservs for which you can sign up.
- **"What's Next?" Notebook** - This annual publication addresses issues encountered in the post-service stage of volunteering, and helps to guide your transition out of volunteer service.
- **Staying Connected** - Each issue of this free newsletter focuses on an aspect of volunteering (simple living, social justice, spirituality, relationships, etc.) and how that can apply to life after service.
- **Job Bank** - The Job Bank aids former volunteers in the search for meaningful and fulfilling work. You can sign up for the Job Bank, emailed weekly, and also review articles, links, and strategies for career discernment and job searching.
- **Resources in Your Area** - Wondering what current and former volunteers are up to in your neck of the woods? Have a great resource to share with others? The Pallotti Center has compiled a list of monthly former volunteer gatherings, parishes where formers attend, retreat opportunities, peace and justice organizations, volunteer opportunities, and other valuable resources. Also browse the Former Volunteer Resource Contacts in your area to find former volunteers who are willing to organize gatherings or help you with the transition to a new area.

Activity: Translating

What motivated you to embark upon the journey of full-time unique journey post-service. For many of you, though, the site, it's important to take time to honor your experience and experience may translate into meaningful work.

You may already know the type of work you want to do when the process, the following exercise is designed to help you use what you learned. Depending on what you seek in a job, you may want to tailor your resume and cover letters appropriately. Often fail to capture the personal, spiritual, communal, and other experiences into your future journey, and this is just one way

Organizing Your Experience

1. Summarize the mission or purpose of your volunteer placement in one sentence.
2. Summarize the mission or purpose of your placement in the service component of your volunteer program if these are different from the organization, in one sentence.
3. Summarize your specific job in one to two sentences.
4. Use the following table to organize the specific things you did as a volunteer. You will probably want to reproduce this table for your own; feel free to add or eliminate categories as you see fit. It will be most helpful to you to do this with your community supervisor at work. We've provided an example to get you started. For the example, the job we use is that of caseworker for single mothers.
5. Re-visit your table and add to it as you continue to gain volunteer experience. Allow this to be a tool in helping you identify what you'd like to do when your term of service ends.



Task	KSAs
<i>Helped single mothers apply for food stamps</i>	<i>Knowledge of current food stamp policy</i> <i>Ability to communicate government policies</i>

Your Volunteer Experience into Meaningful Work

How do you volunteer service? Each person will have a unique answer to this question, and each person will continue on a unique journey that will involve some type of employment. As you prepare to leave your volunteer program and placement and the emotions involved. It's also important to take stock of what you've accomplished and consider how your

When you finish your service term, or you may be just starting to test the waters of a job search. Wherever you are in your journey, flesh out the tasks you performed as a volunteer and to begin to think broadly about the ways you may apply what you find. Try to find employers who are quite familiar with long-term service or those who are completely unfamiliar. It will be a challenge. One final piece of advice: it may seem disingenuous to think of your volunteer service in resume terms that only list duties and emotional experiences. It is vital, however, for you to begin to think about how you can translate those wonderful experiences into a way of doing that.

Here's an explanation of the categories across the top of the table:

Task - List specific tasks that you did as part of your overall job.

KSAs - This stands for Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities, a common way the government organizes its job openings. There is a difference between a skill, which is "the proficient manual, verbal, or mental manipulation of data or things" (i.e. - computer software use), and an ability, which is "the power or capacity to perform an activity or task" (i.e. - facilitating a class). For this purpose, you don't need to distinguish; this is just a way of getting you to think about what you did as a volunteer.

Example - How, where, and/or how often did you learn/apply this knowledge or skill? Think of a specific example that would illustrate this to an outsider.

Broad Implication - What are the broader implications, both personally and professionally, of this knowledge, skill, or ability? What is something that you learned about yourself, others, an issue, the world, etc.?

Translation - Thinking alone or with others, brainstorm other areas in which you may be able to transfer what you've learned.

Takeaway - What's the takeaway message? Think broadly and creatively about what you might say to a potential employer or graduate school admissions committee about your experience.



Example	Broad Implication	Translation	Takeaway
<i>Learned about policy in orientation & ongoing training</i>	<i>Developed better understanding of challenges facing the poor</i>	<i>Could work with other groups of marginalized or impoverished people; could work in government or on policy issues</i>	<i>I am able to apply my experience working hands-on with a policy to an organization trying to reform policy or assist other people seeking government assistance.</i>
<i>Explained policy to 2-3 clients per week</i>	<i>Improved interpersonal skills; became more compassionate</i>		

Activity: What's Your Sign?

Hey, volunteer, what's your sign?

No, we're not talking about a bad pick-up line, but we do want you to ask someone else about his or her sign. With your community, use this activity to gauge how each member is feeling as many of you approach the end of your service term.

Gather as a community

If the weather is nice, consider going outside. You'll need enough space to allow people to pair off if your community is large enough. If you have a small community, don't split up.



What's your sign?

Grab a partner and allow each group to go for a short walk or sit apart from the other groups for about 10-15 minutes. Use this time to ask each other: what's your sign? Choose a road sign that describes how you feel as you consider the future. Are you at a crossroads? Speeding along at 70 miles per hour?



What does your passenger think?

Share with each other why you chose your sign and, if you feel comfortable, what the future looks like - possibilities, choices, etc. Envision your partner as the passenger in a car. What suggestions or questions can your partner pose for you as you think about navigating the road ahead?

Where's your GPS?

In this case, your God Positioning System. Where do you see your faith involved on the road ahead?

Share insights with your community

We can't predict the future, but we can prepare for it. As an entire community again, share any insights that you had about your signs and how you might navigate the future.

Use the imagery of a road sign after you leave your community as way of intentionally checking in with how you feel about the possibilities that lay ahead. If it helps, establish regular check-in times via email or phone calls with your community members after you leave to ask: what's your sign?

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you may be tempted to work right up to the last second and behave as if nothing is changing, **we encourage you to take some time to intentionally reflect on what you will lose as your and others' term of service comes to an end.** Will you miss seeing your fellow volunteers everyday? Interacting with the people you serve? Living in a particular place? Reflecting on these losses before they occur may help you experience your final days more fully, and it will also prepare you for the changes to come.

Task Two: To Work Through the Pain of Grief. It is normal to experience some difficult emotions during times of loss and transition. You may miss your fellow volunteers or the people you served. You may feel a loss of purpose after leaving your work. You may feel confused as you ponder what to do next. As painful as it may be, **acknowledging and expressing these emotions are important steps in moving forward with your life.** These emotions can also be opportunities for self-discovery. For example, if you miss living in community, perhaps you could incorporate some aspects of communal living into your future living situations. If you miss working with a particular population, perhaps you can make that population part of your future career.

Task Three: To Adjust to an Environment in Which Something is Missing. If you are leaving your volunteer program, this may mean adjusting to life without the people

and work to whom you have grown accustomed. If you are continuing in your program, this may mean adjusting to a community or placement site after a particular person has gone. An important part of this task is **finding ways to fill the practical, emotional, and spiritual "holes" left after a loss.** Think about the losses you identified in steps one and two and consider new ways of filling those holes. If your work gave you a sense of purpose, where can you find that purpose now? If living in community deepened your spirituality, how can you continue that spiritual development in your new life? If a particular community member was your confidant, in whom can you confide now?

Task Four: To Emotionally Relocate What Has Been Lost and Move On With Life. How will you incorporate your volunteer experience and the people and places involved into the rest of your life? This final step involves moving from a place where you acutely miss the people and experiences of your time as a volunteer to a place where you take the memories of that time into your future life. How can you honor those people and experiences in your future life and work? **Finding ways to incorporate your volunteer experience into the rest of your life is a wonderful way to cope with the changes and loss which are part of that experience.** For ideas about how to achieve this, see the rest of this issue and our website, www.pallotticenter.org.

Biblical Reflection: Feeding the Lambs

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He then said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” (Jesus) said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

John 21: 15-18

This account of Jesus with Peter mentioned above is a scene in which Jesus returns to guide his disciples before ascending into Heaven. After the death and Resurrection of Jesus, the disciples were left with many questions. What were these events that they just witnessed? What were they supposed to do next with all that they had been taught? Maybe you can relate to this in your current situation, whether you are leaving your placement or watching others go.

The question Jesus asks Peter is a simple one, and the phrase – “feed my lambs” – seems direct but vague at the same time. There are many ways one can minister to others. How is Peter to know what Jesus means? How are we to know how the Lord wants us to serve

next? Maybe the answer is in the question, for Peter and for us.

Jesus asks Peter about love. Our passions unlock the ways in which we are called to serve. So ask yourself: What have you loved about the work you’ve done this year? Whom have you loved? Is there a population of people with whom you enjoyed working?

God can even reveal clues to us in the challenges. Think about some of the things that you did this year that maybe you never thought you would have to do. What did you learn about love in those situations? Certainly the apostles never could have imagined all the Lord showed them, but now had new skills and tools for their ministry because of those experiences.



“Feed my lambs” does not have to mean a physical ministry. Perhaps there are some skills that you developed in dealing in community that will allow you to bring spiritual or emotional nourishment to others. It is also worth noting the number of times the Lord asks Peter his

simple question. The journey is never over, even if you are moving onto a new place or job, and you may find that what you have experienced this year will show itself again in new ways in the future.

The Lord continues to ask us to serve Him, even after many “deaths” and “resurrections” of our own. Reflecting on and tapping into the loves and lessons you have known this year can be the guide for where the Lord may be calling you next. May you continue to be inspired by love and mission wherever you are led!

Checklist for Readers of Shared Visions:

If you're finishing your term of service:

- Enjoy some final rituals/activities with your community.
- Prepare to say your goodbyes.
- Sign up for the Network of Former Volunteers, Job Bank, and *Staying Connected* on the Pallotti Center website: www.pallotticenter.org!



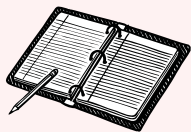
If you're still serving/staying for an additional term:

- Brainstorm ways to make your service feel fresh and new.
- Welcome any new community members or appreciate those continuing the journey with you.
- Check in with your program director to make sure you still receive *Shared Visions*.

And for all of our readers:

- Check the name/address on this copy of *Shared Visions*. Still correct? Great! Need to make a change? Need to increase or decrease the number of copies you receive? Simply email the information to sharedvisions@pallotticenter.org. We rely on you to help us make sure *Shared Visions* arrives in the right hands!

Journaling: Intentionally Reviewing Your Service



Journaling can be a great way to process an experience. Here are some topics and prompts that may help you recall your volunteer experience while you're still serving as well as in the months after you leave.

- Read Romans 12:9-21, in particular verse 12: "Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer." Write about how you experienced these exhortations during your volunteer service.

- Read the story of the men on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). Reflect on the times when you felt your own heart burning or recognized Christ in the face of another.

- Review Jesus' conditions of discipleship (Matthew 16:24-26). Are there times during your volunteer year where you have felt like you've lost your life, or parts of your life, to save it?

- If you only had time to tell one story of your volunteer

experience to someone who was not familiar with the culture within or the people with whom you worked, what story would you tell?

- Think of your feelings, attitudes, dreams, and goals before you began your volunteer service. Write whatever comes to mind as you think about how those may have changed over the course of your service.

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The Mission of the St. Vincent Pallotti Center

The mission of the St. Vincent Pallotti Center is to inspire volunteer service through Catholic-based organizations. We support prospective volunteers during their exploration of service opportunities, strengthen the personal and spiritual development of volunteers while they serve, and assist former volunteers to stay connected to their ideals and their communities. The Center takes its 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 have a missionary heart.

The Pallotti Center is located in Washington, DC.

Shared Visions' goal is to explore five building blocks of spiritual development: intellectual growth, emotional and physical health, leadership and prayer.



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