

# Voluntas Dei Institute

January 2011

Vol. 16, No. 1



## “BE IT DONE UNTO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD” (LUKE 1:38)

### GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Voluntas Family:

Happy New Year!

Our theme for the year is “Uncommon Gratitude: Alleluia for all that is.” It is a struggle to live gratefully rather than negatively. Voluntas spirituality is one that calls us to be overflowing with gratefulness from living with the absence of criticism and complaint. My prayer for us that we will live our vows, commitments, and affiliation in 2011 through the daily practice of gratitude. It is a decision and choice that we are called to make each day.

Our new General, Fr. Dunstan, in his letter to the Voluntas worldwide family addressed the issue of “Voluntas Dei” (The will of God) vs. “Voluntas Mei” (My will). I would suggest that this is the basic struggle for all human beings from Adam and Eve up to the present. There are no free lunches. We must all deal with this fundamental issue in our lives.

Our Constitutions give us a beautiful vision for living a life of obedience and service modeled on the Virgin of the Annunciation: “Members surrender to God so as to be totally His and following Jesus, they commit themselves to a life of adoration, filial surrender and service.” (#43) The key word is surrender.

The challenge is to surrender to the will of God each day. What exactly does that mean for us? I propose these simple things:

- Surrender to listening: Listen to voice of the God in the scriptures, the sacraments, and the Church. Pay attention to the voice of your fellow Voluntas members as a roadmap for discovering God’s desire for you. Listen to the deepest stirrings within yourself where God is tugging at your heart. Make a decision each day to stop, pay attention, and listen.
- In all decisions that you have to make, the question that will set you on the right path is: “What choice will best keep me in relationship to God? That is God’s desire for you. All spirit-led choices should keep us in closer relationship to God and with one another.
- As vowed, committed, and affiliated members of Voluntas Dei our place for living out our relationship with God and one another are the ways in which we gather as a community at Team meetings, Sector Gatherings, and the annual Retreat and Congress. These are all sacred meeting places where Voluntas members are nourished and give support one another. These are places where we get glimpses of God’s will for us.

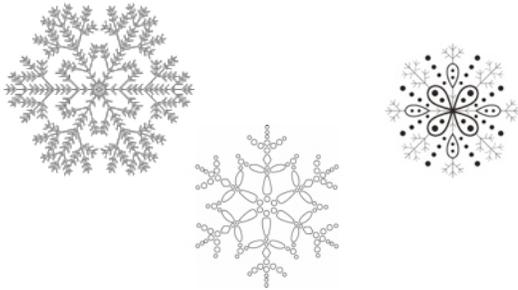
- The acid test of whether we are doing God’s will in our lives is the charity of our lives. If you need to know how you are doing, ask yourself how you are doing with the practice of five acts of charity each day. That is the surest sign that you have moved outside of yourself (Voluntas Mei) and have embraced God ‘s will for you (Voluntas Dei).

As we journey together into 2011 , let’s try as a community to surrender to gratitude through our absence o f criticism and complaint and generous service to one another and to the world through our daily acts of charity. If we live this way, we are Voluntas Dei.

I thank God for you, pray for you each day, and promise to do my best to continue joyfully to serve our Voluntas Dei community.

Love and Blessings,

*Tony Ciorra*



## **The Call to Consecrated Life**

**By: Bill Konicki**

We have been making adjustments to our national schedule for District meetings in order to make ourselves available to others called to consecrated life. Ah, what a challenge it is for us to be flexible! As with any change we will need to be patient with one another as we work the bugs out.

As for me, and other members of the Bay State Team, we are feeling out in left field. We have been so used to meeting in August, November and March, and it seems forever between a November and an August meeting. Plus we have two couples that are not able to make the August 2011 meeting who want to become Aspirants but will hold off till 2012. Seems like a long time to be waiting since they have been with us for over a year now.

We are doing a feature on vocations in our monthly parish newsletter and showcasing Consecrated life and featuring our Bay State Team. There are other members of our parish who are interested in a focused spirituality and may be interested in walking with us as we move forward. Entering as we are in transition is a challenge that requires all of us to have gentle spirit and a willingness to trust the workings of the Holy Spirit and the guidance of our new council. Let us raise them up in prayer.

As vocation director for the Eastern half of the District I have had many inquiries from possible candidates for Voluntas in States where we do not have Teams as yet. I am hoping that the St. Isidore can handle their team life. Having been a member of the St. Isidore when I first joined Voluntas, I couldn’t wait to be part of a team “with skin on!” Hopefully others will have the energy to wait patiently for others in their area to desire consecrated life, or make the effort to invite others to Voluntas.

We are under construction, and that is good news. Much better than, folding our tents! It is an exciting time for all of us here, as frightful as change and transition may be, I ask us all to remember that the reason for all the structural change is to invite others to hear and answer the call to Consecrated life! Happy New Year to all and God bless the West Coast meeting in March, we are with you in spirit and in prayer.

## Save the Dates!

### SECTOR GATHERINGS ANNUAL RETREAT & CONGRESS

#### WEST COAST -2011-2012

March 4 & 5, 2011 (Friday: Start Time: 12 noon; Saturday: End time 3:00PM) at the Holiday Inn, Long Beach, CA. (more details below)

March 3 & 4, 2012 (**Note change to Saturday/Sunday**) Location: TBA

#### EAST COAST 2011

November 5 and 6, 2011 (**Note change to Saturday/Sunday**) at Holy Family Retreat Center, West Hartford, CT.

### VOLUNTAS DEI USA - 2011 ANNUAL RETREAT AND CONGRESS

*Annual Retreat* will be held August 2-4, 2011 at Daylesford Abbey, Paoli, PA.  
Retreat Director: Fr. James Halley

*Annual Congress* will be held August 4-6, 2011 at Daylesford Abbey, Paoli, PA.

*More details will be available in the coming months*

#### WEST COAST SECTOR MEETING

The West Coast Sector Meeting will take place on Friday, March 4th and Saturday, March 5th, 2011 at the Holiday Inn, 2640 N. Lakewood Blvd., Long Beach, CA.

Individual attendees will make reservations for the event directly with Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference Center, Long Beach Airport at 562-498-5432 or by calling Holiday Inn Reservation office at 1-800-HOLIDAY. Make sure that you ask for the Voluntas Dei

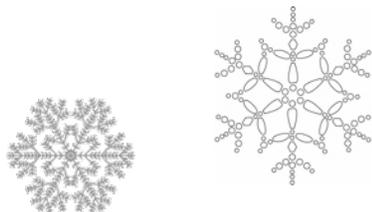
Institute rate in order to receive the special group rate of \$109/per night. The Code is VDI. Standard check-in time is 3:00 PM and check-out time is 12:00 PM. Any individual cancellations or changes must be made at least 24 hours prior to the arrival date.

The \$109 rate also applies to those who might be arriving on Thursday evening, March 3rd.

The easiest airport to come into is Long Beach Airport (LGB). Jet Blue has non stop

flights from JFK and Boston. Other airports have direct, but one stop flights into Long Beach. If Long Beach doesn't work for you, flights can be booked nonstop to LAX (Los Angeles) or to SNA (Orange County Airport). Both of these airports are about 15 miles from Long Beach.

We will have members of our Team, (the west coast version of Marty) available to pick up those who come into all of the airports.



### ***Retired? Really what does it mean?***

*“...to live a simple and generous lifestyle.”* Sound familiar? Of course, because we find this statement throughout the writings of our founder, Fr. Parent. But like everything else within *Voluntas Dei* the challenge lies hidden in what seems like a very simple and sometimes child-like spirituality of *Voluntas Dei*. However we all know by now if we are members of *Voluntas Dei* that the day-to-day practice of our spirituality is quite challenging.

And now that I am, so to speak, retired from the daily operations and leadership of our District the “simple and generous” lifestyle continues to be a challenge as I strive each day to live this life of secular consecration in the midst of parish life. My ministry at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Naples, Florida is classified as part time which includes Masses and Confessions on the weekends and also a few daily Masses with a periodic funeral. But there are also many requests for spiritual direction and hospital visits. As you know quite well there is no such thing as part time for someone involved in Church

ministry – especially if we are mindful of the “generous” portion of our lifestyle.

But my “retirement” here in Naples had a very unique beginning, one that I was not prepared for but one nonetheless that proved to be what I call a “divine surprise with a bit of dark night thrown in.” I arrived at the parish August 12 to be told by the pastor that I was not allowed to celebrate public Mass until approved by the bishop and until I had been fingerprinted and attended the appropriate classes all of which I did immediately. And then the waiting game began. Week followed week, month followed month as I waited to be granted faculties. And finally after 69 days I was approved. I am almost certain that I had been well googled in the meantime by the proper authorities. But this situation I will never understand and I pray that no other priest will have to undergo such treatment. This is something we certainly don’t expect after serving the Church faithfully for 43 years.

However, these are the challenges that strengthen us spiritually and certainly keep us humble. It was a very dark night for me as I contemplated my future and what God had in store for me. It was a time of intense prayer and meditation – an unexpected preparation for “retirement” but I tried my best to see it as a gift from God.

So my friends I am doing my best to live a “simple and generous” lifestyle as I serve the community at St. John’s. I pray for good health to continue to serve and live as a consecrated secular in the midst of God’s people for many years to come. If you ever come this way, you are most welcome! In the meantime I pray for you and I ask that you pray for me.

*George Hazler*

District Director Emeritus

## Council Notes . . .

Fr. John Anderson has been appointed liturgy coordinator for the USA District.

Fr. James Musumeci has been appointed by the General to coordinate preaching assignments for the Voluntas Dei Missions

Fr. Timothy Sullivan has been appointed Director of "Special Cases" for those in formation. Most of these cases are for the transfer of religious order members to the Institute.

The Council is overseeing the process of the transfer of the USA Voluntas legal incorporation from the state of Maryland to New York with inclusion in the Kennedy Directory in the Archdiocese of New York.

The USA Director and Council is in communication with Sue Ann Rice, president of USCCI, about the publication and release of the DVD presentations on secular institutes that involves several of our members.

Three of our Haitian Voluntas brothers, who have been residing and ministering in the United States, have petitioned to join the USA District as mandated by the 2010 General Assembly. The Council welcomes our brothers and has assigned them to the following teams:

Fr. Danis Ridore - Florida Gold Coast Team.

Fr. Jacques Jean-Pierre - Central Park Team.

Fr. Marc-Arthur Francois - Jersey Lakes Team.

The Council has approved the name change of the San Francisco Bay Team to the "Long Beach/South Bay" Team. Fr. Jim Halley is the facilitator of this team.

Fr. Michael Craig now resides in France and has petitioned to be directly under the Central Council Administration rather than the USA District. The General has accepted his petition and the USA Council thanks Michael for his years of service to the USA and wishes him well in his new ministry in France.

The Council will be meeting February 23 and 24. If you have any questions, proposals or concerns that you would like the council to consider, please email Tony ([anthonyciorra@gmail.com](mailto:anthonyciorra@gmail.com) or [Ciorra@fordham.edu](mailto:Ciorra@fordham.edu))



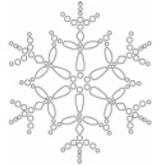
Michael Garfole, the son of Diane Conforti of the Jersey Shore Team, passed away on November 29th. He was 26 years old. Please keep Diane and her family in your thoughts and prayers especially during this time.

Fr. John J. Quinlan, of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Swartswood, NJ, passed from our hands into the Lord's arms on January 22. Please pray for Fr. John and his family at this difficult time.



“ Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion to clarity. . . . Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.”

Melody Beattie



Visit our website at [voluntasdeiusa.org](http://voluntasdeiusa.org)



**CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO  
VOLUNTAS DEI  
INSTITUTE**

We remind all vowed and committed members of our commitment to make the customary contributions to the Institute. Please make checks payable to: Voluntas Dei Institute and mail them to the chair of our finance committee:

Mr. Paul Lang  
26 Settler Court  
Tinton Falls, NJ 07753



In order to keep the address list updated, please send any changes to Eleanor Suroweic at [robtel@comcast.net](mailto:robtel@comcast.net)  
Thank You!