

Voluntas Dei Institute



October 2011

Vol. 16, No. 3

“BE IT DONE TO ME ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD” (Luke 1:38)

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Voluntas Community:

Thank you to all who worked so hard to make our August retreat and congress the wonderful events that they were. It was a joy to see the number of new people who joined us. We once again welcome them and are grateful for the new life and energy they bring to us. Many of them commented to me about the great spirit they experienced among us. As I listened to them, I realized how fortunate we are in the USA to have each other. May we never take that gift for granted!

As we read in the scriptures, “To the one whom much is given, much is expected.” We were given so much during the days of our retreat and congress. “What return can we make to the Lord for all that He has given to us?” I would suggest that we now try to give to others what has been given to us.

There is a very concrete way in which we might do this. One of Fr. Parent’s less known books is It is Possible to Get Along With Others. I would like to invite all of us to read or re-read this book. It is a book about human relations. I am suggesting this as a way of taking our experience of the retreat and congress to its next step by developing the art of human relationships in our teams, parishes, and places of work and ministry. In typical Fr. Parent style, he makes very simple but challenging suggestions on how to develop loving and healing relationships.

In the Preface of the book, Fr. Parent asks the question: Is it possible to get along with others? He writes, “Yes, if we have the courage:

- To take the first step
- To accept others as they are without any prejudice
- To become aware of the quality of our own personal feelings
- To desire the creation of positive and serene relationships
- To develop respect for the freedom of others
- To grow in self-assurance and in trust of others.”

Fr. Parent writes that getting along with others is an art, which “if cultivated, transforms human relations.” During this year as we focus on the theme “Unity and Diversity,” I would give us as our collective project in the USA, the development of the art of cultivating relationships especially with those whom we might find it difficult to do so.

We live in a moment of tremendous divisions within our American politics, our Church, religions, and the world at large. The immediate access that everyone has to information through technology brings us closer together and at the same time accentuates the divisions and differences among us.

As these tensions continue to escalate, we ask what can we as Voluntas do about this problem? To put it simply: Take the unity and joy we experienced in Paoli in August and start making it happen in your world each day. How do you do this? Read Fr. Parent's book, It is Possible to Get Along with Others and start practicing the principles he proposes. It is my hope that by doing this that the theme chosen by our formation team for this year, "Unity and Diversity" will take root within our Voluntas Dei USA District.



I keep you in my heart and prayers each day with deep gratitude for the gift that you are.

Love and Blessings,
Tony



Council Notes

The following are highlights from the August 23, 2011 Council meeting.

1. The council reviewed the questionnaires distributed at the Congress,. Feedback for both the retreat and congress was very positive. The council also thought that everything went well and was very grateful for all those who worked so hard to make our retreat and congress grace-filled times for our District. We also are grateful to Fr. Dunstan for his flexibility in coming to us via videoconference and to Greg for taking care of all of the details, The council will review the schedule and make some modifications for next year.
2. Website changes and improvements have been made
3. Greg and the formation team are working on team lessons for this year's theme, "Unity and Diversity."
4. The council discussed the ongoing progress of the new sector format for our district. The choice of names, Annunciation and Visitation sectors, reflects the fact that the sectors are not divided according to strict geographical lines. All are expected to attend one sector meeting each year. The choice can be

made on what is most convenient for each person's schedule and what works best financially for travel. The council decided that all members will not attend both sector meetings. The council will be represented at each sector. This is an effort to allow the Sector Facilitators (Annunciation: Bill Konicki; Visitation: Jim Halley) to function as the leaders of the sectors.

5. If there anyone is in need of financial assistance to be able to attend sector meetings, please let your sector facilitator know. The council will review all requests and will try to offer partial assistance.
6. The council discussed the work of the mission committee. The goal is for the committee to target five parishes this year for mission appeals. It was reported that appeals that are scheduled through the Propagation of the Faith take 5% from the amount collected to cover their operating expenses. The council thought that this was reasonable and fair.
7. The council talked about the next steps in applying for insurance and compliance issues for the Dallas Charter. A system for background checks and the formation of a response/compliance team is being worked on.
8. Julian and Greg will oversee the development and improvements to our website.
9. Greg, Carol and Joel will attend the USCSI Oct. 28-30 in Connecticut. Members are encouraged to attend.
10. The Council has appointed Anthony DiPalma as the Coordinator for the USA Voluntas Dei "Safe Environment Program /Response Team ." Paul Lang will serve on the committee as the Insurance policy representative and James Burns as the psychological consultant. We thank the them for accepting this responsibility. Details will be communicated as they are worked out.

Save the Dates!

Sector Gatherings

Annunciation Sector 2011

November 5 and 6, 2011 (**Note change to Saturday/Sunday**) at Holy Family Retreat Center, West Hartford, CT. Registration information can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Visitation Sector 2012

March 3 & 4, 2012 (**Note change to Saturday/Sunday**) Details and location will be forthcoming

Focus. . .

John Anderson

John was received into Aspirancy at the August Conference this year and serves the Institute as Director of Liturgy. John lives in New York City where Andrew Sioletti, who was his CPE director at Cabrini Medical Center, introduced him to Voluntas Dei. He is a member of the Central Park Lagoon team and directs spiritual care and quality of life initiatives at Kateri Residence, a Catholic nursing home on Manhattan's Upper West Side.



A native of Fairfield, CT, John studied Political Science and Theology at Boston College followed by six years in sales and marketing before studying for the priesthood. His call to ministry was first answered in Atlanta where he served in parish ministry after studying at the North American College in Rome.

John's spiritual roots were imbedded at a small Benedictine Grange not far from where he grew up. Celebrating Mass in a barn where the liturgy imbued a sense of contemplative mystery and beauty had a deep impact on his soul and spirit. Longing to return to that initial font of grace, John found his way back to the northeast where he could be part of the Grange community and closer to his family.

John's path has led his Catholic roots to be nourished with a mixture of religious and cultural traditions including becoming a teacher of Kundalini Yoga. His work with hospice and his own journey of grief have helped him trust that from our losses and the slow process of mourning there arise reveries of the soul's capacity to love and to heal.

The practical spirituality of the Three Fives, Fr. Parent's wisdom in how to live in the present moment and life-giving friendships are why John feels called to begin training in the Voluntas Dei Institute. Other sources of inspiration for his work and leisure include the contemporary writer Thomas Moore, C.G. Jung, Joan Chittister, the performing arts, travel, exploring art and creating mandalas (like the one below).



The United States Conference of Secular Institutes (USCSI) is a collaborative effort among all active US secular institutes to promote information about vocations to secular institutes. USCSI has an annual meeting, with one day reserved for a retreat or special presentation. Joel, Carol and Greg will be attending the annual meeting to represent Voluntas Dei, and we encourage everyone in the region to consider attending the retreat day to show USCSI that we are a strong and growing institute. The retreat is being held on Saturday October 29 from 9:30 am to 7 pm at the Immaculata Retreat Center (Willimantic, CT).

Interestingly, the retreat center is a ministry of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (Fr. Parent's religious order).

The theme of the USCSI Annual Retreat is: Secular Institutes and the "Universal Call to Holiness": The Ideal of the "Everyday Saint" - Living from Mass to Mass as a Way of Ceaseless Prayer. The presenter, Dr. Ann W. Astell, Professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame, has been a member of the Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary since 1975. Details and registration info below.



**COME CELEBRATE
THE PEARL OF
GREAT PRICE!**

Enjoy a Wonderful Spiritual Retreat
by Dr. Ann W. Astell

Secular Institutes and the
"Universal Call to Holiness":

The Ideal of the "Everyday Saint"
Living from Mass to Mass
as a Way of Ceaseless Prayer

Part 1: Lectio and Labor
Part 2: Consecration, Communion, and Community
Part 3: Open Discussion with Dr. Astell



Ann W. Astell has been a member of the Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary since 1975. Professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame, she is President of the international Colloquium on Violence and Religion (COV&R) and Vice President/ President Elect of the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality (SSCS). She is the author of many books and articles on topics relevant to historical Christian spirituality, including *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (1990) and *Eating Beauty: The Eucharist and the Spiritual Arts of the Middle Ages* (Cornell University Press, 2006). She is editor of *Lay Sanctity, Medieval and Modern: The Search for Models* (2000) and co-editor of *Joan of Arc and Spirituality* (2003). She will be available for book signing throughout the day.

Date: Saturday, October 29, 2011 from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Venue: Immaculata Retreat Center, Willimantic, CT, 860-423-8484 www.immaculataretreat.org
Cost: Retreat including dinner and lunch - \$45.
Registration: Payment is due and registration must be postmarked by October 1, 2011.

Please make checks payable to USCSI and send name/s, address/es, phone/s, and email/s with check to: Evelyn Loyola, 2975 Yorkshire Court, Merced, CA 95340



Hello to you from good old Germany!

Sebastian and I still hold onto the fondest memories we connect to the retreat and congress we were privileged to participate in out in Paoli last August. However, sticking with the present moment, we are just as well completely immersed in our daily routine as teachers and a country priest back in the outer banks of Germany. Come on and visit some day. - Thomas, the third member of our team, is also giving you his best regards. Please keep us in your thoughts and prayers until we meet again!

Sebastian, Thomas and Christian



Prayers...

Tim Sullivan's mother, Grace, passed away on October 3rd. This has been a long journey for Tim and his family. Tim was at his mother's bedside as she returned home to God.

Patricia Kremer, mother of Greg Kremer, died on October 1st. Greg said that she died a peaceful and beautiful death.

The mother of Abraham Chiu Bit-Shing went home to God on September 28th in Hong Kong.

Our prayers, love and support are with Tim, Greg, Abraham and their families.

Happy Birthday to Neil and Jaime!

On September 28th, 2011, Neil Flood and Jaime Graell celebrated Neil's 75th birthday and Jaime's 70th birthday. Our team got together with friends to celebrate these momentous occasions on September 30th with a Trini "Lime" and food and drink. It is really ironic that they are both born on the same day, 5 years apart, and now belong to the same team----Westmorings-by-the-Sea.



Registration Information for Annunciation Sector Gathering November 5 & 6, 2011

Meeting begins at 1:00 pm Saturday, November 5th, and ends Sunday, November 6th at 3:00 pm.

Place: Holy Family Retreat Center
303 Tunix Road
West Hartford, CT 06107-3119
860-521-0440
www.holyfamilyretreat.org

Accommodations at the retreat center:

Rooms w/meals for couples: \$200
Single rooms w/meals: \$120
Meals only@retreat center: \$ 75 (per person)

To make reservations:

Complete the registration form below
Send your check (payable to Ed Pirela) and registration form to:
Ed Pirela, 56 Westcott Rd., Hopedale, MA 01747-1838 by October 21, 2011

**Please direct any questions regarding the Annunciation Sector Gathering to
Ed Pirela at 508-473-5139 or edwinp310@yahoo.com**

Note: If you are in need of financial assistance, please contact Fr. Bill Konicki at
pebill72@yahoo.com

Please Print

Name: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Cell) _____

Email: _____

First time attending national meeting? Yes No

Please check current status:
 Observer Aspirancy Probation Vows/Commitment Stability

Name of Team: _____

Nearest Airport - 30 minutes from Holy Family Retreat Center:

Bradley International Airport (bradleyairport.com)

Airlines flying into Bradley International include:

United Airlines
Southwest Airlines
Air Canada
Frontier Airlines
Delta
US Airways
Continental
American Airlines & American Eagle
Jet Blue

Transportation from airport by taxi: \$40.00 to Retreat Center

Nearest hotel to Retreat Center:

Hartford Marriott Farmington
15 Farm Springs Road
Farmington, LCT 06032
860-678-1000



**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
Thank You!

Visit our website at voluntasdeiusa.org