

The Present Moment

USA District of the
Voluntas Dei Institute

HEART SPEAKS TO HEART

January 2019

Dear Voluntas Family,

The new logo for the Director's letter comes from the coat of arms of John Henry Newman. I have chosen "Heart Speaks to Heart" since it clearly says who we are as a community built on strong relationships in which we journey together from the head to the heart.

The new title for our newsletter, "The Present Moment" calls out an essential part of our spirituality. Living in the present moment in today's world is becoming more challenging than ever before. Each time we receive the newsletter, we will be reminded to choose again every day to live in the present moment.

The new council has already had several meetings and we are bonding very nicely. Thank you to the Assembly for electing a wonderful council and thank you to each council member for saying "Yes!". I am very fortunate once again to have a beautiful team to work with as we together serve our USA District.

Finally, you will be hearing more in the next few months about the plan for implementing the three direction statements that came from the 2018 Assembly (Commit, Reinvigorate, Grow). Each council member will be leading one of these direction statements with concrete action plans based on our table discussions in Paoli and further input from our members and the council.

We move forward with hope and joy into the new year! Let us continue to pray daily for each other and to meet each other in the Eucharist.

Fraternally,
Tony

**Fr. Tony's letter translated by
Hector and Ernestina Pina**

Querida Familia del Voluntas Dei,

El nuevo logo utilizado en la carta del director está inspirado en el escudo de armas de John Henry Newman. Lo he elegido "De Corazón a Corazón" porque expresa claramente lo que somos: una comunidad que camina unida por fuertes lazos, de la cabeza al corazón.

El nuevo título para nuestro boletín informativo, "El Momento Presente" hace un llamado a una parte esencial de nuestra espiritualidad. Vivir en el mundo de hoy representa, más que nunca, un verdadero reto. Cada vez que recibamos el boletín, nos recordará que debemos elegir vivir el momento presente cada día.

El nuevo Consejo se ha reunido en varias oportunidades y nos estamos integrando muy bien. Agradezco a la Asamblea por elegir a un Consejo tan maravilloso y a cada miembro del Consejo por decir "Sí". Una vez más he sido afortunado al contar con un equipo tan hermoso para trabajar al servicio del Distrito de los E.U.U.

Finalmente, en los próximos meses tendrán más información sobre el plan para llevar a cabo las tres líneas de acción que fueron establecidas la Asamblea del 2018: Compromiso, Revigorización y Crecimiento. Cada miembro del Consejo liderará una de estas áreas estratégicas con un plan concreto de acciones considerando lo aportado a través de las mesas de discusión de Paoli y sugerencias de nuestros miembros y el Consejo.

¡Seguimos adelante con esperanza y alegría en este nuevo año! Sigamos rezando diariamente por cada uno de nosotros y encontrándonos en la eucaristía.

Fraternalmente,
Tony

SAVE THE DATES!

March 2019 Plenary Gatherings

March 1-2, 2019
Daylesford Abbey, Paoli, PA

Presenter: Fr. Dennis Berry, MSST,
Director of St. Joseph Shrine,
Stirling, NJ

Theme: Rejoice and Be Glad - Living
the Gospel in Everyday Life

Coordinators: Paul and Eileen Lang
langsivdei@gmail.com

March 15-16, 2019
Jesuit Spiritual Retreat Center, Milford, OH

Theme: Experiencing Mental Prayer-
Contemplation

Coordinator: Steve Orth
sorth@cinci.rr.com
(513) 919-1772

Annual Retreat

July 30 (begins w/lunch) -
August 1, 2019 (ends 11:00 am)
Daylesford Abbey, Paoli, PA

Details TBA

Annual Congress

August 1 (begins w/lunch) -
August 3, 2019 (ends w/brunch)
Daylesford Abbey, Paoli, PA

Details TBA

The District Council has met four times since the Assembly election: August 2, September 4, October 3, and January 2. The next meeting is scheduled for February 28/March 1. The following is a summary of the highlights of the council meetings:

August 2, 2018

Fr. Dunstan met with the council to review with us expectations and procedures from the central administration. While noting the many good things going on in the District, he asked us to pay more attention to formation and knowledge of the Constitutions. He spoke of the needs of the missions and reflections on the Ethiopian sector of the USA. The Council selected the dates for their meetings for 2018-2019

September 4, 2018

The Council reflected on the 2018 Assembly and Congress. We reviewed the evaluations from the Congress and will work to implement changes about food, schedule and liturgy. We began a discussion of the three pillars discussed at the Assembly (Commit, Reinvigorate and Grow) and began a discussion of concrete actions proposed at the Assembly and the table discussions at the Congress. A strategic plan will be presented to the entire membership upon further reflection and discussion.

Speakers for the upcoming retreats, Gatherings and Congress were finalized:

- Fr. Dennis Berry, 2019 March Gathering, Paoli
- Fr Vinny Fortuanto, 2019 August Retreat, Paoli
- Dr. Patricia Kelly, 2019 August Congress, Paoli

The Council also reviewed the plans for the November Recollection Days.

The District Ministries were finalized. All in current ministries remain the same with the following changes:

Frank Berna, District Formation Director and Seminary Formation Coordinator

Michael Cronin, Vocation Director

Steve Orth, will replace the Lang's on the Safe Environment Committee

Jorge Bueno will be finance coordinator in 2019 (Paul Lang will work toward a smooth transition)

Hector and Ernestina Pina, Hospitality Committee

Lenny Delgado will join the Liturgy Team with John Anderson and Emmanuel Bologna

Julian Gonzalez will serve as secretary to the District maintaining our electronic files

Bill and Betty Reuter and Lenny Delgado: Bethany Ministry (outreach to our elderly and infirm members)

The complete list of ministries will be presented to the entire membership at the August Congress.

Discussion began on a new name for our District newsletter. No decision was made. Hector and Ernestina Pina will translate the director's letter into Spanish for each issue.

Council Notes (cont'd...)

October 31, 2018

Various formation issues were discussed. The formation schedule was set for the year:

December, 2018: Team discussions with those making next steps

January, 2019: Discernment with those seeking next steps

February 1, 2019: All paper work to be submitted to the formation director and meetings take place with the formation team

March, 2019: The recommendations of the formation team are presented to the District Council for vote.

April, 2019: Letter sent to those who applied for next steps

August, 2019: Liturgical celebration for those moving to next steps

Michael Cronin is creating a tracking document for people who are discerning a vocation to Voluntas.

District projects were discussed:

Greg Kremer, Michel Denk, and Christopher Lauber will work on redesigning the website.

The renaming and branding of the newsletter discussion continued.

The Lang's are in communication with Fr. Dennis Berry for the March Plenary Gathering in Paoli and Steve Orth is coordinating a March Gathering in Ohio for the week following the Paoli Gathering.

Dallas Charter compliance was discussed. Both the USA District and the Central Administration are in conversation as to next steps.

Benjamin Chinnappan has requested permission to move to the Veteran's Administration in San Diego. The Council voted to approve the move and noted that since he is not in stability, he also needs the permission of his bishop in India.

The strategic planning process continues and will be presented to the membership once completed. The first and rough draft plan is as follows:

COMMIT: PAUL LANG AND FRANK BERNA

Presentations on the Constitutions

Review and Restructuring of formation program

Visits to teams and suggestions for strengthening teams

A district project for each individual team

A format for an annual review of the District Council and teams

Expand locations of November Recollection Days and March Gatherings

REINVIGORATE: MICHAEL CRONIN AND EILEEN LANG

Program for identifying charisms

Leadership development and preparation for the 2022 District Assembly

The charism of Fr. Parent: Focus on our Voluntas identity (Workshops, Connection with Canadian District)

Identify teams that are struggling and need additional support

GROW: LEO PATALINGHUG

New promotional ideas and materials

New technologies and social media

New ways of messaging

Latino and Asian outreach

January 2, 2019

The formation program and dates for 2019 were finalized. The issue of psychological evaluations was discussed and noted that Dr. Patricia Kelly had suggested the possibility of a structured interview.

Michael Cronin reported on inquiries. There have been 5 since our last meeting. He is working on a standard interview and also a formal way of referring people to local teams.

Updates on projects:

Liturgy: Tony had a telephone conference call with John Anderson, Lenny Delgado, and Emmanuel Bologna to discuss liturgical changes within our gatherings. The team is formulating different types of prayer experiences and enhancements to the spiritual environment. They will begin these changes at the March Gathering, 2019.

Website: Greg Kremer, Michael Denk and Christopher Lauber are working on creating a new look for the voluntasdeiusa.org website. Christopher is working with Hector and Ernestina in creating a Latino section for our website.

Newsletter: Conversations with Eileen and Marty about rebranding the District's newsletter.

The New banner will be THE PRESENT MOMENT, with a byline: USA District of the Voluntas Dei Institute.

March 2019 Gathering: The Langs are working with Fr. Dennis Berry, the presenter. The theme will be "Rejoice and Be Glad, Living the Gospel in Our Everyday Life."

District member status: Frank Berna is working with Julian Gonzalez to review the membership to identify those individuals who have met or exceeded the prescribed time intervals for formation steps. Once the list has been verified, individual conversations need to take place with these members in light of the Constitutions Articles 91, 84, 125.

Newly Elected Council Members Reflect. . .



In 2010 I made my first visit as an observer at the March meeting in New Jersey. I knew immediately that IVD was a special group of people with a unique vocation. I was particularly happy about working and praying so closely with married couples, single men and women, as well as clergy from around the country and around the world.

To be elected to a leadership position in 2018 was a surprise. Tony's call to be "available" for service wasn't just a bunch of pious words. He was serious! I hope, trust, and pray that I can serve the Institute to the best of my ability and with God's grace.

In 2020, I will celebrate my 25th anniversary of priestly ordination. Looking back, I'm happy to have had the chance to serve as a parish priest, a Newman Center chaplain, a member of diocesan leadership, and a high school religion teacher. Currently a pastor of three relatively small parishes, I am now spreading my wings a bit more as a professed member of IVD.

The Church we love is moving through a difficult time. I know that our Institute will do what it can to help the Church along to a bright new day of healing filled with faith, hope, and love. God will not disappoint.

Michael



When we showed up for the Assembly and Congress our minds were focused on the logistics of the event as we also prepared for the spiritual and openness of those days. Two quick thoughts came to mind during the Assembly. First, how humbling it felt as our names were listed more and more during the balloting. Secondly, how it also was such a family event as the setting enabled all of us to open up and discuss the direction that Voluntas Dei USA should take in the upcoming years.

Our feelings on being elected were realized during our first Council meeting - "OH BOY" was all that we could say to one another. The review of the Strategic Plan, Directional Statements of Commit, Reinvalidate, and Grow, along with specific tasks the Council would like to accomplish during the next four years initially seemed overwhelming. But as we have met a couple of times now, we seem to have a committed Council focused on the input received from the membership and concrete ways to respond and accomplish those direction statements and the tasks associated with them; To be of service to our Institute.



We look forward to the next four years with hope and joy for our community. It has become truly a family for us, and we feel at home (family home) with Voluntas. Whether or not we were elected, the warmth, acceptance, and love of our community is what humbles us and connects us to Voluntas!

Thanks for the love and confidence you have in us to be of service to you!

Paul & Eileen



I heard and read about Voluntas Dei perhaps twelve or so years ago. My engagement was personal curiosity and wanting to expand my knowledge of contemporary movements in the church. Subsequently I wrote a paper on a number of lay movements in the years leading up to Vatican II.

While happy with many things about my life as a Franciscan Friar some things were missing. I felt a kind of restlessness and a need to be open. I returned to a look at Voluntas Dei. I gave some consideration to joining a diocese but also wanted to respect a commitment I made to the vowed life. My early encounters with team life drew me in. Voluntas really offers an inclusive experience of church; fellow pilgrims journeying together - lay and cleric; women and men; single and married.

My election to the Council and as Assistant Director, particularly the latter, came as a complete surprise. Overwhelming, at first, would best describe the experience. Having served in administration as a friar I knew I had some of the skills. And, Fr. Dunstan's call for all of us to be open, said it was possible. I hope to "serve without complaining" and actually do my best.

Over the next four years I hope to support our continued growth as an Institute. Here I want to encourage and foster the establishment of new teams. I want to support the directions proposed in our gatherings. I hope we find some ways to support teams and individuals who live "at a distance" to strengthen our bonds with each other as a district.

Finally, the spirituality and lived community of Voluntas Dei has enriched my own life with God and service to the Church. I am grateful for an engagement that began with curiosity and the wonderful people who are the reality of the Institute.

Peace,
Frank

As one of the delegates asked to count the recent votes for the various Council positions this past August 2018, it was a bit unnerving to see my name show up a few times on the ballot.

At some point during the counting, Dunstan kept patting me on my shoulder and telling me to get ready to say "yes."

That "yes" to God is why I felt humbled and honored to be elected as a council member. We all know we aren't worthy to be in a positions to help guide the Institute's direction for the next few years. We all have excuses not to get more involved. My gosh, we're all way too busy to take on extra tasks - especially with something as serious and sensitive as a council member. But, this community, the members, the spirituality and the mission motivates me to say "yes" with heartfelt excitement!

While the responsibility is a bit intimidating, I sense the entire USA district is all about encouragement and support. So in a way, I'm not only at peace, I'm excited to see how I can be of service to our Institute.

Whether or not I was elected, I can say the greatest honor that I've experienced so far is feeling at home.

Thanks for the welcome, the confidence, your prayers and sharing your honest conversation in how our council can be of service to you and our Institute.



Leo

Mariandale Retreat House Ossining, NY



About 15 of our IV Dei community gathered on the 1st Saturday in November at the Mariandale Retreat House in Ossining, NY for a retreat presented by Sr. Peggy Murphy with the theme "Do not lose heart, you were made for these times". Sr. Peggy, a life-long teacher came prepared with many handouts and materials which served not only during the retreat but afterwards for further reflection. With many stories from her rich Irish and spiritual background, Sr. Peggy wove a wonderful, thought-filled presentation on how God has called us to live and be in this present moment with all its

uncertainties and challenges and to have hope and courage as we face the future. The day began with rain but the weather mirrored what was taking place inside our hearts as we were filled with hope and laughter and the sun radiantly shone through in the afternoon. All were greatly appreciative of Sr. Peggy and her wisdom.

Rebecca Ford had invited anyone who was able to her home afterwards for a light dinner. MJ and Tom were able to go and enjoyed the fellowship and the opportunity to get to know her family a bit better.



Sacred Heart Parish Center Hopedale, MA

Father Richard Roos, S.J., of the Faber Jesuit Community and a spiritual director and retreat leader at the Champion Center invited us to do some spiritual "HOUSECLEANING FOR THE HEART!" Because we live crowded lives and accumulate a lot of "stuff" that can get in the way of discerning God's call to love in word and deed, our challenge was to empty our overflowing hearts in order to make room for the abundance of God's gifts and love.

It was a warm and spirit-filled day consisting of well-prepared presentations followed by silent meditation, small group sharing, and whole group discussions. We deepened our relationship with God and each other by spending quality, reflective time alone and in community. During one of our silent meditations, we were given the opportunity to focus on two images: Jesus and his Sacred Heart and the Pieta. They were powerful images in our private reflection and prompted meaningful discussion within our groups.

"The time together with our team and a few interested locals provided excellent reflection time as prescribed by our facilitator. The discussions concerning recent events and further reports of poor church leadership from August via Pennsylvania were embraced and openly acknowledged, which the setting and theme of the day allowed. The personal sharing concerning the Heart of the Sacred Heart was, in and of itself, memorable still. Our team put together a well-planned day for all who attended the event proved meaningful."

St. Leo the Great Church Baltimore, MD

The newly formed "Chesapeake Bay Team" gathered 15 people for a Sector Day in Baltimore, MD on Friday November 2, 2018. It was held at St. Leo's Church in Downtown Little Italy. Despite the rain, it was a blessed time by the people who attended, some coming from different teams. Leo's non-profit, The Table Foundation, provided the meal prepared and served by his interns, ex-convicts, who receive a formation process to help them reintegrate back into society after incarceration. The dinner was a great way to satisfy the stomach, but the presentations filled needs of hungry hearts and souls.

Fr. Tony Ciorra, USA Director, presented "Gratitude: Another Way of Seeing," a perfect topic for a busy group of people as they prepared for the National Thanksgiving Holiday.

A few members commented about how much the time together and Tony's words helped put the busyness of their lives in perspective. It deepened their appreciation for the Voluntas Dei Institute. A few remarked that while there were more people who came last year to this team's first Sector Day in 2017, this year's was actually a more meaningful time because having just Voluntas Dei members attend (and a few other guests), it helped

everyone to just go deeper into what it means to be part of this secular institute, rather than trying to explain what it is - as had been done the year before. It was a real confirmation that in this case, less is more!

At the Chesapeake Bay team meeting in December, members continued to share and reflect how our Sector Day, continued to impact their spiritual and practical living out of Voluntas Dei. They were definitely grateful! And, as the title of the Sector Day explained, it helped everyone to see life, faith, and even our struggles in another way, a more blessed way!



Remembrances

Robert Boris
Roy Brown
Arthur Candreva
Julie Devine
Thomas Furlong
Malachy Higgiston
Augustine Katady
Raymond Lefebvre
Frank Masiello
Ruth and Bill McClellan
George Perreira
Eleanor & Bob Suroweic

Happy Birthday!

February

- 05 - Sebastian Springbob
- 07 - Marty Theys
- 11 - Ruth Surak
- 16 - Tim Sullivan
- 20 - Kay McGlynn
- 29 - John Campoli

April

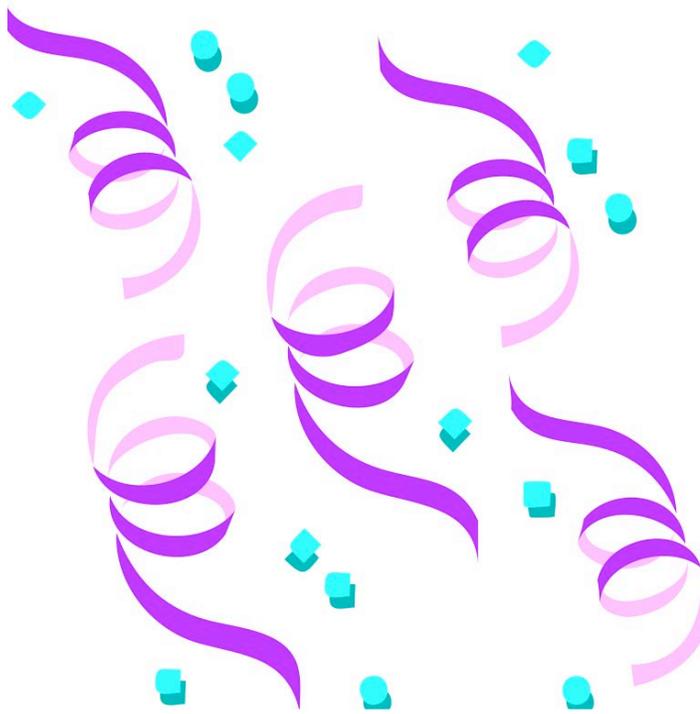
- 01 - Paul Tolve
- 03 - Steve Rossi
- 05 - Tom Devine
- 10 - Angelus Croce
- 10 - John Szamreta
- 20 - Mary Mosquera
- 24 - Carol Livingston

March

- 02 - Paul Lang
- 10 - Ed Pirela
- 15 - Anthony Bruno
- 23 - Jim Musumeci
- 28 - Dom Basile
- 30 - Patricia Ruane

May

- 01 - Frank Berna
- 16 - Ernie Chaplin
- 16 - Leo Patalinghug
- 23 - Skip Buckman
- 26 - Ron Galt
- 27 - James Burns
- 28 - Greg Kremer, Rory Murphy
- 31 - John Schotka, Benjamin Chinnappan



Happy Anniversary

Tim Sullivan - February 3, 1990
Daniel LeBlanc - February 16, 1978

Angelus Croce - March 1, 1958
Eileen & Marty Theys - March 8, 1975
Damian Colicchio - March 24, 1962
Jean Pierre Jaccius - March 25, 2001

John Campoli - April 4, 1970
Patricia & Daniel Buckley - April 23, 1988

Jim Musumeci - May 1, 1976
Lenin Delgado - May 11, 1991
Mariann & Steve Rossi - May 15, 1971
Bill McKeone - May 20, 1972
George Hazler - May 20, 1967
Joel Livingston - May 21, 1994
Frank Berna - a May 24, 1980
Jamie Bono - May 24, 2003
Julian Gonzalez - May 25, 1984
Benjamin Chinnappan - May 26, 1988
Anthony Ciorra - May 26, 1973
Anthony DiPalma - May 26, 1973
James Burns - May 29, 2003
Timothy Corbley - May 29, 1992
Michael Seis - May 29, 1993

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF VOWED/COMMITTED MEMBERS

Our statutes require that by virtue of our vow of poverty that all vowed members contribute 7-10% and committed members 2% of their net income.

Aspirants and Probationers participate in the financial support of the Institute according to their means.

All contributions should be sent directly to the Chair of the District Finance Committee: Mr. Paul Lang, 26 Settler Court, Tinton Falls, NJ 07753.

If any member is unable to contribute according to our statutes, they should communicate this directly to Tony Ciorra. He is the only one that will receive this information and it will be received with compassion and kept strictly confidential.

A weekly homily by John O'Neill reflecting on the Sunday readings and applying them to our Voluntas Dei spirituality can be found on the international website at www.voluntasdei.org

Visit our website at voluntasdeiusa.org

Voluntas Dei USA District Council

Fr. Anthony Ciorra
District Director

Fr. Francis Berna
Assistant Director

Fr. Michael Cronin
Councilor

Fr. Leo Patalinghug
Councilor

Eileen and Paul Lang
Councilors

In order to keep our address list up-to-date, please send any changes to Julian Gonzalez at: gonzalezjulian52@gmail.com