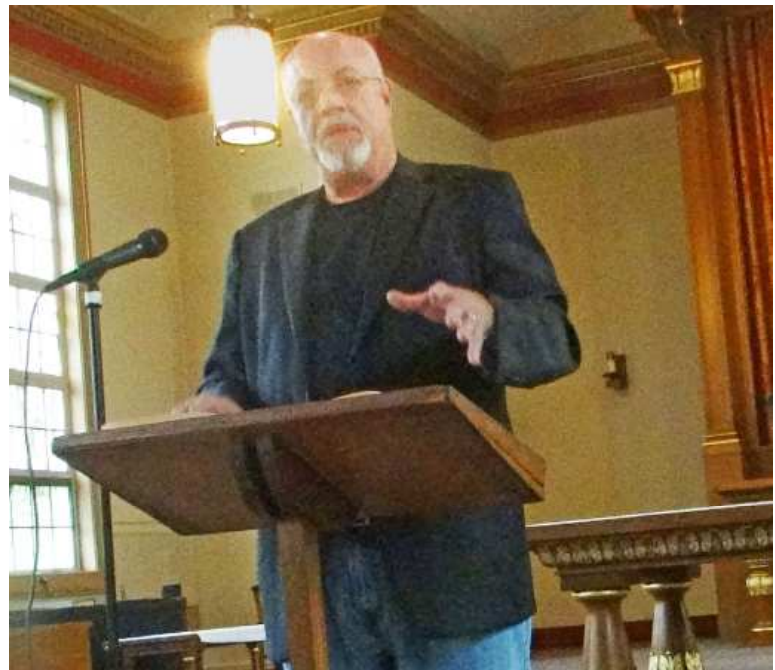


# Corps Connector

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& Northern  
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Dennis Lucey

Joseph Raia

Richard Urban

Good morning, dear Jesus. “And he noticed a poor widow drop in two copper coins and he commented, “I assure you that this poor widow has just put in more than all of them for they have all put in what they can easily spare, but she in her poverty has given away her whole living.” Luke 21:1

Lord, do you praise or scold this poor woman? Is this a noble act of giving all she has? Or is she foolish? Is she blindly following the urging of the temple leadership who in their hunger for wealth to beautify the temple, make her feel compelled to do such a rash act? Or is she acting out of a deep religious conviction that it is “nobler to give than receive”? Or are you both praising and condemning her at the same time?

Lord, you have just traveled up here to Jerusalem from Galilee; just as you arrived, you entered the temple where you were shocked by what you saw. In a rage you upset the tables of the money changers scattering their coins in every direction and you routed the merchants selling birds and livestock. Are you recovering your composure as you enter the temple treasury and see all the rich throwing money into the treasury? Then you “notice a poor widow,” you can tell by her torn and ragged clothes, by the starved, haunted look in the eyes of her child at her side how destitute she is. You see the flash of the two copper pieces in her hand as she drops ‘all she has to live on’ into the treasury.

A question, Lord: What will she do now? Where shall she go? The story in 1 Kings, 17 may supply part of an answer. Elijah, in his flight from Queen Jezebel also encounters a widow. She is gathering sticks to cook a final meal for herself and her starving son—a last handful of flour, a last few drops of oil, the last remnants of her food supply—before they lay down on their beds to die of starvation. Will this be your widow’s fate? Is she not right now on her way to prepare a final meal for her and her son?

Lord, in our work as Ignatian Volunteers, we often can only stand by stunned and mute when we witness or hear reports of the grinding poverty and homelessness, such as this poor widow suffers. We feel a burning desire to do something about their plight, but we can’t. We often feel as helpless as this poor widow, our hands are tied, unable to do anything but watch.

We feel we are of about as much value as the poor widow’s wretched copper coins to lighten the load of such wretchedness. Yet, Lord, you speak to us in our misery that it is *you* who bring help and hope, That it is *our* contribution to bear witness to their tragedy, to look into the face of your people, to offer comfort wherever we are able; to listen, really listen, to their plight.

I originally saw this story as a plain, straight-forward story of a poor widow throwing her last few pennies—all she has to live on—into the treasury. But then I thought, what if you, Lord, intended this as a metaphor? A metaphor presents one thing as something else. If this is a metaphor, are you telling me that the widow is me? If she is, are you asking me to give away all I have to live on.?

If I go even deeper into the metaphor, deeper than you asking me to give away all I have materially to live on, what else do I have to give? My life? While I ponder this question I wonder if it does not apply equally to all of us? Is the widow also you, and is my question also yours to ponder?

—From my journal, November 27, 2017.

*Dick Bowling*

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## Corps Connector

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Photos by Dick Bowling unless otherwise noted



# A feeble attempt at writing an article about the retreat talks

By Ann Johnson



Over 60 retreatants from Baltimore, DC/MD and VA descended upon Loyola Retreat House for our fall retreat Sept. 18-20. We were privileged to have a team from St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Church, Woodstock MD to present four talks centered on “The Role of the Laity in the Contemporary Church (through the perspective of the Spiritual Exercises)”.

Bob McAllister spoke on “The Principle and Foundation”. We all have a vocation and in living it, we find God. We praise God in all we do, especially through our IVC ministry. He emphasized having a loving relationship with God. We pray constantly in that “our deeds are a prayer”.

St. Ignatius preached “an attitude of indifference” towards our own ambitions and independence. But at the same time we pray to find exactly what we are called to be and to do. As Father Pedro Arrupe said, “What you love will influence everything you do.”

Luke Browning challenged us to hear “The Call of the King”. He spoke of John Kennedy’s inspiration to many to join the Peace Corps despite the difficult challenges. But we are to follow Christ by giving ourselves totally over to him.

However we hold back, claim we’re not ready to give 100%. Luke cited the prophets as some who said yes but...”I’m too young” or “unclear” or “not the right one”. He gave us some special quotes to ponder.

“Time to leave our comfort zone.” “Our life is mission; mission is our life.” “We are loved sinners.” He concluded with Teilhard de Chardin’s thought: “Trust in the slow work of God.”



Helen Liu spoke about discernment. We need to find a post-retirement path that will bring us to a sense of ease and familiarity with God, a feeling of consolation. Desolation, on the other hand, can leave us feeling depressed and separated.

There are always serious questions and decisions to be considered. We may be in a relationship that needs attention. There may be a health concern that must be addressed. In these moments we must pay attention to our feelings.

“Contemplatio” was Dee Papania’s topic. She began by reminding us how passionately God loves us with an unfathomable love. We are created to share his love. We learn this through heart knowledge, not head knowledge.

Our life in IVC is the living out of our baptism. Our love for God is being shown in deeds and in our prayer communication.

Dee led the group in a contemplative exercise. As we sat quietly with steady breathing, we strove to be fully present and to feel God’s presence. We felt God looking at us and smiling!





## October Spiritual Reflectors' Gathering

### **“Asking the Contemplative Question is an Art, Not a Science”, Says NoVA-IVC Spiritual Reflectors.**

On Friday, October 17, ten IVC spiritual reflectors in northern Virginia gathered at Mt. Tabor Retreat Center, Vienna, VA from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM for ongoing education, reflection and Eucharist. The annual meeting differed significantly from previous gatherings. First, Washington DC and Maryland spiritual reflectors didn't attend, having scheduled their own meeting. Second, the meeting theme, *“The Art of Asking the Contemplative Question”*, had never been fully explored before. Nor had the entire group ever participated together in a unique role-play exercise of the one-on-one spiritual reflection session, with the masterful Bill Plunkett playing the elusive IVC volunteer.

Jeanie Sweeney led off the meeting, sharing the insights, wisdom and expertise of her 25 years as a pastoral counselor /spiritual director. She first identified the six assumptions on which all IVC interview questions follow:

- ◆ We are IVC Reflectors because of a call. (God calls each of us.)
- ◆ God uses us in so far as we are given over. (*Suscipe*: “Take and receive, Lord...”)
- ◆ God is communicating with our souls. ( Speaking deeply to each of us)
- ◆ We—the reflector and reflectee—are EQUALS (“when two or three are gathered in my name.”)
- ◆ The Spirit is ever new, ever fresh. Always in the Now. (Always with us)
- ◆ We do Christ's work WITH HIM. We are God's co-creators.

Jeanie shared a number of insightful questions/statements to help the reflectees ponder ... and keep the focus on them and their interior experience. For example, *“Where do you notice the presence of God in your IVC experience?”* *“What do you think might be God's invitation to you?”* *“Have you ever asked God?”* “ I especially love this last question. It is one I've seldom asked. Yet, it's powerful and to the point. After all, God is in charge, not us. We are simply making room for God to act.

Jean Noon then led the group in the Ignatian prayer of the imagination with a reflection afterward.

After lunch, Bill Plunkett took over. He was so convincing, in his role as reflectee, in relating the stories of the three middle-school students—two boys (Hispanic and Afro- American) and one girl he was 'tutoring' that one reflector thought he was actually their tutor. Bill later confessed to not following a set script and the importance of being flexible. He thought the directors asked excellent questions, and it was helpful to have all the directors participate rather than one director, as so often happens in a role-play exercise. Each person has his/her own approach, experience and insights. By hearing from many, we learn more from each other.

The IVC gathering ended in the chapel with Mass and the Eucharist. By then, we had become a close knit family of Ignatian volunteers, filled with joy, deeper insight and thanksgiving. Isn't this what makes the IVC volunteer experience so special?



By Marty Walsh

Save  
the  
Date:

January

18,

2018

January Day  
of Reflection

Benedictine  
Monastery,

Bristow, VA

Theme:

Spiritual

Reflection: the  
meaning and  
gift of sacred  
conversations



**Our day of Reflection this January, will take a closer look at one aspect of** our Ignatian journey that many find deeply fulfilling, a practice that brings their relationship with Jesus closer and more intimate. And yet, for others its very prospect induces ennui, skepticism and for some, terror.

Why these two polar reactions to a spiritual practice that is prescribed for all Ignatian volunteers and for which much effort is made to see that it is available to each of us?

**Spiritual reflection! What it is!** It's sitting for a while in the presence of another human being, opening our minds and hearts to where the Lord is leading us. In its purest, seemingly simplest form, it is an attempt to unearth answers to deeply spiritual or religious questions that Jesus proposes in the Gospels. Such as "What are you looking for?" (John 1:35 – 38) "Who do you say I am?" (Matthew 16:13-20) Or "How long have I been with you, and you still do not know me?" (John 14:8 – 10)

The idea for approaching spiritual reflection from the perspective of answering questions Jesus proposes stems from Michael J Buckley's book, *What Do You Seek? The Questions of Jesus of Challenge and Promise*. When Jesus asks Martha, "Did I not tell you that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God?" He invites both the spiritual reflector and the reflectee to strive for deeper faith. When Jesus asks Andrew and his companion in the first chapter of John, "What are you looking for?" He invites them to consider what they want of him.

To the Ignatian Volunteer, spiritual reflection invites us to ponder when God's face is visible in the people I serve? To make our service to others fulfill its purpose of bringing us in fuller union with God and not just an altruistic exercise.

Our spiritual reflectors came together in October to meditate on these questions, and the fruit of their collective reflection serves as the basis for our Day of Reflection on the meaning and gift of entering into sacred conversations.

**Come!** Come see and explore the riches of spiritual reflection whether you find it deeply rewarding, something you're afraid of, or just something you puzzle over.



# Pictures Fall 2017 Retreat



# *Love After Love*

The time will come  
when, with elation,  
you will greet yourself arriving  
at your own door, in your own mirror,  
and each will smile at the other's welcome,

and say, sit here. Eat  
You will love again the stranger that was yourself.  
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart  
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you

all your life, whom you ignored  
for another, who knows you by heart.  
Take down the love-letters from the bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate notes,  
peel your own image from the mirror.  
Sit. Feast on your life.

—Derek Walcott, *Sea Grapes*



# Navigating Regional Growth

by Joe Raia, Regional Council Chairperson



DC/Metro Md and Northern VA Regional Council in Action

Over the past six months, we – our joint Regional Council (charged with supporting and advising both DC/ Metro MD and Northern Virginia regions) and our two amazing Regional Directors Joanie and Mike, along with the IVC National's Director of Programs Tom Ulrich – together have been actively discerning the best way to operate and structure our two regions to advance our mission. Driving

this effort is the growth of our regions; the rapidly changing needs in our communities; and the desire for 'magis' – to constantly reflect God's greater glory.

Our discernment has included: individual reflection, full-day retreat meeting in June, (with follow-up by a task force of Mike, Joanie, Tom and me); and ongoing discussion with the full joint Council. This process of shared introspection, contemplation, decision making and action, a modified version of the Ignatian Communal Discernment process, embodies the Ignatian focus on adapting and innovating to meet God's calling and community needs.

So, what does this mean for all of us? While the two regions will continue to collaborate, we have shifted to more independence in several activities to meet better the unique needs of our regions. Areas of greater independence include:

- Orientation of new volunteers – to allow us to schedule Orientations as needed and to introduce new volunteers to specific elements of each region;
- The fall gathering of Spiritual Reflectors – to allow for more specific regional planning;
- The January Day of Reflection – as our numbers continue to grow, we have fewer facilities to accommodate us. We also found that coordinating these Days between the two regions had often led to greater workloads and longer commutes for volunteers;
- Member Directories – each region will produce its own directory using a shared format;
- City-Group Program Guides – Northern Virginia will continue to create the Guides; DC/Metro MD will use these or create their own Guides as needed.

We will continue to share some key activities for at least the foreseeable future:

Joint Fall and Spring Retreats

Joint Evening of Gratitude

Joint Regional Council – with an addition meeting for region-specific issues to be addressed with Council members from that region.

Collaboration regarding Holy Trinity – Mike and Joanie will continue to collaborate with the wonderful (and cross-regional) parish community

Moving ahead, we continue the dialogue around fundraising processes and organizational structure options. The smaller 'task force' will continue to discuss these key issues and explore with the fuller Council to reach well-formed decisions over the next few months. We engage in all this work seeking the Greater Glory of God! Please keep us in your prayers as we continue this process.



Joe conquering Half Dome at Yosemite  
His fundraising effort raised almost \$1500  
for our regions





## Best Practices



On October 26, Regional Director Joanie Coolidge invited four experienced class-room Ignatian Volunteer tutors to discuss what a new tutor could expect from their tutoring experience. Attending this meeting were Austin Acocella, opening a new tutoring site at Holy Family School, Dale City; Maureen McMahon returning tutor at Corpus Christi School; Maura Sleevi tutor at the Washington School for Girls and Susan Kral a former Fairfax County elementary school teacher who tutored this summer at the Kasisi Children's Home in Zambia, Africa.

At this meeting participants discussed issues such as how to develop a strong relationship with the partner-agency school; how to communicate with the teacher and the principal; how to find information about students' backgrounds; how the needs, progress and difficulties of individual students can best be communicated between teacher and tutor and other vital insights that will serve a new volunteer as they begin their new assignment.

The rich array of stories, struggles and break-through moments in reaching students and assisting them in their learning journeys led to a working list of best practices that should aid our current and future Ignatian Volunteer tutors. The tutors shared inspiring moments of when their young students became excited about reading, a math problem, or science experiment; it's essentially what keeps these tutors going! That, and the simple smiles, hugs and thank-yous that come at unexpected moments.

Joanie hopes to conduct similar get-togethers with experienced volunteers in homelessness, prison ministry, advocacy and other fields. The outcomes of these gatherings would become available to new volunteers to learn from other seasoned volunteers firsthand what they can expect to experience at their new service site. Sending volunteers with the depth of background that an IVC volunteer normally brings to their work site, combined with this new understanding of what it is like to serve their chosen community, will heighten our effectiveness as volunteers.

# Upcoming Events

## NOVA JANUARY DAY OF REFLECTION

Thursday, Jan. 18, 2018  
Benedictine Monastery  
Bristow, VA  
“Spiritual Reflection”

## JUNE RETREAT

JUNE 11-13, 2018  
Facilitator TBA  
Loyola Retreat House  
Faulkner Maryland

## FALL RETREAT

SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2018  
Facilitator TBA  
Loyola Retreat House  
Faulkner Maryland

## Northern Virginia Region 2017-18 City Groups

Good Shephard 8710 Mount Vernon Highway Alexandria, Virginia 1st Wednesday 10:00 am-12:00 noon	Our Lady of Good Council 8601 Wolftrap Road Vienna, VA 22182 1st Thursday 10:00 am-12:00 noon	Our Lady Queen of Peace 2700 19th Street South Arlington, VA 22204 2nd Tuesday 10:00 am-12:00 noon	The Broadway 502 W. Broad St. Falls Church, VA 22046 2nd Wednesday 10:00 am-12:00 noon
2/7/18	2/1/18	2/13/18	2/14/18
3/7/18	3/1/18	3/13/18	3/14/18
4/4/18	4/5/18	4/10/18	4/11/18
5/2/18	5/3/18	5/8/18	5/9/18

Saint Ann's 5300 North 10th St Arlington, VA 22205 2nd Thursday 10:00 am-12:00 noon	St. John Neumann's 11900 Lawyers Road Reston VA 20191 3rd Tuesday 10:00 am-12:00 noon	St. Joseph's 711 Columbus St. Alexandria, VA 22314 3rd Wednesday 10:00 am-12:00 noon
2/15/18	2/20/18	2/21/18
3/15/18	3/20/18	3/21/18
4/12/18	4/17/18	4/18/18
5/10/18	5/15/18	5/16/18

See Page 11 for the DC/Metro Md City Group Dates



## AN EXCITING NEW COLLABORATION OF IVC WITH JESUIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ALUMNI

The IVC National Office has selected 4 Jesuit institutions: Holy Cross College, Worcester, MA; Loyola University of Maryland, Baltimore, MD; Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI; and the University of Scranton, Scranton, PA, to begin a year-long pilot project to recruit their alumni to serve as IVC volunteers throughout the United States. The **Jesuit Colleges/Universities Partnership Initiative (JCUPI)** is a direct response to the U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities’ desire to pinpoint activities that help their alumni stay rooted in their early college Ignatian experience: “service, leadership and caring for the whole person.” This partnership will connect the IVC service program to the structure and resources of the colleges and universities to help strengthen their relationships with their largest wave of alumni – those reaching retirement – by offering them an opportunity for service through IVC, a Jesuit-initiated service organization. Pending the results of the pilot, IVC would launch a broader partnership effort nationwide in full collaboration with US-based Jesuit colleges and universities. Early efforts in the pilot schools are showing inspiring results. One mailing yielded almost 50 inquiries alone! We are thrilled that alumni recruited from Loyola Maryland, Holy Cross and Marquette are among the newly placed Ignatian Volunteers in this year’s service corps!

### DC/Metro MD Region 2017-18 City Groups

<b>The Albrecht's</b> 5814 Ogden Court, Bethesda, MD 20816 1st. Thurs.—9:30–11:30	<b>Wash. Jesuit Academy</b> 900 Varnum St., NE Washington, DC 20017 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday—11:00-1:00	<b>Riderwood</b> 3140 Gracefield Rd. Silver Spring, MD 20904 Last Wednesday--10:00-12:00
February 1	February 13	February 28
March 2	March 13	March 29
April 5	April 10	April 25
May 3	May 8	May 30



