

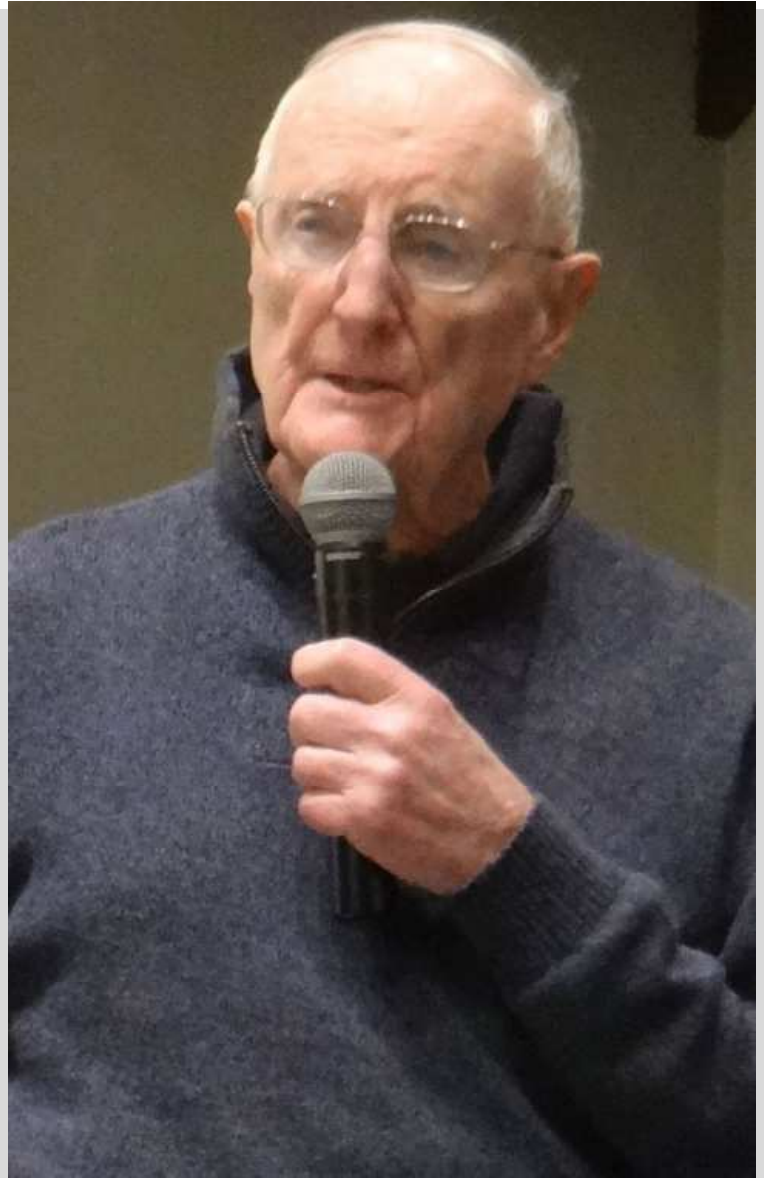
Corps Connector

Volume 14, Number 1

March, 2019



Marie Dennis



Joe Nangle

January Day of Reflection 2019

See Page 4

Northern
Virginia Regional
Council:

Mike Mothes,
Regional Director

Margot Chavez

Kai De Altin Popiolek

Pia Dinon-Clark

Emilie Gillanders

Fr. Tuck Grinnell

James Kelley

Christine McLaughlin

John McLaughlin

Steve Mournighan

Anne Murphy

Rebecca Ruiz

Richard Urban



Notes from the Editor

Please Note: The following story is an example of Imaginative Prayer, a way of praying recommended by Ignatius of Loyola in the Spiritual Exercises. This story resulted from following this model: Visualize the event (the life, denial and abandonment of Jesus by Peter.) Visualize it as if you were making a movie. Pay attention to the details: sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings of the event. Lose yourself in the story; through the act of contemplation, the Holy Spirit makes present a mystery of Jesus' life in a way that is meaningful for you now. Use your imagination to dig deeper into the story so that God may communicate with you in a personal, evocative way.

Peter's Story

I loved you Lord, ever since that day you called me to follow you. My name is Simon; member of a good Jewish family. I'm the oldest in my family. My dad was a fisherman; owned his own boat. I always thought my destiny was to be like my dad: Out on the lake all night trawling for fish; sitting around in the evening with my crew drinking cheap Galilean wine. But then you turned my life around.

It's three years later; I followed you everywhere, Lord. I'm astonished at the way you have accomplished your mission. Through your healing and the conviction with which you explain your mission, hundreds even thousands of people are now following you.

It is Passover and we're gathered around to celebrate the feast with you. During this feast, you told me something that touched me deeply; you said Satan demanded to test me, but you prayed for me that my faith would be strong. This moved me to the core. I professed I was ready to go to jail with you and even die with you. My feelings for you were burning brightly until you said to me, "Peter, I tell you, before a rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will say three times that you do not know me."

Peter's Denial

You told me this only a few hours ago: why didn't I listen? Now look at me, The worst part of my denying you was it didn't have to happen in the first place. Who were these people in the High Priest's courtyard that induced me to say I never knew you? First, there was that servant girl, can you believe it— **a servant girl?** We had all just been standing around the fire when I denied you this first time. So I slipped out to the gate to get away from the crowd. But this same servant girl came up behind me and said to the crowd standing there, "This man was with Jesus from Nazareth." Stupidly I declared— **again**—"I don't know the man." And the madness rolled on. When the crowd heard me say, "I don't know the man," and heard my accent; they started hooting and shouting, "We know this guy's one of them. You heard the way he talks, just like that Galilean who's attracting those huge crowds over in the temple." I couldn't help myself; I snapped back, "Goddammit, I swear to Almighty God

Peter's Story: Next Page

Inside this Issue:

Page 2 & 3 Notes from the
Editor: St. Peter's
Story

Page 4 & 5 Day of Reflection

Page 6 Washington School for
Girls

Page 7 & 8 Volunteering at the
Border

Page 9 Christmas Group Photo

Page 10 Upcoming Events

Corps Connector

is published four times
annually by the Northern Virginia
Region of the Ignatian Volunteer
Corps.

Dick Bowling, Editor
Mary Anne Cummins, Proofreader

Send submissions or comments to
dbowling@ivcusa.org.

Photos by Dick Bowling unless
otherwise noted

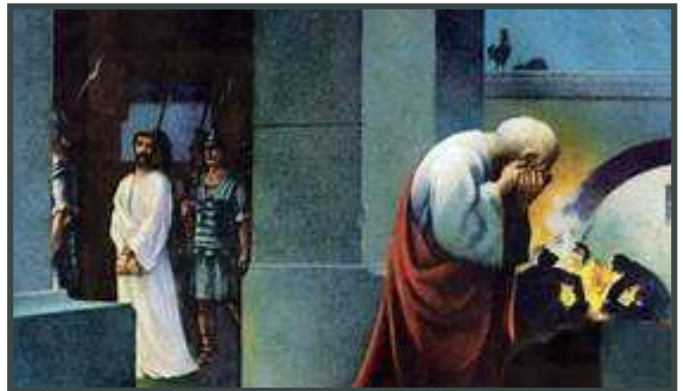
I don't know what the hell you're talking about." I was such a coward. Did any of these around that fire have the right to know that I knew you? **No!**

A moment or two later, the first light of day lit up the morning sky and out on the street somewhere a rooster crowed. When this happened everything came crashing back: how you prayed for me, Lord, and predicted I would deny you. I covered my head in shame, and wept bitterly, ran away as fast as I could and deserted you.

If the Romans had dragged me before Pilate, made me confess under torture that I knew you, you would've excused what I did: but I denied you freely, without force, before a rag-tag gang of onlookers and servant girls. Instead, I should've laughed, made a joke out of it, said something like, "Sure I know him, we play cards and drink beer together every night."

Peter's Repentance

This is hard, Lord, so very very hard. From the time I was a boy, being good is what I only ever wanted to be. But look at me now. How could I – **me** – have done such a thing, Lord? The good, the holy child? I hate myself. What would I not give to turn the clock back? Redo that night? That awful night! But I can't. That terrible guilt has stained my soul forever. A door has slammed shut. Who I used to be; all I ever wanted to be, stands on the other side of that door. Though I knock and knock; it will never reopen. How proud I was of my integrity. I bore it like a badge of honor. How easily I let it slip from me. How precious it is to me now. In those few hours, in that single night; I forgot who I was, I was caught off my guard; I lost my integrity. Forever.



Peter's Forgiveness

You forgave me, Lord. Remember that morning by the seaside when you cooked us breakfast? You took me aside, "Peter, do you love me more than these?" Three times you asked, like the three times I denounced you. "Oh, yes, Lord. I do love you." Those dear sweet words I longed to hear from your sweet lips; my triple denial, you forgave. My abandoning you. You forgave.

Strange as it now seems, had I not disowned you, had I not run away and hid, I never would have found the courage to do what you called me to do. I would have remained that unstained child. *O felix culpa*. O happy fault! O glorious betrayal that required a savior such as you!

I never would have known the abyss of guilt that sucked me under. I never would have plumbed the depths of sorrow that broke me open and showed me how to guide the people of God during those tremulous early days as your Church grew and developed.

Thirty-five years have now passed since that night. I have been chained here in prison in Rome these last five years. Tomorrow the Romans intend to take me out and crucify me. The one request they granted, to crucify me upside down.



January

Day of Reflection

Speakers: Marie Dennis , co-president of Pax Christi International
and Friar Joe Nangle , OFM, Our Lady Queen of Peace parish staff
and member of Assisi community, Washington, DC.

Both Marie and Joe focused on their experience of aging and what it has taught them. The focus Mike Mothes and the speakers agreed on was that of a conversational shape to the presentations. Therefore after the presentations there was time for interaction between the listeners and the presenters.

Marie Dennis began with a quick presentation of her background: she is a lay person, parent, and has been involved with education for justice and peace both in the US and international spheres. She is coming to the end of her 12 year term as co-president of Pax Christi International. Her vision of vocation is that of taking the next right step in response to God's call on the journey of life. From her days as a student at Trinity College just after the Second Vatican Council she learned that Catholics were being called to engage the world, not retreat from it. When in 1971 the Synod of Bishops stated that working for justice is a constitutive element of preaching the Gospel, Marie accepted this as part of her calling (vocation) and it remains so to this day.

A challenge for her has been taking time for reflection and prayer. At one point she knew she needed to slow down, the Sabbath movement caught her attention, but it was still a struggle. Her love of "dirt" and growing things enabled her to focus in a healing way each day on something other than her demanding ministry. This also had the effect of creating community in her neighborhood through people enjoying her produce. Marie pointed out that current culture values people if they are producers or consumers. Aging people are not of much value as producers or consumers. However, faith tells us that every person has value as a creation of God. It is true that as we age we encounter more limits but that does not change our value as God's creation, in union with the value of the rest of creation.

Day of Reflection: Next Page

After time to reflect and share, as well as enjoy the luncheon provided by Panera and deserts donated by some of the IVC members, the second presenter, Father (Friar) Joe Nangle, OFM of Our Lady Queen of Peace parish staff gave his remarks. Father Joe recently had a partial hip replacement and we were fortunate that he was able to be healed enough to come for the day of recollection. He stood during his whole presentation. In his mid 80's he began recounting that during his 75th year he spent a rather long time one afternoon reflecting on his age. His father, whose heart condition he shares, died much younger. However, during his time of reflection he was convinced that there was much more for him to do after age 75. In fact, besides his busy schedule of pastoral work, involvement in liberation theology, and giving conferences, he was elected to his Franciscan provincial team in his late 70's.

Next he mentioned that in his 80's some changes did begin to appear. He has less energy, his hearing is diminished and he wears hearing aids. In the area of prayer he has moved to a more contemplative mode of at times just being in the presence of God without trying to say a lot.

The Latin phrase "adsum", which means "here I am" sums up his attitude many times in prayer. His sense of the eventual approach of death has also heightened. He quoted Karl Rahner's comment where he says death is when "I hurl myself into the waiting arms of God." Death is not so much passive as it is "hurling myself into the arms of God."

For advice Father Joe said memories are important. He once asked his 90 year old mother about memories of her youth and adulthood. His mother recognized that he was doing the same thing for her as she had done for her own mother. It is good for us as we age to look at memories. He even writes them down.

In response to both speakers there was much comment from the listeners, however we will leave that unspoken as an enticement to come again next time.

Stephen Palmer, Manassas, VA Spiritual reflector
(companion)





Tutoring at “The VIEW”

Washington School for Girls

From the moment you encounter the small, well-worn school on the grounds of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church high atop a hill in Southeast overlooking the downtown DC area — appropriately named “The VIEW”— you know you are in a special place! Inside, one is quickly enveloped in an atmosphere that celebrates the gifts, talents, and potential of each young student as they are helped to become confident, competent, and courageous young women.

Washington School for Girls (WSG) is an independent Catholic School in Anacostia providing an inclusive faith-based, tuition-free education for girls from all faiths. Students come primarily from DC's Wards 7 and 8. From founding spirits in three organizations - The National Council of Negro Women, The Religious of Jesus and Mary, and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus – the school began in 1997 as an afterschool enrichment program that met in an apartment building basement to address the lack of educational opportunities for girls in the area. WSG has since blossomed into a comprehensive academic program serving young women in grades 3-8 at two campuses with a mission to close the educational gap by surrounding students and families with the support they need to grow both academically and as young women. Comprehensive services include year-round academic curriculum, mandatory extended day enrichment activities, daily meals, counseling services, family support and engagement programs, and graduate support activities. Every school day starts with reflective morning prayer; each student participates in inclusive theology classes and retreats.

Although small class sizes enable WSG teachers – two per room - to differentiate instruction, there is substantial need for intervention tutoring, particularly in reading and in math. Many students had not been succeeding in their former school environments. I stepped into the role of Math Tutor for some of the girls in grades three to five at THE VIEW campus in Spring of 2017 ... a challenging and invigorating way for me to serve after 35 years of teaching math in Fairfax County. As it often happens, these incredible young ladies are teaching this old teacher LOTS!

I serve as a “pull-out” tutor, assigned regular sessions with identified groups of one, two, or three girls at a time who have demonstrated math weaknesses or just the need for more practice. I set up a learning space for my sessions in the “Prayer Room” (which is used at other times by the PE teacher and music teacher, among others!) Space is a big CHALLENGE for this incredible group of educators – and I am always amazed by their creativity, flexibility and “can do” positive attitude!

I endeavor to be a “low maintenance” volunteer – the staff here already has lots to deal with! My teaching background does help with the “how to,” but I’m always searching for better ways to communicate simply and effectively. I generally check in with the teachers via email the day prior to tutoring so they can identify topics for me to address (as well as continue with ongoing remediation, like addition facts). Incorporating manipulatives and movement into the activities I prepare is a goal, as well as breaking up each 45-minute session into different active learning experiences to maintain attention and engagement.

A typical day may find the fifth grade small group arranging a stack of cards with decimal numbers in order from least to greatest on the floor; then the fourth grade group going to the right “corner” of the room (adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing) as they identify the correct operation for a word problem; and then third grade pairs hopping on a number line on the floor as they practice “skip counting” by twos and threes. I am a firm believer in the adage “The person who is doing the work is the one who is learning.” But it still takes a lot of energy and patience to keep up with these girls and help them overcome their resistance to working with problems that are difficult for them! I stick to non-edibles – stickers and erasers mostly – as end of session reinforcement, in keeping with the school's emphasis on developing intrinsic rewards.

When my day is done, I am usually pooped, often pleased by the progress of at least some of the girls, and always the better for being a small contributor to this amazing village that nurtures and empowers these vulnerable young women!



by Maura Sleeve



Volunteering at the Border

With Kathy White

In response to the “humanitarian crisis” at the border, I decided to go down and see it for myself. I researched and chose to spend a week at Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley Humanitarian Respite Center. My time there was worthwhile, informative, eye-opening and exhausting.

A bit of background:

The Humanitarian Respite Center (HRC) began at a parish in McAllen, TX in response to a need: asylum seekers, who had been processed by ICE and had a contact in the USA to go to, were given court dates and then dropped at the local bus station. The arrivals had only the clothes on their backs, their children, and the court date. Sister Norma Pimental was working at the parish and started helping the arrivals with the details of how to get to their USA contacts and providing for their basic needs, like warm clothing and food for their journey.

The HRC grew as more asylum seekers arrived and more volunteers appeared to help. Now there is an arrangement that Border Patrol actually brings busloads of arrivals directly to HRC, which is housed in a former nursing home. Only parents with children are received at the center (I don't know what happens to singles and often still, married couples are separated, with one parent coming with the children and the other one detained). Most arriving now are from Honduras and Guatemala, seeking asylum from violence.

A friend and I arrived on a Friday night to check out the place; we were given a quick tour of the facility and then put right to work, sorting clothing donations. The parents were being helped to contact their USA family members to send online bus tickets while the children were fed a meal. Afterwards they were all given a chance to shower and a clean set of clothes, some dinner and then transferred to the bus station when it was time either that night or the next morning. Those who needed them got coats, hats and gloves, and all were given a blanket, a sack lunch, and detailed info about their bus connections. (Some were going to Boston, Chicago, Miami, Denver.)

Over the course of the week, I worked in the donation room, in the men's clothing distribution, in the shoe room (mostly old donated shoes and lots of smelly feet!), occasionally in children's clothing but my favorite was the coat room. Most of the people had never worn a coat, and they had no idea of the difference between going to Miami and going to New York! The coat room was sometimes well-stocked but usually we had to make do with 2 layers of sweaters for them to prepare for the sub-zero temps of early February.

I speak only enough Spanish to ask where they were going and to name a few items of clothing, but it sufficed. (Next time I will be prepared with a few more important phrases!) Most people were gracious and thankful for the help they received - a few young women were fashion-conscious and didn't like their options so I didn't work in the women's room if I could help it! The places I didn't experience were the kitchen, the shower/bathrooms, and only once at the clinic—I drove a man to the ER with chest pains and never heard what happened to him afterwards. Other volunteers keep those parts going day in and day out.

Very important were the other volunteers who, like me, came from all over the country in response to the administration's child separation policy. We all believe that our country is better than that and so came to

Continued Next Page

show some humanity to these families who are just seeking a better life. I served that week with people from Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Mississippi, Indiana, North Dakota, and several spots in Texas. One of my donation-room partners was an 84 year old nun from Philly!

HRC is run by a few employees of Catholic Charities. The staff is there from 8 AM until after 9 every night; then there are regular local volunteers (a few couples who are Texas Snowbirds who spend the winter working there every day) and the temporary ones like me. Nearly every day a small group, like a youth group, a college civil rights group, or a Methodist Men's group from Dallas, would show up to do whatever.

There are other issues I learned about, like how the proposed wall/fence will be placed within the US so that it cuts off personal property, including a mission, a high school, and a Native American cemetery, so the local people do not want more walls. How the mayor of McAllen is in favor of the HRC but the neighbors don't like it. How McAllen used to be a peaceful, thriving border town but now it is becoming impoverished and divisive. But those issues are secondary to the charity that is needed and being shared there. I haven't mentioned that the average number of arrivals at HRC is 250 per day. On my last day, there were about 500.

I'm so happy I got to experience HRC; I hope to return. I encourage anyone to take a little trip there; you will be welcomed and appreciated, and you will experience Christ's compassion in a real way.

What is needed at Humanitarian Respite Center?

Wish List: Go to <https://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/JJVAJFS3VIIQ/>

The people coming to the Respite Center are usually size Small or Medium. Please consider that when sending anything; the only thing that would be good in Large is a warm hoodie or jacket that could be layered for going to a cold climate.

In addition to what's on the Wish List, I would add:

- Men's Boxer Briefs: Size Small and Medium
- Men's Socks
- Men's Sweatpants Size Small and Medium
- Belts: Canvas D-Ring belts in neutral colors. For the best price: <https://www.aliexpress.com>

The current address for clothing donations to be sent to is:
Humanitarian Respite Center
209 W. Hackberry Ave.
McAllen, TX 78501

Alternatively, a monetary donation for food can be sent to:

Humanitarian Respite Center
c/o Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley
700 N. Virgen de San Juan Blvd
San Juan TX 78589

Please specify that your donation is for the Humanitarian Center
(My friend there asked that in the Memo portion of the check, write "Snacks")



Kathy White

2018 Christmas Gathering



Photo by Mike Mothes

Upcoming Events

JUNE RETREAT
 JUNE 10-12, 2019
 Kathleen Curtin, Facilitator
 Loyola Retreat House
 Faulkner Maryland

Northern Virginia Region 2018-19 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
April 3	April 4	April 9	April 10
May 1	May 2	May 14	May 8

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
April 11	April 16	April 17
May 9	May 21	May 15