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Metro Maryland
& Northern
Virginia Regional
Council

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Regional Directors

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Joseph Dempsey

James Kelley

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Dennis Lucey

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Corps Connector

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Send submissions or comments to dbowling@ivcusa.org.

“Today, the Ignatian Volunteer Corps lifts up two of its own most powerful witnesses who by their lives, words and actions point to the presence of the living God: Fr. Tuck Grinnell—pastor, spiritual director, tireless advocate for those who are poor; Mr. Jim Kelley—husband, father, crusader for the rights and needs of others, servant leader”
—Fr. Jim Conroy

IVC Honors “Witnesses of our Faith” at 5th Annual Evening of Gratitude By Joe Raia

Over two hundred Ignatian Volunteer Corps volunteers and supporters joined in prayer and celebration at the 5th Annual Evening of Gratitude last month. Two very special IVC members—James P. Kelley and Fr. Horace H. “Tuck” Grinnell—were honored for their dedication to service to those in need.



The Evening of Gratitude began with Mass at St. Aloysius Church, celebrated by Fr. Jim Conroy, S.J., co-celebrated by 9 fellow priests, and led in song by the vibrant voices of the New Spirit Singers Choir. In closing his homily, Fr. Conroy, the co-founder of IVC and currently the Executive Director of the Jesuit Collaborative, set the stage for the tribute to follow:

“Today, the Ignatian Volunteer Corps lifts up two of its own most powerful witnesses who by their lives, words and actions point to the presence of the living God: Fr. Tuck Grinnell—pastor, spiritual director, tireless advocate for those who are poor; Mr. Jim Kelley—husband, father, crusader for the rights and needs of others, servant leader and spiritual director.”

At the reception immediately after Mass, Mr. Kelley was honored as the inaugural recipient of the Conroy-Costello Founders Award. Established this year, the award recognizes unique contributions to the strength and viability of the organization by those directly involved in its operation. As a former IVC volunteer and the recently retired Director of the Northern Virginia region, Jim was the creative force behind its rapid growth and vitality.

Mary McGinnity, IVC’s Executive Director, talked of Jim’s unwavering faith and service. “Jim became an IVC volunteer within days of his retirement, and then went on to serve as Director of our regional IVC program. He has a passion to serve the poor... He has brought us all on a sacred journey.”



Fr. Tuck, the current Pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Church and formerly long-term Pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church, received the Della Strada Award, an award honoring lives that manifest the Ignatian values of direct service to the poor and working and educating for a more just society. He has been an IVC Spiritual Director and supporter for 12 years.

Patty Holley, the new Regional Director of the Northern Virginia region, reinforced Fr. Conroy’s words. “Fr. Tuck is a leader and an example to all of us. He exemplifies the Ignatian values in all he does and demonstrates endless, selfless love of God’s people.”

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Fr. Tim Hickey to Facilitate Fall Retreat Sept. 13-15.

The IVC 2011 Fall Retreat will be held again at the Loyola Retreat House, Faulkner Maryland. Answering the appeal of a number of volunteers, this will be a two day retreat..

The theme for the Fall Retreat is "Doing Theology in the In-Between"

Fr. Tim is pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in Arlington Va.

When Fr. Tim—whose only sign of middle age is his graying hair—delivers his sermons, he speaks with the intensity of a true believer who is energized by his strong convictions. He paces back and forth down the center aisle of the church, addressing people directly and passionately. Before the final blessing at Mass, Fr. Tim challenges the congregation to live the Gospel every moment of their lives and not simply practice their faith one hour in church each Sunday: "The true test of Christianity is what you do and how you live once you leave the building."

Before becoming a priest, Fr. Tim spent several years looking at different religious communities but none of them "resonated," he said, until he met the Spiritans [Holy Ghost Fathers] at a "come and see" weekend at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh in 1989. "It was instantaneous," he said. "The charisma was so evident. It could be seen in their care and concern for the poor and their commitment to evangelism."

Fr. Tim's spiritual journey was especially profound during his two-year training assignment in Puerto Rico that began in 1997. Before ordination, Holy Ghost Fathers spend a minimum of two years overseas. Fr. Tim was asked by the archbishop of San Juan, Puerto Rico, to work at an AIDS hospice. "My ministry was to be with them to accompany them on their spiritual journey, to help them understand that God loved them just the way they are and to help them come to terms with their approaching death and not to fear it," Fr. Tim said.

There was a tremendous cultural and social stigma at the time for those who suffered from AIDS and there was a common misconception that the AIDS virus was contagious. "Even the hospice in San Juan was located in a former

wing of a hospital that had been sealed off out of fear that the virus would escape and infect the medical community. Families often abandoned their own children and left them at the door of the hospice to die," Fr. Tim recalled.

After his ordination in 1999, Fr. Tim worked at St. Mary Magdalene Parish in Chicago where he led a youth ministry and helped young men to leave gangs. Leaving a gang was a dangerous thing to do. The program at St. Mary Magdalene Church aimed to create a safe haven for former gang members to start a new life. "Starting over included something as basic as removing tattoos and providing them with a place that was off the street and safe from gunfire. It also gave them a place to reflect on life and their future," Fr. Tim said.



A little more than 20 years after making the decision to join the priesthood, Fr. Tim is excited about his appointment at Our Lady Queen of Peace, a church that is known for its inclusiveness. Established in 1945, "Queen of Peace is among the Catholic churches in the U.S. with a very strong historical significance," he said. The church founders were African Americans who faced discrimination in their daily lives, including in the Catholic Church.

Post-World War II Black Catholics were not free to worship in Arlington County but instead attended Mass and school in Washington, D.C., or St. Joseph's, a Black Catholic Church in Alexandria. "The Spiritans have a special commitment to blacks, immigrants—people who are marginalized in society," Fr. Tim said. "We find ways to walk with them in their own journeys."

Fr. Tim is the fourth of six children, born and raised in Bellevue Ohio. After leaving college he worked in sales and then as finance director for a furniture company. After a long discernment, at the age of twenty nine, he joined the Spiritans in 1989. Fr. Tim did his philosophy studies at Duquesne University and while there he also studied psychology and formative spirituality. He did graduate and post graduate studies in Chicago at Catholic Theological Union where he earned a master's degree in missiology, and a master's degree in scripture and spirituality. Prior to his appointment at Queen of Peace, Fr. Tim was the Executive Director of Mission and Identity at Duquesne University.

The above article was taken from the Spring 2010 edition of *The Advocate*, Our Lady Queen of Peace's Quarterly Newsletter

NATIONAL BOARD HONORS TWO LOCAL VOLUNTEERS

by **Cliff Hackett**



An honor for our regions and a striking recognition for two highly respected volunteers came this summer when Emilie Gillanders (Northern Virginia) and Madeleine Kirk (DC/Metro Maryland) were named to IVC's National Board. Two of only a handful of volunteers ever named to the National Board, Emilie and Madeleine will assume their responsibilities later this year.

The 22 member National Board is the governance body for programs implemented in 15 regions nationwide. Our two regions are among the organization's most viable and active. The two volunteers selected represent both the vigorous programs in their respective regions and the high regard in which each is held personally.

Emilie joined IVC in October 2006 at the Rosemount Center in upper Northwest Washington where she helped pre-natal women and new mothers adjust to their new roles. In 2008, the long commute from her Northern Virginia home prompted Emilie to switch to the Braddock Center in Fairfax, a program for seniors whose lives are slowed by dementia, where she provides creative hands-on care as well as respite for the staff caregivers.

Emilie came to the Washington area from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin and graduated with a BA from Georgetown University's nursing program. She met her doctor husband at Georgetown and they raised a family of five children while Emilie spent 15 years in geriatric nursing and medical research.

After a busy life in seven countries as a very active foreign service wife and mother, Madeleine Kirk was one of the initial IVC volunteers in 1996 under the direction of co-founders Jim Conroy, SJ and Charlie Costello, SJ. Her first assignment was working with Fr. John Adams as he established the SOME Center for Employment Training in Anacostia. After a brief sabbatical during which she received additional training in parish work, Madeleine rejoined IVC in 2001 to assist the headmaster of the newly founded Washington Jesuit Academy (WJA). With her help, this 12 hour-a-day middle school grew slowly toward its current role as a provider of high quality education for inner-city boys in grades 6-8. Her third IVC assignment was at the Montgomery County Pre-Release Center where, as a member of Welcome Home Prison Ministries, she helped prisoners prepare for reentry into society by honing their basic skills and job attitudes.

Both women are members of Holy Trinity parish in Georgetown, a center of IVC activism and an outstanding source of volunteers for its programs. For both, this honor comes with additional responsibilities. The Board meets 3-4 times a year for intense two-day policy deliberations. Emilie and Madeleine will both continue their volunteer activities while serving on the Board.

Mary McGinnity, IVC's Executive Director, is "overjoyed" to have these two women as Board members. "They are tributes to the strength of our volunteer programs overall and to the vigorous service that occurs in the Washington area regions in particular," she said. Mary hopes, she added, that Emilie and Madeleine will inspire the other 13 regions across the country to bring individual volunteers and their service to the attention of the Board. "We have a great volunteer story to tell nationwide and these two new Board members will bring strong, responsible voices to the task," she said.



At the Franciscan Center in Baltimore

He came to make things right,
But things are not right.

When I see an 18 year-old African American woman with an eighth grade education who is unemployed with three young children and has no food,

It's not right.

When I see a 46 year-old man with a fifth grade education who cannot read or write,

It's not right.

When I see a nattily dressed 61 year-old women who is suddenly laid off through no fault of her own, and cannot afford to buy food,

It's not right

When I see an African American woman, who had just lost her mother, in grief and in tears, and who cannot pay for her own prescriptions,

It's not right.

When I see an inmate recently released from prison with no identification, lost and cannot find work,

It's not right.

When I see a 71 year-old woman who has only a few decaying teeth remaining in her mouth,

It's not right.

Yet, we see in each the face of God; and by serving each one with dignity, we have the opportunity to be closer to God and to see Him more clearly.

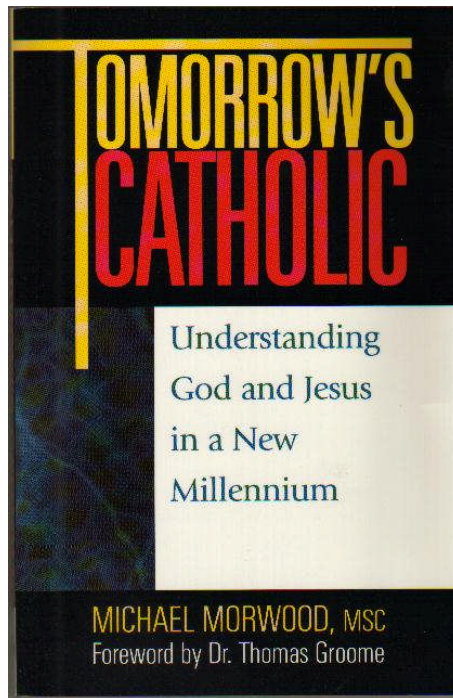
Mark Wong, IVC Volunteer
Baltimore Region

Tomorrow's Catholic, by Michael Morwood, Chosen as IVC's Book for the Year

(The Spiritual Formation Committee has selected Tomorrow's Catholic, by Michael Morwood as the Book for the Year for the IVC program year 2011-2012. Books should be available at the Fall Retreat. The theme for this year is Contemporary Theology. Below is a brief introduction and a number of short reviews picked up from the Internet.)

In clear, down-to-earth language, Fr. Michael Morwood bridges the gap between church doctrine based on the Genesis story and the essential gospel message that is our Christian legacy. He challenges the Genesis worldview that has influenced our images and ideas of God to the present day. Catholics and other Christians across a wide spectrum of ages and beliefs will welcome and want to share this timely book.

The title suggests that the book is directed towards Roman Catholics. But I discovered early on that the arguments put forward here are relevant to Christians of all traditions. Morwood's spirit throughout is one of gentle persuasion. He is not intent on swinging a wrecking ball through the walls of orthodoxy. He describes his approach in these words: 'This is not an attack on Christian faith. It is an assertion that Christian faith has been packaged in a particular way, in particular thought patterns that have been set in concrete and that the time has come to re-examine, with open minds, the fundamentals of our faith and to try expressing them in ways that are relevant to today's worldview.' ... - from "Campbell's Notebook" a US Lutheran "quarterly for those who preach"



I was reminded of a book that shook the foundations of Christianity back in 1963. "Honest to God", by Anglican Bishop John A. T. Robinson was a radical work, radical in the sense that it got to the roots of belief and practice, unafraid to discuss the most sacrosanct, inviolable subjects. It was, like this book, a very readable small work, requiring no great theological mind to understand what the author was getting at. Modest as it was, it contained gems of wisdom that resonated beautifully with what many hearts were thinking at the time.

"Tomorrow's Catholic" is another such gem that will not go unnoticed because it is meant for ordinary people, struggling to make sense of a religion increasingly out of touch with people's lives, beliefs, desires and expectations."

- Eugene H. Ciarlo, book editor for "The American Catholic"

"Pick up this slight tome and let it push the mind into the real wonders that await us in the future."

- Rev. Thomas Powers. "The Evangelist". NY

Father Morwood's attentiveness to our struggles and continuing search for God has been cultivated by extensive pastoral ministry both at home in Australia and in North America. For him the world is not a peril for Christian faith, nor is the Church just a sinful community in need of conversion. He invites us with disarming directness

to draw upon our day-to-day experiences of life to discover the present yet hidden God communicated through Jesus.

Michael A. Fahey, S.J. .
Professor of Theology
Marquette University

Special note to IVC readers from Michael Morwood:

This is a delightful surprise!

I'm wondering if you are aware that the book ran into problems with the Archbishop of Melbourne in 1998 and was banned in that archdiocese. An account of the banning (and of me also!!) can be found on my website. Cf the second page and the heading: *Reactions to Tomorrow's Catholic* at www.morwood.org

It would be good to be familiar with this background if you are not aware of it, just in case someone raises the issue with you. How about something like this for intended readers:

This book was written for adults who want to think about their faith and want to reflect on what they believe and why they believe it. Some readers may find it troubling; some may find it articulates thoughts not far from the surface of their own minds. I hope Ignatian Volunteer Corps readers will find it promotes respectful conversation and a deepening of the faith they cherish as they bring that faith and contemporary knowledge of our universe into dialogue. Michael Morwood

This Most Amazing Day: Part I

By Dick Bowling

“Never let a day go by,” Marty is saying, looking straight at me, “without making a record of its passing.”

“Uh-uh,” I say, like you do when you’re really not listening to what the other person is telling you.

It’s Saturday morning and Marty Walsh and I are sharing breakfast at this little restaurant down the street from his house in Alexandria. Marty is my spiritual reflector, and we are discussing my journal writing quandary, how after four years of faithfully keeping a journal and hardly missing a single day I suddenly quit.

“I still miss it,” I tell him, “but I can’t, for the life of me, figure out how to get started again.”

I began journal writing after my IVC orientation and retreat in October, 2005 and continued until November, 2009. I used to start writing at about 4:30 in the morning and would address my day’s journal to Jesus, beginning usually with “Good morning, dear Jesus.” He and I would then carry on a conversation with me telling him about the day past or what was on my mind or was troubling me and he would usually respond with some suggestion, or word of encouragement. People thought it very weird when I told them Jesus actually responded to me in writing; but he really did!

But how to start again?

It’s a couple of weeks later and it’s early morning. I’m not really thinking about much of anything when I become aware of this chatter inside telling me ‘never let a day go by without making a record of its passing.’

“That’s it!” I almost shout out loud. Marty’s advice that I had ignored, comes back to me. “I’ll make sure none of my days go by without making a record of it,” I promise. The block that stood frozen there for eighteen months began to melt away.

I continue to start my journal at 4:30; I still begin with “Good morning, dear Jesus,” because, well, I have to write to somebody and, who better than that I continue to address my journal to him? So far, though, he hasn’t written back.

And this time I find I’m being drawn deeper; finding more meaning in each day, not just having the experience of it, as T.S. Elliot declared in *The Dry Salvages*:

We had the experience
but missed the meaning.

It’s another Saturday morning, Marty and I are again having breakfast this time at the Key Bridge Marriott; I’m reading from my journal. After I finish, he says “It’s interesting that Jesus told us, ‘Do this in memory of me.’ And through precisely that memory of him, he becomes present to us in each Eucharist even if it’s two thousand years later. Journaling is also a memory; a sacred memory, of our days past. As we re-read our journals, each day becomes sacramentally present to us once more.”



Web Photo

“Remembering,” says Mary Katharine Deeley, writing in the January-February issue of *Liturgy* magazine, “is a way of making room in the present for all those things which shaped us in the past. Remembering helps us hold a particular moment of time in such a way that all of its possibilities are open to us again....We remember who we are so that we might become who God dreams us to be.”

I think I understand better what Marty meant that morning when he said never to let a day go by. What he meant was that each day, no matter how boring or trivial it seems, is precious, is a gift from God. By memorializing each day in my journal I am honoring the God who gave me this most amazing day.

Next time: The day I quit journaling.

Shane Claiborne and the Liturgy

Shane Claiborne's book *the Irresistible Revolution* was IVC's book of the year for 2007-2008 and generated much comment and interest. We present this piece for those who remember his book and its effect on their lives. ED

For the past several years, we've been studying up on liturgy (with lots of help from friends) to create a new resource for the church called *Common Prayer*. As evangelical activists who are new to the world of liturgical rhythms, we've learned a lot. It's fun to have the chance to reintroduce a new generation of Christians to some of our treasures that have gotten lost (or covered in a little dust). These treasures have been a great gift to us and to our communities.

Liturgy comes from the Greek word *leitourgia*, meaning "public worship." When we hear the phrase "public worship," many of us think of large meetings, like Sunday morning services, and while public worship can mean that, it doesn't have to take place in a big group. After all, public shares the same root word as pub, and it really just refers to a gathering of people to share life (and maybe a drink), a get-together that's always open to strangers joining in. Jesus promised that wherever two or three of us gather in his name, he'll be there with us. Jesus will be with us at the "pub" ... whether there's wine or not (and if not, he might conjure some up ... or conjure up grape juice for the Baptists).

For those of us who are new to liturgy, it's noteworthy that, though there are some variations among different traditions, a majority of Christian liturgies around the world share an overall structure—especially the liturgies of Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Methodists. It has been said that if the covers were removed from the major worship books of the late twentieth century, it would be difficult to tell which book belongs to which church body. The major traditions pretty much follow the same script.

When we first experience the organized cycle of readings that is a part of liturgical worship—a lectionary, as it's often called—it can seem like magic or a conspiracy. We may hear a pastor preach from the same text we read in morning prayer and think, "How in the world? The Spirit must be moving!" And, in fact, the Spirit is moving, just in a more organized way than we would have guessed. Some liturgical types smile when evangelicals discover the "miracle" of the liturgy. But it is a miracle nonetheless. So lean in and listen as you pray these prayers. Sometimes it may feel like you can hear the church's heart beat as you pray in a way you never have before.

Participating in the liturgy of the worldwide Christian Community, whether on a Sunday morning or at another time, is more than attending a service or a prayer meeting it is about entering a story. It is about orienting our lives around what God has been doing throughout history. And about being sent forth into the world to help write the next chapter of that story. Wandering the world in search of meaning and purpose, we may not even realize how desperately we need a story. But we know we've found something priceless when we find ourselves in God's narrative.

Liturgy is not about getting indoctrinated. Doctrines are hard things to love. It's not even really about education. Liturgy at its core is not about learning facts and memorizing phrases. Liturgy is soul food. It nourishes our souls just as breakfast strengthens our bodies. It's sort of like a family dinner. Hopefully you get some nutritious food, but more than nutrition, family dinner is about family, love, community. Liturgy is kind of like family dinner with God. Liturgical theologian Aidan Kavanaugh says it well: "The liturgy, like the feast, exists not to



Web Photo

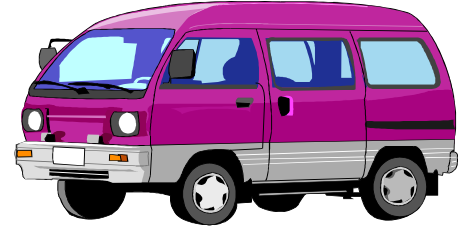
educate but to seduce people into participating in common activity of the highest order, where one is freed to learn things which cannot be taught."

While liturgy is a party, it's also about disciplining our spirits like we exercise our muscles. Certainly we are learning as we pray, as we listen to Scripture, as we learn the songs and stories. But we are also participating in the work of God—active prayer, active worship. As we will see, liturgy offers us an invitation not just to observe but to participate. "The Lord be with you" invites us to respond, "And also with you." When we hear, "God is good," we want to call back, "All the time." Liturgy is a dialogue, a divine drama in which we are invited to be the actors. We become a part of God's story. We sing God's songs. We discover lost ancestors. And their story becomes our story.

Shane Claiborne and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove; Adapted from Liturgy Magazine, Volume 26, Number 2, pp. 46-52, 2011 Copyright © Zondervan ISSN: 0458-063X

Stories from the Van

By John Durkin



Word ClipArt

As a volunteer at SERVE, a short-term shelter for the homeless in Prince William County, my primary job is to drive residents to appointments for job interviews, to obtain medical treatment, to meet with social workers or, sometimes, parole officers, to take them to transportation hubs, or sometimes to take them to the mall so they can go shopping. One day I drove “Joe” to a job interview at a fast food restaurant, and the restaurant manager asked him to return the next day for a follow-up interview after he had memorized the answers to a list of questions they expected their employees to know. As we drove back from that interview, “Joe” despaired of memorizing the answers because of his disorders. That evening, other residents at the shelter helped him to memorize the list. The next day, the potential employer told him they were no longer interested in a further interview, and “Joe” reacted with anger. Somehow I found the words to point out to him the unseen victory, because never again would he need to fear memorizing a list such as the one he had been given.

As I drive the van I am like a fly on the windshield. I hear intimate details of my passengers’ lives as they talk to friends or counselors on their cell phones. “Nora” was one such lady. She has 3 children: two teenage daughters and a boy who is 9 or 10 years old. As I overheard her conversations I learned very intimate details of “Nora”’s life. As Thanksgiving was approaching she mentioned that someone had invited her and her children to Thanksgiving dinner, but she was reluctant to accept the invitation because she didn’t want to cause her host extra work. I suggested that she consider that by accepting the invitation, she would be giving the gift of her family’s presence to her host’s family as well; she said she hadn’t looked at it that way before. A few days before Christmas “Nora” and her family left SERVE and moved to a family shelter in the Shenandoah Valley. During the drive, everyone was quiet, wondering about the future. I couldn’t help thinking about the Nativity narrative from Saint Luke’s gospel.

The residents of SERVE have my cell phone number so that they can call me when they are ready to be picked up from their appointments. I printed business cards that say “van driver” and “resume helper”, my visible jobs. I’m thinking of adding “minute sower” to the list. One day I was reflecting on the Parable of the Sower from the gospel, and I realized that God only wants me to sow minutes – time – in the residents’ lives. I have no control over where the minutes fall, whether on rocky ground or ground overgrown with weeds or in rich soil. “Sally” was somewhat of a busy body; she had opinions about what the other residents should or should not be doing and didn’t hesitate to tell them what she was thinking. Her observations were not usually well received. I saw “Sally” a few days before she left the shelter, and she was in tears not knowing what the next step was for her or where she was going. Another resident “Paula” was always on edge waiting for the hammer to fall and confirm her poor self image. She had few personal boundaries. I wonder how we give hope to people like “Sally” and “Paula”. We can only sow minutes in their lives and fertilize those minutes with our prayer. The rest is up to God.

In addition to the shelter, SERVE has a large food distribution center that serves the larger Prince William County community. The food distribution center has a large, walk-in refrigerator/freezer that no longer worked properly. The replacement unit would cost \$50,000, an amount well beyond SERVE’s resources. Pepsi uses a clever process for funding grant applications: agency proposals are listed on a Web site and a person can register and vote once each day for the proposal. Voting lasts for a month and the top ten proposals are funded. Grant seekers use whatever media they have available to energize their voters; SERVE used e-mails and their Facebook page. One SERVE donor objected to using Pepsi as the source of funding because Pepsi had in the past funded projects to which the donor objected. I thought of the gospel story where Jesus was in Nazareth, but the people’s lack of faith prevented him from performing any miracles (Matthew 13:58). We, sinners that we are, are building the kingdom of heaven in an imperfect world; and, just as God is using us, we have to use the imperfect tools that God has given us.

It was like an episode from Judge Judy or a show on TruTV; I wondered where the camera had been hidden in the van. “Janet” was talking on the phone on a three-way conversation with a police officer and another woman. “Janet”’s husband had been arrested and was in jail and facing charges. “Janet” said her husband also struggles with addiction. I was reminded how “on the edge” the people who are in situations like this live their lives.

Continued on Page 10

“Witnesses of Faith” continued from Page 2

In accepting their awards, both Fr. Tuck and Mr. Kelley spoke of their continuing commitment to contribute in advancing the work of IVC in various ways. They encouraged everyone to look to IVC as a vehicle to “not simply do good – but to understand the transformational impact on your life.”

Both Patty Holley and Joe Jones, Director of the Washington DC/Metro Maryland confirmed the growing need for additional volunteers throughout the region and the plans to increase the volunteer base. “We welcome everyone to consider becoming an IVC volunteer—to help meet the crying needs of our brothers and sisters and to further your own spiritual growth.”

Joe Raia is a member of the IVC Washington DC/Metro Maryland and Northern Virginia Regional Council. He is a parishioner at St. Patrick’s, Rockville, where he is very active in Social Ministry.)

Stories from the Van continued from page 9

Most of the SERVE residents have cell phones, but few have phone plans. “Edna” had no phone plan, and I drove her to a store where she purchased a calling card. When she went to use the card, she discovered that her phone was dead, the battery fully discharged. Her body language said it all; she had been defeated again. There was no energy or joy in her at all.

I drove “Holly” to a hair salon, but it was closed. She had really wanted to go to **that** salon and dismissed the suggestions the other passengers gave her. “Holly” is a proud woman who is looking for the silver bullet that will give her prestige among her fellow residents.

In addition to driving the van, I help residents write their resumes. One of the case managers asked me to help “Denise.” “Denise” was a twenty-something mother, a high-school dropout, no GED, and had been incarcerated. She had minimal work experience. The result was a very short resume. I thought to myself “It’s the best that I can do.” When I arrived at SERVE the next day, the case manager thanked me for helping “Denise” and told me how excited she had been because she had never had a resume before. A week or so later “Denise” asked me to drive her to the rest area along Interstate 66 near Manassas; she had gotten a job!

At first, I didn’t like “Paul” very much. He came to SERVE a bitter man; proud, divorced, more than 65 years old. He had moved to Manassas from out of state, and was having difficulty getting access to his social security check that had been direct deposited to his old bank. Few residents have ever been rude to me, but “Paul” was one. Just before he left SERVE he had broken through all his personal logjams. I took him to the DMV so he could finally obtain his photo ID and to a bank where he opened an account to cash his social security check. In a few days he would leave SERVE. When he left, “Paul” was a changed man, and I discovered I liked him.

“Bill” was a big man with a scary face. A few days after he and his wife came to the shelter, their case manager asked if I could come early on my volunteer day and drive them to the courthouse for a hearing. I gave “Bill” my phone number and promised to return to pick them up when their hearing was over. When I got back to the courthouse after the hearing, only “Bill” got into the van; his wife had been locked up. I was very thankful that there was another resident in the van, a caring, compassionate woman who seemed to know just what to say to “Bill” during the drive back to the shelter. (My attention was focused on driving in the mid-day traffic.) “Bill” was determined to leave the shelter as soon as he could, and over the next few weeks I drove him to get his ID, and to the bank, and, finally, to the home he had rented. My children were replacing some of their furniture, and “Bill” was happy to have their old bed and sofa. Once I told “Bill” that I was keeping him in my prayers, and he thanked me and said that no one had ever told him that before.

I’ll always remember “Barbara” One day my passengers were talking about high school and reunions and such, and “Barbara” said she graduated in 1952. I realized that “Barbara” was about 75 years old! The residents are assigned hygiene chores in the kitchen, eating area, and living spaces at the shelter, and occasionally residents complain if chores are performed haphazardly or not done. “Barbara” said she never complained because if she did the staff would simply assign the chore to her. “Barbara” didn’t walk, she shuffled. When I first met her I wondered if she had borderline dementia. Eventually I started to wonder if “Barbara” had found the secret of life. Outside of monasteries, I’ve seldom met anyone more at peace and content with their life than “Barbara”. She embodied Saint Paul’s teaching that the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.