

Corps Connector

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Evening
of
Gratitude

Della
Strada
Awards
2017



Mike Goggin, Bill Whitaker (awardee) & Joe Raia

Photos by
Bob Gambarelli



Dennis Lucey, Joe Raia,
Fr. Gerry Creedon (awardee) & Joanie Coolidge



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Corps Connector

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Photos by Dick Bowling unless otherwise noted

IT HAPPENED EARLY ONE MORNING NEAR NEW HOPE, KY ON THE Lebanon Branch of the Louisville and Nashville railroad. A freight train traveling way too fast, rounded a sharp turn, jumped the rails and scattered boxcars, tank cars and empty coal cars all along the right of way. This happened around 1938, deep into the depression. The L&N had laid off my Dad back in the early thirties but he was still a railroader at heart; the wreck was close by and to escape the monotony of farm work, he packed us kids into his Model A and drove us over to New Hope to watch them clean up the mess.

I was about three years old, and was sticking tight as flypaper to my dad. When we got out of the car, I could feel the ground shaking from the thumping, pounding and hammering in the distance. The closer we got, the louder and more intense the banging and throbbing grew. As we got up to the wreck, I saw a huge crane lifting any car still intact back on the undamaged track, then dumping great chunks of twisted metal into a long row of gondola cars.



All the yelling back and forth, the twisted railcars, the ripped up track, the engine lying half buried in the soft ground got to me; soon everything started to spin and it felt like I was going to pass out. But I didn't, instead I started to cry.

Dad certainly wasn't ready to take me home, and he must have thought, no bawling kid—already much too prone to turning on the water works—is going to spoil my day out! So he sent my oldest brother Jimmy back to the car with me, where I sat and waited and gradually recovered.

I revisited these scenes in my imagination this morning clearly seeing once more the wreckage, the crane lifting and swinging about, the flashes of the welder's cutting torch and the terror it induced in me. I questioned myself: I know the L&N doesn't run past New Hope anymore, I know the abandoned tracks are rusting. I know the place where that wreck happened will still be there; but where did the rest of it go? Where has that whole time gone?

When you get past eighty all sorts of early scenes like this return and all sorts of strange questions swirl about in your mind. Since I am at that age, I live every day with the reality that my death is ever near. For me, this is not morbid; it's just knowing that nearly everyone I once knew is no longer here and that soon I'll no longer be here.

There is beauty in nostalgia; we can praise God, if we will, for the life he has given us and thank him each time we get to relive a life event as it presents itself to our imagination. Yes, old folk like me do live a lot in the past—almost a cliché—but in my case I don't pine for the good old days; rather I simply ponder the past when these memories surprise me by their return—and enjoy!

Are we not given the gift of old age to spend some of it reflecting on events that we were either too busy or too afraid to examine when they happened? T.S. Eliot once famously said: "We had the experience, but missed the meaning." I believe that our old age allows us not only to have our life experiences once more, but also to give us a second chance not to miss their meaning.

Dick Bowling

Evening of Gratitude

By
Carolyn
Burstein



JUST IN TIME FOR OUR ELEVENTH ANNUAL EVENING OF Gratitude Mass, the roof on St. Aloysius Church was "miraculously repaired," from the recent tornado, quipped

Father Jim Conroy, the celebrant and homilist. Other co-celebrants included Father Gerry Creedon, one of the winners of the 2017 Della Strada Awards, as well as Father Horace H. "Tuck" Grinnell, a former Awardee. In the course of his homily, which focused on Thomas, the doubting apostle needing Christ to show him His wounds, and IVCers needing the same Christ to show them His compassion for others, Father Conroy thanked Gerry Creedon and Bill Whitaker, the other 2017 Awardee, for their courage, compassion and mercy. Immediately after the homily, everyone had the opportunity to renew their baptismal vows.

Following Mass, everyone enjoyed a reception in the Upper Commons, as pictures showing IVCers working in their service sites as well as pictures of the Awardees (as younger people) and other members of the IVC family were flashed on a large screen.

People were then called down to the Lower Commons for a delicious sit-down dinner catered by Ridgewells. Towards the end of dinner the two Awardees received their awards from Joe Raia and Dennis Lucey, members of IVC's regional council. Chris Abell, a long-time friend of Bill Whitaker, founding President of the Washington Jesuit Academy, introduced him to the audience. Bill Whitaker then spoke and mentioned how moving this ceremony was for members of his family and introduced a long-time teacher of reading and English at WJA who was retiring at the

end of the 2017 academic year. Mr. Whitaker referred pleasantly to his 10 years at Gonzaga as Director of Admissions and Assistant Dean of Students. He believed his calling was to be

President of WJA, a school for the poor and marginalized, when asked if he was interested in the position by Father Jim Conroy. He referred to the fact that WJA boys are in school for 11 hours a day and for 11 months of the year, so that they are supported by love and supportive assistance in all areas of their lives.

Father Gerry Creedon, currently pastor of Holy Family parish in Dale City and formerly pastor of St. Charles parish in Arlington, was also introduced by a long-time friend, Vince Keane, from Ireland, who mentioned how competitive Father Creedon was in golf and racquetball. But much more important, Vince indicated, was Father Creedon's work among the poor, the immigrants and his commitment to the social justice Gospel in build-

ing bridges to others (a theme of this year's Evening of Gratitude). When Father Gerry Creedon spoke, he thanked his older brother Michael for giving him the example he would ultimately follow. He told a wonderfully descriptive story about his father who said, after gazing at a spectacular scene in County Cork: "The sun danced." Father Creedon said he was also inspired by the great Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin, who, in the early 1960s, talked about the "cosmic call" of all Christians. Father Creedon has been an active member of the Diocese of Arlington Peace and Justice Commission, Catholic Charities, Catholics for Housing (a corporate sponsor of this Evening of Gratitude), Gabriel Housing, and SALT (Social Action Linking Together) as well as many other groups.



Photos
by Bob
Gambarelli





Mary Lou Miller

February 4, 1941—May 24, 2007

I am thrilled to be asked to offer this brief reflection on my friend and colleague, Mary Lou Miller, who died on May 24 after a year of lung cancer. She LIVED very fully up until the last week or so of her life, still keeping the family and friends connections she loved so. Even her own funeral planning was thoughtful and directed by her long years of vocation to the church.

She was a "Laywoman in the Church," with years on staff at St. Anthony's, building faith communities, and reflecting on God's gifts to those in the parish. She loved St. Anthony's diversity and made a point of going to Guatemala to learn Spanish.

I loved that on her office wall she had framed her Baptismal certificate—her best credential for her work (although she had many degrees and certificates of study.) She stood soundly in her Baptism and Confirmation as indicators of the Source of her work.

Mary Lou loved being a spiritual reflector/director for IVC (she was the first on-board) and a member of Cursillo. Her experience with Shalem Institute's Spiritual Guidance program shaped her way in the world and her desire to find God in all things.

Thanks Mary Lou for years of ministry sharing. You leave us more open to God.

Jeanie Sweeney



Getting to Know the Neighbors and Build Their Trust

by Marie Van Ness

IN FEBRUARY 2015 JOANIE COOLIDGE AND I MET with Alexis Williams, the then Executive Director of the Nauck Community Service Center, a service of the Bonder and Amanda Johnson Community Development Corporation (BAJCDC). Alexis was the only full-time person providing services to the community. There were days she was at the center by herself. I was delighted to help her with this very small community center that had a big job of providing a variety of economic, informational and social features serving the Nauck neighborhood. I also lived a mile from the center.

According to the Washington Post, “Nauck is the oldest African American neighborhood in Arlington. The Levi and Sarah Jones family were among the first African Americans to buy land and build a house there in 1844. Then residents of the nearby Freedman’s Village, recently freed slaves, moved there. And in 1874, D.C. resident John D. Nauck purchased 46 acres subdivided them and sold lots to other black families.”

I have known about the Nauck neighborhood but never knew the people who lived there. Work at the BAJCDC has given me the opportunity to learn more about the neighborhood, get to know the neighbors and be a part of their life experiences.

In 1908, a Christian congregation that later became the Macedonia Baptist Church was organized in the home of **Bonder and Amanda Johnson**, hence the name of the agency.

Though, at the dawn of the 21st century, Macedonia flourished, the surrounding Nauck community, suffered from aging structures and a lack of investments. These conditions led Arlington County to declare the community an area in need of dramatic revitalization.

Our small office is housed on the bottom floor of one of the three affordable-housing complexes, in the Nauck neighborhood. The staff is small; one fulltime social worker, Cicely Whitfield, the new Executive Director, who provides a significant amount of the direct services; and one part time Programs Coordinator, Bri Sheffey, who besides developing and sustaining programs also provides direct services. Both Cicely and Bri grew up and live in Nauck and are familiar with the needs of the neighborhood.

Initially I started working at the agency on the afternoons when Bri wasn’t there. I covered the front desk, answered the phone and saw people who walked in. I also helped collect and distribute coats for the annual winter coat drive. I’m getting to know the neighbors and neighborhood and act as a sounding board for Cicely as she grapples with client and agency issues.

People come to us because they trust the staff and know we will have their best interest to help solve their problem. Our clients come to us with a variety of concerns. Some simply need information; others to use our computers to search for jobs, write resumes, or send e-mails. Others may be facing a crisis; needing child care, dealing with poor family relationships, loss of a job, etc. Some, facing eviction or having their utilities cut-off, often need financial help.

Cicely and Bri are very knowledgeable of both the public and private agencies available to help people and maintain excellent relationships with them. This is particularly true of the faith communities which offer financial assistance as part of their ministries.

Along with the individual services, BAJCDC offers a yearly winter coat and a back-to-school back pack and school supply drive. We also help residents apply for government assistance program such as heating and

cooling assistance, SNAP benefits, Medicaid/Medicare benefits, etc.

BAJCDC is one of centers that weekly distributes food for the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC), the county’s main food assistance program. Large numbers of seniors and disabled adults live in the affordable housing units, so the food is brought to the center and neighbors pick it up every Saturday morning. One of my jobs is to check that people are currently AFAC certified. This has been another great way to get to know the neighbors and build their trust. Recently I began recruiting and scheduling volunteers to help with the Saturday food distribution. I also help whenever I can.

Beginning in 2017, I have run a weekly afternoon Village Time group for the residents living in the neighborhood. Currently, we play BINGO (I buy the snacks and, with ideas from the players, purchase bingo prizes at the dollar store), and each month we celebrate birthdays with a cake. The neighbors enjoy bringing food to share and watch out for one another.

I have learned volumes from Cicely and Bri who are two generations younger than I and full of wisdom. When I started, I was looking for new experiences, wanting to meet new people and have a chance to grow. I have a lot to work on, but am in a good place to do it—somewhat like having your cake and eating it too!





IVC Goes to Zambia

St. Ignatius invites us to be “surprised by God.” Certainly we (long-time Ignatian Volunteer Susan Kral and Northern Virginia Regional Director Joanie Coolidge) have been both surprised and thrilled to discover new possibilities for service emerging for IVC in another part of the world: Zambia, Africa. Located in the countryside just outside the capital of Lusaka is Kasisi Children’s Home, founded in 1926 and run by seven Polish and eight Zambian nuns from the order of the Little Servants of Mary Immaculate.



Kasisi is the largest orphanage in Zambia, housing babies and young children, older girls, street kids, and children infected with HIV/AIDS, about 230 in total. In addition to the sisters, there are 50 Zambian Housemothers who help run the children’s home. While the mission of the children’s home is to provide the children with basic needs, spiritual care, love and protection, and to ensure that the children will be self-supporting once they reach adulthood, Kasisi believes that the best place for a child is with family and tries to find solutions to reunite the children with members of extended family as well as to support them with basic needs once they are back with family.

The story begins with Will Whelan, who lives in Vienna, VA. Will and his whole family have been supporters of and volunteers at Kasisi for several decades, first becoming acquainted with the mission while serving in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Last Fall Will invited IVC members to meet Sr. Mariola when she made her first visit to the United States. Joanie Coolidge and her daughter Rosie met Sister at that reception and were impressed with Sister’s devotion and care for so many children, many with great needs. Her love and the joyful community they have encouraged compelled them to want to learn more about their work. Joanie saw the big picture and decided that volunteering at Kasisi this summer with her daughter could lead to an ongoing relationship between the orphanage and IVC, just the sort of connection Sr. Mariola would like to foster. With the blessing of the IVC National office, IVC is exploring a potential partnership with the Kasisi Children’s Home in Zambia!

Keeping in mind the idea that this will be an ongoing relationship, Joanie, Rosie, and Susan Kral will be volunteering for the month of July at Kasisi and reporting back their experiences. We also hope to assist future IVC volunteers who may have an interest in going to Kasisi, with their travel expenses by starting a travel-assistance fund.

Anyone wishing to support this project can send donations to the National office (www.ivcusa.org, selecting “Northern Virginia” and clicking “DONATE” at the top of the page) and designating the IVC-Kasisi Partnership in the “Additional Information” box.

It may be of interest that many years ago the Tithing Allocation Committee (TAC) of St. Mark’s Catholic Church in Vienna, VA funded the cost of a vehicle for the Kasisi orphanage to transport children to their medical appointments in Lusaka. Will Whelan submitted the grant request. Susan Kral, then a member of St. Mark, was a member of the TAC at the time. “Although the cost of the vehicle was larger than the usual grants awarded by the TAC, Pastor Msgr. Thomas Cassidy encouraged us to support Kasisi in this request,” she states. It was Will’s invitation last October to IVC to attend a reception his family was hosting for Sister Mariola that peaked our interest in the mission of Kasisi.

In case you are pondering the experience for yourself, check out these comments from other Kasisi volunteers:

~ “Often it is said, home is where when you go, you are welcome. But Kasisi has taught me differently. For Kasisi, home is where when you go, you belong.”

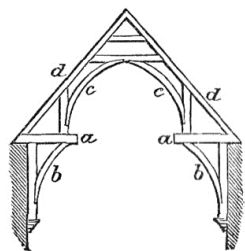
~ “Kasisi is the happiest place on earth!”

Stay tuned to find out how things in Zambia go. It should be an exciting ride!



'Party wih a Purpose' Event for Kasisi



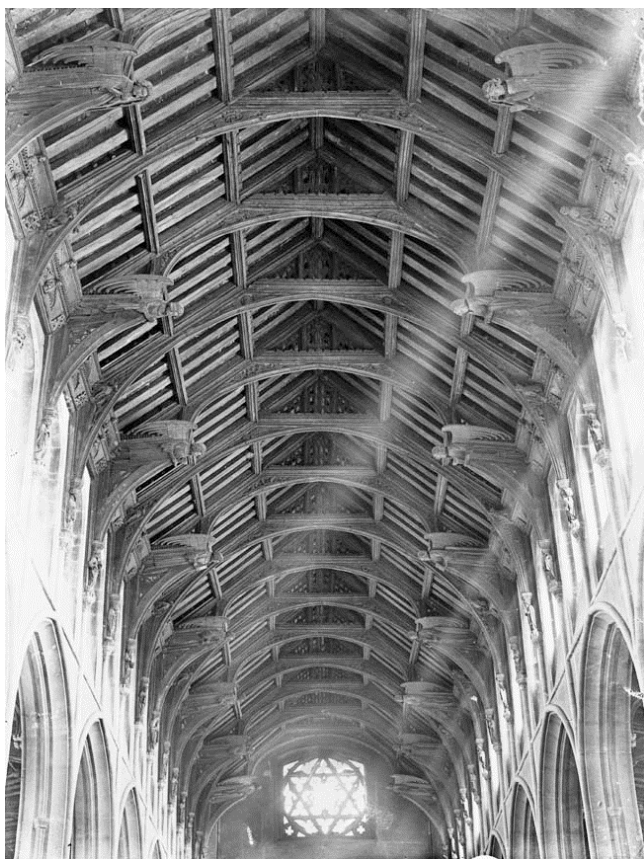


Section of Hammer-beam Roof:
 aa, hammer-beam; bb, hammer-brace; cc, collar-brace; dd, rafters.

How Ignatian Volunteers are Like Hammerbeam Roofs in East Anglia

by Ruth Coyne, Associate Editor, DC/Metro MD Region

"A hammerbeam roof is a decorative, open timber roof truss typical of English Gothic architecture and has been called "...the most spectacular endeavour of the English Medieval carpenter." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hammerbeam_roof)



St. Mary's Church, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk
[\(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

Internet Photo

Several weeks ago I came across a book about some old churches in eastern England. The churches are distinguished by unusual roofs. At the end of each roof beam is a carved image of an angel with widespread wings.

The angel beam roofs are mainly in East Anglia, i.e. Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. These medieval parish churches contain treasures. Open beam wooden trusses support the roofs of these churches, and at the end of each wooden truss is carved an angel. Skilled carpenters carved angels and there the angels have remained, presumably giving glory to God, for nearly 600 years. The winged angels, each one different from its companions, are the work of master woodworkers. Not only do the angels have individual faces, but many of them play musical instruments or hold the instruments of Christ's Passion, e.g., nails, crown of thorns. The medieval church taught her people not only through preaching, choral music and the sacraments, but with the visual arts. These beautiful angel beam roofs survived when much of the artistic glory of medieval England was destroyed during the Reformation in the 1540s. For example, almost no statues or stained glass remain. The hammerbeam roofs rose very high above the floor of the church were hard to reach and thus to destroy, and so they remain. It would be easy to miss the angels if you didn't look up and up. I urge readers to get Michael Rimmer's book, or go to the website listed below.*

What do hammerbeam roofs and angels with trumpets and lutes have to do with IVC volunteers?

Volunteers often contribute beautiful work but the work may not be noticed unless you are looking for it. Volunteers carry on a tradition of service, just as master carpenters served their communities as they built the parish churches in East Anglia. Volunteers come together as a community in prayer and action. Volunteers may not craft with carpenter's tools, wood and paint. They craft with individual talents and time, each person bringing something unique to IVC and to the community.

Ignatian Volunteer Corps members in the Washington D.C. area volunteer at homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and medical clinics. They support men and women coming out of jail to write resumes and identify job possibilities. Other volunteers work at advocacy centers, helping to promote a vision of justice and reparation to a world beset by conflict and injustice. Still other volunteers offer the individual IVC members the spiritual reflection so necessary for a holy

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balance: I volunteer, but not for my own good alone but for that of others. Where is God revealed in mundane volunteer tasks? The spiritual reflector helps us to see Him.

IVC volunteers aren't often noticed by the larger community, but if you pay attention you will see them, each with his or her assignment and way of offering service and praise. In their assignments each person has the equivalent of the angels' musical or artifact of Christ's Passion.

IVC volunteers carry on tradition. In the past many religious communities were founded to address particular needs in a community. Many of us can recall a time when schools and hospitals were staffed largely by members of religious communities. That day is long past, but the needs continue. IVC volunteers respond to current needs in our communities. Volunteers can be role models of service.

If the hammerbeam roofs and the carved angels were made by master carpenters, the Ignatian Volunteer Corps was structured by talented people, and is served by directors who plan, recruit, and administer. We have retreats and days of recollection, opportunities to hear speakers or attend fund raising dinners because of the work of our own master organizers.

The roof angels are lovely to behold. Their history inspires reflection. Their existence enriches us, even if in a small way. The service of IVC volunteers inspires, enriches, graces each individual person and the community in which he or she serves.

***The Angel Roofs of East Anglia: Unseen Masterpieces of the Middle Ages** by Michael Rimmer, The Lutterworth Press, 2015, ISBN-13: 978-0718893699 ISBN-10: 0718893697

<http://www.angelroofs.com/what-are-angel-roofs>

Upcoming Events

June Retreat
June 12-14, 2017
Loyola Retreat House
Faulkner, MD
Facilitated by
Edwina Gateley

Fall Retreat
Sept 11-13, 2017
Loyola Retreat House
Faulkner, MD
Facilitator
TBA

