

Greater Cincinnati Region

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Grown Men Do Cry!

As Dominic Duren fought back the tears while sharing what it's like to be a returning citizen, I looked around the room and saw grown men crying, oh yes and women too! That's what it's like with the Ignatian Volunteer Corps. When we share with the victims of injustice our hearts break too. Dominic who grew up in Compton, California with loving, caring parents was smart enough to graduate from high school at the age of 16. But he wasn't old enough to fight off the lure of street gangs and drugs. So he served his time in prison in Ohio.

But as Paul Graham, National Director of the St. Vincent de Paul Reentry Program, shared returning citizens continue to "serve their sentence" long after leaving prison. Trying to find work, transportation, housing and more, returning citizens encounter one obstacle after another that prevent them from sustainable living and often forces them back into prison. For example the bus company used to give non-profits reduced rates for bus tokens and St. Vincent de Paul and other nonprofits provided transportation to those who could not get licenses or car loans because of a record. Just recently the bus company ended that practice and it has a serious impact on SVDP's ability to serve those in need. One IVC volunteer suggested an on-line giving campaign to buy bus tokens.

Fortunately for Dominic and those he serves as SVDP Cincinnati's Reentry Coordinator, he has hurdled the obstacles. "Every time I got turned down... like trying to go back home to California when I got out of jail...or having to check a box on

a job application that automatically meant it would go in an ignore pile... or not being able to get a house in the neighborhood I wanted for my kids...or not being able to get a car loan...it was hard and I asked God why... but it's led me to where I am today and I know God has been with me all along!"* Indeed God has! Dominic was a guest of Pope Francis on November 6th. We circled around Dominic and prayed for his visit with the Pope. How deep is God's love!

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Dominic Duren, SVDP Cincinnati's Reentry Coordinator

EWTN News- On Nov. 6, a special Jubilee for Prisoners will be celebrated at the Vatican, drawing detainees and their families from around Italy and beyond to St. Peter's Basilica for Mass with Pope Francis and a special reception after. "For the first time it will be possible for a large number of detainees from different parts of Italy and other countries to be present in St. Peter's Basilica to live the Jubilee with Pope Francis," Archbishop Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, spoke to journalists at the presentation of the Jubilee for Prisoners, as well as that of the Nov.

13 Jubilee for the Socially Marginalized, set to coincide with the close of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica, marking the end of the Jubilee of Mercy. The Jubilee of Prisoners, intended above all for prisoners and their families, penitentiary employees, prison chaplains and various associations that assist both inside and outside of the prison system, will take place Nov. 5-6 Jubilee of Mercy.

Justice and Mercy Fall Retreat

Tony Stieritz, Cincinnati Archdiocesan Director of Social Action, facilitated our fall retreat. He shared & lives the seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching

- Dignity of the Human Person.
- Call to Family, Community and Participation.
- Rights and Responsibilities.
- Preferential Option for and with People who are Poor.
- Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.
- Solidarity.
- Care for God's Creation.

Tony challenged us to act with Charity and Justice; not only serving others but changing the social structures that create inequity. He also encouraged us to move from doing things for others to doing things with others. For example advocating for the needs of others is great, community organizing so that others can stand up for themselves is even greater.

Tony introduced us to Paul Graham and Dominic Duren, featured in our cover article. They gave us examples of advocacy, community organizing, acts of charity, and structural changes.

Tony encouraged us to spend time with Pope Francis ourselves as we read and reflected on *Misericordiae Vultus*, Pope Francis' introduction of the Jubilee of Mercy. We had two opportunities to roam the grounds of beautiful convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame in Covington, Kentucky as we reflected on the Pope's words. As we reflected together afterwards several shared how challenging the call to Mercy is to put into practice on a day to day basis and yet how gracious God's love and mercy is for us and needs to be shared. "The mercy of God is his loving concern for each one of us. He feels responsible, that is, he desires our wellbeing and he wants to see us happy, full of joy, and peaceful. This is the path which the merciful love of Christians must also travel. As the Father loves, so do his children. Just as he is merciful, so we are called to be merciful to each other."

We ended our time with Tony sending him off to the Vatican as well. We gave both Tony and Dominic Jim Borgman's, (Cincinnati Artist), "Feelings" T shirt in Italian so they can mingle with the natives. Buon viaggio Tony and Dominic!

Father Joe Folzenlogen, SJ celebrated our All Saints liturgy and reminded us that: "Justice is getting what you deserve. Mercy is not getting what you deserve. Grace is getting what you don't deserve." We are graced by the Love and Mercy of God!



Tony Stieritz, Director Social Action



Paul Graham

Dominic Duren



Sr, Carolyn Brink, RSM



Ellen Owens & Don Ottke

IVC Cincinnati 10th Anniversary



Sam Schloemer in May 2006 next to painting by Fr. Jim Hasse, SJ of Ignatius (who if you look closely has written to the Ignatian Volunteers).

In May the Ignatian Volunteer Corps of Cincinnati turned ten. Our 10th Anniversary celebration was held on October 15th in Dayton, Kentucky at Riverpointe Clubhouse overlooking the Ohio River (thanks to our host Tom Rebel). We honored Sam Schloemer, the inaugural Regional Director for Cincinnati. He shared how his call to initiate IVC Cincinnati was challenging and fulfilling. He tearfully read a letter he wrote after leaving IVC:

December 1, 2012

Thinking back to September, 2005, I received a letter from the selection committee asking me to consider starting an Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC). At the time I thought, "I really don't need one more thing." Over the next several weeks I started thinking about the spiritual component, its value and my need for it in my journey, and that's when I put together a letter of interest. In late December, 2005, after several interviews, the last being with Father Edward W Schmidt, SJ, Provincial of the Chicago Province of the Jesuits, he appointed me to start an IVC in Cincinnati. Nationally, it was the sixteenth location the various Jesuit Provinces sponsored. Spiritually I could not have taken on a more significant activity than IVC. I've been a most thankful person for the past six years. The spiritual component, which was the focus of my discernment, was everything I had hoped for. Volunteering, meeting with a Spiritual Reflector, gathering with fifteen-plus people on a monthly basis to share and reflect on where we had found the Face of God in the faces of the materially poor exceeds anything I could have envisioned. Organizing, scheduling, networking and meeting with new people were natural for me after being in sales and marketing for thirty-five years. I loved it and my enthusiasm for IVC showed. There was no doubt as to what I was going to accomplish. Initially, I depend-

ed on three people: Father Joe Folzenlogen, SJ (I had to get the spelling correct first), George Sullivan, my counterpart in Chicago, and Suzanne Geaney, former CEO, IVC National. They were always there to answer my questions, but were kind enough to hold back on too much advice. I will not forget Nancy Danehy, a dedicated volunteer, who died shortly after we started. That was a tremendous loss in our short life at that time, but a significant reminder of the fragility of life and relationships. I'm thankful for the Spiritual Reflectors who bring further meaning to volunteering, and for words of support from many Jesuits in recognizing the IVC mission is what Ignatius gave us to ponder. For all the directors of the service agencies for your willingness to have one of our volunteers, and who have come to know, appreciate the kindness, the commitment and the quality of our volunteers. For our volunteers, even if I tried, I could never fully express all the good you do as you address the most urgent needs of our society today and the thousands of hours you have given through your commitment of service two days a week.

Thanks, it's been a great journey, Sam

Those present shared their gratitude for Sam and shared stories. Sam we are grateful for your leadership and IVC Cincinnati remains indebted to you for our roots! Thank you to all who attended the event and all the women and men who keep IVC Cincinnati thriving in Ohio!

Sincere Thanks to Our Summer Quarter

Donors

Midwest Jesuit Province
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Thank you to those of you receiving this by email. Not only are you empowering us to “Care for Our Common Home” as Pope Francis urges, you save the expenses we would incur.

To support the Ignatian Volunteer Corps Cincinnati with a tax deductible donation you can do so online at <https://www.gifttool.com/donations/Donate?ID=2033&AID=1984> (Be sure to designate Cincinnati in the drop down menu.)

Or send your donation to:
IVC Cincinnati
4714 Chickering Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45232



The Ignatian Volunteer Corps has been in Cincinnati for over 10 years now and like Sam, I echo gratitude for:

- Fr. Joe Folzenlogen, SJ, Spiritual Animator & the Claver Community that discerned the need for IVC Cincinnati
- Our Spiritual Reflectors, who assure that we reflect on our service & find God in our experience

- Our Service Site providers for engaging our volunteers in purposeful work & serving community needs
- And most of all the amazing women and men of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps who serve, reflect and build community!

In 2014 Pope Francis shared, “Every state of life leads to holiness, always but only if we are open to the grace of God’s gift... we must remember that holiness is a gift from God - it is not something we can achieve on our own.” Holiness, he continued “is not the prerogative of only a few: holiness is a gift that is offered to all, without exception, so that it constitutes the distinctive character of every Christian.”

“We are all called to be saints,” he said. But holiness is not “granted only to those who have the opportunity to break away from the ordinary tasks, to devote themselves to prayer.” Rather, everyone is called to holiness in their own state of life. “Indeed,” he said, “it is by living with love and offering Christian witness in our daily tasks that we are called to become saints... Always and everywhere you can become a saint, that is, by being receptive to the grace that is working in us and leads us to holiness.”

The men & women of IVC respond to this call to holiness by serving those in need, supporting one another, and growing closer to God. As we wrap up the Jubilee of Mercy, whether being at the Vatican in Spirit with Dominic and Tony or being at a soup kitchen, food pantry, adult or children’s classroom, caring for elderly, giving retreats, etc. may we be keenly aware of the Gift God has given us.

May you all be blessed as you have so richly blessed others! *Linda*