

# Corps Connector

Volume 15, Number 2

July, 2020

## National Day of



**John Green**



**Barbara Lee**

## Reflection

via Zoom



# Notes from the Editor

PART ONE OF A SERIES

Northern Virginia Regional Council:

Mike Mothes, Regional Director

Kai De Altin Popiolek

Pia Dinon-Clark

Emilie Gillanders

James Kelley

Christine McLaughlin

John McLaughlin

Steve Mournighan

Anne Murphy

Rebecca Ruiz

Richard Urban

## Inside this Issue:

Page 2 –4 Notes from the Editor

Page 5-6 National Day of Reflection

Page 7-8 Migration & Immigration Services

Page 9-10 Save the Date; Evening of Gratitude

## Corps Connector

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

Volunteer Corps.

Dick Bowling, Editor

Mary Anne Cummins, Proof Reader

Send submissions or comments to dick.bowling777@gmail.com

**T**HIS IS A TIME OF GREAT CHANGE. Young people marching in the streets again, the rest of us confined to our homes. But you and I together have survived great changes before and have grown. My story begins in 1960 and I had no idea of the mammoth brink of change I was standing on.

I was only 25 years old when I was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky. (Spring, 2020 was my 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.) The Archbishop gave me the most precious gift of my life when he assigned me as associate pastor to Father Bill Hartlage, pastor of Ss. Simon and Jude Parish. This assignment was a double blessing; as a priest, Father Bill was, first, not only one of the “good guys,” but kind, loving, caring deeply for his people; and second, as a man, he became the father to me I’d been searching for all my life. Not that my own Dad was so bad; but was one of those men back then, who ruled with an iron hand and insisted we all, my mother included, do exactly what he said, *always*; caring little that I was not his clone, nor his property, nor his slave. Nor did he understand that I was only placed in his care temporarily to love and cherish until I became my own person.



Father Bill

The first thing I noticed about Father Bill was he listened to me which was a brand new experience. He cared about the things I cared about, like the liturgy, the passion of my own life. He intuitively understood that all I’d ever wanted to be was a priest and he allowed that part of me to bloom and grow; he allowed my priesthood to follow its own natural path. I immediately found I loved young people and cared that they would grow into people who would flower like Father Bill was letting me flower.

There was another “good guy” priest who introduced me to the Young Christian Students (YCS) movement; I rounded up a bunch of high school students from the parish and soon started my own YCS chapter. In the YCS I encouraged my young people to care about things; things that were soon to consume an entire generation of young people during the 60s: civil rights, the sexual revolution, women’s liberation, the Vietnam War, peace and love. These movements were all in their infancy at the time I introduced them to my kids in YCS.

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

In the early days of YCS, I fumbled and bumbled my way with these weird alien creatures called teenagers. I had spent my entire adolescence and the first five years of my adult life out in the country, tucked away in that house of prayer, meditation and study called the seminary. With a past like that how could I understand what my kids were thinking or feeling or even talking about most of the time? So I just loved them!

A moment ago I told you about my Dad. I guess he wasn't so bad after all; soon after I went to Simon and Jude, he surprised me with an offer to purchase all the materials needed to build a boy's camp (he thought we'd build it on a piece of land our family owned outside of Louisville). Father Bill quickly helped me round up the builders, painters, and construction workers from our parish to put it up; and when next summer rolled around we had a brand new camp ready for the boys in our parish. (That the girls might also like a camp, was not even on my radar screen back then.)



Ss. Simon & Jude

I talked to three seminarians, who had experience at our diocesan summer camp, and they joined us as counselors at Buck Lodge. ("Buck" was a nickname my Dad inherited on the L.& N. Railroad where he worked.) Each summer, for the next five years, our camp rocked. As each boy graduated from the eighth grade, I invited him to become a junior counselor at the camp.

Within its pastoral boundaries, Ss. Simon and Jude included the city's largest housing project. Unlike today's projects this project was not such a terrible place to live. There were a lot of single moms both white and black living there; Effie Hutchison and Myrt Dalton among them. These two dedicated parishioners headed our school cafeteria. I became very close to both of them and their children. (Naturally, Myrt's three boys soon became the "Dalton gang.")

There were also a lot of troubled kids in the projects who got tangled up with the law. So I became well acquainted with the Jefferson County juvenile court judge; and soon found myself in his office more often, it seemed, than I was seen at the altar. Although he did not place our kids in my custody, nevertheless he trusted me to look after them.

In those days people knew they could call Simon and Jude any time and get help from us. Like the time a call came in from a trailer park about three blocks from the rectory. In this park was a concrete-block building that housed the trailer office and an upstairs apartment. Several months before this, a man in the upstairs apartment, in drunken desperation, had consumed five or six cans of Sterno, destroyed his esophagus and had to be operated on. While he healed, they inserted a feeding tube in his stomach. The caller said this man was pouring beer down his tube, it started to leak and now the fluid had soaked his mattress, and was running out across the room; could we do something? I took the call and said I'd be over. When I got there it was worse than I imagined, a terrible stench permeated the room and a

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

stream of greenish-looking runny stuff was reaching out across the room; the occupant was so drunk I couldn't talk to him, so instead I called Nunnley Funeral Home. They had their own ambulance and were just up the street. They came, tucked the man in their gurney and swept him off to General Hospital. I thanked God that was over; but I spoke too soon. Three weeks later he was back!

I went over, found things pretty much as before, greenish stuff seeping everywhere. This time I called the police who were also serving as paramedics; I told them the story; and when they came up the steps with their gurney and knocked, the man drunkenly yelled, "Go 'way! Ain't goin' no hospital!" The police told me they couldn't enter the apartment without his permission. By this time I was seething, fire in my eyes; I looked at the man (who weighed maybe 85 pounds) and said, "If they don't take you, I'm gonna pick you up, carry you down those steps, put you in the front seat of my Volkswagen and haul you to the hospital myself. You want that?" He looked at me, then the police, "Okay, *they* can take me," he growled.

I asked the officers if I could follow them to the hospital and they said yes but I'd have to keep real close behind, because they run through red lights and everything. I've often wondered what it looked like with the police, their lights flashing, siren screaming, tearing down the road toward General Hospital with this little VW panting along behind!

The halcyon days at Ss. Simon and Jude ended too soon; as I left there I failed to notice a ominous tiny storm cloud just beginning to gather on the edge of my life's horizon.







# *IVC National Day of Reflection*

## *June 9-11, 2020*

*Theme: Being Women and Men for and with Others during Pandemic Times*

WHAT A DELIGHT TO COME TOGETHER ON ZOOM with 24 others from Ignatian Volunteer Corps from all over the country for this time of reflection, knowing that 3 other groups were taking place at the very same time. In the next days a total of **300 IVCers** (out of 600 national volunteers) would attend this retreat. This alone lifted my heart as we began.

Thanks go to our IVC National Director, **Mary McGinnity**, who welcomed us to the first IVC National Retreat. She reminded us of the Pentecost empowerment during this pandemic time, and of the horror of racism that takes our breath away. We began by breathing in the Spirit to be renewed in our service - to be the IVC face of God for others. And it was wonder-ful to see all the faces on the Zoom screen.

Regional directors and staff facilitated the individual sessions. What a great gang! Our own Mike Mothes and Mike Goggin got a call out in my pre-meeting session for their IT prowess in getting this retreat together. Kudos. Yay team!

A video called Deer's Cry with nature images of grandeur and light and also the realities of the evils of misused power, the virus, racism, poverty was brought to us by **Fr. Frank Reale**, SJ. It also presented the familiar prayer attributed to St Patrick: "Christ with me, before me, behind me, in me, beneath me", reminding us that God is in all things. Then Fr. Reale led us in

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

an Ignatian reflection that emphasized that we come before God: AS WE ARE, giving us a chance to see our own pandemic frustrations, loneliness, and fears as well as to see what else opened us to God and others. He closed his session with the prayer loved by St Ignatius – Anima Christi (Soul of Christ).

**Barbara Lee**, Spiritual Reflector for IVC and author of *God Isn't Finished With Me Yet* that we read for City Group, presented a session examining how to serve now when we can't be at our sites. "The gifts that we have used in the past are not necessarily the ones we will use now," she said. She encouraged us with figures from scripture who listened to God's call anew and urged us to set aside our clinging to our old calls, inviting us to "Let God surprise you."

**John Green** is the IVC Regional Director in Philadelphia/South Jersey and also serves as IVC Vice President of Partnership Engagement. John took us through the practical issues of finding God in this time of isolation: wondering how to find God in the quiet of our new lives; noticing that without all the distractions there might be more space for God; wondering what new relationships have happened; seeing the ways we long to be healed; experiencing the tension between living alone and in community. "Allow God to find you in these times of quarantine," he invited.

After quiet time we went into our small groups. What fun for me to share with Anne from Omaha, Phil from NY, Mike from Florida and others! Service sites were missed by all although some IVC tutors were keeping up online. We shared how we were noticing ways of community and service during this time, our gifts from God used in surprisingly new ways as we sought to continue being a man or woman for others.

Lovely Caroline **Park** (whom we know from our Loyola retreats) sang and played Milton's Sonnet 19 with the wonderful line, "they also serve who stand and wait." Stand and wait seemed perfect for this uncomfortable in-between time.

**Jim Fleming S.J.** of Campion Center in Weston, MA. (An aside: I grew up a half mile away, played baseball and ice-skated with the seminarians there.) finished our day with a guided Ignatian Examen to dispel the notion that God is "up there" and is instead personally "entangled" in our everyday life.

Lastly, Fr Fleming closed with a Mary Oliver poem/prayer of noticing. "A Summer Day" left us with a wonderful pandemic question, "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

Jeanie Sweeney,  
Spiritual Reflector,  
IVC Northern Virginia



**OUR IGNATIAN VOLUNTEERS CONTINUE TO SERVE THE MISSION of their organization during the pandemic with staff members working from home, while many volunteer sites are closed. In these uncertain times one of our volunteers shares her story of service.**



WELCOMING THE NEWCOMER

## Immigrant and Refugee Services

Catholic Charities help newcomers become self-sufficient and productive members of American society by offering a combination of legal immigration consultation and representation, English-language instruction, other adult education programs, workforce development training, naturalization assistance, bilingual community education, and refugee resettlement and assistance services.

by Ann Johnson

I am a volunteer at Migration & Refugee Services (MRS), a part of Catholic Charities of the Arlington diocese. In the past I have worked in the office doing all sorts of data entry and financial paperwork; but now that work is being done by case managers. I have worked only one day since March, yet forms have to be filled out for each 2020 case to show the value of all goods donated to each family. This meant I had to create a price list for everything from a sofa to a bar of soap. Since the forms could not be filled out online I had to do each one by hand, scan them, and then e-mail them back to the case manager.

John White is another MRS IVCer. Before the pandemic, he was primarily involved with helping refugees find employment. But since March he has been involved in a lot of other jobs, serving the most immediate needs of the clients. He has made grocery deliveries to Alexandria and diaper deliveries out to our Manassas office. (MRS receives 8,000 diapers each month from The Greater DC Diaper Bank. This helps our clients supplement what they must buy themselves.) MRS receives stripped-down computers that John has delivered to families in Manassas; he also transported Chromebooks donated by the City of Alexandria to our clients living there. (A Chromebook is an innovative alternative to most laptops available on the market with a simple operating system that's easy to use and even easier on the wallet.)

John also continues with his employment-related activities. He receives resumes from refugees seeking jobs and helps them polish their resumes so they will catch the attention of potential employers. Some refugees have sought employment with the census bureau and many are now driving for delivery services.

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

## **CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7**

MRS has a pre-employment training program (PET) that, before the pandemic, was an in-person gathering of all recently arrived refugees to prepare them for finding a job in the US job market. The program was presented over two days in 10 hours. With the pandemic it will now be presented as a virtual online gathering for six hours. John is working to make the transition to the virtual delivery and is cutting the presentations back to fit the reduced time frame.

The employment section has had a lot of success in finding jobs for our refugees in spite of the present difficult job market. In the past three months, 100 clients have been hired in a variety of positions. John has given me some examples of new jobs for refugees and those seeking asylum (asylees):

“We helped a nurse from the Congo (an asylee) who had faced joblessness and homelessness gain a job as a paid nurse’s aide in a training program at a Winchester hospital. She also received career coaching, resume assistance, practice with interviews and assistance with job applications at MRS.”

“We helped a Special Immigrant Visa recipient (SIV) who had a background in auditing obtain employment as an auditor working for Metro; MRS helped him receive extensive employment support, resume and cover letter writing, and ESL classes. He also took advantage of all the professional career development opportunities we offer.”

“A nurse from Ethiopia was helped through our employment program with career guidance and training. She is now working as a nurse at Washington MedStar hospital at \$38 an hour.”

“Two clients arrived in the U. S. speaking no English and started in food preparation at Chipotle and are now apprentice managers on track to manage their own stores.”

According to MRS director, Belayneh Loppisso, they have received only 350 refugees in 10 months while several years ago over 650 came in a year. It’s impossible to say at this point how many more will be coming after the office is opened up again and how much work there will be for the volunteers to do.

---

### **Editor’s Note:**

How has the epidemic impacted your service site? How have you adapted? Are you still able to volunteer? Have your duties changed? Tell us your story, send us an update [dickbowling777@gmail.com](mailto:dickbowling777@gmail.com).





# Save the Date!

SUNDAY  SEPTEMBER 27, 2020  6:00 P.M.

## Honoring Our Della Strada Award Recipients

**Marie A. Dennis**  
Senior Advisor to the  
Secretary General,  
Pax Christi International

**Charles L. Short**  
(retired) Special Assistant  
to the County Executive  
Montgomery County, MD

## Kathleen Curtin Spirituality in Mission Award Recipient

**Fr. Patrick J. Conroy, S.J.**  
Chaplain, United States House of Representatives

## Details of Our Celebration

Due to the on-going public health emergency, our celebration will be a combination of live presentations and small watch parties.



## Sponsorships & Tribute Ads Available

Mike Goggin, [mgoggin@ivcusa.org](mailto:mgoggin@ivcusa.org)  
Mike Mothes, [mmothes@ivcusa.org](mailto:mmothes@ivcusa.org)

INVITATION TO FOLLOW

**continued next page**

# Evening of Gratitude



Co-Sponsored by the DC / Metro Maryland  
and Northern Virginia Regional Councils  
of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps

**F**ULLY AWARE OF the reality of COVID-19 and of our priority to keep our community safe, this year's Evening of Gratitude will come to you virtually on Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup>.

Our plan is to gather the IVC leaders and honorees in a central location. The program will be filmed and streamed live, via Zoom.

Event guests in the Washington DC/Metro MD/Northern Virginia area are invited to join small watch parties with friends.

Guests are also welcome to view the event in the comfort of their own homes. More details to follow.