



A Note from the Director. . .

It seems like yesterday that I was writing an article for TOGETHERNESS and here we are with another publication. I am so grateful to Eileen Theys for making this newsletter a reality. I know we all appreciate her great work.

I am delighted to bring good news from the meeting of the Central Council which Tony Ciorra and I attended Saturday, April 29, 2006. We had the privilege to personally present our proposal to become a District-in-Formation to Fr. Francois Hamel, Fr. Leo Gregoire, Fr. Michael Craig, Fr. Jean-Paul Chiasson, Fr. Paul-Alain Monpas, and Mr. & Mrs. Fernand Turgeon.

Following the meeting on Saturday morning we gathered for 11:30 Mass at the Central House Chapel. As Mass was about to begin Fr. Francois who was celebrant asked that we pray for the newly established District-in-Formation in the United States. Tony and I were quite elated to hear this good news. The Alleluia was extra special at this Mass.

During lunch with the Central Council we were fortunate to visit with Fr. Yvon Carpentier the former Director General. He sends his regards to all those who know him from the early days of this Region.

In the days ahead Tony Ciorra and I will be meeting with Fr. Francois to discuss the transition from a Region to a District-in-Formation. For the moment it is planned that the proclamation will be made at the August meeting and hopefully by Bishop Ling who will be our keynote speaker. At a designated time after that we will convene our first District Assembly. The details for all this will be shared with you after meeting with Fr. Francois.

I wish to thank everyone for your prayers and support as we move ahead in our life in Voluntas Dei. This is a major turning point for all of us who are part of the United States District and it will require of all of us a concerted effort to be integrally involved in the life of the Institute. Let us continue to pray for one another and for vocations in the Church and in Voluntas Dei.

*Respectfully,  
 George Hazler. I.V.Dei  
 Director*

## August Congress. . .

The August Congress will be held from Thursday, August 3 to Saturday, August 5, 2006. It will begin with an optional Mass at 1:00 p.m. Formation sessions begin at 2:00 p.m. and the General Session (for everyone) will begin at 7:00 p.m.

### Reservations:

The August Congress will be held at **Daylesford Abbey**, 220 South Valley Road, Paoli, PA. The number of rooms at the Abbey is limited and will be reserved on a first-come, first-serve basis. Total cost for the Abbey for lodging and meals is \$160 per person. To make your reservation at the Abbey please call Elaine Basile at 732-571-3372.

Overflow accommodations have been arranged at the **Wyndham Hotel**, 888 Chesterbrook Blvd., Wayne, PA. Our cost is \$105 (including tax) per night. For reservations at the hotel please call 1-800-996-3426. ***Be sure to mention that you are with *Voluntas Dei*.*** Anyone staying at the hotel should have their own transportation as the hotel is 3 ½ miles from the Abbey.

For those staying at the hotel the cost of meals at the Abbey will be \$50 per person. Please make checks payable to Daylesford Abbey and send to Elaine Basile, 11 Central Road, Monmouth Beach, NJ 07750.

### Transportation:

In order to accommodate those members who will be flying into **Philadelphia Airport**, transportation will be arranged from the airport to the Abbey. For those arriving on Thursday, August 3, there will be one shuttle to meet you at the airport at 10:00 a.m. For those arriving on Friday, August 4, we will provide two pick-up times at 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Departures from the Abbey on Saturday, August 5, will be at 12:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. (or following our closing Mass). Please try to arrange your flights as close to these times as possible. Also, when your flight arrangements have been made please call Elaine and Domenic Basile at 732-571-3372.



## Reflections. . .

### Breaking the Silence

We are Called

To be

Like the Virgin of the Annunciation  
Announcers of the Good News  
Preachers of the New Evangelization  
Vessels to nurture and incarnate the Word  
in our time and place

Together we sat in silence and listened  
for the end note of the ringing bowl  
Listening for the nothingness that is the opening  
for the voice of God to break the silence  
the voice that speaks through Scripture  
and through our sharing of the stories of  
our lives

We know not  
what seeds God is planting in the silence  
in our concentration  
in our distractedness

We know not  
what fruit our contemplation might bear

But in our unknowing  
we enter the silence  
Sharing our troubled hearts with Mary  
Listening for some Good News to share  
to uplift the oppressed and lowly  
to sow peace

We know not the answers [How can this be?]  
But we trust God completely [Let it be!]  
So we enter the silence, and wait for an angel.

By Greg Kremer



“Be the change you want to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi

Focus. . .

## Greg Kremer

I was born and raised in Southgate KY, a suburb of Cincinnati OH. I was the second of three sons who grew up together in a loving Catholic family, surrounded by cousins and relatives. After a high school career that included lots of sports and fun along with good schooling, I went to a small engineering college (Rose-Hulman) in Indiana and got a degree in Mechanical Engineering, then worked as a Mechanical Engineer for several years for General Electric Aircraft Engines in Cincinnati. In 1993 I re-evaluated my life and decided that rather than working to make money for a corporation I would prefer to work with/for people. After much consideration I felt the call to education, and took the steps to become a college professor. I entered graduate school at the University of Cincinnati to get the required degrees and in 1998 I completed my PhD and started teaching in the ME Department at Ohio University in Athens OH. After 8 wonderful years at OU I am currently an associate professor and have the pleasure of guiding all of our seniors through their capstone design projects as well as conducting energy-related research (cleaner coal technologies, fuel cells, bio-fuels, etc.).

I have a great love of nature, gardening, hiking/backpacking/biking and other outdoor activities. I am very environmentally conscious and strive to live as simply and sustainably as possible. I have a renewable energy system at my home (consisting of a 1kW solar panel array and a 1kW wind turbine) that produces more electricity than I use, making my home a net power producer. I try to grow as much of my own food as possible, and buy most of the other food I eat from the local Farmer's Market.

My path to *Voluntas Dei* is one filled with God-instances (Fr. Jim Willig's term for those coincidences that bear the touch of the divine). In 2001, as I was struggling with a perceived tension between religion and spirituality and trying to understand the meaning of my life, by one of those God-instances in I was exposed to John Paul II's "Private Prayers – Mountaineers of the Spirit" audiobook in which he extols the importance of Secular Institutes in today's world. Shortly after that I came across a booklet about Blessed Pier

Giorgio Frassati that was translated by a priest who taught me religion back in high school. Pier Giorgio had a love for the mountains, studied engineering in order to help others, and was a 3<sup>rd</sup> order Dominican who lived the true lay vocation from his position in the world. So the possibility of a completely different type of vocation than I had considered in the past was planted in my mind early in 2002. The seed was planted, but I was still resistant, clinging to the life I had worked to establish.

During my time of turmoil, I visited my best friend Rob during the summer of 2002 and was greatly influenced by our discussions about the writings of the Early Church fathers and the Pope's "Theology of the Body", and by his example of daily mass, weekly adoration, and strong involvement in the parish community. On that same trip I met my cousin Matt for a multi-day mountain biking trip in the mountains of CO and Utah and we experienced several acts that could best be described as divine intervention, as well as experiencing God in His infinite beauty and majesty in nature. Before the trip I was a lukewarm Catholic. I was on a "spiritual journey" and had read philosophic and spiritual works extensively but my spiritual search was not deeply rooted in Catholicism – in fact it seemed to be leading me away from organized religion into an "individualistic" spirituality. My friend helped me to understand the "humanity of the Church" and the difference between infallible teachings and human (and therefore fallible) actions. The "Theology of the Body" helped me to see the true beauty of both the vocation to married life rightly lived and the beauty of "celibacy for the Kingdom", and I came back from the trip inspired and convinced of the Truth of Catholicism and thirsting for more. I bought a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and was awed by the beauty of the true faith. The totality of the experiences that summer were like a "eureka" moment of discovery - I felt like I had finally found what I had been searching for to understand the meaning of life in general and God's plan for my life in particular. I started getting involved in my parish, eventually becoming active in all aspects of parish faith formation, with my biggest involvement being my position as the Youth Minister for the 2 Catholic parishes in Athens.

I eventually came to realize that truly and fully living a vocation as a lay Catholic is not an “easy way out” compared to other vocations within the Church – rightly understood, all Catholic vocations involve complete self-giving. Because the beauty of St. Francis' life and spirituality resonated with me I researched the various Franciscan orders and extensively studied the rule of the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO). I also researched other third orders, and secular institutes, but not much info was available except for what I found about Voluntas Dei through the website. After much prayer, the thing that finally convinced me to take the next step was finding a favorite prayer of St. Gerard (my patron saint), which concluded: "my only business is to do the will of God."

Encouraged by this prayer that I was being called to Voluntas Dei, on January 1 2004 I contacted the vocations director listed on the web site (Fr. Andrew) to request more information. I attended my first meeting in March 2004 as an observer, and felt incredibly welcomed and at home from the first day I met the members of Voluntas Dei USA. I continued observing and discerning for over a year, then started the application process and entered into Aspirancy in March 2006. I have a sense of great joy and peace in my life, because I was lost, but have found my vocation in the consecrated life in Voluntas Dei secular institute, and it has set my soul on fire.

*Greg*



## News From Our Members. . .

**Tony DiPalma's** dear mother and our good friend, **Flora**, passed away on May 7, 2006. Keep Flora in your prayers as well as Tony and his family as they go through this difficult time. We will surely miss Flora at our meetings.

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Hello to All,

I am sending you heartfelt greetings from **Germany!** I am doing overall well and my final semester at the university is back in full session. I am busy writing my thesis about our Institute Voluntas Dei. Well, it should be done before summer but written words don't come too easy...

I want to ask you for your continuing support in advice, supplement assistance and your prayer for the Holy Spirit!

Yours, Christian+

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**Check this out!!!** Since February 22, 2006, **Fr. George Perera** has had a weekly newspaper column in Southern Dutchess News in Wappingers Falls, New York, where he has the opportunity to share his creative writing. The title of the column is **JUST FOR YOU.**

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**Angelus Croce** and **Eileen Theys**, of the Jersey Lakes Team, traveled to St. Louis, Missouri, in May for a week's training in implementing and directing a small group ministry called ChristCare, which is a subsidiary of Stephen Ministries. ChristCare Groups are gatherings of 5 to 12 people who meet on a regular basis with a trained, commissioned and supervised leader. Group members grow as Jesus' disciples by participating in community building and care, Biblical Equipping, prayer and worship, and meaningful mission. Right now we are studying the materials and making plans to build a strong foundation for ChristCare. We'll keep you updated as we move along. We are very excited about doing God's work through this ministry. Please keep ChristCare and us in your prayers.

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On a recent trip to the Florida home of our son, Joe, and his wife, Tish, we had the chance (arranged by Tish) to have a Dolphin encounter in Epcot Center's Living Seas. Rainer, pictured with us was especially trained not to have any fear of the wheel chair. The guides were superb,

handling Bob with great caution and care. We learned a lot about these wonderful creatures, they are so gentle and kind. To have such a wonderful opportunity is something that will stay with us for a very long time. I was also fortunate enough to have a ride on the back of our son's motorcycle. That will stay with me for an even longer time. I kept my eyes shut tight, and hung on for my life. It  
Saddle River Team

was a lot scarier than when he took me flying in his four-seater airplane! The weather was superb, the trip ended much too soon!

Bob & Eleanor Suroweic

