Reflection

Mark Pickens, BVS Unit #301

“I did not know that you volunteered in the laundry department,” a visitor said to me one day. She had seen me serving the community through visiting residents, leading devotions, sensory group sessions, and other activities, as well as singing and preaching in the weekly community worship services. “Yes, I volunteer in the laundry department four to five days a week,” I replied. In contrast to other services that I am a part of as a BVS worker where I am placed, the laundry department is one site that does not receive much attention or recognition from the rest of the community. In fact, I have found that there are few staff and residents who are familiar with the location and the context of work in laundry services. This has brought to my attention an interesting phenomenon about service and work within an organizational or community structured facility. Most people do not recognize the jobs that require a lot of work and attention, even though people spend a lot of time working to get these jobs done for others, because they are jobs that many might not think about or consider. The folks who work and volunteer in laundry, housekeeping, and maintenance are a few examples of people who are often serving behind the scenes and doing jobs that many of us would not want to do, or perhaps do not think very highly of, in relation to the kind of service we do ourselves. The people who give their time, energy, and lives to carrying out tasks that are typically considered “grunt work” to others are often undervalued and underappreciated in our society and culture. However, if these workers were to not come in to work for one day, imagine what would happen or not happen. There is much that we often overlook or do not give enough attention to while completing our daily tasks. There are tasks that we miss out on, tasks that other volunteers and workers give their time to in order to make sure that all of us have what we need in order to get through the day and to have a nice, clean, and safe place to work and serve. In Philippians 2, we are reminded of the call to emulate Christ in his humility through his willingness to obey God and to give of himself in the fullness of being human. Through our simple and complex acts of humility, we are told that God will raise us up as Christ was raised up. If we are faithful to obeying God’s call in full humility, we will definitely perceive God’s incarnation made alive in us once again.