



## **Challenging Young Adults to One Year of Full-time Service and Faith Formation**

### **Statement of Support for Catholic Volunteers in Florida**

October 4, 2005  
(Feast of St. Francis of Assisi)

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The Bishops of Florida challenge young Catholic adults ages 22 to 26 to one year of full-time service and faith formation. We highly recommend that you consider the Catholic Volunteers in Florida ([www.cvif.org](http://www.cvif.org)) or another similar Catholic volunteer organization ([www.cnvs.org](http://www.cnvs.org)). As we said in our national pastoral plan, *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, "We know that your talents, and those of other young adults, can enrich the Church and can be a sign of God's presence in society."

A Catholic volunteer program is a logical next step into Catholic adulthood after the sacrament of Confirmation. We encourage young adults to apply as they are completing college, before they encounter the experience of starting a career, entering a religious vocation or starting a family. The Catholic Volunteers in Florida will challenge you to faithfully serve the poor and marginalized and reflect on your purpose in life. Through a year of service and faith formation you will live the Gospel, serve others and build your relationship with God. Following the call to prayer and service is following the life and message of Jesus Christ and promises to be a rewarding way to begin your adult life.

#### **A call to relationship with God – Prayer**

Prayer takes as many forms as there are individuals. We each have a unique relationship with God, yet every strong relationship requires time. We must give time to God each day. Throughout scripture we find Jesus spending time with his Father. Before beginning his public ministry Jesus is led by the Spirit into the desert to pray for forty days (Mark 1:12). And later throughout his public service, after many healings, we find Jesus rising before dawn to go to a deserted place to pray (Mark 1:35). In so doing Jesus shows us the importance of making time to pray to his Father. In our increasingly busy lives, when and where we find time each day to spend with our God becomes more and more important. We are called to build our relationship with God.

#### **A call to relationship with others – Service**

At the heart of the Gospel message is Jesus' call for us to love one another (John 13:31). Jesus challenges us to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit and care for the sick and prisoners (Matthew 25:35-38). Throughout the Gospel we have many examples of Jesus serving people who are poor, marginalized, sick, and outcast. Jesus is constantly calling us out of relationship to things and into relationship with others. A temptation of modern life is to live solely within a homogenous community, and not build deep relationships with people different than us. Jesus challenges us to a broad fellowship with others, even those with whom we feel uncomfortable.

## **Become who you are – Prayer and Service**

We are called to explore and deepen our relationship with God and with others, and thereby better understand ourselves. In so doing, we enliven the Church and as part of the body of Christ, help to create the Kingdom of God.

Developing the habits of prayer and service are essential throughout our lives and especially during the formative years of youth and early adulthood. We urge you to live the Good News, develop your relationship with God and with others in service and prayer. A dedicated year of service and faith formation with the Catholic Volunteers in Florida or another volunteer association will help you to become who you are – the hands, the heart, and the feet of Christ in our world today.

We invite our Catholic adults ages 22-26 to give serious consideration to spending their first year after college in service and faith formation as a Catholic volunteer. "The Church needs your energies, your enthusiasm, your ideals, in order to make the Gospel of life penetrate the fabric of society, transforming people's hearts and the structures of society in order to create a civilization of true justice and love." (Pope John Paul II)

In prayer and service with Christ,

**Archbishop John C. Favalora**  
Archdiocese of Miami

**Bishop John J. Nevins**  
Diocese of Venice

**Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ**  
Diocese of Pensacola/Tallahassee

**Bishop Robert N. Lynch**  
Diocese of St. Petersburg

**Bishop Victor Galeone**  
Diocese of St. Augustine

**Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito, JCL**  
Diocese of Palm Beach

**Bishop Thomas G. Wenski**  
Diocese of Orlando

**Auxiliary Bishop Felipe J. Estévez**  
Archdiocese of Miami

**Auxiliary Bishop John G. Noonan**  
Archdiocese of Miami