



United States  
Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

# Pilgrims on the way of Hope: A Resource for the Jubilee of the World of Volunteering

## **Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope**

United States Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

## **Jubilee of the World of Volunteering: Resource Packet**

March 8-9, 2025

## **INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW**

Jubilee 2025 invites you to be a pilgrim of hope. For Christians, hope is anchored in the encounter with Jesus whose life, death, and resurrection reveals God's transforming love. Our hope in God is renewed constantly in the gift of the Holy Spirit, the love of the Father and the Son, who is given, even now, to the community of believers.

The Holy See has designated a number of Jubilee Days throughout 2025 to recognize and celebrate different groups of people and various ministries in the Catholic Church. The Jubilee of the World of Volunteering will be held from Saturday, March 8, to Sunday, March 9, 2025; however, these resources can be used for engaging and celebrating volunteers at any time throughout the Jubilee Year.

Volunteering has allowed the lay faithful to step forward into the universal call to holiness in service to the Church and society. The heartbeat of my parish and civic communities across the United States are the dedicated and selfless volunteers who respond to great needs and contribute their stewardship of time, talent, and treasure to the benefit of others. There are also countless Catholic volunteers who engage in domestic and international mission work in service to the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized communities.



This resource packet is for anyone who finds it useful. It can be used and/or adapted by dioceses, eparchies, parishes, schools, campuses, apostolates, movements, organizations, or individuals to plan their celebration of the Jubilee of the World of Volunteering. It might also serve as a catalyst or inspiration for the creation and development of local or year-round resources for volunteers in the community or globally.

For Catholic volunteers and those engaged in mission-service work who are making a Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome or particular Jubilee celebration in a diocese or eparchy within the United States during 2025, this packet can also serve as an aid in the preparation or experience of that trip.



Additional resources for the Jubilee of the World of Volunteering and other celebrations can be found online at the USCCB Jubilee Year web pages: available in English at <https://www.usccb.org/committees/jubilee-2025> and available in Spanish at <https://www.usccb.org/es/committees/jubileo-2025>.

## WHO IS A VOLUNTEER? WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING?

This word has many meanings in Catholic settings. Each diocese/eparchy or parish can establish parameters for what it exactly means for each context, but here are a few thoughts about who can be included within the broad category of “volunteering.” This is not an exclusive list, but may spark your own creativity:

- Parishioners who volunteer for one or more of the ministries in a parish community (i.e., liturgical ministers, church council members, children’s catechists, musicians or choir members, food pantry support, soup kitchen, Knights of Columbus, altar servers, non-paid ministry coordinators, etc.).
- Lay Catholics who give of their time and giftedness to the civic community (i.e., docents, volunteer firefighters, community clean-up work, non-paid assisted living support, those who assist with secular poverty programs and shelters, those who coordinate community social events, etc.).
- Lay Catholics who are active on the regional, national, or global level through volunteer-based service and/or mission organizations (i.e., Catholic Volunteer Network, Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, Jesuit Volunteer Corps, Glenmary, Maryknoll, Nazareth Farm, Amate House, Habitat for Humanity, Appalachia Service Project,

AmeriCorps, Teach for America, Greenpeace, Mercy Volunteer Corps, Franciscan Mission Service, Salesian Lay Missioners, etc.).

## SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

The heart of a volunteer exudes a generous devotion to service for others and the mission of the Gospel. In upholding the dignity of every person, volunteers are stewards of the gifts God has given them to advance the work of the Church, to alleviate human suffering, or to contribute to the transformation of the world.

When confronted about true righteousness and asked, “who is my neighbor?” (Lk 10:29), Jesus shared the timeless parable of the Good Samaritan, “the one who treated (the victim) with mercy,” and concluded by simply saying, “Go and do likewise” (Lk 10:37). This is the cornerstone of volunteering, to extend mercy and love to others in imitation of Christ, who “did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk 10:45). The Christian volunteer is the one who fulfills the Lord’s great commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt 22:39) and who follows Jesus’ golden rule to “do to others as you would have them do to you” (Lk 6:31). Volunteering allows us to respond to Christ with selflessness.

Yet in the midst of the kindness of volunteering, service-oriented commitment, and the movement to make a real difference in the world, a person can forget to tend their own soul. Perhaps it is fitting that the story of Jesus spending time with Mary and Martha immediately follows the Good Samaritan parable in the Gospel of Luke. Martha, “burdened with much serving” (Lk 10:40), asks Jesus to prod her sister Mary into service work, yet the Lord, while grateful for Martha’s



generosity, expresses concern for her anxiety and worry. We, too, can fall into this habit, dedicating ourselves to volunteering for others, yet not allowing ourselves to rest and sit at the Lord's feet like Martha's sister Mary (see Lk 10:39,42).

During this Jubilee celebration, you are invited to pause for a moment from the great work of volunteering and find rejuvenation in Christ Jesus, who longs to give his people an experience of divine grace. Take time at various points throughout the year for prayer and reflection. Seek out or renew your engagement with a spiritual director or companion. Refresh yourself in the warmth and embrace of the Christian community, which can strengthen us for the work ahead.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PILGRIM PREPARATION

One major element of the Jubilee celebration for Catholics is making pilgrimage. For some, that may involve going to Rome, where international pilgrims traditionally visit the Holy Doors of the four great basilicas (Saint Peter, Saint Paul Outside the Walls, Saint Mary Major, and Saint John Lateran). For most others, though, local Jubilee pilgrimages can be made to diocesan or eparchial cathedrals, churches, and/or religious sites.

*If headed to Rome for the Jubilee of the World of Volunteering:*

Should you, by yourself or with other volunteers, decide to travel to Rome, in particular for the Jubilee of the World of Volunteering (March 8-9, 2025), the following may be helpful:

- You can develop a trip on your own or go through a licensed tour operator that specializes or has experience in religious

travel. The latter option may cost extra, but it can save a local organizer time; additionally, those operators may have existing connections with vendors and may be able to advise on travel concerns. PLEASE NOTE: The USCCB does not endorse nor identify any licensed tour operator as the official U.S. tour operator.

- The official Jubilee events for volunteers include passage through Holy Doors and Mass with the Holy Father on Sunday, March 9. Pilgrims and groups may also consider taking part in additional activities, either planned on their own or events hosted by other apostolates/groups.
- Prepare for the trip with liturgies, retreats, devotional and service experiences, community building, catechesis, and fundraising, as needed. Take time for prayer, especially with the Blessed Sacrament, as well as practical travel planning (packing, supplies, water, etc.).
- Upon the return home, consider in advance ways to share the experience with others and put into practice the missionary lessons received during the Jubilee moments in Rome.

*If coordinating a local pilgrimage within the United States:*

It is highly recommended to make pilgrimage to one's own diocesan or eparchial cathedral or other church(es) or religious site(s) designated by the bishop or eparch.

- Plan for a local pilgrimage which can take place at any time of year or can be done at the same time as the events for volunteers in Rome (March 8-9, 2025). The timing, as well as the exact local destination, is at the discretion of the local organizer(s).



- Research the pilgrimage destination to ensure that your visit does not coincide with liturgical or local community events or is being done within the posted opening hours for the site. You may wish to contact someone in leadership at the location in advance, especially if you plan to bring a group.
- Before embarking on a local pilgrimage, consider taking time for prayer and community-building.
- After returning home (even if the trip was local), take time for prayer and theological reflection on the graces of God received during the pilgrimage experience. If you went as a group, continue to gather in the weeks and months following the trip to support one another and coordinate missionary actions.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS LOCALLY

### *Suggestions for Parishes*

- Use the weekend liturgies on March 8-9 to recognize all the volunteers in the parish community: in the homily, general intercessions, with a special blessing, or by inviting them to serve in key liturgical roles. An example of a petition for the Prayer of the Faithful might include:

*For the lay women and men of our parish who serve with selfless devotion as volunteers in our ministries, in service work, and in the local community, that they may be signs of hope within our world today, we pray to the Lord.*

- Have a reception or networking activity after all weekend Masses on March 8-9 for volunteers in the community (perhaps coordinating this with ministry leaders who

oversee volunteer engagement with particular ministerial areas in the life of the parish). During those gatherings, offer food and drink, opportunities to meet-and-mingle, and invitations for others to consider joining these groups.

- Plan a local pilgrimage for volunteers to the diocesan/eparchial cathedral or to another religious site or church in your area, using the ideas laid out in the previous section.
- Livestream or replay video of key Jubilee events (i.e., Mass with the Holy Father) taking place in Rome from March 8-9 at the parish (noting the time difference between Rome and your local area). You may also consider coordinating programs at the parish during the livestream viewings such as liturgies, Eucharistic adoration, confessions, catechesis, service projects, small groups, or socials.

### *Suggestions for Dioceses and Eparchies*

- Celebrate a liturgy or host a prayer service for Catholic volunteers from parishes or who are volunteering in service work programs in or beyond the local area. Host it at the diocesan/eparchial cathedral during or around March 8-9, concurrent with or proximate to the Jubilee celebrations happening in Rome.
- Hold a diocesan/eparchial-wide Jubilee walking pilgrimage for all volunteers from the cathedral (or another site of your choosing) to religious sites, churches, and/or to a Catholic-led social services center or institution. Consider also inviting the bishop or eparch.
- Post stories about volunteers in parish or community life on the diocesan or eparchial website, social media channels, and communications (magazine, newspaper, newsletter, etc.) prior to and/or during the Jubilee of the World of Volunteers in March 2025.



- Host a special diocesan/eparchial-wide dinner or reception for volunteers, highlighting their service, charity, and work at some point during the Jubilee Year. Consider an award or recognition program for those who make key contributions to the life of the diocese/eparchy and/or society at large.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & DOCUMENTS

- [Evangelii Gaudium](#), Pope Francis (2013): an apostolic exhortation on evangelization and missionary discipleship, ideal for the lay faithful. Available in print and in e-book from several Catholic publishers and online.
- [Living as Missionary Disciples](#), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis (2017): the U.S. Bishops' response to Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* and a basic resource guide outlining the principles of evangelization: encounter, accompaniment, community, and sending. Available online with additional resources from the Catholic Apostolate Center.
- [Lumen Gentium](#), Second Vatican Council (1964): Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, outlining the role the laity play in the life and mission of the Church. Available in print from several Catholic publishers and also available online.
- [Apostolicam Actuositatem](#), Second Vatican Council (1965): Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, guiding the laity in their work of Christian service in the world, rooted in the baptismal call to holiness. Available online.
- [Christifideles Laici](#) (Christ's Faithful Laity), St. John Paul II (1988): apostolic exhortation in response to the 1987 Synod of Bishops on the vocation and mission of the laity in the Church, encouraging the lay faithful to use their gifts to transform the world. Available online.
- [USCCB Laity Web Page](#), with resources for the laity and associations of the faithful, with links to additional content, including webinars, collaborating organizations, and more. Available online.
- [Catholic Volunteer Network \(CVN\)](#), national membership organization of Christian volunteer and mission programs that foster and promote national and international service opportunities. Available online.
- [Catholic Apostolate Center](#), a ministry of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (the Pallottines), Immaculate Conception Province, to develop formation opportunities for the laity in their apostolic work in Church and in the world. Available online.

## KEY SAINTS & BLESSED

### *Holy Companions for Lay Volunteers*

- **St. Martha (first century, feast day July 29)**, sister of Mary and Lazarus of Bethany and friend of Jesus of Nazareth; she is known from the Scriptures for her service in the home and her bold friendship with the Lord. An advocate for hospitality, we know little of her life after the Resurrection.
- **St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660, feast day September 27)**, patron of charities, volunteers, and hospitals and co-founder of the Congregation of the Mission (the Vincentians) and the Confraternity of Charity. A native of France, Vincent was a humble, compassionate priest who dedicated himself to serving the poor.
- **St. Vincent Pallotti (1795-1850, feast day January 22)**, founder of the Union of the Catholic Apostolate and the Society of the Catholic Apostolate (in 1835), who believed that all (ordained, consecrated, and lay alike) are called to be apostles, co-responsible for the Church's mission.



- **St. Zita (1212-1272, feast day April 27)**, patron of single laywomen, domestic workers, and service work; well-known for humility, meekness, and generosity, she was a domestic servant for a rich Italian household while also spending additional time serving the poor and sick in their homes in the community.
- **Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati (1901-1925, feast day July 4)**, lay volunteer, athlete, student, activist, member of the Third Order of Saint Dominic, beloved among the poor and marginalized, and declared the "Man of the Beatitudes"; engaged in regular acts of Christian charity, service, and support, especially for the sick and dying people of Turin, Italy. Died of polio at young adult age of 25 while ministering to polio victims.
- **Bl. Michael McGivney (1852-1890, feast day August 13)**, founder of the Knights of Columbus (in 1882) and filled with a "zeal for the proclamation of the Gospel and generous concern for his brothers and sisters" that "made him an outstanding witness of Christian solidarity and fraternal assistance."
- **Dorothy Day (1897-1980)**, lay volunteer, journalist, activist, Catholic convert, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, and candidate for sainthood; she was "a great witness to faith, hope and charity in the 20th century," who served the poor and worked for justice and lived in New York and Chicago.

## PRAYER FOR LAY VOLUNTEERS

Christifideles Laici Prayer

*O Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, with joy and wonder we seek to make our own your Magnificat, joining you in your hymn of thankfulness and love.*

*With you we give thanks to God, "whose mercy is from generation to generation", for the exalted vocation and the many forms of mission entrusted to the lay faithful.*

*God has called each of them by name to live his own communion of love and holiness and to be one in the great family of God's children. He has sent them forth to shine with the light of Christ and to communicate the fire of the Spirit in every part of society through their life inspired by the gospel. O Virgin of the Magnificat, fill their hearts with a gratitude and enthusiasm for this vocation and mission.*

*With humility and magnanimity, you were the "handmaid of the Lord"; give us your unreserved willingness for service to God and the salvation of the world.*

*Open our hearts to the great anticipation of the Kingdom of God and of the proclamation of the Gospel to the whole of creation.*

*Your mother's heart is ever mindful of the many dangers and evils which threaten to overpower men and women in our time.*

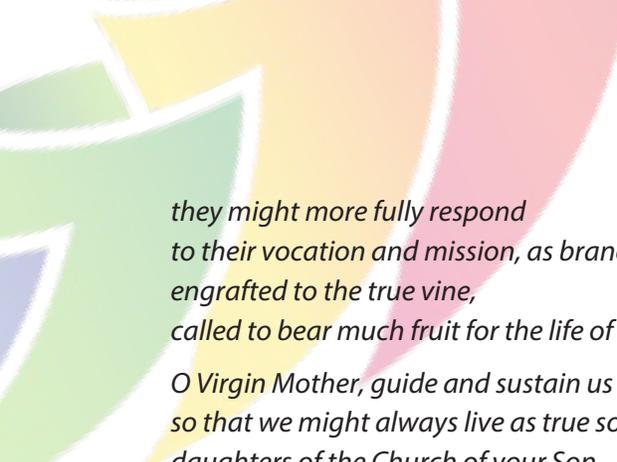
*At the same time your heart also takes notice of the many initiatives undertaken for good, the great yearning for values, and the progress achieved in bringing forth the abundant fruits of salvation.*

*O Virgin full of courage, may your spiritual strength and trust in God inspire us, so that we might know how to overcome all the obstacles that we encounter in accomplishing our mission.*

*Teach us to treat the affairs of the world with a real sense of Christian responsibility and a joyful hope of the coming of God's Kingdom, and of a "new heaven and a new earth".*

*You who were gathered in prayer with the Apostles in the Cenacle, awaiting the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, implore his renewed outpouring on all the faithful, men and women alike, so that*





*they might more fully respond  
to their vocation and mission, as branches  
engrafted to the true vine,  
called to bear much fruit for the life of the world.*

*O Virgin Mother, guide and sustain us  
so that we might always live as true sons and  
daughters of the Church of your Son.  
Enable us to do our part in helping to establish on  
earth the civilization of truth and love,  
as God wills it, for his glory. Amen.*

(from *Christifideles Laici* by St. John Paul II, Libreria  
Editrice Vaticana © 1988)

