



Franciscan Community Volunteers

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Franciscan Community Volunteers is to accompany young men and young women ages 21-30 to grow in Christian discipleship and leadership through Franciscan spirituality, service and a simple community life.

GOALS of Franciscan Community Volunteers:

Service: Volunteers serve full-time in a 10-month program of direct service and advocacy. This time of service will be supported by times of personal and communal prayer and study of the Gospel and Social Teachings of the Catholic Church.

Community Life: Volunteers live in an intentional Franciscan Community. Together they develop a covenant of shared goals and responsibilities, committing to life with and for each other.

Franciscan Spirituality: The life and values of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi are the roots of a rich Franciscan tradition that is an integral part of the spirituality of the Franciscan Community Volunteers.

DETAILS

Direct Service and Advocacy

Franciscan Community Volunteers (FCV) will experience a process of companionship with the poor in the spirit of Saints Francis and Clare. Today, as in the past, Christians are challenged by a world that is filled with poverty, injustice and oppression. A response that Saint Francis of Assisi made was to meditate on and follow the Jesus of the Gospel who came to preach 'the Good News' to those in poverty and to teach them of their incredible worth in the eyes of God. In Jesus, God chose to become one with the poor, to share in their condition, reveal their dignity and empower them to tell the good news of God's love for all. Volunteers will not only serve those living in the margins, but also discover some of the ways in which the poor reveal the message of the Gospel.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord."

Luke 4: 18-19

Intentional Franciscan Community Life

As a community the volunteers will develop a covenant of shared goals, committing to live with and for each other. Believing in living the Gospel of peace, love and mutuality, they are dedicated to working through the difficulties and celebrating the joys of community living. Community living provides an opportunity to live a lifestyle committed to justice and simplicity.

They participate in the daily operations of the community and share in the care and upkeep of the house. The service sites where the volunteers work can ordinarily be reached by walking, biking, or using public transportation. Along with the day-to-day experience of living together, cooking and eating together, buying groceries, cleaning, and sharing with each other their work experiences, the volunteers strive for a spirit of compassion, friendship and mutual support in carrying out the goals of the program.

Community life may be the most difficult, while perhaps at the same time, the most rewarding part of the experience. As they address the injustices in the world, they begin by working on creating a more just world at home.

Living the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Community life develops when individuals commit themselves to a shared vision and a common set of values. The vision and values of Franciscan Community Volunteers find their roots in the Franciscan tradition. The reflection and discussion component includes:

- regular opportunities for exploring, understanding and processing the conditions of poverty and its effect on humanity.
- weekly facilitated Franciscan gatherings for input and discussion.

The Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls whose mission is to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, sponsor Franciscan Community Volunteers by sharing their life, spirit, and spirituality with the Volunteers.

Franciscan Community Volunteers focus on topics central to the Franciscan view of life, the gospel call to share the 'Good News' and current issues related to peace, social justice and integrity of creation.

Spirituality and Prayer

The spiritual journey is an integral part of the Franciscan Community Volunteer program. Together they will reflect on spirituality within the context of our culture, as well as its meaning in the midst of working with those who are poor and marginalized. One of the focuses becomes a life of personal and communal prayer. The volunteers are given the opportunity to cultivate a deeper spiritual life through:

- a better understanding of their own spirituality as well as the tradition of the spiritual life
- exploration of different methods of prayer, and
- opportunities for individual Spiritual Direction.

Spiritual Direction is companionship and involves a special relationship that is grounded in the commitment of one person to help another grow in his/her journey with God. It is a ministry with a long history in the church.

FCV is blessed to have a number of trained and experienced spiritual directors in the local area who are willing to make themselves available to the individual volunteers on a regular basis.

Prayer Opportunities

Along with a week of orientation and a closing retreat, there are two weekend retreats, one in the fall and one in the spring, which provide an extended time for both personal and communal experiences of prayer. These retreats offer the time for volunteers to step away from their work and focus more intensely on the area of spiritual formation. Retreats are held away from the city in a setting close to Mother Earth, Brother Sun, and Sister Water.