



# Matthew 25

...whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine,  
you did for me.

The Social Ministry Commission Newsletter  
of St. Mary's Catholic Center, College Station, Texas

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## Responding to the Call to Serve

by Rachael Cadena, St. Mary's Campus Minister and Director of Social Ministry

Whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Mark 10:43b-45 (from the Gospel reading for October 18<sup>th</sup>)

This Sunday's Gospel reading (29th Sunday of Ordinary Time) reminds us of the importance of service and self-sacrifice. We are called by Christ to serve. Not only that, but we are **made** to serve. We are not individual beings who live in our own little world, but God created us, in His image, as communal beings – to give and receive. God, the first person of the Trinity, lives in union with the Son and the Holy Spirit, each of them giving all of themselves to the other persons and each of them receiving that gift of self from the others. And we are made in that image! We are made to live in communion with others. We are not satisfied unless we are able to serve others, giving of ourselves and receiving the gift of self from another. It is a concept that is so exciting to me!

We are made as communal persons, giving and receiving. And it's not just that I give and receive, but others are made that way too. It is not just that I need to give of myself to other people and they need to receive my gift of self – my service to them, but they in turn also *want* to give of themselves and I need to be open to receiving their gift of self. For example, when I go with ASAP to play BINGO with the elderly residents at a local elderly living residence, I give them my time and myself and desire to bring them joy and hope by playing a simple little game with them but I also realize that they too want to give something to me (perhaps not intentionally), but they too give me their self and bring a smile to my face!

And in giving of them self – in spending time with me (with the BINGO group), in their funny comments and sometimes sour attitude they are able to be that communal person they are. So, I, by giving to them, and they receiving that (coming to play BINGO) am confirmed/validated and experience that communal aspect of being

Since this mission goes on and in the course of history unfolds the mission of Christ Himself, who was sent to preach the Gospel to the poor, the Church, prompted by the Holy Spirit, must walk in the same path on which Christ walked: a path of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice to the death, from which death He came forth a victor by His resurrection. For thus did all the Apostles walk in hope, and by many trials and sufferings they filled up those things wanting to the Passion of Christ for His body which is the Church (cf. Col. 1:24).—*Ad Gentes: On the mission activity of the Church*, Second Vatican Council. (1965).

made in the image and likeness of God. And I hope that they too will feel a sense of validation – of dignity – by my presence there with them on a Saturday morning. It flows into the fundamental social justice teaching of the Catholic Church that each person possesses a basic dignity. I desire to serve God and spread His message to the world (or at least I should!). And I want to recognize that **every** person that He has created has been created in HIS image and thus has a dignity of his or her own. The homeless person on the street has been made in the image and likeness of God and I want him or her to know that sense of self worth that comes with having a glimpse of their own dignity. The shut-in who has no one to talk to or be with other than the people on TV, I want them to share of their

self with another person not just the imitation of one on TV. I want them to be able to participate in that communion of persons and thus have a sense of self worth and dignity. I want to show

Christ to the pregnant teen who is confused and has run away from everything that she knows to find shelter at the maternity home. I want to serve her and listen to her story. I want her to realize her own dignity that comes from God and cannot be lost by mistakes made, or lack of love from others.

So, Christ has given to the Church – to all of us – the mission to serve our brothers and sisters. Who are our brothers and sisters? Everyone! Our acts of service should not be limited to just those that we know. We are called to reach out to anyone in need. And that service comes in many shapes and sizes. We can serve right here at St. Mary's serving our brothers and sisters in Christ in the ministry of a lector or usher or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion at Masses.

We can serve in our community through various organizations here in town. For example, Aggies Serving Another Person (ASAP), St. Mary's student organization that focuses on service projects, does such things as play BINGO with some beautiful elderly residents, supports the poor through serving at the St. Vincent de Paul Resale store, feeds the homeless at the Twin City Mission soup kitchen and builds homes with Habitat for Humanity. ASAP organizes a volunteer opportunity almost weekly during the school semester. The AggieServe network ([aggieserve.tamu.edu](http://aggieserve.tamu.edu)) has a list of organizations in the community and the different opportunities they have for individuals to serve with them.

Sometimes our call to service will take us places outside of our community. There are various different kinds of Christmas and Spring Break Service Trips that go on each year. St. Mary's in particular will be taking two trips over Spring Break. One trip will serve and minister to people who have been affected by some of the recent hurricanes. The other trip will serve some of the poor people in Honduras.

And for others God will call them to live a life of service in a more radical way by taking a year or more to work with an organization in full-time service. Katie Maguire is an AggieCatholic, class of 2008, who just graduated and is now volunteering with FOCUS – Fellowship of Catholic University Students. Here is a little story for you Ags, from our own Katie Maguire...

"Working for the Church after college has always been in the radar for me. My great uncle, a Jesuit priest, exposed me to groups of Jesuit Volunteers who served at his parish when I was still in middle and high school. I realized then that a year or more of volunteer work after college could actually happen – I saw people who did it! The thought of serving full-time excited me, but I was not sure where God was calling me. While a junior at A&M,

I heard of a group called FOCUS, the Fellowship of Catholic University Students. When I heard that FOCUS missionaries worked to bring the Good News of Christ to college students on campuses throughout the U.S., I thought this could be something I wanted to do. I knew how important the St. Mary's community had been in my own faith life, and I also knew that not all colleges had the blessing of a place like St. Mary's. When I began seriously considering different options after graduation, I checked out the FOCUS website. All I can say is that God spoke! Though I am typically indecisive, I remember reading about the program and saying "I want to do this." I felt an almost irresistible desire to answer Pope John

Paul II's call to the New Evangelization through FOCUS. I knew then that I would apply, and if God willed it, I would be a missionary the following year. I ended up applying for one other program as well, but I realized with the help of my spiritual director that my desire was FOCUS first and foremost.

Now that I am a FOCUS missionary at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA), I realize that this type of work is in no way a delay to entering the "real world" but rather an unconventional (and pretty awesome) way of doing it. Part of my job description is

"to know Jesus Christ and to make Him known"; how many people can say that? Along with my team, I am able to lead students to the abundant life found in Christ through leading Bible studies, hosting large group events, and mentoring students one-on-one. Eventually, I hope to give students the tools to be able to do these things as well so that they in turn can lead others to Christ, and we can truly "make disciples of all nations." Through continued prayer and my experiences on campus I see that God has truly equipped me for this work and that I love doing it! I would encourage any student to consider a year or more of service and to find direction from the source, our Lord, in prayer!"

#### AggieCatholic full-time volunteers '09-'10

- Michael and Elizabeth Thaipinh  
Maryknoll Missioners in Thailand
- Zach Rathke (class of '08)  
Teach for America
- Katie Maguire (class of '09)
- Chelsea Mechler (class of '09)  
Fellowship of Catholic University Students
- Hannah Cox (class of '09)  
Catholic Charities—Project SERVE
- Troy Menendez (class of '12)  
National Evangelization Team

#### **What can you do now?**

- Be open** - Pray about the possibility of volunteering full-time. Is God asking that of you? Find out more information. Go to the CVNS website or talk to someone who has volunteered in the past.
- Pray** - Pray for those volunteers in the fields, for their ministry, their work and those they are serving.
- Help Financially** - Consider partnering with a volunteer and supporting him or her financially. You can also give to the Volunteer Collection that is taken up at St. Mary's each August. It is divided among the AggieCatholics who are volunteering full-time in the upcoming school year. Many organizations require the volunteer to raise some or all of their needed funds.

#### **A few places to check out:**

- Catholic Network of Volunteer Service** - [www.cnvs.org](http://www.cnvs.org)  
CNVS has a comprehensive list of faith-based volunteer opportunities and much more information about full-time volunteer service.
- AmeriCorps** - [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov)  
AmeriCorps is a national network of hundreds of programs throughout the US.
- Dominican Volunteers USA** - [www.dvusa.org](http://www.dvusa.org)
- Fellowship of Catholic University Students** - [www.focusonline.org](http://www.focusonline.org)
- Check out the Post-Graduate Volunteer table** in the student center. There are CNVS directories of over 200 volunteer programs as well as information from the organizations that participated in St. Mary's annual fall Long-Term Volunteer Fair that was at the beginning of this month.