

**THEOLOGY OF VOLUNTEERING**  
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The process of recruiting and sustaining volunteers in ministry calls to mind the calling of the Twelve Disciples by Our Lord Jesus Christ. Although the mission Christ sent the Twelve on, was life altering and called for a complete donation; many times volunteers can have a positive experience while serving that can encourage a transformation in their own lives. Christ carefully considered and prayerfully presented each of the Disciples to the Father before choosing them despite their weaknesses and faults. Each member of the Body of Christ has been given gifts; that when shared will contribute to the building up of the Body.



This is precisely why these gifts have been given not for a personal gain but for the betterment of all. The Lord directed the Twelve and helped them function as a body; for by outward appearance they were an unlikely group. From His example we can learn that the body flourishes under good leadership.

The Parish setting, also called the Family of Jesus, is a perfect environment to put our personal gifts at the service of Christ and our brothers and sisters, as the Twelve gave all for the foundation of the Church. As members of the Mystical Body of Christ we are responsible for the Body. When one volunteers it is then that one is able to take ownership of that responsibility. It is giving that we receive and come to know ourselves more fully. "Man cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself."<sup>1</sup> By this reality we understand clearly that the gifts that God has graced us with are given with the purpose to be given. If kept to ourselves they will only rot and become rancid.

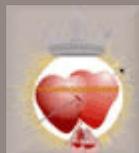
Following the footsteps of Christ we must prayerfully consider who the Lord desires to volunteer and we must post the needs in the parish for all Christian disciples to see and be aware of the needs. Giving others a chance to participate in the work of God, the ministry that He is directing, is a great gift. Although, many may not see that connection and will need you explain, that what they are doing is ultimately building up the Kingdom; even if it is a seemingly simple job. Evaluating the progress of the individual person to see if their gifts are best utilized in a particular ministry or if they could be more fruitful in another area is an important step to maintain volunteers. This concern shows the volunteers that you are attentive to them and care for them so they in turn know that they can trust you. There are other ways that volunteers can be shown gratitude, and should be practiced on a regular basis. Some examples of these occasions are, Birthday, Christmas Party, Summer Cookout, etc. These events give the volunteers time to enjoy each other's company and help them know that they are appreciated for who they are and not just what they do.

Furthermore, to assure the full potential of our volunteer's we should offer them continued education, personal support, resources, and enriching Spiritual experiences of prayer and retreat. If we desire them to support and encourage the ministry of the parish we should make sure that they are being spiritually feed to ensure the good fruit from their gifts.

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<sup>1</sup> Second Vatican Council, Gaudium et Spes, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Dec. 7, 1965, 24

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