

THE COVENANT OF JESUIT VOLUNTEER CORPS NORTHWEST

“Rooted for over fifty years in the Jesuit Catholic tradition emphasizing spiritual openness and depth, Jesuit Volunteers in the Northwest examine and act on the causes of social and environmental injustice to promote peace and structural change.”

From JVC Northwest Mission

With respect for individual freedom and our capacity to change, we, the staff and volunteers of JVC Northwest, are committed to certain common values. We are called to help one another to live guided by the values of Community, Simple Living, Social and Ecological Justice, and Spirituality/Reflection, acknowledging their inherent interconnectedness.

SIMPLE LIVING Honoring simplicity enables us to value relationships over objects and self-reflection over status. Simple living is an emptying of the self for the sake of personal, communal, and environmental transformation. In the bioregion of the Pacific Northwest, voluntary simplicity is deeply connected with the value of ecological sustainability, calling us to be mindful and proactive about how we care for the environment that sustains us. When our lives are free of an excess of activity and material possessions, our view of the world and of ourselves is clarified. We are better able to attend to our deepest self, our community, and people who are marginalized.

- I will value people and relationships over possessions or status.
- I will seek simplicity in my use of time, energy and resources.
- I will live on the monthly stipend, not accepting funds from family, friends, second jobs or any other source to supplement my living.
- I will examine and transform my personal values and habits to reflect my care and concern for the environment. Being mindful of my impact on the earth, I will socialize and recreate in ways which enhance my active and true connection with other people and the natural world.
- Simplicity of time, energy, and resource means that I will choose to stay present to how my needs relate with the needs of the world, allowing for room to stretch and be flexible so as to truly become “a person for others” while also choosing to practice self-care when that is what naturally arises.

SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE We work for justice by being aware of how our attitudes and behavior affect others. Our awareness urges us to change the attitudes and structures which create poverty, perpetuate oppression, and destroy ecological systems. Solidarity demands that we create change by working alongside those who are economically poor, oppressed, and vulnerable. After change has been achieved, we foster reconciliation.

- I will seek truth rather than relying on prejudices, assumptions, rumor and incomplete information.
- I will strive to be just in my attitudes, language, and actions.
- I will strive to recognize and celebrate the worth of my life and the lives of others, no matter how different, in the community where we live and serve.
- I will work and live in solidarity with people who are economically poor, oppressed and vulnerable toward the goal of structural change in the attitudes, practices and institutions of our society.

- I will act in accordance with my ethical beliefs and responsibilities. I will live in such a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

COMMUNITY Living in intentional community challenges us to be open, compassionate and willing to change. As we practice deep compassion with ourselves and each other at home, we are strengthened for our work in the world. We affirm our relational natures and seek the sacredness at the heart of our interactions. In community we learn that our lives are interdependent, and we have a responsibility to others, as they have to us. We come together to support and give life to one another; we are in JVC Northwest together, we are not alone.

- I will be a source of support to my community members with respect to their service and fulfillment of this covenant.
- I will take part in community business meetings, community and spirituality/reflection nights, and other community gatherings.
- I will evaluate my behavior and decisions in light of their effects on my community, the agency and locale where I serve, and the JVC Northwest program.
- I will address that which may be unhealthy in my own life and will accept the support of my community.
- I will listen and speak honestly with each member of my community, seeking connection in all interactions.
- I will commit to solving conflicts peaceably.

SPIRITUALITY /REFLECTION JVC Northwest is founded on the Ignatian principles of action and reflection. Coming together to pray and/or reflect, ponder and converse, we discover how we are being called to create a just world. We explore what it means to live a life rooted in the spirit of justice, while experiencing personal growth through reflection and service.

- I am open to the opportunity to spend time in reflection or prayer, seeking to see the sacredness of the persons I serve and encounter, the persons with whom I live and serve, and of my experience.
- I will lead and participate in weekly community gatherings that provide the opportunity to pray and/or reflect, bringing my own gifts and accepting the gifts of others. I will reflect on my personal journey and beliefs this year in the context of community.
- When attending retreats, I will participate fully by being present to the community of fellow JVs, staff, guests and the natural setting. I will examine the ways my faith or beliefs intersect with my desire for justice. I will work for justice from a place that is grounded in peace, non-violence, and love.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____