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# Caritas Invites Young People to Volunteer

## New Secretary-General Tells of Experience as a Student

MADRID, Spain, AUG. 17, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The new secretary-general of the Church's charity organization says that young people are a "powerful force" when Caritas responds to crises.

Michel Roy, who was elected in May to lead the confederation of charity organizations, addressed youth gathered in Madrid in an Aug. 8 statement.

He affirmed that their role in Caritas Internationalis is important, and told them that "Caritas organizations in 165 countries around the world are waiting to welcome you."

Roy noted youth assistance in Japan, their help with the HAART program for AIDS victims, and their fundraisers in Europe.

"These young people don't just provide a service, but they bring love, compassion and tolerance to their contributions to the work of Caritas," he said.

The French-born leader noted that the current global context is difficult for youth, but he said the "Arab Spring" shows how "new generations everywhere can instigate change and can use new means to combat the old limitations of their societies."

"At a time when the world seems darkened by economic crisis, social problems and instability, it is the young who bring fresh energy and who shine a light which can help guide us forward as one," Roy said.

Memory lane

Roy told the youth of his own beginnings in Caritas -- three decades ago as a student who found himself welcoming Southeast Asian refugees to France.

"That experience is one of those that drove me to get involved in the Church's response to poverty and which made me understand the importance of making a personal contribution to the difficulties of others," he said.

Roy continued, "I'd like to echo the Pope's call when he says 'the Church depends on you! She needs your lively faith, your creative charity and the energy of your hope.'"

And he told the youth that Caritas is there to help those who "need help and support and who are facing the world alone" but also that the Church's charity groups are there "for those who would like the opportunity to offer their services to the poor."

"You are the future for the victims of earthquakes, migrants stranded at sea and for all those who are poor and vulnerable," Roy stated. "Together with your brothers and sisters at World Youth Day, you have the chance to build firm foundations of truth and solidarity for all."

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