



# The Catholic Association

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Dear Applicant

[www.catholicassociation.co.uk](http://www.catholicassociation.co.uk)

Thank you for expressing an interest in coming to Lourdes as a Volunteer Helper. Please find attached an application form and guidance notes for the Young Helpers Group for the Catholic Association Pilgrimage to Lourdes 24<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012.

I hope that the information below will help answer some of your initial questions.

Lourdes lies in the foothills of the Pyrenees in South West France. Here Bernadette Soubirous saw apparitions of the Virgin Mary, and this is why Lourdes has grown into a pilgrimage centre.

As a volunteer helper with the ~~the~~ sick+or disabled+, you will need to understand the terminology of Lourdes. The building where many of them stay is called the **Accueil Notre Dame**. This is not a hospital, as you would recognise it. The word **Accueil** roughly translates as Welcome. It is a large, modern building, a cross between a hotel and a hospice. They tend to be referred to as our ~~the~~ guests+, ~~the~~ residents of the Accueil+or Assisted Pilgrims (A.Ps). Assisted Pilgrims may also stay in Hotels.

Volunteer work includes the following categories (see also [www.catholicassociation.co.uk](http://www.catholicassociation.co.uk)):

- **Rolling duty** - helping people to move from the Accueil or hotels to the events of the pilgrimage (e.g. masses, processions), or to shops, cafes etc. Usually this involves pushing wheelchairs.
- **Accueil Care duty** - assisting the nurses with the care of the guests, e.g. helping them to wash and dress, making beds, and cleaning their rooms.
- **Other duties** . include helping in the Accueil dining room, and the vital job of ensuring a steady supply of tea and coffee from our kitchen (but not cooking, as the food is provided).
- **HCP** . working with the Helpers' Children's Programme. They have a preference for people who have come with the CA as a helper at least once before and who have experience of childcare/teaching/youth groups.
- Another key role is to spend time with our guests, chatting, socialising, shopping etc.

**Male volunteer helpers are called "Brancardiers"** meaning ~~the~~ stretcher-bearers+, and wear the official blue pilgrimage polo shirt when on duty, to help identify them as workers in our group. **The female volunteers are called "Handmaids"**, and are all provided with a uniform (blue dress).

Most of you will work in teams comprising a mixture of Handmaids and Brancardiers and will participate in a mixture of Accueil Care and Rolling duties, under the supervision of experienced team leaders. Other helpers will be assigned to specific roles for the whole week, where continuity is required.

Volunteer **musicians and singers** are also required. Music plays an important role in the ceremonies and the music group is always pleased to have new members. This can be fitted alongside other duties . please complete the relevant section on the form.

The variety of duties should enable all people aged 17 and over with differing capabilities and experience to volunteer. The information that you give us on the Application Form will allow us to place you in the most appropriate job. We hope that you do not think that any questions are too intrusive, but we do need this information to plan the duties and form suitable teams. We also have a duty of care to all pilgrims who travel with us to Lourdes.

In June we will hold a Preparation Day in London, as specified on the Preparation Day and Deposit Slip sheet of this pack. This day is essential for new helpers, to learn more about the work and the pilgrimage as a whole, and to meet more experienced volunteers, including some of the organisers. It is also a useful day for experienced helpers. We will complete CRB application forms on this day.

**Lourdes is a stimulating experience, where volunteers like you work in the service of others and make friends for life.**

**We look forward to receiving your application.**

## Guidance notes for filling in the Catholic Association Young Helpers Application form.

### 1: Relevant details

It is important to fill in all these personal details in case we need to contact you or your family before or during the pilgrimage. You have to be at least 17 years of age by the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2012 and under 25 years of age otherwise we are unable to accept your application. **Please ensure the address given is where you would like your tickets to be sent 1-2 weeks before departure.** We will also need to send you further paperwork, mostly by email. **Please make sure your email address is clearly written and NOT a school or university one as we will be using this to send information after term has finished.**

### 2: Duty choice

If you have been to Lourdes on the Catholic Association Pilgrimage before we would like you to indicate which of the available duties you would prefer. If it is your first time you will be allocated your duty.

### 3: Uniform

All young helpers must wear uniform when on duty and these will be allocated using the information given.

### 4: Education/experience/skills

Please indicate current occupation or full-time education information. Please include all relevant experience and skills.

### 5: Reference

It is necessary for us to obtain a personal reference for all new helpers. Please include the FULL address and email details wherever possible as we prefer to use emails for taking references.

### 6: Medical/dietary information

Please let us know if there are any medical or dietary issues we should know about in case of emergencies. All information that you give us is kept strictly confidential. If you feel the need to give more details then please do so on the back of the application form.

### 7: Declaration

Please sign to indicate that you are prepared to work in Lourdes in the service of others, including the sick and disabled. If you are under 18 years of age your Parent/Guardian must also sign.

### PAYMENT

**Your £75 deposit should be sent A.S.A.P – no later than 1<sup>st</sup> June.**

**The balance of £432 should arrive no later than 1<sup>st</sup> July. The balance can be paid in instalments prior to this. Please make cheques payable to: C.A. YOUTH ACCOUNT.**

Forms should be returned to:

**David & Judy Ball, 8 Farrow Road, Norwich, NR5 8AH.**

If you have any queries, please contact us at the above address or at

young\_helpers@catholicassociation.co.uk



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