

Dear Friends ministering to Youth and Young Adults,

It is such a great joy for me to be welcomed into the Archdiocese of Baltimore as the Director of the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. I hope to meet you all in the coming weeks as I begin to experience the vibrant and faith-filled communities that serves this local Church, and in particular its younger members. I know that in the coming days you all will have a chance to share the stories of both your lives and the lives of those you minister to and with, and I cannot wait to hear them. I eagerly anticipate the days when I am not only a hearer of those stories, but a participant in them as well.

For now in this brief letter I want to share with you a bit of myself, as I prepare to serve you in your attempt to become and create missionary disciples. In the first story I am in college, serving with the ecumenical organization Young Life, and leading a group of high school youth as they in turn lead a junior high ski trip. Among the gathered that night is one high school junior, Blake. As we pray together and sing songs of praise I watch Blake, a quiet, athletic, compassionate young man, close his eyes and sing to God with a holy passion. I realized that night, my calling was not just to discipleship, but to help disciples make disciples. The Spirit called my name, and called me to ministry.

The second story is as a college sophomore on an immersion trip to El Salvador. Having spent time at both the UCA (Universidad Centroamericana) at the site of the martyrs and the tomb of Msgr. Archbishop Romero, we then moved onto the town of El Mozote, home to one of the worst massacres in the brutal Civil War. It was here, among the sacred ruins, that the Spirit called my name again, this time through sorrow and sadness, about the central place that solidarity with the poor has among our encounters with Christ. The missionary discipleship that Christ and His Church call for is one that must walk with the poor and vulnerable.

There are, of course, many more stories of encountering Jesus to share (and believe me, you'll probably hear them all, I love stories!). In the mean time I pray for you, the communities in which you serve, and especially for the young adults and youth and in them.

In Christ,

Craig Gould

Director, Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

*“Ad maiorem Dei gloriam inque hominum salutem”*