

# **Eucharistic Youth Movement**

## **Spirituality and Teachings of the Eucharistic Youth Movement**

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[www.apostleshipofprayer.net](http://www.apostleshipofprayer.net)

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## 1. Introduction

The Eucharistic Youth Movement (EYM) is an international Church Movement for the Christian formation of children and young people of both sexes, from 5 to 21. It seeks to teach them to live in Jesus' way, by guiding them into a loving, 'heart to heart' relationship with him, based on a Eucharistic spirituality. It prepares them to live as Christian adults, committed to serving their brothers and sisters in an unjust and secularised world.

The EYM is the junior branch of the Apostleship of Prayer, an association entrusted by the Church to the Society of Jesus. It is the renewed form of the old Eucharistic Crusade, which had great success in many countries around the middle of the last century. This renewal began in France in 1962, which gave the Movement this new name, followed by other countries all round the world.

Present in 51 countries in all five continents, the EYM is structured on clear lines of action, stages of Christian growth and a central national coordination.

By a methodology based on the formation of communities, with a clear sense of the Church, through the experience of prayer, Eucharist, the Word of God and discernment, young people are led to a life of service, attentive to the needs of today's world. For this, the EYM offers young people different ways - living in a team, meetings, songs, and so on - of relaxing, talking about their experiences, acting and meditating, with the aim of helping them to grow, and of guiding them in their choices.

*"We are young people who want to tell the world that our youthful joy springs from our encounter with God, from disinterested love, from looking at our history with hope, from Jesus' plan, which fires us and moves us to act."*

*(From the Latin American EYM Manual.)*

## **2. History**

### ***A project for young people.***

On 3 December 1844 the spiritual director of a group of young Jesuits, François Xavier Gautrelet SJ, gave a famous exhortation, from which the Apostleship of Prayer (AP) was born. It was on the feast of St. Francis Xavier, in Vals, near Le Puy. Full of desire to satisfy the impatience of his young Jesuit brothers in formation, who wanted to set off on mission to distant countries, he urged them to be missionaries even during their studies, by means of prayer and by offering each and every day in union with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

In 1865 Pius IX appealed to Catholics, adults and young people, to come to his help. Many students were keen to join in. So Fr. Cros took up Fr. Gautrelet's idea, and explained to the young people that they could take part in supporting the Pope through their prayers, times of silence, sacrifices and communions. The idea spread quickly through schools and halls of residence in France, Belgium, Canada, England and all over the Catholic world. In this way the first children entered into this dynamic of prayer and commitment, and were called Crusaders.

In 1870 Fr. Henri Ramière, Fr. Gautrelet's successor, asked Pius IX to give his blessing to this Pontifical Militia, as it might be called. In the letter accompanying his request he explained that the Pontifical Militia was a section of the Apostleship of Prayer, adapted for young Christians, to defend the cause of the Holy See with the weapons proper to it, especially through frequent communion and intensive hours of study offered for this intention. There were already 100,000 members all over the world, encouraging participation in sacramental life in every town and diocese.

In 1881 the first International Congress took place in Lille, where it was said that 'AP is a permanent Eucharistic crusade.'

In 1883 Fr. Ramière took up a campaign for monthly communion for children in the parishes, so that children who attended public and free primary schools would not be left on the margins of sacramental renewal.

Pius X's decrees, on Frequent Communion and Early Communion respectively, were published in 1905 and 1910, to strengthen the Eucharistic life of the faithful.

### ***Children's Eucharistic Crusade.***

From this it came about that between 1911 and 1914 Eucharistic Leagues were founded for children, adolescents and adults, with the aim of putting these decrees into practice. As a result of the Lourdes Eucharistic Congress in July 1914 the idea of a 'Children's Eucharistic Crusade' (Croisade Eucharistique des Enfants), aiming to bring them closer to the Eucharist, came about. However, the beginning of the First World War delayed this project.

In 1916, because of the war, AP organised various groups for the children, to pray for the combatants and for peace; Pope Benedict XV supported this project.

In 1917 the Eucharistic Crusade was organised within AP, and entrusted to the direction of the Society of Jesus.

In 1932 Fr. Ledochowski, the Jesuit superior general, obtained from Pius XII recognition of the Eucharistic Crusade of the Apostleship of Prayer as a Primary Association.

In 1945 Fr. Gilles Arbellot suggested a pedagogical renewal, wanting to offer the Crusaders a spiritual journey to support them in their daily offering: formation in prayer, Eucharistic life and the apostolate. At the same time two new sections were formed for 12-year-olds: the Knights of Christ and the Messengers of Christ.

In 1958 Pius XII approved the New Norms of the Eucharistic Crusade in a personally-signed letter. Following that, Fr. John Baptist Janssens, superior general of the Society of Jesus, asked all the Jesuit provincials to assign competent men to this ministry: *'Three or four men who will devote themselves completely to the Eucharistic Crusade, organise it solidly, form promoters for it, direct the magazines and give religious and moral formation to hundreds of thousands of children and adolescents.'*

### ***The Eucharistic Movement.***

In his address to the 3,522 delegates from the French Eucharistic Crusade on pilgrimage to Rome in 1960, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pius X's decree on early Communion, John XXIII avoided the word 'crusade', calling the group of pilgrims *'children of the French Eucharistic Movement.'*

The Assembly of French Cardinals and Bishops, meeting between 21 and 23 March 1962, promoted the new name 'the Eucharistic Youth Movement' (EYM).<sup>1</sup> However, this was not simply a change of name but also a renewed method of teaching and an updating adapted in names, objectives and specific methods of formation to each stage in a young person's life. Other countries, such as Italy, Spain, Chile, Argentina, Madagascar, did the same thing, with a programme adapted to the young people of each country.

In 1970 a national meeting of leaders of the French EYM (MEJ) took place in Tours. Delegates from different places met to review the future of the Movement. Since 1970 the French EYM has been directly under the Bishops' Conference for Children and Young People, with help from the Jesuits on the National Council, so as to keep up the Ignatian inspiration recognised as specific to the Movement. In the other countries mentioned above, Italy, Spain, Chile, Argentina, Madagascar and so on,

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<sup>1</sup> The Eucharistic Youth Movement (EYM), in Spanish Movimiento Eucarístico Juvenil (MEJ) and in Italian Movimento Eucaristico Giovanile (MEG), depends on the Apostleship of Prayer and is present in 45 countries

the link with the Society of Jesus and the Apostleship of Prayer is maintained, with the specific point that the Society of Jesus considers the AP and the EYM to be a pastoral service that it can and ought to offer to the universal Church and to the local churches.

In his address to the Congress of National Secretaries of the Apostleship of Prayer in 1985 John Paul II said explicitly: 'Special attention should be given to the children and young people who form the Eucharistic Youth Movement, the present-day version of the classic Eucharistic Crusade.'

The 1995 General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, for its part, said in the decree on the collaboration of lay people in mission: 'The Society sustains and promotes this pastoral service which the Holy Father has entrusted to it, as also the Eucharistic Youth Movement.'

The Movement's spirituality starts from the Church, develops within the Church and is at the service of the Church. The same is said of the EYM as of the Apostleship of Prayer, that 'it is not important because it is the Apostleship of Prayer, but because it is the Church'.

### **3. The EYM and the Apostleship of Prayer**

#### ***The EYM in the AP.***

In the history of the Apostleship of Prayer and, within it, in the origin of the Eucharistic Crusade which then became the Eucharistic Youth Movement, we recognize a common spiritual basis which exists today. In both of these we find **a Eucharistic spirituality** which invites its members to form or model their life according to the life and the Heart of Christ, guided in daily reality by a missionary desire and of service to the Church. This is why, the EYM is understood on the basis of the AP.

As we recall the AP was born in 1844 as an invitation addressed to a group of young Jesuit students, to be apostles and missionaries in their daily live, to unite themselves to Christ in everything they did, beginning now and not only in the future when they would leave to far away lands to proclaim the Gospel. Their entire life and each one of their actions could already be an apostolic and missionary action if they offered it to the Lord. It was proposed to them to offer and to live their life faithfully as a way of spiritually helping the missionaries, working in far away lands, and the mission of the whole Church.

The concrete practice which would help them to make this a reality would be to offer, at the beginning of the day, a prayer of offering of the day. In this prayer they would express their desire, their decision and their willingness that the whole day would be for the Lord, and to live everything as something offered to God. At the end of the day, the prayer of the Examination would gather, in discernment and

acknowledgment, what God had done in their lives starting from their morning offering. These two moments of prayer would prepare them to live and be more available and open to God's action during the day, more attentive to allow themselves to be guided by Him.

The united these two practices to the daily Eucharistic celebration, in which they recognized the same dynamics of receiving from God and giving back to God. In the **Eucharist** Christ offers Himself to the Father and gives Himself to them, drawing them in His own movement of offering to offer their life. Everything was one and the same thing, since they understood that both prayers and the Eucharist placed them in an attitude of giving themselves, with Christ, during the whole day. Between these prayers and the Eucharist there was a coincidence and continuity, since the prayers helped them *to live the Eucharist* during the rest of the day. The offering made them more available and more docile to the Spirit, since they were guided by the desire to model or form their lives according to the will of the Father. In this way they became apostles and collaborators in the mission of Christ on earth (made concrete for them even in the most simple things of every day).

Later they understood that to live this Eucharistic attitude in their heart springs from the ideal of love and humanity lived by Jesus in His own Heart. To live a Eucharistic spirituality was to live a spirituality of the Heart of Jesus. According to what was said before, they understood that the profound meaning of the Eucharist and what characterizes the Heart of Jesus, both of these refer us to the same theological reality: the loving self-donation of God to humanity, the life of the Son of God offered gratuitously for our salvation.

To offer life generously and with docility to the Spirit was the way in which these young Jesuits became available to participate in the **mission** of Christ in their daily lives. Their way of serving the **Church** went beyond their prayer, since the AP moved them to live faithfully what the Church was asking them at that moment, that is, to study and to live a holy life, there where they were. Because of the force of their prayer and because they united their lives to Christ, they were serving and supporting the Church spiritually in the frontiers, and really supporting the missionaries. This prayer also had some effect on the young Jesuits; it made them extend their horizon and their heart to the dimensions of the universal Church. At the same time that they became more ecclesial, their lives and everything they lived became more apostolic. The proposal made in 1890 was very natural for the AP, to pray for the monthly prayer intentions of the Holy Father. The AP was a service of prayer which committed the lives of its members to the mission of the whole Church.

To summarize, **Eucharist, Church and Mission** were and continue to be today, three fundamental axis or points to understand, live and promote the Apostleship of Prayer (and the EYM). In a world that is changing and in a new spiritual landscape or state of mind sometimes characterized by much confusion, we will continue to look toward the mystery of the Eucharist as the place of encounter with the Father revealed in Jesus Christ. We will continue to recognize in it the source and the

summit of the life of the Church. We will continue to listen in the Eucharist and in the Church to the voice of the Lord who sends us out on mission.

The AP articulates these three elements in a compact and inseparable way, as they are united in the Heart of Jesus. A life that is offered, a life that is surrendered, in communion with the whole of humanity, the service that leads us to struggle for a more just world, the sense of mission, etc. We express this with the prayer of offering, telling the Lord that we want to live being docile to His Spirit. We express it uniting our hidden life, our sacrifice, our prayer, our joys and sorrows, with Him and with the mission of the whole Church. We extend our gaze so as to include in our prayer all the cosmos, since this school of prayer teaches us to live and to love as the Heart of Jesus did. We make it our own, flesh in us, when we allow the pleas or appeals of the intentions of prayer of the Pope to question us and to change our own life style, placing us more at the service of others.

This theological basis or foundation and these practices constitute what is essential to what was called and began to be diffused as the Apostleship of Prayer, and later on the Eucharistic Youth Movement. In the same way as the AP cannot be understood today without the EYM, we believe that the EYM has to be understood as part of the AP. In fact, the AP has to be the spiritual soul of the EYM. And this not only because of historical reasons, in which we recognize the origin of the EYM and, before, that of the Eucharistic Crusade, but above all, because the spiritual tradition itself of the AP is what has to animate the interior life of the members of the EYM, during and after they have belonged to the Movement. There has to be continuity between the pedagogical proposal of the EYM – which is not for the entire life, but it is to accompany the young during the time of childhood and youth – with the help and the accompaniment that the AP has to continue to offer to those who “leave” the EYM having become adults in faith, in their mission to render other services in the Church.

Now we will go deeper to see how these essential elements of the AP are also at the center of the spiritual and pedagogical proposal of the youth branch of the AP, developed as a program of Christian formation for children and young people.

### ***The EYM in the Church.***

The specific task of the EYM in this sphere is to teach the sense of permanent belonging to the Church to children, adolescents and young people. It receives them at a transitory stage that of their childhood and youth, forms them in habits of Eucharistic life, and prepares them for adult commitment in the Church, in a mature Christian life. Once they leave the EYM, having experienced the process, the AP continues to offer them a spiritual way for living daily commitment in the service of the Kingdom of God. The EYM does not work for itself, but in service of the Church, in communion with the pastoral structures of the diocese. It brings its particular

Eucharistic spirituality to the Church, within the spectrum of the different charisms, services and movements.

The hierarchical and pastoral bonding with the Church is linked to the fact of belonging to the AP, which has the Pope as World Superior, who delegates the direction of it to the Society of Jesus. For that reason it is said that the EYM comes from and is for the Church, not only from and for the Jesuits, and is inserted into various aspects of diocesan organisation at the service of the pastoral task of the whole Church.

### ***The EYM in the World.***

The EYM is in the AP and in the Church at the service of the world. Formation in the EYM, as is proper of every Eucharistic spirituality, as was the life of Jesus, is oriented to service. To give one's life, in the way and in the style of Jesus is to live attentive to the mission to work to bring about a more just world. The EYM forms its members in a critical spirit, capable to value and to dialogue with today's world, but also capable to be opposed to what is contrary to the Gospel and to what threatens human dignity.

- In a world where materialism, hedonism and violence are global, the EYM teaches people to globalise solidarity, the dignity of man and woman, and peace.
- In a world which sees injustices as inevitable or explicable, the EYM believes that through Christian love a better world is possible.
- In an egoistical world of persons turned in on themselves, the EYM issues a challenge to live the adventure of gratuitous love, offered to all, without marginalising anyone.
- In a relativist and superficial world, the EYM proposes the radicality of surrendering one's own life, the radicality of Christ's cross
- In a sad world, without hope, here it is possible to find the joy of letting Jesus transform our lives.
- In a world which manipulates young people and abuses children, the EYM offers them a space in which they are respected and educated.
- In a world full of lonely people, the EYM offers the beauty of life in community.

## 4. Spirituality

The spirituality of the EYM, like that of the AP, which also has Ignatian roots, is a Eucharistic spirituality. So it has the following characteristics:

- Living in personal friendship with Jesus, in union with his Heart, through
  - Prayer, which teaches one to encounter God in everything
  - Listening to the Word
  - Celebration of the Eucharist.
- Being an apostle: service as offering of life
  - To the Church
  - To the world
  - Like Mary

The EYM seeks to lead the young person to interior knowledge of Jesus and his Word, and to teach the ability to encounter God in all the activities of daily life, through a confident prayer to the Father and through community celebration of the Lord's Supper. Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ nourishes the souls of EYM members and encourages them to live their Christian witness in the service of the Kingdom.

The EYM is an essentially ecclesial movement, and lives in, through and for the Church. The general sense of Church can be broken down into four particular aspects:

- sense of communion - one sole body,
- sense of universality,
- sense of the People of God
- sense of small community in the Church.

So in this sphere the specific task of the EYM is to form children, adolescents and young people in a sense of permanent belonging to the Church. It welcomes them at a time in their life when they are growing and changing, the time of childhood and youth, forms them in habits of Eucharistic life and prepares them for adult commitment in the Church and mature Christian life. Once they have lived through the process and leave EYM, AP continues to make its offer of a spirituality with which to live daily commitment to serve the Kingdom of God. So EYM does not work just for itself but at the service of the Church, in communion with the pastoral structures of the diocese. It brings to the Church its specific Eucharistic spirituality, within the spectrum of the different charisms, services and Movements, which is to say that it is open to the world, to society, to reality as it is lived, and so teaches how to go on being an apostle at the service of the Kingdom.

Mary accompanies the EYM on its spiritual journey, as the one who has best incarnated the ideals of openness to the Father's will and service to the brothers and sisters.

## **4. Teaching – methodology.**

The EYM's teaching leads the child or young person to a personal process of election. It teaches them to discover the world as the place of encounter with God, where they learn to receive life from him, to thank him for it and offer it to him.

The EYM's particular teaching method has brought each country to develop a series of educational materials available for the formation and growth of its members. These vary in quantity and quality, depending on the structure enjoyed by EYM in each country where it exists. So far there is not a unique guideline, nor uniformity in the educational content, but there has been communication and exchange of materials between countries, especially where there is a common language. There are manuals, monthly magazines, at both national and local level, websites (see the [links](#) section of our website), special music, etc.

### **The EYM teaching method : a Eucharistic method (The spiritual foundations of the EYM teaching method)**

The first Eucharist took place at a single moment, during the Last Supper, but Christ's life was always Eucharistic. His way of forming his apostles also always had a Eucharist form. Everything in him was Eucharistic, or rather, everything can be interpreted from the Eucharistic point of view. It is the teaching method of a life that was always being given out. Therefore, life in the EYM ought always to be like that.

Christ's teaching method with his disciples was a method starting from his own life, from his Heart, a testimony which the apostles could see and follow:

- a method of personal love for the disciples, of patience and concern for each one;
- of community, accompanying the apostles on missionary and other experiences;
- a method which encouraged the disciples to learn to give their lives,
- finally, a teaching method of a life given out to others, through his total love.

This is what a Eucharistic teaching method is.

To understand the Eucharist well, one must know what was happening in Christ's heart at the moment of the Last Supper:

#### **A Eucharistic Heart**

His heart as a Son, his docility to the Father's will, is the new form of sacrifice pleasing to God, the spiritual sacrifice which consists in offering oneself in obedience. It is the new priesthood, which consists in giving oneself. Psalm 40 reflects this well when it says that God is not pleased with sacrifices nor with cereal-offerings, but rather in the heart's response 'Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will' (Ps.40:7-8) The Letter to the Hebrews makes the same comment, saying that Jesus Christ 'did God's will, offering his own body in sacrifice once for all' (Heb.10: 5-10)

This priesthood and this way of living reach their supreme expression at the Last Supper, where Jesus in a way opens and dedicates his Heart to his disciples – which is to say, his whole life.

On that night Jesus translated into words and gestures what was burning within him, his self-giving love for the Father and for humanity. He made the bread and wine the sign or sacrament of his way of living, summing up his whole life in it: *this bread is me*, he said to them; *this wine is me, offered, poured out for you*. The Eucharistic bread and wine became a symbol of what was in his Heart.

Jesus was always the bread given out, always the wine offered. Through these gestures he also indicated that for love of humanity he accepted the cruel death which was coming upon him, a death which was unjust and unwanted, but which would serve to show the greatest love.

Saying to them ‘Do this in memory of me’, he invited his disciples to associate themselves with his own life offered for love of his brothers and sisters, and to likewise. He did not invite them simply to celebrate the Eucharist in his memory, but invited them above all to give out their lives, to give out their hearts. When St. John tells us in his Gospel the story of the washing of feet in the context of the Last Supper, he is not speaking of something different, since it expresses the same Eucharistic logic of offering of life to serve the brothers and sisters. To be a disciple is to have the same Heart as Jesus, which is to say the same way of life offered for love of others.

The Christian is called to recognise the most characteristic and permanent quality of Jesus’ Heart in this attitude of life offered. It is this that we may call *the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus*. It is this disposition of his Heart that we want to imitate when we pray ‘make our hearts like unto thine’, or when we make the offering of our lives to the Father each morning.

The EYM was founded to put this Eucharistic teaching method into practice. Life in the EYM teaches young people to live with Jesus and in his way – which is to say, according to the Heart of Jesus, the Eucharistic heart, given up for humanity.

The EYM life is full of different activities, there are rich and important experiences, new friends to meet... but the main and most important thing is meeting Christ and getting to know him. All the activities that EYM offers, like meetings, camps, games and so on, are to invite the member to discover Jesus, to know his joy, his friendship, and the challenges that He offers in the life of a young person today. In the words of Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, Fr. General of the Society and Director General of the EYM, to the EYM of France in 2009:

*This is the very meaning of Eucharistic spirituality. You are invited to model your lives on the Eucharist. These are the words of Pope John Paul II in his words to the world leaders of the Apostleship of Prayer in 1985:*

*'You must try to form Christians who are moulded interiorly by the Eucharist, who may have the strength to commit themselves generously, engaging all the aspects of their lives in a spirit of service to their brothers and sisters, like the Body of Christ offered and his Blood poured out.'*

How can this be possible?

*The Eucharist is a source of inspiration for life. Even though going to Mass regularly is essential for taking part in our meetings, still more, in this offering of our lives, the most important thing of all is to let this Eucharistic dynamism impel our whole life. For a member of the EYM the Eucharist is a way of life. In everything, always, in 'all the dimensions of one's life' it means living 'in service of our brothers and sisters.' It means living a Eucharistic life during the week, even when I am not in church. It is a spirituality which teaches us to receive the gift of life with gratitude, and consequently to give it in service of others.*

*This way of living is Christ's way of living. And we find the whole meaning of Christ's life, as a real summary, during the Last Supper. By his gestures and words he reveals the ultimate meaning of his life given up for us.*

We can understand the Mass if we understand the meaning that Jesus gave to his gestures and words at the Last Supper.

*Another quotation from the Pope, this time from Benedict XVI, helps us to understand the deep meaning of the Eucharistic gestures through Christ himself:*

*'What is happening? How can Jesus share out his Body and his Blood? Making the bread his Body and the wine his Blood, he anticipates his death, accepts it in the depths of himself, and turns it into an act of love. What from the outside is brutal violence – the crucifixion – is transformed from within into an act of love which surrenders itself completely. This is the transformation of substance brought about in the Cenacle, and destined to initiate a process of transformations whose ultimate purpose is the transformation of the world until God may be all in all. (cf. 1 Cor. 15: 28) All men have always been hoping in his heart, in some way, in a change, a transformation of the world. This is, now, the central act of transformation which is able truly to renew the world: violence is transformed into love, and so death is transformed into life.'* (20<sup>th</sup> World Youth Day, Cologne- Marienfeld, 21 August 2005)

Fr. Adolfo Nicolás concludes:

*Finally, living a Eucharistic spirituality commits the Christian's whole life. It is the great challenge of the EYM, and of all those who take seriously the spirituality that it offers. It is a programme for life at the service of transformation of the world, which begins with the transformation of our hearts.*

So, living the spirituality and the teaching of the EYM is a constant relationship with the Eucharist, as a fount of inspiration for life, of food for the spirit and of commitment to serve the world: a Eucharistic spirituality which drives us to live a Eucharistic life in everything.

## **The practical methodology of the EYM is based on:**

### **A) Teams**

The fundamental aim of weekly gatherings or meetings, where faith is shared in communities of children or young people, is to bring the young person to encounter Jesus Christ and to live as a Church member. EYM groups are called 'teams'.

It is also in sharing and living in the Church that boys and girls discover the God of Jesus Christ who is at work in their own personal and community life. In this sphere young people learn to accept others, to be open about themselves, to form relationships and work with others through the team, and to be aware of what happens in the world around them (attention to life). Let us deepen into some of these aspects.

- *Communicating* means living together and sharing, or rather, the experience of companionship and friendship. In this way, each person and team member becomes a gift in the other member's life, each one enriching the other's life. The member discovers himself, and discovers the other person as someone different and unique; and in this way he can find his place in the group and form a team, a body with the other members. For that purpose he learns to express himself in words: speaking and allowing others and the Other to express themselves as well. The Movement suggests various ways to live this: sharing the week's events, debates, games, activities and reflection on things to do with living in a team, the morning and the evening prayers, spiritual discernment of what has happened in life, the Personal Notebook ...are all part of the accompaniment of the team.

- *Working together*: sharing with others allows a person to become open to other perspectives and to learn to choose together, with consideration for other ways of thinking. This choice brings him to take a position and to behave more interactively in the group, not just as an individual, learning to respect others. The means which help the young person to live this point are: beginning to keep a group Notebook, manual activities to build something together, singing, self-expression activities, team

projects, quizzes, debates and discussions at the members' level, and sharing experiences, both at meetings and outside them. Camps, both at weekends and in holiday times, when they can often be for several weeks, are intensive experiences in which the member is faced with working with others. There he learns to know himself to live and share with others in an experience of community, and to be formed in spiritual values and the value of service to the world.

- *Attention to life:* EYM team life also seeks to teach its members to live attentively. The aim is to develop the skills that are part of team life, being active and taking one's proper place in it, and becoming responsible for it, together with the others. In taking on these responsibilities the member is called to discern how to live in the truth. To that end, responsibilities are divided out, according to the team's plans. Initiatives are offered for commitment, which are also seen as challenges to confront. These are an invitation to share experiences, points of view, concerns...

All this should make members open to notice what is happening around them, make them want to understand what is going on in their own environment, their friendships, their group, in the family, at school, in the district, and also in society and in the world, in culture, the media, sciences. It helps them to be increasingly open to others, with their differences, to learn to accept what is new and unexpected. Older members have the opportunity to lead some of the activities, and they are also invited to receive personal or spiritual accompaniment.

## **B) EYM team meeting**

EYM meetings have these characteristics:

- Frequency: weekly
- Number of members in a team: ideally not more than 12
- Duration: not longer than an hour and a half.

Development of an EYM team meeting

1. Announcement of the **aims and goals** of the meeting

2. **Activities** (\* optional)

- Begin in the presence of God
- Sharing of experience
- Reflection in the light of the Word and of the Faith
- Formation\*
- Games\*
- Planning a service\*
- Evaluation
- Celebration

### 3. **Content** (according to times, persons and places):

At each meeting daily-life subjects are discussed in relation to God and others (i.e., affectivity, spiritual life, social commitment, use of money and of free time, family, sexuality, vocation, suffering and death, among others).

The content of these meetings helps to open the member's whole person, body, soul, spirit, vision, to a number of aspects of formation. One of the pivots of this formation is what is called *The intelligence of Faith*: another is prayer, of which more will be said later.

The team meeting will also be an occasion to grow in a knowledge of the faith which is experiential as well as intellectual and doctrinal: it should teach the members to get to know the person of Jesus, the Bible, the Church, the sacraments, the Spirit of God who is active in our history, and so on.

Mime, singing, sketching, Bible study, learning prayers – the prayer of offering – lives of saints, and so on, are means to this end.

#### **Some practical information on the monitor's or animator's way of working at the weekly group meeting:**

- Before the meeting: plan beforehand, prepare all the items needed for the meeting, so as to avoid improvisation.
- During: arrive in good time, prepare the meeting-room and be ready to welcome people as they arrive. Make every effort for the meeting to be lived in the presence of God, helping the others to share, so that the monitor is not the centre of attention. It is the monitor's task to see that the meeting develops well, and to evaluate it, making sure that the initial aims were kept in view.
- Afterwards: reflect on aspects which should be improved.

#### **C) Regional and national meetings**

Many countries keep to the tradition of an annual National EYM Gathering, with wide participation from all over the country. These can have various aims: sharing, formation, retreat, celebration. The EYM also holds regular Summer Camps. The gatherings are marked by the particular nature of each centre or region: songs, symbols, intensive and significant moments, particularly important times of the year, and so on. Meetings like this are an opportunity to experience and renew the sense of belonging to the Church.

#### **D) Stages of growth**

The EYM organises its members into teams according to age or according to the member's stage of development, also taking into account psychological maturity.

The following four elements should be present at each stage, evolving as time goes on with the help of different teaching methods:

- Feeling welcome, feeling at home: the joy of being together, playing, having fun
- Formation: knowledge of the world and of Jesus, learning prayer and other kinds of experience, so as to grow in faith and grow as a person.
- Mission: Eucharistic life and service
- Celebration: celebrating life with Jesus, celebrating the Eucharist and the sacraments.

The EYM is not for the whole of life. It is for formation in childhood and youth. The Movement is a preparation within the Church for serving the world. After the EYM, young adults and adults are accompanied for the rest of their lives by the Apostleship of Prayer in their mission as committed Christians.

It is important to say that moving from one stage to another is usually highlighted by a special celebration which marks another step in the child's or young person's commitment to Christ and the Church. The names and timings of these stages vary from country to country. It can be said in general that these stages relate to three 'Eucharistic moments', which indicate their general objectives:

- The youngest: learning to receive life as a gift
- The middle age-group: learning to take responsibility for life, to make it their own, to find their own ways – accepting life.
- The oldest: learning to dedicate or give out their lives - offering

These points will be determined by the young person's individual stage of formation.

In the Spanish-speaking countries (Latin America and Spain) EYM offers 6 stages:

- Friends of Jesus (kindergarten, up to 7)
- Hope (8-9)
- Disciples (10 – 11)
- Witnesses (12-14)
- Apostles (14-17)
- Youth for the Kingdom (18 upwards.)

In French-speaking countries (France, Canada-Quebec, and some African countries) there are 5:

- New Fire (7-10)
- Young Witnesses (10-13)
- Witnesses Today (12-15)

- Hope Team (15-18)
- Apostolic Team (18-21)<sup>2</sup>

In Italy there are 4 stages:

- Emmaus Group (8-10)
- New Youth (11-13)
- Community 14 (14-17)
- Pre-witnesses (18-23)<sup>3</sup>

In Brazil there are 3 stages:

- Seed Group (9-12)
- New People Group (13-15)
- New Fire Group (16 and upwards)<sup>4</sup>

What is important, as will be said again and again, is that in these teams, groups or life-communities, the young person can grow humanly and spiritually and learn to be a source of life for other people, for the community itself and for the Church.

This way of learning can also be described as making the 'Emmaus Experience'. As in the experience of the disciples in Luke 24, the young person is invited to come close to Jesus, with whom he makes a discernment or a reinterpretation of events, listens to the Scriptures, shares bread, and is sent to proclaim the Good News.

In the EYM, by means of these focal points of accompaniment and experiences, the child and the adolescent are enabled to become 'Eucharistic persons'.

## **E) Prayer in the EYM**

The special characteristics of the EYM prayer have their roots in the spiritual tradition of the Apostleship of Prayer, of which it is a part. It seeks to teach the young person to live in a relationship of permanent friendship with the Lord, to find God in all things. His prayer will always be one which starts from life and is one with life, at the same time as it is anchored in the Word of God and directed to turning him into an apostle at the service of the world in the Church.

Even though the whole life of the member seeks to be a response to Jesus' call, there is an educational emphasis on experiencing three special moments of

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<sup>2</sup> In French they are known respectively as: Feu Nouveau (Fnou), Jeunes Témoins (JT), Témoins Aujourd'hui (TA), Equipe Espérance (ES) and Equipe Apostolique.

<sup>3</sup> In Italian they are called Gruppi Emmaus (GE), Ragazzi Nuovi (RN), Comunità 14 (C14) and Pre-testimoni (Pre-T)

<sup>4</sup> In Portuguese, known as: Grupo Semente, Grupo Gente Nova and Grupo Fogo Novo.

encounter with him: **The Three Moments of the Day**. At each one of these there is a pause, to speak one-to-one with the great Friend.

What are these three moments? 1) The offering 2) The meeting in friendship 3) the review:

**1) Each morning there is a Dedication (First Moment):** On waking, the **Offering** of the day to the Lord. This is the moment of greeting the Lord and offering him the whole of the coming day. The member offers his prayers, words, works, sufferings, everything that he has to do on that day, telling Jesus he wants to do it with Him and in His way. He can make this offering in his own words or using some written prayer.

**2) Each day there is a meeting (Second Moment):** This is a **meeting in friendship** with Jesus at some other moment in the day, by a short time of personal prayer, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, reading the Gospel, grace at mealtimes at home.... or at any other time that it comes to mind during the day. This second moment might also be the moment of celebrating the Eucharist and receiving Jesus in Communion. (There might be many 'second moments' during the day.)

**3) Each night a Review (Third Moment):** The Examen or **Review** of the day, at bedtime, to recognise God's activity in one's own life that day. More than an Examination of *conscience*, it is an Examen of *consciousness* or awareness of how God has been with me, and how I have been with Him, during the day which is ending. For this third moment there can be three steps: Give **thanks** for what God has done in me today, ask **forgiveness** for my resistance to God's work in me, ask **help** in living more united to Jesus tomorrow.

How can one live each one of these moments? Prayers written by others may be helpful, but using one's own words is recommended. It always helps to be very specific: to offer the activities that the member is going to do that day, to share with Him what he is feeling, to remember the people he has been with, and so on. He should try to value each Moment more for its quality and intensity than for how long it lasts. The presupposition is that it is difficult to find long recollected times in the midst of the bustle of daily life, so the emphasis is on this intense, deep prayer for a few minutes.

It can be helpful to find a suitable place at home, a 'prayer-corner', a special place to experience this meeting, with a picture, a candle and so on, and also to learn some bodily postures that are conducive to prayer.

Prayer in common, and taking part in the Eucharist, and all the experiences with the team, will feed the member's personal prayer.

## **F) The personal notebook.**

This is a helpful tool for putting the encounter with God and others into words. The different personal processes are written down in it, so that later one can re-read and remember, and learn from them. In this way it will be a reflection of where God has

been in one's life, and a preparation for discerning his will. So it is important for every member of EYM to have and use his personal notebook, which will never be simply a diary or a way of relieving one's feelings. A boy or girl who has just joined EYM will use it differently from a young person who has already spent some time in the Movement, but for all it will be a great help in their lives as members.

The Notebook will help God's action in the life of each member to become God's action for the life of the group. Each young person, starting from what he has experienced with God, might share with his companions what he has written down. Using the Notebook will be a proof of the seriousness with which God's will is shared in the group. Without it the richness of the personal encounter is wasted. So it is an indispensable tool in the methodology.

What should be written down? When a person listens to God and follows him, he notices feelings, interior movements and thoughts. If he pays attention, he discovers that behind them there is a good spirit inviting him to follow the good path, and a bad spirit leading him away from it. It depends on each person's free will whether he gives space to one or the other spirit, chooses Jesus' way or the opposite.

It is these perceptions and reactions, struggles and choices, which will be written down in the Personal Notebook, to help in expressing and discerning them. So it is a logbook or notebook of spiritual life, that should remain private and respected by others. This is the chief use of the Notebook. It will be a place of 'memory' of what is happening; it will be a space to express deepest feelings. Some will use them by writing their prayers to the Lord directly, and others, perhaps, will gather the names of people through whom God is speaking to them. It will also be useful for noting down the life of the team, memories, topics in formation and other important moments in the member's life.

It would be useful for the EYM monitor, animator or coordinator to keep a separate notebook for meetings and plans (different from his own Personal Notebook). This would help organise their weekly commitment, without falling into monotonous repetitions or risky improvisations. By putting plans and experiences with the children and young people into the notebook, they can correct mistakes and keep on improving the service they give.

The children in EYM will use the Notebook more freely, recording the most important moments in their growth in faith. Some centres also have a 'Team Notebook', or one for the centre itself, which everyone helps to complete. Where parents share in their children's activities, it can also be used as a 'Family Notebook', and collect together photos, memories, drawings or letters which illustrate everything that they have experienced with the Lord during the year.

## **G) Our structures: Roles in the EYM**

### **The child and/or young member of the EYM**

### *Who he is*

- The participant in the EYM, who wants to live in Jesus' way.

### *What he does*

- Gets to know Jesus and to have a relationship with him, so as to live like Him.
- Acquires EYM habits
- Puts into words what he has in his heart
- Shares what he has experienced, in community
- Is committed to the Church and to society

## **The monitor or animator**

### *Who he is*

- A person of prayer, helpful and creative, who seeks to live like Jesus in every way
- Is older and more mature than those he accompanies
- Has the qualities needed for leading a team: is helpful, creative, joyful, generous with his time, approachable
- Lives the sacraments, prayer and personal recollection
- Discerns his vocation as monitor and receives it as mission.
- Has made the EYM journey, and/or Consecration in the Apostleship of Prayer
- Takes responsibility for his formation as an EYM monitor, attending special courses, retreats and other courses which will help him to grow in Christian life and personal friendship with Jesus
- Able to work in a team

### *What he does*

- Works directly with the children and young members of EYM, showing Jesus' love for them
- Plans the meeting according to the guidelines established in the Centre's planning, and leads it, or accompanies the person leading it.
- Takes time for personal conversations with each member of his group
- Brings light to the team from the Word of God
- Helps to celebrate what has been experienced in the meeting
- Helps communion inside the team
- Arranges a retreat experience for the group at least once a year, if he is a monitor for young people.
- Takes part in the monitoring team, and keeps in contact with the Coordinator and the Assistant

## **The Centre Coordinator (of a parish or a school)**

### *Who he is*

- A young or adult lay person, called to imitate and show Jesus as master and to live his style of leadership with the Twelve
- At least 17 years old
- Has belonged to EYM for at least a year
- Has received the sacrament of Confirmation

### *What he does*

- He is responsible for the normal running of the Centre
- Is careful to fulfil the aims that have been planned
- Chooses and appoints new monitors, in communion with the spiritual assistants of the EYM, and sees to it that they receive a proper formation.
- Coordinates activities and meetings
- Is above all a motivator and animator of the team of monitors
- Maintains contact with the rest of the Movement and with national or regional activities

## **The National Director of the EYM**

### *Who he is*

- A priest or a religious, male or female, appointed to direct the Movement. Usually it is the National Secretary of the Apostleship of Prayer, who is a Jesuit appointed by the World Director. If circumstances require it, another person can be appointed. The National Secretary of AP makes this appointment, after appropriate consultation and in agreement with the religious superior of the person appointed.
- A person of prayer, with a warm friendship with Jesus, a deep sense of the Eucharist and the Church, with a good understanding of the spirituality and familiar with the history of the Apostleship of Prayer and the EYM. He must be helpful, approachable, with a love of young people, able to work in a team and to value his co-workers, with pastoral, organising and administrative ability, and with a solid philosophical and theological formation.

### *What he does*

- He has primary responsibility and is the visible head of the EYM
- He is pastor to those entrusted to him in the Movement, and his main mission is to pray for them
- He promotes, spreads and organises the Movement in all dioceses.

- He appoints the members of the National Team and gathers them together periodically.
- He takes part in international meetings of the EYM

## **The Spiritual Assistant**

### *Who he is*

- A person, lay or religious, of deep spiritual life.
- Has specific formation for his service
- Lives the spirit of the EYM and the Apostleship of prayer
- Has a love of children and young people and is capable of dialogue with them
- Knows the real situation of children and young people
- Is able to challenge and to make specific proposals to young people

### *What he does*

- He accompanies and forms the monitors and centre coordinators
- Prays for the persons whom he assesses
- Respects the other roles in the EYM
- Helps them to keep the spirit of the Movement and the sense of the Church
- Accompanies the processes of each team
- Has care of fulfilment of the spiritual aims of the EYM

## **The National Team**

### *What it is*

- A team of volunteers, who should have experienced an EYM process and live deeply the EYM spirit, appointed by the National Director to accompany him in his work.

### *What it does*

- It puts itself at the disposition of the different EYM centres in the country, to help them according to their needs.
- Prepares necessary pastoral material, offers retreats and courses for monitors and coordinators
- Organises national meetings and meetings of coordinators

## **The Regional or Continental Coordinator of the AP and the EYM**

- Is a National Secretary of AP and/or Director of EYM who receives the task of coordinating and articulating the common aspects of the Movement on the continent, and facilitating communication between National Secretaries and

Directors. He represents the countries in the region and relates them at world level.

### **The World Director**

- The Pope is the leader and chief Director of the Movement. He entrusts the ordinary direction of it to the General Superior of the Jesuits. He, as World Director, gives the general guidelines of the Movement, and appoints the National Secretaries of AP, who are normally those entrusted with the EYM. He delegates the ordinary government of the AP and the EYM at world level to a **Director General Delegate**, who works with him in Rome.

### **H) Steps to be taken to start the EYM**

- Discuss with the parish priest and the bishop and contact the National Centre of the EYM, if there is one, or the National Centre of the Apostleship of Prayer, if there is one. If not, they should at least contact the international centre of the EYM.
- Select and train the animators.
- Set a date and invite the future members of the EYM.
- Settle the place and time of the weekly meetings.

## 6. Where is the EYM?

The EYM exists in approximately 50 countries, in all the continents:

**Africa:** Burundi, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Togo, Mali, Gabon, Seychelles, Angola, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Kenya, Chad, Tanzania, Benin, Rwanda, Mozambique, Mauritius, Madagascar.

**Asia:** Lebanon, India, Nepal, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, China (Hong Kong)

**America:** Unites States, Canada, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Panama, Peru.

**Europe:** Belgium, France, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Croatia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, the Czech Republic, Italy, Belarus

**Oceania:** Australia, Tahiti, New Caledonia

International website: [www.apostleshipofprayer.net](http://www.apostleshipofprayer.net)

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