

THE EUCHARISTIC YOUTH MOVEMENT IN MADAGASCAR

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I. The EYM

1) *The Eucharistic Youth Movement* is united to the Apostleship of Prayer and its main goal is the formation of Christians. The members receive training to build up their personality so as to commit themselves effectively and with competence in the life and apostolic action of the Church. This formation is adapted to different ages or sections as follows:

- a. The Childhood (*Irak'i Kristy* = Messenger of Christ) 5-14.
- b. The Adolescence (*Vavolombelon'i Kristy* = Witness of Christ) 14-17.
- c. The Youth (*Ekipa Kristianina Ankehitriny* = Christian Team for Today) 17-.
- d. The Responsible (*Mpanabe*).

2) The Teams

The Movement is structured in teams of 10-15 participants accompanied by an adult.

- a. The National Team is composed by two Priests, the Promoter and the National Secretary, appointed by Rome with the agreement of the local Bishops.
- b. The other members of the National Team are volunteers that come from the bases of EYM. They are selected members of the Christian Team for Today.

c. These teams consider themselves to be "cells" of the Church that help the children and young people to find Christ in community, and to share his life with others. They are accompanied by one or two Responsible for the team (which has 10 to 20 members). They carry out their work in a whole range of varied circumstances, meaning the countryside, the cities, schools, universities and parishes.

II. Equipment:

1. Manuals

- *Torolalana* (Directive) for the Responsible.
- *Iraka* (Messenger) for children.
- *Fanasina* (Salt) for the adolescents.
- *Miaradia* (Together) for the youth.

2. Periodicals:

- *Ny Hafatro* (My Messenger) for children and adolescents.
- *Firaisankina* (Union) for the youth and the responsible.

3. Making the periodical known is done mainly by those who give out our magazines. Members use them for their formation and meetings. Children and young people also help distribute their periodicals.

III. Training:

1. The training within the team focuses on the idea that they may consider themselves "cells" of the Church. The formation in the Movement is rooted mainly on the Gospel, the Eucharist and the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. The Virgin Mary is a Model for everybody. For that reason, the first stage corresponds to the First Week of the Exercises. The second stage corresponds to the Second Week of the Exercises. The third stage corresponds to the Third and Fourth Week.

2. The EYM is rooted in the Eucharist. That is the reason of its existence. The activities of the Movement are spiritual (catecheses, preparation for the sacrament) and social (help for invalids, orphans, prisoners, the sick, etc...) and they involve collaboration with different groups (parishes, Catholic schools, cooperatives, executive committees of villages, security committees, etc...).

3. The EYM is a nursery for vocations in the Church.

The Movement takes care of educating faith from childhood to youth. They have frequent contact with Priests, Religious and lay people. The training in the teams give the children and the young people the sense of being a Community and part of the Church, a point stressed by the EYM. It strives to form responsible children and young people, that live a deep Eucharistic life. The aim is to become a true apostle. As a proof there are many vocations for priesthood, religious life and lay commitment that have come from the EYM.

The training is done in different stages: The stage passages are marked by a ceremony during the Eucharist, where they receive their badges. Formation techniques rest above all on team life, well prepared weekly meetings, conferences, retreats, exercises, apostolic work, and the Manuals for the different stages. Eucharistic living is always stressed.

4. The daily witness to being Christian

This is the aim of the MEJ's formation, which is taught as:

a) The pedagogy of *heroes* for the Childhood (I.K.): To pray, to receive Jesus and offer oneself to be an apostle.

b) The pedagogy of *will* for the Adolescence (V.K.): To Receive, to Live, to Share the Gospel of Jesus.

c) The pedagogy of *personality* for the Youth (E.K.A.): To Follow Jesus Christ will mean to see in him the Way, the Truth, the Life (Jn 14:6). They learn to put into practice the Daily offering and the Eucharistic Living, in personal life, in the family, in Community and in the Church.

5. The ways and goals of Formation

- As for children and young people, they need a spiritually integrated and solid formation.

- Formation and information can be found on books about our faith and the life of the Church.

- A testimony of a solid life of faith and pastoral responsibility from adults.

- A catechetically adapted pedagogy.

- A Christianization of all issues.

In short, for the EYM, a spiritually integrated and solid formation can respond to all the difficulties met. The EYM goes on towards training the children and young people on justice and human rights issues. The formation regarding truth, beauty and goodness is always to promote values, aiming to bring the person finally to finding the Almighty God revealed by Jesus Christ, and to find in Him his or her only Happiness.