



Youth Apostles Institute

Our Vision

excerpted from the General Statutes of the Youth Apostles Institute

CHAPTER 1

VISION

- 1.1 The Youth Apostles Institute is a mixed Association of Christ's Faithful composed of single, married and consecrated laymen, and consecrated clerics. As a Public Association of the Faithful it is governed by its proper statutes in accordance with Canons 298 to 320 and 327 to 329. Our community is united by a common vision, spirituality and apostolic thrust, although each member retains his proper lifestyle as layman or cleric.
- 1.2 The members of this Institute desire to be "of one heart and one mind" (Acts 4:32), in response to the Lord's call and in imitation of Christ's first followers. That is, we wish to be one family, composed of different kinds of members in accordance with the Lord's call to each one. We are united through a particular promise to a deep spiritual life and a common apostolic service to youth.
- 1.3 It is our hope that young people realize through the modeling of committed laymen that everyone is called to holiness, not just priests and religious brothers and sisters; that everyone is called to live a life of prayer and moral virtue; that the Church desperately needs the service of all its children to expand God's kingdom.
- 1.4 The fact that lay Youth Apostles preach and practice the same truths and share the same philosophy as ordained members of Youth Apostles, strengthens the challenge and example to the youth and facilitates for them a greater Christian response.
- 1.5 The priests within the Association best exemplify the importance of having sacred ministers who renounce their right to a personal family and totally dedicate themselves to serve the family of the Church, especially its young people. Priests trained to bring to youth the love of the Eucharistic Christ, the strength of prayer, and the peace of the Sacrament of Penance can and will transform the world.
- 1.6 It is our hope that young people realize through the modeling of committed clerics that it is possible and rewarding to respond to God's call and to follow a vocation leading toward the priesthood.
- 1.7 Clerics who form a bond of brotherhood with married members in the Institute enrich each others' spiritual life. The clerics give the married members sacramental strength while the married members afford them the opportunity to have an extended family life, all forming the family of Youth Apostles.



1.8 We dedicate ourselves to live out the Lord's commandment of love which transcends the cross and brings new life into the world. Christ's teaching is clear: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you, live on in my love" (Jn. 15:9). We also intend to live a life of absolute truth which will in turn enable us to experience the freedom promised by the Lord when he said to his followers: "If you live according to my teaching, you are truly my disciples; then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (Jn. 8:31b-32). Inspired and strengthened by the Lord's example of love, truth and freedom, we have responded to His call to discipleship by accepting to become brothers in the Truth, free to love as he loved.

A Response in Love

1.9 The Youth Apostles Institute has been founded with the ultimate purpose of inspiring youth to a Christ-like life based on the Lord's sacrificial love. The love which Christ shares with his followers contains an element of sacrifice: "Love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:12-13). We wish to model for youth this intimate connection between love and sacrifice. As adult Christians we are willing to die to ourselves that youth may live in imitation of Christ who died for all that they may have new life. Young people will come to recognize this new life of grace which comes from God through the love and sacrifice of committed Youth Apostles.

1.10 Christ's compassionate love for others impels us to reach out and actively touch the lives of young people. Jesus was always moved by the needs of others. "Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes and immediately they could see; and they became his followers" (Mt. 20:34). Jesus' love was frequently directed specifically at young people, whose need for compassion he was well aware of. We have been touched by the same merciful love of the Lord, and in turn we wish to touch the lives of the little ones. In unison with the Master we strive to say: "Let the children come to me. Do not hinder them. The kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mt. 19:14). Christ's compassionate love for youth is at the heart of our response to Him in the Youth Apostles Institute.

1.11 We understand love to encompass a deep sense of care; a loving concern for others which stems from a warm heart and which is expressed in a smile and an embrace. Young people are hungry for attention, love and a sense of belonging. By ministering to youth with this sense of care, we bring to them the love of Christ, who is the source of all love and consolation, and we draw them to the Church which is their home.

1.12 Care, when understood as a loving concern for others, involves forgetting oneself and doing the will of the Father. Jesus, our Master and our Brother, is the



perfect example of doing the Father's will. "Doing the will of Him who sent me and bringing His work to completion is my food" (Jn. 4:34). Youth Apostles responds to the will of the Father by bringing Christ's love to the youth and making them feel loved and lovable. Touched by Christ's love, young people are enabled to live a life of moral goodness and self control. This kind of life is challenged by the modern world in which a change in attitudes has called previously accepted values into question and in which youth have become "rebels in their distress" (Gaudium et Spes #7).

- 1.13 The love of Christ is most available to us in the Eucharist and in the life of our community. Thus, both Communion and community constitute the cornerstone of our Christian life and the source of our joy, our strength and our unity. As a community we center our life around the Altar of the Lord because we "realize that the celebration of the Eucharist is the true center of the whole Christian life both for the universal Church and for the local congregation of that Church" (Eucharisticum Mysterium #6). We have not forgotten the Lord's words: "I myself am the bread of life. No one who comes to me shall ever be hungry... [and] if anyone eats this bread he shall live forever" (Jn. 6:35,51).
- 1.14 We are committed to bring the Eucharistic Christ to young people, including those Catholic youth who have wandered away from Him and fail to appreciate His loving concern for them. We shall constantly reflect upon and teach the fact that the Lord is truly present in a mystical, yet real way in the Eucharist to give us His love, His peace and His promise of eternal salvation. Youth Apostles' priests trained and dedicated to minister to youth, are best suited to bring this most beautiful Sacrament to them. "Indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate are bound up in the Eucharist and are directed towards it. For in the most blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself" (Presbyterorum Ordinis #5).
- 1.15 We are also committed to develop intense community life among the youth because we see it as the most effective way to grow in appreciation of the Church and to develop a more intimate union with Christ. A community of Youth Apostles encompassing clergy and laity best exemplifies that "all in the Church, whether they belong to the hierarchy or are cared for by it, are called to holiness"; furthermore, our Christian call "is expressed in many ways by the individuals who, each in his own state of life, tend to the perfection of love, thus sanctifying others" (Lumen Gentium #39).
- 1.16 A unique example to young people is offered by the different life styles of the members of the Youth Apostles Institute. The commitment of the clerical members exemplifies total dedication to enrich the sacramental life of youth. The commitment of the consecrated lay members highlights the beauty of living in accordance with the evangelical counsels in order to become leaven for the world and serve the needs of youth. The commitment of the lay married members



emphasizes the importance of family life, fidelity to one's spouse and children, and a determination to enrich the Church through a strong family bond.

A Response in Truth

1.17 Our community has not only been founded on the Lord's commandment of love, but also upon his commitment to the truth. If we follow his commandment of love, Jesus tells us, "then you will know the truth" (Jn. 8:32a). As he stands before Pilate he says: "The reason I was born, the reason why I came into the world, is to testify to the truth. Anyone committed to the truth hears my voice" (Jn. 18:37). Hence, in the Gospel and in our community, love and truth go hand in hand. "By obedience to the truth you have purified yourselves for a genuine love of your brothers; therefore, love one another constantly from the heart" (1 Pt. 1:22).

1.18 As Youth Apostles we strive to be consecrated to the truth and to inspire youth to live a life of truth. The Lord himself prayed: "Consecrate them by means of truth-Your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). God the Father is the source of all truth and He shared this truth with the world through His Son. "The word became flesh" (Jn. 1:14), and, "... by his death and resurrection, Christ the Incarnate Son, the Word and Image of the invisible God, set the human race free, he shared with everyone the truth and the life of God." (Communio et Progressio #10). It is only through closeness to God that

mankind can remain faithful to the truth, and this closeness occurs through an enriched interior life, cultivated through prayer and the Sacraments.

1.19 Nourishing this intimate life with God, the source of all truth, is not a purely personal endeavor; rather, it must take place within the Church which is in fact the "sign and instrument... of [our] communion with God" (Lumen Gentium #1). Consequently, responding joyfully to the Lord, Youth Apostles professes an explicit faithfulness to the Holy Father, hearing his voice lovingly and surrendering to his authority to teach, govern and sanctify. The defense of the Supreme Pontiff as well as the implementation of his directives are of utmost concern to the Institute. Likewise, this faithfulness and obedience extends to the Ordinary where Youth Apostles are based. Recognizing that "bishops who teach with the Roman Pontiff are to be revered by all as witnesses of divine and Catholic truth" (Lumen Gentium #25), we accept in Christian obedience the decisions of the bishop who exercises his authority and sacred power "personally in the name of Christ" (Lumen Gentium #27).

1.20 Jesus exemplified for us the value of personal communication with the Father by his own life of constant prayer. Reminders of this need for personal union with God are abundant in the Gospel: "When he had sent them away, he went



up to the mountain by himself to pray” (Mt. 14:23). In addition, He personally taught us how to pray (Mt. 6:9-13) and he instructed us to “be on guard and pray that you may not be put to the test” (Mk. 14:38). Our community centers its life on daily personal and communal prayer which is the only way to achieve spiritual growth. We are committed to a life of intense prayer because the Christian life is the constant “discovery of intimacy with God, the necessity for adoration, the need for intercession... and a taste of that true and intimate knowledge of the Lord.” (Evangelica Testificatio #43).

- 1.21 This need to foster in young people a desire to grow in union with God through prayer is particularly evident because, as Vatican II testifies, “many people, including many of the young, have lost sight of the meaning of their lives and are anxiously searching for the contemplative dimension of their being. They do not realize that Christ, through his Church, can respond to their expectations” (Evangelica Testificatio #45). Youth Apostles is dedicated to bring to youth this forgotten dimension of spirituality. It is only by drawing them closer to Christ that they will be renewed and strengthened. We wish to show them that it is Christ who gives ultimate meaning to life, satisfies their search and brings peace: “Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you” (Mt. 11:28).
- 1.22 The ultimate value of truth is further nurtured in young people in an atmosphere of openness and trust. Jesus is our model for truth and openness; he always spoke openly for all to hear and anyone who is committed to the truth will hear his voice (Jn. 18:20,37). While his example shows us that openness makes us vulnerable, it also teaches us that this same openness and vulnerability are the key to giving and receiving love. A life lived in openness and truth facilitates the trust others place in us and brings us closer to God, who is Truth.
- 1.23 Youth must be taught the value of honesty and self-disclosure in a world that believes in lies and deceit. We are convinced that this is achieved by fostering the development of personal friendships between adults and young people. “Adults should be anxious to enter into friendly dialogue with the young, where, despite the difference in age, they could get to know one another and share with one another their own personal riches” (Apostolicam Actuositatem #12). This dialogue is designed to meet the spiritual, moral and psychological needs of youth and lead them toward a sense of personal integration and inner peace.
- 1.24 The Youth Apostles Institute is committed to be “salt of the earth” (Mt. 5:13) to bring new flavor to God’s Word by applying the Gospel to the numerous and varied situations in which youth find themselves in the world. This means we are committed to preach, to instruct, to advise, to challenge, to console, to forgive, to bring youth back to Christ within the Catholic Church in the most creative and effective ways possible. Also, we are committed to be “light of the world” (Mt. 5:14) to guide the youth with the light of Christ which shines



through us; to bring youth out of a life of darkness and sinfulness and into a life of light that leads toward every kind of goodness, justice and truth (Eph. 5:8-9). A young person who lives in the light of Christ is then able to “profess the truth in love and grow to the full maturity of Christ the head” (Eph. 4:15).

- 1.25 The media today has a tremendous impact on young people. Unfortunately, only hints of light are offered to youth by much of the press, cinema, radio, television and video-cassettes. Inter Mirifica and Communio et Progressio stress the need to recognize the power of these means of social communication; a power which can be considerably beneficial if properly used and greatly harmful if misused. The Youth Apostles Institute is particularly interested in helping the youth “understand fully what they see, hear and read”, to teach them how “to reach correct judgments”, and to help them exert “moderation and discipline in their use” of the media especially those “which might endanger [their] faith and morals” (Inter Mirifica #10).

Response in Freedom

- 1.26 Our community finds its own personal liberation in a life based on the Lord’s commandment of love and his commitment to the truth. Love God and others, live in truth, “...and the truth will set you free” (Jn. 8:32b). Love and truth lead us to freedom, and it is “only in freedom that man can turn himself toward what is good” (Gaudium et Spes #17). God made us free, He “willed that man should be left in the hand of his own counsel so that he might of his own accord seek his creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him” (Gaudium et Spes #17). God is the source of all goodness and man remains free only in so far as he remains close to the Lord. Freedom to choose gives man dignity, for when “ridding himself of all slavery to the passions, he presses forward towards his goal by freely choosing what is good” (Gaudium et Spes #17). Our work, as apostles to the youth, is to empower them to choose correctly by teaching them that difficult choices made in freedom require personal discipline, a willingness to make sacrifices, and obedience to God and His Church.
- 1.27 We believe that freedom and moral conscience are intimately connected. Man’s conscience directs his freedom with a voice that calls him “to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil”, a voice that “tells him inwardly at the right moment: do this, shun that....His conscience is man’s most secret core, and his sanctuary” (Gaudium et Spes #16). It is most basic to our Youth Apostles’ call “to be guided by the objective standards of moral conduct” (Gaudium et Spes #16) and to actively participate in forming the moral conscience of young people since “it often happens that conscience goes astray through ignorance” (Gaudium et Spes #16). We want to help them to remain free in their journey toward heaven by developing high moral standards, appreciating the value of truth,



and inspiring them to discover the God that made them out of love, the Christ who says: “I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me” (Jn. 14:6).

- 1.28 Aware of our ability to choose what is right and convinced of our sense of personal responsibility to respond to God’s love, we have made a commitment to follow the Lord within our Church and to invite the youth to make the same response. The “Perfect model of this apostolic spiritual life is the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles” (Apostolicam Actuositatem #4) who, aware of her dignity and personal freedom dared to respond to the Angel’s invitation to become the Mother of God when she said: “I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say” (Lk. 1:38). “In a wholly, singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls” (Lumen Gentium #61). In imitation of Mary’s radical yes, we too have said yes to the Lord and made a commitment to serve the youth unconditionally.
- 1.29 We desire to teach the youth the love and support available to them through Mary our Mother. We want to guide them so they can become close to her and profit from the example she gave us through her life of prayer, simplicity and sacrifice. Mary taught Jesus obedience to the Will of the Father through her own life of total dedication to God, and she can lead us to the Lord and help us to surrender to Him. Strengthened by her example, and in response to God’s grace, we train ourselves and others to do what is right rather than what is convenient and to make responsible choices rather than to act out of selfishness.

A call to serve youth

- 1.30 In their ministry to young people, Youth Apostles wish to develop youth communities which center around the Eucharistic Christ, and serious sacramental, scriptural and prayer life; communities which emphasize Christian commitment in imitation of Mary who radically said yes to the will of God in her life and lived in selfless giving; communities where Christ can be discovered through the warmth, the openness and the mutual support of its members; communities committed to show an example of moral goodness in the world through personal sacrifice, self control, and hard work. We believe youth communities need to be moderated by ministers with the virtue to be models and with the tools to empower youth to become dedicated and well balanced Christian Catholics.
- 1.31 Youth Apostles believe that counseling young people is crucial for their psychological and spiritual growth. A healthy human foundation must be constructed first in order to build the saint. Counseling and spiritual direction blend beautifully when the counseling is based on the knowledge that comes to



us from modern psychology and is firmly anchored in the commandments, the beatitudes, and the theological virtues. Our vision is that youth ministers must develop sufficient skills to talk about delicate and complex psychological issues regarding growth, identity and family life all framed within ultimate Christian values.

- 1.32 Youth Apostles believe that the Sacraments, knowledge of scripture, community life, and spiritual direction are all necessary but not sufficient in themselves for the development of young people. Intellectual growth is also necessary: knowledge of our Church's doctrine, tradition and history; knowledge about the heroic life of our Saints; knowledge about the principles contained in the Council documents and the Encyclical letters. Youth Apostles is committed to serious formation programs which provide the substance within which faith can be rooted and nurtured.
- 1.33 A most important tool to our work is Youth Retreats and offering the more mature and committed young people the opportunity to make the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Time away from their regular lives, devoid of distractions and in an inspiring Christian atmosphere facilitates God's intervention in a person's life. Intimate prayer, communal sharing and a serious participation in the Sacrament of Penance all help release secrets and past mistakes which interfere in the spiritual growth of the person and facilitate their reconciliation with their savior.

Inspiration

- 1.34 We draw inspiration and strength from the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola, as it is expressed in his Spiritual Exercises. His thinking and his style permeate our community and give us philosophical and theological unity. The Ignatian challenge to discernment, determination to follow God's will, avoidance of inordinate attachments, and the wish to always be more and give more, are basic to our thinking and our work. We also draw inspiration from St. Francis of Assisi's devotion to the Eucharist, his life of intense prayer, his simplicity, and his deep sense of care for others. St. John Bosco's love and dedication to young people is a further inspiration. His efforts to reach the youth in an effective and creative fashion in order to help them become faithful Christians and good citizens provide additional strength for us to endure in our ministry tirelessly. Therefore, we believe that the head, heart and hands of our community are inspired by Ignatius of Loyola, Francis of Assisi and John Bosco.

