



Document from EYM International

*That my joy may be in you*

On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the EYM

# History of the Eucharistic Youth Movement

*EYM*

## A – The Eucharistic Crusade

The story begins on 3 December 1844, on the feast of St. Francis Xavier, at the novitiate for Jesuit students in Vals-près-le-Puy (central part of France). Their spiritual father, Father Gautrelet, SJ, held a meeting with the students to express dissatisfaction with an attitude developing among them. The problem was that they were more motivated by the idea of setting off for faraway missions in India than by having to learn theology. The Father urged them to concentrate more on their studies. But, when he was commenting on St. Francis Xavier's missionary adventure in the homily for that feast-day's Mass, he unintentionally aroused the young students' enthusiasm by describing how a life entirely given to study could be very effective in the apostolate: *"If each one infuses his labours with the spirit of prayer and makes of them an offering; if several jointly direct themselves in the same way, there would be a convergence of power capable of lifting up mountains!"*. *"Be missionaries already through your prayer, by the offering of your daily life. Your mission is here and now, in your studies and the little things of every day. In fulfilling it through being open to the will of God, you are already apostles who are helping the entire Church. Pray for the people you will meet tomorrow"*, he told them. Father Gautrelet suggested a very simple initiative that would give meaning to what they were already experiencing in the service of Christ's mission, while further deepening in them their apostolic capacity. The work of every day is the primary apostolate, thanks to the daily offering of what is being lived. This way of seeing prayer as mission, *'the spreading of faith by prayer'*, very quickly transformed the house: the Mass, sacramental offering of Christ, became the centre of the day, and the day became an extension of the Mass. What was now called *'the Apostleship of Prayer'* (AP) spread like wildfire, first in the surrounding country villages where the young Jesuits passed on this way of praying rooted in daily life, then throughout the world. By 1849, the Apostleship of Prayer was recognised by Pope Pius IX, and in 1890, Leo XIII entrusted to it his monthly prayer intentions.

This was the context in 1865 when the first children joined this great wave of prayer. They formed a kind of *'Pope's militia'*, and some referred to them as *'Crusaders'*. Very soon, thanks to the dynamic work of Father Henri Ramière SJ, the *Apostleship of Prayer* had drawn in one hundred thousand children (Note 1), including Thérèse of Lisieux, who was involved at the age of 12 years (Note 2). The AP aims to unite itself with Jesus' most intimate thoughts (*'true devotion to the Sacred Heart'*), and pray for the intentions of the Pope. From 1910 on, under the influence of the new Decrees of Pope St. Pius X, the AP wanted to emphasise communion for children, and asked them to intercede for peace, at the time of war in Europe and the whole world. In 1914, the International Eucharistic Congress of Lourdes expressed its fervent hope for *'a great Eucharistic league of little ones who from their childhood would give rise to a general movement toward the Eucharistic Host.'*

Encouraged by the Eucharistic Congress, groups began to organise. They were referred to as *'Eucharistic Leagues'*, then as *'the Children's Prayer Crusade'*. A number of them joined the Apostleship of Prayer. It was at the heart of the Bordeaux Crusade, created on 13 November 1915 by Father Albert Bessières, SJ, and Geneviève Boselli, that the *'Eucharistic Crusade'* really made its appearance. (Note 3)

In association with the headquarters of the Apostleship of Prayer at Toulouse, its organisational structure over the following months crystallised the Crusades' activities as they developed in France. Bit by bit, the Eucharistic Crusade was absorbed into the Apostleship of Prayer, and from there it became the children's section for 6 to 14-year-olds. The review *'Hostia'*, which

came out from January-February 1917, was particularly intended for the managers of the Eucharistic Crusade. (Note 4)

The motto was originally *'Pray, communicate, fight and conquer'*, then became *'Pray, communicate, sacrifice yourself, be an apostle.'* Another little journal, *The Crusader*, was launched to sustain the intensity of the early days. Its readership immediately became very widespread.

In 1933, nearly a million children (7-12 years old) in France, Belgium, Burundi, Madagascar and so on, were members of the Crusade. Pius XI considered it to be *'the Primary School of Catholic Action'* (Note 5). In 1945, two new sections were created for the over-12s: the *'Cavaliers of Christ'* and the *'Messengers of Christ'*.

In subsequent years, this new pastoral format spread in several countries. Many bishops adopted the *Eucharistic Crusade* as an official movement for youth education, and entrusted it to diocesan or national chaplains. The Crusade still remained under the direction of the Father General of the Company of Jesus (Jesuits), who was given responsibility by the Pope for guidance of the AP.

*'When I was very young, to my great joy, I was a member of the Eucharistic Crusade'*, testifies a religious sister. *'We had one meeting a week; the priest explained to us the 'Missionary Intentions', which served to nourish our efforts during the week. Our prayer was part of the intentions for the world. We felt ourselves to really be part of the Church. 'Pray. Communicate. Sacrifice yourself. Be an apostle.': four key words that have marked my life deeply. It was a great attraction for me to visit the Holy Sacrament on the way to school or on the way home. It was in the Crusade as well that I learnt to conquer myself, to think about others. My soul was being moulded bit by bit, and desired to be an apostle. Yes, I owe a huge amount to this prayer movement!'*. (Note 6)

## **B – The Eucharistic Crusade becomes the EYM**

In 1960, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pius X's Decree on frequent communion, before 3,200 delegates of the movement, Pope John XXIII did not use the word 'crusade', but instead employed the expression *'eucharistic movement'*. In 1962, the title *'Eucharistic Youth Movement'* was officially recognised by the assembly of cardinals and bishops of France. In 1963, the national camp was launched at the Font-Sainte in Cantal, where the new branch *'Young witnesses of Christ'* (YWC) was initiated: it was marked by daily Eucharist, personal prayer in nature and the evening review of the day in common. From 1969 on, significant pedagogical work developed in France, and several francophone or Latin American countries benefited from this. (Note 7)

## C – Towards EYM International

In 2006, the first world meeting of the EYM took place. Directors and chaplains of four countries (Chile, France, Italy and Madagascar) prayed, shared their experience and expressed the common characteristics of the movement. At the international office in Rome, there were then recorded 26 countries where EYM was present.

In 2008, the international office created the website, a new permanent international link for sharing information and resources.

In 2009, Sister Lourdes Varguez, RJM, was appointed as the EYM's international Assistant. Communication intensified (through email and later through the Facebook network). Gradually contact was established with 54 countries where EYM is present, representing more than a million members in the five continents.

In October 2010, **the first EYM World Council** was created, with the aim of helping the Delegate of the Father General of the Company of Jesus in his work of coordinating EYM worldwide. The first members were Claudio Barriga, SJ, World Director Delegate of AP-EYM; Christian Motsch, SJ, National Chaplain of France; Rigobert Kyungu, SJ,, National Director of AP/EYM in the DRC; Loris Piorar, SJ, National Director of EYM in Italy; and Lourdes Varguez, RJM, International Assistant of EYM. A start was made on production of a provisional manual, so as to respond to questions about the identity of the movement.

August 2011: EYM International took part in the World Youth Day gatherings in Madrid. An EYM Talent Fair brought together more than 700 people, who gave expression to the wealth of the different EYM cultures.

September 2012: **the first International EYM Congress** was held in Buenos Aires. This was the fruit of extensive surveys conducted by Father Claudio Barriga across the globe, and 205 participants from 30 countries saw the birth of a truly international movement, once again recognised as the 'youth' branch of the Apostleship of Prayer.

In July 2013, EYM International took part in the World Youth Day at Rio de Janeiro. During the MAGIS programme (young Ignatians), an EYM-based 'experience' was offered for several days. Then during the Youth Festival, an EYM event was put on, bringing together 700 people.

Note 1. Aloys Van Doren SJ, *The Eucharistic Youth Movement, Prayer and Service*, Jan-March 2000, No. 1, p. 44.

Note 2: When St. Therese of Lisieux was scolded by her sisters for leaving her hospital room, at a time when she was already very ill, she replied: "But I'm marching for a missionary". St. Therese had joined the Apostleship of Prayer in her childhood, and this way of prayer that she had internalised at a young age led her to be recognised later as the patron of missions, along with St. Francis Xavier (*Complete Works of St. Therese of Lisieux, Last Conversations, Cerf, 1992, p. 650*).

Note 3: J.-M Derely, SJ, *Manual of Enthusiasts of the Children's Eucharistic Crusade, Apostleship of Prayer*, Toulouse, 1929.

Note 4: According to Ludovic Laloux, *The Eucharistic Youth Movement, Le Sarment Fayard*, 1988, p. 20.

Notes 5, 6, 7: Robert Chevalier SJ, *More than a century of history . . . the Eucharistic Youth Movement*, documents from EYM France, 1984.

## D – Some dates

3/12/1844	Birth of <i>Apostleship of Prayer</i> (AP) at Vals (France), for the feast-day of St. Francis Xavier, founded by Fr. Francis-Xavier Gautrelet SJ. Thanks to Fr. Henri Ramiere, the AP was recognised by Pope Blessed Pius IX, and spread rapidly in the Church beyond France;
1865	Fr. Cros gives the name of 'Crusaders' to the children in AP;
1905, 1910	Pope St. Pius publishes two decrees on frequency of communion, and the precocious communion and confession of children, at ' <i>the age of discretion, that is, around 7 years, more or less.</i> ' Eucharistic leagues were founded for children, adolescents and adults, to put these decrees into effect.
1914-1917	Encouraged by the International Eucharistic Congress at Lourdes (1914), children's prayer crusades are organised, against the backdrop of the 1914-1918 war.
1915	At Bordeaux and then at Auray (Brittany), first reference was made to the ' <i>Eucharistic Crusade</i> ', as the children's branch in the <i>Apostleship of Prayer</i> .
1917	First appearance of the review ' <i>Hostia</i> ' in January-February 1917, intended for the leaders of the Eucharistic Crusade.
1919-20	Foundation of the Eucharistic Crusade in Madagascar and Burundi.
1922	The original motto, ' <i>pray, communicate, fight and conquer</i> ' is replaced by ' <i>pray, communicate, sacrifice yourself, be an apostle</i> '.
1927	Foundation of the Eucharistic Crusade in the Congo (Kivu)
1927-1929	Foundation of the Eucharistic Crusade in Lebanon and Vietnam
26/6/1933	Pope Pius XI recognises the Crusade as ' <i>The primary school of Catholic Action, and its first apprenticeship</i> '. The Crusade numbers 10 million children throughout the world.
1944	Re-foundation of the Eucharistic Crusade in Italy
1952-1953	Foundation of the Eucharistic Crusade in Burkina Faso, Rwanda and El Salvador
6/1/1958	Pope Pius XII publishes a handwritten letter containing the <i>Rules of the Eucharistic Crusade</i>
1959	Foundation of the Eucharistic Crusade in Taiwan
16/4/60	Pope St. John XXIII receives the Crusade of France on pilgrimage, but uses only the new expression of ' <i>French Eucharistic Movement</i> '

3/62	The bishops of France approve the change of title from <i>Eucharistic Crusade</i> to <i>Eucharistic Youth Movement</i> (EYM)
1963	Foundation of EYM in Burkina Faso
1964	Foundation of the EYM in Cameroon. The Crusade becomes EYM in Lebanon and Vietnam
1975	From 1975 on, the Vietnamese Eucharistic Movement spreads across the world, through its diaspora (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Norway, USA and Vietnam), under the name of EYM TNTT.
1977-78	Foundation of EYM in Mauritius and Ivory Coast.
1979-81	Foundation of EYM in Spain, Paraguay and Mexico
1981-85	The Crusade becomes EYM specifically in Chile, Argentina, Philippines, Angola, Haiti
1983	Foundation of EYM in Togo
1990-94	Foundation of EYM in Peru and French-speaking Canada
1999-2000	Foundation of EYM in Gabon. The Crusade becomes EYM in Taiwan
2005	The EYM in Nigeria organises as a national federation
2006	Meeting in Rome, the leaders from Madagascar, France, Italy and Chile write the common features of the EYM
2008-2010	Foundation of EYM in Ethiopia, Kenya and Ecuador
9/2012	In Buenos Aires, delegations from 30 countries inaugurate the first International EYM Congress. The number of members throughout the world is 1,100,000, in 54 countries, following five educational programmes.
2011-2014	Foundation of EYM in Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Indonesia and Portugal

*This document was produced and completed in Rome in June, 2014 under the direction of Fr. Frederic Fornos, SJ, Delegate World Director of EYM, Fr. Claudio Barriga, SJ, former World Director, and Sr. Lourdes Varguez, rjm, EYM International Assistant, with the collaboration of Fr. Rigobert Kyungu, SJ (Africa Coordinator), Fr. Nicolas Rousselot, SJ (France), Mr. Bruno Albuquerque (Brazil), Mr. Rony Sayah (Lebanon), Fr. Corneille Herman, SJ (Taiwan).*

**The international website: [www.apmej.net](http://www.apmej.net)**