



Overview of the First Continental Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults

"GOD'S WORD COMES TO LIFE IN YOUNG PEOPLE"

Young people are a vital force in the Church today, and they are the promise of tomorrow. When young people reflect on the future of the Church, their feelings of hope and longing are visible on their faces. These are the committed young people who will be leaders, who will make their vision a reality. Their energy and vitality will drive the heartbeat of the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Church has always trusted in young people and in their ability to discover their vocation—the drive to be friends and disciples of Jesus, his apostles among their peers. They are truly the best evangelizers of other young people, called by God to invest their energy, their time, indeed, their very lives to bring the Good News of Jesus to all who, consciously or unconsciously, long for new life, especially among those who are most in need.

These young leaders are the target audience of the **Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults**, "God's Word Comes to Life in Young People." Pope John Paul II stated that "young people are a great force in society and for evangelization. They 'represent quite a large part of the population in many nations of America. On their encounter with the living Christ depends the hope and expectation of a future of greater communion and solidarity for the Church and society in America.'"¹

Now is the time to place our trust in these young people and hand over to them the missionary mandate of Jesus, knowing that, filled with faith and apostolic zeal, they are able to move mountains. With accompaniment, guidance, advice, and training from adults who are committed to forming the next generation of Catholic leaders, the young missionaries will faithfully prepare themselves to bring the Word of God to every corner of the Americas, from Alaska and Canada to Patagonia.

Pope John Paul II called young people to be *pilgrims of hope and protagonists of the New Evangelization*. With his loving voice he called to them saying: "My dear young people: Consider yourselves sent forth for the urgent task of announcing the Gospel to those around you. Christ knows your fragility and limitations, but at the same time he says to you: Take heart, do not be afraid! 'I am with you always, until the end of the age.'" (Mt 28:20)²





The Latin American bishops called these young people “sentinels of the dawn... [because] as missionary disciples, the new generations are called to transmit to their fellow young people without distinction, the current of life that comes from Christ, and to share it in community, building up the Church and society.”³ To that end, Pope Benedict XVI says in his exhortation *Verbum Domini*:

We need to help young people to gain confidence and familiarity with sacred Scripture so it can become a compass pointing out the path to follow. Young people need witnesses and teachers who can walk with them, teaching them to love the Gospel and to share it, especially with their peers, and thus to become authentic and credible messengers.⁴

The **Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults**, “**God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People**,” offers an encounter with Jesus and a process to discover who he is: God incarnate who came into the world to bring us new life and eternal salvation. It is a great opportunity for many young people to receive the loving embrace of Jesus through Sacred Scripture and an encounter with other young people.

In this First Mission, Jesus introduces himself to the young person with the same warmth with which he explained to his disciples who he was and why he came into the world. Identifying himself by saying “I am,” he invited them to embrace his incarnation in human history and his unequalled love. This is reflected in the symbolism of the Mission Cross:



- I am the vine (Jn 15:5)
- I am the bread of life (Jn 6:35)
- I am the way and the truth and the life (Jn 14:6)
- I am the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25)
- I am the gate for the sheep (Jn 10:7)
- I am the good shepherd (Jn 10:11)
- I am the light of the world (Jn 8:12)

The goal of this Biblical Mission is to foster the missionary action of young Catholics throughout the Americas. It offers young leaders and the adults who advise them all the resources necessary to carry out the Biblical Mission in parishes, dioceses, schools, universities, and apostolic movements. Working in harmony with one another, the ecclesial community will bring the Good News to thousands and thousands of young people across the Americas.

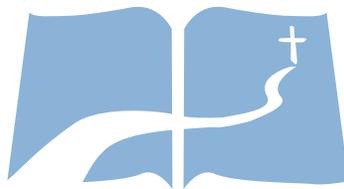
Instituto Fe y Vida—the author of *La Biblia Católica para Jóvenes*—with great faith in Catholic young people and a profound desire for them to know, love, and live the Word of God, launches the First Continental Biblical Mission for Youth and Young Adults. Fe y Vida is collaborating with Editorial Verbo Divino, Saint Mary’s Press, Oregon Catholic Press, and Catholic.net, and enjoys the support of the Council of Latin American Bishops (CELAM) and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).



Animated by the motto, “God’s Word Comes to Life in Young People,” this Biblical Mission is a missionary action of the Catholic Church, coupled with an evangelizing and formative effort on the part of its young leadership. It is carried out in the spirit of Jesus, who had the mission of announcing the Good News of the coming of the Kingdom of God to humankind. This mission was taken up by his first disciples, and with the same strength yesterday, today, and forever, Jesus continues to invite the baptized to bring him as the Word of life to the ends of the earth in every generation.

Look around and identify where Jesus’ love is not reaching young people today. Think about the young people who do not know the meaning of their life and who stand to benefit from learning gospel values to guide their daily decisions. Reflect on those who find themselves alone and who long for authentic friendships and a supportive community. Remember the young people who have asked for prayers, those who are living in difficult situations, and those who suffer from a lack of hope or who have become enslaved to things that hinder their full development as persons.

The Biblical Mission is grounded in an approach, process, and methodology that put the spotlight on Jesus as God’s Word, a living model for young people, and on the young people themselves as protagonists of the pastoral action. Talk to young people who have a passion for the Gospel, and get organized to implement the Biblical Mission. Thanks to the generosity of several foundations and donors who have faith in today’s young people and want to give them solid foundations so that the Church may continue the mission of Jesus throughout history, all the resources necessary to carry out the Biblical Mission can be downloaded for free from the website www.YouthBiblicalMission.org.



¹ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America: On the Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: The Way to Conversion, Communion, and Solidarity in America*, USCCB, Washington DC, 1999, no. 47.

² John Paul II, *Homilía de la Santa Misa para los jóvenes en la explanada de “El Rosario”*, www.vatican.va, May 8, 1990, no. 6.

³ Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM), V General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops’ Conferences, *Aparecida: Documento conclusivo*, Editorial Progreso, México, 2007, no. 443.

⁴ Benedict XVI, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Verbum Domini, on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*, www.vatican.va, 2010, no. 104.