

"Let the holiness of God shine forth" (cf. Mt 5, 16)

item 420

JESUS YOUTH - Pontifical recognition

On May 20th Bishop Josef Clemens, Secretary of the *Pontifical Council for the Laity*, presented to **Jesus Youth** a Decree of Recognition as an **International Association of the Faithful**. The same decree approved its Statutes.



Jesus Youth has its beginnings in Kerala, India, in the late 1970's, with the formation of youth groups among young people active in Catholic Charismatic Renewal. In 1985, during the *International Year of Youth*, these groups came together under the name **Jesus Youth**, and over ensuing years the association spread across India. Following its 2007 canonical recognition, received from the archbishops of Nagpur and Verapoly, the following year the Indian Catholic Bishops' Conference recognised **Jesus Youth** as a '*national* association of the faithful'. Today it is active in more than thirty countries and has many members of all states of life.

The pivotal conviction of the movement is that – 'one can be identified as a **Jesus Youth** only if one is a missionary.' Recognition as an International Association of the Faithful – and the approval of its Statutes – reminds us of the recognition and definitive approval of the Union of Catholic Apostolate and its Statutes by the same Council in 2008.

There is yet another reason for our joy and our spirit of solidarity with this International Association. Sometime ago I was approached by the Leaders of **Jesus Youth** asking if they could use our image of Mary Queen of the Apostles since they also have taken her as the patroness of their movement! They were fascinated by the special image of the Cenacle of St Vincent Pallotti and its spiritual richness. After due consideration I gave permission to use our image of Mary as the patroness of their movement as well.

I was present at one of their celebrations in May this year, the day before the formal approval was announced. It gave me so much joy to see the image of Mary Queen of the Apostles placed right in the middle of their gathering. They have deep devotion to our Heavenly Mother. The following is an extract taken from their website to show the spiritual significance of this image for **Jesus Youth**:

“The image of Mary Queen of the Apostles in the ‘cenacle’ envisaged and depicted by St Vincent Pallotti, with several lay people around Mary along with the Apostles, speaks a lot for the importance of the role and mission of the laity in the Church. The ‘cenacle’ is the place where ordinary human beings are transformed into authentic apostles of Jesus, always under the power of the Holy Spirit and accompanied by Mary Queen of the Apostles. These apostles then go forth from the ‘cenacle’ to proclaim the Good News of Salvation to all people. Mary Queen of the Apostles is adopted as the guide and heavenly patroness of **Jesus Youth** Formation and Households. Henceforth, because of its special relevance to our movement, this beautiful image will be officially promoted for use during prayer and reflection”.

Pallottines are involved in this missionary movement and there are obvious opportunities for collaboration. We too can learn much from this dynamic and committed young group of missionaries and evangelisers.



On behalf of the entire Pallottine Family, I wish to congratulate the Leaders and every member of the **Jesus Youth** International Association. May each one of them go forth as zealous apostles of Jesus, always filled with the youthfulness and fire of the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the Good News of Jesus.

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item 421

...a catholic missionary movement

Jesus Youth is a catholic missionary movement at the service of the Church. To coincide with recent Pontifical recognition I would like to emphasise the great role the movement played in the formation of my own spiritual life.

For me everything began with a youth retreat in my parish in 1992. It was unusual for young people to come together regularly on Saturdays to pray. Nevertheless, because of the deep conviction of being loved by God and our personal experience of Him, we felt compelled to come together, and we never compromised on our Saturday prayer group. Regular accompaniment and encouragement from our spiritual lay elder always kept us faithful. Occasional visits and classes from **Jesus Youth** encouraged us to reach out to other zealous young people. Thus we attended our first **Jesus Youth** Campus Meet in 1993, and realized there were thousands of young people who celebrate their faith in Jesus. For the first time we saw a massive gathering of joyful youth singing, dancing, praying and making decisions to live only for Jesus. That was my first **Jesus Youth** encounter on such a large scale.



From that time a new lifestyle began to develop within me. The pattern of my thoughts was oriented differently, I became courageous enough to witness the joy created by Jesus, dared even to carry the Bible to the university, and above all desired to treat everyone with respect. Contact with the first batch of **Jesus Youth** full-timers, who made one-year commitments for mission, inspired me to go on a far-away mission myself for two years. With the due permission from my parents, I went with one intention – to give completely to the Lord two beautiful years of my life. But God has his own ways of preparing his chosen ones! From that experience I came to know about St Vincent Pallotti through the Pallottines, especially from my present Provincial Fr Varghese Pullan. The great apostolic endeavors of Vincent Pallotti and his followers caused me to end up in a Pallottine seminary in 1996!

During seminary formation I stayed in constant contact with **Jesus Youth** leaders who always provided a spiritual resource for me. By the grace of God I was instrumental in beginning **Jesus Youth** activities in Nagpur during my theological studies. My involvement in building up a generation of young people who love Jesus and his church, paved the way for my future priestly ministry. As a priest God arranged different ways and means of ministering to youth through the **Jesus Youth** platform. After two years of being the Kerala **Jesus Youth** animator I extended that experience to Rome as well.

From my experience of 24 years now with **Jesus Youth**, I acknowledge that I have always received much more than what I have given. I have learned a lot from the movement's leaders, to love Jesus and to make known his love to others. The great passion with which they organize themselves to evangelize always leaves me in wonder. The six Pillars of **Jesus Youth** – Prayer, Word of God, Sacraments, Fellowship, Option for the poor and Evangelization – mould in everyone a thriving missionary heart. My own ongoing involvement helps me to keep alive my spiritual life and apostolic zeal. As the movement has now achieved this highest approval I look back with gratitude to the Lord who is able to give so much more than we can think and ask for. This new phase demands of everyone to stay close to the heart of Jesus and be ever more committed to the Church.



May Mary Queen Apostles intercede for the **Jesus Youth** movement so that every member may become aware of his/her apostolic calling to be faithful to Jesus and support others to do the same.

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