



International EYM Document

That my joy may be in you

At the centenary of the EYM

The heart of the Eucharistic Youth Movement

A – The heart of the EYM is friendship with Jesus

B – The heart of the EYM is to live out this friendship, nourished and modelled by the Eucharist

C – The heart of the EYM is to share the life and mission of Jesus, as Church, serving the justice of the Kingdom of God

EYM n°2

A – The heart of the EYM is friendship with Jesus

God had the astonishing idea to take human flesh on our earth – Jesus the Son of God, revelation of the Father, was truly a man. He grew as a child and teenager, like so many others of his day. He ate, slept, played, and had to learn things as they did. Equally he must have also had friends that he liked and who appreciated him. For him, it was important to have friends. So important that, when he began his ministry of serving the Kingdom of God, he did not set out on his own, but asked some others to share his life and mission (Mk. 1:16-20), and he called them his friends (Jn. 15:9-17).

He felt at home with the poor and made friends with them, knowing that his Father had sent him to them first, without excluding others. Among the disciples of his first group, he had sinners, zealots, tax-collectors, simple people, some of whom were seen as unworthy of consideration. ‘He called those that he wanted to be with him and send out to preach’, Mark tells us in Ch. 3:13. He was warm-hearted, liked to have friends and pass time with them. He invited those to work with him on his Father’s great project. With them, he began to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. With great simplicity, he explained that we are all loved by his Father, who is our Father as well; and that this made us all brothers.

He taught this first group of friends patiently, and prepared them for a mission that he said would be very difficult, while reassuring them that he would not leave them alone. After his resurrection, he confirmed again that he would be with them ‘at all times, to the end of the world.’ (Mt. 28:20). The only thing he asked of them was the gift of their hearts: he asked for love. He put a question to Peter: ‘Do you love me more than these?’ Today, he asks all of us the same question (Jn. 21:15). And today, as yesterday, he offers us his heart. His words make us understand this, ‘Man has no greater love than to lay down his life for those whom he loves.’ (Jn. 15:13). The offering of his Heart became an act and a perpetual memorial in instituting the sacrament of the Eucharist. In this sacrament, Jesus gives himself, body and blood, so great is his desire to dwell in us: ‘We will come to him and make our home in him.’ (Jn. 14:23).

In the EYM, Jesus himself invites us to live in close friendship with him. Our three periods of daily prayer, our times of formation, our meetings and the various activities in the EYM all help us to live in friendship with him. These are all initiated by Jesus’ loving heart, to keep us close to Him. If we feel that we are true friends of Jesus, we can truly say that we are of the EYM.

B – The heart of the EYM is to live out this friendship nourished and modelled by the Eucharist

For us at the EYM, the Eucharist is much more than a ritual that we attend on Sundays. It is a spiritual food that transforms us, an invitation to make it our way of living 'a form of Eucharistic life'. It is an invitation to live Jesus' style of life.

To understand what this means, we need to understand what Jesus' own gestures, and those of his disciples, meant for Him on the night of the Last Supper.

He had always loved his own, as John 13:1 tells us, and he loved them to the end. He knew that his life was in danger, and the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. Like any human being, Jesus did not want to die, he was afraid of the suffering that awaited him, but he did not show cowardice, nor did he change his preaching in order to escape death. He did not want to die, but he did want to love! He had realised that, in accepting the death that was forced on him by the hatred of his enemies towards him, this would be the way of revealing a greater love. Jesus knew that the only way to defeat hatred passes through love. Because of this, and even though he sweated drops of blood in his great fear and anguish, he was ready to accept the terrible torture that was being prepared for him.

Before giving his life, he gathered his disciples together and gave them his spiritual testament. He did this in the context of the ritual Jewish supper of the Passover that was celebrated in memory of the liberation of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. That night, he took the bread in his hands and said to his friends: 'I am this bread! This is my body, given for you.' Then he took the cup and said: 'I am this wine! This is my blood, shed for you.' With these gestures and words, Jesus made it understood that he was willing to give his life for us, because it was the path that would lead us towards the life of abundance. He had always been 'Eucharist' for his brothers, which meant offering his life to his father, being completely available, totally responsive to the Holy Spirit, and at that very moment, ready to accept to the end the consequences of that love.

Then he said to his disciples, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' Do what? Give their lives as well, as he himself was giving it for them. He was inviting them to associate themselves with this form of life, offered to others by love. In EYM language, we could say: he was inviting them to make Eucharist their style of life. We could also say: his way of loving and giving his life is the style of life of Jesus that we want to follow.

At the same time, his love, his friendship, his presence, his life given as nourishment makes us capable of living this 'Eucharistic' style of life, so contrary to our selfish nature. The Eucharist has in itself the capacity to transform in reality what we are offering to the Father: we ask Him to change this bit of bread and wine into his Body and Blood, and at the same time to transform the assembly gathered in Christ's presence, for the sake of the world. The Eucharistic prayer makes two invocations: one to the Holy Spirit, asking Him to bring transformation (epiclesis) on the bread and wine; and the other on the people of God.

This means that, for us in the EYM, the Eucharist is not only a challenge or a path of life, but also the gift that can convert our hearts and make them like the Heart of Christ. We ask for this transformation from the Holy Spirit, when we ask in our prayer that our heart become like the Heart of Jesus.

Pope Benedict developed this subject brilliantly when he addressed the EYM young people in Germany in 2005:

“What is happening here? How can Jesus distribute his Body and his Blood? By making the bread into his Body and the wine into his Blood, he anticipates his death, he accepts it in his heart, and he transforms it into an action of love. What on the outside is simply brutal violence - the Crucifixion - from within becomes an act of total self-giving love. This is the substantial transformation which was accomplished at the Last Supper and was destined to set in motion a series of transformations leading ultimately to the transformation of the world when God will be all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15: 28). In their hearts, people always and everywhere have somehow expected a change, a transformation of the world. Here now is the central act of transformation that alone can truly renew the world: violence is transformed into love, and death into life. Since this act transmutes death into love, death as such is already conquered from within, the Resurrection is already present in it. Death is, so to speak, mortally wounded, so that it can no longer have the last word.

To use an image well known to us today, this is like inducing nuclear fission in the very heart of being - the victory of love over hatred, the victory of love over death. Only this intimate explosion of good conquering evil can then trigger off the series of transformations that little by little will change the world. All other changes remain superficial and cannot save. For this reason we speak of redemption: what had to happen at the most intimate level has indeed happened, and we can enter into its dynamic. Jesus can distribute his Body, because he truly gives himself.

This first fundamental transformation of violence into love, of death into life, brings other changes in its wake. Bread and wine become his Body and Blood. But it must not stop there; on the contrary, the process of transformation must now gather momentum. The Body and Blood of Christ are given to us so that we ourselves will be transformed in our turn. We are to become the Body of Christ, his own Flesh and Blood. We all eat the one bread, and this means that we ourselves become one

(XX WORLD YOUTH DAY, Cologne, Marienfeld, 21 August 2005)

C – The heart of the EYM is to share Jesus' life and mission, as Church, serving the justice of the Kingdom of God

In the EYM, children and young people learn to discover the world as a place of encounter with the Lord. They learn to receive life from Him, to thank Him and offer theirs to Him in return, following Jesus' example. God Himself was actually incarnated, and this incarnation gives rise to two actions, indissolubly linked, which have to be lived out individually and in association with others.

- To try to see the presence of God in the world, as a call to liberty.
- To commit to constructing a better world, accepting responsibilities.

This is the dynamic of the Eucharist that we celebrate and live in the EYM. Following Christ, the Christian (and the young EYM member) is called to receive and offer his or her life without condition, a life given for others. This is how they take on the Eucharistic attitude of the offering of their lives, being available as apostles, serving the justice wanted by God.

For this reason, 'service' must be the distinguishing feature of EYM and all its members, wherever they are: serving family, parish, school, society, the most vulnerable.

EYM service occurs in close union with the Church – it is a specific mark of the EYM to be rooted in the pastoral structures of the local Church, serving the parish or the diocese, open to the universal Church, and, more broadly, open to service in communion with those of other belief systems. It develops harmoniously with the various movements and charisms already in existence, for the service of all. It sometimes offers opportunities for education and community life to groups of young people who are already engaged in parish work.

In other words, the attitude of service that is characteristic of the style and pedagogy of Jesus and his disciples can be called a **eucharistic pedagogy**:

The Eucharist originated on Holy Thursday, but its dynamic was activated every time that Jesus opened his heart and spoke in words and action. In a way, everything in Jesus is Eucharistic, everything can be interpreted through the Eucharist. In this way, Jesus' pedagogy towards his apostles is the pedagogy of a life that is being given.

- 1. A pedagogy of personal love for the disciples, showing patience and attention to each of them.*
- 2. A communal pedagogy, accompanying the apostles both on their individual paths and as a group serving the mission.*
- 3. A pedagogy that invites the disciples to receive life and to give it back out of love.*

These pedagogical principles encourage EYM members to open themselves up more, and to make a greater commitment for the Gospel, thus incarnating their eucharistic selves. They cannot remain indifferent to the world's crises. To live as Jesus did means: service, working for solidarity and justice, respecting Creation, and so on. One does not have to go very far – the family, the neighbourhood, school, the parish – these are all frontiers and places of mission.

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