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The Youth Coordination (2005-2007)

Catholic Action appeals to people of all ages and conditions of life. It is an Association for lay people and consequently its goal is to foster, support and develop the lay vocation of both adults and youths.

Evidently - for children and youth in particular - it is a “school of lay vocations” wherein they can get to know the Lord personally so that they may be able to answer to his call and discover his love. Like the apostles, the first disciples and the numberless men and women, who in the Church were and are witnesses of this love, they continue being witnesses in the everyday life situations where the Lord calls them.

Gradually, through IFCA commitment, a Youth Coordination was set up with the aim of promoting meetings of CA youth and helping CA to be proposed to the youth in the various countries where CA is established and in those where it is being set up.

Since the time when it was set up, IFCA has always given special attention to youth participation. Through the setting up of a Youth

Coordination group, it means to intensify its efforts in this direction and to encourage youths to be actively involved in IFCA. However, one must pay attention not to make this structure too complicated for obvious organizational and economic reasons.

After various activities with the youth in Europe and America, young representatives of some CA associations of the world had the opportunity to meet together during the WYD in Cologne. This gave them the opportunity to plan a symbolic step together in the establishment of this Youth Coordination: an international pilgrimage of CA youth to the Holy Land.

This issue of Newsletter speaks about what happened these last few years between Cologne and the Holy Land. Inside there is a leaflet which gives specific information about the different stages when the youth participated in IFCA initiatives.

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CA Youth: who are they?

In replying to this question it is enough to think of Manuel Morales, Salvador Lara Puente, David Rodan Lara, Piergiorgio Frassati, Alberto Marvelli, Pina Suriano, Antonia Mesina, Ivan Merz, Marcel Callò, Pierina Morosini, Cecilia Eusepi, Nilde Guerra, Paola Renata Carboni, Egidio Bullesi, Benedetta Bianchi Porro, Marietta Gioia, Maria Carmelina Leone, Maria Magro. These are the young CA members who have been declared saints, blessed and venerable. They are “normal” young people who showed a special zeal for the Church, a zeal which spans centuries and may even bring to martyrdom.

At this time, when CA in Italy is celebrating its 140th anniversary, it is nice to point out that just two young men, Mario Fani and Giovanni Acquaderni, “came up” with the idea of Catholic Action and aroused a leaven which eventually spread in different parts of Europe and even crossed the oceans reaching as far as America, Africa and Asia.

Through IFCA Youth Coordination, we hope to be able to highlight the contribution which the youth gave in the setting up of CA in the different countries, and which contribution they can give today to CA which is renewing itself in so many countries or is going to be set up in so many ecclesial realities.

These saints, who have grown within this Association, are the most beautiful testimony that life can be lived to the full even at a young age. They show that youth is not just a transitory period in life but that during this period one can reach the peak of holiness. Not only this. They are also an evidence of the fullness, the intensity, the liveliness, and the responsibility which the young people experience in CA. It is through this experience that they can attain holiness. Generously and freely, they lead an evangelic life and spread the good news of the Gospel in the places where they live. With their way of living, they are living answers to the questions raised by the real life especially in youth spheres.

Faithful to the intuition which led the two young men Fani and Acquaderni, CA youths foster a strong zeal for the Church. Their desire is to see a Church, as Jesus dreamt of, so that therein all young people may feel welcomed. Their link with their own local Church, with

their own territory and with the people who live, hope and suffer therein, helps to rouse and increase in them their zeal for the Church.

Their love for the Church spurs them on to be evangelizers. They announce the Risen Christ in the different places where they live. Their choices, their way of life in the local and global realities, where they are called to live their faith, are all inspired by the Gospel. In evangelic terms this means modeling their lives on Christ.

They are zealous young people who are “protagonists”, that is capable to participate actively in their communities, in their countries, in social and civil spheres. To prepare themselves for this active participation, CA youth undertake to follow a formation-programme based on the Word of God, on personal and liturgical prayer and on the catechism of the Church. They prepare themselves to read what is happening around them in the light of the Gospel, to pay attention to culture, to be well prepared for confrontation and dialogue. It also fosters in them a love for study and urges them to self-giving. These formative itineraries are designed in a way so as to help in the development of each individual young member in a group, in a parish and in the Church both at national and universal level. Special attention is given to the different age-groups, to the different stages of life: vocational choices, work, social and political commitment; to the intergenerational relations, to dialogue with young people of other Associations, other Christian confessions, other religions and cultures.

CA is a gift which the Church presents to the young generations, and CA youth are a gift to the Church and to CA, all the world over.

It would be so nice if each CA youth could repeat a phrase which a CA youth said some years back: we should do our best “to live a full life and not simply to survive” both as individuals and as an association. We should aim at this in our particular realities, in the many realities spread all over the world: to be CA youth in Mexico, Burundi, Rumania, in the Holy Land... We should answer to our call and live as co-responsible young people, living our lay vocation in a specific way and paint it with those particular colours which belong to the different latitudes of the world where we live.

Ilaria Vellani

National Vice-President of the Italian Catholic Action
Youth Sector

From Cologne 2005 to Jerusalem

The First World Meeting of CA Youth in Cologne

International Youth Days are meant to give young people the opportunity to share part of “their journey through life” with young people from other countries and cultures, to experience being a Church, that is a universal community.

During WYD 2005 in Cologne, there was another special appointment: the international meeting of Catholic Action Youth. This was held on the 17th August 2005 in the church dedicated to San Karl Borromäus. The theme chosen for this meeting was: *Pilgrims of peace and unity*. The IFCA group responsible for the Youth Coordination together with the Italian CA youth invited young CA members for this meeting. This was attended by about six hundred youths from ten different countries namely: Argentina, Italy, Malta, Mexico, Rumania, Spain, Switzerland, Holy Land, Ukraine and Venezuela.

During this meeting, the CA youth had the opportunity to meet and to get to know one another. It was the first occasion when they could share a small part of their journey together. Some spoke about their experience and bore witness to the sense of being young pilgrims of peace and unity in their own countries through slides, songs and literature. This gave a very interesting picture, interwoven with testimonies by young Christians, involved in their own local realities and conscious of the cultural mission of their association. It was also an evidence of their desire to be messengers of hope.

The references made during the meeting were so varied. Some quoted Dante, others spoke about the Mexican martyrs, the Ukrainians quoted their founder while the Spaniards gave their message through their catchy songs. H.E. Msgr. Francesco Lambiasi, General Bishop Assistant of the ICA and of IFCA, as well as the Auxiliary Bishop of Nazareth, Giacinto Marcuzzo, accompanied the group. Cologne was in fact the first step towards the International Pilgrimage for CA Youths to the Holy Land, in January 2007.

Until then, we will let us be guided by the words addressed by the Vatican II Fathers to the young people: *let your hearts be enlarged according to the world's dimensions.*



A message to CA youth all over the world after the meeting in Cologne

We have gone to Cologne "to adore Him"

The meeting organized by IFCA in Cologne brought together so many CA youth from all over the world. They spoke about their experience as pilgrims in their own traditions, from the point of view of their Church, their culture and their history. It was a very important historical occasion as it was the first meeting of IFCA's youths from Argentina, Venezuela, Ukraine (UYC), Rumania (ASTRU and Iasi CA), Mexico, Spain, Malta, Switzerland (Lugano CA) and a large number of diocesan CA associations from Italy.

Like the Magi, we all arrived in Cologne from afar, bringing with us different gifts. We all took with us the anxieties and hopes of our associations and of our countries. We went through a time of intense dialogue, prayer and friendship.

Many of us asked "And then, after Cologne?"

- It soon became clear that our journey together did not end there but rather, for CA youth, Cologne was the start of a new journey together. There we shared and understood the beauty, the joy and the fraternity of our being an association of so many CA groups from different parts of the world. Now, thanks to the "IFCA Youth Coordinating Group", together we can be "pilgrims of peace and unity" in our local Churches.

- Following the proposal by Paola Bignardi, the coordinator of IFCA Secretariat, in Cologne we gave each other an appointment: to meet again as "pilgrims of peace and unity" in Jerusalem, on the 1st January 2007. In her message she invited us to meet "to pray for peace, to show our willingness to commit ourselves to work for peace, to express our desire for dialogue and fraternal love... to be pilgrims of peace in the land, where the life given for us on Calvary has made the announcement of the angels' peace to all men of good will possible".

- The meeting in Cologne has asked for a deep commitment from all CA youth; from those who were in Cologne as well as from those who remained at home and from those whom we meet. Our commitment is to pray for peace and unity; to get to know each other better by exchanging our programmes, our resources and our calendars of activities and by preparing our pilgrimage to the Holy Land together with the youths of Holy Land.

Goodbye to Jerusalem, dear CA youth in the whole world, pilgrims of peace and unity!

Rome, 23rd October 2005

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES IN PREPARATION FOR THE PILGRIMAGE

- ✓ **October 2005** - The idea of an international pilgrimage for CA youth to the Holy Land on the occasion of the World Day of Peace 1st January 2007 was presented to the Patriarch Michel Sabbah, who encouraged this initiative and entrusted it to H.E. Msgr. Marcuzzo, Vicar for Israel.
- ✓ **June 2006** - Preparatory visit. Oana Tuduce and Maria Grazia Tibaldi established contact with the Holy Land and started discussing the programme and other logistic aspects. It was decided that all pilgrims should meet in Rome so that from there they could travel to the Holy Land as one group.
- ✓ **September 2006** - The IFCA Secretariat met in Rome in the beginning of September. It decided to postpone the pilgrimage to the 1st January 2008 in order to have time for finding more financial help for this initiative.
- ✓ **December 2006** - A preparatory programme to be followed throughout 2007 was proposed. This was meant to help young people from the different countries prepare themselves for the pilgrimage.
- ✓ **March 2007** - On the occasion of the solemnity of the Annunciation, H.E. Msgr. Marcuzzo sent a letter to the young CA pilgrims:

Dear young friends,

(...) The feast of the Annunciation is the feast of the Incarnation. God became man. He became my brother. He became the "Emanuel", our new creation. The Incarnation signifies the new beginning, the new testament, the new kingdom of God, the new man, a new page in history, a new humanity. In itself, the mystery of the Incarnation is a mystery of novelty. As young and adult members of International Catholic Action, as members of the Church, we are called to cooperate in the construction of this new world and to form within us this new man and possibly even in others. On this great solemnity, I would like to invite you to look towards Nazareth and to contemplate about Mary, the new man *par excellence*. After Jesus Christ, she is definitely the first born of this new humanity and of the new world. By contemplating Mary we can discover the characteristics of the new man, that is, the characteristics of a Christian.

1 - The first outstanding characteristic in Mary of Nazareth and therefore of the new man is her *attitude to accept*, her openness, her being able to say:

Dear young people,

(...) Our duty to sustain our Mother Church in Jerusalem has a long history behind it. The Word of God, through the *Acts of the Apostles* speaks to us about the disciples' concern for their brethren in Judaea (*Acts* 11,29-30) and about the great generosity shown by the Corinthians, which Paul praises in his letter (*1Cor* 16,1-6). Later, for many centuries, as from 1309, the Franciscans were the only protagonists, in Catholic spheres, in the life of the Church in the Holy Land. When in need, they "turned to the rich and to those who were not so rich to ask for donations" (Paul VI, *Nobis in animo*): in this Holy Land, a land of conflicts, the inhabitants are badly in need of that love which can only be expressed through charity. They need these roped friars, as they call them, who, following God's calling have established themselves there even risking martyrdom. They look after those infected with plague, build houses and churches and educate the young. They also treasure ancient ruins and in them they try to find traces of a Man, who, they know, was the Messiah.

They show a deep love for the Country and the People as these go hand in hand. They are the mediators between these two realities: holy places and Christian presence. In this country, which is so particular, they keep the profile and the universal vocation of the Church and of the Holy places alive. These are undoubtedly a rich patrimony for all. It is due to the faithful custody of these sons of St. Francis, that pilgrims, from all corners of the world, can discover the roots of their faith and of their Church. With great generosity and sacrifice, they have done this for seven centuries.

In this ecumenical land the Custody has learned to share the place with others and to communicate with brethren from the other Churches. Together with them it has shown hospitality to pilgrims who visit the places where our Lord Jesus Christ was born, died and was risen.

In this land where dialogue with Islam prevails, the Custody has built schools, hospitals and social centres which are open to all.

There is also dialogue with Hebrewism through initiatives on cultural and archaeological level.

It is a land of political and religious conflicts which have gone on for years and which have torn the lives of these two peoples.

The Friars are here: in this land where the fact of being a Christian is not taken for granted. In spite of everything, being present in this land, in the name of the Church, and living in the places which have witnessed the story of the Revelation, remains their principal vocation (...).

f. Pier Battista Pizzaballa
Custodian of Holy Land

- ✓ **June 2007** - Financial Support: Associazione delle Fondazioni delle Casse di Risparmio Piemontesi, Fondazione Banca San Paolo di Brescia, Fondazione Banco di Sardegna, Fondazione Cariplo, and for the World Day of Peace 2008 Fondazione Monte dei Paschi di Siena - these Financial Associations approved the projects which were presented and promised financial support.
- ✓ **July 2007** - Closing date for applications. With the help of H.E. Msgr. Marcuzzo, procedures were started for the application for visas for about 45 participants. The required forms were sent to the Ministry for Internal Affairs in Israel.
- ✓ **November 2007** - Second preparatory visit to the Holy Land. Meetings were held in Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Nazareth with local people in order to organize the pilgrimage and to plan the accommodation of the pilgrims.
- ✓ **December 2007** - Finalization of programme, guidelines to help pilgrims prepare themselves for pilgrimage, meeting with journalists to establish ways of communicating.
- ✓ **Press release 28 December 2007** - The day when the Pilgrims had to leave Rome.

PILGRIMAGE TO HOLY LAND

28 December 2007 - 6 January 2008

Pilgrims of peace and unity

150 young Catholic Action members coming from 27 different countries will be visiting the Holy Land between the 29th December and the 6th January. They will be leaving Rome together and on their return they will participate in the Eucharistic Celebration presided over by the Holy Father on the solemnity of the Epiphany.

These young people represent so many other young people and their Christian Communities spread all over the world. They will be meeting youths from Christian Communities in the Holy Land who represent the different realities in Palestine and Israel (Bethlehem, Ramallah, Taybeh, Nazareth and Haifa). These will be joining the group throughout the pilgrimage. The aim behind this initiative is to foster friendship and to encourage exchanges among young people. The visitors will be sharing the daily life of the people in the Holy Land as well as visit holy places. They will be meeting the Patriarch, the Custodian, and the Nuncio as well as parish priests. For this to be truly an intense spiritual and ecclesial experience there will also be time for prayer and for charitable work, especially in Bethlehem and Nazareth.

In an address, given in the name of the Holy Father, addressed specifically to these young people, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone recalls the pilgrimage which took place 40 years ago. During this pilgrimage, the Italian Catholic Action youth, sent by Paul VI, lit a lamp of peace in Bethlehem on the occasion of the 1st world day of peace - precisely during these same days" (...).

Just like His Venerable Predecessor, *"The Holy Father - says the Secretary of State - entrusts you with the 2008 World Day of Peace Message so that you may pass it on to the young Christians in the Holy Land. He remembers you daily in His prayers and asks Our Lady and Saint Joseph to protect you. He prays that, with God's help, you may be able to find ways of building bridges of fraternity and solidarity and to ensure that this bond of friendship does not stop here so that those who live in the Holy Land do not feel abandoned but feel that they are full members of the big family of the universal Church"*.

The climax of the pilgrimage will be reached with the celebration of the World Day of Peace on the 1st January in Jerusalem, city of peace, mother of all nations, the place where the roots of the human family as a community of peace may be traced. The message of Pope Benedict XVI for the 2008 World Day of Peace urges young people to make serious reflections on the family and on the correlation between the family and the human family.

During the Eucharistic Celebration of the 1st January, the Patriarch Michel Sabbah will give a lamp, shaped like a dove made by local artisans, to a youth from every country so that the young people present may - in the places where they live - be *"true friends of peace (...) for the exaltation of this primary good, which is Peace, in the varied concert of modern humanity"* (Paolo VI 1st January 1968).

✓ **PROGRAMME OF PILGRIMAGE**

Friday 28 December

Departure from Rome by night to Tel Aviv

Saturday 29 December

Arrival at Bethlehem - Catholic Action Bethlehem (CAB)

WELCOME by Bethlehem Youth

Ore 10,30 -12,30 Cultural Centre CAB

	Prayer
	H.E. Msgr. Domenico SIGALINI, ICA General Assistant
	Presentation of the Pilgrimage
	Oana TUDUCE, in charge of IFCA Youth Coordination
	Addresses
	f. Samuel HABIB ofm, Priest of Saint Catherine parish
	Victor BABOUN, CAB President
	Presentation of participants by country
	Interventions
	Prof. Jacqueline SFEIR Talk about the socio-political and cultural realities
	Daniel ATTINGER biblical itinerary and Guides to the Holy Places
	Early afternoon VISIT TO THE HOLY PLACES: Nativity Grotto, the Shepherds' Field...
17,30	Holy Mass Caritas Baby Hospital H.E. Msgr. Antonio FRANCO, Apostolic Nuncio in Israel Apostolic Delegate for Jerusalem and Palestine Meeting with the Nuns, visit to the Hospital
	Sunday 30 December
	Bethlehem
7,30	Prayer Daniel ATTINGER biblical itinerary (1)
	Jerusalem
10,00	Meeting with f. Pierbattista PIZZABALLA, Custodian of the Holy Land
11,00	Holy Mass, parish of Our Saviour Meeting with the parish youth
14,30 - 15,00	HOLY PLACES JERUSALEM/1 Holy Sepulchre Return to Bethlehem Meetings in Bethlehem - experiences of charity and spirituality After supper together MEETING with testimonies from Bethlehem

Monday 31 December

Bethlehem

7,30 Prayer and biblical itinerary (2)

Jerusalem

9,30 Meeting with H.B. Michel SABBAH Patriarch of Jerusalem
Jerusalem/2 HOLY PLACES

17,00 Holy Mass in the parish of St. Catherine, Bethlehem
with the singing of the TE DEUM
CELEBRATION - music, dancing, singing, peace games
Participation in the New Year's Celebrations at the CAB Centre

Tuesday 1 January 2008

THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE

9,00 **Jerusalem**

10,00 Holy Mass by the Latin Patriarch - H.B. Michel SABBAH
Jerusalem/3 HOLY PLACES

17,30 - 18,00 Return to Bethlehem
After supper together
MEETING: CA Youth witnesses of unity and peace
in the different realities of the world
Coordinator Vincenzo BELLOMO - *Fidei donum* lay youth
in Bethlehem from the diocese of Mazara del Vallo

Wednesday 2 January

From Bethlehem to Nazareth

7,30 Prayers and biblical itinerary (3)

ITINERARY

Ain Karen, Desert

Jerico Holy Mass with youth and the parish community

16,30 Arrival in NAZARETH

WELCOME at Sant'Antonio

(Latin Franciscan Parish Centre in Nazareth)

H.E. Msgr. MARCUZZO, f. Amjad SABBARA and Parish Priests of
the different rites from Nazareth and from neighbouring villages
as well as members of Youth Associations

Departure to different parishes near Nazareth
supper with families and lodging

Thursday 3 January

Nazareth

8,30 Centre of Sant'Antonio
Prayers and biblical itinerary (4)

10,00 - 16,00 Visit to Nazareth and proposal of itineraries
guided by Bethlehem young people and Guides

16,30 Rendezvous in the churchyard

17,00 Holy Mass in the Basilica of the Annunciation
with H.E. Msgr. Giacinto-Boulos MARCUZZO
Auxiliary Bishop for Israel

Meeting in the Auditorium of the Basilica
Exchange of experiences by youth from the different countries

Friday 4 January

Nazareth

8,00 Centre Sant'Antonio

9.30 Crossing of Lake Tiberias

11,00 Capernaum Holy Mass

Mount of the Beatitudes - prayers and biblical itinerary (5)

Walk to Tabgha: Peter's Primacy

Multiplication of bread - Living Water

17,00 to NAZARETH Centre Sant'Antonio

Meeting with youth in Nazareth and farewell

Departure towards parishes and families

Meeting with Parish groups - Supper

Saturday 5 January

8,00 Centre Sant'Antonio

Mount Tabor

Haifa Mount Carmel

15.30 Evening Holy Mass of the Epiphany

In the Latin Parish of Haifa, with the parish youth

Final Farewell

Leave for Tel Aviv Airport

I count on you...

Yes, dear young people: what you wish to be in the future is also what the Church wants since there is in her an interior force which, as the Apostle Paul says, leads her "towards the perfect Man, full mature with the fullness of Christ himself" (*Ep 4,13*).

If you are the bearers and builders of a Church more and more strongly united with the Lord and more and more flexible to be close to man, you should then not only be aware of this, but above all you should be ready to direct your commitment generously towards this goal. You should carry out this mission in the heart of the world together, so that you will be able to meet the man of our times and present to him the Lord of all times. Your young age already helps already to understand the distortions and emptiness brought about by today's consumerist society. Do not react to this by trying to undertake projects inspired by ideologies which annihilate the individual into the mass.

We appeal to your youthful fantasy, inspired by the Gospel, to free man from these dangers and are fully aware that the Gospel announced in all its totality, is by itself the promoter of the human cause: on condition that, if the Gospel is for man, we Christians should be all for the Gospel.

Paul VI to the Italian Catholic Action Youth - 16 October 1976

You should work for peace even in international spheres. Besides planning and coordinating individual, communitarian and collective initiatives, as young people, you have a very special contribution which you can give.

... You can be the builders of international peace if you make full use of the means which you have at your disposal and some possibilities are exclusively restricted to young people.

... The Pope is with you as you trudge along the way towards peace!

... Peace be with you, dear young people, protagonists of history's future and builders of the new world!

... May you be the zealous messengers and the enthusiastic bearers of this special gift: peace. It is a very precious but also a very fragile treasure rooted in our hearts and entrusted in our hands by God!

John Paul II to the Italian Catholic Action Youth - 8 May 1982

The benefits of meetings and exchanges

... I know that twinnings have been established between Catholic Action youth of a particular diocese with those of another as well as with youth in a particular parish in Rome.

This is a scheme which I strongly encourage. This experience offers you a deep and joyful experience of unity as it brings you all together, simultaneously and in all directions, within the Church.

... You bring out the bond that exists between the Church of Rome and all the Churches spread all over Italy and in other parts of the world.

... With your lively faith, you testify that the mystery of the Church, "one, holy, catholic and apostolic", is present in every particular Church in the world (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 26).

This is evidenced in the different experiences which you carry with you and which express the catholicity of the Church. It should however be clear to us all that within this catholicity, "each individual part contributes, through its special gifts, to the good of the other parts and of the whole Church" (*Lumen Gentium*, 13).

John Paul II to the Italian Catholic Action youth - 24 September 1988



World Youth Day

15-20 July 2008

Sydney, Australia

"You will receive **power** when
the **Holy Spirit** has come upon you;
and you will be my **witnesses**"
(Acts 1.8)

March 2008