**YOUNG ADULTS CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION**

**About**

YACA is the last pastoral structure dedicated to the youth in the Archdiocese. These are youth who are aged 27 – 35 years. It also includes those young people who are below 27 years but married or with children or who feel more comfortable in terms of professional and life experience among YACA than in YFC.

Jesus asked the apostles and Christians to make the Gospel known “Go and preach to the whole world” (28:19-20). Every baptized Christian is part of the Church and therefore has the responsibility to be missionary. Owing to their professional and life experiences, YACA are called to inculcate and imbue the society with the Social Teachings of the Church and the values of the Gospel. They more aggressively become involved in social processes without becoming politically controversial. They also challenge each other to live up to their Christian calling especially the sacramental life, exercise of charity and prayer life.

Young Adults Catholic Association, unlike other youth groups, they are rather independent because it is assumed that they are adults and capable of self-management. However, they are under the guidance of the youth chaplains in the Archdiocese, Deanery and Parish levels. They should work together with them and the Chaplains to come up with a program of activities and with their own constitution and guidelines with adherence to what is given here.

Even though all youth are invited to participate in the Palm Sunday Mass with the Local Ordinary, the YACA annual Mass shall be in the last Saturday of September.

**Objectives**

* To develop a greater understanding of the Church’s Social Teachings
* To increase one’s participation in the Sacramental life of the Church and prayer-life, both communal and personal
* To be mentors and guides of PMC, MYM and YFC
* To provide communal support in living out the Christian and professional calling in the world
* To advocate, apply and uphold the principles of the Gospel and the Social Teachings in the public square through sensitization walks and community service
* To place one’s gifts, talents and energies at the disposal of the Church and the larger society
* To offer voluntary work in places of need such as hospitals, children homes and facilities for the elderly and mentally challenged among others
* To know, understand and appreciate the Catholic Faith through deeper study of Scriptures and the Catechism of the Catholic Church
* To deepen their knowledge of the Church in the world
* To actively engage in the Corporal Works of Mercy and Spiritual Works of Mercy
* To provide support and formation in one’s vocation: Marriage, Priesthood and Religious.
* To promote spiritual and material support for their parish and evangelization of peoples around the world
* To go out and evangelize according to each one’s possibility and individual vocation

**Membership**

* Anyone who is between 27 - 35 years young
* Anyone who is younger than 27 years but is married or with a child.
* The youth chaplain or the animators may accept someone who still belongs to YFC but has the maturity to belong to YACA since he/she no longer fits in YFC
* One can be a member of YACA and also of another group such as the choir
* All young people who have satisfied the above criteria and wish to follow and serve Christ and his body the Church by being missionaries through witness and service
* The group shall have an appropriate welcoming ceremony for new members and also those who are leaving to join CWA/CMA.

**Commitments**

* To give testimony of a true Christian life, through the frequent reception of the Sacraments especially the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion
* To actively participate in learning and understanding the Social Teachings of the Church
* To use one’s talents and abilities to advocate for social justice and care of our common home
* Actively participate in YACA activities in the parish, deanery and the Archdiocese.
* To support those who are struggling to live up to the demands of their vocation
* To witness to the gift of the Sacrament of Matrimony
* To be a leaven and salt in the family, among friends in school
* To pray for missionaries around the world
* To reach out to people who do not know the Catholic faith or are not Catholic and promoting a culture of friendship and encounter
* To aspire to be an intelligent Catholic who is well versed in the Catholic Faith
* To welcome the Cross as part and parcel of true Christianity and Peace

**Role Models for YFC**

It is important in our journey of faith to realize that we are never alone. We have brothers and sister who have journeyed on this path before and they know how to go about it. We can and should ask for their help and support. Each parish and youth group needs to do some research and find out about the saints given here and how each person can imitate them in their own way and circumstances.

Being holy and being saints is not an invitation that is reserved to Bishops, Nuns, Brothers and Priests but it is a universal vocation. Holiness actually consists of cheerfulness, doing one’s duty with excellence, initiative and innovation, Being friends with Jesus and being of service and friendly to everyone. We call can do that! So here are saints who are our age mates that can support us in this journey. Kindly read about them! Feel free to research about other saints of similar age and allow yourself to be challenged.

1. St. Joseph, spouse of Mary
2. Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati
3. St. Pope John Paul II
4. St. Josephine Bakhita
5. Dorothy Day
6. St. Theresa of Calcutta

**Jesus Christ: Brother, Master, Friend, Teacher and School of Love**

It is of paramount importance for all youth to realize that they are not part of a huge multinational NGO with the Pope as CEO and Bishops being mid-level managers or branch managers. We belong to a Church that spans through 2000 years of history with everyone having a role to play. The Church is the historical space within which Christ meets each of us, makes himself known to us, walks with us and teaches us while helping us mature in our love for him. He constantly invites us to ‘come and follow him.’ That means he is the model, way and guide. He also commands us to go and evangelize and to be aware that to follow Christ is to take up our crosses every day and follow him. It is very important to be cautious of the prosperity gospel that promises Christ without the Cross. That is fantasy.

Jesus understands each of us and cares for each of us according to our identity and circumstances. He is God and God is love. The relationship that God seeks with people is called Mercy. Our response to this relationship that God seeks, our response to God’s invitation to His kingdom is what we call our Catholic Faith. Religion therefore is God’s invitation and our response and thus the relationship that develops between and among us.

Jesus continues to forgive, console and help each of us and expects us to do the same. His first concern is to enter our hearts, become our friend and transform our lives to become the identity we were created to assume; sons and daughters of God. This is what we see among the Apostles. He called them to be with him and to go out on a mission to others. We are therefore called:

* To live with him by being united more and more and to live in a deeper friendship with him everyday
* To live like him by learning everything from Jesus and to assume his lifestyle
* To be untied with him in the Church and in a faith that is lived through sharing and spreading it
* To go with him, in his name and in with his power, as his collaborators and helpers, his hands, legs and mouth and to do what he wants, with whom he wants, wherever and whatever he wishes as guided by the Magisterium, Scriptures and Tradition of the Church
* To offer one’s life with him and like him through serving and not being served and finally to live with him forever in eternity.

**YACA Leadership**

The group leadership starts with the youth chaplain and then the matrons, patrons or animators of the youth group.

Kindly refer to the General Norms of leadership in the Archdiocese as given on this website

Each YACA is supposed to elect the leadership according to the general norms indicated

The Parish Chairpersons of each parish automatically become the Deanery Council.

The Deanery Council elects from among them the office holders as indicated in the general norms. The deanery council chairpersons automatically become the Archdiocese YACA Council Members who proceed to choose from among themselves, the offices as indicated in the general norms.

The Organizing Secretaries of each Deanery Council shall be the members of the Zonal Council who proceed to elect the necessary offices for the coordination of the Zonal Activities. However, it is important to note that the Zonal governance is not part of the three main governing councils: Parish, Deanery and Archdiocesan. They exist to coordinate activities of the deaneries that constitute the zone.

**YACA Activities**

1. Parish programs
2. Advocacy activities such as walks, mass education, tree planting, community service, newspaper articles etc
3. Volunteering to mentor the PMC and MYM among other works
4. Raising material resources for the parish
5. Seminars and Workshops
6. Youth camps and trips
7. Retreats and Recollections
8. Visit and pilgrimages to shrines and holy places
9. Exchange programs
10. Charitable works
11. Sports, Drama and Musical festivals
12. Archdiocesan activities such as Youth Mass on Palm Sunday,
13. Others as may be planned

**YACA Group Meetings**

Meetings should avoid being repetitive and lacking in creativity and structure. Many youth tend to avoid youth groups in part due to lack of challenge or meetings that lack joy and substance. It would be advisable therefore that the animators assist such that there is a balance between workshops and youth meetings to plan other events and activities.

Each group, adhering to the norms here, can come up with their own constitution, specific rules and guidelines of each youth group. These could entail disciplinary matters, fund raising, welfare, financial accountability measures, and loss of office among others.

Let the executive together with the animators/matrons/patrons come up with a theme for each month and where possible, invite facilitators to cover certain topics. Meetings should constitute of prayers, scriptural readings and a study of the theme at hand either organized as a workshop or study groups or discussion. It can then conclude with a discussion regarding other plans and youth activities.

**The guiding books and manuals for the themes, workshops and seminars are:**

1. ***The Social Teachings of the Catholic Church***
2. ***The Joy of the Gospel – Pope Francis’ Encyclical***
3. ***On the Care of our Common Home – Pope Francis’ Encyclical***
4. ***The Joy of Love – Pope Francis’ Post-Synodal Exhortation Letter***
5. ***The Catechism of the Catholic Church – Youth Version***
6. ***The African Bible***
7. ***The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People – Steve Covey***

Each youth group can decide whether to alternate readings of each by reading a few pages each meeting and discussing, invite facilitators to guide and share or form study groups and debates. It is important however to seek the guidance of a competent lay person or priest in matters of faith and morals as upheld by the Church.

**YACA Symbols**

To be updated.

**Conclusion**

The Pope, Vicar of Christ and father of the Catholic Family invites the youth:

* To be salt of the earth and the light of the world
* To be bridge builders, promoting a culture of encounter and solidarity and protagonists of the future
* To fight against a throw-away culture that glorifies drug abuse, harmful and uncommitted sexual practices, social injustices, environment degradation among other vices
* To set for themselves the achievement of noble and high human and Christian ideals and a life of virtue
* To undertake the path of constant conversion in order to attain a new heart and a newness life
* To be saints! To live in union with God who is the only one who can quench their deepest desires
* To be committed Catholic Christians and active in the parish
* To be apostles to other youth
* To be builders of a more just and fraternal society
* To be builders of peace and a civilization of love
* Love Jesus Christ, His Mother and the Holy Mother Church

The young people are the hope of the Church. Being young in faith, we must be like the first Christians and radiate enthusiasm and courage in our generous devotion to God and our neighbours. We must set ourselves on the path of holiness and thus become a sign of God in the world and re-live in our own country, the missionary epic of the early Church. May we have the courage to reply like Isaiah did: “Here I am, Lord! Send me! (Is 6:8).

Come Lord Jesus!