



**Jesus Youth  
New Zealand**

*One Heart. One Mission.*



A MAGAZINE OF JESUS YOUTH NEW ZEALAND

# Journey





Celebrating 20 Years of Jesus Youth New Zealand

# The Journey

A jubilee invites us to pause, to remember, and to give thanks. It is a moment to look back with gratitude for all that God has done, and to look ahead with renewed hope for all that He continues to unfold.

For Jesus Youth in New Zealand, this year is such a moment. We celebrate 20 years of grace, growth, and mission in this land. What began through small and faithful beginnings has become a living community present across the country—forming young people, strengthening families, nurturing vocations, and creating spaces where many have encountered Christ in a personal way.

The story of Jesus Youth New Zealand was not only built through programmes or events; but it has been gracefully shaped through prayer meetings in homes and parishes, friendships formed in fellowship, retreats that changed lives, acts of service offered quietly, and the many unseen sacrifices of those who said “yes” to God over the years. This is a journey carried by grace.

This edition gleans through memories, testimonies, milestones, and reflections from those who have walked this path. Some were present in the early days, some joined along the way, whereas many have just begun their journey. Together, they reveal one shared story: that God has been faithful in every season.

As we turn these pages, may gratitude fill our hearts. May hope rise again within us. May the same Lord who led us this far continue to guide Jesus Youth New Zealand into the years ahead.



*Exult 2020 at Blue Skies Centre, Christchurch*



*Exult 2023 at Narrows Park, Hamilton*



*National Conference 2022 at Blue Skies Centre, Christchurch*



During the Mass for the Jubilee of Young People at Tor Vergata, Pope Leo XIV reminds young people that Jesus is our hope, and urges them to "adventure with the Lord toward eternity" as the Lord is "gently knocking" at the window of their soul.

Aspire to great things, to holiness, wherever you are. Do not settle for less. You will then see the light of the Gospel growing every day, in you and around you.

"Dear friends, we are not made for a life where everything is taken for granted and fixed, but for an existence that is constantly regenerated in giving, in love. And so we continually aspire to something more that no created reality can give us, we feel a great and burning thirst, so great that no drink of this world can quench it. Faced with this thirst, let us not deceive our hearts by trying to quench it with ineffective substitutes! Let us listen to it, instead! Let us make it a stool on which we can climb, so that we can look out, like children, on tiptoe, at the window of our encounter with God. We will find ourselves before Him, who awaits us, or rather, who knocks gently on the window of our soul. It is beautiful, even at 20 years of age, to open our hearts wide to Him, to allow Him to enter, and then to venture forth with Him, toward the eternal spaces of infinity."



# Courageous Witness for a New Generation

I am delighted to offer you this pastoral greeting as you gather for this Jubilee Conference in Aotearoa New Zealand. I give thanks to God for the gift that Jesus Youth is to our Church, especially in the formation of young Catholics who seek to know Christ personally, to love Him deeply, and to serve Him generously.

Over the years I have seen how this movement has nurtured a living faith among young people, through prayer, Scripture, community life, and a spirit of joyful witness. In a time when many voices compete for attention and allegiance, Jesus Youth has helped young people to listen again to the voice of Christ and to respond with courage. This is no small contribution. It is a blessing for the Church and for our society.

Youth movements such as yours play a vital role in strengthening the life of the Church. They create spaces where faith is not only taught but lived, where young people can encounter Christ in one another, and where leadership for the future is formed. They remind us that the Church is always young when she is open to the Holy Spirit.

At the heart of your charism is the call to missionary discipleship. The Church in New Zealand needs young people who are not afraid to share their faith, who can bring the Gospel into schools, workplaces, families, and communities.

We journey together, each offering our gifts for the sake of the whole. Your witness encourages others to step forward and to discover their own call to mission.

As you celebrate this Jubilee and time together I invite you to remain rooted in prayer, faithful to the sacraments, and attentive to the needs of those on the margins.

**Continue to be a light that draws others to Christ, and a community where faith is lived with authenticity and joy.**

May the Lord bless you abundantly, and may the Holy Spirit guide you in all that lies ahead.



*+ P. B. Martin SM*

**Archbishop Paul Martin SM**

Archbishop of Wellington

# Holiness: Our First Mission



**Fr Philip Suelzer**

Fr Philip is the Assistant Priest of Holy Family Parish, Christchurch, and serves as chaplain to the National Team of Jesus Youth NZ.

Is there such a thing as a Christian who is not a missionary disciple?

From the looks of Christianity today, it may seem that the answer is yes. However, a closer look at the Gospels, Sacred Scripture, the Catechism, the Saints, and the movements of the Church gives a definitive answer: no. It would be a contradiction in terms.

Yet today, because of a culture of complacency, a lack of community, and few opportunities to be missionaries, many Catholic Christians have not begun the path of maturing into missionary disciples. May the Holy Spirit come and awaken in the hearts of the faithful a sense of urgency in the call to “make disciples of all nations”.

Jesus Youth is making sincere efforts in this area. Through opportunities for formation, times of prayer, and fellowship, young people are able to reflect more deeply on what it means to truly follow Christ. They begin to taste what it is to be both a disciple and a missionary. These are essential efforts, and Jesus Youth is pouring its time, energy, and talents into this mission.

I would like to encourage Jesus Youth at this time, and all those reading this, to give your whole heart to the mission at hand. And what is the first mission for each one of us? It is to be holy. In this overactive world, we need to keep returning to the basics: communing deeply in prayer with the Lord.

Encountering and experiencing Christ in prayer allows us to be filled so that we can then go out and fulfil the two great commandments and the three loves: “To love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself.”

This primarily comes through prayer, community, and mission. We also need knowledge, experience, and habits. Jesus Youth contributes to all three, and I encourage you all to grow deeply in these areas.

We could see this as a three-by-three grid. This is how God has made us: for relationship with God (prayer), with others (community), and to go and be light to the world (mission). In each of these areas we need knowledge (formation), experience (heart, emotions, encounters), and habits (daily routines, virtues).

I leave you with this framework so that you may make a heartfelt examination of your life in prayer. In which area, in particular, is God calling you to grow?

# Deeply Rooted



**Fr Ben D'souza**

Fr Ben is the Assistant Priest of St Mary of the Angel's Parish, Wellington, and was a former chaplain to the National Team of Jesus Youth NZ.

One of the key strengths of Jesus Youth New Zealand is its strong focus on formation.

Strong Catholic formation is greatly needed in New Zealand, and Jesus Youth New Zealand responds to this through retreats, youth programmes, and formation courses. Through these initiatives, as well as weekly gatherings, young Catholics are encouraged to develop and deepen their relationship with Christ and His Church, and to live that faith publicly. This intentional formation creates disciples who understand their faith deeply and are equipped to share it confidently with others.

Additionally, the movement contributes to making NZ more missionary by encouraging community-based evangelisation. Small prayer groups, fellowship gatherings, and mission trips across cities have helped spread a much-needed relational model of evangelisation. Jesus Youth empowers lay people, especially young adults, to see themselves as “sent” into the world, aligning with the broader missionary vision of the Church.

Another important aspect is the continuity of discipleship, particularly among young people transitioning into adulthood. Initiatives such as the Reach programme support students moving into university life, helping them remain grounded in faith and mission during a critical stage where many young people drift away from their faith. This helps reduce the common drop-off in religious practice and instead sustains a generation of committed disciples.

Jesus Youth NZ helps transform faith from a private belief into a lived missionary vocation, contributing meaningfully to a more evangelising and disciple-forming Church in New Zealand.

# The Journey Continues

Warm greetings in Christ to the Jesus Youth movement in New Zealand as we celebrate our 20th Jubilee.

With deep joy and gratitude, we thank God for this beautiful journey over the past twenty years. What began with a few people and families who opened their homes and hearts has now grown into a vibrant and loving community. Those simple beginnings—welcoming young people, praying together, and supporting one another—became the foundation for the movement to grow in places like Christchurch, Auckland, and beyond. Even today, that same spirit of love, openness, and fellowship remains our strength.

Jesus Youth New Zealand has been a meaningful part of our global Jesus Youth family. In a country shaped by diverse cultures and migration, our openness has created spaces where many feel welcomed and at home. Especially for young people and families arriving in a new land, our fellowship has helped them remain rooted in their faith, grow spiritually, and experience a sense of belonging. This quiet and faithful witness is a valuable contribution to the wider mission of Jesus Youth.

Our focus on forming young people, particularly through teens ministry, is deeply encouraging. Walking with young people from an early stage and nurturing their faith is a gift to the Church and to the movement. The involvement of families—opening our homes and journeying closely with young people—continues to be a strong and life-giving aspect of our community.

In recent years, especially in the context following COVID and increased migration, new possibilities are emerging. There is a growing presence of young people and families, bringing with it an invitation to reach out with renewed openness. These moments offer opportunities for deeper engagement and for sharing the joy of the Gospel in simple and meaningful ways.

As we mark this Jubilee, it is also a moment to look ahead with hope. The past twenty years have been a time of laying strong foundations. The years ahead call us to a renewed missionary outlook—gently expanding our reach, embracing new cultures and languages, and responding to the needs around us. As one global movement, our shared journey continues to enrich and strengthen our mission.

May the Lord continue to guide and bless all of us as we grow in unity, faith, and service.



**Dr. Midhun Paul**

Midhun is the current International Coordinator of Jesus Youth

# Watching God's Work Unfold

I am filled with joy to hear that Jesus Youth New Zealand is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. It has been a long journey, and I fondly remember how the pioneers planted the seeds of this movement in its early years. Guided by the Holy Spirit, they gathered regularly after work, drawing strength from their experiences in Jesus Youth Fellowships in their home countries. Despite various challenges, their commitment helped Jesus Youth to take root and thrive across New Zealand.

I still remember my first trip to New Zealand in May 2006 for the very first retreat in Auckland. Over the years, I have visited many times, travelled to different places, met with leaders, and listened to their inspiring stories.

As someone who has seen the step-by-step growth of Jesus Youth in NZ from the beginning and has been privileged to work with six generations of leaders, I thank God for each of you—for the wonderful ways you opened your lives to His plans.

Because of this dedication, we expanded to nearly all the main cities in New Zealand, nurturing a new generation of young leaders. God has blessed you to be His hands, reaching many young souls and families. I congratulate everyone who has worked selflessly on this journey, and I sincerely pray that Jesus Youth New Zealand continues to serve as a training ground for more missionaries for the Church in New Zealand and around the world.

As you celebrate this milestone, I look forward to the remarkable things the Lord has in store for you in the coming years. Please know that you are in my prayers. May the graces and blessings of this 20th anniversary guide you forward, and may you continue to be a missionary movement serving the Church, in the fullness of its meaning.



**Manoj Sunny**

Manoj has been involved with the Jesus Youth since its earliest years and served as its first International Coordinator



*Holiness Retreat, led by Manoj Sunny and Tomas Michael*



**Marc Tom Mathew**

National Coordinator (2024 - present)

As we celebrate the 20-year Jubilee of Jesus Youth in New Zealand, my heart overflows with gratitude, joy, and above all, a renewed fire for mission. This truly is a moment of celebration, a time to pause together, to remember how far the Lord has led us, and to look ahead with hope and expectation to where He is calling us next.

**Jubilee is a time of grace, and I believe God is inviting us, as a movement, to rediscover our identity: a people who are sent.**

## Jesus Youth New Zealand at 20: A Jubilee of Gratitude, A Future of Mission

The story of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman has been echoing strongly in my heart as we mark this milestone. One encounter: that is all it took. She met Jesus in her ordinary, even broken, circumstances, and her life was transformed. What is even more striking is what she did next—she did not wait to be trained, and she did not have all the answers. She simply ran and told others: "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done."

That is why the words of Jesus in John 20:21–22 feel so alive today: "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you...Receive the Holy Spirit." This Jubilee is not only a celebration—it is a commissioning. Jesus reminds us of who we are: not just a missionary movement collectively, but individuals personally called to reach out with love and courage. This call is not limited to leaders or national and regional team members, it is for each one of us. He invites each of us to listen again to His words: I am sending you. Each one of us is chosen and sent.



*National Assembly 2024 at Blue Skies Centre, Christchurch*

Looking back over the past 20 years in New Zealand, there is so much to celebrate. From small beginnings, with just a few young people gathering in faith, the movement has grown into a vibrant community spread across seven regions of the country. We have witnessed countless blessings and powerful encounters with God. Camps, leaders' trainings, formation courses, outreach programmes, personal missions, and prayer gatherings have all played part in shaping who we are today.

This is mission in its purest form and this is what God is calling each of us to embrace. Not complicated theology or perfect words, but simple, honest witness: "This is what Jesus has done in my life." To share your story. To share your encounter. To share your joy. If every one of us became that Samaritan woman in our schools, universities, workplaces, and families, imagine how many lives could be touched. How many hearts could be opened.

Over the years, the movement has grown not merely through programs, but through personal encounters. In Matthew 9:27–31, when the blind men cry out in faith, Jesus restores their sight. As we step into this Jubilee, we too need that vision: to see mission not as a burden, but as a privilege; to see people not as strangers, but as hearts waiting to encounter Christ; to see our own stories not as insignificant, but as powerful instruments in God's hands.



National Team of Jesus Youth New Zealand elected in 2024



3sixTEENS 2025 at Sonshine Ranch, Auckland

Let this Jubilee be more than a celebration; let it be a turning point. A time when we, as Jesus Youth in New Zealand, recommit ourselves wholeheartedly to mission. Not in distant or abstract ways, but in the simplest and most real way: by sharing our lives. If each of us takes that step, the impact will be far beyond what we can imagine. The movement will grow. The Church will grow and most importantly, more people will come to know the love of Jesus.

So let us celebrate with joy. Let us give thanks for all that God has done.

Above all, this is a moment of gratitude. Thank you to every person who has journeyed with Jesus Youth in New Zealand: those who began it, those who sustained it, and those who continue to carry it forward. Every prayer, every sacrifice, every small “yes” has mattered.

As we celebrate, may we also hear that gentle yet powerful call once more: **GO, SHARE, TELL YOUR STORY!**



U-Turn 2025 at Blue Skies Centre, Christchurch



Reach 2026 at Highland Home Christian Camp, Palmerston North



At the Ordination of Adolf Goldwyn to the Permanent Diaconate



Leaders Training 2025 at Blue Skies Centre, Christchurch

# One Heart, One Mission, 20 Years of Grace



Youth Team of JY New Zealand (2017 - 2021)



Youth Team of JY New Zealand (2021 - 2024)



National Team of JY New Zealand (2024 - current)



With the JY Australia delegation at the 2025 International Leaders Learning Program

As we mark twenty years of the Jesus Youth movement in New Zealand, our hearts naturally turn to gratitude. Looking back, we begin to recognise more clearly what the Lord has been doing - often quietly, and in ways we could not have planned or anticipated.

Many of us have been formed over these years through prayer, the sacraments, fellowship, and mission. What may have begun as a simple invitation or a moment of encounter has, over time, taken deeper root. God has been at work - shaping lives, building community, and drawing people closer to Himself in ways that are both personal and shared.

To call this “20 years of grace” is an acknowledgement of how this journey has unfolded. There have been many hands involved, many sacrifices made, and many people who have carried this movement forward in ways that are both seen and unseen. Beneath all of this, it is God who has sustained and guided the path we have taken together.

This moment, however, is not only about looking back. It also invites us to consider where we now stand.

The journey of these twenty years brings us back to what has always been central. As St Paul reminds us in the First Epistle to the Corinthians 12:12-13, we are one body, though made up of many parts, formed by the same Spirit. That has been the strength of this family. We come from different places and seasons of life, yet we remain one in Christ.

This time of reflection also invites us to lift our eyes towards 2033. It reminds us that the years ahead call each of us to renewed evangelisation, discipleship, and a greater readiness to offer our lives in service of the Gospel. What we celebrate now can become part of our preparation for what lies ahead.

In this year, we also look to Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of Jesus Youth. His life offers a lens through which we can understand our own journey more clearly. St Francis did not begin with large plans. He responded to what was in front of him, with simplicity and trust

His well-known words - “Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible” - capture something of how God works over time. Much of what we now see in the movement has followed that same pattern.

As we move forward, this Jubilee is not an end point, but a moment of renewal. It is an invitation to return to Christ, to remain united as one heart, and to commit ourselves again to the mission entrusted to us.

**The past twenty years give us reason for gratitude. The years ahead call for clarity, courage, and faith.**

On behalf of the Jubilee team, it has been a privilege to walk this journey of preparation together. We look forward to sharing this Jubilee with you, and to continuing forward together in what God is doing next.



**Tefin Tom Joseph**  
General Coordinator, 20-Year Jubilee  
Assistant National Coordinator  
(2024 - present)

# A Journey of Quiet Surrender



Simi John

I arrived in New Zealand in May 2006, carrying a deep desire in my heart to serve the Lord. My previous year as a Jesus Youth full-timer in India had shaped me profoundly, and as I prepared for this new chapter, I sought God's direction through prayer. He spoke to me through Jeremiah 29:7, calling me to "seek the peace and prosperity of the land". I held on to that word as a personal calling, arriving with a quiet conviction that God was sending me for a specific purpose: to serve Him through the Jesus Youth ministry in this new land.

When I first arrived in New Zealand, the ministry in Auckland was just beginning. It was a small, budding group of young people—the first to attend a Jesus Youth retreat there—who gathered weekly for prayer and fellowship. Slowly, these gatherings became much more than meetings; they became a family. In those moments of prayer and togetherness, we found a true sense of belonging and strength.

In 2007, I married my husband, Soji, who joined me in New Zealand, and from that point on, the mission became ours together. Although we lived two hours away from Auckland, we made a firm decision to attend every weekly prayer meeting. Being a young family, this was not always easy—the long drives after work often left us tired—but we felt strongly that God was calling us to remain faithful, and that faithfulness became our response to Him.

Our commitment deepened even further when Soji was entrusted with the role of National Coordinator. This responsibility involved significant travel, and we made sure to be present for almost every Jesus Youth programme across New Zealand, supporting them in whatever way was needed. Beyond the formal programmes, we felt it was important to personally visit individuals and families. Sitting with them, listening to their stories, and praying together became the very heart of our mission.

This spirit of mission extended into our own home, which we opened as a place of welcome. It became a space where people could gather freely to share meals, pray, and simply be with one another.

Through these everyday moments, I began to understand that mission is not only found in large events, but in the quiet ordinariness of daily life—in small acts of love, hospitality, and presence.

As the ministry spread, we felt called to meet young people and leaders growing in faith across other towns and cities. Often, these journeys took us the length of the country, from Kaitaia in the far north to the Bluff in the south.

The journey, however, was not without its challenges. With young children and limited financial resources, life often felt stretched. Yet, in the midst of it all, God remained faithful. He provided for our needs in ways we could not have planned and sustained our family's health and strength—which I now see as one of His greatest gifts. As a family, we chose to offer our time and resources for the Jesus Youth ministry, still guided by that word from Jeremiah to love the land and become instruments of God's peace.

Throughout every stage, God was also shaping me from within. There were seasons of testing and seasons of deep grace, where I felt drawn to the posture of Mary at the foot of the Cross—to remain in prayer, to trust, and to say "yes" even without fully understanding. That "yes" became the foundation of my life: a quiet surrender and a willingness to go wherever He leads.

Today, as I reflect on this journey, my heart is filled with gratitude. The same God who called me and guided me step by step continues to lead me even now. With that same trust, I continue to say "yes" to Him—one step at a time. I believe Jesus Youth is a treasure within the Church, where many discover a deeper calling within their calling and continue to respond to Him through the movement.

# Witness to the Beginning

One of the early participants in Jesus Youth New Zealand reflects on the humble beginnings of the movement, from a small gathering in Auckland in 2005 to a thriving national community. In this conversation, they share memories of the first meetings, key milestones, and the faith that has guided the journey over the past twenty years.



Ferdin Antony



## How did your journey with Jesus Youth begin?

It was a quiet weekend afternoon in December 2005 when my sister and I attended a gathering of teenagers at St Mary's Parish, invited by a family friend. I had no prior experience of anything like it and did not quite know what to expect. Yet, in that ordinary moment, something extraordinary began, though I could not have known it then. It marked the beginning of a beautiful and life-shaping journey with Jesus Youth.



## What do you remember about those first gatherings?

A small group of us gathered, listening intently to talks by Rajesh Thalappillil from Jesus Youth Australia and CC Joseph, who later became the International Coordinator. That day, we were introduced to Jesus Youth as a missionary movement. The idea of coming together weekly, centred on praise and worship, was planted in our hearts.



## How did the movement begin to take shape in New Zealand?

What began as a simple invitation soon became a rhythm. We started meeting regularly at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church under the mentorship of Liza Johnson. In those early days, we were also blessed with the guidance of our spiritual director, Fr James Mulligan, whose presence grounded and nurtured us.

Those beginnings were humble, simple, and full of learning. We were discovering new songs, understanding what praise and worship truly meant, and slowly growing into something entirely new to us. Step by step, the movement in New Zealand was taking shape.



## What sustained you in those early years?

We were few, inexperienced, and largely unaware that we were part of a global missionary movement serving the Church. Yet, we held firmly to the promise: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). That assurance carried us forward, just as it did for the first believers.

We invited friends. Some came, some stayed, and some wondered why anyone would spend a Friday evening in prayer when the rest of the world was celebrating the end of the school week - but we carried on with quiet conviction.



## Were there any early milestones that stand out to you?

On 13 and 14 May 2006, we experienced Youth Alive, an initiation retreat led by Manoj Sunny, then International Coordinator. It opened our eyes, deepened our understanding, and strengthened our foundation.

Our Friday gatherings continued, growing in spirit and purpose. Then, on 17 February 2007, Jesus Youth New Zealand received a special blessing: a meeting with Bishop Patrick Dunn, who graciously accepted the role of Patron. It was a moment of affirmation and encouragement. I still remember being welcomed into Pompallier Bishop's House, a group of young people being seen, supported, and believed in.

That same year, we hosted our first residential retreat, Destination Christ, at St Francis Retreat Centre. It was more than a retreat. It was an encounter, a moment that drew many of us deeper into our personal relationship with Jesus.



Exult 2012 at Narrows Park, Hamilton



### When did you start seeing the movement grow?

By 2008, something had shifted. The movement began stepping into greater responsibility. The year of World Youth Day 2008 brought new energy and vision. We began with a leadership retreat in Whangārei, joined even by youth from Christchurch. This was a clear sign that the movement was beginning to extend beyond Auckland.

On 29 June 2008, the Rexband show came to Auckland, followed by programmes in Whangārei and Christchurch. Looking back, it was a remarkable milestone. For a movement still finding its feet in New Zealand, hosting something of that scale spoke of courage, faith, and growth.

Soon after, some of us travelled to Sydney for World Youth Day, joining thousands from around the world. In that moment, it became clear that what had begun quietly in Auckland was part of something much bigger, something global.



### How did the movement continue to grow in New Zealand?

In 2010, we held the first Exult retreat at Chosen Valley Camp, an initiative that would go on to become a cornerstone of the movement each year. From there, growth continued steadily. As more young people arrived in New Zealand for higher studies, the gatherings filled once again with new faces, renewed energy, and fresh stories of faith.



### What has Jesus Youth New Zealand meant to you?

Through all these years, Jesus Youth has held a deeply personal place in my life. It gave me a fellowship that shaped who I am, and in moments of uncertainty, it became a place that guarded and sustained my faith.



### As you look back and ahead, what do you see?

Looking back, I do not just see events; I see a journey. A journey that began quietly, grew faithfully, and continues to unfold.

As I look ahead, I do so with hope. Even now, as it was then, there are uncertainties and challenges before us. Yet, just as the disciples once took the hand of Jesus and followed in faith, one thing remains certain: through these past twenty years, and into the years ahead, we are being guided, just as they were. “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

So, we look forward with hope to the next twenty years of the movement here in New Zealand.

# Where it First Took Shape



**Soji Joseph**

National Coordinator (2008 - 2014)

In June 2007, shortly after our marriage, I joined my wife Simi in New Zealand. We arrived carrying a deep, shared conviction: the Lord was calling us to serve Him through Jesus Youth. At that time, the movement here was in its infancy — just a small prayer group in Auckland and a handful of individuals scattered across the country who had encountered the movement elsewhere. Though the beginning was small, we trusted that God had a plan far greater than anything we could see.

We were living in Whangārei in those days, about two hours north of Auckland. Despite the distance and the natural challenges of settling into a new country, we felt a strong spiritual prompting to remain present for the Friday prayer meetings in Auckland. Week after week, we made that long journey — a choice of faithfulness over convenience, a simple act of trusting that the Lord was asking for our commitment.

As we remained faithful, the Lord began opening doors across the nation. Through what I can only describe as God's providence, connections began to form in Christchurch, Hamilton, and beyond. We started gathering with just a few people in homes and small spaces, experiencing the quiet joy of fellowship and prayer. These were modest beginnings, yet in each small gathering, we sensed the steady hand of God laying the foundations of a true community.

A significant milestone came in April 2008, when we organised a leaders' training in Whangārei. As we prayed and discerned together, an ad hoc national team began to take shape, and I was entrusted with the role of coordinator — a responsibility I accepted not out of confidence in my own abilities, but in the certain trust that the Lord would lead His work.

That same year, our mission found a broader rhythm. Through Rexband concerts in Auckland, Christchurch, and Whangārei, and our participation in World Youth Day 2008, we witnessed God drawing young people into the fold. These moments deepened our connection to the wider Church and drew us more fully into the global Jesus Youth family.

In the years that followed, initiatives such as Exult youth retreats, leadership formation programmes, 3sixTEENS teens camps, and mission journeys became the heartbeat of our growth — not merely in numbers, but in faith and in a deeper hunger for God. I continued to serve as National Coordinator through the team's reconstitution in 2011 until my term ended in 2014. Then, as the movement matured, we embarked on a formal formation journey in New Zealand, and by 2016 I was invited to serve as its first Formation Coordinator.

Looking back, many of those early years were marked by simple, hidden acts of faithfulness. We were often under-resourced, unsupported, and misunderstood — tired, and sometimes with young children in tow. The path was not always easy, and there were moments when the weight of it was very real.

Yet it is precisely in those quiet, unglamorous seasons that I can now see how the Lord was building something far deeper — both within us and among us.

Ultimately, this was never our work. It was God who led, sustained, and brought the growth. We were simply invited to be part of His plan. May He continue to fulfil His great purpose for the salvation of the people of New Zealand, as we continue to play our part in His master plan.



*National Team of Jesus Youth New Zealand elected in 2011*

# Twenty Years of Faithful Steps



**Deacon Adolf Goldwyn**  
Animator, Jesus Youth International

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" is a well-known Chinese proverb attributed to the philosopher Lao Tzu. As we stand on the threshold of twenty years of Jesus Youth in our beautiful Aotearoa, it is fitting to look back on that first single step, and the many steps since, that have shaped the journey of the movement to this present moment.

What the Lord has accomplished through the Jesus Youth movement in Aotearoa has indeed been remarkable. Jesus Youth is now present in all six dioceses, with active prayer groups in many regions for teens, young adults, and families. The Jesus Youth formation plan is deeply embedded in the lives of many active members. Initial programmes such as 3:16s and Exult take place annually, drawing new members into the movement. Many Jesus Youth homes have become second homes to students and visitors arriving in the country, and a deep sense of fellowship, flowing from a shared love for God, continues to mark the community.

While we give glory to God for all that the movement has achieved over these two decades, we also remember the many who cooperated wholeheartedly with His plan, often at great personal sacrifice. We must never forget that we would not be celebrating this Jubilee without them.

It was about ten years ago that my family and I arrived in New Zealand. While we had no idea what the future held for us in this new country, we had no fear or anxiety about what lay ahead. That is what being a Jesus Youth does to you, I suppose. Having spent more than ten years as active members of Jesus Youth in India, we were certain that even if there was only one Jesus Youth in this country, we would have a home we could walk into at any time.

Within a week of our arrival in Auckland, the national team was meeting at the Pompallier Centre, and it became an opportunity to meet the leadership team. I remember leaving that meeting amazed at how the Lord was leading the movement in New Zealand and how much He had made possible in the ten years since the first Jesus Youth arrived on these shores.

It did not take long for me to become actively involved in the movement in New Zealand. Within three months of arriving, I was asked to coordinate the first-ever music retreat. The retreat, titled Strings, brought together 22 Jesus Youth musicians from across the country and laid the foundation for music ministries in regions with active prayer meetings.

Jesus Youth Formation had also just begun in New Zealand, and having served as the first National Formation Coordinator in India, it was only natural that I became involved in the formation plans here. We have come a long way since then, with multiple formation courses culminating in a Commitment Retreat in May 2024, where 38 of us made regular commitments in the movement.

I was also involved as an Animator for the National Team, served one term as a member of the International Council, and currently serve as a member of the International Formation Team and as an Animator for the International Council.

Being an active Jesus Youth cannot be separated from being an active parishioner. My family and I were blessed to be part of a welcoming parish where we could use our gifts for the glory of God through the family choir, the St Vincent de Paul Society, the parish RCIA programme, Men's Fellowship, and the parish Charismatic Prayer Group.

In 2020, I experienced a stirring in my heart and sensed the Lord calling me to a higher mission. That began my journey to the diaconate. I was ordained on 2 August 2025 as a Permanent Deacon for the Diocese of Auckland, and I can say without hesitation that the foundations of this calling are deeply connected to my life as a Jesus Youth. It was the movement that awakened in me a deep love for God, for Scripture, for His Church, and for His people.

As I look back on my life, I can see that the Lord has led me step by step, peeling away the layers that prevented me from becoming who He wanted me to be, and guiding me to become the person I am today.

As we celebrate 20 years of Jesus Youth in New Zealand, let our hearts be filled with gratitude and awe at the work of the Holy Spirit. Let us recommit ourselves to be shaped by that same Spirit and continue His work in New Zealand, especially as we approach the great Jubilee in 2033.

May the peace and joy of the Risen Lord be with us all.

# St Francis of Assisi

Patron Saint of Jesus Youth



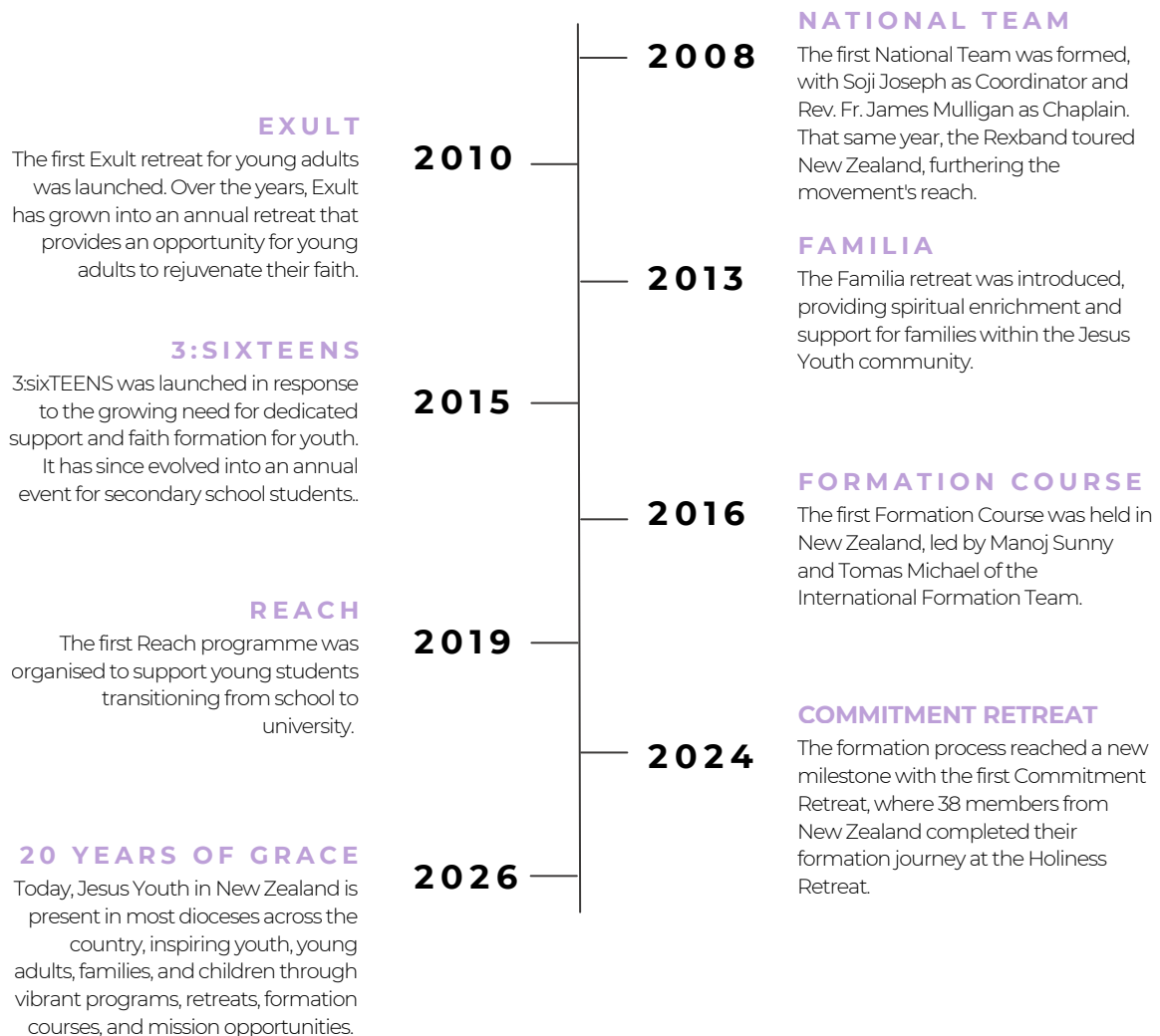
St. Francis of Assisi, “The little beggar” is perhaps the most popular saint in history. St. Francis preached and literally lived the gospel. Through his constant consideration of God's voice and practice of it, St. Francis led and inspired numerous people to a life of holiness and repentance. He lived a life of self denial and gave more importance to the kingdom of God than the earthly kingdom and its pleasures and lived to serve the ‘master’ than the ‘servant’. St. Francis was fervent in prayer, meditation of the Word of God, frequently received the sacraments, was a great evangelizer, built and led an ideal community, lived as a poor and served the poor.

As the patron saint of the Jesus Youth movement, we learn and constantly draw inspiration from this great man of God.

# Our Journey in Aotearoa

Jesus Youth began its journey in New Zealand in the early 2000s when several members migrated to the country seeking better career prospects. In 2005, CC Joseph from the Jesus Youth International Council (JYIC) and Rajesh Thalappillil from Jesus Youth Australia visited New Zealand to connect with the growing community. This connection laid the groundwork for the first prayer gathering in Auckland, guided by Rev. Fr. James Mulligan D.D.

In 2006, visits from Manoj Sunny, the then-Coordinator of JYIC, and Mayrose Pius from Jesus Youth Australia inspired the community to hold regular prayer gatherings. By 2007, the first young adult programme, Destination Christ, was launched. The event prompted Fr James Mulligan and key leaders to present the movement to Bishop Patrick Dunn of Auckland. Following a leadership training in Sydney, Jesus Youth expanded its presence to Hamilton and Christchurch, which marked the beginning of our regional growth.



# Carried by Providence

The story of Jesus Youth in Auckland is, at its heart, a story of young people reaching out to other young people—sharing faith, building community, and journeying together in their love for Jesus. Rooted in the charism of youth evangelising youth, the movement here has grown through personal witness, friendships, and a deep trust in God's providence.

In the early 2000s, the first seeds were sown by young migrants, many from Kerala, who arrived in Auckland carrying with them the spirit of Jesus Youth. In a new country, often navigating loneliness and change, they longed for fellowship and a space to live out their faith. What began as a few young people gathering in homes or parish spaces soon became something more. Through simple acts—inviting a friend, sharing a testimony, singing together, and praying—young people began to reach other young people.

As these small gatherings grew, so did the need for consistency. Around 2005, visiting leaders helped connect scattered individuals and encouraged regular weekly meetings. Programmes like Destination Christ became key moments of encounter, where many experienced a personal relationship with Christ.

One of the defining aspects of the journey has been the search for a place to gather. From Hillsborough parish, to the Pompallier Centre, to Point Chevalier today, there were also seasons with no fixed venue, when the community met in parks, McDonald's meeting rooms, council halls, and other hired spaces. These ordinary places became sacred through prayer and fellowship.

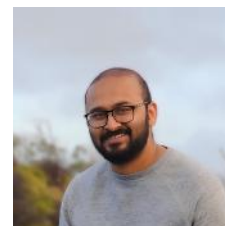
The lack of a permanent venue never stopped the movement, because its strength did not lie in buildings, but in people. Auckland's wide geography, long travel times, migration, and the disruptions of COVID-19 all brought challenges. Yet through every season, the mission endured.

Throughout its journey, Jesus Youth in Auckland has remained deeply connected to the wider Church, with members actively involved in diocesan youth initiatives, parish life, music ministry, and outreach.

As the movement matured, it expanded beyond youth gatherings. A monthly family gathering was introduced, and more recently an additional weekly family gathering on Saturdays began, marking a new phase of growth and renewal.

Today, Jesus Youth in Auckland reflects a vibrant and evolving community—youth, young professionals, and families journeying together. It is increasingly multicultural, enriched by people from different backgrounds. Yet through all these changes, one thing remains constant: a deep love for Jesus and a desire to share that love with others.

The story of Auckland is still being written. As long as young people continue to reach out to one another in faith, the mission of youth evangelising youth will continue to thrive—quietly, faithfully, and powerfully.



Derick Daniel Padappackal



# Quietly Faithful



**Tefin Tom Joseph**

Jesus Youth in Hamilton is a story of quiet faithfulness, steady growth, and a community spirit that has endured through changing seasons.

My first Jesus Youth prayer meeting in Hamilton was on a Saturday evening. There were four adults, myself, and a friend who had attended the first 316s with me. It was a simple gathering, yet it carried the warmth and sincerity that has continued to define the community ever since.

Over the years, people have relocated, moved to different cities, or entered new stages of life. There have been seasons of growth and challenge, yet the presence of Jesus Youth has remained.

Families, teenagers, students, and young adults have each found a place within the journey. More recently, fellowship groups have begun in Taupō and Rotorua, while family houses continue to offer places of welcome, prayer, and community life.

The story of Hamilton may not always be marked by large numbers or visible milestones, but it is marked by a faithful community that continues to gather in the name of Christ.



# Gathered in Faith



**Nify Devasia**

Jesus Youth Wellington continues to grow as a joyful and faith-filled community, bringing together youth, young adults, and families in the life of the Church.

At the heart of the region is a commitment to fellowship, prayer, and shared growth in faith. Weekly “Joyful Gatherings” are held each Friday at Connolly Hall, creating a regular space where people can come together to pray, build friendships, and encourage one another in Christian life.

The community has also sought to strengthen bonds beyond weekly meetings. In September 2025, families and teens gathered for a special outing at El Rancho. The weekend included Holy Mass, fellowship, and the anointing of a new team, marking an important moment of unity and renewal for the region.

A significant development has been the introduction of “Hours of Mercy” at Sacred Heart Cathedral. This time of Eucharistic Adoration continues to draw people into prayer and encounter with Christ.

The story of Wellington is one of steady growth, faithful community, and openness to what God is doing next. As the region continues to grow, it remains a place where faith is nurtured and new relationships are formed in Christ.





Vipin Thomas

“Do not despise these small beginnings.” (Zechariah 4:10)

The story of the Jesus Youth (JY) movement in the Napier–Hastings region is one of humble beginnings, quiet perseverance, and the unmistakable guidance of the Holy Spirit. Rooted in prayer, community, and mission, this journey reflects how God works patiently through ordinary people who remain faithful to small beginnings.

The JY presence in Napier–Hastings began in 2009, with the visit of the JY family couple Soji, Simi, Saby and Jincy. What started as a simple family visit became the seed of a movement that would gradually take root in the region. In those early years, the gatherings were small and informal, marked by fellowship, prayer, and a shared desire to live out the JY way of life.

A significant turning point came with the involvement of teenagers in the movement. From its early origin as a small gathering of teens, the movement was strengthened through the participation of young people in the 3sixTEENS retreat from 2015. In 2018, a teens’ prayer gathering was initiated as a monthly meeting with just three teenagers. Over time, it grew into a fortnightly gathering with more than twenty teenagers coming together regularly for prayer, sharing, and formation.

## Faithful in the Small Things

Building on this momentum, teens’ retreats were held from 2019, offering encounters with Christ and strengthening leadership and community. Responding to the needs of young people, gatherings began in 2020, and as families grew, family gatherings began in 2024. All these gatherings began in our home reflecting a spirit of hospitality and openness. There were even moments when only a single person was present, yet they chose to remain and pray, trusting in God and interceding for the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Another milestone was the introduction of the Hours of Mercy in 2015. Since then, this time of Eucharistic Adoration has been faithfully observed every Monday from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm at the Catholic Church in Hastings from Easter Monday to Pentecost each year.

In 2025, another milestone was the launch of its first Jesus Youth children’s programme, JAM – “Jesus and Me”, held in Hastings, with over 120 children attending. Beyond its internal gatherings, the movement has actively served the wider Church, with members leading praise and worship and serving in parish and diocesan ministries.

Alongside this, the presence of JY has begun to take root in Palmerston North. The community is steadily growing through fortnightly youth gatherings, with a monthly teens gathering following the recent 3:16s programme. A growing number of youth are also becoming part of the community. Though still developing, Palmerston North reflects a place where seeds are being faithfully sown and the spirit of the movement continues to expand.

The region has also contributed to the wider JY movement in New Zealand, with the first family to undertake a one-month family mission initiative coming from Napier–Hastings.

The JY movement in Napier–Hastings stands as a vibrant Catholic community, bearing witness to faithfulness in small things, the courage to continue when numbers are few, and the grace that flows when ordinary people say “yes” to God.





Merin Alanoly

## A Community Glowing in Grace

A region grows not just with time, but through God's abundant blessings and the dedication of those who serve with vision. The story of Jesus Youth Christchurch beautifully reflects this truth—a journey marked by faith, fellowship, and a shared desire to bring Christ's love to every corner of the community.

When I first began journeying with Jesus Youth Christchurch about seven years ago, the community looked very different. We were smaller in number than we are today, yet the sense of belonging was deep and genuine. Today, as our numbers of young adults, families, and children continue to grow, that same spirit of togetherness remains strong—a testament to God's faithfulness and the perseverance of everyone who continues to walk this path.

Our weekly Joyful Gatherings have always been the heartbeat of the community. Week after week, on Mondays at 7:00 pm, members and new faces arrive, some without missing a single gathering, inspiring us all through their constancy and love for fellowship. These gatherings are the pivotal point that unites us in worship, reflection, and mutual support, keeping us grounded in the Word and connected to one another.

In 2019, the service team introduced the JY Meetup—an event at the start of each term that gives university students and newcomers to Christchurch an opportunity to experience the joy of Christian fellowship. In a world where busyness often isolates us, this initiative opened doors for many young adults seeking faith, friendship, and belonging. The Meetups have continued to be a beacon, helping us reach hearts that might otherwise have drifted unnoticed.

One of the most significant milestones in recent years has been the establishment of young adult gatherings from May 2024. What began as monthly gatherings soon became fortnightly after a youth team was formed in April 2025 to organise and animate them. The energy, creativity, and commitment of this youth-led initiative has brought new life to the region.

Our outreach to children has also been a visible blessing. Through the Jesus and Me (JAM) event and the Journey to Bethlehem (JTB) activities during Advent, Jesus Youth Christchurch has become a familiar and cherished presence within the Diocese of Christchurch.

Monthly teens gatherings, following the 2025 3:16s programme, have also been a significant milestone. The teens group has grown in fellowship, reflection, and prayer together, supported by families and leaders who have opened their time and homes for them.

Alongside these initiatives, we continue to support Holy Family Parish, the primary location of our gatherings, through the monthly Holy Mass choir led by our music ministry, as well as other parish activities that require helping hands.

As we celebrate 20 years of Jesus Youth in New Zealand, the story of Christchurch stands as a humble witness to what God can accomplish through ordinary people who say yes to serve the Lord. The region's story is one of quiet faithfulness, of young people welcomed and formed, and of families supported through life's joys and trials.



# A Journey We Took Together



Ann Vipin

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

I would like to share a brief account of our family's mission experience in Assam—by family, I mean my husband and our five children.

When we began planning this journey, I did not fully understand what a “mission experience” would involve. I had many questions and doubts, especially about whether it was right for our children. Concerns about accommodation, food, and safety made me anxious, as we were heading somewhere completely unfamiliar.

During this period, I noticed that my husband remained calm and steady, while the children and I were filled with worry. We found ourselves trying to control things beyond our reach. Over time, however, through prayer, I experienced a deep sense of peace and came to understand that God is in control.



As our mission month approached, unexpected changes arose. Our assignment shifted just two weeks before departure. Instead of our original location, we were sent to Thunkubari village in the Chirang district of Assam.

On arrival, we received a warm welcome from two priests at Francis Assisi Church—one of whom bore a striking resemblance to St Francis himself. We also stayed near three sisters from the Congregation of St Vincent de Paul. Their gentle faith and kindness left a deep impression on us, revealing the beauty of consecrated life.

Despite our initial concerns, we sensed God's presence everywhere—in the monastery, among the people, and in our daily routines.

One of the greatest gifts of the mission was simply having dedicated family time. In our usual lives, busy schedules often keep us apart, but this experience allowed us to reconnect. Each morning began with Mass at 6:30 am, which became the foundation of our days. The children spent time at the school run by the priests, making new friends and helping us connect with the wider community. We participated in the school's Annual Day celebrations, where our son performed, and we led a session for Year 9 students on time management and responsible use of social media.

We were also blessed by the companionship of a Jesus Youth Assam full-timer, whose presence, guidance, and shared prayer enriched our experience and helped us feel deeply connected to the local movement.



Much of our mission involved visiting the seven villages served by the Church, often accompanied by a priest, the lead catechist, or one of the sisters. We took part in various sacraments and witnessed local traditions, including foundation stone-laying ceremonies, marriages, funerals, and church festivals. We were also privileged to conduct a youth programme at the parish and to participate in a local Jesus Youth gathering following the Jaago programme. Spending time with the local Jesus Youth members was especially meaningful.

Despite cultural and language differences, we experienced a deep unity rooted in Christ and the shared charism of Jesus Youth.

Life in Assam was simple. Many families lived with very few resources, and some lacked basic amenities. Yet within this simplicity, we encountered remarkable faith and love. Nearly every home had a prayer room, and devotion was evident in daily life, regardless of material circumstances.



A unique aspect of the culture was the way people greeted one another—often with “Jai Yesu”—each community expressing its faith in its own way, yet always centred on Christ.

Their reverence during Holy Mass was particularly moving. People participated wholeheartedly, and during the offertory, women presented rice in beautifully decorated baskets. After Sunday Mass, communities gathered for Sabbath activities that included prayer, Scripture reflection, and fellowship.

Despite limited means, families worked hard and gave generously to support their church. We were even able to participate in the laying of the foundation for a new village church, which was a significant and memorable moment for our family.

Reflecting on this experience, I realised that the mission was not only about serving others—it transformed us as well. It taught me that we do not need much to serve God, and it deepened my gratitude for the blessings in my own life.

We arrived with questions and concerns, but we returned with gratitude and peace. Above all, we encountered God—not only in significant moments, but in the ordinary, in people, and in genuine love.

This mission strengthened our family’s faith and reminded us that when we surrender to God, He leads us along paths far greater than we could imagine.



# Faithful Through Every Season



**Vipin Varghese**  
National Coordinator (2014 - 2021)

As we celebrate 20 years of Jesus Youth New Zealand, my heart is filled with deep gratitude for the journey we have been blessed to be part of. Serving as the National Coordinator from 2014 to 2021 was truly a grace-filled season, one that I now look back on with awe and thanksgiving.

What stands out most is the quiet yet powerful presence of God that accompanied us throughout. His hand was not always seen in grand moments, but more often in gentle inspirations, small beginnings, and the faithful “yes” of countless young people. It is in these simple acts of surrender that God built something truly beautiful.

During those years, we witnessed the emergence of initiatives like 3sixTEENS and Hours of Mercy, humble efforts that became powerful encounters of faith for many. Alongside these blessings, there were also challenges, moments that called for sacrifice, understanding, and unity amidst diversity. In hindsight, these experiences were gifts in unexpected forms, shaping us into more compassionate and servant-hearted leaders.



*National Team of Jesus Youth New Zealand elected in 2014*

On a personal level, this journey transformed my understanding of leadership. It taught me that true leadership is rooted in listening, humility, and walking together. Travelling across regions, encountering vibrant young people, and journeying with leaders strengthened my conviction that God's work unfolds most beautifully through community, where faith is nurtured and lives are transformed together.

“The one who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.”

– 1 Thessalonians 5:24

One of the most profound moments during this time was being present at the Pontifical Recognition in Rome in 2016, a milestone that affirmed the faithfulness of God to this movement. It was a reminder that Jesus Youth is part of a much larger story that God continues to write across the world.

As we mark this Jubilee, one truth remains clear to me: it was all grace, only grace, that sustained and led us. Even in uncertainty, there was a deep peace that guided our steps and strengthened our mission. This has been one of the greatest lessons I carry forward: to trust in God's timing, knowing that His plans are always perfect.

Looking ahead, I am filled with hope. I see a new generation of leaders rising with vision, responsibility, and a heart for mission. It is also a joy to see our community enriched by young people from diverse backgrounds, especially those making New Zealand their home from different parts of the world.

As we celebrate 20 years, may we continue to keep formation and mission at the heart of all we do. The journey ahead is bright, and I am confident that the same grace that has led us thus far will continue to guide Jesus Youth NZ into the future.



*National Team of Jesus Youth New Zealand elected in 2017*

# The Grace of Walking Together

A community that prays together, grows in faith together, and encourages one another is truly a gift from God.

I may not have had a dramatic conversion like Saint Paul, but God, in His mercy has blessed me with something just as special: a faithful community that I could trust and lean on during my struggles.

For many years, I prayed for someone very dear to me: that they would encounter Jesus, know Him personally, love and follow Him wholeheartedly, and walk in His will. Praying for someone's heart is not easy. There were times when I felt tired, frustrated, and even angry.

Yet, in the middle of it all, God quietly worked in my own heart. He stayed with me, teaching me to trust Him more, to be patient, and to keep praying even when I could not see any change. He gave me a community that prayed with me and for me. For seven years, they prayed for me and for the one I hold dear.

On days when I felt worried and hopeless, I knew I was not alone. I could ask for their prayers and trust that they truly prayed for me.

Yes, some are given powerful experiences like Saint Paul. Some are called to walk in faith like Abraham. But some, like me, are blessed with a loving community, like Jesus Youth, where we slowly grow in faith and learn to love Him and others more.

For this blessing, I give all glory, thanks, and praise to God



Sreeja Jose Prasad

# Strengthened in Faith

My decades-long journey with Jesus Youth has deeply strengthened the roots of my faith and transformed my relationship with Christ. The six pillars of the movement became six remedies in my spiritual life, helping me face challenges in faith and remain close to God. Each prayer meeting became a source of strength that spiritually carried me through the week. The formation courses offered by Jesus Youth have helped to form me in every dimension of my life.

A major turning point came after my studies in New Zealand, when I was searching for my first job. After many applications and interviews, disappointment grew, but I continued placing my intentions before God during the weekly Rosary at the top of Mount Eden. In a way I can only describe as miraculous, I received the very job that had seemed lost. That became the beginning of many blessings and opened my journey into various ministries within Jesus Youth New Zealand.

Another unforgettable encounter happened during the first Jesus Youth New Zealand Conference a decade ago, when Mother Mary appeared in a dream, extending her hands toward me. At the end of that conference, I unexpectedly received the first official Jesus Youth Mother Mary statue to keep at home. Soon after, our prayers were answered, and we conceived our son. My family and I have experienced countless blessings that we are unworthy of, and one lifetime is not enough to offer thanksgiving in return.

Later, through Hours of Mercy, a Eucharistic adoration organised by Jesus Youth across New Zealand, I received healing from a long-standing health condition after years of treatment and unanswered questions. Today, my faith in Christ has deepened even further, especially with the birth of our daughter after ten years of prayer, a living testimony that God answers in His time.

Now, placing my faith completely in our Lord Jesus Christ has become natural in my life and has deepened my life of prayer.

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1) .



Antony Thomas

# Small Beginnings, Lasting Fruit

The beginnings of the teens ministry in Jesus Youth NZ were modest, but their purpose was clear: to create spaces where young people could encounter Christ personally, grow in faith, and discover that discipleship is meant to be lived in community.

From the beginning, 3:sixTEENS was shaped as a place of encounter for teenagers at a formative stage of life. Many arrive carrying questions, uncertainty, distractions, or a faith that has remained largely external. The ministry seeks to meet them there. Through talks centred on the love of God, prayer, worship, sacraments, fellowship, and the witness of young leaders, participants are invited to see that Jesus is not distant or abstract, but present and personal.

What has always made 3:sixTEENS distinctive is its simplicity. Its strength lies in sincerity - in the quiet power of prayerful moments, shared laughter, and friendships formed over a few days. For many teenagers, it becomes the first place where faith feels chosen rather than assumed, alive rather than inherited.

The journey of the ministry has reflected that same pattern. Growth did not happen all at once, nor only in visible ways. There was a time when 3:sixTEENS was run with just 12 teenagers attending. Yet even in that smallness, there was hope. The number itself became a reminder that Christ began with twelve disciples, and that God often works through what appears small and hidden before the fruit becomes visible.

In later years, that fruit began to emerge more clearly. Last year, 50 teenagers attended 3:sixTEENS. This year, 60 young people gathered. Those numbers are meaningful not merely because they are larger, but because it shows a growing hunger among young people for something deeper than what the world ordinarily offers.



Participants of 3:sixTEENS 2015 at Narrows Park, Hamilton



Participants of 3:sixTEENS 2026 at Narrows Park, Hamilton

Still, the most significant growth cannot be measured by attendance alone. This year's 3:sixTEENS revealed something deeper: many of the leaders serving the camp were once participants themselves. They had first come as teenagers, later continued their journey through regional fellowship groups, and eventually returned to accompany the next generation. There is something profoundly hopeful in that movement. Those who were once served now serve. The ministry is no longer sustained only by elders; it is being carried forward by its own fruit.

That is where Reach has become an important part of the story. If 3:sixTEENS is often the beginning of encounter, Reach offers the next step of formation.

As young people move into university, work, and adult life, the questions become deeper and more demanding. Reach creates space to reflect on identity, vocation, mission, and what it means to follow Christ with intention in everyday life.



Participants of Reach 2026 at Highland Home Christian Camp, Palmerston North

More recently, the fruit of that journey has begun to appear in grassroots university ministry. Young adults formed through these ministries are now helping build prayer groups, fellowship spaces, and communities of witness on campus. The seeds planted in teenage years are bearing fruit in new grounds.

Looking back, the story of 316s and Reach is about the patient work of God through years of small yeses. A teenager who returns years later as a leader. A friendship group that becomes a fellowship. A young person who learns to pray and later helps others do the same.

This is how the Lord often works—quietly, steadily, and more deeply than we first realise. What began as a simple desire to reach teenagers has become part of the formation of a generation. And the story is still unfolding.



Participants of Reach 2021 at Blue Skies Centre, Christchurch



Participants of Reach 2019 at Sunshine Ranch, Auckland



Sneha Jenson

## More than Routine

Being part of Jesus Youth has been one of the most meaningful influences on my faith journey. Before attending the prayer meetings and retreats, my faith often felt routine, something I practised out of habit rather than deep conviction. Jesus Youth changed that by showing me that faith is not just an obligation, but a relationship with God.

As a young Catholic, being part of this community has shaped my identity. It has inspired me to live out my faith more boldly in everyday life. At first, I did not expect much from attending Jesus Youth programmes, but over time I found myself opening my heart more at each programme I attended and returning home renewed.

However, the depth of this community is not confined to the retreat experience, but is sustained through ongoing fellowship and shared faith.

Since attending my first retreat in Year 9, I have become part of a family that constantly strive to grow in faith and encourages me to stay committed, knowing I am not on this journey alone.

JYNZ has continued to grow for more than 20 years because of the dedication and commitment of so many people who have faithfully served the movement. Their passion and perseverance have created opportunities for young people like me to encounter God in a real way.

In a world where many young people feel lost and disconnected, I believe this movement is more important than ever. My hope is that this same commitment continues into the future, leaving a lasting impact not only on individuals, but on the future of the Church.

## Finding Faith, Sharing Light



Ann Gibu Joseph

Jesus Youth has been a significant part of my life since 2025, beginning with my very first 3sixTEENS in Auckland. I arrived with few expectations and an open heart, unsure of what to expect. By the time I left, I felt restored and renewed, with a fresh desire to strengthen my faith in Christ and to share that message with other teens back home in Palmerston North.

In April 2025, our journey began with just seven teens. Today, our faith community has grown to more than 25 teens attending our monthly sessions. Jesus Youth has guided me in discovering my own faith journey, teaching me that it is okay to make mistakes because Jesus is ever forgiving and always embraces us, regardless of our missteps.

Since joining Jesus Youth, I have grown closer to God, learning to trust in His guidance and finding strength in His presence. It has been a transformative experience, shaping not only my faith but also my outlook on life and community.

Looking ahead, I hope the movement continues to inspire young people who, like us, seek to bring light and positivity to the world.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Jesus Youth is the radiant energy, selflessness, and generosity of its members. My hope is that this spirit continues to be passed on to future generations, spreading light to those who need it most.

## Lifted & Renewed



Eva Sunil

I used to be someone who followed my faith because I had been taught to from the time I was little. Growing up, prayer always felt like a chore. I went to church and attended retreats because my family did, not because I wanted to. My move to New Zealand happened at the beginning of my teenage years, and the sudden shift in culture taught me many wrong ideas about what was right and wrong.

Surprisingly, my introduction to Jesus Youth was through 3sixTEENS, one such event I attended only because my mum wanted me to. It was truly a new experience for me. I came to understand that many things I thought were true were only distorted versions of the truth.

During the inner healing session, I did not cry or have some dramatic moment, but I left the camp feeling as though something had changed.

Through Jesus Youth, I found a family here. Back in India, I was always surrounded by relatives, so New Zealand felt really lonely at first. Jesus Youth became that family for me. I found a community of people who support one another through every phase of life. God even opened a door for me to serve in the Music Ministry, which was something I had always wanted to do.

Looking back, I realise He was answering prayers I did not even know I was praying.

### In Focus

## Held Through Uncertain Times



Gladly Jacob

National Coordinator (2021 - 2024)

I stand in awe of all that the Lord has done through Jesus Youth in New Zealand.

Journeying with Jesus Youth for the last 18 years, one truth has become clear to me: what often feels unstable and uncertain to us is always secure and certain in His hands.

The story of Lazarus reminds us of this reality. Though it seemed four days too late, it was perfectly on time in God's plan.

In the period following the pandemic, as I served as National Coordinator, when many had grown accustomed to online Mass and prayer gatherings struggled to restart, the future seemed uncertain. Yet one truth remained unchanged: the One who called us is faithful. God raised leaders and witnesses among us to do His work.

As I reflect on the journey of Jesus Youth in New Zealand, I know that if God had not been at the centre of it, this would not have been possible. What we witness today is purely the fruit of His grace and mercy. This celebration of 20 years is not a recognition of our achievement, but a testimony to His faithfulness.

With confidence, I hold on to this promise: the God who has brought us to this grace of 20 years will continue to lead us in the days ahead.



National Team of Jesus Youth New Zealand elected in 2021



Gladwin Joseph

# Two Weeks That Changed Everything

In December 2022, I had the opportunity to travel to Papua New Guinea for two weeks as part of a Jesus Youth mission. Our team consisted of seven members—two from New Zealand and five from Australia. What I experienced during those two weeks deeply transformed my perspective on life, faith, and what truly matters.

Before this mission, I often took many things for granted—simple comforts such as food, clothing, shelter, and stable work. However, witnessing the lives of people in Papua New Guinea opened my eyes in a way I had never experienced before. Many people there struggle daily to meet their basic needs, yet their faith and gratitude remain incredibly strong. Despite hardship, they continue to live with hope, humility, and trust in God.

One of the most impactful aspects of the mission was serving the poor and feeding the homeless. Being able to help in even the smallest ways gave me a sense of purpose and fulfillment that I had never felt before. It shifted my priorities and made me realise that true happiness often comes from giving rather than receiving. Since then, helping others has become an important part of my life.

Another powerful experience was witnessing the depth of faith within the local communities. People would travel for eight to ten hours, often on foot or through difficult terrain, just to attend Mass. Their dedication and commitment to their faith were truly inspiring. It made me reflect on my own spiritual life and encouraged me to grow closer to God through prayer and trust.

Equally inspiring were the missionaries and priests who served these communities. They would travel long distances—sometimes up to ten hours—just to celebrate one Mass each week in remote areas where vehicles could not reach. Their selflessness and dedication to serving others, regardless of the challenges, left a lasting impression on me.

This mission was more than just a trip; it was a life-changing journey. It taught me gratitude, compassion, and the importance of faith. It reminded me that our lives are indeed a blessing, and we should never take what we have for granted. Instead, we should strive to help others, live with purpose, and remain thankful for every small gift in our lives.



# Until Christ Be Formed

## The Five Phases of Formation

**Contact:** A time of encounter and awakening. Young people are introduced to the movement and invited into a deeper experience of faith, often marked by a personal encounter with Christ and renewal of baptismal grace.

**Companion:** A season of walking together. Individuals grow in their relationship with the Lord, supported by community and guided formation, while being rooted in the fundamentals of the Catholic faith.

**Committed:** A step into intentional discipleship. The person embraces the spirituality of Jesus Youth and its six pillars, choosing to live a Christ-centred life.

**Confirmed:** A stage of maturity. Here, one becomes a missionary disciple—firm in faith, active in mission, and ready to witness Christ in everyday life.

**Covenant:** A deeper calling. This phase marks a spiritual covenant, a wholehearted offering of one's life in alignment with the vision of the Church.

As we celebrate the 20th Jubilee, we look back with gratitude at God's faithfulness in guiding the Jesus Youth movement. From the beginning, the movement has carried a special call: to accompany young people in their journey of faith, helping them encounter Christ and grow as missionary disciples.

The Jesus Youth formation plan, shaped through years of prayer and experience, is not merely a series of courses but a journey of transformation. It enables young people to deepen their relationship with the Lord and live their faith with clarity and commitment.

*"My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." – Galatians 4:19*

This scripture reflects the heart of formation: a patient journey where Christ is formed in each person.



*Participants of the first Philip Course in New Zealand, led by Manoj Sunny and Tomas Michael*

## Formation in New Zealand

Formation in NZ began in 2016 with the first Philip Course. Since then, the Lord has faithfully led its growth.

Today, formation is guided by:

- A National Formation Team
- Formation Base Teams in Auckland and Christchurch
- Dedicated study groups across regions

Philip, Paul, Emmaus, and Stewardship courses continue to be powerful instruments of transformation.

200+

young people have begun formation

38

people have completed the second phase of formation

The real fruit lies in transformed lives— young people encountering Christ, growing in community, and stepping into mission with conviction.

As we mark this Jubilee, we recognise God's grace in every step of this journey. Formation continues to raise disciples rooted in Christ and ready to serve the Church and the world.

With grateful hearts, we look ahead in hope, trusting that the Lord who began this good work will bring it to fulfilment.



# Jesus Youth New Zealand

*One Heart. One Mission.*

# JUBILEE CONFERENCE

22 MAY 2026 (7PM) TO 24 MAY 2026 (3PM)  
CHRISTIAN YOUTH CAMPS INC, HAMILTON