

My name is Moisés Urquizo and I am a young Assumptionist candidate belonging to the Assumptionist parish of San Pedro of Licán, in the city of Riobamba, in Ecuador. I have represented our diocese in many national youth encounters which have strengthened my love of the Lord and my desire to follow him.

This summer, for the first time, I attended a World Youth Day, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This experience helped me to open my horizons even more to the reality of Christian young people around the world, their enthusiasm, hopes, and potential. On our arrival in Rio, the Assumptionists of the parish of Santísima Trinidad, received us with such open arms that, personally, I immediately felt at home; everyone was so welcoming, including all the lay-people that work at the parish and so many of the young people.

Not long after we got there, the first Assumptionist delegations from other countries (Belgium and France) began to arrive in order to take part like us in the pre-World Youth Day mission week. Then there were delegations from Colombia, Chile, and the USA and other countries that came. We all had to travel to a town called Eugenopolis where the Assumptionists have run a large parish for many, many years. The welcome was as warm as the one in Rio. I felt like some kind of movie star! I was really moved to see so many other young people from all over the world happy to follow the Lord. We stayed in the former minor seminary of the Assumptionists. The mission week is really hard to describe -- a week of great spiritual depth and I felt the fraternity, joy, and love of Christ of these Assumptionists who have given their lives to serve others.

There were moments of intense joy, games with the town's children, prayer, sharing sessions. It was quite moving for all of us. In passing, let me say that this pre-WYD mission was extremely well-planned. It had a profound effect on me and my religious vocation. God willing, as the

Assumptionist priest that I hope to be one day, I would like to be involved in the same kind of work I saw these Assumptionist priests and brothers doing, with the most needy, not simply those who are poor economically but those with a thirst for Jesus Christ. I can still feel the joy of working with all those kids and with the elderly of the parish, all of whose smiles made my day. Thanks to them I was able to see the face of Christ all around me and I am convinced that this wonderful experience confirmed my resolve to serve Jesus as a priest and religious.

I would also like to thank the Assumptionist priests of the community of Nuestra Señora del Chimborazo in Riobamba for their trust in me, Frs. Marco Silva and Cristián, and a special word of thanks to Br. Alejandro for all the efforts he made to make this experience possible. May God bless them and may they continue the great youth work, especially vocation work, in Riobamba.

I was a little sad when the pre-WYD mission came to an end, but it was time to set off for the even larger WYD in Rio. I was a little apprehensive because it was going to be the first time I ever attended anything so large, but the pre-WYD prepared me well. There were SO MANY young people in Rio from all over the world. Praying with them, singing with them, talking with them (when I speak their language), adoring the Lord with them, listening with them, seeing their faith --- it was unbelievable.

One of the other experiences that I will remember forever was the time spent on Copacabana beach with several million young people praying with the new Pope Francis; it was my first time to see a pope. My eyes filled with tears I was so moved. I cannot describe the joy I felt inside seeing all these young people united in one thing--- praising God together, with the Pope so near. He was inspiring -- words so simple and yet so concrete. What a powerful experience! I want to thank God with all my heart.

I pray that I might be able to bring what I experienced in Brazil to my everyday life here in Riobamba. I'll never forget the Holy Father's closing words, "Go and have no fear of serving others." His words rang true within me and helped me say, "Yes, I want to be an Assumptionist all my life."

Let me conclude by giving profound thanks to the Brazilian people who made this experience so touching.

Warmest regards,
Moisés Urquizo Sosa, young Assumptionist candidate

(Editor's note--- in January Moisés and two other young men from Riobamba will begin a year's live-in experience with the Assumptionist community of Riobamba)