

Institute for Faith and Life: 30 years training Catholic leaders in the United States

The Institute for Faith and Life was born 30 years ago as an **expression of the commitment and the option of Lasallians for the training of Catholic leaders in the United States** linked to various services and ministries in Youth Ministry and Hispanic Pastoral Ministry.



“This Institute, founded by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1994, is nourished by their spirituality and mission, and seeks to transform the reality of Latin American and Caribbean youth who, many times, are not recognized in society and in the Church in the United States... they are like ‘invisible’ in different areas and structures”, says its Executive Director, Juan Escafuller, when he says that **“the Institute for Faith and Life is a great tool of God for young people to find a purpose in their lives and discover their leadership and their transforming important role”**.

This was the experience of the 200 young people and adults who participated in this year’s National Catholic Leadership Program held on the campus of Lewis University - to which the Institute for Faith and Life is attached - between 16 and 22 June, for young leaders and counselors of Pastoral Juvenil, ecclesial ministers and Hispanic formators.

Prophets of hope



Each of the courses and seminars offered by the Institute are guided by the conviction that young people are “prophets of hope” in the Church and in society. **On this occasion, the Institute for Faith and Life has offered eight alternative programs:** Symposium on Leadership for an Integrated Youth Ministry - now in its 29th edition; Spirituality, Discernment and Life Project; Certification for Parenting School Facilitators; Certification for Pastoral Advisors with Adolescents; Practical Application of the Social Doctrine of the Church; Digital Evangelization; Training in Christian Sexuality; and Retreat for Inner Healing: Path of the Heart.

For Elisabeth Román, Director of Communications and Outreach at Lewis University and the Instituto Fe y Vida, “the formative contribution offered is very significant when you consider that **42% of Catholics in this country are of Latin American and Caribbean origin and young Latinos make up 65% of the young population under the age of 35**”.



“The Institute for Faith and Life has been able to be a ‘bridge’ between God and humankind, awakening the thirst and longing for God in the hearts of more than 14,000 young people it has trained and of all those who come into

contact with this mission”, said Mons. Lucio Adrián Ruiz, Secretary of the Dicastery for Communication at the Holy See, during the Eucharist he presided over on 22 June, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Institute.

“The value of his mission has been the service to the formation of Catholic leaders”, the prelate underlined, recalling the words of Pope Francis: “true leadership is that which is focused on service, and **service is to give life, to lead to the Father**”, **in the manner of Jesus**, because “good leadership is not personal, because the good leader brings forth new leaders, he is fruitful”, he concluded.





