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# **Ximena: Young People and Love for the Pope**

Ximena shares how the formation she received at centres of the Work in Chiclayo, Peru awakened a deep love for the Pope. This journey led her to her current participation in the youth advisory council of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life.

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Ximena's story starts with her participation in activities in centres of the Work in Chiclayo, Peru. As a teenager, she learned the value of friendship, spirit of service and, especially, love for the Roman Pontiff in the Farolillo and Sauces clubs. Over time, the formation she received in her youth became the driving force behind her commitment to the Church.

## **An encounter in Peru**

Her love for the Pope took concrete shape when she began collaborating during the pandemic in the youth ministry of her diocese. There she met Bishop Robert Prevost, who was then her bishop in Chiclayo. Ximena remembers his simplicity and readiness to listen: "Whenever we needed his support to address a message to the clergy or back some activity, he did so without hesitation. He never closed a door on us."

That relationship of trust which had emerged on Peruvian soil took a qualitative leap when Bishop Prevost was elected Pope. In July 2025, Ximena travelled to Rome for the Jubilee of Youth, which took place during Peru's national holidays, and had the opportunity to greet him again. "I gave him an image of Our Lady of Peace of Chiclayo, handcrafted by a cousin."

In that audience, the Holy Father asked the pilgrims to share everything they had learned with those who hadn't been able to travel to Rome. "He encouraged us not to let this experience become a mere memory. On the contrary, that it should always encourage us to flood the lands of Peru with the joy and strength of the Gospel." At the end, he wished them a happy holiday with a smile that, in Ximena's words, "embraced their souls."

## Advisory work at the Vatican

In time, her commitment to the Church took a further step when she was appointed as a member of the International Youth Advisory Body (IYAB), a team of twenty young people from around the world who advise the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. In the working meetings held in Rome in October 2025, Ximena was able to see the simplicity which had defined her bishop in Chiclayo present in the Holy Father.

While waiting to enter an audience, a conversation arose with another young woman on the council about point 178 of *The Way*.

They discovered that they had received the same formation in very distant countries: Peru and Denmark. It brought them great joy, Ximena says, to experience how faith and the Work's apostolate create

bonds of immediate friendship transcending any geographical borders.

## **The mission to be light in ordinary life**

Today, Ximena combines her work at the Vatican with her job as an e-learning design analyst. Following the Pope's invitation to be salt of the earth and light of the world, she seeks to make her time at the International University of Valencia and her professional life an extension of that service which began as a young woman in Chiclayo. Her testimony reflects how the formation received in the Work is, ultimately, a preparation to love and serve the Church wherever one finds oneself.

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