

Within Vida Ascendente, some initiatives and how to overcome difficulties

The meeting of Spiritual Advisors and Presidents of the movement in Spain was held in Madrid from January 20th to 23rd, during which the Jubilee celebration was planned at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Almudena in Madrid.

During the meeting, several very different initiatives demonstrated how to overcome the difficulties encountered:

- 1.** A spiritual advisor was appointed to reactivate the movement in the diocese of Ourense, where everything had died, with no memory of anything useful that had happened. The movement is functioning again in the diocese.
- 2.** How can a movement remain alive when it is necessary to take a plane or a boat to visit groups, as happens in the Canary Islands?
- 3.** What happens when there is only one group in a diocese? A few months later, we were contacted, as the diocesan motto for the year was "Accompanying the Elderly," and the memory of Vida Ascendente remained very much alive.

1. D. José Manuel, Spiritual Advisor of Orense, explains how the Bishop called him to appoint him Spiritual Advisor of Vida Ascendente. He accepted without any idea of what it entailed and had to learn what was expected of him, starting with the telephone number of the National Advisor and the Area Coordinator.

Documentation was sent to him, and he began speaking to priests and archpriests: there are 735 parishes and 12 archpriesteries in Orense. This way, the movement became known.

He organized several meetings for the elderly, each time explaining the movement's objectives. However, it wasn't until the third meeting that the movement found traction, and teams began to form in various parishes and some retirement homes.

In October 2024, a call was made for those interested to train to become team leaders, and the "kick-off" was given.

He entrusted his prayer to the Lord, asking for enthusiasm and joy so as not to become discouraged throughout the process.

2. The Canary Islands Coordinator explained in detail her connection with the movement since the 1980s and how in 2013 she was appointed President of Tenerife, which also means four more islands. Connecting with them and encouraging them requires taking a boat or plane, which also involves a significant investment of time and money.

There is a representative on each island, and the President maintains close telephone contact with them.

He has a very good relationship with the Spiritual Advisor, who helps them plan and complete their work.

3. The Bishop of the Diocese of Astorga put out a call for volunteers interested in working with the elderly, and to our surprise, 270 volunteers came forward, 80 of whom signed up for the Vida Ascendente workshop.

After giving them a presentation of the movement, we agreed on a specific date for a training session, which took place on December 14th in Ponferrada.

Three things struck us during this meeting:

- The Bishop's kindness towards the Vida Ascendente movement
- His trust in the Lord's will and the intelligence with which he presented the movement
- The National Advisor's willingness to support the rehabilitation process in the Diocese of Astorga.

A conclusion from what was discussed: "**If you call people, they will come!**"

Other more general and local experiences were then shared. "**The Lord is the one who leads the Movement**"

Mercedes Montoya