

# ISKALI MISSIONARY PROGRAM



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# OUR MISSION

“He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves...”

**We FORM, EMPOWER, and EQUIP young Latinos to be transformative leaders.**

The Iskali Missionary Program is a joyful cry that young people belong in the Church today, not tomorrow, not “someday,” but right now. Their parish is their home. Thus, our missionaries are sent out to reach those on the margins and bring them into the loving embrace of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The essence of our mission is to make our parishes true homes, where a new generation of servant leaders is formed in communities of authentic friendship, empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the Gospel, and equipped with Mary’s humble fiat to Christify the world.

Through this apostolate, Iskali seeks to uphold the dignity and responsibility of young people, who are called to holiness as they walk through the ordinary circumstances of daily life.

“... but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” (2 Cor 5:15)



# THE NEED

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16,279

Catholic parishes in the US.

4,479

of those (about 28%) offer one or more masses in Spanish.

2,760

Latino presence or ministry even if they don't currently offer Spanish-language Masses.

49%

of U.S. Latinos now identify as religious unaffiliated.

While 28% of parishes (4,479) have Spanish Masses which is a strong indicator of a significant Hispanic population. The additional 2,760 parishes with Hispanic ministry suggests that roughly 7,200+ parishes (about 44%) have meaningful Hispanic ministry presence in some form.

In parishes across the United States, a quiet crisis is unfolding as many young Latino Catholics drift away from the Church. These young men and women, who form the vibrant heart of our faith community, often feel unseen and unwelcomed in the very parishes that should be their spiritual home. They carry deep cultural gifts and thirst for God, yet too often they don't find a space in the church where their language, music, and stories are cherished. Many have walked away not out of anger, but out of a silent ache, feeling that the Church has little to offer them or doesn't truly see them.

At the same time, countless Catholic parishes struggle with limited resources and few mentors to engage young people. Pastors and volunteers do their best, but without training or support they cannot easily build the vibrant youth ministries and small faith communities that young adults long for. Without someone to walk with them in faith, young Catholics form their own circles or drift into a secular culture that promises belonging elsewhere, but never fulfills. It's a challenge that weighs heavily on the whole Church, but it also sparks a profound hope.

# OUR HISTORY

Iskali is a growing ecclesial movement within the Catholic Church. The word "Iskali" comes from Nahuatl, the language our Lady of Guadalupe spoke to St. Juan Diego, and means "to resurge" or "new life." It reflects our mission to renew the spirit of young people and walk towards holiness together.

Founded on June 12, 2010, by Vicente Del Real-Alvarez, a young adult with a simple desire to reach his peers at St. Charles Borromeo in Melrose Park, Iskali now serves 28 parishes across Chicago, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis. Guided by the Spirit, we continue to reach ever further, bringing God's love to young hearts most distant from Him.

## WHAT IS OUR MISSIONARY ZEAL?

To imitate Mary's intimate life with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We take to heart our Lady of Guadalupe's words to St. Juan Diego, "It must be you," and we strive to follow her example of Christian discipleship.

## WHY MISSIONARY APOSTOLATE?

We are missionary because we have been sent by the Beloved. As an apostolate, our work is not a program or a project, but a living participation in the Church's evangelizing mission, carried out in communion with our pastors and guided by the Holy Spirit.

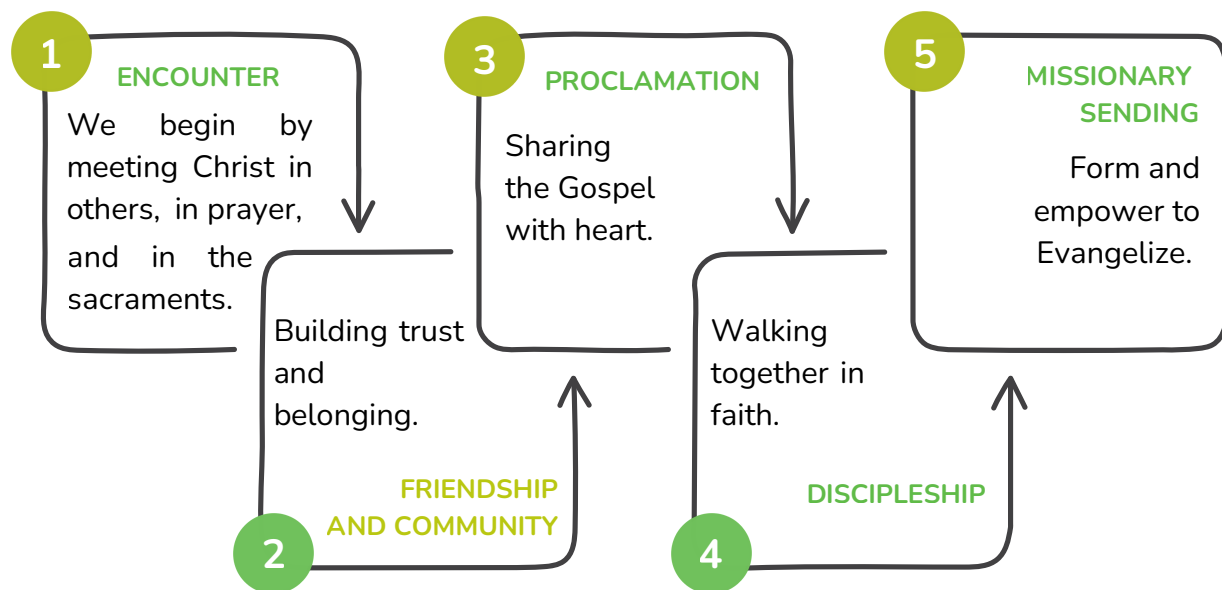


# OUR APPROACH

At the heart of the Iskali Missionary Program is the mission to build consequential relationships that foster authentic discipleship. This is especially vital within the Hispanic community, where strong family bonds, friendship, and faith are deeply valued.

By integrating universal principles of evangelization with culturally specific elements, Iskali missionaries embrace three essential pillars:

- **Authentic Acceptance** - Welcoming young adults as they are, creating a space where they feel seen and valued.
- **Authentic Friendship** - Walking alongside others in their faith journey, forming deep meaningful connections.
- **Sharing the Joy of the Gospel** - Bringing the message of Christ's love to others in a way that resonates.



With these core principles, we walk together with our brothers and sisters on the common path of faith.



# AN ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT AND FORMATION

Our missionaries offer parishes more than a dedicated presence; they invite them into a robust ecosystem of formation, community, and mission that has been built and refined over 15 years. This ecosystem includes hundreds of young adults who gather weekly in small faith communities; a proven retreat program for evangelization and leadership formation; ongoing spiritual, human, and pastoral formation rooted in prayer and accompaniment; mentorship and scholarship opportunities; sports and wellness initiatives; service to those in need; and an annual conference that unites and deepens the mission across regions.

This ecosystem is further strengthened through a key partnership with the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame, which supports the theological and pastoral formation of our communities. Through this collaboration, young adults and leaders receive formation grounded in sound theology, pastoral best practices, and long-term sustainability ensuring the mission extends beyond any single program or individual.

Each missionary makes a one-year commitment of service at a partnering parish. Formation begins in January with a three-week intensive boot camp at our retreat house, Casa Iskali, followed by weekly formation throughout the year. Missionaries serve within and draw strength from this larger ecosystem, ensuring they are never working in isolation.

Through this integrated model, parishes do not simply receive a missionary, they become part of a wider movement of young Latino leaders being formed to renew parish life and strengthen the Church for the long term.





# PARISH COMMITMENT

The apostolate is most fruitful when parish leadership and missionaries walk together in a shared commitment to forming young disciples.

**1. Weekly pastor meetings:** Regular weekly check-ins with the pastor are essential to provide clear guidance and expectations for the missionary's role. These meetings serve as an opportunity for mentorship, feedback, and alignment on parish goals and initiatives.

**2. Integrate in parish staff meetings:** Missionaries participate in parish staff meetings, ensuring they are recognized as integral members of the team. Inclusion in these meetings fosters collaboration, improves communication, and helps align missionary efforts with broader parish and Iskali objectives.

**3. Work space for missionary:** Each missionary is provided a designated workspace on parish grounds. This physical space enhances their sense of belonging within the parish community and serves as a welcoming environment for meeting with young adults or planning activities.

**4. Integration in parish life:** Missionaries are fully immersed in parish life through liturgical participation, community engagement, support for parish ministries, leadership development, and collaboration with parish staff.



# FUELING THE MISSION

Reaching the hearts of young people is a mission far greater than any one community can carry alone. Through shared stewardship with our parish partners, who join us in funding and sustaining this work, we are able to form and send young adults as missionary leaders for the Church.

## 50% PARISH CONTRIBUTION

**\$25,000**

Partnering parishes will make payments to Iskali in six installments of \$4,166, issued every 2 months throughout the year. This will contribute to the missionary's salary.

## 25% MISSIONARY FUNDRAISING

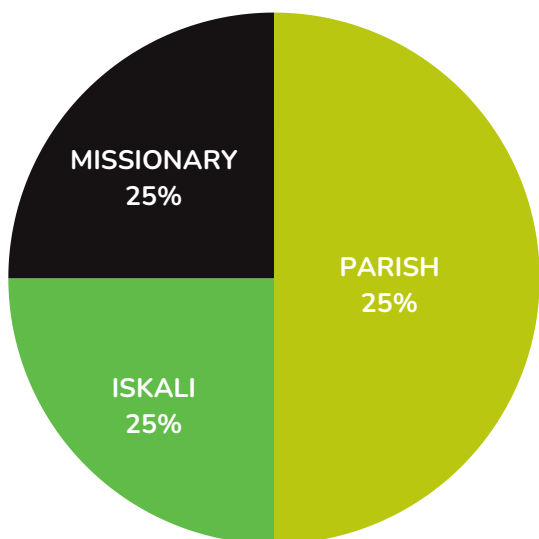
**\$12,500**

At bootcamp, missionaries will receive fundraising training, donor-engagement formation, budgeting tools, and a personalized online donation page. Then, they will dedicate the first month of February to reaching their goal. The annual salary will be \$37,500 paid biweekly.

## 25% ISKALI'S CONTRIBUTION

**\$12,200**

Iskali will cover the cost for bootcamp, ongoing formation, supervision, and missionary support throughout the year. All travel and logistical costs to and from Casa Iskali for missionary purposes will be covered.



**TOTAL COST: \$49,500**



# PILGRIMAGE TO ROME

As a gesture of gratitude for their generous year of service, at the end of the year, our missionaries are sent together on a week-long pilgrimage to the heart of the Church, Rome. This pilgrimage becomes a sacred pause, to reflect on the fruits and struggles of their journey, and to look toward the future with renewed hope for a life-time mission of evangelization.

## MORE QUESTIONS? CONTACT:

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***“It must be you.”***