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Australian Cardijn Institute calls for “revitalisation” of lay apostolate

In a new submission to the Plenary Council, the Australian Cardijn Institute has called for the establishment of an “Australian Catholic Council for the Lay Apostolate” to support the “revitalisation” of the lay apostolate as understood by the Second Vatican Council.

“The term ‘apostolate’ describes the way in which Christians are to live their faith,” the submission notes. “Each Christian has both a personal and a social apostolate in living out their mission as a follower of Christ.” This is to be distinguished from the work of “lay ministry,” which “requires authorisation from the competent authority,” the submission explains.

“We urge the Council to draw on the rich experience of the Jocist movements in Australia to revitalise understanding of the lay apostolate,” the submission says, referring to the movements that draw on the heritage of Joseph Cardijn, founder of the Young Christian Workers (YCW) or Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (JOC).

Cardijn was “a leading voice among those bishops who worked on the articulation of the role of the Church in the world and the apostolate of the laity as they appear in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today (*Gaudium et Spes*) and the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*),” the submission states.

“The development of lay ministry has been a great positive in the Church but it is deeply paradoxical that this emphasis appears to have developed at the expense of the Vatican II conception of lay apostolate,” commented ACI secretary, Stefan Gigacz. “It’s time to rebalance priorities.”

The ACI submission proposes the establishment of an “Australian Catholic Council for the Lay Apostolate” specifically to promote the lay apostolate as described in the Vatican II Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity. It further calls for financial support for the provision of “direct funding to nationally organised movements that promote the lay apostolate” understood in this sense.

Finally, it calls for resources to be directed to “training in the theology and pedagogy of lay movements promoting faith formation and social transformation for priests, religious and lay people” as well as “research, publication and study to foster understanding of the lay apostolate and the application of Catholic Social Teaching.”*

ACI Submission: <https://australiancardijninstitute.org/aci-calls-for-lay-apostolate-council/>

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