

ACU and Australian Jesuits announce research partnership

Australian Catholic University (ACU) will partner with the Australian Province of the Society of Jesus to launch a new national research institute in Melbourne.

ACU Melbourne will be the official home of The Loyola Institute, established by the Australian Jesuits in 2021 to promote the research and advocacy of Jesuit scholars in Australia and abroad. The Institute will bring together ACU experts in various sectors of the university with Australian and international Jesuit scholars to work on collaborative research projects that align with the Society's apostolic priorities.

The new partnership builds on a formal agreement between ACU's Faculty of Theology and Philosophy and the Australian Jesuits to deliver Ignatian Spirituality and Ministry Supervision postgraduate courses previously offered by the now-closed Jesuit College of Spirituality.

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Zlatko Skrbis and Provincial of the Australian Jesuits Fr Quyen Vu SJ will officially launch the partnership between The Loyola Institute and ACU on February 21.

Chair of The Loyola Institute, Reverend Professor Daniel Madigan SJ, said the Jesuits were grateful to have ACU as their national university partner.

"The Loyola Institute was established to encourage collaboration among Jesuit scholars and our colleagues in Australia as well as with broad international networks. An institutional partner like ACU is essential to such a project, and almost all of our scholars will be working in an honorary capacity," Fr Madigan said.

"Our priorities for research and advocacy include several areas that are also important to ACU's teaching and research: for example, the Church and human rights (including questions of indigenous rights, disability, refugee policy, social services, ethics and public policy); contemporary Catholic theologies in this 'change of epoch,' as Pope Francis calls it; comparative theology and interreligious engagement; mission formation for Catholic institutional leadership; and the search for adequate responses to the profound questions raised for the Church by the clerical abuse crisis.

"We look forward to exploring these themes with our research collaborators at ACU."

Executive Dean of ACU's Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Associate Professor Richard Colledge, said the university was privileged to host a research institute in support of the Australian Jesuits.

"The Australian Jesuits are a mainstay of Australian Christian life, specifically in their contribution to the intellectual and spiritual fabric of our nation," Associate Professor Colledge said.

"Australian Catholic University is proud to uphold the Australian Jesuit legacy by partnering with them on higher education research that supports their key apostolic goals both in Australia and internationally.

"Our new partnership with the Australian Jesuits will foster unique connections with the Order's global network of scholars and strengthen the research capacity of both institutions.

"We look forward to partnering with the Australian Jesuits in strengthening our mission."

The Australian Jesuits join a growing list of religious orders that make up ACU's history, including the De La Salle Brothers, the Dominican Sisters, the Sisters of Mercy, the Sisters of St Joseph, the Christian Brothers, the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, and the Marist Brothers.

Founded in 1540 by St Ignatius Loyola, Jesuits have ministered in Australia since 1848, for the most part in the fields of secondary and tertiary education.

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