

100 years of the YCW – 100 years in action

YCW members, past and present including representatives from the Australian YCW, met in Belgium from 1-12 May to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the YCW. Celebrations began with an international Mass at Notre-Dame de Laeken in Brussels followed by a youth festival and leader exchanges across Europe.

YCW was founded by Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, a "son of the working class" who began organising young workers in 1912 in his parish, Laeken, where he now lays. 1925 was however the year the YCW was officially recognised by Pope Pius XI, who listened and responded to Cardijn's wish to "save young workers".

Cardinal Joseph Cardijn was a visionary who defended the rights and dignity of young workers. His message of 'see, judge, act' is still relevant today and continues to inspire young people around the world. [Read more...](#)

Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Gilbert F. Hongbo, congratulated the YCW on reaching such a milestone and encouraged the YCW to continue fighting for better working conditions and adequate representation for young people worldwide.

He reminded the YCW that they are one of the only few youth organizations with consultative status at the ILO and have been an invaluable partner in our journey to protect labour rights.

Mr. Hongbo concluded that the YCW's unwavering commitment to young workers' rights is essential to achieving this. "Your vision of a society, built on dignity, solidarity and social justice, aligns with the ILO's mission. Together, we can be a driving force for change for the next century and beyond."

Pope Leo XIV, in his first address to the College of Cardinals on 12 May, invokes this legacy saying that he wants the Church to "respond to a new industrial revolution and to the development of artificial intelligence." <https://futureofwork-labourafterlaudatosi.net/2025/05/12/pope-leo-xiv-to-cardinals-church-must-respond-to-digital-revolution-12-may-2025-global/>

National President, Achut Thuc, from Melbourne, represented the Australian YCW together with leaders Thomas Magri from Paramatta Diocese and Joseva Saukuru from Adelaide. They were accompanied by former member, Stefan Gigacz from Perth. Achut, having arrived in Australia as a teenage refugee from Sudan, commented on how the YCW has transformed her life and who now works as a community mental health worker in the public housing towers in Richmond, Victoria.

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0adj7U6mTwfBCP6cYCu3eSqhmYoDbNKG5UmJyCQ8QQfTRXphW6dZrGFMk5V2KEKnul&id=100064759474386

To mark the special anniversary in Australia, the YCW in partnership with former member groups Australian Cardijn Institute and Cardijn Communities will be celebrating Masses throughout the country:

Melbourne: Archbishop Peter Comensoli will preside at the Mass on Saturday 24 May 3pm, at All Saints Church in Fitzroy. [Melbourne YCW Centenary Mass](#)

Perth: Bishop Donald Sproxton will preside at the Mass at Mary MacKillop parish at Ballajura on Pentecost Sunday 8 June 2025. [Perth YCW Centenary Mass](#)

Sandhurst: Bishop Shane Mackinlay of Sandhurst will preside at a YCW Mass to be held at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Bendigo at 11 am on Sunday 13 July 2025. [Sandhurst YCW Centenary Mass](#)

More Masses and reunions are currently being organised in lead up the YCW's National Conference to be held on 29-30 November in Melbourne preceding the National Catholic Youth Festival.

For more information please contact: info@ycw.org.au

[Read opening speech by International President, Basma Louis from Egypt](#)

[Centenary Hybrid Opening](#)

Youth Festival:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/19AquaSQUo/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

<https://100years.joc.be/>