

## **Media Release - ACI welcomes St Pier Giorgio Frassati canonisation and beatification of 20 YCW and YCS martyrs**

**6 September 2025**

As a corresponding member of Pax Romana, the movement of Catholic students, intellectuals and professionals, to which St Pier Giorgio Frassati once belonged, the Australian Cardijn Institute welcomes his canonisation by Pope Leo XIV on Sunday 7 September 2025.

ACI also welcomes the announcement by the Diocese of Paris of the beatification on Sunday 13 December 2025 of more than twenty martyrs from the French Young Christian Workers (YCW) and Young Christian Students (YCS) movements. They are among 50 victims of the Nazi regime who will be beatified at Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris. Cardinal Jean-Paul Hollerich of Luxembourg, himself a former YCW and YCS chaplain, will preside at the ceremony.

### **Pier Giorgio Frassati**

Pier Giorgio is known for his charitable work, his commitment to social reform and his intense prayer life.

“Charity is not enough; we need social reform,” he often used to say.

While a student of engineering in Turin, Pier Giorgio attended the inaugural conference in Fribourg, Switzerland at which Pax Romana was founded in 1921.

Here, we also recall the role played by Joseph Cardijn, founder of the Young Christian Workers movement, who wrote to Pope Pius XI in January 1938 requesting the pontiff to open Pier Giorgio’s cause for canonisation.

As Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII, responded on behalf of Pius XI, Pier Giorgio “the success of this Cause would provide a very powerful Protector for Catholic Action.”

ACI secretary Stefan Gigacz commented:

“Looking back over Pier Giorgio’s life and his involvement with workers and students as well as against fascism, it’s not surprising that Cardijn would take an interest in him.

“Cardijn was always close to the student movement. Although it’s often forgotten, he also launched a university student movement known as the Catholic Social Youth, a precursor to the Young Christian Students movement. And he later became a board member of the academic arm of Pax Romana.

“It’s difficult to know what impact if any Cardijn’s appeal to Pius XI may have had.

“Still the fact that he wrote to the pope illustrates both Cardijn’s respect and admiration for Pier Giorgio as well as his concern to provide models of holiness for young people of every generation.”

### **French YCW and YCS martyrs**

The beatification of more than twenty French YCW and YCS leaders and chaplains is “a tremendous acknowledgment by the Church of their extraordinary sacrifice,” Stefan Gigacz commented.

“What an honour for them to be beatified in the historic, beautiful, newly renovated cathedral of Notre Dame, who was really the first lay apostle of the Church, announcing and bringing Jesus into the world.

“And it comes at providential moment being the year of the centenary of the movement’s official foundation in Belgium in 1925.”

### **Lay YCW leaders to be beatified include**

Jean Lépiciér (1921-1945), died at Buchenwald;

Bernard Lemaire (1920-1944), died of typhus at Buchenwald;

Maurice Grandet (1920-1944), died of typhus at Buchenwald;

René Ponsin (1923-1945), died at Buchenwald; Claude-Colbert Lebeau (1922-1945), died at Zöschen;

Jean Chavet (1922-1945), died of typhus at Mauthausen;

André Parsy (1922-1944), interned at Zöschen, died at Trebitz;

André Vallée (1919-1945), died at Flossenbürg;

Henri Marrannes (1923-1945), died in Zwickau;

Louis Pourtois (1919-1945), died in Mauthausen; Camille Millet (1922-1945), died in Flossenbürg;

Marcel Carrier (1922-1945), died in Neustadt during the “death march”;

Alfredo Dall’Oglio (1921-1944), Italian naturalized French, died in Wuhlheide; Marcel Touquet (1914-1945), died in Ravensbrück;

Lucien Croci (1919-1945), died in Barth;

Jean Mestre (1924-1944), died shortly after his arrest;

Jean Perriolat (1920-1945), died in Mauthausen;

René Rouzé (1922-1945), died in Dora-Mittelbau;

Henri Euzenat (1920-1945), who died at Dachau;

Eugène Lemoine (1920-1945) (also a Scout), died at Zöschen;

Bernard Morizot (1924-1945) (also a Scout), interned at Buchenwald and shot.

### **YCS leaders**

Jean Préhu, YCS lay leader (and Scout), Jean Préhu (1920-1945) died at Dachau.

Jean Chavet

### **Priests and chaplains linked to the YCW included:**

René Giraudet (1907-1945), interned at Bergen-Belsen, sick with typhus, died in Paris;

Victor Dillard (1897-1945), who died at the Dachau concentration camp;

Louis Doumain (1920-1944), died at the Zöschen concentration camp;

Pierre de Porcaro (1904-1945), who died at the Dachau concentration camp.

READ MORE

[Pier Giorgio Frassati and Cardijn](#) (Cardijn Research)

[YCW & YCS martyrs beatified at Notre Dame](#) (ACI)

[French YCW and YCS leaders to be beatified](#) (ACI)



Website: [www.australiancardijninstitute.org](http://www.australiancardijninstitute.org)

Contact: [aci@australiancardijninstitute.org](mailto:aci@australiancardijninstitute.org)