

THE RETREAT AND RECOLLECTION SERVICE

1. Historically, it was the first “JOC Service”. Long before the official foundation of the JOC, the pioneers and future founders of the JOC worked from 1912 to build the **jocist tradition** of seeking enlightenment and the strength necessary for their vocation to the apostolate in retreats and recollections.

Without exaggeration, it can be said that the JOC developed its mystique and its characteristic style by means of these retreats and recollections. The retreats and recollections took place amid an impressive liturgical and Eucharistic atmosphere, with the silence, meditation and fervour of neophytes, all of which facilitated the revelation of true interior, profound and fully engaged religion on the part of many young people.

2. From the beginning, the annual reports on JOC activities, which were sent to the bishops and to Rome, emphasised the essential role of retreats and recollections as part of the jocist formation process and as a result they earned the highest encouragements and approvals.

An enquiry among retreat houses, abbeys, convents and religious houses would provide an authorised appreciation of these jocist recollections and retreats. In 19.., “Editions jocistes” published “Aux sources de l’Energie” in which Fr Arendt applied the encyclical to retreats and recollections.

3. Exchanges of views and discussions with Fr Van Maele, Jacobs and other chaplains from the Eucharistic Crusade highlighted the need for and the effectiveness of jocist retreats and recollections. Thus, it was unanimously agreed that the JOC would continue its usual cycle of retreats and recollections throughout the country.

4. At the time of the foundation of the JVKA¹ and the discussion over the statutes of the latter, the question of retreats and recollections was officially raised. It was formally decided that the organisations affiliated to the JVKA would not only maintain but strengthen the religious formation of their leaders as far as possible, particularly through retreats and recollections.

5. Not much experience of Catholic Action is needed to understand that apostolic formation is inseparable from profound, interior religious formation. It would be inconceivable (for such separation) in a seminary of novitiate? So how could this occur in the seminary and novitiate of lay apostolate, which is what a Catholic Action movement for young people actually is?

6. No pretext of “unity” can take priority over the obligation to hold retreats and recollections for leaders of specialised organisations. It is at this level that adaptation is most necessary. From another angle, it is here that unity of formation and action within the same movement is necessary. Separating body and soul would end up destroying Catholic Action.

7. The opportunities for meetings and collaboration in the field of action and life are too numerous for one to be sought in recollections and retreats. A spirit of unity will quickly become irresistible if one promotes it by charity, confidence, mutual aid and generosity instead of seeking to impose it by meddlesome measures that betray and foster mistrust, guardianship, paternalism and constraint.

¹ JVKA: Jeugdverbond voor Katholieke Actie (The Flemish Union for Catholic Youth). The Flemish equivalent of the ACJB.

8. At a time that is so decisive for the future of working youth and the working class, when it is necessary to multiply the number of apostles and Christian leaders, everything must be done to promote the religious and moral formation of these apostles and leaders. In particular, everything needs to be done to promote and facilitate jocist retreats and recollections.

The 15,000 jocist militants who took part in a study week this year need to be able to experience retreats and recollections and their number needs to be doubled. That would be the most effective means to combat paganism and communism that threatens the future of youth and the working class.

- Joseph Cardijn

SOURCE

Archives Cardijn 1834