

# GIVEN Forum Activates the Gifts of Young Women For the Church and the World

*Week-long event in June to kick off a year of mentorship, guidance, and transformation*

**Washington, D.C., December 7, 2023**—A 2015 Pew Research Center report showed that 35% of Millennials identified as persons with no religious affiliation and also revealed a 10-point increase in religious disaffiliation among women, compared to 2009. In a world where many young women are losing their Catholic faith, the GIVEN Institute seeks to counter these trends and activate the gifts of young women that both the world and the Church are in need of. The primary goal of the GIVEN Institute is to help young women receive the gift that they are, realize the gifts they've been given, and respond with the gift that only they can give. This mission is materialized through an event called the GIVEN Catholic Women's Leadership Forum, a 5-day event set to take place June 8-12 in Washington, DC.

The GIVEN Forum kicks off a year-long experience called the Art of Accompaniment Mentoring Program, in which young women ages 21-35 are matched with an assigned mentor who will offer personal and spiritual formation and professional leadership training. Nearly 300 women, comprised of both lay and consecrated attendees, mentors, and volunteers from all around the country will gather for this year's Forum. Applications are currently open for this experience. Young adult applicants will submit an application and Action Plan, describing their own unique initiatives to activate their God-given gifts in the Church and in the world.

"Every woman has a unique gifting from which flows her personal vocation. Through the Leadership Forum and the Art of Accompaniment Mentoring Program, GIVEN journeys with each woman as she discovers her gifts and then activates them in her home, the Church or even the world at large," notes Executive Director Michelle Hillaert, "We're grateful for our mentors who give so much of their time and heart to walk with these young women as they learn and grow, as well as to our donors whose desire to participate in raising female leaders within the Church facilitates this transformative experience."

GIVEN treasures its relationships with a number of different women's religious orders. The organization was founded in 2018 by the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR) after successfully hosting the first Forum in 2016. Hillaert shares, "GIVEN was born from a desire in the hearts of religious sisters to share their spiritual maternity with young lay women who had a need for direction and mentorship. Over the years, we've seen transformation in the lives of women from many backgrounds and vocations as they activate their gifts, whether they're single, married, or have children. It's beautiful to work alongside religious sisters, to witness the impact they have on the women who attend the Forum and mentoring year, and to celebrate with the young women who have discovered a call to religious life through the process."

In addition to the Art of Accompaniment mentorship program training, highlights of this year's Forum include a number of special events. Masses will be held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the

Immaculate Conception as well as the Saint John Paul II National Shrine. Special presentations will be given from noted Catholic speakers and alumnae. There will also be a Celebration of Catholic Female Leaders event on Tuesday, June 11 at 8:00pm, during which GIVEN will recognize an awardee with outstanding contributions as a woman in the Church. This honoree will be announced at a later date, and a limited number of tickets will be made available to the public for this special event. A full schedule can be accessed at <https://giveninstitute.com/given-forum-schedule/>.

For more information and a complete press kit, visit <https://giveninstitute.com/press/>.

To request an interview with Michelle Hillaert or to attend the 2024 GIVEN Forum as press, contact [communications@giveninstitute.com](mailto:communications@giveninstitute.com).

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