

# **GIVEN Art of Accompaniment Mentoring Program Activates the Gifts of Young Women For the Church and the World**

*More than 300 women from across the US and around the globe will gather June 8-12 in Washington, DC*

**Washington, D.C., May 06, 2024** — We can all think of young women who have lost faith in God and left the Church as they struggled to find their identity and purpose in the world. The GIVEN Institute offers young women a reason not only to stay in the Catholic Church but to flourish by helping them to “receive the gift they are, realize the gifts they’ve been given, and respond with the gift that only they can give.” Our mission and our invitation to young women becomes a reality when they participate in the GIVEN Art of Accompaniment Mentoring Program and the GIVEN Catholic Women’s Leadership Forum, a 5-day event set to take place June 8-12 in Washington, DC.

The Art of Accompaniment Mentoring Program is a year-long experience that matches young women ages 21-35 with an assigned mentor, who offers personal and spiritual formation, often virtually, as well as leadership training. The GIVEN Forum brings mentees and mentors together in a week-long, in-person event to learn and grow in person. This year marks the 5th Catholic Young Women’s Leadership Forum and GIVEN will welcome the largest group of participants since the inaugural Forum in 2016. Over 300 women, lay and consecrated attendees, mentors, and volunteers from various parts of the country and around the globe will gather for this year’s Forum.

“Although we often struggle to believe it, God has blessed every woman with unique gifts. Through the Leadership Forum and the Art of Accompaniment Mentoring Program, we journey with our participants as they discover their gifts and then activate them in their home, the Church, and the world at large,” said GIVEN Executive Director Michelle Hillaert. “We are grateful for our mentors who give so much of their time and their hearts to walk with these young women, as well as for our donors whose desire to participate in raising female leaders within the Church facilitates this transformative experience.”

The GIVEN Institute was founded in 2018 by the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious (CMSWR) after successfully hosting the first Forum in 2016. “GIVEN was born from the hearts of Religious Sisters who desired to bring what once was normative in parishes, schools and communities - namely a place for the emerging generation of young women to find faithful mentors and guides - into today’s world,” said Sister of Life, Sr. Mary Gabriel Devlin, SV, President and Chair of the Board., “And we’ve witnessed the power of such community – the Lord has blessed the hearts of all the women involved and remarkable gifts have been ushered into the larger Church through the Action Plans of the participants, blessing many beyond GIVEN.”

Highlights of this year’s Forum, in addition to the Art of Accompaniment Mentorship Program training, include the presentation of the inaugural GIVEN Fiat Award to Mary Ann Glendon, Learned Hand Professor of Law, emerita, at Harvard University, and former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See as well as a “Fireside Chat” between Professor Glendon and Montse Alvarado, President and COO of EWTN News.

We are honoring Glendon for her dedication to upholding the values of the Catholic Church through her remarkable academic works, and unwavering commitment to defending human rights and religious freedom worldwide. The award will be presented in the context of the Catholic Women Leaders Celebration held Tuesday, June 11.

Throughout the Forum, notable Catholic speakers and alumnae will deliver special presentations, with keynote addresses by Sister Miriam James Heidland, SOLT, Sister Mary Grace, SV, Montse Alvarado, Chinwe Esimai, and Rachel Bulman. Panel discussions will feature speakers such as Sister Clare Hunter, FSE, FEMM founder Anna Halpine, author Kathryn Whitaker, and FIERCE Athlete founder Samantha Kelley. The attendees will be joined by chaplains Fr. John Burns, Fr. Pierre Toussaint, CFR, and Fr. Joseph Hagan, OP. 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.

After the GIVEN Forum, program participants will be matched with mentors to embark on a 9-month journey of learning and growing with one-to-one mentorship. Throughout this period, they will develop their Action Plans, which are unique initiatives chosen to activate their God-given gifts in the Church and the world. These Action Plans will be launched within one year of the Forum, empowering young women to utilize their gifts in service to others: their families, local communities, churches, or even the world at large.

“It is all too true that if the Church isn’t intentional about forming young women, the secular culture is more than happy to – thus it is no small thing that GIVEN exists!” GIVEN Alumna Emily Sullivan said of her experience with the Art of Accompaniment Mentoring Program. “It gives so many of us hope that with God’s grace... the time has come - GIVEN has happened - and will continue to bear great fruit for not just years, but generations to come.”

A full schedule of the GIVEN Forum 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).