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GIVEN Institute Announces Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, S.V., as 2026 Fiat Award Recipient on International Women’s Day

Washington, D.C., March 5, 2026. – Commemorating International Women’s Day, the GIVEN Institute announces that Mother Agnes Mary Donovan, S.V., founding member and former Superior General of the Sisters of Life, will receive the 2026 GIVEN Fiat Award, recognizing her extraordinary witness to the dignity of women, the gift of life, and the integration of faith and professional excellence.

Instituted by the GIVEN Institute, the Fiat Award honors women whose lives embody the response of Our Lady—*fiat*, “let it be done”—through faithful leadership, service, and love in the Church and the world.

In his *Letter to Women*, Pope St. John Paul II gave thanks for the indispensable contribution of women and affirmed the unique gifts by which women uphold the dignity of every human person and help build a civilization of love. This vision continues to shape the Church’s understanding of women’s leadership today. More recently, Pope Leo XIV has emphasized the vital role of women in strengthening the life and mission of the Church through their gifts of relational leadership, spiritual insight, and service.

The life and leadership of Mother Agnes Mary Donovan stand as a compelling embodiment of this call.

A trained psychologist and former professor, Mother Agnes has united intellectual rigor with profound spiritual motherhood. As a founding member of the Sisters of Life and their Superior General from 1993 to 2021, she led the community in its mission to serve pregnant women in need, offer retreats for healing and renewal, and accompany those suffering after abortion with compassion and hope.

Under her leadership, the Sisters of Life grew into a vibrant community dedicated to proclaiming the sacredness of every human life. Through her work, countless women have been supported in moments of crisis, strengthened in their dignity, and accompanied toward healing. Rooted in prayer and expressed in concrete service,



her life offers a model of leadership that is both contemplative and responsive to the needs of the modern world.

“Mother Agnes Mary Donovan exemplifies the *fiat* of a woman who has received her gifts fully and poured them out in love,” said Sister Mary Gabriel Devlin, S.V., who will present the award and serves as Board Chair of the GIVEN Institute. “Her life of spiritual motherhood, intellectual depth, and compassionate service is a powerful witness for young women seeking to lead with courage and faith.”

Mother Agnes will be honored at the Catholic Women’s Leadership Celebration at 7:30 PM on Saturday, June 27, 2026, in the Keelty Atrium of the Columbus School of Law at The Catholic University of America, during the GIVEN Institute’s annual forum, taking place June 24–28, 2026.

Following the presentation of the Fiat Award, Mother Agnes will participate in a featured conversation with legal scholar, professor, and author Helen Alvaré. This dialogue will offer forum participants a unique opportunity to encounter two complementary expressions of feminine leadership: the vocation of spiritual motherhood lived in consecrated religious life, and the witness of lay leadership lived in professional, academic, and family life. Together, their exchange will illuminate the diverse and essential ways women offer their gifts in service to the Church and the world.

For more information about the GIVEN Institute and the 2026 GIVEN Forum, visit www.giveninstitute.com.

About the GIVEN Institute and Forum

The GIVEN Institute is a not-for-profit organization that activates the gifts of young adult women for the Church and the world. Through leadership training, faith formation, and mentoring, GIVEN forms women for mission and for life. Its signature program, the GIVEN Forum, gathers young women leaders from across the country for a week-long immersion in leadership development, spiritual formation, and the creation of action plans that are implemented in their local communities.

About the GIVEN Fiat Award

The GIVEN Fiat Award, established by the Institute, honors women whose lives reflect a generous response to God’s call in imitation of Our Lady’s *fiat*—“let it be done.” The award recognizes leaders whose faith, courage, and service have made a lasting impact on the Church and society. Professor Mary Ann Glendon, legal scholar, former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, and President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, was named the inaugural recipient of the GIVEN Fiat Award in 2024.