News
Q&As



Laura Matthews (top row, second from left), a consecrated woman of Regnum Christi, helps run the preparation course for young consecrated women preparing for final vows. (Courtesy of Laura Matthews)



by Rachel Kettner

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For Laura Matthews, a consecrated woman of Regnum Christi, accompanying young people on their faith journey is no minor task. She is helping build the next generation of Catholics who can change the world for the better.

"My primary apostolate has been working in schools as a campus minister and religion teacher for girls ages 11-18," she said. "The faith of children and seeing them get to know Jesus and then become apostles within their own families are some of the most beautiful experiences I have had."

While her primary focus is helping teenage students develop their faith and grow in love for God, she understands that the human person is complicated and growing in faith often means addressing the entirety of the human experience.



Laura Matthews leading a retreat, posing with one of her high school students (Courtesy of Laura Matthews)

"Currently, I am studying for my master's [degree] in psychology to better accompany people on their journey to knowing and loving Jesus," she said. "The more I study the rich complexities of the psyche, the deeper it draws me deeper into the unique beauty of every person's story and walk with God. I love witnessing how wounds turn into near occasions of grace or, as St. Augustine said, 'In my deepest wound, I saw your glory, and it dazzled me.' "

Originally from Indiana, Matthews is currently serving in Atlanta, Georgia, but has lived in communities across the United States and Europe. She has been consecrated for 17 years.

***Global Sisters Report*: What did your discernment process look like?**

Matthews: I grew up in a big Catholic family, so the seeds of my vocation were sown from my childhood. My parents prioritized the living of the faith: daily rosary, the sacraments, service to others, etc. The Regnum Christi Movement has a youth club called ECYD (Encounter, Conviction, Your Decision) that I became involved in when I was 10 years old, going to camps, retreats, and even a pilgrimage to Rome to see St. John Paul II in 1998. I was also exposed to many different religious orders, and my great-aunt was a Benedictine nun, so my whole life, I was open to the possible call to belong entirely to Jesus.

When I was 16 years old, I went on a Holy Week mission trip and got to know some amazing teenage girls who were discerning consecrated life while in high school. In my junior and senior years, I attended this discernment high school, and there were many opportunities to continue deepening my prayer life and openness to whatever God desired. Through spiritual direction, retreats, reading the lives of the saints, and many hours before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I felt more and more free, joyful, and immensely happy when I thought of the vocation of becoming a consecrated woman of Regnum Christi. The process was not a big St. Paul lightning bolt moment; it was a slow, gradual process like the unfolding of a sunrise, an ever deeper falling in love with Jesus.



A moment of one-on-one mentoring with a young woman (left) discerning her possible vocation with Regnum Christi (Courtesy of Laura Matthews)

Why did you choose Regnum Christi over other religious orders?

While I had exposure to Benedictine nuns and Franciscan sisters and frequently served with the Little Sisters of the Poor, I never felt the special "spark" inside than when I was with the consecrated women of Regnum Christi. It's like asking a woman why she married the man she married and not another. It's because she knew he was the one. It's hard to explain, but when your heart is a specific shape, and you find the shape that fills it in a particular charism and spirituality within the church, it just fits.

Being a consecrated woman of Regnum Christi is a specific call. It is to belong entirely to Jesus but to remain in the heart of the world, like leaven in the dough. To be in the world but not of the world. As a society of apostolic life, we are not called to be religious or to wear habits that distinguish us from others. We are called to take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, to live in community, to serve the kingdom of God, etc. It is knowing the charism and calling of a particular way of life that helps you see if it is what God created you for, the dream he has for you, the mission he had planned from all of time, your unique way of joining in the beautiful adventure of his love in salvation history.



A group photo of Laura Matthews with the young people from Argentina that she brought to World Youth Day in Lisbon in August 2023 (Courtesy of Laura Matthews)

Was there ever a moment you doubted your call? What was that like?

There have definitely been very painful and challenging moments in the past 17 years that have rocked me. Although I have had my faith tested, and God has allowed these trials as moments of purification, I honestly have never doubted my call. Actually, it is the rock that has stood firm for me amid the storm. Jesus' love, fidelity, kindness, patience and outpouring of grace have been there for me always, even when there is dryness, darkness and immense suffering. It may be surprising to say I have never doubted my call, but it's because Jesus gave me the grace in those moments to keep my eyes on him and not the waves. It's all about him and his mercy toward me in my littleness.

What has been the most powerful experience you've had as a consecrated woman?

Oh, I could write a book answering this question! What experience is not powerful when you see Jesus working in the hearts of so many beautiful people? It takes my breath away to think back on all the people I have walked with, how many I have seen come to know him, and how many of them have blossomed in their relationship

with God and have become ardent apostles for the kingdom.

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Everything God does is powerful, even in the hidden, intimate moments of spiritual direction when you see someone finally freed of a lie they have believed or a past sin they couldn't let go of and eventually forgive themselves. Like the parables of the kingdom of God, much of what is truly powerful is hidden but grows through time into an enormous turning point of healing and grace. But if I had to answer the question, my experience of working in schools with children would be dearest to my heart.

Is there a mission you feel specifically called in your vocation?

God continues to surprise me on this adventure of life with him, but I would say a mission I feel called to is to work deeply with a small group of people, whatever that looks like. I love walking with people (courses, spiritual direction, pilgrimages, preaching retreats, missions, etc.) and giving them the tools to become the best versions of themselves and then go out and set the whole world ablaze with Christ's love (which was what St. John Paul II told us young people to do when I went to Rome in 1998).