

Volume 8, Issue 1

The Official Newsletter of the Legionaries of Christ and the Regnum Christi Movement

ONE SIZE FITS ~~ALL~~ You!

Discernment Is a Journey – Not a Destination

Many young men come to the Legion for formation to become priests, but some discern that God is calling them to a different vocation. Discernment is a process of discovery. And even when a vocation is discerned, God continues to reveal more of how that vocation is to be realized and lived. When asking the question, “What is God calling me to do?” the unfolding answer may come relatively quickly, or it may take many years.

This is the common experience of any discerning Christian, but the discernment journey for seminarians is generally more focused, especially for those who, after discerning for years, finally conclude that God is leading them elsewhere. We asked three men who spent some years in Legionary formation to share their experience after discerning that God was NOT calling them to the priesthood.

The first thing to note is their generosity in giving God “the first shot” of serving as a priest. When entering seminary as a novice, even if you feel 100% sure of your vocation as a priest, it is wise to remain open as you learn more about yourself and whether the “fit” continues to be right. Here are brief profiles of three men called to leave the religious life.

Brenner LeCompte spent two years in the Legion’s Apostolic High School followed by eight years in seminary. Darren Backstrom entered Apostolic School in 1997 and left seminary in 2013. Michael Gross entered Legionary novitiate after college in 1998, leaving seminary in 2009. What do these men have to say about their vocational discernment? How was their transition from religious life back to “normal” society? And how has their formation influenced their post-religious lives?

In each case, it is clear that they are grateful for their seminary experience. As Michael Gross remarked, “I wouldn’t be who I am today without my formation.” With God, nothing is wasted when we continue to put him first in our lives. Although the men were



Former Legionary seminarian Brenner LeCompte with his beautiful family.

at peace with their discernment, it was not always an easy decision for others to accept. Sometimes friends, relatives or even peers felt disappointed or even betrayed. It is worthwhile to de-stigmatize the path of seminarians who discerned not to become priests.

Brenner LeCompte adapted quickly to life outside the seminary, finding work as a financial planner and adviser for a major finance company. Even as a seminarian, Brenner had a knack for finance, which led him at one point to be appointed as the vice-rector of the seminary in Cheshire. He enjoyed reading the stock market pages in the newspaper, something out of the ordinary.

Brenner’s advice is that vocational discernment is dynamic and to always be open to God’s voice, recognizing that he wants you to be happy. In fact, it was seeing the happiness resulting from apostolic works in Regnum Christi and the Legion that attracted him to enter the seminary. However, he came to realize that he could also use his gifts to bring happiness to others without becoming a priest. Today he and his wife, Kristen, have three children. In addition to the couple

(continued on the following page)

ONE SIZE FITS YOU *continued*

working with the Three to Get Married marriage preparation program, Brenner has been active in various committees and conferences for the Regnum Christi renewal in recent years.



Darren Backstrom with his wife, Catherine, and their children.

Darren Backstrom also began in a Legionary Apostolic school before entering the novitiate. He noted that the majority of young men in the Apostolic schools do not go on to become priests, but they do benefit from a good formation. For Darren, a priestly vocation never felt completely right for him. While he had the qualities for the priesthood, he had a sense that he was forcing the vocation too much with mere willpower. Eventually, mid-way through a week of Spiritual Exercises, he realized that his call was to the married life.

Today he and his wife, Catherine, live in Ohio with their three children. With the help of a benefactor who owned a manufacturing business, Darren entered the profession of human resources. Currently, Darren is the business manager for a cluster of Catholic parishes. He also trains the men's team for the Cana Institute apostolate for marriage and family. He is also the basketball coach at Royalmont Academy. His advice for discernment is to "never stop believing that God has given you all the gifts and skills you need for your vocation."

Michael Gross completed a degree at Bemidji State University in Minnesota followed by several years working in the field of computer mapping. He too was attracted by Regnum Christi's apostolic work. Due to his proficiency in French, he entered the novitiate in Cornwall, Canada before continuing at Cheshire. His transition out of the Legion was not without its challenges. A good Catholic therapist warned him of the temptation of feeling that he had "let God down" by leaving the religious life.



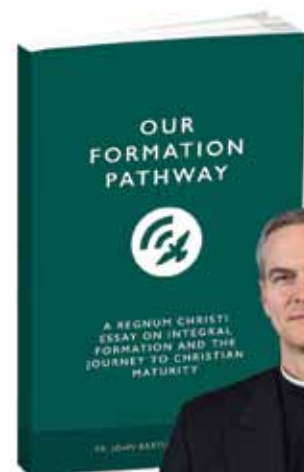
Michael Gross

For the first few years, Michael found work as a freelance translator using his Spanish language skills. He also completed courses in clinical pastoral training and began working in chaplaincy services at the Veteran's Medical Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He enjoys serving our nation's veterans from day to day. Along with his other work, he is a volunteer chapter coordinator for the Catholic Psychotherapy Association which supports mental health professionals.

During Regnum Christi's renewal years, the view of formation and discernment has become better understood and articulated. In his recent book *Our Formation Pathway: A Regnum Christi Essay on Integral Formation and the Journey to Christian Maturity*, author Fr. John Bartunek, LC, SThD, warns of apostolic activity that is "performance-centered" rather than "Christ-centered." He writes that "what we often need to do is slow down and try to prudently and prayerfully discern where God wants us to serve . . . [to know if] it really fit[s] with where we are in our own relationship with the Lord and with the gifts, desires, and talents he has given us." (p. 47)

The journey to discover our vocations (whether a capital "V" or lower-case "v") is a process of faith and courage. It is a journey where, if we stay close to God, we need never believe we are lost. We need never feel we have wasted our time. And when our motive is from a heart of love, it is always a journey of success in the eyes of the Lord. And when our motive springs from a heart filled with love and fidelity, we are on the right path towards the Lord.

Fr. John Bartunek with his book on Integral Formation.



LENT AND HOLY WEEK IN CHESHIRE

The Holiest Time of Year at our Novitiate and College of Humanities

Ash Wednesday takes place this year on February 26th with the traditional distribution of ashes. As a separate event, a Regnum Christi men's "The Big Picture" Spiritual Exercises Retreat begins at 6 P.M., available as a three or four day event.

Father-Son "A Man of the Kingdom" Lenten Retreat with separate tracks for grade school and high school age sons will be held February 28th - March 1st.

The Passion Concert, Saturday, April 4. Open to the public. The Legion of Christ Novitiate and College Choir will perform a variety of Lenten songs followed by refreshments.

Palm Sunday liturgy includes the blessing of palm fronds and a solemn procession to commemorate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem before his Passion.

Holy Thursday Solemn Mass of the Lord's Supper will be followed by a Eucharistic procession to the altar of repose. The altar of repose is a beautiful enthrone that the brothers

construct where we have a Holy Hour at 11 P.M. followed by nocturnal adoration. From Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper until breakfast on Holy Saturday, total silence is observed.

Good Friday activities will include a Community Way of the Cross on Good Friday, the Seven Last Words preached on Good Friday, Good Friday Veneration of the Cross.

Solemn Easter Vigil Mass is followed by a Solemn Latin Mass on Easter Sunday morning.

Holy Week Test Your Call (TYC) retreat during the Holy Triduum is for young men discerning Legionary life (April 8-12, 2020). During the TYC, young men participate in Gospel reflections, the Rosary, daily Mass, adoration, sports and one-on-one time with the Legionary seminarians in Cheshire. More than 80 young people attended the retreat over Christmas week. Those interested may email vocations@legionaries.org or call 203.631.2894 for more information.



Clockwise from top left: Receiving ashes on Ash Wednesday; Palm Sunday procession; the altar of repose; Veneration of the Cross; reading of The Passion; Easter Vigil; Easter Sunday

EMPTY TOMB, EXPECTANT HEART

Trusting in God's Providence

“On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early in the morning while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran off to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and told them, ‘They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.’ So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter, and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down to look in and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not lying with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he had to rise from the dead.” John 20:1-9

Confusing Signs:

Without faith, realities that should inspire hope and expectation only cause confusion. Jesus’ empty tomb is the sign of the most complete victory, the most extreme love and the most powerful presence. Mary Magdalene, Peter and John all see the empty tomb. But their limited faith needs time to grow and completely accept the great gift that is offered to them. In approaching the mystery of God, I must stoke up my faith. Otherwise, what should cause hope and courage will only wind up becoming a stumbling block for me. Only a sincere and generous faith in Christ enables me to take the circumstances of life in hope, confidence and security.



Rembrandt's painting of *Christ and St. Mary Magdalene at the Tomb*.

Running to the Experience of Faith: Running is an integral part of this Gospel. Mary Magdalene runs. Peter runs, and John outruns Peter. Love for the Lord creates a sense of urgency. What they saw at the tomb could have been seen without running at all. But promptness is a sign of love for the Lord. If I wish to experience Christ and the power of his resurrection, I need to have a sense of urgency in my relationship with the Lord. I must strive to meet him and give myself to him in my here and now. I can't wait for the "ideal" moment. If I don't give myself to Christ now, under the present conditions, there is no reason to think I ever will.

Faith Begins with the Experience of the Senses, but Does Not End There:

John, Peter and Mary Magdalene will eventually have an unshakeable conviction in the Resurrection, and become messengers of the Resurrection. But they first need to see the empty tomb and pick up the wrappings. They would also need to see and touch the risen Christ. All this would cause wonderment, reflection, and eventually a growing realization that would induce faith. God works in the

same way in my life. First there are the lived experiences of my life: people I meet, circumstances I face, events that occur... Then my wonderment and reflection on what it all means. Then the slow dawning of faith.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your presence in my life. I love you, and I want to follow after you with all my heart. Grant me the joy of seeing my hopes constantly kindled by your power over sin and death. May the strength of your resurrection overcome the weaknesses of my human nature.



Fr. Robert Presutti, LC, is the director of the Spiritual Direction Certificate Program at Divine Mercy University in Washington, DC.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

A Foundation for the Mission

Bill and Judy Guilfoil are two of the founders of Pinecrest Academy in Atlanta, Georgia, and helped to launch Regnum Christi in that city.

In her 18 years of involvement with Pinecrest, Judy filled various roles, including admissions director and guidance counselor. Those roles involved direct, apostolic, hard work. And they produced unforgettable moments of inspiration.

“When I worked in admissions, it was an opportunity to show love to others. We had visitors for an hour of presentation and a tour and you can show someone a lot of loving in an hour,” Judy explains. “The tour always ended in the chapel. And there is one dad I especially remember.

“He said he was an atheist and he was just there for his wife. He had never been in a chapel, so I explained the various parts and why we make the Sign of the Cross and use holy water. He sat down in a pew and asked if he could stay when the tour was over and it was time to leave.

“God’s work is so mysterious. That man’s children ended up attending Pinecrest Academy and several years later he came into the Church.”

You might think the credit for that father becoming a new member of Christ’s Church should go to Judy’s skill as an admissions director, and certainly that was a factor. But Judy would give God all the credit and suggests that her role was founded in spiritual direction.

Regnum Christi has five dimensions – the first dimension of the life of a Regnum Christi Member is the spiritual life. The core of a member’s life is to know Christ’s love, love him deeply and share that love with others. Closely related is the fifth dimension: personal accompaniment. A key element of this accompaniment is spiritual direction (sometimes called spiritual guidance).

For Judy Guilfoil, spiritual direction is an essential part of accompaniment in Regnum Christi. It is an apostolate she has been involved in since very early in her time with Regnum Christi. And she says she has benefited both from giving and receiving spiritual direction.

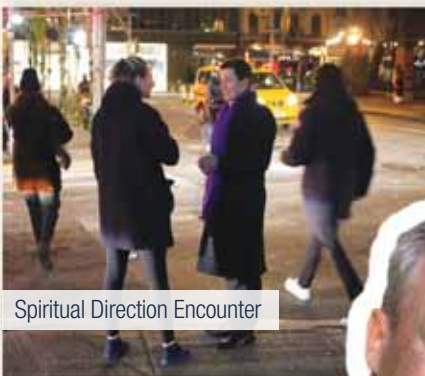
“What I have received from my spiritual directors has helped me to process what I hear, and help others discern what is truly from God... and it has helped me to do the same in my own life,” Judy says.

And while Regnum Christi certainly didn’t invent spiritual direction, it is doing something about it. In addition to the vast wealth of spiritual materials provided for free at the RC Spirituality Center, Divine Mercy University (DMU) and Regnum Christi of North America are partnering to address the pressing need for spiritual directors in the life of the Church and the world. The Spiritual Direction Certificate (SDC) Program at DMU began in January 2019 and is available online for enrolled students.

The SDC Program is designed to provide knowledge, skills, and supervision for future spiritual directors. The program seeks to respond to the ongoing need for followers of Jesus Christ to assist others on their path of hearing the Lord’s ongoing call in their lives and becoming ever more his faithful disciples.

The DMU program is to serve the Church, not just Regnum Christi. But as Judy explains, spiritual direction is vital to Regnum Christi.

“Forming apostles is at the heart of what Regnum Christi does. And an apostle must have a growing relationship with Christ to be effective in the mission. This forms the foundation for everything in Regnum Christi – the relationship with Christ is what moves the apostle to act.”



Spiritual Direction Encounter



Spiritual Direction on-line program at DMU



Private Spiritual Direction



Bill and Judy Guilfoil

HOW ABOUT A MINUTE WITH MARY?

Whether you pray daily or have suffered from prayer avoidance syndrome, you may find a moment of peace in the daily practice of the Marian Minute.

The Marian Minute is a project of The Marian Center of Dallas, which has the mission to assist young professionals in leading people worldwide into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ through our mother Mary reflected in activities that promote prayer campaigns and pilgrimages to Catholic shrines and destinations around the world.

The Marian Center of Dallas was founded 1989. A group of young professionals founded Marian Minute in 2011 and assumed direction of the center after that year's World Youth day in Dallas, Texas. They wanted a simple way to foster devotion to Mary and help others build a relationship with her through a consistent life of prayer.

Regnum Christi members Karla Alfaro and Horacio Gomez are two of the key people who founded and continue to lead the Marian Center and Marian Minute.

"The idea is to help young people build a habit of prayer," Karla says. "Mary wants to keep it simple."

And simple it is. Go to the Marian Minute site, click on start, and pray for a minute. WARNING: Mary wants you to pay attention for a full minute, so if you move your computer mouse, the timer starts over.

In its first month, the website had 100,000 visitors from 120 countries. Today, it has 500 to 1000 visitors a day and is offered in 10 languages.

Other apostolates are on the horizon, such as Marian pilgrimages and, for the Dallas community, a speaker series centered on Marian spirituality and theology. Visit www.marianminute.org



Schedule of Events

Atlanta Area

Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment

See website (events or services) for dates and information.

www.rcatlanta.org | 770-837-2798

Washington, D.C. Area – OLB Retreat Center

Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment

See website for dates and information.

www.ourladyofbethesda.org

301-365-0612

Connecticut Area

Legion of Christ Novitiate & College of Humanities

See events at www.LCCheshire.org | 203-271-0805

Dallas Area

Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment

See website (events) for dates and information.

www.dfw-rc.org

Greater Charlotte Area

Retreats, spiritual exercises and enrichment

See website (retreats or events) for dates and information.

www.rcgreatercharlotte.com

Greater Ohio Valley Area

Retreats, spiritual exercises and enrichment

See web site (events) for dates and information.

www.rcohiovalley.org

Houston Area

Retreats, spiritual exercises and enrichment

See website (resources) for dates and information.

www.thykingdomcome.us

New York/New Jersey/Connecticut Area

Retreats, marriage prep and enrichment

See website (events) for dates and information.

www.regnumchristinyctnj.org

914-244-3685 | info@RegnumChristinyctnj.org

Missions

Online Spiritual Resources/Retreat Guides

www.rcspirituality.org

Study Circle Guides, Ask a Priest - Q&A

contact@rcspirituality.org

Mission Youth Missions – International Missions

See website for dates:

www.missionyouth.com | 855-556-6872

missionyouth@missionnetwork.com

Helping Hands Medical Missions

See website (join) for dates: www.hhmm.org

972-253-1800 | mission@hhmm.org

NEW MASS PROGRAM WEBSITE

More than 900 priests of the Legionaries of Christ celebrate the holy sacrifice of the Mass daily, and each Mass is offered for an intention. That's almost 330,000 Masses every year. Now it's easier than ever to request that Masses be celebrated for your intentions through a new Mass Program website.

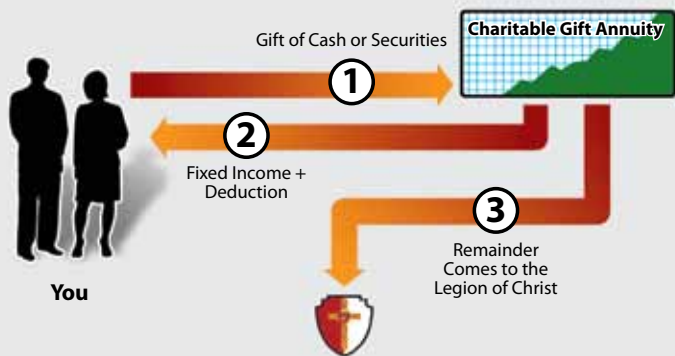
When requesting a Mass or Novena intention, you can select a greeting card from one of many designs with religious art on the cover. Donations received by the Mass program fund the needs of the priests and seminarians of the congregation. To request a Mass, or for more information, go to www.legionmasses.org or contact Barbara DiSpirito at 800.532.7478 ext 2.



THANK YOU FOR OUR 39 NEW PRIESTS!



Easy as One, Two, Three... A Charitable Gift Annuity is a source of lifetime income for you (or you and your spouse) and one way to provide for future generations of priests. Whatever happens in the market, a Legion of Christ charitable gift annuity provides certainty. Here is how it works:



Here is what YOU receive with a Charitable Gift Annuity:

- **Guaranteed Life Income** at an attractive rate of return.
- **Charitable Deduction.** A significant income tax deduction for your gift.
- **Tax-Free Payments.** A large portion of each payment is tax-free.
- **Capital Gains Tax Savings.** When funding the Charitable Gift Annuity with appreciated stocks or mutual funds, you will reduce capital gains taxes.

New Higher Rates!

Age	Rate	Age	Rate
67	/ 5.3%	80	/ 7.3%
70	/ 5.6%	85	/ 8.3%
75	/ 6.2%	90+	/ 9.5%

Rates as of January 1, 2020

Through the Legion of Christ, you can establish a Charitable Gift Annuity for yourself or a loved one that will pay a fixed income stream for life. And it has the added benefit of supporting future seminarians and priests at the same time. **Please return the enclosed short reply form** and we will send you a no-obligation proposal showing what a charitable gift annuity would specifically do for you, for your spouse or a loved one.

Not Yet 67?
Ask us about a deferred charitable gift annuity

Guaranteed Payments...Guaranteed Impact!

I would like a **FREE, no-obligation proposal outlining the benefits of a Legion Charitable Gift Annuity**

- ✓ My date of birth (or the date of birth of the person I want to receive a lifetime income): _____ / _____ / _____
 - ✓ Date of birth of a second person who would continue receiving income (if I so desire): _____ / _____ / _____
 - ✓ Amount I am considering as a Charitable Gift Annuity: \$ _____ (if you are not sure, we will base our proposal on a hypothetical amount of \$10,000)
- Funding in Cash
 Funding by Stock Transfer
 I am not 67. Please send me information on a deferred CGA

NAME (please print): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE #: _____ E-MAIL: _____



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GIFTS IN KIND

Phil Liquori

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Phil.Liquori@sbcglobal.net

Our Mission

We work as Jesus did. We reveal his love, form apostles and send them out to help build the Kingdom of Christ. We help awaken the individual and the family to their mission in life and in the Church.

Who We Are

We are an apostolic movement of evangelization composed of four vocations – Legionaries of Christ, Consecrated Women, Lay Consecrated Men and Lay Members – called to help people discover Christ's love and build his Kingdom.

What We Do

Regnum Christi has a Christ-centered spirituality that is lived together in communion with all members, in union with the whole Church and through a mission to build the Kingdom of Christ.

ON OUR MASTHEAD

Br. Arnold Pyran – Goanives, Haiti

Br. Anthony Garza – Houston, Texas

Missionaries in Action | Witnesses In a Secular World

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Helping Children *DISCOVER* their Faith

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a program to teach catechesis to kids from 18 months old to middle school in a hands-on way. Several Regnum Christi (RC) schools use this, and several Regnum Christi members run it in their local parishes.

The program uses the Montessori Method of learning to engage a child's imagination. Once a theme is introduced, the child can choose an activity by interacting with objects in a prepared environment (called an "atrium") where child-sized representations of fine art, Scripture, and liturgical items impact the child's inner mindscape. Music is another important tool in growing a child's spiritual life.

Sheila Moroney, an RC member who helps run a group at St. Albert the Great Parish in Calgary, Canada, was impressed by how engaged the preschool kids were. She explained, "It was so hands-on for the children. They have things they can hold rather than being told 'stand up here, read this, and do this coloring page.'"

One mom of a child in the program, Amanda Reid, spoke about how her 5-year-old has experienced the program. "He's

learned about the parts of the Mass, and he's grown to appreciate praying more."

Trisha Quilici helps run the program at Canyon Heights Academy, near San Jose. She appreciates how children discover things on their own rather than in a more formal teaching style.

The atrium is a place of spiritual retreat for children where work and study and prayer are all parts of their interior contemplation of God.

Several other Regnum Christi members and schools run the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, including Pinecrest Academy, near Atlanta. More information on CGS can be found at: www.cgsusa.org



A young CGS participant discovers the Eucharist.

"Missionaries in Action" features inspirational people who give of themselves to build the Kingdom of God. For more stories and information about living an active faith, see our website at www.regnumchristi.org