



REGNUM CHRISTI

Discernment Course

Discernment Course: Session 1 A Gift for the Church

The Vocation to Regnum Christi

This document offers information to assist those who are discerning a vocation to Regnum Christi.

Introduction

Regnum Christi was born *as an ecclesial movement of apostolate* that seeks to make present the Kingdom of Christ through the sanctification of its members and through a personal and communal apostolic action so that Jesus Christ may reign in the hearts of all people and of society. (Preamble SRCF)

Regnum Christi members live in dozens of countries, speak many different languages and represent multiple cultures. They hail from a wide spectrum of economic-social status. They are young and old, married and single. They are Catholic.

What they share is a love for Christ and dedication to the New Evangelization. They believe they have a responsibility to evangelize culture and balance personal spiritual formation with apostolic zeal. They are *contemplative and evangelizing*.

Our membership consists of about 21,500 youths, adults, deacons, and priests and 10,000 in our ECYD organization for boys and girls, in more than 30 countries.

Our History

Regnum Christi began as one of the new ecclesial Movements in the church. It was made up of a religious order of priests (The Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ), the Lay Consecrated Men of Regnum Christi, Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi and the lay members who live single or married in the secular world.

The Legionaries of Christ are a religious Congregation of priests, of pontifical rite, founded in 1941 in Mexico. In 1965, Pope Paul VI granted the Decretum Laudis to the Legion. Pope Francis approved their revised constitutions in November of 2014.

The priestly order of the Legionaries of Christ and the Regnum Christi Movement were founded in 1936 by Fr Marcial Maciel, responding to a call that would offer to the Church well-formed priests and lay people with a Christ-centered spirituality and apostolic dynamism to form apostles in the Church and build the Kingdom. The first statutes of Regnum Christi were drafted in 1959. The first groups of lay people in Regnum Christi began in 1968, from the invitation, formation, and guidance of the priests of the Legionaries of Christ.

In November 2004, Saint John Paul II granted definitive approval to the Statutes of the Regnum Christi Apostolic Movement.

After revelations in 2009 that the hidden life of the founder did not exemplify the virtue demanded by Christian morality or the priesthood, Pope Benedict XVI led Regnum Christi in a rediscovery and purification of the charism and mission given by God to all Regnum Christi Members and Legionaries of Christ, under the leadership of Cardinal Velasio de Paolis.

In 2013, the Lay Consecrated Men of Regnum Christi and Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi held assemblies and submitted new statutes to the Holy See for approval. In 2014, the Legionaries of Christ held an extraordinary general chapter, and their revised Constitutions were approved by the Holy See. Finally, in 2016, the lay members of Regnum Christi proposed amended statutes that were submitted to the Vatican for approval later that year.

On May 31, 2019 following this period of renewal, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life canonically established the Regnum Christi Federation and approved its statutes.

The decree of the establishment recognizes that the members of Regnum Christi have received an authentic Charism.

“ The Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ, the Society of Apostolic Life of the Consecrated Women of Regnum Christi, and the Society of Apostolic Life of the Lay Consecrated Men of Regnum Christi, their members and the other faithful individually associated with the Federation, belong to Regnum Christi, a spiritual family and apostolic body.” (SRCF 3)

In this way, the Church has confirmed the identity and charism of Regnum Christi.

What is a charism?

799 CCC Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men and to the needs of the world.

There are many charisms in the Church, and all religious orders and approved Movements have their own charism. All charisms contain elements of Catholic life. Different charisms, emphasize different aspects.

A charism is made up of three parts: Spirituality, Communion and Mission.

How do you know if you are one of those people God has prepared to receive the Regnum Christi charism and called to become a saint by helping that charism unfold in your life?

Those whom God calls will feel something stir within their minds and hearts when they come into contact with other people incarnating the same charism. It may not be automatic or immediate. The stirring may come after extended exposure and participation over a long period of time, for example. The *how* and the *when* of a vocation like this may vary from person to person and are part of the mystery of God's loving action in one's life.

At the same time, it is possible to like and appreciate Regnum Christi members, activities, and apostolates without experiencing any internal resonance or sense of heartfelt attraction. Not everyone in the Church is called to join a movement, and not everyone called to join a movement is called to join Regnum Christi (Bartunek, J. 2019, What is Regnum Christi? pp. 42-43).

Regnum Christi is a Christian Vocation

"The lay members of Regnum Christi are Catholics who, without assuming the evangelical counsels by a sacred bond [i.e., a vow], personally embrace a vocation from God to live their baptismal commitments in the midst of temporal realities according to the charism of Regnum Christi, the fundamental traits of which are described in numbers six to thirty of the Statutes of the Regnum Christi Federation and in this Rule of Life.

This vocation occurs within the context of normal Catholic life and is presented by God as a way to live that life more fully.

Of course, feeling an attraction is not sufficient to discern a vocation to any communal charism, Regnum Christi included. That attraction, or an invitation from a trusted friend or acquaintance, should serve as the beginning of a journey of discovery and discernment on the part of the person who may be called, as well as on the part of the other members of Regnum Christi who are called to welcome in Christ's name those whom the Lord calls into this spiritual family" (Bartunek, J. 2019, What is Regnum Christi? pp. 45-46).

"According to St. John Paul II, the charisms of spiritual families in the Church are characterized by "a profound desire to be conformed to Christ to give witness to some aspect of his mystery." The charism of a spiritual family confers on its members a particular grace to contemplate, live, and communicate a particular mystery of Christ, and thus offer the Church and the world a specific way to make the Mystery of Christ present in its totality (Regnum Christi Identity, 2019).

The Legion of Christ, The Societies of Apostolic Life of Consecrated Women and Lay Consecrated Men of Regnum Christi and the lay members share the same charism, spirituality and mission. We seek to work as Jesus did.

Ultimate Purpose

“We seek to give glory to God and make the Kingdom of Christ present in the hearts of all people and in society, by our sanctification in the state and condition of life to which God has called us, and by personal and communal apostolic action” (SRFC 7).

Our Mission

“To fulfill our mission, we seek to make present the mystery of Christ who goes out to people, reveals the love of his heart to them, gathers them together and forms them as apostles and Christian leaders, sends them out and accompanies them as they collaborate in the evangelization of people and of society” (SRFC 8).

Apostolic Fruitfulness

“Aware that the Kingdom of Christ is a gift and that we cannot build it by human strength alone, we seek to remain always in communion with Christ and with his Church, like the branch on the vine (see John 15:5). As followers and collaborators of Christ the Apostle, we know that prayer, participation in his cross, generosity in the service of others, trust in the action of his grace, and the witness of an authentically Christian life must precede and accompany all our apostolic action” (SRFC 9).

A way of self-giving

“The personal experience of Christ’s love produces an interior urging in our hearts that impels us to passionate self-giving in order to make his Kingdom present: *“caritas Christi urget nos”* (2 Corinthians 5:14). This passion moves us to take on a way of living that is characterized by:

1. accepting that following Christ includes spiritual combat, the struggle marked by perseverance and trust in the Lord in the face of the reality of evil and sin in one’s own life and in society, moved by the power of love to the extreme;
2. undertaking with a magnanimous, enthusiastic, and creative heart the actions that make the Kingdom present in greater depth and extent;
3. going out to address the most pressing needs of the world and the Church;
4. facing challenges with courage and boldness in our personal lives and in the apostolate;
5. making the most of the opportunities that arise in life to proclaim the love of Christ with Christian audacity;

6. fulfilling the responsibilities we assumed and striving to give the best of ourselves both in our formation and in our work” (SRCF 10).

Our Apostolic Activity

“Seeking to respond effectively to the principal needs of evangelization in our own sphere of life and without excluding any type of apostolic activity, we undertake initiatives and establish apostolic works directed especially at proclaiming the faith and spreading Catholic doctrine; at the Christian formation and education of children, adolescents and young adults; at the promotion of marriage and the family; at vocation ministry; at the evangelization of the professions, of culture and of the media; and at the promotion of social justice and the practice of the works of mercy”(SRCF 11).

We employ our principles and charism to work in cooperation with and in support of the church at all levels. We serve the Church and its pastors in every way we can, wherever it has need – especially in the formation of apostles at the service of the Church.

With this specific charism, joining Regnum Christi is different from joining a club. Becoming a member of Regnum Christi is an answer to a call from God, a vocation within the state in life you are living.

It means taking time and effort to gradually discover and fulfill God’s plan for your life by assimilating and living out the Regnum Christi charism. It means joining one of the Holy Spirit’s newest additions to the family of spiritual and apostolic associations within the Church.

“The charism of a spiritual family confers on its members a particular grace to contemplate, live, and communicate a particular Mystery of Christ, and thus offer the Church and the world a specific way to make the Mystery of Christ present in its totality” (Regnum Christi Identity pp.12-13).

Youth in the Regnum Christi Spiritual Family

ECYD is an international, Catholic association of adolescents, ages 11-16, who make a pledge of friendship with Christ and with each other to build up a new world according to the Gospel. As children of the Regnum Christi Spiritual Family, ECYD adolescents live out the Regnum Christi Charism according to their age (ECYD Statutes 1&2).

- ECYD is an acronym that represents “encounters, convictions. your decisions,”
- Friendship with Christ is the specific characteristic of Christ-centeredness in ECYD.

What is Discernment?

"This is discernment" - the process of prayerfully and mindfully making decisions.

How to discern the call to Regnum Christi?

Every day we face decisions, big & small, about life (school, career, work, relationships), priorities and goals, how to spend our time, what to pay attention to and what to put off for another day. How do we make these choices? How do we weigh competing values?

Everything in this world is presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily. Thus, our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want, and I choose what will give the most glory to God and be expressive of my own deepest self, my authentic self.

The Process of Discernment

1. Become Aware

A confirmed awareness of resonating with the Regnum Christi charism will eventually lead a person to ask the question: Is God inviting me to become a Regnum Christi member?

2. Understand

Obtain the necessary information to decide prayerfully and intelligently if God is calling you to a vocation in Regnum Christi.

What is drawing me naturally to this specific vocation?

- What are my gifts?
- What motives are driving me in my choices? (purity of intention)
- Where am I best suited to serve Christ and others?

(As you gather information, it is good to involve others in your discernment process, especially those who will be affected by this decision; spouse, children, and other family members.

Consider their thoughts, feelings and desires about the possibility of you becoming a member of Regnum Christi.)

Spiritual Guidance is recommended as part of your discernment. Spiritual Guides can help you process what you may be experiencing in your prayer life and what and why you are experiencing regarding possible association into Regnum Christi.

3. Take Action

Pray for inner freedom and balance that allows you not to be inclined more toward one alternative or option than to the other. Contemplate, “What is the most loving choice I can make? What is the choice that helps me live out my Christian vocation as God wills?”

Consider possible obstacles that can distract you from proper discernment: unhealthy attachments, perfectionism, fears, lack of control, past hurts etc.

...it is proper for the good spirit to lead primarily through “strength, consolations, tears, inspirations, and peace. This He does by making all easy, by removing all obstacles so that the soul goes forward in doing good” (315).

Ask yourself if you feel “blessed” by your decision, in the sense of experiencing: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23)? This awareness of these thoughts, and feelings are all parts of your inner experience of the Holy Spirit accompanying you to the truth.

These feelings of consolation guide your decision when they lead you in the direction of loving and serving God, those around you, and your authentic self. (These feelings are different from emotions that point towards desires shaped by disordered attachments directed only at selfish ways.)

If your feelings alter between consolation and what we might call “desolation” praying for purity and openness to God will help.

Trust God and make a decision based upon the outcome of your discernment, even if you are not certain about it.

4. Look for Confirmation in Your Choice

Points to Ponder:

- God uses others to lead and guide us into action
- Do I have interior peace?
- Do I have the affirmation of others?
- What does my Spiritual Guide think (if you have one)?