



**LAISSER
UNE
EMPREINTE
DURABLE**

350 ANS D'EXCELLENCE

**CHAIR OF RESEARCH AND TEACHING
ON THE CONSECRATED LIFE**

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES



**UNIVERSITÉ
LAVAL**

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

A COMPREHENSIVE FACULTY



UNIVERSITÉ
LAVAL

Faculté de théologie et
de sciences religieuses

The Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies (FTRS) of the University of Laval is the oldest francophone faculty of theology in Quebec. In fact, it is the last standing faculty of theology in the province. It grants civil and canonical degrees recognized by the Holy See.

The Faculty offers programs of study leading to university degrees at all three levels (bachelor's, master's, and doctorate) as well as a master's and doctorate in practical theology. A number of our students are preparing for ministry as priests, permanent deacons, or lay pastoral agents.

Our innovative Faculty offers several online courses and off-campus courses in the Montreal area and elsewhere in Quebec, serving students from across the province and beyond. Open to the world, our programs promote mobility and we collaborate with other universities in Canada and around the globe. Our courses and programs attract and welcome students from other faculties at the University of Laval and, due to the broad reach and quality of our teaching and research, we participate in other programs on campus that have sought out our expertise.

A RICH AND DIVERSE COMMUNITY

The Faculty serves some 600 students from all over Quebec, Canada, and abroad. More than 1 out of 7 students are from abroad, especially those who are registered in our master's and doctoral programs. Many of these students belong to religious or secular institutes, societies of apostolic life, new communities, or ecclesial movements established in Quebec.

The Faculty boasts several thousand graduates since its founding. A significant number of members of institutes of consecrated life have been educated – and continue to be educated – here at the Faculty.

The Faculty celebrates its highly qualified professors, course and faculty lecturers, as well as its many associate professors.

A UNIQUE AND DYNAMIC MILIEU FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Here at the Faculty, various research groups bring together professors-researchers around fascinating research subjects, often in collaboration with other faculties or other university establishments, in Canada or abroad. The dynamism of these groups is expressed in the form of scientific activities and the Faculty hosts several conferences, seminars, and colloquia, many on an international scale.

The influence of our researchers stems from the significant number of their publications and from conferences, here and abroad, in which they are invited to participate.

Financial support is offered to students in the form of scholarships and research or teaching assistantships. This assistance encourages students to pursue graduate studies and allows them to develop research projects and connect to one of the Faculty's research groups, among other things,

— CONTEXT

CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

The consecrated life, like an ecosystem, is constantly evolving. Centuries-old and well-established foundations stand side by side with new shoots, as it were, that are sometimes fragile, but herald promise. The old nourishes the new. The new draws life from the old. So it is with the cycles of life and death, and the resurgences that have characterized the consecrated life throughout history. Today, the consecrated life, particularly in the Western world, faces great challenges. In some cases, it is a question of legacy and transmission. In others, it is the challenge of the present and the future. Broadly, though, changes in the consecrated life require careful examination and support through a theological reflection that is firmly anchored in Church tradition, is open to the renewing breath of the Holy Spirit, and is attentive to the social and ecclesial contexts of the day.

However, for this to happen, there must be a forum – a place – that promotes and stirs such reflection.

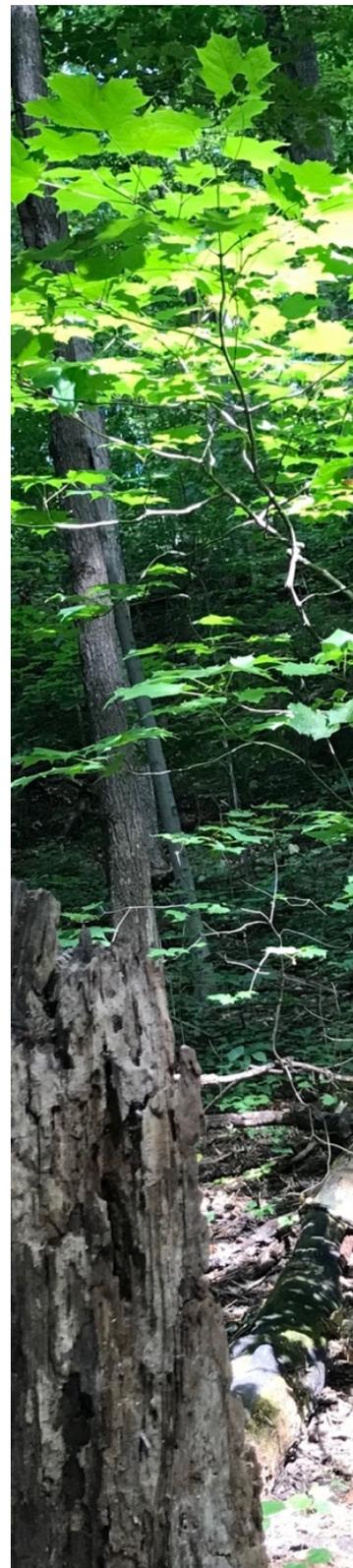
RESPONDING TO CURRENT NEEDS

Over the years, although it has never been a specialized subject in its own right, the study of the consecrated life has always been present at the FTRS through our teaching, publications, and in our supervision of master’s and doctoral theses. This work has been carried out in contexts other than a particular discipline dedicated to the study of the consecrated life. Ecclesiology, Church history, or even spirituality, for example, have often been the privileged frameworks used to address this subject. In addition, the Faculty has hosted events related to the consecrated life, such as the “Wake Up the World” colloquium that marked the Year of Consecrated Life in 2015, or, more recently, a colloquium consisting of a series of midday lectures (from January 10 to March 10, 2021) on the topic of women engaged in religious life (entitled: “Mystical, Spiritual, Ascetic, and Monastic Motherhoods: Explorations of the Religious and the Maternal”). We would be remiss not to also call to the fore here our summer school programs offered over the years at the Trappist monastery of Val Notre-Dame of Saint-Jean-de-Matha or at the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Benoît-du-Lac.

Despite these achievements, the Faculty nevertheless considers that the needs and challenges of the day require the development of an expertise that is explicitly dedicated to the consecrated life.

The changing face of the study of theology in educational establishments in Quebec and, more broadly, in French-speaking Canada, compels the FTRS – the only establishment in Quebec offering a theological education at all three levels and whose programs are recognized by the Congregation for Catholic Education – to assume a certain responsibility here. This situation entails obligations and the Faculty would be delighted to count the study of the consecrated life among its programs of excellence. This is a need and we must carefully tend to it.

Considering this and in response to the concerns and questions raised by many concerned parties, we propose the creation of a Chair of Research and Teaching on the Consecrated Life.



A PRIVILEGED PLACE

In light of the current state of university teaching and research on theology, in both French-speaking and English-speaking Canada, the FTRS of the University of Laval is one of the rare places where it is possible to envision university-level training in the field of consecrated life.

No program of this kind exists in Quebec or Canada. To find university-level programs or centers given to the study of the consecrated life, one would have to travel to, say, the United States (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, Georgetown University, Washington; Center for the Study of Consecrated Life, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago), Italy (Istituto di Teologia della Vita Consacrata “Claretianum”, Pontificia Università Lateranense, Rome), Spain (Cátedra de Teología para la Vida Consagrada, Universidad Eclesiástica San Dámaso, Madrid; Instituto Teológico de Vida Religiosa, Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, Madrid), or France (Centre Sèvres, Paris).



The creation of a Chair of Research and Teaching on the Consecrated Life here at the FTRS of the University of Laval will provide a privileged place for reflection on this subject in Quebec, Canada, and the world.

— FOSTERING THE STUDY OF THE CONSECRATED LIFE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LAVAL

AIM

The secular development of the consecrated life has made it “a plant with many branches, which sinks its roots into the Gospel and brings forth abundant fruit in every season of the Church’s life” (*Vita Consecrata* 5). In its various forms, the fundamental project of the consecrated life remains substantially the same: a vital consecration to God, in the Church and for the world.

Taking into account the unity and the rich diversity of this Christian way of life, the Chair of Research and Teaching on the Consecrated Life will focus, on the one hand, on canonical forms of consecrated life: consecrated virgins, diocesan hermits, consecrated widows and widowers, religious institutes, secular institutes. On the other hand, the Chair will also be interested in forms of evangelical life related to the consecrated life: societies of apostolic life, new communities, laypersons associated with institutes of consecrated life, new ecclesial movements comprising a nucleus of consecrated persons, New Beguinage, New Monasticism, etc.

QUESTIONS

The Chair of Research and Teaching on the Consecrated Life intends to be a dynamic interface, a place of encounter and exchange between the academic world and that of the consecrated life. In this way, the Chair will be interested in exploring a wide range of questions. Some are of a general nature, such as the biblical and theological roots of the consecrated life, its unfolding throughout history, and its meaning in the world today. Others are more specific, such as the contribution of consecrated women to the life of the Church and to society, the commitment of communities to mission, the sustainability of religious institutions, the intergenerational and intercultural challenges in community experiences, the drawing in and the training of new members, the accompaniment of new communities, etc.

APPROACHES

Although at home in theology, the Chair of Research and Teaching on the Consecrated Life will also call upon related disciplines, such as history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, canon law, etc. In addition to an interdisciplinary approach, the Chair will also adopt a practical approach that is focussed on the needs and challenges of concerned milieus.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

The Chair will focus on the development of a vast network of partners and collaborators from academic, religious, and social milieus, which share interests and pursue objectives related to those of the Chair.

In addition to institutes of consecrated life, which, on an individual basis, will be associated with it, the Chair will also be able to count on another major partner: the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC), a reference organization for the leaders of some 240 religious communities and societies of apostolic life in Canada.



OBJECTIVES

Along with the general objective of the Chair – which is the theological, multidisciplinary, and practical study of the consecrated life – the Chair will take up the following specific objectives:

- to develop, at the University of Laval, cutting-edge expertise in the field of consecrated life;
- to act as a center of excellence and reference on this subject in Quebec, Canada, and the world;
- to offer training and to encourage research as well as publication in the field of consecrated life;
- to train new experts capable of reflecting on current issues regarding the consecrated life and of participating/intervening pertinently in milieus of related interest.

ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

The Chair will organize and offer a number of activities and resources, including:

- credited activities (courses, seminars, summer school programs, distance learning);
- graduate studies (master's and doctorate in theology | practical theology | religious studies);
- research and publication projects (books, articles, research projects);

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- outreach activities (tailor-made trainings, video clips, community consultation and support, study days, thematic conferences, and involvement in milieus of related interest);
 - hosting events (seminars, conferences, book launches);
 - personnel (professors, researchers, specialists) and documentation resources (university library, documentation center on new communities and new ecclesial movements).

GOVERNANCE, FINANCING, AND THE CHAIRHOLDER

The creation of the Chair of Research and Teaching on the Consecrated Life would be fully supported by a sustainable capitalized fund from which only the income would be used to pay the salary of the person holding the Chair. The Chairholder would be hired part-time or full-time, depending on the income generated by the Support Fund for the Chair.

The objective is to endow the Chair with a Support Fund of more than \$2 million. This Fund would be dedicated exclusively to the support of the Chair on the Consecrated Life: the payment of the holder's salary and, where appropriate, support for the organization of scientific activities or continuing education and the offering of scholarships.

This Fund would be fully capitalized and only the income would be used to support the Chair, which would guarantee its sustainability and continuity over time.

The Fund would be administered, according to the standards and protocols in place at the University of Laval for similar cases, by a steering committee composed of the dean of the Faculty, the Chairholder, a professor from the Faculty, and a representative of the donors. A scientific committee, on which partners and professors from the Faculty would sit, would be called upon to draw up the scientific program of the Chair every year.

The Chairholder, hired full-time or part-time - depending on the capital of the Fund and the income it would generate - will be recognized on the basis of her or his specialization in the field of consecrated life, its classic forms, or its emerging forms (new communities). She or he will be appointed professor at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Laval.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Gilles Routhier, professor

Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses
Pavillon Félix-Antoine-Savard, local 730
2325, rue des Bibliothèques
Université Laval, Québec (Québec)
G1V 0A6

Téléphone : 418-656-2131, extension 407510

Courriel : Gilles.Routhier@ftr.ulaval.ca