

For Immediate Release

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Grant Award to Support New Community-based Theological Education and Formation Program for Catholic Religious

CHICAGO, IL. - The Religious Formation Conference (RFC) is pleased to announce that it has received a generous grant from the GHR Foundation to support a partnership with Catholic Theological Union (CTU) and itself to offer theological education and formation to Catholic religious. *Together: A Collaborative for Theological Education, Formation and Community* establishes a community-based, residential theology program of study and formation.

Sister Ellen Dauwer, SC, RFC Executive Director, believes the funding will greatly contribute to this one-of-a-kind opportunity for women and men religious. "We are excited about this support as it affirms our model of collaboration and ensures that the RFC and CTU can continue to innovate in the areas of theological education and formation. The focus on community and the intercongregational, intercultural, and intergenerational character of this program give expression to the emerging reality of religious life in the 21st century. We are thrilled to be working with CTU to offer *Together*. It embodies the best of our ministries, academic excellence and exceptional formation."

Sister Barbara Reid, OP, Vice President and Academic Dean at CTU, extolled the potential of this new partnership. "At a time when the Church needs well-prepared ministers in every kind of ministry, this exciting new program prepares sisters and brothers academically, spiritually, and communally to meet the needs of an ever-changing global Church and world."

Together will be offered as a pilot program beginning with this Fall semester 2018. It is open to religious who have completed at least one year of novitiate (canonical year), who have not yet made their final profession. *Together* will consist of at least one full year of study at CTU that would lead to a certificate in an area of theology/spirituality; however two or three years of study will be encouraged to enable participants to earn a master's degree in theology or a Master of Divinity degree.

In addition to their academic pursuits, participants will share community in a designated area in the residence hall and take part in ongoing formation together. They will engage formative elements such as theological reflection, spiritual direction, and experiences that foster interpersonal skills for community living, intercultural capacities, effective communication, and other integrative learning. This living/learning community will enable a holistic integration of the intellectual, human, spiritual, and pastoral. *Together* will foster transformative growth and development that springs forth from peer communities that challenge and support each other.

Those interested in *Together* can visit the program's website, www.together-formation.com for more information or contact Ryan Hoffmann, RFC Associate Director, by email at rhoffmann@relforcon.org.

About the Religious Formation Conference (RFC)

The Religious Formation Conference (RFC) is a national Roman Catholic organization serving religious institutes of women and men with programs and services for those in the ministry of initial and lifelong formation, and general congregational membership. For more information visit www.relforcon.org.

About Catholic Theological Union (CTU)

CTU is a Roman Catholic graduate school of theology and ministry. Its mission is to prepare effective leaders for the Church, ready to witness to Christ's good news of justice, love, and peace. CTU's 4,000 vowed religious women and men and lay graduates are serving in 60 countries worldwide. To learn more go to ctu.edu.

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