

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Catholic Theological Union Receives Lilly Endowment Grant to Strengthen Science-Informed Preaching**

October 11, 2023 – Chicago. Catholic Theological Union (CTU) has received a grant of \$1.249 million from Lilly Endowment Inc as part of the Compelling Preaching Initiative. This initiative is designed to foster and support preaching that inspires, encourages, and guides people to come to know and love God and to live out their Christian faith more fully.

CTU is one of 81 organizations receiving grants. Reflecting the diversity of Christianity in the United States, the organizations are affiliated with mainline Protestant, evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox, Anabaptist and Pentecostal faith communities. Many of the organizations are rooted in the Black Church and in Hispanic and Asian American Christian traditions.

“Throughout history, preachers often have needed to adapt their preaching practices to engage new generations of hearers more effectively,” said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion. “We are pleased that the organizations receiving grants in this initiative will help pastors and others in ministry engage in the kinds of preaching needed today to ensure that the gospel message is heard and accessible for all audiences.”

Building on its groundbreaking Preaching with the Sciences initiative, CTU’s Compelling Preaching project is a pioneering partnership with the renowned psychologist Howard Nusbaum of the University of Chicago. Designed to discover how neuroscience and allied fields can enable more effective preaching, the project will conduct empirical studies on real-time preaching and monitor its effects on both English and Spanish-speaking congregations. The goal is to help preachers better understand the impact of their homilies on assemblies. It is also intended to enable those who educate preachers to adapt their pedagogies for shaping new generations of compelling homilists.

“This is a unique and necessary dialogue between science and preaching that promises visionary contributions to the homiletic and liturgical arts,” says Edward Foley, Capuchin, who will oversee the grant. For more information, you can contact Edward Foley at [foley@ctu.edu](mailto:foley@ctu.edu).

**About Catholic Theological Union**

Catholic Theological Union is a Roman Catholic graduate school of theology and ministry located in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago. Its mission is to prepare effective leaders for the Church, ready to witness to Christ’s good news of justice, love, and peace. More than 4,500 CTU alumni, -vowed religious and lay women and men- have gone on to minister in 60 countries worldwide. CTU was founded in 1968, following the Second Vatican Council, during a time of dramatic renewal in the Catholic Church. Fifty years later, CTU has evolved into a premier school of theology and ministry, enjoying a global reputation for academic and pastoral excellence.

**About Lilly Endowment Inc.**

Lilly Endowment Inc. is a private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. The principal aim of the Endowment’s religion grantmaking is to deepen and enrich the lives of American Christians, primarily by seeking out and supporting efforts that enhance the vitality of congregations and strengthen the pastoral and lay leadership of Christian communities. The Endowment also seeks to improve public understanding of diverse religious traditions by supporting fair and accurate portrayals of the role religion plays in the United States and across the globe.