For Immediate Release

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Peacebuilders Initiative Receives $775,000 Grant from Lilly Endowment

Chicago, IL, January 6, 2010…. The Bernardin Center at Catholic Theological Union (CTU) is pleased to announce that their high school leadership training program, Peacebuilders Initiative, was the recipient of a grant of $775,000 from Lilly Endowment, Inc. The grant will assist the program as it seeks to become self-sustaining through fees and fundraising efforts. This additional grant will provide for nearly half of the Initiative’s costs through 2016.

“We continue to be humbled by the generosity of Lilly Endowment and its commitment to providing youth with the tools and training to be peacebuilders in our world,” stated Megan Kennedy-Farrell, director of Peacebuilders Initiative. “Through its support we have been able to train and prepare nearly four hundred young people who are now scattered across the country and the globe working for peace and justice.”

Peacebuilders Initiative was founded in 2001 through a $2 million Endowment grant. Each summer more than fifty high school juniors and seniors join CTU faculty and adult mentors for a week-long intensive program on Catholic social teaching where they learn theology, ministry skills, and different forms of prayer. This week begins their year-long commitment to the Initiative. Throughout the year, these high school students stay connected with their mentors, create and implement a Peace Project in their schools or communities, and participate in two retreats.

“As a school of theology we recognize the importance of handing on the traditions of our faith to the next generation. Peacebuilders Initiative has been very successful in doing exactly that,” says Donald Senior, C.P., president of Catholic Theological Union. “Through this additional grant, Lilly Endowment is clearly telling us that we are doing something that is of lasting value. We intend to continue this very important work.”

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About the Bernardin Center for Theology and Ministry: Established in 1997 with the blessing of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin to build upon his work and vision, the Center has an array of initiatives focused on the late Cardinal’s signature issues of reconciliation and peacemaking, leadership development for the Church, interreligious dialogue, the consistent ethic of life, and Catholic Common Ground. Through scholarships, Catholics On Call, Peacebuilders Initiative, Catholic Common Ground Initiative, public lectures, conferences, theological research and other programs, the Center advances the work of peace, justice, and reconciliation.

About Catholic Theological Union: Catholic Theological Union (CTU), located in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago, is the largest Roman Catholic school of theology and ministry in the United States. CTU educates five hundred clergy, religious, and lay persons pursuing master and doctoral level degrees in various areas of theology and ministry. Nearly one third of its student body is international from more than forty countries worldwide. In addition to its courses on Catholic theology, the school also has highly respected programs in Jewish studies and in Islamic studies—both intended to promote dialogue and mutual respect among the Abrahamic faiths. Through its degree programs and other educational and formational opportunities, CTU strives to educate effective leaders for the Church whose mission is to witness Christ’s good news of justice, love, and peace to people of all nations.

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