It is with deep gratitude that I share about the richness of my experience as an Arthur J. Schmitt Scholar at Catholic Theological Union. As I finish up my first full year at CTU, I reflect on the many gifts of this education made possible by the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation, the enriching co-curricular activities offered at CTU, and the wisdom gleaned from the book *Quest for Leadership: The Arthur J. Schmitt Story*. With the assistance of this scholarship, I hope and believe that I have furthered the mission of the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation to preserve its founder’s memory and create a better and more humane world by developing my personal leadership skills and academic and ministerial achievements. In this brief essay, I hope to meaningfully share about these gifts that have been extended to me.

As a younger Catholic Sister and a social justice lawyer, studying theology at CTU has rooted me deeper in our Roman Catholic tradition, teachings, and theology and has helped me apply what I learn to our country’s present day realities that call for our attention and energy to create social change. It is providing me with a solid foundation from which all else in my works will flow. My classes at CTU this year included *Reading the New Testament through the Eyes, Mind, and Heart of a Woman*, *The Mystery of Human Suffering (Theodicy)*, *Religious Life for the 21st Century: Creating Communities of Hope on a Global Scale*, *Methods in Theology and Ethics*, and *Christology and Culture*. These courses helped me develop and articulate my own theology, helped me answer or deepen the mystery of life’s big questions, further advance a theology for Religious Life today, and contribute to the world of academia. These classes took me outside of my personal box and helped me better identify my personal gifts and deepest desires which are those of God.

Outside of the classroom, the learning community of CTU helped me live out one of the gifts of Arthur J. Schmitt to be both “relational and prophetic.” Preparing prayers and rituals for events like our Earth Day Celebration in April helped me take initiative and develop my spiritual leadership skills. Volunteering as a greeter and sharing hospitality at events such as Sandra Schneider, IHM’s presentation on Religious Life and the Blessed are the Peacemakers annual event honoring Donald Senior, CP helped me network and make meaningful connections with the broader CTU community, alumni, and friends. Volunteering with logistics and as an exhibitor at CTU’s inaugural Ministry Showcase in the fall helped me connect with others seeking potential ministry placement. It also allowed me to share about one of my ministries this year at The Well Spirituality Center, a regional center for the telling of the Universe Story, where people of all faiths and cultures are invited to recognize and affirm our communion with God and all creation; to experience an atmosphere for spiritual, physical, and emotional wholeness; and to participate in the sacred processes of healing and caring for Earth and her people. Attending co-curricular seminars and presentations such as Professor Steve Bevan’s presentation on the Creeds, helped me gain a better understanding of our Catholic and Christian traditions and beliefs. Building meaningful relationships with other students, faculty and staff have enriched my life personally, spiritually, and professionally. There is no other theological institution in the world where a coming together of a diverse Catholic community and from numerous Religious
congregations takes place. Events such as the OLA student gathering to support our Latino scholarship recipients create a space and nourish our relationships that will last into the future.

In my ministries as an attorney for national social justice movements, a volunteer in Nazareth Academy’s Campus Ministry office planning and facilitating retreats and community service projects for students, and at The Well Spirituality Center in LaGrange Park, Illinois, I have been able to live out the teaching of Arthur J. Schmitt by listening to others and meeting the needs of the people I serve. I hope to “use my abilities and power to fashion a better and humane world” now and in the future. As a scholarship recipient, I plan to continue to work toward being an “engineer of the soul,” as Arthur J. Schmitt said “Maybe what the world needs more than anything else are engineers of the soul.”