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CTU launches Center for the Study of Consecrated Life, only center of its kind in the United States

CHICAGO – The new Center for the Study of Consecrated Life will launch at Catholic Theological Union (CTU) on February 12, 2015. The goal of the center is to engage in global dialogue and research on contemporary issues in consecrated life today. CSCL was created in part as a response to the designation of 2015 as the “Year of Consecrated Life” by Pope Francis.

The center’s first director, Sister Maria Cimperman, RSCJ, PhD, is a member of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She is an associate professor of Catholic theological ethics at CTU. In addition to working on areas of contemporary religious life, her scholarship is at the intersection of moral theology, social ethics, and spirituality.

Of the need for CSCL, Cimperman said, “Religious communities are a vital presence in today’s global Catholic Church. With new forms of consecrated life also emerging, there is a compelling need for a center where the theology, spirituality and history of religious and consecrated life can be studied, and where collaboration, dialogue, and creativity will yield valuable resources for these communities worldwide.”

Currently in the United States, no other institution exists that is engaged in the study of consecrated life. “An international school of theology such as CTU is the perfect venue from which to collaboratively engage in scholarship and conversations of consequence in the service of the Church and the world,” said Cimperman.

The launch will feature two speakers. The Rev. Robert Schreiter, CPPS, Vatican Council II professor of theology at CTU, will address “Re-imagining Consecrated Life in a Changing World.” Sister Maria will speak on “Hope Encounters: Consecrated Life for Our Times.” The day will include opportunities for dialogue, reflection, and prayer. Another symposium is planned for October 2015.

CSCL plans to offer yearly courses, workshops, and symposia on topics such as: vowed life in today’s world; community living that welcomes a diversity of cultures; and collaborative models of church among religious congregations. “We want to encourage new scholarship across disciplines, provide processes for dialogue, assist in the discovery of new vocations, and explore the internationality of consecrated life,” said Cimperman. More information on the center can be found at: http://www.ctu.edu/consecratedlife

In the Roman Catholic Church, “consecrated life” is used to describe a stable way of life, recognized by the Church and characterized by a constant search to conform oneself to the life of Jesus Christ. One of the most well-known forms is religious life in which members, drawn to a particular spirituality and charism, express their dedication through the profession of the public vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

About Catholic Theological Union: CTU’s mission is to prepare effective leaders for the Church, ready to witness to Christ’s good news of justice, love, and peace. Founded in 1968, CTU is a Roman Catholic graduate school of theology and ministry sponsored by 24 men’s religious communities. Located in Chicago, Illinois, its more than 4,000 lay and vowed religious graduates serve in 60 countries.

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