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## For Immediate Release

### **Dr. Mary Catherine Hilkert, OP and Dr. Rami Nashashibi to Receive Honorary Doctorates from Chicago's Catholic Theological Union**

Chicago, May 11, 2021. Catholic Theological Union (CTU) will present honorary doctorates at the 53<sup>rd</sup> annual commencement to Sr. Mary Catherine Hilkert, OP, PhD and Rami Nashashibi, PhD. Hilkert will receive a Doctorate in Theology, *honoris causa*; Nashashibi will receive a Doctorate in Ministry, *honoris causa*. Honorary degrees are conferred annually by the CTU faculty and Board of Trustees upon individuals whose contributions to the fields of scholarship and service reflect the values to which Catholic Theological Union is committed.

Dr. Hilkert is a member of the Dominican Sisters of Peace, has served as Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame since 1995. In addition to her service in the Department of Theology, she is also a Faculty Fellow at the Kroc Peace Institute for International Peace Studies and an Affiliated Faculty member in the Department of Gender Studies. She is Past President of the Catholic Theological Society of America. Her teaching and writing focus on the interrelationship between theology, preaching and spirituality. She is the author or editor of five books and numerous essays and book chapters. She has twice received awards at Notre Dame for excellence in teaching. Hilkert has lectured and preached in Catholic and ecumenical contexts in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, and South Africa.

As a member of the Order of Preachers, Hilkert has developed a rich theology and spirituality of preaching, including preaching by lay persons. Her book, *Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination*, has been widely acclaimed and is a standard reference in the field.

Hilkert has also been a leader in the field of Catholic feminist theology. In her writing and lecturing she lifts up the voices of women across the world in interpreting and proclaiming the Gospel. This is reflected in her book, *Speaking with Authority: Catherine of Siena and the Voices of Women Today*.

Her doctoral research on the theology of another Dominican, Edward Schillebeeckx, has borne fruit in a number of publications and lectures. In a particular way, she has lectured on the experience of suffering in the world, a topic that is central to the theology of Schillebeeckx. Hilkert's thoughtful and sensitive reflections on this profound mystery have enriched and inspired many audiences.

Dr. Nashashibi is the founder and Executive Director of the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), a non-profit organization incorporated in 1997 that fosters health, wellness, and healing on Chicago's South Side and Atlanta's west end by organizing for social change, cultivating the arts, and operating a holistic health center.

As a community leader building bridges across racial, religious, and socioeconomic divides to confront the challenges of poverty and disinvestment in urban communities, Nashashibi has successfully unified a diverse set of constituencies around a shared focus of social justice. He serves on the board of directors of the Margaret Casey Foundation and in 2020, Nashashibi made his debut as musician, song-writer, and executive producer of "THIS LOVE THING", a soul-stirring album.

In 2009, Nashashibi was named one of the 500 most influential Muslims by The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre and the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University. In 2014, the Center for American Progress listed Nashashibi as one of "14 Faith Leaders to Watch in 2014." In 2017, Nashashibi was named a MacArthur Fellow, for "confronting the challenges of poverty and disinvestment in urban communities through a Muslim-led civic engagement effort that bridges race, class, and religion." In 2018, he won the Opus Prize, a faith-based award for social entrepreneurship.

Nashashibi has lectured around the world on a range of topics related to American Muslim identity, community organizing and social justice issues and has received many prestigious community service and organizing honors. He has been featured in several prominent media publications including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and multiple stories on *PBS*, *CBS*, and *National Public Radio*.

Sr. Barbara Reid, OP, President of CTU, remarked that in a year when healing is sorely needed on so many levels in the church and world, these two honorees embody ways to accomplish this through their commitment to seek and proclaim truth and to act for justice.

The [virtual commencement ceremony](#) will take place May 20, 2021 at 3:00 pm Central time celebrating the accomplishments of graduates representing fourteen countries. Forty graduates will receive certificates or Master level degrees in the areas of Intercultural Studies and Ministry; Mission Studies, Pastoral Studies; and Theology. Twenty-two will receive a Master of Divinity degree and six will receive a Doctor of Ministry degree.

### **About Catholic Theological Union**

Catholic Theological Union 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 4,500 vowed religious women and men and lay graduates are serving in 60 countries worldwide.

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