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May 12, 2017

Dear Partner and Friend of Catholics on Call,

I am writing this letter to let you know of some important developments in our Catholics on Call program. We have decided that *we will not hold a Young Adult Conference this year—in August of 2017.*

We at Catholics on Call have come to this decision after much deliberation and after consulting with Catholic Theological Union President Mark Francis, CSV. A number of factors have contributed to this difficult decision. First, and at the beginning of last fall, our Catholics on Call Program Coordinator, Paola Tai, was transferred by her Focolare community from Chicago to Vancouver, British Columbia, in Canada. We thought that we would be able to keep up with the work that Catholics on Call entails with our two assistants in the Bernardin Center, Andrew Cirillo and Esther Sanborn. However, due to a large amount of additional work at the Bernardin Center, Andrew and Esther realized that they could not really do all the work that Paola had done to prepare the Young Adult Conference successfully.

In addition, after sixteen years of service as the Director of the Bernardin Center, which oversees the Catholics on Call program, Sheila McLaughlin decided to retire, effective on April 7, 2017. Catholic Theological Union is currently searching for Sheila's successor, and the new director should be in place by July 1, 2017. The transition to a new director, however, will also mean a restructuring of the Bernardin Center itself, including the Catholics on Call staff. Currently, I am serving as Interim Director of the Bernardin Center, but I cannot organize the Young Adult Conference without a proper staff.

All this does *not* mean, however, that we are ending the Catholics on Call program. We will still hold our Partner Conference in the fall. It is scheduled for September 21-22, 2017. We have already engaged our main speaker—nationally-known youth minister, speaker, and author Frank Mercadante, who will speak on contemporary culture in the United States. Frank has published *Engaging a New Generation: A Vision for Reaching Catholic Teens* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2012) and *Positively Dangerous: Live Loud, Be Real, Change the World* (Saint Mary's Press, 2003), in addition to many other works. You can see a short clip of his work at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DI-0jUAZfsU>. We will also continue to maintain our webpage and social media presence, post Partner events, and publish our weekly scripture reflections, authored by Catholics on Call alumni and faculty, including myself as I continue as the Catholics on Call Faculty Moderator.

With this letter, we are sending out renewal notices to all of you, our partners. Along with the

Basic Partnership fee of \$100.00 per year, we will be offering, as we have the last two years, “enhanced” levels of partnership at \$300.00 and \$500.00, including an Ultimate Partnership fee of \$1,000.00. This will allow you to participate more fully in our ministry if you wish. To find out more about each partnership level, see the enclosed Partnership Renewal Form.

The decision not to hold our annual Young Adult Conference, the actual “flagship” component of our Catholics on Call program, has been, as I have said, a reluctant one. Given the circumstances, however, our judgment is that it would be best if the Bernardin Center’s new director, together with its new staff, have the necessary time to adjust to the position. We wanted to let you know, however, before we posted the news of these developments on our website.

Our hope is that you, our partner and friend, will continue to support us as we work to continue a program that has helped several hundred young adults in the past decade to find direction for their lives. For that support we are very grateful, and we thank you in advance for it. We would be glad to answer any further questions you may have, or discuss other ways that Catholics on Call might be of service to you, even without the Young Adult Conference this year.

With every good wish for your important ministries—

Sincerely,



Steve Bevens, SVD  
Interim Director, The Bernardin Center for Theology and Ministry at Catholic Theological Union  
Faculty Moderator, Catholics on Call