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NFCYM Receives Grant for a New Storytelling Initiative

WASHINGTON D.C., - The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) has received a \$5,000,000 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. through its National Storytelling Initiative on Christian Faith and Life 2025. The grant will support a change in the way the Church in the United States sees, hears, and values its young people, replacing the prevailing narrative of disaffiliation with the powerful, hope-filled stories of young people who are choosing to remain in the faith and ensuring their witness shines as a source of inspiration for years to come.

The Endowment is making the grants through a competitive round of its National Storytelling Initiative on Christian Faith and Life (Storytelling Initiative). The initiative seeks to help organizations identify, produce and share compelling stories about ways that Christians from many different backgrounds and in a broad range of settings are living vibrant lives of faith and engaging in acts of love and service for others.

This five-year initiative will allow NFCYM to launch the largest Catholic youth-led storytelling effort in the United States. By awarding over \$3,600,000 in microgrants, the project will equip 150 Catholic dioceses, schools, parishes, and media organizations to identify, produce, and share compelling stories of Catholic teenagers and young adults whose lives bear authentic witness to Christian faith and life. These locally created stories will be amplified through a coordinated national campaign, reaching an estimated 10 million U.S. Catholics and inspiring renewed confidence in the future of the Church.

“This grant is a powerful affirmation of young people. It allows us to move beyond a narrative of disaffiliation and instead lift up the witness of young people who are choosing to remain in the faith. Through this initiative, I am excited to see NFCYM launch the largest Catholic youth-led storytelling effort in the country,” said Christina Lamas, Executive Director of NFCYM.

NFCYM is one of 60 organizations from across the United States that have received grants through the initiative since 2024. The groups include media organizations, denominational judicatories, church networks, publishers, educational institutions, congregations, and other nonprofit charitable organizations.

“Christian leaders from many communities have shared with the Endowment powerful stories about how faith helps people find meaning and hope and connects them with one another. Contrary to many media accounts that highlight the decline of religion, these stories tell how individuals and congregations are living out their faith by tending to the needs of their neighbors, extending hospitality to friends and strangers, and working to promote healing and reconciliation in their communities,” said Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment’s vice president for religion. “Through the Storytelling Initiative, the Endowment hopes that the funded organizations will shine a light on these stories and make more visible the vitality that many Christians experience through their faith.”

The aim of Lilly Endowment’s National Initiative on Christian Faith and Life is to help organizations identify, produce and share with a wide variety of audiences compelling stories that portray the vibrancy and hope of Christian faith and life.

For more information, visit www.nfcym.org. For media inquiries, please contact Natalie Ibarra, Communications Manager for NFCYM, at nataliei@nfcym.org.

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About Lilly Endowment Inc

Lilly Endowment Inc. is a private philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by J.K. Lilly Sr. and his sons Eli and J.K. Jr. through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, it is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana. The principal aim of the Endowment's religion grantmaking is to deepen and enrich the lives of Christians in the United States, primarily by seeking out and supporting efforts that enhance the vitality of congregations and strengthen the pastoral and lay leadership of Christian communities. The Endowment also seeks to improve public understanding of diverse religious traditions by supporting fair and accurate portrayals of the role religion plays in the United States and across the globe.

About the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry

National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM), Inc. (nfcym.org), a nonprofit organization, is a broad, nationally recognized leadership alliance for Catholic youth ministry. Its mission is to "support and strengthen those who accompany young people as they encounter and follow Jesus Christ."