Multi-Institution Program MACC is Involved in Empowers Catholics to Be Active Leaders in the Church

Loyola University Chicago-led initiative supported by $10 million grant from Lilly Endowment

Mexican American Catholic College (MACC) is glad to share the following news!

CHICAGO—Loyola University Chicago, along with 15 partner Catholic colleges and universities (of which MACC is one of them), announced the launch of the Catholic Education Network to Enact and Resource Synodality (CENTERS), a collaboration to strengthen active listening, dialogue, and shared decision-making in the Catholic Church in the United States.

In November 2025, Lilly Endowment Inc. announced Loyola University Chicago as the recipient of a $10 million grant to support CENTERS. Lilly Endowment made the grant through its Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative, which is designed to help theological schools respond to the most pressing challenges in preparing pastoral leaders for Christian congregations both now and into the future.

CENTERS will support the Church's global synodal journey, begun by Pope Francis in 2021. The network will help theological schools renew their internal operations, curricula, and partnerships to better prepare pastoral leaders for an evolving Church.

"This effort will not only continue to make synodality a way of life for the Church but will also help institutions to deepen the work synodality in the Church. I am glad that MACC and the other organizations involved in this project can help the Church continue and strengthen this important work by supporting dioceses and other Catholic institutions," said Bishop Michael Boulette, Chairman of MACC's Board. "I am glad MACC will support our region to further synodality."

To achieve these goals, CENTERS will fund local capacity-building projects at each participating institution; support regional retreats, trainings, symposia, and peer learning; convene national assemblies; and endow the Adsumus Fellowship, a national cohort-based ministry leadership formation program for ministry students.

"Over the last four years, faculty and students from Catholic colleges and universities across the country have been discerning together how we can respond to Pope Francis' call for a Church renewed through listening, dialogue, and shared discernment," said Peter Jones, interim dean of Loyola's Institute of Pastoral Studies (IPS). "This grant from Lilly Endowment enables CENTERS to deepen and broaden that work. Together, our institutions will strengthen ministry leadership formation, develop new models of synodal practice, and help animate a more participatory and mission-focused Church in the United States."

Jones and Michael Canaris, IPS associate professor, serve as principal investigators on the grant.

CENTERS is anchored by Loyola's IPS and governed collaboratively by participating institutions:

the Catholic Theological Union, Gonzaga University, Loyola Marymount University, Loyola University New Orleans, Mexican American Catholic College, Xavier University, Xavier University of Louisiana, Saint John's University, Saint Joseph's University, Santa Clara University, Southeast Pastoral Institute, University of Dayton, University of Dallas, University of San Francisco, and Villanova University.

CENTERS will also offer opportunities for Catholics not affiliated with participating institutions. Additionally, CENTERS will be fundraising through the Loyola University Chicago Pathways Challenge to sustain the program. More information on participation and fundraising will be shared later this year.

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About Loyola University Chicago
Founded in 1870, Loyola University Chicago is one of the nation's largest Jesuit, Catholic universities, recognized for its academic excellence, commitment to community engagement, and leadership in sustainability. A Carnegie R1 research institution, Loyola leverages its status as one of an elite group of universities with the highest level of research activity to advance knowledge that serves communities and creates global impact. With 15 schools, colleges, and institutes—including Business, Law, Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences—Loyola operates three primary campuses in the greater Chicago area and one in Rome, Italy, that provide students a transformative, globally connected learning experience. Consistently ranked among the nation's top universities by U.S. News & World Report, Loyola is a STARS Gold-rated institution that is ranked as one of the country's most sustainable campuses by The Princeton Review and has earned distinctions from AmeriCorps and the Carnegie Foundation for its longstanding record of service and community engagement. Guided by its Jesuit mission and commitment to caring for the whole person, Loyola educates ethical leaders who think critically, act with purpose, and strive to create a more just and sustainable world. Visit Loyola Today to find the latest University news.

About Lilly Endowment Inc.
Lilly Endowment Inc. is a private 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. A 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 about religion and lift up in fair, accurate and balanced ways the roles that people of all faiths and various religious communities play in the United State and around the globe traditions in the United States and across the globe.