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Chicago Theological Seminary Awards 2016 Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman Interreligious Leadership Award to Student Activist

CHICAGO, February 5, 2017 – Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS) is proud to announce the winner of the Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman Interreligious Leadership Award: Teresa Pasquale Mateus, who is currently pursuing her Master of Divinity degree at CTS.

Mateus won the award based on her essay, "Mitakuye Oyasin: A Call to Stand with Standing Rock," an illuminating and personal reflection of the protests against the Dakota Pipeline project in Standing Rock, where 500 clergy joined the protestors in solidarity. Students across the seminary were invited to participate in the contest. Mateus will read her award-winning essay during the December 6 Fireside Chat featuring speakers Rev. Lisa Noel Seiwert, Jenan Mohajir, and Rabbi Capers C. Funnye, Jr.

"I am incredibly grateful and honored to have been selected for this award," Mateus said. "It feels especially poignant as I returned Sunday night from close to a week at Standing Rock in the Oceti Sakowin Camp. I left with a feeling there is still so much to do -- on the frontlines and home -- and feel drawn more deeply into the calling in my essay. Let us not be silent in this moment. Standing Rock calls for our voices, and this moment beckons us as people of faith and action to be just that."

Named for the Chicago rabbi and interreligious activist, Herman E. Schaalman, the Schaalman Interreligious Leadership Award was made available to the seminary's student body, which is made up of over 200 online and face-to-face students from numerous faith traditions. This award reflects the seminary's longstanding commitment to interreligious engagement. In 2009, CTS became the first Protestant seminary to endow a chair in Jewish Studies, a position currently held by Rabbi Dr. Rachel Mikva. The chair was named in honor of Rabbi Schaalman, who was a CTS faculty member from 1987 to 2009. Rabbi Schaalman currently serves as Rabbi Emeritus at Emanuel Congregation in Chicago's Edgewater neighborhood.

"The importance of CTS' commitment to interreligious engagement cannot be overstated," Dr. Mikva said. "It is reflected throughout the seminary: in our curriculum; in our faculty, trustees, staff and student body; in our Center for Jewish, Christian and Islamic Studies and other co-curricular efforts. This essay contest is an outstanding addition, giving students the opportunity to express themselves as interfaith leaders.

Please join us on December 6 Fireside Chat to hear Mateus read her essay, and to speak with our amazing panel of interfaith leaders. The discussion is from 5:15 pm to 6:30 pm. For more information about this free event, please contact Rev. Lisa Goods at lgoods@ctschicago.edu.

ABOUT CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Based in Chicago's Southside, Chicago Theological Seminary is committed to creating leaders for the next generation at religious leadership...whatever that may be. A leader in social justice, CTS is committed to LGBTQ and gender issues, interreligious understanding, and racial justice.

CTS is an affiliated seminary at the United Church of Christ. Since its beginning in 1855, CTS has pushed at the growing boundaries of the church in order to make faith more relevant and transform society towards greater justice and mercy. The student body now represents more than 40 different faith traditions, perspectives and denominations.

