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## Washington Theological Union to Conclude its Mission in 2013

WASHINGTON, DC – Washington Theological Union (WTU), a Roman Catholic graduate school of theology and ministry in Washington, DC, announced today that it does not have the financial resources to be able to continue offering its academic services to the Church and the community beyond the 2012 - 2013 academic year.

In recent years, WTU, like many other seminaries and religious schools, has been navigating multiple financial challenges with the recent economic downturn, decline in the number of religious vocations and a national decrease in private funding for religious initiatives. Earlier this month, the Board of Trustees, in consideration of these challenges and a declining endowment, decided to close enrollment to new students after September 2011. Classes will then continue to be held to allow current students the opportunity to complete their degrees in the time remaining before the end of the 2012 - 2013 academic year.

“This was a difficult decision for us, not least because of the excellence of the education and formation our students are receiving,” said Very Rev. James Greenfield, OSFS, and Chair of the Board of Trustees. “We remain proud of all we’ve accomplished as a community, and of the many successes and contributions our students, faculty, staff and alumni are making to the Church.”

All efforts will now be focused on working with currently enrolled students to complete their studies by the 2012 - 2013 academic year. WTU, long a host to nationally recognized conferences and workshops, will continue to operate its conference center and offer lectures and programs for the Church community during this time period.

*“Let this be a time to celebrate the Union's contribution to the Church, to honor the various constituencies that made it possible, and to reaffirm the Union's values, still much needed. We will enter this final phase with dignity, a sense of accomplishment, and gratitude to God,” said Very Rev. John Welch, O.Carm., Provincial of the Chicago Carmelite Province and Board of Trustees member.*

WTU, which boasts over 1400 religious and lay alumni throughout Archdioceses and parishes across the nation and worldwide, has educated men and women for ministry to the Church for over 40 years. Its graduates include bishops, theologians, presidents of universities, missionaries in every part of the world, pastors and lay associates. Its faculty has included world renowned scholars, homilists, pastors, pastoral counselors, spiritual masters and directors.

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*Washington Theological Union has educated men and women for ministry in the Roman Catholic Church for forty years. Founded as a coalition of seminaries for men in religious communities, the Union has earned a reputation as one of the finest graduate schools for ministry in the United States. Graduates often pursue doctoral studies at major Catholic institutions as well as minister and teach around the world in settings as diverse as suburban and inner-city parishes, high school and college campuses, hospitals and hospices, homeless shelters and prison ministries. The student body consists of Catholic religious men and women, laity, ordained ministers, and students from other Christian traditions who are part of the Washington Theological Consortium. More information about the Washington Theological Union is available at [www.wtu.edu](http://www.wtu.edu).*