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Opus Prize Reflections

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Opus Prize Reflections

The million-dollar Opus Prize has been hosted by Jesuit universities in nine of its thirteen years. Jesuit hosts include Marquette, University of San Francisco, Seattle, Fordham, Loyola Marymount, Georgetown, Gonzaga, and Creighton. Regis University hosted the most recent year-long process, culminating in the award to Sister Mary Lacey and her organization Mercy Beyond Borders, announced October 11.



Opus finalists Sr. Stan Therese Mumuni, Dr. Jason Reinking, and Sr. Marilyn Lacey participate in Opus Prize week activities at Regis University, October 8-11, 2017

The prize and its surrounding publicity clearly benefits the winner and the two finalists, the latter each awarded a \$100,000 prize. But the impact and benefits go far beyond the nominees. Students, faculty, staff, and community members from the host institution participate actively in the nomination and selection process, and in campus events during the week leading up to the award ceremony. *Jesuit Higher Education* asked recent participants to reflect on their experiences, shared in the following pages.

Sister Marilyn Lacey is named 2017 Opus Prize Laureate

With an enthusiastic audience of students, alumni, faculty, staff and members of the greater Denver community, Father John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J., named Sister Marilyn Lacey and her nonprofit organization, Mercy Beyond Borders, as this year's \$1 million winner. Working in Haiti and South Sudan, Lacey and her organization are helping women and girls escape extreme poverty

through educational, economic and empowerment opportunities.

"I felt called by God to help these women and girls who are suffering," Lacey said earlier in the day. "In serving others, we can find a connectedness, a kinship that leads to binding joy."

The other two finalists included Sister Stan Terese Mumuni — founder of Nazareth Home for God's Children, which works in Ghana caring for children born with physical, mental or behavioral disabilities — and Drs. Jason Reinking and Noha Aboelata, whose work through Roots Community Health Center is providing health care to impoverished people living on the streets of Oakland, California.



Sr. Marilyn Lacey of Mercy Beyond Borders

"Your work truly restores hope and ignites the possibilities for those who live at the margins," Fitzgibbons said, addressing all three finalists. "We are inspired and moved by your example." HJE

What Is the Opus Prize?

The Opus Prize is an annual faith-based humanitarian award, recognizing leaders and organizations that develop creative solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems. The Prize is awarded in partnership with Catholic universities, providing new opportunities to inspire the next generation of servant leaders. Opus Prize laureates are motivated by remarkable faith to create new opportunities for transformation. The Opus Prize is given not only to expand the humanitarian efforts of the recipient, but to inspire others to pursue lives of service.

Opus Prize laureates combine the spirit of innovation with amazing faith to inspire long-term, local solutions to address poverty and injustice. Opus Prize laureates prove change is possible, empowering and inspiring us all. The \$1 million award and two \$100,000 prizes make up one of the world's largest faith-based awards for social entrepreneurship. Nominees may have roots in any faith. To learn more about the Opus Prize, visit opusprize.org.