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Three Global Change Makers Selected as 2016 Opus Prize Finalists

**Million-dollar award for social entrepreneurship
to scale faith-filled solutions, inspire service by others**

OMAHA (July 11, 2016) — Three faith-filled entrepreneurial leaders, each of whom have dedicated themselves to addressing the root of social problems in ways that drive locally-owned, short- and long-term change, have been named as finalists for the 2016 Opus Prize, slated to be awarded in November at a ceremony hosted by Creighton University at the Holland Center.

[The Opus Prize](#) is one of the world's most prestigious recognitions for faith-based, nonprofit innovation and work, and includes a \$1 million award. The \$1 million award and two \$100,000 prizes make up one of the world's largest faith-based awards for social entrepreneurship.

The Opus Prize Foundation's mission statement reads, in part: "Opus Prize laureates are unsung heroes who, in the face of improbable odds, are creating change in their communities. Prize laureates demonstrate meaningful faith and creativity through their inspiring work. Their leadership and dedication is helping people transform their lives."

This year's Opus Prize theme, "Restoring Hope: Lighting the Way Home" is evident in the faith and works of the three finalists, each of whom has dedicated themselves to going beyond immediate problems to fundamentally change individuals, families and communities.

After an extensive observation and vetting process by a jury committee, the finalists were selected from among 14 nominees scattered around the globe. Two students and a faculty member, along with Opus Prize board members and staff, traveled to each of the three sights for a due diligence observation and provided information for the Opus Prize Foundation committee to confirm the nominees.

Each nominee pursues humanitarian efforts rooted in several spiritual traditions to help people transform their lives and inspire people to help others. The finalists for the 2016 Opus Prize are:



The Rev. Peter Balleis, S.J. is the co-founding member of the [Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins](#) (JC:HEM), which makes online higher education courses available to refugees, and served as international director of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) from 2007 to 2015. Since 2010, in partnership with JRS, more than 2,000 students have studied in JC:HEM programs. Many of JC:HEM's overseas sites were established at Fr. Balleis' initiative, including most recently in two camps in Eastern Chad, Goz Beida and Guereda. JRS is an international, Catholic organization defending the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced people. More than 700,000 people whose lives have been interrupted by natural disasters or conflict are currently being aided by JRS, which works in partnership with the United Nations, local churches and other faith-based institutions and local non-governmental organizations.



Sr. Anne Jordan, PBVM is chief executive officer of [Cana Communities Incorporated](#) (CCI), a Sydney, Australia-based organization aimed at assisting people struggling with addiction and mental health issues. Recognizing the unique value and beauty of each person, Cana Communities is committed to serving people with the fewest options in life by providing emergency accommodations, meals and support. It is also a place to share community—building relationships for people who are lonely, homeless, recently released from prison or are otherwise marginalized by society.



Sarah Lance is the founder and managing director of [Sari Bari](#), a freedom business where women who have been exploited in Kolkata, India's sex trade, or who are vulnerable to trafficking, can experience a new life. Sari Bari employs approximately 120 women in a safe, loving environment where they are trained as artisans. As the women create beautiful, sustainable handmade products from used saris, the traditional garment worn by Indian women, they are also making a new life for themselves and promoting freedom for other women in the trade.



The 2016 Opus Prize will be awarded during a ceremony at the Holland Center hosted by Creighton University on Nov. 17. The recipient of the prize earns a \$1 million award to further their organization's mission. The runners-up each receive \$100,000.

The Opus Prize is an annual faith-based humanitarian award, recognizing leaders and their organizations that develop creative solutions to some of the world's most pressing problems. The Opus Prize connects Catholic universities and their students with faith-filled entrepreneurs. The result is a mutually beneficial connection, advancing the mission of those doing good around the world while inspiring students to support global causes.

The Opus Prize is more than just an award. It's a promise to inspire students poised to impact the future. It's when faith takes root and innovation happens. It's an opportunity to champion change by recognizing men and women who, in the face of improbable odds, are creating sustainable change in their communities.