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Campus Minister Pens Winning Song

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Tens of thousands of high school students will soon be singing a song by University of Dayton's campus minister Nick Cardilino. It won't be the first time.

"Called to Glory," co-written with David C. Smith and Sean Clive, has been selected as the anthem for the 2011 National Catholic Youth Conference next November in Indianapolis. It will be premiered this December at the 2010 National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry in New Orleans, where Cardilino will perform it live.

Smith and Cardilino, director of the University's Center for Social Concern, won the 2007 competition with "Discover the Way," which they performed at the conference in Columbus, Ohio, before an audience of 20,000. The two are the only songwriters to have won the competition more than once. Smith is a music producer, drummer and songwriter from Indiana; singer-songwriter Clive is from Utica, N.Y.

"I'm really excited," Cardilino said. "From my experience in Columbus, I know how much power a song can have when you have thousands of high school kids singing it. I was just in tears. It's amazing that God would use someone like me to help these kids have a real spiritual experience through song."

"Called to Glory" was produced and submitted in two different versions as an upbeat rock anthem and as a more prayerful, reflective ballad, Cardilino said. The songwriters used the same approach with the 2007 submission, resulting in multiple uses at the conference.

"The students love singing, clapping, shouting and swaying their hands to an up-tempo theme song, but a more meditative approach works during prayer, especially the Masses that are celebrated during the weekend," he said.

Prior to the 2011 conference, "Called to Glory" will appear in a promotional DVD that will be circulated among diocesan directors of youth ministry this winter and posted online.

Cardilino said he hopes "Called to Glory" will be published and someday be included in a hymnal for use in church services. "Discover the Way" has been published by Oregon Catholic Press's contemporary music division, Spirit and Song.

This is the third time Cardilino submitted a song in the competition. He and Smith entered a song for the 2009 conference, but later learned their submission never reached the organizers. "It was lost somewhere in cyberspace," he said. "But that means that, so far, we're two-for-two."

Cardilino, director of the University of Dayton's Center for Social Concern, has served as a campus minister for 19 years. He has produced three CDs, and has a fourth, titled "The Birthday of Love," coming out in November. His CDs are available for purchase through Cardilino's website or through iTunes.

The National Catholic Youth Conference is sponsored by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, a nonprofit organization that advocates for the needs of young people and promotes the role of the church and the gospel in their lives.

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