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PRESS RELEASE

2nd Annual Celebrating the Sacred in Food and Water Regional Conference

San Miguel Parish, Socorro, NM Friday/Saturday, October 15-16, 2004

ALBUQUERQUE – Tuesday, September 28, 2004--IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Celebrating the Sacred in Food and Water”, 2nd Annual Conference is sponsored by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, the Diocese of Gallup, the Diocese of Las Cruces and the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service. **The conference will focus attention upon the issues of water, land and food for rural and urban dwellers in the state of New Mexico.** Slated for Friday, October 15th and Saturday, October 16th. The conference will be held at San Miguel Parish, Socorro, NM.

The conference brings to the local level environmental and food issues addressed in the US Catholic Bishop’s November 2003 document: *For I Was Hungry & You Gave Me Food: Catholic Reflections on Food, Farmers and Farm Workers.* <http://www.usccb.org/bishops/agricultural.shtml>

Tim Kautza, who works extensively with water as the science and environmental education specialist from the **National Catholic Rural Life Conference will keynote the conference.** Kautza states,

Since the beginning of religious worship, people have seen a sacred power in water in its natural condition - rain, snow, running streams, lakes and oceans - fresh, clean and life-giving water. We have come to take this sacredness of water for granted. We tend to treat water ignorantly, greedily, clumsily, destructively. The power of water as purifying and life-giving is becoming less valid. As natural water systems are poisoned or no longer provide sufficient water, water comes to more predominantly symbolize death. We come together to restore the sacredness of water as commons.

- **Friday, October 15th, 12:15 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. a tour of four local farms** focusing on grass range chickens, organic alfalfa, chili and vegetable production, seed saving and issues of culture and water.
- **Friday, October 15th, 7 to 9 p.m. San Miguel parish hall a free public presentation and discussion from 7-9 in** on “Water as Spiritual Gift: A Dialogue between Catholic, Christian and Native American Traditions.” The Dialogue will explore the deeper meaning of water within the spiritual traditions of New Mexico. Kautza will be joined by Jose Lucero, Santa Clara Pueblo and Philmer Bluehouse, Bluehouse Peacemaking Institute.
- **Saturday, October 16th, Conference 8:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. San Miguel parish hall.**

The Saturday conference offers participants the opportunity to explore panels on “**One Web of Life: The Sacramental Commons**”, “**Health, Heritage and Biodiversity**” and an **Open Space Breakout Session focusing on local issues.**

A wealth of experience and diversity is represented by **participating panelists: Felice Lucero, Farm Manager, San Felipe Pueblo; Jim McCord, Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust; Acequia Representative; Kevin Bixby, Southwest Environmental Center, Las Cruces; Wynoma Foster, Eastern Navajo Dineh Against Uranium Mining; Diana Bustamante, Colonias Development Council, Las Cruces; Tim Kautza, NCRLC and Pat Sheely, graduate of Steward’s of Creation program and nutritionist, Gallup.**

In addition to the farm tour and conference sessions, several opportunities for prayer and time to have wonderful food, meet new and old friends and visit booths with local produce, value added products and information are built into the day.

Registration is \$10 for farm tour, \$20 for conference or \$25 for both; however, no one will be turned away for lack of finances. Early registration is required. For more information or for a registration brochure contact the Social Justice Office at 505-831-8205 or go to the website www.archdiocesasantafe.org, Social Justice Office current events. CONTACT: Social Justice Office, 505.831.8205--END