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NEWS RELEASE

**Santuario de Chimayo / Tome Hill Pilgrimages Postponed
Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

ALBUQUERQUE – Monday, March 16, 2020 - IMMEDIATE RELEASE – The Archdiocese of Santa Fe continues to abide by New Mexico’s Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham’s March 11, 2020’s Executive Order 2020-004 and amendments declaring a state of public health emergency as a result of the global spread of 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

As such, Chimayo and the Tome Hill group pilgrimages are hereby postponed until the State of New Mexico Department of Health lifts these COVID-19 directives protecting the lives of our citizens. Individual pilgrims visiting Santuario de Chimayo are strongly discouraged from visiting the sacred shrine because of the increased risk of contracting COVID-19 and passing it on to another who may be gravely harmed. For those who insist upon visiting the Santuario at this time and are not willing or able to postpone their pilgrimage to a later date when the danger has passed, we ask that social distancing and proper safety protocols be strictly self-enforced to protect fellow pilgrims and their families.

Please know this very difficult decision was made with a great sense of sadness. Archbishop John C. Wester, in collaboration with Reverend Julio Gonzales, SF, Holy Family Parish | Santuario de Chimayo pastor and civil authorities made it out of an abundance of caution due to the gravity of our current situation and concern for the safety of the pilgrims journeying to these sacred sites. A shortage of State personnel cannot assure the safety of pilgrims traveling on New Mexico’s highways. Additional information will be provided as conditions warrant.

New Mexico health officials strongly advise residents to stay home to the greatest extent possible, to limit person-to-person contact, and to undertake only those outings that are essential to health, safety and general welfare.

Archbishop John C. Wester said in his March 13, 2020 Letter to the People of God:

Wherever you are and whatever you do, please be assiduous in following good hygiene.

We are in a trying time and situation, but our hope is that this action will assist in minimizing its duration.

We recommend viewing it as an extended Triduum of sorts—the absence of Eucharistic Communion mirroring the loss felt by the apostles after Jesus’ death...resulting in the great joy of the reunion after the Resurrection. While the current situation is a collective “thorn” for all, we also remember St. Paul: “...to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh...to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ ...For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)—END