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NEWS RELEASE

**Archdiocese of Santa Fe Files Lawsuit Against
U. S. Small Business Administration**

ALBUQUERQUE – Thursday, April 23, 2020–IMMEDIATE RELEASE—The Archdiocese of Santa Fe (ASF) filed a lawsuit Tuesday, April 21, 2020, against the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico. Through this lawsuit, the ASF intends to rectify an error in the SBA’s rules on forms related to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) which rejects loan applications from entities undergoing Chapter 11 reorganization, such as the ASF. The intent of the CARES Act through the Federal Government-backed Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (EIDL) is to preserve payroll for employees and thus support them due to financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 crisis, regardless of reorganization.

The chain reaction of the unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic and its unknown trajectory continues to significantly affect the ASF’s mission to safeguard the sanctity of life and provide pastoral care and critical resources to the faithful in 93 parishes, 226 missions, 16 Catholic schools, and affiliated Catholic organizations within the 61,142 square miles of the archdiocese.

Pre-COVID-19, the ASF’s mission was primarily funded by offertory collections during Mass. Without the PPP and the EIDL loans, the ASF may be forced to furlough essential employees.

Though the effects of COVID-19 have been dire, Archbishop John C. Wester encourages people of good will to “stay the course.” It is imperative we heed the advice of our global scientists, medical and public health experts. We will continue to abide by New Mexico’s Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham’s Executive Orders regarding public safety and the COVID-19 pandemic.

We mourn the vast loss of life from COVID-19 and pray for those who are alone or hospitalized and give thanks for our dedicated first responders. We encourage all people of good will to join us in keeping families safe. Stay home, practice social distancing. Together we can save lives.

Similar suits against the SBA to have the SBA application forms modified are being filed by nonprofit and for-profit entities in other locales across the nation.--END