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NEWS RELEASE

**All Pilgrimages & Special Processions Canceled
Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

ALBUQUERQUE – Monday, March 15, 2021 - IMMEDIATE RELEASE – The Archdiocese of Santa Fe continues to abide by New Mexico’s Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham’s Red to Green Framework, the county-by-county framework that permits counties – and the businesses and nonprofit entities within their borders – to operate under less restrictive public health measures when health metrics demonstrating the extent of the virus’ spread and test positivity within those counties are met.

As such, **Chimayo and the Tome Hill group pilgrimages, as well as special processions in which people bunch together, are canceled for 2021.** It is the archdiocese’s hope the pilgrimages will resume full-scale next year, but still want to do the utmost to protect life in this continuing—though attenuating—pandemic. Individual pilgrims visiting Santuario de Chimayo are strongly discouraged from visiting the sacred shrine. The NM Department of Transportation will not be providing signs, cones, barricades, lights, trash receptacles, or portable message boards to keep the walkers safe. 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.

This very difficult decision was again made with a great sense of sadness. Archbishop John C. Wester, in collaboration with Reverend Julio Gonzalez, 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. In addition, **El Santuario de Chimayo will be closed Holy Thursday through Easter Monday (April 1-5). El Santuario’s grounds, chapel and restrooms will also be closed.** Pilgrims are discouraged from visiting the sacred site.

Archbishop Wester emphasizes it is more important than ever to stay the course: continue to wear masks, wash hands and practice social distancing. Let us continue to pray for all our brothers and sisters who have been affected by this pandemic.

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. --END