News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

University of St. Thomas to Host "Mosaics of Faith: The Mexican Experience"

Houston (Feb. 28, 2009) – The University of St. Thomas will host a two-day conference Wednesday-Thursday, March 25-26 "Mosaics of Faith: The Mexican Experience."

Mosaics of Faith is an annual event geared towards stimulating active interest in the vast universe of social, anthropological and political manifestations resulting from the intertwined relation between culture and faith. On its first edition, Mosaics of Faith will feature Mexico and the Catholic Faith. Discussions will be prompted by the three documentary films of the Darkness into Light series and a group of experts in the matter will offer their intake from an American and Mexican perspective. Just like the films feature in this first edition, Mosaics of Faith is an attempt to explore connections and divisions between the U.S. and other parts of the world by considering the spiritual journey of different cultures and their long struggles to live according to conscience.

"Darkness into Light" is a series of three award-winning documentaries produced by Houston filmmakers Patricia Lacy Collins and Robert S. Cozens. **"Guadalupe, Mother of All Mexico," "Semana Santa San Miguel" and "Following the Spirit"** were filmed on location in Mexico and document culture of the Mexican people and its spiritual basis. The series was developed primarily for the audiences of Public Television. The films, sponsored by the University of St. Thomas and the Southwest Alternate Media Project, have received international film festival awards and have been broadcast internationally.

"Today, resolution of the conflict is underway," said filmmaker Patricia Collins. "As never before, the Mexican people can choose to believe, or not believe, in matters of religion. Believers once again can profess their faith in an open and communal manner. This is a story for our time, our world."

Distinguished speakers include:

MANUEL RAMOS MEDINA is Director of the Centro de Estudios de Historia de Mexico CARSO in Mexico City. He obtained his doctorate in History from l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, where he began his studies of spirituality in New Spain. He has written about mysticism and convent life and now is taking part in a larger history of "Mysticism in New Spain, a Manifestation of Spirituality."

GUADALUPE JIMENEZ CODINACH has a doctorate from University of London, and has researched the Kingdom of New Spain mainly in the period of 1750-1821. She has combined research, teaching, and curatorial experience and has authored 13 books and 65 articles on historical topics. Presently she is developing Bicentennial Projects (1810 – 1821) for several institutions.

JOHN MASON HART is the John and Rebecca Moores Professor of History at the University of Houston. He is author of seven books and 50 articles. His expertise includes political and economic interaction between the United States and Mexico during the 19th and 20th centuries. He authored "Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War," published by the University of California Press in 2002.

University of St. Thomas/Mosaics of Faith/222222
March 25-26, 2009

This event is cosponsored by UST's Center for International Studies, *Literal* Magazine, San Rafael Films, and the Office of Academic Affairs. The program is generously supported by Sylvia J. Cameron. The promotion of this program is supported by the Consulate General of Mexico.

Events will be held Wednesday, March 25 from 7-10 p.m. and Thursday, March 26 from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in Cullen Hall, 4001 Mt. Vernon. Following Mass and a lunch program, the concluding program will be in Jones Hall from 3 to 5 p.m.

All programs are free and open to the public. Those who wish to attend the lunch may send a check for $15 to Anna Martens, University of St. Thomas, 3800 Montrose Blvd., Houston TX 77006, or may reserve a place by contacting martena@stthom.edu and paying by cash or check the day of the conference.

For additional information contact: Anna Martens or Rogelio Garcia Contreras at rogarcia@stthom.edu or Patricia Collins at sanrafaelfilms@yahoo.com

Darkness into Light Film Series Fact Sheet

"Guadalupe, Mother of All Mexico" is a memorable and moving account of the role of the Virgin Mary in bringing Christ to the New World. This documentary is about the Mexican people, their spiritual longings, pilgrimages, celebrations, music and miracles. Each year 10 million people visit the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the most popular shrine of the Virgin Mary in the world: but Mexican devotion doesn't end there.

"Semana Santa, San Miguel" is a documentary account of the days leading up to Easter in a colonial town in the very center of Mexico. Collins wrote the book, "Holy Week in San Miguel: A Story of Faithfulness" on which the film is based.

"Following the Spirit" brings the story of the spiritual journey of the people of Mexico to the present time. The irrepressible spirituality of contemporary Mexico plays against the dark years of struggle. Observances of the Days of the Dead, the revived processions of Corpus Christi, and the canonization of San Juan Diego provide memorable counterpoints.

Each of the three documentaries received awards from the Columbus International Film Festival and from Worldfest Houston. The independent project was sponsored by the University of St. Thomas and the Southwest Alternate Media Project.

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UST is a Hispanic-serving institution.

University of St. Thomas/Mosaics of Faith/33333
March 25-26, 2009

Mosaics of Faith
Conference Schedule

7 p.m. Wednesday, March 25
Early Roots of Mexican Culture
Film Screening: Guadalupe, Mother of All Mexico
Followed by Roundtable Discussion
with invited Mexican and US participants
Cullen Hall, 4001 Mt. Vernon

9:30 a.m. Thursday, March 26
The Crown and the Cross in the Kingdom of New Spain
Film Screening: Semana Santa, San Miguel
Followed by Roundtable Discussion
With invited Mexican and US participants
Cullen Hall, 4001 Mt. Vernon

12:30 p.m., St Basil's Chapel
Mass honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe
celebrated by Bishop Joseph Vasquez
3802 Yoakum

1:30 p.m., Lunch *** in the Scanlan Room, Jerabeck Center, 4000 Mt. Vernon*
"The journey continues: from broadcast to classroom."
Series Director Robert S. Cozens, Editor Bill Moore and Dr. Debra Andrist, coauthor of the Study Guides, will present their different outlooks on the series

3 p.m., Jones Hall * note location for this session only
Independence in a Troubled World: Many Constitutions
Film Screening: Following the Spirit
Roundtable Discussion and Conclusions
With invited Mexican and US participants
3910 Yoakum

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