News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

University of St. Thomas Celebrates the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

HOUSTON (Dec. 21, 2009) – Millions of Christians across the globe will join their hands and voices in prayer for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, to be held Monday to Monday, Jan. 18-25, 2010.

Ecumenism has shown how important prayer is for Christian unity, and for 100 years, Christians have gathered around the world to pray in communion with the prayer of Jesus "that they all may be one" (John 17:21). Houston-area Christians of all confessions will collaborate during the week-long observance to come together in prayer. Each night of the week will be hosted by a different Christian Church or Community. The Houston services are organized by the University of St. Thomas Center for Faith and Culture.

"Christians, who share belief in Christ and share one baptism and one Lord are obligated to overcome the stumbling block of disunity," said Fr. Donald Nesti, CSSp, director of the UST Center for Faith and Culture. "Obliged by their belief Christians of every generation and every decade must enter into relationship of prayer and dialogue to sense where it is that the Holy Spirit is leading them to be one. Only the Spirit can be the 'Glue' that will reassemble a fractured Body."
The Church Unity Octave, a forerunner of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, was first celebrated in January 1908 by the Rev. Paul Wattson, SA, at Graymoor in Garrison, N.Y. The eight days between two liturgical feasts, the Confession of St. Peter (Jan. 18) and the Conversion of St. Paul (Jan. 25), seemed especially appropriate to pray for the unity of the Church.

"This new prayer movement caught the imagination of others beyond the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement to become an energetic movement that gradually blossomed into a worldwide observance involving many nations and millions of people," said Rev. Timothy MacDonald, SA, associate director of Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute.

The 2010 theme, "You Are Witness of These Things," comes from Luke's Gospel, chapter 24 verse 48. Each prayer service will integrate the theme along with Luke's entire chapter 24. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity schedule is:

Mon	Jan 18	7 pm	The Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart	1111 St. Joseph Parkway – 77002
Tues	Jan 19	7 pm	St. Mary's Seminary Chapel	9845 Memorial Drive – 77024
Wed	Jan 20	7 pm	University of St. Thomas – Chapel of St. Basil	3802 Yoakum – 77006
Thurs	Jan 21	7 pm	St. Theresa Catholic Church	6622 Haskell Street – 77007
Fri	Jan 22	7 pm	Windsor Village United Methodist Church	6011 West Orem - 77085
Sat	Jan 23	6 pm	Christ the King Lutheran Church	2353 Rice Boulevard - 77005
Sun	Jan 24	4 pm	St. Martin's Episcopal Church	717 Sage Road - 77056
Mon	Jan 25	7 pm	The Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart	1111 St. Joseph Parkway - 77002

All prayer and celebration is open to the public. For more information, contact UST Center for Faith and Culture, at 713-942-5066 or www.stthom.edu/cfc.