

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Mary's first post-secondary institution in Calgary to feature "The Life Near Gjoa Haven" exhibit

Calgary, Alberta (March 5, 2014) - The Life Near Gjoa Haven is a 12 piece art exhibition of Inuit textiles featuring the work of Jessie Kernek, Martha Kogiuk and Bessie Nahalolik. This exhibition celebrates rituals and customs connected to seasonal change in northern Canada. The artists offer traditional Inuit perspectives on daily life with particular attention given to family and the indigenous animals that provide sustenance.

St. Mary's is pleased to collaborate with the City of Calgary on this initiative to bring Aboriginal and Inuit artwork into an educational setting. St. Mary's University College is the first post-secondary institution in Calgary to host this exhibit. These beautiful tapestries will hang in the classroom building on St. Mary's campus for six weeks until April 4, 2014.

The nature of a liberal arts university is to bring students into the lived experience of the world around them. "Through questioning, dialogue, and the use of texts, students are invited to engage the material." said Nancy Quan, Director of Campus Ministry at St. Mary's and the facilitator in bringing the exhibit to St. Mary's. "It is our hope that this textile exhibit which reflects the landscapes, community and artistic expression of Inuit peoples in conjunction with content covered in the English, Ethics, Philosophy and History courses taught at St. Mary's, will extend the discussion of culture and the diverse experience of First Nations peoples outside of the classroom."

This exhibit will also coincide with St. Mary's next Speakers Series on March 19th featuring Dogrib writer Richard Van Camp. Van Camp is an internationally renowned storyteller and best-selling author. He is a graduate of the En'owkin International School of Writing, the University of Victoria's Creative Writing BFA Program, and the Master's Degree in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia.

The feedback from students, faculty and community has been overwhelmingly positive. Students congregate around the textiles discussing the colour, textures, and representation of community life they see in the tapestries. The art works in this exhibition are a testimony to the enduring way of Inuit life that has been practiced for many centuries and the heart and spirit of the Inuit peoples.

About St. Mary's University College

St. Mary's University College is a Catholic Post-Secondary, student-focused liberal arts and sciences teaching and research institution in Calgary. St. Mary's offers Bachelor of Arts degrees, a Bachelor of Science degree, a Bachelor of Education (Elementary) degree, and courses in 35 academic disciplines. For more information, visit www.stmu.ca

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FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES, CONTACT:

MACKENZIE CANN

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

DIRECT LINE: (403) 254-3705

CELL PHONE: (403) 998-1081

MACKENZIE.CANN@STMU.CA