

MEDIA ADVISORY

TO: Assignment Editors/News Directors

WHAT: St. Mary's welcomes the "Sukkah" (Hebrew for "Booth") which graces the campus during the Jewish Festival of Booths, October 8-16, 2014. This booth is called a "Soupkah" because it invites everyone to place food cans in the walls, which will be donated to families in need and to the Calgary Food Bank.

Rabbi Osadchey of Beth Tzedec will dedicate the Soupkah on campus. Rabbi Osadchey and Dr. Michael Duggan, along with faculty and students of Humanities 101, will give presentations on social justice and the Festival of Booths in McGivney Hall from 1:00 to 2:15 p.m.

WHERE: **Grass Quadrangle (centre of campus)**

St. Mary's University College campus | 14500 Bannister Way SE, just off Macleod Trail South. Plenty of free parking

WHEN: **Thursday, October 9, 2014 | Dedication: 12:30pm Presentations: 1:00pm**

Why:

A *sukkah* (booth) occupies a central place on the St. Mary's campus throughout the Jewish Festival of Booths which takes place this year from October 8 to 16. The Festival of Booths has extensive roots in the Hebrew Scriptures as a week-long celebration of the harvesting of fruit trees in the fall of every year. During this festival, people set up temporary shelters made of tree branches to re-experience the journey through the wilderness that the Israelites made with Moses. Hence, the festival is a celebration of freedom from slavery while expressing the vulnerability of people who are homeless.

The *sukkah* (booth) structure on campus this year reflects a call for social justice with focuses on homelessness and hunger in our local community and across the world. It has merited the title of "Soupkah," in recognition of the holes in the external and interior walls where people can place food cans of almost any size. We invite everyone to leave donations of food in the Soupkah, which we shall distribute to families in need and to the Calgary Food Bank.

Rabbi Shaul Osadchey and the congregation of Beth Tzedec synagogue collaborated with Dr. Michael Duggan, the CWL Chair for Catholic Studies, to place the Soupkah on the St. Mary's campus as a sign that social justice is an essential expression of faith in the Jewish-Christian tradition. This focus is a defining element of life at St. Mary's and will be central to the major in Catholic Studies and Social Justice, which is in the final stages of preparation at our university.

In 2012, Rabbi Osadchey and Beth Tzedec synagogue commissioned a graduate class in the School of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary to design a *sukkah* that speaks to the world today. The New York City Sukkah design competition inspired the project.

St. Mary's Theology professor, Dr. Duggan, says, "The Soupkah reflects the commitment to social justice and interfaith collaboration, which are emblematic of St. Mary's. We are honoured by this partnership with the congregation of Beth Tzedec and recognize our Jewish sisters and brothers as our wise elders who ground us in our common heritage as children of Abraham. At the heart of our shared tradition is the conviction that an essential expression of faith is service in the cause of justice for all people."

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. 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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