

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. Mary's University College becomes first University in Alberta to go bottled water free

Calgary, AB (October 6, 2011) –At the launch of the 2011-2012 social justice theme of water on October 6th, St. Mary's University College has declared itself a bottled water free campus, the first to do so in Alberta.

The launch was centred on the unveiling of the school's new water refilling stations and fountains by St. Mary's president, Dr. Gerry Turcotte. In total, there will be five units installed across campus to provide St. Mary's 585 students with clean free drinking water.

The motivation behind choosing water as this year's social justice theme and making St. Mary's a bottled water free campus was the declaration by the United Nations General Assembly in July of 2010 that "the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation is a human right." According to Nancy Quan, St. Mary's Director of Campus Ministry and chair of the Social Justice Committee, "despite the UN's declaration, inequality and injustice in how water resources are used and the availability of clean water sources for all is still very prevalent today" citing that there are 900 million people worldwide who currently do not have access to clean drinking water. "We are very fortunate to have access to clean drinking water here in Calgary. We want to take advantage of that and offer our students the opportunity to make a difference and be leaders in environmental concerns and going bottled water free is one way of doing that" she said.

As part of the launch, the students were given free refillable water bottles and were invited to take part in a taste test to see if they could distinguish between bottled water and tap water. "The tap water tastes better, and I'm not just saying that" commented Brooke Ramsay, a liberal arts student at St. Mary's, who has always preferred tap water over bottled water.

St. Mary's president, Dr. Gerry Turcotte, fully supports the initiative to go bottled water free. After unveiling the first water refilling station and fountain, he stated that "Calgary has unbelievable water which is available on tap. Let's honour that and use those resources." Dr. Turcotte then wrapped up the event by removing the final bottle of water from a vending machine on campus.

Further plans for the Social Justice Committee include water nature walks; a water photography contest for students, staff, and faculty; lectures; film showings; indoor and outdoor recreation water activities; hands on opportunities to work with water filters; and more.

About St. Mary's University College

St. Mary's University College is a Catholic post-secondary, liberal arts and sciences teaching and research institution open to all faiths and traditions. St. Mary's offers Bachelor of Arts degrees, a Bachelor of Education (Elementary) degree and university courses in 33 academic disciplines. For more information, visit www.stmu.ca

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