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PRESS RELEASE

Local Faith Communities to Host Interfaith Vigil Marking

The 80th Anniversary of the Trinity Atomic Test, Calling for Nuclear Weapons Abolition

Albuquerque, NM—Wednesday, July 9, 2025--IMMEDIATE RELEASE--To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the first detonation of an atomic weapon in 1945 at the nearby Trinity Test Site, the complete elimination of nuclear weapons must be prioritized. We are locked into a second nuclear arms race in which New Mexico again plays a crucial role. After 80 years, it is way past time that the nuclear powers honor their promise to get rid of the world's most dangerous weapons.

"80 Years and Still Waiting: An Interfaith Remembrance of the Trinity Test," will be held at St. Pius X School's Fine Arts Building, located in Albuquerque at 5301 St. Joseph's Dr. NW, featuring music, speakers, exhibitions, and moments of reflection and prayer. The free public event will be held Sunday, July 13, from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. Doors open at 2 p.m. and pre-registration is encouraged. The event will also be live-streamed.

Eighty years ago, the government did not warn or evacuate the estimated tens of thousands of people living within a 50-mile radius of the Trinity Test blast. "We don't ask IF we'll get cancer; we ask WHEN it will be our turn," says Tina Cordova, event co-organizer and co-founder of the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium.

In 1990, Congress passed the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA), which provided compensation only to downwinders in a limited area near the Nevada Test Site. Survivors of the world's first atomic bomb in New Mexico, who are disproportionately Native and Hispanic, have never been eligible—the benefits provided by this program ended June 7, 2024. However, language was included in the budget reconciliation bill that expands the provisions of RECA and extends it for two years. For the first time, our New Mexico Downwinders and the post-71 uranium miners will be covered. While this is a breakthrough, the fight is not over. Two years will likely not be enough time to enroll all affected New Mexicans. We need a more permanent fix.

Melissa Parke, Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), will be the keynote speaker. ICAN was the 2017 recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Additional speakers include Dr. Ira Helfand (Immediate Past President, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War; ICAN), Eddie Laiche (Students for Nuclear Disarmament), Tina Cordova (Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium), Jay Coghlan (Executive Director, Nuclear Watch New Mexico), Most Reverend John C. Wester (Archbishop of Santa Fe), and Adin Strauss (General Director, Soka Gakkai International-USA). Topics addressed include the human and environmental impacts of nuclear testing in New Mexico, the growing national Back from the Brink movement, how young people are engaging with these issues, the role of hope and faith as we face growing nuclear threats, and what we can do now.

The event is organized by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Interfaith Power and Light (NM-EP), New Mexico Conference of Churches, Nuclear Watch New Mexico, Soka Gakkai International-USA, the Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium, and the Back from the Brink New Mexico Hub. For more information, call the Archdiocese of Santa Fe's Office of Social Justice and Respect Life at 505.831.8205. Pre-register at jotform.com/build/251126623369053, where you will also find the live-stream link.

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