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OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIRECTOR: SARA FINN, APR

PUBLICATIONS EDITOR: JOHN SUTHERLAND

PUBLIC/CALENDAR EVENTS: JOAN MURRY, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

TELEPHONE: (619) 260-4600/EXT. 4296

ADDRESS: RM. 266 DESALES HALL, ALCALÁ PARK, SAN DIEGO, CA 92110

For immediate release

SOCIAL COMMENTATOR MICHAEL NOVAK
TO SPEAK AT USD ON FEBRUARY 26

Writer-scholar Michael Novak will speak on "Towards the Future: The Lay Commission Letter," at 8 p.m. on February 26 in Camino Theater on the University of San Diego campus.

The speech is the second in a series of free public forums sponsored by the USD Office of Public Relations on "Emerging Issues ... the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy."

Novak was vice chairman of a group of prominent lay people which recently issued a letter on the U.S. economy in response to the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on "Catholic Social Teaching and the Economy." The bishops' letter calls for meeting the basic needs of the poor as the top priority of the U.S. economy. The lay commission letter defends U.S. capitalism.

Resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy in Washington, D.C., Novak is the author of several books on philosophy, theology and cultures. Among his books are A Theology for Radical Politics, The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism, Confession of a Catholic and Freedom with Justice.

Novak describes himself as a former socialist transformed into a capitalist. "It became clearer and clearer to me I could not be a socialist if I took into account economic reality," he said in a 1984 interview. "Socialism made no sense as an economic theory."

Novak holds degrees from Stonehill College, Gregorian University in Rome and Harvard University. He has served on the faculties of Stanford University, the experimental college at State University of New York College at Old Westbury and at Syracuse University.

As founder of the Ethnic Millions Action Committee (EMPAC) in 1974, Novak campaigned for the creation of a White House Office of Ethnic Affairs, an office that was opened during the Ford administration and continued under former President Carter.

In 1981 and 1982 Novak was appointed by President Reagan as the Chief of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva. President Reagan recently appointed Novak to the Board of International Broadcasters, the private corporation which governs Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.