
PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ottawa, July 12, 2010

**ARCHBISHOP PRENDERGAST COMMENTS ON
CRIMINAL CHARGES AGAINST OTTAWA PRIEST**

The Most Reverend Terrence Prendergast, S.J., Archbishop of Ottawa, on learning that criminal charges, relating to sexual assaults, had been laid against Fr. William Allen made the following statement:

“I am deeply saddened to hear that criminal charges, on the basis of sexual assault, have been laid against Fr. William Allen, one of our priests. For some years, it has been our policy to advise victims that a criminal investigation is always one of their options. I am confident that the judicial process will bring to light the facts and circumstances of these charges. Justice must be done, and must be seen to be done.

Fr. Allen, who is 80 years old and in failing health, withdrew from active ministry a number of years ago. Nevertheless, following our usual protocol, I have immediately and formally suspended Fr. Allen from all ministry and prohibited him from presenting himself as a Catholic priest.

I restate our commitment to create a safe environment in the Church for children and other vulnerable persons. We are also committed to a process of justice and reconciliation for the victims of clergy abuse. A criminal investigation always remains an option for victims. Over time, some victims have chosen a process outside of the criminal justice system. That still remains a possibility. In that situation, victims are invited to contact our church offices. Every inquiry will be treated justly and with discretion.

I invite Catholics, and other people of goodwill, to pray with me for a process of justice, as well as one that will bring healing and reconciliation to victims.”

Given the nature of criminal charges, no other comment will be given at this time.

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