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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, September 23, 2011.
Hamilton, Ontario

The Diocese of Hamilton is shocked and distressed by the news of the arrest of Father José Silva (full name: José Gildásico de Sousa Silva). Father Silva has been Pastor of St. Mary's Parish – Paroquia de Santa Maria in downtown Hamilton. Father Silva is a Brazilian citizen from the Diocese of Oeiras but has been serving here since October 1, 2009. He was born on September 22, 1977 and was ordained a priest on February 8, 2003.

Father Silva has been arrested and charged on one count of sexual assault relating to an alleged incident involving an 18-year-old male at the Parish on Sunday, September 18th. Father Silva was held for a bail hearing today, Friday, September 23, 2011.

On learning of the charges Msgr. Vincent Kerr, Chancellor of the Diocese of Hamilton, made the following statement:

"I am greatly distressed to hear of the arrest of Father Silva on such a charge. He is a young, popular, and enthusiastic priest who has come to us from Brazil to serve the needs of the Portuguese-speaking community in the City of Hamilton. He came to us with appropriate recommendations from his own Bishop and there have been only compliments about the quality of his work during his time with us. I very much regret that there will be much turmoil and speculation while the allegation is being investigated by the appropriate authorities. I shall be attending Masses at Santa Maria this coming weekend and will have a chance to express my concern and support to the parishioners. As in any case of this kind, Father Silva will not be exercising any public priestly ministry while this matter is sub judice; I shall make myself available to assist our local police services in their inquiries. In the meantime I remind everyone that here in Canada the presumption of law is always 'innocent until proven guilty.' "

Communications Office
Diocese of Hamilton