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**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Ottawa, July 4, 2012

**ARCHBISHOP PRENDERGAST COMMENTS ON CRIMINAL  
CHARGES AGAINST FR. JOE LECLAIR**

*On being advised that Fr. Joe LeClair had been criminally charged in relation to the financial administration of Blessed Sacrament Parish Ottawa, the Most Reverend Terrence Prendergast, S.J., Roman Catholic Archbishop of Ottawa, made the following statement:*

“Given the many people that Fr. LeClair has assisted as well as the several parishes which he has pastored during his 25 years of ministry, today is a sad day for our local Church in Ottawa. Many people, in our Catholic community and beyond, will be hurt and disappointed by this news. The events concerning Fr. LeClair which have come to light over the past year have obliged us to review our expectations of priests, as well as our care of them.

We have been reminded that we priests are in a position of trust with respect to the people whom we pastor. That trust includes proper and transparent administration of money and other temporal goods given to us by parishioners and other donors. The events of the past year have also led our archdiocese to institute a new protocol for the financial administration of our parishes. The protocol calls for greater controls, accountability and review.

Today, let us be mindful of Fr. LeClair. I invite our Catholic community to also pray for the faithful of Blessed Sacrament Parish. They have been particularly burdened and pained by what has happened over the last year. Let us pray that they receive the Lord’s blessing of healing, reconciliation and peace which will support them in their continued journey as a community of faith.”

No other comment will be provided as this time.

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