



Dear fellow parishioners of Blessed Sacrament;

The attached petition has been prepared with the intention of demonstrating to the Archdiocese we are not satisfied with their handling of the unfortunate situation surrounding our beloved Father Joe. We ask you please read this petition and if you are in agreement with it, sign and date it in the space provided and mail or email your signed copy to the Archbishop to the co-ordinates listed below.

When submitting your petition you should indicate the number of family members represented or have individual family members send in their own response. As our attempts to date seem to have fallen on deaf ears it has been suggested we also send a copy to the Apostolic Nuncio.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Friends of Father Joe

Mailing co-ordinates:

Most Reverend Terrence Prendergast, S.J.
Archbishop of Ottawa
1247 Kilborn Place
Ottawa, Ont.
K1H 6K9

E-Mail: archbishop@archottawa.ca

His Excellency
Most Reverend Pedro Lopez-Quintana, Apostolic Nuncio
724 Manor Ave.
Ottawa, Ont.
K1M 0E3

E-Mail: apostolic.nunciature@rogers.com

Most Reverend Terrance Prendergast S.J.
Archbishop of Ottawa
1247 Kilborn Place
Ottawa Ontario
K1H 6K9

October 8, 2011

Re: Blessed Sacrament Parish Fr. Joe

As parishioners we ask ourselves why the diocese has turned this matter over to the police and what the diocese hopes to achieve by this action. If the investigation proves Fr Joe did not commit an indictable crime, why did the Diocese not take him at his word? If the investigation concludes that a crime was committed, what does the Diocese hope will be achieved?

- Restitution of funds, if funds are found to have been misappropriated? If so, restitution from/ to whom?
- Does the diocese simply seek further punishment for Fr Joe?
- Does the diocese somehow seek to justify the lack of support they provided over many years to our parish priest by hoping to "prove" that he acted in a criminal manner?
- Satisfying the curiosity of the readers of the press?

For a crime to occur there must be a victim. Who is the victim in this case? The parishioners have not requested a police investigation.

From the information made available to us, the parishioners of Blessed Sacrament Church, it is apparent that what is very likely a crime, through negligence and omission, is the weak to non-existent financial and accounting control system put in place by the Archdiocese and the lack of support our parish priest received in the area of financial management from the diocese.

Parish priests are called upon to fill many roles. Principal amongst these must be the nurturing and advancement of spiritual life and guidance and support of the faith experience of parishioners as well as providing counseling and support to parishioners in time of need. For this their training as priests provides them with guidance and they have Holy Scripture to fall back upon for further guidance in performing their vocation and ministry.

In addition to the spiritual role parish priests are, to analogize with the business world, called upon to act as Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Controller, Chief Marketing Officer and Chief of Human Resources for their parish, an entity managing many thousands of dollars. The Archdiocese, the governing body, manager and administrator of all the parishes, had in place a very weak or non-existent financial and internal control system at the parish level. There were no checks or balances in place to ensure that the daily/weekly cash offering donations were counted immediately after collections and fully accounted for. As for cheque disbursements, the Vicar General had authorized that the parish priest, alone, was authorized to sign cheques without a co-signer. There were no controls in place to ensure that only cheques be prepared and signed for authorized expenditures.

All the parishioners of Blessed Sacrament Parish are shocked to have learned what weak financial controls existed at the Diocesan level and that it appears that no guidance was provided to the parish priest with regard to sound financial management. The "Our Father" says...."lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil". We see that the Diocese may, or may not, unknowingly have lead Fr. Joe into temptation. Clearly the fact that the Diocese has asked the Ottawa Police to investigate would lead one to conclude that the Diocese believe they may have lead Fr. Joe into temptation. In practicing our faith, we realize we can all have weak moments, and can err. The parable where Jesus said "whoever has never sinned should throw the first stone" is very appropriate. When Jesus said this, the crowd put down their stones and dispersed without a single stone being thrown at the woman. When we think of the prodigal son, the son

wanted his inheritance before the parents had died. He received his inheritance, squandered it and then realized how he had shamed himself, and how he had erred in judging what is important in life ...placing the greatest emphasis on monetary considerations, rather than on the love of his family. He realized he had his values and priorities all messed up, and in so doing, he returned to his father and asked for his forgiveness. His father was elated that his son, who had been lost, was found again...and they celebrated.

Let us assess where we are today.

The Archdiocese has made significant errors in judgment and stewardship regarding financial and accounting controls at the parish level. The Diocese is in the process of rectifying this situation. The Archdiocese is upset that improprieties may have occurred, and the Diocese should stand back and consider what portion of responsibility it should rightly assume for the mess we all find ourselves in.

Big picturethe Archdiocese is fine, it has learned many lessons from this, and is moving forward stronger.

The parishioners, as evidenced by the meeting, held two weeks ago, following the 11:00 am service, remain very supportive of Fr. Joe and of Herve DeJordy. The parishioners are very upset with the Diocese that it is not ready to move forward.....The parishioners are upset that the Diocese should practice what it preaches, namely: love, understanding, patience, compassion and forgiveness. The parishioners are not fine. We are very disturbed that the Diocese of which Fr. Joe is a member, is not being supported by that family, in this trying time.

On the greater scale of things Fr. Joe has done a wonderful job /ministry. He may have erred. God knows being a priest today is not an easy cross to bear.

Let us not judge.

Let us all learn.

Let us forgive and let the healing begin.

We the parishioners love and support Fr. Joe.

We ask that the Archdiocese show their love and support for Fr. Joe as well.

We petition that the Archdiocese withdraw their request for the Ottawa Police Services investigation.

Signed..... Dated.....

Print Name.....