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PRESS RELEASE

**Downingtown Pastor Arrested for Stealing Money
From St. Joseph's Catholic Church**

The Chester County District Attorney's Office announced the arrest of Father Joseph McLoone for the theft of \$98,405.50 from St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Downingtown, Pennsylvania. Father McLoone accomplished this theft by diverting parish funds into a secret account, misappropriating fees charged to parishioners, and other fraudulent activity. The defendant has been charged with Theft by Unlawful Taking and related offenses.

Joseph McLoone is 56 years old. He is a priest at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Downingtown, Chester County, Pennsylvania. He is also a resident of Downingtown, Pennsylvania.

District Attorney Chief of Staff Charles Gaza stated, "Father McLoone held a position of leadership and his parishioners trusted him to properly handle their generous donations to the church. Father McLoone violated the trust of the members of St. Joseph's for his own personal gain."

The facts alleged in the criminal complaint are as follows:¹

In 2011, defendant Joseph Connell McLoone took over as pastor of St. Joseph's Parish in Downingtown, Chester County following the removal of Msgr. William Lynn due to Lynn's indictment and incarceration. During his tenure at St. Joseph's Parish, the defendant used his position as pastor to circumvent financial controls and illegally change practices which benefitted him financially.

¹ A criminal defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

On November 2, 2011, the defendant opened an account at TD Bank which he named the “St. Joseph Activity Account”. November 2, 2011 was the first All Souls holiday while the defendant was at St. Joseph’s Parish.

Over the next six years, the defendant diverted approximately \$125,000 in donation checks written to the St. Joseph’s Parish into this account. The sources of these diverted funds included donations for the use of the church and school by community groups, donations from the congregation related to special collections held during masses, fees paid to the parish for weddings and funerals by those married at the church or holding funeral services for a loved one, and other gifts made out to St. Joseph’s Parish. Some money from the account was recovered by authorities.

The defendant also used the activity account to take the entirety of the All Souls’ collection each year and convert checks written out to St. Joseph’s into checks made out to himself and others within the parish. This account was not disclosed to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia until shortly before McLoone’s removal from St. Joseph’s in early 2018. The total amount taken out of the All Souls’ collection was \$39,543.00.

The defendant created the activity account for the purpose of avoiding disclosure of the funds to the diocese and ensuring that nobody at the parish could see what these funds were being spent on. He used the account as a vehicle for taking the All Souls collection each year.

The defendant took full advantage of the lack of control over the activity account and used it to fund his personal lifestyle. His lifestyle included a beach house, travel, dining, and spending on adult men with whom he maintained sexual relationships. The defendant additionally supplemented his income by doubling the stipend he collected for saying each mass and performing weddings and funerals.

The defendant ultimately stole \$98,405 from St. Joseph’s Parish. He accomplished his theft through several means. The first of which is regular cash withdrawals, thousands of dollars of which occurred in Ocean City, New Jersey, where the defendant maintains a vacation home. The defendant stole all of the checks and cash collected for the All Souls celebration each November. The defendant made thousands of dollars in payments directly from the activity account to his personal credit cards. The defendant made thousands of dollars in payments directly to men with whom he maintained relationships via Square and JPay online services. The defendant further gave himself a pay raise by doubling the amount he collected as a stipend for each mass, wedding, and funeral held at St. Joseph’s Parish.

The defendant has been charged with felony theft and related crimes. He was arrested today, August 21, 2019. His bail was set at \$50,000 unsecured.

This case was investigated by the Chester County Detectives. Anybody with further information should contact Detective Bernard Martin at 610-344-6866. The assigned prosecutor is Caitlin Rice.

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Approved for release:

Charles A. Gaza