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**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Ottawa, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**Archdiocese of Ottawa comments on articles in the Ottawa Citizen  
concerning cases of clergy abuse**

*In response to the articles on cases relating to the abuse of minors by priests of the Archdiocese of Ottawa that appeared in the print edition of the Ottawa Citizen on May 18<sup>th</sup>, the Archdiocese provided the following comment:*

One case of the abuse of a vulnerable person is one case too many. When the abuse is compounded by a betrayal of trust as is the case of the abuse of a minor by a priest, the scandal is even greater. The articles which appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen* edition of May 18<sup>th</sup> put into stark relief the multiple cases of abuse committed by several priests of our diocese, in the decades beginning in the 1950's. The cost to victims, to their families, as well as to our Catholic faith community, cannot be calculated.

For many years now, we have been engaged in a process of justice and reconciliation with victims of abuse by members of our clergy. The reality is that most victims now choose the criminal and civil courts to seek redress. Given their experience of priests and of the church, we can understand their decision. Necessarily, we engage with victims in the forum which they choose but we do so always in a spirit of reconciliation and repentance.

Since beginning his episcopal ministry in Ottawa in 2007, Archbishop Terrence Prendergast has made it his clear policy and practice that any priest, who is found guilty in a criminal trial or found liable in a civil action, is prohibited from conducting any and all ministry and from presenting himself as a Catholic priest. Further, the Archdiocese complies with the most recent Vatican procedures that require that such cases be reported to Vatican offices for review and decision as to the clerical status of such priests.

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Our archdiocese – like many dioceses across North America – began several years ago a process to create safe environments in our faith communities, notably parishes, for the protection of minors and other vulnerable persons. The most recent step in this ongoing effort of vigilance was the publication in September of 2015 of a *Code of Pastoral Conduct* (copy available on line at [www.CatholicOttawa.ca](http://www.CatholicOttawa.ca)). The Code applies to all persons, ordained and lay, who are engaged in ministries and services in the Archdiocese of Ottawa.

Following the publication of the *Citizen* articles, Archbishop Prendergast provided the following comment:

“As Catholics, we are scandalized and deeply saddened by these cases of clergy abuse. As the pastoral leader of our Archdiocese, I continue my request to our community of faith to pray for the victims of clergy abuse and for their families, that they may find justice, healing and peace. In these difficult times, I express my deepest gratitude to our lay faithful who experience the holiness of the Church, despite these terrible betrayals of trust. I also thank our priests who discreetly and with incessant labour continue the pastoral care of individuals and families across the diocese. May God bless and protect you all.”

*No further comment will be made at this time.*

Link to *Code of Pastoral Conduct*:

<http://www.catholicottawa.ca/documents/2015/10/15-10-05%20Code%20de%20conduite%20EN.pdf>

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