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**BRONX DISTRICT ATTORNEY DARCEL D. CLARK ANNOUNCES
RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGATIONS AGAINST FORMER
PASTOR OF ST. FRANCES DE CHANTAL PARISH
Over \$22,000 in Parish Accounts Improperly Reimbursed to Fr. Peter Miqueli for Personal Expenses**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that an extensive investigation into allegations against the former pastor of a Bronx church has found that he was improperly reimbursed for over \$22,000 in personal expenses from the parish account.

The investigation also revealed that the parish did not comply with certain financial controls mandated by the Archdiocese of New York, and the Archdiocese did not scrutinize the finances of the parish to ensure it was in compliance. The District Attorney's Office has made recommendations to the parish and the Archdiocese to ensure that proper financial controls are in place. The Archdiocese has reimbursed St. Frances de Chantal Church for the funds paid to Father Miqueli. No criminal charges will be filed.

District Attorney Clark said, "This investigation by the Economic Crimes Bureau found that Father Miqueli was improperly reimbursed for personal expenses. The Archdiocese has reimbursed St. Frances de Chantal Church for the funds, \$22,450 of hard-earned money donated by parishioners for the betterment of the parish. We have made recommendations to the Archdiocese and they have agreed to more oversight."

District Attorney Clark said all allegations of criminal behavior alleged to have been committed by Father Miqueli, including that he misappropriated or stole millions of dollars from the parish over a period of several years, were investigated and the allegations of criminal conduct were found to be unsubstantiated. The funds that were improperly reimbursed to Father Miqueli are now being paid back to the parish, taken from sustenance funds that, under Canon Law, were due to Father Miqueli. In effect, this means that Father Miqueli is repaying the \$22,450 to the Parish.

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In addition, in the course of its investigation, the Bronx District Attorney's Office has identified certain important financial and business controls and best practices, many of which are mandated in the Archdiocesan Financial Policies and Procedures Manual ("Manual") that were not being followed by the parish. The Bronx District Attorney's made the following recommendations:

1. The Parish must undergo a complete audit and should be audited regularly, and no less than every 3 years. Further, an audit should be conducted whenever a pastor is about to leave the Parish and before a new pastor is assigned;
2. The Parish's budget must be submitted by March 15th every year;
3. The Parish may only have a single general purpose credit card which must have the pastor's name and the name of the Parish on it, and be used only for Parish expenses;
4. Weekly collections must be secured in sealed security bags, stored in a safe or lock box, counted by an accounting team of no less than two individuals and must be handled at all times in a manner consistent with the Manual prior to deposit in the bank;
5. The weekly collection and the Parish's annual financial statement must be published in the Parish's bulletin;
6. A Parish Finance Council, formed from parishioners with fiscal acumen and knowledge of the Parish, must be operational and fully informed of all finances of the Parish;
7. The pastor and the Parish manager must be trained in the Parish SOFT (formerly "LOGOS") system of accounting;
8. The Parish must have two lay trustees who are long-time parishioners and familiar with Parish finances;
9. There must be a Parish Council;
10. There must be an annual meeting of the officers of the Parish Corporation;
11. Only an approved accountant may be used by the Parish and such accountant cannot also serve as the personal accountant for the pastor or any employee of the Parish;

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12. Regular operational reviews must be conducted during which every expense incurred by the Parish and its employees, must be examined and reconciled by the parish Finance Council;
13. All internal controls set forth in the Manual must be fully implemented and operational and must remain in place.

The matter was investigated by Assistant District Attorney Miriam Bell-Blair and Forensic Accountant Julio Santiago, under the supervision of William Zelenka, Chief of the Economic Crimes Bureau, and the overall supervision of Stuart Levy, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division and Jean T. Walsh, Chief of the Investigations Division.

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