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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Former St. Peter Catholic Church Pastor Found Guilty of Theft

State v. Earl F. Simone, 2015-CR-3730

DAYTON, OH (03/10/2016) – Prosecuting Attorney Mat Heck, Jr. announced today that 75 year old **Earl F. Simone**, of Huber Heights, has been found guilty of Aggravated Theft over \$1.5 million from St. Peter Catholic Church.

Early in 2015, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati contacted law enforcement concerning misappropriated funds from the parish. A lengthy investigation conducted jointly by the Huber Heights Police Department and Prosecutor's Investigators in the Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit discovered that the defendant, Earl Simone, had stolen over \$1.9 million from the church.

The defendant was the Pastor at the church from 1992 until his retirement in April of last year. He transferred funds from the various church accounts to his own accounts, as well as paid personal expenses from the church's accounts. It was determined the defendant owned over 30 rental properties, many of which were being maintained and updated using church funds.

Today, with the agreement of the Archdiocese and the Huber Heights Police Department, the defendant entered a guilty plea by Bill of Information to one count of Aggravated Theft over \$1,500,000, a felony of the first degree. Furthermore, it is agreed the defendant will be sentenced to prison for 5 years. The defendant will be required to pay \$1.9 million in restitution; however, it appears the money has been spent by the defendant and there are now liens and mortgages on the real estate.

Prosecutor Heck added, "It is unfortunate that someone who had devoted their lifetime to the Church and to helping others succumbed to greed and ended up stealing from the very people he ministered to. However, no one is above the law, and this defendant will be held accountable for his actions."

The defendant will be sentenced on April 22, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.

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