



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

153 ASH STREET, PO BOX 310, MANCHESTER, NH 03105-0310
(603) 669-3100 WWW.CATHOLICNH.ORG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 23, 2014

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
THOMAS BEBBINGTON
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION
603-669-3100, EXT. 185

BISHOPS LIBASCI AND MCCORMACK COMMENT ON SENTENCING OF REV. MSGR. EDWARD J. ARSENAULT

On being advised that the Reverend Monsignor Edward J. Arsenault pleaded guilty to misappropriating funds of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Manchester, Catholic Medical Center, and the Estate of Rev. Msgr. John Molan, the Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci, Bishop of Manchester, made the following statement:

“This is indeed a sad day. Foremost on my mind are the more than 275,000 Catholic faithful in our state. Every week, parishioners freely give their funds to support the mission of the Church to worship, evangelize, and serve the poor and vulnerable. They place their trust and confidence in the Church that these contributions will be safeguarded and used for its good works.

“Msgr. Arsenault’s criminal actions profoundly betrayed this trust and confidence by diverting substantial amounts of diocesan funds for personal use. While the sentence imposed by the court today includes restitution, the loss of diocesan funds is not the full measure of the damage that has been done. Many of the faithful and former co-workers inevitably will be left with a profound sense of betrayal and mistrust. They are very much the victims here.

“It is important to acknowledge another reason for feelings of sadness and betrayal. I know that many people benefitted from Msgr. Arsenault’s ministry over the years. As a pastor, he served his parishioners as a source of spiritual guidance and support. As a leader in the Diocesan Administration, he was dedicated and hard-working, managing the establishment and implementation of diocesan policies and procedures that provided for greater efficiency, accountability, and transparency. That Msgr. Arsenault would use his many skills and talents for improper purposes is tragic.

“The Catholic community in New Hampshire is grateful for the work of the Office of the Attorney General and the law enforcement agencies that assisted in this difficult, painful case. We believe that the sentence imposed by the Court serves justice.

“I ask that you keep in prayer those who have been affected by Msgr. Arsenault’s conduct, particularly his brother priests and those who worked closely with him. I also ask that you pray for Msgr. Arsenault. He has made some terrible mistakes, and he will be held accountable for them. We hope and we pray that by taking responsibility for his actions and the harm he has caused, Msgr. Arsenault will achieve redemption and spiritual peace.”

Bishop Emeritus John B. McCormack said:

“The revelation of these charges is disheartening to me and many people who know or benefitted from the service and ministry of Msgr. Arsenault these many years. For those who have been directly affected by the actions with which he is charged, I pray for them, that they may find peace. For Msgr. Arsenault, I pray for him too that he will find peace as he seeks to make recompense in a spirit of repentance.”

No other comment will be provided at this time. Additional information regarding this matter is available on the Diocese of Manchester website at www.catholicnh.org/arsenault.

###

The Diocese of Manchester is the Roman Catholic Church of New Hampshire, serving the needs of more than 275,000 Catholics. For more information, please visit www.catholicnh.org.