



## Newark Division

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### **Pastor of St. Vincent De Paul Parish Sentenced to Prison for Tax Evasion After Stealing Money from Parishioners for Personal Use**

**U.S. Attorney's Office**  
April 26, 2011

**District of New Jersey**  
(973) 645-2888

NEWARK, NJ—A Roman Catholic priest and pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Stirling, N.J., was sentenced today to five months in prison and five months of home confinement with electronic monitoring for tax evasion, after admitting he used tens of thousands of dollars of parish money for his personal benefit, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Monsignor Patrick Brown, 60, of Paterson, N.J., previously pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Susan D. Wigenton to an information charging him with income tax evasion. Judge Wigenton also imposed the sentence this afternoon in Newark federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

Since his ordination in 1978, Brown has worked in a number of parishes in the Diocese of Paterson, which includes the counties of Passaic, Morris, and Sussex. He has been the pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish since July 1992.

The parish serves approximately 1,385 families in Stirling and the surrounding communities, and includes the church, a school, and a cemetery. As pastor and leader of the parish, Brown alone is authorized to open accounts in the name of the parish, decide into which accounts donations and other Parish monies are deposited, and determine how those monies are spent.

Just three days after becoming pastor of the parish, Brown opened an account with Chemical Bank—which subsequently merged with JPMorgan Chase Bank. The account was titled, “Rev. Patrick E. Brown St. Vincent DePaul R.C. Church” (the “Chase Account”). The Chase Account was primarily funded with parish monies, including monies paid by parishioners and others for cemetery plots at St. Vincent de Paul Cemetery and related funeral expenses. Brown misdirected the money, which should have been deposited into the parish’s cemetery or perpetual care account, into the Chase Account. He also took monies which were meant as donations to the parish school and to Hurricane Katrina victims. Brown solicited funds from parishioners for two families that he invented, even providing updates on the progress of the fictitious families as they recovered from the disaster.

Brown kept the account open until October 2007, and kept it hidden from both the parish and the diocese. Brown did not disclose the account’s existence to the diocese in the parish’s required yearly financial disclosures or during any of the diocese-directed financial reviews of the parish, which occurred every three years. Between January 2004 and October 2007, Brown used the Chase Account to fund a number of personal expenditures, including tens of thousands of dollars paid to himself—as well as his mother, siblings, and other family members as gifts, including for Christmas and birthdays. He also paid tens of thousands of dollars toward his personal credit card. Charges on that credit card included vacations in Vail, Colorado; Hawaii; and Ireland.

Immediately after closing the Chase Account, Brown opened an account with Sovereign Bank titled, “Rev. Msgr. Patrick E. Brown St. Vincent De Paul Church” (the “Sovereign Account”). The Sovereign Account was funded, at least in part, with parish monies—including various donations made to the parish by parishioners and others. Those monies should have been deposited into the parish’s operating account, but were instead misdirected by Brown into the Sovereign Account. Brown also kept this account hidden from the parish and the diocese, using it to pay for work done on his personal residence in Budd Lake, N.J., and to pay his credit card bills—including charges for a personal trip to Sun Valley, Idaho.

Between 2004 and June 2009, Brown used at least \$63,706.24 in parish monies for personal expenditures. As part of his plea agreement, Brown agreed to pay the parish back the full amount.

Brown did not pay any income tax on money he misappropriated over the course of several years. For example, Brown only declared his diocesan salary on his 2005 tax return. During his guilty plea, Brown acknowledged owing income tax of approximately \$12,400 for that calendar year alone.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Wigenton sentenced Brown to two years of supervised release, to include the term of home confinement, and ordered him to pay a \$30,000 fine. For the period of supervised release, Brown is barred from serving as a pastor or having any fiduciary responsibilities.

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In sentencing Brown, Judge Wigenton noted that the conduct took place over a period of 18 years and called his behavior “pathological,” adding that she needed “to send a message to others who operate in an unchecked way.”

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward, and IRS - Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Victor W. Lessoff, with the investigation leading to today’s sentence.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lee Vartan of the U.S. Attorney’s Office Economic Crimes Unit in Newark.

Defense counsel:

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