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EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

ALEXANDRIA NEWPORT NEWS NORFOLK RICHMOND

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**Priest Pleads Guilty in Fraud and Money Laundering Scheme**

(**Richmond, VA**) Rodney L. Rodis, age 51, of Fredericksburg, Virginia, pleaded guilty today to mail fraud and money laundering. Rodis faces a maximum penalty of twenty years' imprisonment on each count, a fine of \$250,000 on the mail fraud count, and a fine of the greater of \$500,000 or twice the value of the laundered funds on the money laundering count. In addition, Rodis has agreed to pay at least \$400,000 in restitution to the Catholic Diocese of Virginia, the full amount to be determined by the Court when he is sentenced on February 21, 2008, by Senior United States District Judge Richard L. Williams.

Chuck Rosenberg, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Charles J. Cunningham, Special Agent-In-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Richmond Division; Guy Cottrell, Postal Inspector-In-Charge, Washington Division; and Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, Superintendent, Virginia State Police announced the plea.

Rodis served simultaneously as Catholic parish priest for St. Jude Church in Mineral, Virginia, and the Immaculate Conception Church in Bumpass, Virginia. Both parishes are part of the Richmond Diocese. Between September 2002, and August 2006, while in this dual capacity, Rodis engaged in a scheme to embezzle from both parishes. According to court documents, as part of his scheme, Rodis established bank accounts and a post office box over which he exercised authority. He then directed his parishioners to mail their contributions to this post office box, after which he would then transfer the checks to his personal bank account. He used some of the money for his own himself and his spouse and three biological children, whom he concealed from his parishioners by living approximately 50 miles from his church location. He also laundered some of the proceeds and wired them abroad to family in the Philippines, who purchased, among other things, real property in the Philippines.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Richmond Division; the United States Postal Inspection Service, Richmond Division; and the Virginia State Police. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Brian L. Whisler and G.

Wingate Grant. Federal authorities received assistance from Louisa County Commonwealth's Attorney Don Short.

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