



On Tuesday, November 17, Father Michael Suhy was informed by Archbishop Vigneron that he had been relieved as pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish. This decision followed a process outlined in Church (Canon) Law, which lasted a number of months. Some are aware that interviews were conducted over the summer with current and former clergy, staff, parishioners, and those in current leadership positions. In addition, documents were reviewed and on-site observations were conducted. One of Archbishop Vigneron's conclusions was that Fr. Suhy has become overwhelmed with the responsibilities, burdens, and challenges of administrating a large and complex parish like Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish with its added dimension of having a school. Following the required consultations and fact-finding, the action taken on November 17 was believed necessary for Fr. Suhy's well-being, and also for the well-being of the parish, parishioners, and school.

Starting in late spring, officials from the Archdiocese of Detroit met with Fr. Suhy on multiple occasions in the hopes of assisting him to become better equipped to handle such a large parish with a school. Fr. Suhy did not accept Archbishop Vigneron's offer of assistance. In September, the need – and the specific reasons – for Father to step aside were documented and discussed at length with him. As required by Church law, two letters were sent to him encouraging him to resign as pastor for his own sake and for the sake of the parish; but, he chose not to do so. Due to that decision on his part, the administrative process moved forward respecting Church law on the matter. Fr. Suhy retained a canon

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lawyer to represent him. That administrative process has now reached the point where Archbishop Vigneron can – and has decided to – relieve Fr. Suhy of his office as pastor.

Until receiving a new assignment from the Detroit archdiocese, Fr. Suhy will be provided a residence, his medical benefits will continue, and he will be supported financially by the Archdiocese of Detroit. There are no restrictions on his priestly ministry. However, for the good of everyone, he will no longer live at this parish, nor will he be permitted to return to Our Lady of Good Counsel to celebrate Mass or sacraments or visit the school. In our day and age, some minds may start to speculate on other matters, and so let me clearly say that there is no allegation of clerical sexual abuse or criminal activity against Fr. Suhy. It is sad to have to counter those types of speculations which may occur.

Archbishop Vigneron has appointed Msgr. Patrick Halfpenny the temporary administrator until a new pastor is assigned. There will be no change to the status of the parish or school as a result of this transition. During this time, patience, along with prayers for the parish and all those involved and impacted, are indispensable to your proclaimed mission: *Offering every person in your community a life-changing encounter with Jesus.*

In Christ,

+ Most Rev. Gerald W. Battersby
Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit/South Regional Moderator