



**OFFICE OF THE  
APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR**

**CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAGINAW**

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February 1, 2019

To Our Lady of Peace Parish members

Dear Friends in Christ,

For some time now I have been aware of a number of issues, particularly with the Liturgy, that have divided the parish community at Our Lady of Peace Parish, Bay City. This is a serious concern in that our worship should draw us together, rather than divide. It is important that we seek ways to unite the parish in our common mission of being evangelizing disciples and grow in our relationship with Christ, each in our own way.

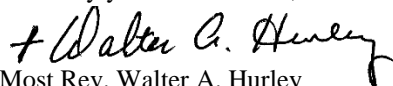
On January 28 and again on January 29 I met with Father Dwyer to discuss divisions within Our Lady of Peace. This meeting was preceded by earlier meetings with our Diocesan staff, including Father Bill Rutkowski, Vicar General and Father Peter Gaspeny, the Regional Vicar. I asked that Father Dwyer step away from the parish for a brief period while a senior priest serves in an interim basis and Diocesan staff evaluate how best to resolve the situation. He declined my request. Unfortunately, my office is now receiving faxes, emails, letters and telephone calls based upon inaccurate accounts of our conversations. I do not want the parishioners of Our Lady of Peace Parish to become disheartened by the controversy.

At this time, therefore, I have withdrawn his present assignment as Parochial Administrator, effective February 8, 2019. The Diocese will have responsibility for his salary, benefits and housing as he awaits a new assignment.

- 1) For the time being I have asked Father Patrick O'Connor, one of our senior priests, to provide pastoral oversight of the parish.
- 2) Father Steve Gavit, the pastor of St. Dominic Parish in Saginaw, who served in the ministry at Saginaw Valley State University for many years, has been assigned to provide pastoral care to the University community. Of course, students and young people may worship where they wish and I would hope they would always be welcome in all of our parishes.
- 3) Members of the Diocesan staff will be asked to review the various issues at Our Lady of Peace and make some recommendations to me. From the correspondence and meetings that have taken place, I have some familiarity with the various issues, in particular as they relate to the worshipping community and parish governance.

These are challenging times for all our Catholic people. I am conscious of the deep faith and commitment of our people to the church and to their parishes. I ask for your prayers and understanding as we seek a resolution to the challenges you face as a parish and we all face in the Church. In the midst of it all, we continue to be confident that God is walking with us.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

  
Most Rev. Walter A. Hurley  
Apostolic Administrator