



The Diocese of Knoxville
Office of Communications

December 13, 2024

Dear Beloved Parish Members,

On behalf of the Diocese of Knoxville and Bishop Mark Beckman, we are writing to inform you of an important matter concerning Fr. Miguel Velez.

Effective immediately, Father will be placed on administrative leave in accordance with the Diocese of Knoxville Safe Environment Policy.

A complaint of boundary violations has been brought to the Diocese's attention, and we are committed to being fully transparent about our response.

As required by Diocesan policy, the complaint has been reported to State authorities. The diocese has informed Fr. Velez of the complaint and will await the completion of the civil authorities' investigation before conducting its own independent and comprehensive review of the matter. With an abundance of caution, Fr. Velez has been removed from his pastoral responsibilities during the time of the investigation, as our primary concern is the protection of those in our care and ensuring a fair, comprehensive review of the allegations. During this investigative process, we uphold the principle of presumption of innocence and will take appropriate measures to protect the individual's dignity and reputation until the facts are fully established.

We ask for your prayers, compassion, and respect for all individuals involved during this challenging time. The Diocese of Knoxville remains steadfast in its commitment to maintaining the spiritual care of our people.

In the interim, Fr. Adam Royal will assume the pastoral needs of St. Patrick parish, and all regular parish activities are scheduled to continue as normal.

We appreciate your understanding, faith, and support as we navigate this difficult situation with the utmost care and integrity.

For inquiries, please reach out to John Mecklenborg, Director of Communications, at the Diocese of Knoxville.

Peace in Christ,

John Mecklenborg
Director of Communications