

From Fr. Martin Leopold

Mary Mother of the Church Parish
St. Peter Prince of the Apostle's Parish
Our Lady of Sorrows Parish
Our Lady of Grace Parish

My good and faithful people,

As you may be aware, Archbishop Gustavo removed Fr. Praveen Lakkisetti as parish administrator from St. Peter Prince of the Apostles, Our Lady of Sorrows, and Our Lady of Grace. I am saddened by what we have learned about the recent allegations that Fr. Praveen abused his position as a priest to coercively secure significant personal gifts. At the same time, I am grateful that our Archbishop is acting decisively and transparently to restore justice, protect our communities, and help Fr. Praveen to address and overcome the attitudes or issues that underlie his actions.

I was surprised and even saddened to leave our parishes last summer, even as I have been very blessed with the new beginnings of Mary Mother of the Church Parish. I was even more surprised by the Archbishop's decision that I would be the right person to help during this new time of transition. (It is possible that he had very limited options.) I promise to do all that I can to minister fully to Mary Mother of the Church, and I may need to lean a bit more on Socorro, Monica, Deacon Jose, and our dedicated parishioners. I will also do all that is needed to ensure that Fr. Agustin and Fr. Dennis, Mr. Duarte, Lora, Liz, Alma, Deacon Rich, Deacon John, Nicole, Patty, Diane, Kimberly, Kimberley, Amada, and Daisy have all of the support they need to continue leading our parishes well. I am confident that this will work well, though I cannot promise to be personally very present to my new assignments.

I will also do all that I can to assist the Archbishop in finding a pastor for you, and we expect that this will happen with the regular assignments in July.

I would like to repeat the Archbishop's assertion that the archdiocese takes seriously any allegations brought forward by our parishioners. The safety and wellbeing of the people in our community are very important to him. Any violation of our Code of Conduct can be reported through our third party Archdiocesan Misconduct Hotline at (844) 709-1169. You may also reach out to me or any of our staff directly if you are more comfortable doing so.

Finally, I ask you to keep Fr. Praveen in your prayers as he works to navigate a path of restitution and reform.

Love, Fr. Martin