



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

Diocese releases statement regarding financial investigation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 9, 2016

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This weekend at all the Masses, the Parish communities of St. Mary Assumption, Bronson and St. Barbara Parish, Colon, were informed of the following situation: An independent accounting firm, at the request of the Diocese of Kalamazoo, completed a forensic audit of both St. Mary's Assumption, Bronson, and St. Barbara, Colon, which details questionable financial transactions and practices from 2010-2016. A day after receiving the audit report, Bishop Paul J. Bradley accepted the resignation of Rev. Richard Fritz, 69, as pastor on Thursday, October 6, 2016 and temporarily suspended his priestly faculties (i.e. his ability to exercise public ministry). Fr. Fritz will no longer reside at the rectory.

Very Reverend Mark Vyverman, Dean of the Eastern Deanery and pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Coldwater and Our Lady of Fatima, Union City, assumes the role of pastor of St. Mary's Assumption Parish (which is part of the Parish Collaborative effective this past July 1, 2016).

The Diocese began its internal review of the matter after suspected irregularities were reported in the spring of 2016. In June of 2016, immediately after establishing that there were irregularities, Fr. Fritz's access to parish funds was removed. The alleged financial mismanagement of the parish funds of St. Mary Assumption, Bronson and St. Barbara, Colon, relates to suspected inappropriate checks distributed between 2010-2016. The Diocese is currently reviewing financial records of both parishes prior to 2010 to identify additional potential losses.

The Michigan State Police Department is currently conducting its own investigation. The Diocese has fully cooperated with civil authorities in this case and will continue to do so.

Rev. Richard Fritz

Priestly Assignments: Diocese of Kalamazoo, Mich.

1990-October 6, 2016	Pastor	St. Mary Parish, Bronson
1996-July 1, 2016	Pastor	St. Barbara Mission, Colon
1988-1990	Pastor	St. Basil Parish, South Haven
1983-1988	Pastor	Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Brigman
1980-1983	Associate Pastor	St. Charles Borromeo Parish, Coldwater
1978-1980	Associate Pastor	St. Philip Parish, Battle Creek

Ordination to priesthood: May 23, 1975, in Lakeport, Mich., for the Pontifical Institute for Mission Extension (P.I.M.E). Incardinated to the Diocese of Kalamazoo on November 24, 1981.

Priestly Assignments: P.I.M.E.

1976-1977	Vocation Director	P.I.M.E. High School Seminary, Newark, Ohio
1977-1978	Associate Pastor	St. Edward, Port Huron, Mich.