DIOCESE OF RALEIGH Office of Communications
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TO: **Parishioners of Immaculate Conception Church**

FROM: **Fr. Michael Burbeck, Vicar General**

RE: **Fr. John McGee, OSFS**

As was announced at Masses this weekend, Fr. John McGee has resigned as pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish and Dean of the Cape Fear Deanery effective October 1, 2026. At the same time, Bishop Luis has opened an investigation into alleged financial irregularities. It is important to emphasize that Fr. McGee is presumed innocent while the investigation unfolds.

Though Immaculate Conception Parish has been served for many years by the Oblates of Saint Francis de Sales, you are a part of the Diocese of Raleigh and Bishop Luis is committed to providing for your pastoral and sacramental needs. We will be announcing soon the appointment of a priest who will be able to care for the parish.

Please pray for Fr. McGee and your fellow parishioners during this time.

Did You Know?

What does it mean when a bishop opens a “canonical investigation” into a Catholic priest’s actions?

The Catholic Church is present wherever the faithful live and worship. In each diocese or territory, the bishop leads as shepherd and father, working with pastors whom he appoints to care for each parish. This structure and bond among the faithful, their pastors, and the bishop unites the Church throughout the world. Canon Law governs and supports this unity, with the common goal being the salvation of souls.

When there are signs that a priest may have committed an offense against Church law, the first step is usually a preliminary investigation as described in canon 1717. In practical terms:

- The bishop, personally or through someone he appoints, carefully examines any report that appears at least plausible.
- The inquiry examines the facts and circumstances and whether the accused can be held responsible.
- The good name of everyone involved must be protected.
- It is not a trial and does not determine guilt. The accused is presumed innocent.
- Its purpose is to help the bishop decide whether a penal process or other action is warranted.

A canonical investigation does not take the place of civil justice. When an allegation involves a possible crime under civil law, the Diocese of Raleigh would report it to the competent authorities in accordance with civil law and diocesan policy.

https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib7-cann1717-1731_en.html