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September 4, 2021

Dear People of the St. Gall and St. Simon Parish Community,

Today I must share difficult news about your pastor, Father René Mena Beltrán. I have asked Father Mena Beltrán to step aside from ministry pending investigation of his inappropriate behavior with an adult man. In all such cases, the Archdiocese offers to provide pastoral care through the Office of Victims Assistance Ministry. Father Mena Beltrán has acknowledged this behavior and will live away from the parish while he enters a period of prayer, spiritual healing and discernment. He is cooperating with this direction.

While we decide on next steps in this matter, Father Agustin Garza Candanosa, Associate of St. Gall, will serve as parish administrator. He will attend to the needs of the parish and school community.

Surely this message is upsetting to hear, especially as you continue to build a new parish community. God calls us to ensure those serving our parishioners are fit for ministry and we sometimes have to make difficult decisions to fulfill that responsibility. Parishioners will always be respected if they come forward with information that needs our attention in this regard.

Please know you will be in my prayers and you go forward to create a vibrant parish. We will keep you informed about new leadership to support you during this time of renewal.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
Archbishop of Chicago