

For Release Monday, March 31st, 2003

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Incident at St. Paul Albanian Catholic Church

On Sunday, March 30th, during the Offertory of the 12:30 p.m. Mass at St. Paul Albanian Catholic Church, Rochester Hills, a gunman opened fire, shooting and killing a man seated in one of the pews. In the melee that followed, several parishioners were hurt as they scrambled out of the church building. The gunman was subdued by parishioners and is in police custody. Neither the victim nor the perpetrator, who apparently knew each other, appears to be a member of the parish.

Fr. Anton Kcira, administrator of St. Paul Albanian, was not injured in the incident. Horrified by the events that unfolded in front of him, Fr. Kcira says he is grateful no one else was wounded by the gun violence. Several hundred people were in attendance at the Sunday liturgy.

Cardinal Adam Maida, archbishop of Detroit, expressed his shock and sadness over the killing. "This is a terrible tragedy," the cardinal said, "a life sacrificed, Mass goers traumatized, a sacred worship space desecrated." The cardinal has asked the priests and people of the archdiocese to pray and extend themselves to the St. Paul Albanian Catholic Community.

According to Church law (Canon 1211) the worship space at St. Paul Albanian has been desecrated by a "gravely injurious action" and so requires a "liturgical ceremony of repentance" stipulated by the liturgical norms. A schedule and details of that service have yet to be determined.

Parish Information:

Founded: 1981
Location: 525 W. Auburn, Rochester Hills
(Originally located in Warren, moved to Rochester Hills in July, 2002)
Households: 900