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Dear Parishioners:

About a month ago, I shared with you some difficult news that was both hard to deliver and, I'm sure, even harder to receive: an audit by the Archdiocese of Detroit indicated a long pattern of what authorities would consider the mishandling and misappropriation of parish finances. Well aware of your interest in how this matter continues to be addressed, I am now able to share with you several new developments.

Recognizing the needs of the St. Dunstan Community and its staff at this time in its history, Cardinal Maida has asked one of our senior priests to serve the parish as its temporary resident administrator. Fr. Tom Sutherland will assume administrative responsibilities on November 1st and will be celebrating some of the Masses with you this coming weekend. Fr. Sutherland has been a priest for 47 years. The founding pastor of St. Thérèse of Lisieux in Macomb County, he served in five others parishes, including 11 years at St. Thomas Aquinas on the Detroit-Dearborn border.

As you know, in September the Garden City Police Department opened a case regarding the apparent embezzlement of funds from St. Dunstan parish by a former employee. Considering the scope of that criminal investigation, officials of the Detroit archdiocese believe the town hall-like meeting with parish members should be conducted after the police complete their work and following a final report and analysis of their findings.

Rightfully so, many parishioners continue to express their concern for Fr. Demmer. There are currently no restrictions on his priestly ministry, such as celebrating Mass or administering the sacraments. He has, however, been asked not to come to St. Dunstan while the police investigation is underway. As I have encouraged you in the past, please keep Fr. Demmer, your parish, and all involved in these matters in your prayers.

I want to thank Fr. Scott Thibodeau for the assistance that he has generously provided to St. Dunstan Parish and School over the past months. It is not easy to administer two parishes and two schools. I also want to thank Fr. Manny Chircop for doing extra duty over the same period and hope that he will continue to assist Fr. Sutherland as we go forward. Finally, I want to thank the staff for all that they have been doing to continue to provide parish services to all of you.

As your regional bishop, I remain confident that we will be able to work together to build a secure future for the parish. As I concluded my previous correspondence to you: no doubt there are great challenges ahead, but with prayer, patience, goodwill, and, of course, a realistic plan, these matters can and will be addressed and overcome.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Bishop Francis R. Reiss, D.D.
Auxiliary Bishop of Detroit