

to enter into partisan politics. That would be highly improper of me. Second, I realize that the present moment is marked by a great deal of tension and emotion. I do not want to add to that."

He said that, instead, he wanted to provide a moral framework for approaching the mayoral race.

Although some people "become quite upset" if racism is mentioned, "it does exist, and it is not limited to any particular group," the cardinal wrote.

"I prayerfully suggest that no one succumb to the temptation to inject racism, or religious or ethnic bias, into the campaign for whatever reason," the cardinal added. "Consider instead the qualities of the candidates. Consider, too, where they stand on the serious issues facing our city. Decide who can address those issues more effectively."

END

22-3-18-83

ARCHBISHOP GERETY SUSPENDS PRIEST IN LONG-STANDING CONFLICT (360)

NEWARK (NC) — Archbishop Peter L. Gerety of Newark March 17 suspended a priest who refused to comply with a transfer order and, according to an archdiocesan statement, challenged "church authority" for several years.

The priest, Father Paul Wickens, received transfer orders earlier this year from his position as associate pastor of St. Venantius' Parish in Orange, N.J., to work at two public hospitals within the archdiocese.

Father Wickens, 52, told NC News soon after the announcement of his suspension that he saw the transfer as "politically motivated" and a "punishment" for his long-standing conservative opposition to many archdiocesan practices and programs. He also said he did not hear about the suspension directly because "all communication from the archdiocese goes directly to my lawyer."

The archdiocesan statement said that subsequent to the original transfer order, "Archbishop Gerety was informed that Father Wickens could not comply" because of health reasons. The archbishop then "personally advised" Father Wickens to move to the archdiocese's Immaculate Conception Seminary while the hospital transfer would be deferred for further consideration, according to the statement.

Father Wickens informed the archbishop he would not comply with the order and petitioned the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy on the issue Feb. 24.

The March 17 statement characterized Father Wickens as a priest who has engaged in "obstructionist tactics and challenges to church authority."

Most recently, the priest was involved in a protest of a sex education program scheduled to begin in archdiocesan schools this fall.

Father Wickens said, "What's involved here is not a struggle between an archbishop and a priest but between orthodoxy and modernism. I do not consider this a personal thing. This is a clash of philosophy — not personality — political and religious philosophy, with me representing a conservative viewpoint and Archbishop Gerety the liberal. I would like to make peace with (Archbishop Gerety)." said Father Wickens.

The archbishop's statement also spoke of reconciliation. "The goal of this suspension is to rectify the past actions and to ultimately result in restoration," it said.

An archdiocesan official told NC News that this was the first time within several decades that a priest faced suspension.

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ADVISORY

Editors: Please disregard the More to Come slug on 21-3-17-83, New York — Cardinal Cooke snubs... The following story incorporates that information and adds other material. (3-18-83)

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