



OUR LADY of MERCY
CATHOLIC CHURCH

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A Note to Our Parish Family

I wanted to reach out following an incident that occurred during our 8:00 AM Mass on Sunday, April 26, just before the distribution of Holy Communion. I would like to share three things with you: first, a brief overview of what unfolded; second, my gratitude for those who responded; and finally, reassurance that your safety remains a priority for us here at Our Lady of Mercy.

First, regarding the incident.

The individual involved was someone previously known to both the parish and the Aurora Police Department, and a Stalking/No Contact Order had been filed due to his prior aggressive behavior toward me and toward our community. Because one of our volunteers recognized him from the safety flyer we distributed, the police were contacted immediately on Sunday and responded quickly to remove him from the church.

Second, I want to express my deep gratitude.

I'm grateful for Fr. William Vagenas, our deacons, staff, volunteers, and the Aurora Police Department's swift response. While it was not ideal for this to unfold during Mass, I am thankful that no one was harmed. I also want to acknowledge the parishioners who stepped forward to assist during the situation. Your instinct to protect others reflects a deep sense of care for our parish family. Please know how appreciative I am.

Finally, a word on safety.

I understand that situations like this can be unsettling, especially in a place where we come to pray and encounter the Lord. Please know that we take your safety seriously. Our Mass coordinators and ushers are trained to respond to a variety of situations, and we will continue to review and strengthen our protocols in light of this experience.

We are also planning additional ALICE training sessions for both the church and the Parish Life Center. These training courses will be offered to the whole parish and have already proven helpful in preparing our staff and volunteers. In addition, the Aurora Police Department has shared that they will increase their presence in our parking lot over the coming weekends.

I truly believe Christ, our Good Shepherd, was watching over us this past Sunday. I am truly sorry to anyone who felt frightened by this experience. Please know of my prayers for you, and my commitment to ensuring that Our Lady of Mercy remains not only a beautiful place to worship, but also a place where you feel safe and at peace. I ask you to join me in praying for our parish community and for this man's healing and recovery.

Our Lady of Mercy, pray for us.

Fr. Michael T. Kearney