

## News Advisory

**To:** News Directors, Assignment Editors and other Interested Persons

**From:** Ned McGrath / 313-237-5943

**Date:** March 22, 2002

**RE: Detroit Archdiocese Responds to Reports of Abuse and Fr. Gerald Shirilla**

*What follows are the statements released by the Communications Department of the Archdiocese of Detroit this week in response to questions on the removal of a Detroit priest from a parish assignment in the Diocese of Gaylord and subsequent reports on his victims.*

“Words fall woefully short when commenting on stories about the abuse of minor children by clergy. What we can reiterate— on behalf of Cardinal Maida and the Archdiocese of Detroit— is a sincere apology for these grievous acts. The victims and families who have suffered this abuse have our continued commitment to be vigilant in addressing these tragic situations.

“As it relates to Fr. Gerald Shirilla, the prohibition on his service as priest, as ordered in 1993 by Cardinal Adam Maida, archbishop of Detroit, continues in effect.”

---Statement from Ned McGrath  
Director of Communications  
Archdiocese of Detroit  
Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2002

“As it was in 1993, Cardinal Maida's decision and determination to resolve the situation with Fr. Gerald Shirilla was motivated out of heartfelt concern—concern for the victims in this case... concern for the community... and concern for the Catholic Church.”

---Statement from Ned McGrath  
Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2002

“Fr. Gerald Shirilla, a Detroit priest who was assigned a pastorate by the Diocese of Gaylord, has been removed from that position.

“In 1993, an allegation of sexual misconduct by Fr. Shirilla was received and processed under the archdiocesan policy on the sexual abuse of minors by clergy. At the time, Fr. Shirilla resigned as director of the archdiocesan Office of Worship. Subsequently, Fr. Shirilla was placed on an administrative leave of absence from the archdiocese, which included a prohibition of any exercise of priestly ministry.

“In August of 2001, without the approval or permission of the archdiocese, Fr. Shirilla accepted a pastoral assignment at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Alpena. To address this situation in the months that followed, consideration was given to a process by which Fr. Shirilla would, in effect, transfer (incardinate) into the Diocese of Gaylord, and transfer (excardinate) out of the Archdiocese of Detroit.

“At the initiative of the archdiocese, that process has been terminated. Fr. Shirilla’s appointment as pastor of St. Mary Parish has been withdrawn. The prohibition on his service as a priest, as ordered in 1993 by Cardinal Adam Maida, archbishop of Detroit, continues in effect.”

---Statement from Ned McGrath  
Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2002