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## **Priest Plans Double Duty at Oswego Parishes St. John's Pastor Will Leave Because of Illness. St. Mary's Pastor Will Step In.**

By Luis Perez  
Post-Standard  
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Changes are coming to two Roman Catholic churches in the city.

The Rev. Chester Misercola is resigning from his post as pastor of St. John's Catholic Church on Erie Street due to health reasons, he said. He will say his last Sunday Mass this weekend at the 11 a.m. service, he said.

It wasn't really a surprise, but that it happened this soon wasn't expected, said Danielle Cummings, spokeswoman for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse.

The Most Rev. Bishop James Moynihan has asked the Rev. David Baehr, pastor of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church on West Seventh Street, to take over Misercola's parish.

Misercola, 60, had a heart attack last May, and the responsibilities of running the parish and trying to improve his health were just too much, he said. Baehr is familiar with St. John's, which has about 400 families, Misercola said.

"It's very helpful that he is not an unknown," Misercola said. "I've had an exciting time being pastor. There are a lot of nice people there."

Scheduled services will be changing, since Baehr will be the only full-time priest at both churches, Baehr said. Daily Masses, Saturday evening vigil Mass and the 11 a.m. Sunday service at St. John's will be eliminated for the time being, Baehr said. Sunday services also will be earlier, with Masses at 8 and 9:30 a.m.

"It's just too much," Baehr said. "I have to have a little flexibility. So you can't commit too much."

Baehr said other responsibilities such as funerals, weddings and baptisms at both parishes will keep him busy. And that doesn't count the administrative duties.

The Rev. George Matisse, who is Syracuse-based and chaplain at the State University College at Oswego, will help by saying several Masses a week.

Cummings said while it's not common, there are precedents for one priest having responsibility for more than one parish. Maybe half-a-dozen priests in the diocese do the same, she said.

Parishioners will have to adjust slightly, she said. This maintains the integrity of the parish, she said, since Baehr grew up in Oswego and attended St. John's.

Misercola's last day as pastor will be Wednesday.

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