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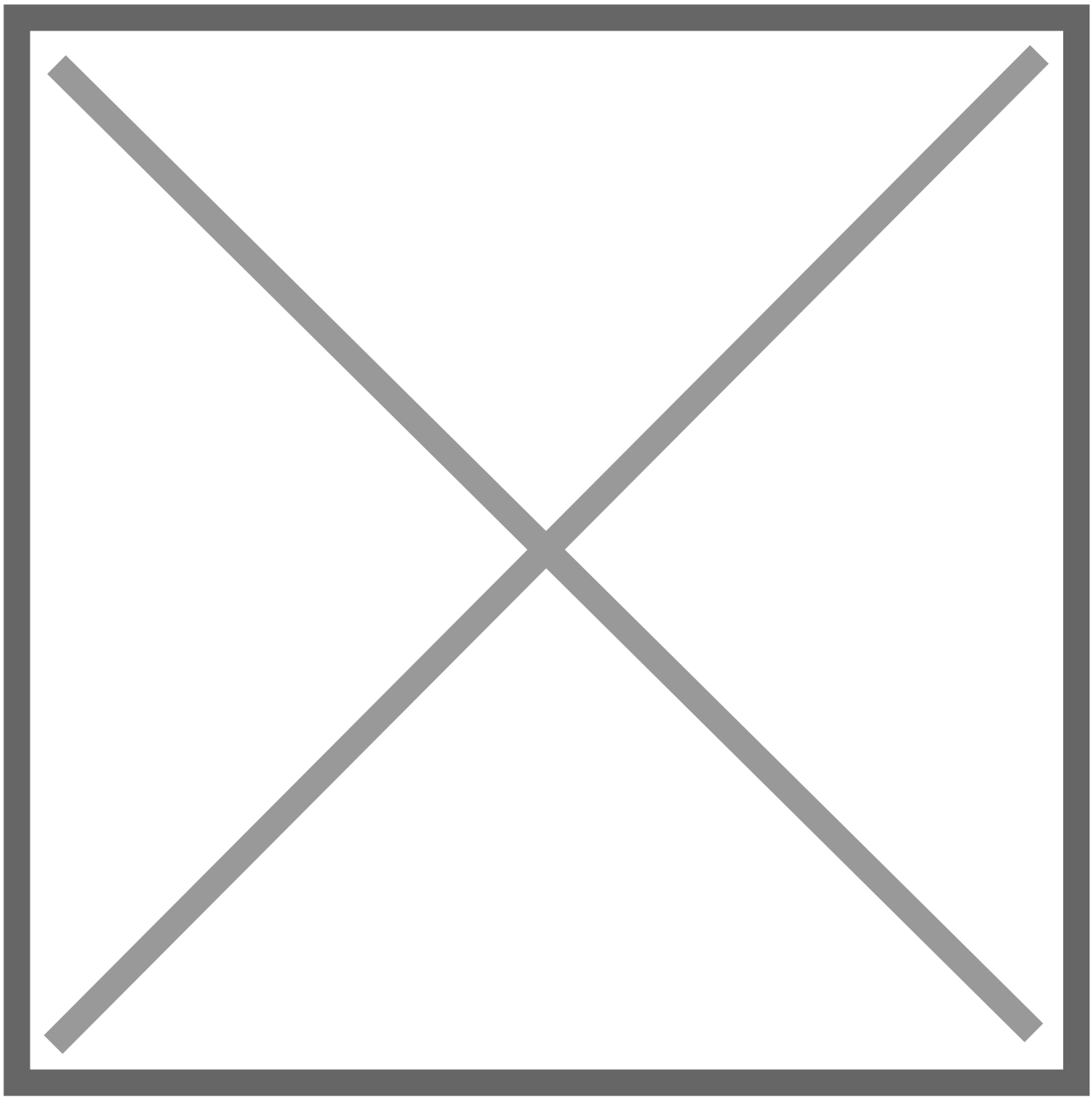

Priests and seminarians of the Orchard Lake Schools, a private Catholic institution originally known as the "Polish Seminary" in Orchard Lake, Mich., participate in a procession on campus in 2014. (CNS photo/Detroit Catholic/Michael Stechschulte)

Michael Stechschulte

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DETROIT — December 17, 2020

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The chancellor of the Orchard Lake Schools in Michigan is on administrative leave after a lawsuit filed in federal court Dec. 14 alleged he pressured two employees into sexual activities and retaliated against them when they rebuffed his advances.

Fr. Miroslaw Krol, 50, a Polish priest of the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, has served since 2017 as chancellor and CEO of the Orchard Lake Schools, an independent Polish campus located within the Archdiocese of Detroit that includes SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, St. Mary's Preparatory High School and the Polish Mission.

The institutions are not owned or operated by the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Two adult men — who are unnamed in the lawsuit — claim Krol recruited them to work for the Orchard Lake Schools in 2018, engaged in "grooming" tactics, and later harassed or sexually assaulted them on multiple occasions. The lawsuit also alleges Krol threatened the men's employment when they tried to report the abuse.

Through his attorney, Krol denied the allegations in a statement to the Detroit Free Press.

"Father Krol denies all allegations of misconduct in their entirety, and looks forward to being vindicated," Roy Henley, an attorney in East Lansing, Michigan, said in the brief statement.

In a separate statement, the Orchard Lake Schools said Krol is on administrative leave "pending the resolution of this matter," but said the lawsuit's plaintiffs "have mischaracterized the circumstances surrounding their terminations."

"We are confident that the facts in this case will prevail, that the legal process will determine their claims lack merit, and that we acted appropriately at all times," the statement said. "As an institution, we have been and will continue to be fully committed to following the highest standards for our students, faculty and staff."

Prior to being appointed chancellor, Krol was a former student, dean and vice rector of SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, an independent seminary that primarily educates and forms Polish immigrants to serve as priests in the United States.

Because of its location within the boundaries of the Archdiocese of Detroit, Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron has a seat on its board of regents and has specific responsibilities for certain elements of its formation, though neither he nor the archdiocese oversee or operate the seminary.

Questions about Krol's ministry status should be directed to the Newark Archdiocese, said Ned McGrath, a spokesman for the Detroit Archdiocese. However, McGrath said Krol had been recalled to the Newark Archdiocese and was no longer permitted to act as a priest in the Archdiocese of Detroit.

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