

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

August 5, 2013 at 4:18pm

Boston official takes leave, pleads not guilty to sex charge

by Catholic News Service

Boston — An episcopal vicar in the archdiocese of Boston began a voluntary administrative leave Monday after he pleaded not guilty to allegedly paying for sex with an female prostitute.

Msgr. Arthur M. Coyle, episcopal vicar of the Merrimack region since 2008, was arrested Sunday near the Polish Cemetery in Lowell after police said they witnessed him paying a fee for sex in a vehicle behind the cemetery.

In a statement Monday, the archdiocese said Coyle, 62, had taken the voluntary leave "as a result of his arrest on charges related to sexual misconduct involving an adult." He will not be permitted to perform any public ministry until the case is resolved, the statement said.

"The steps taken today do not represent a determination of Msgr. Coyle's guilt or innocence as it pertains to these charges," it added. "The archdiocese asks for prayers for all impacted by this matter."

Coyle was in residence at St. Rita Parish in Lowell, according to the archdiocesan website. He is scheduled to return to court for a pretrial conference Sept. 16.

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