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Candlelight vigil to be held for removed priest

by Dan Morris-Young

Bend controversy

Seattle — A New Year's eve candlelight vigil in support of Fr. James Radloff, canonically removed as pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Bend, Ore. in October by Bishop Liam Cary, will be held on the steps of the historic St. Francis of Assisi Church, according to members of a group of parishioners supporting Radloff.

"There will be a silent, respectful, prayerful candlelight vigil so that we might come together and hold Fr. Radloff in our thoughts and prayers for one hour," parishioner Susan Kold wrote in a Dec. 30 email.

Scheduled to take place on the steps of the parish's original church building from 7 to 8 p.m., the vigil will be attended by "between 50 and 100 people" from St. Francis Parish as well as parishes in Sisters and Sunriver where Radloff has also served, Kolb said.

That number might swell, indicated 27-year parishioner Mike Cleavenger. "It has all just kind of snowballed," he said. "It has not really been organized, but there has been a lot of support for Fr. Radloff and somehow reinstating his good name. So with lots of emails, this just kind of happened."

Radloff filed an appeal with the Vatican Congregation for Clergy in October asking that Cary's decree of removal be overturned and that he be reinstated as pastor of Bend's largest parish. Radloff has also asked that the reasons contained in Cary's action be made public.

Radloff has been staying with his mother in Chicago since shortly after his removal as pastor.

He had been assigned to a small parish on the California-Oregon border effective in late November, but that assignment was retracted by Cary when the bishop accused Radloff and his canonical advisor, Fr. Thomas Faucher of Boise, Idaho, of confidentiality breaches and criticized Radloff for postings on his

Facebook page. Faucher strongly objected to Cary's charges.

On Dec. 8, a group of parishioners supporting Radloff placed envelopes containing reprints of the *NCR* report (Nov. 22-Dec.5) on Radloff's removal on windows of cars at the 10 a.m. Mass.

Radloff was installed as St. Francis' pastor in December 2011, about three months before Cary was ordained Baker's bishop.

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