

McCARRICK'S DEATH DOESN'T RESOLVE EVERYTHING

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Theodore McCarrick died April 3 at the age of 94. The defrocked cardinal was known for decades as one of the most influential prelates in America. He was also a masterful fundraiser and a notorious homosexual whose predatory behavior is legendary.

Contrary to what the *Washington Post* editorialized in 2019, it was not the media that revealed McCarrick's offenses—it was New York Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan.

Dolan's Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program was responsible for outing McCarrick. Dolan went public after one of McCarrick's victims came forward. As Bill Donohue said in his book, *The Truth about Clergy Sexual Abuse*, "How many rapists who work in the media—think of CBS and NBC—have had one of their senior officials turn them in? None."

McCarrick was not content to be a good priest. The report on him, known as "The McCarrick Report," found that when he was Archbishop of Newark, he told two bishops of his quest to succeed Cardinal John O'Connor as the Archbishop of New York (he had been an auxiliary bishop there in the late 1970s-early 1980s). He "pounded the table and blurted out 'I deserve New York.'"

In the mid-1990s, McCarrick called to congratulate Bill Donohue for fighting anti-Catholicism. He had been in the job for only a few years. Donohue was struck when McCarrick told him of his desire to come across the Hudson and become the

successor to Cardinal O'Connor. Why, Donohue wondered, would he tell him? It was obvious that he was consumed with this issue.

None of this would have come as a surprise to those who knew him when he was a monsignor in the late 1960s. He was assessed by his superiors as being overly "ambitious."

In the 1980s, McCarrick first served as the Bishop of Metuchen, and then as Archbishop of Newark. This is when he began his predatory behavior. It was at his beach house on the Jersey Shore where he would invite seminarians to stay with him. He would intentionally invite more men than he had beds for. This set the stage: he would invite one of them to sleep with him. He often succeeded. He also had sex with seminarians in the Waldorf Astoria in Manhattan.

McCarrick justified his behavior by telling the seminarians that "priests engaging in sexual activity with each other was normal and accepted in the United States, especially in that diocese." While this was an obvious rationalization, it was not altogether incorrect. The homosexual network at that time was extensive.

His sexual romps were known to many of the New Jersey bishops, but they did nothing about it. Nor did they say a word when McCarrick grabbed the crotch of a priest at the dinner table—they simply looked away.

Were there any good guys? Yes. Cardinal O'Connor was not afraid to act. After fielding several complaints, he reported McCarrick to Vatican officials. But McCarrick had friends everywhere, and those who surrounded Pope John Paul II took his side when he contested O'Connor's account. It took Pope Benedict XVI to get beyond this. In 2006, he accepted McCarrick's resignation, something he had to offer when he turned seventy-five.

Travel restrictions were placed on McCarrick but he ignored

them. He ignored them under Benedict and even more so under Pope Francis. He did exactly what he wanted to and no one stopped him.

Unfortunately, McCarrick's death does not put to rest all concerns.

The person who is currently in charge of the Vatican's administrative duties is also the person who lived with McCarrick in Washington, D.C. for six years (McCarrick consecrated him in 2001), yet he claims that he never heard of any wrongdoing. Indeed, he "never suspected or ever had reason to suspect, any inappropriate conduct in Washington." As Donohue said in his book, "That would make him unique."

His name is Cardinal Kevin Farrell. He is now the Camerlengo, or Chamberlain, responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the Vatican. He was very close to Pope Francis, who elevated him to several high posts. Pope Francis also said he never heard about McCarrick's predatory conduct, though others say they told him.

Farrell admitted in 2019 that he received a \$29,000 gift from Bishop Michael Bransfield to refurbish his Rome apartment. A probe found that he had been using diocesan funds for these gifts and his own personal spending. He then returned the money; Bransfield was removed from office.

A priest was recently quoted saying that Farrell is holding "the fort down until the conclave elects a new pope." Now that McCarrick is dead, it would be helpful if he told us more about his interactions with him. It would also be instructive to know why he thinks he was held in the dark when so many others at least heard of McCarrick's offenses.