

Pedophilia & the Pope: Did He Cover It Up?

It is no light matter to allege or outright accuse any man, let alone the Pope, of covering up pedophilia. What is before you is an account of the outbreak of the current sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church and the events that have led to questions about what Pope Francis knew and when he knew it.

In the ongoing drama, something that could become the greatest crisis in the Catholic Church's 2,000-year-old history, there are hundreds upon hundreds, if not thousands of pages of materials to review. While the piece below is long, it is meant to bring readers up to speed on the scandals to better understand the allegations against Pope Francis and other leaders within the Catholic Church. (*Edit: added after the initial publishing of the article*)

On June 20, 2018, New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan removed Cardinal Theodore McCarrick from public ministry after a review board of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York found the allegation that McCarrick, while a priest, had sexually abused a 16-year-old altar boy to be "credible and substantiated".

According to *The New York Times*, Cardinal McCarrick had been "one of the most recognized American cardinals on the global stage, a Washington power broker who participated in funeral masses for political luminaries like Edward M. Kennedy, the longtime Massachusetts senator, and Beau Biden, the son of former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr."

Furthermore, *The New York Times* revealed that it wasn't just an isolated case of sexual abuse by McCarrick, but rather ongoing "grooming" and sexual abuse.


With his warm, gregarious presence, Cardinal McCarrick rose quickly through the ranks of the church after being ordained a priest in 1958. As a bishop, he took pride in his success at recruiting young men to the priesthood – including one he met in an airport, according to his colleagues.


In 1981, the New York-born clergyman was made the bishop of the newly created diocese of Metuchen in central New Jersey. The young men he recruited would attend seminary at Mount St. Mary's in Maryland, before being ordained as priests for the diocese.

*Those who interacted with him back then said **he was friendly with all the seminarians, but would invite a few he especially favored to overnight stays at a beach house** in Sea Girt, N.J. It was a small, simple house, some six blocks from the ocean – a retreat that the diocese had purchased at Bishop McCarrick's request in 1984.*

*About four or five seminarians and young priests would go to the house at a time, usually on a Friday, where they would sometimes cook dinner or order pizza and socialize over beers, Mr. Ciolek recalled. Before lights out, Mr. Ciolek said, **Bishop McCarrick would assign sleeping arrangements, directing one seminarian to share his room, which had one large bed.***

Sometimes, Bishop McCarrick would start to rub a young man's back as the rest of the group was filtering toward the bedrooms. Other times, it would happen once the young man who had been selected to room with the bishop was alone with him.

In another story from *The New York Times*, a man who only goes by the name of "James"  revealed that McCarrick called himself "Uncle Ted" and the young men he abused his "nephews".

 James (allegedly pictured with McCarrick in the photo) recounted decades of sexual abuse by McCarrick, beginning with

McCarrick showing then 11-year-old James his genitalia during a house call.

The allegations by James are utterly depraved and show a much wider pattern of abuse by McCarrick, as well as hints to how such a man climbed to the top.

When he was 13, he said, the priest first touched his penis. At 14, he said, Father McCarrick masturbated him in a beach parking lot. When he was 15, James said, Father McCarrick took him to a restaurant in San Francisco, the Tonga Room, and poured vodka in his drinks. He then brought him back to his hotel room and masturbated him and brought himself to orgasm, James said.

“I was absolutely disgusted, afraid,” James said. “I felt fear. What have I done?”

On visits to the East Coast, James, then 16 or 17, said he would go with other boys with Father McCarrick to a fishing camp in Eldred, N.Y., identical to the one described by adult seminarians who said McCarrick abused them there. On these visits, they would sleep together naked, James said, and Father McCarrick would touch him.

When James turned 18, he joined the Navy, and was stationed outside Chicago. When Father McCarrick, who became a bishop in 1977, was in town, he would call James to his hotel. When James was transferred to San Diego, Bishop McCarrick would invite him to the Beverly Hills Hilton in Los Angeles, James said.

“He introduced me to the most incredible people in the whole wide world,” James said, adding that the bishop introduced him as his nephew. *“Bob Hope. I met the scarecrow from the “Wizard of Oz.”*

James described repeated sexual touching that always stopped short of intercourse. There was no kissing, no holding hands,

which is also how the adult seminarians had described their alleged abuse. Like James, they said the bishop called himself "Uncle Ted" and them his "nephews."

Yes, all of it is horrifying, disgusting, and must be brought to an end. The lasting damage done to boys and young men by predatory priests, bishops, and cardinals cannot even begin to be understood. Men who swore to uphold the good and to shepherd souls to heaven instead became wolves, devouring the souls of lambs.

Since the McCarrick scandal broke, what was once a rolling ball of snow is now a crashing avalanche, threatening to destroy the Catholic Church in America.

On August 14, 2018, Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro [revealed](#) "the comprehensive findings of a statewide investigative grand jury that spent two years uncovering abuse of children by priests, and a systematic cover up spanning decades by senior church leaders in Pennsylvania and the Vatican."

The grand jury report is absolutely repulsive, detailing thousands of diabolical acts of sexual abuse by Catholic priests in six dioceses of Pennsylvania. Here is the summary of findings:

- **301 Catholic priests identified as predator priests** who sexually abused children while serving in active ministry in the church.
- Detailed accounts of **over 1,000 children victimized sexually by predator priests**, with the grand jury noting it believed the real number of victims was in the "thousands."
- **Senior church officials, including bishops, Monsignors and others, knew about the abuse** committed by priests, but routinely covered it up to avoid scandal, criminal charges against priests, and monetary damages to the

dioceses.

- Priests committed acts of sexual abuse upon children, and were routinely shuttled to other parishes- while **parishioners were left unaware of sexual predators in their midst.**

In the full, 887-page “Pennsylvania Diocese Victims Report” (available [here](#)) the accounts of abuse are graphic and deeply disturbing. The report opens:

*We, the members of this grand jury, need you to hear this. We know some of you have heard some of it before. There have been other reports about child sex abuse within the Catholic Church. But never on this scale. **For many of us, those earlier stories happened someplace else, someplace away. Now we know the truth: it happened everywhere.***

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*Most of the victims were boys; but there were girls too. Some were teens; many were pre- pubescent. Some were manipulated with alcohol or pornography. Some were made to masturbate their assailants, or were groped by them. Some were raped orally, some vaginally, some anally. **But all of them were brushed aside, in every part of the state, by church leaders who preferred to protect the abusers and their institution above all.***

*As a consequence of the coverup, almost every instance of abuse we found is too old to be prosecuted. **But that is not to say there are no more predators.***

If you d’t want to read examples of the actual abuse and cover-up by Catholic leaders, please skip ahead a few paragraphs. Again, the report is horrifying and reveals the most repulsive behavior by men who were supposed to be trustworthy. On the other hand, if you want to know the truth about the widespread evil, then keep reading.

What is clear from the grand jury report is that the abuses were of the most diabolical nature *and* the leadership of Catholic Church was complicit in the cover up.

...in the Diocese of Erie, despite a priest's admission to assaulting at least a dozen young boys, the bishop wrote to thank him for "all that you have done for God's people... The Lord, who sees in private, will reward." Another priest confessed to anal and oral rape of at least 15 boys, as young as seven years old. ***The bishop later met with the abuser to commend him as "a person of candor and sincerity" and to compliment him "for the progress he has made" in controlling his "addiction."*** When the abuser was finally removed from the priesthood years later, the bishop ordered the parish not to say why; "nothing else need be noted."

...

...despite some institutional reform, individual leaders of the church have largely escaped public accountability. Priests were raping little boys and girls, and the men of God who were responsible for them not only did nothing; they hid it all. For decades. Monsignors, auxiliary bishops, bishops, archbishops, cardinals have mostly been protected; many, including some named in this report, have been promoted. Until that changes, we think it is too early to close the book on the Catholic Church sex scandal.

Contained in the grand jury report are profiles of over 300 abusive clergy members, "the largest grand jury report of its kind to date." Worrisome is the admittance that "while the list of priests is long, we don't think we got them all."

Here is one such profile of a sexually abusive priest: Father Graff.

Father Edward R. Graff served as a priest in the Roman Catholic Church for approximately forty-five years,

approximately thirty-five years in the Diocese of Allentown [PA] and ten years in the Dioceses of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Amarillo, Texas. **During his years in ministry, Graff raped scores of children.** The Grand Jury investigated not only Graff's conduct but the knowledge of the relevant Dioceses.

The case of Graff is an example of dioceses that minimized the criminal conduct of one of their priests, while secretly noting the significant danger the priest posed to the public. The Grand Jury notes that the use of euphemisms was constant throughout the Dioceses of Pennsylvania, but particularly apparent in the case of Graff. Terms such as "sick leave" or "health leave" were often used to reference an absence from ministry related to child sexual abuse. In Graff's case, it was coded as sick leave and retirement. Additionally, child sexual abuse was often minimized with terms such as familiarity, boundary issues, or inappropriate contact. In Graff's case, internal records and correspondence referred to it as difficulties.

As for Graff's atrocities, they are manifold.

The Grand Jury heard testimony from some of Graff's victims. In addition, the Grand Jury learned of Joey from his grandmother, mother, and sister in August 2016.

Some years after his abuse, Joey disclosed his secret to his grandmother, Kitty. Kitty and Joey had a special relationship. They would go on walks together. They would discuss their life and the future together. They were best friends.

Kitty recalled that, after years of a downward spiral, Joey finally told her what had happened to him as a child attending his home parish within the Diocese. **Graff had raped Joey. During the violent assault, Graff had borne down on Joey's back with such force it had damaged his back.** Kitty

believed Joey had tried to tell her this years earlier when he had asked if priests molest children. Kitty thought then it was just the gossip of children.

Joey eventually told his mother, Judy, and his sister. Suddenly, the changes they noticed in this happy, out-going, science-fiction-loving boy made sense. He was dealing with trauma and conflict.

*Joey wrote the Diocese on July 31, 2007. Joey described how Graff befriended him and then violently violated him. Joey wrote, **“Father Graff did more than rape me. He killed my potential and in so doing killed the man I should have become.”***

...

*Joey did not live to have his day in court. **He passed away due to an addiction to painkillers. Joey became addicted to these pain killers after his back was injured during a particularly violent attack by Graff.***

Joey’s account is but one account of many victims who were harmed by Graff as children.

In response to the damning Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report and its detailed account of widespread sexual abuse by Catholic priests, on August 20, 2018, the Vatican published a [letter](#) from Pope Francis “...to the People of God”.

The Pontiff opened his letter by stating that no effort should be spared to prevent cover-ups and continued abuse. He went on to state that there would zero tolerance for those who committed the crimes or covered them up, and that both groups would be held accountable.

“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it”™ (1 Cor 12:26). These words of Saint Paul forcefully echo in my heart as I acknowledge once more the suffering endured by many

minors due to sexual abuse, the abuse of power and the abuse of conscience perpetrated by a significant number of clerics and consecrated persons. Crimes that inflict deep wounds of pain and powerlessness, primarily among the victims, but also in their family members and in the larger community of believers and nonbelievers alike. Looking back to the past, no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done will ever be sufficient. **Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated...**

In recent days, a report was made public which detailed the experiences of at least a thousand survivors, victims of sexual abuse, the abuse of power and of conscience at the hands of priests over a period of approximately seventy years. Even though it can be said that most of these cases belong to the past, nonetheless as time goes on we have come to know the pain of many of the victims. **We have realized that these wounds never disappear and that they require us forcefully to condemn these atrocities and join forces in uprooting this culture ...**

...

I am conscious of the effort and work being carried out in various parts of the world to come up with the necessary means to ensure the safety and protection of the integrity of children and of vulnerable adults, as well as **implementing zero tolerance and ways of making all those who perpetrate or cover up these crimes accountable.** We have delayed in applying these actions and sanctions that are so necessary, yet I am confident that they will help to guarantee a greater culture of care in the present and future.

Out of nowhere, on August 25, 2018, a thoroughly unexpected testimony by Archbishop and former Papal Nuncio Carlo Maria

Viganò was [published](#) on several websites and quickly went viral at news outlets across the globe. In the words of many, the report went off like an atomic bomb in the middle of the Vatican.

In his 11-page account, Viganò ultimately calls for the resignation of Pope Francis and alleges that the Pontiff actually played a role in the cover-up of McCarrick's decades of sexual abuse, covering for him "to the bitter end"□.

...the Pope learned about it from me on June 23, 2013 and continued to cover for [McCarrick]. He did not take into account the sanctions that Pope Benedict had imposed on him and made him his trusted counselor along with Maradiaga.

...

*Even in the tragic affair of McCarrick, Pope Francis's behavior was no different. **He knew from at least June 23, 2013 that McCarrick was a serial predator. Although he knew that he was a corrupt man, he covered for him to the bitter end**; indeed, he made McCarrick's advice his own, which was certainly not inspired by sound intentions and for love of the Church. It was only when he was forced by the report of the abuse of a minor, again on the basis of media attention, that he took action [regarding McCarrick] to save his image in the media.*

And who is Viganò? In his own words, he is a man who held positions that gave him uniquely insider-perspective, including directly reporting to Pope Francis at times.

As Delegate for Pontifical Representations in the Secretariat of State, my responsibilities were not limited to the Apostolic Nunciatures, but also included the staff of the Roman Curia (hires, promotions, informational processes on candidates to the episcopate, etc.) and the examination of delicate cases, including those regarding cardinals and

bishops, that were entrusted to the Delegate by the Cardinal Secretary of State or by the Substitute of the Secretariat of State.

The full report by Viganò should be [read](#), particularly as it has raised the very real possibility that Pope Francis and other Catholic leaders not only knew about McCarrick's evil deeds but helped to ignore and cover them up. That is a grave accusation, but one that seems necessary to explore.

On Sunday, August 26, 2018, Pope Francis was asked about the Viganò allegations by a reporter, with both the questions and responses caught on video.

As you saw in the video, in response to a yes or no question about whether or not the allegations are true, Pope Francis refused to answer the question. He had no comment.

Does that mean the Pope is guilty? Certainly not, but if he is innocent, then such a response seems odd.

With every hour that passes since the Viganò report, more and more information is coming to light and the different factions within the Catholic Church have drawn their battle lines.

Some are alleging that Viganò is a crank and just seeking revenge as a "disgruntled former employee".

But still others in prominent positions within the Catholic Church are rising to his defense. Bishop Strickland, Cardinal Burke, Bishop Olmsted, Archbishop Vigneron, Bishop Morlino, and Bishop Athanasius Schneider. Former nunciature official, Monsignor Jean-Francois Lantheaume stated to Catholic News Agency, "Viganò said the truth. That's all."

As can be expected, further attacks are coming against Viganò, particularly the allegation that he himself played a role in covering up allegations against Archbishop Neinstadt during the sexual abuse crisis that rocked the Minneapolis-St. Paul Archdiocese. In response, Viganò [released more documentation](#) that credibly refutes the character attack.

There can be no doubt that even prior to Viganò's public testimony against Pope Francis and other Church leaders, the recent sexual abuse revelations caused serious damage.

Cardinal McCarrick was seen as one of the most powerful cardinals in the Catholic Church; he played a key role in appointing many priests to high positions across the United States and rubbed shoulders with the country's rich and powerful. For such a man to be revealed as not just a sinner, but a sexual predator of the worst kind, leaves many Catholics and non-Catholics wondering how no one in the hierarchy knew of his evil deeds.

Does it not seem hard to believe?

The Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report on widespread sexual abuse by priests serves as confirmation to many Catholics and non-Catholics that the hierarchy *did* know about rampant sexual abuses, but instead chose to cover them up rather than to defend the most vulnerable in their flocks. Indeed, the Grand Jury Report signals that the problem of predatory priests is far more widespread than any one dared admit.

Now rumors are swirling within the Catholic world that other states, such as New York and Illinois, will soon join Pennsylvania with their own grand jury investigations of sexual abuse cover-ups within the Catholic Church. If enough investigations take place and reveal a widespread, country-wide network of predatory priests, the federal Department of Justice may get involved.

And what of Pope Francis? What did he know and when? Did he

actively cover-up or ignore the diabolical acts of McCarrick and other priests?

Honestly, for anyone trying to discern the truth in this exploding scandal, one thing is clear: We can't trust the Catholic hierarchy.

So how are we to learn the truth and force change? It seems that while good priests and bishops will come forward, a purification of the Church is going to have to be forced upon her by secular forces and the laity.

It is now as it was in the times of Isaiah:

"Their complacency bears witness against them, they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not conceal it, all the worse for them, for they have hatched their own downfall."