

# Report on Key Findings in Correspondence Concerning Theodore E. McCarrick

## “Follow the Path of Truth Wherever it May Lead”

May 28, 2019

The former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick ordained me to the priesthood 25 years ago today. I served as his personal secretary in the Archdiocese of Newark (September 1994 – June 1995) and also assisted him in a secretarial capacity during his many visits to Rome in my 19 years of ministry there.

After long consideration, I have made the decision to place in the public domain some of the correspondence and other information related to McCarrick that I possess in my many years of service to him. I have spent time in prayer and discernment about the moral basis for revealing these. My decision follows attempts since September 2018 to share and discuss these with the Holy See and other Church leaders.

Realizing full well that the debate about McCarrick has become highly politicized, I wish only to present facts that will help the Church to know the truth. From the outset of this report, I pledge my unswerving affection, loyalty and support for Pope Francis and his Magisterium in his tireless ministry as the Successor of Peter, as I manifested also to Pope Benedict XVI, grateful for their paternal solicitude and efforts to address the scourge of abuse. Indeed, my actions in releasing this report at this time are encouraged by the Holy Father’s *motu proprio* “*Vos Estis Lux Mundi*” (“*You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.*” Mt 5:14), based on the overriding principle that it is imperative to place in the public domain, at the right time and prudently, information that has yet to come to light and impacts directly on allegations of criminal activity, the restrictions imposed on my now laicized former Archbishop, and who knew what and when.

It is my firm hope that this information will help the Church as she further endeavors to create a culture of transparency. This report, which may form the first of others, is a contribution to the wish of Pope Francis and the Holy See “to follow the path of truth wherever it may lead” in terms of the ongoing McCarrick investigation (Pope Francis, Philadelphia, USA, September 27, 2015; Press Statement of the Holy See, October 6, 2018). It aims to help the US Bishops in their promise last August to “pursue the many questions surrounding Archbishop McCarrick’s conduct ... we are determined to find the truth in this matter” (Statement of Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, President, USCCB, August 1, 2018). What Archbishop Wilton Gregory expressed for his local Church, upon his appointment to the Archdiocese of Washington, I wish to do for the Universal Church: “The only way that I can serve this Archdiocese is by telling the truth” (Press Conference, April 4, 2019).

In the subsequent sections, I present facts from correspondence that I hold relevant to questions still surrounding McCarrick. These facts show clearly that high-ranking prelates likely had knowledge of McCarrick’s actions and of restrictions imposed upon him during the pontificate of Benedict XVI. They also clearly show that these restrictions were not enforced even before the

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pontificate of Francis. It is not my place to judge to what extent the fault lies with the failure to impose canonical penalties, instead of mere restrictions, at the start, or with other Church leaders who later failed to expose McCarrick's behavior and the impropriety of his continued public activity, and indeed may have encouraged it. My intention throughout this report is to present facts – not judgments or condemnation of anyone – for the protection of minors and vulnerable persons, the salvation of souls, and the good of the Church Universal. As a priest ordained by then Archbishop McCarrick and one who served him closely, I reflect often upon how much damage to the physical, psychological and spiritual lives of so many might have been avoided had the restrictions been made public and enforced as soon as they were imposed.

The hierarchy's abuse of authority and cover up, in their various and serious manifestations, have inflicted consequences upon me, too. As Pope Francis has noted: "Many of those who have suffered in this way have also sought relief in the path of addiction" (Homily, July 7, 2014). Especially as a priest, I regret unreservedly the harms that I caused as a result of them through seeking consolation in alcohol. Now I am deeply grateful for the therapeutic treatment that I am receiving, which has allowed me to embrace a life of sobriety. It is my hope that my openness will encourage and help other priests, religious, and seminarians, who have found themselves trapped in similar abuses of authority and cover up by Bishops and Superiors. If God wills, the attached webpage ([www.theFigueiredoReport.com](http://www.theFigueiredoReport.com)) and my private and secure email address ([ajaf@protonmail.com](mailto:ajaf@protonmail.com)) can become vehicles for sharing these experiences in a safe and, whenever desired, confidential context.

My desire is for my experience to contribute to a new culture in the Church – a culture in which no victim, young or old, no priest or seminarian, no religious or superior, no bishop or nuncio need fear to speak the truth, a culture in which each knows where to seek help and all are held accountable, a culture in which no secret sins can fester and no corruption mar the Church's maternal care. The Holy Father's bold *motu proprio* "*Vos Estis Lux Mundi*" guides us in this direction. Only by such *humiliating transparency* does the Church imitate her Lord and fulfill her vocation as "*the light of the world*": Wherever the proclamation of the Gospel and the celebration of the sacraments are public, let the self-discipline of the Church also be!

*Monsignor Anthony J. A. Figueiredo*

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## I.

### **Facts Surrounding Letter of Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for Bishops, delivered to Theodore McCarrick on August 22, 2008**

- In an August 25, 2008 letter to Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States from 2005 until his death in 2011, McCarrick recalls their meeting on the previous Friday (August 22, 2008) at which Archbishop Sambi presented to him a letter from Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, then Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops:

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- “However, having studied the letter of Cardinal Re and having shared it with my Archbishop, I pledge again that I shall always try to be a good servant of the Church even if I do not understand its desires in my life. Of course, I am ready to accept the Holy Father’s will in my regard.”
- “I could find a place to live in one of the parishes of the Archdiocese of Washington. The Archbishop is willing to arrange for that in any area that the Holy See would desire.”
- “In summary, in the future I will make no commitments to accept any public appearances or talks without the express permission of the Apostolic Nuncio or the Holy See itself.”

### *Key findings:*

- *By acknowledging in the letter that Archbishop Sambini had presented him a letter from Cardinal Re, McCarrick provides evidence that such a letter exists and should be in the archives of the Congregation for Bishops and Apostolic Nunciature in Washington, D.C.*
- *By stating that he had “shared the letter with his Archbishop,” McCarrick indicates that then Archbishop Wuerl was aware of the letter and restrictions in 2008 and that a copy might exist in the archives of the Archdiocese of Washington.*
- *Two restrictions are clearly revealed:*
  - (i) *A change of residence;*
  - (ii) *No public appearances without permission from the Apostolic Nuncio or Holy See.*
- *According to McCarrick, Archbishop Wuerl is involved in the change of residence.*
- On September 1, 2008, a week after he sent the letter to Archbishop Sambini, McCarrick drafted a letter to Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, then Secretary of State of the Vatican, offering an account of his behaviors in light of the restrictions placed on him in the letter from Cardinal Re. As per McCarrick’s request, I translated the letter into Italian for Cardinal Bertone’s ease of comprehension. From my correspondence, it is not clear whether the letter ever reached Cardinal Bertone. The pertinent details facts of the letter remain:
  - “In the event that Your Eminence is not familiar with my personal situation, I would like to give you a brief background on it, together with a letter, which I have sent

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to the Apostolic Nuncio for delivery to Cardinal Re” (N.B. I have never seen the letter from McCarrick to Re).

- “I do recognize that in one particular [case] I had been at fault in an unfortunate lack of judgment. I have always considered my priests and seminarians as part of my family, and just as I have shared a bed with my cousins and uncles and other relatives without thinking of it being wrong, I had done this on occasion when the Diocesan Summer House was overcrowded. In no case were there minors involved, but men in their twenties and thirties.”
- “Cardinal Re is rightly concerned about the good of the Church and I am, of course, willing to do whatever the Holy See asks of me, whether I personally may feel it to be just or unjust.”
- “I have never had sexual relations with anyone, man, woman or child, nor have I ever sought such acts.”
- “I have replied to the Cardinal’s directive by suggesting ways in which I can be less public a figure and I just wanted your Eminence to know the background, since I do have great regard for your person and great appreciation for your friendship.”

## *Key findings:*

- *McCarrick confesses to a lack of judgment in sharing his bed with priests and seminarians;*
  - *McCarrick denies any sexual relation ever;*
  - *McCarrick reiterates his willingness to follow the Holy See’s restrictions and his own suggestions to be “less public a figure.”*
- In an October 7, 2008 email to Monsignor Figueiredo, McCarrick confirms three decisions made by Cardinal Re without indicating through whom these were communicated or in what form or context:
    1. “Cardinal Re has approved my moving to a parish and my Archbishop has been great in beginning to work that out.”
    2. “I’ve agreed to make no public appearances either here or abroad without his permission and resign from all Roman and USCCB entities.”
    3. “[Cardinal Re] has forbidden me to come to Rome.”

The correspondence also indicates:

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1. “The original letter [McCarrick’s letter to Re] is going from the Nuncio to [Cardinal] Re in the pouch.”

- In an October 9, 2008 email to Monsignor Figueiredo, McCarrick writes:

“I have sent the copy directly to Archbishop Wuerl.”

*Key findings:*

- *Cardinal Re and Cardinal Wuerl appear to be directly involved in the implementation of the restrictions;*
- *McCarrick again promises “no public appearances” either here or abroad with resignation from all Roman and USCCB entities;*
- *Cardinal Re forbids McCarrick from coming to Rome;*
- *Copies of McCarrick’s letter to Cardinal Re should exist in the Archives of the Congregation for Bishops and the Archdiocese of Washington.*

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## II.

### **McCarrick ignores restrictions, continues public ministry**

Since the restrictions imposed were not made public and despite McCarrick’s promises, he continued his public ministry, including taking a highly visible public role, interacting with high-ranking Vatican officials (including Cardinals Sodano and Bertone and heads of Dicasteries), public officials in the United States and around the globe.

- Examples of travel in the pontificate of Benedict XVI:
  - (i) *“I have written with the Nuncio’s encouragement to see if I can come to Rome for APSA and the Palliums”* (email from McCarrick to Monsignor Figueiredo of May 28, 2009)
  - (ii) *“I’m coming to Rome for the APSA meeting”* (email from McCarrick to Monsignor Figueiredo of June 13, 2009)
  - (iii) *“I just landed back home. You know how special yesterday was for me ... seeing the Holy Father after more than two years”* (email from McCarrick to Monsignor Figueiredo of April 17, 2010)

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- (iv) In late January 2012, McCarrick is invited to travel on behalf of Catholic Relief Services to Bosnia-Herzegovina: *“Your Eminence, On behalf of the CRS/BiH team, I can tell you that we eagerly await your return to Sarajevo ... I am attaching a working draft itinerary for your 3 days with us ... your arrival on the 25<sup>th</sup>”* (email from Jake Hershman, CRS/Bosnia-Herzegovina, January 18, 2012)
- (v) *“You make me jealous going to China! It has been five years since I last made that journey for the Holy See ... I have started the journeying again. I was in Doha last week and go to Ireland for the IEC [International Eucharistic Congress] and following that ... I begin one of my longest trips – Beirut, Jordan, Egypt, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia and Hong Kong ... before I start again in the Holy Land and Belarus”* (email from McCarrick to Monsignor Figueiredo of June 7, 2012)
- Correspondence during Pope Benedict’s Papacy also includes a letter (January 13, 2012) from then U.S. President Barack Obama to Pope Benedict mentioning McCarrick’s offer “to carry a message to you on my behalf,” as well as a letter with a request from the Librarian of Congress, Doctor James H. Billington, noting also McCarrick’s role in the Library of Congress as “a distinguished visiting scholar” (January 11, 2011). This latter request involved correspondence between McCarrick and Monsignor Peter Wells, then Assessor in the Secretariat of State (now Apostolic Nuncio in South Africa), with the request to be approved by Cardinal Bertone.

Without any sense of the lifting of the restrictions, McCarrick continues his foreign travel after the election of Pope Francis on March 13, 2013, as evidenced by a number of communications from him regarding his extensive activity around the globe. Among the many:

**(i) *Travel on behalf of the Church:***

McCarrick cites travels to locations on behalf of the Church and direct engagement with high-ranking Church officials, Government leaders, and even Royalty, including, among other places: Mainland China, Central Asia, Cyprus, the Balkans, the Middle East, Lebanon, the Holy Land, Morocco, Iraq, Iran, Kurdistan, and the Philippines. A few examples of the extent of then-Cardinal McCarrick’s influence as gleaned from the correspondence:

- “I have been traveling a good deal, perhaps more than I should, during these last few weeks ... Cyprus ... the Balkans ... the Middle East, both in Lebanon and in the Holy Land ... In the latter area, I was able to speak to many of the American diplomats who are working in the peace process, as well as to visit with the Nuncio ... I have put off my return trip to China and I will make sure that I speak to Archbishop Parolin before I go the next time ... I would hope to have his counsel before I go again to that complex land ... last week I had the great privilege of going to the Philippines” (letter to Pope Francis of November 24, 2013)

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- “I leave for China on Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup> ... I will only be able to stay [in Rome] for the summit of Muslim Christian relations ... I am sure that Cardinal Parolin would see me since he is involved with my China trip” (email to Monsignor Figueiredo of November 21, 2014).

Shortly after the visit of Pope Francis to the United States, then-Cardinal McCarrick writes the Holy Father:

- “When you greeted me so cheerfully in Washington as an adjunct member of the foreign service, I received this as a challenge to continue as an amateur in the very noble work of the foreign relations of the Holy See. I have maintained on a quiet level our relationship with China and have been developing new relationships with the Arab countries of the Middle East. They have been inviting me to many of their meetings where I can continue to assure them of Your Holiness’ interest, concern, and love for our Muslim brothers and sisters ... With God’s help, before He calls me home, I will help to bring you China and the great dream of Matteo Ricci will begin to be realized once again” (letter to Pope Francis of September 30, 2015).
- “Next week I will be going to Morocco at the invitation of His Majesty, the King Mohammed VI to attend a meeting of the religious leaders of Islam and Christianity. From there I go to Kurdistan where I have been in the past and have had the opportunity of speaking with their governmental and religious leadership ... I have been invited to Najaf in Iraq for a meeting with the Shiite leaders later this year. Their great spiritual leader, Grand Ayatollah Sistani has agreed to see me at that time ... This will be a hopeful meeting for me since I have been invited to return to Iran sometime after that for meetings with their religious leaders and possibly a meeting with their supreme leader ... I am blessed to keep in touch with Cardinal Tauran who is a dear friend and a very wise counsellor ... I have not been back to China since the fall but I have received some indication to continue my conversations with some of the leaders of that great country as well ... Holy Father, forgive me for giving you all this information, but I always feel better if I know that You are aware of what I am trying to do” (letter to Pope Francis of January 20, 2016).
- “My travel plans for these last few weeks have been intense. I was invited to Marrakesh in Morocco by the King and ended up there the only Cardinal at this extraordinary meeting. Have you seen the Marrakesh declaration? It is a most important work and could truly change Christian-Moslem relations in the future. I ended up being the one who was asked to receive it after it was approved. From there I went to Kurdistan to see the refugee camps and talk to the government and the bishops ... I returned to DC on a Tuesday evening and flew to Beijing the Thursday morning ... The reason for the China trip was an invitation by the son of a former Communist Party General Secretary who is still very close to [President] Xi ... I go to Iraq this Saturday for a surprising visit with the Grand Ayatollah Sistani who has not been open to US visitors before” (email to Monsignor Figueiredo of February 9, 2016).

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- “My visit [to Rome] was so very helpful and it looks as if two projects – China and Islam – continue to move forward slowly. To try to monitor them a bit, I think it would be useful for me to come to the Papal Foundation Board meeting ... I would have to leave for some national Muslim meetings back here in the States ... I will try to be in contact with Cardinal Turkson and Cardinal Parolin to check on the progress of the planned meeting with the Chinese” (email to Monsignor Figueiredo of March 23, 2016).

### (ii) *Communications with the Secretariat of State (some quotes repeated from above):*

- “Cardinal McCarrick asks me to inform you: he meets with Archbishop Beccì Thursday at 12 NOON. If you are available, he could see you either before or after – even for a few minutes” (email to Monsignor Peter Wells from Monsignor Figueiredo, February 12, 2013).
- “I will make sure that I speak to Archbishop Parolin before I go the next time [to Mainland China]. He has been a great expert in that field and I would hope to have his counsel before I go again to that complex land” (letter to Pope Francis of November 24, 2013).
- “I am sure that Cardinal Parolin would see me since he is involved with my China trip” (email to Monsignor Figueiredo of November 21, 2014).
- “I brought Ambassador Clark and two other Protestant ecclesiastics in to see the Foreign Minister, Archbishop Gallagher, which has a bit about the idea of a special study group that might discuss the problems of the Middle East, even as the China group does now” (letter to Monsignor Figueiredo of September 10, 2015).
- “I have not been back to China since the fall, but I have received some indication to continue my conversations with some of the leaders of that great country as well. I have always been in touch with Cardinal Parolin and his staff and I believe that they are peaceful with my continuing to foster another channel for possible future discussions” (letter to Pope Francis of January 20, 2016).
- “I have written to the Holy Father and, of course, to Cardinals Parolin, Turkson and Tauran, as well as to Archbishop Gallagher” (letter to Monsignor Figueiredo of March 8, 2016, regarding visits to Iran, Mainland China, and the Holy Land).

### (iii) *Interaction with Apostolic Nuncio of the United States*

- “I just received a note from the Nuncio enclosing a message he had received from the Substitute to me indicating that the Holy Father would receive me when I come to Rome and I should make contact with the Palace to set that up. Could you once



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again be my agent in this?” (email from Archbishop McCarrick to Monsignor Figueiredo, February 11, 2016).

- “I am grateful to His Excellency Archbishop Pierre for his kindness in enclosing this letter in his diplomatic pouch, so that I may give your Holiness some idea of a number of the questions which were brought up during my recent visit to China” (letter to Pope Francis of January 27, 2017).
- “I have written to the Apostolic Nuncio and requested that the letter to His Holiness might be included in the diplomatic pouch. I am sure he will have no objection” (letter to Monsignor Figueiredo of January 27, 2017).

### (iv) *Involvement with United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:*

- Letter of June 27, 2016 from Most Reverend Oscar Cantù, then Bishop of Las Cruces and Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, to Monsignor Figueiredo, concerning the visit of a high-ranking Iranian delegation to the Vatican on the theme “Moral Dialogue between U.S. and Iranian Religious Leaders.” McCarrick is listed as “Member, Committee on International Justice and Peace, USCCB”:

“On behalf of Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Bishop Richard E. Pates, Bishop Denis Madden, Dr. Stephen Colecchi and myself, I want to thank you for everything you did to welcome the participants in our moral and religious dialogue in Rome on June 5-9, 2016 ... The public audience with Pope Francis was a highlight of the week for all of us ... The visit to North American College and the interactions with seminarians were especially meaningful.”

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### **Conclusion: A Moral Imperative to End the Cover Up Surrounding the Abuse of Power, Conscience and Sexual Abuse**

- It is clear that for far too long, a culture has existed in the Church that allowed those like McCarrick to continue their public activity after serious and even settled allegations had come to the attention of Church leaders. Moreover, it is all too evident that Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops – in their cover up – until quite recently have enjoyed the propitious benefit of a more “forgiving” and “lenient” standard of evaluation as compared to those applied to lower ranking clerics and religious. A double standard and non-independent accountability harm the credibility of Church leadership and impede efforts to reestablish fundamental trust in the Catholic clergy.

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- The saddening nature of the allegations against McCarrick, as well as the silence by Church leaders who ignored or enabled his actions, illustrates anew the moral imperative to all people of good will, and especially leaders of the Church, to address and inform all appropriate persons of this type of behavior at the earliest opportunity, first and foremost for the safety of minors and vulnerable persons, and ultimately for the salvation of every soul. For this very purpose, Jesus Christ came into the world.

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**The documents used in this report have been vetted for their authenticity by lawyers and journalists. Additional documents and other sensitive correspondence from McCarrick that offer further background on these and other issues are in my possession. They will form the basis of further possible reports if this contributes to the good of the ongoing investigation and efforts to address the abuse crisis, love of Holy Mother Church, and ultimately the salvation of souls.**

**This report and other documents can be found on the website: [www.theFigueiredoReport.com](http://www.theFigueiredoReport.com). Monsignor Figueiredo may also be contacted directly and confidentially on his personal and secure email account: [ajaf@protonmail.com](mailto:ajaf@protonmail.com).**