

# USCCB to Vote on Corrupt Candidate Next Week

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Msgr. Gene Thomas Gomulka

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*Above: Chancery of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, in Washington, D.C.*

Ten prelates have been nominated for president and vice president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), positions that will be filled during the upcoming Bishops Fall General Assembly, which takes place next week starting November 14. Among the leading contenders, many of whom have checkered pasts of covering up sexual misconduct, is the current conference secretary, Archbishop Timothy Broglio. Following his priestly ordination in 1977, Broglio worked as an associate pastor in the diocese of Cleveland for two years before entering the Vatican Diplomatic Corps where he served for 28 years. Broglio went on to become Archbishop for the Military Services, USA (AMS) in November of 2007, during which time he was confronted for mishandling sexual misconduct allegations as well as for covering up for the way his predecessor, then-Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, who failed to investigate accused predatory priests.

## Lee, O'Brien Cover-Up

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In a letter to Broglio dated 24 July 2019, it was pointed out how then-Archbishop O'Brien grossly underreported abuse numbers to the National Review Board that would later be reprinted in the John Jay Report by claiming that in the 52-year period of the report (1950-2002), only two minors were reportedly abused. It was also shown how O'Brien covered up the predatory behavior of Chaplain John "Matt" Lee who, in 2002, was reported for having a "live-in boyfriend." When Lee was arrested in 2007 and charged with conduct unbecoming an officer, aggravated assault, sodomy, and failure to inform sex partners that he was HIV positive, O'Brien told reporters, "When the Archdiocese for the Military Services became aware through Chaplain Lee that there was an accusation against him of immoral behavior with military personnel, we, along with the Archdiocese of Washington, removed his faculties immediately." While that is true, the "whole truth" O'Brien failed to reveal is that when he received a report five years earlier about Lee cohabitating with another man, he failed to investigate the allegation and take the necessary steps to prevent Lee from harming others and himself. Lee is currently serving a 30-year sentence in the Petersburg Federal Prison in Virginia.

In his September 17, 2019 response, Broglio claimed that O'Brien received a report merely involving "suspicions about Matt Lee's probable homosexual orientation." Having been the one who reported Lee to O'Brien, I wrote Broglio on October 7, 2022 stating, "You and I know that there is no signed document 'from the reserved files in the possession of the Archdiocese for the Military Services' supporting your false claim that my May 6, 2002 letter to Archbishop O'Brien concerned Lee's 'probable homosexual orientation'." The May 6, 2002 letter that both Broglio and I possess addresses the allegation I received that Matt

Lee had “a live-in boyfriend” ( as Doyle confirms) whom he did not want me to meet. I told Broglio, “If I were still on active duty and you received a report that I was cohabitating with a woman, I doubt you would dismiss the report and later claim that it was simply my ‘heterosexual orientation’ that was brought to your attention?”

One would expect a trained diplomat to avoid getting caught lying in a letter bearing one’s signature. Perhaps having learned from his mistake, Broglio chose to remain silent when *Church Militant* producer, Christine Niles, asked him to comment on whether he lied about what was actually reported to O’Brien in 2002 about Lee. Broglio’s lack of response was the same as Pope Francis’ when asked if it were true that Archbishop Carlo Viganò warned him about Cardinal Theodore McCarrick’s predatory behavior in 2013. Broglio likewise remained silent when he received a request that he remove O’Brien’s name from the Pastoral Center of the AMS office building just like Cardinal William Keeler’s name was removed from buildings in the Diocese of Harrisburg and Archdiocese of Baltimore where he was found to have covered up abuse.

## Highfill Cover-Up

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In addition to covering up for O’Brien’s cover-up of Lee’s predatory behavior, Broglio also covered up abuse allegations brought against late Air Force Chaplain Brian Highfill when he was contacted by News Orleans 4WWL-TV investigative reporter, David Hammer. When Broglio wrote in November of 2018, “There is nothing in his [Highfill’s] personnel file that would cast suspicion on his ministry while a military chaplain,” one of Highfill’s victims countered Broglio’s claim by producing correspondence dating back to 2016 in which Dr. Eileen Dombo, the AMS victims assistance coordinator, confirmed receipt of sexual assault allegations brought against Monsignor Highfill that she said were referred to the Air Force for investigation. This cover-up by Broglio was exposed in a New Orleans 4WWL-TV special report, “Losing Faith: The Church Sex Abuse Scandal.”

## USCCB Cover-Up?

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Insofar as Broglio has shown that he has covered up for predator priests like Highfill, and that he has also covered up his predecessor’s (O’Brien’s) underreporting and cover-ups, his brother bishops might find him an excellent candidate to cover up their own shortcomings were he to be elected the President of the USCCB. Based on research undertaken by bishopaccountability.org, it is believed that Broglio, O’Brien, and the AMS have **probably underreported and covered up more abuse than any diocese in the U.S.**

The Vatican has learned the costly mistake of promoting truly transparent prelates like Archbishop Diarmuid Martin who, as head of the scandal-rocked Archdiocese of Dublin, turned over more than 65,000 archival files to the Murphy Commission which showed how his predecessors covered up the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. Following that appointment, the Vatican has tried to appoint bishops whom they are confident will cover up the faults of their predecessors. This happened in Washington, DC where disgraced Cardinal Donald Wuerl replaced laicized Cardinal Theodore McCarrick only to have pro-LGBTQ Cardinal Wilton Gregory replace Wuerl; in Baltimore where then-Archbishop O'Brien replaced disgraced Cardinal William Keeler only to be replaced by Archbishop William Lori; in Palm Beach where Bishop Anthony O'Connell replaced accused Bishop Joseph Symons, only later for O'Connell himself to resign after admitting to abusing a seminarian almost three decades earlier; in Springfield in Illinois where accused Bishop George Lucas replaced predator Bishop Daniel Ryan only to be replaced by Bishop Thomas Paprocki; in Albany where Bishop Edward Scharfenberger replaced Bishop Howard Hubbard who has been named in seven sex abuse lawsuits; in Buffalo where Scharfenberger, as apostolic administrator, replaced disgraced Bishop Richard Malone and covered up for accused Auxiliary Bishop Edward Grosz before the appointment of Bishop Michael Fisher; and, finally, in the AMS where Archbishop Broglio replaced now-Cardinal Edwin O'Brien.

Just as a number of secular and Catholic media sources like Catholic News Agency (CNA) and Catholic News Service (CNS) are documented to have repeatedly provided cover for prelates who aid and abet sexual misconduct, one should not expect most compromised Catholic news outlets to tell the "whole truth" about whoever is elected the next president and vice president of the USCCB.