
MEDIA RELEASE

Whistleblower priest calls into question the impending Conclave of Cardinals

James Faluszczyk, himself a victim of abuse by a priest, and still feeling called to the priesthood, left active ministry because the Church ignored his claims. He testified before the 40th Pennsylvania Grand Jury as it investigated six dioceses in Pennsylvania, and he now investigates clergy and institutional child sexual abuse.

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WHAT: Statement in anticipation of a tainted Conclave to elect the Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church.

WHEN: Available anytime by arrangement.

WHERE: Via Zoom, Skype, or phone by arrangement.

WHO: Victim advocate and investigator of clergy abuse James Faluszczyk, a sworn witness before the 40th Pennsylvania Statewide Investigating Grand Jury.

ST. MARYS, PENNSYLVANIA (USA). Sunday, May 4, 2025 – Since the public discussion of Pope Francis' ministry has focused overwhelmingly on his public virtues, reporting of that nature should include a trigger warning for the tens of thousands of survivors of clergy sexual abuse of children around the world who have a different experience of his leadership. Innumerable souls have been lost to poverty, ethnic cleansing, and violence; while Pope Francis rightly focused his pontificate on these horrors from his inauguration as Bishop of Rome, survivors of abuse wrought by his Church continue to drown in a sea of despair as they seek to heal, most without ever reconstituting their lives on the dry land of spiritual safety and financial restitution by the Church.

Among them were two of my friends: [John Delaney](#) who was harmed within and by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and [Nate Lindstrom](#) who was harmed by three priests of the Norbertine Order of priests in Wisconsin. In both cases, it was government prosecutors, not the Church, who sought and gained a measure of transparency about the trauma and crimes they experienced. Both lives ended prematurely because of the hardball tactics of the Catholic Church under Pope Francis, and their feeling that they were swimming against a tide of internal church bureaucracy and an ocean of Catholics who would not listen to or believe them.

Also among the dead are two of my clients in my work as an investigator of clergy sexual abuse: T.S., who had tremendous difficulty coping with his abuse at the hand of Fr. Bernard Mach in the Diocese of Buffalo, and whose case was never filed under New York's Child Victims Act; and [PB5-DOE](#) who was allegedly abused by Msgr. Valerio Bernardo in the



Buffalo diocese, and whose case was able to be filed. Both died, in part, because of the obfuscation and opposition of Buffalo Bishop Richard Malone, who Pope Francis allowed to retire with the full benefits of an Emeritus Bishop, and who continues to represent the Church at public masses and in city parades. Malone was ostensibly investigated under Vos Estis Lux Mundi statutes enacted by Pope Francis, presumably initiated by Metropolitan Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York, and investigated by Dolan's friend Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, a protege of disgraced Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. The Catholic faithful of the Diocese of Buffalo never received the results of DiMarzio's report, and was himself subsequently accused of child sexual abuse.

The death of any survivor should be a signal event to everyone in the Church, but many living survivors speak of the murder of their soul by priests and bishops. This points to the institutional failure of the Church and its stated mission to save souls, a contradiction which should be viewed as a violation of fundamental human rights and a menace within the fabric of society.

For his part, even as Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York prepares to enter the Conclave to elect the next pope, he has failed to give account of multiple egregious lapses in oversight in three archdioceses. Three examples illustrate this:

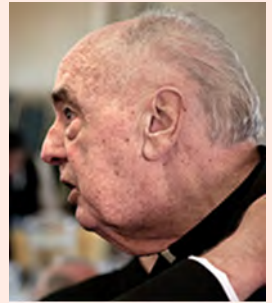
1.) Dolan's alleged witness, when he was a young priest living in a room adjacent to Fr. LeRoy Valentine at Immacolata Church in a suburb of St. Louis Missouri, of Valentine trafficking a child into the rectory there where Valentine sexually molested him.

2.) Dolan's sustained employment of New York psychologist Msgr. James Cassidy to investigate and supervise abuser-priests within that Archdiocese. Cassidy lived with Auxiliary Bishop Theodore McCarrick even as he was charged with supervising known clergy offenders. Though Cassidy's oversight contemporaneous to McCarrick's abuse in their shared residence is publicly discoverable in the Francis-ordered McCarrick Report, it has not been reported on, and Dolan has not shared his knowledge of the McCarrick Matter with the public, denying key details which would assist survivors in their healing.

3.) As Archbishop of Milwaukee Dolan spun off diocesan assets into charitable foundations in order to shield them from survivors seeking to reconstitute what they had lost. This remains a common practice, reported by the 40th Pennsylvania Statewide Grand Jury (p. 267), and also seen in my home Diocese of Erie and its Catholic Foundation.

Although Camerlengo Cardinal Kevin Farrell denied witnessing any inappropriate behavior of Cardinal Theodore McCarrick in their shared residence, the frequency of abuse by McCarrick suggests Farrell's denial defies credulity. While distancing himself from McCarrick, it should be clear that the man running operations in the Vatican during the interregnum following the death of Pope Francis owes his ecclesiastical career to McCarrick and Pope Francis. McCarrick considered Farrell to have the appropriate skills to manage matters related to offender priests and repeatedly promoted him, finally to the position of Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Washington, second only to McCarrick in governing that archdiocese. Later following McCarrick at the helm of the Archdiocese of Washington, Cardinal Wilton Gregory is preparing for the Conclave without ever sharing with the public the knowledge they have as a result of managing McCarrick's dossier within the Secret Archives of their former archdiocese; Neither has current D.C. Archbishop and Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, though he too is preparing to enter the Conclave.

Pope Francis appointed disgraced Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles as his personal representative to the closing of the 150th Anniversary of the Pennsylvania Diocese of Scranton in 2018, the year of the PA Grand Jury Report, for which I gave sworn testimony. Mahony had the sense to relinquish that role after abuse victims voiced disgust at Pope Francis' choice of Mahony. Yet, when named a Cardinal himself, Papal Nuncio to the United States Christophe Pierre, unbound by Pope Francis, gave both Mahony and disgraced Cardinal Donald Wuerl pride of place when Pierre took possession of his titular church in



Rome, St. Peter in Chains. Cardinal Pierre, who turned a blind eye to Buffalo Bishop Richard Malone, is also preparing to elect the next pope and is himself eligible for that office.

Pope Francis is widely celebrated as resetting the Church's pastoral approach to those with a homosexual orientation. Sexuality is a constitutive element of the human condition. As a gay man, out to my friends and seminary formation directors long before ordination—happily celibate until towards the end of my ministerial priesthood, and most of my life since—I regard Francis' pastoral stance towards gay priests as morally ambiguous at best. Celibacy among Roman Catholic religious remains a public promise and an expectation of the communities in which a priest ministers. Since Pope Francis famously proclaimed "who am I to judge" there has not been a corresponding springtime of openness for gay clergy, most of whom remain deeply embedded in closets of shame. Furthermore, the blackmail culture of gay priests living and ministering alongside criminal abusers of children and vulnerable adults remains. Few in Church life are speaking meaningfully of the phenomenon of priests who are fearful of blowing the whistle on brothers committing civil and canonical crimes because of their fear of being outed in retaliation, though their own behavior be consensual and non-criminal. My experience as an investigator of sexual abuse by clerics and an advocate for victims continues to unearth instances of priests with a diagnosis of HIV and AIDS passing that hardship to each other, and sometimes heaping that additional burden onto victims. The ministerial priesthood is as sick as the secrets it keeps, and it is time for communities to invite and support openness to priests who are gay, and to demand openness, acceptance, and intentional seminary formation of future clerics who are gay; anything less risks further complicity in behavioral dynamics which often lead to harming the vulnerable. In fact, it is for the next pope to judge priests, and to provide clear leadership in response to these complex realities.

In the wake of the 2019 Vatican Summit on clergy abuse, the bishops of Chile submitted their resignations to Pope Francis, and some were accepted. Yet this followed Pope Francis allowing Chilean Cardinal Ricardo Ezzati to resign upon reaching the age of 75, as is customary, and without Church sanction. If the resignation of Chilean bishops en masse was heralded as proactive by Pope Francis, then why not demand the same of US and Canadian bishops, who are at least as negligent and complicit in the abuse of children? Examples abound worldwide of bishops institutionalizing abuse and coverup. Among them most of the world's Cardinals who have communed with each other in the daily congregations preceding the Conclave, many eligible to be Pope.

On the eve of that celebrated 2019 Papal Summit at the Vatican, Pope Francis said that those who bring accusations against the Church are in league with Satan. When Camerlengo Cardinal Kevin Farrell sealed the Pope's apartment after his death, victims were reminded that those who brought complaints to his doorstep were regarded as whiners during his pontificate. This accounts for the non-response of Pope Francis when Pennsylvania State Representative Mark Rozzi, former Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham, and I sought an audience with him to share our experience and present our allegations.

Pope Francis and his Cardinals have done good in the name of the Church and its Gospel, and have also presided over crimes against children, survivors of abuse, and against humanity. Theirs is a faith historically co-opted by an empire which, in turn, co-opted the trappings of that empire. What recourse is there for victims, really, in the face of a power of such magnitude? Victims lives hang by a thread, yet past experience suggests that the Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church and its next Supreme Pontiff are unlikely to offer a sturdy lifeline.

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