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I woke up this morning, browsing the front page of the *Washington Post* as usual. But I was immediately struck by a headline below the fold: "Amid rumors of misdeeds, cardinal cultivated valuable reputation." As I read the story, I realized that accusations of sex abuse by Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, former Archbishop of Washington, had suddenly become public. The Vatican has now suspended him from public ministry.

These accusations came from priests and seminarians from Albany, New York, and New Jersey, and dated at least to the early 2000s. Illegitimate relationships had apparently been going on for years. Moreover, there are rumors of legal settlements with McCarrick in New Jersey dioceses in the early 2000s. Some priests and bishops claimed to have told the Vatican about all this, but if they did, nothing was ever done in response. If this is true, the silence and inaction of the Vatican are scandalous.

Moreover, it is way past time that the Catholic Church reconsider its celibacy requirement for clergy. Not that celibacy is the "cause" of misdeeds like McCarrick's. It is certainly possible for married clergy in other denominations to seek illegitimate partners or to be guilty of sex abuse, but it seems to happen far less often in those

denominations than in the Catholic Church, where celibacy is a requirement for the clergy.

But, whatever reconsideration is given to celibacy, no system blesses the multiple relationships and abuse described in the story about Cardinal McCarrick. Indeed, it is truly sad to see these accusations; Cardinal McCarrick, whatever his office in the church, should, in fairness, be subject to the same civil laws and penalties as others facing similar accusations.

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