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In a June 2015 letter to Boston's Cardinal Sean O'Malley obtained by Catholic News Service, a New York priest tells the prelate about "sexual abuse/harassment/intimidation" allegations he had heard concerning then-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick and asks that if the matter doesn't fall under his purview, to forward it to the "proper agency in the Vatican."

The letter "has taken me years to write and send," writes Fr. Boniface Ramsey, pastor of St. Joseph's Church Yorkville in New York City, who made the letter available to CNS in early August. But it was the second time he had attempted to tell church officials in writing.

In it, he describes for O'Malley conversations with the rector of a seminary in New Jersey about trips McCarrick, as head of the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey,

would take with seminarians to a beach house.

During the time period he mentions in the letter, 1986 to 1996, he says he was teaching at Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall University in New Jersey. He writes of the accounts he'd heard of McCarrick's repeated trips to a New Jersey beach house where, after too many seminarians were invited for too few beds, "the extra seminarian was then told that he could share the archbishop's bed."

"Some of these stories were not presented to me as mere rumors but were told me by persons directly involved," he wrote.

In an Aug. 13 phone interview with CNS, Ramsey said he didn't know any sexual acts were taking place, "but I thought his (McCarrick's) behavior was extremely inappropriate at the least." He said he was careful about what he wrote in the letter to O'Malley because he didn't want to be spreading rumors he'd heard, but he had concerns about the bed-sharing after hearing that it weighed on one of his friends who was tasked with finding seminarians for the archbishop's beach visits.

"I'd never heard of any adult who had sex with McCarrick," he said, but felt the constant bed sharing he'd often heard about was "something he shouldn't have been doing."

The letter dated June 17, 2015, was sent just shortly after the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, headed by O'Malley, received its statutes in May 2015. Ramsey said he sent it then because he had heard of the formation of the commission and had recently been at the funeral for New York Cardinal Edward Egan, who died in March 2015, and saw McCarrick there. At that point the prelate was archbishop of Washington.

"I was angry," Ramsey told Catholic News Service. "I said 'this guy is still out and about.'"

Ramsey said it made him "upset" to see that McCarrick, after "this long history which so many people knew about, he could continue to show his face."

He had written a letter about his concerns more than a decade before, in 2000, and it didn't seem to go anywhere, but his new motivation came about when he saw McCarrick and "wanted this stuff to stop with the seminarians," he said in the interview. So, he sat down to write a letter – again.

"The matter does not have to do with the abuse of minors, but it does have to do with a form of sexual abuse/harassment/intimidation or maybe simply high-jinks as practiced by Theodore Cardinal McCarrick with his seminarians and perhaps other young men when he was the Archbishop of Newark," writes Ramsey to O'Malley.

In a July statement, O'Malley said he did not "personally" receive the letter but the statement said "at the staff level the letter was reviewed and determined that the matters presented did not fall under the purview of the Commission or the Archdiocese of Boston..." However, the response from the cardinal's office did not say whether it had been forwarded to the proper agency, as Ramsey had requested.

In the letter to O'Malley, Ramsey says that he had in the past told Archbishop Thomas Kelly of Louisville, who died in December 2011, about his concerns. Kelly told him that "stories about Archbishop McCarrick had been circulating among the American bishops," the letter says, and that Kelly mentioned to him a story involving a flight attendant.

In the interview with CNS, Ramsey said the story was about a male flight attendant whom McCarrick "picked up" on a flight, telling him that perhaps he had a vocation, and ended up enrolling him in a seminary, but there seemed to be reasons other than religious for wanting him there. The flight-attendant-turned seminarian was later kicked out of the seminary.

Ramsey writes in the letter that after McCarrick was appointed to the Archdiocese of Washington in 2000, he tried to speak to the apostolic nuncio in Washington, who was then Gabriel Montalvo Higuera, about what he knew. The nuncio told him to write him a letter, which Ramsey said he sent. He told a priest friend about the letter and that friend tried to dissuade him from sending it, telling him it could hurt him.

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"I never received any acknowledgement, although I have certain knowledge that the letter was received, and that the information was forwarded to somewhere in the Vatican," he wrote O'Malley.

The writing of the letter didn't seem to hurt Ramsey, as his friend had feared. But its revelations also didn't seem to hurt McCarrick.

"I found it shocking at the time that Archbishop McCarrick was ever advanced to the Archdiocese of Washington, since I have little doubt that many persons in the Vatican were aware of his proclivities before he was named," he wrote in the letter to O'Malley. "And then, of course, on to the cardinalate, which was to be expected for the Archbishop of Washington, but still distressing."

Mentioning cases of high-ranking officials disgraced because of sexual misbehavior, he said in the letter that "it seems bizarre to me that Cardinal McCarrick is out and about, a conspicuous presence at religious (including papal) events, being interviewed, giving speeches, serving on committees and the like. Was not what he did at the very least highly questionable? Was it not taking advantage of young men who did not know how to say no to their archbishop? Has it not, for the many laity and clergy who were aware of his actions, contributed to cynicism about the church and the hierarchy?"

Ramsey said he did not keep a letter of the one sent in 2000 to the nuncio, but in between the first and the second letter he sent, he said tried to speak with others, including Egan, about stopping McCarrick.

Egan "didn't want to hear about it," Ramsey said to CNS.

Below is the text of Ramsey's letter to O'Malley:

Dear Cardinal O'Malley,

I am writing to you about a delicate matter, about which in fact I contacted Archbishop Montalvo, the Apostolic Nuncio, in November 2000. I feel that, after thinking about it for several years, I should make a second contact -- this time with you. The matter does not have to do with the abuse of minors, but it does have to do with a form of sexual abuse/harassment/intimidation or maybe simply high-jinks as practiced by Theodore Cardinal McCarrick with his seminarians and perhaps other young men when he was the Archbishop of Newark.

From 1986 to 1996 I taught patrology at Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall University and for much of that time served there as a mentor and spiritual director. (I was a Dominican at the time and am now a priest of the Archdiocese of New York.) Early on in my tenure at the seminary I heard from several seminarians

that Archbishop McCarrick was in the habit of inviting seminarians to his house on the New Jersey Shore -- always one more seminarian than there were beds; the extra seminarian was then told that he could share the archbishop's bed. Archbishop McCarrick would ask the rector of the seminary to find seminarians to go to his beach house, which the rector apparently did with a great deal of reluctance, not knowing how to refuse his ordinary. The rector was a man whom I admired, and a friend. When I had a chance to speak with him about this, I believe that he resolved to resist the archbishop, and I think that he did. I am not sure, however, that the archbishop ceased his invitations. There were also stories of seminarians and seminarian-age young men sharing the archbishop's residence, of special privileges (like studying in Rome) for his "nephews," and so forth. Some of these stories were not presented to me as mere rumors but were told me by persons directly involved.

Initially I kept this information to myself, viewing it as a natural secret, but I eventually discovered that it was rather widely known in the archdiocese and even further abroad, which made me feel that I was released from observing any confidentiality. I spoke with Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly of Louisville, a friend of mine, sometime in the 1990s, and he said that stories about Archbishop McCarrick had been circulating among the American bishops, and he himself mentioned one story involving a flight attendant (whom I knew at the seminary and who was expelled for preying on another seminarian).

When Archbishop McCarrick was named Archbishop of Washington in November 2000, I decided to inform the nuncio about what I knew. First I called him, spoke with him directly about the situation, and asked if he would receive a letter from me. He said yes. The next day I reconsidered, and then I called him and said that I had had second thoughts about sending him my letter. He told me in no uncertain terms that I should send it, and so I did. I never received any acknowledgement, although I have certain knowledge that the letter was received and that the information was forwarded to somewhere in the Vatican.

I found it shocking at the time that Archbishop McCarrick was ever advanced to the Archdiocese of Washington, since I have little doubt that many persons in the Vatican were aware of his proclivities before he was named. And then, of course, on to the cardinalate, which was to be expected for the Archbishop of Washington, but still distressing.

These days, when the former nuncio to the Dominican Republic is going to go to trial for child abuse and the Archbishop of Saint Paul has just resigned over the same issue, when a Scottish cardinal has recently been disgraced for sexual misbehavior with his priests, it seems bizarre to me that Cardinal McCarrick is out and about, a conspicuous presence at religious (including papal) events, being interviewed, giving speeches, serving on committees, and the like. Was not what he did at the very least highly questionable? Was it not taking advantage of young men who did not know how to say no to their archbishop? Has it not, for the many laity and clergy who were aware of his actions, contributed to cynicism about the Church and the hierarchy?

I am not sure whether Cardinal McCarrick's past actions come under your purview, but if they do, all the better. If not, perhaps you would forward this letter to the proper agency in the Vatican.

I am grateful for any attention that you may give to this letter, which it has taken me years to decide to write and send.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

(Rev.) Boniface Ramsey

Administrator