News



Ave Maria University in Naples, Florida (Wikimedia Commons/Anthjay)



by James Dearie

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September 14, 2018

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Editor's note: *Welcome to NCR's college roundup, where every Friday we bring you the latest news in Catholic college and university life. Do you have news you would like to share? Email James Dearie at jdearie@ncronline.org.*

ALLEGANY, N.Y. — St. Bonaventure University has rescinded the honorary degree of former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, weeks after the retired prelate was suspended from public ministry by the Vatican for credible accusations of child sexual abuse.

"In voting to rescind the degree, St. Bonaventure's trustees recognized that revocation of this honor does little to heal the deep and painful wounds McCarrick's actions have caused, but we have an unwavering commitment to stand in solidarity with all survivors of sexual abuse," university president Dennis DePerro, is quoted as saying in the university's announcement Sept. 10.

McCarrick had been awarded the degree at the university's 2011 commencement.

Other prominent Catholic universities have also rescinded honors bestowed on McCarrick, including the Catholic University of America and Fordham University.

MILWAUKEE — Marquette University has removed the name of past university president Jesuit Fr. Robert Wild from one of its buildings following a letter from the priest asking that it be removed.

The dorm formerly named "Wild Commons," was renamed simply to "The Commons" Sept. 4 just weeks after opening in August.

Wild said in the letter published by Marquette Sept. 4 that he was "filled with sorrow and abhorrence at any incident of abuse committed by a religious leader" but when he was Jesuit provincial for the order's Chicago province from 1985 to 1991, he handled sex abuse allegations against three of its members.

"Looking back, I would have handled certain aspects of those cases rather differently than I did then," he wrote.

"I have decided that one aspect of 'fasting' I should undertake is to formally request that Marquette University remove my name from our new residence hall complex."

NAPLES, Fla. — The president of Ave Maria University has reaffirmed his support of Pope Francis despite backlash, while also issuing an apology for some of his remarks.

In the wake of Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò's explosive letter claiming that Pope Francis had been aware of abuse complaints about former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick and calling on him to resign, Ave Maria president Jim Towey penned a letter Aug. 24, defending the pope and calling for unity in the church.

"Contrary to the popular narrative, most conservative Catholics are not following suit and embracing their defiance, and certainly not on our campus," Towey said. Ave Maria is considered by many to be a "conservative" Catholic university.

However, Towey was compelled to issue another letter the following day, in which he apologized for one part of his Aug 29 statement, in which he suggested that Cardinal Raymond Burke's opposition to Francis stemmed "from the Holy Father's decision to remove him from his prominent position as head of the Holy See's highest ecclesiastical court."

"Such speculation was unfair and His Eminence deserved better," Towey said in his Aug. 30 letter after many alumni responded negatively to his first. "He has been a friend of Ave Maria University since its founding and is renowned for his sincere love of the Church. I will amend my statement on the web site, and I apologize."

Towey also reiterated that he stands with the pope. "I remain confident [Francis] will comment at the appropriate time on what has been published, and also lead the effort the Church needs to protect children and vulnerable adults from clergy sexual abuse, and hold those who perpetrate such acts or cover them up within the hierarchy, accountable," Towey says near the end of his second letter. "Let us all pray for him."

TOLEDO, Ohio — Mercy College of Ohio, a Catholic college with around 1,300 students enrolled that has operated for more than 100 years, has signed a letter of intent to transfer their operations to Bowling Green State University over the next few years, the institutions announced September 12.

Bowling Green State called the move an "effort to address a statewide shortage of nurses and the high demand for other health professional," in its press release announcing the plan.

The Catholic college is part of Mercy Health, the largest provider of medical care in the state of Ohio. Bowling Green State said that the "transfer, which would include

Mercy College’s nine degree programs and six certificate programs, is expected to take two to three years to complete."

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