



Archdiocese of Santa Fe

Office of Communications/ Social Media

4000 Saint Joseph Place NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120-1714
Celine Baca Radigan, Director
Voice 505.831.8180, FAX 505.831.8248
cradigan@archdiosf.org, | www.archdiosf.org

STATEMENT

The Vatican Report on Theodore E. McCarrick

By Archbishop John C. Wester

ALBUQUERQUE – Thursday, November 12, 2020 –Archbishop John C. Wester issued the following statement regarding the Vatican report on Theodore E. McCarrick:

The recently released report by the Holy See regarding Theodore E. McCarrick is painfully clear about the crimes and sins of this former cardinal and about the mistakes and poor judgments made by officials in the Catholic Church. It is important to read the entire report in order to appreciate the thoroughness and honesty of the investigation, but it makes for very sad reading. I can only imagine how excruciating it would be for a victim of clergy sexual abuse. Hopefully, this further step in the Church's mandate to heal and protect will further the healing that only God's grace can bestow. Pope Francis has committed himself and the Catholic Church to accountability, responsibility and transparency. The McCarrick report is part of this commitment, but by no means the last word. Rather, it marks a critical moment in the life of the Church to accept the truth no matter where it is found and no matter where it leads. Pope Francis's integrity and the integrity of the Church rests on this fundamental principle.

The McCarrick report underscores the importance of hearing and respecting the accounts of those who have been abused. It points to the necessity of working together to find the truth, which is the first step in the healing of victims and the healing of the Church. It also unveils the insidiousness of clericalism and the devastating effects of selfish ambition and unbridled power. Pope Francis has spoken often and eloquently of the evil of clericalism and of the Gospel's clarion call to fight this cancer in the Church by following Christ's example of selfless service and surrender to the will of God: "Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)

This report is in keeping with Pope Francis's apostolic letter Vos Estis Lux Mundi, which provides a structure of accountability for all bishops, abbots and those equivalent in the law. It also reminds us bishops that we must be ever attentive to the needs of the faithful, especially children, the vulnerable and those on the peripheries.

We are grateful to Pope Francis for commissioning this report and to those who worked so hard in producing it. I believe that while it sheds a bright light on the sins of the past it, also illumines the path of all bishops and those in authority in the Church as we strive to reflect the light of Christ in all aspects of our lives and ministry. I pray that this report will be an important part of a wider effort on the part of the Catholic Church to build a new moment of trust and truth, "...a new heaven and a new earth." (Revelation 21:1)

Most Reverend John C. Wester
Archbishop of Santa Fe

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