

Bishops Scramble To Cover a Seminary in Shambles

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Who will be the next rector?



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The Vatican often goes into panic mode when clergy try to be transparent about sexual abuse.

Such was the case when Fr. Thomas Doyle broke the code of silence by co-authoring a confidential clerical sex abuse report while working at the Vatican embassy, and it was the case again when Dublin Abp. Diarmuid Martin handed over 80,000 files from archdiocesan archives to a commission investigating sex abuse. Both Doyle and Martin might have been made cardinals had they covered up abuse, just as Pope Francis (both as pope and archbishop of Buenos Aires), Cdl. Timothy Dolan, Cdl. Blase Cupich and over 130 U.S. bishops have allegedly done.



Fr. Peter Harman

With attention now turning to the empty rector's chair of the North American College (NAC), candidates among the U.S. presbyterate are being sized up to succeed Fr. Peter Harman — who is stepping down amid revelations of sexual scandal. The faithful should watch carefully to see who is selected if they want to gauge the direction of the Church.

When a bishop or other high-ranking cleric is removed after covering up (or committing) abuse, what happens next is often equally corrupt. New administrators are tasked with doing damage control for their predecessors and are selected on that basis (the Vatican does not want a repeat at NAC of what happened in Dublin, where Abp. Martin exposed still further the depravity of his predecessor). This *modus operandi* can work well for officials — as long as the new replacement avoids getting caught.

Cases where the new bishop was no better than the former can be seen in dioceses like Palm Beach; Newark; Washington, D.C. and Springfield.

Spotlight: Illinois Orgy — the Rome Connection

In Palm Beach, Bp. Joseph Symons resigned in 1998 after admitting to molesting five boys. The Vatican then appointed Bp. Anthony O'Connell to replace him. Just a few years later, O'Connell himself resigned after admitting to molesting an underage seminarian.

The resignation of consecutive bishops led some to call Palm Beach "among the most troubled dioceses" in terms of clergy abuse.



Cdl. Joseph Tobin and Francesco Castiglione

In Newark, then-archbishop Theodore McCarrick (a notorious sexual predator) was followed by Abp. John Myers. Myers would later be accused of homosexual misconduct in a lawsuit. Myers was followed by Cdl. Joseph Tobin, who, it was revealed, had been living for months with a 36-year-old gay Italian actor.

Given that Pope Francis put Msgr. Battista Ricca in charge of his residence at Casa Santa Marta after Ricca cohabitated with a Swiss boyfriend, it may come as no shock to the faithful (although it should) that Francis named Tobin to the Congregation for Bishops (the office that advises the pope on who to nominate to become a bishop) this year.



Bp. Anthony O'Connell and Cdl. Donald Wuerl

Myers and Tobin were not the only successors tasked with covering up abuse by a predecessor. McCarrick's sins (including the \$180,000 in abuse settlements that were arranged for him) were also covered up by his successor in Washington, Cdl. Donald Wuerl.

As with the scandal in Palm Beach wherein O'Connell proved to be as bad as Symons, Wuerl was forced to resign — but only *after* the 2018 Pennsylvania Grand Jury Report exposed his record of covering up for abusive priests during his tenure as bishop of Pittsburgh. Following Wuerl's fall, pro-LGBT prelate Wilton Gregory was sent to take over in Washington.

When Gregory gave Wuerl \$2 million this year for so-called ministry activities, one investigative reporter went so far as to ask, "What does Cdl. Wuerl know that's worth \$2 million?"

The script for what is playing out with Abp. Gregory in Washington was written years earlier when the Vatican sent Abp. George Lucas to the diocese of Springfield, Illinois, to replace Bp. Daniel Ryan after Ryan was accused of sexual misconduct. Lucas himself had sexual misconduct allegations levied against him and, like his predecessor, is reported to have engaged in homosexual relations with his priests, including outgoing NAC rector Fr. Peter Harman.

What does Cdl. Wuerl know that's worth \$2 million?

With Harman leaving his post at the NAC in disgrace, many question whom the Congregation of Clergy and the NAC board of governors will choose to be the new rector. Multiple sworn statements in a massive lawsuit affirm allegations that Harman covered up predatory behavior on the part of his former vice rector, Fr. Adam Park. They also affirm that he engaged in sodomy with Abp. Lucas at an orgy — in the presence of seminarians.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/TUNKgUMuKfk>

In light of such a shady past, it is expected that the bishops will look to replace Harman with an equally compromised cleric for the purpose of initiating yet another cover-up. Based on this criterion, two possible successors come to mind: Fr. Carter Griffin and Fr. Marco Durazo.

Father Griffin was ordained in 2004 in the archdiocese of Washington and is now the rector of St. Pope John Paul II Seminary in Washington. He's a NAC alumnus and was the priest-secretary to both former-cardinal McCarrick and Cdl. Wuerl. Griffin was accused of sexually harassing and then targeting for reprisal a Baltimore seminarian — an incident that Griffin himself admitted was never properly investigated.



Frs. Carter Griffin and Marco Durazo

Father Marco Durazo, a priest ordained in 2007 in the archdiocese of Los Angeles, who is now the rector of St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, California, has been accused of preying sexually on seminarians. One of Durazo's alleged boyfriends, Fr. Gerson Espinosa Velasco, is also accused of having sexually abused multiple seminarians — and is even said to have raped a seminarian at St. John's Seminary.

It would appear that Griffin and Durazo are both *eminently* qualified to cover up for Fr. Harman, especially as the lawsuit against Harman, Park, Cdl. Timothy Dolan and the NAC continues to bring forward damning revelations.

Did I mention that as long as the bishops appoint another rector with a questionable past, the faithful will likely be kept in the dark regarding how their contributions have been funneled to Fox Rothschild, a gargantuan pro-LGBTQ law firm retained to defend the sexual antics of disgraced NAC leaders?

Griffin and Durazo are both eminently qualified to cover up for Fr. Harman.

Whichever priest replaces Harman, he may be surprised to learn that life on the Janiculum is not as vibrant as the Catholic News Agency (CNA) portrayed in its whitewashed coverage of Harman's departure.



Abp. John Myers

CNA reporter Hannah Brockhaus, who herself was named in an ethics violation report for unprofessional conduct, inaccurately reported that "more than 200 seminarians and graduate priests from the United States and Australia are currently studying at the college." The real truth is that enrollment has fallen by more than 50%, from 252 students to just over 100 since Abp. John Myers installed Harman as rector in 2016.

If enrollment continues to decline at the current rate, and the Vatican needs to sell off some of its holdings to pay off debts resulting from recent shady deals and other financial losses, we should not be surprised if the NAC closes its doors in disgrace — joining the American College at Louvain in Belgium and many other scandal-ridden seminaries in the dustbin of history.

Anyone wishing to support the Save Our Seminarians Fund (supporting the effort to apply legal protections for seminarians who have been victims of abuse or cover-ups) may contribute at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-our-seminarians-fund>.

Gene Thomas Gomulka is a sexual abuse victims' advocate, investigative reporter and screenwriter. A former Navy chaplain, captain (O6), seminary instructor and diocesan Respect Life director, Gomulka was ordained a priest for the Altoona-Johnstown diocese and later made a prelate of honor (monsignor) by Pope St. John Paul II.

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