



ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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NEWS RELEASE

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Archdiocese Statement Concerning Robert Ciolek

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Archdiocese of Washington understands that in 2004 Robert Ciolek, a former priest of the Diocese of Metuchen, filed a complaint in the Diocese of Pittsburgh asserting claims of abuse arising from an adult relationship as a seminarian with a Pittsburgh Diocese priest assigned to the faculty of Mount Saint Mary's Seminary, where Mr. Ciolek was studying. In that same complaint, the Archdiocese understands that Mr. Ciolek claimed that years prior, he as an adult seminarian also experienced inappropriate activity involving Archbishop Theodore McCarrick. At that time, the Archdiocese understands that Mr. Ciolek requested confidentiality for the information he submitted.

The Archdiocese also understands that Mr. Ciolek's 2004 claim was addressed immediately by the Diocese of Pittsburgh and then-Bishop Donald Wuerl. The priest in question was immediately removed from ministry. Bishop Wuerl also quickly forwarded the Ciolek claim regarding then-Cardinal McCarrick to the Papal Nunciature in Washington, D.C., and received no further information regarding the matter. Bishop Wuerl adhered to Mr. Ciolek's request for confidentiality, and the Archdiocese understands that Mr. Ciolek also expressed his gratitude with how the Diocese of Pittsburgh handled his allegations.

In late 2018, the Archdiocese understands that Mr. Ciolek was allowed to review the file regarding his Pittsburgh complaint, and that Mr. Ciolek confirmed that the Diocese of Pittsburgh and then-Bishop Wuerl acted appropriately in addressing his complaints and in fulfilling his request that his assertions regarding then-Cardinal McCarrick be submitted to the Nunciature in Washington, D.C.

As Cardinal Wuerl has noted, neither he, the Diocese of Pittsburgh nor the Archdiocese of Washington were made aware of Mr. Ciolek's settlement with the Diocese of Metuchen until the Diocese disclosed the confidential settlement in July 2018. Further, Mr. Ciolek began publicly sharing his experiences in the Fall of 2018.

The Archdiocese's communications with Mr. Ciolek were meant to be respectful of what he has experienced. Furthermore, Cardinal Wuerl has attempted to be accurate in addressing questions about Archbishop McCarrick. His statements previously referred to claims of sexual abuse of a minor by Archbishop McCarrick, as well as rumors of such behavior. The Cardinal stands by those statements, which were not intended to be imprecise.

It is important to note that Archbishop Theodore McCarrick was appointed to the Archdiocese of Washington in November 2000 and named a cardinal in February 2001, years before Mr. Ciolek made his claims. Then-Bishop Wuerl was not involved in the decision-making process resulting in the appointment and promotion.

In June 2006 Bishop Wuerl was named Archbishop of Washington. Cardinal Wuerl has said that until the accusation of abuse of a minor by Cardinal McCarrick was made in New York, no one from this archdiocese has come forward with an accusation of abuse by Archbishop McCarrick during his time in Washington.