



Cardinal Theodore McCarrick

Lisa Bourne / LifeSiteNews

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Cardinal McCarrick should be laicized and his enablers should resign: Psychiatrist

July 25, 2018 (LifeSiteNews) – Men who find fulfillment in their God-given vocation as protectors of their wives, children, youth, marriage, the culture and their country find Cardinal Theodore McCarrick’s long history of sexually aggressive behavior against youth, seminarians, and adults totally incomprehensible.

As a psychiatrist who has treated priests who sexually abused youth and who has written a psychological analysis of the clear role of homosexuality in the abuse of adolescent males, who are the primary victims in the crisis and offered recommendations to bishops in this article, I hope to clarify the serious psychological and spiritual conflicts in sexually abusive priests and bishops and in those who do not have SSA [same-sex attraction], yet have enabled Cardinal McCarrick’s behaviors. I trust that it will be helpful as well to other colluding members of the Hierarchy.

Psychological conflicts – vulnerability from childhood

Given the numerous allegations that are emerging against Cardinal McCarrick and in view of the recent World Health Organization’s recognition of compulsive sexual behavior as a mental disorder, undoubtedly many in the Church will identify Cardinal McCarrick as struggling with a sexual addiction for which a 12-step recovery program is indicated.

Narcissism

While such programs can be beneficial, they rarely identify and address the severe narcissism and other psychological conflicts involved, particularly a profound weakness in male confidence from childhood that can later lead a man to act against his nature as protector of youth and to think and feel he is entitled to use others as sexual objects.

I have described elsewhere the role of narcissism in the epidemic of sexually aggressive behaviors in the media, as well as in adult females, singles and adolescents of both sexes.

Childhood male insecurity and loneliness

The psychological conflict, most often seen in males with SSA and which often precedes the development of serious narcissistic personality traits, is that of a weakness in male confidence.

When an adolescent male comes in for treatment who has begun using homosexual pornography, the most common response to the question as to why he is attracted to a male is that the other male possesses something which he feels that he lacks. Often what is specifically identified is a muscular, handsome body, a strong sense of masculinity or an image of male confidence.

When asked to name their best friend in elementary school, these adolescents respond with initial silence and then often timidly name a girl.

These young men are often gifted intellectually and artistically but not athletically. The lack of eye-hand coordination results in a deep experience of insecurity and loneliness in childhood because of an inability to participate in sports play with other boys and teenagers in a culture obsessed with sports.

The lack of secure, accepting and positive relationships with a father or brother can intensify feelings of male insecurity, sadness, anxiety and anger.

These youths can develop a craving for male acceptance, which can become eroticized. Sexual acting-out by adult males with adolescent and younger males can be an unconscious attempt to seek escape from their pain of adolescent sadness, loneliness and male insecurity.

Cardinal McCarrick's compulsive aggressive sexual behaviors with other younger males unconsciously becomes a "sporting" male-bonding event which fosters a sense of male acceptance and fleeting enhancement for the weak male confidence, just as it does with heterosexually aggressive compulsive behaviors.

The primary psychological conflicts then are: first major weaknesses in male confidence from a lack of a secure attachment relationship with male peers and/or father; and then the development of severe narcissism.

Priests and bishops who embrace the situational ethics that fueled the massive worldwide rebellion against *Humanae Vitae* regularly have grandiose, disproportionate thinking concerning the assertion of the primacy of the personal conscience as taking precedence over the sixth and ninth commandments and 2,000 years of Church teaching. Such grandiose thinking intensifies narcissism in priests, bishops and laity.

Also, the failure of bishops and priests to live and to preach the truth about sexual morality by their silence and passive-aggressive anger against *Humanae Vitae* further weakened their male confidence. These grave errors both predispose them to act out sexually and to be fearful of correcting someone like Cardinal McCarrick, whose abusive behaviors were known to them.

Spiritual conflicts

If a priest fails to teach the Church's truth about sexual morality as contained in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, he does not configure himself to Jesus Christ in this vital aspect of proclaiming the Good News. His failure to do so leads to a growth towards embracing situational ethics, which in turn leads to a support of the primacy of the personal, and usually uninformed, conscience over the mandates of the sixth and ninth of God's 10 commandments.

The massive rebellion of bishops conferences against *Humanae Vitae* in the 1960s and 1970s and the pressure applied to priests and to seminarians to rebel against it -- as described by Cardinal Stafford at the fortieth anniversary of *Humanae Vitae* -- further weakened the Faith of bishops and priests.

Priests have been pressured by their pastors and their bishops not to preach about sexual morality and marriage. Subsequently, a great fear developed of confronting sexual problems at all levels.

In 2002 in an article on the crisis, titled *Letter to Bishops*, I wrote:

Our experience over 25 years has convinced us of the direct link between rebellion and anger against the Church's teaching, and sexually promiscuous behaviors. This appears to be a two way street: those who are sexually active dissent from the Church's teaching on sexuality to justify their own actions, while those who adopt rebellious ideas on sexual morality are more vulnerable to becoming sexually active, because they have little to no defense against sexual temptations. Growth in forgiveness and growth in humility are essential in the treatment of such priests.

Finally, priests should be screened for homosexuality by their bishops or religious superiors prior to being considered for a position of responsibility in a diocese, religious community or in the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The previous attitude of "winking" at homosexuality in priests must end. Otherwise, all Church teaching on sexual morality is undermined. Also, complaints by priests of aggressive homosexual behavior in rectories and religious communities must be addressed and no longer ignored.

The growth of sexual heresy in the Church

Dale O'Leary, author of *One Man: One Woman: A Catholic's Guide to Defending Marriage* and co-author of our *Linacre Quarterly* article on the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic Clergy, believes that Church historians will one day describe this period in Church history as the age of the sexual heresy.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes heresy as, "the obstinate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with divine and catholic faith, or it is likewise an obstinate doubt concerning the same ...," n.2089.

All the warnings given by Pope Paul VI in HV [*Humanae Vitae*] about giving in to the contraceptive mentality have been fulfilled and the damage is even far more. The contraceptive mentality is responsible in large part for the epidemic of divorce, marital infidelity and the demographic winter in many countries because of low birth rates. The explosion of sexually transmitted disease is due to the contraceptive mentality and the accompanying permissiveness, whereas, the massive retreat from marriage and the epidemic of cohabitation have left forty percent of children being born out of wedlock. A two fold increase has occurred in depressive illness in adolescents on the pill and a two fold greater risk for suicide attempt and a three fold greater risk for suicide on the pill, sexual activity by those who vowed to remain celibate and the sexual abuse of minors by priests, especially of adolescent males are further results of this collapse of moral teaching.

Bishops and priests in large numbers worldwide rejected *Humanae Vitae* and gave into sexually heretical thinking. This heresy has seriously harmed seminary formation, as well as college, secondary and primary education.

Those who failed to give in to the contraceptive mentality were pressured to do as Cardinal Stafford described on the fortieth anniversary of HV, a certitude acquired from his experiences as a priest after its release.

In my clinical experience, bishops or those on their staff who are sexual heretics attempt to laicize loyal priests who did not abuse minors or adults and whose psychological conflicts can be resolved. They also support or generate false accusations of abuse against loyal priests whom they then try to laicize. As with Cardinal McCarrick, other bishops are aware of their hostile, passive-aggressive activities against loyal priests and the Church.

Loyal priests are often told by their pastors or pressured by their bishops through his staff not to preach on contraception, sexual morality, marriage, fornication, homosexuality or adultery. Those who do not remain silent on these subjects are often victims of false accusations. Tragically, a 'critical mass' of homosexually inclined clergy has tipped the balance and the clergy who are faithful on sexual ethics are in danger of being falsely accused.

The influence of Cardinal McCarrick in the Vatican's choice of Cardinals is alarming as identifying a tendency toward those who support situational ethics.

Cardinal McCarrick and other cardinals and bishops, some of whom who have been appointed by Pope Francis, support books that undermine the Church's teaching on homosexuality. This behavior lends support to evidence of a strong influence of sexual heresy in high levels of the Church.

Similarly, another bishop appointed by Pope Francis has recommended that parishes make their own decisions about their approach to homosexuality.

At the Vatican, an Archbishop who led the Pontifical Council of the Family was responsible for the release of an online sexual education program for adolescents that initially contained the same type of pornography used by homosexual priest predators of adolescent males in their grooming behaviors. Later, he was appointed to lead the John Paul II Institutes, in spite of the revelation of the massive blasphemous homosexual mural he commissioned for his Cathedral of those engaging in sinful sexual behaviors being taken into heaven. The image of the Lord in this mural revealed his genitalia.

Rev. Thomas Weinandy, former chief of staff of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Doctrine, wrote to the Holy Father about his choice of bishops:

“Faithful Catholics can only be disconcerted by your choice of some bishops, men who seem not merely open to those who hold views counter to Christian belief but who support and even defend them. What scandalizes believers, and even some fellow bishops, is not only your having appointed such men to be shepherds of the Church, but that you also seem silent in the face of their teaching and pastoral practice.”

During the Arian Heresy, the majority of bishops signed the Arian Creed. During the heresy against marriage and sexual morality under Henry VIII, only one bishop, St. John Fisher, remained loyal to Jesus Christ and His Church. In fact, many laity shed their blood for refusing to give into the heresy.

Today, the laity needs to defend the Church from the unprecedented attempts from within the Vatican to undermine her teaching on marriage, homosexuality, sexual morality in general, particularly adultery and the Eucharist.

In order to protect the Church, priests and bishops with homosexual attractions have a grave responsibility to address their psychological conflicts and often-heretical views on sexual morality and to protect adolescent males in particular, and the Church from further shame and sorrow.

With all due respect, the Hierarchy must be protected from priests who have same-sex attractions and who have never preached the Church's truth on sexual morality. If a candidate for the episcopacy has such conflicts, he should not be considered for the Office of Bishop.

The abuse Cardinal McCarrick inflicted upon youth, as well as adults, and the great shame that he has brought upon himself and the Church, are primarily the result of his unresolved psychological conflicts, leading to embracing a sexual heresy and refusing to teach the truth found in *Humanae Vitae*. Had he addressed his psychological weaknesses and preached the truth, he would have been configured to that truth and, in all likelihood, would never have used others compulsively as sexual objects.

Requests for forgiveness should be offered to the laity from the Holy Father and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and from bishops and priests who have never taught the 2,000 year teaching of Jesus Christ and his Church on sexual morality and, more recently, marriage.

In order to rebuild trust and purify the Church, resignations should be requested of members of the Hierarchy in the United States and in the Vatican who enabled Cardinal McCarrick. These undermine the Church's teaching on homosexuality and sexual morality by supporting situational ethics and would seem to be actively trying to laicize loyal, psychologically and spiritually healthy priests.

In addition, Cardinal McCarrick should be treated by the Vatican as would any priest would be who engaged in similar monstrous behaviors against adolescent males and young adults. Justice requires his laicization.

Bishops and priests should initiate a major catechesis on the Church's teaching on sexual morality, marriage and the human person, all of which are found in St. John Paul II's outstanding writing including *Veritatis Splendor*, *The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, and *Theology*

of the Body, in addition to *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* published by the Pontifical Council on the Family during John Paul II's pontificate.

The purification of the Hierarchy and the priesthood will not be possible until they commit to teach the liberating truth found in *Humanae Vitae* for marriage, singles, youth and themselves.

The advice of St. Pope John Paul II at his meeting on the crisis in the Church with Cardinal McCarrick and three other members of the American Hierarchy on April 23, 2002 is even more urgently needed today:

People must know that bishops and priests are totally committed to the fullness of Catholic truth on matters of sexual morality, a truth as essential to the renewal of the priesthood and the episcopate as it is to the renewal of marriage and family life.

Editor's note: Rick Fitzgibbons, M.D., is a member of the John Paul II Academy for Human Life and Family, has taught at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at Catholic University of America and has served as a consultant to the Congregation for Clergy at the Vatican. He is the co-author of Forgiveness Therapy: An Empirical Guide for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope, APA Books, 2014. His forthcoming book on strengthening Catholic marriages will be published in the Spring by Ignatius Press.