

LEGAL WOES CONTINUE FOR DOLAN AND NAC

Victimized Seminarian Appeals His Case

The legal fight to protect victimized seminarians continues as the attorney of former North American College (NAC) seminarian Anthony Gorgia has begun an appeal to reverse a New York judge's decision dismissing a major sexual predation and cover-up Complaint against New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan and the NAC. Notably, while the judge claimed alleged procedural technicalities and jurisdictional issues, she never dismissed the veracity of the cover-up allegations faced by Dolan; nor did she oppose the disturbing sexual misconduct allegations against outgoing NAC rector, Father Peter Harman, and former vice-rector, Father Adam Park, who resigned in disgrace after these allegations were exposed. The merits of the accusations were confirmed by a highly-credentialed former FBI Special Agent in Charge (SAC) who, after reviewing evidence, affirmed in sworn testimony that he found them to be "entirely credible."

Multiple NAC seminarians and the former FBI SAC have detailed Harman and Park's alleged sexual antics toward seminarians, as well as retaliatory tactics used to hide the clerics' sexual misconduct and punish whistleblower seminarians. The lawsuit also exposes a three-year paper trail of Dolan, NAC seminary officials, and the Vatican refusing to investigate these credible allegations.

In an apparently vindictive move, Dolan asked the New York judge to order the plaintiff to pay his legal fees in an attempt to punish him for bringing forward the evidence-based allegations in Court. The judge denied Dolan's retaliatory demand by ruling that Dolan had no basis to punish Gorgia for his "good faith" lawsuit. In court filings, Gorgia's attorney called Dolan's request an attempt to "terrorize" Gorgia and stated that Dolan ought to be the subject of sanctions for "frivolous, misleading, and false presentations" made under oath in his court documents. According to the lawsuit, Dolan has a serial record of re-victimizing or punishing whistleblowers who expose his cover-up for accused predatory priests spanning his career in the archdioceses of St. Louis, Milwaukee, and New York.

Owing to strong precedent bolstering the Complaint's filing in the State of New York, Gorgia's attorney is confident that this case has a good chance of moving forward upon appeal and that any reputed minor technicalities will be addressed. Court filings already establish that a New York court does in fact have jurisdiction over illegal activities by the New York-based Cardinal Dolan and his New York Archdiocese; by the NAC which has had extensive business dealings in New York; and by the defendants whose actions caused significant harm to Gorgia in New York State.

According to victims' advocates, accused clerics often pursue the costly legal maneuver of motions to dismiss at the Faithful's expense rather than answering allegations against them in order to avoid perjuring themselves by false denials or to delay or even prevent the damning discovery process from taking place. If a lawsuit is not dismissed, "discovery" allows for incriminating evidence against defendants to be laid bare; for defendants to be questioned about accusations under penalty of perjury; and for many more victims and witnesses to come forward with testimony that may be used against the accused at trial. Both the NAC defendants, through their pro-LGBTQ+ 950-attorney law firm, and Dolan, through his army of archdiocesan lawyers, sought to block discovery against them by filing motions to dismiss. Unless Gorgia's attorney succeeds in appealing this case, Catholic faithful will be deprived of discovery against Dolan and the NAC which they appear so intent to avoid.

To date, the suit against Dolan and the NAC has brought the Church's complicit web of cover-up to a point of no return. With the departure of the two accused NAC clerics, Harman and Park,

announced within weeks of each other following the lawsuit filings, the NAC Board of Governors is now scrambling to appoint a new rector who may be equally skilled at covering up the NAC's sexual scandals. Over 30 U.S. and Vatican bishops, among whom are these same Board of Governors members, stand accused of having received and covered up the allegations against Harman and Park, a fact which has the potential to end the careers of a number of reigning Ordinaries and auxiliaries if this lawsuit moves forward to the discovery phase. Bishop-endorsed Catholic media outlets such as *Catholic News Service* (CNS) and *Catholic News Agency* (CNA) were likewise not spared from exposure of their loyalties to accused sexually-active clerics which has reached unprecedented levels. Unforgettably, CNA's Vatican correspondent, Hannah Brockhaus, who covered up the more than 50-percent decline in enrollment at the NAC since 2016 when Harman was installed as rector, was named in an ethics violation report for her attempted interference by illicitly contacting the presiding judge who was reviewing sexual accusations against Brockhaus' own Omaha Archbishop George Lucas.

Victims' advocates observe that if Dolan and the NAC are left to escape legal accountability for their actions, the implications would be devastating for seminarians across the country who want to pursue their vocations without becoming the sexual prey of seminary officials or bishops. A 250-page report published in September 2021 revealed that the sexual predation and cover-up alleged at the NAC fits a vast pattern of sexual misconduct recently reported in over 40 seminaries and dioceses.

If Catholics are angered by the loss of good vocations who are abused and driven out by vindictive seminary rectors, vice-rectors, and bishops, they have a moral obligation to protect seminarians who give up their lives in response to the Faithful's prayers for vocations.

The lawsuit needs the support of concerned Catholics more than ever to safeguard vulnerable seminarians and stem the ongoing closure of churches owing to a critical priest shortage. Catholics are encouraged to donate to the Save Our Seminarians Fund (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-our-seminarians-fund>) so that the lawsuit against Dolan and the NAC may be successfully appealed and the deeds of accused prelates and scandal-racked seminaries might finally be unveiled in what has every indication of being a bombshell legal discovery process.

Gene Thomas Gomulka, a sexual abuse victims' advocate, investigative reporter and screenwriter, is a retired Navy (O6) Captain/Chaplain who was ordained a priest for the Altoona-Johnstown diocese and later made a prelate of honor (monsignor) by Pope St. John Paul II.