

356 H Avenue  
Coronado, CA 92118  
August 28, 2018

Most Rev. Robert W. McElroy  
P.O. Box 85728  
San Diego, CA 92186-5728

Dear Bishop McElroy,

In February of 2017 I submitted a detailed petition to Pope Francis via you and the Papal Nuncio, requesting to be dispensed from my vows of celibacy and to minister as a married priest like any number of convert Protestant clergy. While I knew my chances of receiving this dispensation were low, and that only Pope Francis himself could grant such a dispensation, I was taken aback when your Judicial Vicar, Monsignor Steven Callahan, informed me in June of 2017 that I would not be able to have or even see a copy of the communication confirming that my request had been turned down.

The reason I submitted my request was my belief that Pope Francis was serious about protecting children and disciplining bishops who not only covered up abuse, but who also retaliated against priests like Dominican Father Thomas Doyle and myself who suffered reprisals from prelates like Cardinals Edwin O'Brien and Theodore McCarrick. After (then) Archbishop O'Brien unjustifiably revoked our ecclesiastical endorsements to function as military chaplains, it was Cardinal McCarrick who denied Father Doyle priestly faculties when he returned to the Washington, DC area. How ironic that a sexually abusive prelate would deny faculties to a priest whose only sin was supporting victims of clerical sexual abuse.

It was only after I submitted my dispensation request to you that I discovered the online 28 July 2016 letter that the late A.W. Richard Sipe sent you documenting, in part, the sexual misconduct of Cardinal McCarrick. I was scandalized and could not understand why you did not endorse his recommendations to have Cardinal McCarrick and other members of the episcopacy investigated and disciplined for documented sexual abuse. You were reported in the *National Catholic Reporter* to have said that Sipe's "limitations on his willingness to share corroborating information made it impossible to know what was real and what was rumor." If I were a priest of the San Diego Diocese and someone made allegations about my conduct as you had in your possession about Cardinal McCarrick, I doubt you would leave me in ministry and not undertake an investigation.

While stationed in Hawaii from 1999 to 2002 as the Marine Forces Pacific Chaplain with supervisory responsibility for over 150 chaplains serving at U.S. Marine Corps commands spread over four continents, I was informed by a Catholic Chaplain outside of my Marine Corps chain of command that Catholic Navy Chaplain John "Matt" Lee, also outside of my Marine Corps chain of command, was sexually involved with a sailor with whom he was cohabitating. Because I was responsible to a degree for Father Lee being in the Navy in so far as I recruited him in 1989 into the Chaplain Candidate Program when he was a young seminarian, I was particularly concerned if these allegations were true. Consequently, I reported the matter to Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien in a letter dated May 6, 2002 (See Enclosure 1) in which I wrote, "When a Catholic chaplain does not return hospitality because he does not want me to meet his live-in boy friend...how can I feel pride in serving with such Catholic chaplains?"

I had no reservation about forwarding this report to Archbishop O'Brien because the priest who told me about Father Lee was very credible – someone not prone to pass false rumors. However, because I personally did not witness Lee cohabitating with the sailor, and because I myself could not confront him as he did not fall within my chain of command, I refrained from mentioning his name in my letter. Had this matter been handled properly, Archbishop O'Brien would have called me about the allegations in my letter. With regard to the "live-in boy friend," I would have said, "Because I heard from a brother priest that Matt Lee was cohabitating with a sailor, I thought you might want to look into the matter." Had he said, "Why don't you look into it?" I would have responded, "Matt works for Monsignor Joe Estabrook on the Navy side and is outside of my Marine Corps chain of command." Had he said, "Why don't you

then bring up the matter with Monsignor Estabrook?" I would have responded, "The priest who told me about Matt also works under Joe Estabrook whom he feels is already aware of what Matt is doing and is not doing anything about it." Unfortunately, that conversation never took place and I neither received an acknowledgement nor a response to my letter. I am quite confident that had I written about a Catholic chaplain who was cohabitating with a woman, I would have received an immediate response.

One of the reasons I became upset that Archbishop O'Brien did not want to discuss the allegations of wrong doing I addressed in my letter was because I knew that the priest who told me about Matt's boyfriend had a classmate from the seminary who died of AIDS (even though the cause of his death was covered-up and attributed to cancer). When I later spoke with this priest and told him that I did not betray his confidence by identifying him in my letter to O'Brien, he said he was not surprised that Archbishop O'Brien did not answer my letter. I later learned that he felt threatened that Archbishop O'Brien might withdraw his ecclesiastical endorsement for having published an article about the large number of priests he knew that were HIV positive or dying of AIDS.

When I sent Archbishop O'Brien another report on October 7, 2002, I wrote, "I have confided in my family, friends and some Catholic chaplains that your lack of support has affected my faith." Unlike my previous letters, I finally did receive a letter from Archbishop O'Brien (See Enclosure 2) inviting me to meet with him in Washington, DC. Before leaving for that meeting, I informed chaplain friends (including Chaplain Tom Doyle who was stationed in Ramstein, Germany) that Archbishop O'Brien finally would like to discuss the issues that I had been bringing to his attention. In addition to the Matt Lee case, I also wanted to talk with him about a senior enlisted petty officer whom I recommended to study for the priesthood after he completed a twenty year career in the Navy. When I heard that he left the seminary because he was getting tired of being "hit on" by gay seminarians, I was hoping that Archbishop O'Brien might be interested in finding him another seminary while investigating the seminary that he left. However, when I met with Archbishop O'Brien in the presence of his Auxiliary Bishop, Jack Kaising, he did not want to discuss the gay seminary problem or Matt Lee's live-in boyfriend." Instead, Archbishop O'Brien said that he was concerned about my spiritual and psychological well-being because I seemed to be losing my "priest friends." Even though he didn't name those so-called "priest friends," the only priests I felt he could be referring to were Monsignor Estabrook and Father Lee. Because I had documentation in my possession from women who worked for Monsignor Estabrook who complained about him covering up sexual harassment, and because I felt Father Lee was engaged in homosexual behavior, I could no longer count them as "priest friends."

In the course of the encounter, Archbishop O'Brien suggested that I undergo a psychological evaluation. I initially had no problem with that request in so far as I felt it was the priests I was writing about who actually needed help. However, when I returned to my command and informed Father Doyle by email what had transpired during my meeting with Archbishop O'Brien, he advised me not to undergo an evaluation as, from his experience, bishops use these, regardless of the outcome, to discredit priest whistleblowers. Consequently, I sent an email to Archbishop O'Brien and Bishop Kaising saying that I would be happy to have an evaluation, but only after receiving a signed letter from Archbishop O'Brien explaining exactly why he felt such an evaluation was warranted. Archbishop O'Brien never responded as is described in an article written by Father Doyle entitled "Cardinals Behaving Badly" (See Enclosure 3).

In February of 2004 I received a letter from Archbishop O'Brien (See Enclosure 4) sent to all military chaplains informing us that he reported to the National Review Board that there were only "two cases" of sexual abuse in the Military Archdiocese between 1950 and 2002. When I read that letter I became sick to my stomach. I had flashbacks of the five abuse cases I was involved with years earlier when I served as the Deputy Chaplain of the Marine Corps from 1991 to 1994. Four cases involved homosexual predation and one involved pedophilia with prepubescent children. I could remember my visit to a Marine Corps Air Station where I sat down with Chaplain Robert Hrdlicka who pled guilty and was sentenced to 12 years in prison for two abuse incidents in Italy and five in Beaufort, S.C., involving boys ages 7 to 11. I recalled my conversation with Father Robert de Otero who was given an Other-Than-Honorable (OTH) discharge after he pled guilty to abusing a young male family member at the Marine

Corps Base in Twenty-nine Palms, CA. I remembered visiting Chaplain Carl Drake in his brig cell on Thanksgiving Day at Marine Corps Base Quantico after he was convicted of committing indecent acts with a 14 year old boy. I recalled receiving a call about Chaplain Neal DeStafano who was convicted and sentenced to five years for drugging and molesting two Marines. Finally, I also remembered receiving a call from Okinawa about a priest who had just arrived six months earlier but who was being given an Other-Than-Honorable discharge for inviting Marines to his room where he performed oral sex on them. I can't recall his name which does not appear in the list of some 100 military chaplains (accessible on [bishopaccountability.org](http://bishopaccountability.org)) who were accused, convicted, or discharged as a result of sexual abuse.

*The Boston Globe* in its reporting of sex abuse within the Boston Archdiocese concluded that just over 10% of the priests of the Archdiocese were guilty of abuse. Interestingly, the five priest abuse cases I handled in three years also represented 10 percent of the 50 Catholic chaplains I was supervising in the Marine Corps at that time. In so far as Archbishop O'Brien greatly underreported the number of abuse cases in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Veterans Administration over a 52 year period, it is no wonder that, having been provided false information, the John Jay Study in 2004 inaccurately reported that only 4.3 percent (and not 10 percent) of Catholic priests were guilty of sexually abusing minors.

When Archbishop O'Brien withdrew my ecclesiastical endorsement and the endorsement of Dominican Father Tom Doyle, it was clear that his unwarranted actions were designed to get us both to leave the Church. Fortunately, Father Doyle's Dominican superior in Chicago supported him knowing that the real reason for Archbishop O'Brien withdrawing his endorsement was because of his testimony at several abuse trials which cost the church hundreds of millions of dollars. Unfortunately, my own bishop in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Joseph Adamec, did not defend my actions in exposing cover-ups within the Military Archdiocese. Adamec dealt with me the same way he handled my mentor, Monsignor Philip Saylor, whom he reprimanded against by sending him off to a remote parish under a "precept of silence" for his truthful court testimony at an abuse trial that cost the diocese \$1.2 million. Bishop Adamec was later chastised by the Pennsylvania State Grand Jury for moving abusive priests and covering up abuse within the diocese. Because I refused to be sent into exile by Bishop Adamec to a remote Pennsylvania State Prison, I took a leave of absence from the priesthood; married; and later was blessed with two beautiful children.

Five years after I wrote my enclosed May 6, 2002 letter to Archbishop O'Brien about the "live-in boyfriend" and the gay infested seminary that I'm sure Archbishop O'Brien deemed "healthy" in his 2005-2006 seminary study, Chaplain "Matt" Lee was arrested on charges of aggravated assault, sodomy, conduct unbecoming an officer, and failure to inform sex partners that he was HIV positive. When the media contacted Archbishop O'Brien at the time of Lee's arrest, he said "When the Archdiocese for the Military Services became aware through Chaplain Lee that there was an accusation against him of immoral behavior with military personnel, we, along with the Archdiocese of Washington, removed his faculties immediately." That quote is a perfect example of how a person can lie by using words that are technically true. The real truth, however, is that I informed Archbishop O'Brien as early as 2002 of Lee's immoral behavior and he did nothing. After serving a two year sentence, Lee was released only to be arrested again in 2014 on charges of sexually exploiting children. Lee is currently serving a thirty year sentence in a Delaware State Prison.

In April of 2008, A.W. Richard Sipe wrote to Pope Benedict XVI addressing many of the same problems that were included in his letter to you dated July 28, 2016. According to Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò's testimony, Pope Benedict found the allegations against McCarrick to be credible and had the Apostolic Nuncio, Pietro Sambi, impart sanctions on McCarrick that were witnessed by Monsignor Jean-François Lantheaume. However, after Benedict retired and it later appeared to people like Sipe that McCarrick was not being held accountable for his predatory behavior, Sipe appealed to you thinking, as a Francis appointee, you might be able to get the new pontiff to take action that Sipe believed Benedict never took. How sad Sipe died without realizing that Pope Benedict actually was able to distinguish between what was "real" and what was "rumor" which led him to impose sanctions on McCarrick.

Not only are people who have been abused by priests and bishops being urged to report the abuse they may have suffered, but I understand that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Review Board would like people to report bishops who may have covered up abuse, or who may have reprised against people like myself and Tom Doyle who exposed it. In so far as the evidence I provided you in February of 2017 showing that Cardinal O'Brien covered up, lied about, and under reported abuse that was reported to him was never acted upon, I will leave it to you to forward this communication to whatever investigative body in the Church is responsible for looking into these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Gomulka', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gene Thomas Gomulka

Enclosures (4)

cc: Archbishop Christophe Pierre

46-065 Konohiki Street #3635  
Kaneohe, HI 9674  
6 May 2002

Most Rev. Edwin F. O'Brien, D.D.  
Archdiocese for the Military Services  
Post Office Box 4469  
Washington, DC 20017-0469

Dear Archbishop,

Three years ago, when you called to inform me that the Holy Father named me a Prelate of Honor, I interpreted this "promotion" as recognition of past service and as encouragement to exercise continued leadership in the future. My past outspoken efforts to promote respect for life (in opposing abortions in military facilities overseas and in challenging the Navy Chief of Chaplains who discouraged chaplains from addressing the partial-birth abortion issue); my success in coordinating the recruitment of 71 active duty priests, 33 reserve priests, and 52 seminarians who today make up approximately one-third of all active duty Catholic Navy chaplains; my co-authorship of the Marine Corps and Navy Core Values of "Honor, Courage and Commitment;" my publications in the area of marriage and military life; and the role I played in defending the DoD homosexual exclusion policy resulting in a clearer legal distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual behavior, all seemed to be affirmed by the ecclesiastical honor that you personally recommended.

Over the past three years in Hawaii, while I have attempted to exercise leadership in addressing a variety of issues, I regret to say that I have not always felt supported by the Military Archdiocese. I say this for the following three reasons:

- 1) When I informed you of a reprisal I experienced as a result of challenging a Navy Chaplain who defamed a Catholic chapel, as well as my defense of two female chaplains, I received hardly any support in response to correspondence and documentation I sent you and your staff. While two other senior Catholic chaplains were aware of the serious problems encountered by these female chaplains, both failed to take corrective action. Had they defended the women, or even my own defense of these chaplains, I never would have experienced a reprisal on the part of the Navy Chief of Chaplains. Did Jesus not confront the double standards of his time involving women (e.g., in regard to divorce and adultery)? If Chaplains Dianne Eller and Leila Havadtoy were not the victims of abuse, reprisals, and discrimination, then it is unfair for me to accuse brother priests of failing to take a Christ-like position in defense of these women. However, if the above allegations are true, then one can understand how I am upset by a lack of moral courage on the part of senior Catholic chaplains to imitate Christ who courageously defended women in his own day. If you are going to make a priest a "monsignor" and encourage him to exercise Christ-like leadership, I believe you should be ready to support him when he does so. If his leadership or judgment is poor, then I believe this also needs to be addressed.
- 2) Several months before some Church leaders were criticized for the way they handled abuse cases involving priests, I addressed the priest shortage in the enclosed September 2001 edition of *The Priest* and indirectly questioned in my *America* article attempts to solve the shortage problem by accepting homosexual candidates whose behavior has proven problematic for the Chaplain Corps. While you neither wrote nor said anything about my article in *The Priest*, you endorsed criticism that questioned the veracity of my enclosed *America* article. If I attempt to offer recommendations by encouraging the

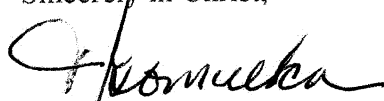
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church hierarchy and laity to be more supportive of priests, only to be criticized for addressing real problems that some Church leaders have attempted to conceal, then I question whether the Church wants leaders whose critical thinking seeks the Church to grow, admit and correct its shortcomings, and be more Christ-like in the process.

- 3) Throughout my military career I have served with some truly exceptional priests. At the same time, I have challenged other priests whose actions or positions I found to be non-Christian. For example, I questioned one priest who supported President Clinton's position on partial-birth abortions; another who refused to celebrate Easter Sunday Mass and who canceled his Confirmation program; and two other senior priests who (for political reasons) failed to take proper corrective action in regard to a chaplain friend of the Navy Chief of Chaplains. When I confront priests of the Military Archdiocese whose actions I consider to be unjustifiable, and receive no backing from you and your staff, am I wrong in interpreting this as a vote of "no confidence" and an implied suggestion that I no longer raise such objections or exercise similar leadership in the future?

A person, particularly a leader, must take pride in the institution in which he serves. When a Catholic chaplain does not return hospitality because he does not want me to meet his live-in boy friend; when another Catholic chaplain is chosen by the Navy Chief of Chaplains to testify before the Office of the Secretary of Defense on the homosexual exclusion policy, and he himself is engaged in homosexual actions; when I mentor a Chief Petty Officer who enters the seminary only to leave a year later because he is tired of getting "hit on" by gay seminarians; or when brother priests do not demonstrate Christ's attitude in regard to equal rights and justice for women, how can I feel pride in serving with such Catholic chaplains?

Sincerely in Christ,



E. T. Gomulka

Encl: "A rewarding and challenging ministry"  
"Home Alone' in the Priesthood"

cc: Most Rev. Joseph V. Adamec

# ARCHDIOCESE FOR THE MILITARY SERVICES, USA

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Post Office Box 4400  
Washington, D.C. 20017-0400



Office of the Archbishop

October 23, 2002

Monsignor Eugene T. Gornulka  
2107 Persena Way  
Oxnard, CA 93030

Dear Monsignor Gornulka,

Thank you for your letter updating me on the status of the report you submitted to the Inspector General of the Navy. Without reading the entire report, I am not in a position to comment on its merits, or even to decide whether any comment would be appropriate about what appears to be an internal Navy personnel matter. I will review anything you provide me.

While you characterize your letter initially as informational, I am troubled that you end it with a comment about the effect this situation has had on your faith. I had hoped to visit with you during the convocation last week in San Diego but I do understand you were in Washington discussing your report to the Inspector General. I remain convinced that we should meet in person and request you come to Washington to meet with me and Bishop Kasing as soon as your schedule permits.

The Archdiocese will, of course, fund your travel. Please contact Bishop Kasing to arrange a mutually convenient time. Until then, please know that you are in our prayers daily.

In the Lord

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Edwin P. O'Brien".

Edwin P. O'Brien

Archbishop for the Military Services

CC: Bishop Adams

On November 14, [2015] a former Catholic Navy chaplain named John Thomas Lee pleaded guilty to child pornography charges in Delaware. In 2007 he had been court-martialed by the Navy on charges of sodomy and failing to inform a sex partner he was HIV positive. At his court-martial he confessed to having had sex with numerous partners including a number of military service members.

Lee's fall in 2007 was not unexpected. Not long after Lee arrived at an assignment to Hawaii in 2002 he set himself up with a live-in boyfriend. A very diligent Navy chaplain learned of this arrangement and reported it to the archbishop for the Military Services who was Edwin O'Brien at the time. Edwin went from the military archdiocese to become archbishop of Baltimore and from there to being a cardinal and Grand Master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

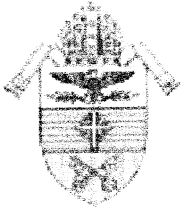
O'Brien ignored the report. The priest wrote again and this time O'Brien invited him for a personal meeting in Washington. The persistent chaplain mistakenly believed that O'Brien had finally believed him about this and other similar situations he had courageously brought to the archbishop's attention. Instead, O'Brien said he was concerned about his psychological welfare and insisted he have an evaluation. The Priest, Father X, contacted me for canonical advice and I told him not to agree to it. He wisely told O'Brien and his auxiliary bishop, John Kaising, that he would agree to an exam only if they sent him a written communication telling him in detail why they felt it was necessary. He called their bluff and the exam never took place.

The Navy Times had a front-page story when Lee was sentenced at the court martial. The military archdiocese was asked to comment and said that was the first they knew of any such allegations. No surprise there! That was neither the first nor last time they covered for predator priests in the military and lied about it when questioned.

Lee kept cruising till it all caught up with him. He was sentenced to two years of confinement at his court martial. Obviously he didn't learn much in prison. He's now awaiting sentencing and could get up to fifty years in prison.

Back to O'Brien. (To his credit, he had the courage to go after the Legion of Christ which had inflicted itself on the Baltimore archdiocese.) He was military archbishop during the latter part of my own military career and was the one who fired me as a Catholic Chaplain in 2003. I kept quiet about that for several months after it happened, not out of shame or embarrassment but because I didn't want to get caught up in a media splash. I was not exactly successful because someone let the cat out of the bag a few months later. Naturally I was pummeled by questions about why. O'Brien's concocted reasons were that I had refused to say daily Mass and that I had set myself up as an alternate authority to him. Both were totally bogus and he knew it. He refused to meet with me, talk to me or otherwise communicate about it all. The real reason was obvious: retaliation for my outspoken criticisms of bishops.





Office of the  
Archbishop

# **Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA**

**Post Office Box 4469, Washington, DC 20017-0469**

## **STATEMENT OF ARCHBISHOP EDWIN F. O'BRIEN to the Priest Chaplains of the Archdiocese for the Military Services On the "Scandal Studies"**

**February 18, 2004**

The long awaited studies, commissioned by our Conference of Bishops, on the extent of clerical sexual abuse of minors will be released on Friday, February 27, 2004.

Predictably, the reports of the National Review Board and John Jay College are bound to capture headlines, few of which will inspire.

The John Jay Study is a quantitative analysis of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy from 1950 through 2002. The National Review Board report, having prior access to the John Jay Study, will be a qualitative report based on interviews with some 60 people, including bishops.

Unfortunately, our Catholic Conference will see the contents of the documents only hours before their release to the public. What follows, then, is an attempt to anticipate the inevitably sensationalist press coverage of what is proving to be one of the darkest moments in the history of our Church in the United States.

1. As to our Archdiocese, two such cases have come forward where active duty priest chaplains have been found guilty of engaging in immoral acts with minors. The Archdiocese has done everything possible to see that victims have been cared for and counseled. Since our inception in 1985, we have been liable for related legal fees of \$100,000.
2. Nationally, while a tragic past cannot be changed, I am convinced that our bishops are taking measures to prevent history's repeat. Those measures include not only the provisions of the June 2003 "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" but also our Conference's commissioning the John Jay and National Review Board studies.
3. Because of the high moral standards rightly expected of priests, sexual misconduct of their kind by Catholic clergy is understandably shocking and upsetting to Catholics and bewildering to all, even if it involved but a single case. As the reports will dramatize, there were many cases throughout the nation. We can only hope for some objectivity on

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