


One year since the McCarrick allegations: A CNA timeline

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Washington D.C., Jun 19, 2019 / 04:18 pm (CNA).- June 20 marks one year since the announcement that credible allegations of sexual abuse had been raised against then-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. In the months that followed, a major crisis of abuse and cover up within the Church in the U.S. was revealed, and Church officials have responded with new policies and pledges of transparency. Here is a timeline of major events in the last year:

June 20

The Archdiocese of New York announces that an allegation of sexual abuse by Cardinal Theodore McCarrick has been found to be “credible and substantiated.”In the following months, additional allegations will be raised against McCarrick, including claims that McCarrick had a widely-known reputation for sexual advances toward seminarians.

July 3

The Diocese of Cheyenne says Emeritus Bishop Joseph Hart has been credibly accused of sexually assaulting two boys after he became bishop of the diocese in 1976. A third credible allegation is confirmed a few weeks later.

July 28

Pope Francis accepts the resignation of McCarrick from the College of Cardinals and suspends him from the exercise of any public ministry. He directs McCarrick to observe a life of prayer and penance, pending the canonical process against him.

August 14

A grand jury report in Pennsylvania details allegations against some 300 priests, from more than 1,000 victims in six of the state’s Catholic dioceses over a 70-year period. The report was met with national outcry and prompted more than a dozen other states to follow suit.

August 16

The U.S. bishops’ conference calls for a Vatican-led investigation into the allegations of sexual abuse and cover-up surrounding McCarrick.

August 25

Former apostolic nuncio to the U.S. Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano releases a “testament” claiming that Pope Francis knew about sanctions imposed on McCarrick by Benedict XVI but chose to repeal them.

August 26

Asked during an in-flight interview about Vigano's letter, Pope Francis says he "will not say a single word" on the subject and instructs journalists to use their "journalistic capacity to draw your own conclusions."

September 12

Pope Francis calls for all the presidents of the Catholic bishops' conferences of the world to meet at the Vatican Feb. 21-24 to address the protection of minors.

September 19

The administrative committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops announces new accountability measures, including a code of conduct for bishops and the creation of an independent reporting mechanism for complaints against bishops. The committee also calls for a full investigation into the allegations against McCarrick and the Church's response to these allegations.

October 6

The Vatican announces that Pope Francis has ordered a review of all Holy See files pertaining to allegations of sexual misconduct on the part of McCarrick. The results of that review have not, to date, been released.

November 12

U.S. bishops gather for an annual fall meeting in Baltimore; the Vatican instructs them to delay until after the February meeting a vote on two proposals intended to be the foundation of the U.S. Church's response to the abuse crisis.

November 14

The U.S. bishops fail to pass a resolution that would have "encouraged" the Holy See to release all documents on the allegations of misconduct against McCarrick.

January 2-8

At the suggestion of Pope Francis, the U.S. bishops hold a retreat to consider how to respond to the still ongoing sexual abuse crises facing the Church.

January 11

McCarrick is laicized. Also known as dismissal from the clerical state, he no longer has the right to exercise sacred ministry in the Church, except in the extreme situation of encountering someone who is in immediate danger of death. In addition, he no longer has the canonical right to be financially supported by the Church. A statement from the Vatican announcing the laicization is released Feb. 16.

February 21 - 24

The Vatican holds a sex abuse summit with the heads of bishops' conference from countries around the world. The summit's stated purpose is to educate the world's bishops on their

responsibility for protecting minors from abuse within the Church.

April 4

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith upholds a 2018 verdict finding Archbishop Anthony Apuron of Agana, Guam, guilty of several abuse related charges. Apuron is deprived of his office as archbishop and forbidden to use the insignia of a bishop or live within the jurisdiction of the archdiocese. He is not removed from ministry or the clerical state, and is not instructed to live in prayer and penance.

May 9

Pope Francis issues new experimental norms for the handling of some sex abuse allegations. The norms place seminarians and religious coerced into sexual activity through the abuse of authority in the same criminal category as abuse of minors and vulnerable adults. They also establish obligatory reporting for clerics and religious, require that every diocese has a mechanism for reporting abuse, and put the metropolitan archbishop in charge of investigations of accusations of abuse or negligence against suffragan bishops.

June 4

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. bishops' conference, is accused of mishandling an allegation of sexual coercion made against his former vicar general by permitting the priest to transfer to another diocese and continue in ministry. The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston disputes the claim, saying the priest underwent a rehabilitation process, and was recommended to be returned to ministry by the professionals who assessed him.

June 5

An investigation finds credible allegations of sexual harassment and coercion of adults by former Bishop Michael Bransfield of Wheeling-Charleston, as well as the fostering of "a culture of fear of retaliation and retribution" that prevented his conduct from being discovered or reported. Pope Francis had accepted Bransfield's resignation the previous September when he turned 75.

June 12-13

At their annual spring meeting, the U.S. bishops approve the creation of a national third-party reporting mechanism, directives to apply the pope's new norms, protocol for a diocesan bishop to restrict the ministry his predecessor when needed, and a set of non-binding moral commitments pledging to hold themselves to the same standards applied to priests.