

## **Daniel McCormack**

### **The man who should have been jailed before he was ordained**

#### **Even after McCormack's arrest in 2005, George refused to remove him from parish and school**

Daniel McCormack, one of the most notorious priests of the Archdiocese of Chicago, was the subject of credible reports of child sexual abuse years before his ordination. Instead of informing the police, the vice-rector and rector of Mundelein seminary kept the allegations internal. Bishop Gerald Kicanas was informed of allegations of misconduct and McCormack's trouble with alcohol, but approved McCormack for ordination in 1994.

By 1999, McCormack was pastor of Holy Family in Chicago. The Office of Catholic Schools had complaints about McCormack. Teachers began their own informal "monitoring" of the priest. DCFS, however, was not informed. The principal of Holy Family was concerned enough about McCormack's behavior that she hand-delivered a letter to the Archbishop, outlining allegation of abuse. The principal was told to "drop it" unless the parents complained.

In 2003, a parent of a victim made an anonymous call to the Archdiocese. They did not follow up on the complaint.

On August 29, 2005, Cardinal George promoted McCormack to Dean, even after his Vicars for Priests objected, based on their knowledge of a letter pertaining to McCormack having "boys in the rectory." The day before McCormack's appointment became effective, he was arrested for child sexual abuse. Between August and McCormack's indictment in January 2006, he is allowed to remain at Holy Family, working in the school and coaching sports. He was also installed as Dean. McCormack's monitor was never told why he must monitor the priest, and the school and parish are not notified of the arrest.

The review board finally learned of McCormack's arrest in October 2005. They immediately recommend that McCormack be removed from ministry. Cardinal George chooses not to do so. George finally removes McCormack when McCormack is arrested once more in January 2006. As admitted by Cardinal George in his deposition, between August 2005 and January 2006 McCormack continues to abuse children as a result of his choice to leave him in ministry.

In 2007, McCormack pleads guilty to five counts and is sentenced to five years in prison. Two years later, the Illinois Attorney General and Cook County prosecutors file a petition to have McCormack incarcerated under the Illinois Sexually Violent Persons Commitment Act.

McCormack is in the custody of the Illinois Department of Human Services.

## **TIMELINE OF DOCUMENTS – DANIEL MCCORMACK**

### 1986 - McCormack attends Seminary; Niles College then St. Mary of the Lake

- 1990 During McCormack's time in the seminary, the Archdiocese has concerns over his sexual misconduct with 2 adult males and one minor male. (Defenbaugh Report, Deposition of Cardinal George Ex. 106)
- 1992 The Vice-rector at Mundelein, Fr. John Canary, was aware of McCormack's sexual misconduct. Fr. Canary documented it in McCormack's file in Spring 1992. McCormack's misconduct was not reported to civil authorities. (Dep. Ex. 106). During the audit, McCormack's seminary file was reviewed and Canary's report was not found. Fr. Canary told auditors that he absolutely remembered making a record of the misconduct which was done in accordance with their policy at that time. Following the incident, McCormack was sent for counseling for alcohol abuse, also in accordance with their policy. (Dep. Ex. 106). The Rector at Mundelein, Fr. Gerald Kicanas, approves McCormack for ordination despite his sexual improprieties.

### 1994 - Ordained

#### 1994 – Assistant Pastor, St. Ailbe

- 1994-1996 McCormack abuses boys in St. Ailbe's rectory. During this time, McCormack, an Associate Pastor at St. Ailbe, also is bringing other boys into the rectory. (Complaint, December 11, 2013) McCormack also abuses John Doe according to a lawsuit filed in 2012.

#### 1997 – Dean of Students and Teacher at St. Joseph Seminary

#### 1998 - Sacramental Minister, then Pastor, of Holy Family

- 1999-2005 "Numerous allegations" were received by officials of the Office of Catholic Schools about McCormack. These allegations were credible enough to cause the teachers to do their own "informal monitoring" of McCormack when he was in the school. (Dep. Ex. 106, p.24)
- 10/99 The Archdiocese becomes aware that McCormack told a male student to take down his pants in class (Dep. Ex. 106). The principal of the school at Holy Family (a nun) advised the Archdiocese that McCormack had told a fourth grade student that he had to be naked so that McCormack could measure him in order to become an altar boy. (Dep. Ex. 106)

**Late 2000** Upon hearing that the mother of the 1999 boy was sporting expensive jewelry and paid cash for her son's tuition, the principal at Holy Family hand-delivers a letter to the front desk of the Archdiocese outlining the events of the 1999 allegation. The letter was not found in any file during the 2006 audit. She also discussed the matter with the Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools at that time. She was told, "If the parents aren't pushing it, let it go." (Dep. Ex. 106; Dep. Ex. 111)

2000 – Pastor, St. Agatha

**9/03** The Archdiocese is notified and expresses concern over McCormack having boys in the rectory. (Dep. Ex. 115)

9/5/03 The Archdiocese receives an allegation that Fr. Daniel McCormack is molesting at least one boy in his parish. If the Archdiocese had done any investigation, they would have uncovered at least one more boy as well. (Dep. Ex. 106, p. 3) The caller, who wished to remain anonymous and was the mother of a victim, left her phone number for a response. "The Office of the Vicar for Priests failed to notify other Archdiocesan offices of the complaint or to follow up with the complainant." (Dep. Ex. 106, p. 22)

8/05 Mother of one of the boys being molested by McCormack at St. Agatha calls the police and makes a report.

**7/13/05** McCormack is considered for promotion to position of Dean by Vicar General George Rassas. Vicars for Clergy Ed Grace and Vincent Costello suggest that McCormack is not a suitable candidate "because of boys in rectory letter." (Dep. Ex. 117)

8/29/05 Cardinal George appoints McCormack a Dean in the Archdiocese, effective on September 1. "The office of the Vicar for Priests had in its possession derogatory information concerning Fr. McCormack which they delayed reporting to Bishop Rassas, the Vicar General. Rassas was telephonically apprised of the derogatory information but allowed the appointment to proceed without requiring further investigation into the allegation or withdrawing the appointment letter." (Dep. Ex. 106, p. 4)

**8/30/05** McCormack is arrested for sexual misconduct with a minor. Fr. Ed Grace, the Vicar for Priests, is informed of the nature of the allegations and is also told that the boy's allegation is credible. (Dep. Ex. 118)

Fr. Grace tells McCormack verbally that he is not allowed to have unsupervised contact with children and cannot teach math class (however he did eventually

return to teaching). He is not restricted from his activity as the basketball coach at St. Agatha's. The priest assigned to monitor McCormack is never told why McCormack is being monitored, nor is he advised what activity is restricted, except that children were not allowed in the rectory. The priest then told the Vicar for Priests that since he was assigned to full-time ministry in another parish, he didn't know how good a job he could do of monitoring McCormack. (Dep. Ex. 106). The Vicar for Priests simply tells the priest to let him know if he'd be out of the rectory for more than one week at a time. (Childers audit, p.18) McCormack's monitor asked for details about the offense pattern and behavior, and was told he could not know that information due to confidentiality. (Childers audit, p. 18)

9/1/05 – Appointed Dean.

- 10/15/05 The Professional Fitness Review Board is apprised of the information regarding the recent allegation and arrest at length and recommends that McCormack be removed from ministry in order to ensure the safety of children. (Dep. Ex. 106, p.2) The recommendation is presented to Cardinal George on October 17. Cardinal George disregards the recommendation and accepts the risk that McCormack may abuse a child.
- 12/14/05 McCormack receives a letter from IL-DCFS advising him that their investigation yielded a finding of “indicated,” meaning that sexual molestation likely occurred. This letter was also received by the Office of Professional Responsibility in January 2006 (Dep. Ex. 127)**
- 12/05 While his “monitor” was away from the rectory for Christmas vacation, McCormack molests a child in the rectory. (Dep. Ex. 106)
- 1/15/06 McCormack gives his last sermon to his parish.
- 1/21/06 McCormack is charged criminal with criminal sexual conduct for the molestation of two boys.
- 2/1/06 McCormack resigns from St. Agatha.
- 2/9/06 Jeff Anderson files first civil lawsuit on behalf of John Doe 100 against Archdiocese of Chicago regarding abuse by McCormack.
- 2/06 McCormack is charged for the molestation of a third child.
- 2/15/06 A second civil lawsuit is filed involving a 13 year old boy who was abused until January 2005 as a member of the Our Lady of the Westside basketball team. Dozens more victims come forward between 2006 and 2014.

- 2/06 Fr. John Canary is named Vicar General of the Archdiocese.
- 5/5/06 Prosecutors announce that they are charging McCormack for the molestations of 2 more minors.
- 7/ 2/07 McCormack pleads guilty to all 5 counts against him and is sentenced to 5 years in prison for each count to run concurrently.
- 2007 Cardinal George elected President of U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Bishop Gerald Kicanas, Bishop of the Diocese of Tuscon since 2003, is elected Vice President of U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- 9/09 Illinois attorney general and Cook County prosecutors file petition to have McCormack incarcerated under the Illinois Sexually Violent Persons Commitment Act.