



October 9, 2020

To His Holiness, Pope Francis

The Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests beg your Holiness to dispatch Vatican investigators to New Orleans, Louisiana at once. The Catholic faithful have no confidence that Archbishop Gregory Aymond has the capacity to lead your people and God's Church in the Ecclesiastical State of Louisiana.

Archbishop Aymond has lost control of his priests. On October 1, Rev. Patrick Wattigny was removed from ministry after he admitted that he had sexually abused a child in 2013, an admission that came about when it was discovered he had been sending inappropriate electronic messages to boys at the high school where he worked as chaplain.

Then, on October 1, Archbishop Aymond was forced to remove Rev. Travis Clark after police arrested Clark for having graphic sexual intercourse with two paid female dominatrices on the altar of his church. Only two days after that lurid encounter, on October 4, two local journalists reported that Rev. Luis Fernandez and deceased Rev. Robert Cooper had groomed and sexually abused at least three survivors while they were students at St. John Vianney Prep High School in the 1970's. Archbishop Aymond was the rector of the school at that time, but has denied knowing of allegations against both priests and has not taken these crimes seriously since they were reported again.

The events of this past week belie a culture of sexual depravity within the Archdiocese of New Orleans, one that is exacerbated and encouraged by Archbishop Aymond's inability to be honest with the public. We believe that the efforts from Aymond and his ilk to hide this crime has only encouraged more perversion. As a result of Archbishop Aymond's consistent mishandling of abuse cases over the past year, the people of New Orleans do not believe him. He hides behind highly paid bankruptcy and criminal defense lawyers to conceal the truth. Since he cannot be honest with his flock, we implore you to send Vatican investigators to New Orleans so that you may arrive at the same truth for yourself that we already know – Catholics in New Orleans deserve a better leader than Gregory Aymond.

Sincerely,

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