



NEWS

New Viganò testimony: Vatican covered up allegations of sexual abuse of Pope's altar boys

Interview questions unpublished by Washington Post are now revealed by LifeSiteNews.

Wed Jul 3, 2019 - 8:26 pm EST



Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò speaks at the Rome Life Forum in May 2018.

By Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò

July 3, 2019 (LifeSiteNews) – Editor's Note: Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò's interview with the Washington Post, published June 10, contained an answer that the Post decided to expurgate from the interview. This answer contained important information regarding unaddressed accusations of sex abuse against a high official of the Holy See, as well as the coverup of a former seminarian, now a priest, accused of the sexual abuse of pre-seminarian adolescents who acted as the Pope's altar boys. The full text of Viganò's unpublished answers to the Washington Post follows. The text has been slightly modified to

include capitalizations normally used in English. The name of one individual has been removed by LifeSite because LifeSite was unable to find sufficient support for the accusation against him at this point.

I.b. Do you see any signs that the Vatican, under Pope Francis, is taking proper steps to address the serious issues of abuse? If not, what is missing?

The signs I see are truly ominous. Not only is Pope Francis doing close to nothing to punish those who have committed abuse, he is doing absolutely nothing to expose and bring to justice those who have, for decades, facilitated and covered up the abusers. Just to cite one example: Cardinal Wuerl, who covered up the abuses of McCarrick and others for decades, and whose repeated and blatant lies have been made manifest to everyone who has been paying attention (for those who have not been paying attention, see [washingtonpost.com/opinions/cardinal-wuerl-knew-about-theodore-mccarrick-and-he-lied-about-it](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/cardinal-wuerl-knew-about-theodore-mccarrick-and-he-lied-about-it/)), had to resign in disgrace due to popular outrage. Yet, in accepting his resignation, Pope Francis praised him for his “nobility.” What credibility has the pope left after this kind of statement?

But such behavior is by no means the worst. Going back to the summit and its focus on the abuse of minors, I now wish to bring to your attention two recent and truly horrifying cases involving allegations of offenses against minors during Pope Francis’ tenure. The pope and many prelates in the Curia are well aware of these allegations, but in neither case was an open and thorough investigation permitted. An objective observer cannot help but suspect that horrible deeds are being covered up.

1. The first is said to have occurred inside the very walls of the Vatican, at the Pre-Seminary Pius X, which is located just a short walk from the Domus Sanctae Marthae, where Pope Francis lives. That seminary trains minors who serve as altar boys in St. Peter’s Basilica and at papal ceremonies.

One of the seminarians, Kamil Jarzembowski, a roommate of one of the victims, claims to have witnessed dozens of incidents of sexual aggression. Along with two other seminarians, he denounced the aggressor, first in person to his pre-seminary superiors, then in writing to cardinals, and finally in 2014, again in writing, to Pope Francis himself. One of the victims was a boy, allegedly abused for five consecutive years, starting at age 13. The alleged aggressor was a 21-year-old seminarian, Gabriele Martinelli.

That pre-seminary is under the responsibility of the diocese of Como, and is run by the Don Folci Association. A preliminary investigation was entrusted to the judicial vicar of Como, don Andrea Stabellini, who found elements of evidence that warranted further investigation. I received firsthand information indicating that his superiors prohibited his continuing the investigation. He can testify for himself, and I urge you to go and interview him. I pray that he will find the courage to share with you what he so courageously shared with me.

Along with the above, I learned how the authorities of the Holy See dealt with this case. After evidence was collected by Don Stabellini, the case was immediately covered up by the then-bishop of Como, Diego Coletti, together with Cardinal Angelo Comastri, Vicar General of

Pope Francis for Vatican City. In addition, Cardinal Coccopalmerio, then president of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, who was consulted by Don Stabellini, strongly admonished him to stop the investigation.

You might wonder how this horrible case was closed. The Bishop of Como removed Don Stabellini from the post of Judicial Vicar; the whistleblower, the seminarian Kamil Jarzembowski, was expelled from the seminary; the two fellow seminarians who had joined him in the denunciation left the seminary; and the alleged abuser, Gabriele Martinelli, was ordained priest in July 2017. All this happened within the Vatican walls, and not a word of it came out during the summit.

The summit was therefore terribly disappointing, for it is hypocrisy to condemn abuses against minors and claim to sympathize with the victims while refusing to face up to the facts honestly. A spiritual revitalization of the clergy is most urgent, but it will ultimately be ineffectual if there is no willingness to address the real problem.

2. The second case involves Archbishop Edgar Peña Parra, whom Pope Francis has chosen to be the new Substitute at the Secretariat of State, making him the third most powerful person in the curia. In doing so, the pope essentially ignored a terrifying dossier sent to him by a group of faithful from Maracaibo, entitled “¿Quién es verdaderamente Monseñor Edgar Robinson Peña Parra, Nuevo Sustituto de la Secretaría de Estado del Vaticano?” (“Who really is Msgr. Edgar Robinson Peña Parra, the new Substitute at the Secretariat of State of the Vatican” - LifeSite) The dossier is signed by Dr. Enrique W. Lagunillas Machado, in the name of the “Grupo de Laicos de la Arquidiócesis de Maracaibo por una Iglesia y un Clero según el Corazón de Cristo” (“Group of Laity of the Archdiocese of Maracaibo for a Church and a Clergy in accordance with the Heart of Christ” – LifeSite). These faithful accused Peña Parra of terrible immorality, describing in detail his alleged crimes. This might even be a scandal surpassing that of McCarrick, and it must not be allowed to be covered by silence.

Some facts have already been published in the media, notably in the Italian weekly *L'Espresso* (see espresso.repubblica.it/inchieste/2018/10/18/news/buio-in-vaticano-ecco-l-ultimo-scandalo-1.327923). I will now add facts known by the Secretariat of State in the Vatican since 2002, which I learned when I served as the Delegate for Pontifical Representations.

- In January 2000, Maracaibo journalist Gastón Guisandes López made serious accusations against some priests from the diocese of Maracaibo, including Msgr. Peña Parra, involving sexual abuse of minors and other possibly criminal activity.
- In 2001, Gastón Guisandes López twice asked to be received by the apostolic nuncio (the Pope's ambassador) in Venezuela, archbishop André Dupuy, to discuss these matters, but the archbishop inexplicably refused to receive him. He did, however, report to the Secretariat of State that the journalist had accused Msgr. Peña Parra of two very serious crimes, describing the circumstances.
 - First, Edgar Peña Parra was accused of having seduced, on September 24, 1990, two minor seminarians from the parish of San Pablo, who were to enter the Major Seminary of Maracaibo that same year. The event is said to have taken place in the Church of Nuestra Señora del Rosario, where the Rev. José Severeyn was parish priest. Rev. Severeyn was later removed from the parish by the then archbishop

Msgr. Roa Pérez. The case was reported to the police by the parents of the two young men and was dealt with by the then-rector of the major seminary, Rev. Enrique Pérez, and by the then spiritual director, Rev. Emilio Melchor. Rev. Pérez, when questioned by the Secretariat of State, confirmed in writing the episode of September 24, 1990. I have seen these documents with my own eyes.

- Second, Edgar Peña Parra was allegedly involved, together with [NAME REMOVED], in the death of two people, a doctor and a certain Jairo Pérez, which took place in August 1992, on the island of San Carlos in Lake Maracaibo. They were killed by an electric discharge, and it is not clear whether or not the deaths were accidental. This same accusation is also contained in the aforementioned dossier sent by a group of lay people from Maracaibo, with the additional detail that the two corpses were found naked, with evidence of macabre homosexual lewd encounters. These accusations are, to say the least, extremely grave. Yet not only was Peña Parra not required to face them, he was allowed to continue in the diplomatic service of the Holy See.
- These two accusations were reported to the Secretariat of State in 2002 by the then apostolic nuncio in Venezuela, archbishop André Dupuy. The relevant documentation, if it has not been destroyed, can be found both in the archives of the diplomatic personnel of the Secretariat of State where I held the position of Delegate for the Pontifical Representations, and in the archives of the apostolic nunciature in Venezuela, where the following archbishops have served as nuncios since: Giacinto Berloco, from 2005 to 2009; Pietro Parolin, from 2009 to 2013; and Aldo Giordano, from 2013 to the present. They all had access to the documents reporting these accusations against the future Substitute, as did the cardinals Secretaries of State Sodano, Bertone, and Parolin and the Substitutes Sandri, Filoni, and Becciu.
- Particularly egregious is the behavior of Cardinal Parolin who, as Secretary of State, did not oppose the recent appointment of Peña Parra as Substitute, making him his closest collaborator. Even more: years earlier, in January 2011, as apostolic nuncio in Caracas, Parolin did not oppose the appointment of Peña Parra as archbishop and apostolic nuncio to Pakistan. Before such important appointments, a rigorous informative process is made to verify the suitability of the candidate, so these accusations were surely brought to the attention of Cardinal Parolin.

Furthermore, Cardinal Parolin knows the names of a number of priests in the Curia who are sexually unchaste, violating the laws of God that they solemnly committed themselves to teach and practice, and he continues to look the other way.

If Cardinal Parolin's responsibilities are grave, even more so are those of Pope Francis for having chosen for an extremely important position in the Church a man accused of such serious crimes, without first insisting on an open and thorough investigation. There is one more scandalous aspect to this horrific story. Peña Parra is closely connected with Honduras, and more precisely with Cardinal Maradiaga and Bishop Juan José Pineda. Between 2003 and 2007, Peña Parra served in the nunciature in Tegucigalpa, and while there he was very close to Juan José Pineda, who in 2005 was ordained auxiliary bishop of Tegucigalpa, becoming the right-hand man of Cardinal Maradiaga. Juan José Pineda resigned from his post of auxiliary bishop in July 2018, without any reason given to the faithful of Tegucigalpa. Pope Francis has not released the results of the report that the Apostolic Visitor, the Argentine bishop Alcides Casaretto, delivered directly and only to him more than a year ago.

How can one interpret Pope Francis' firm decision not to talk about or answer any question about this matter except as a cover up of the facts and protection of a homosexual network? Such decisions reveal a terrible truth: rather than allowing open and serious investigations of those accused of grave offenses against the Church, the pope is allowing the Church herself to suffer.

Coming back to your question. You ask me if I see any signs that the Vatican, under Pope Francis, is taking proper steps to address the serious issues of abuse. My answer is simple: Pope Francis himself is covering up abuse right now, as he did for McCarrick. I say this with great sorrow. When King David pronounced the greedy rich man in Nathan's parable worthy of death, the prophet told him bluntly, "You are the man" (2 Sam 12:1-7). I had hoped my testimony might be received like Nathan's, but it was instead received like that of Micaiah (1Kings 22:15-27). I pray that this will change.
