

Theodore McCarrick charged with sexual abuse

Catholic officials required the retired archbishop to stop ministry activities. McCarrick maintained his innocence.

by [Jack Jenkins](#) in the [July 18, 2018](#) issue



Cardinal Theodore McCarrick. AP photo/J. Scott Applewhite/File.

Catholic authorities deemed “credible and substantiated” a sexual abuse allegation made against Theodore McCarrick, former archbishop of Washington, D.C.

They ordered McCarrick to cease all public ministry activities following an investigation by the Archdiocese of New York to assess an account that the cardinal abused a teenager almost 50 years ago while working in that region as a priest.

McCarrick served as a bishop and archbishop in New Jersey before heading the Washington, D.C., archdiocese from 2001 until his retirement in 2006.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York, as well as archdioceses in Washington and New Jersey, released statements in late June about the decision, noting that officials have

ordered McCarrick to refrain from ministry “at the direction of Pope Francis.” One statement also said that McCarrick was charged with sexual misconduct with adults “decades ago,” with two of three allegations resulting in settlements.

While McCarrick faces church discipline, he is unlikely to see legal ramifications, as New York state law does not allow child sexual abuse survivors to press charges after they turn 23. McCarrick said in a statement that he has “absolutely no recollection” of the reported abuse, yet he fully cooperated with the investigation.

“While shocked by the report, and while maintaining my innocence, I considered it essential that the charges be reported to the police, thoroughly investigated by an independent agency, and given to the Review Board of the Archdiocese of New York,” he said. —Religion News Service

FOLLOWING UP (Updated February 26, 2019): The Vatican laicized Theodore McCarrick, an 88-year-old former cardinal, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith announced in February 2019. The top Vatican doctrinal office had investigated charges against McCarrick and found him guilty of sexual abuse of minors and adults, “with the aggravating factor of the abuse of power.”

A version of this article appears in the print edition under the title “People: Cardinal Theodore McCarrick.”