

November, 2019

To Most Holy Father Pope Francis and Church leaders,

*“The laity...are obliged to express their opinion on those things which concern the good of the Church.” (Lumen Gentium)*

**We write not only to express our concerns as encouraged by *Lumen Gentium*, but also to powerfully protest the irresponsible handling of the case of Geoffrey Drew, an Archdiocese of Cincinnati priest recently indicted on nine counts of rape.** We are disturbed by the blatant disregard of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Decree on Child Protection (referred to as the Decree in the following) by Archdiocesan authorities and Boards as well as the ignoring of grave lay complaints concerning Drew.

**We implore you to thoroughly investigate and impose appropriate consequences on those who have failed as shepherds of the Church.** Hopefully, this critical step will help excise the tragic clerical sex abuse scandal from the Church. We write because we trust in the goodness in the Church, in its many faithful clerics, religious and lay people, and in goodness itself, Jesus Christ. **We seek to reform only what we cherish.**

**Here is our story.**

From 2009 through 2018, Fr. Geoffrey Drew was pastor of St. Maximilian Kolbe parish in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. **In 2013 and 2015, parishioners wrote in complaint to Archdiocesan officials about his behavior.** Following protocol in the Decree, this information was forwarded to Butler County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office who, upon investigation, deemed Drew’s behavior to be non-criminal. While non-criminal, Drew’s actions unequivocally violated Decree mandates.

**Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Binzer’s response to the complaints was also an unequivocal violation of the Decree.** He reports that he simply discussed Drew’s behavior with him and received from him a promise to change. Binzer allegedly also chose to not inform other Archdiocesan authorities, including Archbishop Dennis Schnurr, the Priest Personnel Board or Archdiocesan Review Board. Binzer also failed to place any information about accusations in Drew’s personnel file.

In July, 2018, despite his history of unacceptable behavior, Drew became pastor of Archdiocesan St. Ignatius of Loyola parish. During the short year he was pastor, angry letters, emails, and phone calls from parishioners to Archdiocesan officials **expressed grave concerns about Drew’s behavior, including making boys feel uncomfortable.** According to parishioners, these complaints were neither acknowledged nor acted upon.

In August, 2018, a month after Drew’s appointment to St. Ignatius, Archbishop Dennis Schnurr received a letter from a St. Maximilian Kolbe parishioner **reiterating the 2013 and 2015 complaints against Drew. Allegedly, this is when Archbishop Schnurr became involved for the first time.**

Again, the complaint was forwarded to Butler County Prosecuting Attorney's Office who again deemed Drew's behavior non-criminal. However, they **recommended that Drew restrict his interaction with children and that he be assigned a "monitor"**. **No one informed either parish or school officials.**

In October 2018, **another complaint to the Archdiocese** prompted more investigation by criminal authorities who again found Drew's behavior non-criminal.

In February, 2019, Archdiocesan Chancellor Fr. Steve Angi commissioned an internal investigation of Drew's behavior by Strategic HR. During the investigation, **Drew was to continue limiting his activities with children and continue working with a "monitor"**. **Again, neither school nor parish personnel were given this information.**

In May, 2019, as a result of its internal investigation, Strategic HR recommended that Drew begin professional counseling.

**A month later, in June, 2019, a St. Ignatius family reported to Archdiocese authorities that Drew texted their teenage son, a violation of specific Decree directives.**

**In July, Archbishop Schnurr removed Drew as pastor of St. Ignatius, placing him on a leave of absence. This was close to a year after complaints about Drew surfaced at the parish.**

On **August 1, 2019, a new allegation of abuse** was received at the Archdiocesan Ministry to Survivors of Abuse from a member of **St. Rita Parish, Dayton, OH, where Drew was pastor 2005-2009**. The complaint alleged that Fr. Drew engaged in inappropriate behavior with eighth grade boys, behavior specifically forbidden in the Decree on Child Protection. **The alleged abuse took place in 2006**. This complaint was forwarded by the Archdiocese to Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney's office. *(added November 3, 2019):*.

Shortly thereafter, on August 19, 2019, Hamilton County Prosecutor Joseph Deters announced **that a criminal grand jury had indicted Drew on nine counts of rape allegedly committed in 1988 and 1991, when he was a lay employee of St. Jude Parish in the Archdiocese.**

**This letter, however, is not about Drew's innocence or guilt.** It is about the unquestionable failure of Church authorities to respect and abide by directives of the Decree. Just as reprehensible is the blatant ignoring of lay persons' dozens of complaints about behavior that, although not officially criminal, was forbidden in order to prevent "worrisome behavior" (Archdiocesan spokesperson Mike Schafer's description of Drew's behavior) from escalating to criminal activity.

#### **Mishandling by Archdiocesan officials appear at all steps of Drew's case:**

1. Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Binzer ignored and overrode specific regulations in the Decree as well as personnel procedures in favor of personal preferences.

2. Archbishop Dennis Schnurr a.) failed to provide leadership and oversight to insure adherence to the Decree; b.) failed to provide leadership and oversight to insure adherence to regulations imposed by criminal authorities.
3. Chancellor Steve Angi failed his responsibilities as Protector of Children.
4. Archbishop Schnurr, Auxiliary Bishop Binzer and Chancellor Angi failed to notify St. Ignatius parish and school of Geoffrey Drew's restricted interaction with children imposed by civic authorities nor to impose an appropriate "monitoring" protocol.
5. Archbishop Schnurr gave woefully inadequate consequences to Auxiliary Bishop Binzer for failing his responsibilities.
6. Archbishop Schnurr gave absolutely no consequences to Chancellor Angi for failing his responsibilities as Protector of Children.
7. Archdiocesan seminary authorities provided questionable vetting and testing to seminary applicant Geoffrey Drew whose pre-applicant behavior had been questioned and now includes allegations of rape.
8. Archbishop Schnurr failed to curtail Geoffrey Drew's duties as pastor in a timely manner.
9. Archdiocesan Review Board members failed to fully engage in their responsibilities as outlined in the Decree.
10. USCCB audits failed to uncover any potential wrongdoing because bishops allow pastors to shield themselves from the auditors.
11. Archbishop Schnurr, Auxiliary Bishop Binzer and Chancellor Angi failed to respond to grave legitimate parishioner complaints.

We acknowledge that failure of judgement and tragic blind spots may explain some of these actions, but they do not excuse them.

For more information, we ask you to please click to review [this timeline and questions that must be answered](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XFAXsvm1XtTk0gWxX8Fn3nm28Y8-DaBf/view?usp=sharing) in order for a **complete, thorough and just investigation of Church officials and Board members** to take place. (You can also copy and paste this URL into your browser if clicking on the link did not work:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XFAXsvm1XtTk0gWxX8Fn3nm28Y8-DaBf/view?usp=sharing>)

**We look forward to appropriate action, including that outlined in *Vos Estis Lumen Mundi*, as well as the removal of all who have failed the people of God and the integrity of the Catholic Church.**

**We thank you for your timely response on the progress of your investigation, including a quarterly report to us, the first being in January, 2020. Please respond to us at the email address below or to Concerned Catholics of Cincinnati, % 6256 Crittenden Dr., Cincinnati OH 45244. Gratefully,**

**Concerned Catholics of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

[concernedcatholicsofcincy@gmail.com](mailto:concernedcatholicsofcincy@gmail.com)

*Organizing committee members: John Bange, Teresa Dinwiddie-Hermann, Michelle Kroeger, Sarah Mierke, Jan and Bruce Seidel and Susan and Jim Vogt*

**Concerned Catholics:** Please click to [add your name to a petition](#) that we will send to the Holy Father Pope Francis and other Church leaders **in protest of the handling of the Geoffrey Drew case.** (You will need to open the petition in Google docs to add your name.) (You can also copy and paste this URL into your browser if clicking on the link did not work:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd3a2GIJrz0XY1gV-wzH3Pp41LxHPnFlurLiLmMCW-J0hFQg/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd3a2GIJrz0XY1gV-wzH3Pp41LxHPnFlurLiLmMCW-J0hFQg/viewform?usp=sf_link) )

**See who has already signed:**

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