

opusdei.org

# **Statements Regarding Fr. C. John McCloskey**

January 7, 2019, January 10, 2019, and January 29, 2019 statements about Fr. C. John McCloskey.

01/06/2019

**January 7, 2019, Statement by  
Msgr. Thomas Bohlin, Vicar of  
Opus Dei in the U.S.**

I have some sad news to share concerning an Opus Dei priest, Father C. John McCloskey.

In November 2002, the Prelature received word of a complaint from an adult woman of sexual misconduct by Father C. John McCloskey, who at the time was serving as director of the Catholic Information Center (CIC) in Washington D.C. Almost immediately we directed him to give spiritual direction to women only in a traditional confessional (the norm for Opus Dei priests) and to end his contact with the woman in question. After investigating the complaint in subsequent months, we found the complaint to be credible, and in December 2003, Father McCloskey was removed from his position at the CIC.

What happened was deeply painful for the woman, and we are very sorry for all she suffered. A settlement was reached with her in 2005. She has remained in contact with our activities.

In the years since Father McCloskey's removal from the CIC, his priestly activities with women have been very limited because of the restrictions we placed as well as his declining health. He had very few assignments in our activities for women (Opus Dei 's activities are separate for men and for women) and his contact with individual women was limited to the confessional. Throughout the years, we were careful to ensure that he would not have any opportunities to engage in the kind of actions that led to the complaint.

As regards Father McCloskey's time before being at the CIC as well as afterwards, we have not received any complaints for sexual misconduct.

Father McCloskey currently suffers from advanced Alzheimer's. He is largely incapacitated and needs

assistance for routine daily tasks. He has not had any pastoral assignments for a number of years and is no longer able to celebrate Mass, even privately.

Very recently, we have become aware of another woman who may have also suffered from Father McCloskey's actions at the CIC. We are in the process of trying to reach out to her. We will do the same with anyone else we become aware of and welcome any information in this regard. Our number for receiving reports of abuse is 646-742-2741.

All harassment and abuse are abhorrent. I am very sorry for any suffering caused to any woman by Father McCloskey's actions and pray that God may bring healing to her. I would also ask you to pray for Father McCloskey as his health continues to decline.

I am painfully aware of all that the Church is suffering, and I am very sorry that we in Opus Dei have added to it. Let us ask God to show mercy on all of us in the Church at this difficult time.

January 7, 2019

---

## **January 10, 2019, Statement from the Opus Dei Press Office**

The communications office of Opus Dei has received some media inquiries about Opus Dei's interaction with the Archdiocese of Chicago concerning the priestly ministry of Fr. C. John McCloskey. We would like to make the following points in this regard.

- At the time of Fr. McCloskey's arrival, Opus Dei's Vicar for the Midwest, Fr. Peter Armenio,

informed Cardinal George in person of Fr. McCloskey's situation. The Cardinal spoke by phone to the woman, who recounted in full her experiences with Fr. McCloskey and his sexual misconduct toward her.

- Restrictions were placed on his activities in the form of the assignments he was given. All Opus Dei activities, like classes or retreats, are segregated by men and women. During his whole time in Chicago he was given few pastoral assignments for activities with women. Within those activities, his one-on-one interactions with women would have been required to take place in a traditional confessional where the priest and the other person are completely separated by a

partition and speak through a small screen.

- During his entire time in Chicago he lived in Opus Dei centers with male numerary (celibate) members of Opus Dei.

Neither the Archdiocese nor the Prelature has received any complaints of sexual misconduct on the part of Fr. McCloskey for his time in Chicago (2005-2013).

Once again, we offer our deep apologies to the victim of Father McCloskey's misconduct for all she suffered. We are also sorry for the difficulties caused for the Archdiocese of Chicago by the way we communicated. We should have included all of the information in the letter sent to request permission for Fr. McCloskey to exercise his faculties in the Archdiocese. In the future we will make sure that the Archdiocese of Chicago (or any other

diocese) is fully informed through the normal channels.

---

## **January 29, 2019, Statement from the Opus Dei Press Office**

In the past few weeks, some questions have been raised about the case of Father C. John McCloskey. Regarding them, we would like to make the following points.

Regarding the size of the settlement: Some people, especially outside the United States, have expressed the view that the amount of the settlement seems excessive, disproportionate to the misconduct described in media accounts.

We are not going to discuss the highly personal details that the woman told us, regarding what she experienced, her personal suffering,



and her financial situation. We can say that what she told us about her experiences corresponds with what has been reported in the media. The media reports make it clear that, when the abuse occurred, she was in an emotionally vulnerable state and was seeking spiritual support from someone she could trust.

Consequently, the abuse had a strong impact on her. She was an accomplished professional earning a good salary, and she had to leave her job. In the settlement discussions, both sides were represented by well-respected attorneys, who recommended that the matter be settled. The settlement included a mutual non-disclosure agreement, which neither the woman nor Opus Dei intends to enforce.

Some people have wondered why until recently book reviews were appearing in the Catholic press under Father McCloskey's name,

given that he is largely incapacitated with advanced Alzheimer's. Father McCloskey had an editor who helped him with his writing. As his condition declined the editor did more and more and eventually was writing the articles completely.

Finally, we would like to stress that the suffering the woman experienced is real, and, once again, we are very sorry for all she has suffered.

.....

pdf | document generated  
automatically from [https://opusdei.org/  
en-us/article/message-from-msgr-  
thomas-bohlin-2/](https://opusdei.org/en-us/article/message-from-msgr-thomas-bohlin-2/) (01/18/2026)