

Jennifer L. Kane, OCDS



Most Rev. Christophe Pierre
Apostolic Nuncio
3339 Massachusetts Avenue
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28 May 2021

OBJECTION
to the candidacy of Rev. Monsignor David LiPuma
for elevation to Office of Bishop [Diocese of Buffalo]

Your Excellency,

It has come to the recent attention of the public through a national Catholic media organization that Rev. Monsignor David LiPuma might still be under consideration for elevation to the office of Bishop.

As I related in a lengthy interview with an investigator for the New York State Attorney General's sex crimes unit (March, 2019), **I am a corroborating witness to Monsignor LiPuma's participation in an orchestrated attempt with other diocesan officials to conceal a report of clergy sexual abuse.**

As the New York State Attorney General's recent lawsuit against the Diocese of Buffalo and its bishops disclosed, and as Most Rev. Richard Malone acknowledged to a Vatican official (document enclosed), a seminarian studying at the diocese's Christ the King seminary reported in early 2004 that he was sexually molested by a diocesan priest.

As the state lawsuit records on page 174 (enclosed), Monsignor LiPuma, then vice chancellor, was one of the officials (absent a bishop at the time) who interviewed the seminarian about his allegations in the spring of 2004. He was also one of the officials to whom the seminarian wrote asking for clarification as to why a diocesan official would not classify the actions of the offending priest as even "sexual harassment." The offending priest allegedly crawled into the seminarian's bed naked and fondled the seminarian's genitalia. The seminarian's very question in his letter to Monsignor LiPuma reveals that diocesan officials attempted to conceal from this 23-year-old Polish immigrant—unfamiliar with U.S. laws—the true nature of the sexual assault.

No one in the diocese wrote up a report of the seminarian's allegation. The seminarian told me in 2006 that he wrote up his own report and sent it to diocesan officials. No report of this allegation was made to the diocesan attorney or the Diocesan

Review Board as per the diocese's protocols, according to the State Attorney General's lawsuit.

Approximately two years after the alleged incident, the seminarian confided to me details of the sexual assault. He listed the diocesan officials, like Monsignor LiPuma, who knew about the incident. Up to that point in time (and to this very day) diocesan officials had not done an investigation, and the offending priest had not been dealt with appropriately by the bishop. The seminarian told me he was concerned about the safety of others with this priest still in active ministry as a pastor; but he said he was at the same time unable to report to civil authorities because Auxiliary Bishop Edward Grosz threatened him against mentioning this incident to anyone.

Not even sure this molestation was a legal crime, the seminarian turned to the diocese for help, and officials didn't just ignore him, they exerted enormous abuse of power by misrepresenting the nature of the alleged offense and inflicting further psychological and spiritual abuse upon this young man.

That 2004 letter the seminarian wrote to Monsignor LiPuma, which I referenced above and which is now in the hands of the New York State Attorney General, was a cry for help to the Church—help he never received. It is just one illustration of Monsignor LiPuma's participation in the institutional abuse inflicted upon this victim of clergy sexual abuse.

I witnessed the devastating effect of officials' neglect in which seminary and chancery clerics in the know like Monsignor LiPuma made no attempt to provide pastoral aid and comfort to this seminarian so emotionally and spiritually devastated by this "spiritual incest," (as one New York State bishop characterizes the molestation of a priest upon a seminarian). Also disturbing was the monsignor's abusive silence when he was in a position in the chancery to encourage his superiors to follow secular and ecclesial protocols in justly and properly handling this report of clergy sexual abuse.

But my concern with Monsignor LiPuma did not end when the seminarian finished out his term at our parish in 2007 at the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. Over the years, I was dumbfounded to learn that this diocesan official never uttered a word of contrition or sorrow or the slightest expression of compassion much less an apology to that seminarian who eventually was ordained to the priesthood in 2009.

During his last year as vice chancellor, Monsignor LiPuma facilitated moving the same credibly-accused sex offender priest to an adult care facility where he was assigned as chaplain. The monsignor never disclosed to the proprietors the exact nature of the diocese's concern with this priest, as one of the brothers in the Brothers of Mercy facility reported (document enclosed). Not long afterward, two more allegations surfaced of that priest sexually grooming two young adult employees at that facility. (Documentation enclosed).

Your Excellency, this monsignor's despicable behavior aside, isn't it a sign of "clericalism" for the Church not to hold this monsignor accountable to the same moral/gospel standards to which we laity are held?

For his documented complicity in covering up a credible accusation of clergy sexual abuse; for his documented failure to protect the public, putting us at risk; for withholding pastoral care to a survivor of clergy sexual abuse seeking his help; for negligence in following secular and ecclesial norms and protocols in handling a clergy sexual abuse allegation, **I object to the candidacy of Rev. Monsignor David LiPuma of the Diocese of Buffalo to any office or title in the Roman Catholic Church** as he has so clearly chosen to violate his integrity in order to preserve the reputation of the institution at the expense of innocent victims and the salvation of souls.

I pray fervently for this monsignor.

As we close out the final days of the Easter Season, may we all renew our allegiance to the risen Christ above all others. I keep you and your important deliberations in prayer. Thank you for the generosity of your time reading this letter and for your prayerful consideration of its content.

Respectfully in Christ,

Jennifer L. Kane, OCDS

cc:

Most Rev. Michael Fisher | Bishop, Diocese of Buffalo