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[ALL-UG] STATEMENT FROM PRESIDENT THAYNE McCULLOH REGARDING NATIONAL NEWS STORY

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Inbox



Office of the President

TO: The Gonzaga Community

FROM: Thayne M. McCulloh, D.Phil., President

SUBJ: Statement from President Thayne McCulloh Regarding National News Story

DATE: December 17, 2018

I write today in light of a recent investigative report entitled, “Sins of the Fathers.” The account first focused on the horrifying, predatory sexual abuse of Alaska Native girls and women by James Poole, a Jesuit priest who worked at that time in Nome, Alaska; and then examined the ways in which the leadership of the Society of Jesus knowingly re-assigned men such as Poole – as well as

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credibly accused of abusing children, women and men, and vulnerable adults. Through her research, the reporter further found that many men who were accused of sexual abuse were in their later years assigned to the retirement facility and Infirmary for the Oregon Province, Cardinal Bea House, located just west of St. Aloysius Church.

Listening to this broadcast and reading these accounts is deeply disturbing and elicits for me feelings of sadness, disgust and betrayal that I know must be shared by all of you as well. I feel so much sadness and anger for the women, men and children who were victimized by Poole and others, and all those who have been sexually assaulted by ordained priests who abused their power and privilege. I, together with fellow colleagues and friends of the University, were deeply wounded by the revelations of the sexual abuse of children, men, and women by Jesuits of the Oregon Province that were at the heart of the Province bankruptcy (filed in 2009, with a settlement reached in March 2011).

Those wounds for me were re-opened this weekend, at the revelation that the Society of Jesus had knowingly sent a man with Poole's record of sexual abuse to live in their facility within the parameters of our campus – which serves not only as the home of college students, but regularly hosts grade-school children and visitors of all ages – without notification by the Province to the University. Cardinal Bea House is owned and operated by the Jesuits West Province (i.e., not Gonzaga University). It has served both as a center for formation of Jesuit novices and as a residence for retired Jesuits (until the present). The Province determines the assignment of its Jesuits to its communities, such as Cardinal Bea House.

It is important for me to share with you, that in the years following the 2011 Oregon Province bankruptcy, I learned that there had been priests under supervised “safety plans” living at the Jesuit retirement community (Bea House). It was not until 2016, when the Province chose to begin relocating a number of retired men to the Sacred Heart Community in Los Gatos, that I learned that among them were Jesuits who had been on safety plans (and were moved). The first notification I had that Fr. James Poole lived at Bea House was when the US Jesuits West list was released on December 7th, 2018; I did not know of Fr. Poole, or his history in Alaska, until the investigative report aired this past weekend. Following the lessons learned out of the bankruptcy, I had relied upon the Province to inform us of any Jesuit whose history might pose a threat to our students or campus community. I deeply regret that I was not

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The University is not aware of any reports of abuse or misconduct involving retired priests during the time they were living in Cardinal Bea House. Today, I reaffirmed with the Provincial that there are currently no Jesuits against whom an allegation of sexual abuse has been made living at Gonzaga University, Della Strada Jesuit Community, or the Regis Community at Cardinal Bea House. Further, I have asked that we be guaranteed that no Jesuit against whom credible allegations of sexual misconduct or abuse have been made ever be assigned to Gonzaga or the Jesuit communities here.

We are committed to being a community that strives to respect, protect and support every individual. As such, the safety of our students, staff and visitors to the Gonzaga campus is our top priority, and the University has zero tolerance for sexual misconduct of any form. Gonzaga has measures in place to allow for confidential reporting of misconduct to the proper authorities at www.gonzaga.edu/report. It is University policy to cooperate fully with any and all investigations of abuse and to take swift action when warranted.

Please know our [Center for Cura Personalis](#), [Health and Counseling Services](#), and [Office of Mission and Ministry](#) are resources dedicated to helping our students work through complex issues such as this. For employees struggling with these same feelings, the free, confidential [Employee Assistance Program](#) is available. Further, I encourage anyone who has been victimized by a Jesuit to contact both Mary Pat Panighetti, advocacy coordinator for Jesuits West, at 408-893-8398 or mppanighetti@jesuits.org, and appropriate law enforcement and child protective agencies.

Earlier this fall, I communicated Gonzaga University's [commitments](#) to our students and community (<https://www.gonzaga.edu/about/president-leadership/messages-media/2018/ongoing-revelations-of-abuse-in-the-catholic-church>). This message also appears in the current edition of the Gonzaga Magazine, arriving in homes this week.

Fully repairing the pain of abuse may never be possible, but we must be and remain committed to continuously love, support and care for those who have been victimized, and resolve to seek justice with and for them.

Sincerely,

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Thayne M. McCulloh, D.Phil.
President