



**Independent Investigation of  
Saint Peter's Anglican Cathedral**

**Report and Recommendations**

**November 22, 2019**

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the Summer of 2018, a staff member of Saint Peter’s Anglican Cathedral (“St. Peter’s” or “the Cathedral”) disclosed to the Bishop of the Gulf Atlantic Diocese (“the Diocese” or “GAD”) a pattern of clergy misconduct allegations concerning the Dean of the Cathedral, Father Eric Dudley.<sup>1</sup> Under the direction of the Bishop, the Diocese appointed a canonical investigator and launched an inquiry into the allegations. Two additional individuals subsequently came forward with allegations of behavioral misconduct by Father Eric. In response to the allegations, the Cathedral, in concert with the Diocese, entered into an agreement with Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment (“GRACE”) for GRACE to conduct an independent investigation of the allegations, provide a final report summarizing its investigative findings, and propose recommendations.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Scope

The Engagement Agreement between St. Peter’s and GRACE specifies that “GRACE shall investigate any and all allegations of clergy misconduct by Eric Dudley, including but not limited to, whether St. Peter’s had any knowledge of such allegations, and if so, how St. Peter’s responded to such allegations.” It further specifies: “GRACE shall also investigate any and all known allegations of sexual misconduct perpetrated by St. Peter’s staff and/or volunteers, including but not limited to, whether the Cathedral had knowledge of such allegations and how it responded.”<sup>2</sup> Due to the significant amount of information received related to the allegations of clergy misconduct against Father Eric, as well as time and budget constraints, GRACE focused this investigation on the allegations pertaining to Father Eric.<sup>3</sup>

### B. Survey

GRACE created a confidential online survey which was made available for public access on the Cathedral’s website.<sup>4</sup> The link to the survey was also provided to several individuals who were believed to have relevant information. The purpose of the survey, the scope of the investigation, and definitions of misconduct<sup>5</sup> were articulated at the beginning of the survey. Prior to completion, each respondent was required to acknowledge having read these instructions. In total, the survey was accessed 659 times.

### C. Witness Interviews and Documentation Evidence

GRACE interviewed fifty-one witnesses, including both survey and non-survey participants.<sup>6</sup> Because this investigation was not a judicial proceeding, GRACE did not have the power to subpoena witnesses or documents; all information provided to GRACE was done voluntarily. In order to protect the identities of the reported victims and witnesses, pseudonyms are used throughout this report.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond witness testimony, GRACE investigators examined evidence provided by witnesses, including Diocesan and Cathedral investigative materials, public letters and notices, email and other personal communications, phone records, social media posts, written correspondence, previously recorded interviews, and the results of a forensic computer examination.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On February 18, 2019, after completion of an ecclesiastical investigation, which stemmed from these allegations, Eric Dudley was “deposed” from ordained ministry in the Anglican Church in North America and no longer holds the title of “priest.” As most of the allegations related to this investigation reportedly occurred while Eric Dudley was an ordained priest, and in order to minimize confusion, GRACE will refer to Eric Dudley as “Father Eric” throughout this Report.

<sup>2</sup> Engagement Agreement at 2.

<sup>3</sup> GRACE received information that a former Cathedral priest may have engaged in clergy misconduct.

<sup>4</sup> A copy of the survey and corresponding is attached to this report. The link to the survey remained posted and active throughout the duration of the investigation. The purpose of the survey was to identify prospective witnesses and provide them the opportunity to share relevant information in a safe and simple manner.

<sup>5</sup> See *GRACE Survey for St. Peter’s Cathedral Investigation*.

<sup>6</sup> Over the course of the investigation, several individuals contacted GRACE requesting to be interviewed. The GRACE team uses its combined professional judgment in deciding who to interview based on the scope of the investigation.

<sup>7</sup> Generally, each witness is randomly assigned a first name as a pseudonym. Any pseudonym that appears to be the name of a real person is unintentional and purely coincidental. GRACE made every effort to avoid any such similarities.

<sup>8</sup> The forensic computer examination resulted in 8.6 megabytes of data (nearly 4,000 pages). After conducting a digital forensic analysis of the computer system, the examiner concluded, to a reasonable degree of scientific certainty, that the computer was used almost entirely for “official business” and that the “computer system was likely not used for nefarious or unauthorized purposes.” See Summary of findings for Requested Digital Forensic

### III. INVESTIGATIVE FINDINGS<sup>9</sup>

#### A. Allegations of Father Eric's Clergy Misconduct<sup>10</sup>

##### 1. Background Information

Father Eric grew up in Hartsville, South Carolina, the middle child of three boys.<sup>11</sup> Father Eric earned a B.A. from Wofford College, an M.Div. from Vanderbilt University, and an S.T.M. from Yale University.<sup>12</sup> Father Eric began his ministry serving parishes in South Carolina. In 1995, Eric, his wife, and their three children moved to Florida. Settling in Tallahassee, Father Eric served as Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church for the next decade.<sup>13</sup>

In 2003, leadership of the Episcopal Church approved the election of an openly gay man to the position of bishop and moved closer towards acceptance of same-sex marriage.<sup>14</sup> This led many orthodox leaders and churches, who felt that the shift towards acceptance of homosexuality was another step away from the Church's traditional teachings, to depart from the Episcopal Church.<sup>15</sup> In 2005, Father Eric called together a number of leaders within the Episcopal Diocese of Florida for a retreat where they bonded over their mutual desire to return the church to orthodoxy.<sup>16</sup> This group, led by Father Eric, would soon bring their Anglican and Episcopal parishes together to form the Anglican Alliance of North Florida.<sup>17</sup>

During a Sunday morning service in the fall of 2005, Father Eric made an announcement from the pulpit that he was resigning from St. John's and leaving the Episcopal Church to start a new church.<sup>18</sup> Father Eric explained that he had decided to leave due to "deeply unrepentant heresies" in the Episcopal Church, which made it impossible for him, as an orthodox minister, to continue to serve.<sup>19</sup> An old church building in Tallahassee was purchased, and along with several hundred parishioners who followed him from St. John's, Father Eric founded St. Peter's Anglican Church.<sup>20</sup>

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Analysis, pg. 5-6. Additionally, GRACE investigators conducted dozens of searches of the data and reviewed hundreds of emails and other data from the computer system. GRACE used this evidence to corroborate witness accounts, confirm the dates and locations of events that took place, and analyze communications between witnesses. Where relevant, some of this evidence is cited herein.

<sup>9</sup> GRACE is a non-profit organization that conducts independent investigations to assist faith communities with appropriate responses to abuse disclosures. Although GRACE employs investigators with prior law enforcement and legal experience, GRACE is not a law firm and does not make findings related to "guilt" or "innocence" as would a court of law. GRACE provides a summary of relevant data points along with a reasoned analysis so that the reader may be properly equipped with understanding the facts gathered from the perspective of experts who regularly work in the field of behavioral misconduct, with a focus of such conduct within faith communities.

<sup>10</sup> Clergy Misconduct occurs when a religious leader abuses his or her power or authority for an improper purpose, such conduct is an abuse of power when a person who has power uses it for self-oriented reasons instead of in-service to the person with less power. Clergy sexual abuse may also be referred to as "clergy sexual misconduct."

<sup>11</sup> Testimony of Father Eric, Interview with Canonical Investigator 5 (Dec. 13, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* at 6-7. See also Margo Payne, *What is the Gospel?*, Margo's Corner (Feb. 19, 2013, 1:03 PM), <https://margopayne.wordpress.com/2013/02/19/what-is-the-gospel/>. At Vanderbilt, Father Eric became friends with Associate Priest 1, who would later work with Father Eric at both St. John's and St. Peter's. *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> Margo Payne, *What is the Gospel?*, Margo's Corner (Feb. 19, 2013, 1:03 PM), <https://margopayne.wordpress.com/2013/02/19/what-is-the-gospel/>.

<sup>14</sup> *History*, Gulf Atlantic Diocese, <http://gulfatlanticdiocese.org/history/> (last visited Nov.13, 2019).

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-dec-04-na-episcopal4-story.html>

<sup>16</sup> This group included the "Florida Six," a group of church leaders who had already refused to pledge to the diocese over its financial relationship with the Episcopal Church. *History*, Gulf Atlantic Diocese, <http://gulfatlanticdiocese.org/history/>.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* Father Eric's leadership during and after this transition made him into one of the most influential priests in the diocese.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> David W. Virtue, *Florida Rector Bids Farewell to Diocese and the ECUSA*, Virtue Online (Oct. 2, 2005), <https://virtueonline.org/florida-rector-bids-farewell-diocese-and-ecusa>. Later that day, the Rector of All Souls Church in Jacksonville, announced the formation of the Anglican Alliance of North Florida (AANF), made up of the "Florida Six" and Father Eric's newly-formed church. *Id.* Key leaders from the AANF came together in the Fall of 2009 to ratify a Constitution and Canons and elect a bishop and governing body; together, they founded the Gulf-Atlantic Diocese. By the end of the year, the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) approved admission of the Gulf-Atlantic Diocese into its body. *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> St. Peter's Anglican Church was initially formed under the Province of Uganda. *Id.* The Anglican Church of Uganda, which cut ties with the Episcopal Church in 2003, has historically supported criminal prosecution of homosexuals. Jeff Sharlet, *Straight Man's Burden: The American Roots of Uganda's Anti-gay Persecutions*, Harper's Mag., Sept. 2010, at 36-37. In 2014, the Anglican Archbishop publicly supported a bill that would have punished homosexual acts with up to life in prison. Fredrick Nzwili, *Uganda's Anglican Leader Says Anti-gay Law Still Needed*, Episcopal News Service (Aug. 5, 2014), <https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2014/08/05/ugandas-anglican-leader-says-anti-gay-law-still-needed/>. The bill was eventually invalidated on a technicality. *Id.*

As church membership grew over the course of the next decade, Father Eric campaigned to raise millions of dollars to build a cathedral to house St. Peter's. In June 2014, the congregation moved into the new building.<sup>21</sup> In February of 2018, St. Peter's was elevated in status when it was consecrated as the Cathedral of the Diocese of the Gulf Atlantic.<sup>22</sup> Father Eric, the Rector of St. Peter's, became the Dean of St. Peter's Anglican Cathedral.<sup>23</sup>

## 2. Clergy Misconduct Disclosures

A number of reports were made about alleged clergy misconduct against Father Eric. Four separate individuals identified themselves to GRACE as reported victims of clergy misconduct by Father Eric. After conducting interviews with several reported victims and other witnesses, GRACE was informed that there may be other reported victims. GRACE was unable to locate some of these reported victims while others either denied the alleged misconduct or simply declined to speak with GRACE.<sup>24</sup>

In the first week of June 2018, Father Eric left for a three-month sabbatical. John Doe subsequently made a formal complaint to the Bishop, accusing Father Eric of violating the diocesan sexual misconduct policy.<sup>25</sup> Late in the evening on August 20, 2018, Mark Doe called the Bishop reporting that he had recently learned about sexual harassment in his seminary course, and felt that he needed to inform the Bishop what Father Eric had done to him.<sup>26</sup> After the Bishop issued a Godly Admonition instructing him to do so, Father Eric resigned, effective immediately.<sup>27</sup>

After hearing some of the troubling allegations about Father Eric, Luke Doe recalled being subjected to similar behavior during a trip he took with Father Eric that spring.<sup>28</sup> Luke Doe subsequently notified the Bishop of his complaint. In addition to the three men who came forward in the summer of 2018, GRACE interviewed a fourth witness who had also reportedly been a victim of similar misconduct by Father Eric years earlier.

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<sup>21</sup> Jordan Culver, *Three Bishops Travel to Tallahassee to Consecrate St. Peter's*, Tallahassee Democrat (June 13, 2014), <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/life/faith/2014/06/13/three-bishops-travel-tallahassee-consecrate-st-peters/10414291>.

<sup>22</sup> *St. Peter's Church Rises to Cathedral Status*, Tallahassee Democrat (Feb. 2, 2018), <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/life/faith/2018/02/02/humble-beginnings-st-peters-cathedral-born/1080918001>.

<sup>23</sup> By the time that Father Eric resigned in the Fall of 2018, the congregation of St. Peter's included more than 2,000 people.

<sup>24</sup> In over ten years of conducting independent investigations, GRACE has learned that it is not uncommon for some reported victims to elect not to disclose abuse for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: shame, embarrassment, fear of reliving traumatic experiences, concern of not being believed, a desire to "move on and leave things in the past," fear of retaliation, and much more. GRACE recognizes and respects a witness's decision to speak, if and when they choose, and on their own timeline.

<sup>25</sup> Luke Doe Wife Tr. 12. A few days later, the Bishop appointed a canonical investigator ("CI") to investigate the matter and determine whether Father Eric had violated diocesan policy. On August 7, 2018 Bishop issued the first of three Godly Admonitions to Father Eric. The Bishop apprised Father Eric of the complaint that had been made against him, which at this point was an allegation that he had violated the diocesan sexual misconduct policy and admonished him not to discuss the complaint with other parishioners, to have no contact with the family of John Doe, to stay away from church property, and to refrain from drinking alcohol. Godly Admonition to Fr. Eric (Aug. 7, 2018). The same day, Bishop 1 also issued a Godly Admonition to John Doe, directing him to refrain from alcohol, not have any contact with Father Eric, refrain from discussing the complaint (except with pre-approved individuals), and to preserve all materials relevant to the complaint. Godly Admonition to John Doe (Aug. 7, 2018).

<sup>26</sup> At the time of their respective disclosures, neither John Doe nor Mark Doe knew that the other had reported these allegations to the Bishop. The day after receiving Mark Doe's disclosure, the Bishop issued a second Godly Admonition to Father Eric, admonishing him to resign by the end of the day for multiple allegations of sexual harassment. *See* Godly Admonition to Fr. Eric (Aug. 21, 2018).

<sup>27</sup> *See* Bishop 1 Tr. 14. Father Eric submitted a resignation letter to the church on August 30, 2018, which states that Father Eric had "struggled deeply with burnout" over the past two years, causing him to "react[] with unwarranted outbursts of anger, and occasional heavy consumption of alcohol to help alleviate stress." Father Eric explains that, it was on the occasions that he drank too much that he "became more affectionate than usual and overstepped boundaries." He admits that, "on those occasions, I did exhibit unbecoming displays of affection towards other adults" and that his conduct was "unbefitting a priest . . . And the dean of a cathedral." Father Eric goes on to "apologize and ask forgiveness from those affected by my inappropriate actions;" he then apologizes to the congregation and asked that they show mercy to his family. Eric Dudley, Resignation Letter (Aug. 30, 2018) (hereinafter "Dudley Resignation Letter").

<sup>28</sup> Learning that there were now three alleged victims, Bishop 1 expanded the scope of the CI's investigation. Godly Admonition to Fr. Eric (Sept. 6, 2018); Sexual Misconduct Follow-On Report (Sept. 20, 2018). The CI subsequently issued a follow-up report, finding that Father Eric had violated the diocese's sexual misconduct policy. Sexual Misconduct Follow-On Report (Sept. 20, 2018). The CI issued two reports in this case. The first report was focused only on John Doe's allegations and placed some degree of blame on John Doe for acquiescing to Father Eric's conduct. This determination was based, in part, on reliance on the opinion of a therapist who had provided relationship counseling to Father Eric and John Doe, but who had been previously unaware of the physical nature of their relationship. The therapist was of the opinion that the sexual behavior was likely isolated and "probably won't repeat." Sexual Misconduct Report (Aug. 11, 2018). The therapist's opinion was discredited as more reported victims came forward, and the CI ultimately conducted an expanded investigation and issued a second report. Due to Father Eric's refusal to comply with the Godly Admonitions, Bishop 1 made a formal accusation against Father Eric, which escalated the disciplinary process from Canon 2 (diocesan policy violations) to Title IV, Canon 3 (canonical violations). *See* Bishop 1 Tr. 12; CI Tr. 8.

### 3. Similarities Between Allegations

Over the course of this investigation, it became evident that many of the reported victims had substantially similar profiles as it relates to particular vulnerabilities. For example, most were relatively new in town and had little to no social or support network. Each reported victim was either newly married or had a young family. In addition, the reported victims were facing various financial challenges. Some of the reported victims came from troubled homes, or had poor relationships with their fathers, and were in need of a mentor. Furthermore, the reported victims were relatively similar in physical appearance.<sup>29</sup>

Each reported victim gave a similar account of how their relationship with Father Eric began. Father Eric sought out a relationship with each of the reported victims, often by taking him to lunch. The reported victims felt excited and honored at the attention they were given by Father Eric and welcomed his invitations to get together. Eventually, the meetings would become more regular, sometimes even scheduled on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.<sup>30</sup> During these meetings, Father Eric would ask the young man about his background, family life, struggles, and career goals. Father Eric often paid the bill during these many outings.

Ben Doe described that he had been away from church for years, so he looked for a place where he could worship again when he moved to Tallahassee in 2010.<sup>31</sup> Ben Doe said from the first moment that he and his wife – who was pregnant at the time - met Father Eric, Father Eric seemed extremely interested in getting to know Ben Doe. The witness recalled that each time he crossed paths with Father Eric, “it would just be more interest, more probing;” as Ben Doe’s father-in-law put it, “Eric showed [Ben Doe] favor.”<sup>32</sup> Soon, Father Eric began calling Ben Doe and inviting him to lunch. The lunches progressed into counseling sessions in Father Eric’s office where Ben Doe ended up confiding his vulnerabilities and struggles with Father Eric.<sup>33</sup>

John Doe was in seminary when he first met Father Eric who immediately exhibited a special interest in him.<sup>34</sup> He recalled that this interest was initially demonstrated by Father Eric taking him out for meals and drinks and offering him advice and encouragement. On other occasions, Father Eric flew John Doe and one other student from seminary to Tallahassee for visits. It became clear to John Doe that Father Eric was showing him favoritism when Father Eric would invite him to stay at his house while he was in Tallahassee but would not extend the same invitation to the other student. Additionally, Father Eric would only invite John Doe out for meals.<sup>35</sup> During one of these visits, when John Doe expressed interest in working at St. Peter’s after graduation, Father Eric promised to do whatever was needed to bring John Doe on board.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> A witness who has been on staff for more than a decade stated, “I’ve watched a pattern of young males that seemed to have captured our rector’s eye and that all of a sudden he would spend an inordinate amount of time with them or start buying them things or allow them to do things that the normal person or parishioner didn’t have the opportunities to do.” Employee 3 Tr. 3. Another witness, Kevin, recognized that “Eric had a way of finding people and pulling in people that had talent.” *Id.* “Looking back now,” Kevin stated, “[Ben Doe] kind of fit a profile.” *Id.* He later clarified, “I look at all of these guys, and they’re all thin, fit, they like to exercise, they are all good looking guys. They’re all guys that women notice when they walk in a room. They all fit that pattern.” *Id.* at 13.

<sup>30</sup> One of the victims stated that, a year or so into his relationship with Father Eric, he was meeting with him five to six times a week, in addition to working for him. John Doe Tr. 33.

<sup>31</sup> Reflecting on his feelings when he and his wife moved to Tallahassee, Ben Doe stated he thought, “I’m ready to go back to church. And if we’re going to start a family, church is going to be part of that.” Ben Doe Tr. 6.

<sup>32</sup> Ben Doe stated to GRACE, “He just was really interested. And I thought it was ... I didn’t know what to think. I felt on the spot. But that became kind of a thing when we would come back to that church. It was interesting to see some of my wife’s family members, and they’re very good people and all of that stuff. But each time I would cross paths with him, it would just be more interest, more probing. To put it in my father-in-law’s terms, who’s like an evangelical, he’d say Eric showed me favor. And if I’m honest, it seemed like a good thing. That led to him reaching out to go to lunch, so I did that. Had counseling sessions in his office. I would tell him things about myself. That led to phone calls. And I thought, ‘This is unusual, but it’s church. And this is a great guy, I guess. Everyone thinks he’s great.’” Ben Doe Tr. 7. Ben Doe’s Wife recalled, “We felt a lot of favoritism, and that was exciting and fun feeling, that we were singled out a lot of times as a young family...We were excited that we felt favored...It felt fun. But just also, what I wasn’t connecting to was how showy and flamboyant, and it was just more about him than the message and the people. That was one thing that I remember communicating is, ‘I’m just not getting a message that I’m looking for and going to church. I just feel like I’m coming here and it’s more who’s who, and not coming to church to learn.’” Ben Doe Wife Tr. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 7.

<sup>34</sup> In an email to an instructor at John Doe’s seminary, Father Eric wrote, “[W]hile I’ve got you, thank you for [John Doe]. I wasn’t sure about him initially as he seemed thoroughly overwhelmed, but he is SUCH a fine young man! There is so much depth of character there, so much clear love for God and others; and, I am TRULY impressed with his teaching and preaching skills! He is one I will want to keep up with! I’ve adopted him!” Email from Eric Dudley to seminary professor dated August 10, 2013.

<sup>35</sup> John Doe Tr. 10-11.

<sup>36</sup> JDA-1.

After moving to Tallahassee for college, Mark Doe got involved in campus ministry and St. Peter's. He became a Christian a couple years later and started focusing on getting involved in the ministry.<sup>37</sup> After hearing Father Eric give a few sermons, Mark Doe was contacted by Father Eric's assistant inviting him to have lunch with the rector. After that lunch, Father Eric took an obvious interest in Mark Doe, meeting him for numerous meals while repeatedly encouraging him to pursue the priesthood. Within a very short time, Father Eric seemingly became a self-appointed mentor to Mark Doe as he began to follow the path towards ministry.<sup>38</sup>

Luke Doe graduated from seminary and then came to St. Peter's overseeing youth ministry while working towards ordination within the denomination. That next year, Luke Doe was ordained as a deacon.

#### 4. Professional Relationship Becomes Personal

After building trust as a mentor or counselor, Father Eric began to shift the relationship into something more intimate as conversations became increasingly personal and intrusive. Father Eric had a common pattern of sharing his loneliness followed by expressing how important their friendship was to him, and then communicate how much he "loved" them.

After finding out the needs of each reported victim, Father Eric worked to fill that need, and through that process gained greater trust from each young man. For example, if the reported victim needed a job, Father Eric hired him, or found a job for him. If the reported victim was struggling financially, he gave him money, or a car, or paid for his school, claiming he expected nothing in return, that it was just "the Christian thing to do."<sup>39</sup> Initially, the reported victims appreciated Father Eric's attention, feeling special that such an important and busy man was so invested in their respective lives. He showered them with praises, encouraged them to pursue the ministry and become more involved in the church, and offered much-needed financial assistance and gifts.<sup>40</sup>

When Father Eric learned that Ben Doe was unemployed with a baby on the way, he found a job for him with one of his parishioners. The gifts started soon after that.<sup>41</sup> When Ben Doe tried to refuse gifts, Father Eric told him to accept them because this was just what Christians do.<sup>42</sup> On the night that Ben Doe's first child was born, Father Eric arrived, uninvited, at the hospital. Ben Doe's wife felt like it was an invasion of their privacy – her parents had not even seen the baby yet – but Ben Doe thought it was an incredibly kind gesture.<sup>43</sup> When Father Eric was leaving, he stopped and wrote Ben Doe a \$500 check. When Ben Doe protested, Father Eric explained that "blessing people" was what the discretionary fund<sup>44</sup> was

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Mark Doe 1.

<sup>38</sup> After graduating college, Mark Doe accepted a position with another ministry, but Father Eric continued to mentor him, encouraging him to seek a certain position at St. Peter's. Mark Doe Tr. 1-3. After a few years, shortly after Mark Doe married his wife, he joined the staff at St. Peter's. *Id.* A year later, Mark Doe assumed the same position that Father Eric had recommended to him. Mark Doe Tr. 3. The position that Father Eric gave Mark Doe is actually a clergy position. At the time that Mark Doe accepted the position, he had been a Christian for about six years; he was not ordained, so he performed only non-sacramental duties. The idea was that the church would pay for Mark Doe to attend seminary so that eventually he could perform all the duties that the position required. *Id.* Mark Doe's direct supervisor was Father Eric. *See id.* at 11 (responding, "Absolutely, yeah." when asked whether Eric had the power to fire him).

<sup>39</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 26. Father Eric claimed that he wanted nothing in return, but with each gift, the victim felt more indebted to Father Eric. *See* Ben Doe Tr. 25 (stating that, after Eric refused to stop harassing him, he told his attorney that he "was going to take out a \$5,000 loan and give it to the church, that way he could never say anything. He could never say anything. And I'd always be able to say I never took anything from that place.").

<sup>40</sup> In addition to cash, some of the gifts that Father Eric bestowed upon the victims included all of their meals and drinks together, books, tuition for college courses, a clothes shopping spree, a used car, airline tickets, one of his personal cassocks valued at \$1,500, sometimes compliments of the rector's discretionary fund. *See id.*; John Doe Tr. 14.

<sup>41</sup> Ben Doe, Summary of Eric Dudley Allegations Prepared for Tallahassee Police Dept. (Feb. 17, 2012) (hereinafter "Ben Doe TPD Summary").

<sup>42</sup> Ben Doe TPD Summary.

<sup>43</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 26. Ben Doe's wife stated, "[W]hen we had our son, he showed up at the hospital prior to my own mother coming in the room, and it just felt like, 'Go away. Go away. You're not ...' It was too much, all the time. I think too much." Ben Doe Wife Tr. 4.

<sup>44</sup> *See* footnote 42. Employee 3 stated, "The rector's discretionary fund was a separate checking account...It usually would run somewhere between \$1,500 to \$5,000. Usually how that money came in that is anytime we would do a funeral or a wedding, if somebody was writing a check to cover him doing that, then they would write it and it would go in his discretionary account. The most I ever remember being in that account was six or \$7,000, but it's always been a separate checking account." *Id.* at 21.

for.<sup>45</sup> Father Eric also bought a lot of gifts for Mark Doe, mostly related to their shared interest in gardening.<sup>46</sup> Mark Doe said that the most expensive gift that Father Eric bought for Mark Doe was “a wrought iron garden bench,” which Mark Doe estimated cost around \$200.<sup>47</sup>

Ben Doe said that the counseling sessions led to Father Eric calling him more often. At first, Ben Doe thought, “This is unusual, but it’s church. And this is a great guy, I guess. Everyone thinks he’s great.”<sup>48</sup> When the calls increased, along with the text messages and emails, however, Ben Doe’s feelings changed. “It was totally out of control at some point,” he recalled, “I’d be at my office and I’d get a call. I wouldn’t pick it up . . . immediately I’d get a text. I wouldn’t answer it. More texts. I was getting five or six in a row like blocks . . . It was like he was making me respond.”<sup>49</sup> Ben Doe said he started by telling Father Eric that he didn’t have time to talk, that he was sorry but, “I just can’t do this.” Over the course of the conversation, however, Ben Doe stated that it felt like “I would lose track of right and wrong, which way is up.” By the time the call ended, Ben Doe would be telling himself, “I’ve got to get better at responding.”<sup>50</sup>

After Mark Doe joined the staff, Father Eric started making more personal invitations for Mark Doe to join him outside of work. Mark Doe eagerly accepted these invitations because Father Eric was his mentor and now his boss. Also, Mark Doe had started to recognize some problems related to church staff issues and thought he could use these opportunities to talk with Father Eric about his ideas for improving the ministry. At some point, Mark Doe’s meetings with Father Eric began “drifting away from being about ministry and more about personal stuff.”<sup>51</sup> Specifically, Father Eric started opening up about his loneliness and how he felt misunderstood. At times, he would even become emotional and cry.<sup>52</sup> Mark Doe began questioning his relationship with Father Eric: “I was just in this kind of weird place, I was like is this a mentorship thing or is this getting weird?”<sup>53</sup>

A few months after his ordination to the diaconate,<sup>54</sup> John Doe and his family moved to Tallahassee and John Doe started working part-time for the church, under Father Eric’s supervision.<sup>55</sup> John Doe recalls that it was during that summer that the mentoring – and now employment - relationship that he had with Father Eric started becoming what seemed like a personal friendship.<sup>56</sup> The two of them started spending time together outside of work, meeting for meals, going to movies, and working out together.<sup>57</sup> After John Doe was ordained to the priesthood in the fall,<sup>58</sup> Father Eric took him on a \$700

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<sup>45</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 26. Reflecting on that moment, Ben Doe stated, “I think looking back, those things were very nice and some of those moments felt very genuine, but I think looking back it felt more like leverage, that I owed him, and that this narrative about me using him, like all that was now being used against me. And it hurt really bad.” *Id.* John Doe expressed a similar sentiment after his disclosures, saying that his therapist brought to his attention that the gifts were part of Father Eric’s “grooming” process. John Doe Tr. 10. One example that John Doe mentioned was that at the end of his summer internship, Father Eric wrote him a check for \$500. *Id.* John Doe stated, “[he] just gave it to me and told me, ‘Keep quiet about it.’ It was a nice little gift from his discretion account to help support me.” John Doe explained that, at the time, he thought to himself, “Oh okay. This guy knows . . . I ha[ve] two kids and one on the way, [I’m not] making a lot of money, I just thought, ‘Hey this guy is just being nice.’” *Id.*

<sup>46</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 20-21.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.* at 12.

<sup>48</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 7.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*

<sup>50</sup> *Id.*

<sup>51</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 9.

<sup>52</sup> Mark Doe stated, “He started opening up to me about things like loneliness and being, having feeling like his [sic] misunderstood by people and getting teary and things like this.” *Id.*

<sup>53</sup> *Id.* at 10. Mark Doe also stated, “Yeah. For me, Eric was like a mentor, he was a father figure. He was my first priest, he’s really my first priest that I had a friendship with and he was my boss. I feel like he had so much power because all those different dynamics were always at play. Yeah, I didn’t want to believe that he was doing the wrong thing. I also felt bad for him if he’s lonely or whatever. He’s been doing this ministry thing for like 30 years, maybe he just doesn’t know how to have a friend. [...] I can’t quantify what was power and what was manipulation. It’s just he had so much power . . .” *Id.* at 19.

<sup>54</sup> JDA-1. At the ordination, Father Eric insisted on having the photographer take pictures of John Doe and him without the rest of the group. Father Eric also allowed John Doe to preach at St. Peter’s the same weekend that he was ordained. *Id.*

<sup>55</sup> John Doe Tr. 15. Email from Eric Dudley to John Doe (June 1, 2015) (discussing John Doe’s moving arrangements).

<sup>56</sup> JDA-2.

<sup>57</sup> *Id.*

<sup>58</sup> During a sermon at a smaller church where John Doe sometimes preached, Father Eric describes how, during the ordination ceremony of a priest, the priest will lie prostrate on the floor with his nose to the ground and his arms extended out like the crucifixion. Father Eric, Sermon (2017) (on file with GRACE). He says, “It is a beautiful moment. In fact, I have a little picture that I’ve kept in my office of John Doe, lying like that on the floor, and his nose ground into the floor, and, I don’t know, I probably like it for . . . reasons I shouldn’t like it, but uh . . .” *Id.* He trails off and grins widely as the congregation laughs. *Id.* When asked about the sermon during his interview, John Doe stated that he had not been present for the sermon. John Doe Follow-Up Tr. 33. Just a few weeks after the sermon where he mentioned the photo of John Doe lying prostrate, Eric sent a text message to John Doe

shopping spree to Father Eric’s favorite clothing store.<sup>59</sup> Later that winter, Father Eric offered John Doe a full-time position at the Cathedral, starting that summer.<sup>60</sup> On or about that period of time, Father Eric informed John Doe that he wanted him to be his successor at St. Peter’s Cathedral.<sup>61</sup>

## 5. Crossing Physical Boundaries

With each of these reported victims, the relationships with Father Eric not only grew much more personal, but they eventually crossed physical boundaries. This usually occurred when the men were alone, and Father Eric engaged them in a personal conversation about previously known vulnerabilities. Almost inevitably, this resulted in someone crying and Father Eric engaging in some form of physical contact, such as putting his head in the reported victim’s lap, holding the reported victim’s hands, touching the reported victim’s feet, or otherwise caressing the reported victim. In many cases, the physical contact escalated to the point that Father Eric was arranging to sleep in the same bed as the reported victim; he even kissed a reported victim on the mouth. If the respective person expressed any uneasiness with the touching, Father Eric would either normalize the behavior (such as by explaining that he was just an affectionate person<sup>62</sup> or talking about men holding hands or kissing in other cultures<sup>63</sup>) or reassure the victim that he was not sexually attracted to men.<sup>64</sup>

Similar to others, Father Eric also asked Ben Doe to accompany him to an out-of-town conference. Though Ben Doe did not want to go, he felt like he could not say no.<sup>65</sup> Ben Doe stated that he and Father Eric “stayed in the same room,” but had separate beds.<sup>66</sup> During this trip, Ben Doe recalled “[Father Eric] likes to hold my hand, which is embarrassing. He wanted to pray with me alone and he would hold my hand.”<sup>67</sup> Ben Doe said that Father Eric explained his behavior by “say[ing] things like, ‘This is how Christians are.’”<sup>68</sup>

A couple months after John Doe purchased his house in Tallahassee, Eric invited John Doe to join him on a trip to visit two large Anglican churches in South Carolina and Northern Virginia.<sup>69</sup> They left at the end of April. When they arrived at their

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asking John Doe to “get rid of that photo with us in the red hats.” Text Message from Eric Dudley to John Doe (Sep. 26, 2017). Father Eric stated that he did not want “staff and parishioners seeing that- too odd!” *Id.* But, Father Eric told John Doe, “[i]t does mean a lot to me that you have photos of me in your office!” *Id.*

<sup>59</sup> JDA-2.

<sup>60</sup> Father Eric exercised total authority over recruiting and hiring John Doe. John Doe stated, “[T]here was no interview process for me . . . . No committee or anything like that.” John Doe Tr. 22.

<sup>61</sup> John Doe stated, “I think it was during the winter of that first year within six months, we were on a run, and he told me that he saw me as his successor, he wanted me to the next rector and dean of St. Peter’s. It wouldn’t be the dean, it would be the rector at that point, we weren’t a cathedral. But he saw me as the next rector of St. Peter’s and really wanted me to pray about. And for a guy who’s six months in I think, ‘Wow that’s a tremendous opportunity. Yeah like why wouldn’t I.’ But it was also hush hush initially, ‘Don’t tell [our wives], I’m not telling anybody.’ And I was, ‘Well.’ I kept pushing, I said, ‘I can’t make any decision without my wife being on board.’ So eventually we had to tell her, we tell our wives, and that was another step towards solidifying us being down here permanently. And so when it came time to buy my house, I bought a house that I thought I would stay in long term. Now, I knew that typically a priest stays at church five, six years then you move on. (But I had the promise of a life-long position) Therefore, I bought a huge fixer-upper-about five minutes away from the church. It was far more than we could afford, but he had convinced me that, ‘Hey don’t worry. You’re going to keep getting raises, it’s going to be fine. You may have tight couple of years but you’ll be okay.’” John Doe Tr. 18. *See also infra* at n. 91.

<sup>62</sup> *See supra* at note 27.

<sup>63</sup> Mark Doe stated, “I think that sometimes you talk about other cultures like men don’t hold hands. Other times, he would talk about lack of intimacy in his family or how the men in our church are just not vulnerable enough. Yeah, he would explain things in that way.” Mark Doe Tr. 19.

<sup>64</sup> John Doe said, “Whenever he would talk about homosexuality, he was always very negative. I think I shared with you one time he was holding my hand and speaking about, something about the homosexual agenda and I’m just like, you got to be kidding me. How can you hold my hand and profess your love and have these feelings for me and you say you don’t like homosexuals or you don’t like homosexuality, or you disagree with it? It’s just very odd. Conflicted. And I never understood that.” John Doe Follow-Up Tr. 42; *see also infra* at note 74.

<sup>65</sup> Ben Doe recalled: “Eric had asked me to go with him to a leadership conference in [location] and I said, ‘Yes.’ I shouldn’t have said yes. I felt like I shouldn’t have said yes at the time. Felt like I had to. I regretted it the whole time. I regret it now.” Ben Doe Tr. 14-15.

<sup>66</sup> *Id.* at 15.

<sup>67</sup> *Id.*

<sup>68</sup> *Id.* Looking back on that trip, Ben Doe remarked, “The whole thing was just so inappropriate.” *Id.* In his interview, Ben Doe expressed a sentiment similar to Luke Doe’s “intuition.” Though “[n]othing physical ever happened,” Ben Doe stated that he was “ready to defend [him]self at any moment.” Ben Doe Tr. 15. Ben recounted that at one point during the trip, “[Father Eric wanted to tie my tie and he came behind me and he was too close. If I hadn’t just figured out how to stop that scenario, it would’ve escalated. I think that’s what the whole thing was about. There were a few other moments like that, but it never actually crossed that line. I just can’t believe how I would get in the situations. I just felt like, how did I get here? How can I not just tell this guy, ‘Get out of here?’”

<sup>69</sup> JDA-3.



hotel in Charleston, Eric went inside to check-in to the hotel while John Doe waited in the car.<sup>70</sup> When Eric returned to the car, he informed John Doe that, instead of the two double beds that they had requested, the hotel had mistakenly booked them in a single room with a king-sized bed.<sup>71</sup> They proceeded to the room where they drank scotch and shared personal stories. Eventually, Eric began to cry, so John Doe put his arms around Eric to comfort him. Continuing to cry, Eric then placed his head in John Doe's lap. John Doe thought that was "really odd, [but] it's a guy crying. So, I put my arm around him, I'm patting him, I'm trying to be caring, considerate and listening."<sup>72</sup>

The next morning, John Doe woke up to Eric's hands inside of John Doe's shirt, rubbing his back and chest. John Doe asked Eric what he was doing, and Eric responded, "Just rubbing your back. I've never been this close to somebody before."<sup>73</sup> John Doe went to the bathroom and sat there in shock from what had just happened.<sup>74</sup> When he came out of the bathroom, however, Eric acted like everything was normal, so they went to work out.<sup>75</sup> Later that day, they continued on to Northern Virginia. When they arrived at the hotel, Eric went to check-in and told John Doe to go look at the hotel gym and restaurant.<sup>76</sup>

When John Doe got to the room he saw that there was, once again, only a single king-sized bed.<sup>77</sup> This time, however, Eric admitted that he requested a single bed, and told John Doe that he "just enjoyed being close" to [John Doe] but that he did not "want to run away to California and get married."<sup>78</sup> John Doe thought this was "very strange" but also felt unable to do anything about it, "I realized that I was trapped in a hotel room hundreds of miles from home and that this person was clearly coming on to me. I had already told him that a single bed was weird in [South Carolina] and my nonverbal reactions should have clearly stated that I was not comfortable at all."<sup>79</sup> Eric insisted, however, that there was nothing erotic about it.<sup>80</sup> John

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<sup>70</sup> JDA-3.

<sup>71</sup> Eric secretly changed the hotel room from two beds to one bed on multiple occasions, not only with John Doe, but also with Mark Doe. *See* Mark Doe Tr. 9. Mark Doe stated that it was a Tuesday night when he and Father Eric stayed at a hotel near the airport in Atlanta. He said that he believed that Father Eric changed the reservation after Mark Doe dropped him off to check in. *Id.* When they entered the room, Mark Doe said, "There's only one bed in here." Father Eric responded that the hotel was "all out of doubles," so they ended up sharing "a little bed." *Id.* Mark Doe later inquired with the hotel, and the staff informed him that, "if anything . . . their single bedrooms are booked well before the double bedrooms on a weeknight." *Id.* Mark Doe added that, much later, he confirmed that the "reservation was changed at check-in." *Id.*

Another witness, Ward\*, went on a men's church retreat with Eric a few years ago. Interview with Ward and Holly\* 3-4 (Feb. 5, 2019). At the time, he considered Eric to be a "close friend" as well as a "mentor" or "older brother" figure in his life. *Id.* at 1, 3. Ward was struggling a bit at the time, so he opened up to the group. He stated in his interview that he considered the "group sharing" aspect of these retreats to be "therapeutic." He explained, "if I'm gonna share, I don't hold back, and so I was vulnerable." *Id.* at 4. His wife, Holly\*, agreed, stating that Ward "was very vulnerable, . . . at night he would download with me the conversations, and I think even there was an extreme emotional sharing at one point. So, I was so thankful that he was getting ministered to by these good dear friends . . ." *Id.* at 5. During the retreat, Ward and Eric shared a house with two other men. *Id.* at 3. Ward does not recall whether the other two housemates were present at the time, but he remembers that, on the last night of the retreat, Eric complained about how uncomfortable his bed was. *Id.* Ward replied that he was "sleeping like a baby" because his bed was really comfortable. *Id.* Eric then asked, "Would you mind if I slept in your bed?" *Id.* Because Ward had shared beds with friends growing up, and because he saw Eric as a "mentor" or "older brother" figure, "[n]othing occurred to me to be off." *Id.* Ward subsequently climbed into bed and Eric later climbed into bed with him and said good night. *Id.* Ward stated that he did not recall anything inappropriate happening, but noted that, "when I sleep, I sleep hard." *Id.* When Ward returned from the retreat, he told Holly that "[t]he weirdest thing happened. Eric asked to sleep in the bed." *Id.* at 4. Holly thought it was bizarre, but they chalked it up to Eric's "quirky" personality. *Id.* at 5. After Ward heard some of the recent allegations concerning Eric sleeping in the same bed with the alleged victims, he recounted the allegations to Holly, and she reminded him about the retreat. *Id.* at 3. Ward said that he decided to come forward after thinking about it, stating, "I thought, 'That sure looks like the pattern, from what I understand.'" *Id.*

<sup>72</sup> JDA-3. *See also* John Doe Tr. 24.

<sup>73</sup> John Doe Tr. 25.

<sup>74</sup> John Doe stated, "I go in the bathroom and I'm just kind of having this, 'What the heck is going on? What in the world . . .?' Part of me is going like, 'This is super strange. That's weird.' And another part is going, 'This can't be happening.' Eric is known as the guy who hates gay people. We're the church that built our church based on anti-homosexuality. He kind of has a caricature out there, so no way this guy is coming onto me, I'm misreading him. I'm misunderstanding this situation." *Id.* John Doe said, when he came out of the bathroom and Eric asked him if he wanted to go to the gym, John Doe thought to himself, "I would love to do anything but talk about what just happened and move on. Yes. Sure." *Id.* Since he told Eric that he thought what he did was "kind of weird," John Doe said that he "assumed that it would never happen again. But it kept happening." *Id.*

<sup>75</sup> JDA-3; John Doe Tr. 25.

<sup>76</sup> JDA-4.

<sup>77</sup> JDA-4. An administrative staff member made the original hotel reservation; the Hilton confirmation the staff member forwarded to Father Eric says that the reservation is for one room, two adult guests, and "2 QUEEN BEDS." Email from Margie\* to Eric Dudley (Apr. 8, 2016) (forwarding Hilton hotel confirmation email).

<sup>78</sup> JDA-4.

<sup>79</sup> JDA-4.

<sup>80</sup> JDA-4

Doe recalled, “[Father Eric] was supposed to be my best friend and mentor. I was conflicted and unsure of who to talk to about it, so I didn’t resist.”<sup>81</sup>

The next morning, John Doe again awoke to Eric rubbing his chest under his shirt. John Doe immediately got out of bed. “At that point,” John Doe recalled, “I was disgusted with myself and angry at him. Ultimately, not sure what to do.”<sup>82</sup> They went to the meeting at the church, then talked about the situation.<sup>83</sup> John Doe said that he told Eric that it was “very strange,” but Eric “continued to insist that it was not erotic and compared his feelings to wanting to cuddle with his son.”<sup>84</sup>

The next day, while they were driving, Eric grabbed John Doe’s hand and just started holding hands with him.<sup>85</sup> John Doe said, “Hey, I don’t really feel comfortable with this. There’s all these cars. People are going to see us.” Eric responded by “making a joke about it” and stating, “You know, buddy, touch is so important to me. I’m not gay, I don’t want to run away to California and marry you, I just, touch is really important.”<sup>86</sup> John Doe said that Eric went on to complain about how his wife is “never ... affectionate towards him and how he’s just an affectionate guy and he’s not getting it.”<sup>87</sup> Eventually, John Doe relented.<sup>88</sup>

The following night, which was the last night of the trip, they stayed at Eric’s brother’s house. They slept in two separate beds. The next morning, however, when John Doe went to wake up Eric, Eric pulled John Doe into bed with him.<sup>89</sup> The next day, as they were driving, Eric insisted on holding John Doe’s hand again, even though he knew that it made John Doe uncomfortable.<sup>90</sup>

John Doe explained his internal struggle upon returning home from the trip: “I was disgusted and confused. I was unsure of what to say or who to talk to in fear that I would lose my job. Losing my job would put my family and me in a very difficult position.<sup>91</sup> Especially when it came to selling my house. I was fearful that I could not resell my house at the purchase price because of the disrepair. I was afraid of the power and control Eric had as the Rector of one of the largest parishes. Out of fear and disbelief that a true friend would cross such extreme boundaries, I remained quiet hoping that this was a one-time occurrence.”<sup>92</sup>

John Doe said that, after they returned home from the trip, things “kind of [went] back to normal.”<sup>93</sup> He said that Eric tried to hold his hand, but backed off when John Doe told him that it made him uncomfortable.<sup>94</sup> One night, however, when they

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<sup>81</sup> JDA-4.

<sup>82</sup> JDA-4.

<sup>83</sup> John Doe stated that he remembers being at the meeting at the church and “just wanting to stand up and scream and be like, ‘This guy is crazy.’” John Doe Tr. 25. But, he said, “the other side is saying, ‘Nope, this is your really good friend. This is your best friend. You love this guy and he cares about you and this is normal. This isn’t so bad.’” *Id.*

<sup>84</sup> JDA-4.

<sup>85</sup> John Doe Tr. 25.

<sup>86</sup> *Id.*

<sup>87</sup> John Doe Tr. 25.

<sup>88</sup> John Doe Tr. 25. John Doe explained, “I kind of allow [the hand-holding] to take place, but very much mak[e] known that I’m not very comfortable with it.” *Id.*

<sup>89</sup> John Doe Tr. 25. John Doe stated that when Eric pulled him into bed, he thought, “What the heck am I going to say? I’m at this guy’s house. I don’t know these people.” Since he did not know what else to do, he said, “Okay, I’ll lie here for a little bit with you.” *Id.*

<sup>90</sup> JDA-4.

<sup>91</sup> Employee 3 stated, “I had tried to warn [John Doe] a little bit of the pattern I had seen with the other gentleman of, ‘Hey guard your time.’ Evidently by that time it was too late, [Father Eric] had already took him into this pattern of controlling his paycheck and his funds of what he needed to be able to take care of his family.” Employee 3 Tr. 4. When discussing who was responsible for setting the salary, Employee 3 remarked, “Basically the way it worked was the finance committee and Vestry would set Father Eric’s and then he set everybody else’s ... Normally he would run it by the junior warden or the senior warden, but usually he was great at justifying what he was after, especially with [John Doe]. It was like, ‘Oh he’s such a bright young man, we don’t want to lose him. We’ve got to pay him things, but he was making more than Assistant Priest who’s been on staff since the very beginning. That was the kind of things that would draw my attention. Here you’ve got a priest that’s been on staff for 13 years, his last raise was in 2011 and you’re bringing these guys in and they’re making more than this guy. But it never ... The finance committee reviewed the salaries once a year, nobody ever really questioned any of that stuff.” *Id.* at 9.

<sup>92</sup> JDA-4. John Doe provided many other detailed examples of similar behavior during his interview, but GRACE chose to highlight only a few examples for purposes of this report.

<sup>93</sup> John Doe Tr. 26.

<sup>94</sup> John Doe Tr. 26. At this point, John Doe started thinking that maybe he was misunderstanding Eric, that “[m]aybe he’s just really affectionate ... and we just need to respect our boundaries.” *Id.*

were playing chess at Eric's house, Eric told John Doe that he wanted to show him a piece of antique furniture in his bedroom. John Doe said that, when they got up to Eric's bedroom, Eric had his arm around John Doe "and [Father Eric was] pointing out pictures and explaining family members, and then he went in for a bear hug, and then he kissed me. And I go, I'm backing my head up and I'm like, 'What are you doing, man?' He went, 'Oh, you don't like that?' And he kisses me again."<sup>95</sup>

On another occasion shortly after John Doe had purchased a new bed, he and Father Eric were alone at John Doe's home drinking scotch, playing chess, and hanging out when Father Eric mentioned that he wanted to go see the new bed. John Doe recalled the following, "So, I take him upstairs to my bedroom and I'm showing him, and he's laying down. He's like, 'Where do you sleep?' I'm like, 'I sleep over here.' And he's like, 'Come lay down. Lay down with me.' And I get in, hesitantly, and then he kind of gets on top of me and he kisses me, and he's just holding me. At first, I'm putting up with it, I'm putting up, and he's just kind of rubbing all over me and he takes off his shirt, takes off my shirt. I'm getting very uncomfortable at that point, and he tells me he's getting hard and at that point I shoved him off of me and said, 'Dude, I'm not having sex with you.' And he said, 'What?' I said, 'I'm not going to have sex with you, man.' And he's like, 'I'm not trying to have sex with you.' So, he storms out of my house. Gets his clothes on real quick, storms out, and he leaves. And the next day he comes over and again it's another conversation of, 'I don't want to run away to California. I'm not gay. I'm not into that. I just, I need your, I'm an affectionate person. I need to be touched by you.' I told him, I said, 'Things kind of got a little too far and I didn't like that.' And again, it kind of backs down a bit. That I would say for me, that night was the point where I said, 'No. No. I'm pretty sure Eric's gay and I'm not.'"<sup>96</sup>

One night, when both Mark Doe and Father Eric's wives were out of town, Father Eric invited Mark Doe out for the evening. Mark Doe parked his car at Father Eric's house and rode with him to a bar to play pool. Soon after their arrival, Father Eric began drinking heavily and buying drinks for Mark Doe.<sup>97</sup> He recalled that when Father Eric decided it was time to go home, Father Eric "was clearly under the influence."<sup>98</sup> Mark Doe further recalled Father Eric driving erratically and at the same time asking Mark Doe very personal questions, such as whether he had issues with pornography.<sup>99</sup> At that moment, Mark Doe started wondering whether this was really "a mentorship thing or is this getting weird?"<sup>100</sup> By the time that they arrived at Father Eric's house, they had started talking about Mark Doe's family, which was an emotional issue for Mark Doe.<sup>101</sup> While they were still sitting in the car, Father Eric put out his hand and told Mark Doe, "Hold my hand, buddy."<sup>102</sup> Father Eric continued to hold Mark Doe's hand while they sat in the car and talked. Half an hour later, Father Eric released Mark Doe's hand and invited him inside to continue their conversation.<sup>103</sup>

While inside his home, Father Eric made more drinks and the two of them went outside and sat on the patio. Father Eric's questions became even more personal than they had been in the car; he started asking Mark Doe about "really intense stuff with my family, especially with my younger brother."<sup>104</sup> Mark Doe had previously shared with Father Eric about some of the issues with his brother and eventually became emotional and started crying.<sup>105</sup> He recalled that Father Eric started to comfort him, "but the way he was comforting me was very weird. He was caressing my arm and rubbing me and stuff. I felt like he was expressing grief but it didn't feel real."<sup>106</sup> Unsure of what to do, Mark Doe allowed Father Eric to continue

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<sup>95</sup> John Doe Tr. 26. When asked, John Doe clarified that Eric kissed him on the mouth. *Id.*

<sup>96</sup> John Doe Tr. 28. John Doe continued saying, "And even, I had been drinking a little too much and I knew my kind of, just my subconscious knew, said to tell him, 'I'm not having sex with you.' So, I knew there something was dangerous. But I kind of felt, at that point, really trapped." *Id.*

<sup>97</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 10. Mark Doe said that Eric "kept on ordering drinks for us and ordering drinks for me. I was feeling kind of uncomfortable about the amount of drinks that he was ordering. Kind of sort of fake finishing my drinks and stuff like that. Then I just started thinking, man, this guy can really hold his liquor, I can't keep up with him." *Id.*

<sup>98</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 10.

<sup>99</sup> *Id.*

<sup>100</sup> *Id.*

<sup>101</sup> *Id.*

<sup>102</sup> *Id.* Confused, Mark Doe thought maybe Father Eric was "going to make me a promise or something," so he took his hand. But there was no promise. *See id.*

<sup>103</sup> *Id.*

<sup>104</sup> *Id.*

<sup>105</sup> *Id.*

<sup>106</sup> *Id.* Again, Mark Doe felt confused and tried to sort out in his head what was happening. He thought to himself, "Am I being weird or is he being weird? Okay, maybe he's like a weird guy and he's really trying to minister to me right now." *Id.*

caressing him and holding his hand until around 2:30 in the morning when he decided to leave.<sup>107</sup> Although Mark Doe felt like Father Eric had crossed his physical boundaries, he still questioned his own judgment as to whether Father Eric had acted inappropriately.<sup>108</sup>

Mark Doe explained another incident, this time out of time: “Again, he had a few drinks and then later in the night we went back to our hotel room. It was just one bedroom, but it was two beds in the hotel room, twin beds. He kind of ... He basically was like, ‘All right, well, time for us to drink some scotch.’ He pulled out a bottle of scotch from his bag and poured a scotch. Then we sat down, and we talked. It was again at first it was about church stuff. At that point, he had kind of been like down to his ‘PJs’ which is just boxers and a T-shirt. I was talking about church stuff and he started to play with my feet with his feet while we were talking. Then he started asking me questions about my [family] as like a non-sequitur. I immediately, internally threw up this huge guard. I was like the first time I brought up my [family] but I don’t want him bringing up my [family]. I feel like he’s poking now, just trying to get us back to where we left off on that weird night. So, I kind of kept it distant but then he put his hands out, held my hand, played with my feet for a couple of hours. Finally, it got to a point where I was like ‘all right, it’s time to go to bed.’ He’s like ‘okay’ and he’s like ‘give me a hug tonight.’ Then he hugged me and then when he pulled away from hugging me, he kissed me on the mouth. I was kind of shocked by that and I was just kind of like okay, love you, goodnight. Just got in bed and I felt pretty shitty.”<sup>109</sup>

Mark Doe described another time he went out of town with Father Eric to attend a conference: “I was driving and I dropped him off to go check in.<sup>110</sup> When Mark Doe and Father Eric got to the hotel room, “[Father Eric] opened the door of the hotel room and is a single bed. I was like, ‘There’s only one bed in here.’ He said, ‘Yeah, they’re out, they’re all out of doubles.’ I said, ‘Okay.’ He’s like ‘yeah.’ Then I felt awkward, I felt there’s a lot of awkwardness.”<sup>111</sup> Mark Doe stated that night Father Eric held his hand in bed. The next morning Father Eric said, “I’m sorry that I held your hand in bed, that was kind of weird.” Mark Doe responded, “Yeah, that was kind of weird.”<sup>112</sup> Mark Doe stated that afternoon, Father Eric said the conference was “lame”<sup>113</sup> so they went to eat and grab drinks at a bar.<sup>114</sup> On the Uber ride back to the hotel, Father Eric held Mark Doe’s hand, but Mark Doe pulled away from Father Eric. Mark Doe recounted what happened next: “When we get back to the hotel room he starts making fun of me about that and how there’s nothing weird about men holding hands. Then it’s just repeat of the same stuff for another couple of hours. Then we get to bed and he holds my hand again and at that point, I pull my hand away like pretty quickly. I just say, ‘Man, I thought we agreed this morning that’s weird, we’re not doing that.’ Then he really intensely grabs my hand and pulled it up to his chest and started like breathing really heavily and stuff. He was like, ‘I don’t care about that, I don’t care.’ I just remembered he said I don’t care. He was like breathing in this really ... He was clearly aroused by the interaction and I didn’t know what to do because I was kind of scared. What if I pull away again? The first time I pulled away, this went up like this ratcheted things up when I pulled away the first time. Now our hands against his chest and his breathing and if I pull away again, is he going to grab me totally? Am I going

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<sup>107</sup> *Id.* Even though he was tired, Mark Doe drove home that night “because [he] felt afraid to sleep on [Father Eric’s] couch.” *Id.* Mark Doe went on to describe his inner conflict in deciding not to sleep on Father Eric’s couch, explaining, “I don’t know if this is going to get weird. [...] At the same time, I didn’t feel confident enough in my feeling weird to be certain that it was inappropriate.” *Id.*

<sup>108</sup> *Id.* Mark Doe stated, “So that was the first incident where I felt like physical boundaries were really crossed. At the same time, I didn’t feel confident enough in my feeling weird to be certain that it was inappropriate. Then the next day, he invited me to go out to dinner and he sort of debriefed all of it with me and kind of normalized it.” *Id.*

<sup>109</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 12. Mark Doe then goes on about how he did not bring enough shirts for the trip and Father Eric “insisted” Mark Doe wear his turtle neck that “exactly matched” Father Eric. *Id.* Mark Doe recounted what happened next: He was yelling it across the antique shop, acting like he wanted to show me stuff like my boyfriend or whatever. I kept telling him ‘cut it out’ and he was just like whatever. He’s acting like he’s joking around. He also kept insisting holding [sic] my hand in the car as we were driving back from [out of town]. After all, I was just like not ... I felt like the shadow of myself[.] *Id.* See *supra* note 244.

<sup>110</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 16. Mark Doe stated, “That’s when he changed reservation so that we like one bedroom with a little bed.” Mark Doe later confirmed this fact. *Id.* *Supra* note 71.

<sup>111</sup> *Id.*

<sup>112</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 17. Mark Doe explained, I just kind of wanted to know why it was weird but I didn’t want to make it a big deal, it was like let me move on.” *Id.*

<sup>113</sup> *Id.* Mark Doe recalled, “Then in the afternoon of the conference he basically told me, he’s like, “This conference is lame. I don’t want to go to the last session, let’s go out to eat.” He took me out to this kind of hip bar, whatever and basically it was just I felt completely wined and dined. He was ordering drinks left and right, really expensive food, lots of appetizers. I saw the bill, it was like 280 bucks for just the two of us. I started to feel really uncomfortable because I was pretty sure this is all coming out of church fund.” *Id.*

<sup>114</sup> *Id.* Mark Doe stated, “I’m just like this whole night, I’m not even drinking more than half of the drink before he’s forcing me to get another drink. I’m like I’m not going to ... Whatever is going to happen all night, is I’m really kind of worried what’s going to happen in the hotel room tonight.” *Id.*

to have to run out of here? So I just remember him saying something about Jonathan and David<sup>115</sup> and me being like holy shit, this is real. He's doing this, his [sic] been like grooming me. I just knew that he's been grooming me for who knows how many, how long he wanted to get to this point with me. I was like 'what am I doing, how did I get here?' Then I just closed my eyes and I was like, God, please make me fall asleep, I just want to fall asleep. Then he was like, 'Buddy, are you asleep?' I was like, 'Yeah, I'm falling asleep, I ate so much food.' He let go of me and he let me fall asleep. I just remember the next day I was so crushed."<sup>116</sup>

Father Eric also crossed physical boundaries with Luke Doe, who also worked at St. Peter's. On one occasion, he invited Luke Doe to go with him to a conference in Montgomery, Alabama.<sup>117</sup> After the conference, they went out to a bar with some priests from other dioceses and had a few drinks.<sup>118</sup> When they returned to their hotel room, Father Eric pulled out a bottle of scotch and said they were going to have some before bed.<sup>119</sup> Soon after they started drinking the scotch, Father Eric turned the conversation towards subjects that were extremely personal to Luke Doe.<sup>120</sup> Initially, Father Eric wanted to talk about tension that had arisen between Luke Doe's wife and himself (Father Eric).<sup>121</sup> When Luke Doe made clear that he was always going to support his wife, Father Eric shifted the topic of conversation to his family and things that had happened with his father when he was a kid.<sup>122</sup> Father Eric's alleged openness about such a personal matter prompted Luke Doe to begin sharing about his own issues with his father. Luke Doe said, "I talked about it honestly, and at the time, I thought we were having a really intimate conversation."<sup>123</sup>

Eventually, the topic shifted, and Father Eric started talking about how he had threatened Luke Doe's job a couple years prior.<sup>124</sup> Luke Doe responded by explaining why Father Eric's threat had been so hurtful. As he was discussing about this painful topic to Father Eric, Luke Doe describes it as being "kind of emotional."<sup>125</sup> Then, as Luke Doe is talking, Father Eric suddenly reached both of his hands across the table and instructed Luke Doe to, "Put your hands here."<sup>126</sup> Luke Doe did as he was told and then Father Eric "held both [of Luke Doe's] hands and looked [him] in the eye and apologized."<sup>127</sup> Then, Luke Doe said that Father Eric took Luke Doe's right hand "and leaned forward, and he kissed my hand."<sup>128</sup>

As Luke Doe got in his bed and turned out the lights, Father Eric went in the bathroom. A few minutes later, Father Eric came out of the bathroom and said something about needing a hug after having that kind of conversation.<sup>129</sup> Luke Doe recalled, "I was already in bed like fetal position on my right side, and he just kind of he'd leaned over and hugged me. I couldn't reciprocate because I was under [the] covers, and I just kind of had the thought in that moment like, 'Hey. Don't

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<sup>115</sup> Mark Doe explained, "The Jonathan and David thing was the first that I remember, the first Biblical justification that he gave. When I was in college ministry, I remembered I ministered to a kid who was abused by a pastor and who used the Jonathan and David line on him as well. I think that was one of the things that really kind of broke me up in the moment. Was just that and just realizing this is what's going on. This is what Eric has been doing." Mark Doe Tr. 19-20.

<sup>116</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 17-18.

<sup>117</sup> Luke Doe Tr. 21-22. Luke Doe said that, before he left, his wife asked if he and Luke Doe would be "staying in the same room." *Id.* Luke Doe said that they were and did not really think anything of it. *Id.* at 22. His wife did not like the idea though, and the conversation gave Luke Doe the feeling "that he needed to be mentally prepared if something happened, if [Father Eric] tried something." *Id.* Even though Luke Doe had not heard about Father Eric behaving inappropriately with anyone else, he said, "But I had the thought that I needed to be mentally prepared if something happened, if he tried something, like grab your phone, run, and I know people who live in Montgomery and call one of them. But I knew nothing about anything else. It was intuition." Luke Doe Tr. 22. Luke Doe continued to be cautious on the trip, stating that he "drank very carefully" because "alcohol's a tool." *Id.*

<sup>118</sup> *Id.* at 14.

<sup>119</sup> *Id.*

<sup>120</sup> *See id.* at 14-15.

<sup>121</sup> *Id.* at 14. Luke Doe's wife left the church after Father Eric reportedly mistreated her friend, who used to be on staff. *Id.* at 13-14.

<sup>122</sup> *Id.* at 14.

<sup>123</sup> *Id.* at 15.

<sup>124</sup> *See id.* at 15. Luke Doe stated that the incident that they discussed happened in August of his second year at St. Peter's, two months after Luke Doe and his wife had purchased a house in Tallahassee. *Id.* at 10, 15. Luke Doe recalled that, one day, "out of the blue, [Father Eric] had a meeting with me and basically told me I might not have a job by December, with no prior warning." *Id.* at 10. Luke Doe stated that he ended up keeping his job and he and Father Eric "worked pretty fine together beyond that season." *Id.*

<sup>125</sup> *Id.* at 15.

<sup>126</sup> *Id.*

<sup>127</sup> *Id.*

<sup>128</sup> *Id.* at 15. Luke Doe recalled feeling as if the entire situation was "weird" but he thought to himself, "Eric's kind of weird and quirky. That's kind of his personality." *Id.* So he let it go and started getting ready for bed. *See id.*

<sup>129</sup> *Id.*

get in this bed with me, please,’ and he didn’t. He didn’t. He hugged me. It was just weird that I was lying down, and he was standing up.”<sup>130</sup> Afterwards, Father Eric went back to his own bed and they both went to sleep.<sup>131</sup>

Because he and Father Eric had a somewhat strained relationship in the past, Luke Doe “felt like we had had this emotional moment” on the trip and “thought I’d made some progress” towards improving his relationship with Father Eric.<sup>132</sup> After hearing John Doe’s story and later Mark Doe’s, however, Luke Doe recognized that it had been something different: seemingly a pattern.<sup>133</sup> Luke Doe said it was “the same thing with both of them with emotional conversations creating the chance for some kind of comforting touch that then leads somewhere else.”<sup>134</sup>

## 6. Escalation of Misconduct

As the communications, meetings, and personal activities that Father Eric demanded from these young men grew in frequency and intensity, the reported victims and their spouses became increasingly annoyed and troubled.<sup>135</sup> Attempts by the reported victims to reduce communications and contact with Father Eric, however, were often met with guilt trips, anger, and sometimes rage.<sup>136</sup> Father Eric’s escalation of misconduct over time led each victim to disclose their experiences.

Ben Doe recalled that, in 2011, the seemingly “incessant”<sup>137</sup> calls and texts from Father Eric escalated to the point that, if Ben Doe was not immediately responsive, Father Eric would show up at his home or work to find out why.<sup>138</sup> Ben Doe described one incident where Father Eric showed up at his office unannounced and “got by the receptionist because he had a book or something for me and he was in his priest garb.”<sup>139</sup> Ben Doe recalled, “[I]t was so bizarre. I think he thought we were in some kind of romantic, intimate relationship or something.”<sup>140</sup> Father Eric wanted to know why Ben Doe had not been calling him and started telling Ben Doe how much he loved him.<sup>141</sup> Ben Doe said that “[Father Eric] was crying at one point, telling me how much he loved me.”<sup>142</sup> Ben Doe said, “Eric, you got to stop,” but Father Eric argued that “[t]his is how Christians are with one another. It’s not the way the world is. This is how we are.”<sup>143</sup> Ben Doe said that he thought to himself, “I think he’s mixing two things here.”<sup>144</sup>

For a while, Ben Doe felt like he could not tell anyone about what Father Eric was doing, largely because he thought he would get fired due to his boss’s close connection with the Cathedral.<sup>145</sup> After the office incident, however, Ben Doe could not handle it anymore; he finally got the courage to talk to his boss.<sup>146</sup> When he informed his boss that he needed to talk

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<sup>130</sup> *Id.*

<sup>131</sup> *Id.*

<sup>132</sup> *Id.*

<sup>133</sup> *Id.*

<sup>134</sup> *Id.* at 15. Luke Doe explained, “Knowing the trajectory [of what happened with John Doe and Mark Doe] made me have to kind of reckon with the fact that . . . [t]hat was on the trajectory.” *Id.*

<sup>135</sup> *See infra* at note 149.

<sup>136</sup> These issues were complicated by the fact that Father Eric was not only their friend, priest, and/or mentor, but he was also involved in the employment of all four reported victims: three were St. Peter’s employees who reported directly to Father Eric, and one was employed by a church member at Father Eric’s request.

<sup>137</sup> Ben Doe, Tr. 7.

<sup>138</sup> *See id.* at 7-10.

<sup>139</sup> *Id.* at 7.

<sup>140</sup> *Id.*

<sup>141</sup> *Id.*

<sup>142</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 8. Ben Doe said Father Eric “was really good about putting me in a corner.” *Id.* He said, “[I]t was so confusing . . . There’s scenarios in my life where I’d just punch the guy and deal with it. But for some reason, I can’t defend myself against this guy and I don’t know why.” *Id.* at 7.

<sup>143</sup> *Id.* at 8. Ben Doe knew that the situation looked terrible to his co-workers, but felt like “[he] was being held hostage in a way.” He explained, “I didn’t have it in me to just kick [Father Eric] out of there . . . because I felt like there were so many layers of consequences that would happen if I did.” *Id.* at 7. Instead, Ben Doe “just slipped into this role play thing where I was just telling him what he wanted to hear so he’d leave.” *Id.* at 8. Ben Doe indicated that he felt at the time that this was his only option. Looking back, he said, “I don’t know why I just didn’t physically throw him out of there, because I could’ve. But I just felt like I’d lose.” *Id.* It took over an hour before he was able to get Father Eric to leave his office. *Id.* at 7.

<sup>144</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>145</sup> *Id.* at 7-8.

<sup>146</sup> *Id.* at 8. Ben Doe’s boss recalled this situation as follows: “[Ben Doe] came to me early one morning and said that Eric just blew a gasket on him, that he was angry with [Ben Doe]. Then forwarded me an email that was, gosh, I don’t know, one paragraph, but it was super, super long, one long paragraph. ‘I have been your priest. I have been your friend.’ Now keep in mind I’m trying to remember it from six or seven years ago...It was all of it, all of that conversation, . . . was related to Eric’s anger and his treatment of a parishioner. I knew Eric had a temper. [...] I was longtime close friends to him. [...] I’d seen it multiple times, but it was only anger oriented, never of a sexual nature, never. Met with [Ben Doe and t]alked with [him]. [Ben

with him about Father Eric, the boss replied, “What did he do this time?” As Ben Doe attempted to explain everything that was happening with Father Eric, his boss “didn’t want to hear any of it.” He cut Ben Doe off and simply stated that “Father Eric ‘doesn’t need to come to this office anymore,’” and ended the conversation.<sup>147</sup>

For a few days, Ben Doe attempted to placate Father Eric by telling him what he wanted to hear, taking his calls and responding to his texts. Father Eric only intensified his interfering in Ben Doe’s life. He left notes on Ben Doe’s door; his neighbors reported to Ben Doe that Father Eric was observed parked outside of his home.<sup>148</sup> Ben Doe’s wife became “scared at times,” telling Ben Doe that she was afraid that Father Eric saw her as standing in the way of them being together.<sup>149</sup> At the same time, Ben Doe was working and doing an internship, while attempting to deal with Father Eric’s “incessant” emails, calls, and text messages.<sup>150</sup> He decided that he needed to put an end to it.<sup>151</sup>

Ben Doe emailed Associate Priest 1, asking for his help dealing with Father Eric, stating his relationship with Father Eric “couldn’t be more strained” and has been “unable to sufficiently deal with the emotional demands of the situation.”<sup>152</sup> Ben Doe asked if Associate Priest 1, would be willing to “sit in on a conversation with [Father] Eric and [him] and perhaps offer some guidance.”<sup>153</sup> Wanting to be transparent and demonstrate that he was seeking an amicable resolution, Ben Doe copied

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Doe] forwarded me the email. Again, the only thing that I can remember or ever saw was a priest that, who really became unhinged in an anger kind of way. I want to emphasize, I never saw anything sexual..I called the senior warden, good friend of mine. I called the junior warden, good friend of mine. I called Eric. We met in a first grade classroom in little St. Peter’s. We sat him down and said basically, ‘We don’t know what you were thinking. If you want to keep your job, you cannot respond to parishioners with that kind of vitriol and anger ever. Do you understand?’ He was contrite. He was sorry. I have no, no recollection of whether he ever apologized to [Ben Doe]. I don’t remember what happened after that. We had a conversation with him about his anger and his anger only. There was not even a, I had no reason to believe the other ‘cause I never saw anything. That, I am sticking to the facts as they were presented to me. “ Ben Doe Boss Tr. 8-9

<sup>147</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 8. Father Eric did not repeat the appearance at Ben Doe’s office. *Id.*

<sup>148</sup> Ben Doe recalled that he would sometimes talk to his neighbor, who did not attend St. Peter’s, about “what was going on” with Father Eric. Ben said that his neighbor would call sometimes and tell him, “That guy’s car is outside your apartment waiting for you to come home.” *Id.* at 9. When interviewed, Ben Doe’s neighbor stated, “I do remember [Ben Doe] being very, very worried, and maybe even putting us on alert, like ‘Keep your eyes out, he’s not supposed to be here anymore, if you see him you need to let me know.’ Kind of in that worried husband dad mode, like keep your eyes out. But nothing like, he wouldn’t text me through the day and be like, ‘Is he there?’ Nothing like that. Just a general blanket warning, like ‘You need to know he’s not supposed to be here, so if you see something then there’s no reason why he should be there.’” Neighbor Tr. 8.

<sup>149</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 8. Ben Doe’s wife stated, “I think Eric really sought out a relationship with [Ben Doe], and definitely not me. I was I think kind of in the way, like a ... And it felt very wedged. He was wedged between our little family, and I always felt like, I need my husband here. This is all new to me, and new responsibility, and just didn’t work for me. Then it just got weirder and weirder. At the end, I just remember, I’m texting Eric and saying, ‘We just want you to leave us alone. Please leave our family alone.’” Ben Doe Wife Tr. 3.

<sup>150</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 9.

<sup>151</sup> *Id.* Ben Doe stated, “I was trying to set my family up to succeed. And I couldn’t take it. I couldn’t take it anymore.” *Id.* Ben Doe also recalled one particular night when he was driving home: “I just remember, it was crazy, but I would ... I was like screaming in my car by myself. Punching the steering wheel, just like, ‘Leave me alone.’ My phone was going off. But I couldn’t somehow just tell [Father Eric]. And he wouldn’t have. He wouldn’t have stopped. He would’ve taken that as like an escalation. Like it gave him pleasure for me to like ... Any emotional response, like if I said, Get out of here.’ He’d smile. I just felt like I can’t, I don’t know how to do this.” *Id.* at 28.

<sup>152</sup> Email from Ben Doe to Associate Priest 1 (Nov. 18, 2011). Eric responded to this email the next day stating, “[Ben Doe] and I have talked since this email was sent, and I think we have resolved our misunderstandings and are moving in a new direction for our relationship. However, if he still needs a conversation with a third-party I am more than willing.” See Email from Father Eric to Associate Priest (Nov. 19, 2011). The following day, November 20, 2011, Associate Priest 1 offered via email to meet with Ben Doe. See Email from Associate Priest 1 to Ben Doe (Nov. 20, 2011). Ben Doe responded, thanking Associate Priest 1, and stating “At this time however I do not need to talk. I sincerely appreciate your availability.” See Email from Ben Doe to Associate Priest 1 (Nov. 20, 2011).

In an email to GRACE, Ben Doe stated, “[Father] Eric responded [to the email] the morning after he came to my home. I suspect he talked to [Associate Priest 1] in the interim. [Associate Priest 1] responded the morning after Eric. Everything seems like it’s on the up-and-up, but I assure you it wasn’t. Eric’s extreme behavior and aggressive spin on the situation presented a clear cost-benefit decision for me: don’t talk to anybody and play along, or he would destroy me and my reputation at church and in the community. That’s what I believed. I still believe it. He was so aggressive and irrational, that it scared [my wife] and me. I chose to sanitize the situation as best I could and go away. But it wasn’t over. Eric kept pursuing me.” *Id.* Email to GRACE (Nov. 4, 2019). Associate Priest 1 relayed to GRACE via email, “I do not remember the exact date Ben Doe’s problems with Eric were relayed [sic] to me, but I would say it was probably in the spring (March or April) of 2012. I did not have any email contact with [Ben Doe], only personal contact...As I mentioned in my interview, Eric took the unusual step of meeting with me to talk about his relationship with [Ben Doe]. As [Father Eric] portrayed it, he was acting like a father to [Ben Doe]. After this, I became aware that Eric [sic] attentions were increasingly intrusive and that [Ben Doe’s Wife] had complained about them.” See Email from Associate Priest 1 to GRACE (Nov. 4, 2019).

<sup>153</sup> Email from Ben Doe to Associate Priest 1 (Nov. 18, 2011). Ben Doe also stated in the email to Associate Priest 1, “I believe having a third party in the room will help bring some balance to the situation.” Ben Doe stated he does not recall meeting with Associate Priest 1 and Father Eric. See *infra* note 55; Email from Ben Doe to Associate Priest 1 (Nov. 20, 2019).

Father Eric on the email to the priest. Ben Doe reported that within minutes of sending the email, Father Eric called him. Ben Doe did not pick up the phone, so it went to voicemail.<sup>154</sup>

Within approximately thirty minutes of receiving this email, Father Eric was at Ben Doe's residence<sup>155</sup> and began beating on the front door, screaming for him. Ben Doe "hiding inside" with the lights off,<sup>156</sup> and watched as Father Eric ran around to the windows yelling, "I know you're in there!"<sup>157</sup> Eventually, Father Eric made it to the back door and started beating on the glass, trying to get inside.<sup>158</sup> Afraid that he was going to break the glass, Ben Doe finally opened the door, but refused to let Father Eric come inside.<sup>159</sup> Suddenly, Father Eric started crying and expressing how he could not believe how Ben Doe was treating him, "after everything I've done for you."<sup>160</sup> Looking back, Ben Doe could not explain why, but he apologized to Father Eric before asking him to leave. Father Eric responded to Ben Doe by saying, "It's over. You screwed up. How dare you contact my employee?" Father Eric continued yelling for a while as they stood outside the back door of Ben Doe's condo.<sup>161</sup> Eventually, Father Eric left.<sup>162</sup> When Ben Doe's wife got home (with their newborn baby), he told her, "I need help. I don't know what to do, but I need help."<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> This voicemail was provided to GRACE. The full transcription, with identifying details redacted, follows: "Well this this is Eric and I wanna tell you that I could not be more angry with you than I am right now. How dare you write [Associate Priest 1]?! He's my subordinate. He works for me. And you're writing him why? Because you think I'm going to go around sharing inaccurate things about you? That's what you think of me? That's what you think of my character as a priest? That I'm mad at you and so I'm going to go spread that around church to hurt you? You think I'd do that? I would never do that [unintelligible] Are you kidding? Oh my gosh. And... and it's all about you again [Ben]. You're not concerned about me; you're not concerned about the friendship; you're concerned that I'm going to say something negative that's going to hurt [Ben]'s reputation. Oh my gosh! You're the most egocentric person. Good lord! And let me tell you something. We can't go and talk to [Associate Priest 1]. Are you kidding?! What's he gonna say? I'm his rector. He works for me. Are you kidding? What an awkward position to put him in. I'll tell you what- if you want to have a sit down with somebody who's a third party who's fair and can listen, I suggest we sit down with [Name]. [REDACTED]"

[REDACTED] So if you wanna do that I'm willing to bring [Name] in I can do that but um of course I'm not going to going to go sit down with [Associate Priest 1] because man he's going to feel so weird doing something like that. So I don't get it [Ben]. I just don't get it. Um anyhow I wrote you a letter. I was going to wait until after you finished your exams to give it to you but obviously you know I need to just go ahead and give it to you. So I will. I'll leave it at your house." Voicemail from Eric Dudley to Ben Doe (Nov.18, 2011).

<sup>155</sup> Ben Doe said, "Maybe 30 min[utes] (or so) after sending, Eric was beating on my front door, windows and back door, and screaming 'let me in, I know you're in there, how dare you,' and things of that nature. [My wife] and I lived in a ground floor condo at the time. We were saving for a house. I also had walking pneumonia and had completely broken down from stress. I put the best face I could on my email to [Associate Priest 1]. I hid from Eric with the lights off, but eventually went to the back door to confront him. The door was glass with a wood frame. I thought he was going to break it." See Email from Ben Doe to GRACE (Nov.4, 2019).

<sup>156</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 31. See also Email from Ben Doe to GRACE (Nov. 4, 2019) (stating "I hid from [Father] Eric with the lights off, but eventually went to the back door to confront him. The door was glass with a wood frame. I thought he was going to break it.").

<sup>157</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 9. Ben Doe's wife remembered Ben Doe calling her saying, "I'm freaked out. I can't even go outside. I don't know what to do. I feel terrorized." Ben Doe Wife Tr. 4.

<sup>158</sup> Ben Doe TPD Summary.

<sup>159</sup> Ben Doe TPD Summary. Ben Doe said, "[Father Eric] kept trying to get around me and even put his hands on me at one point. I pushed his hands off me and held up my open hands and yelled 'don't touch!'" *Id.*

<sup>160</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 10.

<sup>161</sup> Ben Doe said that Father Eric's grievances were nonsensical, but Ben Doe could not reason with him: "He thought we were in an intimate love relationship, as if we were boyfriend and girlfriend. To me he was always just my priest." Ben Doe TPD Summary; see Ben Doe Tr. 10 (stating "I don't know why . . . I just took it.").

<sup>162</sup> In a sermon several years after this incident, Father Eric spoke about Jesus's message in Luke, Chapter 11. Jesus asks, "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee." Luke 11: 5-7 (KJV). Speaking to this passage, Father Eric says, "A man who came banging on his neighbor's door in the middle of the night for a loaf of bread. Can you imagine doing that?! Just imagine you had some guests come over, they stayed late, you didn't get enough groceries in and so, in the middle of the night, you go next door and bang on the door asking for bread. I think we'd get shot! No I can't imagine doing that! What nerve!" Eric Dudley, "Fatherly Love" Sermon (July 24, 2016), located at <<https://www.stpetersfl.com/sermons-2016/fatherly-love>>.

<sup>163</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 10. Father Eric recently described his relationship with Ben Doe as follows: "Very needy, always was seeking my help. Shifts in and out of paranoia. Worked for [redacted], felt that all the women in his office were plotting against him. I helped him get a job with [a member of St. Peter's], which did not go well. [Ben Doe] then thought his in laws were out to get him; then that I was out to get him. I felt misused and mistreated by [Ben Doe], and we had an argument, after which we had nothing to do with one another. This was over five years ago." Eric Dudley, Paragraph 11 Disclosures.



On or about the same evening Father Eric came to his residence, Ben Doe and his wife talked with a family friend who was an attorney on what to do.<sup>164</sup> On or around December 26, 2011, Ben Doe and his wife made a police report.<sup>165</sup> Ben Doe's Wife stated, "We went to the police, and we didn't know what that would be like, but the police said ... I think it was because we didn't want him coming to our home, and the police said, 'You have to file something. It has to be on record multiple times before you can have some kind of restraining order.' Because we just wanted him to go away, we didn't want him bothering us or just please leave us alone, it was ... I don't know. It was something that we did to have it on the record, and I think too, just ... It made [John Doe] and I nervous for him to be in a place of such power. [John Doe's] a grown man and feeling helpless, and [Father] Eric's around children. That just freaked us out, the powerless. So, we filed a report[.]"<sup>166</sup> After filing a report with the police, "a longtime family friend and member of St. Peter's called [Ben Doe's family members] and said, 'What is this? The police report,' and we just felt like, 'Oh, gosh, oh, no.' And like, 'What have we done?' I think [Ben Doe] took steps to take it back, and we definitely didn't feel supported at all."<sup>167</sup> I think that was such a hard part of it."<sup>168</sup>

Years later, after returning from a trip with Father Eric, John Doe told his wife "[t]hings are not okay. I want to get out. I want to get away and I don't know how."<sup>169</sup> In early July, John Doe privately asked Luke Doe for advice on whether John Doe should apply for a position in another diocese.<sup>170</sup> Even though Luke Doe did not fully understand what was going on between Father Eric and John Doe,<sup>171</sup> Luke Doe immediately responded in the affirmative, telling John Doe, "I think you have to take any chance you can to get out of here because this is weird, and your family . . . will not survive."<sup>172</sup> Luke Doe said "it was amazing" to see John Doe's reaction "because I think [John Doe] immediately felt a lot of relief."<sup>173</sup>

That weekend, John Doe and his wife invited Luke Doe and his wife over for dinner. After the kids went to bed, John Doe started talking about what was really going on with Father Eric, explaining how he felt trapped in an increasingly unhealthy relationship with Father Eric and did not know how to get out of it. Over the course of the evening, John Doe gave an

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<sup>164</sup> Ben Doe's wife shared that Ben Doe was "freaked out," and he relayed the story to a family member who attended the church. The family member laughed, and then explained, "I'm not laughing at your experience. It's not funny. What I'm laughing about is, this isn't the first time. You're not the first one. This is something that Eric's done in the past." Ben Doe's wife said, "That was the first time [Ben] confided in anybody and told them, and it was just kind of, 'Oh, that's just Eric. That's just something that's happened before.'" Ben Doe's Wife Tr. 6.

<sup>165</sup> Ben Doe went to the police again on or about February 17, 2012. Email to GRACE (Nov. 4, 2019).

<sup>166</sup> Ben Doe Wife Tr. 5.

<sup>167</sup> Ben Doe recalled that he "didn't want anyone to know" and "didn't want the paper here, or whoever to do a public records request and come up with something, and then ... I just didn't want to be involved. I didn't want an attorney to be able to subpoena something, and turn it up or something like that. I thought it just ... I thought I'd get in trouble." Ben Doe Tr. 33-34.

<sup>168</sup> Ben Doe Wife Tr. 5.

<sup>169</sup> John Doe Tr. 32. That night, John Doe told his wife "Eric is very dangerous. I have learned that he is clearly not my friend, that he just has one thing in mind for me and that is to see me as some sort of sexual object." *Id.*

<sup>170</sup> Even though they had worked together for three years, John Doe and Luke Doe were not close friends prior to John Doe's disclosure. Luke Doe explained that John Doe was always around Father Eric, so he thought that they were just really close friends. Luke Doe Tr. 3. In hindsight, however, Luke Doe said that he and John Doe "weren't really friends mostly because [John Doe] spent almost all of his time either at work or with Father Eric and some with his family, and Father Eric, I think, pretty intentionally isolated him from other friendships." *Id.* at 4.

<sup>171</sup> Though Luke Doe was aware that something was not right with Father Eric's relationship with John Doe, it was not until Luke Doe ran into John Doe's wife in the spring that he started realizing the extent of Father Eric's mistreatment of John Doe. Luke Doe Tr. 3. John Doe's wife soon began confiding in Luke Doe about her concerns about John Doe's relationship with Father Eric and how it was interfering with their family life. Some of the stories John Doe's wife relayed to Luke Doe over the next couple of months were alarming. For instance, John Doe's wife told Luke Doe about a time that Father Eric had become furious with John Doe after Father Eric read some of John Doe's private text messages with his wife that were about Father Eric. John Doe's wife also told Luke Doe that John Doe and Father Eric had been seeing a therapist for relationship counseling. Luke Doe Tr. 3. In his interview, Luke Doe stated, "that was really a red flag to me . . . I don't know many same-sex friendships that end up going to counseling to resolve issues especially when those people are married and are not seeing counselors as couples. It's just not normal." *Id.*

<sup>172</sup> Luke Doe Tr. 5. Shortly before Father Eric left for his sabbatical, John Doe's Wife and Luke Doe were talking in the church parking lot. John Doe's Wife was expressing her frustration about wanting to attend the upcoming wedding at the church, but not knowing "how to navigate the fact that . . . Father Eric would be all over her husband the entire time," when Father Eric pulled into the parking lot and looked at them. Shortly after Father Eric walked inside the building, John Doe's Wife received a call from John Doe and Luke Doe went inside. Because he knew that Father Eric was going to question him about it, Luke Doe started mentally preparing himself to defend having "a private, confidential conversation between a priest and a parishioner." Luke Doe Tr. 3-4. Just as Luke Doe had predicted, Father Eric came in Luke Doe's office and said, "I saw that you all were talking. It looked kind of serious. Is there anything I need to know about?" Luke Doe said no, but Father Eric continued to pry. Luke Doe recalled, "I just stonewalled him, and that was the moment I knew immediately that something was really wrong . . ." Luke Doe Tr. 4. Luke Doe later learned that the reason that John Doe had called John Doe's Wife when they were outside was because Father Eric had come in John Doe's office demanding to know what Luke Doe and John Doe's Wife were discussing. Luke Doe Tr. 3.

<sup>173</sup> Luke Doe Tr. 5.

emotional and detailed account of much of what had transpired.<sup>174</sup> Luke Doe immediately gave his full support to John Doe. Because he was concerned about what might happen with “Eric and his power” when John Doe tried to leave, Luke Doe advised John Doe not to tell Father Eric about his plans to apply for another job because “it could become dangerous.”<sup>175</sup>

After an out of town trip with Father Eric, Mark Doe avoided Father Eric and only tried to talk about work with him.<sup>176</sup> Mark Doe stated that it took him approximately three months after his out of town trip to Atlanta to come forward.

## **B. The Cathedral’s Knowledge and Response of Reported Clergy Misconduct**

### **1. Knowledge**

Shortly after a staff retreat in May of 2018, Father Eric left for a scheduled sabbatical. Upon his departure, a member of the St. Peter’s staff came forward and disclosed to a colleague that he was the reported victim of Father Eric’s reported misconduct. This disclosure prompted the two individuals to meet with a mutually trusted advisor. Following that meeting, the reported victim appropriately reported the misconduct to the Bishop (holder of chief ecclesiastical authority) of the Gulf Atlantic Diocese of the Anglican Church in North America.

Upon becoming aware of this disclosure, the Bishop ordered an inquiry into these allegations and appointed a canonical investigator in June of 2018.

During the course of that ecclesiastical investigation, a second member of the Cathedral staff came forward to the Bishop and disclosed being the reported victim of a similar pattern of misconduct by Father Eric.

The question remains as to whether these reported allegations represent the first time that the leadership of the Cathedral and/or the Diocese knew or should have known about the alleged misconduct of Father Eric. Throughout this investigation, GRACE has been made aware, by multiple sources, that information has been shared over an extended period of time (nearly the whole ministry of Father Eric at the Cathedral) with various members of Cathedral leadership concerning troubling interpersonal behavior of Father Eric with others. It is clear that as far back as 2011 in relation to the above referenced situation involving Ben Doe, certain members and leaders of St. Peter’s had at least some knowledge of regarding clergy misconduct concerning Father Eric. Furthermore, Ben Doe sent an email in November of 2011 to Associate Priest 1 requesting help of that priest concerning the “emotional demands” of his relationship with Father Eric. Associate Priest 1 reported during this investigation awareness of the concern of this reported victim at the time but denied having ever received the email. GRACE did not find evidence of St. Peter’s taking substantive actions in response to Father Eric’s reported misconduct until 2018.

### **2. Response**

In August of 2018, the Bishop informed Father Eric of the canonical charges (reported misconduct) that were made against him. As a result, the Bishop subjected Father Eric to abide by several “Godly Admonitions”<sup>177</sup> designed to regulate his conduct. Namely, Father Eric was forbidden from discussing the charges, having any contact with the reported victim and his family, and going on the church property. Also, he was to refrain from consuming alcoholic beverages.

On August 11, 2018 (prior to the second disclosure), the Canonical Investigator concluded his first misconduct report, which placed some of the blame for the misconduct on John Doe. This led to a seemingly confusing administrative situation

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<sup>174</sup> Luke Doe Tr. 5.

<sup>175</sup> Luke Doe Tr. 8. In his interview Luke Doe explained, “I’d seen [Father Eric’s] anger before . . . , and after reading the communications between them, there seemed to be this just kind of . . . controlling, obsessive thing that I figured wouldn’t play out well.” *Id.* at 7.

<sup>176</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 20.

<sup>177</sup> The Anglican Church of North America defines a Godly Admonition as: a written directive from a Bishop with jurisdiction to a member of the Clergy under his jurisdiction. Such admonition shall not be issued until the Bishop shall have met personally with the member of the Clergy – unless for valid reason the Bishop shall have delegated such meeting to another Bishop – and the issues have been clearly and fairly discussed. The written admonition shall be specific concerning the matter complained of and the canonical or theological basis for the complaint, and shall provide a reasonable time for the required action to be taken.” (Title IV, Canon 2).

whereby a decision was made to terminate John Doe from his position on the staff of the Cathedral and to allow Father Eric to remain. While this decision was never carried out, it was communicated to John Doe and his family.

On or about August 20, 2018, when the additional member of the Cathedral staff came forward to the Bishop disclosing having been the reported victim of similar misconduct by Father Eric, the Bishop responded by meeting with the Cathedral leadership. On August 21, 2018, the Bishop issued Father Eric a second “Godly Admonition” which admonished him to resign by the end of that day citing multiple allegations of “sexual harassment” as the reason. Further, it prohibited him from returning to the Cathedral apart from being accompanied by the Senior Warden of the Vestry so that he might collect his personal effects. The Cathedral leadership agreed with the assessment of the Bishop and affirmed that Father Eric be required to resign his position as Dean of the Cathedral. The Bishop met with the whole of the Cathedral Vestry, Staff, and Finance Committee on August 28, 2018 to inform them of the nature of the allegations and one of the reported victims spontaneously stood, self-identified, and spoke to the appropriateness of Father Eric’s required resignation. On August 30, 2018, Father Eric did in fact submit his letter of resignation to the Cathedral. Father Eric’s resignation letter was read to the congregation and was published on St. Peter’s website for a short time.

After the meeting between the Cathedral leadership and the bishop, a third member of the cathedral staff came forward to the bishop and disclosed having been the victim of similar abuse by Father Eric. On September 2, 2018, the bishop held a public meeting with the cathedral congregation and responded to their questions. Because of the additional disclosures, the bishop served Father Eric with a third set of “Godly Admonitions” on September 6, 2018. Father Eric confirmed receipt of these admonitions and asked for no changes, therefore, the bishop considered them accepted on September 19, 2018. On September 12, 2018, the Bishop elected to expand the scope of the Diocese’s Canonical Investigation to include the allegations of misconduct reported by the additional victims. This expanded investigation resulted in the CI authoring a “Sexual Misconduct Follow-on Report” on September 20, 2018.

In October of 2018, Father Eric informed the Bishop that he would abide by the “Godly Admonitions.” However, he almost immediately violated them by contacting some of victims and within a few days he informed the Bishop that he would not submit himself to the Bishop’s authority. Father Eric further violated the admonitions by informing his supporters that he intended to go to the Cathedral for Sunday services which resulted in the Bishop needing to have the sheriff issue a trespass order preventing Father Eric from coming to the Cathedral.

On November 1, 2018, Bishop 1 brought an accusation against Father Eric for violating the Godly Admonitions of his Bishop. This accusation changed the disciplinary case against Father Eric from a violation of Diocesan policy to a Canonical violation.<sup>178</sup> This change began the presentment process<sup>179</sup> against Father Eric.

Ultimately, the decision was made<sup>180</sup> that the Bishop should recuse himself as the ecclesiastical authority overseeing the presentment and that Bishop 2 be appointed to oversee the disciplinary process. On February 13, 2019, Bishop 2 received a letter from Father Eric wherein he confessed<sup>181</sup> to certain violations of the church’s canons.<sup>182</sup> Bishop 2 deposed Eric from ordained ministry within the Anglican Church in North America on February 18, 2019. This effectively concluded the Diocese’s investigation into the allegations of misconduct concerning Father Eric.

As a result of this situation, the House of Bishops of the ACNA elected to make significant changes to their canonical response to reported clergy misconduct including the immediate decision to appoint a neutral, third-party Bishop as the

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<sup>178</sup> An accusation of violating the Diocese’s sexual harassment policy is considered a Canon 2 Case (Violation of Diocesan Policy). Failing to obey the Godly Admonitions of a Bishop, however is an ACNA Canonical Violation (Title IX, Canon 3).

<sup>179</sup> When, after investigation of an accusation, the diocesan authority has determined that the matter should proceed forward, Articles of Presentment shall be prepared and personally served upon the Presbyter or Deacon against whom the accusation has been made. (ACNA Title IX, Canon 3. Section 4).

<sup>180</sup> The bishop made this decision in consultation with two Archbishops, and the diocesan Standing Committee who elected to nominate Bishop 2 to continue the disciplinary proceedings against Father Eric. (Email from the Chair of the Standing Committee to Diocesan Clergy (Feb. 19, 2019)

<sup>181</sup> The confession letter authored by Father Eric is referenced in the “Letter of Deposition from the Ordained Ministry” issued by the hand of Bishop 2 on February 18, 2019.

<sup>182</sup> Conduct Unbecoming a Priest, i.e. “Conduct giving just cause for scandal or offense,” (Title IV, Canon 2.4); Violation of Ordination Vows (Title IV, Canon 2.3); Insubordination (Title IV, Canon 2.9); Willful Refusal to Follow a Godly Admonition (Title IV, Canon 12).

convening ecclesiastical authority. The Diocese, in response, has completely revised its sexual abuse policy, to now include greater provisions for responding to allegations of adult sexual abuse.<sup>183</sup>

The Cathedral yielded to the authority of the Bishop and, as employer of the alleged offender, forced the resignation of Father Eric. Further, the Cathedral chose to engage GRACE to conduct this comprehensive independent investigation into the allegations of misconduct by Father Eric.

### C. Allegations of Interpersonal Mistreatment in the Workplace<sup>184</sup>

While many of the allegations mentioned in the previous section would also be considered interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace, the misconduct allegations discussed in this section took place entirely within the confines of the employment relationship. GRACE interviewed additional reported victims of clergy misconduct that took place entirely in the workplace. Allegations include: displays of anger by Father Eric, such as yelling,<sup>185</sup> screaming, yelling in the face of a female employee, banging his hands/fist on the desk, and making employees cry.<sup>186</sup> Other behavior that made employees uncomfortable was when Father Eric walked around without a shirt on at a staff retreat.<sup>187</sup>

At a staff retreat in May 2017, an employment lawyer reportedly gave a presentation on human resources issues and mentioned that St. Peter's was "suffering from the silo mentality."<sup>188</sup> Father Eric subsequently appointed some staff members to a Collaboration Committee for the purpose of addressing some of the issues raised at the retreat.<sup>189</sup> Employee 1 had been talking to other staff members as well about these concerns: "Over the next couple months, over the summer, talking to these people, I'm like, 'Oh, they're all really burnt out, really unhappy.' I think I had one day where three people told me just independently that if they could quit tomorrow, they would. I was like, 'This is not good.' These people feel this way. I'm very relational. It took a toll on me. My empathy was working in overdrive. I was suffering at the job. All the people I loved were suffering at the job."<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Bishop 2 Tr. 18-19.

<sup>184</sup> Interpersonal mistreatment occurs when an organizational member takes counter normative negative actions – or terminates normative positive actions – against another member. Such mistreatment can range from subtle social slights to general incivility to blatant harassment and violence. L.M. Anderson and C.M. Pearson, *Tit for tat? The spiraling effect of incivility in the workplace*, *Academy of Management Review*, 452-471 (1999).

<sup>185</sup> One employee stated, "[Father Eric] wouldn't really yell in public, but it was more behind the scenes. I've seen him make [Employee 4] cry I don't know how many different times with the way he would talk to her, different things. He never ... He probably had yelled at me three or four times over my time, but never once did he ever come back and apologize or say that, 'Hey, I handled that poorly or whatever.'" Employee 3 Tr. 15.

<sup>186</sup> One former employee recounted: "I witnessed him being pretty hard on a number of staff people, but like I said, I kind of explained those things away in my mind, like, 'Well, he probably didn't handle that the way I would have handled it,' but it was enough to like, when somebody was crying at the photocopier, I'd go over and put my arm around her and be like, 'It's all right.' And she would just bawl and say, 'He's just so mean. When he gets mean, he just gets so mean.' And I was like, 'Well, it's okay. It's okay,' just trying to comfort each other." Employee 2 Tr. 5.

<sup>187</sup> One employee stated, "One of the things that really disturbed us, and I say 'us' because there were other people who were disturbed too, was that Eric, at the staff meeting, was walking around without a shirt on. That might not be a big deal but for us, that was our leader, our shepherd. It was just inappropriate. He didn't act inappropriate, that I could tell. He was just trying to be one of the guys. It was just awkward for us to see him, just showing it off." Employee 5 Tr. 5. The witness explained that she saw Father Eric without his shirt on at a staff retreat while he was on a screened in porch playing ping pong: "I just remember being on the porch and him walking around without his shirt, and playing ping pong, and being real competitive with the young guys. It was awkward. It was like, 'Who is this?'" *Id.* at 5.

<sup>188</sup> Employee 1 Tr. 5-6 "[The employment lawyer] was at the staff retreat. He did a presentation on the silo mentality, which he kind of did this test where he asked us to close our eyes and raise our hands if we'd ever ... felt like you were competing with another part of the church, or if you were ever afraid of getting in trouble, if you didn't have enough people at your event, or whatever. We did that. When that was over, he was like, 'It looks like St. Peter's is suffering from the silo mentality,' which is when an organization gets so big that it starts competing within itself. We're not all working towards the same goal[.] We started talking about that as a big group, as a staff. We were all like, 'Yes, it feels like we're afraid of failure. We're afraid of the, people who go to the church complaining, and getting us in trouble, or whatever.'" We're all going, 'Yeah, this is an environment of fear.' I remember Eric not taking it seriously at all. I mean, I remember him saying in the prayer at the end of that day, he was like, 'Thank you Lord that we don't suffer from the silo mentality.' I was like, 'What? The guy just told us we did.' He said also, somebody was like, 'This is an environment of fear.' He said, 'A little bit of fear is a good thing.' We were all kind of going, 'Oh, okay, well, this is awkward,' cause we're trying to communicate a truth about what it's like to be on staff here and he's not hearing it." *Id.*

<sup>189</sup> *Id.* at 6.

<sup>190</sup> Employee 1 Tr. 6.

Employee 1 set up a meeting to talk to Father Eric about the issues raised because of the retreat,<sup>191</sup> co-worker burnout, and about the future of her employment at St. Peters. During the subsequent one-on-one meeting with Father Eric, Father Eric began to get “defensive” when addressing concerns about the culture of the church work environment.<sup>192</sup> Then, when Employee 1 brought up concerns about co-worker burnout, she recalled: “He responded by saying ‘You’ve been cold to me for weeks – what problems do you have with me?’ At this point, he stood up, crossed the room, and picked up a cricket ball,<sup>193</sup> which he handled and tossed back and forth during the duration of our conversation.”<sup>194</sup> Employee 1 recalled: “At some point, Father Eric began to raise his voice to me. He worked himself up by talking, and eventually he was yelling. He said ‘You know what, I’m not going to talk about this with you! You are going to be upset by everything, it’s not even worth continuing! You are rude and you are arrogant! You have been rude to me in the hallways!’ At this point, he did an impression of me saying hello to him in the hallway which was not favorable or positive to me, and then said ‘You’re snitty, you know how you are. I’ve been in ministry for 30 years! How PRESUMPTUOUS!’ He then told me to get out of his office. At this point he had been yelling at me so much that he was red-faced. I said ‘Father Eric, can we pray about this?’ He refused. He stood up and I said, ‘well when would you like me to leave?’ He said, ‘I can’t talk about this, get out.’”<sup>195</sup>

Employee 1 stated: “I left the office. I cried for a couple days. Then I got a message from his secretary that he wanted to meet with me. I was like, ‘I’m not gonna meet with him alone.’”<sup>196</sup> He created this meeting in which it was me, and then the three young pastoral presences on staff.”<sup>197</sup> Employee 1 recalled that she went to the meeting, but she was “uncomfortable being in this meeting with four men who are all older than me and above me in the hierarchy of the church.”<sup>198</sup> Employee 1 stated she was hoping to get an apology from Father Eric.<sup>199</sup> His response was as follows: “I’m sorry you were upset with me. I’m sorry you attacked me and I responded poorly.”<sup>200</sup> Employee 1 resigned and was asked by Father Eric to leave immediately following this meeting.<sup>201</sup>

Current and former employees stated similar things about feeling burned out and overworked: “[F]or the last year that I worked there in terms of, any time of day or night was fair game for working. You didn’t ever really get a break which,

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<sup>191</sup> *Id.* at 7. Some concerns include: “Blue Box training in management and collaboration, hiring a part-time HR person, addressing the fear on staff, clearer disciplinary measures to ameliorate fear of losing your job, and addressing the spiritual concerns of staff members. It was at this point that Father Eric began to be defensive.” Employee 1 Written Statement in 8/2017 (“E1WS”).

<sup>192</sup> *Id.* “It was at this point that Father Eric began to be defensive. He said that the Blue Box team has been trained and does not need any more training. We continued to discuss the issues that have come up in Collaboration Committee meetings, but he continued to push back against them, albeit lightly.” E1WS

<sup>193</sup> Employee 1 stated, “I was like, ‘Well, I didn’t really want to get personal.’ Then he started just kind of yelling at me. He picked up a, he went across the room and he picked up a cricket ball, one of those really hard crick [sic] balls. He started just throwing it back and forth between his hands really angrily, which was a little bit frightening.” Employee 1 Tr. 8.

<sup>194</sup> E1WS.

<sup>195</sup> E1WS. Employee 1 continued, “He walked over to his phone and picked it up, pushed a button and said to someone ‘Where are you? Get down here.’ I then walked over to the middle of his office and calmly and gently looked him in the eye and said, ‘Fr. Eric. I love you and I love this church and I only want what’s best for it.’ And he said ‘You need to give me space.’ I left and passed [John Doe] heading to his office on my way out. Needless to say, this experience was profoundly shocking and emotionally draining for me. I had entered this meeting with a calm and prayerful heart, and with a desire to communicate what I have experienced working at St. Peter’s with one goal in mind: the health and flourishing of St. Peter’s. I was met with defensiveness, and worse, a critical, name-calling, unprayerful spirit.”

<sup>196</sup> Both Employee 1 and Employee 2 reported they met with Father Eric in his office alone when Father Eric engaged in outbursts of anger. In Father Eric’s Paragraph 11 Disclosures to the Diocese, he listed people that were “fired” and stated he “[h]ad no private time with any of them to the best of my memory except with [Employee 1 and 2], and that was in my office to discuss work related issues.”

<sup>197</sup> Employee 1 Tr. 8. Employee 1 stated: “Well, this is going to ruin my friendships with all of these guys because I’m gonna go in there. I know that they’re not gonna support me because their jobs are on the line. This is their boss. He has power over them. This is not a good situation for them. They don’t have a lot of choices.” *Id.*

<sup>198</sup> Employee 1 Tr. 8.

<sup>199</sup> “I just said, ‘You behaved inappropriately. I’d like an apology for basically losing your temper.’” Employee 1 Tr. 9.

<sup>200</sup> *Id.*

<sup>201</sup> Employee 1 recalled: “After that meeting I was like, ‘I’m not sure I can work for a man who both can’t control his temper, especially with a young woman who’s on staff, and also will not repent of that behavior. If this person is supposed to be leading a church spiritually, that’s not, he’s not a healthy, in a healthy place to be doing that. I don’t agree with that.’ He then asked me for, to meet again with, he said it would be a woman this time since I had complained. He wouldn’t tell me who it was. I didn’t want to be in a room with him ever regardless of, if there was anybody else there. I said, ‘I am gonna resign.’ Then I said, ‘I can give you two weeks. I can give you however long you want.’ He said, ‘No, leave immediately.’ I left my job immediately. As far as I know, they didn’t tell the staff. They didn’t tell the congregation. They didn’t tell the youth group girls. They never had an announcement or a letter about me leaving. I had been at that church for nine years. That’s that. I never heard from him ever again. I left. It was really painful.” Employee 1 Tr. 9.

anyway. It turned out that we started talking about having these common experiences about feeling burnt out working at the church.”<sup>202</sup> Another employee stated that she felt there was an unspoken expectation to give “150%.”<sup>203</sup>

Another concern raised was the fearful work environment at St. Peter’s. One employee stated, “Even though [Father Eric] would say he wasn’t[,] he was a super micromanager. His mantra was you had to do everything with excellence. But in my view he had always skewed excellence with extravagant, which meant you had to do things super over the top. There was such this fear that you couldn’t fail at an event. If you wanted to try something new and only 30 people showed up versus 300, then all of a sudden you would worry.”<sup>204</sup>

Employee 2 relayed her experience working for Father Eric: “And I got a phone call from Eric that said that he needed to speak with me in his office and he didn’t sound happy. So, I walked down there and I’m realizing like there’s literally nobody but me and him in the office. And I started to get a little nervous because his voice was very weird on the phone and I didn’t know what to expect. And I got into the office and literally nobody was there. [Father Eric’s secretary] wasn’t there or anybody. And he started. He had me sit down and he started to slam his hands on the table in front of me and was like, ‘How do you like this? How does this make you feel?’ And started yelling in my face. And I’m like, ‘I don’t know what you’re doing.’ He said, ‘Well, this is how you treated my wife during VBS.’ And I’m like, ‘What? What are you talking about?’ And he started pounding his fist and he said, ‘You questioned whether my [family member] was going to be here and you’re the one who didn’t do this and you didn’t do that. And he’s like, ‘It doesn’t feel so good when somebody’s threatening you.’ And I’m like, ‘I don’t know what you’re even talking about.’ And I was just bawling. I mean, just bawling. It was really, really scary.”<sup>205</sup> Employee 2 stated that this was in response to a conversation she had with Father Eric’s wife.<sup>206</sup> Employee 2 stated she “just couldn’t get out of there fast enough.”<sup>207</sup> She “apologized for anything that was misunderstood” and for how she treated [his wife].<sup>208</sup> She recalled, “I grabbed my purse and I ran outside and I called my husband from the lawn and I was like, ‘I’m really, really scared. I don’t know what to do.’ And my husband was like, ‘Just get out of there. Just go to the car and leave and just call me from home when you get there.’”<sup>209</sup> Employee 2 stated that “from that moment, it was pretty much unbearable to work for him. I was then placed on weekly meetings and it was known that if you were on weekly meetings, you were one of the problem employees...And so I was on the weekly meetings and usually they were to talk about what I wasn’t doing right. Or it was just an opportunity to try to wield power over me and make life unpleasant for me.”<sup>210</sup> After a couple of months, Employee 2 resigned.<sup>211</sup> She recalled, “He called me an immature

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<sup>202</sup> Interview with Employee 1, at 5 (Feb. 25, 2019).

<sup>203</sup> Employee 5 recounted, “[I]t wasn’t a said expectation. It wasn’t but I just feel like everybody was expected to put in a 150%. I mean, I guess, one of the other spiritual personal things that I learned is to have those boundaries. I’ve learned that over this, through my experience here...It’s like, you can bend over so far backwards that you lose your balance. I think it was expected here. Even though it wasn’t written or said, it was just known, you be 150%.” Employee 5 Tr. 11. This employee said she felt like this expectation came from “the head. I think it came from Farther Eric.” *Id.* She also said, “I was supposed to work 20 hours but the expectation was that you were here more. I mean, you were here when you were needed. I remember my family saying, ‘You’re only supposed to work 20 hours and you’re putting in 40 hours.’ I think that the expectation was definitely that on Eric’s side, is that you were to be here whenever you were asked or... It was expected that you were working over your time.” *Id.* at 10.

<sup>204</sup> Employee 3 Tr. 14-15.

<sup>205</sup> Employee 2 Tr. 10.

<sup>206</sup> Employee 2 recounted: “And he said that [his wife] had recounted to him how...I had thundered into her office, the phone area, the reception area, and then I had slammed my hands down on the desk and leaned over the desk in a threatening manner and had questioned whether [Name] was going to be able to do this or not in a nasty voice. And I was like, I don’t even understand how that could have been... I was just couldn’t even speak. And he said that he didn’t want to have to do this to me, but that he had talked to all of his priest friends and he had gotten advice from all of his small group priest friends that he should not let this go and that no one should be allowed to treat his family this way.” Employee 2 Interview Transcript, at page 10.

<sup>207</sup> *Id.*

<sup>208</sup> *Id.*

<sup>209</sup> *Id.*

<sup>210</sup> *Id.* at pg. 10-11.

<sup>211</sup> Employee 2 stated, “And finally, after a couple of months of this, that was in August, the weekly meetings started basically at the end of August. And then I made it through to October. And by October, I was pretty worn down. I told my husband, I just, ‘I feel called to this ministry. I love my job. I could see myself being there forever.’ I loved what I did and I loved our children, but I couldn’t take the pressure anymore. So, I went in at the end of October and I said, ‘I can’t do this anymore.’ I said, ‘You’re going to have to find a new director. If this is what my life is going to be, I can’t do it anymore.’ I said, ‘You treat me with disrespect. I come in here every week just to be berated. And this goes back to the issue with [your wife].’ And I said, ‘You never asked me what happened with [your wife]. You never allowed me the opportunity to tell you that I didn’t slam my hands on the table. You didn’t allow me the opportunity to tell my side of the story.’ And he jumped up enraged. I’m hearing myself. I don’t know if I can keep talking hearing myself. Okay. So he jumped up in rage and just started yelling and he said, ‘Well, we’re going to take care of this right now.’ And he went out and he got [his wife] and brought her into the office. And so [Father Eric’s Wife] starts like whining about, ‘I thought we were okay, [Name]. I thought we were okay.’ And I’m like, ‘I have no problem with you. I have a problem with your husband and I have a problem with how he has dealt with this

Christian. He said what a horrible person I was. And the immature Christian is the one thing I remember because I just remember that just hit me in the soul. I'm trying so hard to be God's called me to be and he just hit me where it hurt."<sup>212</sup>

#### **D. Father Eric's Response to Allegations of Misconduct and Mistreatment**

GRACE reached out to Father Eric on multiple occasions via email and phone messages.<sup>213</sup> Father Eric eventually responded through his attorney and declined to participate in the GRACE investigation.<sup>214</sup> However, Father Eric has made statements regarding these allegations to different people at different times. GRACE's findings related to Father Eric's response to the allegations is set forth below.

Furthermore, as part of the initial internal investigation, Bishop appointed a canonical investigator ("CI"), who conducted a recorded interview with Father Eric regarding the allegations of clergy misconduct reported by John Doe His wife and Mark Doe.<sup>215</sup> During the course of that interview, Father Eric admitted to several the allegations that were presented to the diocese. He spoke of an overnight trip that was taken with one of the reported victims and described that the two of them shared a room with a single bed. After sharing vulnerable stories with one another, Father Eric stated that the reported victim suggested that they go to sleep for the night. Father. Eric stated that he and the reported victim shared a bed for the evening; "So we do get in the bed, and you know, I'm still working through all this in my mind, this sharing that'd been done and, and he simply reached his arm around me and just held me, um, and that's how I went to sleep. And, um, never had that happen before, um, with a ma-man, um, and we talked about that on the way home driving back and he said, um, I know that can seem a little weird, he said, but I, uh, I, I like feeling that we were able to comfort each other, that we were able to embrace each other in that way. I said I did too, it, it meant a lot to me."<sup>216</sup> Father Eric went on to describe that the relationship with this reported victim included "cuddling."

As the relationship went on, Father Eric described that the need arose to establish physical boundaries. He described the boundary setting this way; "...no more cuddle ... and we still hugged each other, kissed each other. I still, you know, if, if we were sitting down talking at a table and it became kind of a touching moment or something, he'd stretch out his hand and take my hand or I would stretch out my hand and take his hand, squeeze his hand. Um, so I, I guess again...I'm romanticizing or idealiz-... idealization of, of friendship."<sup>217</sup> Further, Father Eric justified the physical nature of his relationship with this reported victim by describing it in relation to his perception of male relationships in other cultures. He said; "And, you know, I guess I read a lot of books about friendship along the way and, and, and I, I know that in other countries and places like Italy and Spain and Africa, you know, there, there are men who walk hand and hand, who hug each other and kiss each other and, and it's not homosexual, it's not erotic, it's not ... it's, it's that they're brothers, that they

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situation. I have a problem with the way I've been treated for the last three months and I'm not going to do it anymore.' I said, "[Father Eric's Wife], did I come across the table at you? Did I act in a threatening manner or did I lean in and whisper?...And she said, 'Well, I think you probably just leaned and whispered.' I'm like, 'That's what I'm saying like I never was threatening to your wife.' And so he yelled at her to get out. [Father Eric's wife] goes out of the room and I think it was like a Thursday or Friday. And I said, 'I am leaving right now. I want you to take what your wife has just said and how you've treated me the last few months and how impossible you've made this job and decide how you're going to treat me going forward. I am willing to move on, but I'm not going to do it under these circumstances.' And so I left and didn't see him for a few days and I went back in on Monday or Tuesday and sat down and I said, 'We need to decide how this is going to move forward.' And I said, 'You now know that I did not come across the table at your wife in a threatening manner.' And he said, 'I have spoken to her at home. Nothing has changed for me. You threatened my wife and this will continue.' And I'm like, 'Well then that's it. I'm done.' I said, 'I'm going to go to my office, collect my thoughts and I will let you know if this is my final notice that I've quit.' So I go to the office. He called me an immature Christian. He said what a horrible person I was. And the immature Christian is the one thing I remember because I just remember that just hit me in the soul. I'm trying so hard to be God's called me to be and he just hit me where it hurt. And so I went back to my nursery area and sat in a little chapel that we had created and one of the priests came in and he was like, 'I know, I know.' He just understood. He knew how I felt because Eric had done this to other people. I wasn't the first, and I wasn't going to be the last that I knew that. So I resigned." Employee 2 Interview Transcript at p. 11-12.

<sup>212</sup> *Id.*  
<sup>213</sup> GRACE Investigators sent numerous emails to Father Eric and left him a voice message using the phone number provided by St. Peter's. He did not respond to the emails or the voice message.

<sup>214</sup> Though GRACE certainly respects Father Eric's decision not to participate in this investigation, this voluntary decision negated his opportunity to clarify and respond to particular matters raised by the reported victims, witnesses, and the plethora of relevant documentation reviewed by the GRACE team. GRACE also extended invitations to Father Eric's family members who all declined to meet with the investigative team. Some members of his family emailed GRACE what they believed was relevant information related to this investigation. However, without the opportunity to question these witnesses about the information provided, its relevance and credibility was afforded the appropriate weight by the investigative team.

<sup>215</sup> See CI Tr. 6.

<sup>216</sup> Eric Dudley CI Interview Tr.13-14.

<sup>217</sup> Eric Dudley CI Interview Tr.14-15.

love each other, they're family to one another. And I know that in, in this western world in which we're living, that's just not the case. I mean, I've seen that in some cases with ... among friends that kind of closeness, but it's a rare thing. Um, but I, I felt like we had a rare thing. We, we both talked about it in that regard. He said ... both of us said, he said, I said that feel like God has blessed us with the gift of this friendship."<sup>218</sup>

Father Eric described that he and one of the reported victims would kiss one another. Specifically stating, "And we're in my backyard, and we're being silly and in the midst of, of just silliness, you know, I ... we, we typically kiss each other on the lip ... on the face, but I kissed him on the lips. Just quick, and a peck and said, I don't know, said something silly in the ... in the ... of the night. And we were out there just, just being like kids, you know? Um, kidding around a lot and ... but, but then after that, um, when we were in a normal context of daily life, um, he says ... I said, I'm sorry about that, that was kinda unexpected. He said, uh, I didn't take offense, he said, you know, um, it ... I kiss all, all the members of my family on the lips. He said that's a, a normal thing. I said, well it's interesting, I said the [name] family here in the parish and the [name] family all do that too, even though their sons are grown. And, um, and, and so, um, it kinda gave us permission."<sup>219</sup>

Father Eric went on to describe that the relationship was inappropriate. He admitted; "...we're talking and I'm rubbing his back and we go to sleep. Um, w-was that wise? No. Um, was it prudent? No. Was it sexual? No. No, it wasn't. It was ... it was brotherly, you know? I mean, so often I go to bed with my brother, my younger brother, rubbing my back or me rubbing his back and, and maybe, you know, maybe I allowed myself to get a skewed perspective in the midst of, um, of this friendship and, and because it, it meant so much to me, uh, to have that kind of familial, um, openness. Um, but I'll tell you, [CI], it, it didn't feel sexual. Um, that, that wasn't what I was seeking, it wasn't what he was seeking. Um, that's, that's what it was. That's, that's all it was. That's genuinely all it was. No where along the way did I seek, or he seek, you know, any kind of...sexual relationship."<sup>220</sup> He went on to state: "And alcohol, um, to, to cause me to make some imprudent decisions. But honest to goodness, in all of it I was never seeking a sexual relationship and nor was he. And it ... the ... it was so mutual and in every bit of it ... it was all that business of my having this amazing friend who knew me completely and loved me fully and I can hug him and I can talk to him about anything and he, he's always happy to see me and, uh, really knows and cares about me. And it was that, um, if I ... if I could go back would I do it differently? Oh yeah."<sup>221</sup>

In addition to the recorded interview with the CI, the investigation yielded numerous written communications authored by Father Eric that describe and respond to the nature of the allegations in question. In his resignation letter to the cathedral, Father Eric admitted that he engaged in inappropriate conduct. Specifically he said; "When I drank too much, I became more affectionate than usual and overstepped boundaries, and on those occasions, I did exhibit unbecoming displays of affection towards other adults unbecoming a priest of God's church and the dean of a cathedral."<sup>222</sup> Father Eric went on to apologize to those individuals who were affected by his "inappropriate actions," and to the whole of the cathedral membership and the church in general.

Father Eric has maintained that his conduct was due to the stress of burnout and the result of consequential excess consumption of alcohol. He has further maintained that his interactions with the reported victims were "affectional" in nature as opposed to "sexual."<sup>223</sup>

In an undated letter to one of the reported victims entitled "Friendship," Father Eric had this to say; "This friendship has come as a real surprise, just nothing I would ever have expected. Not only because it is boss/employee, older/younger, but especially because of the depth and nature of it. That love has grown more and more over the last 8-10 months to the point that, together with my immediate family, you are the person I love most." In his own words, Father Eric articulates the foundational concerns regarding his conduct. Namely, the disparity, which existed in the relationship: "boss/employee, older/younger." Clearly this speaks to the imbalance of relational power that Father Eric was well aware of.

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<sup>218</sup> Eric Dudley CI Interview Tr. 15.

<sup>219</sup> Eric Dudley CI Interview Tr. 16.

<sup>220</sup> *Id.* at 17.

<sup>221</sup> *Id.*

<sup>222</sup> See Dudley Resignation Letter. In addition, one witness stated Father Eric said, "And that he had not acted in a priestly way. And really just sort of that he was burnt out and had something to do with alcohol. And that's about what I know." (Employee 4 Tr. 3)

<sup>223</sup> *Id.*



In Father Eric's written Separation Agreement Disclosures, Father Eric transfers blame to a reported victim and describes that he was the one who was "misused and mistreated." Further, in a text message to the Archbishop, Father Eric greatly minimized the suffering of the reported victims and blamed their spouses and therapists as being the reason for these disclosures having been made. Father Eric described his truth as being the truth and insisted that he be able to confront the reported victims who certainly feel "guilt – not devastation" for making these disclosures. He stated: "I am embarrassed and humiliated by the truth, but what I know to be the truth does not resemble what is being claimed."<sup>224</sup>

In the aftermath of the disclosures made by the reported victims, Father Eric was prohibited from having any contact with them. However, he did not abide by that admonition and continued to contact reported victims. In a text message to one of the reported victims on September 17, 2018, Father Eric said; "Hey, I know you're not supposed to talk to me, and I'm not supposed to talk to you- but that's such crap! Are we really going to do this?... I'd like to see you, to talk openly and honestly as Christian friends should. Name the time and place and I'm there!" In another text to the same reported victim on October 18, 2018, he said; "Give me just fifteen minutes. No one needs to know. I'm not going to be mean to you, or argue with you. It just seems that it might be better for your family, my family, and the family of St. Peter's if we could talk. Please pray about this before telling the Bishop."

In another text to a reported victim in wake of the disclosures on October 28, 2018, Father Eric wrote, "How can you stand at God's altar and pray the Prayer of Humble Access? What kind of priest can harbor that kind of hate? You told me that you 'crave my touch,' that you 'love and adore me,' that you 'didn't want to spend a single day apart,' that you 'fear that you love me more than your family,' and yet now you want to completely destroy my life. When you kneel to pray, how is your heart before God? Do you not feel utter guilt? You should! I can kneel knowing that I have done nothing evil, hateful, sexual, or sinister. I loved my friend, and I got too close, and that is all. But there is no way, after what you've said and done, that you can have that same clear conscience! Some day, my friend, God will confront you with your hate, your lies, your mean-spiritedness. You will not escape unscathed!" This private statement seemingly stands in stark contrast to his public apology to those whom he reportedly wronged.

#### IV. INVESTIGATIVE ANALYSIS

##### A. Reported Misconduct of Father Eric

Father Eric is, by all accounts, a very intelligent man. He is a gifted orator with an Ivy League diploma. When Father Eric opened his mouth to preach, one can hear a pin drop in the crowded sanctuary. Unlike the monotone stereotype of the intellectual teaching pastor, Father Eric's sermons were animated and filled with relevant anecdotes and even bits of humor. He is a man who has devoted his life largely to the service of God and the Anglican Church, a man so devoted to his faith that he broke with the Episcopal Church over what he saw as an increasing shift away from the Scripture. Hundreds followed him, and together they founded St. Peter's, eventually building one of the largest Anglican cathedrals in the United States.

He is beloved by many of his former parishioners, even in light of the troubling allegations that have been made against him. It is understandable that his being deposed has caused a rift in the church, that there are many who refuse to believe that their former rector would ever use his position to harm anyone.

For those who are struggling to accept that someone who seemed so good, so Godly, could commit the acts described by the reported victims in this investigation, the first thing to understand is the role that deception plays in the perpetuation of abuse. Dr. Diane Langberg, a psychologist who specializes in abuse in the church, has explained that while "[d]eception is clearly involved in the perpetrator's relationship with the victim," that is not where it begins. "[F]irst and foremost, the perpetrator is self-deceived. Deception of others is inevitably preceded by deception of the self. We as human beings have a seemingly unlimited capacity to hide truths that are painful to us. We have an uncanny ability to suppress knowing what

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<sup>224</sup> See *supra* note 245 and 245.

we know.”<sup>225</sup> She continues, “Self-deception is not the worst thing that you can do but it is the means by which we do the most terrible things.”<sup>226</sup>

There is no denying that the reported victims have reported that the abuse they suffered at the hand of Father Eric was sexual in nature, and inappropriate. Conversely, Father Eric has consistently denied possessing a sexual motivation and has described his actions as being affectionate. All concerned parties (including Father Eric), however, have agreed that Father Eric’s actions were inappropriate. Consequently, the chief concern of this investigation has been an examination of Father Eric’s abuse of power<sup>227</sup> and control as opposed to attempting to ascertain his underlying motivation for the misconduct. In every reported instance, Father Eric stood in a clear position of power over those individuals who reported being abused by him. He was older; they were younger. He was the boss, they were employees. He was a priest, they were parishioners. This investigation has made clear that on countless occurrences, Father Eric abused the position of authority and power, both spiritual and actual, that he had been entrusted with to victimize, manipulate, and exploit those below him.

## 1. Clergy Misconduct Allegations

Investigators evaluated all of the witness testimony obtained and considered the totality of the facts and circumstances involved, including the nature of the alleged conduct and the context in which it reportedly occurred. GRACE provides the following points of analysis for consideration with the hope that it will help process and assess the investigative findings.

In evaluating all the witness accounts, GRACE noted that the witnesses who disclosed misconduct appeared to provide as much detail as possible relating to the events in question even when the descriptions were months or years earlier. Many witnesses described not only the times and locations of the reported events with particularity, but also the allegations themselves with specific details. These witnesses also described with particularity how in some cases they internalized feelings of shame, blame, or helplessness associated with the abuse.<sup>228</sup>

Motive and bias are also important data points, which must be considered when evaluating witness accounts. In addition, the reported victims came forward at different times and for different reasons, not knowing the others reported victims’ allegations prior to making their disclosure. GRACE found no evidence demonstrating any discernible bias or motive for any of the witnesses to falsely accuse Father Eric of clergy misconduct.<sup>229</sup>

In addition, GRACE evaluated the timing and consistency of these statements about these events over the passage of time. All the evidence GRACE reviewed indicated that the witnesses who described misconduct have spoken consistently about the timeframes, locations, and the nature of the misconduct over time.

Finally, GRACE evaluated Father Eric’s own statements about the allegations. GRACE noted that Father Eric attempted to shift blame and pinned a motive onto the victims and their families. At times, Father Eric claimed that John Doe and his

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<sup>225</sup> Clinical Psychologist Anna Salter writes, “...people in general are just plain easy to fool.” She says that “[w]hat makes fooling us so easy is not the worst in us, it is often the best.” Anna Salter, *Predators, Pedophiles, Rapists and Other Sex Offenders: Who They Are, How They Operate, and How We Can Protect Ourselves and Our Children* 29-30 (2003).

<sup>226</sup> *Id.*

<sup>227</sup> Religious leaders are by definition community leaders who carry spiritual as well as organization and community leadership roles. They are expected to be compassionate, ethical, and moral leaders who hold the well-being of those they lead as a sacred trust. The differential of power between a religious leader and a congregant is like that of a physician and patient or counselor and client, although with the added dimension of sacred trust. Because of the power the leader holds and the attachment of congregants to their leaders, the congregant has much less power to say “no” to sexual overtures, rendering the concept of “consent” virtually meaningless. Any sexual relationship between a religious leader and a congregant is thus more accurately described as “abuse of power” rather than “affair,” which implies mutual consent. Research Terminology, Baylor University, [https://www.baylor.edu/social\\_work/index.php?id=935542](https://www.baylor.edu/social_work/index.php?id=935542).

<sup>228</sup> “I mean, why I continued to get involved or stay involved with Eric in any relationship, I think initially at first I had mixed understandings of what exactly was going on. Initially it’s like, “Well, wait a second, maybe I’m misreading him. Maybe this in his all ...” You know, one side of the brain saying, “You’re not quite understanding him. This is all a miscommunication, kind of.” It’s embarrassing. You don’t really want to talk about it, so you don’t really talk. I didn’t talk to him directly. And then there’s also the fact that you’re scared because this guy is your boss. You’re all alone. You got no help, and if he wants to ruin your life, he’s got that power to do that. And so as it started out, it’s kind of a mixed feelings. At the end, it was, “I’m trapped and I’ve got to get out of this quietly whatever way possible.” John Doe Tr. 27. *See also* footnote.

<sup>229</sup> Some of the reported victims have left the church, but they still agreed to participate in the investigation.

wife were motivated by “revenge,” but it is unclear what he thinks that they would want revenge *for*.<sup>230</sup> GRACE did not identify any factual basis to support the purported argument that the reported victims were motivated by revenge.

While Father Eric declined to sit for an interview with GRACE, the team collected numerous statements that he has made, both publicly and privately, concerning the allegations, as well as letters, emails, text messages, and other recorded statements that he made directly to the reported victims, both before and after the reported victims came forward.<sup>231</sup> While offering numerous excuses and justifications for his conduct, Father Eric has, at one time or another admitted portions the misconduct alleged by the victims.<sup>232</sup>

Where Father Eric has admitted to misconduct, however, he blames his lapse in judgment on external factors, including: alcohol abuse;<sup>233</sup> burnout,<sup>234</sup> manifested by sleeplessness and high blood pressure;<sup>235</sup> anger issues;<sup>236</sup> being “overly affectionate” when drinking;<sup>237</sup> a prescription sleeping medication;<sup>238</sup> exhaustion from building the church;<sup>239</sup> loneliness and isolation due to his son moving away and getting a girlfriend;<sup>240</sup> and the fact that he was “awkward” and dealt with bullying during his elementary and high school years.<sup>241</sup> He also minimizes what he did and the effect that it had on the reported victims.<sup>242</sup>

Father Eric varies from making excuses for his conduct to placing the blame squarely on the reported victims or other alleged conspirators.<sup>243</sup> He justifies his conduct toward Employee 1, and claims that he was the real victim in the situation with Ben Doe.<sup>244</sup> Father Eric also blames the reported victims for overreacting to his conduct.<sup>245</sup> In addition to blaming the

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<sup>230</sup> See Text Message from Eric Dudley to Archbishop (Feb. 18, 2019) (“[John Doe and his wife] are all about revenge, and he has to appear devastated [sic] so that he remains the innocent party. This is evil- I swear before God that this is revenge. Why don’t you arrange for him to sit with me (and a mediator) to tell me why he is devastated.”).

<sup>231</sup> Many of these statements were made in violation of the Godly Admonitions in place at the time.

<sup>232</sup> One witness said that he spoke to Eric after the disclosures and Eric admitted that he “crossed boundaries,” acted inappropriately, and should be stepping down, but that he “[d]idn’t have sex with anybody” or “touch anybody sexually.” Parishioner 1 Tr. 6; see also Text Message from Eric Dudley to Parishioner 2 (Aug. 2018) (describing his conduct as overly affectionate and “very inappropriate for a priest,” but “[a]bsolutely never anything that crossed a sexuality line”).

<sup>233</sup> *Id.* In his resignation letter, Father Eric blamed his behavior over the previous two years on “burnout” and alcohol abuse. Dudley Resignation Letter. This placed Bishop 1 in the position of having to disclose that alcohol was a factor in only some of the allegations. Bishop 1, Dudley Q&A Response (Sep. 6, 2018). The Bishop went on to state, “[o]f course I cannot measure the degree of Eric’s burnout, and what effect it also had, or what other emotional factors applied. Like all our sins, the behaviors themselves were inexcusable.” *Id.* Father Eric subsequently berated Bishop 1 for providing the clarification. See texts between Father Eric and Bishop 1.

<sup>234</sup> Employee 1 recalls when she went to Father Eric in 2017 voicing concerns about employee burnout at the Cathedral: “I tried to very carefully, without being like, ‘Your church is the worst,’ being like, ‘These are the issues that we’ve seen come up.’ He basically denied that those were issues and was like, ‘Nobody’s burnt out. I talked to them all. They told me they’re not burnt out.’ That was a little bit strange.” Employee 1 Tr. 7

<sup>235</sup> Text Message from Eric Dudley to Witness 1. (Aug. 2018); see Dudley Resignation Letter.

<sup>236</sup> *Id.*

<sup>237</sup> Text Message from Eric Dudley to Witness 1. (Aug. 2018); Dudley Resignation Letter.

<sup>238</sup> Eric Dudley, CI Interview at 4:36.

<sup>239</sup> Dudley Resignation Letter; CI Interview at 36.

<sup>240</sup> Eric Dudley, CI Interview at 5:24; Eric also expressed that he had never had any real friendships, “friendship is something I never really had and always wanted” and that he felt “isolated” in the parish. CI Interview at 12:50. Less than a minute earlier in the interview, however, Eric mentioned that he became friends with Associate Priest when he was in seminary at Vanderbilt. *Id.* At 12:07. When the CI asked him about this, Eric stated, “I love [Associate Priest] and I’ll always love [Associate Priest], but [Associate Priest] doesn’t have that kind of vulnerable interpersonal ability.... when you talk to [Associate Priest], so often he sits there with the glazed eyes and you don’t know if he’s really hearing you and he doesn’t give you much back.” *Id.* At 16:36.

<sup>241</sup> CI Interview with Eric Dudley at 8.

<sup>242</sup> In response to the Archbishop’s statement to the church, Eric texted, “Is NOT true that I touched them inappropriately (this has given the impression that I grabbed between their legs) . . . I swear before the cross of Christ that I NEVER touched them in inappropriate places!!” Text Message from Eric Dudley to Archbishop (Feb. 18, 2019). The Archbishop replied, “I have to assume you never did any misconduct prevention training. ‘Inappropriate’ means any touching that is not (or no longer) desired.” In a text message to a close friend from church, Eric admitted to “becoming ridiculously affectionate toward those around me,” but then minimizes his conduct as consisting of “hugging them, holding their hands, *kissing them on face* [sic] and telling them about all of my woundedness.” Text Message from Eric Dudley to Witness 1. (Aug. 2018) (emphasis added).

<sup>243</sup> The reported victims, on the other hand, tend to blame themselves for what Eric did to them and have struggled in silence with guilt and shame.

<sup>244</sup> Eric claimed that “[Employee 1] is particularly hostile towards me” and that he “felt misused and mistreated by [Ben Doe].” Paragraph 11 disclosures.

<sup>245</sup> In a text to the Archbishop, Eric stated, “Mark Doe I just don’t get. How can he be devastated from holding my hand? And if he was why didn’t he say something then? Why continue hanging out; borrowing my truck; eating Cubans with me?” Eric Dudley, Text Message to Archbishop (Feb. 18, 2019).

reported victims, Father Eric has blamed other random players such as the therapist who he believes is treating two of the reported victims,<sup>246</sup> the wives of the reported victims,<sup>247</sup> and the Diocese.<sup>248</sup>

In addition to Father Eric’s own statements, other evidence that corroborated their accounts included: audio and video recordings of incidents that they described, hundreds of pages of text messages and emails, church documents, and other witnesses’ recollection of events. It is also significant that the reported victims’ accounts often corroborated each other, even though they were not aware of other reported victims at the time.<sup>249</sup>

After a review of the totality of the information received, including the nature of the allegations and the context in which it reportedly occurred, GRACE found that a number of significant data points (including Father Eric’s denial of sexual misconduct and minimization of events), point to a significant degree of credibility related to the witness’ reports of clergy misconduct and bring into question the believability of Father Eric’s statements about these events.<sup>250</sup>

## 2. Abuse of Authority as Spiritual Leader and Employer

One of the common themes in clergy abuse of adults is how the dual relationships clergy have with parishioners can enable abusers.<sup>251</sup> Not only do these dual roles blur the boundaries that should be respected in professional relationships, but they also further disturb the imbalance of power that is already present between a spiritual leader and his follower. With each role the priest takes on in the relationship, he gains more power and control relative to the other person.<sup>252</sup> God calls his people to be aware of their power and use it for protection and service to others, especially the vulnerable.<sup>253</sup>

The roles that people play in our lives and the boundaries of those roles “dictate appropriate versus inappropriate behavior between a person and family, friends, co-workers, and professionals, ultimately helping society to create a sense of structure and expectations for social interactions.”<sup>254</sup> These boundaries become less clear or even ambiguous “when an individual functions in multiple roles with another person.”<sup>255</sup> Dual relationships occur in many professional settings, such as when a teacher is also a friend, or a personal physician is also a neighbor; in some professions, dual roles are even encouraged.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> *Id.* (stating “I think this damn therapist is behind all of this . . . [she] sees everything as victimization . . . she’s a looney toon. [...] [John Doe and Mark Doe] only became ‘devastated’ after meeting with her!”).

<sup>247</sup> *Id.* (stating that “[t]his all started with two hateful women – [Name of Two Victims’ Wives].”).

<sup>248</sup> In a text message to Bishop 1, Father Eric stated, “You have been deceitful, manipulative, and . . . quite mean-spirited. [...] You chose to destroy my reputation before every priest and bishop in the Anglican Church . . . . You do what you wish with my Orders, but I will never again sit under your authority!” Eric Dudley, Text Message to Bishop (Oct. 18, 2018).

<sup>249</sup> The reported victims sometimes corroborated each other’s stories without realizing it. One of the most stark examples of this comes from Mark Doe’s very specific account of the weekend that he spent with Eric out of town. Mark Doe stated that, the day after Eric’s reported misconduct, he realized he didn’t pack enough shirts for the trip and had to borrow one from Father Eric. Eric had them dress in similar turtleneck sweaters and go antique shopping (inside the shops, Eric insisted on loudly referring to Mark Doe by the nickname “Dickie,” despite Mark Doe’s obvious embarrassment at the situation). Mark Doe Tr. 12-13.

<sup>250</sup> GRACE is particularly grateful to all of the witnesses who participated in this process and shared their information, observations, and experiences with the team. We recognize that it is sometimes emotionally difficult for witnesses to meet with us and discuss such difficult matters. We thank each witness for coming forward and cooperating with this investigation.

<sup>251</sup> “The merging of clerical roles and activities with other types of relationships, mostly unmonitored, is a crucial element in understanding [clergy sexual misconduct against adults]. Unlike in other professional relationships, it is an added element that has facilitated sexual misconduct . . . .” Stephen E. de Weger and Jodi Death. “Clergy Sexual Misconduct Against Adults in the Roman Catholic Church: The Misuse of Professional and Spiritual Power in the Sexual Abuse of Adults” JASR 227, 241 (2017), available at <http://doi.org.10.1558/jasr.32747>;

<sup>252</sup> While this power imbalance is present in every relationship between a spiritual leader and a member of his congregation, most spiritual leaders create clear boundaries to minimize the possibility of even inadvertently exploiting their power to the detriment of a congregant. Priests can do this by limiting the number of additional roles that they take on.

<sup>253</sup> See Proverbs 31:8-9.

<sup>254</sup> Jessica A. Justice and Diana Garland, “Dual Relationships: When Clergy Counsel Congregants” available at <https://www.baylor.edu/clergysexualmisconduct/index.php?id=67408>.

<sup>255</sup> Jessica A. Justice and Diana Garland, “Dual Relationships: When Clergy Counsel Congregants” available at <https://www.baylor.edu/clergysexualmisconduct/index.php?id=67408>. Generally, we use boundaries in social interactions to help us cope with power and vulnerability in relationships. However, clergy sometimes overlook the power of their position and are not always aware of their influence over their congregants, who often regard them as spiritual authorities and may grant [clergy] with extraordinary trust, power and authority. This discrepancy in perception may result in the pastor minimizing or ignoring boundaries, creating an environment in which predisposed clergy can misuse the power they have to exploit vulnerable congregants. Clergy should consider carefully the implications of that power both as a pastor and spiritual authority and as a counselor. *Id.*

<sup>256</sup> Jessica A. Justice and Diana Garland, “Dual Relationships: When Clergy Counsel Congregants” available at <https://www.baylor.edu/clergysexualmisconduct/index.php?id=67408>.

There may be no professional relationship where dual roles are more common, however, than the role between members of the clergy and members of their flock.<sup>257</sup> Besides serving as spiritual leaders, clergy can serve as personal and relationship counselors, spiritual directors, teachers, neighbors, mentors, and friends (the list goes on).

Many of Father Eric's reported victims were also his employees. One of the reasons that federal law prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace is because of the uneven power dynamic.<sup>258</sup> The employee feels unable to resist the employer's advances because the employer controls the employee's job. This was especially true in this case because of the enormous amount of power that Father Eric held as Dean of the Cathedral.<sup>259</sup>

In addition to crossing emotional and physical boundaries with some of his employees, Father Eric abused his position as rector by using hostility, impulsivity, uncontrolled outbursts, implied threats, and intimidation to control his employees, creating a culture of fear and uncertainty in the workplace and leading to high staff turnover, particularly in the children and youth ministry. Father Eric created this "culture of fear"<sup>260</sup> in the workplace by exercising excessive control over his employees<sup>261</sup> and failing to use self-control to manage anger.<sup>262</sup>

Father Eric showed favoritism towards select priests, giving them the best assignments and the most sermons and showering them with praises at work. Outside the office, he pitted his favorite priests against each other, often bragging to John Doe about the time he spent with Mark Doe.<sup>263</sup> In the brief time that John Doe was employed, Father Eric promoted him and gave him several salary increases until John Doe was eventually making more than Associate Priest 1, who had not received a raise since 2011.

### 3. Failure to Respect Boundaries

To understand how Father Eric was able to engage in misconduct upon intelligent adult men, one must understand the context in which the reported victims were acquainted with Father Eric. For decades, he has been a larger-than-life figure in the Episcopalian and Anglican communities, not just in Tallahassee but across the country.<sup>264</sup> The reported victims were young, each with particular vulnerabilities. They believed that they had found someone who could provide them with some degree of spiritual direction and mentorship. Once Father Eric developed enough trust in his relationships with the reported victims, he would use abusive tactics to further manipulate them. Again, Father Eric followed a pattern, exploiting his reported victims emotionally, financially, spiritually, and physically.

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<sup>257</sup> It is hard to imagine another professional relationship where a person's counselor could show up uninvited at the person's home, but it would not be uncommon for a member of the clergy to show up at the home of a church member following a death in the family, regardless of the other roles that the priest may play in the lives of the bereaved.

<sup>258</sup> See Mark Doe Tr. 19.

<sup>259</sup> See footnotes 53 and 264. Mark Doe also stated, "I'd say Eric was probably the most influential person in the ACNA that I knew. I'm close with the Bishop but I felt Eric had more influence than the Bishop. Just like de facto influence" Mark Doe Tr. 19. Ben Doe's neighbor recalled, "[Ben Doe] was like, 'You don't understand how much power this man has in this community, I'm going to blackballed, no one's going to want to hire me,' he was legitimately frightened about what the consequences would be in the early days, if he said anything. Which I think is what caused him not to do very much at the beginning." Neighbor Tr. 7. Ben Doe's Neighbor continued, There were a lot of people in this community that regarded him very, very highly. And he was pretty well established here, and I think he had a support network of people that no matter what he did or said, were going to blindly stand by his side. That even got revealed after he left, I noticed a lot of comments in replies to the newspaper article and things like that where people were just saying this is all BS, and he's being taken advantage of, just people who were not willing to even acknowledge it." *Id.* at 7-8.

<sup>260</sup> See *supra* notes 188 and 191.

<sup>261</sup> See *supra* notes 197 and 210 and corresponding text.

<sup>262</sup> In at least one instance, Father Eric consumed alcohol in his office prior to an emotional meeting with an employee. He also encouraged the other clergy members who were going to be present in the meeting to drink. See Employee 1 Tr. 8

<sup>263</sup> Around the same time that Father Eric first held Mark Doe's hand in the car, John Doe expressed to Father Eric that he felt like Mark Doe was replacing him. Father Eric dismissed the idea and continued to inform John Doe whenever he spent time with Mark Doe. See Text Messages Between John Doe and Eric Dudley (on file with GRACE).

<sup>264</sup> Speaking of the community's perception of Father Eric, one of the priests that GRACE interviewed stated, "I mean, he is idolized. I'm sure you're getting that from every interview. I've never seen anybody up on so high a pedestal. I love Eric. He's a real person. I've known him to be happy and sad and remorse ... I've known him always as a real person, but ... with his work ethic, intelligence, and his gravitas, and his gregariousness, he could have done anything he wanted to do in his life. He could have been the president of the United States. I don't say that lightly. ... He's probably one of the most powerful men I've ever met in my entire life, and I've met a lot of powerful men. [...] He's bar none, one of the most impressive human beings I've ever met." Interview with Associate Priest 2 TR 10 (Feb. 22, 2019).

Father Eric met John Doe as part of an internship program, and thus was initially akin to a student-teacher relationship. John Doe, a married seminarian with young children, was learning about the call of the profession while looking for a ministry where he could serve in a place that he and his family could make a home. As John Doe became more interested in working at St. Peter's, Father Eric gained a second role: that of potential employer. Father Eric was also an influential leader in the ACNA and GAD and the revered dean of a cathedral with a special relationship with John Doe's seminary. Before John Doe was even approaching ordination, the circumstances were ripe for Father Eric to exploit his power and authority over John Doe.<sup>265</sup>

At this point in the relationship, Father Eric had a spiritual, ethical, moral, and professional responsibility to ensure that the boundaries in the relationship were clear and take whatever precautions were necessary to protect this vulnerable young man who clearly respected and looked up to him. Instead, Father Eric chose to further exploit the relationship for his personal benefit by pursuing a "friendship" with a seminarian many years his junior. Then, Father Eric offered John Doe a job and encouraged him to buy a house that he could not afford, in Eric's neighborhood. By the time that John Doe was ordained as a priest, Father Eric had already taken on a role as a fatherly mentor to John Doe, a role that Father Eric described as "father in God," and began to pursue a closer personal relationship.<sup>266</sup> They started having more meals and meetings together, working out and running together.<sup>267</sup>

Father Eric was John Doe's friend, mentor, spiritual leader, neighbor, and employer. In addition, Father Eric seemingly began preparing John Doe to be his successor and his "best friend," a relationship that Father Eric redefined to suit his purposes.<sup>268</sup> Father Eric did not just blur the boundaries of their relationship; he eliminated them. John Doe describes his internal struggle as he realized what was happening: "I knew there something was dangerous. But I kind of felt . . . really trapped. I had allowed way too much to occur. [...] I think if . . . the first time something happened if I had been like Steven Seagal and broke his arm, I might feel a little bit better about myself. But I didn't. And so, I just stayed quiet about it and thought that I could create boundaries and he would respect that."<sup>269</sup>

Ben Doe stated, "Every time I tried to set a boundary, [Father Eric] took it as . . . a challenge."<sup>270</sup> These words perhaps best describe how Father Eric was able to inflict such lasting emotional damage on his reported victims: by making them feel powerless to stop it. The extent of the emotional abuse that Eric inflicted on the reported victims is very troubling.<sup>271</sup> As evidenced in Father Eric's reported harassment of Ben Doe, this kind of unwelcome and intrusive behavior can result with those on the receiving end of this kind of misconduct fearing for their safety and the safety of their loved ones. It is difficult to comprehend the emotional impact Father Eric's harassing and obsessive behavior had upon Ben Doe and his wife, especially with a newborn baby on the way.<sup>272</sup>

In addition to the emotional misconduct perpetrated by Father Eric, he was able to breach physical boundaries with at least two men through a series of manipulative and deceptive behaviors. While Father Eric has consistently and adamantly denied that any of his conduct was sexual, the evidence suggests otherwise. Some of the many factors that support this finding include the following:<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> In his interview with the CI, Eric stated, "even back to his internship [John Doe] thought that everything I did was amazing. [...] You know, I mean he just thought I hung moon." Eric Dudley, CI Interview at 3:40-4:35.

<sup>266</sup> Letter from Eric Dudley to John Doe (Oct. 21, 2015). In a handwritten card that Eric gave to John Doe just before his ordination, Eric wrote that, in a dozen or more years of involvement with summer interns, "I've never connected as deeply with one as I have with you, nor have I ever seen more promise. [...] I hope you will allow me to continue to be a 'father in God' to you, as I watch you grow into the fullness of your gifts." *Id.*

<sup>267</sup> Eric Dudley, CI Interview at 3:40.

<sup>268</sup> As a model for their own friendship, Eric had the two of them read Wesley Hill's book, *Spiritual Friendship*. Hill, an openly gay, celibate Christian, wrote the semi-autobiographical book about his "spiritual friendship" with his best friend as a demonstration of how gay Christians can have loving, platonic relationships with other men. Hill does not advocate such relationships between individuals with uneven power dynamics. *See generally* Wesley Hill, *Spiritual Friendship*, <http://www.spiritualfriendship.org>.

<sup>269</sup> John Doe Tr. 28.

<sup>270</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 9:17-18.

<sup>271</sup> There is no way to quantify the amount of abuse GRACE uncovered in this case, nor would it be possible to present everything within the confines of a few dozen pages. Suffice to say that the facts presented herein are merely samples gathered from extensive interviews and thousands of pages of documents. Many unanswered questions remain, particularly regarding events that occurred prior to the founding of St. Peter's. In all likelihood, only Father Eric will ever know the full extent of his misconduct as a member of the clergy.

<sup>272</sup> "So [John Doe]...I remember he gets off the phone with Eric, and he breaks down. He was down, huddled up in a ball kind of on the floor just freaking out. And I'm asking him, 'What's wrong? What can I do?'" John Doe Wife Tr. 26.

<sup>273</sup> Note that some of these factors apply only to one incident while others apply to many incidents.

- The physical conduct took place in discrete locations such as shared hotel rooms and bedrooms where Eric and the reported victim were the only people present.<sup>274</sup>
- On multiple occasions, Father Eric secretly arranged for there to be only one bed in the room and then lied about it.<sup>275</sup>
- The touching often took place in bed, with Father Eric dressed in his underwear and reaching under the reported victim's clothing to touch him.
- Father Eric kissed some of the reported victims on the mouth.
- On at least one occasion, Father Eric laid his body on top of the reported victim's body and stated that he was having an erection.<sup>276</sup>
- The reported victims often had to resist Father Eric's advances, including by saying, "I will not let you have sex with me!"<sup>277</sup>
- Father Eric verbalized his love for the reported victims on many occasions,<sup>278</sup> as well as constantly complimenting them on their physical appearances.<sup>279</sup>
- Father Eric was jealous of the reported victims' wives and interfered in their marital relationships.<sup>280</sup> In conversations with John Doe, Father Eric expressed a sense of entitlement to having at least the same amount of time with John Doe that John Doe had with his spouse.
- The reported victims believed the conduct was sexual and reacted with feelings of confusion, shame, and guilt.<sup>281</sup>

This sexualized behavior was most often explained away by Father Eric claiming that his actions were innocent expressions of friendship<sup>282</sup> and that men just did not know how to have real friendships anymore. This attempted minimization of such troubling physical behavior by a mentor, employer, and supposed "friend" caused much confusion amongst the reported victims. As Mark Doe explained, "I really maintained that through multiple incidence [sic] over the next year and a half of kind of really struggling internally. Figuring out am I being a homophobe, am I being weird? The part of this whole push is men don't know how to do friendship in America like I'm just a lonely person. You need to make sure you have good deep friendships and all that stuff."<sup>283</sup> It is worth considering how the public would have interpreted Eric's actions if the reported victims had been females.

<sup>274</sup> On each trip where abuse occurred, Eric made arrangements for himself and the reported victim to share a hotel room, despite the fact that he was not ordinarily frugal with the church's money. For example, it was not unusual for Eric to charge the Cathedral \$150 or more for a single dinner for two. Employee 3 Tr. 6.

<sup>275</sup> See *supra* note 71.

<sup>276</sup> See John Doe Tr. 28. John Doe stated that, on one occasion, Father Eric asked to see his bedroom, "So, I take him upstairs to my bedroom and I'm showing him, and he's laying down. He's like, 'Where do you sleep?' I'm like, 'I sleep over here.'" And he's like, 'Come lay down. Lay down with me.' And I get in, hesitantly, and then he kind of gets on top of me and he kisses me, and he's just holding me. At first I'm putting up with it, I'm putting up, and he's just kind of rubbing all over me and he takes off his shirt, takes off my shirt. I'm getting very uncomfortable at that point, and he tells me he's getting hard, and at that point I shoved him off of me and

said, 'Dude, I'm not having sex with you.' And he said, 'What?' I said, 'I'm not going to have sex with you, man.'" *Id.*

<sup>277</sup> See *id.*

<sup>278</sup> John Doe provided GRACE with all of the text messages on his phone between him and Eric. In 325 pages of text messages exchanged between Father Eric and John Doe, the phrase "love you" appeared on 268 pages, often multiple times on a single page. John Doe and Eric told each other that they loved each other almost every night before bed. When asked why, John Doe said, "[There's] a lot of initiation on my end as well. Yes. I mean, that's the part that kept me so quiet. It's like, 'Oh, well, are you complicit in this, then?' Because you say, 'I love you too,' or, 'I love you,' and it's very hard to describe for people and to put it into words, but there's an expectation that you know you have to ... Trying to think of a ... Just this expectation. If you don't do it then, there's consequences. And so you just get used to, 'Okay, if I just do this very quickly, or if I just play along, or if I say these words, or if I do these actions, he's not going to get on my case. He's going to back off. This keeps him at bay.' Okay, so let me give you an example. I could have a miserable day, just an awful day of him yelling and being mad and angry and having an adult hissy fit and being mad at me. Or, the first thing I could do every morning when I see him is give him a kiss. What would you choose to do? I think it's pretty easy just to, okay, just give him a kiss and be done. Just let it be done. It's over. It's done with. And it's really hard to describe for people." John Doe Tr. 29.

<sup>279</sup> For example, in a written list of 25 things he loves about John Doe, Father Eric wrote, "The way you look like a little boy when you sleep."

<sup>280</sup> See, e.g., text messages calling John Doe's wife "Dragon Queen" and telling John Doe that his wife was controlling his life.

<sup>281</sup> It should be noted that Father Eric later blamed the reported victims for being the "aggressors" in the relationships, using a term that is typically associated with intimate relationships. See Text Message from Eric Dudley to Archbishop 1 (Feb. 18, 2019) ("I do not buy that I have devastated [John Doe]; he was more aggressive than I in this relationship, and how is someone who is devastated still telling me 2 weeks before this mess that I'm his best friend and he loves me dearly?").

<sup>282</sup> Ben Doe recalled that, when Eric barged into his office that day and started professing his love for Ben Doe, Ben Doe told him to stop. Ben Doe Tr. 7. According to Ben Doe, Father Eric's response was to normalize his behavior: "This is how Christians are with one another. It's not the way the world is. This is how we are." *Id.*

<sup>283</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 4.

#### 4. The Aftermath

Father Eric has yet to take full responsibility for his actions. To date, he has only offered a vague apology in his resignation letter where he said: “I apologize and ask for forgiveness from those affected by my inappropriate actions. Please pray for their peace. I also apologize to this congregation and the church. I am deeply sorry and have earnestly repented before God.”<sup>284</sup> Aside from this, GRACE did not find any evidence where he has apologized to the reported victims.<sup>285</sup> Additionally, Father Eric refused to follow the ecclesiastical discipline, even stating in a text message to the Bishop that he would never again submit to his authority. Indeed, even after he was deposed from the ministry, Father Eric continued to practice as a priest. Additionally, Father Eric has continued attempting to contact John Doe, even during this investigation.<sup>286</sup> These actions indicate that Father Eric is still rallying support behind him rather than seeking repentance from those he has harmed and seeking the help that he needs. In short, Father Eric has not exhibited fruits of repentance, sorrow, or grievance for the pain he has caused.<sup>287</sup>

One way to measure what happened is by the degree of trauma inflicted upon the reported victims. Those who were hurt have been shattered by Eric’s behavior, losing the significant trust they had in him and feeling seriously violated. This was not just a set of misunderstood gestures. Eric overstepped boundaries.<sup>288</sup>

When the gravity of Father Eric’s misconduct hit Mark Doe, it crushed his confidence in his decision to enter the ministry. At first, Mark Doe did not want to speak up about the abuse because “I felt like I had changed a lot of my life and I had made a lot of decisions about my life. Based on him being like a mentor and a good priest. I committed so much work into that church and I didn’t want it to be true. I didn’t want to feel like I had wasted ... years of my life.”<sup>289</sup>

Ten years ago, Baylor University conducted a research study on the topic of adult exploitation by clergy. The author of the study, Professor Diana Garland, described the impact of a congregation’s response on victims, stating, “[V]ictims were ‘hurt’ by a religious leader, but they were ‘destroyed’ by the congregation.” John Doe’s wife said, “As time went on, parishioners began scheduling pastoral appointments with John Doe only to confront him with Eric’s truth and harass him further. Naturally, this caused John Doe’s anxiety to increase tremendously.” After surviving years of Father Eric’s misconduct, it was the response by many in the congregation that finally seemed to bring him to his breaking point. John Doe and his family no longer felt that they could remain in the community, so they finally made the difficult decision to leave.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>284</sup>Dudley Resignation Letter.

<sup>285</sup> See id.

<sup>286</sup> As of the writing of this report, the most recent message that Eric sent to John Doe was on X date, 2019. John Doe has also received numerous text messages from Eric’s family and several “anonymous” letters. When asked why he does not block Eric’s number on his phone, John Doe responded, “I can answer that very easily...I wanted to be aware of his emotional level because I can almost predict what his next step would be. The more information I have, although it’s hard to see and hard to look at, the more I know what he’s doing. When there’s silence, it actually says a whole lot to me. When he’s active, that tells me something. So, I’ve just learned how to read in between his lines and so yeah, I want to be aware of what he’s doing and what he’s thinking.” John Doe Tr. 34.

<sup>287</sup> It is important to note that the reported victims are first and foremost impacted by these events. However, the ripple effect of the impact of Father Eric’s actions cannot be overstated. The impacts on the reported victim’s friends and family, the fellow staff at the Cathedral, the Cathedral Leadership, the entire Cathedral congregation, and the diocese is worth noting.

<sup>288</sup> Bishop 1, Dudley Q&A Response (Sept. 6, 2018) (“I would not have taken major action for trivial infractions. If we had a video of incidents that took place, you would be as heartbroken as I was.”).

<sup>289</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 7. Mark Doe also stated, “One of the reason that is so hard to talk about [the trip where misconduct occurred] is the sense that ... Okay, the last six years. What is that been? It’s kind of been a waste. I just thought I kind of wished I had known. I just feel like I wasted and people are trying to tell me I didn’t waste it but it feels like a pretty freaking waste.” Mark Doe Tr. 19.

<sup>290</sup> John Doe Wife Follow Up 4. John Doe’s wife described their reaction to Eric’s resignation letter to the congregation, stating, “To most, this letter was sincere and offered closure. To us, it was a sign that Eric was in complete denial of what he had done and the consequences he was suffering.” John Doe Wife Follow Up 4. She stated, and GRACE confirmed that Eric sent text messages to John Doe right before he released the letter, and then, more frequently, after he released the letter, despite the Bishop’s admonitions prohibiting Eric from contacting John Doe. Eric also continued to name his accusers and spread rumors about conspiracies and lies.



## B. Analysis of St. Peter's Response

### 1. Complaints of Clergy Misconduct

Evaluating the institutional response in this investigation is a two-fold process. St. Peter's is an independent congregation with its own leadership; however, it is also a member church of the Diocese of the Gulf Atlantic. Both entities shared responsibility for the response to allegations of abuse made against Father Eric. Upon learning of the disclosed abuse, the Bishop appointed an internal diocesan investigator to conduct a canonical investigation. This investigation was not independent nor was it transparent. These factors contributed to a wider sense of confusion amongst the affected parties. Further, the internal investigation initially asserted a degree of blame on one of the victims and bound that victim by a series of Godly Admonitions. That decision was later rolled back by the Bishop but gives the appearance that a victim of abuse will be punished if they come forward and make a disclosure. It was only later in this process that St. Peter's (in concert with the Diocese) elected to engage GRACE to conduct this independent investigation. This unfortunate situation could have been mitigated if St. Peter's and the diocese had elected to seek the assistance of an independent investigation from the outset of learning about these allegations.

A common theme that has surfaced throughout this investigation (survey responses and witness interviews) is a reported frustration with the apparent lack of transparency in the communication between St. Peter's and the diocese with the members of the congregation. Much of the communication provided very little substantive information and the information that was shared left significant room for innuendo and individual interpretation. The communication was further complicated by the decision to release information via Facebook as opposed to more directly to the congregation. Additionally, Father Eric was permitted to make a written statement to the congregation, which was posted for view and then almost immediately removed. This lack of clarity, transparency, and consistency in communication served to further confuse the congregation.

It is important to note that St. Peter's is to be commended for getting independent professional assistance and engaging GRACE to do its own independent, third-party investigation. However, had St. Peter's done this as soon as they received information about Father Eric, reported victims may have experienced less harm and trauma after making their disclosures. St. Peter's and the diocese should use this situation as a learning experience in which to learn and never repeat.

In addition, the Godly admonitions given to one of the reported victims after he came forward was an error in judgment. While understandably there are Anglican order and laws, doing so within the context of misconduct has a significant impact on the reported victim. In addition, this posture gives off one that is reported victim-blaming and shaming and has no place in any form of response when one steps forward to disclose allegations of clergy misconduct. Furthermore, this situation involved dynamics of abuse of power and control. Accordingly, a Godly Admonition given in this context only further reminds the reported victim that he is not in control of the situation and further plays into the abuse of power dynamics that were already at play in his life. In addition, one reported victim was initially told that he would need to find another job and that Father Eric could keep his. This was reversed, however, the impact on the reported victim was still felt.<sup>291</sup>

Last, failure to care for survivors in situations such as these indicates that it is not a safe environment to disclose abuse. As one reported victim stated, "if there are other people that are going to come forward, they need to know that they're going to be okay. What kept me quiet for so long is the feeling that if I came forward, this would ruin my life. I'm still nervous that this is going to ruin ... that my coming forward is going to ruin my life. I just want to try to avoid that if possible going forward. I know it's hard coming forward no matter what, no matter what you have set up. People are always afraid to come

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<sup>291</sup> "I never want the diocese to repeat that mistake. So I want that exposed a bit. Not as a way of I'm angry with the Gulf Atlantic diocese, or I'm angry at [Bishop 1]. I'm not. I understand he did the best he could do, but it was handled very badly in my opinion. And I think anybody who went through this would say, yeah, coming forward at certain times was felt the worst decision I'd ever made in my entire life. When I was being fired and Eric was being [inaudible 02:30:00] was going to be allowed to stay. I think the fact that [Bishop 1] didn't recuse himself right away, he had to play the judge and the fact that we're not able to do these kinds of investigations in house, yet we still have to do this, keep this all contained in house. We tried to keep everything quiet and it just muddled everything. And I know that the heart behind [Bishop 1] and [name] was probably well intended [inaudible 02:30:29] well intentioned there. It was so bad and it could have been, this thing could have really gone south quickly. If Mark Doe hadn't come forward, I would be in a very different situation right now and my life would be far worse and I don't like that it took another victim coming forward to make the situation redeemable." John Doe Tr. 43.

forward, but if we don't fix some of these very obvious problems, chances are nobody will ever come forward."<sup>292</sup> It is imperative that St. Peter's understand how to best care for survivors in their flock.<sup>293</sup> Doing so communicates to past, present, and future survivors that "abuse will not be tolerated here," creating a safe-haven for survivors rather than offenders.<sup>294</sup>

## 2. Lack of Training: Understanding the Dynamics of Clergy Misconduct

If St. Peter's had significant training on the dynamics of clergy misconduct, spiritual abuse, and the exploitation of power and control, it could have potentially identified behaviors used by Father Eric to gain control over these reported victim's lives earlier.

Some individuals responded that Father Eric could not have committed these offenses because they "know his character."<sup>295</sup> This type of common response to clergy misconduct and the exploitation of power and control can have serious consequences. Danger can exist when we draw conclusions about a person's private behavior based upon what is known about a person's public persona. As Dr. Diane Langberg explains, "[w]e may think we know people, but God says we do not."<sup>296</sup> All parents, volunteers, childcare workers, and institutional leaders must understand and remember that "Niceness is a decision... a strategy of social interaction; it is not a character trait."<sup>297</sup> Appreciating, therefore, the danger of these dynamics is even more important for Christian organizations. Believing that a person we know is capable of certain types of misconduct is usually difficult to accept. But, as troubling as these realities can be, pursuing truth through education about these types of abuses is one of the best and most important ways we can protect the vulnerable and the institution.

Ongoing church-wide education is a critical investment not only for St. Peter's leadership but also for the congregation. Just as St. Peter's maintains its gardens or ensures the fire alarms are in working order, how much more so should engaging in regular safeguarding education be a priority for the ongoing health of any organization committed to preventing those in power from using it to wound others and supporting those who have been wounded. Educating all demographics of the church body about the dynamics of abuse must be a top and ongoing priority for institutions that serve the vulnerable. An institution's failure to be proactive about these issues means that its people are more vulnerable to exploitation, and those who are engaged in misconduct are not held accountable for known offenses. Accordingly, St. Peter's communicates the message that the church is not a safe place. The bottom line is that churches that communicate proactively with the wounded and are vocal about the realities of clergy misconduct by addressing it transparently through education, sermons, support, and care for reported victims are communicating a clear message: your pain is not too much for us to bear. Transforming our churches and faith communities into places of refuge for those who have been wounded, judged, and marginalized is what the gospel is all about. If God is our refuge, then our churches must be the places where these souls find safety and rest. Sacred spaces should be safe places. Ensuring the sacredness of the church is only done through prevention and awareness on abuse issues.

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<sup>292</sup> John Doe Tr. 44.

<sup>293</sup> See Matthew 25:35-40: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'" (ESV).

<sup>294</sup> One reported victim stated, "I think that this was handled initially so poorly by St. Peter's that when [another reported victim] came to me and told me what had happened, I struggled for a little bit to tell her to come forward because I knew what potentially could happen." (John Doe, pg. 43). GRACE became aware of this situation, but it fell outside the scope, preventing further investigation.

<sup>295</sup> For example, a survey respondent said, "I am an attorney and have lived and practiced the idea that you are innocent until proven guilty. While I will always forgive those making the acquisitions against Father Eric, they do not jibe with what I have observed about Father Eric's character. While I recognize that he has "confessed," I wonder if the confession was in any way forced upon him by other pressures. I will keep an open mind until after the final report is released and, in the meantime, I will continue to pray for all concerned and our church." See Survey Response 473.

<sup>296</sup> Diane Langberg, "Sexual Abuse in Christian Organizations." See

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b0a335c45776ee022efd309/t/5be936628a922d4a291eb2af/1542010466315/Sexual+Abuse+Within+Christian+Organizations+-+Langberg.pdf>

<sup>297</sup> Gavin de Becker, *The Gift of Fear* (1997).

### 3. Lack of Appropriate Policies and Procedures

During the relevant times investigated by GRACE, St. Peter's had very little formal reporting structure set up related to employee-employer issues. Several witnesses explained feeling that they did not have anywhere to go to report complaints. In 2017, the Collaboration Committee raised concerns that there were no policies and procedures in place and recommended hiring a part-time Human Resources staff. The lack of policy and procedures gives rise to confusion and the culture of fear that were raised by many current and former employees during this investigation.

Concerns were raised throughout this investigation about the fact that Father Eric did not have a window in his office door, per his request. In addition, Father Eric requested additional sound proofing to be made to his office.<sup>298</sup> This request was met with a new door with a higher grade.<sup>299</sup> Windows in office doors are best practice for organizations across the country, especially those such as Father Eric engaging in counseling ministries. This not only protects the minister, but the parishioners and other employees in closed-door meetings. Of concern, is the fact that Father Eric held multiple one-on-one meetings with both men and women in his office, some of which have led to the complaints raised in this report. This is an unfortunate lack of accountability upon Father Eric. Also of concern, Father Eric was the only employee who had no window on his office. While small, this indicates to employees yet again, that Father Eric was above the rules. In addition, failure to appropriately respond to and follow best practice protocol when someone came forward in 2010 with complaints about Father Eric created an environment where Father Eric was left at the helm, unchecked, leading to many of the unfortunate situations described within this report.

Failure to listen to the staff and implement best practice protocols is what gave Father Eric the control and power necessary to carry out the grievances raised. It created a culture of fear and ultimately, created an environment in which all forms of misconduct are more likely to thrive.

### V. Impact on Reported Victims, Family, and Congregational Community

The lasting consequences of abuse and misconduct on a victim, their family, and even the wider community of faith are so significant that they can be nearly impossible to quantify. While the effects of abuse are always numerous and varied, it is the harm to the very soul which is perhaps the most devastating and profound. When this wrong occurs within the context of a Christian community having been committed by someone who professes the Christian faith and who occupies a position of spiritual authority over the victim, the spiritual harm which surely follows is shattering. Some witnesses told GRACE the impact this has had on them:

- *"I read through the gospel of Matthew and the gospel of Luke together, and it was just so apparent that Jesus is mad about what happened and would have handled things much differently than the church. We feel like in all of this, that he's been on our side, so to speak. He's been with us and on our side in all of this. I think the thing that feels the most damaged is my relationship with the church."*<sup>300</sup>
- *"I [am] reading through Luke and reading through that section where he's just yelling at Pharisees. It just feels like if Jesus came back and said the same exact things today. So, it's just leadership at St. Peters, especially certain people, he wouldn't have to change any words. He could just say exactly the same thing. That's why I'm completely disillusioned with the church as an institution. I don't want to be a priest, I don't want to do any of that. It feels like a waste of my life."*<sup>301</sup>
- *I think one thing that I ... that I'm angry about, is sometimes when I pray I think of Eric and the way he'd hold my hand [during prayer] and stuff like that. It was totally inappropriate and I would just think ... That will come to mind and I'll just feel like, 'I don't even want to pray right now.' To me that's just such a personal violation. I know that my faith is ... I know that that faith is pure. I know that God is good and that what Eric did and ... he's not God and those two things are separate. But I'm pretty distant. I'm pretty distant. I go to church, but I'm pretty distant. I'm not looking to get involved. No way."*<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> See Employee 4 Transcript.

<sup>299</sup> *Id.*

<sup>300</sup> Mark Doe Wife Tr. 18.

<sup>301</sup> Mark Doe Tr. 27.

<sup>302</sup> Ben Doe Tr. 44.

- *We've been going to a [new church] lately. This is just me, I'm not talking for anybody else, but they'll do ... they have music in the beginning and I'm trying to pick out who's the ... who could be the Eric-type guy out there. So, I'm not looking to get involved but I'll go. That's where I'm at right now.*<sup>303</sup>

Research and practice have demonstrated the consequential reality of re-victimization when reported victims are required to tell their story, even under the most favorable of circumstances. Regrettably, the way a response is made to a report of clergy misconduct is often more negatively impactful to the reported victim than the occurrence of the abuse itself. The unthinkable reality is that reported victims of abuse and misconduct will be impacted personally and spiritually for the rest of their lives.

When charged with responding to any form of abuse or misconduct, organizations must do so with great care and wisdom. This rings even more true within the Christian community. If reported victims are to be well served rather than re-victimized upon disclosure, the Church needs to possess a clearly defined understanding of the physical and spiritual impact of these offenses against the Kingdom of God. Those who are called to serve in Christian leadership must comprehend the call of the Gospel to protect the vulnerable and to advocate for the wounded who are under their care.

In Anglicanism, the dignity and worth of every individual, even more so the vulnerable and wounded are established and made known through the Baptismal Covenant. Therefore, the responsibility of the care of the individual is a corporate one, a task to which the whole church pledges their commitment to and is held to account by God. At times, this responsibility mandates that individuals who harm the body of Christ must be exposed and held responsible for their abusive and inappropriate actions. Holy Scripture demonstrates that at his very nature, Jesus is truth and light. Following his example, members of the body of Christ in the church are mandated by His Word to live in truth and light; this is at once a personal and an institutional command. A failure on the part of any church to protect against and / or properly respond to these offenses is a failure to make known the love and truth of Jesus.

Even more, the ripple effect of abuse in the church moves beyond those individuals who are directly impacted by the abuse (the reported victims and their families) and extends to the congregation as a whole. The occurrence of abuse unjustly causes a rift in the church and in many cases forces congregants to take one side or another. The impact on the Body of Christ is devastating and long lasting. When a member of the clergy commits a wrong against any member of the church, he in turn commits a spiritual wrong against the entire church.

GRACE commends St. Peter's for its demonstrated commitment to truth and light through the courageous initiation of this independent investigation. By continuing to respond to this investigation in humility, with a teachable spirit, and an authentic commitment for change, the Cathedral will demonstrate the transformative love of Jesus, which is able to liberate and to heal the individuals who have been affected by these matters and the greater body of Christ at Saint Peter's Anglican Cathedral as a whole.

Respectfully Submitted on this 22nd Day of November 2019,

GRACE

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<sup>303</sup> *Id.*



**Independent Investigation of  
Saint Peter's Anglican Cathedral**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based upon the findings of this investigation, GRACE proposes several recommendations for the leadership of Saint Peter's Anglican Cathedral:

**Addressing the Past**

1. GRACE recommends that St. Peter's provide funding to assist all individuals who were the victims of clergy misconduct and interpersonal mistreatment by Father Eric referenced in this report.
2. GRACE recommends that the leadership of St. Peter's develop a plan that demonstrates authentic repentance to all the reported victims referenced in this report.
3. GRACE recommends that St. Peter's initiate an investigation into allegations of misconduct by church representatives that were brought to the attention of GRACE during the investigation.<sup>304</sup>

**The Present**

1. GRACE recommends that St. Peter's host a service of lament and forgiveness related to the many profoundly troubling issues addressed by this investigation.

**Moving Forward**

1. GRACE recommends that St. Peter's develops a clergy misconduct policy that satisfies best practice standards – this should be done with the assistance of an expert on clergy abuse matters.
2. GRACE recommends that St. Peter's reviews and revises all sexual misconduct policies to ensure that they satisfy best practice standards – this should be done with the assistance of an expert on sexual misconduct matters.

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<sup>304</sup> GRACE shall provide more specific details on this issue during the in-person meeting with the leadership of St. Peter's.

3. GRACE recommends that St. Peter's reviews and revises all child protection policies to ensure that they satisfy best practice standards – this should be done with the assistance of an expert in child safeguarding.
4. GRACE recommends that St. Peter's develops clear reporting guidelines relating to allegations of clergy misconduct, sexual misconduct, and child maltreatment. These guidelines should include both internal reporting protocols and external reporting protocols that fully comply with state law.
5. GRACE recommends that St. Peter's takes steps to make all policies and protocols accessible on its website.
6. GRACE recommends that the leadership of St. Peter's seek a greater understanding of the spiritual impact of clergy misconduct, sexual misconduct, and child sexual abuse. This greater understanding should eventually facilitate a conversation to develop ways to minimize this pain for victims who wish to worship at St. Peter's.
7. GRACE recommends that St. Peter's develops a Safeguarding team that will:
  - a) Facilitate a support ministry for survivors of clergy misconduct and sexual abuse.
  - b) Engage subject matter experts to provide and mandate substantive abuse and misconduct training to all clergy, staff, lay leaders, volunteers, and to make similar training available to the wider church membership.
  - c) Facilitate ongoing training for all members of St. Peter's (adults and children) related to misconduct and abuse matters.
  - d) Play a central role in responding to reported policy violations.
  - e) Develop relationships with community partners who work in the field of addressing issues related to various types of misconduct and abuse.
8. GRACE recommends that the St. Peter's Pastoral staff and Vestry receive annual training on how to understand, identify, and respond to issues related to clergy misconduct, sexual abuse, and victimization
9. GRACE recommends that the greater St. Peter's community receive ongoing education and training on issues related to the identification and response to clergy misconduct and other forms of abuse.
10. GRACE recommends training and awareness for the St. Peter's youth on how to identify and report all forms of clergy and/or sexual misconduct.
11. GRACE recommends that leadership of St. Peter's articulate ways the church community can have more transparent and healthy conversations that address all forms of misconduct and abuse, including but not limited to, clergy misconduct, spiritual abuse, interpersonal mistreatment, sexual abuse, family violence, and non-physical/verbal abuse.
12. GRACE recommends that St. Peter's review the resources at the church to be sure that resources exist for families impacted by all forms of abuse. This should include books<sup>305</sup> and links to appropriate counseling in which a licensed clinician is able to provide evidence-based therapy and, within that setting, to also address the spiritual impact of all forms of abuse and misconduct.

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<sup>305</sup> E.g., Diane Langberg, *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores* (Greensboro: New Growth Press 2015).