

May 4, 2021

Dear Upper Midwest Diocese Family:

Negative Events Misrepresented

Bishop Stewart was aware that allegations against Mark extended far beyond the 'last two years.'

I am writing to share with you about a devastating situation that has occurred in our diocese during the last two years. We have been working toward taking the appropriate next steps, and our diocese has now signed an agreement to begin a formal investigation. We should have done this earlier, but we signed the contract last Friday, April 30 and wanted you to know as soon as that process was officially underway.

Organizational Promotion

Prioritizes the 'action' that has been taken over apology for time taken to preserve credibility.

Prosocial Behavior

Prosocial behavior highlights the organization's involvement in prosocial actions in an attempt to atone for mistakes and convince stakeholders and/or the public that the organization merits a positive image.

Let me begin by saying there are those who have been horribly victimized in **these events**. I desire to own where we have not served them as well as we should have and to care for any potential victims who may still come forward.

Burying

Obscures, denies, or conceals the organization's connection to an unfavorable other.

Negative Events Misrepresented

Incorrect date, the formal accusation was made on May 18, 2019

Two years ago, on May 20, 2019, Mark Rivera, a **volunteer lay leader (with the title of Catechist)** at Christ Our Light in Big Rock, Illinois, was accused of a sexual offense against a minor. Christ Our Light was part of the Greenhouse Missionary Society, which is within our diocese. When Greenhouse leadership learned of this accusation, Mark was immediately removed from his position as Catechist. On June 10, 2019, Mark was arrested and jailed in Kane County.

Negative Events Misrepresented

He was accused of serial molestation of a 9 year old little girl.

Burying

Bp. Stewart knew that Mark's role at Rez was extensive and went back decades.

Organizational Promotion

Focuses on removing Mark from his position, while diverting attention from the fact that those same Greenhouse leaders all failed to report child sexual abuse.

Negative Events Misrepresented

This glosses over the fact that some COLA attendees were not immediately informed until Cherin contacted them herself, days after her daughter came forward with allegations against Mark

The congregation, which consisted of half a dozen families and some individuals, all knew of Mark's arrest immediately. Six months later, in late 2019, Mark's bail was paid, and he was released and placed under the supervision of the court as he awaited trial. This trial is still pending.

Organizational Promotion

The church's failure to involve proper authorities when Mark's 9-year-old victim disclosed the abuse is buried while the reader is focused on how Bp. Ruch urged Joanna to report the rapes and quickly met with Diocesan leaders.

In November 2020, I received an email from an adult woman who accused Mark of a sexual crime. That morning I met with diocesan leaders and attorneys. I then replied to her email and assured her that we took her accusation very seriously. I urged her to go to the proper authorities with this accusation.

Organizational Promotion

The letter distracts from the original failure to call DCFS and highlights these later calls.

The next day, I learned that a third young woman had disclosed to two pastoral leaders that very day that she and Mark had engaged in a sexual relationship for several months. Because we were not clear about her age and to exercise caution, I directed these two pastoral leaders to call DCFS and the prosecutor's office. They did so immediately. As best as these leaders could ascertain, she was a young adult when their sexual relationship began. A couple months later, I learned of other possible minors at risk, and personally called DCFS to make an additional report.

Organizational Promotion

The letter emphasizes prompt responses with phrases like "that very day" and "immediately" to divert attention from the two year delay in notifying the congregation.

Negative Events Misrepresented

Cherin Marie first told Church of the Resurrection leaders that these minors were at risk in June 2019 and Dcn. Val McIntyre was reminded of this fact in early December 2020. Bp. Ruch did not call DCFS until January 2021.

The alleged crimes occurred in a private home or on private property not on church property or at a church event, but we still want to take an

Burying

Not only are the claims that Mark did not molest his 9-year-old victim at a church event or on church property lacking evidence, but not all of the victims that came forward disclosed the locations of their abuse.

active role in learning how best to ensure that something like this never happens again .

Denial of Intention

This suggests that certain negative events were unforeseeable and, thus, outside of the organization's control. By emphasizing his ignorance, Bp. Ruch implies it was reasonable to assume the legal system alone was responsible for protecting victims from an abuser who was at large in his churches for 20+ years.

Let me say at the start that I made regrettable errors in this process. When the original allegation came out against Mark in 2019, mistakenly assumed that the necessary criminal investigation was a sufficient next step. I thought it best to let the county district attorney's office lead a thorough investigation resulting in a clear ruling. I anticipated that after this process we would inform the diocese of the court's ruling. I naively expected the trial to occur much sooner than it has.

Negative Events Misrepresented

Not only was Church of the Resurrection aware of multiple victims in June 2019, but Joanna Rudenberg detailed 10 allegations to Bp. Ruch in January 2021 and some of those victims reported that he did not reach out to them to ensure their safety.

Ingratiation

This is demonstrated through his use of "dear family of God," which has the effect of deflecting criticism by reminding readers of his authority as their church leader.

I have since learned otherwise, in part through conversations with one of the victims. I now understand that when an accusation of this gravity occurs, and when an arrest is made, a safe opportunity for other possible victims to come forward must be created. I apologize for this, dear family of God. We would have cared better for the victims had we hired a firm earlier. My mistake accounts for the significant gap in time between Mark being accused of an offense and this communication to you.

Burying

Comes into play with "we would have cared better," which glosses over the direct harm that was done to survivors, and if "we had hired a firm earlier," which distracts from the mishandling by focusing on the time it took to hire a firm.

Denial of Intention

"Mistake" indicates a singular error in judgment as opposed to an entire systematic failure to respond well to victims.

Negative Events Misrepresented

This shrinks multiple felony offenses down to a single offense.

Denial of Agency

Implies that he did not make a particular decision or perform a specific behavior that caused a negative event.

I have always sought the counsel of diocesan leaders and attorneys, and yet I take responsibility for these decisions. Other oversights will likely surface as we go through this process, and we as a diocese will seek to be as transparent as possible.

Disclaimer

An explanation given in anticipation of a negative event in order to ward off any potential future threats to the organization's image.

Organizational Promotion

Promises of transparency, while repeatedly ignoring survivor requests to make the investigative final report public.

Boasting

Proclaims a positive link to a favorable organization--in this case, Archbishop Foley Beach and the Province.

I have been keeping (my superior, Archbishop Foley Beach, apprised of the situation). I have done the same with the Bishop's Council of the Upper Midwest Diocese and Church of the Resurrection's Vestry. They are highly supportive of all the decisions described in this letter.

Organizational Promotion

The combination of these tactics implies that Bp. Ruch is an active communicator and that the Diocesan and Provincial leadership approve of his actions.

Burnishing

Enhances the positive features of a favorable other.

After intensive interviewing and research of seven firms, the diocesan Bishop's Council and I are grateful to announce that we signed a contract with a **highly reputable firm with experience in such investigations**, Grand River Solutions, last Friday.

Organizational Promotion

By casting UMD leadership as dedicated to researching firms and eager to learn, attention is diverted from the fact that they have already failed to bring in experts or learn from survivors.

Our intent in hiring an investigator is not to protect our diocese but to help us accomplish three main goals:

Burnishing

GRS and UMD failed even to reach out to known reported victims of Mark Rivera. The only notifications about the GRS investigation were sent to church and diocesan members, effectively excluding anyone who no longer attended an ACNA church.

- 1) **to reach out to any other possible victims** and make sure they are cared for,
- 2) to learn how we could have handled these allegations better, and
- 3) to build better systems for the future so that the diocese is as safe a place as possible.

Organizational Promotion

The letter asserts that the UMD desires truth, justice, and healing when their actions suggest otherwise.

As we work with this investigative firm, one of our first actions will be communicating how other possible victims or their parents can find help. We desire to help spur truth, justice and healing throughout our diocese. I

can appreciate that this letter may raise many questions for you; please know that we will be communicating from the diocese as we work with the investigator. We anticipate there are details that we do not know or have as inaccurate and these adaptations will be a part of future communications.

Disclaimer

The letter wards off criticism by promising communications with updates and corrections, yet no communication occurred between this announcement and Joanna Rudenberg's first Twitter post almost two months later, despite the fact that survivors immediately informed Bp. Ruch of numerous inaccuracies in the announcement.

Mark attended Church of the Resurrection in Wheaton from the mid-nineties until Christ Our Light was founded in 2013. The only information we have regarding Mark's involvement with our children or youth was as a youth volunteer for one summer. He also served as a prayer minister. Mark has never held a paid position of any kind in our diocese. We look forward to working with the investigators to confirm or contradict these details.

Burying

This minimizes all of Mark's volunteer positions at Church of the Resurrection, despite the fact that UMD was aware of the extensive roles Mark held over the years.

Negative Events Misrepresented

Mark continued attending Church of the Resurrection after 2013, because Christ Our Light Anglican met on Saturday evenings. Mark even attended Church of the Resurrection while out on bond.

If you or someone you know may have been harmed by Mark, we encourage you to contact the independent investigating firm at Reports@GrandRiverSolutions.com to make a confidential and safe inquiry.

Prosocial Behavior

Harm is a tepid word that illuminates the threat that Mark's abuse poses to the church's image.

Supplication

The letter appeals to the readers for sympathy with Supplication tactics, which "portray an image of dependency and vulnerability for the purpose of acquiring help, favor, or sympathy from others."

If you have general questions or concerns, please email office@midwestanglican.org.

Let me also say that I am heartbroken. Katherine and I have known all the families involved for years. Our diocese and churches have sought to provide care for the victims and their families, and moving forward, we will do

our utmost to support them. We also continue to offer Mark and his family care if they desire to engage with our diocesan processes.

I ask for your prayers as we proceed. Please pray for the families involved. Please pray that justice will be done in the trial. Please pray for our independent investigation and the aforementioned goals.

May the Lord lead us in the days ahead as we seek his kingdom. Let us ask him to redeem this time to help us build a stronger Church together.

Yours in Christ,

Bp. Stewart Ruch III



Ingratiation

In a church context often takes the form of over-spiritualized language to gain favor with religious readers.

