

Dear Clergy of the DCOH,

We are writing to inform you that resolution has been accomplished in the matter of Rev. Dan Claire under the oversight of Bishop Ryan Reed (ACNA Diocese of Ft. Worth). A one-sided resolution is technically not a resolution but a single-handed decision. In continuation of his recusal from the process, Bishop Steve Breedlove delegated the oversight of ~~unresolved~~ complaints (including “unresolved” suggests that any complaints have ever been fully or satisfactorily addressed and resolved, which, as we all know, is not the case) concerning Rev. Claire to Bp. Reed in May 2023. ~~Assisted by the Diocesan Investigative Team, Bp. Reed has judged that there has been actual interpersonal offense in this situation.~~ (The submission of the Complaints evidenced the fact that at the very least there simply was interpersonal offense, and that offense was not open to judgment or opinion to the contrary by Bp. Reed or anyone else.) However, contrary to Bishop Breedlove’s own admission to at least one of the Complainants and contrary to the representations of the Diocesan Response Team to all Complainants, he judged that ~~this offense~~ these offenses did not rise to the level of charges that warrant further canonical investigation and (this judgment was also not for him to make, at least not as per the Diocesan’s own protocols announced in 2023, which clearly state that only an independent canonical investigation could have answered the question or whether or not the canons were violated) announced that decision to both the remaining complainants and Rev. Claire. Within the time frame of Bp. Reed’s decision, Rev. Claire issued two grossly inadequate private apologies and one pseudo-public apology, which none of the original Complainants got to hear. Any further resolution of this matter moves to the realm of interpersonal mediation.\*

Two private apologies were only provided to the two individuals whose complaints he had not successfully killed by legal challenges. By the Diocese’s own admission, those apologies were drafted and communicated through Dan’s attorney. The two private apologies failed to acknowledge or apologize for any of the wrongdoings alleged, including the most serious offenses. No private apologies were made to any of the other 8-9 Complainants known to us. Further, there has been nothing one can in good faith call a public apology given that none of the Complainants, nor their advocates, were aware of it, nor have since been provided with a copy to read or watch. Further, it was requested that any public apology be specific to any of the Complainants who desired it who had also been maligned and publicly lied about by Rev. Claire to numerous people, and there was failure on that as well.

\*With respect to “mediation”, it is grossly misleading and shocking to suggest this yet again. We, as victims of Dan’s abusive behavior, have had to reject the completely unfitting suggestion of a mediation at least half a dozen times now in this process. It reveals an utter failure by each of you regarding the nature of abuse generally and understanding of the wrongdoings alleged against Dan. Given the history of numerous Complainants’ attempts to discuss and resolve their concerns with Dan at the times when the problems between them arose (either directly or with a third party), and the abuse and attacks each and every one of us received as a result of any such attempts, it is absolutely irresponsible to continue to put forth mediation as any type of remedy or resolution, and flies in the face of well-established best practices in such situations.

Since the matter was originally brought to the attention of the DCOH, Rev. Claire ~~willingly~~ pursued a number of avenues for personal and pastoral growth once he was directed to do so by his bishop. He remains a priest in good standing and has the confidence of the bishops of this diocese to continue to serve as Rector of Church of the Resurrection, DC. (We are genuinely curious as to why. How can any rector have your “full confidence” after learning how he has treated parishioners, and after you have observed how he has utilized ecclesiastical and civil legal threats and courts against you to avoid discipline and investigation?)

This decision has been reached after several years of intensive efforts, including a flawed investigation by the DCOH which brought undue and significant pain to those who brought complaints, to the respondent, and to the church he serves. This remains a very difficult, yet-to-be-finished part of the story. Heartfelt efforts to extend faithful compassionate care to the complainants and Rev. Claire, including prayerful listening, learning, and personal reconciliation, will continue as a top priority of the bishops of the DCOH. We ask prayers for all involved, that the healing God can bring through truth, repentance, and mercy will move forward. (This rings incredibly hollow given the absolutely inadequate care for victims and railroading of the entire investigative process that was finally supposed to correctly go forward after prolonged waiting and now-empty assurances of a fair, canonical, and independent process in place. We suggest rewording to acknowledge the failures of the process and how you have mistreated us over the past 4 years up to this very point in time.)

A more detailed review of the subsequent public statement about the actions of the diocese will come this fall.

As mentioned at Synod 2023, we remain committed as a diocese to build biblically-informed, effective policies and systems for safeguarding all congregants and for giving reliable paths for walking through matters of conflict and misconduct by both clergy and leaders. (This also is an incredibly hollow sentiment given that over the course of the past 4 years, we have witnessed next to no learning or implementation of best practices with respect to the treatment of complaints and victims. We had great hopes after the Diocesan response to the GRS-report that the Diocese would keep their word and stay committed to their own newly announced investigation and safeguarding protocols. On first attempt, the Diocese has betrayed their own commitment, including confidentiality agreements and canonically founded investigatory processes. We as complainants kept reminding you of your own protocols and procedures, to no avail. So to state that the diocese keeps committed is simply not true – we would like to learn when the diocese plans to follow through with their repeatedly announced commitment) To this end, we recently strengthened our efforts by employing Rev. Canon Sergio Sapunar as the Canon for Ethics and Safeguarding. (Please contact Canon Sergio at [ssapunar@adhope.org](mailto:ssapunar@adhope.org) if you have questions about diocesan safeguarding processes.) The conversations we hope to continue with the parties involved in this difficult process will contribute materially to our growth in understanding of how to respond in a godly and effective manner in any future complaints of misconduct by clergy and lay leaders.

As bishops, it is incumbent on us to pursue integrity, humility, and pastoral skill in our own lives. From this posture, we pray God will give us compassion, wisdom, gentleness, and strength to serve the flock we shepherd and to lead well.

May the Lord enable all of us to pursue Christlike character and actions as we lead his flock,

Bishop Steve A. Breedlove, Bishop Alan J. Hawkins, Bishop R. Quigg Lawrence