

**REPORT TO HOLY CROSS COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Barrett McNagny LLP  
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## **I. Executive Summary**

Barrett McNagny LLP<sup>1</sup> (“Barrett”) was retained by Holy Cross College, Inc. (“Holy Cross”) in October of 2025 to investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct and sexual abuse involving Reverend Thomas King, CSC. Father King, a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross (the “Order”), served as a Professor of History at Holy Cross from 1981 to 2007. Father King was also employed by the University of Notre Dame (“Notre Dame”) as the Rector of Zahm Hall from 1980 until 1997.

This investigation began after Holy Cross was notified by officials at Notre Dame of allegations by former students of misconduct and sexual abuse by Father King and its decision to retain Debevoise & Plimpton LLP (“Debevoise”) to conduct an investigation into such allegations. Attorney Helen Cantwell was the primary attorney at Debevoise responsible for this investigation. Holy Cross advised officials at Notre Dame that it would fully cooperate with its investigation and conduct its own independent investigation of allegations involving Father King during his time at Holy Cross and retained Barrett for such purposes.

In connection with this investigation, Holy Cross made available to Debevoise hundreds of documents and helped coordinate interviews with dozens of present and former professors and administrators of Holy Cross. In addition, Barrett reviewed voluminous records and conducted separate interviews of present and former members of the Holy Cross Board of Trustees and other present and former members of the administration and staff of Holy Cross.

From the outset of the investigation, Holy Cross has repeatedly issued public statements inviting and encouraging present and former students, alumni, staff and others affiliated with the College to report any and all instances of misconduct or sexual abuse by Father King. Holy Cross reiterated this invitation following the issuance of the Report by Debevoise to the University of Notre Dame Board of Trustees which occurred on May 28, 2026. Holy Cross made the decision to delay having Barrett issue its final report until sufficient time had passed to allow anyone else to come forward to report abuse by Fr. King.

In spite of the fact that the report to Notre Dame references six former Holy Cross students who were credibly subjected to sexual abuse by Father King, only one of those former students made a report of sexual abuse to Holy Cross. This former Holy Cross student consented to be interviewed as part of this investigation as well. His description of sexual abuse by F. King is well-documented in the Notre Dame Report and he provided similar details when interviewed by Barrett. In light of the similarities of this former student’s description of abuse with reports by other former Holy Cross and Notre Dame students, Barrett also determined his report of sexual abuse by Fr. King to be credible.

This former student also indicated that he contacted the then Holy Cross Vice-President of Student Affairs several years after graduation to report the abuse by Father King. The administrator promised to look into his allegations, but he never received any response. This administrator left Holy Cross several years ago, but fully cooperated with this investigation. That administrator has no memory of this conversation, but conceded that they would have followed through. Notwithstanding the lack of recollection, the administrator noted that the former student’s report should not be discounted. There were no records found which reference the complaint by this former student.

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<sup>1</sup> Barrett has never before represented Holy Cross in any legal matters.

## **II. Holy Cross College**

Holy Cross is a four-year liberal arts college located across the road from Notre Dame. It was founded in 1966 by the Midwest Province of the Brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross. It began as a two-year community college and remained so for much of the time that Father King was employed as a professor. Today, it is a four-year academic institution. As a two-year community college, its mission was to transform good students into excellent students capable of admission to four-year colleges and universities. Notre Dame was a frequent destination for those transfers with thirty (30) to forty (40) Holy Cross students successfully transferring to Notre Dame annually during Father King's tenure at Holy Cross. Among students, Father King had the reputation as being someone who could assist those interested in transferring to Notre Dame and, regardless of whether or not that was true, Father King may have led some Holy Cross students to believe it was so.

## **III. Father King's Employment at Holy Cross**

Father King was employed as a History Professor at Holy Cross from 1981 until 2007. He did take several sabbaticals from his teaching position during those years at his request. Father King never resided at Holy Cross or in any quarters which it owned or rented. He did have an office in the Vincent Building where all of the faculty offices are located. Father King resigned his position as a member of the faculty of Holy Cross in June of 2007 by simply submitting a one-page letter. The letter of resignation was submitted to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs at Holy Cross. This Vice-President also resigned from Holy Cross that same month. That administrator refused to be interviewed or provide any information in connection with this investigation. Brother Richard Gilman, C.S.C was the President of Holy Cross in 2007 and for many years before then. He passed away in 2017.

There are no records which otherwise relate to or explain the reasons for Father King's resignation. However, the then Vice-President for Academic Affairs told another member of the faculty that Father King was fired because a student was upset with a letter of recommendation he authored after the student refused to go to a weigh-in with Father King. There were also rumors among staff that Father King was fired as a result of allegations of sexual misconduct.

Rumors also circulated during Father King's tenure at Holy Cross concerning the weigh-ins of students at the "Rock" facilitated by Father King<sup>2</sup>. However, no specific complaints were reported by students of which Holy Cross became aware of at the time and those who heard such rumors did not appreciate the fact that they were part of "grooming behavior" by Father King. The search of the archives of Holy Cross did not reveal any notes, memos, emails or correspondence relating to these weigh-ins or concerns which others may have had regarding Father King's behavior. Admittedly, recordkeeping and retention during Father King's tenure at Holy Cross was lacking.

Father King was not available to be interviewed as part of this investigation. It is Barrett's understanding from a variety of sources that due to serious health issues, Father King would not be capable of giving such an interview on these matters even if he was inclined to do so.

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<sup>2</sup> The "Rock" is the nickname of the Rockne Athletic facility located at Notre Dame. It is open to and made available for use by Holy Cross students.

#### **IV. Observations**

It is apparent from this investigation that there may have been opportunities while Father King was a member of the faculty at Holy Cross to discover his misconduct and sexual abuse of students had there been a better reporting system in place and a better understanding of how behavior others thought was odd or eccentric actually constituted “grooming behavior”. Had complaints and concerns regarding Father King's behavior as Rector at Zahm Hall at Notre Dame also been communicated to Holy Cross, this pattern of behavior might have more easily been recognized. That being said, other than a single report/complaint of abuse by Father King made by a former student in the early 2000s (which was not documented or remembered by the then Vice-President Student Affairs when interviewed during the investigation), no other report or complaint of misconduct or abuse prior to Father King's resignation in 2007 was uncovered by this investigation.

#### **V. Policies and Procedures**

Holy Cross has long had policies and procedures intended to foster a community where the dignity of every member is respected and upheld. These policies – which include Title IX sexual harassment policy and procedures; the student handbook and faculty staff resources – have been updated and amended over time to reflect best practices. In addition to outlining expectations for all community members, these policies and related procedures provide multiple avenues for reporting, responding to and addressing policy violations and other concerns.

Following the Debevoise’s report to Notre Dame, Notre Dame and the Order established new communication policies with respect to complaints of misconduct or abuse by priests or other faculty and staff to ensure that such complaints are timely reported across these organizations. Holy Cross is also in the process of adopting improved communications and recordkeeping protocols with Notre Dame, the Order and the Diocese. In addition, Holy Cross should implement a robust system and process for tracking complaints against clergy and other faculty and staff to ensure there are no gaps in the process.

#### **VI. Enhanced Training and Education**

Holy Cross should also continue to enhance training and education delivered to faculty, staff and students regarding its policies on sexual misconduct. This should include regular and ongoing training, with an emphasis on the multiple avenues available to report sexual misconduct by clergy, faculty, staff and other persons in positions of trust.

#### **VII. Conclusion**

Barrett wishes to thank Holy Cross President Marco Clark and former Board Chair John Gschwind, as well as other members of the faculty, staff and Board of Trustees for providing their full and complete cooperation and transparency in connection with this investigation. It is the author's hope that what has been learned through this investigation will prevent the reoccurrence of this type of misconduct and sexual abuse in the future.