

## *Concerned Parishioners of St. Frances de Chantal*

Most Reverend Gerald T. Walsh  
Vicar for Clergy  
Archdiocese of New York  
1011 First Avenue  
New York NY 10022

10 November 2017

Your Excellency:

Once again, the Concerned Parishioners of St. Frances de Chantal must challenge communication from a representative of the Archdiocese of New York, specifically two letters from you, one to the people of our parish and one to Msgr John Graham, our pastor.

In your letter to the parishioners, your very first sentence refers to “a very thorough investigation” by the Bronx DA, with the “full cooperation of the parish and the archdiocese.” We contest your praise of the “diligent efforts” of the DA, and question the fact that a “thorough investigation” could have been accomplished without interviews of several parishioners with first-hand knowledge and physical evidence regarding Peter Miqueli’s illegal activities, notably, the piles of cash witnessed on the floor of Miqueli’s living quarters.

Then, you express gratitude for our patience “as this investigation has taken place.” We must remind you that many parishioners and members of our committee have sought attention from our priests and our new pastor, but we have been summarily rebuffed and admonished to “put it behind us.” We have not been “patient.” We have been *ignored*.

You also express gratitude to DA Clark for her “recommendations...to ensure that proper financial controls are in place.” Since when does the ADNY take policy advice from an outside, non-religious entity? The Policies & Procedure Manual is an ADNY document. The ADNY knew the P&P were not being followed and did *nothing*, despite warnings from multiple parishioners from both St. Frances de Chantal and St. Frances Cabrini. For over a dozen years, the ADNY received these warnings. And NOW they are “grateful” to the DA for “ensuring proper controls.”

How very delicate is your choice of vocabulary when referring to Miqueli’s activities! What you call his “improper reimbursement” and “misappropriation” of other people’s money is called Grand Larceny by any reasonable person. No matter how many elegant terms you choose, Miqueli stole, embezzled, defrauded, cheated, fleeced, conned, and swindled the people of the parishes in which he was appointed to be a spiritual leader, setting an example for others. He abused his people...and the ADNY did *nothing* to come to our aid when it was happening, did *nothing* to stop it, and is now putting a cosmetic spin on the disgrace that they allowed to continue, casting doubt on the veracity, decency and integrity of the abused parishioners.

In your explanation of the \$22,000 restitution from Miqueli, you further diluted the grossness of his theft by stating “this is a far cry from the \$1 to \$2 million that were alleged to have been misappropriated by...Miqueli from parish funds.” This is very troubling on many levels. *First*, you make it seem that, since Miqueli’s crime amounted to so little, it was hardly worth investigating, let alone prosecuting. *Second*, the Concerned Parishioners of St. Frances de Chantal never alleged that he stole \$1 million to \$2 million from *our* parish. The million+ theft allegation came from the Roosevelt Island parish, St. Frances Cabrini. As such, the Bronx DA could *not* have investigated the larger theft and your statement does not belong in a letter to our parish. We recommend that you contact Manhattan DA Cyrus Vance and demand an investigation into Miqueli’s enviable \$700,000+ portfolio, which he amassed during his career as a humble priest and pastor. Let Cyrus Vance apply his “diligent efforts” to a previously ignored allegation.

Additionally, we do not agree with your assessment that “this matter (is) closed” simply because the \$22,000 has been “paid back to the parish.” You state that Miqueli’s “improper reimbursement” to himself (again that *delicate* term!) “cannot be excused or condoned.” Yet, you consider the “matter closed.” That sounds an awful lot like the ADNY and the Bronx DA have “excused and condoned” Miqueli’s theft.

Regarding the ADNY’s attempt “to investigate the other, more sensational, accusations of morally abhorrent behavior” and their finding that “to date, nothing has been brought forward to substantiate them...”, apparently expect us to accept your proclamations as gospel truth. The people of our parish are sadder, but wiser today. We simply do not believe that the ADNY made *any* attempt to investigate Miqueli’s personal behavior.

You further state that “it is difficult to envision a circumstance that would allow him (Miqueli) to return to the active priesthood.” We wonder, “Why not?” Everything in your letter suggests that he only made a simple error in judgment, a small bookkeeping boo-boo, that he has been exonerated of any prosecutable crimes, that no morally abhorrent behavior was found to have occurred. So why would his “return to the active priesthood” be outside the realm of possibility? We fear time will further ameliorate your opinion of Miqueli and, suddenly, the ADNY will begin to “envision a circumstance” that will restore this man to a position to which he is grossly unsuited.

**We feel it incumbent upon our committee to respond also to your letter to our pastor, Msgr John Graham.**

We would like to know the amount of Miqueli’s “reduced sustenance allowance in lieu of salary.” You were astute in referencing Canon Law to explain that “sustenance funds...were due to ...Miqueli.” Does Canon Law have nothing to say about prosecution for Grand Larceny? Bernie Madoff is not only required to reimburse those he defrauded, he must also serve a sentence behind bars. Why is Miqueli not required to serve time?

Why is the ADNY making Msgr Graham aware of their Policies and Procedures Manual? This manual was published AT LEAST as far back as June 2005. Msgr Graham has been a pastor and Vicar of the East Bronx for many years. Is he just now discovering the manual? Would the ADNY have us believe that Miqueli was not aware of these same financial P&Ps when he served as a pastor for over a decade?

Moreover, does a pastor really need a manual in order NOT to be a thief? One would think that the Ten Commandments would be an over-riding, personal P&P manual for any good priest or pastor, without having to receive instructions from his bishop.

The parishioners of St. Frances de Chantal neither sought nor desired to focus new attention on this shameful scandal, but, because the ADNY did not address it honestly for a dozen years, we must all attend to it again today. We are steadfast and faithful Catholics. We insist upon a prompt response to the challenges and questions in this letter.

Faithfully in Christ,

The Concerned Parishioners of  
St. Frances de Chantal

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