

# Wisconsin Catholic Conference: Bishops announce new Bishop reporting and accountability measures

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Wisconsin's Catholic bishops have announced the implementation of a protocol and reporting system for misconduct allegations involving a bishop within the state. The new protocol was developed and implemented over the past several months and adheres to the Holy Father's Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio, Vos estis lux mundi* (You are the Light of the World). For many years, all five Wisconsin dioceses have had robust and effective systems in place for reporting and responding to allegations of misconduct by all church personnel, but these new measures have been adopted to ensure even more careful oversight for allegations involving bishops.

The bishops affirmed that "We are committed to episcopal accountability, and join with the bishops of the United States in pledging our full support and encouragement for the reporting of misconduct committed by bishops."

Before utilizing the reporting system, all are encouraged to first report misconduct and criminal offenses to law enforcement authorities. Once a report is made, the protocol requires the rapid reporting of misconduct to civil authorities, mandates the full cooperation of Church authorities with law enforcement, and ensures that appropriate Church authorities are quickly alerted to a report of bishop misconduct. Each diocesan bishop is also required to designate a member of the laity to receive allegations of misconduct and monitor the response to any such allegations.

The protocol encourages use of a website and a toll-free telephone number through

which

individuals can file a report regarding a bishop. To report misconduct, visit the Catholic Bishops Abuse Reporting Service (CBAR) at <https://reportbishopabuse.org/>. This nationwide third-party reporting system is managed by Convercent, Inc., a commercial vendor of ethics reporting services, and supported through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The Wisconsin bishops stressed the importance of remaining vigilant in preventing abuse and of continuing to respond to the needs of survivors. They concluded their letter by urging continued prayers for survivors, whose lives and faith have been shattered by abuse and misconduct within the Church.