

Nate's Mission: Archdiocese of Milwaukee defies Attorney General Kaul, district attorneys

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Breaking ranks with bishops and Catholic officials in twenty-two other states where similar investigations have been opened, Archbishop Jerome ListECKI of Milwaukee is publicly refusing to cooperate with the Wisconsin Attorney General and leading district attorneys investigating clergy sex crimes and institutional concealment. The archdiocese lied to Catholic families when they asserted that they have been cooperating with law enforcement. This week's letter directly contradicts what they have claimed is their organization's policy and practice. Like his predecessor, the liberal Archbishop Rembert Weakland, conservative Archbishop ListECKI has claimed anti-Catholic bias as a defense against investigations into rape and abuse of children and concealment of those crimes by employees of his organization.

This week's letter effectively orders church officials, Catholic school personnel, priests, and nuns not to cooperate with law enforcement. The letter functions as a thinly-veiled threat to any Catholic who has experienced, witnessed, or suspected abuse or cover-up that they are in violation of the ListECKI's directive and, if employed by the church, could potentially face retaliation.

Fortunately, anyone who has evidence or proof of criminal conduct or cover-up in any faith-based organization has been provided with confidential means of reporting abuse and institutional misconduct to Attorney General Kaul's office. The Wisconsin Department of Justice has assured whistleblowers that they will be fully protected by the law and their identity will remain private.

ListECKI has falsely claimed that the organization has not engaged in institutional cover-up since 1998. If this is true, then the Archdiocese of Milwaukee should be

eager to turn over documents and interviews to the Attorney General's office for review. Their refusal to do so strongly suggests that this is false and can be proven with church records and sworn testimony to Wisconsin Department of Justice officials.

Archbishop Listecki is not only defying state authorities, but also church authorities. In December 2019, Pope Francis abolished a church law which allowed bishops to withhold documents and evidence from civil and criminal authorities in all abuse-related investigations. This is exactly what Archbishop Listecki and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee are doing in their brazen obstruction of the Attorney General's investigation.