

Nate's Mission: Press Conference Today at Brown County DA's Office

Posted on Thursday, Apr 8, 2021

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Group calls on Brown County DA to investigate, prosecute Norbertine priest for child sexual assaults

New documents reveal stunning admission by De Pere Abbot concerning organizational management of known child sex offenders

Green Bay, Wis – In a landmark federal trial in March 2007, a Delaware jury found Norbertine priest Father Edward Smith guilty of sexually assaulting Commander Kenneth J. Whitwell as a teenager over 230 times while Whitwell attended Archmere Academy, a Norbertine school in Claymont, Delaware. The abuse occurred over a period of three years from 1982-1985 in several states including Wisconsin, where Whitwell was abused during a visit to St. Norbert Abbey in De Pere in 1984.

Despite Fr. Smith's well-known history of abuse and misconduct at Archmere Academy and his previous assignment at St. John Neumann High School in Philadelphia, after discussions with church officials who knew of Fr. Smith's crimes, he was transferred to St. Norbert Abbey where he served with no ministerial

restrictions from 1986 to 1989. Additionally, he was assigned to lead a school funding committee by the Diocese of Green Bay. During this time Smith sexually assaulted at least two alleged victims. Smith was then secretly transferred back to Delaware where he continued in ministry. No reports were ever made to law enforcement officials by the Norbertines or the Diocese of Green Bay. Smith remains a Norbertine priest.

According to previously sealed testimony, Abbot E. Thomas DeWayne of De Pere, affirmed that the Norbertine policy is to never remove a priest from the Norbertine order for any criminal act, including rape of children in their care. The only exception to this policy, per Abott DeWayne, would be “a serial killer” who “might kill the administrator [Abbot]” of the order.

Because of the tolling statute, a Wisconsin law that freezes the statute of limitations when the accused offender leaves the state, a criminal case can still be brought against Fr. Smith. This provision was utilized in Brown County in the 2004 prosecutions of Green Bay diocesan priest Fr. Donald Buzanowski and Norbertine priest Fr. James Stein, one of the priests accused of abusing Nate Lindstrom and other students at Our Lady of Premontre High School, now Notre Dame Academy.

Although the statute of limitations to prosecute Smith for felony sexual assaults in Wisconsin has not expired and despite the fact that court records were made available to him, no formal charges were ever issued by former Brown County District Attorney John Zakowski.

Nate’s Mission will be calling on current Brown County District Attorney David Lasee to reopen the investigation into Fr. Smith and compel the Norbertine order to turn over all documents related to clergy sexual abuse. Additionally, the group is asking for his formal support for a statewide inquiry by Attorney General Josh Kaul into sexual abuse and cover-up in faith-based organizations.

WHO: Survivors of clergy abuse and victim advocates

WHAT: A press conference in which representatives of Nate’s Mission will discuss the case of Fr. Ed Smith, sharing newly unsealed testimony and documents

WHERE: Brown County DA’s Office, 300 E Walnut St, Green Bay, WI



WHEN: Thursday, April 8th at 1:30pm