

# Nate's Mission: Wisconsin attorney general to open a statewide investigation into clergy abuse, survivors respond

Posted on Thursday, Apr 22, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

According to a [USA Today Network - Wisconsin article](#), it was announced today that Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul has joined 22 other Republican and Democratic attorneys general in launching a statewide investigation into the clergy abuse and cover-up crisis in faith-based organizations.

“Survivors in Wisconsin have suffered and struggled for years urging justice officials to finally take action to protect children in our faith-based institutions. We fully expect on Monday when church officials meet with Attorney General Kaul that they will bring with them every document and piece of evidence concerning the institutional cover-up of these crimes, present and past,” said Peter Isely, Nate’s Mission Program Director and founding member of the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP).

The volumes of publicly-available evidence of institutional concealment of child sex crimes already demonstrate the active participation of some of the highest-ranking church officials both nationally and globally, including Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Cardinal Raymond Burke, and Bishop David Zubik, all of whom were promoted after covering up sex crimes against children in Wisconsin. This raises serious questions as to the promotional track of officials in the Catholic hierarchy.

- Evidence already shows that Cardinal Dolan, while in Milwaukee, deceived Catholic families and the Department of Justice by [secretly issuing church](#)

[funds to known priest pedophiles](#) in exchange for their agreement to quietly leave the priesthood without implicating church officials in their crimes. Before leaving ministry, the diocese assisted several of these priests in their relocation, professional development, and integration into new careers in which they continued to work with children. Cardinal Dolan has never been investigated for working with Vatican officials in [his fraudulent transfer of approximately \\$60 million](#) in order to prevent U.S. courts from compensating victims of abuse in his archdiocese.

- Although evidence exists that Cardinal Raymond Burke, as bishop of La Crosse, concealed clergy sex crimes, the Diocese of La Crosse has refused to surrender church files related to the abuse to justice officials. Under Burke's leadership, [a higher percentage of priests with allegations of child sex abuse were kept in ministry than any other diocese in the United States](#). He has since been promoted several times and currently serves at the Vatican.
- Immediately after [deliberately ordering the systematic destruction of criminal evidence against at least 52 Diocese of Green Bay clergy](#), Bishop Zubik was promoted to the Diocese of Pittsburgh where he was later implicated in the Pennsylvania Grand Jury investigation into clergy sexual abuse.

The evidence that the Attorney General requires will come not only from existing documents and evidence, but also from anyone who has experienced, witnessed, or suspects abuse or cover-up – whether or not it has previously been reported to church officials or law enforcement. This investigation will provide Wisconsin's citizens with the first opportunity in the state's history to confidentially report abuse and misconduct by clergy and church officials, regardless of when it took place.

“The abuse that occurred in Wisconsin's faith-based organizations is not just a story of individual offenders, but rather an elite community that coalesced around the issue to conceal the abuse and evade individual and organizational responsibility, allowing children to be harmed. This community includes highly-compensated corporate lawyers, third-party risk mitigation firms, insurance companies, law enforcement officials – and every person or organization who put profit, reputation, and career advancement above the safety of children in their care.” said Sarah Pearson, associate director of Nate's Mission.