

Ending Clergy Abuse: Pope Benedict XVI was involved in several high-profile Wisconsin abuse cases

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On Thursday, a US delegation including US Ambassador to the Holy See, Joe Donnelly, and former Milwaukee Archbishop, now Cardinal Timothy Dolan, will represent President Biden at the funeral of Pope Benedict XVI.

As head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) and then Pope, Benedict XVI was involved in some of the most notorious cases of sexual abuse in the United States, [including that of Milwaukee-based Father Lawrence Murphy](#), who raped and sexually assaulted over 200 deaf children.

When the Milwaukee Archdiocese filed bankruptcy [for roughly 8,000 incidents of child sexual abuse](#), Pope Benedict XVI approved [a widely-considered fraudulent transfer of \\$60 million dollars](#) at the request of then Milwaukee Archbishop, Cardinal Timothy Dolan. According to a secret letter to the Vatican, Dolan initiated the transfer to avoid compensating victims by US courts.

Pope Benedict XVI appointed current Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome ListECKI before resigning from the papacy. [ListECKI has openly refused to cooperate with a statewide clergy abuse investigation](#) launched by Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul in April 2021. Yesterday, ListECKI prayed the Invocation for the Inauguration of the 2023 Wisconsin State Assembly.

Thus far, it appears as though Attorney General Kaul has failed to compel Wisconsin's Catholic dioceses and religious orders to comply with his investigation by sharing documents and evidence related to clergy sexual abuse and cover-up

with the Wisconsin Department of Justice. It is likely that copies of many of these documents, including those concerning cases overseen by Pope Benedict XVI, exist in the Vatican's archives.

In a letter sent to state delegations attending Pope Benedict XVI's funeral, including Ambassador Donnelly, clergy abuse survivors have made two requests that pertain to Kaul's investigation:

1. Make an official request of the Vatican to share all documents and evidence related to clergy sexual abuse and cover-up with justice officials in your respective states. This would include direct evidence of thousands of cases of abuse that may have been mishandled by Pope Benedict XVI that remain in the Vatican's secret archive.
2. Demand Pope Francis order his bishops to cooperate fully with all governmental investigations into clergy sexual abuse, including that of the United Nations, which so far, he has not done.

Last year, after [receiving a letter](#) from US clergy abuse victim organizations, including Nate's Mission, Ambassador Donnelly, [in an email, promised](#) to meet with victims following his confirmation. Since then, after repeated attempts to contact the ambassador, victims have yet to receive a reply.

The Biden administration has made several laudatory official statements regarding the passing of Pope Benedict XVI without addressing his years of covering up widespread human rights violations against American children by thousands of US Catholic clergy. President Biden has spoken fondly of his Catholic faith and education, including his years as an adolescent at Archmere Academy, a Catholic preparatory school in Claymont, Delaware, operated by the Wisconsin-based Norbertine religious order. At the time both his sons, Beau and Hunter Biden, attended Archmere, internal church documents show several Norbertine faculty members were known by the religious order to be sexually assaulting students.

The international anti-clergy abuse organization, Ending Clergy Abuse (ECA), sent the following letter to Ambassador Donnelly and other state delegations attending Pope Benedict XVI's funeral.

To our respective state delegations:

This week, the Vatican will lead a global memorial and celebration, honoring the life

and legacy of Pope Benedict XVI. You will travel to Vatican City for his funeral, and in doing so, you will be acknowledging the historical, political, and social power of the Catholic Church. Meanwhile millions of clergy abuse victims around the world will be forced to witness what will likely be a rewriting of history concerning the legacy and actions of a man who is directly and partly responsible for decades of widespread and systematic rape and sexual abuse of children in the church.

Throughout most of his professional life, Pope Benedict XVI was one the chief architects of the cover-up of abuse in the Catholic Church. As Archbishop of Munich, he concealed and transferred known abusive clergy and until his death misled investigators and the public about his direct responsibility for it. As head of the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) under John Paul II, he acted as the Pope's chief global fixer for 23 years, shielding bishops from criminal, civil, and moral accountability for conducting themselves the way he did when Archbishop of Munich. After a short time as Pope, history finally caught up with him, and he resigned before the full extent of his role in these crimes had emerged. After his resignation, Pope Benedict XVI had almost ten years to make amends for his actions. He failed to do so.

In many of your countries, the Vatican is currently obstructing governmental investigations into clergy sexual abuse by refusing to share documents and evidence related to abuse and institutional concealment with state officials. A great deal of this evidence pertains to child sexual abuse and cover-up that occurred under the leadership of Pope Benedict XVI, while he was head of the CDF and then Pope. The Vatican continues to ignore the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child's mandate that would bring the Holy See into compliance with international human rights law.

Your planned attendance of Pope Benedict XVI's funeral and the official praise you have bestowed upon him with no acknowledgement of his central role in the global clergy abuse crisis is deeply harmful to survivors and an affront to memory and justice.

We are asking you to take the side of victims against their abusers and those who would deny our suffering and instead to do the following:

1. Use your state power and diplomatic influence to demand that Pope Francis

make zero tolerance for clergy sexual abuse a universal church law. Thus far, like his predecessor, he has refused to do so.

2. Make an official request of the Vatican to share all documents and evidence related to clergy sexual abuse and cover-up with justice officials in your respective states. This would include direct evidence of thousands of cases of abuse that may have been mishandled by Pope Benedict that remain in the Vatican's secret archive.
3. Demand Pope Francis order his bishops to cooperate fully with all governmental investigations into clergy sexual abuse, including that of the United Nations, which so far, he has not done.

By attending this event and remaining silent regarding Pope Benedict XVI's failure to protect your nation's children, wittingly or not, you are participating in the cover-up of clergy sexual abuse. This is why we are respectfully asking that you reconsider your presence at the funeral. Instead, we call on you to join survivors around the world, including those in your own nation, in bringing about a post-abuse church, which will never happen without truth-telling, transparency, and accountability.

Sincerely,

Ending Clergy Abuse Board Members

Timothy Law, USA



Sara Oviedo, Ecuador



Denise Buchanan, Jamaica



Simone Padovoni, Italy



Adalberto Mendez, Mexico

