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**For Immediate Release**

## **Diocese of Madison statement after Wisconsin Attorney General calls for clergy sexual abuse review**

Yesterday, representatives of the Roman Catholic dioceses of Wisconsin, as well as Catholic major religious orders, met with the Wisconsin Attorney General via videoconference. The Diocese of Madison will review the Attorney General's upcoming request as soon as it is received. The Diocese of Madison takes the issue of sexual abuse of minors very seriously and based on its own, ongoing initiative remains vigilantly committed to providing healing to any victims and their families, and to fostering trust based on its diocesan safe environment policies spanning two decades.

### **Background**

The news of the sex abuse crisis in the United States' Catholic Church made national headlines in 2002 and resulted in all of the bishops and dioceses of the United States setting forth and agreeing upon the **Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Dallas Charter)** (June, 2002) and the **Revised Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons**, approved in November 2002. New offices and review boards were created, policies were written, victims were contacted and cared for, cases were reviewed, and abusers in ministry were removed.

The Diocese of Madison has worked vigilantly to take decisive actions to address sexual abuse, has worked closely with the appropriate law enforcement agencies and investigators, and has created and maintained a safe environment in the Catholic Church and our communities. For more details on the Diocese of Madison's efforts in this regard, please visit [madisondiocese.org/abuse](http://madisondiocese.org/abuse). Efforts include performing 33,000 background checks, training 13,000 young people on maintaining a safe environment, meeting by bishops with numerous victim/survivors, creating a review board of mostly lay experts to review diocesan policies and cases, cooperating with annual compliance audits, and publishing those priests credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor. Most recently, Defenbaugh & Associates, an independent security and investigation firm, headed by retired FBI agents, conducted an independent and comprehensive on-site file review over the course of months at the request of and with the full cooperation of the Diocese of Madison.

The Diocese of Madison renews its invitation to any survivors of child sexual abuse to contact our confidential reporting hotline. The diocese also renews its commitment to provide healing wherever possible, to report allegations concerning child sexual abuse to civil authorities, to cooperate with such investigations, to remove all offending clergy permanently from ministry, to maintain a safe environment to protect children and the vulnerable, to maintain its stringent protocols of clear policies and background checks, to protect the rights of an individual bringing an accusation, as well as those of the accused, and to communicate openly to the public.

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*As always, any allegation of sexual misconduct should be brought to the attention of law enforcement officials. If allegations involve priests, deacons, or other Church personnel, regardless of when they are said to have occurred, they should also be reported to the Diocese of Madison, by way of the Sexual Misconduct Question and Reporting Line, 608-821-3162. The diocesan policies regarding sexual abuse allegations, and instructions for making a report of sexual misconduct, are available on the diocesan website: [https://madisondiocese.org/safe-environment](http://madisondiocese.org/safe-environment).*