

CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF SUPERIOR

April 27, 2021 Catholic Diocese of Superior statement on Attorney General clergy abuse review

On April 26th, the Catholic Diocese of Superior participated in a virtual meeting with the Wisconsin Attorney General. The reason for the meeting was for the Attorney General to announce a “new statewide initiative to address clergy sex abuse,” which was announced publicly on April 27th, 2021. The Attorney General is starting a review of “historical cases,” not any new or recent reports or allegations against anyone in the Diocese of Superior.

The Diocese recognizes that some cases were mishandled in the past. That is not today’s Church. The Diocese of Superior implemented a Morals and Ethics Policy in 1988. In 2002 the Catholic Church instituted a comprehensive set of reforms, the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (the Charter). The Diocese of Superior has fully implemented the Charter to hold itself accountable to address sexual abuse of minors. The Church and the Charter have since become a model for how abuse is to be addressed. Our safeties include a coordinator of victim assistance, lay person members appointed to the Diocesan Abuse Review Board, background checks, safe environment and prevention training, mandatory reporting to law enforcement, and independent auditing. In sum, the Diocese of Superior takes the issue of sexual abuse of minors very seriously.

The Diocese of Superior voluntarily hired Defenbaugh & Associates for an independent third-party review of clergy files. The Diocese of Superior is in the process of using the independent report to list the names of clergy against whom substantiated child sexual abuse claims have been made.

The Attorney General stated his intent to request Diocesan records. We will carefully evaluate that request, and the authority for it, when it is received. We have deep concerns about the potential adverse impact this could have on abuse survivors, because the publicity has the potential to re-victimize them. Many of those whose voices have been heard have requested that their information remain private. While we are concerned with the Attorney General’s focus on the Catholic Church, we will keep the lines of communication open.

We have diligently complied with the Charter to prevent abuse, and we believe that the Diocese of Superior has never been safer for our youth. We continue to pray for and offer appropriate assistance to clergy abuse survivors. May God pour out His peace and healing on all victims, survivors, and their families.

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