



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

November 12, 2020

WISCONSIN BISHOPS ANNOUNCE NEW EPISCOPAL ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

Wisconsin's Catholic bishops have announced the implementation of a new protocol for misconduct allegations involving a bishop within the state. Once a report is made through a national third-party system, the protocol requires the rapid reporting of misconduct to civil authorities, mandates the full cooperation of Church authorities with law enforcement, and ensures that appropriate Church authorities are quickly alerted to a report of bishop misconduct. To report misconduct, visit <https://reportbishopabuse.org/>.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Church's failure to defend the most vulnerable from clergy sexual abuse has caused irreparable harm to thousands of survivors and their families. It has stolen childhoods, destroyed lives, and damaged the trust of the faithful.

We know that we must do more to stop the rippling victimization and harm that occurs when a Church leader fails in his response to misconduct or, worse, personally preys on the vulnerable. To this end, we announce the implementation of a new protocol and reporting system for misconduct allegations involving a bishop within Wisconsin. All five Wisconsin dioceses have for many years had robust and effective systems in place for reporting and responding to allegations of misconduct by all church personnel, but these new measures have been adopted to ensure even more careful oversight for allegations involving bishops. We are committed to episcopal accountability and join with the bishops of the United States in pledging our full support and encouragement for the reporting of misconduct committed by bishops.

The new Wisconsin protocol and reporting system adheres with the provisions outlined by the Holy Father in his Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio, Vos estis lux mundi (You are the Light of the World)*. Before utilizing the national third-party reporting system, all are encouraged to first report misconduct and criminal offenses to law enforcement authorities. Once a report is made through the national system or other channels, the protocol requires the rapid reporting of misconduct to civil authorities, mandates the full cooperation of Church authorities with law enforcement, and ensures that appropriate Church authorities are quickly alerted to a report of bishop misconduct.* Each diocesan bishop is also required to designate a member of the laity to receive allegations of misconduct and monitor the response to any such allegations.

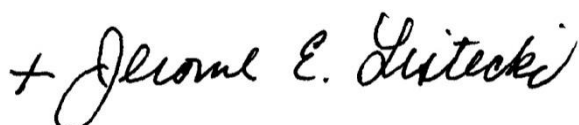
The Wisconsin system, which is now fully implemented, utilizes a national website and toll-free telephone number through which individuals can file a report regarding a bishop. To report misconduct, visit the Catholic Bishops Abuse Reporting Service (CBAR) at

<https://reportbishopabuse.org/>. This nationwide third-party reporting system is managed by Convercent, Inc., a commercial vendor of ethics reporting services, and supported through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

It is important that we remain vigilant in preventing abuse and continue to seek out ways to respond to the needs of survivors. We must continually strive for prevention, transparency, accountability, justice, grace, and healing.

We pray daily for those impacted by abuse and ask you to join us in prayer for those whose lives and faith have been shattered by the failure of bishops to defend the most vulnerable.

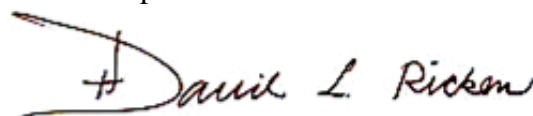
Sincerely Yours in Christ,



The Most Reverend Jerome E. Listecky
Archbishop of Milwaukee



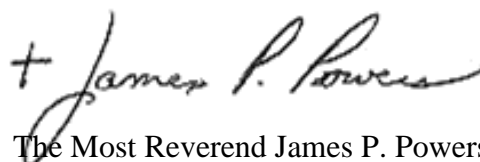
The Most Reverend Donald J. Hying
Bishop of Madison



The Most Reverend David L. Ricken
Bishop of Green Bay



The Most Reverend William P. Callahan
Bishop of La Crosse



The Most Reverend James P. Powers
Bishop of Superior

* An accompanying flowchart details the Wisconsin episcopal accountability protocol process.