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**MEDIA  
STATEMENT**

**September 5, 2025  
For Immediate Release**

**Statement in Response to Capitol Press Conference:  
The Name of the Accused Priest Was Never Provided to the Diocese of Madison**

At a press conference held by the organizations Nate's Mission and SNAP on September 4, 2025, a woman came forward to say that, in January of 2024, she was assaulted by Fr. Andrew Showers, a priest of the Diocese of Madison. Last week, Fr. Showers was arrested in Clintonville, Wisconsin on separate charges. It is devastating to learn of this additional allegation. However, some statements made during the press conference stand in need of important corrections and clarifications, especially the unfounded accusation that Bishop Donald Hying and the Diocese of Madison are perpetrating a cover-up concerning the actions of Fr. Showers. To be clear: there is no cover-up, and in the Diocese of Madison's continued commitment to transparency and truth, we offer the following corrections, responses, and supporting documentation.

**Regarding the alleged sexual assault of an adult woman in Chicago in 2024 and what information was provided to the Diocese of Madison:**

At the media event on September 4, 2025, Patricia Moriarty shared allegations that she was sexually assaulted by Fr. Andrew Showers in January of 2024. It takes great courage to step forward and to relive a very difficult and traumatic experience like what has been alleged by Ms. Moriarty. The Diocese of Madison prayerfully supports and stands behind those who have suffered harm, especially at the hands of those entrusted to pastorally care for us.

Ms. Moriarty's father, John Moriarty, stated that he contacted the Diocese of Madison about the alleged sexual assault. While it is true that Mr. Moriarty contacted the Diocese and that the Diocese communicated directly with him by both phone and email, it is critically important to note that Mr. Moriarty would not share essential information with diocesan staff designated to handle allegations, including the name of the priest, the location where the alleged incident occurred, and/or which police department was investigating. Had we known that Fr. Showers was the priest in question behind the 2024 allegation, immediate action could and would have been taken.

Additionally, at the September 4<sup>th</sup> press conference, it was stated repeatedly that Bishop Hying did not call Mr. Moriarty back. This is a true statement. However, what was not shared was the fact that once a

police investigation has been launched (which Mr. Moriarty said was the case here), the Church's abuse-reporting protocols, which were put in place precisely to preserve the integrity of investigations and protect victims, preclude the bishop from speaking with those who have made allegations. This important precaution is there to remove any possibility or even suspicion of witness tampering, victim coercion, or potential cover-up. Once again, Mr. Moriarty had shared repeatedly with diocesan representatives that the police were involved. He also indicated more than once that he would be sending Bishop Hying a copy of the police report. That report was never shared and no law enforcement officials ever reached out to the Diocese of Madison about this incident. Without knowing the name of the priest involved, the name of the victim, or even which law enforcement agency was investigating, there was simply no way to pursue this or take corrective action.

The Special Assistant to the Bishop, who is appointed by the Bishop and equipped to respond to allegations, spoke with Mr. Moriarty, affirmed that contacting the police is the recommended step, and expressed to him the urgent need to share the name of the accused priest for the protection of others.

In addition to gathering critical information about allegations for the Bishop, the Special Assistant also ensures that complaints are authentic and credible. In instances where there is no police investigation, the Diocese conducts its own investigation, the results of which are evaluated by the Sexual Abuse Review Board, comprised of qualified lay people and clergy. The board then shares its conclusions with the Bishop so that appropriate action can be taken.

For the sake of greater clarity, below is the timeline of communication between Mr. Moriarty and the Diocese of Madison. Also provided is the text of the last email sent to Mr. Moriarty discussing the police investigation and the need for the Diocese to know the name of the accused priest.

## **TIMELINE**

### **January 22, 2024:**

John Moriarty calls the Victim Assistance Line and states that his 23-year-old daughter was sexually assaulted by a priest of the Diocese of Madison. Mr. Moriarty does not share in this initial call any important details that would allow us to take action, including the name of the priest or the location/jurisdiction where the incident allegedly took place. He indicates that he would like to first contact law enforcement and his attorney, and then will call Victim Assistance back to file an official report. The Victim Assistance Coordinator encourages Mr. Moriarty to have his adult daughter contact Victim Assistance when she is ready.

### **Thursday, February 29, 2024**

10:35 a.m.: A diocesan staff member receives an email from John Moriarty, which is ultimately forwarded to the Special Assistant to the Bishop who handles these types of allegations.

3:30 p.m.: A call is made to Mr. Moriarty by the Special Assistant to the Bishop. Mr. Moriarty once again shares the allegation concerning his daughter and the fact that the police have been informed. He states that he wants the process done right, but will not share the name of the priest or additional details with the Special Assistant despite explicit requests because he wants to speak with the Bishop. Mr. Moriarty says that he will send the police report when he has it.

5:40 p.m.: The Special Assistant to the Bishop sends a follow-up email to Mr. Moriarty indicating that while there is an ongoing police investigation, the diocesan protocol is to wait until the investigation is finished before getting involved so that we do not “interfere” with the police work. This explains why the Bishop could not call or speak with him until the investigation was concluded. (See email with redacted names below.)

## EMAIL

Dear John,

Thank you for your time on the phone today. I understand that you wish to speak with the bishop, and that can happen. But you mentioned that there is an ongoing police investigation. Our experience with local law enforcement has taught us that they do not want the diocese interfering with their investigations – including speaking with witnesses – and the diocese has agreed not to become involved until their investigation is complete. We stand ready to assist law enforcement in any way possible.

If you could share the name and number of your contact at the local police, I will call them and make known the diocese’s readiness to assist in any way that would be helpful. I will also request a copy of the police report once they conclude their investigation, and will initiate the diocese’s own investigation once theirs is complete.

We have also set up channels for reporting allegations so that we can gather the information needed to quickly and appropriately respond. Our victim assistance coordinator, [NAME REDACTED], with whom you’ve spoken briefly on January 22, stands ready to take your report. Her number is 608-821-3162. Any investigation on our part, however, will begin only after the conclusion of the police investigation.

Immediate steps we can take include putting a priest who is under investigation on leave until the conclusion of the investigation.

Be assured of my prayers and readiness to assist you.

Sincerely,

[NAME REDACTED]

Despite the requests of this email and Mr. Moriarty’s previous statements, he never sent the police report or called the Victim Assistance Line again to actually file a report. He never shared the name of the accused priest, location, or investigating police department.

In their September 3, 2025 press release, Nate’s Mission – one of the press conference organizers – indicated that, “Representatives of Nate’s Mission previously reported the Chicago allegation to the Wisconsin Department of Justice during a meeting in April last year.” However, Nate’s Mission did not contact the Diocese of Madison to share this important information they had. Similarly, the Wisconsin

Department of Justice never contacted the Diocese of Madison to alert them to the report of possible sexual abuse or assault involving Fr. Showers. This information, if shared with the Diocese, would have allowed immediate action to be taken against Fr. Showers.

### **Regarding the 2021 parental complaint about questions asked of a minor in the Sacrament of Confession:**

Regarding the 2021 parental complaint, the pastor and parish staff did what they should have done. Additionally, both diocesan officials and the Lodi police looked into the matter, including speaking with the parent. After interviewing the parent and the teen, the police concluded that nothing criminal occurred. Based on conversations with the parent, diocesan officials determined that the priest was simply trying to help the student make a good and thorough confession.

In short, what the police report described and what the diocesan review revealed was not solicitation (which, according to Church law, is the crime of a priest seeking sexual contact with the penitent/person going to confession) or inappropriate sexual behavior in the confessional. Rather, questions of a moral nature were asked presumably to help the male teenager make a good and thorough confession. In fact, the statement provided by the minor indicated that Fr. Showers asked him about different commandments and moral norms and not just about violations of the sixth commandment involving sins of a sexual nature. Thus, there was no reason for diocesan officials to think that this was anything other than an attempt to guide a young man through a more thorough examination of conscience for the purpose of celebrating the Sacrament. If the Diocese had any real reason to believe that sexual impropriety or solicitation occurred, the situation would have been dealt with immediately and would have resulted in the removal of the priest from active ministry.

Below are excerpts from the publicly available police report indicating the questions asked by police and answered by the 14-year-old male student:

- “I asked if the reverend asked him any other sexual questions or made any other similar statements and he said no.”
- “I asked him if he had ever met the reverend before and he said no.”
- “I asked if the reverend touched him or propositioned him and he said no.”
- “He said that Rev Showers asked him about theft and if he had ever stolen anything. [REDACTED NAME] said no. Rev Showers then said a word [REDACTED NAME] did not know the meaning of and told the Reverend that he didn't know what the word meant and the reverend explained that it meant masturbation. [REDACTED NAME] said no. Rev Showers then said another word that [REDACTED NAME] didn't understand and told him he didn't know what that meant and the Reverend explained it meant looking at pornographic pictures and videos. [REDACTED NAME] said no. [REDACTED NAME] said there were no more questions and the Reverend ended the confession.

## **Conclusion**

As part of the Diocese of Madison's Safe Environment policy, which includes periodic training in detecting abuse and knowledge of how to report any suspected abuse, mandated background checks are also completed for all clergy, staff, and stable volunteers who work with children. The most recent background check on Fr. Andrew Showers was done in June of 2025. That report contained no criminal charges or convictions from anywhere, including Lodi, Wisconsin and Chicago, Illinois.

Bishop Hying cannot discipline or remove a priest without knowing the priest's name. He cannot discipline or remove a priest without knowing where a crime occurred. He cannot discipline or remove a priest if law enforcement or the Wisconsin Department of Justice do not inform him of allegations. He cannot discipline or remove a priest when groups claiming to want to prevent victims of clergy abuse do not share reports of abuse with him.

To reiterate, there was no abuse discovered in the Lodi complaint in 2021. Furthermore, there was no knowledge on our part that Fr. Showers was the priest accused in 2024 until September 4, 2025. Until the Clintonville police released their charges against Fr. Andrew Showers on Monday, August 25, 2025, there was no reason to suspect Fr. Showers of improper behavior.

The Church has worked hard to fight the scourge of sexual abuse and misconduct, and an integral part of this fight is cooperating with law enforcement, facilitating the reporting of abuse, and taking action swiftly and decisively when a credible allegation is made. Like the faithful of our diocese, we are stunned, angered, and heartbroken. We continue to hold up in prayer all who have been affected by these events.

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