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The attorney general for the District of Columbia is the latest official to announce an investigation into clergy sex abuse in the Catholic Church and said his office will look at possible abuse cases in the Archdiocese of Washington.

In an Oct. 23 tweet, Attorney General Karl Racine said his office is "investigating whether the Archdiocese of Washington covered up allegations of sexual abuse of minors." Other news organizations in the Washington area said he announced the investigation during a breakfast with other officials.

Racine also tweeted a link to an online form to report sexual abuse of minors. The announcement came a day after the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia announced the launch of a hotline and email address to report child sexual abuse by clergy.

In a statement released on the same day as the announcement, the Archdiocese of Washington said that in September, it had briefed the attorney general's office, at the request of Cardinal Donald Wuerl, on efforts to prevent and respond to allegations of sexual abuse of minors.

"We had a very productive exchange with the attorney general and his staff. We explained that the problem of sexual abuse of minors in the archdiocese was an historical one — that to our knowledge there had not been an incident of abuse of a minor by an archdiocesan clergy member for almost 20 years," Kim Viti Fiorentino, chancellor and general counsel for the Archdiocese of Washington, said in the statement.

Fiorentino added that "there is not now, and has not been for decades, any problem of abuse of minors by clergy of the Archdiocese of Washington. Zero tolerance has been mandated in this archdiocese and zero abuse is the result."

On a local radio news show in August, Racine said that his office was "burning up," in reference to phone calls from the public asking for an investigation of the archdiocese, which recently announced it was releasing names of more than two dozen clergy that it said had, over the past 70 years, been "credibly accused" of sexual abuse. The oldest case was reported in 1953 and the last case in 2007 and includes priests as well as one deacon.

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The archdiocese also is reeling from news earlier in October that the pope accepted the resignation of its leader, Wuerl, who has been under fire after a mixed report on his handling of abuse cases in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, where he served before arriving in Washington in 2006.

The cardinal, who turns 78 Nov. 12, had turned in his resignation at age 75 as canon law requires all bishops to do. But it was not accepted by the pope until Oct. 12; the same day the pope appointed Wuerl to be apostolic administrator of the archdiocese until his successor is chosen.

After his resignation was announced, Wuerl said in a statement: "Once again for any past errors in judgment, I apologize and ask for pardon. My resignation is one way to express my great and abiding love for you the people of the church of Washington."

A few months earlier, the Vatican also had announced that the archdiocese's former leader Archbishop Theodore McCarrick, then a cardinal, was stepping down from the College of Cardinals following long-ago sex abuse allegations, which he has denied.

Pope Francis has authorized a look into documents to see how McCarrick was able to rise in church ranks to cardinal in 2001, even as church officials fielded accusations of potential abuses.