News



by Peter Feuerherd

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Editor's Note: This story was updated at 8 a.m. Central time, May 3, to clarify which office will be investigating the case.

As Atlanta Archbishop Wilton Gregory prepares to be consecrated archbishop of Washington May 21, Georgia attorney general Chris Carr announced that the Catholic Church in Georgia is being investigated by his office over its handling of sex abuse cases. The investigation will be undertaken by the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council of Georgia, the group which represents district attorneys in the state.

According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Carr announced April 30 that Georgia has joined Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Florida, Delaware and New Jersey in investigating Catholic Church sex abuse. He did not provide any information about specific cases.

The Georgia investigation will include the Archdiocese of Atlanta and the Diocese of Savannah, the two Catholic dioceses in the state. In a statement reported by the Journal-Constitution, both Gregory and Savannah Bishop Gregory Hartmayer pledged full cooperation with the investigation.

"I reiterate my genuine concern for all who have been hurt directly or indirectly by abuse of any kind by anyone and I renew my commitment to healing, transparency, and trust. This remains even as I prepare to take leave of this wonderful archdiocese. I believe this review is an important step in the long journey forward," said Atlanta Archbishop Gregory.

The Archdiocese of Washington has been hit particularly hard by the leadership crisis in the church. Former cardinal Theodore McCarrick was laicized after charges that he abused minors and harassed seminarians. Cardinal Donald Wuerl was among bishops named in a Pennsylvania grand jury report for failing to act on sex abuse cases when he was bishop of Pittsburgh.

Gregory, the former president of the U.S. bishops' conference, spearheaded what became known as the Dallas Charter in 2002, which created an official zero-tolerance policy for priests credibly accused of sex abuse.

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