



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF AGAÑA

CHANCERY OFFICE

196 B Cuesta San Raimon • Agaña, Guam 96910 • Tel: (671) 472-6116 • Fax: (671) 477-3519, 472-6044

April 22, 2010

NEWS RELEASE

Archdiocese stepping up outreach to victims of abuse; Diocesan priest laicized

Public concern about sexual abuse within the Catholic Church both here in Guam and in other parts of the world has risen in recent weeks and in response the Archdiocese of Agaña is committed to redoubling its efforts to reach out to victims of sexual abuse in the community and take steps to appropriately punish those who have betrayed their trust.

As Archbishop Anthony Sablan Apuron said in a letter to the community October, 2009: "I want to assure everyone that the Archdiocese takes seriously its responsibility to ensure a safe environment for all minors who are in the care of Archdiocesan personnel.

A policy with clear procedures for action is in place and will be quickly enforced when reports of an improper behavior on the part of Archdiocesan personnel are received. Proper investigative authorities will be immediately notified if and when allegations of abuse or improper conduct are imposed. Again, the Catholic Church does not and will not tolerate any kind of sexual abuse."

Unfortunately, Guam has not been immune from the problems that we have been reading about in other communities. At the conclusion of an investigation of serious allegations of abuse by Fr. Raymond Cepeda, the Archdiocese had Fr. Raymond laicized in December of 2009. He is no longer a priest. The Archdiocese has reported the case to civil authorities so we cannot comment at this time.

New York Capuchins respond to request for information

The Archdiocese has also communicated with the Capuchin Franciscans on Guam and with the religious order's overall jurisdictional province in New York regarding recent allegations of sexual abuse leveled against two of its members said to have occurred during their ministries off-island.

Capuchin leadership in New York indicated the appropriate measures they took in a March 25 letter to the Archdiocese.

We have attached the letter by the Province of St. Mary of the Capuchin Order responding to the Archdiocese's request for information.

(Continued next page)

(Continued from Page 1)

The Capuchins have served the people of Guam with deep faith and devotion for more than 100 years. We believe the legacy of love, faith, care, and assistance the Capuchins and all priests have rendered to the people of the Marianas will remain steadfast in the hearts of our people even in these trying times.

We will not tolerate sexual abuse on the part of clergy and other Church personnel and will take immediate steps to investigate all accusations that are brought forward.

Foremost in our hearts are the victims of abuse and we want to make it as easy as possible for these people to come forward and identify their abusers. We apologize for the grave harm that has been done to them and offer the full help and support of the Church to help them in the future. Over the next few months the Archdiocese will conduct public outreach through radio, television, print and the Internet to let people know how to report abuse and access the resources the Church has to offer.

We urge anyone who has experienced abuse – no matter when or where the abuse happened – to call law enforcement to make a report, as well as to call our Victim Assistance Program Office. Call Deacon Jeff Barcinas (472-6116, ext. 205) or Deacon Steve Martincz (472-6116, ext. 208) at the Chancery.

The Archdiocese's Policies on Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment can be viewed at our official website: <http://agana-archdiocese.org>. You can also visit or call the Chancery to request a copy (472-6116, ext. 206).

**CAPUCHIN FRANCISCANS**

St. Conrad Friary - Provincialate • 30 Gedney Park Drive

White Plains, NY 10605 • (914) 761-3008 • Fax (914) 948-6429

*The Province of St. Mary of the Capuchin Order***March 25, 2010**

**Most Rev. Anthony S. Apuron, OFM Cap.
Archbishop of Agaña
196 B Cuesta San Ramon
Agaña, Guam 96910**

Dear Archbishop Apuron,

Peace and all good things. It has come to my attention that questions have recently arisen regarding allegations and suspicions of past instances of sexual abuse of minors by two friars formerly engaged in ministry in the Archdiocese of Agaña. Because Capuchin friars have had a long and distinguished history of pastoral service in Guam, I have reviewed our files in order to share with you any pertinent information that might be of help in addressing questions accurately.

The faculties of Fr. Randolph Nowak to engage in public ministry were permanently revoked in 2004 for reasons relating to allegations that arose elsewhere (not in Guam). Fr. Nowak has not engaged in public ministry since that time. He is now 84 years old and is living in retirement.

The faculties of Fr. Andrew Mannetta to engage in public ministry were permanently revoked in 2002 because of abuse allegations brought by an individual who was not a minor at the time of the alleged abuse. At the time, Fr. Mannetta, who once served in the Archdiocese of Agaña, had an assignment in the Archdiocese of Honolulu. Fr. Mannetta subsequently left the Capuchin community in 2007.

The Province shares with you both the shame and the horror engendered by the fact that crimes of sexual abuse have been committed within our Church. With you we are determined to be vigilant in doing what we can to prevent such crimes from occurring in the future and, equally as important, to provide appropriate and good pastoral care and support for the victims of these crimes. To that end I pledge my full and continuing cooperation.

Sincerely,


Rev. John Gallagher, OFM Cap.
Provincial Minister