

# July 27, 2016 News Release

Jul. 27, 2016

## Press Conference

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### Dulce Nombre De Maria Cathedral-Basilica, Hagatña

Today, I want to address Mr. Roy Quintanilla, Mrs. Doris Concepcion, Mr. Walter Denton and Mr. Roland Sondia regarding their allegations of child abuse against Archbishop Apuron while he was a priest in the parish of Agat in the 1970s. I also want to address anyone who may be out there who has been harmed by any Church official. This is an extremely serious matter and I am treating it as such.

I want to personally welcome today those members of the media who have made the time to attend this press conference. I am committed to serving in the Archdiocese in an open and transparent fashion, and I appreciate your attention to these important matters.

Let me first make it clear that the Holy Father appointed me the Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese after learning of the allegations against Archbishop Apuron. Because this is a serious matter regarding a Bishop, only the Holy Father has the authority to investigate and according to Church law it must be submitted to the Holy See (Cfr. *Christus Dominus* 21, Canon 401§2). I do not have the authority to investigate Archbishop Apuron in this matter. My obligation is to ensure that all of the documentation related to this matter reaches the proper offices of the Holy See. This I have done promptly and with due diligence. I forwarded all of the statements by the plaintiffs to the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, which is the competent authority of the Holy See in matters of reported sexual abuse by a member of the clergy, including Bishops and Archbishops. The Congregation has diligently kept the Holy Father informed about the process in order to receive his prompt advice or directives. I will report on the progress of this matter as information becomes available to me.

I would also like to say a few words regarding the reactions of the Archdiocese to the reports made by the plaintiffs and other commentators, such as Mr. Tim Rohr. These statements were published on the Archdiocesan website and released to the press regarding the motivation of plaintiffs in making their reports public and about Mr. Rohr's intentions in raising questions about the financial matters of the Archdiocese. Immediately after I arrived on Guam, I ordered the removal of these statements from all Archdiocesan media organs, including the website of the archdiocese and that of the archdiocesan newspaper.

Let me be clear that in no way do my priest counselors nor I endorse the contents of these statements. Under my administration, it should now be very evident that such statements did not, and do not – in the

least – represent the opinion of the Archdiocese of Agaña on the handling of sexual misconduct allegations against any member of the clergy, including a Bishop, nor do they represent the opinion of the Archdiocese on those who raise questions about the handling of church finances.

As I mentioned previously, I take all reports of sexual misconduct by officials of the Church very seriously and I have not, do not, and will not consider a person presenting such reports as malicious or calumnious, or motivated by a desire to attack the church or any other improper purpose. Instead, the Archdiocese should always assume and believe that the intent of those who make allegations of sexual abuse is to bring to light serious claims of abuse. I am gravely troubled by what the plaintiffs have brought forward here. Archbishop Apuron's prior statements were not consistent with the gravity with which the Church approaches all allegations of abuse. I recant and retract all such statements. I also specifically recant and retract all statements implying or suggesting that Mr. Rohr was part of a conspiracy involving an improper and clandestine real estate transaction, or that he had any improper motives in raising questions about the financial matters of the Archdiocese.

I have requested the clergy to celebrate Masses and to organize prayer gatherings for those who were wounded by the Church in the past and to show support for all those who are currently suffering as a consequence. I myself in prayer meetings and Masses prayed explicitly for them and in my messages I asked the people of God to pray continuously for them. I also appointed Fr. Patrick Castro, OFM. Cap. as a priest contact person to offer support and pastoral care to all those who have reported sexual misconduct by a Church official.

I also pledge to do all in my power to ensure a safe environment in the Church for all, especially the most vulnerable. In this regard the Archdiocese has been making concerted efforts: it has now completely revised the policy for responding to reports of sexual misconduct by an official of the Church, which now includes a clause for the eventuality of the Archbishop (Ordinary) being accused; he must recuse himself from the proceedings. The Moderator of the Curia, in this case Fr. Jeffrey San Nicolas, is then obliged to inform the Holy See of the matter through the Apostolic Delegate in Pacific Oceania, in this case Archbishop Martin Krebs.

The Moderator is further obliged to send all of the pertinent information related to the matter to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, through the same Apostolic Delegate and to follow the directives of the Holy See. The revised policy was created by a panel of professional and lay persons who helped draft the revision and will be involved in its enactment; a new coordinator of the response for such allegations has also been appointed in the person of Deacon Leonard Stohr; the policy also foresees training programs. The revised policy will be published in the Archdiocesan media and will also be made available to the press.

Besides the roles of Fr. Patrick Castro and Deacon Leonard Stohr, I, as pastor appointed by Pope Francis for the care of souls in the Archdiocese of Agaña, would like to express my sincere desire to personally meet with Mr. Quintanilla, Mrs. Concepcion, Mr. Denton and Mr. Sondia. I will travel personally to meet with those who are off-island, if they wish, or the Archdiocese will arrange for their travel to Guam to meet with me. I kindly ask them to please contact me, or my secretary Mrs. Liza Weisenberger at the Chancery to make arrangements: Tel. 1.671.562-0000, Fax 1.671.477-3519.

Thank you and God bless you

+Archbishop Savio Hon Tai Fai, SDB  
Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Agaña  
July 27, 2016

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### **Archbishop Savio Hon Tai Fai, SDB**

Archbishop Savio Hon Tai Fai, SDB, the Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, was appointed the Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Agana by His Holiness Pope Francis on June 6, 2016. As Apostolic Administrator, Archbishop Hon has full pastoral responsibility and administrative authority in the Archdiocese.