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Vatican administrator wants Archbishop accused of abuse removed

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Rev. Fr. Jeffrey C. San Nicolas, apostolic delegate, delivers a homily on Sunday, Sept. 18, 2016, at the Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral-Basilica in Hagatna, Guam. During the same Mass he read a letter from Archbishop Savio Tai Fai Hon, Apostolic Administrator, who called for the Holy See to remove Archbishop Anthony S. Apuron from his position. Apruon, 70, was appointed as archbishop in 1986 by then-Pope John Paul II and has been beset by recent allegations from former altar boys that he sexually abused them in the 1970's. (Credit: AP Photo/Grace Garces Bordallo.)

An advertisement for Villanova University's online Master of Science in Church Management program. The background shows a classical building with columns. A blue banner at the top reads "EARN YOUR ONLINE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CHURCH MANAGEMENT." Below it is the Villanova University logo, which consists of a large 'V' over the words "VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY". At the bottom, a blue button says "LEARN MORE".

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HAGATNA, Guam - A Roman Catholic administrator is urging the Vatican to remove Guam's archbishop, who has refused to resign amid accusations of sexual abuse against altar boys.

The move comes after a letter delivered in July from leaders in the Archdiocese of Agana did not move Archbishop Anthony Apuron to leave his post.

Archbishop Savio Hon, a temporary apostolic administrator for Guam who was appointed by the Vatican after the allegations surfaced, also is urging parishioners to sign a petition upholding the statute of limitation on civil lawsuits for child sex abuse.

He said the archdiocese "will be exposed to unlimited financial liability" forcing the sale of church property. Guam's population is about 80 percent Catholic.

A bill that lifts the current statute of limitation passed the Guam Legislature and is expected to be delivered to the governor's desk on Sept. 21. The Guam church has not submitted any substitute bill for consideration.

"Right now we hope any legislation would not damage the social service agencies and the schools that are not a part of these accusations," said Father Jeff San Nicolas, who is Guam's apostolic delegate.

Priests of the island's 26 Catholic churches were asked to read a two-page letter during Sunday masses, which Hon sent from Rome, in which he addressed these matters and also stated that Apuron would undergo a canonical trial.

Parishioner Roland C. Flores, 40, who heard the letter being read at a Sunday mass, said he signed the petition "so they won't shut down Catholic schools." He attended Catholic schools and does not want to see them turned into government facilities.

Hon in the letter also announced the creation of a trust fund to provide compensation for Guam's survivors of clergy sex abuse.

"We are already in the process of assessing certain assets to create this fund. We will address this financial obligation-financial settlements through this fund that we create," said San Nicolas.

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Apruon, 70, was appointed as archbishop in 1986 by then-Pope John Paul II and has been beset by recent allegations from former altar boys that he sexually abused them in the 1970's.

Hon is expected to return to Guam on Wednesday.

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