

Pampanga priest accused of abusing 17-year-old girl

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<https://www.rappler.com/philippines/234356-pampanga-priest-daniel-baul-accused-abusing-girl/MANILA>, Philippines –

The Catholic Church confirmed it has relieved a priest in Pampanga for allegedly abusing a 17-year-old girl in a church-based center for women and children.

The accused priest is Father Daniel Baul, who belongs to the Archdiocese of San Fernando in Pampanga.

“As a matter of protocol, the accused, though innocent until proven guilty, has been relieved from his assignment,” said San Fernando Archbishop Florentino Lavarias in a statement on Sunday, June 30.

Lavarias added, “Ecclesiastical investigation is ongoing.”

He also said the Archdiocese of San Fernando “has been cooperating with civil authorities so that truth and justice may be served for all parties concerned.” The Catholic Church is also

extending pastoral care to the alleged victim.

“Kindly join us in praying to God for the immediate resolution of the case,” Lavarias said.

The 17-year-old girl said the abuse “happened at a church-based center for women and children in Pampanga,” according to the news service of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines.

This comes as Pope Francis strengthens measures against sexual abuse by priests, which remains a challenge for the Catholic Church. (READ: Cardinal Tagle at sex abuse summit: Bishops wound victims) – **Rappler.com**