

Police searching for priest charged for abuse of teen

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SAN Fernando, Pampanga Archbishop Florentino Lavarias on Friday, July 5, 2019 said he has no clue on the whereabouts of Fr. Daniel Baul, who is wanted by authorities over the alleged sexual abuse of a teenage girl in Pampanga.

In a statement, Lavarias admitted that he does not know where Baul is currently located after criminal charges were filed against the latter.

"During the filing of the complaint before the Prosecutor's Office and at the inception of the Ecclesiastical Investigation, Fr Baul assured me that he will squarely face the matter before the proper fora," said Lavarias.

"Unfortunately, at this stage of the case, his whereabouts is not known to me," the bishop added.

Authorities are currently searching for the priest suspected of raping a 17-year-old girl in a church-based center for women and children.

A formal complaint was made by the alleged victim, which

resulted in the issuance of a warrant of arrest.

Nevertheless, the prelate said he continues to be confident that Baul will honor his word that he would face the allegations.

"I trust his word previously given to me that he will not evade the case, and will, in due time, appear in court to support his claim of innocence," Lavarias said.

Similarly, the archbishop appealed to police to trust him with his vow to cooperate and respect the legal process.

"Meantime, the civil authorities may rest assured that the Archdiocese will not keep Fr. Baul from the reach of the law," said Lavarias. **(HDT/SunStar Philippines)**