



ARCHDIOCESE OF AGAÑA

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ARCHDIOCESE OF AGANA MEDIA RELEASE JUNE 3, 2016

Mr. Stephen Martinez, on June 1, 2016, released to the media a number of malicious and intentionally false claims against our Archbishop. Regarding these calumnious statements, the archdiocese points out that:

We are facing one allegation – contradicted by other testimonies – and some unsubstantiated rumors of sexual abuse. We are dealing with unproven *allegations*, not with proven crimes. To insult the archbishop as Mr. Martinez did is not only against any Christian standard, but also below any standard of due process which have to be granted to every person: a man is innocent until proven guilty and the Archbishop has adamantly denied these allegations.

The Archbishop has always taken very seriously any allegations, and even rumors, of sexual abuse and acted on them: this is what he did in the case of Fr. Paul Gofigan, who was removed when he refused to restrict from active and voluntary church activities a registered sex offender and murderer; this is what he did when he limited the faculties of Fr. John Wadeson following the surfacing of an old unproven allegation (subsequently cleared by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles); and, lately, when Fr. Luis Camacho was removed as pastor, and had his ministry limited, when his only accuser was the same Stephen Martinez who was reporting rumors.

To state, as Stephen Martinez did, that the sexual abuse policy of the archdiocese was kept weak purposefully by the Archbishop to protect himself is a calumny of such magnitude that the only avenue, which we are following, is recourse to the civil and canonical legal processes to address these intentional lies. We are working with one of the most prominent US legal firms to address these issues and with an independent investigator to inquire about this allegation and these rumors. These intentional lies oblige the Archbishop to take appropriate and immediate canonical measures in regard to Stephen Martinez.

Stephen Martinez has distinguished himself egregiously for his incompetence: in his official capacity as the former Archdiocesan Financial Officer, Mr. Martinez, unbeknownst to the Archbishop, failed for six consecutive years to submit the required annual financial reports to the proper authorities at the Vatican. This glaring incompetence caused many problems for the Archdiocese. It is obvious that Mr. Martinez is part of the Rohr group conspiring to topple Archbishop Apuron from his service as Shepherd and a successor of the Apostles, a service he has been doing for the last thirty years defending Guam from many immoral inroads and we challenge anybody to prove the contrary.

Celebrating our Golden Jubilee as a Diocese 1965-2016

The current attack has its roots in two significant events: First, the plan of the previous finance council to sell the property in Yona housing the Seminary and Theological Institute in order to cover financial misdeeds. Selling the seminary would have covered the immense debt incurred by Cathedral-Basilica and Catholic Cemeteries. It would have also concealed the previous administration's enormous mismanagement of these entities later discovered in the financial review conducted by the archdiocese. The archbishop was adamantly opposed to the selling of the seminary property. Tim Rohr however had a personal interest in this plan and was supposed to be involved in this multi-million dollar sale as a real estate mediator. The second event is the removal of Msgr. James Benavente as rector of the Cathedral-Basilica and Director of Catholic Cemeteries. His removal allowed the archdiocese to uncover the mismanagement of these entities. It also angered those who has a vested interest in the sale of the seminary property. Thus, the group condemning the archbishop today is working towards his demise and has continued with a relentlessly malicious smear campaign.

The Archbishop is being persecuted because he is cleaning up the Church we all love. Let us make ours the words of Saint Paul in his letter to the Ephesians, "Stay firm and let the truth be the belt around your waist."