

Cops nab priest facing raps for alleged rape of choir girl

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A 62-year-old Catholic priest wanted for rape was arrested at Camelot Subdivision, Barangay Estefania, Bacolod, 6:05 p.m. Monday, March 27.

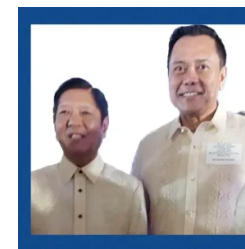
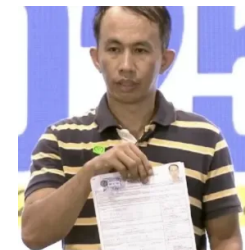
Fr. Conrado Ursua Mantac is facing criminal charges for the alleged rape of a 17-year-old choir girl in Sagay City in 2022 with no bail granted for his temporary liberty, the police said Tuesday.

The alleged incident occurred while the priest was assigned in Sagay City.

Mantac, who is from Brgy Balatocan, Municipality of Looc, Romblon, was arrested by virtue of a warrant of arrest issued by Executive Judge Reginald Fuentebella of the Sagay Regional Trial Court Branch 73 on March 7.

Mantac was assigned to the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Barangay Paraiso, Sagay, and was preventively suspended when the Diocese of San Carlos received the complaint in December, San Carlos Bishop Gerardo Alminaza said on Tuesday, March 28.

The news of the alleged rape leading to the arrest of Mantac "pains me and the whole Diocese of San Carlos. In our Diocese, we have been consistent in our teachings and advocacy against any form of sexual



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abuse of children, women and vulnerable persons, and such crimes committed by any person, and especially priests or religious cannot be tolerated. This is a grave crime which contradicts the office of the priesthood," he said.

Alminaza also assured that the Diocese of San Carlos will fully cooperate with the civil authorities and observe the legal process or the truth to come out and for justice to be served.

"Together with the whole Diocese, we commit to provide the needed information openly and honestly to the public without reservations," he said.

Alminaza assured the alleged victim and her family of support and protection.

The bishop said he deeply feels "the suffering of the victim and her family and entrust her to the rightful agency which can provide proper care and assistance".

As the father of the priests in the Diocese of San Carlos, Alminaza also said he takes confidence with the words of Mantac that he will face the allegations filed against him.

"We also recognize his right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty and thus support him in his efforts to establish his innocence in court," Alminaza said.

Mantac has denied raping the 17-year-old.

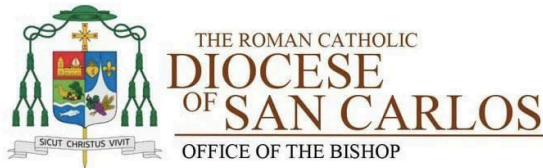
"While Fr. Mantac faces the crime of rape... we suspend all ministries with regard to his pastoral duties in the Diocese. The Church will also proceed with its own canonical process," Alminaza said.

As the case proceeds, Alminaza appealed to everyone "to keep their judgments as we await the proper disposition by the court. I implore you to pray for Fr. Mantac and the alleged victim, as well as to show them care".

"May we be able to balance our zeal in the pursuit of justice and truth with caution, decency, and respect," he added.

Alminaza also called for prayers that the authorities, the lawyers, the guardians, and all other parties involved, including himself, carry out their obligations in an "honest and truthful manner".*





March 28, 2023

**STATEMENT OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN CARLOS ON THE ARREST
OF REV. FR. CONRADO U. MANTAC**

The recent news about the accusation of alleged rape leading to the arrest of Fr. Conrado Mantac pains me and the whole Diocese of San Carlos. In our Diocese, we have been consistent in our teachings and advocacy against any form of sexual abuse of children, women and vulnerable persons, and such crimes committed by any person, and especially priests or religious cannot be tolerated. This is a grave crime which contradicts the office of the priesthood.

As the Bishop of the Diocese of San Carlos, I sincerely convey my utmost assurance to fully cooperate with the civil authorities and to properly observe the legal process of our Judicial System for the truth to come out and for justice to be served accordingly. Together with the whole Diocese, we commit to provide the needed information openly and honestly to the public without reservations. The Diocese would like to assure the alleged victim and her family of support and protection, and following what is stipulated in the *Vademecum on Certain Points of Procedure in Treating Cases of Sexual Abuse of Minors Committed by Clerics*, to treat them “with dignity and respect, and must offer them welcome, attentive hearing and support, also through dedicated services, as well as spiritual, medical and psychological help, as required by the specific case” (No.55). I deeply feel the suffering of the victim and her family and entrust her to the rightful agency which can provide proper care and assistance.

As the father of our priests in the Diocese, I also take confidence with the words of Fr. Mantac that he will face the allegations filed against him. We also recognize his right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty and thus support him in his efforts to establish his innocence in court. While Fr. Mantac faces the crime of rape and of the pending preliminary investigation, we still assume our responsibility of the accused. For the meantime, we suspend all ministries with regard to his pastoral duties in the Diocese. The church will also proceed with its own canonical process accordingly.

As the case proceeds, I humbly ask everyone to keep their judgments as we await the proper disposition by the court. I implore you to pray for Fr. Mantac and the alleged victim, as well as to show them care. May we be able to balance our zeal in the pursuit of justice and truth with caution, decency, and respect. Please pray that the authorities, the lawyers, the guardians, and all other parties involved, including myself, will carry out our obligations in an honest and truthful manner. Let us remember we are all parts of the one Body of Christ. We all suffer even when one or two of our members are in pain. May we be able to draw wisdom and strength from the paschal mystery we shall soon celebrate - the passion, death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ - in order to face and overcome these present trials.

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MOST REV. GERARDO A. ALMINAZA, DD
Bishop of San Carlos

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