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Bishop defends priest in molestation case

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Wednesday, November 10, 2010

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CACERES (Bicol) Archbishop Leonardo Legaspi stood by his priest who has been accused of molesting a teenage boy in a local motel, describing the incident as an attempt to discredit the Roman Catholic Church.

Legaspi believed on the claims of Monsignor Peter Berina that he is innocent on the charges against him.

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“The accused priest and the Archdiocese of Caceres vehemently deny the accusation,” said Legaspi.

Based on the Church-initiated investigation, he said the car used by the suspect was indeed owned by Berina but it was the priest's driver who admitted using the car without permission.

The unnamed aide apparently admitted that he went to a motel with a female companion on the date and time of the alleged incident while Berina was “nowhere near the place of the incident.”

“Apparently, Monsignor Berina is innocent and the accusation against him is false and fabricated,” said Legaspi.

“The Archdiocese of Caceres is prepared to take appropriate legal action against the people behind these defamatory accusations,” he pointed out.

Meanwhile, an official of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) pinned the blame on the society's moral degeneration as the reason for the reported high number of incest cases in the country.

CBCP-Episcopal Commission on Family and Life Executive Secretary Melvin Castro said there is already an apparent weakening in the moral foundation of the people resulting to lesser value for morality.

“Sad to say, there is that level of moral degeneration due to the promotion of various means of communication of such immoral acts,” said Castro. (AMN/Sunnex)

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