

Sex abuse case catches alumni by surprise

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MANILA (UCAN) -- Reports of a settlement of a sex abuse case in the United States involving a Filipino priest has surprised and upset alumni of a Benedictine school in Manila. The [Manila Standard Today](#) reported earlier this week that El Paso diocese in New Mexico had settled a third case involving Filipino Benedictine Father Manuel Perez Maramba. The priest, now reportedly serving in the Abbey of Our Lady of Montserrat in San Beda College downtown Manila, was accused of abusing young boys while he was serving in the US Church between 1974 and 1977. Staff at the Benedictine Provincial house told UCA News April 8 that Father Maramba was not at the abbey. Repeated attempts to speak with superior Father Tarcisio Maria Narciso and other officials at the abbey also failed. Alumni of Benedictine-run [San Beda College](#) who knew Father Maramba said the report about the “respected”

musician priest and liturgist surprised and “upset” them. “I knew the priest as a respected and talented musician,” Augusto Pardo, who headed the 50th homecoming of his San Beda class in 2008, told UCA News. There were never any rumors about priests being abusive, he said. “Alumni I have talked with tell me they are angrier at the newspapers for printing the news than with the news itself,” Pardo said. They ask why the news is being published more than three decades after the supposed abuse. Others wonder why the school kept it secret. “I was surprised,” Carlos Verzosa of San Beda Law Class of 1997 said. The lawyer told UCA News April 8 he did not know enough about the case to comment on legal arguments, but he did not think the school was under any obligation to tell parents about cases against priests. However, “they are bound to act and the school does owe parents an explanation if they knew about this the last 35 years and refused to act on it,” Verzosa said. “Once the school knew of the charges against Father Maramba, there should have been a departmental hearing,” he said. “Father Maramba should have had legal assistance, but once he was proven guilty by the court, he should have been thrown out of the college,” Verzosa believes.