

Negros Occidental priest charged with rape for allegedly molesting 4-year-old girl

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Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, February 27) — A Catholic priest in Cadiz City, Negros Occidental is facing a rape charge for allegedly molesting a four-year-old girl.

Father Aron Buenacosa, parish priest of St. Joseph Parish Church in Barangay Caduha-an, was charged with rape before the Cadiz City Prosecutor's Office on Wednesday for purportedly violating Republic Act 7610 or the Special Protection of Children against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act.

The alleged victim is a day-care pupil whose mother works as a secretary of the church.

The parents of the victim reported the alleged sexual molestation to the police on Saturday last week.

Although there was no laceration or abnormal discharges, Cadiz City Police head Clnsp. Robert Mansueto said the result of medical examination indicated that there was slightly gaping in the genital area of the victim.

Mansueto said the victim had been consistent in her statements about the indecent act allegedly committed against her by the priest. Buenacosa had allegedly kissed the victim and touched her genital in several occasions, the recent of which was on February 8.

In a statement, San Carlos Bishop Gerardo Alminaza said Buenacosa had denied the accusations.

"Our brother-priest, to his credit, was prompt to inform me of such allegation to which he assured me he didn't do. He himself was shocked to be accused of such action and he is willing to face the allegation to prove his innocence," Alminaza said, adding that they are saddened and shocked with the alleged incident.

"We also acknowledge his right to be presumed innocent until proven otherwise and we are committed to assist and cooperate in the process so the truth will come out and justice is served," he added.

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