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The successes and failures of the Philippine courts and police

written by Fr. Shay Cullen | December 3, 2024



The Philippine Supreme Court | Photo by Aerous on [Wikimedia Commons](#)



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The first of two parts**REFLECTIONS**

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During the Senate’s plenary debates on the 2025 General Appropriations Act, Sen. Grace Poe said 900,000 court cases had been unresolved and undecided for many years. It was an astounding revelation. The complainants are waiting for justice to be served. “Justice delayed is justice

denied” is a sign in many Philippine courtrooms.

One hundred fifty judges out of approximately 1,823 are facing administrative charges for failing to resolve cases within 90 days, per Supreme Court OCA Circular 243-2022. It says in part: “Delay in the disposition of cases deprives the litigants of their right to speedy disposition of their cases and tarnishes the image of the judiciary.”

The number of unresolved cases at regional trial courts is 362,000, and those at family courts are 64,000. The latter are overloaded, so we need a special children’s Court to attain justice more quickly.

In children’s rights advocates’ previous communications with the Supreme Court administrator, it is clear that children’s rights are their top priority, hence the abovementioned circular. To reduce the backlog of unresolved cases, the Court has directed the lower courts to determine whether complainants want to continue their cases. The case can be dismissed if the answer is no or no. It could be justice denied to young children who cannot understand this. The delaying tactics of the accused and their lawyers, who constantly ask for postponements — which some judges approve — created the backlog.

“These coverups undermine real justice, deny the child’s rights, and make the Church and the Philippines look like a pedophile’s paradise. We have to believe and act for justice

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(Matthew 18 1–7) and to take a stand for child victims and see justice done.”



Dismissing a case without hearing the evidence will allow child abusers to go free. All heinous crimes against children should be exempted from the Court circular dismissing cases stuck in the courts. These archived cases should continue until the accused is arrested and tried. These contrived delays always favor the suspect as his pedophile protectors in the Church or society find ways to bribe the victims' parents to withdraw their cases. The delay causes the child victim to grow fatigued and become depressed, forcing her to drop her (or his) complaint. This corruption in the system is worsening child abuse. Some people have no conscience.

Take, for example, the trial proceedings against Catholic priest Fr. Karole Israel Reward in Cagayan. These proceedings have been going on for almost two years, with hearings spaced only every few months, and will extend until 2026. This case could have been resolved in 90 days. The accused admitted to the alleged rape of and acts of sexual assault against a 15-year-old girl but claimed it was consensual. The teenager said she was being blackmailed by the videos the priest made to keep her quiet. She was offered a scholarship by a priest from the diocese, but she refused.

Another Catholic priest, Fr. Serlito D. Vilar in Cebu, is accused of committing heinous sexual crimes against an 11-year-old boy. The solid evidence of abuse over two years was presented to the prosecutor, who then filed criminal complaints in a court in Cebu. The priest failed to attend a court hearing and sent a lawyer instead. He paid P1 million as bail (aided by whom, we wonder), and the Court postponed the hearing for several months. There is no chance for justice in 90 days in this Court. Nongovernmental organizations concerned with children's rights must petition the Supreme Court administrator to know if this long postponement is permissible.

These coverups undermine real justice, deny the child's rights, and make the Church and the Philippines look like a pedophile's paradise. We have to believe and act for justice (Matthew 18 1–7) and to take a stand for child victims and see justice done.

To be concluded on December 1, 2024



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CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

FR. KAROLE ISRAEL REWARD

FR. SERLITO VILLAR

PEDOPHILE PARADISE

SEN. GRACE POE

SUPREME COURT

0 comments

FR. SHAY CULLEN

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