



# Roman Catholic Bishop of San Carlos

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February 28, 2019

## STATEMENT OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN CARLOS

We are greatly saddened and shocked that a young child is alleged to have been molested by one of our clergy. This painful incident creates a deep wound and hurt not only to the victim and the victim's family but also to the communities and to the entire clergy of the Diocese of San Carlos. While we acknowledge the right of the accused to be presumed innocent until proven otherwise, we are steadfast to assist the victim and cooperate in the process so the truth will come out and justice is served.

Following the recent guidelines of our Holy Father to focus on protecting children rather than "protecting the institution", and to provide the accompaniment of those who have been abused with an emphasis on listening - we have reached out to the family of the minor. We assure the family that we are concerned that their child is given proper care and intervention and we have asked our parish leaders to reach out to them on our behalf. We have offered help and support as well both to the accused and his family of origin and his pastoral council and eventually to our presbyterium and the affected parish community.

We are making it clear that we are not hiding the accused to protect him from the charges. We are proceeding with our own canonical process as dictated by church law by providing pastoral care to the accused while allowing the legal process to take its course. I have assigned a priest to take over temporarily the shepherding of the parish concerned in order to give the accused time to spiritually prepare himself to face the allegations and to give way for an impartial investigation.

We are committed to search for truth and to make sure the process will be fair and just to both parties and whoever is responsible will have to face the consequences. While our Holy Father is calling for an "all-out battle" against the sexual abuse of minors, and to turn this evil into an "opportunity for purification", we in the Diocese of San Carlos is challenged to "walk the talk".

I ask our faithful to pray for everyone involved in this case, journeying together as people of God, sharing the pain of the alleged victim and her family, the accused and his family and the faith community that's directly affected by it, including our priestly fraternity, guided by this Word of Life: "Do to others as you would have them do to you."

We draw consolation from Pope Francis that "if our hearts are open to mercy ... we proclaim before the world that it is possible to overcome evil with good."

**+MOST REV. GERARDO A. ALMINAZA, D.D.**

Bishop of San Carlos