



Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC)

Secretariat, Pastoral Orientation Centre, P.B.No.2251, Palarivattom, Kochi-682025, Kerala, India
Tel: +91-484-2805722, 2805815, Fax: +91-484-2806214
E-mail : deputysecretarykcbc@gmail.com, www.kcbsite.com

All Kerala Press Release
Ref: 635/KCBC/K-6/KPR/DS

24.9.2018

KCBC Press Note

Kochi: A series of events which took place of late have become a matter of great pain for the Catholic Church: a nun belonging to the Congregation of the Missionaries of Jesus, working in the diocese of Jalandhar, filing a complaint of sexual molestation against Dr. Franco Mulackal, Bishop of Jalandhar, at the Police station at Kuravilangad, leading to the arrest of the Bishop and the court sending him to police custody. The K.C.B.C. regrets over these happenings.

Since the case is *sub judice* the K.C.B.C. thinks that it is not right to comment on the truth and falsity of it. At the same time the further enquiry and the trial of the case should take place impartially and without pressure from any corner. It is hoped that the truth will come to light in the court and that the accused will get sufficient opportunity to prove his innocence, and that if the accusation is proved right the culprit will get the due punishment which the law envisages. We pray that full justice take place in this matter. It is not to be forgotten that any conscious attempts at tarnishing the person, honour and the dignity of the complainant and the accused are not in keeping with justice and fairness.

The faithful should discern those people who, under the cover of this case, try to destabilize the Catholic Church and malign the Bishops. They are people who oppose the Church or are jealous about the Church, media persons with hidden agenda and with vested interests and some with grievances within the Church. We should be vigilant about those who try to put down the Church on account of an accusation against a single individual. When a reputed Indian journalist was accused of a sexual offence by his own female colleague and he was jailed no one went ahead accusing all media personnel. When a minister in Kerala had to resign on account of a similar accusation no one pointed their finger against all the ministers and politicians. So also when a Supreme Court Judge was accused of a similar case, because of which he had to resign from the chairmanship of the State Human Rights' Commission, no one had attacked all the judges of the Supreme Court nor the judiciary *in toto*. Now as an accusation of sexual molestation is raised against a bishop of the Catholic Church some with vested interests and some sections of the media have taken it as an occasion to implicate the Church and the bishops as a whole, without even having the investigation completed. Not just the members of the Catholic Church but the whole public should recognize the hidden agenda behind such moves. It is not clear whether it is jealousy or anger against the Church that leads these people to attack the Church violently,

PRESIDENT

MOST REV. DR. SOOSA PAKIAM
Archbishop of Trivandrum,
Archbishop's House,
Velkayambalam, Kawdiar P.O.,
Trivandrum 695 003.
Ph: 0471 2724001, 2724002, Fax: 0471 2725001
E-mail: archbishop@archtm.in

VICE-PRESIDENT

DR. YOONAN MAR CHRYSOSTOM
Bishop of pathanamthitta
Santhome Catholic Bishop's House
St. Peter's Junction
Pathanamthitta - 689 645
Ph: 0468-2223100, Fax: 0468-2223100
Email: bpdiopta@gmail.com

SECRETARY GENERAL

MAR MATHEW MOOLAKKATT
Archbishop of Kottayam
Catholic Archbishop's House,
P.B. No. 71, Kottayam 686 001.
Ph: 0481 2563527, 2563812, Fax: 0481 2563327
E-mail: mamosb@yahoo.com

DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL

FR. VARGHESE VALLIKKATT
Pastoral Orientation Centre
P.B. No. 2251, Kochi-682 025
Tel: +91-484-2805722, 2805815,
Fax: 2806214
E-mail: vallikkatt@gmail.com

for the Church has been very much active in the public sphere by way of educational, medical and social services, not to mention the Church's unrelenting involvement in the latest flood relief and in the continued rehabilitation programmes, catering to all without looking into caste and creed. It is unjust to take the Church as a laughingstock on the basis of an unproved accusation against one of its bishops, while so many of its bishops, priests and nuns are living saintly lives.

Obviously there is a concerted effort to bring in lawlessness within the Church by destroying the discipline therein, obedience to authority and its unity. The sacredness and integrity of consecrated life is scorned. Even the sacrament of confession is under trial. Nonetheless the Church in India, with its lakhs of fervent believers, thousands of nuns leading holy lives and hundreds of priests and bishops doing selfless service, has the inner strength to overcome any kinds of crisis. For this is a missionary Church, which has overcome all persecution, pressures and false accusations, as being founded by the cross of Christ, grown up through the sacrifice of thousands of martyrs, and still nurtured by the virtuous lives of thousands, serving and praying. There will definitely emerge within the Church fruitful ways and means to correct errors and solve problems.

On the face of accusations and counter-accusations in this case the K.C.B.C. has from the very beginning taken a stance welcoming impartial police enquiry without at the same time judging or protecting anyone. One cannot take a definitive stance either pro or contra until the truth is revealed. The K.C.B.C. has requested for proper police enquiry and trial in the court, without approving of trial in the media, which has been declared by the Supreme Court as unlawful. The K.C.B.C. had also let it known that it had requested the Church authorities to act at the earliest possible upon the complaint registered by the nun. Yet as the complaint of the nun was under the consideration of the police and the court, it was not right from the part of the Church authorities to hastily act upon the same matter. At the same time without waiting for the conclusion of the police enquiry the Church authority has acted by withholding Bishop Franco Mulackal from the administration of the diocese of Jalandhar. Hence when the nun made a complaint appropriately towards the Church authorities due redressing action has come without delay. Therefore the argument that the nun did not get justice from Church does not stand.

Whatever the reasons were, the fact that some priests and nuns agitating in the streets giving occasion to the enemies of the Church to attack the Church and the Church authorities and to disdain even the sacraments, has caused much pain to all who love the Church. We hope that the members of the Church and the public will recognize that their action was not in keeping with Christian values, rightful interests of the Catholic Church and even of the statutes of their Religious Congregation.

Fr. Varghese Vallikkatt

Deputy Secretary General/Spokesperson, KCBC