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**Hafa Adai,
It's Thursday**



**GUAM WINS
26 GOLD
MEDALS**
SEE STORY, PAGE 32



**CNMI CAN'T
HARVEST
SEA TURTLES**
SEE STORY, PAGE 2



**Rev and Tax has
refunded error-free tax
returns filed by Feb. 9.**



Vote and comment on today's poll.

TODAY'S QUESTION:
Which candidate should be the
next president of the United
States of America?

Results from yesterday's PDN poll
are on **PAGE 2.**

LAWYER: ONLY VATICAN CAN INVESTIGATE APURON



Apuron

JASMINE STOLE
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Sexual assault allegations against an archbishop are supposed to be investigated by the Vatican, and not locally, according to an expert in the laws of the Ro-

man Catholic Church.

Although Guam Archbishop Anthony Apuron has been accused of sexually assaulting children in the 1970s, the alleged crimes happened so long ago they could not be criminally prosecuted, according to the Office of the Attorney

General.

Canon lawyer Jennifer Haselberger, an expert in church law, said Vatican policy dictates that only Rome can investigate bishops who are accused of sexual abuse.

The Archdiocese of Agaña on May 17 announced it

had launched a local investigation in the sex abuse allegations against Apuron, which church officials have called "lies." An attorney representing alleged abuse victim Roy Quintanilla has questioned the fairness and

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Honoring fallen peace officers



RICK CRUZ/PDN

Meding Santos, left, reaches out to touch the photo of her late brother, patrolman Juan Santos, during the Peace Officers' Memorial Service and Wreath Laying ceremony Wednesday outside the Guam Police Department's Hagåtña Precinct.

Photos Online

For more photos, go to **www.GuamPDN.com.**

Vatican-sent archbishop now in Guam

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The archbishop appointed by the Vatican to temporarily oversee the Catholic Church in

Guam now is on island and is expected to remain here while accusations of sexual abuse against Archbishop Anthony S. Apuron are being investigated, according to the church.

Pope Francis on Monday gave Archbishop Savio Tai Fai Hon temporary authority to govern the Archdiocese of Agaña, but Apuron remains the island's archbishop.

In a statement Wednesday, Hon said the priority of the apostolic administrator is to "take stock of the present pastoral sit-

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Claims: No police report received

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validity of the local investigation.

While Catholic churches have their respective policies to respond to sexual abuse allegations, the Vatican also has guidelines, Haselberger said.

A document with these guidelines, modified in 2010, states that if a bishop is accused of sexually abusing a minor, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith is to be notified, Haselberger said.



Tydingco

Haselberger has practiced as a canon lawyer in the U.S. and internationally.

She's also a member of the Canon Law Society of America and earned a licentiate degree in canon law in 2004 from the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium.

When a bishop is accused of sexually abusing anyone under the age of 18, the investigation process is not one that can be handled at the local level, Haselberger said. "It has to be handled by the Congregation in Rome," she said.

She said this raises questions about the Guam archdiocese's original response to the accusations, which was to involve the



RICK CRUZ/PDN

Walter Denton and his wife, Shirley, clasp their hands together during a press conference outside the Cathedral Pastoral Center in Hagåtña on Tuesday. Walter Denton, 52, has accused Apuron of raping him in 1977, when he was a 13-year-old altar boy. At that time, says Chief Prosecutor Phillip Tydingco, the statute of limitations required prosecution to occur within three years for felony crimes and within one year for misdemeanor crimes.

local church review board. Normally that would not be the case, Haselberger said.

The Vatican's norms apply to the universal church and are true for Catholic churches in Guam, the mainland and all over the world, she said. Bishops would cer-

tainly be aware of these norms, Haselberger said.

If the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith finds there is credibility to abuse allegations, the penalty could include removal from office and possible dismissal from clerical state, according to Haselberger.

Apuron has been accused three times during the past month of sexually abusing altar boys when he was a priest at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Agat in the 1970s.

On May 17, Roy Quintanilla, 52, said Apuron molested him when he was a 12-year-old altar boy in

Agat.

Later, the mother of Joseph A. Quinata came forward. Now living in Arizona, Doris Concepcion said her son told her 11 years ago that Apuron had molested him when he was an altar boy. Quinata died when he was 38 years old.

On Tuesday, Walter

Denton, 52, accused Apuron of raping him in 1977, when he was a 13-year-old altar boy.

No legal action has been taken against Apuron in connection with the allegations. The alleged crimes happened so long ago, they cannot be prosecuted, according to the attorney general's office.

The attorney general's office has not received any police reports or criminal complaints filed by Quintanilla, Denton or from Quinata's mother, claiming criminal sexual abuse or molestation, said Chief Prosecutor Phillip Tydingco.

Tydingco said in the 1970s, the statute of limitations required prosecution to occur within three years for felony crimes and within one year for misdemeanor crimes.

Some amendments to the statute of limitations for certain crimes have been made in Guam law, Tydingco said. "However, the U.S. Supreme Court has held that such a law cannot be used to revive a previously time-barred prosecution," because it violates the U.S. Constitution, he said.

Tydingco said first- and second-degree criminal sexual conduct crimes committed in Guam since 2011 have no statute of limitations. "But all criminal sexual conduct type crimes committed before 2011 are governed by the three-and one-year statute of limitations law," Tydingco said.

Archbishop: Hon to lead a prayer meeting

Continued from Page 1

uation of the diocese; to identify the difficulties present among the clergy, religious, and lay faithful and to take urgent measures, at the earliest, in order to promote and restore unity and harmony in the local church."

"The Apostolic Administrator, after carefully discerning the needs of the Archdiocese will take all necessary decisions to assure that this goal is being implemented," the statement adds.

The statement also said Pope Francis asks for "the trust and prayers of the local church and sincerely hopes that the entire Catholic Community will put all of its energy in promoting unity, harmony, and stability of the church."

Hon is scheduled to lead a prayer meeting 4 p.m. Thursday at Saint Anthony and Saint Victor Church in Tamuning, church pastor Monsignor Brigido Arroyo said Wednesday.

"It is open to everyone — priests, deacons, religious leaders, lay people. It is a prayer meeting," Arroyo said.

A prayer vigil also is scheduled for noon Thursday, at the old rectory of Agat Catholic church, where the alleged sexual abuses by Apuron happened in the 1970s.

Accusations

In recent weeks, two former Agat altar boys, Roy Quintanilla and Walter Denton, have come forward to say they were sexually abused by Apuron when he was the parish priest at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in the 1970s. Doris Concepcion, a former Guam resident who now lives in Arizona, also said her son told her, before he passed away 11 years ago, that Apuron molested him when he was an altar boy in Agat.

Denton and Concepcion are scheduled to attend the Agat prayer vigil.

Apuron has denied the allegations by Quintanilla and Con-

cepcion. Apuron, who was in Rome earlier this week, and the archdiocese have yet to comment on the accusation by Denton.



Hon

David J. Sablan, vice president of the Concerned Catholics of Guam, said the Vatican's appointment of a temporary administrator "is a step in the right direction." One goal of the group is to provide a platform for Guam's faithful and clergy to state complaints about the church.

As one of his last official acts before being temporarily relieved of his administrative duties, Apuron issued a decree, declaring the Concerned Catholics of Guam a "prohibitive society." The decree states no one is to associate with or assist the group.

Sablan said Apuron issued

the decree without meeting the group, despite the group's repeated requests for such a meeting.

"The decree emboldened us, not weakened us," Sablan said.

The group's membership includes churchgoers who have publicly questioned Apuron's decisions in recent years, including the alleged transfer of a prime piece of church real estate and the training of Catholic priests in Guam.

"The cause of all the problems is the archbishop," Sablan said. "We believe he should be removed as archbishop. His victims are coming forward. That warrants his removal. In the church history, most of the time when there's an appointment of an administrator 'sede plena,' the archbishop is eventually removed as archbishop. We hope that's what's going to happen here."

Joelle Casteix, Western Regional Director of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, or SNAP, the world's

largest support group for clergy abuse victims, has urged Archbishop Hon to engage in a "complete and independent investigation of the allegations against Apuron and act upon the findings swiftly and appropriately."

She said the group believes Guam lawmakers also should revisit legislation that allows victims of sexual abuse to sue their abusers and organizations that cover up and facilitate abuse.

Bill 326, introduced by Sen. Frank F. Blas Jr., seeks to eliminate the statute of limitations on lawsuits against child molesters. Guam lawmakers in the past temporarily gave victims of child sexual abuse a two-year limit to file lawsuits, but the window has closed.

The Vatican's temporary stripping of Apuron's administrative powers comes shortly after Pope Francis issued new rules for removing bishops who fail to protect minors and vulnerable adults from sex abuse.