



ARCHDIOCESE OF AGAÑA

March 11, 2025

Archbishop's letter to the faithful on wrong committed during Holy Eucharist prayer service

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

A holy Lenten season to all. I write to publicly share with the faithful an unfortunate incident involving the Blessed Sacrament and the corrective measures the Archdiocese of Agaña is taking through Father Jeffrey San Nicolas, our Superintendent of Catholic Schools; and Father Paul Gofigan, our Vicar General and Chair of the Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission (ALC).

Many have seen footage which was circulated or have heard about a prayer service at one of our Catholic schools which was held during Catholic Schools Week last January. The intention was a good one. Nonetheless, a most regrettable error was committed because a lay campus minister was allowed to lead a procession of the Blessed Sacrament from the school chapel to the gymnasium during the prayer service with the school community.

I apologize for the serious wrongdoing that was committed with the Blessed Sacrament, the most sacred Body of Christ. As the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Father Jeff has apologized in a separate letter, correctly emphasizing Church teaching that the handling of the Blessed Sacrament is a role reserved for the clergy. Only under exigent circumstances may a designated lay minister assist in this role.

As your archbishop, however, I must take ultimate responsibility for this wrongdoing. One of my major responsibilities as your appointed shepherd is to ensure that all tenets of our Church are properly transmitted, understood and followed in all parts of our archdiocese, most certainly in our schools. Please accept my apology and that of everyone involved.

I also apologize that it has taken much too long for us to publicly address the incident with you, the faithful. You deserved to hear from us promptly, understanding the concern, confusion and anger it has produced among many in our archdiocese. We will do better in this area and will work with everyone in our schools, parishes, Curia and Chancery in this regard.



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After learning of the incident, I met with Father Jeff and Father Paul. These are the steps that are being taken to correct the situation:

1. “Guidelines for Lay Ministers in a Catholic School Celebration of the Eucharist” and “Guidelines for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in a School Prayer Service” have been developed. These two documents are meant to give clear and practical guidance from the office of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools to school administrators on the distinct roles of lay ministers and the clergy in the celebration of the Eucharist. The Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission is currently reviewing school liturgies in general, and its members will provide formal liturgical policies to our schools as they may determine.
2. Professional development sessions are being planned for our school administrators to cover (a) The History of the Eucharist, (b) Theology of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, and (c) Practical Guidelines for the Celebration of the Eucharist in a Catholic School. The purpose of this training course is to ensure all our school administrators are well informed and are sharing best practices for celebrating the Eucharist in a school setting.

Father Jeff has shared the above guidelines to our Catholic school administrators initially. However, they must still be reviewed by the newly appointed Presbyteral Council and Archdiocesan Liturgical Commission before they are finalized and can be broadly issued to everyone. We will update all in the archdiocese when this process is completed.

We will also work with our parish priests to strengthen the leadership and active support of our Catholic schools that is needed from them, most especially those who have Catholic schools as part of their parishes. It’s very important that liturgies that take place in our schools are done so with the assistance, guidance and experience of our clergy.

I thank Father Jeff for developing the new guidelines and Father Paul and our Liturgical Commission members for their work in this area, as well. I thank the many administrators, faculty, staff, students and families that support our Catholic schools. Despite tremendous challenges and sacrifices, you remain devoted to our schools and Church. Si Yu'os Ma'åse!



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Having concluded the Year of Eucharistic Revival last November and now in the early months of the Jubilee Year of Hope, our Church in Guam has many wonderful opportunities to deepen our devotion and knowledge of our faith and of our loving God who never fails us. Please continue to walk with us on this journey to become a better, stronger, more holy archdiocese. Though we will fall along the way, if we stay sincere in our love for and trust in God, he will guide us in our walk.

Once more, I sincerely apologize and ask for your prayers and support. Be assured you are all in mine.

Sincerely,

/s/Most Rev. Ryan P. Jimenez, D.D.
Archbishop of Agaña