



CONCERNED CATHOLICS OF GUAM, INC.

P.O. Box 8647
Tamuning, Guam 96931
Telephone: 1-(671) 727-3233
Fax: 1-(671) 646-4549

August 29, 2016

The Redemptoris Mater Seminary Must Be Closed

Good afternoon. I am Andrew Camacho, vice president, Concerned Catholics of Guam.

In my opinion the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Yona is a SHAM. The beauty of its exterior masks an empty shell. This seminary should be shut down. I feel sorry for the men who have true vocations to the priesthood and have to endure the poor formation in this "so called" seminary.

The many problems and deficiencies of RMS include:

- Lack of strict requirements for admittance to the program
- Lack of a true vetting process for students
- Poor Quantity of the faculty to teach courses
- Poor Quality of the permanent and visiting faculty
- The sole focus on the Neocatechumenal Way
- Priests who do not serve the faithful in Guam
- The high cost of running the RMS.

A brief look at a true, properly functioning seminary shows a stark contrast with RMS. An example is St. Patrick's Seminary in California. Its BA Completion Degree program that I quote: "is designed primarily for those men who wish to study for the priesthood but do not have the required college background."

At RMS, the qualifications are not clear. We don't know if all of the seminarians there have a high school diploma. A reliable source who has seen things from the inside said no records for the seminarians can be found. This raises so many questions, which can be answered by one statement: The Redemptoris Mater Seminary is a sham.

The admission requirements for St. Patrick's include a long list of items applicants must complete in addition to a rigorous screening process to determine if the applicant is fit for the priesthood. An important part of this vetting procedure is a psychological screening. The best one could say about RMS is it doesn't come close to meeting this standard. This actually poses a danger to the people of Guam. Without proper screening, there is an increased potential to admit seminarians with psychological problems.

When a seminarian from RMS completes his studies he will have earned the equivalent of a Bachelors degree. But this is questionable due, in part, to the faculty or lack of faculty. RMS lists several permanent professors and a very extensive list of visiting professors. Many of the permanent professors are not on island. Those who do come here stay for an average of 10 days. This is not what you would expect from a permanent faculty. Then we have to consider the credentials of the faculty. Let's look at one example. Professor David Atienza teaches

Philosophy and History at RMS yet his doctoral degree is in Anthropology. Is he qualified to teach philosophy to seminarians in formation for the priesthood? This should raise a few "red flags."

The following is information provided by a local person who has first hand knowledge about the seminary and the faculty:

"As for the visiting professors, at best most could be considered as lecturers or seminar givers, but certainly not visiting professors since many of them do not even teach in another place of learning. What was sold to the faithful of Guam as a place of higher learning is basically a FRAUD.

The Institute lists on their site seven departments:

- 1. Philosophy,*
- 2. Languages,*
- 3. Sacred Scriptures,*
- 4. Dogmatics,*
- 5. Moral Theology, Church History and Patrology,*
- 6. Sacraments and Liturgy,*
- 7. Pastoral Theology and Canon law.*

How can this Institute claim to have seven departments when they only have three full time professors that are qualified to teach, two of them in their late 70s, and a cabal of part timers, who are teaching on subjects they are not trained for?"

RMS in Guam is also below par compared to other Redemptoris Mater Seminaries in the U.S. mainland, such as Newark, Denver, D.C., and Boston. Why would this be? Because the bishops of those diocese require RMS seminarians to take courses in another seminary to ensure they receive all the required education as part of their formation for the priesthood. In Guam this is not the case. Why? Because our archbishop, Anthony Apuron, did not require them to be well educated. He only required them to be Neocatechumenal.

Is RMS a seminary for Guam? Absolutely not. According to the articles of incorporation the purpose of RMS is to form priests following the life and practice of the Neocatechumenal Way. The number of local catholics in the NCW is quite small. Why would there be a need for so many NCW priests? What about the vast majority of local catholics? Is there an effort to promote vocations in the diocesan priesthood, the Capuchin order, the Jesuit order, etc.? There is evidence of the exact opposite. Fr. Richard Kidd requested permission to go into formation for the diocesan priesthood. He was told "the diocesan priesthood in Guam is no more." Fr. Richard was repeatedly steered toward RMS. Finally after two years Fr. Richard was allowed to attend a seminary in the states and is now serving Guam as diocesan priest. How many men were confronted with the same situation? How many future priests had their vocations squelched because of Apuron and the Neocatechumenal Way's desire to promote only the RMS?

RMS has produced 17 priests in the last few years. Do they serve the catholic faithful in Guam? Seven priests serve in local parishes. Two are at RMS. Eight are not in Guam. Some are serving in other countries. The status of others is unknown. Fr. Pedro Durango has not been seen since he left for Columbia after his ordination. Why form priests for Guam if they don't stay on Guam? Please let me say that again. Why form a priest and why spend all of the money and not have that priest serve the local Catholic faithful on Guam?

The cost of running the RMS is too high. Approximately \$200,000 dollars comes from the archdiocese of Agana. What do we get for our "investment"? Poorly formed priests? Priests working in other countries? And for the "missing" priests, it is just money down the drain.

Does the archdiocese raise funds to support the mission of the Mercy Sisters, SSND, Dominican Sisters, Capuchins, Jesuits, etc.? No. Why? These groups are their own separate organizations and raise their own funds. RSM Corporation is its own separate organization but the archdiocese goes to great lengths to raise money for it. Why does the archdiocese treat this organization differently than the others?

The Concerned Catholics of Guam has a simple, clear mission summed up in three words: Return, Restore, Resign.

- The RMS seminary property must be **Returned** to the Archdiocese of Agana;
- Fr Paul Gofigan and Monsignor James Benvanete must be **Restored** to their former positions; and
- Anthony Apuron must **Resign**.

There is no middle ground. Unity in this Catholic community will only be achieved when "Return, Restore, Resign" occurs.

Does Guam actually need a seminary? Would it be more cost effective to send our men to accredited institutions of priestly formation? Wouldn't they be better-formed priests?

If we must have a seminary it must be a fully accredited diocesan seminary to properly form local priests for our local parishes, for our local Catholics.

Thank you for your time. I'm available to take some questions.
