

# Chancery of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore

#07-01 Catholic Centre  
55 Waterloo Street  
Singapore 187954  
Email: [chancery@catholic.org.sg](mailto:chancery@catholic.org.sg)

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## CHANCERY NOTICE

The Chancery has recently received reports that a man known as Benediktus Yakobus Ratuwalu, also known as 'Benito' or 'Beny Ratuwalu'. Ratuwalu has been soliciting donations for impoverished children here in Singapore, claiming to be operating as a priest under the Missionary Society of the Divine Word (SVD). However, Ratuwalu's activities in the Archdiocese of Singapore were not authorized as he has neither applied for a Statement of Suitability for Ministry nor adhered to the guidelines for foreign fundraising established by the Archdiocese.

Having conducted further inquiry, the Chancery wishes to inform the faithful of the following:

- 1) Ratuwalu is currently serving a three-year excommunication from the Society of the Divine Word, effective from 2016. The term 'excommunication' refers to an authorization given to a member of a religious order bound by perpetual vows to live for a limited time outside their religious institute, usually to discern whether to depart definitively. Thus, Ratuwalu cannot be considered a priest in good standing at this time. (can. 686-8)
- 2) Correspondence with the Indonesian Diocese of Pangkalpinang has revealed that Ratuwalu's initiative was a personal one, and not part of the missionary work of the SVD Province in Indonesia. In fact, his unwillingness to disclose to the Society details regarding this initiative (including the setting up of a non-profit organization) was a major factor in the events leading up to his excommunication.
- 3) The Superior General of the Missionaries of the Divine Word, the Rev. Father Paulus Budi Kleden SVD, has confirmed that Ratuwalu has 'not sought for permission and hence has no authorization' to engage in activities such as fundraising, as far as the Society is concerned. Father Kleden also informed us that Ratuwalu has been ordered to cease all such activities and return to the Society.

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The faithful are advised not to contribute to or support in any way these fundraising activities, due to the uncertain nature of Ratuwalu's canonical status and the lack of accountability he has shown in this initiative. The faithful are also reminded of the need to remain attentive about the credentials of all foreign and local ministers in Singapore and their suitability for ministry.

If they are unsure of a person's suitability to minister or preach the faith, clergy and laity are invited to contact the Chancery at 6336 9408 or [chancery@catholic.org.sg](mailto:chancery@catholic.org.sg) to clarify the status of the minister in question.



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Fr John-Paul Tan OFM, JCL  
Chancellor

