



PRESS RELEASE

Bishop in Kerala acquitted of rape of nun

Since 2018, a nun, former Superior of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Jesus, based in Kottayam, Kerala, has complained that she was raped 13 times in three years by the Bishop of Jalandhar, Franco Mulakkal. An unprecedented outpouring of support from her convent nuns, who went so far as to demonstrate publicly, and dozens of testimonies, including those of priests, led to the prosecution. Despite Mulakkal's many manoeuvres to evade justice, the trial finally took place. After 105 days of hearings, it ended on 15 January.

Against all odds, Bishop Mulakkal was acquitted.

The verdict was so outrageous that the judicial authorities, who described the case as "airtight", spoke of a miscarriage of justice, that the Kerala government and even the police undertook to appeal. The complainant, reduced to the rank of a charlatan, is overwhelmed by letters of support. But she is definitely ostracized.

The judgment is, as always in these cases, based on legal contortions that ignore the nature and devastating effects of what victims of sexual abuse experience.

The significance of such a judgment is seen as a disaster by those who defend the dignity of nuns who have been assaulted by priests, now by a bishop, locked in the silence imposed on them, and who are now defenceless.

There are worse things! The Catholic Church is gloating! The steps taken throughout the investigation, and all the way to Rome, have remained unanswered. Now those who "wish him ill" have been defeated. A religious superior, an Indian based in Rome, in a three-page text, triumphs, rejoicing in each of the arguments of the judgement, lecturing the victim, which is also the opinion of others.

How long will the Catholic Church maintain this kind of abuse, based on clericalism in all its horror? Times have changed, now it is known and now it will not be tolerated.

NSAE (We are Church) is closely following the situation, in liaison with the Indian nuns, and recalls its previous statements on the subject, and condemns the attitude of both the justice system, obviously under influence, and the Catholic Church. NSAE gives its full support to the victim, to Sisters in Solidarity, and to all the actions undertaken to obtain justice.

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List of associations associating themselves with this press release

- Croyants aujourd'hui Orléans
- Chrétiens et libres en Morbihan (CELEM)
- Chrétiens pour une Église dégagée de l'école confessionnelle (CEDEC)
- Équipe de chrétiens en classe ouvrière de la région de Caen (ECCO).
- Espérance 54
- Femmes et Hommes, Égalité, Droits et Libertés Dans les Églises et les Sociétés (FHEDLES)
- Liberté et Partage (NSAE 45)
- Mouvance Partenaria
- Mouvement Le cri
- NSAE Cantal
- NSAE Cher
- NSAE Dordogne
- NSAE Île-de-France
- NSAE Oise
- Partenaria 31
- Réseaux du Parvis (board)

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