

Withdrawn edition of Catholic News on "Marxist conspiracy"

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On 14 June 1987, the Catholic Church had printed copies of its June 14 edition of the Catholic News with a statement from the Church to its faithful.

However, for reasons unknown, the then Archbishop, Gregory Yong, decided to withdraw that edition of the Catholic News.

We reproduce it here, with the statement from the Church to its followers, explaining the Church's position on the arrest of 22 Singaporeans, including church workers, by the Government on 21 May 1987. [[Click here to download a copy.](#)]

The arrests were known as "[Operation Spectrum](#)".

The Catholic Church's statement as on 14 June 1987 in the withdrawn edition of the Catholic News:

MY DEAR People of God and well-wishing friends,

The peace of the risen Christ be with you always. We have been going through a very difficult time, full of anxiety and anguish, not knowing what is happening *in* our Church and *to* our Church.

I thank you for all your prayers and the assurance that you are supporting me and the Church with your prayers, fasting and sacrifices. You have not prayed, fasted and sacrificed in vain.

I thank especially all those who went to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Church to participate in the special Mass offered for our detained brothers and sisters and their families, relatives and friends (May 27). You conducted yourself admirably. Nobody could find fault with your behaviour although many including myself went there with some trepidation and apprehension.

On that occasion I asked you to pray for me and my priests as we were to gather the following day to consider a serious matter that concerns the whole Church and to issue a statement. The meeting which could have divided and polarised our priests brought about a better understanding among ourselves and unified us as we produced the following statement:

We refer to the statement from the Ministry of Home Affairs (May 26) regarding the investigation into a “clandestine communist network” and the arrest and detention of 16 person, May 21.

Four of the 16 are full-time workers in Church work. They are: Vincent Cheng Kim Chuan, Executive Secretary of the Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission. Ne Bee Leng, full-time staff of the Catholic Centre for Foreign Workers (formerly the Geylang Catholic Centre). Tang Lay Lee, full-time staff of the Young Christian Workers’ Movement. Kevin Desmond De Souza, full-time staff of the Catholic Students’ Society of the Singapore Polytechnic.

Among the 16, there are also 6 voluntary workers in some of our Catholic organisations. They are: Mah Lee Lin (Chait Chee Cathokic Centre), Teo Soh Lung (Catholic Centre for Foreign Workers), Kenneth Tsang, Tan Tee Seng and their respective spouses, Jenny Chin Lai Ching and Low Yit Leng (Justice and Peace Commission).

We are greatly perturbed at the arrests and the Ministry’s statement. We are also concerned for those detained and their respective families.

We have been informed by the Ministry of Home Affairs that none of the ten has been detained because of his/her work in Catholic organisations, but because of their “possible involvement in a clandestine communist network”.

The Catholic Church is totally opposed to Marxism/Communism which is contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The Catholic Church, however, must continue its mission of spreading its teachings on matters pertaining to justice as they apply to social, economic and political issues.

These teachings of the Church are part of its mission and tradition and have worldwide application. They do not derive from any one system of theology.

We affirm our confidence in and continued support for all Catholic organisations mentioned in the Ministry’s statement.

To the best of our knowledge, the full-time workers have been fully committed to the work of the Catholic organisations in which they served.

The six voluntary workers have generously contributed their time and talents to specific work in the Catholic organisation with which they were associated.

We hope and pray that justice will be done and be seen to be done.

We also hope the detainees will be treated justly and humanely.

Thank you once again for remaining calm, supportive, prayerful. We have been assured that we can count on your support whenever we need it.

God keep us all faithful to Jesus, his way of life.

Your appreciative archbishop and priests,

Gregory Yong

Archbishop Gregory Yong and his priests,

May 30, 1987