

## Church leaders warn against Pokemon Go addiction

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Church leaders in the Philippines have urged Catholics "to exercise discipline in the use of technology" amid the Pokemon Go craze, which is seeing people play the game even in churches.

Brother Manuel de Leon, president of Notre Dame College in Kidawapan, Mindanao, said that while technology is a "welcome development," young people should be taught about a "technology with a soul."

The Marist brother warned that when playing mobile phone games "becomes an addiction and causes distraction to the real purpose of living and being, then it is bad."

"There is no doubt that playing Pokemon Go has its own advantages as a hobby ... but when it becomes an addiction and results in less productivity then it should be stopped," said De Leon.

Pokemon Go, a location-based augmented reality game that uses mobile devices, was released in the Philippines on Aug. 6.

After its international launch, the mobile app quickly became a phenomena with more than 130 million downloads worldwide.

Father Ronel Taboso of Tacloban said he is not prohibiting Pokemon Go players entering his church but is reminding them "to come to church for the right reasons."

"They should use their time and energy productively and not waste their precious time," said the priest.

Several churches in the Philippines have been designated as "PokeStops" and "PokeGyms."

In Baguio Diocese, Bishop Carlito Cenzone prohibited players from hunting "pocket monsters" inside churches.

"People lose their manners during Mass, so we disallow it," said the prelate. "They should come to praise the Lord."

Bishop Henesto Ongtioco of Cubao warned that addiction to online or mobile games can plunge people into sickness and ruin families and relationships.

"We should be careful with these games," said Bishop Ongtioco.

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