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Pennsylvania Priest Indicted For Traveling To Honduras To Sexually Abuse Minor Boys In Orphanages

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 7, 2014

WASHINGTON— A Pennsylvania Roman Catholic priest was indicted today in the Western District of Pennsylvania and charged with foreign travel to engage in illicit sexual conduct with minors and possession of child pornography.

Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney David J. Hickton of the Western District of Pennsylvania made the announcement.

Joseph D. Maurizio Jr., 69, a priest at the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, was originally charged by criminal complaint and arrested on Sept. 25, 2014. He has been in custody since his arrest.

According to allegations in the indictment and complaint, each year between 1999 and 2009, Maurizio traveled from Pennsylvania to Honduras to assist a non-profit organization that provides services to children there. While he was in Honduras, Maurizio provided money or candy to minor boys in an orphanage and engaged in unlawful sexual activities. Maurizio is also charged with possession of material depicting minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct.

Following search warrants executed on Sept. 12, 2014, at the rectory at Our Lady Queen of Angels Church in Central City, Pennsylvania, and a farm owned by Maurizio in Windber, Pennsylvania, law enforcement seized various computers and electronic devices, including a hard drive allegedly containing images depicting minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct.

The charges in the complaint and indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The case is being investigated by HSI's Pittsburgh Office and prosecuted by Criminal Division Trial Attorney Amy E. Larson of the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) and Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephanie Haines of the Western District of Pennsylvania.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse, launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by U.S. Attorneys' offices and CEOS, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

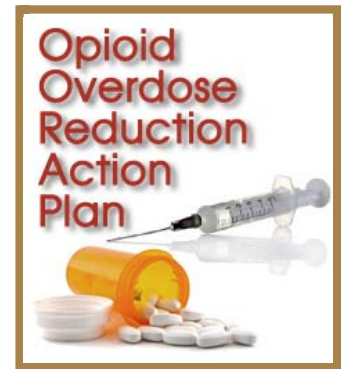
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