

## Feds add 2 more victims to priest's sexual tourism case

**JOE MANDAK** *The Associated Press*  
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PITTSBURGH (AP) - A new federal indictment adds two more victims to the case of a Roman Catholic priest accused of traveling to Honduras to have sex with poor street children during missionary trips.

The Rev. Joseph Maurizio Jr., 69, has been jailed since last fall when federal prosecutors in Johnstown accused him of molesting one boy, and possessing child pornography. The new indictment returned Tuesday also charges the suspended priest with sending \$8,000 to a charity to help facilitate the trips which ended in 2009. None of the alleged victims are named, but all are under 18, according to the indictment.



Maurizio's attorney, Stephen Passarello, told The Associated Press that the charges in the new indictment came as no surprise.

"We have already prepared for them and already have, through our investigative team in Honduras, witnesses lined up to challenge the veracity of the allegations," he said.

In the indictment, Maurizio is charged with engaging in illicit sexual conduct in foreign places - also referred to as sexual tourism, or the act of traveling abroad to commit child-sex acts that are illegal in the United States.

He's also charged with three counts of transferring money out of the country used to promote an illegal activity.

Passarello has previously claimed that a rival charity, ProNino USA, and unspecified Dutch atheists have conspired to bribe poor Honduran children to accuse the priest.

ProNino USA didn't respond to a message Wednesday seeking comment on the new charges against Maurizio.

Among other things, he's charged with sending \$8,000 in three installments to ProNino USA in 2007 and 2008 to finance his alleged sex trips. The charity is not accused of wrongdoing, nor does the indictment suggest that officials with the charity knew the purpose of Maurizio's trips.

Maurizio has been jailed since Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents arrested him in September.

A criminal complaint filed then, which contains more details than the indictment, **MORE** alleges Maurizio gave boys candy and money so he could molest them, including performing a sex act with a 12-year-old in a church.

candy and money so he could molest them - including performing a sex act on a 14-year-old in a chapel - or watch the boys have sex. It happened during mission trips to Honduras with his self-run charity in 2009 and prior years, according to the complaint.

Maurizio has been placed on leave from the Somerset County church he also pastored, Our Lady Queen of Angels.

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