



RHODE ISLAND STATE POLICE
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PRESS RELEASE

MEMBERS OF THE RHODE ISLAND STATE POLICE MAJOR CRIMES UNIT ARREST A FORMER WARWICK PRIEST FOR FIRST-DEGREE SEXUAL ASSAULT

For Immediate Release

November 21, 2014

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Colonel Steven G. O'Donnell, Superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police and Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, announces that on Thursday, November 20, 2014, members of the Rhode Island State Police Major Crimes Unit arrested **Father Barry Meehan, age 65, of 767 Providence Street, West Warwick, Rhode Island** for First-Degree Sexual Assault. Father Meehan last served as Pastor of Saint Timothy's Church, 1799 Warwick Avenue, Warwick, Rhode Island in 2013.

Father Meehan was arraigned before The Honorable Magistrate Patricia L. Harwood in Providence County Superior Court on Five Counts of First-Degree Sexual Assault. Bail was set at \$50,000 surety with no contact with the victims. Father Meehan must also surrender his passport, as well as, not leave the State of Rhode Island. A Pre-Trial Conference was scheduled for December 11, 2014 in the Providence County Superior Court, 250 Benefit Street, Providence, and Rhode Island.

During the month of December, 2012, the State Police Major Crimes Unit received a complaint from the Office of Education and Compliance for the Diocese of Providence into the alleged sexual assaults committed by Father Meehan upon several young males during the 1980's and 1990's. Detectives subsequently initiated a joint investigation with the Office of Education and Compliance for the Diocese of Providence into the allegations and developed information from the alleged victims that Father Meehan had sexually assaulted them at various locations and dates within Rhode Island. On November 20, 2014, an arrest warrant was issued for Father Meehan and he was arrested without incident at the West Warwick address.

The investigation was a collaborative effort by Detectives from the Rhode Island State Police, members of the Attorney General's Office and the Office of Education and Compliance for the Diocese of Providence, who worked to identify and locate the victims in this investigation.

This investigation is ongoing, and if anyone has any knowledge of any additional victims, please contact Rhode Island State Police Major Crimes Lieutenant Matthew Moynihan at 401-444-1046 or Corporal Kenneth Moriarty at 401-444-1280.

A person found guilty of First-Degree Sexual Assault may be sentenced to not less than ten (10) years and up to life in prison.

Colonel O'Donnell stated, "I commend these individuals for coming forward and placing their confidence and trust in the criminal justice system."

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