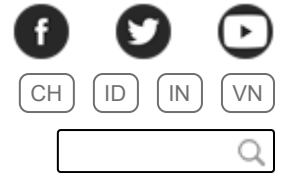




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Laicized priest in Timor-Leste refuses to give up ministry

Richard Daschbach was stripped of priestly duties after allegedly admitting to abusing girls at orphanage

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US-born missionary, Richard Daschbach, has been laicized for allegedly sexually abusing children under his care at Topu Honis Sheltered Home, Timor Leste. (Photo supplied)

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A disgraced American missionary priest laicized by the Vatican for allegedly abusing young girls at an orphanage he founded in [Timor-Leste](#) has refused Church instructions to leave the children's home and stop saying Mass.

Father Richard Daschbach, 82, who has worked in the Catholic majority country since 1966, is accused of having sexually abused several girls in his care at the Topu Honis Shelter Home, which he founded in Oecussi district 27 years ago.

The accusations surfaced in early 2018.

However, despite allegedly admitting the allegations to police and being laicized by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith in November last year following a Vatican probe, he remains at the orphanage and continues saying Mass, according to Divine Word Society (SVD) Superior General, Father Paul Budi Kleden.

Father Kleden says Daschbach refused to leave the home and go to the capital Dili when instructed, which prompted the SVD to call on police to arrest him.

"Cases like this deeply wound the Church," he said.

Police have not yet arrested Daschbach and prosecutors have yet to lay charges.

Father Yohanes Suban Gapun, head of the SVD in Dili told ucanews.com he does not understand why Daschbach returned to the orphanage, especially after submitting his resignation from the congregation.

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"I forbade him to go anywhere because the case was under [police](#) investigation. But he returned quietly [to the orphanage]," he said.

"He told me the accusations were his responsibility. He said 'I'll face them on my own.'"

Father Gapun said police were likely hesitant to arrest Daschbach because he is still a respected and well-connected figure among the [ruling elite](#) who admire him for his contribution to the country's independence struggle and his efforts to help marginalized people.

The Divine Word priest said prosecutors had assured him they were looking into the case.

Daschbach and prosecutors could not be reached for comment.

Born in Pittsburg, Daschbach is known for his social work in Timor-Leste. He established Topu Honis in 1993 to provide care for homeless children, as well as disabled adults, and [women](#) fleeing domestic abuse.



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Tobias Raphael

Fr. Gapen should man-up and force him to leave... physically! Get this pervert away from those children!

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Marie Claire Sweeney

He did, correctly, refer it to the police. It is they and their masters who are telling the survivors that what they suffered is nothing.

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