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[Return to story](#)

More charges for priest

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A former Catholic priest in Louisa County was indicted today on 12 additional counts of embezzlement.

Rodney Lee Rodis, 50, now faces 13 counts of felony embezzlement. He's accused of stealing from his former parishes, St. Jude and Immaculate Conception Catholic churches. Police have said the thefts may have exceeded \$1 million.

Rodis was indicted on the first embezzlement charge Jan. 8. An arraignment on that charge had been scheduled today, and Louisa defense attorney Jack Maus had indicated that Rodis might plead guilty.

The arraignment was pushed back after the Louisa Circuit Court grand jury indicted the former priest on the 12 additional charges this morning. The change frustrated several parishioners there to watch.

"It's going to go on for years," said St. Jude parishioner Ellen McGough. "They keep delaying and delaying."

Maus said after court that the case is going through the legal system as normal. "The wheels of justice move slowly," he said.

Rodis' next court hearing is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. March 30. He could be arraigned that day, and Maus said it's possible that he might enter a plea.

The initial indictment accused Rodis of stealing from the churches between September 2001 and October 2006. Today's indictments charge him with stealing during 12 separate six-month periods between September 1995 and September 2001.

Rodis will remain free on a \$10,000 bond until his next court appearance. He lives in the Sheraton Hills area of Spotsylvania County. He is a native of the Philippines and had to surrender his passport to get bond.

He had been living with 44-year-old Joyce Sillador and three girls, but those four recently moved to New Mexico. Rodis remains to face the charges in Louisa.

Neighbors assumed Rodis was married with children. They have said they didn't know Rodis was a priest. Maus said Rodis is not married, but the attorney has referred to Sillador and the girls as the priest's family.

Rodis was pastor at St. Jude and Immaculate Conception Catholic churches for 13 years. He retired in May, citing health reasons.

State police began investigating last year when a parishioner donated \$1,000 and asked for a receipt. There was no record of it.

Rodis can no longer present himself publicly as a priest. The Catholic Diocese of Richmond hasn't said whether it will try to defrock Rodis, but the sacraments he gave will remain valid.

-- Bill Freehling, The Free Lance-Star

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