

NORTH

# Fugitive priest arrested in LA

*Apologizes for US child pornography scandal*

By Scott J. Croteau, TELEGRAM & GAZETTE  
December 19, 2012

<https://www.telegram.com/story/news/local/north/2012/12/20/fugitive-priest-arrested-in-la/49201676007/>

The Roman Catholic priest wanted by authorities in Worcester for allegedly possessing child pornography and stealing from his Fitchburg parish was taken into custody in Los Angeles recently and will be brought to Worcester, authorities said.

The Rev. Lowe B. Dongor, 36, was brought to Los Angeles from the Philippines, his home country.

Records from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department show Rev. Dongor was arrested Dec. 10 by Los Angeles police. He is being held without bail in a Los Angeles correctional facility. He is to appear in a Los Angeles court Wednesday. Timothy J. Connolly, spokesman for the Worcester district attorney's office, said Rev. Dongor agreed not to fight rendition, but no time has been set for his return to Worcester.

“Our office is in the process of making arrangements to

bring him to Worcester Superior Court,” Mr. Connolly said.

Mr. Connolly said Los Angeles police detained Rev. Dongor when he arrived in the United States.

Rev. Dongor was flown to the United States on Monday evening, according to the Philippine Daily Inquirer newspaper. The newspaper said Rev. Dongor turned himself in to National Bureau of Investigation officials after a priest helped mediate the surrender.

“I am so sorry. I want to apologize to all the people ... for all the damage I have done to you, to the church, and to myself,” Rev. Dongor told the Inquirer. He told the newspaper he visited pornographic websites out of curiosity.

A Worcester County grand jury handed up indictments earlier this year charging Rev. Dongor with possession of child pornography and larceny of more than \$250. A warrant was issued for the arrest of Rev. Dongor, who authorities believed had fled the country and possibly returned to the Philippines.

State police allege that one of Rev. Dongor’s laptop computers contained images of girls 10 or 11 years old in various states of undress. The 36-year-old priest also allegedly admitted to investigators that he stole “\$40 or \$50” from St. Joseph Parish in Fitchburg on a number of occasions to send to his family in the Philippines.

The diocese placed him on administrative leave of absence and he was relieved of his duties as associate pastor of St. Joseph by Worcester Bishop Robert J. McManus. The diocese then asked the Vatican to defrock Rev. Dongor.

Raymond L. Delisle, spokesman for the Diocese of Worcester, said no word has come back from the Vatican. Bishop McManus did send a letter to the Catholic Bishops of the Conference of the Philippines in October 2011, telling them Rev. Dongor was not allowed to dress in clerical clothes or be a priest, Mr. Delisle said. An audit was performed on the St. Joseph Church, and no large sums of money were discovered missing, he said.

The Diocese of Worcester has been cooperative throughout the case, Mr. Connolly said. A federal complaint filed in U.S. District Court in Massachusetts earlier this year accused Rev. Dongor of unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.

FBI Special Agent Rachael Boisselle wrote in a complaint that Rev. Dongor left the United States from JFK International Airport in New York on Oct. 1, 2011, on a Korean Airlines flight. Law enforcement believed he was fleeing to the Philippines, the agent wrote. Rev. Dongor was in the United States on a religious work visa, Agent

Boisselle wrote. Rev. Dongor was arraigned in Fitchburg District Court in September 2011 on the child pornography possession charge.