

*Jackie Lacey*  
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NEWS RELEASE

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**Man Who Allegedly Posed as Priest  
Sentenced For Stealing From Parishioners**

A 59-year-old man accused of posing as a Catholic priest has been sentenced to one year in county jail after pleading guilty to stealing funds from churchgoers.

Erwin Mena pleaded guilty yesterday to one count of grand theft and was immediately sentenced by Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge David Horwitz to one year in jail and ordered to pay about \$53,000 in restitution.

Mena passed himself off as a priest dating back to October 2014 at a pair of Catholic churches in Los Angeles where he performed Mass, confessions and a wedding.

Mena was accused of swindling parishioners at two churches by selling tickets for a pilgrimage to see Pope Francis during his visit to the United States last September. Prosecutors said he never made the arrangements and the trip did not take place.

The case was investigated by the Los Angeles Police Department.

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**[About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#)**

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.