

## Close to 2000 Brazilian Priests Caught in Sexual Misconduct

Contributed by A. A.  
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A Roman Catholic priest has been sentenced in Brazil to 14 years and eight months in prison for sexually molesting two boys, according to court officials.

Rev. Tarcísio Tadeu Spricigo was convicted of molesting the boys, ages five and 13, between 2001 and 2002 in Anápolis, state of Goiás, in the Brazilian midwest. Spricigo currently is jailed in São Paulo on similar charges.

The Brazilian priest has denied any wrongdoing, and his lawyers have pledged to appeal, the court's press officer Patricia Papini said by telephone from Goiânia, capital of Goiás. His conviction comes amid widening concerns of sexual abuse among Brazilian priests.

Earlier this month, priest Felix Barbosa Carreiro was arrested and charged with pedophilia in the northeastern state of Maranhão after police seized him in a hotel room with four teenage boys.

In January, Geraldo da Consolação Machado, the priest of a small parish in the southeastern state of Minas Gerais, was sentenced to almost nine years in jail for sexually abusing an 11-year-old boy.

Brazil is the world's largest Roman Catholic country. Nearly 70 percent of its 185 million people are Catholics.

Recent press reports from Rome said the Vatican has sent a special commission to Brazil to investigate sexual misconduct among Brazilian priests. The Brazilian Bishop's Council denied any knowledge of such a commission.

According to the national news magazine Isto É, a papal commission found 10 percent of Brazil's 1,700 priests to have been involved in sexual misconduct and 200 priests had been committed to psychological institutions for pedophilia over the past three years.

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