

Catholic cardinal and former top Vatican official, 79, arrested for DUI while vacationing in Hawaii with priest friends

- **Former San Francisco Archbishop William Levada was arrested August 20 on a DUI charge after being spotted swerving in and out of traffic**
- **Levada was freed on \$500 bail and later released a statement apologizing for 'an error in judgement'**
- **Before his retirement as archbishop in 2012, Levada was the highest ranking American cardinal within Vatican hierarchy**

By [Snejana Farberov](#) For [Dailymail.com](#)

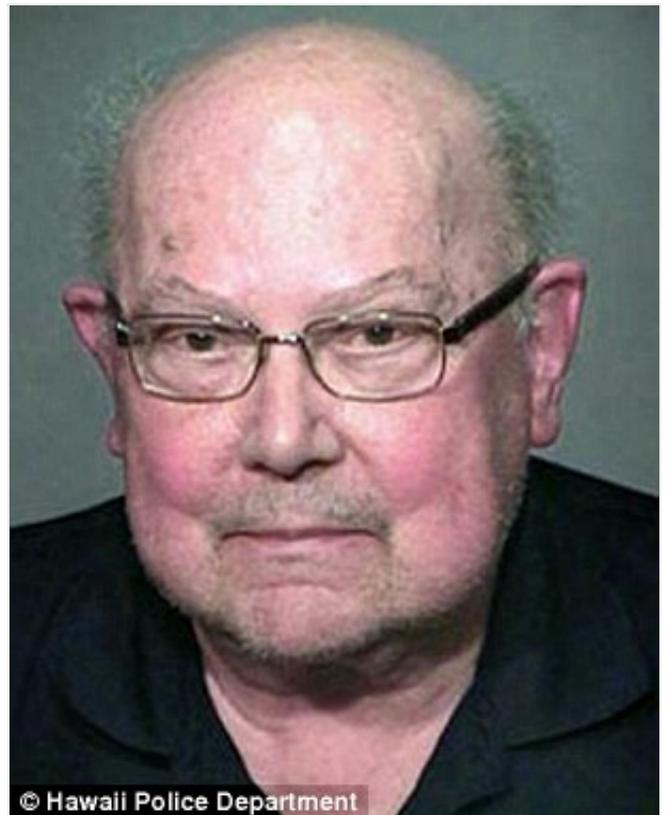
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A Roman Catholic cardinal from California was arrested last week on a drunken driving charge while vacationing on Hawaii's Big Island.

Police say Cardinal William Levada, 79, was seen driving erratically before he was pulled over Thursday night on Hina Lani Street in Kailua-Kona.

Levada, a former archbishop of Portland and San Francisco, was charged with DUI and released after posting \$500 bail.

Before his retirement as archbishop in 2012, Levada was the highest ranking American cardinal within the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.



Humbled: Cardinal William Levada, 79, is pictured in his booking photo following a DUI

In a statement released in the wake of his **arrest on Hawaii's Big Island August 20** arrest, the clergyman said he regretted his 'error in judgement' and promised to continue cooperating with police, reported **Hawaii Tribune-Herald**.

According to Michael Brown, spokesperson for the Archdiocese of San Francisco, Levada was vacationing in Hawaii with some of his priest friends at the time of the incident.

Levada was behind the wheel of a 2015 Nissan Altima and was alone when a police officer saw him swerve while going northbound on Queen Kaahumanu Highway at around midnight Thursday, according to the Hawaii paper.

The 79-year-old cleric is due back in court on the Big Island September 24.

Levada was ordained a priest in the Los Angeles Archdiocese in 1961.



Prince of the church: Levada was officially named cardinal in March 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI (pictured)





High honor: Levada, pictured left and right, also had served as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith - a position Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger had occupied before being elected Pope Benedict XVI

After rising through the ranks of church hierarchy, Levada in 2005 was appointed Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith - a position Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger had occupied before being elected Pope Benedict XVI.

A year later, Levada was made a cardinal. In his capacity as the highest ranking cardinal in the US, Levada was in charge of handling some of the fallout from the church sex abuse scandal.

He retired as the head of Vatican's orthodoxy watchdog in 2012 and took on the honorary title Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In 2013, Levada traveled to the Vatican to take part in the conclave that elected Pope Francis.



Controversial figure: In 2013, Cardinal Levada sparked an uproar when he spoke up in defense of Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahoney, who was suspected of covering up priests' sex abuse crimes

Around the same time, Levada stirred a controversy when he publicly criticized victims of sex abuse who were calling on Los Angeles Cardinal Roger Mahoney to recuse himself from the conclave over allegations that he had shielded pedophile priests.

'There are some victims groups for whom enough is never enough, so we have to do our jobs as best we see it,' Levada told reporters at the time. 'He [Mahoney] has apologized for errors in judgment that were made. I believe he should be at the conclave.'

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