

Composer Ernie Sands wrote “Sing of the Lord’s Goodness”

Sex abuse suspect priest Father Ernest Sands found dead

© 19 April 2016



DOUGELLIOT/GEOGRAPH

| One of the offences relates to Fr Sands time as a teacher at Upholland College

A Roman Catholic priest arrested on suspicion of child sexual abuse has been found dead on the day he was due to report to police.

Father Ernest Sands, 67, was found dead on 11 April, it has emerged.

Last year Lancashire Police arrested Fr Sands, who lived in Oswestry, on suspicion of sexually abusing five boys including one at a Catholic seminary.

A Lancashire Police spokesman said the death was not suspicious and his alleged victims had been informed.

Fr Sands was never charged and his family told the BBC that he always maintained his innocence.

The offences were said to have taken place in the late 1970s and 1980s against boys aged from 11 to 15.

One offence relates to Fr Sands' time as a teacher at St Joseph's Roman Catholic College, Upholland, Lancashire, where future priests were trained.

A police spokesman said the other offences took place at different locations.

The police spokesman added: "He had been due to answer bail on 11 April but was found dead at an address in Oswestry, on 11 April".

A file was being prepared for the coroner, he said.

The Crown Prosecution Service said it had been considering a file prepared by police.

The Diocese of Shrewsbury said Fr Sands had not been in active ministry for several years.

Fr Sands wrote the hymn Sing Of The Lord's Goodness, which was chosen by George Carey for his installation as the Archbishop of Canterbury.