



St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office
Steven A. Hall, Sheriff
23150 Leonard Hall Drive, Leonardtown, MD 20650



NEWS RELEASE

Man Arrested Following Disruptions at Local Churches

LEONARDTOWN, MD (December 26, 2024) – Deputies from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office have arrested and charged Thomas Campbell Bolling Von Goetz, 56, of Avenue, after incidents at two local churches disrupted religious services and endangered citizens.

On December 24, 2024, shortly after 5 p.m., Von Goetz entered Holy Angels Catholic Church in Avenue during a Mass. He approached the altar and dropped an onion in the aisle, disturbing the peace of those attending. A citizen followed Von Goetz as he exited the church to ensure he was leaving the premises. Outside, Von Goetz assaulted the citizen by throwing tangerines at them.

Later that night, during Midnight Mass at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Leonardtown, Von Goetz disrupted the service by pouring whiskey into the holy water and threatening to harm parishioners. As church attendees escorted him from the building, he attempted unsuccessfully to strike several individuals with a whiskey bottle. Parishioners detained Von Goetz until deputies arrived; he was then transported to MedStar St. Mary's Hospital for medical evaluation.

On December 26, 2024, Von Goetz was arrested and charged with the following offenses:

- Second-Degree Assault
- Disorderly Conduct
- Defacing Religious Property
- Religious Crime Against a Group
- Obstructing a Religious Exercise
- Threat of Mass Violence
- Disturbing the Peace

Von-Goetz is currently being held at the St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center, pending an appearance before a District Court Commissioner.

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