



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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Fillmore Man Sentenced for Lewd Acts on a Child

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Vidal Vargas Morales (DOB 12/30/60), of Fillmore, was sentenced on January 23, 2024, to two years state prison and is required to register as a sex offender pursuant to Penal Code section 290. Morales was previously convicted on December 12, 2023, of one felony count of lewd act upon a child who was 15 years old. The special allegation that he took advantage of a position of trust and confidence to commit the offense was also found true by the court.

In 2013, Morales worked as a youth coordinator for a church in Fillmore. During that time, he met the victim who attended catechism classes. Between October and November 2013, Morales began inappropriate communications with the victim, both verbally and through text messages. In early November 2013, Morales grabbed and fondled the victim. The crime was reported years later. Other victims who had similar experiences with Morales testified during the trial.

Deputy District Attorney Michael Kern, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Sexual Assault Unit, prosecuted the case.

"The defendant used his position of trust and authority as a respected member of the church and Fillmore community to inflict emotional, spiritual, and ultimately, sexual abuse against the victim," Mr. Kern said. "The severity of the sentence reflects the severity of the conduct. And while this sentence can never fully remedy the harm suffered by the victim in this case, hopefully it serves as one step in this continued healing process."

Morales will be back in court for a restitution hearing scheduled for January 31, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 14 of the Ventura County Superior Court.

Case: 2016023855

Defendant Information:

Vidal Vargas Morales (DOB 12/30/60)

Fillmore

Charges Convicted of:

- PC 288(c)(1) – Lewd act upon a child

Special Allegations:

- CRC 4.421(a)(11) – The defendant took advantage of a position of trust and confidence to commit the offense

