

Body of former Coast priest found

JACKSON COUNTY BUREAU

A body found in a drainage canal near Houma, La., last month has been identified as that of Jack Wesley Smith, a former Coast priest.

Terrebonne Parish Sheriff Ronnie Duplantis said Smith's death was "definitely a homicide" and the case is still under investigation.

Smith, 41, had most recently served Our Lady of Victories Parish in Pascagoula. He had lived in Houma for about eight months, where he was employed with an offshore food catering

company. Smith was last seen on April 19, and Houma police had been investigating his disappearance.

Duplantis said Smith's body was found by hunters in a drainage canal at Bayou Dularge on June 18, but cause of death could not be determined. He said there are indications that Smith drowned, but it is believed foul play was involved.

Dental records and X-rays from Pascagoula were used to confirm the identification, Duplantis said.