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Charges off in priest's stabbing

Investigation
will continue

By Michael D. Clark
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MIDDLETOWN - Authorities dropped charges Wednesday against a man accused of stabbing a Catholic priest but indicated their investigation would continue and charges might be refiled.

Marcus Finefrock was charged with felonious assault in the May 5 stabbing of the Rev. Charles "Chuck" Mentrup in the priest's Mid-



Finefrock



Mentrup

dletown home.

Father Mentrup, who is principal of Fenwick High School and pastor of the Church of the Incarnation in Centerville, refused to testify against Mr. Finefrock because he said he was hearing his former student's confes-

sion at the time of the incident.

Mr. Finefrock, a 25-year-old law school graduate, had entered a not-guilty plea.

Father Mentrup is still recovering from the stabbing at a private location.

Middletown Police Chief Bill Becker said in a statement that prosecutors "believe additional investigation is warranted" in the stabbing.

He said detectives will continue to examine the case and will report back to prosecutors "for further direction."

He declined further comment.

Butler County Prosecutor John Holcomb said he expects the charges to be reinstated "sometime soon" but declined to elaborate.

Mr. Finefrock would not comment but his attorney predicted that further investigation will not uncover more evidence.

"Mr. Finefrock is not guilty of any illegal acts ... or any crime," said attorney Clyde Bennett II. "This is a good juncture to finally resolve this case."