

## World &amp; Nation

## Cathedral attacker said to be mentally ill Cuban refugee

By Cindy Wooden

Washington (NC) — A naked man with a history of mental illness attacked and killed an usher and injured a police officer September 21 at New York's St. Patrick Cathedral before he was shot and killed by police.

The next day Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York performed the rite of reconciliation of a desecrated church before the 8 a.m. Mass. The rite is used when violence and bloodshed have taken place within a church.

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Cardinal O'Connor told the 300 people gathered for the rite that judgment of the attacker must be left to God. He asked for prayers for the murdered usher, the injured police officer and the officer who shot and killed the attacker, identified as 32-year-old Jorge Delgado, a homeless man with a history of mental illness and a criminal record.

Police said Delgado, who came to the United States in 1980 with a boatlift of refugees from Mariel, Cuba, had been in the church early in the morning September 21 and had confronted Cardinal O'Connor.

After the cardinal gave him a blessing, the man left without incident, Cardinal O'Connor later told reporters.

Witnesses said Delgado returned shortly before 8 p.m., walking into the cathedral naked, carrying a pair of sneakers and a bouquet of red carnations in front of his groin.

He used the flowers to hit a 34-year-old man who was seated near the back of the church, a police spokesman told National Catholic News Service.

Delgado then walked up the aisle toward the main altar and punched a 39-year-old

woman in the face. Police said the woman sustained injuries, but refused medical attention.

At that point, a cathedral employee summoned James T. McMann, the police officer on duty outside St. Patrick's, the spokesman said. An officer regularly is stationed outside the Manhattan church.

Police said Delgado, 6 feet 5 inches tall and weighing 250 pounds, walked to St. Elizabeth's altar, which is behind the sanctuary, and pulled loose a 3-foot-high wrought-iron bookstand which was bolted to the marble floor.

McMann ran up the south aisle of the church toward Delgado, confronting him near the main altar. The police spokesman said McMann told Delgado to drop the bookstand, but Delgado began pursuing McMann down the aisle.

The officer radioed for assistance before Delgado started beating him over the head with the stand. The 50-year-old McMann fell to the floor.

Police said Delgado then turned on a 77-year-old usher, John Winters. Delgado hit Winters "seven or eight times directly on the head" with the bookstand, the police report

said.

Winters "collapsed at the foot of the altar steps" and died there on the marble floor.

The usher and his son, Father Sean G. Winters of Holy Spirit Parish in Perth Amboy, N.J., had traveled on a pilgrimage to Ireland with Cardinal O'Connor in July.

Joseph Zwilling, a spokesman for the Archdiocese of New York, told NC News that the elder Winters was working in the cathedral when the attack occurred. Ushers remain in the church to assist worshipers and tourists even when Mass is not being celebrated, Zwilling said.

Officer Carl Tobia, a member of the police backup team responding to McMann's call for help, entered the cathedral and told Delgado to drop the stand. When Delgado lunged toward Tobia, the officer fired one shot, hitting Delgado in the chest. He died at the cathedral.

After the incident, Cardinal O'Connor and New York Mayor Edward Koch went to the hospital to visit McMann, who was receiving treatment for facial fractures and a concussion.

A police spokesman said that last March Delgado had been forcibly removed from the cathedral by police and taken to Roosevelt Hospital for a psychiatric evaluation after he was seen acting aggressively and shouting in the church.

The police also said Delgado was among the hundreds of Cuban refugees who came to the United States in 1980 as part of the Mariel boatlift.

Delgado, the police said, had been admitted to Bellevue Hospital for psychiatric treatment at least five times since 1983 and had been imprisoned at least 11 times for a variety of offenses between 1982 and 1987.

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## Abortion pill approved for France

Paris (NC) — France has approved a controversial "abortion pill" for use in the country, drawing immediate and sharp criticism from a national Catholic organization.

The drug, RU-486, is to be made available in some French family planning clinics where women can obtain contraceptives. It will not be for sale in pharmacies or available under prescription by family doctors, French Health Minister Claude Evin said September 23 in announcing the drug's approval.

The Catholic Families Association criticized authorization of the drug, saying it would be aimed at "the poorest and weakest segments of society."

Medical experts said the pill, which aborts an unborn child in the early stages of pregnancy, could cut by half or more France's 150,000 annual surgical or suction-method abortions.

China approved use of the drug on September 18.

An American firm reportedly plans to seek U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval to market RU-486. Right-to-life groups said they would organize a boycott of any firm marketing the drug in the United States and urged their French counterparts to launch boycotts of French marketers.

France approved use of RU-486 for up to 49 days after a woman's last menstrual period. For permission to use the drug, a woman would be required to take a pregnancy test as soon as she missed a period and decide quickly to have an abortion if the test proved positive.

The woman would take a pill on three consecutive days, then take an injection or suppository of the drug prostaglandin. Prostaglandin works with RU-486 to induce a miscarriage. Bleeding and passing blood clots might continue for up to 10 days after the treatment.

RU-486 blocks cells in the uterus from receiving progesterone, a hormone needed to prepare for and continue a pregnancy.

A surgical abortion would be required if the RU-486 treatment failed because the drug might cause birth defects, according to experts.

In the United States, Richard D. Glasow, education director of National Right to Life, said the group has asked French anti-abortion groups to protest the marketing of the drug. Right to Life has also told the French ambassador in Washington that pro-life organizations may launch a worldwide boycott of the products of Rousell-Uclaf, the French company which owns the rights to the drug, and Hoescht Pharmaceuticals, the West German parent company.