

# Killings rock church, draw worldwide rage

By Bill Pritchard  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The church in El Salvador and throughout the world was rocked Nov. 16 by the murders of six Jesuit priests — including the head of Central American University — along with their cook and her teenage daughter.

The incident drew widespread outrage, including harsh words from Pope John Paul II and several U.S. bishops.

Meanwhile, there were reports of scattered attacks on Catholic and other churches by Salvadoran troops in the sweep against rebels entrenched in the poor, northern suburbs of El Salvador's capital, San Salvador.

Pope John Paul on Nov. 17 called the killings "barbaric" and sent telegrams of sympathy to the Jesuit order and the Salvadoran church.

On Nov. 19, San Salvador Archbishop Arturo Rivera Damas spoke of a "strong indication" that the killers were Salvadoran soldiers or their collaborators. By contrast, on the day of the killings he said the church was not in a position to accuse specific individuals or groups.

The murders "put our country in first place in terms of barbarity," the archbishop said in his Sunday homily.

In a letter dated Nov. 18, El Salvador's attorney general asked the pope to remove "some of the bishops" from El Salvador for their own safety and "the security and well-being of the parishioners of El Salvador."

Without naming the bishops to be removed, Attorney General Mauricio Eduardo Colorado said these prelates have maintained "this questionable ideology of the 'Church of the Poor.'" Archbishop Rivera Damas is believed to be among those to whom the attorney general referred.

The slain Jesuits were university rector Father Ignacio Ellacuria, 59; vice rector Father Ignacio Martin-Baro, 47; and head of the university's human-rights office Father Segundo Montes, 56. Also killed were Jesuit Fathers Juan Moreno, 56; Amando Lopez, 53; and Joaquin Lopez y Lopez, 71. All but Father Lopez y Lopez, a native Salvadoran and a cousin of San

Salvador's ambassador to the United States, were naturalized citizens of Spanish birth.

Also killed during the early-morning attack were the Jesuits' cook, Elba Ramos, and her 15-year-old daughter, Mariset.

Witnesses reported seeing at least 20 men in military uniforms breaking into the residence at the time of the killings.

The murders occurred shortly after 3 a.m. (4 a.m. EST) during a curfew imposed by the military. Fighting between rebels — who had launched a major offensive — and government troops has raged in the beleaguered capital since Nov. 11.

The incident overshadowed, for a time, the overall toll of more than 1,000 dead from the fighting. At least 70,000 people have been killed in El Salvador's 10-year civil war.

Right-wing groups have charged the university and its officials with having links to the insurgent organization and sympathy for the rebels.

The Jesuit provincial for Central America, Father Jose Maria Tojeira, said the victims were "assassinated with great barbarity."

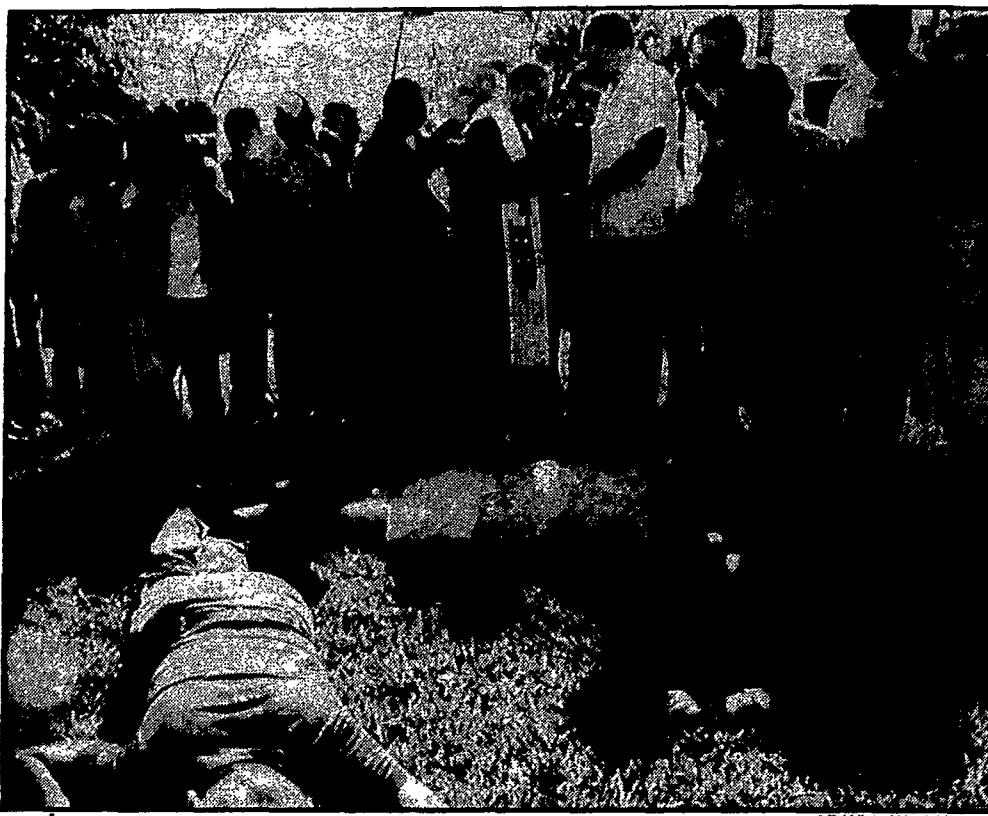
The government of President Alfredo Cristiani has denied involvement in the killings, accusing "terrorist groups" of the act.

The assailants took some of their victims to the lawn outside the residence and shot them. Others were shot inside the building. Spent shells of automatic rifles, said to be from U.S.-made M-16s, were strewn about the area where the bodies lay.

Witnesses said a bomb was detonated at the time of the attack. Some observers believe it was used to force entry into the residence.

Archbishop Rivera Damas, who visited the scene, said "we are not thinking of revenge, nor are we asking for it."

In Washington Nov. 17, Father Walter J. Farrell, president of the United States Jesuit Conference, said the priests had received anonymous telephone threats in



AP Wide World Photo

Monsignor Arturo Rivera Damas, archbishop of San Salvador (center) and journalists view the bodies of the six Jesuit priests and two university employees who were killed and mutilated by a squad of assassins on Thursday, Nov. 16.

the days preceding their murder.

"The implication from a reliable source in Central America is that it is the extreme right, which has been against them for a number of years," he said.

He said the bodies of the Jesuits had been mutilated.

"They took out their brains," Father Farrell said. "They just gouged them out."

Father Farrell also expressed concern for an American Jesuit in El Salvador, Father Richard Howard, 40, who coordinates the order's refugee effort in Central America. "He feels he is in danger," Father Farrell said.

The ambassador defended his government against accusations of complicity in the murders, saying the assailants were "fanatics" of the left or the "extreme right."

Several U.S. bishops expressed outrage and shock over the killings, calling for increased pressure by the U.S. government to bring an end to the bloodshed in the nation's decade-long civil war.

"Absolutely nothing justifies such unconscionable acts of terrorism," said Boston's Cardinal Bernard F. Law, chairman

of the United States bishops' Committee on Migration.

Los Angeles' Archbishop Roger M. Mahony, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Policy, said the tragedy is a glaring example of how many innocent people have become victims of an ideological war.

Many of the bishops called on the U.S. government to take the lead in urging an immediate truce and prompt negotiations between the government and the guerrillas.

The bishops also expressed hope that church facilities used as hospitals or shelters would be protected from the violence and that the government and guerrillas would agree even for just a short period.

The human-rights organization America's Watch blamed the Salvadoran military for the killings and said the soldiers and commanders involved should be punished.

During a memorial Mass Nov. 16 at U.S. Catholic Conference headquarters in Washington, Jesuit Father Simon E. Smith, executive secretary of Jesuit Missions Inc., said that although the deaths of the priests shocked people in the United States, "this day of blood came as no surprise to them."

## Conference stresses church opposition to condoms

By Agostino Bono  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The first Vatican-sponsored conference on AIDS served as a forum for repeating church opposition to the use of condoms under any circumstances.

The consensus of church officials and others asked to discuss ethical aspects of the disease was that — morally and medically — condoms are not the answer.

Many church speakers said condoms are medically wrong because they will only encourage people to engage in sexual practices capable of transmitting AIDS.

At the conference held Nov. 13-15, this view was disputed by some doctors and scientists who argued that while condoms do not guarantee "safe sex," they do provide "safer sex" by reducing the possibilities of infection.

Participants generally agreed, however, that the use of condoms will not stop the spread of the disease.

The strongest moral condemnation was given by Monsignor Carlo Caffarra, dean of the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family Studies in Rome.

Use of condoms "is a true and proper anti-conceptive act which is never licit under any circumstances or for any reasons," he said.

If a spouse has the AIDS virus the couple "has the grave obligation of total abstinence" so as not to infect the healthy member, said Monsignor Caffarra.

Exceptions to the "total abstinence" rule are if it presents danger of adultery and when "prolonged abstinence gravely harms conjugal harmony," he said.

In these exceptions condoms cannot be used, but the couple can risk infection, he said.

AIDS-education programs must not favor use of condoms because "it is never licit to apply the principle of the 'lesser evil' to advise use of a prophylactic," Monsignor Caffarra said.

Church officials said condoms would encourage homosexual and heterosexual permissiveness, thus increasing the risk of spreading AIDS. For similar reasons, they opposed distribution of sterile needles to intravenous drug addicts.

In closing the conference, Pope John Paul II did not specifically mention condoms, but opposed all AIDS-prevention methods considered "morally illicit" by the church.

Doctors and scientists speaking at the conference said the only "safe sex" occurs between non-infected people.

Many, however, said condoms should be a part of AIDS prevention.

Use of condoms means "safer sex," said Dr. August Von Eiff, director of the Bonn University Medical Clinic in West Germany.

In cases where one partner in a marriage is infected, "in the eyes of many doctors — including myself — the use of condoms is indicated so that sex life not be interrupted," he said.

There is an 8-to-17 percent chance of infection with condoms, said Von Eiff, who opposed advertising campaigns for con-

doms as leading to false hopes for prevention.

Dr. Luc Montagnier, director of viral oncology at the Pasteur Institute, Paris, said condoms should be included in AIDS-education programs, but are insufficient in themselves to prevent spread of the disease.

Lt. Col. Robert Redfield, a medical doctor and the chief of the retrovirus research

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## Philosopher says AIDS is divine punishment

By Agostino Bono  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Is AIDS the punishment of God?

While many speakers at a November Vatican conference on AIDS brushed off the question with a quick "no," one person made it the focus of his talk and answered "yes," as is all suffering and disease.

But the punishment is a positive thing and is not aimed exclusively at homosexuals and drug addicts, said Rocco Buttiglione, influential in Italian Catholic circles because he is responsible for developing the ideological positions of Communion and Liberation, one of the country's largest lay Catholic movements.

"It is the wrath of God against certain patterns of human behavior, not just sexual," he said.

"The wrath of God may mean that AIDS is sent to people to call people back to truth and justice," Buttiglione added.

The Nov. 13-15 meeting gathered more than 1,000 participants from 84 countries for the first international meeting on AIDS to be sponsored by the Vatican.

A Christian prophetic tradition regards "the punishment of God as a physical disease which God sends to his people to awaken their sleeping conscience," said Buttiglione, pro-rector of the International Academy of Philosophy in Liechtenstein.

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