

Seven suspects arrested in cardinal's death

Some doubting version of killing

GUADALAJARA, Mexico (CNS) — Mexican police have arrested seven men on suspicion of involvement in the slaying of Cardinal Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo of Guadalajara, but some Mexicans doubt the official version of his death.

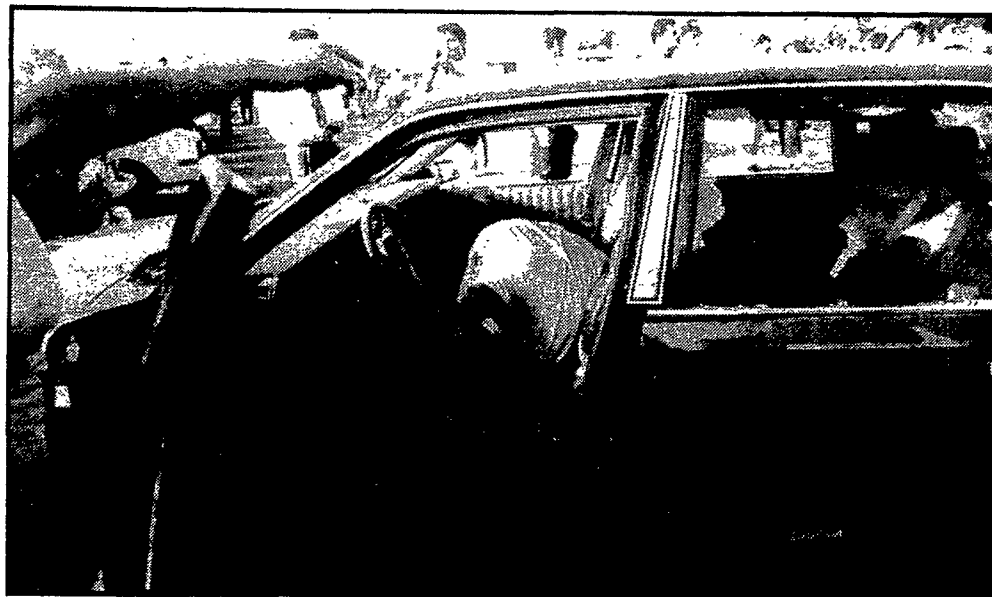
Government authorities say Cardinal Posadas was killed by mistake in a drug-related shootout at the city airport after gunmen confused his car with that of Joaquin Guzman Loera, head of the Sinaloa, Mexico, cartel.

However, one official at the Guadalajara cathedral echoed the feelings of many Mexicans, saying it would have been "impossible (for gunmen) to have mistaken a religious figure dressed in a black suit and a white collar for a drug trafficker."

And a leading Mexican newsmagazine reported eyewitness accounts that contradicted the official version of how the cardinal died.

Tens of thousands of people gathered outside the city's cathedral for Cardinal Posadas' May 27 funeral, and condolences came in from all over the world. The 66-year-old cardinal had served as vice president of the Mexican bishops' conference and first vice president of the Latin American bishops' council.

At a Mass at the Vatican to mark the slaying, the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, said Cardinal



An unidentified body lies inside a car at the Guadalajara International Airport on Monday, May 24, after a shootout in which Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo, the 66-year-old cardinal of Guadalajara City, was killed along with six other people.

Posadas' death "leaves us with a sense of dismay and indignation at the gratuitous and savage violence of which he was a victim."

He said the church had lost a "truly exemplary pastor" whose life was "cut down by a murderous hand." Cardinal Posadas paid with blood for his "generous service toward the cause of the Gospel," he said.

Speaking in Spanish at his May 26 general audience, Pope John Paul II prayed that "the blood shed by the exemplary pastor, who generously dedicated his life to the service of God and the church, would be an urgent call to reject unjustifiable violence, which causes so much suffering and death and threatens peaceful coexistence."

Two of the suspects arrested by the Mexican government said they traveled to Guadalajara a week before the shootout with a dozen other men to kill drug lord Guzman.

They did not admit to taking part in the cardinal's killing but said they

were involved in the gun battle, which left seven people — including the cardinal — dead. They said they then boarded a plane and flew to Tijuana, Mexico.

The Mexican government has offered a \$5 million reward for information leading to the arrest of Guzman, his fellow Sinaloa drug chief Hector Salazar Palma, and brothers Ramon and Francisco Arellano Felix, heads of the Tijuana cartel.

Mexican officials said Cardinal Posadas was traveling in a car identical to the one Guzman was expected to use and was the victim of a bungled "hit" ordered by leaders of the rival Tijuana cartel. A government source in Mexico City said the gunmen were high on drugs at the time of the shooting.

The cardinal died May 24 of as many as 14 gunshot wounds to the chest and throat in the parking lot of the airport, where he was to meet the Vatican ambassador to Mexico, Archbishop Girolamo Prigione. The car-

dinal's automobile was riddled by as many as 40 rounds of various calibers. The coroner said many of the shots that hit the cardinal were fired from as near as three feet.

Bishop Juan Sandoval Iniguez of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, said that "calling it a drug trafficking affair is the easiest way out." He said he neither believed nor accepted that the cardinal was mistaken for someone else.

At the funeral, Archbishop Adolfo Suarez Rivera of Monterrey, president of the Mexican bishops' conference, called on Mexican law enforcement authorities to come up with "credible explanations" for the murder of Cardinal Posadas and other drug-related violent crimes.

The weekly magazine Proceso quoted witnesses who said a gunman forced open the cardinal's car before shooting him.

"The cardinal had one foot outside of the car," one witness was quoted as saying. "They (gunmen) saw him, identified him."

Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles, one of 40 concelebrants at Cardinal Posadas' funeral, said: "Cardinal Posadas was strongly opposed to the two elements that took his life: drug abuse and guns. He stood tall and vigorous against the incredible spread of weapons in Mexico and in the United States and devoted many efforts to help stop the spread of narcotics among everyone, but especially among young people."

The cardinal's death has fanned fears that Mexican drug barons are developing influence like those of their counterparts in Colombia.

Officials said the two cartels, which produce narcotics and also smuggle them from Colombia and other countries to the United States, have fought a savage turf battle across several states since the March 1989 arrest of drug baron Miguel Felix Gallardo, who drug experts say kept the peace among the groups.

Vatican says no decisions yet on altar girls

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican has nearly finished a study on female altar servers and other forms of lay liturgical participation, but no final decisions have been made, Vatican officials said.

The officials commented after a report in the June 7 issue of *Time* magazine said the pope "appears to be prepared to allow girls to serve at Roman Catholic Masses."

Archbishop Geraldo M. Agnelo, secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Sacraments, said May 26 that the congregation had almost completed its work on a document on the subject. The study was begun after questions about church ministries were raised at the 1987 Synod of Bishops on the laity.

The congregation will submit its study to Pope John Paul II for any final decisions, he said.

"It seems we're close to a solution," Archbishop Agnelo said, but stressed that it was up to the pope to decide what to do with the document.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls confirmed May 31 that the issue of female altar servers was under study but that no decisions had been made. He emphasized that the question was seen as a pastoral one, unrelated to the larger issue of the ordained ministry.

While church law excludes the formal institution of women into the ministry of acolyte or lector, as a practice many women do the readings at Mass and in some places women or girls have served at the altar.

Sisters moving out of Auschwitz convent

Controversy has raged since 1984

By Jonathan Luxmoore
Catholic News Service

WARSAW, Poland — The Carmelite occupants of the controversial convent at the former Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz have begun moving out, a Polish church spokesman said.

Five of the 14 sisters from the convent that sparked worldwide Jewish protest have transferred to a newly opened interfaith center nearby, said Father Marek Glownia, the center's curator.

"The Carmelite convent is now functioning at the center, and at this moment five sisters have moved in," he said. "The remaining sisters have until the end of June to vacate the old theater," which houses the Auschwitz convent. The building had been a storehouse for Zyklon-B, the gas used to kill Auschwitz prisoners.

Father Glownia said that the center — the result of a Catholic-Jewish agreement on how to settle the controversy — was blessed by the local bishop, Bishop Tadeusz Rakoczy of Bielsko-Zywiec, during a "very modest ceremony" attended by the five nuns and a few priests.

There was no public notification of the ceremony.

The bishop also concelebrated the first Mass at the center, Father Glownia said.

Jewish organizations had protested the convent, saying its presence violated the special nature of Auschwitz as a symbol of the Holocaust in which millions of Jews were murdered by the Third Reich and its allies.

The controversy escalated when, in May 1985, in a fund-raising letter, the European Catholic organization Aid to the Church in Need referred to the convent as "a guarantee of the conversion of strayed brothers from our countries as well as proof of our desire to erase outrages so often done to the vicar of Christ."

Asked one Jewish leader at the time: "Was it necessary to speak of conversion here?"

Father Ignacy Urbaniec, Bishop Rakoczy's chaplain, said that any Carmelites who wished to move back to their motherhouse in Poznan would do so "within the next two to three weeks."

In an April 9 letter widely welcomed by Jewish groups, Pope John Paul II said it was the "will of the church" that the Carmelites should abandon the Auschwitz convent, as envisioned under a 1987 Catholic-Jewish declaration.

Most will be leaving the site for the first time since it opened in 1984.

A group from the convent made an inspection tour of their new quarters in early May.

Father Glownia said he had received no further information on how many of the nuns would decide to move to the center.

"The pope has very clearly given them a free choice in the matter," the curator said. "What is important is that the new convent now exists. Everything necessary has happened according to plan."

There had been "absolutely no public reaction" to the departure of the Carmelites, Father Glownia said.

The only organized protest since the pope's letter was sent was a May 2 prayer meeting in the garden of the old convent, attended by about 50 local residents, he said.

"It all has happened completely peacefully," Father Glownia said.

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