

Obituary

Bishop Rafael Garcia Gonzalez, 68

Bishop Rafael Garcia Gonzalez, who helped forge a sister-diocese relationship between the Dioceses of Rochester and Tabasco, Mexico, died Tuesday, Nov. 8, 1994, of complications following surgery in Leon, Mexico. Bishop Rafael was 68 years old.

Born May 10, 1926, in Guadalajara, Mexico, Bishop Rafael was one of seven children. He was ordained a priest in Rome on April 7, 1949. He studied for five years at the Gregorian University and served for a time as spiritual director of the Mexican College in Rome. Ironically, this position was similar to Bishop Matthew H. Clark's post as spiritual director of the North American College in Rome prior to his appointment as bishop of Rochester.

Bishop Rafael was named a bishop on July 7, 1972. He was ordained a month later on Aug. 15. He was appointed Tabasco's bishop on May 30, 1974.

After some initial discussions between the Dioceses of Rochester and Tabasco, a sister-diocese relationship was established in 1980, according to Lourdes Perez-Albuerne, business manager of the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward. Perez-Albuerne formerly coordinated the diocese's International Justice and Peace Commission at the time the sister-diocese relationship was established.

In addition to sending mission teams to Tabasco over the years, Bishops Rafael and Clark exchanged visits to each other's diocese. Bishop Clark recalled Bishop Rafael as "a great bishop and a dear friend. I admired him for his generous service and for his deep love for the people among whom he served. I shall miss him very much."

Perez-Albuerne, who represented the diocese at Bishop Rafael's funeral in Leon on Nov. 11, likewise recalled the



File photo

Bishop Rafael Garcia Gonzalez blessed vehicles at a special migrant worker Mass held at Brockport's Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in 1987. Bishop Rafael, who helped initiate a relationship between the Dioceses of Rochester and Tabasco, Mexico, died on Nov. 8.

late bishop as an "extremely warm man, an extremely pastoral man. He knew many of his people by their first names."

Bishop Rafael was also a courageous man, Perez-Albuerne added. She remembered an incident years ago when some peasants were imprisoned following a protest. Bishop Rafael intervened on their behalf, she reported, noting that "he received death threats" after involving himself in the matter.

Father Paul J. Ryan knew Bishop Rafael through serving in the Tabasco mission from 1985-90. The current pastor of the Cayuga Team Ministry cluster had visited Mexico in July when the late bishop began dialysis for kidney problems. The pastor also pointed out how courageous Bishop Rafael was in the face of government policies toward the poor and the church.

Father Ryan added that it was only in

1993 that the Mexican constitution was changed to recognize the Roman Catholic Church as a civil entity.

"You were constantly having to defend your faith and the rights of the people," observed Father Ryan of the Mexican government's policies.

Despite difficulties with the government and the remoteness of many sections of Tabasco, Bishop Rafael worked constantly for his people, traveling through the jungles to visit churches and communities throughout the Mexican diocese.

"At the core of his being, at the center of his being, was a child — and by that I mean an innocence and a kindness," Father Ryan said. "He was just delightful."

In February, 1992, Bishop Rafael was named Bishop of Leon, where he served until his death.

— Lee Strong

Pastor

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have felt duty-bound to leave behind a tape that violated the privacy of those at the meeting. Father Callan further explained that he had pressed the issue because gays and lesbians are often reluctant to speak about themselves publicly in the church for fear of the consequences.

Murray failed to return repeated calls to his home.

According to John M. Regan, Murray's attorney, his client will not comment on the case because he plans to testify against the pastor. He added that Murray had filed a report of the incident with Rochester City Police, but that nothing had ever come of the matter.

Speaking on Murray's behalf, Regan contradicted much of what Father Callan claimed, emphasizing that Murray is a "frail" elderly man in his late 60s who felt scared and outnumbered by those at the meeting and Corpus staff members.

Regan explained that when Father Callan told Murray he wasn't leaving

with the tape, Murray "took Father Callan at his word."

"I think that sounds to most people how Joe Murray took it," Regan added.

Regan also dismissed Father Callan's contention that Murray, who publicly called for Bishop Matthew H. Clark's removal in a 1987 letter to the *Catholic Courier*, was merely one of several conservative diocesan Catholics looking for publicity to damage the priest and the bishop.

"They're trying to prove I'm an untrustworthy priest ... and that Bishop Clark is at fault for not removing me," Father Callan said.

Regan acknowledged that the claim against the pastor originally included Bishop Clark, but he noted that the bishop had been dropped from the claim when it was determined that he had nothing to do with the incident.

Regan added that Murray had no agenda behind his claim, and that he would have never brought the case to court if he didn't think Father Callan had done him wrong.

"This isn't prompted by any disagreement Joe Murray had with Bishop

Clark, or for that matter, Father Jim Callan, as far as religion or doctrinal matters is concerned," Regan asserted. "This case comes about because Joe Murray was held against his will for two or three hours and forced to turn over a tape that he had every right to make."

Attorneys for both parties said no date has been set for the trial, which is scheduled to be heard before N.Y. State Supreme Court Justice Andrew Siracuse.

Charges

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government to charge conspiracy to commit a crime even though defendants had not been charged with possession of stolen goods.

"I'm convinced at this point that the count is viable," Larimer said of allowing the conspiracy charge to remain.

O'Connor took the stand Nov. 10 and reiterated his defense attorney's contention that he would never have robbed the depot on a Tuesday night — the night the heist took place.

On Wednesday nights, O'Connor explained, \$40-50 million was stored in a truck parked in the depot's lot. Any inside perpetrator would have known that the truck was vulnerable on Wednesday nights, O'Connor maintained.

He added that the perpetrators took serialized money during the heist, something any employee of Brink's would not have knowingly

Diocesan appointments

The following is a quarterly update of pastoral appointments announced by Bishop Matthew H. Clark from June 23 to Oct. 31, 1994.

Pastors/Administrators

Father Michael J. Bausch, from pastor of St. Helen's Church in Rochester, to pastor of Church of the Good Shepherd in Henrietta, effective Sept. 23, 1994.

Father Joseph P. McCaffrey, from pastor of Church of the Holy Cross in Dryden/Freeville, to pastor of the St. Anthony-St. Patrick Cluster in Elmira, effective Aug. 1, 1994.

Father John O'Hare, OFM Cap., from pastor of St. Francis Solanus Church in Interlaken, and temporary administrator of St. James the Apostle Church in Trumansburg, to pastor of St. James the Apostle Church in Trumansburg, effective Oct. 21, 1994.

Father Nelson Ruppert, OFM Cap., from pastor of Holy Cross Church in Ovid, to pastor of Holy Cross-Ovid/St. Francis Solanus-Interlaken Cluster, effective Oct. 21, 1994.

Temporary administrators/Priest coverage

Sister Nancy DeRycke, SSJ, from pastoral associate, to temporary administrator of St. Helen's Church in Rochester, effective Sept. 23, 1994.

Father Paul J. Freemesser, from sabatical at the American College in Leuven, Belgium, to temporary administrator of St. Patrick's Church in Elmira, effective for the month of July, 1994, then to temporary administrator of Church of the Holy Cross in Dryden/Freeville, effective Aug. 1, 1994.

Sister Barbara Kuhn, SSJ, from pastoral associate, to temporary administrator of Guardian Angels Church in Rochester, effective June 24, 1994.

Parochial vicars

Father Callistus Juras, OFM Conv., from parochial vicar at St. Stanislaus Basilica in Chicopee, Mass., to parochial vicar at St. Hyacinth Church in Auburn, effective Aug. 17, 1994.

Other

Father Lawrence A. Gross, from pastor of Good Shepherd Church in Henrietta, to sacramental minister of Guardian Angels Church in Rochester, effective Oct. 1, 1994.

Father Robert P. Ring, to sacramental minister of St. Helen's Church in Rochester, concurrent with present duties as director of Department of Priests' Personnel, effective Oct. 15, 1994.

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