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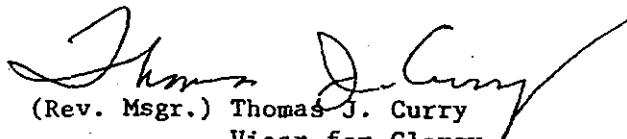
Most Reverend Norberto Rivera C.  
Bishop of Tehuacán  
Obispado de Tehuacan  
Apartado Num. 137  
75700  
Tehuacan, Mexico

Dear Bishop Rivera:

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a story from the  
Los Angeles Times of February 20, 1988.

May I request that if you know of the whereabouts of  
Father Aguilar-Rivera you urge him most strongly to return  
here to answer the allegations that have been made against him.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
(Rev. Msgr.) Thomas J. Curry  
Vicar for Clergy

Enclosures

10-11-88

RIV 00031  
CONFIDENTIAL

Ex. 14

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## *Visiting Mexican Cleric Flees*

# Priest Sought in Alleged Molestation of Altar Boys

By MARITA HERNANDEZ, *Times Staff Writer*

A visiting priest from Mexico, who gained the confidence of Spanish-speaking families in two Los Angeles Catholic parishes and was welcomed into their homes, is under investigation by police for allegedly sexually molesting at least 18 altar boys before fleeing the country.

Investigators said they expect the number of alleged victims to rise. So far, they have been able to reach only about half of the two parishes' 60 or so altar boys. The children, ranging in age from 9 to 13, make up the primary group of possible victims, police said.

The priest under investigation was identified as Father Nicolas Aguilar Rivera, 46, by Detective Gary Lyon of the Los Angeles Police Juvenile Division.

The alleged molestations—ranging from fondling to masturbation—began last April, shortly after Aguilar arrived at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in the El Sereno area of East Los Angeles and ended about a month ago, with his sudden departure from St. Agatha's Parish in South-Central Los Angeles, police said.

Police said they have received less than full cooperation from the church in the investigation, and parents who opened their homes to the priest and encouraged their children to spend time with him have raised questions about the church's handling of the case.

Father Joseph Battaglia, a spokesman for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles, said

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# PRIEST: Alleged Molesting of Altar Boys

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the archdiocese's immediate response upon learning about the charges against Aguilar was to remove him from all church duties. Police were not notified until two days later.

"He was asked to stay in the country to face the accusations against him, but he chose to leave," Battaglia said. He added that the archdiocese has contacted Aguilar's church superiors in Mexico "to try to convince him to come back."

The archdiocese's decision to confront Aguilar with the allegations two days before reporting the matter to police may have inadvertently allowed the priest to evade arrest. Detective Lyon said.

He said that while the church acted properly in relieving [Aguilar] of any duty involving children, it's unfortunate that we couldn't have been there when he was notified [of the allegations] by the archdiocese."

## Called by Principal

The police first learned of the alleged molestations when they were called by the principal of the Catholic school affiliated with Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Because multiple victims were alleged, the officers were prepared to take Aguilar into custody, Lyon said.

Some parents resented having learned about the alleged molestation from police rather than church authorities, and that the priest's sudden departure from their parish about a month ago was explained to one of the congregations as a "family emergency."

"The church shouldn't be telling us," said the father of two of the alleged molestation victims. "They should tell us the truth so that we can be prepared for something like this. How can we be alert if they don't tell us the truth about things?"

Battaglia pointed out that the allegations against Aguilar have not been proved.

## Walking a Fine Line

"You walk a fine line between recognition of an allegation and a presumption of guilt," he said. In cases like this, "reputations and psychological health are of paramount importance for both the accused and the ones allegedly injured." Psychological counseling has been offered to the families by the archdiocese, he said.



Father Nicolas Aguilar Rivera

the care and control of children, usually leads to felony charges as well, he said.

Police efforts to contact all potential victims of the alleged molestation have been hampered by the church's refusal to furnish lists of altar boys at the two parishes, Lyon said.

"We've had to ferret out the names on our own," he added. At Our Lady of Guadalupe parish, where Aguilar spent about two months, parents provided police with a list that has allowed investigators to contact most of the boys there, Lyon said. But no such list has been available from St. Agatha's parish, where the priest worked for eight months.

Investigators have been slowly contacting some boys through public schools in the St. Agatha's parish area, Lyon said.

The archdiocese's Battaglia said he did not know why the lists were not made available to police. Calls by The Times to other archdiocesan and parish officials, including Archbishop Roger M. Mahony, were not returned.

Aguilar came to Los Angeles with the permission of his Mexican bishop, and his credentials showed him to be "a priest in good standing," Battaglia said.

"I guarantee you that if any problem had even been hinted at, he would not have been accepted here," he said.

Aguilar, however, told a parishioner at Our Lady of Guadalupe that he had had a "problem" with a

For some supposedly educated person to come into my home and disrupt my family."

After he learned of the alleged molestation, the father spoke to close friends with whom the priest had also stayed overnight. When questioned, the second couple's children told their parents that the priest had fondled them during a three-day stay at their home.

"We opened the doors to our home because my children liked him and because one of our sons has a vocation for the priesthood and we wanted a priest to counsel him," the second father said.

As he did with other families, Aguilar attended family gatherings and took the children on outings. The priest also asked the families to allow their children to teach him English. Several said they gladly gave their permission.

It was during these private English lessons, several of the children alleged, that they were molested.

The two couples and a third, whose children also said they were molested, pondered what action to take for about a week before approaching their pastor and the school principal, who eventually reported the matter to police.

Although parents said they hope that the priest is located and either forced into psychiatric treatment or punished, most of the parents said that the painful experience has not shaken their faith in their church.

For the one family, however, the experience dealt a more severe setback.

"My kids have always helped out at the church and we've encouraged them," the father said. "I didn't want them hanging out on the street and getting involved with gangs."

"But I don't know who to trust anymore. . . . My children say they will never help out at church again."

## Millionaire in Bouquet Bomb Case Sentenced

From the Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO—A saga in which millionaire landlord Peter Pilaski was convicted with his homosexual lover in a bombing that injured his estranged wife ended Friday when Pilaski was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

## ■ Huyó de Los Angeles, EU

# Sacerdote mexicano acusado de abuso sexual a 18 monaguillos

Efe, Los Angeles, California, EEUU, 20 de febrero. La policía de Los Angeles busca a un sacerdote mexicano acusado de abusar sexualmente de por lo menos dieciocho monaguillos durante nueve meses de estancia en California, informó hoy *Los Angeles Times*.

Según la policía, el sacerdote fue identificado por el detective Gary Lyon, de la división juvenil de la policía de Los Angeles, como Nicolás Aguilar Ribera, de 46 años, quien huyó a su país.

Los abusos sexuales comenzaron el pasado abril después de que Aguilar llegó a la parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, en la zona de El Sereno, en el este de Los Angeles.

Terminaron hace un mes, cuando el cura abandonó súbitamente la parroquia de Santa Agata, en la misma ciudad.

La policía se quejó de no haber recibido el suficiente apoyo de las autoridades eclesiásticas en este asunto, pero un portavoz de la arquidiócesis católica de Los Angeles, el padre Joseph Battaglia, dijo que al enterarse de lo sucedido se le

prohibió al padre Aguilar continuar ejerciendo su ministerio.

"Le pedimos que siguiese en Estados Unidos para hacer frente a las acusaciones en su contra, pero optó por marcharse", dijo Battaglia.

Tehuacan

Ordenado Jul 1970

"La Jornada" 21. 11. 88

# Priest Formally Charged in Sex Abuse of 10 Boys

By WILLIAM OVEREND, Times Staff Writer

A fugitive priest suspected of molesting as many as 26 altar boys in two Los Angeles Catholic parishes was formally charged Monday with sexually assaulting eight of the youths and two other children.

Father Nicolas Aguilar Rivera, 46, a Mexican national believed hiding in Mexico, was charged in a felony complaint issued by the Los Angeles County district attorney's office with 19 counts of committing a lewd act with a child.

Police and prosecutors said the filing of the charge is a necessary step in seeking Aguilar's arrest in Mexico if the priest fails to return to the United States voluntarily to face prosecution.

Aguilar, who arrived in Los Angeles a year ago with credentials that persuaded officials of the Los Angeles Archdiocese that he was a "priest in good standing," allegedly began his series of molestations while assigned to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in El Sereno.

After two months there, he moved to St. Agatha's Church in South-Central Los Angeles, where he remained for about six months until fleeing to Mexico in January after being confronted by church officials

with complaints of his alleged activities from parents. Aguilar, according to church officials in Mexico, stopped at his former diocese in Tehuacan in the Mexican state of Puebla after fleeing Los Angeles and announced that he was resigning as a priest. He said he was going to Cuernavaca, Mexico, to stay with relatives.

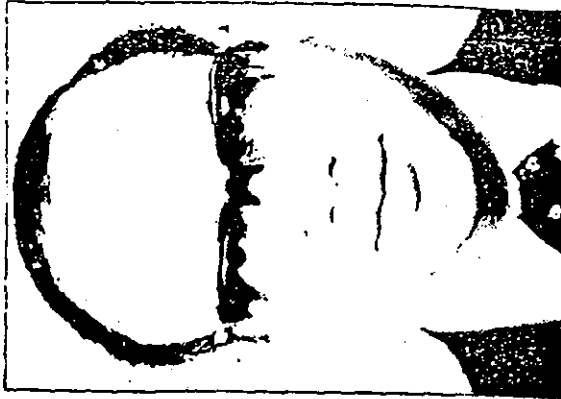
Deputy Dist. Atty. Al Jenkins said Monday that the charges against Aguilar are that he "fondled and masturbated" the 10 boys, all between the ages of 9 and 14.

### No Extradition Treaty

"There's no extradition treaty between us and Mexico," Jenkins said. "He will either have to come back here himself or be arrested by authorities in Mexico."

Detective Gary Lyon of the Los Angeles Police Department's Juvenile Division, who investigated the case, said LAPD's first effort after the issuance of the formal complaint will be to "try to get the priest to come back voluntarily."

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Associated Press

Father Nicolas Aguilar Rivera