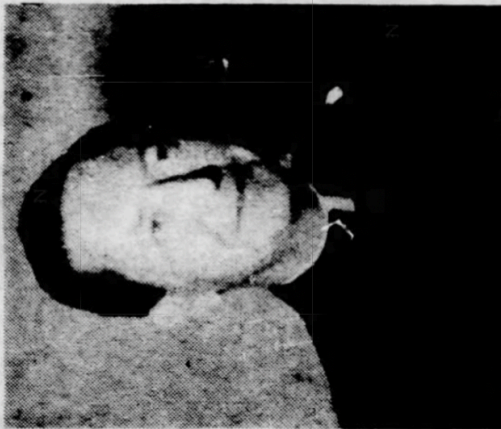


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Father Alberto Battagliola

2 states hunt priest's slayer

By KEN SCHULTZ
Californian Staff Writer

Oregon State Police early today discovered the abandoned car of a Castroville priest who was found murdered yesterday in a San Francisco motel room.

A two-state hunt is being conducted for a young man in his early 20s who is suspected in the slaying of the Rev. Alberto Orlando Battagliola, 58, administrator of Castroville's Our Lady of Refuge Catholic Church.

The car, a green 1972 Ford Torino, was found parked at a roadside stop area 100 miles north of the California-Oregon border around 2 a.m. today, about 15 hours after Father Bat-

tagliola's body was discovered by the manager of San Francisco's Mart Motel, 101 Ninth St.

The priest's throat had been slit from ear to ear, and an autopsy showed he had been stabbed repeatedly in the head, neck and chest. No weapon was found. The room was ransacked, but neither bed had been slept in.

Monterey County Sheriff's Capt. Bill Davis, who is heading a local investigation in an attempt to retrace the priest's steps before he left Wednesday for San Francisco on his day off, said Father Battagliola's car was stolen, along with about \$200 from his wallet.

Motel manager Mrs. Chandon Patel discovered the body around 9 a.m. yesterday when she went to the priest's room to return his Master Charge card. Father Battagliola was wearing a T-shirt, slacks and shoes.

Mrs. Patel told police the priest had checked in about 2 p.m. Wednesday with a young man described as Caucasian, between 20 and 25 years old, with long brown hair. She said the priest asked for a double room.

Oregon State Police St. John Stuart said Father Battagliola's car was found abandoned in the Cabin Creek rest area, 18 miles north of Roseburg on Route 5.

Stuart said the windows of the

automobile were rolled down, "probably indicating it was left here yesterday in the early evening because we had a very warm day here."

State police investigators from Salem and Eugene were expected to begin exploring the car for fingerprints and other clues around 1 p.m. today, and a check is being conducted of motels and hotels along Route 5, Stuart said.

In Monterey County, Davis said the sheriff's department is working with San Francisco police checking out the residence (Battagliola lived in the church rectory), and trying to retrace

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