

Priest Stabbed In South Texas

McALLEN (AP) — A 63-year-old priest was stabbed repeatedly early Sunday in an apparent robbery while house-sitting an apartment at a complex for the elderly and disabled, police said.

The Rev. Benedicto Ortiz, associate pastor of San Martin de Porres Catholic Church in Weslaco, was in critical condition at Knapp Medical Center late Sunday.

Meanwhile, Jose Angel Villanueva, 19, of McAllen, was arraigned on a charge of criminal attempted murder and bond was set at \$50,000. Villanueva remained in the Hidalgo County jail late Sunday, officials said.

Police said Villanueva gave authorities a statement admitting to the stabbing, but said he attacked Ortiz only after the priest had tried to sexually assault him.

Ortiz was attacked at about 4 a.m. in an apartment in north Donna, about 10 miles east of McAllen, police said. They suspect robbery may have been the motive.

"The house had pretty much been ransacked," said investigator Rigo Quintanilla.

There were no signs of forced entry, but said telephone lines at the apartment had been cut and an alarm had been broken, he said.

Ortiz, who sustained several knife wounds in the stomach and neck, sought help at an adjacent apartment, police said.

A neighbor, Juanita Alvarez, called authorities.