



TIMES REVIEW

Brother James Miller, diocesan native, martyred in Guatemala

HUEHUETENANGO, GUATEMALA (NC)—More than 800 mourners attended funeral services at the Indian Center here for Christian Brother James Miller, a missionary from the Diocese of La Crosse who was shot to death Feb. 13 by masked men as he fixed a window in the building.

Brother Santiago (James), as he was known to the 132 youths at the center, had joined six other brothers at Huehuetenango a year ago. The 37-year-old brother taught earlier at Bluefields and Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua.

He is the third Catholic missionary from the United States to meet violent death in Guatemala since 1976, the year Maryknoll Father William Woods died when his plane crashed while flying a mercy mission. Associates said they suspected sabotage.

Last July Father Stanley Rother of Oklahoma City was murdered at his rectory in Santiago Atitlan by three hooded men. These deaths and the kidnapping, murder or expulsion of 176 other

church personnel have prompted the bishops to denounce persecution of the church.

In response to **TIMES REVIEW** questioning, Bob Blohm, the U.S. State Department's country officer for Guatemala, said the U.S. has asked Guatemalan officials to act on the Min. r case.

"We have asked the Guatemalan government at senior levels to conduct a full investigation into the matter," he said. He added that the Guatemalans have assured the State Department that such an inquiry will begin.

The White House had no comment regarding the incident.

According to police, machinegun fire from a passing car killed Brother James in mid-afternoon as he repaired a window near the street. The center houses Indians from poor families in the surrounding villages. The brother lived in the center.

A U.S. Embassy spokesperson in Guatemala City said the body was returned to the Christian Brothers after an official autopsy, and that the identity of the assassins was not known.

Mass for Brother James was celebrated Feb. 14 at the center's yard by Bishop Hugo Martinez of Huehuetenango. The body was flown home the following day.

The brother, who came from a farming family, ran La Granaja, a vocational farm that combined crop raising with animal husbandry. He also taught at the center and the high school.

A statement issued by the Christian Brothers in St. Louis, MO, said Brother James' death "has been a great loss to our brotherhood and to the Indian children of Guatemala...we abhor the use of violence and the cowardly killing of another human being."



Brother James Miller (left) of Custer and some of the students he taught in Guatemala (above). See related stories on pages 6 and 7.