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Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia, 86, champion of indigenous, dies in Mexico (excerpts)

By David Agren, Catholic News Service

[The complete article can be found on the [Catholic News Service web site.](#)]

(MEXICO CITY (CNS) -- Retired Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia, known as the champion of the poor and indigenous in southern

Mexico, died Jan. 24 of complications from long-standing illnesses. He was 86.

The bishop headed the Diocese of San Cristobal de Las Casas from 1960 to 2000, and from 1994 to 1998 mediated a commission looking for an end to the conflict between the Mexican government and the indigenous Zapatista National Liberation Army in Chiapas state.

For his work with the state's indigenous population he received death threats and, in 2002, was the recipient of the Niwano Peace Prize for his work "raising the social standing of the indigenous communities of Mexico" and for his work toward "the reclamation and preservation of their native cultures."

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News of Bishop Ruiz's death made nationwide headlines because he was well-known for his human rights advocacy and mediation work in Chiapas. He most recently participated in a commission serving as a channel between the rebel People's Revolutionary Army and the Interior Ministry over the issue of forced disappearances.

Mexican President Felipe Calderon said Bishop Ruiz's death "constitutes a great loss for Mexico."

"Samuel Ruiz strove to build a more just Mexico -- egalitarian, dignified and without discrimination in it -- so that indigenous communities have a voice and their rights and freedoms are respected by all," the president said in a statement.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, visiting Mexico Jan. 24, said of Bishop Ruiz, "My colleagues say he was a tireless mediator that searched for reconciliation and justice through dialogue, and that is exactly the legacy we must honor and the example we all must follow."

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Bishop Ruiz said his faith led him to examine the roots of the injustice and prompted his writings on the exploitation of native Americans and his research into indigenous cosmology and theology. However, his remarks against the powerful landlord class were construed by some -- including some at the Vatican -- as originating in Marxist class theory, rather than the Gospel.

During Pope John Paul II's 1990 visit to Mexico, landowners published an open letter, accusing Bishop Ruiz of being a communist and fomenting class hatred.

Bishop Ruiz learned to speak four Mayan languages and often traveled by mule through his diocese, where he was affectionately called Don Samuel or "Tata," which means father in a Mayan language.

Samuel Ruiz Garcia was born Nov. 3, 1924, in Irapuato, Mexico. He was ordained a priest in 1949 after studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He served as a seminary rector in Leon, Mexico, and was consecrated a bishop in 1960.

On his 75th birthday, he told nearly 2,000 people who packed the diocesan cathedral that he was grateful to God for being allowed to serve the diocese for nearly 40 years and he had learned much from the indigenous people.

"I can tell you that I am the same person, but that I am not the same," he said. "The bishop that arrived here has been left behind, has evolved."

Deporting Haitians into Peril: a Disturbing Policy

(Washington, D.C.) Jan. 7, 2011 – The recent decision by the U.S. government to resume the deportation of Haitians is wrong, and will put lives at risk while creating an additional problem for the maintenance of public order in beleaguered Haiti. Haiti is still struggling to recover from last January's earthquake, is in the midst of a cholera epidemic and is also embroiled in controversy over the recent presidential elections there. Deporting Haitians -- especially those with criminal records -- from the United States at this time is an unwise and dangerous policy.

On Dec. 22, 2010, [Jesuit Refugee Service/USA](#) and other faith-based and legal services groups wrote to Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano asking that the department reconsider this pending action. We have yet to hear a response to the concerns we raised in the letter.

DHS has not issued any written guidance explaining this new policy on Haitian deportations. Instead it has given verbal briefings to a limited group of stakeholders stating that the U.S. government will initially detain and deport individuals with "serious criminal convictions," with an ultimate expectation of removing 700 people by the end of 2011. While we support the enforcement of immigration laws, we are concerned that the continuing state of emergency in Haiti will jeopardize the lives of those deported and divert resources from the recovery and reconstruction effort.

We are also concerned that it will be nearly impossible to carry out the planned deportations and provide for the reintegration of those deported, many of whom are long-time U.S. residents with no resources in Haiti, in a safe and dignified fashion. We are disturbed by the lack of clarity and transparency of DHS, which has provided no details as to how this might be accomplished. It is difficult to understand why this decision has been made at a time when Haiti is experiencing increasing political unrest and rising criminal activity. Placing the additional burden of dealing with these deportees on already overwhelmed Haitian government officials at this time is a bad decision.

Also troubling is the fact that about 100 Haitians have been transferred to remote detention centers in Louisiana. This has separated them not only from family members in the U.S., but also from their lawyers and legal service providers. In effect, they have been spirited away

from those who love them and those who could provide aid to them.

Jesuit Refugee Service/USA calls on the Department of Homeland Security to clarify their new policy and to provide an explanation of how conditions have materially changed in Haiti to justify the resumption of deportations, which have been suspended since the earthquake. We also ask what steps are being taken in Haiti to prepare for the returns and what agreements have been reached with the Haitian government regarding the treatment of those returned.

Cardinal Mahony: Putting a human face on the immigrant (excerpts)

By Tim Rutten

[This story was published in the Los Angeles Times January 19, 2011. The complete article can be found on the [Times web site](#).]

When he turns 75 late next month, Cardinal Roger Mahony will step down as the leader of America's largest Roman Catholic diocese.

But he's still vigorous and plans to remain very much engaged, not only as a priest but also as an influential voice in the debates over an issue that has preoccupied him throughout his ministry: Immigration. In a statement to be distributed throughout the archdiocese this week, Mahony outlines his plans in a deeply personal document headed, "STANDING with the ELEVEN MILLION: Welcoming the Strangers in Our Midst."

The title is a reference to the estimated 11 million immigrants currently making a life in the United States without legal documents. And in a conversation this week, I asked Mahony -- the first native-born Angeleno to serve as archbishop -- why this issue, among all others, so animates him.

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With an academic background in social work, Mahony -- who served as the first head of California's Agricultural Labor Relations Board -- always has had a capacity, unusual among clerics, to engage the practical details of applying social morality to policy. Thus, he sees an opening still for comprehensive immigration reform, which he believes has been impeded by the recession. He intends, moreover, to devote a substantial portion of his effort to universities because, as he told me, "Young people get this issue."

That, plus polling data that demonstrate a continuing appetite for some sort of path to legal residency and citizenship for undocumented immigrant workers, makes him optimistic on an issue many would rather avoid.

I asked Mahony how he responds to critics who charge that the church's -- and his -- position on immigration is less a consequence of principle than of expediency. Newcomers, after all, are filling pews increasingly vacated by alienated or indifferent Catholics of European descent and helping to maintain the church's position as the country's largest religious denomination. The cardinal chuckled and quipped, "If that's the only way we can attract people, we'd be doing such a poor job of proclaiming the Gospel that we'd have gone out of business years ago."

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In his statement this week, Mahony writes that "I suspect that many anti-immigrant feelings and sentiments arise from frustration with the seeming inability, or the unwillingness, to fix our broken immigration system," but that he hopes to "encourage all of us to get to know our immigrant neighbors more personally. We will discover that their core values are the same as ours Once we put a human face on an immigrant, the stereotypes ... begin to dissolve."

Immigration is one of those contested social questions on which goodwill and reason are in increasingly short supply. The approach that Mahony is now pursuing is so self-evidently rooted in our common moral wisdom and the practical realities of our economy and politics that those who refuse to engage the issue on this basis bear the burden of showing why.

Maryknoll Sisters honor memory of U.S. churchwomen 30 years after deaths in El Salvador

Family member remembered posthumously for work to bring case to justice

In December 1980, four U.S. Catholic missionaries, including Maryknoll sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, were brutally murdered in El Salvador during that country's horrific civil war. The perpetrators of the attack were members of the Salvadoran National Guard; in 2000, after a lengthy court battle, the intellectual authors of the killings were found guilty of the crimes in U.S. federal court.



On Thursday, January 6, the Maryknoll Sisters commemorated the 30th anniversary of the women's deaths, and also honored posthumously William (Bill) Ford, who persistently and faithfully pursued truth and justice for his sister, Ita, and the other women -- and for the people of El Salvador.

Mr. Michael Posner, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor and former executive director of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (now Human Rights First), presented the award to Ford's widow, Mary Anne.

Several Members of Congress attended.

Official Pax Christi statement on the attempted assassination of Rep. Giffords

[Pax Christi USA](#) condemns the violence which took place in Arizona on Sunday, killing 6 people and wounding 7 others, including Representative Gabrielle Giffords. Within hours of the assassination attempt on Rep. Giffords, a Democrat who had voted in support of last

year's health care law, the debate regarding the role that our current national political divisiveness had played in this violence was being played out in media outlets across our nation. Prominently noted was that Giffords had been targeted by former Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin because of her support of healthcare reform, appearing on a map on Palin's political action committee's website and her own Facebook page with the cross-hairs of a gun-sight denoting Giffords' district.

Pax Christi USA has consistently spoken out against the rising negative rhetoric that has marked our national political conversation over the past few years and warned of its consequences. It is disingenuous and ignorant to suggest that hate-talk media and the hyperbolic use of violent imagery play no role in this rising wave of political violence. The vandalism which has been perpetrated at the offices of our political representatives, the scenes of individuals carrying weapons at last year's town hall meetings, and now the assassination attempt on Rep. Giffords are all part of the same cloth that begins with the irresponsible speech and sloganeering of media personalities and political leaders. Pax Christi USA hopes that the escalation of violence demonstrated in yesterday's events will finally bring our nation to its senses and lead the American people to no longer tolerate such utter disregard for civility and for the humanity of those with whom we disagree.

Pax Christi was founded on the reconciliation of French and German Catholics following two world wars in which they had slaughtered each other by the millions. Respect for our shared humanity is at the heart of our proclamation of the power of nonviolence to transform enemies into friends. We believe in a God who calls us to respect all life, to care for all of our sisters and brothers, and to work for a world that reflects the message God's son shared with us—a message of compassion, love, forgiveness, and peace with justice. Today, we pray for Rep. Giffords' recovery, for the healing of those wounded in this tragic act, and for the consolation of the family and friends of the six who were killed—including a 9 year-old girl. And we pray too that this tragedy brings about a new era of civil and respectful dialogue in our national political conversation, where we recognize and honor the conscience and freedom of our opponents, and where our highest ideals—rather than our basest fears—govern how we speak to one another and how we portray each other.

Vatican Head of Justice and Peace to Address 2011 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering

WASHINGTON (January 12, 2011)--Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, will address the opening plenary of the 2011 [Catholic Social Ministry Gathering](#), which will be February 13-16, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington.

The theme of the 2011 Gathering is "Protecting Human Life and Dignity: Promoting a Just Economy." The Gathering is sponsored by 19 Catholic organizations, including the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and brings together hundreds of Catholic social ministry leaders from national Catholic organizations, local dioceses, religious congregations, Catholic education, health care and others.

Cardinal Turkson, who will speak February 13, is a native of Ghana. He served as the archbishop of Cape Coast from 1992- 2009, when Pope Benedict XVI appointed him to lead the Vatican's justice and peace efforts. He will speak on the theme, "The Legacy of *Rerum Novarum*: the Current Challenges of Catholic Social Teaching," offering reflections on the place of Catholic social teaching in the life and ministry of the Church. Following the opening plenary, the cardinal will celebrate the Gathering's opening Mass with Bishop Stephen Blaire of Stockton, California, chairman of the USCCB Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

At the Domestic Issues Plenary, February 14, a panel of national leaders will participate in a panel discussion about the state of poverty in the United States and positive ways to reduce

the number of people living in poverty. Panelists will include Father Fred Kammer, SJ, director of the Jesuit Social Research Center, as well as leaders from Catholic Charities and organizations funded by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). Kathy Saile, director of the USCCB's Office of Domestic Social Development, will moderate the discussion.

Paul Collier, a professor of economics at Oxford University and director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies, will address the Gathering's International Issues Plenary the morning of February 15. Collier is the author of several books including *The Bottom Billion* and writes a monthly column for the *New York Times*, the *Financial Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*. He has advised the strategy and policy department of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Africa region of the World Bank and the British government.

The Gathering will also include numerous workshops, a Capitol Hill visit and reception and a closing liturgy celebrated by Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Albany, chairman of the USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace.

Arms Control Association Receives Prestigious MacArthur Foundation Award

(Washington, D.C.) The [John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation](#) announced on January 19 that the [Arms Control Association](#) has been selected as a recipient of their Award for Creative and Effective Institutions.

"We are honored to receive the MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions," said Arms Control Association Executive Director Daryl G. Kimball. "The award recognizes institutions around the globe that are leaders on critical issues and challenges. We are very proud to be recognized as one of these high-impact organizations," said Kimball, who has worked in the nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament field for more than twenty years and has led ACA for the past decade.

"These exceptional organizations effectively address pressing national and international challenges and they have had an impact that is disproportionate to their small size," said MacArthur President Robert Gallucci. "The MacArthur Foundation is proud to recognize them. It is our hope that these Awards will help position them for long-term growth and even greater impact in the years ahead," said Gallucci, who worked for 21 years in the U.S. government on arms control, nonproliferation, and international security.

The nonpartisan, member-supported Arms Control Association was founded in 1971 and is based in Washington, DC. With fewer than a dozen full-time staff in Washington plus an international representative in Berlin, the organization works to promote public understanding of and support for effective arms control solutions to strengthen U.S. and global security.

ACA is unique in that it combines widely respected arms control [research](#) and policy analysis with timely media outreach, plus effective working relationships with senior administration, congressional, and diplomatic officials. Through its monthly journal, [Arms Control Today](#), ACA provides a forum for new ideas and a venue for raising awareness about overlooked issues. ACA is among the most frequently cited sources in the media on nuclear, chemical, biological, and conventional weapons-related security challenges.

The Arms Control Association will use its \$500,000 award to establish an operating reserve and to develop and execute a communications and strategic plan for public outreach. The grant does not support ACA's ongoing program activities.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days, March 25-28, 2011



Ecumenical Advocacy Days

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Prepare now to hear from internationally known policy experts, stimulating theologians and inspiring preachers -- along with Administration officials, Congressional aides and advocacy specialists.

[REGISTER NOW](#) for "Development, Security and Economic Justice: What's Gender Got to Do with It?"

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It is also sent to justice and peace directors of CMSM member organizations, and to others who have expressed an interest.

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