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Thousands Attend Funeral for Slain El Monte Educator Bobby Salcedo

KTLA News

1:32 PM PST, January 7, 2010



Agustin Roberto "Bobby" Salcedo

EL MONTE -- A popular El Monte educator shot, execution-style, while vacationing in Mexico with his wife was remembered Thursday as a passionate supporter of young people and a well loved member of the community.

Agustin Roberto "Bobby" Salcedo, who was the assistant principal of instruction at El Monte High School and a school district trustee, was murdered Dec. 30 in Gomez Palacio, the hometown of his wife, Betzy, in the Mexican state of Durango.

Authorities believe the 33-year-old educator was an innocent victim of Mexico's drug war, and that he was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"His priority was getting the students in our community into four-year universities, and he did that in every sense," El Monte Mayor Andre Quintero told news reporters outside Nativity Church before Salcedo's funeral Mass.

"I mean, whether it was elementary school education, where he was a board member or as an administrator at the high school, he spent time with these young people," the mayor said.

"He worked with them on their applications and everything, just to make sure they could get ahead. He was completely and totally devoted to that idea that education was a gateway to opportunity."

Cardinal Roger Mahony officiated at the Mass.

On Monday, at least 2,000 mourners attended an emotional candlelight vigil at the football stadium of Mountain View High School, Salcedo's Alma Mater.

Friends and students recalled Salcedo as a man who was not only passionate about education but loved to crack jokes at the expense of everyone, including himself.

"If he could see this today, I guarantee you, his first words would be, 'Damn, they finally filled the stadium,'" said Juan Salcedo, Bobby's brother.

At the vigil, Juan called on people to write to elected officials to demand that the Mexican government find his killers and bring them to justice.

Salcedo and his wife were having dinner with some of her ex-classmates in a restaurant when armed men burst in and kidnapped him and six other men, then shot them execution-style.

Salcedo and his wife, a physician in Mexico who has been preparing to work as a doctor in the United States, had been married for two years.

In November, Salcedo was re-elected to a new term on El Monte City School District board which governs the city's elementary schools, and he was working on a doctorate at UCLA.

Before becoming a school administrator, he taught world history, government and economics.

Raging drug violence and rampant corruption have plagued Durango. The local Catholic archbishop, Hector Gonzalez

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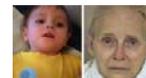
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