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Mexico City — April 19, 2018
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A Mexico priest has been stabbed to death in his parish, the latest attack on clergy in the heavily Catholic country.

Father Ruben Alcantara Diaz was attacked April 18, just prior to the 7 p.m. Mass at Our Lady of Carmen Parish in Cuautitlan Izcalli, the Diocese of Izcalli said in a short statement.

The priest, who was also the diocesan judicial vicar, was accosted by the assailant and was involved in a discussion prior to the attack, according to Mexican media.

The assailant alleged abuse in his shouts and fled the scene, the newspaper Reforma reported. His whereabouts remains unknown.

Attacks on clergy have become common in Mexico, where the homicide rate reached historic high levels in 2017 and the violence consuming large swaths of the country has not spared the Catholic Church.

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The Catholic Multimedia Center has counted 22 priests killed in Mexico since December 2012, when the six-year administration of President Enrique Pena Nieto began.