News

A white man with white hair wears green vestments and talks to a group of people outside

Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell is pictured speaking with parishioners outside St. Frances X. Cabrini Church in Los Angeles July 19, 2015. According to local news reports, Los Angeles County sheriffs found him dead of a gunshot wound at his home Feb. 18, 2023. Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón announced Feb. 22 that Carlos Medina, 61, has been charged with murder. (OSV News photo/CNS file, John Rueda, The Tidings)



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Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón announced Feb. 22 that the suspect arrested in the shooting death of Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell has been charged with murder.

Carlos Medina, 61, was taken into custody the morning of Feb. 20 by Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies as the prime suspect in the shooting death of the bishop, who was found dead in his home in the Los Angeles suburb of Hacienda Heights on the afternoon of Feb. 18.

"This was a brutal act of violence against a person who dedicated his life to making our neighborhoods safer, healthier and always serving with love and compassion," Gascón said in a statement. "As Catholics around Los Angeles and the nation start the holy season of Lent, let us reflect on Bishop O'Connell's life of service and dedication to those in greatest need of our care."

"Charging Mr. Medina will never repair the tremendous harm that was caused by this callous act, but it does take us one step closer to accountability," he added.

Medina was charged with one count of murder "and a special allegation that he personally used a firearm," according to a news release from Gascon's office. Medina was to be arraigned later the same day.

At an afternoon news conference Feb. 20, LA County Sheriff Robert G. Luna announced that citizen tips led to the 8:15 a.m. arrest of Medina, the husband of a housekeeper who had worked at O'Connell's home, after an all-night search.

In an emotional press conference, Luna said "my heart grieves" for the death of O'Connell, based on all the calls of support he received in the investigation over a period of 48 hours.

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"This man, this bishop, made a huge difference in our community," said Luna. "He was loved. It is very sad that we are gathered here today about this murder."

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, one of the speakers at the press conference, stopped several times during his remarks to collect himself. At one point, Luna put his arm around Gomez’s shoulder to comfort him.

"On behalf of our entire community, I want to share thanks for your professionalism and sensitivity," Gomez said of the investigation. "It is a sad and painful moment for all of us. Let us keep praying for Bishop Dave and his family, just as he prayed for law enforcement officials."

O'Connell was originally from Brooklodge, Glanmire, in County Cork, the largest county in Ireland. He studied for the priesthood at the former All Hallows College in Dublin and was ordained to serve in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in 1979.

O'Connell was named an auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles by Pope Francis in July 2015. Since then, he had served as episcopal vicar for the San Gabriel Pastoral Region, one of the LA archdiocese's five regions.

During his time as auxiliary bishop in Los Angeles, evangelization, pastoral care for immigrants, and ensuring the future of his region's Catholic schools were all top

priorities for O'Connell, who believed that "parishes and schools are powerful instruments of transformation of people's lives and of neighborhoods."

Before being named a bishop, he was well-known for his pastoral work in south LA -- where he served as pastor of four different parishes -- in the years before and after the 1992 Rodney King riots. He played a key role, along with other local faith leaders, in bringing together communities already suffering from gang violence, poverty and drugs, while working to restore trust between community members and law enforcement.