News

A white man with white hair, a beard, glasses, and a black cassock speaks into a microphone

Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell is pictured during a Nov. 17, 2021, session of the fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore. O'Connell was murdered Feb. 18, 2023, and the suspect arrested in the case pleaded not guilty at an arraignment hearing March 22 at Foltz Criminal Justice Center in downtown LA. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

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The man suspected of killing Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell in his Hacienda Heights home pleaded not guilty at an arraignment hearing March 22.

Carlos Medina, 61, has been charged with one felony count of murder and a special allegation that he used a firearm. During the arraignment at Foltz Criminal Justice Center in downtown LA, Superior Court Judge Armenui Amy Ashvanian ordered that Medina remain in jail in lieu of $2 million bail, and his next scheduled court appearance is May 17, when a hearing will be set to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to require him to stand trial.

If convicted, Medina faces up to 35 years to life in prison.

Medina is the husband of O'Connell's housekeeper and had done work at the home, authorities said. He was arrested at his Torrance home Feb. 20 after a six-hour standoff with SWAT and LA County Sheriff's deputies.

Medina admitted to the killing, said District Attorney George Gascón during a Feb. 22 press conference. A motive for the killing remains under investigation by the Sheriff's Department.

LA County Sheriff Robert Luna previously said O'Connell was shot multiple times in the bedroom of his home Feb. 18. The bishop's body was discovered when a deacon went to his home because O'Connell was late for a meeting, he said.

Weapons found in Medina's home after his arrest were tested to see if they were connected to O'Connell's murder, Luna said in February.

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The bishop was a longtime priest in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles since 1979, largely serving in South LA. Long known for his pastoral work with the poor and disenfranchised, Then-Fr. 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 Los Angeles Archdiocese's five regions.

In a statement, the archdiocese said the arraignment "marks a next step in the legal process with the hopes of bringing about justice and healing from this terrible tragedy."

"We appreciate the diligent efforts of all involved in these proceedings," read the statement. "We have been extremely moved by the tremendous outpouring of prayers and support from throughout our archdiocese, across the nation and around the world. It is truly a testament to Bishop David O'Connell's ministry to bring God's loving mercy to all, especially those most in need."

A new exhibit honoring O'Connell's life, ministry, and legacy recently opened inside the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles.

The chapel, located in one of the niches in the cathedral’s south ambulatory, features photos of the bishop throughout his life, as well as personal items such as

handwritten notes, a Bible, a rosary, books of jokes, and more, including a plaque from his office with his episcopal motto, "Jesus, I trust in you."

"We have made a beautiful, prayerful chapel to our beloved friend. I hope many will be able to come and celebrate the life of Bishop O'Connell, which was truly a life lived for Jesus," said Archbishop José H. Gomez, who was on hand to dedicate the chapel March 17, St. Patrick’s Day. O'Connell was a native of Ireland.

After his murder, thousands paid respect at vigils, Masses and his funeral with an outpouring of love, mourning and tales of how O'Connell impacted their lives.