

Tributes pour in for Valley Interfaith clergy leader Alfonso M. Guevara

By Steve Taylor

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SAN JUAN, Texas – Tributes have poured in for the Rev. Alfonso M. Guevara, a longtime priest in the Rio Grande Valley and clergy leader in the Valley Interfaith movement.

Guevara, a Brownsville native, died Feb. 10, aged 75.

“Father Alfonso was a very humble guy with an ordinary, simple lifestyle,” said his good friend Jerry Frank, a retired priest.

“He had a lot of faith, a lot of commitment to Christ, including the social, political, aspects of that. He was a leader in Valley interfaith for a few years. He believed our faith extends to make making a difference in the world, standing up for the little people, the ones who don’t have somebody to speak for them. And he did that well.”

Guevara succeeded Frank as priest of St. John the Baptist in San Juan.



The Rev. Alfonso M. Guevara at Christ the King Church, Brownsville. (Photo: Leslie Mazoch/El Herald)

“But, Alfonso was also very Catholic, in the sense of the traditional type of things. He never really challenged the institution, like I did at times. He was a team player in that way. But, he was a hard worker. He was available, he he had a great great life, a great priesthood, I think,” Frank said.

Elizabeth Valdez, a former Valley Interfaith coordinator, said: “Valley Interfaith sends our condolences to Father Alfonso’s family. He was a prophet fighting against any injustice happening to families in the peripheries. His legacy will continue.”

Valley Interfaith posted this message on Legacy.com: “Father Alfonso Guevara, a long-time clergy leader with Valley Interfaith, passed away on February 10.

He worked for many years to help ordinary men and women develop their confidence and skills people so they could do extraordinary things in the parishes and communities.”

The group linked a number of stories the *Rio Grande Guardian International News Service* ran about Guevara.

A friend of Guevara, Jacqueline Santos, wrote: “I was deeply hurt to learn about Father Alfonso’s passing. My heart broke into a million pieces. I grew up with Father and was an altar server at Saint Joseph The Worker Catholic Church, where he would say Mass. He helped me feel and understand the faith more, and helped me through my struggles at the time. He made going to church feel like a blessing. He brought life to the church and spread lots of love and faith to the community. May he rest in peace joining God the Father Almighty in Heaven.”

Obituary

Editor's Note: Here is the official obituary for the Rev. Alfonso M. Guevara:

San Juan – Rev. Alfonso M. Guevara, 75, went to the Lord on Friday, Feb. 10, 2023, at San Juan Nursing Home.

He was born Aug. 2, 1947 in Brownsville to Mauro and Margarita Guevara, and was a 1965 graduate of St. Joseph Academy in Brownsville.

Father Alfonso was ordained a Catholic priest for the Diocese of Brownsville on May 28, 1977, by Bishop John J. Fitzpatrick. He served as pastor in several parishes throughout the Rio Grande Valley, including Sacred Heart in Escobares; St. Margaret Mary in Pharr; Christ the King in Brownsville; St. Joseph the Worker in McAllen; and most recently at St. John the Baptist Parish in San Juan. He also served as Vicar General for the diocese from 2012 to 2018 and most recently as Episcopal Vicar for Apostolic Movements and Pastoral Initiatives.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Mauro M. and Margarita Guevara; two siblings, Maria Del Rosario Ybarra and Ireneo M. Guevara; nephew, Patricio Guevara; niece, Veronica G. Guevara; and brother-in-law, Francisco N. Ybarra.

Father Guevara is survived by his sister, Teresita M. Guevara of Brownsville; uncle, Ramon Mendez of Laredo; nephew Col. Samuel G. (Sharon Day) Ybarra of Germany, LTC (ret) Rene G. (Lisa Morales) Ybarra, of San Antonio; niece, Breanna Ybarra of Colorado; nephew, David Guevara; and several cousins.

Visitation was held from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. with a 7 p.m. rosary Thursday, February 16, 2023, at St. John the Baptist Catholic Parish in San Juan. The funeral mass took place at 10 a.m., Friday, February 17, 2023, at St. John the Baptist Catholic Parish in San Juan. Interment followed at Buena Vista Burial Park in Brownsville.

In lieu of flowers, the family prefers donations to be made in Father Alfonso's honor to Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley.

Funeral services were under the direction of Memorial Funeral Home in San Juan.