



The Catholic community is extremely disturbed by the news.

"We are shocked by this information," said Bishop Gregory Aymond, bishop of the Diocese of Austin. "We do not know whether he is missing or has been killed. Please remember Father Euresti, his family and parishioners in prayer."

The Cristo Rey Catholic Church said it will offer prayers for Euresti every day at its noon and 6 p.m. mass celebrations until something further develops surrounding the priest's disappearance.

Euresti's family members said he bought the house in the gated Nuevo Laredo community just four months ago, with plans to retire there. He was born and raised in Austin and graduated from Stephen F. Austin High School in 1957. His family and friends warned him against retiring there.

"We kept telling him 'Why buy, why not stay here,' but I guess it was something he wanted to do," said Josephine Juarez, a parishioner.

"He's been there for all of us," said family friend Mary Lou Ortega, speaking from Father Jesse's home. "He loved Mexico. This is what he wanted."

Relatives said Euresti would go to his Nuevo Laredo home on Calle Guerrero every week for a couple days before returning to run the Cristo Rey Catholic Church.

Euresti has been a leader at the church since 2006. Some parishioners remember first meeting him at the church 50 years ago when he was a teenager in seminary school and lived around the corner from the church.

"I was just an altar boy," said Luis Zavala. "He worked with the community here." Zavala joined hundreds of others at the church Wednesday to sing and pray together.

Below is the report from 6 p.m. on Wednesday regarding the case:



Euresti has been a priest since 1965, serving in area communities for decades, including parishes in Waco, Luling, Lockhart and Cameron. Euresti also served as a chaplain in the United States Air Force.

Euresti's family is traveling to Nuevo Laredo to get more information, working with the [U.S. Consulate](#) to locate him. The local police department in Nuevo Laredo, as well as the offices of U.S. and Mexican consulates, confirmed an ongoing investigation into the priest's disappearance.

Austin police have opened a missing-persons report, and Laredo authorities are reportedly looking into the case as well.

"My uncle could just disappear there...that's possible, it's happening everyday there," said Beatrice Rios, his niece.

Violence against both locals and visitors from the U.S. has skyrocketed in some parts of Mexico, particularly along the border, and almost nowhere more than in Nuevo Laredo with sprawling mansions and bitter poverty.

Euresti was born and raised in Austin but loves Mexico, his family said. He shrugged off his family's fears for his safety when he decided to live there.

"We were all telling him, 'Please don't do that,' but my uncle had been to Mexico many times. He loves Mexico," his nephew Rios said.

Nuevo Laredo is a city of about 500,000 people, about 230 miles south of Austin, just across the border from Laredo, Texas.

- KXAN reporter Erin Cargile contributed to this report

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