

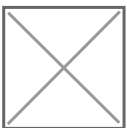


A man makes the sign of the cross at a makeshift memorial during a vigil in Houston July 11, 2026, in response to the fatal shooting of a Mexican motorist by an Immigration and Customs and Enforcement agent during a vehicle stop. (OSV News/Reuters/Antranik Tavitian)



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Catholics and immigrant advocacy groups have expressed solidarity and offered prayers in the aftermath of two fatal shootings by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers within less than a week.

The deaths sparked local protests and calls for accountability.

An ICE officer shot and killed Johan Sebastián Durán Guerrero in Biddeford, Maine (about 18 miles south of Portland) July 13 when the 25-year old was on his way to work in the morning. Early on July 7, an ICE agent shot Lorenzo Salgado Araujo in Houston when he was on his way to a construction site that his homebuilding company was working on. He died later at an area hospital.

In a July 15 statement on the Archdiocese of Houston-Galveston's website, Archbishop Joe S. Vásquez of Houston-Galveston called on "all the faithful" to pray for Salgado, "his family and all those affected by fear and anxiety." He also asked for prayers "for unity and peace in our community and nation."

"The U.S. Catholic Bishops have repeatedly called for enforcement efforts that are targeted, proportional, and humane. Furthermore, the bishops have expressed the necessity for meaningful immigration reform as opposed to an 'enforcement-only approach.' A reform that brings about justice to all parties requires peaceful dialogue, mutual respect, and a commitment to charity," he reiterated.

The Diocese of Portland, Maine, in a July 15 statement said its Office of Hispanic Ministry is giving pastoral support to Durán's family and community.

"We pray that all those affected by his death may experience God's loving comfort, strength, and peace," said the statement sent to OSV News.

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Catholic Charities Maine extended "deepest sympathies" to Durán's family. "Our hearts are with the community of Biddeford as they grieve this tragic loss," the agency told OSV News in a statement July 15. "We know the tremendous responsibility that comes with local and federal law enforcement positions in keeping our communities safe, and trust that a fair and transparent investigation will be conducted."

In relation to Durán's death, an ICE spokesperson told OSV News in a statement that ICE officials were doing surveillance at "the last known address" of someone without authorization to be in the U.S. who had "a final order of removal." The spokesperson also said "an illegal alien (person not authorized to be in the country) departed the residence in a vehicle."

"The vehicle attempted to flee the scene and fearing for public safety an officer discharged his weapon," according to the spokesperson July 15.

The spokesperson said with regard to Salgado's shooting, "From information we are receiving, he rammed an ICE law enforcement vehicle, refused to follow multiple verbal commands, and weaponized his vehicle in an attempt to run over an ICE law enforcement officer resulting in our officer firing his weapon in self-defense."

The spokesperson said July 15 the DHS Office of Inspector General would be investigating Durán's shooting and that it "is leading the investigation" of Salgado's shooting, while the FBI in Houston is heading an investigation into "the potential assault on a federal law enforcement officer."

Multiple media outlets have reported witnesses, including Salgado's brother who was with him and two other workers going to the job site, disputed ICE's description of the events leading up to both shootings.

These men were not subjects of ICE investigations, according to media reports that quote DHS and Congressional and state representatives whose districts include their homes. The ICE spokesperson did not answer questions about these media reports.

An analysis by The Guardian media outlet found at least 10 shooting deaths by immigration agents since President Donald Trump took office in 2024. Durán's death makes that total 11.

Durán, a Colombian national who was described by family and friends as a hardworking family man who held two jobs, left behind a 3-year old daughter and his partner.

A Homeland Security spokesperson confirmed to OSV News that Durán arrived in the U.S. without papers through the southern border in September 2023.

"To be clear, work authorization does NOT confer legal status in the United States," added the spokesperson, in answer to whether Durán obtained, in March 2025, permission to work in the country.

A Washington Post story reported Durán's relatives and neighbors in Bucaramanga, Colombia, held a prayer vigil on July 14, where they said the rosary and erected a memorial decorated with a statue of Mary. A Go Fund Me page, which has so far raised close to \$500,000 for Durán's family and to cover the return of his remains to Colombia, mentions preparation for a "Christian burial."

Salgado, a 52-year old father of three adult U.S. citizens, had been living in the country for nearly 35 years. His oldest son, Ronaldo Salgado, who learned of his father's shooting when he recognized his voice as he cried for help in a video of the aftermath that was posted on social media, told reporters his Mexican father had started the process toward getting a work permit more than a year ago.

"He was close to obtaining his legal status," he said in the July 8 news conference.

Ronaldo Salgado posted an invitation to a July 16 "public viewing" for his father on social media, decorated with images of Our Lady of Guadalupe and announcing the recitation of the rosary.

Church World Service emphasized it "fully supports" calls for independent investigations into both fatal shootings. The Washington-based Christian humanitarian agency — which has partnered with Catholic groups on providing direct services to those in need worldwide and on advocacy for immigration reform in the U.S. — expressed condolences July 14 over the deaths of Salgado and Durán and solidarity with those mourning their loss.

In the Portland, Maine, area, Fernanda Vergara McLaughlin, a Hispanic community activist who manages an immigrant network of 2,000 members, joined the call for an independent investigation into Durán's killing. She told OSV News she had been

in touch with his family, offering support and encouraging them to speak out.

"We are a big community of Latinos in Maine and we, a few days ago, were just talking about Lorenzo (Salgado) in Houston, Texas," she said. "Then we find out that same week we have one right here in Maine, a neighbor of ours. (We're) just heartbroken."

"We mourn the tragic deaths of Lorenzo Salgado Araujo and Johan Sebastián Durán Guerrero, and we grieve alongside their families and loved ones," Anne Gallagher, executive director of CLINIC, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., said in a July 14 statement to OSV News. "As immigration enforcement efforts continue to intensify across the country, we are witnessing an increasingly fearful and volatile environment that puts lives and communities at greater risk."

"Catholic social teaching reminds us that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and that the dignity and sanctity of every human life must remain at the center of our nation's immigration policies," she added.