

## Pastor tells bus-crash-victim mourners to trust in God

### The Rev. Trinh parishoners to keep faith in wake of tragedy

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Midafternoon Friday, the Rev. Dominic Huy The Trinh knew what he wanted to say to mourners who would be filling the pews at Our Lady of Lavang for an evening service.

Much earlier in the day, Trinh learned that the chartered bus carrying members of his northwest Harris County church and Vietnamese Martyrs Catholic Church in southeast Houston smashed into a bridge guardrail in North Texas.

"I will tell (my parishioners) we don't know what happened, but we are not the owners of our lives," Trinh said. "God created everything. We have to trust in God, accept everything that he has given us and pray for the victims. Those who died went to Heaven, and God will watch those in the hospitals and help them."

### Entire community suffers, official says

The Rev. Dat Hoang, director of the office of vocations for the Archdiocese of Galveston-

Houston, didn't know Friday afternoon if there was anybody on the bus he knew personally. He dreads finding out.

"Every one of us feels related in some way to the people on the bus," he said.

Hoang estimates there are roughly 40,000 Vietnamese-American Catholics in this area.

"We suffer a lot together," he said. "We suffered in our old country. We suffered while we were leaving. And now, when we come here and a tragedy like this happens, it impacts us all. We stand by each other in the midst of our suffering."

It's hard to understand, he said, why bad things happen to good people.

### Cardinal expresses sadness over tragedy

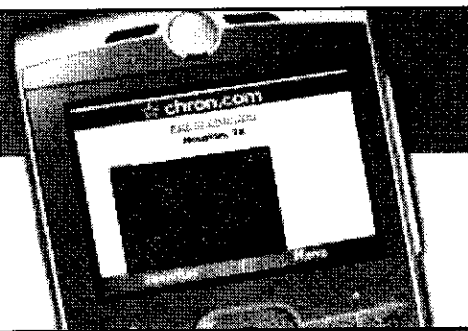
The chartered bus was carrying 55 members of Vietnamese Martyrs Catholic Church and Our Lady of Lavang Church when it crashed. Cardinal Daniel DiNardo issued a statement about the accident:

"I, along with the entire Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, mourn for the victims of the bus tragedy that occurred in Sherman, Texas early this morning," DiNardo wrote. "We also mourn for their families and the spiritual communities from which they came. We pray for the intercession of our mother, Mary, that she may grant the families peace in knowing that

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their loved ones are now with her Son, Jesus."

### **Church member just missed trip**

Tinh Trinh, a member of the Martyrs parish for more than 20 years, said people who found out about the accident when they arrived for a 6:30 a.m. Mass were distraught.

"I, myself, cried," said Trinh, a NASA employee.

Had there been room on the bus just days ago, Trinh said, he and perhaps five other members of his family would have been aboard. Only four seats were available.

"So we didn't go," Trinh said.

### **Crisis counseling available to families**

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston is providing 24-hour crisis counseling to families affected. Families seeking counseling services can call 1-866-649-5862.

The Diocese of Dallas has allowed the Red Cross to establish an assistance center at St. Patrick Catholic Church, 416 N. Rusk in Denison, where shelter and support will be offered to relatives of those who were aboard the bus.

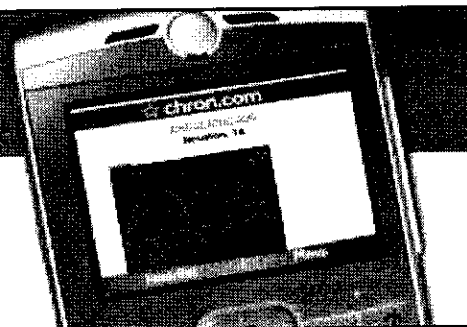
Houston's Red Cross chapter has established a phone line for people seeking information on relatives who were on the bus: 866-438-4636.

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