

September 13, 1984

His Excellency,
Most Reverend P.F. Flores,
Archbishop of San Antonio
P.O. Box 28410
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Your Excellency:

Thank you for trying to help our group here in Goliad, Texas, concerning the closing of the gate leading to the Chapel of the Virgen de Loreto. We consider this to be of great concern to us. We received a copy of Bishop Grahmann's reply to you, we believe it served a good purpose. The letter showed the problems we discussed at our meeting were not fabricated or exaggerated by our group. This also showed that Bishop Grahmann does not intend to discuss the matter of the gate with our group personally. The information instructing us to enter through the museum entrance in order to visit the chapel was put in our church bulletin weeks after the gate was closed on us. None of the members who attend services at the Chapel or visit at different times were approached or contacted for opinions concerning the gate. We challenge the fact that only seven (7) people maximum were making visits to the Chapel before the said gate was closed. In the Petition that was circulated, 280 signatures protesting the closing of the gate were collected, and not all of the people who care deeply about the Chapel were approached for their signature.

Providing volunteers by our group to guard the chapel is one condition we are unable to meet with. Is it their belief that the Mexican American Community in Goliad do not have to work and are able to sit by the Chapel door from 9 to 5, seven days a week? Why couldn't a job be created for the sole purpose of some person to guard the Chapel?

Your Excellency, up to this point, this has been an unpleasant experience for our people here in Goliad. We took great pride on the progress our people had made in society with our customs and beliefs being respected. It now appears that other groups and organizations have shown interest in our Chapel and our people are being pushed aside and ignored with the control of our Chapel being turned over to a Curator. This brings to mind the injustice of passed years when the Mexican American people were treated as second class citizens with no voice and very little justice. Our people believe in preserving history and for 200 years our people have been doing exactly that with the Chapel at La Bahia.

The drawings and literature that were left with you showing the route one must take to visit the Chapel as this new plan dictates, explains the hardships our people are subject to. We fail to understand why this change was ever considered.

We strongly feel someone has to hear us and help restore our Chapel to us. We are prepared to seek assistance through the Apostolic Deligate in Washington D.C. or to our beloved Pope. We would just like to know why we are subjected to such hardships. We pray that you do not allow this unjust matter to go any further and to see that justice is done.

Hoping to see you personally or hear from you through the mail.

Respectfully,


Tony Garcia


Ralph Medrano

CC: Most Reverend Charles V. Grahmann, D.D.
Bishop, Diocese of Victoria in Texas
The Catholic Center
P.O. Box 4708
Victoria, Texas 77903

Rev. Don Ruppert
The Catholic Center
P.O. Box 4708
Victoria, Texas 77903

om the desk of . . .

Date 9-7-84

Archbishop Flores

Mr. Garcia,

For your information.

+ P. Flores

3rd letter



Diocese of Victoria in Texas

P.O. Box 4708
Victoria, Texas 77903
(512) 573-0828

Bishop's Office

August 28, 1984



His Excellency,
Most Reverend P. F. Flores,
Archbishop of San Antonio
Post Office Box 28410
San Antonio, Texas 78228

Your Excellency:

Many thanks for your letter of August 17th concerning the visit of the group from Goliad. I am grateful for the time you spent with them.

Shortly after the Diocese was established in 1982 I visited La Bahia. During the tour of the little Chapel I was told about the 18th century statue present on the altar and how open the place was for someone to take it and anything they wanted from the chapel, including the sacred vessels, etc. Something needed to be done about security. The statue was removed for minor restoration.

Meanwhile Gallagher Bassett Insurance Agency made an inspection of the facility and firmly recommended that better security be in place at the chapel. The decision was made to close the northwest gate of the compound and re-route entrance and exit to the chapel through the museum area where the curator is always present. The chapel is removed from the area and no one is close by to provide security there. I believe that was a responsible decision.

However, to be sensitive to the desire of those local people who wanted to visit the chapel, arrangements were made, announced and publicized in the parish bulletin that open entrance could be readily had through the museum area. Some seven people maximum, have been making such visits weekly and have continued to do so after the northwest gate was closed.

Recently Mr. Michael O'Connor visited with Father Don Ruppert and me about the situation. Out of our discussion came a proposal that, if there

His Excellency,
Most Rev. P. F. Flores
Aug. 28, 1984
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is a deep feeling about the gate being opened, the curator will be happy to receive a list of volunteers from this group and manage their service.

Preserving history is a difficult job in a society that doesn't always look favorably on this sacred trust. I believe La Bahia is that kind of heritage and deserves, within reason, responsible care.

Thanks again for your time given to this matter.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Charles V. Grahmann

+Most Reverend Charles V. Grahmann, D.D.
Bishop, Diocese of Victoria in Texas

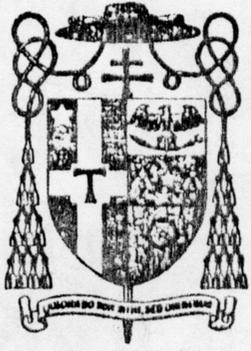
CVG/hw

cc: Mr. Antonio Garcia
Rev. Jerry Caponi
Rev. Don Ruppert
Mr. Tom O'Connor
Mr. Michael O'Connor
Gallagher Bassett Ins. Co.

2nd letter



CHANCERY OFFICE
P.O. BOX 28410
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78228
TELEPHONE 734-2620
AREA CODE 512



August 17, 1984

Most Reverend Charles V. Grahmann, D.D.
Bishop of Victoria
The Catholic Center
P.O. Box 4708
Victoria, Texas 77903

Your Excellency:

On Tuesday, August 14, 1984, a delegation from Goliad came to my office. There was a total of 6 people (three men and three women); their leader was Mr. Antonio García, P.O. Box 589, Goliad, Texas 77063 who works for the police department; two ladies work at the ticket office of the La Bahia Museum; another gentleman is one of the custodians at La Bahia.

They all expressed disappointment over the closing of the gate entrance to the Capilla and are frustrated because no one wants to listen to them. They say that no one consulted any of those who have always belonged to the Mision. They object having to go in and out of the museum in order to make a visit to the Capilla; they claim nothing has ever been stolen from the Capilla; that there is always a custodian nearby; that they resent this change.

I informed the delegation that I would report to you their visit and that I felt confident that you would treat them and the matter with justice. The group wants to meet with you, otherwise they claim they will go to the Apostolic Delegate and if need be, to the Pope.

I pray that this problem of the gate may be peacefully settled.

With personal best wishes, I remain

Fraternally yours in Christ,

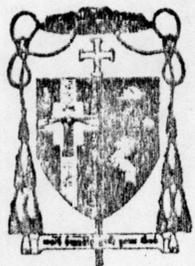
P. F. Flores

Most Reverend P. F. Flores, D.D.
Archbishop of San Antonio

PFF/mgs

✓ xc: Mr. Antonio García

1st letter



Diocese of Victoria in Texas
P.O. Box 4708
Victoria, Texas 77903
(512) 573-0828

Bishop's Office

August 3, 1984

Meeting was
ON Fri. Aug 3, 1984

Mr. Michael O'Connor
702 W. Goodwin
Victoria, Texas 77901

Dear Mr. O'Connor:

Many thanks for coming to my office and discussing with Father Don Ruppert and me the situation and implications surrounding the Chapel of Our Lady of Loretto at La Bahia in Coliad. I appreciate the time you have given to help resolve the tensions.

Enclosed is a summary of our reflection which places the situation before us, the reasons for the decisions made in the past and a proposal to follow another course of action with the help of volunteers from the area. I appreciate your role in passing this information on and then receiving the names of the volunteers.

I believe La Bahia stands as a beautiful monument to history. I would not want to put it up for grabs.

Thanks for your help.

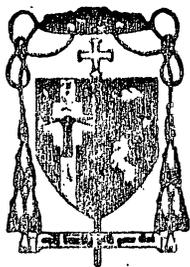
Sincerely yours in Christ,

Charles V. Grahmann

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+Most Reverend Charles V. Grahmann, D.D.,
Bishop, Diocese of Victoria in Texas

CVG/hw



Diocese of Victoria in Texas

**P.O. Box 4708
Victoria, Texas 77903
(512) 573-0828**

Bishop's Office

**Chapel of Our Lady of Loretto
La Bahia**

The small Chapel of Our Lady of Loretto at La Bahia is the proud depository of an 18th century statue of Nuestra Senora de Loreto. The wall behind the main altar contains a beautiful painting, both historical artifacts. The entire Chapel itself speaks of a sense of history and heritage deserving of preservation for future generations.

Because of the priceless artifacts in the Chapel and the history of the Chapel itself, the Diocese of Victoria was strongly urged to provide adequate and responsible security for these historical objects. Until recently anyone could have entered the Chapel, stole the artifact, defaced the painting, etc. Insurance representatives demanded that security be put in place to monitor this priceless heritage.

The northwest gate of the compound of La Bahia was closed to satisfy the insurance demands for security purposes. At the same time care was taken to insure that the local people have access to the Chapel of Loretto for their private visits and prayer. Arrangements were made and publicized that anyone who desired to visit the Chapel for prayer could freely do so by entering through the museum area. The same number of people continued to visit the Chapel through the new arrangement as before.

Some question has arisen about the opening of the northwest gate. For security reasons only it is presently closed.

However if there is a deep historical interest in this matter the Diocese is most willing to manage volunteers who would be present to provide the security demanded for such valuable artifacts and for such an historic place. With this type of volunteers the northwest gate could be opened. The Diocese would be happy to receive a list of volunteers and the times available to serve in this capacity and arrange their service to this venerable historic monument.

I believe all of us love La Bahia, its heritage and artifacts, the Chapel of Loretto so much that we would truly want to provide it with the care and security that it deserves. To do otherwise would be a mark against all of us.