



# Priest Under Fire: Padre David Rodríguez, the Catholic Church, and El Salvador's Revolutionary Movement

By Peter M. Sánchez

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“A valuable book that goes beyond the specifics of one priest’s life to provide insight into the Salvadoran civil war.”—Arthur Leigh Binford, coeditor of *Landscapes of Struggle: Politics, Society, and Community in El Salvador*

“The fascinating story of Father David Rodríguez sheds light on half a century of El Salvador’s troubled history and helps to understand the impact of liberation theology.”—Héctor Lindo-Fuentes, coauthor of *Modernizing Minds in El Salvador: Education Reform and the Cold War, 1960–1980*

“Documents Rodriguez’s life—an important contribution in and of itself—and shows how religiously grounded leaders like Rodríguez were crucial to the success of revolutionary movements.”—Anna Peterson, coeditor of *Christianity, Social Change, and Globalization in the Americas*

“Sánchez challenges fellow specialists by introducing new evidence and placing Father David in the context of social-movement scholarship. *Priest Under Fire* is an important and engaging contribution.”—Erik Ching, author of *Authoritarian El Salvador: Politics and the Origins of the Military Regimes, 1880–1940*

David Rodriguez, or Padre David as he is known throughout El Salvador, is a diocesan priest who followed the Second Vatican Council’s doctrinal mandate to advocate for the poor and oppressed. In the 1970s, he joined the largest guerilla organization in El Salvador, the FPL (Popular Liberation Forces) and would later be a member of the resulting political party, the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front). Along with other progressive clergy committed to liberation theology, Padre David helped drive forward the country’s popular movement.

In *Priest Under Fire*, Peter Sánchez tells the story of how one priest joined a movement to help his people and his country. He provides much-needed insight

into both the Salvadoran civil war and the Catholic Church-influenced grassroots political movements, showing that they continue to inform Latin America today.

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#### About the Author

**Peter M. Sánchez** is professor of political science at Loyola University Chicago. He is the author of *Panama Lost?: U.S. Hegemony, Democracy, and the Canal*.

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