

## **Father Elizondo honored by Catholic Theological**

### **Society of America** By Catholic News Service

LOS ANGELES (CNS) - Father Virgilio P. Elizondo, a professor at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind., was given the John Courtney Murray Award from the Catholic Theological Society of America at its annual convention banquet June 9 in Los Angeles.

The society's award — its highest honor for distinguished achievement in theology -- went to Father Elizondo for his work in the area of Latino religious thought.

Father Elizondo, who is currently a professor of pastoral and Hispanic theology at Notre Dame, is widely recognized as "the father of U.S. Latino religious thought." He has pursued scholarly work in theology, evangelization, faith and spirituality, culture and public ritual.

He was an advocate for underpaid and exploited Mexican-American laborers in the Archdiocese of San Antonio during the early 1970s. Father Elizondo has been active in television work and video productions and is considered the foremost interpreter of U.S. Latino religion by the national and international media.

As pastor of the San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, Father Elizondo presided over a Sunday Spanish Mass that was broadcast to more than 1 million households. He founded the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio in 1972 and served as its first president.

A native of San Antonio and the son of Mexican immigrants, Father Elizondo was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of San Antonio in 1963. As a young priest, he worked in parishes, but in 1965 Archbishop Robert E. Lucey, then head of the archdiocese, appointed him archdiocesan director of religious education.

He joined the Notre Dame faculty in 2000 and has written several books, including "The Future Is Mestizo," "Galilean Journey" and "The Human Quest."

The John Courtney Murray Award is named after the most prominent American Catholic theologian at the Second Vatican Council and a principal author of the council's Declaration on Religious Freedom ("Dignitatis Humanae").