Guatemalan bishop visits Hub immigrants

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Maria Sacchetti, the Globe's immigration reporter, last night swung by a Mass at Most Holy Redeemer, a Catholic parish in East Boston with a large concentration of recent immigrants from Latin America, to hear Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini Imeri (right), who is visiting from Guatemala this week. Maria told me the event reminded her of the attention that was focused on the civil war in Guatemala in the 1980s and 1990s, but has since faded from the headlines. She sends along this dispatch:

"In a packed East Boston church last night, a Guatemalan bishop told 300 mostly immigrant parishioners that “for God there are no borders” – a contentious issue he will take up again tonight at Boston College. Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini of San Marcos presided over a Mass in the Most Holy Redeemer Church marking the 10th anniversary of the brutal slaying of Roman Catholic Bishop Juan Gerardi in Guatemala. The 75-year-old human rights crusader was killed two days after presenting a report on atrocities during Guatemala’s 36-year-old war, mostly by the military. The war ended in 1996, and killed 200,000 people. Ramazzini told the crowd in Spanish that peace still eluded their homeland because of poverty and violence – which still drives many of them to the United States. Ramazzini spoke flanked by Boston Bishop Robert Hennessey and a handful of other priests who work with immigrants. Tonight Ramazzini will give a talk entitled “Immigration and Deportation Today and Tomorrow: Human Rights for Migrant Workers?” at the Boston College Center for Human Rights and International Justice.

(Photos courtesy of William W. Houghton/Guatemala Solidarity Committee Boston.)