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**FIDES SPECIAL FEATURE**

**THE NAMES OF PASTORAL WORKERS,  
PRIESTS, MEN AND WOMEN RELIGIOUS  
AND LAY CATHOLICS  
KILLED DURING 2009**

“The Church everywhere proclaims the Gospel of Christ, despite persecutions, discriminations, attacks and at times hostile indifference. These, in fact, enable her to share the lot of her Master and Lord.”

*(Pope Benedict XVI, Christmas Message, December 25, 2009)*

## THE NAMES OF CATHOLICS KILLED WHILE ON MISSION IN 2009

**Vatican City (Agenzia Fides)** – Once again this year, as 2009 comes to an end, Fides has drawn up a list of the names of pastoral workers who lost their lives in a violent manner over the course of 2009. As far as we know the total number of Catholic priests, men and women religious and seminarians killed during 2009 was 37, the highest number in the last 10 years and nearly double the number reported in 2008. There were 30 priests, 2 religious sisters, 2 seminarians, and 3 lay volunteers.

In analyzing the list for each continent, this year, the one with the highest number were the Americas, with 23 pastoral workers killed (18 priests, 2 seminarians, 1 sister, and 2 lay persons), followed by Africa, where 9 priests, 1 religious, and 1 laymen lost their lives. In Asia, 2 priests were killed, and in Europe, one priest was killed.

Our list does not only include the names of missionaries *ad gentes* in the strict sense, but all pastoral workers who died a violent death. We choose not to refer to these persons as “martyrs”, since it is up to the Church to judge their possible merits, and also because of the scarcity of available information in most of cases, with regard to their life and even the circumstances of their death.

As Pope Benedict XVI recalled on the feast day of Saint Stephen, the First Martyr, “Stephen's witness, like that of the Christian martyrs, shows our fellow men and women, so often distracted and disoriented, in whom they must place their trust in order to give meaning to life. The martyr is, in fact, the person who dies in the certainty of being loved by God and, placing nothing before love for Christ, knows he has chosen the better part. Fully identifying himself with the death of Christ, he realizes that he is a life-giving seed that opens the way for peace and hope in the world. Today, presenting us St. Stephen the Deacon as a model, the Church is also showing us that acceptance and love for the poor is one of the privileged ways to live the Gospel and to bear credible witness before the world of the Kingdom of God that is to come.” (Angelus, December 26, 2009)

Recalling the many pastoral workers killed throughout the world and praying for their eternal rest “a duty of gratitude for the whole Church and an incentive for each one of us to witness ever more courageously to our faith and hope in the One who on the Cross triumphed over the power of violence and hatred for ever with his almighty love.” (Benedict XVI, Regina Caeli, March 24, 2008)

From the few biographies of these brothers and sisters who were killed, we can perceive their generous and unconditional offer to the great cause of the Gospel: that is what has united them in life and even in a violent death, yet in very different situations and contexts. To proclaim the love of Christ, crucified and risen for the salvation of man, testifying in concrete works of love towards their brethren, they have not hesitated to put their lives at risk every day in so many contexts of suffering, extreme poverty, tension, and generalized violence, to offer hope of a better tomorrow and try to free many, especially young people, from the degradation and the vicious circle of crime. Some were victims of that very violence that they were fighting or the willingness to go to the aid of others, placing their own security in jeopardy. Many were killed in attempted robbery or kidnapping, attacked in their homes by bandits in search of elusive treasures who most often had to settle for an old car or the victim's phone, and yet taking with them the most precious treasure: a life given in love. Others were eliminated because they opposed hatred with love, despair with hope, violent opposition and the right to abuse with dialogue.

This provisional list compiled annually by the Fides News Agency must nevertheless always be added to the long list of many who perhaps will never be known of, who in every corner of the planet suffer and even give their lives for their faith in Christ. This is the “cloud of unknown

soldiers of the great cause of God" - in the words of Pope John Paul II - to whom we look with gratitude and reverence, even without knowing their faces, because without them, the Church and the world would be enormously impoverished.

## OVERVIEW OF THE CONTINENTS

### AMERICA

The 23 pastoral workers (18 priests, 2 seminarians, 1 sister, 2 lay people) were killed in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Cuba, El Salvador, United States, Guatemala and Honduras.

6 priests were killed in Brazil, an undoubtedly high number, so much so that the Pastoral Council of Bishops of the Bishops' Conference of Brazil, after its last meeting of the year, issued a statement on its concern for the rising tide of violence against the priests in the country: "The Catholic Church in Brazil was deeply hurt and indignant in the face of violence against her children whose life was cut short. We reaffirm that nothing justifies the violence."

Among the priests killed was Spaniard Ramiro Luden, known as "Father Ramiro," who worked for 34 years in an association for supporting children, especially street children, and was murdered by a 15-year-old young man for robbery. Italian Fidei Donum missionary Fr. Ruggero Ruvoletto, killed in his parish, after having been robbed of 50 Real (about 19 euros). Fr. Evaldo Martiol, murdered by two young men, was the victim of a robbery that ended in murder. "His method of evangelizing was through friendship," the bishop recalled during his funeral.

Colombia, with 5 priests and 1 lay person killed, is in second place. All the priests were victims of robberies that ended tragically. The two Redemptorist priests, Father Gabriel Fernando Montoya Tamayo and Father Jesús Ariel Jiménez, were killed by a man who broke into the priests' living quarters at "Colegio de La Pascua," most likely looking for money, killing them both while they were using the Internet. The lifeless body of Fr. Danilo Oscar Cardozo Ossa was found in the rectory of the parish, along with a gag and some ropes. Also, Fr. Emir Don Jaramillo Cardenas was killed on the night between Sunday, December 20, and Monday, December 21, 2009 in his home. Fr. Juan Gonzalo Aristizabal Isaza, was found dead inside the car he owned, abandoned on the local highway. In addition, there is the layman Jorge Humberto Echeverri Garro, a professor and pastoral workers, who worked as a catechist and advocate for social peace, killed by a group of guerrillas during a meeting concerning certain Church projects.

In Mexico, a priest and two seminarians were killed on their way to a pastoral meeting for vocations. Their vehicle was overtaken by another, they were made to exit the vehicle, and were beaten to death with firearms. The Archbishop of Acapulco has reported that in that region, there is a prevailing logic that everything can be solved with a gun, the logic of settling of accounts with bloodshed, and the armed forces are unable to control drug trafficking and violence .

Particularly disturbing were the violent deaths of two Spanish priests in Cuba: Fr. Eduardo de la Fuente Serrano, who died following a stabbing in a street on the outskirts of the capital, and Fr. Mariano Arroyo Merino, who was killed in his parish. His body was found handcuffed, gagged, and partially burned.

There were two victims in El Salvador: a priest and a young layman. The lifeless body of the Salvadoran Redemptorist Fr. Leopoldo Cruz was found several days after his disappearance in a canal in a rural area of San Salvador. The young William Quijano, of the Community of Saint Egidio, was killed by gunshots, as he returned home, by one of the many violent organized gangs formed by young people in poor neighborhoods of Central America. For five years, William was involved in the School of Peace for poor children of the neighborhood of Apopa, in the suburbs of the capital.

The only religious killed in the continent is Sister Marguerite Bartz, of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (SBS), was killed in her convent of Saint Berard in the Navajo area of New Mexico (United States of America). The nun was known as a woman who was always passionate for justice and peace. Also in the United States, Fr. Ed Hinds, Pastor of St. Patrick Church in Chatham, New

Jersey (USA), was found dead in the Rectory beside the church, covered with numerous injuries and wounds caused by sharp weapon.

In Guatemala, Father Lorenzo Rosebaugh, of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), was killed following an assault which occurred along a country road, while he and other priests were on their way to a pastoral meeting. Two men armed with rifles and with their faces covered stopped the car and, after robbing the missionaries of all they had, shot and killed Fr. Rosebaugh.

Guatemalan Capuchin priest Fr. Miguel Angel Hernandez, who had been pastor of a parish in Ocatepeque (Honduras) for four years, was found dead in a province of eastern Guatemala. He had died several days prior to the discovery of his body.

## **AFRICA**

In Africa, 9 priests, 1 religious sister, and 1 lay person died violently in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, Kenya, and Burundi.

In the troubled country of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the Church and local residents have long been the target of brutality and ongoing human rights violations, 2 priests, 1 religious sister, and 1 lay Caritas worker were all killed. Both Fr. Jean Gaston Buli and Fr. Daniel Cizimya Nakamaga were killed by unknown persons who entered their homes in the middle of the night, most likely to rob them. These two murders took place in Bunia (Ituri) and Kabare, respectively. Sister Denise Kahambo Murahirwa, a Trappist nun, was killed by gunmen in uniform who entered the monastery of "Notre Dame de la Clarté" in Murhesa, 20 kilometers from Bukavu, and after the murder, fled without stealing anything. The young Congolese man Ricky Sukaka Agus, a Caritas worker, was killed in Musezero in North Kivu, by two men wearing army uniforms.

In South Africa as well, 4 priests were killed. Fr. Daniel Matsela Mahula, of the Diocese of Klerksdorp, was killed while driving in his car, by four highwaymen. Fr. Lionel Sham, 66, pastor of a parish in Mohlakeng (Archdiocese of Johannesburg, South Africa), was killed after being abducted from his home. The body of Father Ernst Plöchl of the Congregation of Mariannahill Missionaries, who had been in South Africa for over 40 years, was found in the isolated mission station of Maria Zell. Also, Father Louis Blondel of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), was killed in the night by some young people who entered in the missionaries' living quarters.

In Kenya, Fr. Joseph Bertaina of the Consolata Missionaries was attacked and killed by thugs at the Institute of Philosophy run by the Consolata Missionaries in Nairobi, where he was rector and administrator. They beat, bound and gagged him, causing his death from respiratory failure. The body of Fr. Jeremiah Roche of the Society of St. Patrick for Foreign Missions was found with his hands tied and machete wounds to the head.

An act of altruism has cost the lives of Fr. Révoat Gahimbare, in Burundi. Having heard of the assault to the monastery of the "Bene Maria" religious sisters, he was going to bring help to the nuns, but on his way bandits attacked and killed him.

## **ASIA**

Two priests were killed in Asia in 2009. In India, Fr. James Mukalel was found dead near Mangalore (State of Karnataka in southern India), probably the victim of anti-Christian violence as the area had previously seen attacks by fundamentalists. In the Philippines, Fr. Cecilio Lucero, defender of the weakest and committed to the protection of human rights, was killed by a group of armed men in the Northern Samar province, south of the capital, Manila.

## **EUROPE**

The only priest reported as being killed was Fr. Louis Jousseau, assaulted and murdered in the rectory of Egletons, Diocese of Tulle (France), where he was Pastor. Active in serving persons with disabilities, he was murdered by one of the mentally unbalanced he ministered to.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH

*Fides News Agency welcomes any extra information or correction to this year's list or to those of previous years.*

**Fr. Joseph Bertaina, Italian, of the Consolata Missionaries**, was killed on the morning of 16 January 2009, in his office in Langata, at the Institute of Philosophy of the Consolata Missionaries in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. Fr. Bertaina was rector and director of the Institute. Several persons entered secretly in the institute during the hours of instruction, while students and teachers were in their classrooms. The culprits surprised Fr. Joseph, beating him, bounding and gagging him, causing his death by respiratory failure. Fr. Bertaina ordained priest in 1951, and had been in Kenya beginning in the 1960s. He was in that country, except for a period in South Africa, where he had gone to study. Robberies that end in murder are a growing phenomenon and occur with alarming frequency with religious institutions and other works of the Church.  
(See Fides 16/1/2009, 19/1/2009)

The lifeless body of **Spanish priest Fr. Eduardo de la Fuente Serrano**, was found the morning of 14 February 2009, in an area northwest of Havana (Cuba). According to investigations, the priest died following a stabbing, on a street on the outskirts of the capital. His car was found in the town of Bauta, about 20 kilometers from the place where his body was abandoned. The priest, 61, was a native of Guadalix de la Sierra, near Madrid (Spain), and had worked for three years in Cuba as a parish priest in the Church of St. Clare of Assisi, where he was engaged in humanitarian work. The testimonies of those who knew him reveal his attention to everyone: children, the elderly, and especially teenagers and young adults, whom he had brought together in a lively and committed parish group. Through an intensive and practical pastoral work, he had managed to restore life to a community affected by the lack of a permanent priest for some years. Fr. Eduardo, who carried out pastoral ministry in Madrid at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in the district of Carabanchel, had begun working in Havana a decade ago, where every year in July he went to replace a priest. Then, three years ago, he decided to move there permanently, mainly to help those most in need.  
(See Fides 16/2/2009, 20/2/2009)

**Fr. Juan Gonzalo Aristizabal Isaza, a Colombian priest**, 62 years old, was killed February 22, 2009. His body was found inside the car he owned, abandoned on the regional highway, near the University of Antioch. The priest was pastor of the parish of "St. John the Apostle" and chaplain of the Intercontinental Hotel in Medellin (Colombia). He was also distinguished by his spirit of charity towards the needy, his pastoral dedication, intelligence, and giving to others. Born in Medellin in 1946, Fr. Juan Gonzalo Aristizabal Isaza was ordained a priest on June 10, 1973. Earning a degree in Education, he also earned the title of psychologist and teacher in psychological orientation. After his ordination he held various pastoral assignments in parishes and in different schools as chaplain. He was also Dean of the School in Ozhanam and Chaplain of the Government of Antioch (1993-1996). Since February 2, 2006, he had served as pastor of St. John the Apostle.  
(See Fides 24/2/2009)

**Fr. Daniel Matsela Mahula, of the Diocese of Klerksdorp (South Africa)**, was killed while driving his car, by four highway bandits near Bloemhof, February 27, 2009. Born June 6, 1975 he was ordained a priest on 22 December 2002. He ministered at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Jouberton. (See Fides 10/3/2009)

**Fr. Lionel Sham, age 66, pastor in Mohlakeng (Archdiocese of Johannesburg, South Africa)**, was killed March 7, 2009, after being abducted from his home in Mohlakeng. His body was

recovered by police on Sunday, March 8, just hours after the disappearance of the priest from his parish. Fr. Lionel Sham was known to be open to all and generous with all those in need.  
(See Fides 10/3/2009)

Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, **Fr. Révocat Gahimbare**, pastor of the parish of Karuzi, Burundi, was killed by 4 bandits dressed as policemen, who had robbed the monastery of the "Bene Maria" Sisters. Having learned of the assault, Fr. Gahimbare rushed to the rescue of the religious, but was ambushed along the road by bandits. The priest was hit by a bullet that killed him.  
(See Fides 10/3/2009)

**Two Redemptorist priests, Father Gabriel Fernando Montoya Tamayo (age 40) and Father Jesús Ariel Jiménez (45 years)** were killed on the night of March 16, 2009 in the municipality of La Primavera (Vichada) in Colombia. The tragic events occurred in the area of Easter, the jurisdiction of the municipality of La Primavera, in the Department of Vichada, over 500 kilometers from Bogota and the border with Venezuela. The double crime was committed by a man on the evening of March 16, 2009, who raided the priests' rooms at the "Colegio de La Pascua," probably in search of money, killing them both with a firearm while they were using the Internet. Fr. Gabriel Fernando Montoya was seven years Director of the College and was about to pass the assignment to Fr. Jesús Ariel Jiménez, who had recently arrived as the new director.  
(See Fides 18/3/2009, 20/3/2009)

**Spanish priest Fr. Ramiro Luden, 64, was killed March 20, 2009 in Recife, northeast Brazil**, where he worked for 34 years in an association for street children. According to information from the police, Fr. Luden was killed by a gunshot while he was leaving with his vehicle from a parking lot. The shot reached his arm and penetrated his chest. Brazilian police arrested a young man of 15 years who has confessed to the crime and has also found the weapon used, a rifle. The teenager said he wanted to rob the priest while he was in his car, and fired a weapon because he thought the priest was looking for a weapon to try and defend himself. The Spanish priest, a native of Toledo, had been residing in Brazil for 34 years and worked with the Movement of Support for Meninos de Rua (Mamer), for teenagers in Jaboatao dos Guararapes, in the metropolitan area of Recife. According to friends of the religious, Fr. Luden was very affectionate and appreciated by all, and had never received threats. They describe him as a quiet man, but "energetic and determined" when defending NGOs. He was "a priest with a great social awareness, trying to rescue children and adolescents from poverty and the temptation to enter into a life of crime."  
(See Fides 21/3/2009)

**U.S. priest Fr. Lorenzo Rosebaugh, age 74, of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI)**, was killed in Guatemala on May 18, 2009 following an assault that took place in the National Park Laguna Lachuá in Alta Verapaz, a rural community north of Guatemala, along a country road that joins the community of Chisec with Ixcán. Two men armed with rifles and with their faces covered they stopped a car driven by Fr. Rosebaugh, who was traveling with four other priests, all of them Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), on their way to Laguna Lachuá for a meeting. After taking their belongings, the criminals opened fire on the religious, killing Fr. Rosebaugh and seriously injuring Fr. Jean Claude Nowama, of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while the others were left unharmed by the attack. The priests had money stolen from them, along with a cell phone, and liturgical objects. Fr. Rosebaugh had been in Guatemala since 1993. He had been pastor at a parish in Chicaman, in the mountains populated by the Maya, and then in the community of Ixcán, a region in the northern part of the country that is known for its high concentration of crime, where he remained until 2000. After a visit home to attend to his mother, he returned to Guatemala in 2005, taking care of the sick, the poor, and prisoners.  
(Agenzia Fides 20/5/2009)

**Father Ernst Plöchl, Austrian, age 78, of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Mariannahill** was killed in the Cape Province of South Africa. The body of the missionary, who had been in South Africa for over 40 years, was found the morning of Sunday, May 31, 2009, in the isolated mission station of Maria Zell. At first, the local authorities had said that the missionary was shot to death with firearms, but then they said he had been strangled. Fr. Ploechl ran a school of 400 pupils in Matatiele, a town in the south. Fr. Ploechl was born in Neumarkt im Mühlkreis in the district of Freistadt (Austria), where he had retained strong ties and was admired for his commitment to the poor. (See Fides 2/6/2009)

**Jorge Humberto Echeverri Garro, age 40, professor and pastoral worker**, on 11 June 2009 was in Colonos, Panama Arauca (Colombia), to attend a pastoral meeting of the Church in the area, focusing on projects in favor of strengthening the community in collaboration with Caritas Germany. During the meeting, a group of guerrillas invaded the city's center and headed to the place of the meeting without giving any explanation, and shot the professor dead. According to the statement issued by Monsignor Héctor Fabio Henao Gaviria, director of the National Secretariat of Social/Pastoral, "Jorge Humberto, in addition to being recognized for his leadership, was also a catechist and member of the network of teachers as part of a Social/Pastoral proposal with the Instructional Centers for Peace, which is run in the same area, in agreement with the UNHCR. (See Fides 15/6/2009)

**Mexican priest Fr. Habacuc Benítez Hernández, 39, and the young seminarians Oregon Eduardo Benitez, 19, and Silvestre Gonzalez Cambron, 21**, both of Ajuchitlán (Guerrero), were murdered on their way to a meeting for pastoral care of vocations, the evening of Saturday, June 13, 2009, in the municipality of Arcelia, in Tierra Caliente (Guerrero). The priest was to coordinate the promotion of vocations in the Diocese of Ciudad Altamirano (Mexico). According to police analysis, priests and seminarians must have been met by shots fired by individuals around seven o'clock on the afternoon of June 13, while traveling in a truck. As they traveling down one of the central streets of Arcelia, suddenly another vehicle reached them, they were forced to exit the truck and were hit with several rounds of gunfire. Archbishop Felipe Aguirre Franco of Acapulco noted that in that region there is a tendency to solve everything with a gun, the logic of settling of accounts with the shedding of blood. Also, "the armed forces have not solved the overall problem of drug trafficking and violence." (See Fides 16/6/2009)

**Fr. Gisley Azevedo Gomes, CSS, age 31, National Leader of the Youth Section of the Bishops' Conference of Brazil (CNBB)**, was killed on June 15, 2009. The priest's body was found the next day, June 16, near Brazlandia, satellite city of Brasilia, inside his car. He had suffered a shot to the face and two to the head. Police arrested several young people, guilty of the crime, who had gotten into his car, first robbing him and then killing him. Originally from Morrinhos, Fr. Gisley had entered the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ and was ordained a priest on May 2005. He had been the leader of the National Youth Section of the CNBB for just two years. Very dedicated to working with young people, he joined the Youth Ministry of Brazil in organizing the National Campaign on the theme "Youth in the march against violence." "In a regrettable way - the bishops said – he was the victim of violence that wanted to fight against." (See Fides 17/6/2009)

**Fr. Mariano Arroyo Merino, a native of Spain, age 74**, was found dead in his parish at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rule in Cuba, on July 13, 2009. The priest's body was found by firefighters at around 6:10 am (local time), after the watchman had seen the smoke coming from the parish. The attackers stabbed Fr. Arroyo and then set him on fire. His body was handcuffed, gagged, and partially burned. The priest had served in Cuba during the last 12 years in the residential area of

Havana, carrying out an intense pastoral work with a special charism. Mariano Arroyo was born February 20, 1935, in Cabezon de la Sal, Cantabria (Spain). He was ordained a priest on April 17, 1960. Shortly after, in 1962, he began working as a missionary in Santiago de Chile, where he remained until 1968. From 1969 to 1979 he worked again in Madrid (Spain) as pastor and trainer in the seminary. In 1980, he returned to Chile and had served in various parishes in the Diocese of Copiapo. In Havana, he had arrived on January 19, 1997. The following March, he was named pastor of Our Lady of Pilar, in Havana, and in December of 2004, Rector and Parish Priest of the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Rule. He was also advisor to the Movement of Christian Workers and Director of the "Father Félix Varela" Institute of Religious Sciences. Fr. Arroyo belonged to the Hispanic-American Priest Cooperation Association (known as OCSHA). (See Fides 14/7/2009, 16/7/2009, 21/7/2009)

**The young Congolese Ricky Sukaka Agus, 27, Caritas worker,** was killed on the afternoon of July 15, 2009 in Musezero in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo. According to a reconstruction of the murder, the youth, who had worked for a year as an agricultural engineer in a project of Secours Catholique-Caritas France, was approached by two men wearing army uniforms and returned home. His corpse was later found; his t-shirt of "Secours Catholique" that he had been wearing and his portfolio had been robbed. Caritas Internationalis has condemned "the brutal murder of a young man who worked bravely in a war zone to help others rebuild their lives."

**Fr. Mukalel James, age 39, was found dead near Mangalore, (State of Karnataka) in southern India.** His body was found in the countryside by some parishioners on July 30, 2009, after the young priest had failed to return to his parish in the Syro-Malabar diocese of Belthangady. On July 29, in his last hours before death, according to his usual pastoral duties, the priest had visited some families, dined in a monastery, and celebrated a funeral. The young priest was well-liked by all, was always smiling and a zealous pastoral worker. Among the hypotheses is the fact that it could have been a case of anti-Christian violence, as last year the area had seen some cases of attacks by fundamentalists. (See Fides 31/7/2009)

The lifeless body of the **Salvadoran Redemptorist Fr. Leopoldo Cruz,** of which there were no further news since mid-August, was found August 24, 2009 in a canal in a rural area of El Salvador. Since the body was already in an advanced state of decomposition, it is difficult to determine the exact cause and date of death. A young man found driving the car of Father Cruz was arrested. (See Fides 4/9/2009)

**Fr. Cecilio Lucero, Filipino, age 48, was killed September 6, 2009 by a group of armed men in the Northern Samar province, south of the capital, Manila (Philippines).** According to local police, the priest was traveling in his car when he was stopped by over 30 people who opened fire, killing him instantly. Two other people were on board the vehicle with him and were seriously wounded. Fr. Lucero, pastor in the town of Catubig, was considered by all a defender of the weak and an activist for the protection of human rights. He was responsible for the Human Rights Commission of the Diocese of Catarman and had launched several initiatives and projects to protect the poor and denounce abuse of power. He also had relatives among the politicians of the province of Northern Samar: according to investigators, this fact could be linked to murder, in a kind of revenge or political crossfire. In the region of Northern Samar, there have been numerous assassinations of politicians, journalists, and social and pastoral workers who dare to raise their voices to defend human rights of the most vulnerable or accuse the powerful of corruption. (See Fides 7/9/2009)

**Fr. Roger Ruvoletto, Italian Fidei donum missionary, age 52, was killed September 19, 2009,** in his parish dedicated to the "Sagrado Corazon de Maria" in Barrio Santa Etelvina, a suburb of Manaus (Brazil). Around 7 o'clock in the morning (local time), the deacon of the parish, heard the shots, and came and found the lifeless body of Fr. Roger, kneeling by the bed, his head bowed, struck in the head by a bullet. From evidence gathered at the place, it seems that only fifty Real (about nineteen euros) had been taken, leaving more money in the dwelling. Fr. Roger Ruvoletto was born in Galt of Vigonovo March 23, 1957, in the Province of Venice, Diocese of Padua. He was ordained a priest in 1982. After studying ecclesiology in Rome, had returned to his diocese in August 1994, where he worked for about a year of pastoral and social work, and then was appointed Director of the Diocesan Mission Center, a position he held from 1995 to 2003. On July 6, 2003 he left for Brazil, as a Fidei donum missionary for the Diocese of Itaguaí in Mangaratiba. The following year he participated in a project of missionary presence in the outskirts of Manaus, requested by the local dioceses. It is a location along the border between the city and the forest where the crime is particularly aggressive. Fr. Roger had recently participated in a demonstration to demand greater security. (See Fides 21/9/2009)

**A priest, age 33, Fr. Evaldo Martiol of the Diocese of Cacador (Brazil),** was killed in Santa Caterina on the evening of 26 September 2009 by two young men, age 21 and 15, respectively uncle and nephew. The priest was the victim of a robbery that ended in murder. After leaving a chapel and passing to visit another priest, Fr. Evaldo gave a ride in his car to the two young men who killed him. The next day, police identified the criminals, who still had the priest's car, cell phone, and documents. The two confessed and indicated the place to find the body of the priest: 5 kilometers outside the urban area of Cacador, hit by four bullets. Fr. Evaldo, a native of Great Timbo, was ordained priest on April 26, 2003. "His method was to evangelize through friendship," recalled the Diocesan Bishop Luiz Carlos Eccell, who celebrated his funeral in the Cathedral where the priest worked, which was filled with faithful moved and distraught because "Father Evaldo was a beloved son who was friends with everyone." (See Fides 29/9/2009)

**The lifeless body of Fr. Danilo Oscar Cardozo bones was found in the parish rectory of St. Louis Marie de Montfort to Villavicencio (Colombia),** of which he was pastor from 2003, on the afternoon of Sunday, September 27, 2009. Some of the faithful, seeing that the priest did not arrive to celebrate evening Mass, went looking for him at the rectory and found his lifeless body. As reported by the police authorities, no signs of tampering or forcing were found, so most likely the assassins were known by the priest. They also found a gag and some ropes on the site. Father Danilo Oscar Cardozo was born April 7, 1952 in Toro (Valle). He was ordained a priest on 10 June 1983. He was Vice-Rector of the Minor Seminary of St. Pius X in Restrepo, assistant pastor of St. Joseph the Worker, founder and pastor of Mary, Help of Christians Parish, chaplain of the Acacias Prison, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in the district of Grasse, in San Jose Obrero, Nuevo Ricaute neighborhood, in St. Louis Marie de Montfort (since 2003), and Archbishop's Delegate for the radio and the newspaper "Echo Llanera." (See Fides 29/9/2009)

**The young William Quijano, 21, of the Community of St. Egidio in El Salvador,** was shot to death by gunshots while returning home on the evening of 28 September 2009. The assassins were members of one of the many violent organized gangs formed by young people in poor neighborhoods of Central America. For five years William was involved in the School of Peace for the poor children of the neighborhood of Apopa, in the suburbs of the capital, San Salvador. His peaceful and good life, serving the youth most in need was well-known and presented an alternative to violent gangs. (See Fides 1/10/2009)

**The body of Don Ed Hinds, Pastor of St. Patrick Church in Chatham, New Jersey (USA),** about 10 miles from Newark, was found on the morning of Saturday, October 24, 2009, in the kitchen adjacent to the Rectory of the church, covered with numerous injuries and wounds caused by a sharp weapon. On the morning of Saturday, shortly after 8 pm, a deacon and a maintenance person went to look for him, since he had not arrived for the Mass in the morning. There, they came upon the murder. The priest, 61, was seen for the last time the night before, around 11pm, during a community meeting in the premises of the rectory, and he was fine. Very involved in supporting the oppressed, the priest was considered the heart and soul of the community of St. Patrick, where he was pastor for 7 years. (See Fides 26/10/2009)

**Fr. Louis Jousseume, native of the Diocese of Lucon (France) was attacked and murdered on the evening of October 26, 2009 in the rectory of Egletons, Diocese of Tulle,** where he was pastor from 1981, as well as chaplain of the movement "Chretien en monde rural" (CMR) and responsible for the liturgical and sacramental ministries. The priest, who had just turned 70, for over 40 years had carried out pastoral services in the Diocese of Tulle, where among other things had been chaplain at the Breeve high school and engaged in service to those with disabilities. From those who knew him was described as a man who was loving, open, who had spent his entire life under the sign of the Gospel, take special note of the poorest and the weakest, especially the handicapped. In fact, it was one of these mentally unbalanced persons who attacked and killed him.

**Sister Marguerite Bartz, 64, of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (SBS),** based in Bensalem, Pennsylvania, was killed in her convent of Saint Berard in the area of the Navajo, New Mexico, on Sunday, November 1<sup>st</sup>. As the nun was not present at Sunday Mass, a co-worker went in search of her and found her body. According to the FBI, the nun was murdered on the night of Saturday, October 31 and the morning of Sunday, November 1st. The nun was known as a woman passionate for justice and peace. Sister Marguerite was born in Plymouth, Wisconsin in 1945. She entered the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (SBS) in 1966 in Beaumont, Texas and took her perpetual vows in 1974. After earning a degree in Literature and a Masters in Religious Education, for over 40 years, Sister Marguerite served in the missions in different places. The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (SBS) were founded in 1891 by St. Katherine Drexel (1858-1955) to spread the Gospel message and Eucharistic life, especially among Native Americans and African-Americans. (See Fides 03/11/2009)

**Father Hidalberto Henrique Guimaraes, age 48,** pastor of the church of Our Lady of Grace in the town of Murici on the outskirts of Maceió (AL), Brazil, was found murdered on 7 November 2009, two days after his disappearance. On Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, he was supposed to celebrate a Mass in the city of Branquinho, and precisely because of his absence, a friend went to his house to find him. Upon entering, he found the bloodied body of the priest on the kitchen floor, with many cuts all over his body. Father Hidalberto was ordained a priest in the Church of St. Joseph, in the district Trapiche, in Maceió, December 14, 1992. He had recently earned a degree in journalism. The priest was much loved by his parishioners. (See Fides 10/11/2009, 12/11/2009)

**Guatemalan Capuchin priest Fr Miguel Angel Hernandez, age 45,** for four years serving a parish in Ocotepeque (Honduras), was found dead in a province of eastern Guatemala, having died a few days earlier. Honduran police sources say Father Hernandez was kidnapped on his way from Ocotepeque towards the eastern city of Chiquimula (Guatemala). The priest's body was found inside a small motel in the town of Esquipulas, about 222 kilometers east of the capital, having suffered several stab wounds. The death must have occurred on November 8. The Capuchins have been working for many years in the border area between Honduras and Guatemala, where they have different communities. Fr. Miguel had been principal of a Catholic school and was a close friend of

the youth. He was very dedicated in his work, simple, clear in his preaching, always very sincere, and consistent. (See Fides 11/11/2009, 21/11/2009)

**Fr. Jean Gaston Buli was killed in the night between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2009**, by armed bandits who entered the rectory of his parish in Nyakasanza, in Bunia (Ituri) (DR Congo). Around 2:30 am, the robbers forced open the door of the office and fatally wounded the priest, who, transported to a nearby hospital, unfortunately died soon after due to severe hemorrhaging. Fr. Jean Gaston, after 24 years of priesthood, had recently been appointed vicar-treasurer of the parish in Nyakasanza.

**Fr. Daniel Cizimya Nakamaga, age 51, 12 years as a priest in Bukavu (DR Congo), was killed in his parish of Kabare on Sunday, December 6, at two o'clock in the morning.** Some unknown assailants attacked the parish house on the night of December 6, and after tearing off the bars of a window, entered the house. Fr. Daniel tried to take refuge in his room, but was reached by the criminals and killed in cold blood.  
(See Fides 9/12/2009)

**Father Louis Blondel, of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), was killed on the night of Sunday December 6 and Monday, December 7, 2009, in Diepsloot, one of the townships of Pretoria, South Africa.** During the night three young men entered the missionaries' living quarters. Having woken a brother of Fr. Louis and another person who was sleeping in the house and stealing their mobile phones, they requested to have the main door of the house opened. Through it came another boy, who asked if there were other people in the house. They then headed towards the room of Fr. Louis Blondel, who opened the door and was immediately killed with the shot of a firearm. Fr. Louis Blondel was 70 years old and a native of northern France. He had taught philosophy in Tanzania for 15 years. By 1987, he had moved to South Africa. In June 2009, he finished his second term as Superior of the Province of Southern Africa (Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa) of the White Fathers. He taught philosophy at St. Peter's Seminary, Hammanskraal. After founding "Cordis", an Emmaus Center, and having worked in the development of Orange Farm, a huge township in Johannesburg, in 2008 Fr. Blondel had moved to Diepsloot, another township of about 300,000 people located between Johannesburg and Pretoria. In Diepsloot, Fr. Blondet had opened a new parish. (See Fides 9/12/2009)

**Sister Denise Kahambu Muhayirwa, age 44, a Trappist nun, was killed on the evening of December 7, 2009** by armed men in uniform who entered the monastery of "Notre Dame de la Clarté" in Murhesa, 20 kilometers from Bukavu, in the territory of Kabare, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The nun, in charge of reception and the concierge of the monastery, was killed around 8:00pm while, after having prayed vespers with the community, she was going to clear the tables where the guests from Goma had eaten. The guests had come to attend the ceremony for their daughters who were going to take the habit and begin their novitiate the following day, December 8. Noticing the presence of unwanted guests, the nun started running and shouting to warn her sisters, pursued by gangsters who shot her in the leg, causing her death.  
(See Fides 9/12/2009)

**Fr. Jeremiah Roche, Irish, of the Society of St. Patrick for Foreign Missions, was murdered on the night of December 10 and 11 by strangers who came to his home** in Kericho, 250 kilometers from Nairobi (Kenya). The body of the missionary, who lived alone, was discovered by several parishioners alarmed by the fact that Fr. Roche did not appear to celebrate the Mass at 6 in the morning. The missionary had his hands tied and machete wounds to the head. Fr. Roche lent his service in Kenya since 1968 and recently had completed a new church. He promoted various development projects, thanks to his incessant fund-raising, which was supported by his large

family. The act was probably carried out by some local youths, the local police commander said, who thought that the missionary had some kind of treasure and broke into the house for a robbery, which ended tragically. The youth took some clothing, which they left in the street, as well as a CD player and a cellular phone.

**Brazilian priest Fr. Alvino Broering, age 46**, was stabbed at dawn on December 14 in the southern state of Santa Catarina (Brazil) by a man who then stole his car, according to information from the police. The priest was hit with several stab wounds in the back, abdomen, and face, and was transported to the hospital Marieta Bornhausen Kondyor Massif, where he had surgery, but unfortunately died shortly after. Fr. Alvino was chaplain of the University of Vale do Itajai and director of the community radio station Conceição FM. The radio, in 2010, will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Father Alvino had already begun to make preparations for the anniversary celebrations. He was also a member of the Academy of Letters of Itajai, and was very active in the city and the region. He was a priest who was very easy to approach, outgoing, charismatic, and loved by all. (See Fides 15/12/2009)

**Colombian priest Fr. Emiro Jaramillo Cardenas** was killed on the evening of Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup> 2009 at his home, located in Santa Rosa de Osos, about 74 km from the city of Medellin. According to some acquaintances of the priest, who was in charge of the Chapel "Our Lord of Humility", Father Jaramillo had not received any threats against his life. His body was found by a relative who, surprised by the fact that he had not come to the chapel, went looking for him. The door of his apartment was open and upon entering, he found the body of the priest with knife wounds. Fr. Emir Don Jaramillo was born in 1936 and was ordained priest in 1966. Since 1999, he worked at the chapel dedicated to "Our Lady of Humility," a place rich in history and spirituality, often visited by the faithful of this city. (See Fides 22/12/2009)

## TABLE FOR THE YEAR 2009

	Name	Country of Origin	Institute	Place and Date of Death
1.	Fr. Giuseppe Bertaina	Italy	Consolata Missionary (IMC)	Nairobi (Kenya) – Jan. 16
2.	Fr. Eduardo de la Fuente Serrano	Spain	Diocesan	Havana (Cuba) – Feb. 14
3.	Fr. Juan Gonzalo Aristizabal Isaza	Colombia	Diocesan	Medellin (Colombia) – Feb. 22
4.	Fr. Daniel Matsela Mahula	South Africa	Diocesan	Bloemhof (South Africa) – Feb. 27
5.	Fr. Lionel Sham	South Africa	Diocesan	Mohlakeng (South Africa) – March 7
6.	Fr. Révoat Gahimbare	Burundi	Diocesan	Karuzi (Burundi) – March 8
7.	Fr. Gabriel Fernando Montoya Tamayo	Colombia	Redemptorists	Vichada (Colombia) – March 16
8.	Fr. Jesús Ariel Jiménez	Colombia	Redemptorists	Vichada (Colombia) – March 16
9.	Fr. Ramiro Ludeña	Spain	Diocesan	Recife (Brazil) – March 20
10	Fr. Lorenzo Rosebaugh	United States	Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI)	Alta Verapaz (Guatemala) – May 18
11	Fr. Ernst Plöchl	Austria	Mariannhill Missionaries	Maria Zella (South Africa) – May 31
12	Jorge Humberto Echeverri Garro	Colombia	Lay pastoral worker	Panama di Arauca (Colombia) – June 11
13	Fr. Habacuc Hernández Benítez	Mexico	Diocesan	Tierra Caliente (Mexico) – June 13
14	Eduardo Oregón Benítez	Mexico	Seminarian	Tierra Caliente (Mexico) – June 13
15	Silvestre González Cambrón	Mexico	Seminarian	Tierra Caliente (Mexico) – June 13
16	Fr. Gisley Azevedo Gomes	Brazil	Stigmatines CSS	Brazlândia (Brazil) – June 15
17	Fr. Mariano Arroyo Merino	Spain	Diocesan/OCSHA	Havana (Cuba) – July 13
18	Ricky Agusa Sukaka	D.R. Congo	Caritas Worker	Musezero (D.R. Congo) – July 15
19	Fr. James Mukalel	India	Diocesan	Mangalore (India) – July 30
20	Fr. Leopoldo Cruz	El Salvador	Redemptorists	San Salvador (El Salvador) – August 24
21	Fr. Cecilio Lucero	Philippines	Diocesan	Nord Samar (Philippines) – September 6
22	Fr. Ruggero Ruvoletto	Italy	Fidei donum	Manaus (Brazil) – September 19
23	Fr. Evaldo Martiol	Brazil	Diocesan	Santa Caterina (Brazil) – September 26
24	Fr. Oscar Danilo Cardozo Ossa	Colombia	Diocesan	Villavicencio (Colombia) – September 27
25	William Quijano	El Salvador	Lay, Community of St. Egidio	San Salvador (El Salvador) – September 28
26	Fr. Ed Hinds	Stati Uniti	Diocesan	Chatham (N.J.- USA) – October 24
27	Fr. Louis Jousseume	France	Diocesan	Egletons (France) – October 26
28	Sister Marguerite Bartz	United States	Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (SBS)	Saint Berard, New Mexico, USA – November 1
29	Fr. Hidalberto Henrique Guimaraes	Brazil	Diocesan	Maceió (AL), Brazil – November 7
30	Fr. Miguel Angel Hernandez	Guatemala	OFM Capuchin	Esquipulas (Honduras) - November 8
31	Fr. Jean Gaston Buli	D.R. Congo	Diocesan	Bunia (D.R. Congo) – November 10
32	Fr. Daniel Cizimya Nakamaga	D.R. Congo	Diocesan	Bukavu (D.R. Congo) –

				December 6
33	Fr. Louis Blondel	France	Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)	Pretoria (South Africa) – December 7
34	Sister Denise Kahambu Muhahyirwa	D.R. Congo	Trappist Nun	Bukavu (D.R. Congo) – December 7
35	Fr. Jeremiah Roche	Ireland	Society of St. Patrick for the Foreign Missions	Nairobi (Kenya) – December 11
36	Fr. Alvino Broering	Brazil	Diocesan	Santa Catarina (Brazil) – December 14
37	Fr. Jaramillo Cárdenas	Colombia	Diocesan	Santa Rosa de Osos (Colombia) – December 20

### Number by category of pastoral workers killed in 2009

Priests: 30 (19 diocesan, 1 Fidei donum, 3 Redemptorists, 1 Consolata Missionary, 1 Oblate of Mary Immaculate, 1 Mariannahill Missionary, 1 Stigmatini, 1 White Father, 1 of the Society of St. Patrick, 1 Capuchin)

Seminarians: 2

Women religious: 2

Laity: 3

### Country of Origin

America: 5 (2 Mexico, 1 United States, Peru, El Salvador)

Africa: 4 (Ghana, Swaziland, D. R. Congo, South Africa)

Europe: 4 (2 Spain, 1 Italy, Germany)

Asia: 8 (4 Iraq, 2 Philippines, 1 Sri Lanka, Indonesia)

### Countries of Origin

Asia 2 (India, Philippines)

America 19 (6 Colombia, 4 Brazil, 3 United States, 3 Mexico, 2 El Salvador, 1 Guatemala)

Africa 7 (4 D.R. Congo, 2 South Africa, 1 Burundi)

Europe 9 (3 Spain, 2 France, 2 Italy, 1 Ireland, 1 Austria)

### Places of Death

Asia 2 (India, Philippines)

America 23 (6 Brazil, 6 Colombia, 3 Mexico, 2 Cuba, 2 El Salvador, 2 United States, 1 Guatemala, 1 Honduras)

Africa 11 (4 D.R. Congo, 4 South Africa, 2 Kenya, 1 Burundi)

Europe 1 (France)

## Table of Pastoral Workers killed on mission between 1980 and 2007

**Vatican City** (Agenzia Fides) - According to the information we have, in the decade 1980-1989 **115 missionaries** died a violent death. However the number is certainly higher since it refers only to cases reported and confirmed.

In the period 1990-2000, according to our information, a total number of **604 missionaries** were killed. The number is considerably higher than in the previous decade due to the following factors: the Rwandan genocide (1994) in which at least 248 members of church personnel were killed; improved communications and quicker information from even remote parts of the world; the number includes besides missionaries *ad gentes* in the strict sense, pastoral workers who despite serious risk remained at their post to care for the people entrusted to them.

Between 2001-2008 a total number of **193** pastoral workers were killed.

YEAR	TOTAL	B	P	D	B	SIS	S	IVC	C	L	V
1990	17		10			7					
1991	19	1	14		1	3					
1992	21		6		2	13					
1993	21	1C+1	13			4	1	1			
1994	26		20		1	4	1				
1994*	248	3	103		47	65		30			
1995	33		18	1	3	9				2	
1996	48	3	19		8	13	1	2	1	1(ct)	
1997	68	1	19		1	7	40				
1998	40	1	13		5	17	4				
1999	32		17			9	4		2		
2000	31		19			7	3	1			1
2001	33		25			5	1	1		1	
2002	25	1	18		1	2	2	1			
2003	29	1	20		1		3			2	2
2004	16		12			1				3	
2005	25	1	18		2	3				1	
2006	24		17		1	3				2	1
2007	21		15	3	1	1	1				
2008	20	1	16		1					2	

\* = refers to Rwandan genocide.

B: bishop; C: cardinal; P: priest; D: deacon; B: Brother; SIS: women religious; S: seminarian; IVC: member of Institute of consecrated life; C: catechist; L: lay person; V: volunteer; ct: catechumen.

(Agenzia Fides 30/12/2009)

**FOR MORE Fides INFORMATION, COMMENTS, AND REFLECTION ON PASTORAL WORKERS KILLED IN RECENT YEARS SEE: [www.fides.org](http://www.fides.org)**