



agenzia fides

AGENZIA DELLE PONTIFICIE OPERE MISSIONARIE

30 December 2021

FIDES SPECIAL FEATURE

MISSIONARIES KILLED IN THE YEAR 2021

“How many generous persons suffered and died here in Slovakia for the name of Christ! Theirs was a witness borne out of love of him whom they had long contemplated. To the point that they resembled him even in their death. I think too of our own time, in which there is no lack of opportunities for bearing witness”

Pope Francis, Budapest, 14 September, 2021

MISSIONARIES KILLED IN 2021

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) – According to information gathered by Agenzia Fides, in 2021 22 missionaries were killed in the world: 13 priests, 1 religious man, 2 religious women, 6 lay persons. This year the highest number of missionaries killed was registered in Africa, where 11 missionaries (7 priests, 2 religious women, 2 lay persons) were killed, followed by America, where 7 missionaries (4 priests, 1 religious man, 2 lay persons) were killed. In Asia, 3 missionaries (1 priest, 2 lay persons) were killed, and Europe, where 1 priest was killed. From 2020 to 2020, according to data in our possession, 536 missionaries have been killed in the world.

As it has been for some time, the annual list of Fides does not look only to Missionaries *ad gentes* in the strict sense, but tries to record all the baptized engaged in the life of the Church who died in a violent way, not only “in hatred of the faith”. For this reason, we prefer not to use the term “martyrs”, if not in its etymological meaning of “witness”, in order not to enter into the question of the judgment that the Church might eventually deliver upon some of them, after careful consideration. At the same time we use the term “missionary” for all the baptized, aware that “in virtue of their Baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples. All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization” (EG 120).

“They could not help but testify”

As highlighted by the very little information that could be gathered on their biographies and on the circumstances of death, none of them carried out striking feats or actions, but were “simply” giving witness of their faith in contexts of impoverished, degraded social contexts, where violence is the rule of life, the authority of the state was lacking or weakened by corruption and compromises and in the total lack of respect for life and for every human right. Once again these priests, men and women religious and lay persons, were aware of all this, they were often born in the same land where they died, so they were not naïve, but “when everything counselled silence, taking cover, not professing the faith, they could not – could not – help but testify” (*Pope Francis, Budapest, 14 September, 2021*). From Africa to America, from Asia to Europe, they shared daily life with their brothers and sisters, with its risks and fears, its violence and its deprivations, bringing in the small daily gestures Christian witness as a seed of hope.

Parish priests killed in their communities, in Africa and America, tortured, kidnapped by criminals in search of non-existent treasures or attracted by the mirage of easy redemptions or to silence uncomfortable voices, that urged not to passively submit to the regime of crime; priests engaged in social works, as in Haiti, killed to rob them of what was needed to run such activities, or even killed by those they were helping, as in France, or in Venezuela, where a religious was killed by thieves in the same school where he taught young people to build a future; nuns chased and killed cold-bloodedly by bandits in South Sudan. And still many lay persons, whose number is growing: catechists killed by armed clashes together with the communities who animated South Sudan; youths killed by snipers while trying to bring aid to displaced people fleeing clashes between the army and guerrillas in Myanmar; a lay missionary brutally murdered for stealing a cellphone in Peru; a young man killed because of a mine which exploded in the Central African Republic while traveling in a mission car; an indigenous catechist, activist for the respect of human rights in a non-violent way, killed in Mexico. All of them “could not, could not help but testify” with the strength of their life given out of love, fighting every day peacefully against arrogance, violence, war.

“Killed by a gunshot for telling the truth with works of peace”

The missionaries killed on this list are like the tip of the iceberg. The provisional list compiled annually by Fides, must therefore be added to the long list of many of whom there may never be news, who in every corner of the world suffer and even pay with their lives for their faith in Christ.

To confirm this we report three examples, of Africa, America and Asia, the continents most bathed in the blood of so many men and women of peace. The diocese of Tombura-Yambio, in South Sudan, is bloodied by a relentless civil war that has raged across the country for years. The diocesan Curia has sent Fides a list of 16 names including catechists, group leaders, pastoral workers killed in the year 2021 during armed clashes (see Fides, 11/11/2021).

Accompanying their names, the Bishop, Monsignor Edward Hiiboro Kussala, underlines: “All these were killed with the violence of weapons! Targeted and killed by a gunshot for telling the truth with works of peace!”. Their names: Luke Asogoreng (catechist), Claudio Leopard (catechist), John Babayo (young leader), Matthew Paul (catechist), Moses Batingbayo Angelo (catechist), Matthew Minisare (catechist), Andrew Suanyo (catechist), Santo Paingo (spiritual leader), Mary Nako (Catholic Action), Charles Ueyo (catechist), Atilio Gadia (member of the parish council), William Tere (choir master), Peter Maakara (spiritual leader), Henry Romai (catechist), Juliano Ambrose Otwali (diocese of Makakal, catechist), Arop Okew (diocese of Malakal, catechist).

The second example comes from Mexico. Michele Colosio, 42, originally from Borgosatollo (Italy), was killed on July 11, 2021 in San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas, hit by some gunshots fired by a person on a motorcycle (see Fides, 14/7/2021). He had studied and worked as a radiologist in a hospital, then, since 2011, he was in Mexico, engaged in cooperation, in particular for the promotion of the right to health. In an area where violence is widespread, Michele stood out for his smile and for his service towards the last. Catholic, Michael was not tied in his commitment to any ecclesial reality, but his path of life had led him to South America, to coordinate various projects for the education of children in the poorest rural areas, through the care of a small farm and the breeding of farmyard animals, because he was convinced that "we must give, we must help, we must unite as a people of brothers, without distinction of languages, borders and skin color".

Finally, Myanmar, where the civil conflict has taken the form of a "heartbreaking and horrible atrocity", as Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, Archbishop of Yangon and President of the Bishops' Conference defined it. On December 24, Christmas Eve, at least 35 innocent civilians, all of Catholic faith, inhabitants of the village of Mo So, in the territory of the city of Hpruso, including women and children, were killed by the military and their bodies set on fire. Refugees in that area were fleeing following an army offensive. "The fact that the bodies of those killed, burned, and mutilated were found on Christmas Day makes this appalling tragedy even more poignant and sickening", Cardinal Bo said. "As the rest of the world celebrated the birth of Christ with joy, the people of Mo So village suffered death, shock, and destruction" (see Fides 28 and 29/12/2021).

Like the Apostles, today we too can touch the suffering and glorious flesh of Christ in the history of every day and share with everyone a destiny of hope.

“Like the Apostles and the first Christians, we too can say with complete conviction: «We cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard» (*Acts* 4:20). Everything we have received from the Lord is meant to be put to good use and freely shared with others. Just as the Apostles saw, heard and touched the saving power of Jesus (cf. *1 Jn* 1:1-4), we too can daily touch the sorrowful and glorious flesh of Christ. There we can find the courage to share with everyone we meet a destiny of hope, the sure knowledge that the Lord is ever at our side. As Christians, we cannot keep the Lord to ourselves:

the Church's evangelizing mission finds outward fulfilment in the transformation of our world and in the care of creation". (*Pope Francis, Message for World Mission Day 2021*).

OVERVIEW OF CONTINENTS

AFRICA

In Africa 7 priests, 2 nuns, 2 lay persons (11).

Angola - Father Manuel Ubaldo Jáuregui Vega, Colombian, from the Institute for Foreign Missions in Yarumal, was assassinated in Zango, municipality of Viana, Luanda, on March 7, 2021, during an assault following a minor road accident.

Nigeria - Fr. John Gbakaan Yaji, parish priest in Gulu, in the diocese of Minna, was killed on January 15, 2021 along the Lambata-Lapai road, by armed men who attacked the car in which he was traveling. His body was found near the road, tied to a tree.

Fr. Ferdinand Fanen Ngugban was killed by armed men on the morning of March 30, 2021, in the parish of St. Paul of Ayetwar, diocese of Katsina-Ala, Benue State, during a raid by armed men in the area.

Fr. Alphonsus Bello was killed on the night of May 20, 2021, when a group of armed men attacked the parish of St. Vincent Ferrer in Malunfashi, in Katsina State, and was kidnapped along with another priest. His lifeless body was found the next morning.

Fr. Luke Adeleke was killed in an attempted kidnapping on his way home after celebrating Christmas Eve Mass on the evening of December 24, hit by bullets by a gang of gunmen in Ogunmakin Obafemi Owode.

Burkina Faso - Fr. Rodrigue Sanon's body, parish priest in the diocese of Banfora, who had disappeared on January 19, 2021 while on his way to a meeting of priests with the Bishop, was found on January 21, in the forest of Toumousseni, about twenty of kilometers from Banfora.

Central African Rep. - Twenty-year-old Omer Dalyom Dallet was killed by the explosion of a mine that hit the car driven by a missionary of the Catholic Mission of Niem on May 5, 2021, injured, on which Omer was traveling to visit his sister who was hospitalized.

South Sudan - Sister Mary Daniel Abut and Sister Regina Roba, of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, were killed cold-bloodedly during an ambush along the Juba-Nimule highway on August 16, 2021. They fled after the attack by bandits on the bus they were traveling on, and were caught and killed.

Peter Bata, head catechist, was killed along with other people on October 26, 2021 during the assault by an armed group on the Catholic parish of Mupoi.

Uganda - Fr. Joshephat Kasambula, former parish priest of Lwamata in the diocese of Kiyinda-Mityana, was murdered cold-bloodedly on the evening of August 18, 2021 by a person known as a drug addict.

AMERICA

In America 4 priests, 1 religious, 2 lay persons were killed (7).

Venezuela - Brother Luigi Manganiello, a Lasallian religious, was violently hit by the thieves he had caught while they were stealing from the premises of the Barquisimeto school, on the night between January 5 and 6, 2021.

Mexico - Fr. Gumersindo Cortés González, parish priest of Cristo Rey parish, in Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato, disappeared on March 27, 2021. The following day his body was found near his car, with signs of violence and gunshots.

Friar Juan Antonio Orozco Alvarado, OFM, was the victim, along with other people, of a clash between armed gangs in the territory, on June 12, 2021, while he was about to celebrate mass in the community of Tepehuana de Pajaritos, in Zacatecas State, Jalisco.

Simón Pedro Pérez López, indigenous tzozil, catechist of the diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas, human rights activist, was killed on the morning of July 5, 2021 by a stranger on a motorcycle who shot him in the head.

The lifeless body of Fr. José Guadalupe Popoca was found on the morning of August 31, 2021 in his parish, in Galeana, municipality of Zacatepec, in Morelos State. He was killed in the night by gunshots to the head.

Peru - Nadia de Munari, an Italian lay missionary, of Operation Mato Grosso (OMG) died on Saturday April 24, 2021 after being brutally attacked with a machete in her sleep, a few days earlier, during a theft.

Haiti - On September 6, 2021, Fr. André Sylvestre was attacked by two young people on a motorcycle in Cap Haitien, as he was leaving a bank carrying a wallet. Reached by gunshots, he died in the operating room.

ASIA

In Asia 1 priest and 2 lay persons were killed (3).

Philippines - On the evening of January 24, 2021, gunmen killed Fr. Rene Bayang Regalado, as he was returning to the St. John XXIII Seminary in the village of Patpat, province of Bukidnon, on the island of Mindanao, several shots hit him in the head.

Myanmar - Two young 18-year-old Catholics, Alfred Ludo and Patrick Bo Reh, who were working to bring food and humanitarian aid to displaced people fleeing the conflict between the Burmese regular army and the popular defense forces, were killed by snipers on May 27, 2021 .

EUROPE

In Europe 1 priest was killed.

France - Father Olivier Maire, Provincial Superior of the Company of Mary (Monfortan), was assassinated on August 9, 2021, in the provincial house of Saint Laurent sur Sèvre, in France, by a Rwandan citizen who had been for some time in the community.

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*

Brother Luigi Manganiello, 49, was of Italian origin and belonged to the lay Congregation founded by St. John Baptist de La Salle. He was violently hit in the body and head with a blunt object by thieves while they were stealing from the premises of the school where he taught, in the center of Barquisimeto (Venezuela). His lifeless body was found on the morning of January 6, 2021 by one of the guardians.

The religious, the son of Italian parents who emigrated to Venezuela, was born in Puerto Cabello. The religious was well known, loved and respected for his work carried out over many years as the main coordinator of the La Salle religious institute, as well as for the pastoral care among young people and in his pastoral commitment of vocational pastoral work. He was also part of the board of directors of the Venezuelan Association of Catholic Education. In 2016, the guardian of the same school, Ramón Ramírez, had been killed.

(Agenzia Fides, 8/1/2021)

Fr. John Gbakaan, 38, parish priest of the Saint Anthony Church in Gulu, in the diocese of Minna, was kidnapped and murdered on January 15 along the road from Lambata to Lapai in the state of Niger. Fr. Gbakaan, together with his brother and another priest, had gone to Makurdi in Benue state on January 14th to visit his mother. The following day, on January 15, the priest and his brother were ambushed by armed men on their way back along the road.

The assault took place around 9 pm, near the village of Tufa. The two men were captured by armed bandits, who then called the diocese of Minna, demanding a ransom. In the meantime, however, the priest's lifeless body was found near the site of the kidnapping. Father Gbakaan was allegedly executed with a machete in such a brutal manner that identification was hardly possible. The car that the priest was traveling in was also found in the bush. The priest is remembered as a humble and kind person, dedicated to the service of God and the people.

(Agenzia Fides, 18/1/2021)

Fr. Rodrigue Sanon, parish priest of Soubaganyedougou, in the diocese of Banfora, Burkina Faso, passed away on January 19, 2021, while on his way to Banfora, where he never arrived, for a meeting of priests with the Bishop, Msgr. Lucas Kalfa Sanon. The research carried out led to the discovery of his car and his lifeless body, on January 21, in the Toumousseni forest, about twenty kilometers from Banfora. The announcement of the priest's death aroused amazement and questions within the diocese and especially among the parishioners of whom he had been parish priest since 2018, who wondered whether Fr. Sanon was the victim of bandits or fell into the hands of terrorists, given the context of insecurity in Burkina Faso, denounced on several occasions by the Bishops, which also involved priests and faithful.

(Agenzia Fides, 21,22, 23/1/2021)

Unidentified armed men opened fire and killed, on January 24, 2021, a Filipino Catholic priest, **Fr. Rene Bayang Regalado**, as he was preparing to return to St. John XXIII College Seminary in the village of Patpat, near Malaybalay, a city in the province of Bukidnon, on the island of Mindanao, in the southern Philippines. The police confirmed that Fr. Regalado was killed in the vicinity of the Seminary "with gunshots to his head". The criminals stopped his vehicle on an isolated road, his body was about three meters from the car. "His left eye was bruised as if he had been shot before his death", the police reported, and the priest's left arm was "tied with a white shoe lace" Fr. Regalado was also known as "Paring Bukidnon" ("mountain priest"), as he often visited the most isolated communities,

advocating issues related to the life and urgencies of farmers, promoting organic and sustainable agriculture. According to police investigators, Fr. Regalado had received death threats.
(Agenzia Fides, 25/1/2021)

Father Manuel Ubaldo Jáuregui Vega, 36, Xaverian missionary from Yarumal (Institute for Foreign Missions of Yarumal), born in Cúcuta, Colombia, was assassinated in Zango, in the municipality of Viana, Luanda, capital of Angola.

The missionary had been working in this country for 6 years, as assistant parish priest of the Holy Trinity Parish. On the afternoon of Sunday, March 7, 2021, after a slight accident in a parking lot, in which he had damaged a motorcycle with his car, the missionary got out to see the damage caused and was attacked by the owner of the motorcycle, causing him serious injuries. Taken to the hospital, the priest died, while his attacker was arrested.

(Agenzia Fides, 9/3/2021)

Father Gumersindo Cortés González, parish priest of Cristo Rey parish, in Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato, Mexico was found dead. The priest had disappeared on Saturday, March 27. The next day, the Guanajuato State Prosecutor's Office reported the discovery of the body near his car, in the municipality of Dolores Hidalgo. According to the police, the mortal remains showed signs of violence and shots. The diocese of Celaya was saddened by the violent death of the priest, as well as the death of many other people, victims of the violence that was unleashed in the area, not only following the struggle between the gangs for the control of drug trafficking, but also for thefts, blackmail and violence that affect people with increasing frequency. The priest was born on January 13, 1957 and was ordained a priest on March 9, 1983.

(Agenzia Fides, 30/3/2021)

Father Ferdinand Fanen Ngugban, a Nigerian priest, was killed by gunmen on the morning of March 30, 2021. He was ordained a priest in 2015, he currently served in the parish of St. Paul of Ayetwar, diocese of Katsina-Ala, in Benue State. According to the statements of the diocese, on March 30, after celebrating Mass, Fr. Ferdinand was preparing to leave for the Chrism Mass which would have been celebrated in the Cathedral of St Gerardo Maiella, when a riot broke out among the internally displaced refugees in the parish premises. Fr. Ferdinand, who went out to understand the cause of the turmoil, was shot in the head while trying to take cover after seeing some armed men. Six other people were killed with him. During the raid of the armed group, homes were damaged and set on fire and villages in the area were ransacked. In addition to the population, many priests in Nigeria have also been victims of violence in recent months, often involving kidnappings for the purpose of ransom or murder.

Nadia de Munari, Italian lay missionary, 50, belonged to the group of volunteers for Operation Mato Grosso, (OMG) in Perú, died on Saturday, April 24, 2021 after being brutally attacked with a machete while she was sleeping. The attack took place during the night of April 21 in the family home where she lived and worked, in the poor neighborhood of Nuevo Chimbote, a huge urban agglomeration on the outskirts of the city, on the northern coast of Peru. The missionary was still alive the next morning, when she was found in her room, and taken to the hospital and underwent surgery, but she died due to the severe injuries in various parts of her body. The Bishop of the diocese of Chimbote, Monsignor Ángel Francisco Simón Piorno, said that it was a horrible crime, which shocked the entire diocese, and recalled that Nadia was responsible for six nurseries and a primary school for 500 children and canteens for the poor that are part of Operation Mato Grosso. In addition to providing free food to minors and mothers with limited resources, the OMG carries out permanent social work for those most in need in the area. A young Peruvian was arrested for the crime, and according to his confession, he killed Nadia because she woke up and caught him stealing her cell phone.

(Agenzia Fides, 26/4/2021)

Omer Dalyom Dallet, twenty years old, was the victim of the explosion of a mine that exploded under the car of the Catholic Mission of Niem on May 5, 2021, entrusted to the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Betharram, in the Central African Republic. With him were Father Arialdo Urbani and a collaborator, who were returning to Niem after a visit to the village of Service Kolo. The young Omer had asked for a ride to visit his sister, who was hospitalized in the Mission hospital. Despite Father Arialdo's warnings about the risk of mines on the road, he insisted on asking for a ride. About 10 km from Niem, near the village of Zakau, the mission car drove on the mine, and the young man was killed, while the other two passengers suffered minor injuries. That of the missionaries was not the first car hit by the mines scattered along the road between Niem and Kolo. Omer belonged to a Catholic family.

(Agenzia Fides, 6/5/2021)

Fr. Alphonsus Bello, 30, was killed on the night of May 20, 2021, when a group of armed men stormed the parish of St. Vincent Ferrer in Malunfashi, in Katsina State, in northern Nigeria and wounded some people. Fr. Bello was kidnapped together with another priest, former parish priest Fr. Joe Keke, who was then released on June 3. On the morning of May 21, Fr. Bello's body was found lifeless in the agricultural land behind the Catechetical Training School. The priest belonged to the Archdiocese of Kaduna, but was destined for the diocese of Sokoto and engaged in the parish of Malunfashi in Katsina.

(Agenzia Fides, 21/5/2021; 4/6/2021)

Two young 18-year-old Catholics, Alfred Ludo and Patrick Bo Reh who in Demoso (in the diocese of Loikaw, Myanmar) had made themselves available to bring food and humanitarian aid to the displaced people fleeing the conflict between the Burmese regular army, which bombed cities and villages, and popular defense forces, were killed. On one of their trips to deliver aid, Alfred and Patrick were shot and killed by bullets fired by snipers on May 27, 2021. The local Catholic community defined them as "martyrs and heroes who gave their lives to help others, like Christ Jesus".

(Agenzia Fides, 28/5/2021)

Father Juan Antonio Orozco Alvarado, OFM, was the victim, along with other people, of a clash between armed gangs disputing the territory. On the morning of June 12, 2021, as he was about to celebrate mass in the community of Tepehuana de Pajaritos, some armed members of the Jalisco Nueva Generación (CJNG) cartel and the Sinaloa cartel began to attack each other. The priest and the small group of faithful from the community who had welcomed him and were on their way to church with him found themselves in the middle of the armed conflict. Father Juan Antonio Orozco Alvarado was killed. He was originally from Monclova and was 33 years old. He was a parish priest in Santa Lucía de la Sierra, in the municipality of Valparaíso in the state of Zacatecas, Jalisco. "Father Juanito", as he was known, had just begun his pastoral work in the area 6 months ago.

(Agenzia Fides, 14/6/2021; 19/6/2021)

Simón Pedro Pérez López, indigenous Tzozil, catechist of the parish of Santa Catarina, in Pantelho, diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas (Mexico), was killed on the morning of July 5, 2021 by a stranger on a motorcycle who shot him in the head. Simón Pedro Pérez López was at the market in Simojovel with his son when the attack took place in which two other people were injured. All three were taken to hospital, where Simón Pedro Pérez López died. He was a catechist, promoter and defender of the rights of indigenous peoples, he accompanied the communities in becoming aware of their rights and in their demands for justice, always fighting peacefully. He was also president of Civic organization Abejas de Acteal, whose members have waged a peaceful struggle in the search for justice after the massacre of 45 people of ethnic Tzotzil, mostly women and children, while they

were in church, which took place in 1997. The statement of the diocese of San Cristóbal de las Casas after the murder recalls: "May the blood of Simón Pedro and of all the murdered people be the seed for the liberation of indigenous children who suffer marginalization, persecution and displacement. The blood cries out for peace, the blood cries out for justice but never cries out for revenge". (Agenzia Fides, 7/7/2021)

Father Olivier Maire, provincial Superior of the Montfortan missionaries or Montfort Fathers in France, was murdered on August 9, 2021, in the Provincial House of Saint Laurent sur Sèvre, in France, by a Rwandan citizen, Emmanuel Abayisenga, who had been staying in the community for some time. He was involved in the fire of the Nantes Cathedral on 18 July 2020, and was awaiting trial. He had recently returned to the community after being admitted to a psychiatric hospital. Originally from the diocese of Besançon, Fr. Maire was 60 years old, he had been ordained a priest in 1990 and worked for many years in Uganda as the person in charge of formation and then in Rome as assistant general of the Company of Mary. A man of profound culture, in particular biblical and patristic, he was also known for his openness and profound faith. "Father Olivier Maire died a victim of his generosity, a martyr of charity", reads the statement by Mgr. François Jacolin, Bishop of Luçon. "He leaves a testimony of Christian charity, in the footsteps of St. Louis Marie de Montfort and Christ, who taught us to serve others, especially those who are in difficulty ... And one does not approach others without exposing". (Agenzia Fides, 10/8/2021)

Sister Mary Daniel Abut, and Sister Regina Roba, of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, were killed cold-bloodedly during a road ambush along the Juba-Nimule highway in South Sudan on August 16, 2021. The two nuns were part of a group of nine sisters when gunmen attacked their bus on their way back to Juba after the celebrations of the centenary of the parish of the Assumption of Our Lady, in Loa. Armed men blocked the bus with a car they had set on fire. The five passengers and four of the nuns attempted to escape by hiding in the bush, but the criminals reached Sister Mary Daniel Abut, and Sister Regina Roba, as well as two other passengers and killed them cold-bloodedly. A fifth person was run over by the vehicle of the fleeing criminals and was killed.

Sister Mary Daniel was the headmistress of the Usra Tuna School in Juba, while Sister Regina was a tutor and administrator at the Catholic Health Training Institute (CHTI) in the Catholic diocese of Wau. South Sudanese President Salva Kiir blamed groups, that did not sign the 2018 peace agreement, for the crime. His Exc. Mgr. Stephen Ameyu Martin Mulla, Archbishop of Juba, said in the homily at the funeral of the two sisters: "These are our martyrs who will remain in our memories. Our sisters died because of their faith". (Agenzia Fides 18/8/2021; 19/8/2021; 21/8/2021)

Fr. Joshephat Kasambula, 68, former parish priest of Lwamata in the diocese of Kiyinda-Mityana, Uganda, was murdered cold-bloodedly on the evening of August 18, 2021. It is believed that the perpetrator is likely a person who may have had problems with drugs. Fr. Joshephat went to oversee the work on a property where he allegedly met his killer, who was illegally on the farm. The priest asked the alleged killer who had authorized him to access the land and the house, but stabbed him in the back with a blunt object. The Catholic priest died immediately. According to some witnesses, the alleged killer is a known to be a drug addict and is believed to have been under the influence of drugs at the time of the murder. (Agenzia Fides, 19/8/2021)

On the morning of August 31, 2021, the lifeless body of **Mexican priest José Guadalupe Popoca** was found in the parish of San Nicolás de Bari, in the town of Galeana, municipality of Zacatepec, in Morelos State (Mexico). According to the medical report, the parish priest was shot to the head in the

night between August 30 and 31. Fr. José Guadalupe was born in Jiutepec, Morelos, 43 years ago and was ordained a priest on August 15, 2007. He had carried out his priestly ministry in various parishes of the diocese of Cuernavaca, dedicating himself in particular to children and young people. The state of Morelos is among the most violent of the Mexican states, with a high number of murders, kidnappings and thefts.

(Agenzia Fides, 1/9/2021)

On September 6, 2021, 70-year-old **Fr. André Sylvestre** was attacked by two young men on a motorcycle in Cap Haitien, in the north of Haiti, as he was leaving a bank carrying a wallet. Reached by gunshots, he died in the operating room. The criminals were unable to get the wallet as they were immediately surrounded by the crowd. Father Sylvestre was highly regarded and loved in his parish of Our Lady of Mercy in Robillard, he also ran an orphanage and cared for the homeless. Criminal gangs confront each other relentlessly on the streets of Haitian towns, in a spiral of violence that unfortunately have never stopped. Priests have long been considered untouchable for their work on behalf of the poor, but in recent months, violence has also affected members of the Churches.

(Agenzia Fides, 8/9/2021)

Peter Bata, head catechist, was killed along with other people on October 26, 2021 during the assault by an armed group on the Catholic parish of Mupoi, in South Sudan. On October 30, 2021, the Solidarity Community located in the parish of Riimenze was looted by unknown gunmen. The diocese of Tombura Yambio strongly condemned acts of vandalism, thefts and murders of Church personnel, not only in the diocese but also in any part of South Sudan. The organization urged the national government and State governments to uphold the rule of law and adhere to national and international principles for the protection of human rights. The diocese urged the state government to give security and protection to the Church, its property and personnel. It asks to guarantee the recovery of all stolen properties, both in the Parish of Mupoi and in the Solidarity Community of Riimenze and other interreligious properties, and that the perpetrators be arrested and prosecuted according to the law.

(Agenzia Fides, 11/11/2021)

Fr. Luke Adeleke, 38, a priest ordained on August 19, 2017, parish priest of Sant'Antonio in Ijemo Fadipe, in the diocese of Abeokuta, capital of the southwestern state of Ogun, was killed on his way home after celebrating Mass on the eve of Christmas, on the evening of December 24, in one outstation in Ogunmakin. While driving along the road that runs alongside the forest, he was hit in the legs by bullets by a gang of armed men, who probably wanted to stop the car to carry out a kidnapping for ransom. Wounded, the priest managed to continue driving until he got close to the hospital, but when he arrived he was dying from the blood he had lost.

(Agenzia Fides, 28/12/2021; 29/12/2021)

SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR 2021

N°	Name and surname	Nationality	Institute or Diocese	Date and place of death
1.	Brother Luigi Manganiello	Venezuela	Brothers of the Christian Schools, FSC, Lasallian	6/1 - Barquisimeto (Venezuela)
2.	Fr. John Gbakaan Yaji	Nigeria	Diocesan	15/1 - Makurdi (Nigeria)
3.	Fr. Rodrigue Sanon	Burkina Faso	Diocesan	21/1 - Banfora (Burkina Faso)
4	Fr. Rene Bayang Regalado	Philippines	Diocesan	24/1 - Bukidnon (Philippines)
5.	Father Manuel Ubaldo Jáuregui Vega	Colombia	Institute for Foreign Missions in Yarumal	7/3 - Zango (Angola)
6.	Fr. Gumersindo Cortés González	Mexico	Diocesan	28/3 - Guanajuato (Mexico)
7.	Fr. Ferdinand Fanen Ngugban	Nigeria	Diocesan	30/3 - Katsina-Ala (Nigeria)
8.	Nadia de Munari	Italy	Lay person (OMG)	24/4 - Nuevo Chimbote (Peru)
9.	Omer Dalyom Dallet	Cent. African Rep.	Lay person	5/5 - Niem (Central African Rep.)
10.	Fr. Alphonsus Bello	Nigeria	Diocesan	21/5 - Malunfashi (Nigeria)
11.	Alfred Ludo	Myanmar	Lay person	27/5 - Demoso (Myanmar)
12.	Patrick Bo Reh	Myanmar	Lay person	27/5 - Demoso (Myanmar)
13.	Fr. Juan Antonio Orozco Alvarado	Mexico	Friars Minor, OFM	12/6 - Tepehuana (Mexico)
14.	Simón Pedro Pérez López	Mexico	Lay catechist	5/7 - Simojovel (Mexico)
15.	Father Olivier Maire	France	Company of Mary, Monfortan	9/8 - St.Laurent sur Sèvre (France)
16.	Sister Mary Daniel Abut	South Sudan	Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	16/8 - Juba (South Sudan)
17.	Sister Regina Roba	South Sudan	Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	16/8 - Juba (South Sudan)
18.	Fr. Joshephat Kasambula	Uganda	Diocesan	18/8 - Kiyinda-Mityana (Uganda)
19.	Fr. José Guadalupe Popoca	Mexico	Diocesan	31/8 - Galeana (Mexico)
20.	Fr. André Sylvestre	Haiti	Diocesan	6/9 - Cap Haitien (Haiti)
21.	Peter Bata	South Sudan	Lay person, catechist	26/10 - Mupoi (South Sudan)
22	Fr. Luke Adeleke	Nigeria	Diocesan	24/12 - Obafemi Owode (Nigeria)

Religious Status	Total	Religious belonging
Priests	13	10 diocesan, 1 OFM, 1 Monfortan, 1 Missionary in Yarumal
Men Religious	1	Brothers of the Christian Schools (Lasallian)
Women Religious	2	Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
Lay persons	6	Operation Mato Grosso

Continent of origin	Total	Country
Africa	10	4 Nigeria, 3 South Sudan, 1 Burkina Faso, 1 Uganda, 1 Central African Rep.
America	7	4 Mexico, 1 Colombia, 1 Haiti, 1 Venezuela
Asia	3	2 Myanmar, 1 Philippines
Europe	2	1 Italy, 1 France

Place of death	Total	Country
Africa	11	4 Nigeria, 3 South Sudan, 1 Uganda, 1 Burkina Faso, 1 Angola, 1 Central African Rep.
America	7	4 Mexico, 1 Colombia, 1 Haiti, 1 Venezuela
Asia	3	2 Myanmar, 1 Philippines
Europe	1	1 France

PASTORAL CARE WORKERS KILLED FROM 1980 TO 2020

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) – According to data in Fides’ possession, in the decade from **1980-1989 115 missionaries** lost their lives in violent manners. This number, however, is doubtful, based only upon the cases which made news. The collective summary from **1990-2000** presents a total of **604 missionaries killed**. The number is significantly higher than the previous decade, however, one must also consider the following factor: the genocide in Rwanda (1994) that caused at least 248 victims among all church personnel. During the years **2001-2020** the total of the pastoral care workers killed is **505**.

YEAR	TOT	BISH	PRIE	DEA	BRO	REL	SEM	ICL	CAT	LAI	VOL
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	
2009	37		30			2	2			3	
2010	25	1	17		1	1	2			3	
2011	26		18			4				4	
2012	13		11			1				1	
2013	23		20			1				2	
2014	26		17		1	6	1			1	
2015	22		13			4				5	
2016	28		14			9	1			4	
2017	23		13		1	1				8	
2018	40		35				1			4	
2019	29		18	1	2	2				6	
2020	20		8		1	3	2			6	

* = Data referring just to the Rwanda genocide.

BIS: bishops; C: cardinals; PRIE: diocesan and religious priests; DEA: deacons; BRO: religious brothers; REL: religious sisters; SEM: seminarians; ICL: members of institutes of consecrated life; CAT: catechists; LAI: laity; VOL: volunteers; CT: catechumen.

Fides Special S.L. – Agenzia Fides 30/12/2021

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE PREVIOUS YEARS: www.fides.org