

December 30, 2019

***FIDES SPECIAL FEATURE***

**MISSIONARIES KILLED**

**IN THE YEAR 2019**

"**Martyrdom is the air of the life of a Christian, of a Christian community. There will always be martyrs among us: this is the sign that we are on the path of Jesus**".

*Pope Francis, 11 December, 2019*

**MISSIONARIES KILLED IN THE YEAR 2019**

**Vatican City (Agenzia Fides)** - "It is my wish that the celebration of the centenary of *Maximum illud*, in the month of October 2019, be a favourable time for prayer, the witness of many saints and martyrs of the mission, biblical and theological reflection, catechesis and missionary charity to contribute to evangelizing, first and foremost, the Church, so that having rediscovered the freshness and zeal of the first love for the crucified and risen Lord, she may evangelize the world with credibility and evangelical efficacy". With these words, addressed to the General Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies on June 3, 2017, Pope Francis highlighted the testimony of many missionaries who gave their lives for the Lord Jesus, as one of the four dimensions to be taken into consideration for the celebration of the Extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019.

In the wake of this special time lived by Catholic communities at all latitudes, which was also an opportunity to rediscover the figures of many witnesses of the faith of the local Churches who spent their lives for the Gospel in the most diverse contexts and situations, Agenzia Fides continues its service to collect information regarding the missionaries killed during the year. 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). 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, for beatification or canonization.

According to information gathered by Agenzia Fides, in 2019 29 missionaries were killed throughout the world, mostly priests: 18 priests, 1 permanent deacon, 2 religious men, 2 nuns, 6 lay people. After eight consecutive years in which the highest number of missionaries killed was recorded in America, since 2018 it is Africa that has taken the first place in this tragic category. In Africa in 2019 12 priests were killed, 1 religious man, 1 religious woman, 1 lay woman (15). In America 6 priests were killed, 1 permanent deacon, 1 religious man, 4 lay people (12). In Asia, 1 lay woman was killed. In Europe, 1 nun was killed.

Another note is given by the fact that there is a sort of "globalization of violence": while in the past the missionaries killed were mostly concentrated in a nation, or in a geographical area, in 2019 the phenomenon appears more generalized and widespread. 10 missionaries from Africa, 8 from America, 1 from Asia and 1 from Europe.

Even this year many Missionaries lost their lives during attempted hold-ups and robberies, ferociously committed, in impoverished, degraded social contexts, where violence is the rule of life, the authority of the state was lacking or weakened by corruption and compromises. These murders are therefore not a direct expression of hatred of faith, but of a desire for "social destabilization". "The priest and parish communities promote security, education, health services, the human rights of migrants, women and children" explained the director of the Catholic Multimedia Center (CCM), Fr. Omar Sotelo Aguilar, SSP. The local Church is, in fact, "a reality that helps people, in direct competition with organized crime", which knows that eliminating a priest is much more than eliminating a person, because it destabilizes an entire community. This is how "a culture of terror and silence is established, which is important for the growth of corruption and, therefore, to allow cartels to work freely" (see Fides, 17/6/2019).

Some of the murders must probably be read in this manner, such as that of Fr. David Tanko, killed by armed men on the way to the village of Takum, in Nigeria, where he was going to mediate a peace agreement between two local ethnic groups in conflict for decades, or the barbaric assassination of an elderly nun in the Central African Republic, Sister Ines Nieves Sancho, who for decades continued to teach girls how to sew and learn a trade, or the story of Brother Paul McAuley, found lifeless inside the premises of the Intercultural student "La Salle" community, in Iquitos, department of the Peruvian forest, where he dedicated himself to the education of indigenous youth.

Everywhere priests, religious, and lay people share the same daily life as the common people, bringing them the evangelical witness of love and service for all, as a sign of hope and peace, trying to alleviate the suffering of the weak and raising their voices in defense of their trampled rights, denouncing evil and injustice, opening their hearts to hope.

**The recognition of the Church**

The missionaries killed who reach the recognition of their martyrdom by the Church are almost the tip of the icebeg of this contemporary ordeal. In the year 2019 we remember:

**Msgr. Enrique Ángel Angelelli,** Bishop of La Rioja (Argentina), **Carlos de Dios Murias**, Conventual Franciscan, **Gabriel Longueville**, fidei donum missionary priest, and the catechist, **Wenceslao Pedernera**, family man, insulted and persecuted because of Jesus and Evangelical justice, were beatified on April 27, 2019. "They were assassinated in 1976, during the period of military dictatorship, characterized by an incandescent political and social climate, which also had clear aspects of religious persecution", Cardinal Angelo Becciu emphasized in his homily, recalling that they committed themselves in a pastoral action "open to new pastoral challenges, to the promotion of the weakest strata, to the defense of their dignity and to the formation of consciences, within the framework of the Church's social doctrine".

On the eve of World Mission Day of the Extraordinary Missionary Month, on October 19, PIME missionary, **Father Alfredo Cremonesi**, was beatified in the Cathedral of Crema, killed in hatred of the faith on February 7, 1953, in Myanmar (Burma) where he had spent 28 years of mission. "It was precisely his charity - underlined Cardinal Becciu - that brought him to offer his life to defend his people. Blessed Alfredo Cremonesi is a beautiful figure of priestly and religious life. Entirely devoted to God and to the evangelizing mission: his existence was given to his people, of whom he had wanted to share the condition of poverty, renouncing even the smallest privilege".

"A martyr, an excellent educator and evangelical defender of the poor and oppressed, who became one of us and gave his life for us": thus Cardinal José Luis Lacunza Maestrojuán, Bishop of David, described the American, **brother James Alfred Miller**, of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (La Salle), during the beatification celebrations which he presided on December 7, in Huehuetenango, Guatemala, in the place of his martyrdom, which occurred in 1982: the *Casa Indígena La Salle*, a school for only those born in rural areas, very poor, of which he was Deputy Director and in which he was buried.

**Fr. Emilio Moscoso Cardenas**, a Jesuit, the first martyr of Ecuador, was assassinated on May 4, 1897, during the Liberal Revolution with strong anti-clerical connotations that shocked Ecuador at that time. "The virtuous life and the heroic death of Blessed Emilio Moscoso encourage each of us to bring the light of the Gospel to our contemporaries with enthusiasm, as he did. His testimony is current and offers us a meaningful message: one does not improvise to become martyr, martyrdom is the fruit of a faith rooted in God and lived day by day; faith requires consistency, courage and an intense capacity to love God and one’s neighbor, with the gift of oneself", said Cardinal Angelo Becciu, during the beatification which he presided on November 16 in Riobamba.

Archbishop of Rouen, Msgr. Dominique Lebrun concluded the diocesan phase of the cause of beatification of **Fr. Jacques Hamel** on 9 March, who was killed on the morning of 26 July 2016 while he was celebrating Mass in the church of Saint Etienne du Rouvray, in Normandy, by two Islamist terrorists, who slaughtered him while celebrating a morning mass.

On March 23 thousands of faithful gathered in the Catechetical Center of Guiúa, diocese of Inhambane, (Mozambique), for the conclusion of the diocesan phase of the process of Beatification and Canonization of a **group of lay Mozambican catechists and their families**, killed in hatred of the faith on March 22, 1992, while they were participating in a formation course in this diocesan Catechetical Center, managed by the Consolata Missionaries (IMC). During the night the Renamo guerrillas attacked the dormitory and took men, women, and children, in order to get information about their opponents of Frelimo, which they obviously did not get and therefore triggered their ferocity. The rebels brutally led the families from the Center, at three kilometers’ distance, and after a painful interrogation began killing them all in a field. Other catechists, seeing that the situation was serious and impossible to change, asked permission to pray. After a few moments of prayer, the 23 catechists were killed.

On June 21, in the Cathedral of Bururi the first cause of canonization in the history of the Church of Burundi opened, concerning two Italian Xaverian missionaries, **Father Ottorino Maule** and **Father Aldo Marchiol**, who together with the lay volunteer **Catina Gubert**, were killed in the parish of Buyengero on 30 September 1995; **Abbé Michel Kayoya**, to whom the cause is named, killed on 17 May 1972 in Gitega, and **forty seminarians** killed on 30 April 1997 in the seminary of Buta. "These brothers and this sister in Christ are the heroes that we, the Bishops of Burundi, present to you as a single model that inspires love for fraternity. They represent the first group of probable martyrs that we present to the universal Church, to be officially declared martyrs and are for us all models of fraternity in Christian life and also in our whole Burundian society", wrote the Bishops.

The cause for the beatification of British-born **John Bradburne**, a Franciscan secular missionary, began in Zimbabwe on September 5. He spent his life and gave his testimony of faith in the midst of the lepers in Mutemwa. "The colony was dirty and the people were dirty, recalls who knew him then. There was no medicine, no clothes and people were hungry. He took care of everyone’s needs: he fed people, cleaned and bandaged their wounds". In 1979, controversies began with the inhabitants of the nearby village. Bradburne offered to mediate, but the villagers accused him of being a spy, because he had defended the lepers. After refusing to leave Zimbabwe for security reasons, he was taken and killed along the way by the villagers.

**The plague of seizures and violence do not stop**

It is almost impossible to compile a complete list of the bishops, priests, nuns, pastoral workers, simple catholics, humanitarian workers, or members of international organizations, who are attacked, beaten, robbed, and threatened. Just as it is impossible to make a census of the catholic organizations at the service of the entire population, without distinction of faith or ethnicity, like schools, hospitals, hospitality centers, which have been attacked, vandalized, or sacked. Then, the churches profaned or burnt down, the sacred statues or images destroyed, the faithful attacked while gathered in prayer, provoke pain.

The seizures of priests and nuns are now unfortunately common on various continents: some of which end tragically, as one sees also from the list of Missionaries killed. Others end with the liberation of the hostages, others again in silence. In Nigeria, the abductions of priests and religious for the sake of extortion have increased, the majority being released within a few days, in some cases, however, with devastating consequences for their physical and psychological health. Analogous phenomena are frequent also in Latin America.

Among the representatives of this group we mention Italian Jesuit **Fr. Paolo Dall’Oglio**, kidnapped on July 29, 2013 in Raqqa, Syria, on which many rumors have circulated in recent years, without any confirmation. His kidnapping has never been claimed. Colombian missionary **Sister Gloria Cecilia Narvaez Argoty**, kidnapped on February 8, 2017 in the village of Karangasso, Mali, by the Al Qaeda group of Mali. **Father Pierluigi Maccalli**, of the Society of African Missions (SMA), who was kidnapped on the night of 17-18 September 2018 in Niger, in the mission of Bamoanga, is still in the hands of his kidnappers.

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. As Pope Francis recalled on 11 December, "Martyrdom is the air of the life of a Christian, of a Christian community. There will always be martyrs among us: this is the sign that we are on the path of Jesus".

(S.L.) (Agenzia Fides, 30/12/2019)

**OVERVIEW OF CONTINENTS**

**AFRICA**

**In Africa 12 priests were killed, 1 religious man, 1 religious woman, 1 lay woman (15)**

**Madagascar: 1 priest**

Fr. Nicolas Ratodisoa fell victim to a brutal road attack on February 9 and died in hospital on February 14, 2019, following serious injuries.

**Burkina Faso: 3 priests**

Fr. Antonio César Fernández Fernández, SDB, fell victim to a jihadist attack 40 kilometers from the southern border of Burkina Faso on February 15, 2019.

Fr. Siméon Yampa, parish priest of Dablo, in north-central Burkina Faso, was killed by jihadist terrorists, along with other people, while he was celebrating mass on May 12, 2019.

Fernando Fernández, SDB, was stabbed to death on 17 May 2019 in the Salesian Don Bosco center, in the city of Bobo Dioulasso, in the southwest of Burkina Faso.

**Cameroon: 1 priest**

Capuchin Fr. Toussaint Zoumaldé was killed in Cameroon while returning to his fraternity in Mbaibokoum, Chad, on the night of 19-20 March 2019, when unknown assailants attacked him.

**Nigeria: 3 priests**

Fr. Clement Rapuluchukwu Ugwu, on the evening of March 13, 2019, was taken by force from his parish by some bandits; his body, in a state of decomposition, was found on March 20.

Fr. Paul Offu was killed on August 1, 2019. Parish priest in the diocese of Enugu, he fell under gunshots fired by a group of people while he was traveling by car.

On 29 August 2019, Fr. David Tanko was stopped and killed by gunmen while he was on the way to the village of Takum, where he was going to mediate a peace agreement between two local ethnic groups.

**Mozambique: 1 priest**

Fr. Landry Ibil Ikwel, of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, was killed on May 19, 2019 in Beira. He was stabbed in his community and died in hospital due to injuries.

**Central African Republic: 1 nun**

Sister Ines Nieves Sancho, a 77-year-old Spanish nun, of the Daughters of Jesus, was barbarously murdered in the early hours of the morning of 20 May 2019, in the village of Nola, near Berberati.

**Kenya: 2 priests**

Fr. Eutycas Murangiri Muthur was stabbed to death by one or more individuals who entered his car on June 4, 2019, in Makutano, about 200 km from the capital, Nairobi.

Fr. Michael Maingi Kyengo, vice parish priest of Thatha, in the diocese of Machakos, was kidnapped onOctober 8, 2019, and was found buried near the banks of the Mashamba river, in Makima, on October 15.

**Congo: 1 priest**

Fr. Paul Mbon was abducted between 28 and 29 June 2019 in Ouesso, in the north of the Republic of the Congo. His body, in a state of decomposition with wounds, was rescued in the Sangha waters.

**Uganda: 1 religious man**

Brother Norbert Emmanuel Mugarura, who had been elected a few months before Superior General of the Brothers of St. Charles Lwanga, was killed on July 3, 2019 in the suburb of Banda, Kampala.

**Ivory Coast: 1 lay woman**

Ms. Faustine Brou N’Guessan, secretary of the Sainte-Cécile du Vallon parish in the Archdiocese of Abidjan, was stabbed to death in the parish office on August 10, 2019.

**AMERICA**

**In America 6 priests were killed, 1 permanent deacon, 1 religious man, 4 lay people (12)**

**Colombia: 2 priests**

Fr. Carlos Ernesto Jaramillo was killed on the evening of February 18, 2019, in the Tierra Buena neighborhood of Patio Bonito, in the town of Kennedy, south of the Colombian capital Bogota.

Fr. Jhony Ramos, parish priest in the Comuneros district in the city of Villavicencio, was found dead on 2 October 2019, his feet and hands tied, in the parish house, probably the victim of a theft.

**Peru: 1 religious man**

Brother Paul McAuley, of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (La Salle), was found lifeless on April 2, 2019, inside the premises of the intercultural student "La Salle" community, in Iquitos, department of the Peruvian forest.

**El Salvador: 1 priest**

Fr. Cecilio Pérez Cruz, was murdered on the night between Friday 17 and Saturday 18 May 2019, in the parish house of San José in La Majada, 70 km from the capital San Salvador.

**Argentina: 1 permanent deacon, 1 lay person**

Permanent deacon Guillermo Luquín, from the Argentine diocese of Lomas de Zamora, was killed in his home, probably at dawn on Sunday 9 June 2019.

Ernesto Cavazza, a lay person engaged in the parish of Santa Monica in Villa Sarmiento, diocese of Morón, was killed on June 30, 2019, while he was going to open the church for the first mass.

**Mexico: 1 priest, 2 lay people**

Hugo Leonardo Avendaño Chávez, a university student, engaged in the parish, was kidnapped on the evening of 11 June 2019. His lifeless body was found the next day.

Catechist Margeli Lang Antonio was killed during an armed assault on a Catholic church in the municipality of Acacoyagua, in the state of Chiapas, on Saturday 15 June 2019.

Fr. José Martín Guzmán Vega, parish priest in Santa Adelaide, diocese of Matamoros, was seriously injured with a weapon on the threshold of the church, on the evening of August 22, 2019.

**Puerto Rico: 1 priest**

Fr. Stanislaw Szczepanik, of the Congregation of the CM Mission, was apparently the victim of a road accident on August 16, 2019 in Ponce. The autopsy revealed wounds not compatible with the fall.

**Guatemala: 1 lay woman**

Diana Isabel Hernández Juárez, teacher and coordinator of the Pastoral of Creation of the parish church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Suchitepéquez was murdered by two individuals on September 7, 2019.

**Brazil: 1 priest**

Fr. Kazimierez Wojno, parish priest of the Shrine of Our Lady of Health, Brasilia, died on September 21, 2019. Some men entered the church and took him hostage together with the church caretaker. He was found dead with his hands and feet tied and an iron wire around his neck.

**ASIA**

**In Asia, 1 lay person was killed**

**Philippines: 1 lay woman.**

Genifer Buckley, a young Jesuit Volunteer from the Philippines (JVP), was stabbed inside the house where she resided, on August 23, 2019.

**IN EUROPE**

**In Europe 1 religious woman was killed.**

**Portugal: 1 religious woman.**

Sister Antonia Pinho, of the Congregation of the Servants of Mary Ministers to the Sick, was attacked and killed on September 8, 2019 in the city of Sao Joao da Madeira.

**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. Nicolas Ratodisoa** was victim of a brutal attack on 9 February and died on 14 February in Madagascar due to his serious injuries. As he himself reported from the hospital a few days before his death, on 9 February, around 6.30pm, while he was riding his motorcycle, he was stopped by some bandits on the road to Mahitsy, a rural town located only 30 km from the capital. Fr. Nicolas was returning to the Soanavela formation center, after bringing the Eucharist to a sick man. The criminals, after extorting some money, shot the priest behind his back. Once on the ground, they walked over him and kicked him. Before leaving, the bandits shot him for the second time. A second person was also killed in the road ambush.

(Agenzia Fides, 20/2/2019)

A Spanish Salesian, **Fr. Antonio César Fernández Fernández, SDB**, 72 years old, missionary in Bukina Faso, was assassinated on February 15, 2019 at 15.00 hours local time, with three shots during a jihadist attack perpetrated at about 40 kilometers from the border of Burkina Faso. He was in the car with two other confreres from the Ouagadougou community who managed to survive the attack. They were coming from Lome, after celebrating the first session of the Provincial Chapter of the AFO Province. In addition to the missionary, four customs officers from Burkina Faso were killed.

Fr. Antonio César Fernández was born in Pozoblanco on 7 July 1946, and had been a priest for 46 years, and a missionary in several African Countries since 1982. "A good man, a man of God who, like the Lord, spent his life “doing good”, especially among his beloved African people", wrote the Rector Major of the Salesians, Fr Ángel Fernández Artime.

(Agenzia Fides, 16/2/2019; 19/2/2019)

At approximately 7 pm local time, on Monday 18 February, 2019 in the Tierra Buena neighborhood of Patio Bonito, in the town of Kennedy, in the south of the Colombian capital Bogotà, **Fr. Carlos Ernesto Jaramillo**, 65, was assassinated. Incardinated in the diocese of Granada in Colombia, he had been allowed to reside in Bogota for two years to undergo medical treatment. Residents of the condominium complex where the priest was resident, who helped the Venezuelan emigrants, said that some young men killed the priest to rob him.

The testimonies disseminated by the local media are in agreement in defining Fr. Carlos Ernesto a good priest, dedicated to his ministry, who had also had missionary experiences.

(Agenzia Fides, 20/02/2019)

A Capuchin father of Central African nationality, **Fr. Toussaint Zoumaldé**, 48, was killed in Ngaoundere, Cameroon as he was returning to his Baibokoum fraternity in Chad. He had gone to the diocese of Bouar, in the western part of Central Africa, from where he hails in order to carry out a formation course for local priests. In the night between 19 and 20 March unknown people attacked him and killed him in Ngaoundéré (Cameroon) where he stopped to rest. Fr. Toussaint had worked extensively as a journalist for Radio Siriri, in the diocese of Bouar, and composed several religious songs.

(Agenzia Fides, 21/3/2019)

**Fr. Clement Rapuluchukwu Ugwu**, Catholic Priest of St. Mark Catholic Church, Obinofia Ndiuno in Ezeagu Local Government Area (LGA) of Enugu State was found dead on March, 20, 20 km from his home.

He was reportedly abducted on March 13, 2019, in his parish. It was gathered that the gunmen suspected to be kidnappers, had shot him before they took him away.

(Agenzia Fides, 21/3/2019)

British missionary **Brother Paul McAuley**, of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (La Salle), was found lifeless on April 2, 2019, inside the premises of the intercultural student "La Salle" community, in the district of Belén in Iquitos, department of the Peruvian forest, in the Loreto region.

He was born in Portsmouth, England, in 1947, Paul McAuley had been in Peru since 1995, where he had founded the "Colegio Fe y Alegría N° 43" in Zapallal, Puente Piedra district, Lima. He then worked in Moyobamba and San José de Amazonas. For 19 years he lived in Iquitos, where he had been in charge of the radio programs "La Voz de la Selva", he had participated in various development projects for the populations living along the Amazonas and Huallaga rivers, and he had dedicated himself to raising funds for the young natives who came to Iquitos to study. He was also known for his commitment to protecting the environment and indigenous peoples.

(Agenzia Fides, 3/4/2019)

Between 9 and 10 am, Sunday 12 May 2019, about twenty jihadist terrorists arrived aboard motorcycles in Dablo, a village 90 km from Kaya, in the province of Sanmatenga, in the north-central area of Burkina Faso, sowing panic among people. The armed group immediately attacked the church where Sunday Mass was being celebrated, killing five faithful and the priest. Before escaping, they burned down the church, then shops and a the health center.

The priest killed, **Fr. Siméon Yampa**, was born on February 19, 1985. He was ordained on July 7, 2014. "Don Siméon Yampa was a humble person, obedient and full of love, he loved his parishioners", wrote Mgr. Théophile Nare, Bishop of Kaya.

(Agenzia Fides, 13/5/2019)

**Fr. Fernando Fernández**, a 60-year-old Spanish Salesian, was stabbed to death on 17 May in Don Bosco center of Bobo-Dioulasso in the Southwest of Burkina Faso.

During lunch, a former cook who worked in the facility for seven years, hurled the Spanish religious with a knife and killed him. A second priest of Togolese origin was injured in the accident. The killer was immediately arrested by the police.

From the first investigations it seems that the cook wanted to take revenge for having been sacked two months ago.

Fr. Fernández was the vicar and treasurer of the Don Bosco center in Bobo-Dioulasso, in addition to carrying out other tasks: responsible for the pre-novitiate, the parish, the oratory, a reception center for street children, a literacy center and a professional training centre l. After his priestly ordination in 1991, he had been sent on a mission to Africa. According to his wish, he was buried in the courtyard of the Salesian center of Bobo Dioulasso, to which he dedicated a lot of energy.

(Agenzia Fides, 18/5/2019)

Diocesan priest, **Fr. Cecilio Pérez Cruz** was murdered in the evening between Friday 17 and Saturday 18 May 2019. Parish priest of San José in La Majada (about 70 km from the capital San Salvador), was 35 years old and a priest for 10. He was a simple, cheerful and dynamic person, loved in particular by the young people to whom he dedicated much energy: in the parish he had given life to a group of young people. Fr. Cecilio was a native of Sabana San Juan Arriba, municipality of Nahuizalco, in the same department of Sonsonate, about 15 kilometers from San José parish in La Majada, where he arrived four years ago and where he was killed. Mgr. Constantino Barrera, Bishop of the diocese of Sonsonate, celebrated a memorial mass the following day in front of hundreds of faithful and dozens of priests from many nearby areas. In this same area, where criminal gangs and violence raged, another priest had been killed by the underworld the previous year.

(Agenzia Fides, 20/05/2019)

**Father Landry Ibil Ikwel**, 34, of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, was killed on May 19, 2019 in Beira, Mozambique. According to investigations, the priest was stabbed in his community, taken to the hospital where he died due to his wounds. Of Congolese nationality, Fr. Landry was ordained a priest on February 7, 2016, in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He was the director of the Institute of the Blind in Beira (IDV-B), a structure whose mission is the training, rehabilitation, education, social integration of blind children, young people and adults from all over the country, ensuring everyone adequate education according to individual skills, and therefore bringing them out of the marginalization to which society relegates them.

(Agenzia Fides, 22/5/2019)

**Sister Ines Nieves Sancho**, a 77-year-old Spanish nun of the local community of the Daughters of Jesus, was murdered in the early hours of May 20, in the village of Nola, near Berberati, in the south-west of the Central African Republic, on the border with Cameroon. Sister Ines, despite her age, continued to serve in Nola where she gave the girls sewing lessons. And in one of the rooms of the building she used to teach girls how to sew and learn a trade.

 On May 22, during the general audience in St. Peter's Square Pope Francis recalled the missionary killed: "Today I would like to remember Sister Ines, 77, educator of poor girls for decades, barbarously killed in Central Africa in her room where she taught how to sew, an extra woman who gives her life for Jesus at the service of the poor".

(Agenzia Fides, 22/5/2019)

**Fr. Eutycas Murangiri Muthur**, of the parish of Limbine, diocese of Meru, county of Tigania (Kenya), was stabbed to death by one or more individuals at about 1.30 am on June 4th, 2019 in Makutano, at about 200 km from the capital, Nairobi.

Fr. Eutycas was 32 years old and was ordained a priest on December 23, 2018.

(Agenzia Fides, 5/6/2019)

Permanent deacon **Guillermo Luquín**, pastoral reference in the Carmelite parishes of Lomas and Banfield Este, Argentine diocese of Lomas de Zamora, was killed in his home, probably at dawn on Sunday 9 June, 2019: he was found dead with a neck wound. Born on August 5, 1966, was ordained a deacon on October 19, 2002. His work was much appreciated by the faithful of the community of El Carmen and El Buen Pastor (Banfield), where in April he guided the parish.

(Agenzia Fides, 10/06/2019)

A student of the Intercontinental University of Mexico City, **Hugo Leonardo Avendaño Chávez**, 29, was attending post-graduate courses at the Intercontinental University. He was kidnapped around 11pm on 11 June, 2019, while he was going to the parish. His body was found the next day in his van, wrapped in a blanket, in the district of Aculco, in the municipality of Iztapalapa, with signs of torture, he died due to strangulation. Relatives remember him as a young devotee who wanted to dedicate his life to God, he was happy and full of life, with a bright future. His murder took place in a generalized climate of violence, insecurity and fear.

(Agenzia Fides, 14/6/2019)

Children's catechist, **Margeli Lang Antonio**, was shot dead in the municipality of Acacoyagua, in the state of Chiapas, Mexico. On Saturday 15 June 2019. At the end of catechists' training course in the church of the Immaculate Conception, of San Marcos Evangelista parish, two young men entered and started shooting, one of the bullets injured Margeli Lang Antonio, who died almost immediately. She was much loved by the faithful and deeply engaged in pastoral work.

(Agenzia Fides, 18/6/2019)

**Ernesto Cavazza**, 80 years old, a parishioner and lay person involved in the life of the parish of Santa Monica, in Villa Sarmiento, diocese of Morón (Argentina), was killed on Sunday 30 June 2019. He was part of the economic Council of the parish and one of his duties included opening the doors of the church for the first mass of the day.

On Sunday, June 30th, Cavazza arrived at the parish by car just before 10am. He got out of the car and was intercepted by three men who attacked him, probably with the intention to take his car or rob in the church. It seems that Ernesto resisted, so the criminals shot him. Transferred to a hospital in the area, he died shortly after while undergoing surgery.

(Agenzia Fides, 3/07/2019)

**Fr. Paul Mbon**, who served in the parish of Sembé, was kidnapped by strangers while he was taking a walk with a priest friend on the night between 28 and 29 June, in Ouesso where he had gone for an ordination. The body of Fr. Mbon in a state of decomposition with wounds, was rescued in the Sangha waters. His burial took place on 4 July in Ouesso. For several years, Fr. Mbon served in the diocese of Ouesso and was recently assigned to the parish of Sembé in the department of Sangha.

(Agenzia Fides, 5/7/2019)

**Brother Norbert Emmanuel Mugarura**, who had been elected Superior General of the Brothers of St. Charles Lwanga on January 27, 2019, was killed on July 3 in the suburb of Banda, Kampala (Uganda) by a university student who was arrested. The religious's body showed signs of strangulation. The student allegedly killed him to rob his car. Mugarura was born on December 28, 1972 in the village of Buyanja, in the diocese of Kabale. In 1992 he became a postulant of the Brothers of St Charles Lwanga, and professed his vows on 6 January 1995. "He was a true servant of God", said the spokesman of the Brothers of St Charles Lwanga, in remembering him. Mgr. John Baptist Kaggwa, Bishop Emeritus of Masaka, said: "We knew Brother Mugarura well and we have no doubts about his moral correctness. Since he had become Superior General of the Brothers of St Charles Lwanga, he had re-established the internal order in the institute, taking care of the spiritual part, and taking care that the vows of poverty and chastity were respected. If he were still alive he would have continued to do a great job".

(Agenzia Fides, 9/7/2019; 10/7/2019)

**Fr. Paul Offu** was killed on the evening of Thursday 1 August 2019. The priest, parish priest of the Church of San Giacomo Maggiore in Ugbawka, diocese of Enugu (Nigeria), fell under the gunshots fired by a group of armed people called "Fulani shepherds" while he was driving along the Ihe-Agbudu Road in Awgu. According to the first reconstructions, the priest did not stop in front of the attackers who ordered him to block his car. The diocese released an official statement describing the dramatic condition of the area, marked by massacres, kidnappings, rape, arson and devastation, and the responsibilities of the political authorities are also called into question in the face of the devastation scenarios outlined.

(Agenzia Fides, 5/8/2019)

**Ms. Faustine Brou N'Guessan**, secretary of the Sainte-Cécile du Vallon parish in the Archdiocese of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, was stabbed to death in the parish office on August 10, 2019. The agonizing body of Faustine Brou N’Guessan, was found in a pool of blood around 11 am on August 10th, 2019 in her office in the Jean Pierre Cardinal Kutwa building of the parish. Taken to the nearest clinic, unfortunately, she died soon after. The sixty-year-old mother of a daughter and for thirty years secretary in the parish of Sainte-Cécile du Vallon, was going to retire this year. The killing of the secretary of the parish of Sainte-Cécile du Vallon was preceded by the desecration of some statues of the Virgin Mary and attacks against priests and laity engaged in parish services.

(Agenzia Fides, 19/8/2019; 28/8/2019)

Polish missionary **Fr. Stanislaw Szczepanik**, 63, of the Congregation of the CM Mission, was apparently the victim of an accident on August 16, 2019 in Ponce, Puerto Rico, but the police are investigating why he was found with wounds on his body next to his bicycle. Taken to San Cristobal hospital in Ponce, he died the next day, due to his injuries. At first it was thought that he had died following the fall from the bicycle, but the autopsy revealed that he had received blows to the head, arms, shoulders and other parts of the body, incompatible with the fall from the bicycle. Ordained a priest in Poland in 1985, the following year he was sent as a missionary to then Zaire, then to Haiti and the Dominican Republic, finally to Puerto Rico. After two years in Poland, in 2013 he returned to Puerto Rico, to the parish of Ponce. His congregation recalls that "he was a zealous priest, great promoter of the devotion to the Divine Mercy in the Dominican Republic. He was a person of profound interior life. In his life he left a trail of love for God and love for the poor. He was a tireless worker, always ready to live his priesthood for the sanctification of the faithful. A great confessor and a good spiritual guide. He was a formator at the seminary and promoter of many vocations".

(Agenzia Fides, 19/08/2019)

**Fr. José Martín Guzmán Vega**, 55, of the parish of Cristo Rey de la Paz, in Santa Adelaide, diocese of Matamoros, state of Tamaulipas, Mexico, was seriously injured with a weapon on the threshold of the church, on the evening of August 22, 2019. Taken to “Dr. Alfredo Pumarejo” hospital, he died after hours of agony. Born in Michoacan in 1964, ordained a priest in 2004 for the diocese of Matamoros, he served in the penitentiary ministry and in the parish of Cristo Rey.

(Agenzia Fides, 24/08/2019)

On August 23, 2019, **Genifer Buckley**, a young 24-year-old, originally from Zamboanga del Sur, was stabbed to death in the house where she lived with a colleague, who was injured but managed to escape. The two volunteers were serving at Pangantucan Community High School, Bukidnon, in a project of the JVP movement (Jesuit Volunteer Philippines, JVP). Police arrested a suspect shortly after the murder. The man allegedly attacked the two young women while he was trying to steal.

Buckly earned a bachelor's degree in Education at Zamboanga University run by the Jesuits in 2015 and subsequently taught at the University's Junior High School for four years before enrolling in the JVP this year. Later she volunteered to teach at Pangantucan Community High School since May 27th. The JVP is committed to bringing hope to marginalized populations. Jesuit volunteers have been working with schools, parishes and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to teach, train community leaders, assist cooperatives, implement livelihood projects, assist disabled people and victims of violence, engage in the training of young people, supporting environmental issues, defending the dignity of indigenous peoples, fighting for the rights of the oppressed.

(Agenzia Fides, 28/8/2019)

**Fr. David Tanko**, a Nigerian priest, on 29 August 2019 was stopped by armed men on the way to the village of Takum, where he was to attend a meeting to mediate a peace agreement aimed at ending the crisis that opposes the Tiv and Jukun populations. The criminals, perhaps belonging to a Tiv militia, after killing Fr. Tanko set fire to the body of the priest and his car. The conflict between the Tiv and the Jukuns dates back to 1953 (for others to 1959 or 1977), between truces and backfires of violence.

(Agenzia Fides, 30/8/2019; 31/8/2019)

**Diana Isabel Hernández Juárez**, a 35-year-old teacher and coordinator of the Pastoral of Creation of the parish church of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Suchitepéquez (Guatemala) was murdered on September 7, 2019. She was participating in a Bible Day gathering at Monte Gloria community, when she was attacked by two individuals who shot her and then fled. Unfortunately she died because of serious injuries. Diana Isabel Hernández Juárez was known in the area because she had led several projects in more than 32 rural communities.

(Agenzia Fides, 10/09/2019)

**Sister Antonia Pinho**, 62, Portuguese, of the Congregation of the Servants of Mary Ministers to the Sick, was killed on September 8, 2019 in the city of Sao Joao da Madeira, where she resided in her mother's house to assist her. She was well known for her generosity and her commitment, as she moved around the city, wearing her religious dress, to help the sick in the hospital and at home, and bring her help to those in need, both during the day and during the night, according to the charisma of her institute. She had been a nurse and religious for 40 years, and had served in Italy and Spain. The body of the nun was found in the apartment of a drug addict, who had been released from prison three months before after serving a rape sentence. Probably the man had obtained a ride by the nun. Once he got home he tried to abuse her. When Sister Antonia refused, he strangled her and immediately abused her when she was already dead.

(Agenzia Fides, 11/09/2019)

**Fr. Kazimierez Wojno** (known as Father Casimiro), parish priest of the Shrine of Our Lady of Health, in the northern sector 702 of Brasilia, died on the evening of September 21, 2019. He was born on February 3, 1948 and ordained a priest on 27 May 1973.

According to Police information, 6 men entered the church after the last Mass on Saturday evening and took the priest and the church caretaker as hostages, who then managed to escape. Father Casimiro was found dead, with his hands and feet tied and a wire around his neck, in a field beside the church. Unfortunately it is not the first time that this church suffers theft.

(Agenzia Fides, 23/09/2019)

**Fr. Jhony Ramos**, 53 years old, parish priest of the Jesus de la Misericordia parish in the Comuneros district in the city of Villavicencio (Colombia), was found dead, on 2 October 2019, his feet and hands tied, in the parish house. He was probably the victim of a theft, given that he had recently organized a parish lottery. The priest was suffocated and hit in the head with a blunt instrument. He was loved by all the faithful, even though he had been at the head of the parish for only 4 months. Cauca was disputed between the army, paramilitaries and guerrillas of the Fuerzas armadas revolucionarias de Colombia (Farc). Instead of the guerrilla, demobilized, today old and new armed gangs are trying to "regain it". At stake is the control of the coca fields, or better, of the land that the armed groups would like to turn into drug plantations, given the favorable climate.

(Agenzia Fides, 3/10/2019)

The body of **Fr. Michael Maingi Kyengo**, vice parish priest of Thatha, in the diocese of Machakos, was kidnapped on October 8, 2019 and found buried near the banks of the Mashamba river, in Makima, in Embu county, on October 15.

Fr. Kyengo, 43, was last seen on October 8th. On October 11, family members reported the disappearance to the police.

The investigators managed to stop a suspect, who had taken possession of the missing priest’s cell phone, car and credit card. When cornered, the man led the police to the scene where Fr. Kyengo’s body was found. The murderer apparently strangled him and then cut the priest's throat.

Fr. Kyengo was ordained in 2012 and always served in the parish of Thatha.

(Agenzia Fides, 17/10/2019)

**SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **N°** | **Name and Surname** | **Nationality** | **Institute or Diocese** | **Date and place of death** |
| 1. | **Fr. Nicolas Ratodisoa** | Madagascar | Diocesan | 14/02 – Mahitsy (Madagascar) |
| 2. | **Fr. Antonio César Fernández Fernández** | Spain | Salesian don Bosco (SDB) | 15/02 - Nouhao (Burkina Faso) |
| 3. | **Fr. Carlos Ernesto Jaramillo** | Colombia | Diocesan | 18/02 – Kennedy (Colombia) |
| 4 | **Fr. Toussaint Zoumaldé** | Central Africa | Capuchin | 19-20/03 Ngaoundéré (Cameroon) |
| 5. | **Fr. Clement Rapuluchukwu Ugwu** | Nigeria | Diocesan | 20/3 - Obinofia Ndiuno (Nigeria) |
| 6. | **Brother Paul McAuley** | England | Brothers of the Christian Schools (La Salle) | 12/4 - Iquitos (Peru) |
| 7. | **Fr. Siméon Yampa** | Burkina Faso | Diocesan | 12/5 – Dablo (Burkina Faso)  |
| 8. | **Fr. Fernando Fernández** | Spain | Salesian don Bosco (SDB) | 17/5 - Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso) |
| 9. | **Fr. Cecilio Pérez Cruz** | El Salvador | Diocesan | 17-18/5 – La Majada (El Salvador) |
| 10. | **Fr. Landry Ibil Ikwel** | Congo | Cong. Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary | 19/5 – Beira (Mozambique) |
| 11 | **Sister Ines Nieves Sancho**  | Spain | Daughters of Jesus | 20/5 – Nola (Central African Rep.) |
| 12. | **Fr Eutycas Murangiri Muthur** | Kenya | Diocesan | 4/6 - Makutano (Kenya) |
| 13. | **Guillermo Luquín**  | Argentina | Permanent Deacon  | 9/6 – Lomas de Zamora (Argentina) |
| 14. | **Hugo Leonardo Avendaño Chávez** | Mexico | Lay faithful | 12/6 – Iztapalapa (Mexico) |
| 15. | **Margeli Lang Antonio** | Mexico | Lay faithful | 15/6 – Acacoyagua (Mexico) |
| 16. | **Ernesto Cavazza** | Argentina | Lay faithful | 30/6 – Villa Sarmiento (Argentina) |
| 17. | **Fr. Paul Mbon** | Congo | Diocesan | 3/7 – Ouesso (Rep. of Congo) |
| 18. | **Brother Norbert Emmanuel Mugarura** | Uganda | Brothers of St. Charles Lwanga | 3/7 – Banda, Kampala (Uganda) |
| 19. | **Fr. Paul Offu** | Nigeria | Diocesan | 1/8 – Awgu (Nigeria) |
| 20. | **Faustine Brou N’Guessan** | Ivory Coast | Lay faithful | 10/8 – Abidjan (Ivory Coast) |
| 21. | **Fr. Stanislaw Szczepanik** | Polond | Cong. of CM Mission | 16/8 – Ponce (Puerto Rico) |
| 22 | **Fr. José Martín Guzmán Vega** | Mexico | Diocesan | 22/8 – Santa Adelaide (Mexico) |
| 23. | **Genifer Buckley** | Philippines | Lay faithful | 23/8 – Bukidnon (Philippines) |
| 24. | **Fr. David Tanko** | Nigeria | Diocesan | 29/8 – Takum (Nigeria) |
| 25. | **Diana Isabel Hernández Juárez** | Guatemala | Lay faithful | 7/9 – Monte Gloria (Guatemala) |
| 26. | **Sister Antonia Pinho** | Portugal | Servants of Mary Ministers to the Sick  | 8/9 - Sao Joao da Madeira (Portugal) |
| 27 | **Fr. Kazimierez Wojno** | Polond | Diocesan | 21/9 – Brasilia (Brazil) |
| 28 | **Fr. Jhony Ramos** | Colombia | Diocesan | 2/10 – Villavicencio (Colombia)  |
| 29 | **Fr. Michael Maingi Kyengo** | Kenya | Diocesan | 15/10 – Makima (Kenya) |

**Religious Status**

Priests 18 13 diocesans; 2 Salesians (SDB); 1 Capuchin; 1 Congr. of the Mission (CM); 1 Congr. S. Hearts

Perm Deacon. 1 Diocesan

Men Religious 2 Brothers of the Christian Schools (La Salle); Brothers of St. Charles Lwanga

Women Religious 2 Daughters of Jesus; Servants of Mary Ministers to the Sick

Laity 6

**Country of origin**

Africa 12 3 Nigeria, 2 Kenya, 2 Congo, 1 Ivory Coast. 1 Madagascar, 1 Central Afican Rep., 1 Burkina

 Faso, 1 Uganda

America 9 3 Mexico, 2 Colombia, 2 Argentina, 1 Guatemala, 1 El Salvador.

Europe 7 3 Spain, 2 Polond, 1England, 1 Portugal.

Asia 1 Philippines

**Place of death**

Africa 15 3 Nigeria, 3 Burkina Faso, 2 Kenya, 1 Madagascar, 1 Cameroon, 1 Central African Rep, 1

 Mozambique, 1 Congo, 1 Uganda, 1 Ivory Coast

America 12 3 Mexico, 2 Colombia, 1 Peru, 1 El Salvador, 2 Argentina, 1 Puerto Rico, 1 Guatemala, 1 Brazil.

Asia 1 Philippines

Europe 1 Portugal.

**PASTORAL CARE WORKERS KILLED FROM 1980 TO 2018**

**Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) –** According to data inFides’ 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,** still according to our information*.* The number is significantly higher than the previous decade, however, one must also consider the following factors: the genocide in Rwanda (1994) that caused at least 248 victims among church personnel; the increased speed of the mass media in disseminating the news even from most remote places; the total does not include only the missionaries *ad gentes* in the strictest sense, but all church personnel killed in a violent manner, or who sacrificed their lives aware of the risks they ran, while not abandoning the people in their care.

During the years **2001-2018** the total of the pastoral care workers killed is **456.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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 |  |

\* = Data referring just to the Rwanda genocide.

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

**DATA, COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS ON THE PASTORAL CARE WORKERS KILLED IN RECENT YEARS MAY BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE:** [**www.fides.org**](http://www.fides.org)

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