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AMERICA/COLOMBIA - Priest killed in Colombia

Antioquia (Agenzia Fides) – The body of Fr. Román de Jesús Zapata, was found March 24 in the rectory of the parish's jurisdiction of Currulao, in Turbo, about 500 km from the capital city of Bogota, where he was pastor. The diocesan priest, age 51, was found in the bathroom, naked, with his hands tied and with half of his body covered with a sheet, which makes authorities believe that he died from asphyxiation. Police Chief of Urabá, Colonel Victor Angel Gutierrez Ortega, has told the local press that according to family members, the religious had not received any death threats.
"We are investigating the causes of the event, especially since we have verified that the house is not missing anything of value, which leads us to exclude robbery. The priest had no gunshot wounds or knife wounds," said Gutierrez Ortega. The priest's lifeless body was found by the woman in charge of ringing the bells, who saw that he did not arrive for the Mass in the morning and went looking for him.
The climate of violence in Colombia continues to be confirmed by two other criminal episodes that occurred during previous days: March 23, in the same area as that of Fr. Román de Jesús, a judicial assistant of the Regional Court, Gloria Emilse Guisao Perez, was murdered by blows of a firearm in the city's downtown area, around 7:40 in the morning. On Saturday, March 20, Luis Enrique Pineda, a Salesian Brother, was killed in the capital, Bogota, at 8 pm, during a robbery (see Fides 25/03/2010). In Colombia, in 2009 alone, 6 priests were killed. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 26/03/2010)

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