



AMERICA/PERU - Franciscan priest killed along with assistant in downtown Lima

Lima (Agenzia Fides) – Sadness and bewilderment has followed the violent death of a Puerto Rican Franciscan priest (OFM) and his young assistant in the Convent of “San Francisco,” located in the heart of the Peruvian capital. According to information collected by Fides, the forensic experts have indicated that in the early morning of Friday, August 27, Father Linan Ruiz Morales, age 80, was found dead in his bedroom on the first floor of the convent, with a series of cuts on his neck. The body of his colleague, Ananias Aguila (age 26), was also found with numerous stab wounds, in the kitchen next to the church, where there is a soup kitchen for the poor. According to the police report, when the offenders entered the rectory the priest probably noticed their presence. The priests' room was a mess and the safe was open and empty. The authorities suspect that the crime was carried out by people involved in crime who also frequented the soup kitchen.

Father Ruiz, of Puerto Rican nationality, had begun his religious life at age 27 and had carried out his novitiate in the Franciscan community of Cuzco, where he learned to love Peru. A layman, Hernan Lanzara, friend of the priest interviewed by the local press, reported that the priest had discovered his vocation in New York, where he grew up, and in 1978 he arrived in Peru to promote the Movement “Encuentros de Promoción Juvenil,” a type of youth ministry that made him known and loved by many young people of the Archdiocese of Lima. He had a passion for soccer and was a fan of the team “Alianza Lima.” Once he even went to speak with the players, to encourage them to pray and to remind them to go to church. In recent years, he had devoted himself particularly to the poorest of the poor: the soup kitchen he ran fed 1,200 children and elderly in need who came from all over the city. A few months ago he underwent surgery for stomach problems, but he was always active in his service to the needy. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 28/08/2010)