



AMERICA/ECUADOR - Polish Franciscan missionary killed in his parish church

Santo Domingo de Los Colorados (Agenzia Fides) - His name is Fr Miroslaw Karczewski and he was the 45 year old priest of the Convent of Friars Minor (OFM Conv) killed on the afternoon of Monday, 6 December in the rectory of the parish of St Anthony of Padua in Santo Domingo de Los Colorados (in Ecuador), in the north of the country, about 300 km from Quito. The priest was part of the Polish province in the Order of the Friars Minor and for five years was working in the parish of Santo Domingo de los Colorados, in the province of Tsáchila.

According to information gathered by Fides, the priest was to celebrate Mass at 7:00 pm, but he did not appear. The parishioners went to look for him at home, and found him dead. Father Juan Luna, head of the Franciscans of Ecuador, said in a statement that the priest had cuts to his neck and to other parts of the body, from which it follows that he struggled with the murderer. It seems that when Fr Miroslaw opened the rectory to his attackers, he was alone. After they killed him, hitting him with a large crucifix, the criminals stole the priest's mobile phone and computer. Police said that the priest had already been assaulted a year ago in his house, and had laid eyes on the criminals who threatened to kill him if he denounced them.

From the General Curia OFM Conv. we learn that Miroslaw belonged to the Province of St Maximilian Kolbe (Poland - Gdansk). Born in 1965 in Polczyn Zdrój, he was ordained a priest in 1993 in Koszalin. After his ordination he worked for two years in the convent of St Maximilian in Gdynia. In 1995 he left for Ecuador. Most recently he was the guardian of the convent of St Anthony of Padua in Santo Domingo de los Colorados. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 13/12/2010)