



AMERICA/MEXICO - Priest murdered: "a reflection on the corruption, the shame and the immoral social situation which leads to violence," says the Bishop of Tuxpan

Veracruz (Agenzia Fides) – On the night between 21 and 22 February, in the parish community of Mecapala, a community of about 5,000 inhabitants, in the Mexican state of Puebla, Father Santos Sánchez Hernández was found dead in the rectory. He was a native of the community of Pastoria in the town of Chicontepepec, in Veracruz. According to a note written by the Bishop of Tuxpan, Bishop Juan Navarro Castellanos, sent to Fides, everything points to the probability that someone entered the priest's quarters, probably to steal, and once he was discovered, he attacked the priest with a machete, gravely injuring him and then finally killing him. The case is under investigation, says the Bishop's message. Fr Santos, 43 years old, had arrived at the parish on 24 June 2010. "We invite everyone in the Diocese of Tuxpan unite with us in prayer, praying to the Lord for Fr Santos Sanchez Hernandez, for his family and for the diocesan community, and the consolation of eternal hope," writes Bishop Navarro Castellanos in the message. In an interview to a local newspaper in Tuxpan, after the funeral Mass for the priest, the Bishop said: "He that murders must make amends with God, because to kill is a mortal sin. Life is a divine gift from God that no man can dispense". Bishop Navarro Castellanos further condemned the climate of violence and insecurity, observing that "this comes as a reflection on the corruption, the shame and the immoral social situation of the institutions which create ethical and social disorder, which confuse people, creating situations and attitudes which lead to violations of human rights and to violence." According to the biography of the priest released by the Episcopal Conference of Mexico, Fr Santos Sanchez Hernandez was born on 29 August 1967 in Potrero del Llano, Veracruz. He studied philosophy and theology at the Interdiocesan Seminary in Xalapa. He was ordained a deacon on 22 December 1998 and a priest on 28 April 1999. He was appointed parish priest of St Francis of Assisi in Zontecomatlán, Veracruz, on 4 June 2000. He was coordinator of the Pastoral Liturgy (from December 2002), coordinator for Indigenous Pastoral Care for the diocese (from February 2004). He had a degree in Canon Law from the Pontifical University of Mexico (2006 to 2009). He was appointed assistant parish priest of Santiago El Pescador in Tamiahua on 14 November 2009, then appointed parish priest of San José in Mecapalapa, Puebla on 24 June 2010. He was recently appointed Dean of the parish of Tihuatlán. (CE) (Agenzia Fides, 24/02/2011)