



## **AMERICA/COLOMBIA - More violence in Colombia: a priest murdered**

Buga (Agenzia Fides) - The diocesan priest Don José Francisco Velez Echeverri, 55, was found dead yesterday, January 16, with stab wounds in the courtyard of his house in the neighborhood El Albergue, in the south of Buga, about 250 kilometers from the capital Bogota, in Colombia. According to the note sent to Fides Agency, the neighbors reported seeing a person on a bicycle leaving from the priest's house a few hours before the discovery of his lifeless body.

From the initial assumptions made by the authorities it seems to be a robbery which ended in tragedy. Don José was very much involved in social work and did not, according to the testimonies of the faithful, have any enemies. The murder has caused dismay and deep sorrow throughout the Diocese of Buga, led by His Exc. Mgr. José Roberto Ospina Leongómez.

Don José Francisco, was ordained a priest on January 20, 1990, for two years he had been parish priest at the Niño Jesús de Praga (Infant Jesus of Prague) parish, in the municipality of Tulua. He also worked in the parishes of Alto Bonito and San Vicente de Paul, in Buga, and in the parishes of Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Holy Family, in Sevilla.

According to the statistics annually carried out by Fides Agency, in 2012, for the fourth consecutive year, America registered the highest number of pastoral workers killed compared to other continents. In Colombia in 2012, a priest was killed; in 2011 6 priests and 1 lay person were killed; in 2010, three priests and a religious died; in 2009 five priests and one lay person died violently. (CE) (Agenzia Fides 17/01/2013)