



MISSIONARIES AND PASTORAL WORKERS KILLED IN THE YEAR 2024

«We can ask them: “How did you manage to survive such trials?” And they will tell us what we heard in this passage from the Second Letter to the Corinthians: “God is the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation. He is the one who consoled us!”»

Pope Francis, Cathedral of Tirana,

September 21, 2014

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MISSIONARIES AND PASTORAL WORKERS KILLED IN 2024

Dossier edited by Fabio Beretta

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) – As 2024 is about to end, Fides publishes its annual report on missionaries and pastoral workers killed in the world in the last year.

The annual list proposed by Fides, as it has been for some time, does not refer only to missionaries and pastoral workers “ad gentes” in the strict sense, but considers the term “missionary” in a broader context, encompassing all Catholics who were involved in some way in pastoral works and ecclesial activities and who died violently, even if they did not die expressly “in hatred of the faith”.

For this reason, we prefer not to use the term “martyrs”, if not in its etymological meaning of “witness”, in order not to enter into the question of the judgment that the Church might eventually deliver upon some of them, after careful consideration, for beatification or canonization.

The little information on the lives and circumstances in which these people died violently give us a picture of daily life, in contexts often marked by violence, poverty and lack of justice. They are often witnesses and missionaries who selflessly sacrificed their lives to Christ until the end.

Fides Agency is and will be grateful to all those who wish to report updates or corrections to this list or to those of previous years.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

In 2024, according to data verified by Fides, 13 Catholic "missionaries" were killed worldwide, including eight priests and five lay people.

This year too, Africa and America recorded the highest number of pastoral workers killed: five on both continents. In recent years, it was Africa and America that alternated at the top of this tragic ranking.

From 2000 to 2024, a total of 608 missionaries and pastoral workers were killed. As the information on their biographies and the circumstances of their deaths shows, the missionaries and pastoral workers killed were not in the spotlight, but worked to bear witness to their faith in everyday life, not only in contexts marked by violence and conflict. In 2024, two priests died in violent attacks in two European countries.

OVERVIEW OF CONTINENTS

Africa

In total, six missionaries were murdered in Africa in 2024, two of them in **Burkina Faso**: Volunteer François Kabore was killed on February 25, 2024 in Essakane in an attack by a jihadist group while leading a prayer meeting with the local community. The other pastoral worker murdered in Burkina Faso was catechist Edouard Zoetyenga Yougbare, who was kidnapped and killed near Saatenga in the diocese of Fada N'Gourma in eastern Burkina Faso. He died between April 18 and 19. He was looking for his donkey when an armed group captured him along with another catechist, Jean Marie Yougbare, who was immediately released. Edouard's body was found in the early hours of April 19 in Pouargogê, about seven kilometers from Saatenga. His throat was slit, his hands were tied behind his back and his body showed signs of torture.

In **Cameroon**, Father Christophe Komla Badjougou, a Togolese *Fidei Donum* priest, was killed in Yaoundé on the evening of October 7. The priest was shot dead in front of the gate of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Mvolyé, a neighborhood of the capital. According to the Cameroonian authorities, the priest was killed during a street robbery. The images from the surveillance cameras at scene of the crime made it possible to reconstruct the dynamics of the murder.

On September 27, Edmond Bahati Monja, coordinator of Radio Maria/Goma, died in Goma, the capital of North Kivu, an eastern province of the **Democratic Republic of Congo** shaken by the advance of the armed group M23. The Catholic radio journalist was shot dead by gunmen near his home in the Ndosho district on the outskirts of Goma. The regular Congolese army formed alliances with other armed groups to defend the city and also supplied weapons to some militias that call themselves "Wazalendo" ("patriots" in Swahili). However, the presence of irregular armed groups has led to a rise in violent crimes in Goma, with robberies and murders. The case of the killing of Edmond Bahati, involved in investigations into local issues, is also linked to the passion with which he conducted his work. At least a dozen journalists have been murdered in and around Goma in two years. Bahati had been investigating the violence of armed groups in the region.

In **South Africa**, two priests were murdered in just over a month, both by gunfire. The first murder occurred on March 13. A priest of Zambian origin was the victim. Father William Banda of the St. Patrick's Society for Foreign Missions (Kiltegan Fathers) was shot dead in church as he prepared to celebrate Mass in Tzaneen Cathedral. This comes after the murder of three Orthodox monks who were killed in a knife attack in Cullinan, about 30 kilometers east of Pretoria, on October 12. The other Catholic priest murdered in South Africa was Father Paul Tatu, a Stigmatine (Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ) from the Province of the Most Holy Redeemer, who was murdered in Pretoria on April 27. Father Paul was killed in his car with a gunshot in the back of the head.

America

In the Americas, a total of five Catholic pastoral workers were murdered in 2024. In **Colombia**, Father Ramón Arturo Montejo Peinado, the parish priest of San José in Buenavista, was murdered in a robbery on June 4. Colombian police said they had caught the suspected perpetrators, two people of Venezuelan nationality.

In **Ecuador**, a 53-year-old diocesan priest was found dead four days after his disappearance. Father Fabián Enrique Arcos Sevilla, who had been missing since October 30, was found on the evening of November 3 in the province of Cotopaxi near a landfill. Here too, according to the police, the motive was robbery. The funeral took place three days after the discovery, on November 6, in the church of Huachi Chico, in the south of Ambato.

On September 14, Juan Antonio López, 46 years old, married with two daughters, coordinator of social pastoral care in the diocese of Trujillo and founding member of the Integral Ecology Pastoral Care in **Honduras**, was shot dead while he was in his car after attending the Eucharistic celebration in the Fabio Ochoa colony in the municipality of Tocoa, a city where he was also a city councilor, about 300 kilometers from Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. Juan Antonio was known for his commitment to social justice, and drew strength and courage from the source of his Christian faith. The crime occurred just hours after a press conference in which Juan Antonio López, along with other municipal representatives, denounced alleged links between members of the Tocoa municipal government and organized crime. López's murder is part of a growing repression against human rights activists in Honduras. Pope Francis stressed the importance of protecting those who work for

justice during the Angelus prayer on September 22. "I join in the grief of this local Church and in the condemnation of all forms of violence," the Pope stressed. "I am close to all those who see their basic rights trampled upon, as well as to those who work for the common good and in this way respond to the cry of the poor and the earth," the Pope added.

In 2024, the Church in **Mexico** lost a priest in a violent way. He was an indigenous priest, the parish priest of the Cuxtitali neighborhood in San Cristobal de las Casas, Father Marcelo Pérez Pérez, who was killed on his way back from the parish of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, also in San Cristobal de las Casas, after celebrating Mass. Two killers on motorcycles shot Father Marcelo in his car on Sunday morning, October 20.

In **Brazil**, a parish worker was shot in the head on his way to mass on Sunday, December 8. Steve Maguerith Chaves do Nascimento, 43 years old, married and father of a 6-year-old girl, worked as an architect and was involved in the preaching of the Gospel and the charitable work of the Nossa Senhora da Cabeça parish. The crime occurred at 6:58 p.m., two minutes before the 7 p.m. mass that the architect regularly attended. Two men on a motorcycle approached Steve's car. When the man realized what was about to happen, he tried to flee, but one of the two killers shot him in the head, killing him on the spot.

Europe

In Europe, two priests were murdered in 2024. They were a Spanish Franciscan priest and a Polish priest. In **Spain**, Juan Antonio Llorente, a Franciscan friar of the Immaculate Conception, died a violent death. He was murdered in the monastery where he lived, in Gilet. On November 9, a man armed with a stick and a glass bottle entered the monastery, shouted "I am Jesus Christ" and beat the monks. Several Franciscans were injured and all were taken to the hospital in Valencia. There, 76-year-old Father Juan died after two days from the serious injuries inflicted on his head.

Also in November, Father Lech Lachowicz was murdered in **Poland**. The 72-year-old priest was attacked late in the evening of Sunday, November 3, by a man who, according to police reconstruction, broke into the rectory armed with an axe to rob Father Lech. The priest died in hospital on Saturday, November 9. A week after the priest's death, the coffin was brought to the church in Szczytno, where a funeral service was held, presided over by Bishop Janusz Ostrowski. The funeral took place the next day, presided over by Metropolitan Archbishop of Warmia Józef Górczyński. Hundreds of people attended the funeral services in memory of Father Lachowicz throughout the weekend.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF DEATH

François Kabore (55) - Born on October 5, 1969 in Koubéogo, a village in the province of Zorgho in the Central Plateau region of Burkina Faso, he was a volunteer in the local Catholic community. Although he was not officially assigned as a catechist, he was providing this service as a volunteer. He was leading a prayer session with about 30 Catholics when he was the victim of a brutal jihadist attack on February 25 in Essakane, a village 45 kilometers from Dori in the Sahel region of northeastern Burkina Faso. The village of Essakane is located in the so-called "tri-border area", on the border between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, an area with a strong presence of jihadist groups. As Laurent Dabiré, Bishop of Dori, explained to Fides agency, "the attack took place around 8:30 a.m. The jihadists entered the chapel where Sunday prayers were being held under the leadership of the catechist. Since 2018, the majority of the faithful have been forced to flee due to the violence of the jihadist groups. There are only a few people left who, in the absence of a permanent priest, gather on Sundays for a collective prayer led by a catechist." "The jihadists shot the men and spared

the women," reports Bishop Dabiré, "12 died on the spot, three others succumbed to their injuries in the local clinic. Two others were injured." The attack came after an attack on a mosque in Natiaboani at around 5 a.m., killing several dozen people. The victims were all Muslims, mainly men, who had gathered in the mosque to pray.

William Banda (37) - He was born on May 31, 1986 in Lusaka, Zambia. He was baptized and received his First Communion and Confirmation at St. Peter's Parish in Garden Township, Lusaka, where priests of the Saint Patrick's Missionary Society carried out their ministry. He was the eldest of seven children with three brothers (Vincent, Gabriel and Yamikani) and three sisters (Monica, Theresa and Loviness). Since childhood, William was actively involved in parish activities and joined the altar boy group. He enjoyed helping the priests in their work. After completing primary and secondary school, he applied to join St Patrick's Missionary Society. In 2006, he began his education at the Congregation's Formation House in Foxdale (Lusaka). He continued his studies at the Kwa Patrick's Society Formation House in South Africa and studied philosophy at St. Joseph's Theological Institute in Cedara. He then went on his first missionary assignment to the Diocese of Tzaneen, South Africa. There he was involved in youth work, visiting the sick, and all areas of community life. In 2012 he moved to Kenya to continue his theological studies at Tangaza College in Nairobi and to live in the Lang'ata Formation Community. In 2015 he was ordained a deacon in Nairobi. On May 28, 2016 he was ordained a priest at the Cathedral of the Infant Jesus in Lusaka, Zambia, by Archbishop Emeritus George Telesphore Mpundu. He was later transferred to the Diocese of Tzaneen in South Africa. From 2016 and until his death, William carried out his ministry with humility, diligence, wisdom, and courage. He was a loving, approachable and kind priest. According to reports, on the morning of March 13, at around 7.45am, Father Banda was leading the prayer before the 8am mass at Tzaneen Cathedral. The faithful present saw an unknown person enter the church, a very well-dressed man who immediately approached the priest and sat down next to him. After the prayer was over, Father William went to the sacristy to prepare for the Eucharist. The stranger flanked the priest and accompanied him into the sacristy. As Father William was about to enter the sacristy, the killer pulled a gun from his pocket, pointed the gun at the back of the priest's head and fired. The killer then made his way towards the exit of the church, but when he reached the threshold, he turned around, approached the priest's body and fired a second shot into the back of the head. After leaving the church, the killer got into a waiting car and fled at high speed, according to witnesses. The murder of the Catholic priest came a day after the killing of three Coptic Orthodox monks at the Monastery of St. Mark and St. Samuel the Confessor in Cullinan, about 30 kilometers east of Pretoria. In a statement, the Coptic Orthodox Church said the monks shot dead were Father Takla El-Samouili, (diocesan vicar), Father Youstos Ava-Markos and Father Mina Ava-Markostre.

Edouard Zoetyenga Yougbare, (60) - Born in 1964 in the Kourioyé region of Burkina Faso, this catechist was married to Eulalie Delma. The father of eight children, six boys and two girls, three of whom died prematurely, was a catechist in Lantaogo in eastern Burkina Faso for six years. In 1993, he decided to return to his home village of Gondinpiighin, then moved to the east of the country in the first years after 2000. He was kidnapped and killed in the area of Saatenga, in the diocese of Fada N'Gourma. He was looking for his donkey when an armed group captured him along with another catechist, Jean Marie Yougbare, who was released almost immediately. Edouard's family, who had not seen him return and had heard of the attack, went looking for him but found only his bicycle. The search for the catechist continued the next day and led to his body being found in the early hours of April 19 in Pouargogé, about seven kilometers from Saatenga. The man was found with his throat slit, his hands tied behind his back and with signs of torture. His commitment to the Church "was marked by remarkable devotion," according to a statement from the diocese.

Mothobi Paul Tatu (45) - He was born on December 31, 1978 in Ha Moholobela, Lesotho as the fourth of 10 children and was baptized on March 19, 1980 in the Catholic Church of Gethsemane, received his First Communion on December 25, 1989 and the Sacrament of Confirmation on May 12, 1991. He then attended the minor seminary, where he felt called to the priesthood and religious life. In 1998 he entered the Congregation of the Stigmatines and lived in Jericho. In 1999 he moved to the Wildwoods formation community, where he continued his philosophy studies. In 2000 he began his postulancy and in 2001 he went to Notwane, Botswana, where he completed his novitiate. He made his religious profession in 2004 and continued his theological studies at St. John Mary Vianney Seminary in Pretoria. He made his final vows on 1 September 2007 in Mothotlung. He was ordained deacon in June 2008 and ordained priest in Mmakau on December 20 the same year by Bishop George Francis Daniel. He began his pastoral ministry in various places including Letlhabile, Brits, Mmakau, Winterveldt and in Tanzania. A versatile priest who served as a parish priest, formator and media and communications manager, he had a great passion for media and communications and hence pursued studies in this field. He then worked as a media officer at the headquarters of the Southern Africa Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC). At the time of his untimely death, Father Mothobi was studying for a doctorate at the University of Johannesburg. Father Mothobi will be remembered as a gentle person with a calm but persuasive character who never left any stone unturned. He did not hesitate to work hard until he was completely satisfied with the result. He also had a great passion for selling religious items. He will be remembered by many as a supplier of candles, clothing, tableware, rosaries and other religious items. He was killed on April 27, 2024 in Pretoria on his way home from Johannesburg, found dead in his car on the N1 highway that connects Johannesburg to Pretoria with a gunshot wound to the forehead. According to witness statements obtained by Fides, Father Paul accidentally witnessed a woman being murdered. He was allegedly forced into the car where he was shot to suppress his testimony.

Ramón Arturo Montejo Peinado (45) - Born in Teorama, a small town in the department of Norte de Santander (Colombia), he was orphaned at the age of five and his mother decided to entrust him to her sister Ana Matilde Montejo so that she could educate and care for him, since economic circumstances did not allow her to guarantee him a complete and adequate education. From a very early age, Ramón turned to the Church and immediately felt a vocation. He expressed his desire to become a priest in order to proclaim the word of God to the poor. He attended the "Integrated Municipal School" and then the "Emiliano Santiago Quintero" high school. He then entered the "Good Shepherd" seminary in Ocaña. He celebrated his first mass in the church of San Isidro Labrador de Teorama. He then moved to San Calixto, where he founded a branch of the Savings Cooperative (Coopintégrate) to help the farmers of the region. He later worked in the parish of San Rafael in Ocaña and, in his later years, in the chapel of San José in the municipality of Buenavista. A passionate football player, a music lover and with a sense of humor, he organized various activities to help those most in need. He went to the villages to do social work, participated in negotiations to free kidnapped people and became a member of the Diocesan Commission for Regional Peace Dialogues. Father Ramón Arturo Montejo Peinado was murdered on June 4. The attack took place in a parking lot in the Jesús Cautivo neighborhood of Ocaña, where he had parked his parish vehicle. According to witness statements and security camera footage, the priest was approached by two people who ordered him to get out of the vehicle. Father Montejo tried to resist, but the perpetrators stabbed him twice in the back, then threw him out of the vehicle and ran him over with the same vehicle. Colombian police say they have arrested the men believed to be responsible for the priest's murder. They are two people of Venezuelan nationality.

Juan Antonio López (46) - Originally from Tocoa, in the department of Colón in Honduras, he proved to be a man of great faith from a young age. He was responsible for social pastoral care in the diocese of Trujillo and also held the office of "Delegado de la Palabra". He was a member of the Ecclesial Ecological Network of Mesoamerica (REMAM) and founded the National Commission

for Integral Ecology within the diocese. His vocation also led him to work for the protection of natural resources for the benefit of the weakest in his country. A choice that ultimately brought him into conflict with the interests of the extractive companies operating in Honduras. López lived with the conviction that faith should also be manifested in concrete actions for the benefit of the weakest. His devotion to Saint Oscar Romero and his work in the Base Ecclesial Communities led him to work for social justice and dedicate his life to protecting the rural communities and natural resources of Honduras. Since 2023, he had been under precautionary protection by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) due to death threats he received because of his work on the environment. The married father of two daughters was murdered in his car on the evening of September 14 after attending a Eucharistic celebration in the Fabio Ochoa colony, in the municipality of Tocoa, where he was also a municipal councilor. According to witnesses, armed men on motorcycles approached him and shot him. López died instantly. He had recently denounced the pollution of the Guapinol and San Pedro rivers, threatened by illegal mining projects that endanger the water resources on which local communities depend. Local media also reported that the crime occurred just hours after a press conference in which López, along with other community representatives, denounced alleged links between members of the Tocoa municipal government and organized crime. "This crime is not an isolated case," REMAM and the Laudato Si movement said in a joint statement. In January 2022, there was a similar murder in Honduras: that of pastoral worker Pablo Isabel Hernández, who was killed in the municipality of San Marcos de Caiquín, in the department of Lempira, on his way to a celebration of the Word of God. That same year, on March 2, Catholic priest Enrique Vásquez was also killed on his way to his parents' house. His body was found north of San Pedro Sula, in Santa Cruz de Yojoa, with multiple gunshot wounds. The Bishops' Conference of Honduras called on the authorities to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation. "We are deeply saddened," said the bishops, who asked the faithful to pray for López, "a true disciple and missionary." "Juan Antonio López was a man committed to the truth, honest and courageous, who proved his faith through his concrete actions," the statement said. Pope Francis also remembered Juan Antonio López at the end of the Angelus prayer on Sunday, September 22: "I have learned with sorrow that Juan Antonio López has been killed in Honduras. Coordinator of social pastoral care in the diocese of Trujillo, he was a founder member of the pastoral care of integral ecology in Honduras. I join in the grief of that Church, and condemn every form of violence. I am close to all those who see their elementary rights violated, and to those who work for the common good in response to the cry of the poor and the earth," said Pope Francis.

Edmond Bahati Monja (36) - Born in Kiseguro on June 1, 1988. He is the second son born in a family of 11 children, he was baptized in the Catholic church of Kiseguro on May 27, 1990. He received his First Communion in 2001 and his Confirmation in 2013 in the parish of St. Aloysius in Rutshur. After attending school in Kiseguro, he studied economics. In 2011, he became a teacher at the Kabemba Primary School in Rutshuru. In the same city, he was president of the Get Up and Walk collective from 2013 to 2015. Since August 2017 he was First Assistant to the Person in Charge at the Institut Supérieur de Commerce (ISC) in Kiwanja. From September 2020, he was also coordinator of Radio Maria in Goma. He married his wife Justine on September 23, 2021 in Goma Tumaini and had three children, two boys and a girl. At the time of his death, the youngest of them was only ten days old. He was shot dead by gunmen near his home in the Ndosho district, on the outskirts of Goma, on September 27. Edmond Bahati's bloody end appears to be linked to his profession. Bahati had been conducting research into the violence perpetrated against the population by armed groups in the region.

Christophe Komla Badjougou (46) - Originally from Togo, he was born on May 30, 1978. In 2013, he was ordained a priest in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Trinity in Atakpamé. In 2014, he became a member of the Association of Silent Workers of the Cross, inspired by the Italian Blessed Luigi Novarese, whose mother house is in Ariano Irpino in southern Italy, in the Marian Shrine of

Valleluogo. He was a *fidei donum* priest in the parish of Mouda. He exercised his ministry as a formator and as parish priest of the parish of Zouzoui in the diocese of Yagoua in Cameroon. His murder occurred while he was passing through Yaoundé, from where he was going to Italy to complete a year of formation. He was shot dead on the evening of October 7 in front of the gate of the residence of the Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM) in Mvolyé, a district of the capital. According to the Cameroonian authorities, the priest was killed during a robbery in the street. Images from surveillance cameras at the scene made it possible to reconstruct the dynamics of the murder. They show that the priest arrived accompanied by a motorcyclist who dropped him off at the gate of the missionaries' residence. A few seconds later, two people on motorcycles overtook the priest, but immediately turned around to attack and rob Father Christophe. The images show a confrontation between the victim and one of the attackers, who managed to take the priest's bag. The perpetrator fired twice in the air and then three times at the priest, killing him.

Marcelo Pérez Pérez (50) - The son of farmers, he was born in 1974 in the municipality of Chichelalhó in San Andrés Larráinzar (Chiapas). He studied at the seminary, was ordained a priest on April 6, 2002 and began his service as parish priest in Chenalhó, where he had contact with survivors of the 1997 Acteal massacre. He worked as a human rights activist for decades and lived in Simojovel for more than 10 years. He coordinated the social pastoral care of the province of Chiapas, which includes the dioceses of the municipalities of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Tapachula and Tuxtla Gutiérrez, and supported indigenous religious organizations and groups by leading pilgrimages and activities on the issues of health, poverty and violence in Simojovel. The priest was also parish priest in Chenalhó for 10 years, in Simojovel for 10 years and in the parish of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in San Cristobal de las Casas for more than two years. In 2019 he was one of the founders of the Ecclesial-Ecological Network for Central America (REEMAM) and in 2020 he received the "Per Anger 2020" award, which is given to people and organizations that promote human rights and democracy. The murder of the indigenous priest occurred as he was returning from a mass at the parish of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in San Cristobal de las Casas. According to the investigation, two murderers on motorcycles reached the car in which the priest was sitting and shot him on Sunday morning, October 20.

Fabián Enrique Arcos Sevilla (53) - Born in Quito on January 28, 1971, he was ordained a priest on July 18, 1998. He studied at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador and then enrolled in the seminary of San José. He then studied in Italy, in Rome, at the Pontifical Gregorian University. Since then, he dedicated his life to pastoral service in various parishes and communities in the Diocese of Ambato. First as Vicar cooperator in Juan Benignos Vela from 1998 to 1999, then as parish priest in Pilahuín from 1999 to 2002. From 2002 to 2003 he was Vicar cooperator in Pilahuín and for the three-year period 2001-2003 he was also Vicar for indigenous pastoral care. As a member of the Priests' Council, he was also parish priest of Huambaló from 2003 to 2004. From 2009 to 2012 he served as parish priest in the parish of San Juan Apóstol and from 2012 to 2013 as parish priest in the parish of San Antonio. From 2009 to 2013 he was chancellor of the diocese of Ambato and from 2017 until his death he was also Vicar cooperator of Izamba. He disappeared on October 30, 2024 and was found dead four days later, on the evening of November 3, in the province of Cotopaxi near a landfill with obvious signs of torture. The funeral took place three days after his discovery, on November 6, in the church of Huachi Chico, in the south of Ambato.

Lech Lachowicz (72) - Born on July 20, 1952 in Lidzbark Warmiński, Poland, he graduated from the Lidzbark Warmiński Secondary School. He passed the secondary school exams in 1969 and then continued his studies at the Hosianum Major Seminary in Olsztyn. He was ordained a priest in 1976 by Bishop Józef Drzazga. In the same year he obtained a degree in theology from the Catholic University of Lublin. As a vicar, he carried out his pastoral ministry in the parishes of Olsztyn,

Bartoszyce, Mikołajki, Wielbark and Gołdap. Since 1987 he was the administrator of the parish in Janów, near Kwidzyn, and since 1990 he was the parish priest of San Fratel Alberto in Szczytno. San Fratel Alberto is a new church, whose construction work was started by Lachowicz himself who also became its first parish priest. As a priest, he carried out various social, cultural, scientific and even political activities. In 2001, he was named honorary chaplain by the Pope. The priest was fatally attacked late in the evening of Sunday, November 3, by a man who, according to police reconstruction, broke into the rectory armed with an axe to rob him. In the attack, Father Lachowicz reportedly suffered very serious injuries, including a fractured skull and brain swelling. The police were alerted by a housekeeper who, when she arrived, chased the attacker away and also called for help. The perpetrator, a young man of 27, was arrested. Father Lech died in hospital on Saturday, November 9, as a result of his serious injuries.

Juan Antonio Llorente Espín (76) - Born in Cehegín, near Murcia, in 1948, he entered the Franciscan order at the age of 30. From the beginning he showed a very strong devotion to the Virgin Mary, so much so that in the early 1990s he founded the National Association of Friends of the Virgin, which is registered as such in the Segovia Register of Associations. The association was officially founded on May 18, 1991 in Madrid. In 2015, in conjunction with his stay in Murcia, he also moved the association's corporate and tax headquarters to the city. Every year he presided over the meeting of members in the places where the Franciscan Order had transferred him, and to which he adhered with joy and obedience. His last stop was the monastery of Gilet, near Valencia, where he died on Monday, November 11, after two days of agony in hospital. The tranquility of the place where he lived was disturbed by the attack on November 9 by a man who entered the Santo Espíritu del Monte monastery in Gilet armed with a stick and a glass bottle. The attacker, who according to the police reconstruction has psychological problems, broke into the monastery, shouted "I am Jesus Christ" and hit all the monks with the stick and the glass bottle in his hand. Several Franciscans were injured and all were taken to the hospital in Valencia. There, after two days, Brother Juan Antonio Llorente Espín died as a result of the severe blows he had received to the head. His body was transferred to Cehegín. Here, in the monastery of San Esteban, the solemn funeral took place. The body was then buried in the family chapel.

Steve Maguerith Chaves do Nascimento (43) - He was born in Brazil in 1981 and after his studies worked as an architect in the city of Rio de Janeiro. He was a husband and father of a 6-year-old girl and was involved in preaching the Gospel and in charity work in the parish of Nossa Senhora da Cabeça in Penha, a district in the north of Rio. The murder occurred on Sunday, December 8, at 6:58 p.m. Analysis of images from the parish's security cameras helped reconstruct the dynamics of events. The video footage showed that two men on a motorcycle approached Steve's car. When the man realized what was about to happen, he tried to flee, but one of the two gunmen shot him in the head, killing him instantly. According to the parish priest, the area where the church is located is constantly affected by violence and robberies. There are often reports of parishioners being robbed on their way to church. Steve's funeral took place on Tuesday, December 10, in the parish where he was murdered. The auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro, Antônio Catelan, celebrated the funeral mass. In a condolence message to the family and parish, the Archdiocese of São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro described Steve as "a strong presence in our community, to which he always contributed with love and dedication."

SUMMARY TABLES 2024

Name and Surname	Country	Istitute o Diocese	Date, place of death
François Kabore	Burkina Faso	Volunteer	25/02 - Essakane
William Banda	Zambia	Religious priest	13/03 - Tzaneen
Edouard Zoetyenga Yougbare	Burkina Faso	Catechist	19/04 - Saatega
Mothobi Paul Tatu	Lesotho	Religious priest	28/04 - Pretoria
Ramón Arturo Montejo Peinado	Colombia	Diocesan priest	04/06 - Ocaña
Juan Antonio López	Honduras	Lay man	14/09 - Tocoa
Edmond Bahati Monja	D.R. Congo	Lay man	27/09 - Goma
Christophe Komla Badjougou	Togo	Religious priest	07/10 - Yaoundé
Marcelo Pérez Pérez	Mexico	Diocesan priest	20/10 - S. Cristobal
Fabián Enrique Arcos Sevilla	Ecuador	Diocesan priest	03/11 - Cotopaxi
Lech Lachowicz	Polond	Diocesan priest	9/11 - Szczytno
Juan Antonio Llorente Espín	Spain	Religious priest	11/11 - Gilet
Steve Maguerith Chaves do Nascimento	Brazil	Lay man	08/12 - Rio de Janeiro

Continent (origin)	Country	Total
Africa	Burkina Faso (2), Zambia (1), Lesotho (1), D.R. Congo (1), Togo (1)	6
America	Colombia (1), Ecuador (1), Honduras (1), Mexico (1), Brazil (1)	5
Europe	Spain (1), Polond (1)	2

Continent (death)	Country	Tot
Africa	Burkina Faso (2), Cameroon (1), D.R. Congo (1), South Africa (2)	6
America	Colombia (1), Ecuador (1), Honduras (1), Mexico (1), Brazil (1)	5
Europe	Spain (1), Polond (1)	2

REPORT 1990-2024

According to data available to Fides, in the ten years from 1980 to 1989, 115 missionaries were violently murdered. The real number is undoubtedly higher, as the data refer to cases for which verifiable information is available. The summary list for the years 1990-2000 shows a total of 604 church workers killed. This figure is considerably higher than in the previous decade, due to several factors, including the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, in which at least 248 church workers died. The table below shows the total number of pastoral workers murdered in 1994: in addition to the 248 in Rwanda (3 bishops, 103 priests, 47 religious brothers, 65 nuns and 30 members of institutes of consecrated life), there are 26 murdered in all other countries of the world. In the years 2001-2022, the total number of pastoral workers murdered is 544.

YEAR	BISH	PRIE	DEA	BRO	REL	SEM	ICL	CAT	LAI	VOL	TOT
1990	/	10	/	/	7	/	/	/	/	/	17
1991	1	14	/	1	3	/	/	/	/	/	19
1992	/	6	/	2	13	/	/	/	/	/	21
1993	1C+1	13	/	/	4	1	1	/	/	/	21
1994	3	123	/	48	69	1	30	/	/	/	274
1995	/	18	1	1	9	/	/	/	2	/	33
1996	3	19	/	8	13	1	2	1	1 (Ct)	/	48
1997	1	19	/	1	7	40	/	/	/	/	68
1998	1	13	/	5	17	4	/	/	/	/	40
1999	/	17	/	/	9	4	/	2	/	/	32
2000	/	19	/	/	7	3	1	/	/	1	31
2001	/	25	/	/	5	1	1	/	1	/	33
2002	1	18	/	1	2	2	1	/	/	/	25
2003	1	20	/	1	/	3	/	/	2	2	29
2004	/	12	/	/	1	/	/	/	3	/	16
2005	1	18	/	2	3	/	/	/	1	/	25
2006	/	17	/	1	3	/	/	/	2	1	24
2007	/	15	3	1	1	1	/	/	/	/	21
2008	1	16	/	1	/	/	/	/	2	/	20

2009	/	30	/	/	2	2	/	/	3	/	37
2010	1	17	/	1	1	2	/	/	3	/	25
2011	/	18	/	/	4	/	/	/	4	/	26
2012	/	11	/	/	1	/	/	/	1	/	13
2013	/	20	/	/	1	/	/	/	2	/	23
YEAR	BISH	PRIE	DEA	FRAT	REL	SEM	ICL	CAT	LAI	VOL	TOT
2014	/	17	/	1	6	1	/	/	1	/	26
2015	/	13	/	/	4	/	/	/	5	/	22
2016	/	14	/	/	9	1	/	/	4	/	28
2017	/	13	/	1	1	/	/	/	8	/	23
2018	/	35	/	/	/	1	/	/	4	/	40
2019	/	18	1	2	2	/	/	/	6	/	29
2020	/	8	/	1	3	2	/	/	6	/	20
2021	/	12	/	1	2	/	/	/	6	/	21
2022	/	12	/	1	3	1	/	/	1	/	18
2023	1	8	/	2	/	1	1 (Nv)	/	7	/	20
2024	/	8	/	/	/	/	/	1	3	1	13

BISH	Bishops
C	Cardinal
PRIE	Diocesan and religious priests
DEA	Deacons
BRO	Religious brothers
REL	Religious sisters
SEM	Seminarians
ICL	Members of institutes of consecrated life
CAT	Catechists
LAI	Laity
VOL	Volunteers
CT	Catechumen
NV	Novices

(Agenzia Fides, 30/12/2024)