

# Criminal Behavior

## Yearly Total



The Vatican announced that more than 260 Catholic priests and religious were murdered around the world in 1994. The civil war in Rwanda – in addition to killing tens of thousands of laity – claimed the largest number: three bishops, 101 priests and 64 nuns. Elsewhere, missionaries were killed in India, Uganda, Algeria and Sudan. The Vatican said its figures were provisional and could be higher, according to the report.

**6/10/94**

**Lawrence, MA** – David Cedeno and an unidentified accomplice entered St. Mary's Church while Fr. Robert Guessetto was celebrating the noon Mass. They entered the sanctuary and, in the presence of forty worshippers, stole two chalices and a Communion paten, spilling the sacred species on the altar and the sanctuary floor. Seventeen year-old Cedeno was charged with larceny and disturbing an assembly of worship. He was later charged with civil rights violations. Due largely to pressure from the Catholic League, Cedeno became the first person found guilty of violating the rights of Catholics under a hate crime conviction. He was also found guilty under constitutional charges, and received a combined sentence of 3 to 5 years, despite having no prior criminal record.

**7/21/94**

**Staten Island, NY** – A pro-life sign, situated on the property of the Church of the Holy Child, Staten Island, New York, was vandalized when inscriptions were made on the sign and an anti-Catholic poster was taped to it. The poster accused the Catholic Church of holding "vast economic and political resources" used by its undemocratically chosen hierarchy" to enforce its "archaic" views about "abortion, women's rights, homosexuality and conception." It went on to say that "free

speech in America is not free” and that “We have chosen to use this sign to say: ‘Stop imposing your religious beliefs on those who do not share them.’” It ended with “Stop abusing and restricting women in the name of God.” The church’s sign read “Abortion Stops a Beating Heart,” and was paid for through donations raised by the Respect Life Committee of the parish. The pastor, Msgr. John D. Burke, had previously received several phone calls demanding that the sign be removed.

## **November / December**

***Indianapolis, IN*** – St. Gabriel’s parish in Connersville was one of several Catholic Churches in the Indianapolis area to be hit by thieves stealing chalices over the course of two months. On Dec. 11, a silver chalice and a paten were stolen from an unlocked safe at the parish. Other Indiana churches hit by theft include parishes in Rensselaer, Logansport, Reynolds and Monticello.

**12/23/94**

***Valhalla, NY*** – The baby Jesus was removed from a Nativity scene displayed in front of a firehouse in Valhalla. The plastic figure was found a day later, hanging upside down from a nearby tree, its head bashed in.