

## Bishop Alejandro Labaka



Bishop Alejandro Labaka was born in Spain on April 19, 1920, in Beizama, a small village in the Basque Country. A Capuchin Friar Minor, he was parish priest in Pifo, before later becoming Superior of the Custody of the Capuchin Fathers in **Ecuador**; Prefect and then Apostolic Vicar of the Mission of Aguarico. His mission led to him evangelise and protect the rights of the indigenous Huaorani (Acunas) people, however, on 21 July 1987 he was tragically killed, together with fellow-missionary Sister Inés Arango by the Huaorani to whom he wanted to announce the Gospel.

While he was in Rome in 1965 for the Second Vatican Council, he wrote to His Holiness Paul VI:

*"Within me I feel very strongly the mandate to preach to all peoples and especially to these Acuas. A campaign of rapprochement to them has started, but - this is my question - to what extent can I explain the life of the missionaries, of the laity and my own propter evangelium? ... Most Holy Father: if in God's plans the sacrifice of a certain life will be necessary for bring Christ to these tribes, please deign to offer us, together with the divine victim in your Holy Mass, because we are worthy of this grace and because it will be a special blessing for the missionaries and for all those who have been entrusted".*

In his diary he wrote: "Society does not want to worry about small peoples, it has other problems and forgets about people who live in the jungle. But we missionaries, we believe in the Gospel, there we find written that Jesus left the 99 sheep to look for one; even if they are few they have the same value: Jesus is worried about the little ones of the abandoned, so we must do too".