

5 January 2025

Fr Georg Hipler

10 April 1935 – 5 January 2026

He was 90 years old, in his 91st year of life; in his 70th year in the Society; in his 60th year of Priesthood; and in his 53rd year of Final Vows.

Ort.10 April 1935
Loc. Nat.Rosengarth, Ostpreußen
Ingr.17 April 1956
Loc. Ingr.Jakobsberg, Germany
Mag.Marymount Mission
Stud.Licentiate from Munich in
Philosophy; and a Licentiate
in Theology from Heythrop.

Sub-Diac.
Diac.
Ord.28 August 1966
Loc. Ord.Berlin
TertianshipBerlin (1967)
Grad.Professed of 4 Vows
Dies.15 August 1973
Loc. Grad.St Albert's Mission

TranscribedGER->ZIM 05 November 1978
Defunc.5 January 2026
Loc. Defunc.Harare, Zimbabwe
Date of Funeral8 January 2026
Place of Funeral:Chishawasha Mission,
Harare, Zimbabwe
Place of Burial:Chishawasha Cemetery,
Harare, Zimbabwe
Prov.SAP

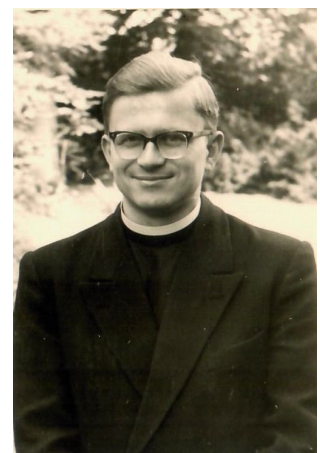


Georg was born in Rosengarth, the youngest of three boys and three girls. Their home, 'Ermland' (Warmia) was a 95% Catholic part of East Prussia. Every Sunday the family went 3km to Mass in a horse-drawn coach. He had a happy secure home though once, his sibling *'got cross with me and locked me in the kitchen. I broke the glass on the door to get out and cut my hand (I still have the scar from it).'*

Georg wrote about his early life in 1996, abbreviated here. *'When I was nine years old, the Russians overran our farm. We lost everything. They drove us out of our house. They took away my father and two elder sisters. I never saw my father and the younger of my sisters again. It was a time of high anxiety. We did not know the intentions of the soldier who led us away. We let a little distance come between us and the soldier and since it was getting dark, we ran into the forest. We ran and ran through the snow. Finally we huddled together to await the dawn. Eventually we returned to our farm and searched for food. My memory of these events is so dreadful that I have subconsciously deleted them from my mind. We even searched our barn for mice to cook and eat.'*

Eventually his family left Poland and became refugees in East Germany. They were taught in school there is no God. Georg argued with his teacher and was told off. Their family faith remained strong. *'My mother worked herself to death for us but she would never show any signs of affection. Neither did I show affection for anybody.'* He was not allowed to go to secondary school because he was a practicing Catholic. Eventually they made their way to West Germany and Georg followed his brother into the Jesuits.

He entered the Society in Jakobsberg, near Bingen, in 1956. He did his philosophy in Munich. He started to think of being a missionary. His first thoughts were of going to Russia but their liturgy was all sung, and he was not a good singer! His thoughts then went to Rhodesia. But the first doctor said his heart would not stand up to it. So he went to another doctor. He worked in Marymount, then Rhodesia, during regency (1961-63). He learnt English together with the students. They taught each other! He returned to Europe for theology, to England (Heythrop), and was ordained in Berlin in 1966.



Fr Hipler in August 1961

Back in Rhodesia, he spent eighteen years alone in Sipolilo/Guruve, (1969-86). He had to build up a whole mission even though he knew nothing of building or gardening. *'I enjoyed being with the people',* he wrote, *'They were open welcoming and friendly. They had a strong faith. Words like "God willing" came naturally to them.'* He enjoyed building the outstations – each with a little church. In each place a small Christian community (SCC) was started nourished on bible sharing. *'Together with a catechist, I went from house to house, not leaving out a single (known) Catholic home.'*

Then came the war years. He had to retire to Mvurwi some 65km away and serve the people at a distance (1978). That was the year three of his Jesuit companions were killed. And his own mission house was completely destroyed. He had to start from scratch but in a different location.

In 1987 he became Parish priest of Chitsungo in the Zambezi Valley where temperatures could reach 46 degrees. Brs Günter Gattung and Benedict Ngawaseke helped build a new house and clinic. When we got an assistant priest Georg turned his attention to building a hospital, but unfortunately Gattung had been transferred and he had to do the work.



Eight years later we find him at Chishawasha, again as parish priest (1995-2001). Again he became involved in SCC's and even drew up family trees of the different families in Chishawasha.

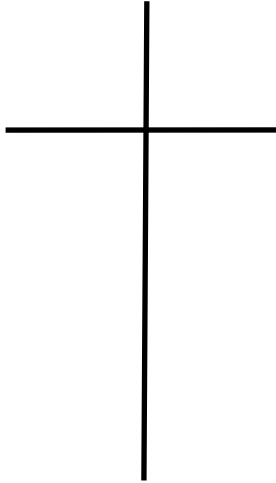
Georg then, over 65 years old, went to St Boniface, Hurungwe, with its 64 outstations for two years before joining the parish staff at Our Lady of the Way, Harare. In 2006 he moved to the Holy Name, Mabelreign and in 2012 he went to St Francis Xavier, Braeside, for two years. He was then chaplain at Macheke for a year before returning to Our Lady of the Way and finally Emmaus House in 2017. While based there, he assisted at Our Lady of the Wayside until 23 August 2019, when he moved to Richartz House for the elderly and infirm.

He is remembered above all as a builder of missions. He gave himself patiently to communities over many years, laying foundations not only in buildings and parish structures, but in people's faith, resilience, and sense of belonging. He remained faithful to places often marked by hardship and isolation, trusting that steady presence, ordinary pastoral care, and perseverance were themselves a form of proclamation. Through this quiet fidelity, he helped communities take root and endure.

Georg remained at Richartz House until his death on 5 January 2026. In his later years, his health gradually declined, and he eventually became confined to a wheelchair and dependent on constant care. In this final stage of life, he lived the Ignatian call to obedience in a new way: receiving rather than doing, allowing himself to be cared for as part of his continued service to the Lord. He bore this time with humility and quiet trust. He was surrounded by the attentive, compassionate, and faithful care of the carers at Richartz House, whose kindness and dedication allowed him to live his final years in peace and dignity. For this gift of care, the Society of Jesus and all who knew and loved him remain deeply grateful.



06.01.2026



Der Herr allen Lebens hat
am 5. Januar 2026
um 21:15 Uhr (MEZ+1)

P. Georg Hipler SJ

geboren 10. April 1935
eingetreten 17. April 1956
geweiht 28. August 1966

im Richartz House
in Harare/Simbabwe
zu sich gerufen.



Pater Georg Hipler wurde als jüngster von fünf Geschwistern in Rosengarth bei Braunsberg im Ermland geboren. Nach Flucht und Vertreibung aus Ostpreußen fand die Familie im Westen eine neue Heimat, der Vater blieb allerdings im Krieg vermisst. Georg maturierte am Realgymnasium in Fulda und trat unmittelbar danach ins Noviziat auf dem Jakobsberg ein, wo schon sein älterer Bruder Bruno einige Jahre zuvor sein Noviziat absolvierte. Es folgten die philosophischen Studien in Pullach, während derer sich sein Interesse für die Mission herausbildete. Entsprechend verband er einen ersten Aufenthalt in der Marymount-Mission in Simbabwe von 1961 bis 1963 mit Sprachstudien zur Vorbereitung einer künftigen Missionstätigkeit. Von 1963 bis 1967 studierte er Theologie im Heythrop College in London, das Tertiat in Berlin-Kladow schloss sich unmittelbar an. Danach kehrte er nach Afrika zurück und begann seine vielfältigen Missionstätigkeiten, zunächst bis 1969 im Canisius House in Harare, wo er Shona lernte. Danach wurde er bis 1986 Pfarrer in Sipolilo (heute Guruve), bis 1994 Pfarrer in Chitsungo, dann bis 2001 Pfarrer in Chishawasha. Zwischen 2001 und 2003 war er Oberer und Pfarrer in der St. Boniface Mission, dann bis 2005 Pfarrvikar und stellvertretender Ökonom in Mount Pleasant. 2006 wurde er als Pfarrvikar nach Mabelreign versetzt, wo er von 2007 bis 2012 erneut als Pfarrer tätig war. Bis 2014 folgte eine Zeit als Pfarrvikar in Braeside, dann als Kaplan in Macheke. Ab 2017 diente er erneut als Pfarrvikar in Mount Pleasant. Gesundheitlich schon etwas geschwächt nahm er ab 2018 von Emmaus House aus Aushilfen in Our Lady of the Wayside wahr, bis er 2019 zum Richartz House wechselte, wo er nun sein Leben in die Hände seines Schöpfers zurücklegte.

Gemäß dem Brauch unserer Gesellschaft sind alle Mitbrüder eingeladen, eine Hl. Messe im Gedenken an unseren verstorbenen Mitbruder zu feiern und seiner in ihren Gebeten zu gedenken, die Mitbrüder seiner Kommunität eine weitere.

Requiescat in pace!

für die Zentraleuropäische Provinz der Jesuiten
P. Thomas Hollweck SJ, Provinzial

Termin und Ort der Trauerfeierlichkeiten werden noch bekanntgegeben.