

8 January

Fr JOACHIM VON KERSENBROCK

1 September 1929 – 8 January 2015



The father of ‘Addi’, as he was known, von KerseNBrock, died in 1945 shortly before the war ended and he had two brothers who were prisoners of war during the conflict. When peace came, Addi developed a transport business based on horses. In the novitiate, which he joined in 1949, he refitted an old boat with a bicycle made for two peddlers as its ‘engine’. He would take people, Br Günter Gattung remembers, on trips around the lake.

Addi wanted to go to Russia as a missionary but he was sent to Southern Rhodesia. With this in mind, his last years of theology were in England where he was ordained in 1959. He came to Rhodesia in 1962 and was there at the start of Chitsungo mission where ‘his ways of acting were not always agreeable with his superiors’ (*Jesuiten Nachrufe, 2015*) and ‘he took advantage of the difficulty of communicating with Germany’.

Addi also served in Marymount which, as a pilot he was able to reach during the war when the roads were unsafe. He could be easily persuaded to extend his flying to cater for visitors. He flew the present writer and his parents to the Falls on one occasion and offered to dip his wing in the lake on the return flight. He loved life and he always had something of a boy looking for fun in him. He once bombed the community house at St Albert’s with toilet paper.

He developed Kangaire into a mechanical workshop to serve the small farmers in the Chesa area. His idea was to train them to make, and maintain, their implements.

But he was outspoken and, in war time, a lack of discretion could put him and others in danger. He returned to Germany in 1976 and became the chaplain to the St Boniface Society, a work that took him to New York and Montreal as a pastor to the German community in both cities. This involved him in teaching religion in schools for Catholics and Protestants, something he found difficult.

He was known for his kindness and helped many poor people. When Egon Royek left the Jesuits, Addi went to great trouble to help him, especially when Egon became incurably ill and later died in Florida. He would remember birthdays and send a card or telephone. When his health declined, he was brave and faced it with a humour that was sometimes bitter. He died in Germany in 2015 and was buried in New York, at his wish.