



Fr Jan Lyszczarz, S.J.
(1907-1944. In Zambia 1939-1944)

22 January 1944

Jan Lyszczarz was born in Godowa-Srzychowa (Poland) on 19 January 1907. He entered the Society at Stara Wies in 1924 before his 18th birthday. For his regency he was prefect at Chyrow College (1931-33). He was ordained in Lublin in June 1936. He obviously aspired to be a missionary for he wrote in his diary 'I cannot express the deep pain I feel when I think about so many people who do not know God' – which reminds one of the saying of the great Peter Claver. He left Poland at the end of 1938 as the Second World War was about to erupt.

He arrived in Northern Rhodesia in January 1939 and went immediately to Chikuni to take over the Teachers Training College. There he met Fr Zabdyr who had already spent more than a decade there, but was now appointed Mission Superior. It was obviously thought better that Fr Lyszczarz should take charge of the schools around Katondwe, as Fr Prokoph was at the time in London completing his educational studies and was expected to take up work in Chikuni.

In Katondwe the young priest of 32 years threw himself energetically into learning the local language. With his usual application and pleasant manner, he was soon able to be involved in priestly ministry. His main work however was education and he soon began to produce the necessary books for the schools under his care. He did not spare himself and was often out touring the schools in the heat of the Luangwa Valley.

In 1943 he was appointed superior of Katondwe which was quite unusual given his recent arrival and the fact that he still had not yet completed his Jesuit training - for he had yet to do his tertianship. During the war (1938-45) even basic medical supplies were difficult to get and yet he willingly shared with others his own meagre supplies of quinine. An older priest would have cautioned him about all his travelling around the schools, particularly during the hot season, but since he was in charge there was really no one to guide him. He contracted malaria which was aggravated by dehydration as a result of his over-exertions and, before he could take the necessary precautions, it had developed into blackwater fever which is often terminal.

So, after only four years on the mission, he passed away on 22 January 1944 and was buried with his predecessors at the Mission. Soon afterwards the experienced Waligora was re-appointed and remained there for the next twenty years.