



Fr Francis McDonagh, S.J.
(1915-1993. In Zambia 1969-1976)

25 February 1993

Fr Francis (Frank) McDonagh was born in Manchester, England, on 21 December 1915. His family moved back to Ireland to live in Dublin. He was 23 years of age when he entered the Society at Emo Park. He went through the usual studies of the Society and was ordained priest at Milltown Park in July 1951.

After tertianship in 1953, he was posted to Belvedere College in Dublin, as Assistant Prefect of Studies, going on to be minister for five years and then rector for another six. As is normal for rectors to be moved at the end of their term, Fr Frank moved to Gardiner Street Church in 1966 to work in the parish team.

A big change of scene took him to Zambia in 1969 to Charles Lwanga Teacher Training College for a few years where he taught, was spiritual Father to the students, minister and also bursar. St Ignatius in Lusaka had him for a year as had Mukasa Minor Seminary in Choma. Back to Lusaka to Chelston parish, where he did church work and was also on the Nunciature staff as the 'local collaborator', a term to which Fr Frank objected. He remarked to a colleague, 'My Vatican masters were either oblivious or unbothered that the Nazis had made the term "collaborator" a very bad word'. In 1975 he was minister in Chikuni and returned to Ireland the following year.

He was posted to Gardiner Street where he had been in the sixties. He was bursar and church worker, posts which he held up to 1990 when he was transferred to Cherryfield, the Jesuit Nursing Home, again as bursar and censor of books. This was his last posting as he died there of a heart attack in February of 1993.

Fr Frank was a kind man, right from his novitiate days, ready to help his fellow Jesuits. When he was at Belvedere College, he was remembered as 'a kind, thoughtful and humane rector'. A good community man, his kindness went with him to Zambia and it is that quality that he is remembered by.

One who wrote a short obituary of him ended it "He was an urbane man with a sure sense of humor and the ability to tell a story. Not an ascetic in the physical sense, he liked his drink and smoke and music. But there was in him the essential *askesis* of devoted service and of deep sympathy and concern for people. It is good to know that he considered his time at Cherryfield the happiest time of his life."