



**Br Brutus J Clay S.J.**  
**(1917-2008. In Zambia 1980-1987)**

**2 April 2008**

Brutus Clay was born in Atlanta, GA and grew up in Kentucky and Maryland. He attended St. Mary's Parochial School in Paris KY and Mt Washington County School in Baltimore and others. He graduated from Georgetown Prep in 1937 and then went on to Holy Cross College and finished in 1941 with a BA in English. He served in the US Army Air corps as a mechanic from 1942-1945. For another three years he tried his hand at farming, before he joined the Jesuits at the Milford OH novitiate in 1949.

'When he joined the Jesuits at the age of 32 he brought with him a lot of valuable experience from his family's horse and coal businesses and his time in the army' says Fr Daniel Flaherty. He had a wonderful easygoing personality with a Kentucky accent that everyone tried to imitate. Fr Patrick McGrath recalls one of his favorite Br Clay stories: 'When I was a scholastic studying philosophy at Loyola University, Br Brutus was the sacristan for our community and was always in the chapel either caring for it or praying. One morning I happened to be in the chapel very early when he came in, he walked right up to the tabernacle, and said aloud with a strong accent: "Good morning, Lord!" It was very natural – he was just saying hello to a friend he knew so well. That was Br. Brutus, a Kentucky gentleman of the first order'.

He served in the house library at West Baden College for three years beginning in 1953, before being assigned to work in our general curia in Rome as the brother secretary for the American assistant from 1956 to 1969. For the next five years he served as brother secretary for the Chicago Province in Oak Park IL. From 1974 to 1980 he served the Jesuit community in Xavier University as guest master, secretary and health insurance agent.

'Br Brutus was an excellent Jesuit and wanted to put his talents at the service of others' says Fr. Flaherty. 'In the eighties he volunteered to go to Africa to offer his business skills and experience to Canisius Secondary School in Zambia'. From 1980 to 1987 he was bursar of the school at a time when the economy of the country was at a low ebb with high inflation and constant shortages.

He returned to Chicago and joined Loyola University Jesuit community as an assistant in the rector's office, as well as being sacristan and library assistant. This in fact was his longest assignment.

Being a horseman from Kentucky, Br. Clay was also a crowd favorite around the time of the Kentucky Derby. Fr Baumhart recalls, 'We used to play up to him around Derby time because he tracked horses and always had his favorites. Then the day after the Derby he would explain why his choice didn't win'!

In 2003 he retired to Colombiere Center in Clarkston MI, where he served as sacristan and prayed for the Church and Society until his death on 2 April 2008 in his 90<sup>th</sup> year.