



Fr Kenneth Flood, S.J.
(1930-1962. In Zambia 1956-1958)

19 April 1962

Fr Ken was only 32 years of age when he died, so young for a Jesuit, just at the beginning of his priestly life. He was born in Dublin on 17 August 1930. After being at O'Connell's School, he entered the Society at Emo on 7 September 1948.

After studies at Rathfarnham and Tullabeg, he volunteered for work in the Chikuni Mission, Zambia, where he was sent in August 1956. He went to Chivuna to learn the language in 1957. The following tribute was paid to him by Fr Dominic Nchete, the vicar general and first Tonga priest of Monze diocese, "Fr Flood was a first rate missionary. During his language studies he had prepared and instructed many children for baptism. Those whom he had prepared for baptism burst into tears when they heard of his death".

He went to Chikuni, to Canisius Secondary School to teach for his second year. This work he tackled with characteristic devotion although he found teaching hard. He was not blessed with any great reserves of energy. Already perhaps, at Canisius, the disease, from which he was to die less than four years later, was slowly undermining his health and sapping his strength.

Cancer was diagnosed on the ear in August 1958 so he was sent back early in September to Ireland to pursue theology at Milltown Park where he was ordained priest on 31 July 1961. An X-ray check revealed lung trouble. On 15 February 1962, he was operated on and went to Galway to convalesce. While saying his last Mass on the feast of St Joseph, 19 March, Ken felt the beginning of his collapse. He returned to the hospital where the doctors diagnosed serious internal complications and gave him less than a month to live.

Fr Ken showed a courageous acceptance of the news which was all the more striking in one whose outward life was that of an ordinary but devoted Jesuit. During his last illness, he bore his suffering with great resignation. No word of complaint or self-pity was heard from him. He died on 19th April 1962.

What was perhaps most characteristic about Fr Ken, that which impressed both those with whom he lived and externs who had dealings with him, was his great sincerity, completely devoid of any affectation or artificiality. He was a man of prayer and a zealous priest. His life and death in the Society was an inspiration.