



**Fr Frank Keenan, S.J.  
1929-2020  
(In Zambia 1957-  
1993)**

**22 April 2020**

Frank Keenan was born in Portrush, Co. Antrim, Ireland in 1929 but grew up in Belfast where he went to St Mary's Christian Brothers school. His father died while he was only 10 years old after which the family moved out of the city. He entered the novitiate at Emo in 1950 and did his juniorate in Laval, France in 1952-1954. He was sent to Northern Rhodesia for regency (1957-1960), returning to Ireland for theology and was ordained in 1963.

He did a catechetical course in Lumen Vitae, Brussels from 1965 to 1966. After returning to Zambia he set up St Kizito's Catechetical Centre (Monze) as a two-year residential course for catechists. After the need for additional catechists was satisfied, St Kizito became a pastoral center for the diocese and ran a variety of renewal courses for Church personnel. It also provided a facility for learning chiTonga in which Frank taught the language and for which he produced a grammar. Under his direction the center offered facilities for doing retreats and after some years he produced a useful handbook for directors of the Spiritual Exercises. During all these years he was a confidant of Bishop Corboy who welcomed his insights and advice. For a number of years he was also parish priest to the adjoining parish of St Mary's.

In 1980 he moved to the Jesuit Novitiate in Lusaka where he continued to provide his much-needed skills in retreat work. He was also Vicar General for Religious for the Archdiocese of Lusaka and was involved in a variety of formation programs for both diocesan priests and religious sisters.

He was renowned for his sharp, even acerbic wit, coupled the kindness, hospitality and generosity. He did not suffer fools gladly and hated hypocrisy - as the Gospel hates it. And so he could bring a person down with a brilliant, yet highly humorous thrust of the verbal dagger.

He returned to Ireland and ran the Mission Office in Dublin from 1994 to 1996, while living at Gardiner Street community where he was available both for ministry in the Church and for retreat requests. He spent eleven fruitful years (1996-2007) in our retreat house at St Bueno's, Wales (UK). He finally returned to continue pastoral ministry and retreat work at Gardiner St Church before he finally retired to Cherryfield (2017-2020).

He was a talented and gifted man who down the years gave generous service, above all to Church personnel.