



Fr Francis Kovanda, S.J.
(1919-1985. In Zambia 1951-1964)

23 April 1985

Francis Kovanda was born on 12 September 1919 in Kynice in the district of Havlickuv Brod in the middle of the Czech Republic. He entered the Society on 7 September 1939 and was ordained in 1947. Shortly after his final vows in 1950, he came to Northern Rhodesia.

He soon mastered the local language at Kasisi to such an extent that he compiled a stenciled handbook of the chiLenje language in two volumes, with the assistance of Fr Luwisha and Mr Monsobwe. It was originally produced in 1952/53 and proved so valuable that a later edition was made in 1964.

He spent most of his 13 years at Mpima Minor Seminary, where he taught science and was considered a very good teacher. Over the years he set up one of the best school laboratories in the country through his perseverance and dedication. While of a gentle disposition, his exacting and demanding character led to a certain amount of nervous tension. After some time as Rector of the seminary, the work and responsibility became too much for him and he was advised by the doctor to seek a change in climate and work.

He left the Mission in 1964 and worked among the Czech community in Montreal (Canada) living in the Jesuit Czech house. He worked for a number of years in the southern part of the United States and eventually passed away in Montreal on 23 April 1985 at the age of 66.



Bishop Paul Lungu, S.J.

(1947-1998)

29 April 1998

While returning to Monze in the late afternoon of 29th April 1998, after chairing a Programme against Malnutrition meeting, a large truck veered round the bend and hit the driver's side of the car. He was killed instantly but the passenger escaped almost unharmed. The driver was Bishop Paul Lungu, S J. He was only 51.

Bishop Paul was born and grew up in Kabwe, Zambia. Fr Nowicki S.J. (aka Chimokoshi) became a great friend of his and even at primary school detected and fostered Paul's aspirations to the priesthood. Paul went to Canisius for secondary school and then entered the Jesuit novitiate in Lusaka in July 1969. After vows, he went to Kinshasa, Zaire, for philosophy. From 1974 to 1976, he taught and was boarding master at Mukasa Minor Seminary in Choma. He moved to Rome from 1976 to 1981 to study theology where he obtained a licentiate at the Gregorian University. He was ordained priest in his home town of Kabwe on the 5th August 1979.

He worked in Ngungu parish, Kabwe, for two years and then did a course in Jesuit spirituality in Rome with some pastoral work in Germany. By 1986, he had a licentiate in spirituality and returned to Zambia to direct the Jesuit novices in Lusaka for five years.

Early on there were indications of Rome wanting him to be a bishop, even before he was posted to the novitiate. In 1992 he was ordained Bishop of Monze to succeed Bishop James Corboy.

'He had great energy and drive. Whenever he was around, you could always hear his loud and joyful laugh and behind it was a heart that reached out to others so that people would constantly come to him to talk things over, ask help and advice and they knew that they would always be welcome and made to feel at home. He had a wide range of friends both within and without Zambia. His real effectiveness was in the way he could relate to others and help them to find the Good News in their lives. He needed to interact with others deeply and personally but in the process he would enable them to find their own fulfillment in the Lord. His ease and openness with people came from his own inner freedom. The way he lived his religious life was an invitation and a challenge'.

As Bishop his priority was to care for his priests, to accompany them in their pilgrimage and to provide possibilities for on-going renewal. His skills in formation led him to be the Bishop appointed to oversee seminary formation in the country. He was in great demand: he was appointed chairman of the Government Programme against Malnutrition, a member of the Anti-Corruption Committee, was Bishop adviser to the Christian Life Communities, and national director to Marriage Encounter. His Jesuit identity always came to the fore.

One message of condolence which came after he had been killed said, 'Tennis, jogging, CLC, retreats, picnics, Italians, Americans, Zambians, Zimbabweans – all received an episcopal touch from you. When the well ran dry for many sisters, brothers and fellow Jesuits, you were an oasis that many sought to drink from and be nourished by'.