



**Fr James Carroll, S.J.**  
**(1934-2006. In Zambia 1960-1998)**

**2 May 2006**

Big Jim, as he was often referred to, grew up in Limerick, Ireland and was of farming stock. He attended the Jesuit Crescent College in Limerick and entered the Society at the end of his secondary school. At school, he was a fine rugby player and would have gone far in that field if he had not entered the Society. After novitiate, he attended the university for his B.A., went to Tullabeg for philosophy.

Then he headed for the then Northern Rhodesia to Chikuni, where he remained from 1960 to 1963. Here he learned chiTonga, the local language, taught in Canisius Secondary School along with performing the other duties which a scholastic in regency normally does. He returned to Ireland to Milltown Park for theology where he was ordained on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1966. On completion of tertianship, he returned to Zambia.

Jim was both able and adaptable. When he returned to Chikuni, he became Minister of the house and assistant parish priest. In 1969, he became rector and taught in Canisius again for six years. He then moved to the parish for five years as parish priest. He went to Monze as secretary to the Bishop James Corboy S.J. in 1981. This he did for seven years and then became director of building for the diocese. This entailed buying supplies, supervising building, carpentry, electrical work and plumbing. He added wings to Monze hospital and built a chapel there. Outstations benefited from his ability with the building of schools and churches. A special building, dear to his heart, was the school for the handicapped, St Mulumba, in Choma. His interest in these handicapped children never waned and varied from helping to send a few of them to the USA for the Special Olympics (where some medals were won) to sending money on the 21st birthday of the school so that the children could have a treat.

Heart trouble brought him back to Ireland for two years from 1991 to 1993, where he did some pastoral work in his beloved Limerick. With improved health, he returned to Zambia, this time to a rural area, Chilalantambo, a one-man station on the road from Choma to Namwala.

Jim loved the place and the people. He extended an awning from the veranda of the house and here he met, talked to, chatted with, debated local affairs with the people from all walks of life, including Chief Mapanza himself who lived quite near. Coming from a farming family, he gardened and planted trees in all the places he lived. He helped the farmers around Chilalantambo, buying their maize and selling it in Choma to the Indian traders, bringing back seed and fertilizer for them. He organized schemes for the women for food production. His advice, usually good, was sought for and listened to. He was a good cook and when you went to visit him at Chilalantambo, you were sure of a tasty meal.

On weekends, Jim would head out to an outstation to celebrate Mass for the people. Confessions, baptisms, church council meetings were all part of the Sunday supply work.

Being of a practical turn of mind, he had a no-nonsense approach to life and its problems and could be quite critical of the institutional Church for its failure to allow and encourage lay participation in the running of the Church. This, combined with his placid and unruffled disposition, did not endear him to everyone. In fact, some found him difficult to understand.

After five years in Chilalantambo, he went to Ireland in 1998 on leave but his health

prevented him from returning. That was a sad day for him, for his heart was in Zambia. That was in 1998. He was posted to Gardiner Street, Dublin, where he joined the church team. He never complained about his ill health but would say with a grin, "Looking after your health is a full time job"! He loved Scripture and spent some time in Jerusalem during a mini-sabbatical which consolidated that love. His end was a no-fuss one. He was in bed in hospital and was talking to his sister, a nun, about the possibility of moving out of the hospital when he turned over in the bed and died.