



Br Alphonse McAndrew, S.J.

(1932-2014. In Zambia/Malawi 1972-2008)

18 May 2014

Brother Alphonse (Al) McAndrew, S.J. died peacefully on 18 May 2014 Pickering, Ontario, Canada. Brother McAndrew was born on 28 February 1932 in Toronto, Ontario, son of Henry McAndrew and Marie McNeil. He was brought up in Hamilton, Ontario. His father perished at the landing at Dieppe in 1942. Al entered the Society of Jesus on 7 December 1955 in Guelph Ontario. Al had studied at the F. R. Close Technical Institute in Hamilton and continued gaining skills in boiler maintenance, carpentry, machines and many other specialized skills. After some initial Jesuit training, he worked for Regis College in Toronto and St Paul's High School in Winnipeg, caring for the maintenance of the buildings and the boilers.

In 1972, he moved to Zambia and started doing maintenance work at Charles Lwanga College. During that time he also did a course in chiTonga at St Kizito's pastoral centre. From time to time, Al would take a study leave to improve his catechetical and educational skills (1987, Toronto, studying refrigeration; 1979 Eldoret, Kenya, studying catechetics; 1984, Spokane, WA, doing the Credo programme; 1992, Manila, studying at the East Asian Pastoral Institute). From 1980 to 1984 and from 1989 to 1992, he was Minister in the St Ignatius community in Lusaka and taught in government secondary schools. From 1984 to 1989 he served as Minister in Canisius community in Chikuni and taught religious education in the secondary school.

From 1993-2000 Al did maintenance work and taught RE in Mukasa Minor Seminary in Choma. In 2000 he moved to Katondwe Mission and did maintenance work and taught in the secondary schools for three years. His final assignment in Zambia was in 2003 where he returned to Chikuni and taught in Canisius.

Al had a gruff and bullish exterior. It seemed he liked to project the image of a tough guy who was independent and didn't need the help of anyone else. Perhaps he exaggerated this image just to preserve his privacy and independence. But Al was also an extremely kind and generous person. He was the type of person who would do anything for anyone.

He was a self-taught teacher of religious education. Even though he had very little formal education, he became a respected and successful religious education teacher. Over the years he taught religious education in various schools, even well beyond the age when most teachers have retired. He only put down the chalk at the age of 75. He taught at Canisius and in Chikuni Girls. In Lusaka he taught at Matero Boys, Kabulonga Boys, and Kasisi Girls. In Katondwe he taught at Katondwe Girls and at Luangwa Secondary School. And in Choma he taught at Mukasa Minor Seminary. All this in addition to his primary responsibilities of being minister or doing maintenance work.

Al was also a hard worker. He liked to do physical work. He never shied away from any work no matter how difficult, time consuming, or boring. If one wanted some task to be done and, if it was physically possible, Al would do it. He would doggedly search for a leak in one of the water pipes at Charles Lwanga or search for an electrical short in the lighting system a classroom block until he found it and repaired it.

Al exemplified being a good Jesuit. He was a man of prayer. Because of the type of person he was, he didn't wear his piety on his sleeve, but it was obvious that he was a

man of prayer. He gave exemplary witness to being faithful to a life of daily prayer with the Eucharist being the centre. His annual retreat was always a directed retreat.

He was also a man who lived his religious vows. Whatever his superiors asked, he would do. Perhaps he did not like it or thought that it was foolish, but he did it with little complaining. Also in his life of chastity and poverty there was no way that he could be faulted.

In 2008, Al returned to Canada and lived in Toronto working with inner-city refugees and migrants. In 2010, he worked in Thunder Bay at the apostolate to Native People and was the temporal administrator in Armstrong and Gull Bay. In 2012, he moved to Pickering due to some health difficulties. Brother Al was a very serene person and very respected for his skills and his wisdom. He was physically very able throughout his life and into his eighties. He was very generous and was happy contributing to the proclamation of the Gospel both in Africa and in Canada.