



Fr Ladislaw Daleczko, S.J.
(1910-1991. In Zambia 1965-1975)

4 June 1991

Fr Daleczko was born on 14 October 1910 in Podlasie, Poland, about 200 km east of Warsaw and 200 km north of Lublin. The Catholics of the Eastern rite of Podlasie suffered a severe persecution under the Tsarist Regime in the latter part of the 19th century. Fr Daleczko was very conscious of the sufferings of his people and would often refer to them. He was ordained into the Diocese of Lublin in 1936 and was assistant parish priest in the small village of Batorz Lubelski. Just after the war in 1945 he sought permission from his bishop and entered the Society.

In the early 1960s he became aware of the urgent needs of the mission in Northern Rhodesia and decided to offer himself for it. Despite the tight controls of the Communist Government preventing priests going outside the country and the initial reluctance of the home province, his persistence eventually won out and he headed off for a year to the United States to learn English before heading to Zambia.

He spent 1964-65 in Detroit with Fr Borucki, a parish priest friendly to the Society. Initially his age (he was 55) seemed to come against him, but eventually Rome gave the necessary permission and he arrived in Lusaka via Rome on 6 July 1965. He spent the last four months of the year learning chiNyanja in Nathenje Mission in Malawi under Fr Salaun, together with Br Fransk and Mr Lowe. He approached the learning of a new language with his usual precision and dedication not satisfied in knowing it 'somewhat', but 'properly'.

Back in Lusaka his first assignment was Mpanshya under Fr Folta. In 1966 we find him in Kasisi as his health was beginning to cause problems. In June he was sent to Johannesburg for a check-up and had to undergo a rather serious abdominal operation. He came back to Zambia in September but he never properly recovered. During his convalescence in Johannesburg he stayed with the Kasisi Sisters, who came to know him and wished to have him there as their chaplain. Meanwhile in Zambia he dedicated himself as best he could to the pastoral work in Mpanshya. However since his health was not improving and there was some criticism of his pastoral methods, he asked to be sent to Johannesburg. He went there in August 1971 but could not stay since he had problems obtaining an extension to his visa. He returned to Zambia in March 1972 and worked at Kasisi. He accepted the invitation of the Kasisi Sisters in New Jersey (USA) to be their chaplain and with the permission of the superiors he left for the USA in June 1975.

In the United States he continued his activities with his natural perfectionism, often working for his old mission. He acquired a small printing press and began producing catechisms in chiNyanga, chiLenje and chiBemba which he duly sent to Zambia, all at his own expense. In his fidelity to the history of his ancestry, he also reprinted the two volumes of Fr Joseph Pruszkowski's book about the martyrs of the Uniates in Podlasie with all the diagrams and maps.

Eventually his health worsened. In June 1989 Fr Daleczko arrived back from the United States completely shattered in health. He was sent to the Gdynia novitiate where he lived a life of prayer and sacrifice until the Good Lord took him on 4th June 1991.