

June 5

Fr JOHN VOLLERS

28 March 1861 – 5 June 1907

Born in Maastricht, Holland, John Vollers entered the Society in 1881 and did much of his formation in South Africa at Dunbrody and Graaf Reinet. In 1893 he was one of a party of six who came out from Europe and he was assigned to the lower Zambezi. Making his way up river to Boroma with another Jesuit going to another mission, he was waylaid by local people, robbed and even stripped of their clothes.



A 'Samaritan' passed by, a Portuguese traveller, Paiva d'Antrada, in *Silveira*, a river steamer originally purchased by Fr Weld for the mission but later sold to the Portuguese government. D'Antrada took care of them. He was a fan of the Jesuits and had even approached Fr General to ask for the Jesuits to return to Mozambique, or Portuguese East Africa, as they called it then, after their long absence since the Suppression. Fr General replied, 'Yes, yes, but we must proceed cautiously. The Portuguese are our best friends but they are also our worst enemies.'

After surviving twelve years in the heat and humidity of the lower Zambezi valley, Vollers sailed for Lisbon to promote the mission in Europe but was found dead in his cabin near the Canaries on 5 June 1907 and was buried at sea.

The photo above is not the *Silveira* but the *Salvator*. Wolfgang Thamm wrote in a letter to Fr Bex in 2009 that Fr Johannes Hiller, a Silesian Jesuit, worked in Boroma on the Lower Zambezi from 1893 and gathered money on home leave

to replace the *Silveira*, which had been sold, with the *Salvador* in 1901. It served the mission stations along the Zambezi for 10 years until the Jesuits were expelled. Before leaving, Hiller sold it to an Indian. Later, when the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) took over the Jesuit missions, they bought a third boat.

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Fr. João Humberto VOLLERS

Born in Uijk, Maastricht, Netherlands, on March 28, 1861, he entered the Society of Jesus on September 23, 1881, when he was already assigned to the Zambezia Mission. He studied philosophy in Dumbrody, South Africa and theology in Enghien. He did his tertianship in Setubal and went to Mozambique in 1893. He always worked in Boroma, where he took his final vows on May 3, 1894. In 1907, on his way to Europe for a vacation, he died in the Atlantic, near the Canary Islands, on June 5. His body was thrown into the sea.

(Cf. APSI, Necrológio; Catalogus Defunctorum in renata Societate Iesu ab a. 1814 ad a. 1970)