



**Fr Martin Drwiega, S.J.**  
**(1887-1965. In Zambia 1923-1929)**

**30 June 1965**

Martin Driega, the son of John and Anna (nee Caban) Drwiege was born near Sanok in the south east of Poland on 10 October 1887. He entered the novitiate at Stara Wies in 1904 and was ordained in Czechowice in 1917.

He left for Northern Rhodesia in 1922 and arrived in Kasisi together with Fr Mazurek in March 1923. He immediately began his missionary work there. A year later he was transferred to Katondwe where he succeeded Fr Spendel as superior in August 1923. He soon constructed a small residence for a visiting priest at Mpanshya which has not survived.

Prior to his departure for Africa he experienced long-lasting headaches which seemed to be sufficiently improved for his superiors to allow him to travel. While in Kasisi he expended his energy in physical work, clearing the land and undergoing long tiresome journeys. His superiors described him as a very eager missionary but lacking in prudence.

This later led to problems both within the Society and with externs. In preparation for the erection of the Prefecture of Broken Hill (Kabwe), Fr Charles Bert from Salisbury was appointed superior. On one famous occasion Fr Drwiega opposed the firm Belgian on the use of the British Mass ordo and ended up telling his fault before the community while reciting the penitential Psalms!

Within a short time Mgr Wolnik was appointed the first Apostolic Prefect and the Mission became ecclesiastically independent. Monsignor requested the Polish provincial to recall Fr Drwiega. In November 1928 when it became clear that he needed therapy, Mgr Wolnik went with Br Duda to Katondwe to bring him to Lusaka for treatment. This was followed by a spell of rest in Chikuni. Reluctantly, he agreed to return home and two weeks later he headed back.

In Poland he underwent further psychiatric examination, was stationed in the villa house at Stara Wies where he spent the remainder of his days. He seemed to recover but lived a rather reclusive life. In some of his letters he acknowledged that it was a mistake to send him to Africa and he even apologized for his behavior. He also thanked Mgr Wolnik for being kind to him. He died at Stara Wies on 30 January 1965.