



Fr John Makangila Bangwe, S.J.

(1982-2019)

7 July 2019

John Bangwe was born on 29 June 1982 in Chilubi District, Kasama, of Maximo and Edah Bangwe. He was the second of four brothers. His mother died when he was about 6 years old. His father died in 1998. At that point, John together with the other siblings, were taken and raised by a relative.

He did his secondary schooling at Mansa High. After completing his grade 12, he went on to Evelyn Hone College, Lusaka from where he graduated with an Advanced Certificate in Accounts in 2005. His interest in computers led him to work in an internet café, a family business, for two years. Opportunities in life began to open up for him, yet he decided to forget some of the job offers that arose. He opted to answer the call to join the Society of Jesus and entered the novitiate on 7 July 2006.

After the novitiate he was sent to Harare, Zimbabwe for his philosophical studies. He was greatly appreciated by his fellow Jesuits: he was generous, available, approachable, kind, jovial ... a man for others! As his friend, Jean Damascene Bavugayabo wrote: "I remember when you created a Facebook group for all of us as a platform of sharing information. You cared for them. John, we miss you, and I write this in tears."

After four years of philosophy in Harare, John was missioned to teach Accounts and Business Studies at Canisius Secondary School, Chikuni. His love and dedication for his mission led him to know his students who later took him as their role model. While there he felt at home, as evidenced in his learning chiTonga. He was also minister to the community which he found challenging.

When the time of regency was coming to a close, there was a possibility for John to pursue further studies in accounts. However, he specifically asked the Provincial to first allow him to go for theology. Accountancy studies, in his mind, could be taken up after ordination.

During philosophy and theology, he was not afraid to speak his mind whenever he felt the lecturer was not doing enough. He had the ability to notice small details and often not afraid to express how things could be improved. This was because he believed that the power of knowledge is essential to accomplishing the mission of Christ. He studied his theology in Nairobi, Kenya and was ordained by Archbishop Emeritus Telesphore Mpundu in Lusaka on 27 May 2017. He was then sent for a postgraduate diploma in accounts at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. Upon the successful completion of this program, he was missioned to the Copperbelt University, Kitwe as Catholic Chaplain in August 2018.

As the need for an interim Province treasurer arose, he was asked to move from Kitwe to Lusaka and reside at Luwisha House. He joyfully accepted the mission. However, the Lord had a better mission for our companion. He died in a road traffic accident at Kapiri Mposhi on 7 July 2019, while bringing his luggage to Lusaka. He was just 37 years old and on the first missioning after his training!

As his friend Jean Damascene wrote: "You died on the day you joined the Society of Jesus. May the heavenly Society of Jesus welcome you"!