



Fr Fred Moriarty, S.J.
(1934-1998. In Zambia 1961-1998)

24 July 1998

When the young Fred Moriarty arrived at the Jesuit Novitiate he was surprised to find a student from his own school with him. That companion was Fr Donal McKenna who was two years ahead of him at O'Connell's School, Dublin. They would both work in Zambia for their lifetimes. Fr Fred Moriarty's specialization was development in Monze Diocese.

Fr Fred was born in Dublin 17 December 1934. He had done a full year of engineering and part time studies in accounts and commerce before joining the Jesuits. He studied philosophy at Tullabeg from 1958 to 1961. He arrived in Zambia on 15th August 1961. His chiTonga language study was from August 1961 for one full year. He spoke chiTonga fluently and in a businesslike manner. Then he taught in Canisius for two years. With Fr Shaun Curran, he leveled the second football field and prepared the running track at Canisius. His theology was done at Milltown Park from 1964-1968. Ordination was on 28 July, 1967. This was followed by tertianship in Rathfarnham in 1968-1969. Fr. Fred did a post-graduate Diploma in Social Administration at the University of Wales, Swansea in 1969-1970.

From November 1970 to August 1971 he began his pastoral work at Kasiya Parish. He liked to move around on a Honda motorcycle. When he was changed to Chikuni the following year as Parish Priest, his mode of travel did not change. Fairly quickly he had a tractor available for hire for the farmers. Getting paid was a problem here but Fr. Fred's chiTonga was able to reach bargaining level before too long. He inherited the Credit Union from Fr Joe Conway and was able to live with the hassle. Some thieving went on at the parish house on account of having to go to Canisius College for supper. One day he came across someone wearing his shirt and had the courage to confront him. He got a development team started in Chikuni. His last parish assignment was to St Mary's Parish in October 1975 until May 1978. St Mary's spreads north to Kazungula and beyond and Fred reached those places by Honda.

Bishop Corboy had responsibility for maize distribution at times of famine for the whole of Zambia. Fr Fred and the Bishop were a wonderful team. Only God knows the good they achieved together in those 25 years of dozens of development projects. Monze Diocese became a shining example of development work in the country under Fred's leadership. Around this time, Fr Fred went to India to have a look at the possibilities of silk worm culture in Zambia. He was also on the alert to learn from Indian development. The Jesuits have many different projects there. He was always open to change and improvement. He could live with taking risks.

Fr Fred was a radio program coordinator. He recorded many programs in chiTonga and English for ZNBC. He coordinated with Fr Bill Lane and Fr Max Prokoph in this area. He had all the equipment with him and set himself up in Chikuni parish house or wherever he could get another program. He stuck to his task and only left when he had another program tucked under his sleeve. He did this as an extra for years.

On 25 April 1998, Fr Fred left Zambia. He was not in good health and was complaining of stomach pains. Bishop Paul Lungu left him in Lusaka but was killed in an accident himself a few days later. Fr Fred was diagnosed with cancer of the liver. He took his suffering like he had lived. He was interested in all the details regarding his illness. He was curious about what it would be like on the other side of life in this world.

He had a lot of visitors when in hospital. The Mission Office and its supporting team were generous in their care. After visitors laid hands on him in prayer Fr Fred joined in with his own prayer for them. His family was present at that special time. He died peacefully on 24 July 1998. Fr Eddie Murphy did the homily at his funeral Mass in Dublin. His classmate, Fr Donal McKenna preached at Mass for him in Monze and finally Fr Colm Brophy spoke at his Mass at St. Ignatius in Lusaka.

His two chiTonga nicknames were *Chimuka* and *Haamanjila*. The first one was that Fr Fred used never quite make it in time for meals. His work and workers and people being served took priority over food. His second name refers to his custom of checking out the food on the stove in Monze. He was always curious and wondered could more sugar be added to the jam as it boiled. Maybe he is still asking questions there where he is in his eternal well-earned reward.