



Br Wladyslaw Misiag, S.J.
(1890-1971. In Zambia 1926-1971)

29 July 1971

Wladyslaw Misiag was born on 12 October 1890 at Tywonia-Jaroslaw in the south of Poland near the Russian border. He entered the Society at Stara Wies in 1920 at the mature age of 30. Within a few years (1925) he left for the Northern Rhodesia Mission with three others: Frs Wolnik & Tomaka and Br Borecki. Fr Wolnik was keen on visiting the important mission endeavors on his journey to Kasisi, for he knew that in a short time he would be the ecclesiastical authority in the newly planned Prefecture of Broken Hill. Their first stop after landing at Port Elizabeth in January 1926, was to Dunbrody, the first Jesuit formation house on the African Continent. Although it only survived six years as a philosophate, it did train a large number of earlier missionaries. Little remained of the philosophate (and even the novitiate) but they could see the thriving farm that a great band of brothers had brought forth out of the relatively impoverished soil. Dunbrody was a great centre for a short time and continued as a successful farm for many years thanks to the energy and creativity of the brothers who ran it.

When they arrived at Salisbury, Fr Wolnik again wanted to see the newly established teacher (and catechist) training center at Kutama, which had only started that year. It was the result of the visitation of the British Provincial, Fr Bodkin, a couple of years before. It coincided with a new change in policy of the British Colonial Administration in taking more responsibility for basic education in their territories and all the Churches became much involved in the ministry of education from then on.

Br Misiag was soon installed in Chingombe, supporting the small community there with basic sustenance. In time he farmed and gardened in all the stations of the Prefecture, thereby making the mission more self-sufficient in basic needs like food, water and firewood. It was the farm and garden in each of the communities that kept the men alive, especially during the difficult financial times of the thirties and forties when Europe was either at war or recovering from it, so that men and money were both in short supply.

In one venture he nearly met his end. Together with Fr Wawrzkiwicz they went to open up a new mission in virgin territory at Mpiyamasse (Kaindu), west of Karendia near the Kafue River. They worked extremely hard for a year and a half in a rather poor, isolated area. In the end, it was a Boma official who, seeing their poor state of health, requested the superior to pull them back to base. When they did return to Kasisi the community could hardly recognize them.

Br Misiag was much admired by his companions for his calm approach to life and his dedication to feeding and providing for each community he worked in. He lived a long and fruitful life having worked in every station from Chingombe to Chikuni. He passed away at Kasisi on 29 July 1971 some months after his eightieth birthday, after being ill for quite some time.