

6 August

## Fr EDWARD CALLAGHAN 25 November 1921- 6 August 1978



Born and educated (at St Francis Xavier College) in Liverpool, Eddie Callaghan entered the Society in 1938 aged 16. He was ordained in 1952 and arrived in Africa in 1957, going first to Hwedza and then Monte Cassino where he became superior and started the girls' school. In 1963 he moved to Chishawasha and in 1965 to Musami where he became director of the Teacher Training College as well as superior. He tried to follow up Jeep Davis' grand plans and advanced the building of the huge church.

But then unexpectedly he was asked to be director of Jesuit Missions in London and the writer of his obituary does not know why. But he did his best in an uncongenial job until such time as he could return to the mission. He then went to Umvukwes (Mvurwi) where he wrote a reflection (*Missionary Magazine* 1973) on what he found: two churches.

(One which the whites attend) where Mass is offered with reverential attention with perhaps a solemn hymn or two with a sermon which is meaty and not too long. (And the other for the black people) which is rumbustious with beating drums, rattling castanets and repetitious, sometime raucous, singing. ... They naturally express love, adoration, sorrow or joy ... vigorously with hands and feet ... They are quite unmoved by a quiet Mass.

Eddie goes on to say the problem is also social ... and part of the struggle between the haves and have-nots,

In Central and Southern Africa (we) find ourselves pastors of two different congregations. How is this divisive problem to be tackled? ... The problem is going to be with us for some time ... but recently something happened that filled me with delight. ... Prominent members of both congregations approached me about ...having Mass together on occasional Sundays ...

Eddie was aware of the divided church in the country but by the time he was writing, in the 1970s, the division was already too deep to be bridged.

In 1976 he was in Mount Pleasant. One of his innovations there was to arrange for a university student to teach Shona to some whites. In 1977, he returned to the province but he hoped not for good. His health was failing and he died the following year.

His contemporaries describe him as ‘excessively sober and serious, deliberate, dogged, steadfast’. One of them, James Walsh, noted the ‘quiet way in which he referred to the coming troubles after UDI’. Towards the end of his life he was inspired by the charismatic movement and tried to promote it.

He did a sabbatical in St Louis, USA, in the mid-1970s where he was described as ‘gracious, insightful and challenging. He enlivened any group he was in’.