

9 August

## Fr CLEMENS FREYER

28 August 1935 – 9 August 2018



Born in Berlin, Clemens' family had to move to Silesia, the city's 'air raid shelter' during the war. His father was drafted into the army and fought in North Africa. After the war the family had to leave Silesia, where they had settled in Steineifersdorf, when it became part of Poland. Gradually they found their way back to Berlin where Clemens, whose family were in the eastern part of the city, crossed over each day to the Jesuit college in the west. In 1956 he entered the Society and went on to study theology in England before reaching Rhodesia in 1970 where he started teaching at St Albert's.

He was there on the dramatic night when guerrillas entered the school grounds and abducted 300 of the students with a view to enlisting them in the armed struggle. Knowing his responsibility for them, Clemens accompanied them into the valley until the fighters allowed him to return with two of them who were in bad shape. Most of the others had melted away in the dark and returned to the school. Gradually it became impossible to continue and Clems moved from teaching to pastoral work at Mount Darwin and Chitsungo. Later he was in Chishawasha and, by 1980, Alaska. In 1986 he moved to Kutama and three years later to Chinhoyi

In 1994 he was able to return to school work and became chaplain and teacher at St Ignatius. After a year at Musami, he returned to Chishawasha in 2002 as superior of the mission. In 2009, he moved to St George's and finally retired to Richartz House in 2015.

He combined his teaching and pastoral work with extra activities: starting a scheme for feeding children at Chishawasha, setting up a home for destitute people in Chinhoyi, the Nazareth Centre, with ministers of other denominations, and ministering to the inmates at the prison there. He continued this prison work from St George's and some of the officers and inmates of Central Prison came to his funeral, the inmates wearing clothes he had provided. He provided food and blankets for the prisoners too.

While at Chishawasha, Clemens started the project to build a church and a priest's house at Ruwa, where the Claretians are now. A devoted worker with high standards, he was hard on himself 'and sometimes on others!' (Wolfgang Thamm).