



**Fr Paul A. Bajan, S.J.**  
**(1912-1978. In Zambia 1953-1970)**

**10 August 1978**

Paul Bajan was born on 1 December 1912 in Podlžany, district of Levice in Slovakia. After he had finished his primary and secondary education in Levice he joined the Society on 14 August 1930 in Trnava. He spent the first five years in Ruzombork doing his novitiate and completing his college studies. He studied philosophy in Cracow, Poland from 1935-1938 and then taught in the High School in Kosice, Slovakia until it was occupied by Hungarians on 2 November 1938. He went to study History and Geography at the University in the capital, Bratislava. He gained his teacher's degree after five years during which time he also taught for three years in Jesuit schools.

In 1943 he began his theological studies at Ruzombork and was ordained there on 16 July 1946. In September he left Slovakia for Heythrop College, England to complete his theology. He did his tertianship the following year in Dublin, Ireland. He expected to return home but in 1948 the government of Prague (Czechoslovakia) was taken over by Communists and he was not able to go back. He was sent to Rome (1948-1950) to do special studies in Church History at the Gregorian University while conducting Slovak broadcasts over Vatican Radio.

As he acquired a Vatican passport he was able to get a visa to the United States and went there in October 1950 hoping that he might be able to do ministry amongst the Slovak speaking people, as they had 250 churches in the States. He was well employed while he was there waiting for a permanent assignment. Over time he wrote a large number of articles on the Holy Land etc. for a weekly Slovak Catholic paper published in the States.

He was missioned to our Mission in Zambia and gladly accepted the assignment and arrived in Lusaka in November 1953. He was posted to Mpanshya under the retired Apostolic Delegate, Fr Bruno Wolnik who had to be transferred for health reasons. He remained as local superior there until 1957 when he was transferred to Mpima Minor Seminary in Kabwe, where he taught History and Latin. From May 1963 he went on prolonged sick leave and returned at the end of the year when he was posted again to Mpanshya. In 1969-1970 he was sent to Kabwe where he was the local superior at Bwacha. From 1970 he was transferred to Pretoria in South Africa where he was in charge of Slovak, Czech and Hungarian refugees while living in the Good Shepherd Sisters convent.

His health was gradually declining and even in Zambia he walked with difficulty due to poor circulation, diabetes and blood pressure. He never really complained and took it all cheerfully and patiently, like to many other difficulties that were part of his life. Eventually in August 1978 he was taken to hospital for emergency treatment and had three toes amputated and the following day they removed a leg below the knee. However it was all too much for his body and he passed away on 10 August in the 66<sup>th</sup> year of his life and the 48<sup>th</sup> year as a Jesuit.