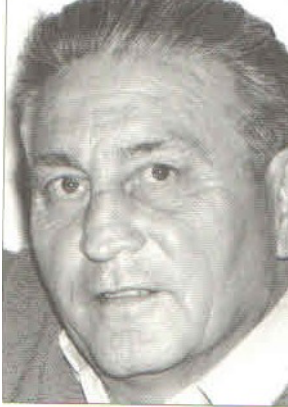


10 September

Fr HERMANN HUSEMANN 29 December 1926 – 10

September 2012



Hermann came from a solidly Catholic family in Munster and grew up in the tense atmosphere created by Hitler's opposition to everything his family believed. Oscar Wermter suggests this was the background to the fighting Hermann we all knew. He was conscripted just before the end of the war and was bitter that the French, who took him captive, held on to him for two years in which he had to work for them. Free at last, he joined the Society in 1949 and soon set his sights on Africa but was unable to come out as a scholastic regent. He was ordained in 1959 and two years later fulfilled his dream by being one of the early men who came out to start the Sinoia Mission. He was already 35 when he went to Kutama in 1961 and from there he moved to Marymount where he started a new mission at Kangaire, where Gerry Pieper was later killed.

Hermann was a man of action and had little patience with planning. The 1960s was a time of building and churches, schools and clinics appeared with the great support he received from Munster. On his home leaves, he would spend much time fostering support among his own people there. Containers would be sent out full of second-hand clothes, tools, bicycles and the like. He shouted at the Customs people if they delayed to release the goods; it was not only among Catholics that he earned the title 'the Voice of Germany'.

In 1986 when Chinhoyi became a diocese, he went to Makumbe, in the Archdiocese – perhaps as sign that the Germans were not abandoning Harare. His energy was still intact and built churches and even a lay leaders training centre at Manhenga. He did not think of asking the archbishop or the provincial first and had one or two altercations with them. The provincial of the time was a short man and would be dwarfed if he stood beside Herman. But this did not prevent Herman saying the provincial 'crushed me like an elephant'! The archbishop later saw the benefit of Manhenga and thanked Hermann.

Hermann not only spoke loudly; he had a rough exterior though people soon discovered the kind interior and he was always generous to those in trouble. Impulsive in his generosity, he would unload heavy cement bags himself from lorries and he injured his back and had to go to Germany for treatment. He was a man of great faith and at Makumbe would talk to Koni Landsberg in the evening about 'God and the world'. Getting old was difficult for an active man like him and he found it hard to be so dependent on nurses at Richartz House when he retired to our house for the infirm and elderly who needed care. But he was quiet and relaxed in his last days and ready to go.