



## Cardinal Adam Kozłowiecki, S.J.

(1911-2007. In Zambia 1946-2007)

### 28 September 2007

Adam Kozłowiecki was born on 1 April 1911 in Huta Komoroska, diocese of Sandomierz in south Poland. His parents were of the Polish nobility, Count Adam and Maria (Janocka) Kozłowiecki. They had three sons Czesław, Adam and Jerzy who were initially educated at home and later in the Jesuit College in Chyrow in what is now Ukraine. Because of his interest in becoming a Jesuit, Adam was sent to a private school in Poznań for his final two years. Two months before he entered the novitiate at Stara Wies in 1929 he legally renounced his entitlement and inheritance. His father was upset by the decision but a year later he donated 15,000 hectares of his land to set up an educational trust administered by a loyal and committed Catholic.

After his first vows in 1931 Adam studied philosophy in Cracow and then he taught for a year in his old college in Chyrow before he went to Lublin for theology. He was ordained in 1937 and completed his final year in Lwow (now Lviv in Ukraine).

The day he received his first missioning to Cracow was the day the German army invaded Poland. With the disruption of all public transport it took him several weeks to get to Cracow on foot, where he took over the administration of a residence. Two weeks later he was arrested by the Gestapo with 24 others and taken to their headquarters for questioning.

He spent some time in Cracow and Wisnicz prisons and in June 1940 he was sent to the newly opened concentration camp of Auschwitz in Poland. In his memoirs (*Oppression and Grief*) he says that these six months were the most difficult of all his years of imprisonment. In December he was transported to Dachau outside Munich in Germany, where he lived and worked with 30,000 inmates until the camp was liberated by American troops in April 1945. By that time only 44 of the 77 Jesuits imprisoned there were still alive. After he was released he learned that his maternal grandmother, who had supported his vocation, had passed away – and that his elder brother had been executed by the German forces in Poland.

Looking back over his time in the camp, he would later say 'It was the best novitiate training I ever received, much better than what the Jesuits had given me.' Sometimes he would make light of the experience by remarking 'I spent five years as a special guest of Adolf Hitler!' On his release he hitchhiked to the Jesuit curia in Rome using the only identification paper he had: 'Inmate 22187 of Dachau camp'.

He was keen to be assigned back to Poland, but he was asked instead to go to join some of his fellow countrymen in the Lusaka Mission of Northern Rhodesia. He obeyed 'Yes, I will go.' While in Rome he pronounced his final vows (1945).

He arrived in Lusaka on 14 April 1946 and was assigned to Kasisi and later became the manager of schools in the area. His contact with the villagers around Kasisi deeply marked him for he would spend the last decades of his life in similar rural settings.

Within four years he was appointed to lead the Vicariate of Lusaka, replacing the aging Bruno Wolnik who had held the position since 1927. In 1955 he was consecrated bishop and four years later when the hierarchy was set up, he was made Archbishop of Lusaka. He was elected the first chairman of AMECEA (Association of Members

Conferences of Eastern Africa) in 1961 and the following year he went to Rome for the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

These were heady years with a whole new outlook launched by the Council in its openness to the modern world and its emphasis on inculturation in the liturgy. After the Council there was a wave of new missionaries willing to help the local Church become more itself which led to a rapid expansion of parishes and churches. On the political level, there was a growing awareness of self-determination which culminated in Independence in October 1964. These years were times of great renewal and growth in the local Church with the rapid mushrooming of Lusaka and the Copperbelt with all the élan and enthusiasm of the newly gained freedom.

While he became a Zambian citizen at Independence, he felt strongly that the bishop of the capital city should be a Zambian. He kept up the pressure on Rome and his resignation was finally accepted in 1969 with the appointment of Emmanuel Milingo as archbishop. Adam was only 58 at the time.

Soon afterwards he started work as a 'normal priest' as he would say. He moved to the Monze diocese for a short time working at Chikuni and Chilalantambo. On his return to the archdiocese in 1976 he worked mostly at Chingombe in the Lukasashi River valley (1976-1988) and later at Mpunde (1993-2006) in Kabwe rural.

He served as the national director of the Pontifical Mission Aid Society and attended many of the local bishops meetings as well as the Synods of Bishops held in Rome from 1967 to 1982. In 1998 Pope John Paul II created him a cardinal. His final overseas journey was for the funeral of the Polish pope in April 2005.

In his later years his contribution to the Church and the country was recognized on a variety of occasions. In 1985 President Kaunda awarded him the Grand Commander of the Order of Freedom. A few years later, the Polish Government under President Lech Walesa, made him a Commander of the Order of Merit. In 2006 the French Government decorated him with the Order of the Legion of Honour. He also received two honorary doctorates: from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi in 2002 and from a university in Warsaw in 2007.