



Fr Gerald Brangan, S.J.
(1919-1978. In Zambia 1971-1974)

29 September 1978

Gerald Brangan was the last of a family of four boys and three girls who grew up in the town of Kells, Co Meath in Ireland. The boys took their secondary school education at Clongowes Wood College and it was there that Gerald's vocation developed. He liked cricket and tennis and played them well. But it was on the golf links of his home town, in the company of his favorite brother Paddy, that his proficiency in the game was most admired.

Gerald had difficulties with the study of humanities even though he was intelligent and endowed with excellent judgment and much common sense. So it was with some relief that he moved on to Tullabeg for philosophy. His years at Tullabeg were happy ones.

His regency years were spent at Belvedere College where he taught and had charge of the Junior Rugby and Cricket teams. These duties laid the foundation for many years of outstanding and distinctly priestly work among senior boys and other adults when, after tertianship, he returned to Belvedere as games master. He spent the greater part of his life in that post. During that time he was always approachable and helped many people by his advice and above all by his example.

Gerry was a priest and the work he did among footballs and cricket bats and referees' whistles was eminently priestly work. By his Christ-like gentleness and quiet winning manner he affected all with whom he dealt. After his time as games master, he returned to the teaching of religious knowledge to junior boys. This work must have been particularly difficult for one whose experience had been gained and talents exercised with much success among the older boys.

At this point in his life, he offered himself for a period of two years on the Zambian mission. Here again his kindness and gentleness won him many friends and endeared him to his parishioners. His work was pastoral, mainly in Roma parish, and a six month stint at the Sacred Heart parish in Kabwe. The warmth with which he was welcomed was a comfort to him. He felt very glad to be where he was wanted.

On his return to Ireland in 1974, he took up work in the diocese of Dublin. He was sent to a parish where the people understood him and he understood them. He also had the appreciation and sympathy of the parish priest. Steadfastly refusing to use a car, he walked every day through his district, visiting schools, making friends with children and teachers, chatting and sympathizing with everyone he met. He revived devotions in the parish where they had lapsed, in spite of discouraging beginnings.

A heart attack laid him low. Hospital treatment and a rest gave him another year's respite and he struggled on. At his funeral, a parishioner spoke the thoughts of many, saying "he radiated the gentleness of Christ and we all looked on him as a saintly soul".