

20 October

Fr ERIC KOTZKI

16 November 1903 – 20 October 1978



Eric Kotzki was born in the Free State of Danzig and this enabled him to travel to Africa even though it was war time. He entered the Society in 1928 and was ordained in 1936. He did some studies in England to prepare him for his tertianship in the United States and it was from there that he travelled to Rhodesia and Chishawasha in 1940. He was the last of the pre-war Jesuits and a pioneer of the Chinhoyi Mission. He was in Triashill in 1942 and St Barbara's in 1945. From 1946 to 1958 he was in Kutama with the whole Lomagundi area as his 'parish'. He would drive for a week along terrible roads or tracks. He wrote an account of his journey

to the Zambezi to fund a school at Chapoto beside the river in 1954 when he came across 'strange buildings, big porches, steps and pillars' which he recognised as the ruins of the Jesuit presence dating from 1735. He wrote of a old bell dating from that time which is 'still there in Milulu, near Zombo.' He wanted to build a mission there linking the modern missionaries to the time of Silveira but it proved impractical because of the shortage of water.

In 1958, he moved to Chikonyora Farm in what was then Sipolilo (now Guruve) and built a mission at St Bernadette. In 1970 he was at Maramba, near Murewa. In 1974 he moved to Kariba on the Zambezi. In 1978 he went as chaplain to Rothwell Farm, the novitiate at that time of the Marist Brothers where he stayed until his death that year.