



Fr Franciszek Tomaka, S.J.
(1882-1945. In Zambia 1926-1945)

27 October 1945

Franciszek Tomaka was born of Wojciech and Maria (nee Bores) in Trzebowiska-Rzeszow, east of Cracow in Poland on 16 August 1882. He entered the Society at Stara Wies in 1903 and stayed there for his two years juniorate. He studied philosophy in Nowy Sacz and his theology at Cracow and he was ordained in 1917 at Czechowice.

Soon afterwards he was appointed minister in Winlno (1918-1923) and superior in Nowy Sacz (1923-1925). He was energetic in the ministry. In 1926, when a candidate for the Lusaka Mission was unable to go, he was asked to replace him. Initially he was not very happy about it, but he soon overcame his reluctance and became a dedicated and enthusiastic missionary.

He spent most of his missionary life in Chingombe and worked assiduously both in the parish and in the surrounding schools, being continually on the move. He strenuously promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart in all his work.

As superior (1931-1939) he was careful to provide what was necessary, despite the remoteness of the mission and the difficulty of obtaining supplies. He helped in developing the school on the mission itself and in preparing the convent for the Sisters, even hiring forty carriers, at one stage, to bring materials from Kabwe.

In 1937 he visited Poland and participated in the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the Mission. He was invited to speak on the national radio about the occasion. He returned to Zambia before the outbreak of the Second World War.

In his last years, during the war, he was chaplain to the Polish refugees in Lusaka. He died of cancer at Kabwe, a month after hostilities ceased and it was noted that his death occurred on 27 October 1945, the vigil of the feast of Christ the King..