



**Fr Francesco Spartaco Ciccotti, S.J.
(1924-2022. In Zambia 1956-1965.
5 November 2022**

Francisco Spartaco Ciccotti was born on 18 February 1924 in Taranto, Puglia, Italy. After schooling, he entered the novitiate in 1939. After his juniorate from 1942-1945, he did his philosophy in Gallarate from 1945-1950. During his regency he took a doctorate in philosophy and literature in Lecce e Bari. He was ordained in Naples in 1953.

He was sent to Northern Rhodesia in 1956, partly to be a chaplain to the Italian community in the country. After a course in ChiBemba, he settled down to work in St Francis Xavier parish, Regiment, which was, at the time, the pro-cathedral. As chaplain he said Mass regularly for the Italian community and visited them occasionally. He soon produced a bulletin for them which was later printed as *Nuove Nazioni*.

He expended the rest of his great energy on serving the local Christians and working closely with teachers. Later in Kasisi, he would produce a newsletter for them *Talks with our Teachers*. His creative and dynamic personality often clashed with his fellow missionaries and with the Bishop, leaving a copious correspondence. To relieve the tension, he was transferred to Kasisi in 1962 but the problems continued to surface. He finally produced a detailed report in 76 pages entitled *Half Busoli* of all he was doing in the parish for whoever took over from him. He called it a day in 1965 and requested Pedro Arrupe, the General, for another mission. He was assigned to Brazil. On arriving he was advised to not to use his name CICCOTTI, as that was the word for a whip which had negative connotations for the ex-slave population. He chose to be called: Francisco Spartaco or Sparta.

On arrival in Brazil he was sent to the north where he was enthralled by the Afro-Brazilian culture. He later wrote a book about it *A Danca dos Orixos*. He requested to work in the southern part of the country around Sao Paulo where he was more accepted and where he could avail of the libraries of the local universities.

He became deeply involved in a project of translating into Brazilian *The bride and the groom* by Alessandro Manzoni, one of the most outstanding Italian novels of the 19th century. He lectured widely in different philosophy faculties and elsewhere on the social implications of the novel, which he claimed responded to the present day Brazilian society. The translation and his lecturing on the work, took up most of the rest of his time and energy.

He went into the retirement home in 2013 and died there on 5 November 2022