



**Fr Anthony Geoghegan, S.J.  
(1931-2015. In Zambia/Malawi 1957-2015)**

**15 November 2015**

Fr Geoghegan was christened as Anthony but was known throughout his life as Tony, an abbreviation that in many ways reflected his personality – compact, warm, company-loving, jovial, cheerful, always concerned for the good of others. Tony was 84 years old when he died. He had spent more than sixty-six of these years in the Society, fourteen of them in Ireland in Jesuit houses of formation, three as a scholastic in Zambia (or Northern Rhodesia, as it was called at the time, 1957 – 1960), and the remaining forty-nine in Zambia as a priest – from 1966 to the day of his death on 15 November 2015.

In 1966 Tony began his apostolic life as a priest in Zambia. He identified wholeheartedly with the new political independence and as soon as it was possible for him to do so, he renounced his status as an Irish citizen and became a Zambian citizen. He never regretted this step, remaining a Zambian citizen for the rest of his life.

Tony's apostolate in Zambia extended to three broad areas. He spent almost half of his years in the Province in education, as teacher, lecturer, spiritual director and chaplain – in Canisius, St Edmund's (Mazabuka), Mukasa (where he was headmaster), Charles Lwanga and the Copperbelt Secondary Teachers' College. A second great area was priestly formation, with a total of eighteen years being spent in Kachebere and St Dominic's seminaries as lecturer and spiritual director. The third phase in Tony's priestly life consisted of a few years in parish work in Kasungu, Bwacha and Kasisi. Finally four years at Chula House, enriching the community and praying with it for the Church and the Society.

His work in Kachebere and St Dominic's, the national seminaries of Malawi and Zambia, brought Tony great satisfaction and joy. To this work he courageously gave his all. Although not of a strongly academic turn of mind, he faced up to the responsibilities of this seminary work with enthusiasm and verve. Ever after, the seminarians and young priests that he had taught retained a special place in his heart and prayers.

In his personal life, Tony was always neat and methodical. It was the same in his apostolic life. He organised his work with meticulous care and was a model of clarity to his students. His classes were always well prepared, his presentations clear and logical, his homilies down-to-earth and to the point. He carefully corrected and diligently marked every assignment he gave. In his final years at Chula House, Tony set himself the task of learning chiShona so that he might be able to communicate with the novices who came from Zimbabwe.

Tony was simple, innocent, ready to look to somebody else for advice on what to do next, bustling in his eagerness to help, getting the best out of himself despite any limitations he might have experienced, courageously going out into new and unaccustomed areas, and totally dedicated to trying to do great things for the Lord. He was small in stature, but he always wanted to do big things for Christ.

Among his most outstanding characteristics were his friendliness, vitality and a resilient joy in life. He loved company and good fellowship. Always kind to others, he appreciated it when similar kindness was shown to himself. He prized his friendships, above all those with Luka Lucic and Emmanuel Kujur. To these he was indebted for outstanding support in times of loneliness and isolation and was never-failing in expressing his gratitude and appreciation. His presence was often signalled by his deep throaty laugh – he enlivened any group of which he was a member not just by his perceptive comments and wide understanding of an issue, but also by his great sense of humour and his ability to lighten

the conversation. Sometimes he showed his uninhibited disposition by an outlandish remark, followed by an impish smile as he looked round to see how it was being received. In his younger days Tony's very gait showed the liveliness of his temperament when he would bounce along, right arm flying and a broad smile lighting up his whole presence.

After four years at Chula House he spent some weeks in hospital. He passed away peacefully on 15 November 2015, following complications from a surgery.