



Fr Kieran Barry-Ryan, S.J.

(1929-2018. In Zambia 1954-1957)

17 November 2018

Kieran Barry-Ryan was born on 20 February 1929 in Cappaghwhile, Co Tipperary to Patrick and Josephine (Ryan) Barry-Ryan. He had three sisters. He went to school in the United Kingdom at St Augustine, Ramsgate and then at the Benedictine school of Downside. He afterwards did a year at the College of Surgeons, Dublin before entering the Society in 1947. After two years juniorate in Laval, France, and philosophy in Tullabeg, he was sent for regency to Northern Rhodesia (1954-1957).

It may not have been easy for Kieran that his companion during those early months was Liam Browne who became so highly proficient in the chiTonga language whereas, because of a kind of explosive way of speaking, he himself never really felt at ease in using it. But things improved for him when he was assigned to a teaching post in Canisius College. The Benedictine tradition that he brought with him from Downside, fitted in very well with his natural dispositions, enabling him to relate with schoolboys and young adults in a very hearty, directive and supportive way.

He was ordained at Milltown Park, Dublin in 1960. He taught religion at Bolton Street DIT in Dublin and was a member of the Gardiner Street community for many years. He was deeply involved in marriage and family ministry. He identified a great need for this work, helping to set up pre-marriage courses, writing the material for them, and training those who would give them. In 1971-1976 he became the director of Marriage Courses at the College of Industrial Relations (CIR). He lived in England from 1997 to 2013 where he continued his popular pre-marriage courses. He became known as a wise and kind presence to the many couples and families who were referred to him. Later, he was a chaplain to Emmaus Nursing home in Kent, England.

Dr Chris Curran, who is working on the Loyola Institute initiative, was a friend who remembers him as a person of good fun and laughter, a very good bridge player, a golfer, fluent in French, someone who worked very well with groups and who loved an argument.

He returned to Gardiner Street community in 2013 and spent his last four years in Cherryfield Lodge nursing home, Dublin, where he prayed for the Church and the Society. He died in St Vincent's Hospital on 17 November 2018, while being surrounded by his family and friends.