



Fr Peter Hannan, S.J.

1934-2023

(In Zambia 1961-1978)

7 December 2023

Peter Hannan was born in The Ward, Co. Dublin on 21 August 1934. He was the second youngest of seven children. He went to school at St Mary's College, Dundalk and later at Clonliffe College, Dublin. He entered the novitiate at Emo in 1957. He went straight to Philosophy in Tullabeg and then was sent to Northern Rhodesia for regency from 1961-1964. He did his theology at Milltown Park, Dublin.

After his ordination in 1967 he went to study the Pedagogy of Language at St Bede's College, Manchester in 1968-1969, before returning to Canisius College in Zambia. After tertianship at Colombiere, Detroit, he returned to Canisius (1973-1976). He studiously produced some students' books for Religious Education for each of the Junior years. He spent some years teaching in Kitwe (1976-1978) while doing some retreat work.

Peter had a great interest in growing things, especially flowers and shrubs. During the years of his regency at Canisius he was in charge of the Young Farmers' Club there and brought it up to very profitable production levels. He also left Chikuni the legacy of the gmelina trees that line the main avenue – these he planted and tended with great care in their initial years.

However, he had a great desire to spend his time fully in retreat work and there was not really the possibility of doing this at the time in Zambia. He returned to Ireland in 1978 and was missioned to the retreat staff in Tullabeg. In 1985 he was assigned retreat work in Manresa where he was to spend the rest of his fruitful days. He was also Ecclesiastical Assistant for the CLC.

Over the years he developed and honed his skills in spiritual direction and became well-known for his quiet and spirit filled direction. He began to write of his experiences which he published in nine books, perhaps the best known was *Follow your dream*. He was never so content as when he was a guide teaching others in a greater awareness of the Spirit in their lives. He relished the search for the divine, seeking to understand one's own and other's stories through prayer, the use of Scripture and Ignatian know-how. Being a spiritual guide was very important to him.

Personally, he was a man who related comfortably with others, though not at any great depth. He could be somewhat remote but the joy he displayed at the successful completion of a community undertaking, or the sight of a rose bud in full bloom, showed another side of his character, something beautiful that was slowly coming to birth and now in God's loving kindness has blossomed in its fullness.

Fr. Peter Hannan SJ died peacefully in Dublin on 7 December 2023 at the Blackrock Clinic in the company of family members and Fr Willie Reynolds, superior of Manresa. His funeral mass took place at St Francis Xavier's, Gardiner Street on 11 December 2023. Peter was laid to rest in the Jesuit plot in Glasnevin Cemetery.