



Fr Apolinary Kraupa, S.J.
(1871-1919. In Zambia 1913-1919)

9 December 1919

Apolinary Kraupa was born on 17 April 1871 at Kozlow-Lwow, Galicia, Poland. He was educated in Tarnopol and entered the Society in Stara Wies in 1888. He did his philosophical studies at Tarnopol and Nowy Sacz from 1893-96. During his regency he was prefect in one of our larger colleges and then he went on to Cracow for theology where he was ordained in 1901. Shortly afterwards (1904-05) he was sent on a sensitive mission to Podlesie, White Russia where Catholic priests were forbidden to minister by law. He operated under the disguise of an artisan, but he was denounced and spent two months in prison in Lublin which resulted in difficult stomach problems that he never fully recovered from.

After he returned to Poland, he was appointed minister at Cracow and Stara Wies (1906-08) and then made rector in the latter community (1906-12). He was interested in going on the missions and prepared himself both academically by reading widely and by talking with as many of the returned 'exiles' from Mozambique that he could meet. He also acquired a good range of medical skills to be of service in Africa. Towards the end of May 1913 he arrived at Katondwe with Brs Leo Kodzynski and Adalbert Paczka. By 7 June he got together with Frs Merleau and Moskopp to discuss mission affairs and by 22 September he officially took over from the acting superior, Fr Baecher.

Kraupa was a clear-sighted energetic person, well read and prompt in action. He set out with his small band of men to firmly establish the new Luangwa mission by replacing the simple huts by buildings of brick and stone with the fine two storey houses of Katondwe and Kapoche. He developed a boarding school on the mission property which included a trade training section. With his small group he began to extend beyond the mission and set up three outstations. He had to come to a quick decision about acquiring Harrison Clark's farm at Chingombe in order to pre-empt the Methodists. He continued to offer his medical talents to all who came and began developing various cures of local ailments using relatively simple treatments. Between 1916-1917 over two thousand people were treated at the mission clinic, most of them probably by himself.

The mission was in rapid expansion but the outbreak of the First World War (1914) closed down access to men and money. Within a few years several men passed away in the full vigor of their youth: Br Zurek collapsed from a heart attack in 1917; both Frs Kraupa and Bulsiewicz passed away in December 1919; Fr Czarlinsky died of malaria on his way from Katondwe to Kasisi (1921) and the pioneer Moskopp died rather suddenly in 1923. The mission went into recession and it took a number of years before the personnel and finances were back again on track.

Fr Kraupa fell sick after an exhausting trip on the river, returning from answering a sick call in Feira. He was treated for malaria but by the time that they realized it was ciufa, an intestinal fungal disease, it was beyond control and he who had helped so many to health, himself passed away within two weeks on 9 December 1919

In his spiritual diary he noted at the end of his last retreat, 'The last page of this little book; perhaps, too, the last of my life. Come, Lord Jesus. Come, my Jesus and take me, for I love Thee more than words can say'.