



Fr Kevin Quinn, S.J.
(1930-1994. In Zambia 1963-1969)

9 December 1994

The word 'incisive' means 'sharp, clear and effective' and this word applies to Fr Quinn who was a brilliant student, a clear, talented teacher, had 'justice for all' as a driving force in his life and apostolate. He did not hesitate to stand up to authority in civil, ecclesiastical, religious, trade union and employer circles when he felt justice was at stake – 'even reducing the Rector or the Gregorian to tears over the way lay employees of that prestigious institution were treated.'

Fr Kevin was born in Limerick, Ireland, on 21 March 1917. He attended the Jesuit school, Crescent College and immediately afterwards entered the Society at Emo Park in 1933. The formation years of study matured him intellectually - university studies, philosophy, theology. He was ordained priest in Milltown Park, Dublin in 1947.

Before the end of 1949, he was called to prepare himself to be co-founder and lecturer in the recently begun Catholic Workers' College. He studied again at U C D where he obtained a Master's degree with first class honors in Economic Science and National Economics in 1951. With this under his belt, he was posted to Rome to the Gregorian University to lecture in Economics for twelve years. He hated Rome and held that his posting was a mistake as the letter summoning him to Rome was address to Pater Quint!

From 1963 to 1969 he lived in Lusaka, Zambia where he joined the Oppenheimer College (1963 -1965) lecturing in Economics and became Vice Principal. Later when the Oppenheimer became one of the founding institutions of the University of Lusaka, he moved there lecturing in Economics. In 1966 he was a member of The Commission of Enquiry into the Mining Industry 1966, Zambia's most important document yet on industry. He was considered to be 'one of Zambia's most respected and experienced arbitrators in labor affairs'. For his work he was awarded Officer of the Order of Distinguished Service by the President in 1966.

He returned to Ireland to the College of Industrial Relations (aka Catholic Workers' College) as director of studies and lecturer where he remained for twenty years.

He lived his life in a spirit of submission to the will of God, as he understood it, through the wishes of his superiors and day-to-day events He was a genuinely humble man with a spirit of detachment and availability. He shared his knowledge with the learned and the unlearned. 'Kevin possessed many social virtues which endeared him to those about him, especially his colleagues in a common enterprise. His loyal co-operation was very notable, likewise his' almost perpetual good humor and his ability to see both sides of a dispute and provide at times a Solomonesque solution which found acceptance'.

From 1986 to 1994 he was minister in our houses. His health began to fail and he died peacefully in Cherryfield Lodge on December 9 1994, aged 78 years.