

Fr Ladislaus Bulsiewicz, S.J.
(1879-1919. In Zambia 1912-1919)

16 December 1919

Ladislaus Bulsiewicz was on 25 May 1878 at Jaslo, Rzeszowskie, in the south east of Poland near the Slovakian border. He entered the Society at Stara Wies on 1 February 1879. He completed his theology at Cracow and was ordained there on 22 April 1905. He was inspired by the plea of Fr Jan Hiller, a Polish missionary in the Lower Zambesi Mission since 1884 and who made a strong appeal for volunteers in his country of origin. Fr Bulsiewicz asked to be sent to the African Mission and a few years afterwards in 1909, he headed for Mozambique in the company of Frs Wilhelm, Hankiewicz and Brs. Klopec and Uhlik.

Initially he was in Boroma but soon was sent to Lifidzi, the east of Angonia next to the Malawian border, under the energetic Fr Hiller. Although not of a robust constitution, he was a hard worker and quite gifted in languages. Within a short time he was deeply involved in the network of schools which in 1910 numbered already nine with 18 catechists and 2,000 catechumens who followed a four year program. He immediately set about composing a catechism but before he could print it, the Edict of Expulsion of 1910 was promulgated. Since he had only recently arrived and was more concerned with the local people and their languages, it was natural for him to think of moving across the Luangwa River and continuing his missionary work among related people.

He arrived in Katondwe in 1912 and between himself and Fr Lazarewicz developed what we might call a 'holy competition'. In their respective areas they both began to set up a network of primary schools which was the insertion for the preaching of the Gospel. For example, in the year of 1916 he visited each of his four outstations more than 30 times. Once again he set out to composed catechisms and readers, as well as translating many hymns and prayers into the local languages. In Mozambique this work was cut short by the Edict of 1910 and in Katondwe it was similarly arrested by his sudden death in 1919.

In early December 1919 Fr Kraupa contracted the dreaded ciufa and before it was diagnosed he was at death's door. He requested Fr Bulsiewicz to bring the letter of appointment he had written from his dying bed, to Chingombe to inform Fr Czarlinski that he was to take over the leadership of the Mission. However within a week of receiving the request, Fr Bulsiewicz himself passed away of the same ailment on 16 December 1919. There was a well known local remedy which was quite effective, provided the illness was detected in its early stages. With the rather poor medical facilities then available, the diagnosis was too late for both men. Fr Bulsiewicz was only 40 years of age when the Good Lord took him to himself, long before we would have planned it.

16 December

25 May 1879 – 16 December 1919

Fr. Ladislau BULSIEWICZ

He was born in Jaslo, Rzeszowskie, Poland on May 25, 1879 and entered the Society of Jesus on September 30, 1897. In 1909, he was sent to the Zambezia Mission (Mozambique), where he worked in the mission of Lifidzi. He took his final vows on February 2, 1910. In 1913, he was sent to a mission founded by the Province of Galicia in Rhodesia. He died on December 16, 1919, in Katóndue.

(Cf. *Catalogus Defunctorum in renata Societate Iesu ab a. 1814 ad a. 1970*).