



Fr Joseph P. Logan, S.J.
(1908-1981. In Zambia 1963-1969)

19 December 1981

Fr Joe was born of Irish parents in Seattle on 15 November 1908. His father died when Joe was quite young and so Joe helped out with a succession of jobs: paperboy, delivery boy and popcorn seller at the ball park. After finishing at Seattle College High School he entered the Society in 1925. For regency he went to Seattle Preparatory School from 1932 to 1935. He himself said that he 'was nutty about teaching'. He loved the classroom and the boys and the feeling was mutual. This love lasted all his life and he was always at home with the young. He had a subtle way of motivating them – he never appeared satisfied and they would be spurred on to do better.

He went for theology to Alma College in California and he was ordained in the Santa Clara Mission chapel on 15 June 1938. After tertianship he did five years hopping from one job to another: minister and socius in the novitiate in Sheridan, minister and teacher in Bellarmine High School, minister of the philosophate and minister at Seattle Prep. The minister's job always went against his grain. As he said, 'if I were the sort of minister the Institute expects me to be I would probably not rate very high with anybody'.

In 1945 still at Seattle Prep he became teacher again and the spiritual father to the boys. After seven years there, in 1952 he was sent to the Jesuit novitiate at Sheridan as rector for six years. He was moved again to be rector at Bellarmine Prep School in Tacoma for five years. 'He exercised authority somewhat obliquely... fidelity was up to the individual. His presence was enough and it meant a lot... Steady, solid, dependable, he had the temperament like some fathers of families, not showing a lot of affection but always there'.

With this temperament and experience and his love of teaching, at the age of 55 he accepted a call to go to Africa, Zambia, as rector of Mpima Minor Seminary in Kabwe. That was 1963, just a year before Independence. He had come to Zambia earlier in 1961 to have a look but picked up malaria resulting in blackouts and eventually hepatitis. While he was at Mpima for his six years in Zambia (1963-69) it became a center for the few Oregon Jesuits, scholastics and brothers. Running the high school seminary which was a boarding school as well, was not easy. However his bubbly, cheerful personality helped him. Shortage of money loomed large in those years, trying to make ends meet. Only a small percentage of the boys would have gone on to the major seminary. Fr Joe remarked at an interview later: 'but we train these kids as well as we can. We know that if they don't become priests, they'll still be well educated and contribute to the country in the business world or the field of education or in government'.

The minor seminarians respected Joe for his calm human insight. He was practical, balanced and fair in difficult situations. The workers and farm laborers loved him, for with them he was generous, fatherly and understanding. The bishops who sent boys to the seminary were tremendously impressed with Joe, expressing real satisfaction and trust'.

He returned to America to Seattle Prep as teacher but by 1974 he left teaching, for now he was 66 years of age. 'I love the actual teaching as such but got tired of correcting papers, making out examinations and the fringes'.

For his final seven years of his life he based himself at Seattle University but worked in a number of parishes, loving the pastoral work there. On 19 December 1981 Fr Joe was found dead in his room, of apparent heart failure, by his brother, Fr Frank. Many people came to his funeral 'to pay final tribute to the great-souled humble, man'.