

Spiritan Magazine

Volume 35
Number 3 *Summer*

Article 11

Summer 2011

Home and Away

Lucky Flanagan

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/spiritan-tc>

Recommended Citation

Flanagan, L. (2011). Home and Away. *Spiritan Magazine*, 35 (3). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/spiritan-tc/vol35/iss3/11>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Spiritan Collection at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spiritan Magazine by an authorized editor of Duquesne Scholarship Collection.

He found his niche and bloomed

Fr Conor Kennedy CSSp – b. August 7, 1936 in Cork, Ireland; d. July 9, 2011 in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

Locky Flanagan CSSp

On the death in South Africa of Fr. Conor Kennedy CSSp, a favourite expression of his comes to mind. “My-oh-my”. My-oh-my...what a character, an individual for sure, a once-born.

Conor left Edmonton for Malawi in the early 70’s, having left Ireland for Canada a few years previously. He gladly followed his heart’s desire and the request of his superiors, in departing for the “warm heart of Africa”. For the first couple of years he worked in southern Malawi and then took a circuitous route to find his niche. Not unlike the earliest French Montfort missionaries, he traveled half way up country (however he had four wheels) to Mtendere mission, a sprawling huge parish, straddling the Mozambican border.

Monsignor Lawrence Mangani, was *The Bambo Mfumu*, the elder, the pastor of Mtendere. He was among the first generation of Malawian priests. Conor quickly came to know and revere the Monsignor; he, in turn, nurtured Conor’s respect for the people of Malawi. In him Conor had a mentor; their relationship was akin to father and son.

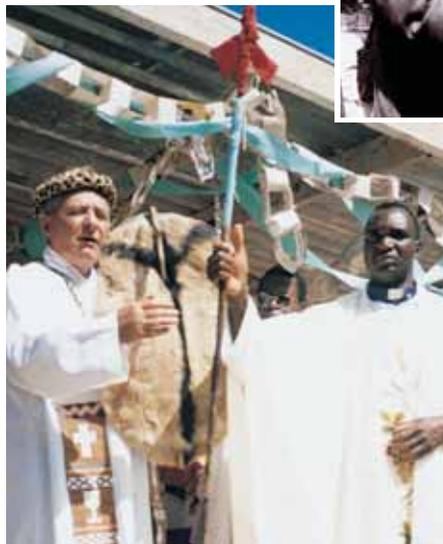
For many missionaries in far flung places their ministry is low profile and infrequently broadcast. Not Conor — on his tri-monthly visits to his southern confreres, he regaled them about the huge numbers of weddings, baptisms, funerals he did. His stories were taken with a certain amount of salt. However, as always with Conor, he had stories, and strong opinions re world and local news. He lived for arguments and strong discussions.

I always picture Conor in the shadow of Mgr Mangani — not preaching, just example. He imbibed a deeper understanding of “fatherhood”. Consciously or unconsciously he grew in understanding young people, as a father senses his growing family. He listened when approached by inquirers with their problems, hopes and dreams. He offered encouragement and hope.

He would meet with those who spoke of priesthood, advising them to explore the diocese and other Congregations so that the likely aspirant would reflect and deepen his resolve. To aspirants for the Spiritans in the years when we had no local formation set up, he would give some instruction on prayer, religious life, Spiritan charism and mentor those first



Top: Mr Bakili, President of Malawi, greets Conor Kennedy, dressed in his robe as Honorary Chief of the Ngoni tribe. Left: As an honorary Ngoni chief Fr Conor Kennedy presented the ceremonial spear and shield to Spiritan Fr Joao Luis Dimba on the day of his ordination.



searchers. He sourced funds to send them to the novitiate either in Tanzania or South Africa. Conor played a huge role in fostering our first generation of Spiritan priests from Malawi and Mozambique.

During the civil war in Mozambique, refugee camps dotted the frontier area. Nzama, was a border mission and Conor was not only *Bambo Mfumu*, he was also involved in advocacy work on behalf of the refugees.

Among the many who approached Conor for assistance, was John Dimba. Soon John was learning English and after three years he was reunited with his family in Mozambique. The memory of Conor’s untiring and dedicated service to the refugees and to the poor remained with John. In 1988 with aspirations of joining the Spiritans, he sought out Conor. In 1990 he submitted his application, and in 2002 he was ordained at Nzama, as the first Spiritan missionary from Mozambique.

It was truly a wonderful celebration with poignant moments, especially when Conor, as an honored Agoni chief, presented to the new priest the shield and spear of the Agoni tribe. Nzama, an Agoni stronghold, erupted into dancing and singing, ululating, clapping, cheers and joy.

Afterwards Fr John Dimba CSSp spoke: “My conviction to become a Spiritan was because I wanted to be as helpful to others, in a Spiritan way, as he was to so many suffering people that had been squeezed to society’s periphery.” ■

New Provincial Council



Bob Colburn



Paul McAuley



Francis Folleh



Alex Osei



Neal Shank

Renewal of commitment



John and Katie Flaherty, Brian and Gilorma Joel celebrate the renewal of their commitment as Lay Spiritans.

New pastors for St. Denis Parish

At the invitation of Bishop Gerard Bergie, Fr Nicholas Twumasi (Ghana) became Pastor and Fr Oliver Iwuchukwu (Nigeria) Associate Pastor of St. Denis Parish in St. Catharines, Ontario, on August 31, 2011.



Nicholas Twumasi



Oliver Iwuchukwu

TransCanada Jubilarians

60 years a priest



John Cunningham

50 years a priest



Dermot Doran



Francis Lavery

60 years a Spiritan



Patrick Doran



William McCormack

50 years a Spiritan



Joseph Kelly

25 years a Spiritan

Robert Colburn
Alexander Osei