

Bp. Bernard Martin **NGAVILIAU**
* March 1, 1917, Marangu, Moshi, Tanzania

+ June 26, 2005
Zanzibar

Bernard was one of seven children born to Kimanganu Martin Shayo and B. Leonarda (Lyimo) Shayo in Marangu, a flourishing parish of the Diocese of Moshi, in Tanzania on March 1, 1917.

Bernard wrote of his father's baptism, which was after the founding of the first mission in Kilimanjaro in 1899, that his father was the first in his country to receive the waters of baptism at age 13. His mother was baptized in 1909. He counts his own baptism in 1925 as one of the greatest moments in his life. He received his First Holy Communion and that day gave his self into the care of Our Blessed Mother and asked her to look after him.

After completing primary studies through the help of the Superior of Kilema Mission, V. Rev. Fr. Griffin, C.S.Sp., he was selected to be sent to St. Patrick's Teachers Training College in 1931. He attended high school at Singa Chini Teacher Training College, St. James Junior Seminary. Its first Principal was Spiritan Fr. J. Gilmore, C.S.Sp. Those five years were very happy for Bernard in spite of the fact that his father died during that time. Early in 1937 he decided to leave the college and enter the seminary at Kilema Chini where he completed his college studies.

In 1941 he began studies in the senior Seminary at Kibosho. He completed his priestly studies in the Major Seminary of Kibosho, in the Diocese of Moshi, and was ordained a priest on April 2, 1949. After ordination he was appointed as assistant priest to Mana Mission. Two years later he was appointed to the Cathedral Parish. In 1956 he entered the Novitiate of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Ireland and was professed in September 1957. Bernard was proficient in Chagga, Swahili, English and Latin. He earned certificates in Human Relations and Counseling. After exercising his priestly ministry in the parishes of Maua and of Kilema, he entered the Congregation and made his novitiate in Kilshane, Ireland (1956-57). He made first profession of vows on September 8, 1957 and final profession in Maua on September 8, 1960.

Following his novitiate, he returned to the Diocese of Moshi, to the parish of Mashati (1957-1963) and that of Mkuu (1968-1971); at the same time he was secretary to the Bishop and chaplain to the Sisters of Our Lady of Kilimanjaro.

From 1971 to 1973 he was the spiritual director of the regional Major Seminary of Kipalapala, Archdiocese of Tabora. He was named Administrator Apostolic of Zanzibar and Pemba on January 23, 1973. He became President of the Episcopal Commission for Ecumenism and in that position, he took part in a Congress held in Europe on Ecumenism and Pastoral Activity for Immigrants.

He spoke fluent English and had uncommon pastoral experience, particularly among Moslems.

On April 10, 1980, our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, announced the creation of the new Diocese of Zanzibar in East Africa and the appointment of Father Bernard Ngaviliau,

C.S.Sp., as its first Bishop. In June he was consecrated as Bishop of Zanzibar and Pemba. The new Diocese of Zanzibar comprised the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba (an island in the Indian Ocean about 25 miles north of Zanzibar), Tumbatu and Uzi, and had a total population of 470,000 people, most of whom were Moslems. Zanzibar was one of the earliest missions of the Holy Ghost Fathers in East Africa and the Congregation has been there working since 1860. There were about 5,000 Catholics at that time, and in 1978 there were 244 baptisms and 9 marriages, a small but active community living in the midst of a population of almost entirely all Moslems. There were three parishes and twenty mission stations, mostly situated from 20 to 50 miles away.

Bishop Ngaviliau, suffering with diabetes and poor eyesight, retired to Usa River Seminary in 199_. He assisted Archbishop Lebulu in Arusha when he was needed and worked with the Provincial Superior giving conferences to the seminarians in Usa after his retirement. His health deteriorated and his death occurred on Sunday, June 26, 2005. Mass of Christian burial was celebrated on June 30 with burial following at Usa River Seminary Cemetery.