

*May he rest in the light of Christ*

## FR. VEDASTUS OF EAP DIES IN BALTIMORE

— Fr. J. Kelly

Both Africa and America lost an outstanding young priest when our confrere, Fr. Vedastus Msilanga Babu, 38, passed away in Baltimore on October 12, 2006, due to complications arising from intestinal cancer. In April 2005, he had come from our Spiritan East African Province to serve as Chaplain to two schools - Seton Keough High School and the Cardinal Gibbons School for Boys - in Baltimore, and he came with a reputation of being loved by all whom he served and this standing continued to increase.

Fr. Vedastus was born in Tanzania near the shores of Lake Victoria at Kamunyonge in the Musoma Diocese on December 29, 1967 and studied at a local Primary School and Uru Seminary. He then entered the Usa River Junior Seminary in Tanzania in 1987 and in 1990 he started his studies in the nearby Spiritan Missionary Seminary in Arusha for Philosophy. After taking his religious vows in 1993 at our Novitiate at Magamba in the beautiful Usambaa Mountains, he took the first part of his Theology course in Tangaza College which is jointly run by the Spiritans, white Fathers and other Religious on the outskirts of Nairobi in Kenya, before doing his Pastoral Experience Program in Senegal and Guinea Conakry from 1995 to 1997. He then returned to Nairobi to finish his course in Theology.

Vedastus went back to his home diocese of Musoma to be ordained on July 8, 1999. He was then sent on his first assignment to the Mto Mbu (Mosquito River) Parish. In 2002 he became First Assistant to the Provincial and superior of the Spiritan House where I was living in Arusha. He had been my student when I taught Pastoral Communications in the seminary and now he was my superior, but everything went very smoothly. Spiritan House is around the corner from where the Rwanda massacre trials have been taking place. In 2005 he became the Formation Director in the Spiritan Postulancy high on a cliff overlooking the Shrine of the Uganda Martyrs on the shore of a delightful little lake. He was not able, though, to stay long because his intestinal cancer was becoming more serious.

### Cancer

However, after surgery in East Africa and chemotherapy, he improved sufficiently to fill the need for his service in 2005 as Chaplain to the two schools in Baltimore, the city where the first Holy Spirit Father in the United States, Fr. Moranville, had taken up pastoral work around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, over 200 years ago. Unfortunately, the condition of Fr. Vedastus soon became worse and he had to go to the Baltimore St. Joseph Medical Center which specializes in cancer, but he passed away at noon on October 12, 2006. The Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore, some 20 African and American priests, a Kenyan Swahili Choir and a lady from Fr. Vedastus' home village who was in the States, and many of his new friends attended his funeral mass in his local parish. His confrere, Fr. Dominic Gathurithu, who is now in Detroit but who had worked with him in Tanzania, gave the homily. His body was then flown back to Tanzania where his burial mass was concelebrated by Archbishop Josaphat Lebulu of Arusha and a great number of priests at Usa River. The body of Fr. Vedastus was then buried there in the Usa Spiritan cemetery.



**Rev. Vedastus Babu, CSSp**  
Dec. 29, 1967 - Oct. 12, 2006