In Deo
Kees Zonneveld
(Cornelis Maria)

By Wim Swüste FIC



Kees was born on 25 January 1931 in Haarlem, the Netherlands. He made his profession to the FIC on 15 August 1951. On 14 November 2021 he died at De Beyart care home in Maastricht.

We just heard from the Gospel according to Luke that Jesus sent 36 couples to do reconnaissance work for his mission of peace and justice. Two by two, appointed by Jesus.

The Disciples were given a clear message. Instructions on what to do if the reception was good or not good, what to take for luggage, instructions to link to what others had to offer. It was very clear. The couples sent on mission had been given strict rules.

The instructions Kees had been given at the start of his mission we heard from the lecture of the Constitutions of the Brothers FIC. Kees took those instructions to heart. And when recently he celebrated his 70-year jubilee, he repeated his mission statement again:
total availability,
permanent readiness to work
with the people around him,
be well-prepared, and
make your own wishes subordinate to those of others
for whom and with whom you work,
and continue your formation.

In his mission to Malawi, which continued for more than forty years, he carried out his assignment very well. To tell the truth, he was rather proud of having had the strength to do that. We, his relatives and fellow Brothers, can only feel respect for that. That is why we feel Kees has earned his praise. And the Eternal One will surely support us in this.

Kees spent his youth in Haarlem, and went to school with the Brothers. In the sixth form, his teacher was Bro. Edwinus. And Edwinus was a good finder of callings for our congregation. In September 1943, Kees and four others from his class went to the FIC prep school in Simpelveld. At home, there was poverty, and due to the war they had to eat flower bulbs and sugar beets, there was nothing else to be had.

Recently Kees told us he had really enjoyed his time in the noviciate: “We had a great group. Almost no one left the congregation and I’m happy to say there are four of us left to celebrate our 70-year jubilee.”

On 5 January 1963, Kees with George van de Leur and Hortensius Meeuws leave for Nyasaland in Africa. He is to work as a teacher at the teacher training college in Maryview. He teaches mathematics. Together with the students, he prepares teaching aids for the children at primary school. His first years there are difficult, because of riots. The country is working toward independence and chooses a new name, Malawi.

On his arrival, Kees is appalled at the terrible poverty and misery among the population. “But,” he says later, “the people and the children were friendly and kind, it was fantastic!”

With anthropologist Father John Schoffeleers, he records the habits and customs of the local populations. He develops the pictures in his own darkroom, and they are used for a book. “It gave me a better insight into the people and culture in this beautiful country.”

In the mid Sixties, Kees is asked to study theology at Berkeley University in the US. He gets his Masters and goes on to teach at the Grand Seminary at Zomba, Malawi, training some 75 future priests. He looked back on that work with great pleasure.

Kees also works for his fellow Brothers in many ways. He becomes provincial treasurer and goes to international FIC meetings on that score. Meanwhile, his physical condition is not getting any better. On leave in the Netherlands, he has to postpone his return several times and eventually he and his superiors decide it will be better for him to return permanently to the Netherlands.

On 3 May 2004, he becomes a member of our community in Rotterdam, after having said goodbye to his beloved Malawi and its people. “Fantastic people to work for, and with!” When the Rotterdam community closes up he moves to Maastricht and joins the Bernardus community. He is a loyal and faithful member of his community and is brave about his decreasing health.

When we here in this chapel look back on his life among us, we do so with a sense of great respect. Kees was a man who clearly put his many talents at the service of others. He was a very kind person to his relatives and to the congregation, someone who bore disappointments patiently, A man who managed to shape his calling as a religious in an excellent way. He enjoyed life and we enjoyed his company.

As a theologist, he taught his students about life and death. He could tell them with complete faith that as human beings we live in a temporary home, on our way to a radiant new life near our Creator.

In the announcement of his death there is a quote from Pope Pius XII: “who has taught many the sense of justice will shine like a star in the heavens.“

Last night, looking out of my window, I saw a very beautiful star in the sky. “Kees, I think you’re doing fine” was what went through my mind then.

he looked back on his work with great pleasure



Together with others

(lecture during the funeral service)

On the occasion of celebrating his 70-year jubilee, Bro. Kees told us what had been the guideline for his life as a Brother FIC:

> Live as the congregation asks of you
> together with others
> and make yourself as useful as possible
> as a fellow Brother.

These guidelines are found in the Constitutions of our congregation. We now read to your those specific articles.

In our apostolic dedication we are expected to work in whatever way and place the Congregation, through our authorities, requests of us, also when the request is counter to our desires, preferences, or judgments. This maybe extremely difficult, but as religious we make ourselves available, to the full.

Total availability further entails, that we readily pursue co-operation with others; as when employed out-side our Congregation; and again in subordinate posts.

Total availability demands of each of us that we should develop in as fitting and harmonious a way as possible. Not only during our formation years, but continuously throughout our lives. Whoever makes himself available in an apostolic Congregation should ensure that he makes himself as useful as possible.

The policy of the Congregation as a whole should also be marked by concern for continuous formation and development.



Brothers gathered during a GC visit to Malawi in 1991. Kees Zonneveld third on the right

For more images from the life of Bro. Kees we refer you to the interview published in our previous issue (digital version available from the editors)

During the jubilee celebrations on 15 August 2021. Kees in the chapel with two members of the FIC Team, Bernadette and Wilma



Prayers

Let us, at this goodbye to Bro. Kees,
in deep faith, put our questions
to the Lord of the living and the dead.
May Bro. Kees, after his life of service
to the people in Malawi and in the Netherlands,
be raised up to the place of eternal peace.
Let us pray.

May his efforts, in particular
among the youth and among student priests,
be not in vain,
and may all of them contribute
to the education and spiritual care
of the people of Malawi.
Let us pray.

May the world leaders of this day
realize that the people of the African continent
are suffering the most
under the heavy burden of the COVID pandemic
and may they be willing to be generous
and let all share in the means to fight the virus.
Let us pray.

Faithful God,
You have created us and asked us
to follow in the footsteps of your Son Jesus,
in good times and in difficult times.
We look forward with longing to peace
and a good life for all of us.
We ask You this
on the intercession of Mother Mary,
our faithful Patroness.



At the funeral of Bro. Kees Zonneveld only few could attend. So here we give some images of the services.



Because of the COVID measures, the Beyart chapel was not available for the funeral masses of the Brothers who died. So we used the historical building, part of the ancient Cell Brothers Monastery in Maastricht which had been founded in 1350. In 1940, the remains of the monastery became the property of the FIC. Three of the four original cloister wings were taken down in that year for reasons of structural instability. Between 1963 and 1966, the chapel and remaining parts of the cloisters were extensively restored.







In 1966, the chapel was re-dedicated as a church, and used for weddings and other formal occasions. In 1975 the FIC received an city award for the restorations and in 1995 the building was handed over to a special foundation.

