

## Fr. McLoone, Mill Hill Missionary

*(Irish Independent, Spectator column, 19<sup>th</sup> October 1942)*

The letter came from Uganda – in fact, the exotic postmark said ‘Jinja’ – and it had only taken months to find its way from the steaming jungles of darkest Africa to the autumnal drizzle of Dublin. It was neatly typed, with a P.S. in a quick, alert handwriting. I found myself fingering it on my desk. A letter for a paragraph? A letter for an epic song or a great play!

It was from the ‘Wee Donegal Priest’ as many Dubliners still remember sturdy young McLoone, who from his native village came to Dublin to be apprenticed in the drapery trade, and who served his time here in a well-known Dublin warehouse. Later in life came his vocation for a greater task, for wider horizons; he began studying for the priesthood and was ordained at Mill Hill, near London, for that, largely, Anglo-Dutch Missionary Congregation which Cardinal Vaughan founded, and which Bishop Biermans brought to such phenomenal growth.

For thirty-one years the ‘wee Donegal priest’ has been encased in the ebony heart of Africa, working among the lepers and is chaplain there still of the populous leper camp at Nyenga. He has grown bald; tropical sun and hard toil have whitened his remaining hair, darkened the patina of his skin. Only the dark Irish eyebrows have resolutely refused to be changed. He must be well on in his sixties now, has recently been ill again, a month of fever, through which the Irish nuns nursed him day and night.

But it is not on such gossip that his letter dwells, it is of a Corpus Christi procession in the camp, of a leper choir, of “all the lepers who could walk in the procession”. One looks with reverence at the personal relics of great men – and I felt awed over this ordinary little letter before me. For it betrays so simply eloquently the grandiose, never ceasing heroism of those very great ordinary men: our missionaries.

## Fr. William Wheatley Mill Hill Missionary

*Uganda Herald, Obituary synopsis, 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1944*

Very Reverend Fr. William Wheatley Mill Hill Fathers was born at Emo, Portarlinton, Co. Laois, in 1887. He studied at Freshfield, Liverpool and then at St Joseph’s College, was ordained and arrived in Uganda 1912. He began teaching at Nyamilango High School, and, in 1921 became manager of Catechist’s School, Nazigo, Bugerere County. In 1926 he was appointed Consulter to the Vicariate authorities and in 1928, Rector of Nyenga Seminary. In 1938 he became Society Superior in Uganda, Vicar Delegate and Secretary. He was killed in a motor bike collision with a lorry. Funeral mass was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Aug 1944