

Canon Ezra Moved to Mundri

A Report by Bishop Bismark Avokaya

“Here in the diocese of Mundri we had proposed since last year, that the remains of the late Canon Ezra Baya Lawri (whose statue was installed at Salisbury Cathedral in 2008) was to be exhumed from Rokon and reburied in Mundri. I had constituted a committee to plan and work out the details for this. Hence based on our work plan the team from Juba and Mundri travelled to the Diocese of Rokon on April 1st, where we spent the night. The following day, on GOOD FRIDAY, we dug and exhumed the bones! We had short prayers there at Rokon Parish Church and then drove to Mundri.

Canon Ezra originally came from Lanyi Village and on arrival at Lanyi we found a lot of people waiting beside the road to pay their last respects and prayers. As we continued we arrived at Lui and the Bishop of Lui had previously arranged that the coffin be taken into the Frazer Cathedral in Lui. This is because Canon Ezra was made a deacon at Lui Parish before he was priested and taken to Mundri Parish.



Later, on arrival at Mundri, the coffin was taken to his home estate for his wife to see before taking it to the Cathedral for the night and reburial the following day. One could wonder why exhume on GOOD FRIDAY? This was because he was killed on GOOD FRIDAY in 1991 and the family felt the remains should be exhumed likewise!!

On April 3rd, we had a special service for the reburial from 10.35 to 5 pm!! The Archbishop came to Rokon on April 1st and stayed with us for over three hours or so and went back to Juba as he was to preach for Easter. As he had to return to Juba, he assigned Bishop Francis of Rokon to represent him at the reburial. Bishop Francis came with his dear wife, Linda, a number of clergy and Christians about 25 people.

Following the reburial the builders continued with the building and decoration of the grave.”



**CANON EZRA BAYA LA. BORN IN 1917
WENT TO THE GLORY. ON 29 MARCH 1991**

**IN THE LOVING MEMORY OF CANON EZRA.
A DEDICATED SERVANT OF GOD, SCHOLAR, BIBLE
TRANSLATOR AND COUNSELLOR. KILLED IN
CROSSFIRE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT SOLDIERS AND
SPLA ON GOOD FRIDAY IN ROKON, ON 29, 3, 1991.
REBURIED ON 03, 4, 2010 IN MUNDRI
IN THE PARISH HE ESTABLISHED.**

**"I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED
THE RACE AND HAVE KEPT THE FAITH."**

2 TI

CANON EZRA BAYA LAWRI (1917 – 1991) - A Brief History

In 2008, the 35th anniversary of our partnership with the Church in the Sudan was celebrated in the presence of the Sudanese Bishops with the unveiling of a sculpture of Canon Ezra on the west front of Salisbury Cathedral.

Why was Canon Ezra chosen to be remembered in this way ?

1917 Ezra was born.

1920 First missionaries arrive in Lui by boat up the Nile. Ezra was one of the first pupils to attend a new missionary school, when they were set up.

1934 Baptised Ezra after the Old Testament prophet.

1946 Ordained deacon.

1947 Ordained priest. Did pastoral work in Lui, and founded the new parish of Mundri.

1951 New Testament in Moru published. Ezra had been part of the translation team.

1956 Appointed Vice-Principal of Bishop Gwynne Theological College in Mundri. Ordinands came from across the Sudan, and many became leaders of the Episcopal Church in Sudan.

1965 College destroyed by Government army. Ezra (now the Principal) and his students escaped on foot to exile in Uganda. While in exile, he began translating the Old Testament into Moru.

1973 Returned from exile and remained in Mundri for the rest of his life and worked on the completion of the Moru Bible.

1991 Good Friday with his wife Hanna and two of his daughters, Canon Ezra was in a large party being forcibly conducted by Sudanese government soldiers between Mundri and Juba. They were caught in crossfire between the Government soldiers and an attacking contingent of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army. Among the forty killed were the saintly Canon Ezra and his daughter Cecilia.

Contact: Sudan Secretary

Email: sudan.secretary@salisbury.anglican.org

Tel: 01722 411922 01722 411922

Fax: 01722 411990

Web Link: <http://www.salisbury.anglican.org>