

Rev. Mag. Dr. Martin Mluanda

Rev. Mluanda came to Austria in 1969/1970 and in the same year he took up his studies at the University of Vienna. He completed a studies programme in Anthropology and African Languages in 1975 and presented his doctoral thesis on "Customs and traditions of the Zigua People in Tanzania".

After he had finished his PhD, he specialised in Religious Studies dealing mainly with interconnections between Ancestry worship in Africa and the worship of Saints in Christianity. His work was conceived as a step towards a deeper inculturation of Christianity in African societies.

Being a member of the Institute for African Studies since the early seventies as a student and at the same time as a teaching assistant, he became lecturer for Swahili in 1988. Since then he constantly worked as a part time teacher for our Institute.

Rev. Mluanda was a carefully and scholarly working expert in his field. He successfully contributed to a deeper understanding of religious and social phenomena through an intercultural approach based on a deep understanding of both an African and a Western world. His contribution to a better comprehension of cultures was not only a scientific one but equally the result of his personal way of life giving an example to members of both cultural communities.

In teaching, he showed much understanding and patience for those, struggling hard with their newly acquired language competence. Being efficient and strict, he at the same time never lost his sense of humour and his interest in good human relations. To his colleagues he was a sensitive partner and a sympathetic listener. We all appreciated his ability to say the right words in the right place and to make difficult things becoming easy.

For some of us who worked with him for long years, he was not only a generous colleague but a personal friend. Through his early death the University of Vienna lost a most honourable scholar and teacher. We lost a friend.