

## OBITUARIES

## Fr. Dr. Joseph Ambrosoli

With this writing I would like to remember Dr. Joseph Ambrosoli, a Verona missionary priest who died in Lira, Uganda, on 27 March 1987. Dr. Ambrosoli will long be remembered for his deeply human personality, free availability to his patients, and for his competence in the field of surgery. These were gifts that he generously shared throughout his years of service to leprosy patients.

In the early 1950s, Dr. Ambrosoli founded the hospital of Kalongo in a very isolated area of northern Uganda. Over the years he developed this hospital into an institution which was well known and appreciated in the whole of Uganda as well as bordering countries. Even though simple in its construction, the hospital was equipped for virtually any type of pathology. It was perhaps best known for the ability of Dr. Ambrosoli to successfully perform almost any kind of surgery and for the nursing care and charitable attention given to the patients by the missionary sisters working there. Dr. Ambrosoli served as a true model of Christian service to his fellow man at this hospital.

Today there are many discussions dealing with integration of leprosy patients into general hospitals. In Kalongo, thanks to Dr. Ambrosoli, this has been a reality since the early 1950s. Dr. Ambrosoli, who specialized in tropical diseases at the School of Tropical Medicine in London, knew very well that leprosy patients were not a significant danger for other patients. Through him, leprosy patients were accepted, examined and, if necessary, admitted to the hospital according to their medical problems. In those years, the fear of leprosy resulted in discrimination in many hospitals; in Ka-

longa, leprosy patients could be seen among the general population in the medical and surgical wards.

Besides integrating leprosy patients into general hospital care, we are grateful to Dr. Ambrosoli with regard to surgery. Willingly and freely, Dr. Ambrosoli did all types of surgery in leprosy patients, including those operations relating specifically to the disease. Many patients owed him their ability to use their hands and feet once more, and many have been spared the disability caused by neuritis. In the innumerable operations he performed for osteomyelitis and septic ulcers, Dr. Ambrosoli was always extremely careful to eliminate as little tissue as possible in order to save as much of the limb as possible. In his typical caring way, he was very attentive to the psychological needs of his patients, performing reconstructive surgery whenever needed.

A very special debt is owed to Dr. Ambrosoli for coming to the aid of two missionary leprosy centers in a very critical moment. In order to enable these two centers to remain open, he sent them the proper medical supervision needed from his own hospital. Through his deep concern, the new physician and the specialized sisters were able to give qualified service to their leprosy patients. It should also be remembered that in those centers the patients were encouraged to live together in spite of the fact that they came from different tribes, thus learning to accept and respect each other.

Dr. Ambrosoli will long be remembered among those who have done a great service to leprosy patients.

—Dr. P. Donini