

KESTER (van) (Wim) (Kwintsheul, the Netherlands, 1.2.1906 - Oosterbeek, the Netherlands, 7.4.1989). Son of Jan and Van den Berg, Barbara.

Wim van Kester was ordained secular priest for the diocese of Haarlem on May 25, 1929, and appointed curate at Heiloo, near Alkmaar. In 1931 he became curate at Rotterdam. In 1933 he decided to become a missionary. He went to Mill Hill for a year of probation and took his missionary oath on September 13, 1934. He then was appointed to the Apostolic Prefecture of Basankusu in the former Belgian Congo. From 1935 onwards, he often had to undertake primitive journeys in his capacity as Inspector for Education. He also performed the task of procurator and for a time was vicar to Mgr. Wantenaar. In 1950 he became parish priest of Mompono. When he received a telegram in 1952 informing him of his appointment as vicar apostolic of Basankusu, he asked in bewilderment: "Don't they ask a person first?" He was consecrated Bishop at Poeldijk on October 11, 1952, the feast of the Maternity of Our Lady. Back in the Congo he blessed the new minor seminary on August 15, 1955. He always tried to set solemnities on the feast days of Our Lady. After the dark years of the struggle for independence and the riots at Simba, he erected a large statue of Our Lady of Beauraing in front of the Cathedral along the main road as a thanksgiving and a prayer to the Mother of God for protection. He always took the greatest care for the well-being of his priests, brothers and sisters. It was a heavy blow to him when some of his missionaries were killed. Another blow was that, during these years of unrest, many young missionaries, destined for his diocese, were appointed to other mission territories because of the uncertain situation in Zaire. When in the early seventies, ecclesiastical difficulties were made by politicians and he himself became the victim of anti-propaganda, it went too far for him. He retired, first to Antwerp and afterwards to "Vrijland" in Oosterbeek.

Date (?)
W. Mol.