

Zambian president expresses sorrow at bishop's death

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ZAMBIA, Lusaka -- Zambian President Rupiah Banda, who for years was criticized by retired Bishop Paul Duffy, expressed sorrow upon hearing of the bishop's Aug. 23 death.

Bishop Duffy died of leukemia at the Oblate retirement home in San Antonio. He was 79.

Bishop Duffy, who served in the Diocese of Mongu for 14 years, was known for criticizing the Zambian government for neglecting the needs of poor people.

In a letter to the Zambia Episcopal Conference, Banda said he still remembered the conversation he had with Bishop Duffy when he visited the clergyman at his house in the rural district of Mongu, in western Zambia. He said that even though he differed with the bishop on some issues, he was a very intelligent person.

"The ... government and I are deeply sorry about this loss, and we wish you and the Catholic Church leadership in Zambia God's grace and strength as you handle the various pressures that arise out of this extremely difficult development," the president said.

Paul Francis Duffy was born July 25, 1932, in Norwood, Mass. He was ordained an Oblate priest Dec. 22, 1962. He received his philosophy degree from the Oblate College in Washington, D.C.; a master's in communications from Baylor University; and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Notre Dame.

He traveled to Zambia in 1984 and served as parish priest in the Catholic parishes of Lukulu and Kalabo until 1997. He was ordained as the first bishop of Mongu Diocese Aug. 31, 1997.

Bishop Duffy served as Zambia's delegate to the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa.

He retired in February and officially handed over the diocese in May.

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