

19 January

Fr FRANCIS XAVIER ROGERS

25 April 1893 – 19 January 1965



Born in Accrington, NW England, FX (as he was known) dropped out of school at thirteen, but still managed to enter the novitiate as a ‘late vocation’ at eighteen! His companions found him ‘great fun’ as he ‘could tell stories against himself and laugh.’ He was a trained singer and was a choirmaster wherever, even teaching the schoolchildren at St Benedict’s, Chiendambuya (see picture below), plain chant.

In 1929 he was at St Aidan’s where he stayed until 1933 when he went north to Driefontein, Kutama, St Benedict’s and Monte Cassino. Everywhere he made friends and was known as ‘a great community man’. He moved the buildings at St Benedict’s to higher ground as malaria was prevalent there. The picture below shows his new dormitories for the boys. There were similar ones for girls and a convent for the sisters. He also constructed a dam.

But his health began to suffer and he returned to England in 1936 going to Stonyhurst where his musical skills led to invitations to the Hallé Orchestra under Sir Malcom Sargent, and later Sir John Barbirolli, to the college. He moved to Wimbedon parish in 1947 where a detailed description of his conducting was written: he was an ‘exciting, exacting, mercurial and lovable choirmaster.’ He was also a popular confessor for small boys. After a time at St Aloysius’, Oxford, he returned to Stonyhurst where he died.

