

21 January

Fr JOHN MANSSY

23 October 1859 – 21 January 1937



St Pierre Chandieu, Isère, France, was the birthplace of John Manssy and he attended the nearby Jesuit Apostolic School at Dôle. He entered the Society in Mariendaal, Holland in 1880 and in 1884 we find him at Dunbrody doing philosophy. He taught at St Aidan's for a while and then started theology at Dunbrody in 1889. It was Dunbrody's finest hour (9 priests, 17 scholastics and 13 brothers) as a scholasticate – and its last. It folded and became a mission – and ostriches replaced scholastics.

Manssy continued his theology in Oña, Spain, and was ordained in 1893 by the Archbishop of Seville. He did brilliantly in theology but returned to Dunbrody to teach at a basic level. The photo shows him with his students in 1902. He was devoted to them and they to him. He continued to teach them until 1922 when his health began to fail. He moved to St George's, Salisbury, and then to Empandeni, Embakwe, Driefontein and finally Chishawasha in 1934. His mind began to give way and he suffered from illusions and abstained from the sacraments. He became restless but towards the end he became more peaceful and returned to sacraments. He liked discussion and argument. His 'social contentiousness was a great help to him as teacher. His aim was to draw out the critical faculty in his pupils.'