

25 January

Fr CYRIL KILROE

30 November 1901 – 25 January 1942



Cyril Kilroe was born in Preston, NW England, and seems to have disliked school though he won a prestigious French prize which was presented by the French Ambassador. He joined the novitiate in 1923 and was ordained in 1936. The following year he left for Africa and worked in Driefontein, Hama, Mhondoro and Chishawasha.

He was ‘indefatigable’ with three or four week treks from the mission, sometimes by lorry, sometimes by foot. He visited the homes, taught and celebrated the Eucharist, supervised the schools and the teachers and dealt with disputes and problems. The writer of his obituary describes his, and many others’, day:

‘Hot and dusty, poorly fed, he plods on bumping over the veldt, fording rivers or ploughing through mud. The vehicle can break down or get bogged in a hidden morass and one can lose direction in the confusing sameness of the country and be caught in the quickly falling dark.’

His health could not take it and the doctor ordered him to Grahamstown. He ‘felt this acutely’ but does not seem to have known how ill he was. David Dryden tells us that ‘while he was giving a retreat to the Assumption sisters, one of the sisters who was a trained nurse, went to the Superior and said, “That man is dying!” And so it turned out.’ He was aged just 40.