

7 February

Fr FRANCIS KEATING 28 December 1899 – 7 February 1972

Born in Liverpool, Keats, as he was called, was educated at the Jesuit college there, St Francis Xavier. He joined the Society in 1916 but his novitiate was interrupted by the war and he had to serve for the last six months before finishing in 1919. He taught at Mount St Mary's and Wimbledon during regency and was ordained in 1932.



He went S Rhodesia and served in Triashill and St Joseph's Hama but in 1937 we find him back in the UK at Glasgow. It is hard to find a word in the archives about his time in Africa.

He shone as a chaplain in the Royal Air Force during WWII and he was noted for his consistent good humour and sense of fun. When a prospective convert from Anglicanism said he struggled with papal infallibility, Keats said, 'Oh, born Catholics don't worry over-much about that sort of thing' and put the man at his ease.

He later taught at Preston and served on the parish at Richmond and his 'easy approachable manner' was noted. The record seems to hint that he was considered by some Jesuit companions to be rather too free and easy and even lazy. 'One cannot say he was very energetic. He was placid, even lethargic.'