

5 April

Br THOMAS MORLEY

25 November 1879 - 5 April 1923



Born in Armagh, Northern Ireland, Thomas Morley seems to have worked on his family farm or other farms for some years before finding his way to the Jesuit novitiate in England in 1914 when he was 35. He lived for only nine years as a Jesuit but he has eleven pages devoted to him in *Letters and Notices*. After vows he worked on the novitiate farm for four years and one who saw him at work said, 'it was an inspiration to see him digging in the

garden or scything in the meadow.' His watch word seems to have been 'Thoroughness.'

He arrived in Empandeni in 1921 and again worked on the farm before being transferred to the newly acquired farm at Kutama the following year. He made a big impression at Kutama in the short time he was there. He toiled with the men and when they tried to restrain him, he said, 'My time is short.'

But he never made allowances for Africa and drank water from the streams and exposed himself to the sun. One day in March 1923, he walked from Kutama Siding to the mission and within a few days was seriously ill with typho-malaria. They nursed him as best they could but he grew worse. Fr Loubière anointed him and he got great consolation from this. 'How silly', he said, 'to wait until a sick man is at his last gasp before anointing him.' He seemed to welcome death with extraordinary joy. A converted *n'anga* was by his bedside and commented, 'Now I know what Christian charity is. Brother only thought of others – never of himself.' He was deeply troubled for some hours before he died but then he was at peace. The Christian community was all around him and, when he died, they begged Loubière to leave the coffin open until the funeral so that they could gaze on him.

There were stories of jackals howling all round the mission during his last days and this caused disquiet among some of the people but Loubière remained silent.