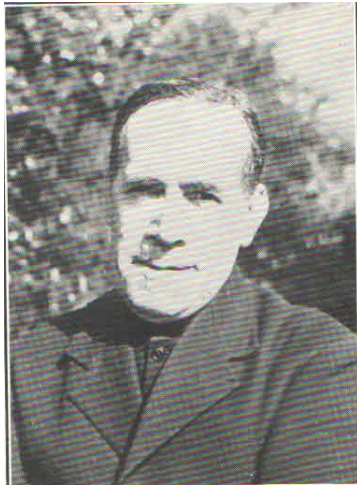


19 April

Br DANIEL SHIELDS

22 August 1877 – 19 April 1940



Daniel Shields was born and grew up in Raphoe, Donegal, Ireland, and left for Glasgow, aged eighteen, never to return. But he always remembered where he came from and celebrated Ireland in his poems:

The bog-lands! The bog-lands!
The home where I was born,
The little farm where ready hands
Were busy ere the morn ...

And to a friend returning home, he wrote;

... So when on that Tir-Connell shore
You watch the bounding sea
Or hear the tides in angry roar
Keep just one thought for me.

He was lonely, hungry and out of work in Glasgow until a Presbyterian farmer helped him. Later he became a tram driver and took an interest in the Catholic Young Men's Society which, he wrote, 'should be powerful, ever-present and progressive.' He attached himself to Fr Egger at St Aloysius and together they walked the 'gusty rain-swept streets' using the simple method of the Apostleship of Prayer to inspire the young men. Soon, 'this great wall of prayer extended to the sea' and Daniel began his life-long passion for work among sea-men.

He joined the Society in 1905 but 'I wasn't much good' at cooking, the first job he was given. He was sent to St Aidan's for a year and then Empandeni where he worked as a carpenter, builder and catechist for the children. But he only spent five years in Southern Africa and was soon back in Glasgow working among the seamen in the docks. He was known for his great gift of talking – and listening – to people and 'bringing them out'.

In 1923, he went to Loyola Hall Retreat House, Rainhill, where he was to spend the rest of his life. He helped to set up the retreat movement all over Lancashire, especially in Wigan. He formed groups and helped them select their own retreat promoters. He would then welcome them to Loyola Hall for a week-end retreat. 'He made us feel we were coming to a home,' said one, 'not an institution.' When the place became overcrowded, he would give retreatants his own room. He was a strong character yet gentle with and 'inward peace'.

He thought three-day retreats were the ideal or even a week-end, Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon. And his little room was besieged by people wanting to come and see him. He inspired many – by one count eighteen - to join the Society.