

June 17

Br JOHN BUSKENS

3 December 1879 – 17 June 1959



John Buskens was the son of cooper (barrel maker) in Rotterdam, Holland. He tells us his mother was strict and though the family were poor she would often help out people who were less well off. Influenced by her, John gave his coat one day to another boy who was shivering with the cold. His mother was pleased. On finishing school he was apprenticed to a blacksmith and had to rise each day at 5.00 and walk four miles to work. It was a long day until 8 at night when he would walk home and go to bed to prepared for the next day.

He wanted to study but his father told him he should learn a trade first in case he failed with his studies.

When he did try to study, he faced so many economic difficulties he just had to give up. He joined the

Jesuits in 1902 after his mother's death but could not manage the studies and settled peacefully to being a brother. In 1904 he was at Dunbrody raising ostriches, pigs and being a dairy farmer, gardener and farrier (shoeing horses). Later he learned the trades of bricklayer, stone mason, carpenter, plumber, well-digger, keeping poultry.

He joined Br Mellon at Gokomere and together they built the church. (See picture of one of the side altars). They used 19 span

(38 oxen) to bring huge granite rocks to the site for the main and the two side-altars.

