

June 21

Fr BASIL GURRIN

15 November 1887 – 21 June 1974



Educated at Stonyhurst, England, Basil Gurrin entered the Jesuits in 1905 and taught at St Francis Xavier's Liverpool for five years from 1927. He refurbished the ablution block which had been neglected for a long time. He promoted the Old Boys' Sodality and started an Old Boys annual breakfast – something simple but highly appreciated. He also revamped the theatre stage and started the SVP at the college – the first such initiative in England. These seem small initiatives but he was remembered for them.

In 1932, he was appointed rector of St George's but only served two or three years. Again he made small but significant improvements. He started the College Chronicle and invited people to visit the college and talk to the boys about their future careers. He promoted the college debating society and all his life was insisted on clear diction. He also improved the playing fields although he was not a sportsman. He got on well with the authorities in the country and 'radiated good will'.

Returning to England in 1935, he became 'Spiritual Father' at first at Heythrop, then Beaumont and Champion Hall before moving to Farm St where he was on the parish staff for eighteen years from 1948. It was a daily round of confessions, the parlour, the altar and the pulpit.

Seemingly, he had his critics – those who called him, 'a pompous snob, who expected to be waited on, was patronising and only mixed with the upper crust of society.' Others saw him as shy and reserved with a 'strange mixture of naivety and sophistication.' He was an 'old school Jesuit'. But he 'gave himself to his friends'.

In 1966 he went to Bournemouth and helped out where he could. In 1969 he went to Osterley where he died.