

June 25

## Fr FRANCIS JOHANNY

8 April 1865 – 25 June 1968



Le Puy, Haute Loire, France, was Francis Johanny's birthplace but he joined the English province of the Society in 1882 to pursue his desire to go on the Zambezi Mission. He was ordained in 1897 and the next year joined Fr Barthelmy at St George's, Bulawayo. He was to stay there until 1921. He knew Rhodes and Jameson. 'He was on friendly terms with all the country's leaders and founders. Those early Fathers in Rhodesia were very much part of the country's history and they started a tradition of co-operation with the civil authorities that Fr Johanny

would have been sad to see lost' (*Letters & Notices 1959*). This revealing sentiment tells us much about the tension, if that is what it was, basically unresolved throughout the early years of the Zambezi Mission in Southern Rhodesia, between those critical of the government's policies like Richartz and those prepared to go along with them like himself.

Johanny was a kindly thorough, though slow working, support figure not only to Barthelmy but also to the Prefects, Parry and Brown and later Chichester. At one time he went on a visitation to the Polish Jesuits in Northern Rhodesia and nearly followed Parry's example of dying at Katondwe.

His miniscule neat handwriting is everywhere in the archives. When he was rector of St George's after Barthelmy, he was held in great respect though his long sermons were not appreciated. Punctuality was foreign to him and school reports for one term would arrive half way through the next. On finishing his term he went to Kutama and Gokomere briefly before settling in Campion House for ten years. His last twenty years were at St John's Avondale where the sisters so much appreciated him, they overlooked his lack of punctuality. He could never settle on a time for Mass and Benediction was either 15 minutes too early or 15 too late. He died there aged 93.