

July 14

Fr JOHN STRATTON

20 March 1878 – 14 July 1949



Born in Bath, SW England, ‘Jack’ Stratton was educated at Stonyhurst and entered the Society in 1898. He did regency at Beaumont, Mount St Mary’s, Hodder and Stonyhurst, fitting in two years of philosophy at St Mary’s Hall.

After ordination he taught in Glasgow and, with the outbreak of war, became a chaplain. He was badly wounded. After the war he returned to Glasgow and later sailing to Southern Africa where he was at Bulawayo (1928-30) and Umtali (Mutare) (1931-35) after which he returned to

England.

He soon had a major car accident which left him crippled for life. But he was able to work at Campion Hall as minister and later as parish priest at Great Yarmouth. In 1946, he ‘moved to lighter work’ at Boscombe. Always in pain, he had to submit to a stomach operation in 1949 which he did not survive.

‘He was a man of action, not a student ... energetic, friendly and impetuous... straight as an arrow, free of all misgivings, outspoken, strong in his sense of justice. Unversed in the arts of diplomacy, unimaginative yet thoroughly good hearted, abounding in charity when he saw a need but not so successful with difficult cases.’ The word ‘impetuous’ keeps occurring. He would jump first and think later! In the novitiate it was his turn to tell a *pia fabula* and he chose St Mary Magdalen of Pazzi and recounted how she went into ecstasy over a flower in the garden. His comment - ‘they all did that sort of thing’ – raised the eyes of Fr Considine, the Novice Master who saw in Jack his fundamental goodwill.

As a school master, ‘he was always approachable and just as genial with us little fellows as with the big lads at the top. ... Every face and every name was known to him.’ At Oxford, ‘he had the reputation for, “How I won the war” but we all knew it would end with, “They afterwards admitted I was right.”’

His contemporaries knew him as one who fought a heroic battle with ill-health and ‘never counted the cost’.