

24 July

## Fr ALFRED WELD

5 August 1823 – 24 July 1890



Born into a Catholic family in Lancashire, which was actively involved in supporting the restoration of the Society in England, Alfred Weld was soon noted as clever, energetic and attractive (though the attached photo might suggest otherwise). He entered the Society in Hodder in 1842 and went on to teach Maths at Stonyhurst and become director of the Observatory there. In time he became a member of the Royal Astronomical Society. He promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart and later was instrumental in acquiring and blessing the Sacred

Heart banner that the first missionaries carried to Zimbabwe, which now hangs at Garnet House.

He also founded the in-house periodical *Letters and Notices* which recorded the lives and doings of members of the province. It is a valued source for the present writer compiling these short lives. Manresa, the house acquired for the novitiate in Roehampton, London, was developed by him when he became Master of Novices but his time there was interrupted when he was chosen as provincial. He was 41. Besides developing the work of the province with parishes and schools, he started a house of writers and supported the founding of *The Month*, a periodical that lasted for more than 100 years. He was generous in sending outstanding men to missions abroad. On completing his term he became rector of St Beuno's but was soon called to Fiesole, where the Curia was in exile from Rome, to be Fr General's English Assistant. He was sent on various missions and was once attacked by 'a mob of roughs' in Gibraltar.

But, from our point of view, his greatest work was the founding and promoting of the Zambezi Mission in response to Bishop Richards of Grahamstown. Huge preparations were needed before the eleven men from a variety of European countries could set out by ox-wagon in April, 1879. Weld kept closely in touch and when Depelchin, the group's leader, asked to be relieved in 1883, Weld was available to take over as superior of the mission. He bought Dunbrody with the idea that it would be a formation house in Africa for Jesuits. But he was not well. He had contracted Bright's disease, 'a historical classification of kidney diseases, described in modern medicine as acute or chronic nephritis, characterized by swelling and the presence of albumin in the urine. It was frequently accompanied by high blood pressure and heart disease.' (Wikipedia)

Weld remained calm and affable as he approached death in Cape Town in 1890.

24 July

5 August 1823 – 24 July 1890

**Fr. Alfred WELD**

Born in Lea-Grain-Hall, Lancashire, England on August 5, 1823, he entered the Society of Jesus on October 21, 1842. He professed his final vows on February 2, 1860. He worked as Fr. General's Assistant in Rome in the organization of Zambezia Mission, in 1877. He was the Mission's superior general from 1833 to 1887. He worked in Mozambique in 1888. He died on July 24, 1890, in Grahamstown, South Africa.

(Catalogus Defunctorum in renata Societate Iesu ab a. 1814 ad a. 1970)