

10 October

## Fr JOSEPH FURNISS

31 March 1880 – 10 October 1951



Joss, as he was known, was born in Quebec and was educated in Beaumont, the Jesuit school near London. He loved ‘every stone and brick of the place’. He entered the Society in 1899 and was ordained in 1913. He taught at St Aidan’s from 1916 – 27 and became a well-known coach in cricket. A good batsman, Joss was ‘positively brilliant as a wicket keeper.’ Even as a bowler he could use his fingers to ‘whittle and shape and carve’ – language, I fear, that is lost on most of us

but would mean a lot to a cricketer.

He returned to England and did further teaching at Southbourne before spending his last stint of work at Farm St. The *Farm Street Calendar* takes flight in telling us;

Fr Furniss was one of the many Jesuits, the vast majority in fact, who have no history. They do their jobs – usually boring exacting jobs – year in and year out and then they die and no one is much the wiser except their Jesuit brothers and a handful of other friends ... Fr Furniss was the perfect type of these devoted, indefatigable oilers of the Jesuit machinery. Only on the cricket field did he ever become a star in his own right

One rector of St Aidan’s wrote of him, ‘I have never met a more hard-working, self-sacrificing and loyal man in my life.’ And an old friend wrote, ‘What at once struck me on meeting him again at Farm St after so many years was his freshness and vitality. He was the same eager and friendly ‘Joss’ one had known in earlier years. He went through terrible agony the night before he died.