

20 October

**Br FRANCIS CLARKE** 24 February 1891 – 20 October 1965



Francis Clarke was proud to come from Lostock, near Bolton in Lancashire, NW England, and three visits to America never diluted his accent. He went as a boy and later as a man and worked on a farm in California until the war broke out (1914) when he went to Canada to join the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He served in France and after the war, returned to Canada to be demobilised. He returned to California but work was hard to find in the slump and he had a friend who helped him get a forged document to say his birth certificate was destroyed in the San

Francisco earthquake in 1906! He then got a job on a boat that went through the Panama Canal and back to England.

Back in Lancashire he heard a sermon from Fr Quin about the Mission in Southern Africa and asked if they needed Brothers. He entered in 1921, aged 30, and soon found himself on a boat to South Africa. After a year in Bulawayo he went to Chishawasha working in the kitchen, farm and garden. From 1934 to '49 he was in Mhondoro working on the farm there. Later he returned to Chishawasha and after four years went to Makumbe. He gradually settled to the confined and monotonous routine of mission life and found happiness in his vocation there. He was patient with the land, gradually nursing the sandy soil of Mhondoro into production.

His last ten months were spent in the care of the Sisters of Nazareth in the city. His sister died earlier that year (1965) but his condition made it impossible to tell him.