

29 October

Fr JAMES COGGER

26 July 1904 – 29 October 1983



James Cogger was born in Blackpool, educated at Mount St Mary's and went back as a regent to teach there. He entered the Society in 1924 and was ordained in 1937. Contemporaries noticed him as somewhat reserved, not one who would make close friends. He came to Southern Rhodesia in 1939 and, after a time learning the language in Monte Cassino, went to Mhondoro as superior in 1942. It was a poor mission but he built up the school, promoted vocations to the priesthood and the sisters and ran a flourishing Sodality (CLC).

In 1954 he moved to Marymount and from there to Chishawasha where he helped the Dominican sisters start the girls' secondary school. Medical issues dogged his later years and he had to go to England for treatment. On his return, he was at Campion House but again he had to go the UK where he died. Many came to his funeral in Wimbledon as well as Mass in the Cathedral in Harare.

Br Francis Waddelove saw him as 'a born teacher who took great care of the schools he was responsible for forty years. He was concerned about giving his pupils a truly Catholic education. ... He was responsible for the comparatively large number of boys and girls who took their first steps in the direction of priesthood and becoming sisters. Archbishop Chakaipa was one of them, ... He was one of the few people who knew he was not a good driver and used to ask me to take him out on sick calls ... Night and day he was at the service of all. He often talked of his time in France at Paray for tertianship and his devotion to Saints Claude de la Colombière and Margaret Mary leading to the devotion to the Sacred Heart. He fostered Holy Hour, Benediction and visits to the Blessed Sacrament. With his domineering manner and strong will, he was sometimes misunderstood and this made him a lonely man, as mentioned above. His physical sufferings were great.

Fr Leonard Kennedy felt 'various kinds of ill luck seemed to pursue him whether in plans, travel or health but he bore these with courage and patience, even bursting into song. In Chishawasha he would sit in the shade talking to the children.