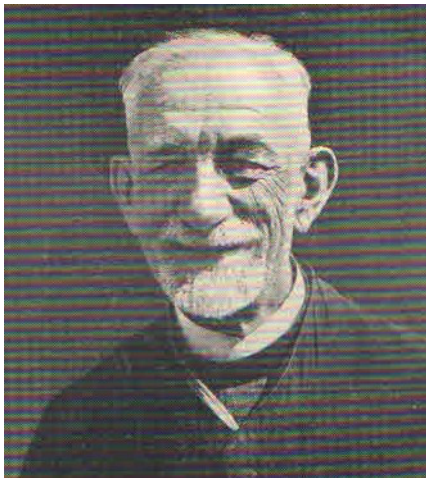


1 November

Br JOHN MATZKE 12 January 1869 (A corrected date) – 1 November 1934



Frs Tony Bex and Francis Johanny went to some trouble to sort out the confusion which arose in the dates of Brs John and Ignatius Matzke. The record had the two brothers born within six months of each other. It took until 1900 for someone to notice the anomaly. They were born into a Bohemian family that settled in South Africa so they were among the first homegrown South African vocations.

John spent his life between his last and his ostriches. By last, I mean, of course, his instrument (like an anvil) on which he made boots, shoes, harness, etc. He entered in 1889 at Dunbrody and stayed there until he moved to Southern Rhodesia in 1927. Fr Isidore Lallemand describes how he ‘drove’ three irrigation plants, repaired wagons and carts and built a concrete dam on the White River. He loved horses and was not afraid to tame and train them and he looked after 700 ostriches at a time when ostriches meant big money. Local farmers used to flock to ask his advice. The market collapse in 1914.

But there was also rinderpest, horse-sickness, droughts – one killed 95 head of cattle -, floods which washed his carefully tended top soil into the sea and swarms of locusts. As each disaster receded, he simply took off his coat and started again. He was a great support for Lallemand at the trying time of the law case which eventually led to the closure of Dunbrody.

After all this it was difficult for him to adapt to Southern Rhodesia where the problems – and the language - were different. He was *ad omnia* at Chishawasha, Empanjeni and Musami (see picture) but developed kidney trouble that ended his life.



1 November

12 January 1869 – 1 November 1934

Br. João MATZKE

Born in Ratzdorf, Bohemia, Germany, on January, 12 1869, he entered the Society of Jesus on February 5, 1889. He lived and worked in Quelimane in 1892 and 1893. then, he went to the Upper Zambezia. He took his final vows on August 15, 1913. He died in Salisbury, Rhodesia, on November 1st 1934.

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