

25 November

Fr FRANCIS KETTERER 17 September 1881 – 25 November 1956



Francis Ketterer was born in Ware, Hertfordshire, England into an originally German family. He studied Maths at Cambridge and then went into business as an overseer of an explosives' factory in Kent. He married but Louise soon died and he spoke of her warmly ever after. He moved to teaching and found himself in a Jesuit school and this stirred an interest he always had. He entered the Society in 1911 at the age of thirty and became known as 'Pa', celebrating his former life. He was ordained in 1918 and was immediately drafted into

the military as a chaplain and was only released in 1920. Pa gave missions up and down England before settling in Maryfield, in London, where he ran a precursor to Osterley, the late vocations college also in London.

His first post in Africa was to a parish in Cape Town in 1925 and four years later he went to Kutama (see picture below with trainee catechists) to help Fr Loubière. In 1933 he became superior in Chishawasha for six years. He moved to Mutare (then called Umtali) in 1939 where he was known for his welcome. 'Come in and have a cup of tea.'

When the Carmelites took over the parish he moved briefly to Salisbury and then to Gwelo (Gweru). In 1954 he settled at Emerald Hill where the children were in and out of his room playing scrabble and the like. A kind smiling man, Pa was noted for being firm in parish business and, somewhat in contrast, emotional in his preaching.

In later years he developed throat cancer but never spoke about it. Yet he suffered a great deal from the condition and the way it was treated in those days. It was 'gruelling' twice a week. It was feared that his death would be a lingering one but he died quite quickly.

