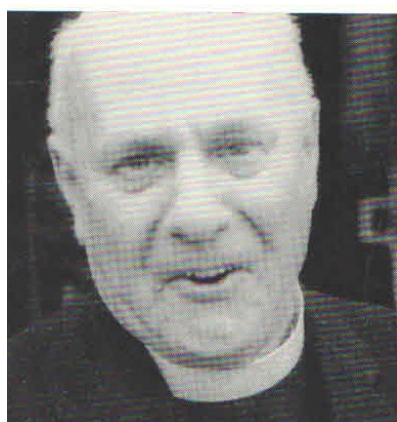


29 November

Fr CHARLES FERGUSON 13 March 1894 – 29 November 1962



Charles Ferguson (Frick) was one of fourteen children and was born in Castries, St Lucia. All ten boys were educated at Stonyhurst and Frick went straight from school to the novitiate in 1913. After his years of training – he was ordained in 1926 – he arrived at St Aidan's in 1927. Two years later he was in Driefontein and after a further five years he went to Bikita (Silveira Mission) where he was alone, at least in the early years. For one who liked company it was hard and often he would be stranded by swollen rivers and stay with the people wherever he was.

His contemporaries said his relations with people could be turbulent but then they would come to know he never spared himself on their behalf. He moved to Chishawasha in 1939 where his lack of administrative ability showed itself. He took little thought for tomorrow and when there was money, he spent it 'on urgent projects'. 'Why be cautious about money', he would say, 'when there isn't any.' He had to be moved after three years and went to Gweru where again he found himself on his own. He built up the out stations of Selukwe and Shabani.

Chichester visited him and remarked that he was putting on weight too rapidly. 'Yes', he agreed, 'twice recently I have been mistaken for your Grace!' After some time Fr David Brand came to live with him and people wondered how two such different characters could share the same roof. Frick was impulsive while David was cautious.

But his health was failing and he returned to England in 1953 and helped out in Blackpool and Stamford Hill. The present writer met him in his last years at the novitiate in Roehampton but, of course, had no idea of his life in Africa and, in those days, there was no opportunity to ask. Crossing London in a taxi after giving a retreat he had a coronary and was found to be dead on entering hospital.