

1 December

Br MATHIAS SCHÖNBROD 30 October 1883 – 1 December 1967



Born in Aachen, Mathias Schönbrod's father was a locksmith and employed 30 men in his trade which Mathias learnt. He joined the Society in 1906 and in 1914 was at Chishawasha. He worked in Driefontein and Gokomere before going to help build the Cathedral in Salisbury and the new St George's College which had

moved there from Bulawayo. He then moved to Kutama to help Fr Loubière build the new church (picture below). The Church tower there was so solidly built they had to call in the army with explosives when the time came to demolish it.

Br Schönbrod is seen on the right in the photo above next to Fr Loubière with Fr Ketterer in the middle, smiling as usual. Mathias had not only learnt to be a locksmith at home but to organise the 30 workers his father employed. He used this skill in Harare and Kutama to organise the team of 120 workers needed in these three big projects.

He returned to Germany in 1930 and worked, Alphonsus Rodriguez like, as a porter and carer of the poor in Koblenz. He died in Münster in 1967.

There is a letter which he wrote in 1960 from Germany about Kutama thirty years before. 'We dug deep using a windlass (winch) to move the huge stones.' He ordered 28 stained glass windows from Germany and Loubière wanted eight saints included but only chose seven. Mathias suggested the eight be the Guardian Angels. Next day they had an accident when the stones slipped from the winch but no one was hurt. Mathias put it down to the care of the Guardian Angels but, not knowing this, Loubière changed his mind and asked that the eight window be John baptising Jesus. They then had a worst accident and three workers were wounded but not seriously. Reflecting on it with Mathias, Loubière decided to quickly return to the Guardian Angels. But the makers of the glass in Germany included one of the Baptiser anyway.

