

8 December

**Fr FRANCIS DONOHOE** 26 August 1876 - 8 December 1938



Francis Donohoe was born in Wigan and educated at Stonyhurst. He entered the Society in 1894 and was ordained in 1909. In 1911 he was teaching at Beaumont and later at St Francis Xavier, Liverpool. In 1917 he became a military chaplain and was awarded an MC by the King and the Belgian Croix de Guerre for his bravery. He once went to the help of a wounded man in 'no-man's-land' against the orders of the colonel. When he later confessed, the colonel simply said 'you are a brave man.'

In 1920 he started teaching at St Aidan's. One version is that he was a 'failure' while another said he was 'outstanding'. What all agree is that he was very 'direct'. He had no airs and no diplomacy. He was easily shocked by deviations from proper order or duty. One of his contemporaries remembered his horror when the lecturer mentioned the pandemonium at one of the early Greek councils.

Poor health brought him back to England in 1924 and in 1927 he was put in charge of Rainhill Retreat House. It was not doing well when he arrived but he shocked retreatants by imposing silence during the retreats. Many stopped coming but gradually the point was made and the centre turned the corner and became a success. People admired his directness and remembered his motto, 'Keep on keeping on'.

In 1938 he moved to St Mary's on the Quay in Bristol but again his health broke down and he died that year. One ill effect of his directness and generosity was his lack of care of his health. A contemporary felt he did not look after himself.