

12 December

Fr IGNATIUS GARTLAN

8 December 1848 – 12 December 1926



Ignatius Gartlan is another example of a point often made by Eddie Murphy: the English Province used to send many of its best men to the missions. Born in Monalty, Ireland, he was educated at Mount St Maty's and joined the Society in 1867. He taught for so many years during regency at Stonyhurst that he saw the same pupils through the school

from Elements to Poetry. 'Fr Garts', as they called him, had a way of getting the best out of his students.

After ordination in 1883, he did a variety of jobs and in 1891 was the acknowledged leader, without an official position, of the Jesuits working in the Preston area. His 'calm sweetness and spiritual insight' was acknowledged widely. He became rector of St Aloysius Glasgow from 1899 to 1904 when he was suddenly whisked off to Africa as the superior of the Salisbury Mission. He knew he had no experience of Africa and when unsure about an issue, would reply, 'I leave it to your judgement.' He was considered 'a charming man' by all. But he had a way of putting heart into a mission and cheering up the priests and brothers. The only photo of him, centre back, this writer can find gives a hint of this.

He held the post for seven years during which Chikuni, Driefontein and Gokomere were established and, when the Marianhills developed their mission at Monte Cassino, he encouraged them to reassume responsibility for Triashill and St Benedict's, places they had abandoned during the *Chimurenga* of 1896.

In 1911 Ignatius Gartland returned to the UK and was appointed Tertian Instructor based at Tullabeg (Ireland). His 'simple common sense' was highly appreciated by his tertians. 'Are we men of prayer?' uttered by him was not a pious platitude. 'Without prayer and the supernatural outlook,' he would say, 'religious life is a mere club without most of the conveniences.'

His last task was to assist Fr Lester in the foundation of Osterley, the centre for late vocations. In 1921 he had serious attack of congestion of the lungs and he developed other maladies in one of his legs. He died in a nursing home in London run by a group of sisters he helped to found.