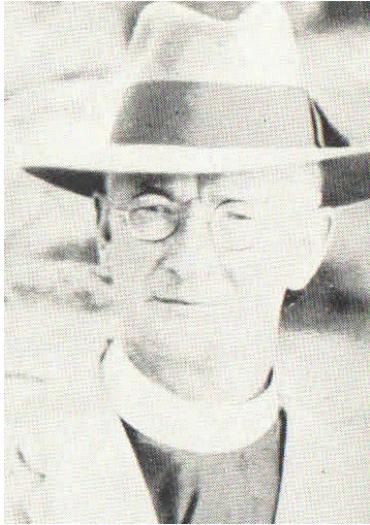


22 December

Fr MICHAEL O'REILLY 9 January 1883 – 22 December 1953



Born in Irvinestown, Fermanagh, Ireland, Michael O'Reilly was educated at St Aloysius Glasgow and the Mount. After entering the Society in 1901 he did a degree in Classics at Campion Hall Oxford and later taught at Beaumont. He was ordained in 1916 and went to Southern Africa in 1923 where he taught Latin, French and English at St George's both before and after the move to Salisbury. He was effervescent; quick witted, easily irascible and just as easily recovering from it. The boys enjoyed hi and out of class he would be surrounded by the boys who jostled him and made jokes at his expense!

At a game he would run up and down the side line shouting support and advice. As spiritual father his Saturday evening talks reflected his 'virile spirituality'. His influence was great and the first candidates for priesthood in Rhodesia came under his influence. But it seems he was eventually judged 'impossible' in the classroom and was moved to the Cathedral.

Then in 1942 he was suddenly back in the classroom, this time in St Aidan's 'to his joy and that of the community'. Francis X Jackson who knew him as a boy in Bulawayo and as a scholastic in Salisbury, wrote 'it was a happy day for the college when he arrived here and his influence over the boys during his last twelve years was lastingly beneficial. ... His constant interest in them outside the classroom and on the playing fields, all had a telling effect. They knew instinctively that here was a man who was spending himself on their behalf.' And yet he was suffering from serious heart disease and had to be removed to the nursing home in Port Elizabeth run by the 'Blue Nuns' (The Little Company of Mary). Finally he returned to St Aidan's to the college infirmary where he died.