

FATHER JAMES GUNNING. SDB.

Father James was born in Manchester on the feast of St. Francis de Sales, January 29th 1900. Four years later his parents moved to Castelrea, Roscommon, Ireland. In 1915 the family returned to Manchester and James worked for 15 years as a junior architectural assistant. During these years he also attended the Technical College in Manchester for a period. Father James began his studies for the priesthood at Cowley, where he made his novitiate and first profession in 1930. He was eventually ordained a priest at Blaisdon Hall, Glos in July 1941.

From 1941 to 1965 Fr. James worked in England at Battersea and Beckford; in Ireland at Ballinakill and Warrenstown. He was not a great success in the classroom, not being methodical enough to be a successful teacher. During this period he was engaged mainly in pastoral work in the confessional. He volunteered to go to Persia and, in fact, spent several years there. However, the climate did not suit him and his health deteriorated so much that he had to return to England.

After his return to England he did a few supplies in the Salford diocese and later in the Portsmouth diocese at Copnor Bridge from 1965-7 and at Alton from 1967-9. Towards the end of 1969 the illness that afflicted him in Persia returned and he took up residence at Kiln Green in the nursing home of the Sisters of Pity. This was in 1969 and he died there on November 30th.

Fr. James was a rather eccentric person in many ways. Order, punctuality and practicality did not come easy to him. He was a strong-willed person and he showed great tenacity in beginning his study of Latin and other subjects at the age of thirty. He had a great devotion to the Little Flower and her missionary spirit encouraged him to undertake his missionary experience in Persia.

May the death of Fr. James be a reminder and a stimulus to each one of us. A stimulus to do ever more and ever better in the service of God and our neighbour.

REST IN PEACE.