

Rev. Fr Francis Hall, C.S.S.R. (1836-1897)

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Francis Hall was born on the 1st of December, 1836. He spent his youth, when not at College, in the neighbourhood of Liverpool. We have from his own pen the extraordinary impression made on him by a Mission given in Old Swan to children by Father Furniss.

He entered the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer in 1855, and after his novitiate went to the House of Studies. His Superiors were not slow to discover his great talent; but there soon came upon him attacks of the nerves and debility, which never completely left him. After his ordination he worked for a time in Clapham. He soon took part in his first Irish Mission, and from that day it might be said of him that his whole heart was given to Catholic Ireland.

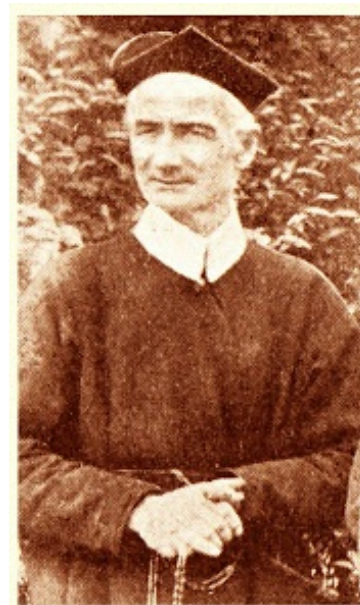
Contrary to human expectations, Father Hall lived to the age of sixty-one. During those years his illnesses often brought him to death's door. On two occasions he attributed his recovery to miracles, one through the intercession of St (then Blessed) Gerard, the other through that of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour. The cure of Father Hall at Bishop Eton is the first great favour of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour in England. He was at death's door and had received all the Sacraments, when to the surprise of everyone he recovered. He then composed a most beautiful poem on the Last Anointing, and gave the thoughts which passed through his mind as he stood on the threshold of eternity. The ideas are very beautiful. His life was an alternation of teaching, home work, and Mission work.

Of his home work the most important was that for the Confraternity of the Holy Family in Limerick. In its earliest days he co-operated with [Father Bridgett](#). He did much to inspire the men with that love for Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, which distinguishes them to-day. But the work was too heavy for his weak shoulders and he had to be replaced by a Father whose strength better fitted him for this laborious undertaking.

As Father Hall had been for some time in all the houses of his Province, he gave Missions both in England and Scotland. But the Missions which pleased him most and filled him with enthusiasm were those of Ireland. He had all the qualities of mind and heart that make a great preacher.

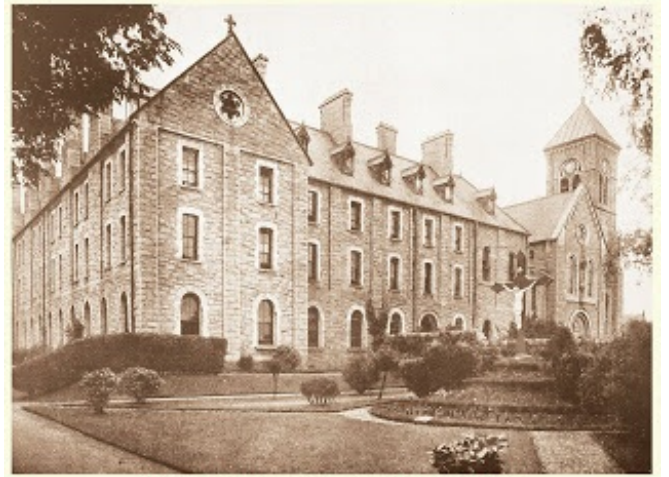
Father Bridgett, speaking of the earlier sermons of Father Hall said that they were intellectual panoramas. Few have surpassed him in the magnificence of his descriptions, and yet his language was always simple, like that of St Alphonsus, whom, in all things, he desired to imitate. In beginning a sermon his voice was weak, but as he proceeded with his subject, he seemed to become another man and spoke at times even with too much vehemence. It was seldom that he did not move the whole population wherever he gave a Mission.

Father Hall was most tenderly devoted to the sacred Infancy of Our Lord, and to His presence in the Blessed Sacrament. Great too was his devotion to the Immaculate Mother. St. Alphonsus he ever looked up to as a father and teacher, and he filled his mind and heart with all that the Saint has left us in his writings. He received everyone with the greatest charity, but his predilection was for sinners, for the poor, and for children.



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Father Hall was amongst the first Fathers in Dundalk. There he spent many years and finally, while a member of that community, breathed his last, surrounded by his brethren, on 28th October, 1897. After the solemn obsequies his remains were laid under the Chapel of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour to await his glorious resurrection. †



St Joseph's Redemptorist Monastery, Dundalk, Ireland.