

Province of The Most Holy Name Franciscan Fathers

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OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL

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My dear Confrere:

The most important news item at this time is word to the effect that Fr. General is coming to the States early in October. It will be impossible for him to be here for the closing of the St. Bonaventure University Centenary due to commitments in Rome and Assisi. Fr. General has appointments in the Midwestern Province and with the Province of the Immaculate Conception. He will dedicate the new dormitory at our Seraphic Seminary in Callicoon early in November.

While I was visiting Christ the King Seminary, early in February, Fr. Irenaeus Herscher reminded me that February 23 marked the 50th anniversary of the death of Fr. Leo Heinrichs. It was impossible for Archbishop Vehr of Denver to be with us there on the twenty-third, so we settled for February 26. I flew to Denver on Tuesday afternoon, sang the solemn Mass for the repose of the soul of Fr. Leo on Wednesday with Archbishop Vehr presiding, and flew back to New York that afternoon. The Rector of the Seminary in Denver, a Vincentian Father, preached at the Mass. He pointed out what I think is very important, namely, that we have in Denver a shrine to a man who, although he has not been designated a martyr by the Church, certainly rates the honor due to an individual who gave his life in line of duty. Fr. Leo Heinrichs was shot while distributing Communion in Denver on February 23, 1908.

On February 27, Fr. Alexander Wyse and I left New York on Pan American Flight 201 with stops at Puerto Rico and Caracas on its way to Belem. At Puerto Rico three of the Fathers and Brother Charles Gilmartin came to the airport to visit with us during the hour-long layover. We arrived in Belem at approximately 5:30 a. m. Friday, February 28. After clearing customs we went to the house in Belem which the Friars from Sacred Heart Province operate as a procuration for their Mission in the Santarem area of the Amazon valley. Most Rev. James Ryan, then Bishop-elect of the new Franciscan Prelacy, was in Belem. He was consecrated in Chicago on April 9. Fr. Alexander and I kept the schedule which called for our leaving Belem for Christalandia early on the morning of Saturday, March 1. It meant rising at approximately 2 a. m., offering Mass, having breakfast, and being ready to take a cab to the airport at four. The Real Airlines DC 3 left on time at 5:30 a. m. We arrived in Christalandia at mid-morning and were met by Frs. Celsus Hayes and Dunstan Dooling. I stayed in Christalandia. Fr. Alexander went on to Anapolis.

Christalandia has been designated as the site of our new Prelacy in Brazil. At the time of this writing no Prelate has been appointed. The Prelacy is now under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Porto Nacional. He has designated Fr. Celsus Hayes as his Vicar General so, for all practical purposes, Fr. Celsus Hayes has the ecclesiastical authority in the Prelacy. The living conditions at Christalandia is still a little on the primitive side. However, it is quite evident that the Fathers of Holy Name

Province have the resourcefulness needed to provide for themselves the necessities of life under varying circumstances. Two cities are now served from Christalandia. Pium, ten miles away, can be reached by surface transportation while Araguacema is available only by air and is served once a month. In Araguacema the Fathers offer afternoon Mass on Sunday, morning Mass on Monday and Tuesday, and return to Christalandia on Tuesday afternoon. I visited Pium and Araguacema and one other town--Santa Isobel--which is not yet being served.

I traveled in this area by light plane, a Cessana 170. At Pium the Church adjoins the air strip. At Araguacema we circled the town twice. After landing, we started to walk into town which is about a mile but someone came out to meet us with a truck. Transportation in these areas is difficult. Santa Isobel, an Indian village, is close to the air strip. We walked. My stay at Christalandia extended from Saturday until Tuesday. On Tuesday morning Fr. Celsus Hayes and I went to Porto Nacional, visited with the Bishop there, and then went on to Portangatu, which is the second of two centers in the new Prelacy. Here again we circled the town a couple of times in our light plane, landed, and Frs. Berard McInerney and John Janson were there to pick up us. At Porangatu, as in Christalandia, there is a church. Both churches are very old and both will eventually be replaced. Fr. Berard McInerney has succeeded in getting a small building and a few lay teachers who opened a Catholic school for the children of Porangatu. On Wednesday, March 5, Fr. Berard, Fr. Celsus and I boarded the Cessana 170 and went to Ceres. This was familiar territory. I was very happy to find that the new monastery is completely adequate. Since my last visit to Ceres a large hall has been built as well as an addition to both the school and church. After spending a day in Ceres, we went on Thursday, March 6, to our headquarters in Anapolis.

From Anapolis, using the airlines, I visited the other towns in our basic Commissariat in Brazil. At Catalao a new church has been started. Actually the foundations were laid before two events caused discontinuance of the building: the annual rainy season and the fact that the parish exhausted its funds. Now with the dry season and a recuperation in parish finances, more of this church will be built. I think that I have mentioned in previous Newsletters that the one phase in which we do not subsidize the mission in Brazil is that of building parish churches. We feel that the people should build the churches themselves. From Catalao it is necessary to go by jeep to Goiandira. However, this is a short trip and not uncomfortable. At Goiandira they have had a fairly complete plant for some time and very few changes were noticed. On Monday, March 10, I went to Pires do Rio and returned the following day. At Pires do Rio there have been additions and changes. In the last stages of building is a large auditorium with classrooms on each side. When this is finished there will be a nine- or ten-classroom ginasio, plus this large auditorium. The church is in the last stages of completion and, by any standards, is beautiful. There have been additions and re-arrangements in the courtyard to give both the Sisters and the Fathers more privacy. At Anapolis the units are in the last stages of completion. The new monastery at Jundai, which is actually Commissariat headquarters, has now approximately twenty rooms completed. When this building is finished it will have a total of thirty-five living rooms. St. Ann's Church is just about completed. It is large, well conceived and built. At St. Anthony's it is quite difficult to keep up with the growth. The complexion of the neighborhood is changing. They now have eight classrooms, a chapel, and a large auditorium. This auditorium is used for a classroom, a gathering place, and for Mass on Sunday. On Thursday, March 13, Fr. James Schuck drove Fr. Stephen Walsh and me to Goiania

where we enplaned for Corumba as the first step of our journey to the Mission in Bolivia.

The departure from Goiania was scheduled for eleven and, to our surprise, actually took place on time. We flew on a Real DC 3, arriving at Corumba a little late. Fr. Sebastian Rabin met us. We checked in at the Hotel Grande and after the evening meal, arranged for Mass at the Salesian Church which was next door. Then we made our arrangements with the police to leave the next morning, walked around town, had a good night's sleep. After seven o'clock Mass Fr. Sebastian and I got in an old car which posed as a taxi cab, and left Corumba for a little town in Bolivia called Puerto Suarez. The cab was an old Ford and, despite the muddy roads, made the journey in the usual time--one hour.

Fr. Stephen Walsh had arranged to get to Santa Cruz by air, directly from Corumba. Arriving in Puerto Suarez we made the usual check with customs and the police and then visited for a few hours with the friars who handle the mission station at Puerto Suarez. Due to weather conditions, our plane from Puerto Suarez to Santa Cruz was late. While we were at the airport waiting for our flight, the plane from Corumba to Santa Cruz, carrying Fr. Stephen Walsh, flew over us. We were met at Santa Cruz by some of the friars we knew, including a friar from St. Louis, Fr. Anselm Recamp, who is working with the Indians. Fr. Anselm, Fr. Gabriel McCarthy and Fr. Sebastian Rabin, went to work in Bolivia some ten years ago at the request of, and to help, the Fathers from the Province of Tyrol. Then later when the area was divided they found themselves helping the Fathers from the Bavarian Province and working for Bishop Kilian Pflaum. When our Province decided to go to Bolivia Fr. Sebastian Rabin and Fr. Joachim Mahler, who had gone to work with Sebastian, moved to the La Paz area.

On Saturday, March 15, we left Santa Cruz at approximately eleven a. m. and were in La Paz at one. There is a stop on this journey at Cochabamba--the finest climate in Bolivia. Just before we left Santa Cruz for La Paz a telegram was handed to us that there would be a reception. There was--something out of this world. The most important part of the greeting seemed to be an attempt to get a handful of flower petals down one's throat. I was hit in the face with them while others rained on the top of my head--really something.

On Sunday, March 16, I offered Mass at the friary at La Paz and then went with Fr. Sebastian Rabin to the Cathedral for a Mass and Te Deum in celebration of the anniversary of the Holy Father's coronation. After this I went with Archbishop Muzzoni to the home of the President of Bolivia for lunch and that evening there was a reception for me at the friary in La Paz. I have this marked on my calendar as a busy day. The following day Frs. Sebastian, Boniface Hanley, Stephen Walsh and I went by jeep to Coroico. Frs. Thomas Manning and Joachim Mahler made the same trip by truck. This ride on a single lane road that clings to the side of the mountain, giving you a view over the precipice, is a thrill that I can use about once every two or three years. I was pleased with the advance made at Coroico. The house has been renovated, made a little more comfortable, and the church also has been cleaned. The great good fortune at Coroico is the fact that they have been able to engage Sisters who will do general work in the area. The friars have been able to find a home and a sort of workshop for the Sisters. I feel sure that this matter of the Sisters will be treated more thoroughly by one of the Fathers at Coroico in the "Provincial Annals." There is real evidence of advancement here.

Coroico will be designated as the seat of a Prelacy. In keeping with his promise to me, Archbishop Muzzoni has already made application

to Rome to have this area set up as a Prelacy and given to the friars, with the understanding that a friar from Holy Name Province will be the Prelate. Coroico is at the lowest altitude of any of our places in Bolivia--approximately the same as Denver--6,000 feet. On my arrival at La Paz I received a cablegram that Fr. Owen Leary had passed to his reward. I sang a solemn Mass for the repose of his soul on Tuesday, March 18, at Coroico. May he rest in peace!

We returned to La Paz on Tuesday afternoon, spent the next day resting and inspecting the work and activities of our parish on the Alto. On Thursday morning we left La Paz for Sorata. At Sorata I received the surprise of a lifetime. I shall never forget my first visit to Sorata two years ago. The condition of the Church and friary, in which two Fathers from one of the Italian Provinces lived, was such that it made me sick. Now, with adequate planning, scrubbing and expert carpentry, the friary has been made clean, homelike, and livable. The people at Sorata are friendly. They spent some hours greeting me and attempting to show their appreciation for the work done by the friars. On Friday morning after offering solemn Mass for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the parish, we were invited to breakfast by the Legion of Mary. Shortly before noon Fr. Sebastian and I were on our way back to La Paz. Saturday was spent doing some window-shopping around La Paz.

On Sunday, March 23, I offered Mass at our Parish on the Alto. Immediately after, a procession--led by a small truck on which a huge crucifix was mounted--was formed. Two acolytes and a Cross bearer followed the truck and I followed the acolytes. After me came the parishioners. I'm sure that this will be covered more thoroughly by Fr. Boniface in a letter to the "Annals" in the not too distant future. I left La Paz the same afternoon at four o'clock. The flight, on Braniff airlines Flight 400, stopped at Lima, Guayaquil, Panama and Havana. It was necessary for me to deplane at Havana and to take Cubana airlines to Miami where I spent a week as I had planned. In Miami, I received news of Fr. Brice's death. May he rest in peace!

We plan to set up a special course in Pastoral Theology for those Fathers who have been chosen for the teaching Apostolate. This will be given in Butler and will commence on Monday, May 12. Eighty of the prescribed one hundred days of class will be taught this summer; twenty next summer. Each morning, Monday through Friday, there will be a lecture and a discussion period. The following Fathers will conduct the lectures and discussions: Joseph Vann (Spiritual Life), Alfred Martin (Counseling), Michael Harding (Canonical Pastoral Problems), Xavier A. Cox (Homiletics).

The possibility of a Church in Atlanta is alive again.

You are requested to send to "Friar" back issues that are available.

Congratulations to Fr. Callistus Smith who has been awarded the Lector Jubilatus by the Most Rev. General and his Definitorium.

Fr. Justin McCarthy is preparing a new book of cartoons which will be published by Doubleday.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR ALL OF OUR MISSIONS.

Sincerely and fraternally,

John Whelan, O.F.M.

Minister Provincial