

Province of The Most Holy Name

Franciscan Fathers

135 WEST 31ST STREET
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OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL

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My dear Confrere:

The new foundation of Poor Clares in Greenville calls to mind some interesting data. The Poor Clares arrived in Boston from Omaha, Nebr., in 1906. From this foundation, in turn, four new monasteries have been formed: Bordentown, N. J. (1909); Philadelphia, Penna. (1917); Lowell, Mass. (1947); and finally, Greenville, S. C. (1955). The Boston (Jamaica Plain) and Lowell monasteries are under the jurisdiction of Holy Name Province.

I co-operated in the founding of the new monastery of St. Clare in Greenville and flew from Boston to Greenville on March 1 with 12 Poor Clare nuns appointed to pioneer the new monastery.

On the morning of departure from Jamaica Plain, Archbishop Cushing and I accompanied the Sisters from their monastery to the airport. The Sisters rode in a cavalcade of four cars, one of which was the Archbishop's, headed by a police escort. At the airport chapel, the Archbishop said Mass for the Sisters and gave them his blessing. We took off from Boston at 10:25 a. m. in a heavy rain, but arrived in Greenville only a few minutes late--about 5:45 p. m.--after an uneventful trip. Most of the Sisters weathered the trip well. At the airport, we put the Sisters into cars furnished by Fr. Thomas Albert and took them to their monastery. We did not know it at the time, but our arrival in Greenville was televised.

On Wednesday, we began doing those things necessary in getting a new religious house under way. The Blessed Sacrament was reserved in the regular tabernacle and also in the tabernacle for perpetual adoration. We blessed the monastery on Saturday because Archbishop Cicognani requested that this be done before he offered the Pontifical Mass. On Saturday morning, I laid the cornerstone, and blessed the chapel and the monastery. His Excellency Bishop Russell of Charleston offered the Mass. On Sunday, at 11 o'clock, the Apostolic Delegate celebrated a Solemn Pontifical Mass. Afterward, there was a dinner at the Poinsett Hotel, with a reception in the evening at St. Mary's Parish for the Papal Delegate. At all of these gatherings there was a goodly representation of the Friars. Grateful notice was taken by the Friars of the fact that Bishop Russell, both in private and in public, expressed recognition of our work and appreciation of it. On Monday, March 7, Fr. Boniface and myself offered Mass early and returned to New York, leaving 12 Poor Clares in their new monastery.

On March 14 there was a gathering in New York to honor and welcome Fr. Victor Bucher, the Visitor General to our Province. That afternoon, Fr. Victor and the Fathers of the Definitorium went to St. Raphael's Novitiate in Lafayette, N. J. The next day, Tuesday, we were hosts to Archbishop Boland, Bishop McNulty and Bishop McCarthy. They inspected the new

novitiate and had lunch with us, after which Fr. Felician Foy showed very interesting movies of last October's dedication ceremonies.

On Friday, March 18, both the Very Reverend Visitor and I left by airplane--Fr. Victor for Brazil and I for Japan. I noticed that, while loading, a representative of Northwest Airlines was very careful with a package which was being put in the body of the airplane instead of the baggage compartment. This package was a cake being sent by an admirer to Dr. Syngman Rhee.

Flying across the country, I looked forward to going on from Seattle to Tokyo in what was supposed to be the latest in up-to-date planes, the Turbo-Prop Constellation. I was disappointed however, because this plane was not yet available. We were given a refund and sent to Tokyo on tourist, which has limited service. On the way over, we stopped at Anchorage, Cold Bay, Alaska, and an Air Force base in Northern Japan for fuel. In the lobby of the administration building at Anchorage there are pictures of pine and bush pilots--among them a picture of Art Woodley, whose brother, a priest, was ordained from Bonnie's. Years ago, at Bonnie's, I (and a lot of others) rode in an open cockpit tandem airplane with Art Woodley.

We finally arrived in Tokyo at 8 o'clock Sunday, March 20, five hours late and in the pouring rain. To compute New York time, you add ten hours to Tokyo time and say yesterday. In other words, 10 o'clock in the morning on Sunday in Tokyo is 8 o'clock on Saturday evening in New York.

Frs. Louis Joyce, Cormac Dungan, Robert Frawley and Lawrence Pafchik met me at Tokyo International Airport. Getting through the Customs was made easy by Fr. Lawrence's help. We left Tokyo Monday morning; visited Msgr. Uchino, the Prefect of the Territory of Urawa, and the Canadian Novitiate, where we have a novice for Holy Name Province. Then we went on to Fr. Cormac Dungan's place at Ota (St. Clare's); had supper at Ota and went on to Tatebayashi (Our Lady Help of Christians), and stayed overnight with Fr. Solanus Gallagher. On Tuesday morning, we returned to Ota and went on from there to the new monastery being built outside of Kiryu, which will have the name of St. Francis of Assisi. The church at Kiryu is St. John the Baptist, its pastor Fr. Harold Finn. We went to Omama (St. Anthony's) for supper and back to Kiryu for the night.

On Wednesday, I visited Isesaki (Sacred Heart, in charge of Fr. Stanislaus Blackowski); Shibukawa (Blessed Trinity--Fr. Ralph Reilly), and on to Maebashi (Our Lady of Mt. Carmel--Fr. Makino, a Japanese secular priest). The Fathers of the Gumma Mission gathered for recreation at Maebashi on Wednesday evening. For the Day of Recollection which I gave on Thursday, most of them stayed at Maebashi, those who returned to their own places coming back to Maebashi the next morning. Thursday evening, I went back to Kiryu, and spent Friday visiting silk mills and shopping. On Saturday morning we visited Tomioka (St. Francis, in charge of Fr. Ambrose Donohue) and Takasaki (Our Lady of the Angels--Fr. Robert Frawley). On Sunday I said Mass at Takasaki, and afterward went on to Maebashi for the yearly congress of the Legion of Mary. Four o'clock that afternoon we left for Tokyo. On Monday, March 28, a week and a day after I arrived, I left Tokyo for New York. Fr. Louis Joyce was with me, leaving Fr. Cormac Dungan as acting religious Superior in the Gumma Mission.

On Tuesday morning, as I was standing in line waiting my turn to shave, the cabin attendant tapped me on the shoulder and advised me to return to my seat. He said that it looked as though there might be engine trouble. The next 40 minutes were filled with tension. All passengers were put in one section of the airplane. We were given our suit coats, then

overcoats, and then told to put on and secure the life vests. Each of us was next given a blanket and a pillow to put on our laps and told to fasten our seat belts tightly. The cabin attendants took everything out of the shelves overhead and moved all baggage to the rear of the airplane. A little later (and by now, you could hear the motors coughing and see we were definitely losing altitude), all were advised to remove their eye-glasses, and ladies to remove their high-heeled shoes. Now the crew personnel were manning the seats next to the emergency exits. The chief cabin attendant pointed out to each passenger the exit he was to use to get to a life raft. The water was getting closer and the engines continued coughing. We were finally instructed on the manner of gripping the seat in front of us to brace ourselves against the crash. It was noticeable during all of this that, despite tension, there was complete self-control in the aircraft on the part of passengers and crew alike. The pilot then announced that we were close enough to an island on which there was an emergency airstrip to land there. Five minutes later, as we maneuvered to get onto the island, the motors suddenly stopped coughing and started to purr. This was the best sound I have heard for a long, long time. The pilot announced that our motors were operating at cruising RPM and we would not land at that island but would fly to Cold Bay, Alaska, which is an optional fueling stop. We were advised to keep our life vests on. The near-accident occurred because of water condensing in the gas lines and then freezing, thus cutting off fuel little by little from the engines' power plants. At the low altitude, the ice thawed and the fuel reached the motors. After 12 hours' delay in Cold Bay, we flew to Seattle, arriving 13 hours late. The ride from Seattle to New York was uneventful.

I would like to take this occasion to thank all those who sent greetings and who remembered me in their prayers and Masses on the occasion of my Feast Day, April 6. I am very grateful to you all.

For your information, here is a schedule of events: May 31, Siena Commencement; June 5, Bonaventure Commencement; June 7, Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee Celebration at St. Raphael's--Mass at 11 o'clock, preprandium at 12, dinner at 1 p. m. June 8, Callicoon Commencement. In Washington, this year's ordinandi will be ordained by His Excellency the Most Reverend Apostolic Delegate, on Thursday, June 9. The Departure Ceremonies for the Missionaries leaving the States will be held on Sunday, June 12.

The following is tentative but I think fairly accurate: It looks now as if the Definitorium will be ordered to report at the new novitiate on the afternoon of June 13 in preparation for the Provincial Chapter.

IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT THE NEW CLASS OF NOVICES WILL BE ORDERED TO REPORT TO THE NEW NOVITIATE JULY 5 TO BEGIN THEIR RETREAT FOR RECEPTION. RECEPTION WILL TAKE PLACE ON THE FEAST OF ST. BONAVENTURE, JULY 14.

It is my pleasure to announce the following missionary appointments. To Japan: Frs. Jerome Donnelly, Raphael McInerney, Campion Lally, who will leave early in July. Also to Japan: Brothers Martin Dowling and Louis Black, who will probably go about October 1. Fr. Joachim Mahler has been chosen to go to Bolivia as a companion to Fr. Sebastian Rabin.

Fr. Flavian Tobin, who was endorsed for military service some months ago, has been ordered to report to the chaplain's school at Ft. Slocum on April 17. We hope that between now and the Chapter two more men will be appointed for the armed forces and for Brazil.

I have accepted an invitation from His Eminence Cardinal Spellman to travel as one of the Spiritual Directors on his pilgrimage to Rio, which leaves New York on July 17 and returns on August 16.

I take this occasion to congratulate most sincerely the Fathers who celebrate this year their Golden or Silver Jubilee of ordination to the Holy Priesthood.

We have been requested to supply a Franciscan Father to assist with the projected Catholic Information Bureau of the NCWC in Washington. The aim is to assist and supplement the popular channels of communication--press, radio, and television--so that the nation may be accurately informed in regard to the Church and the Church's policy in matters affecting the welfare of men.

We have also been requested to furnish a Father as chaplain and Religion Professor for Rosary Hill College in Buffalo.

"The Franciscan Vocation," a 24-page (8½ by 10½) rotogravure booklet depicting the life of St. Francis, the spirit and training of modern Franciscans, and the projects of Holy Name Province, is now ready for distribution. The booklet, composed by Frs. Salvator Fink and Joseph Vann, is to be circulated in schools, colleges, vocation exhibits and to individuals. The copies will be distributed throughout the Province and may be obtained in any quantity by writing to the Fr. Director at Callicoon.

This is the latest step in the work of promoting vocations carried on under the direction of Fr. Salvator Fink. Last year, Fr. Salvator traveled 45,000 miles and interviewed about 250 young men interested in applying for the Order. The interviews were given both to those who actually applied for admission to the Seminary and to those who wrote simply for information.

The average age for admission last year at the Seminary was 17 years. This is a little bit higher than it has been previously. The majority of those admitted last year had finished their four years of high school, but the modern trend of neglecting the classics found most of the seminarians deficient in Latin. Therefore, the average high school graduate who was accepted then, and will be accepted now, will have to go into post-graduate courses where in that one year he will study about four years of Latin, besides Greek, English, Public Speaking and Religion.

Last year, 70 new students were accepted at Callicoon; 21 of these were from the eighth grade grammar school.

Interest in vocations stems primarily from contact with the Order, from literature, from schools where contact is made by the Franciscan Sisters and teachers interested in the work of the Order, and from talks given by the Vocational Director in grammar and high schools. Last year, Fr. Salvator spoke in 125 schools. The greatest number of vocations, however, arises from the example of individual Friars. This is our best recruiting agency. The faculties at Timon and our colleges, our military chaplains (we have 8 boys directly out of service last year) and our parishes are sending in an increasing number. The retreat houses have also contributed men to the Priesthood and Brotherhood.

The booklet mentioned above, "The Franciscan Vocation," is pointed toward boys who are interested in study for the Priesthood. At the present time there is ample vocational literature in booklet form for young men interested in the Brotherhood.

Sincerely and fraternally,

Jesus Whelan, O.F.M.

Minister Provincial