

# Province of The Most Holy Name Franciscan Fathers

135 WEST 31ST STREET  
NEW YORK 1, NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL

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My dear Confrere:

I shall begin this letter by giving information concerning the trip to the Chapter that was not included in my previous letter.

Thursday, June 13th was a free day at the Chapter. Early that morning we left for Alvernia, called the FRANCISCAN CALVARY because of St. Francis' reception of the Stigmata there. The trip through the picturesque Italian countryside took about two hours, the last half-hour of which was consumed in a continual winding climb. At points on the climb we could see the clifflike rock which is La Verna. On foot, this trip must take two or three weeks. It is one more evidence of St. Francis' inclination to seek out high, inaccessible locations as places to pray. We walked the last quarter-mile.

Upon arrival, lunch was served and we were given a guided tour. First we visited the three chapels, i. e., the Choir, Our Lady of the Angels, and finally, the chapel of the Stigmata. We also visited the cells occupied from time to time by Sts. Anthony and Bonaventure. St. Bonaventure wrote the Itinerarium at Alvernia.

The monastery at Alvernia is the novitiate house of the Tuscan Province. Twice daily, after early morning Matins and again after Vespers, there is a procession to the chapel of the Stigmata. A relic of St. Francis, cloth stained with blood from his wounds, is carried and hymns are sung as the procession moves to the chapel. The Friars gather around the spot on which Francis was kneeling on the morning when he received the Stigmata, and sing the Salve, Sancte Pater.

The Chapter continued through June 15th. I left for Rome on June 16th to attend to business there and missed the other tour which was arranged for the 17th.

For many years there has been talk of establishing an American Franciscan house in Rome to accommodate Friars from the States who are in

Rome as students and in other capacities. The idea was discussed aboard ship by the American Provincials. It was decided that Fr. Charles Tallarico, who was not going to the Holy Land, would approach Father General on this subject. When the Provincials returned to Rome, Fr. Charles had the good news that the idea had received encouragement. The matter was discussed further by the Provincials and an appointment with Father General for the group was requested and granted. Once more the idea was received favorably by Father General. The American Provincials then met to discuss the matter in more detail. As a result of this meeting I was requested to arrange for the establishment of the house as a house of our Province. My acceptance was tentative, depending on the authorization of my Definitorium. This reached me in Rome a few days later. Since that time there have been many discussions of ways and means. As I write, it looks as if we will move into a house on 10 Via Po, rented from the Mercy Fathers of East New York. Fr. Wilfred Hept will be the Superior. Number 10 Via Po will house about 18 Friars conveniently, with a fair degree of comfort. It has central heating, shower facilities and other accessories that have become necessities to us. A bus will be needed because 10 Via Po is quite a distance from St. Anthony's. It is hoped that in a few years a more ideal location with a house suited to our needs can be arranged.

After the Chapter all but a few of the Capitulares returned to Rome to await an audience with the Holy Father. This was granted as part of a general audience on Wednesday, July 17th. It was quite an experience. St. Peter's is partitioned by large, heavy wooden barricades about three feet high. Groups are located according to their importance, special groups in front of the barricades, near the Papal platform, which is set before the Papal Altar. The Capitulares were placed in a section near the throne. In front of them and closer to the throne were the Most Reverend Father General and his Definitorium.

The trumpets announce the coming of the Holy Father. There is a hush, and then a cheer, as he is carried into St. Peter's. He greets people on both sides of the aisle, touching the heads of children held up to him, taking white zucchetos from people, touching them to his head and returning them, and, in general encouraging enthusiasm. It takes him a good fifteen minutes to pass from the door to the throne. At the throne, he reads lists of those in attendance and stops for words of greeting to certain groups. He spoke to us for about three minutes. After the greetings from the platform, the Holy Father comes down to the floor and talks with special persons and groups. He embraced Father General, was introduced to the new Definitors, and chatted briefly with the group. We were certainly given full recognition.

After the audience the Capitulares were free to return to their Provinces. However, I took part of the trip I had planned--as far as Louvain. Fr. Sebastian Day and I left Rome, visiting Zurich, Munich and Frankfort on the way to Louvain, where we passed two profitable days. The greater part of one day was spent with Fr. Barnabas Daniels, who drove from his base in Germany for the visit. At Louvain we stayed at St. Anthony's Monastery, the house of First Year Theology belonging to the Irish Province. It has quite a history, dating back to the Penal days. Our Fathers with degrees from Louvain know it well.

Leaving Louvain, I returned to Rome to await the General Definitorium's decision regarding the American house there. It was a week of suspense, and the decision had not been made when I took my final departure.

During this week in Rome, I visited the Generalates of two American Franciscan Communities and the tomb of St. Bernardine of Siena, at Aquila. In this city the Friars have two important churches -- a 13th-century basilica in which the body of St. Bernardine rests and another church in which Pope St. Celestine V was crowned and which now contains his body. At one of the Generalates, I began a project that may bring to realization a hope for our Brazilian Mission. I think that one of the communities we visited is interested. Pray for my intention, please.

A report on the condition of Bro. Hilary Lalor seems in order. He is progressing rapidly toward complete good health. A professor of Spanish has been assigned to him for the purpose of keeping him in practice and perfecting his ability in conversation.

At the General Chapter it was announced that all priests ordained at that time have the faculty of blessing the Crown.

Ten Fathers attended the Institute at Santa Barbara, in California studying the problems connected with character training in Seraphic Seminaries. There took place a very candid exchange of ideas, and there was an evident willingness to help in the solution of one another's problems. The old Spanish Days' Fiesta was in progress during the conference. It was good to see that the Fathers are in control. Part of the Mission restoration program will give the Santa Barbara Province a very adequate new house of Theology. We attended the funeral of a Friar of the Province. The burial was in a cement partition in the wall of a closed cloistered corridor. The coffin was a simple box covered with gray cloth.

This year's missionaries are either already there, on the way, or preparing to go. The Fathers are in Japan. The Fathers leave for Puerto Rico in September; for Brazil in late October; for Bolivia in early January. Bro. Charles will be in Puerto Rico when you receive this newsletter. I am open for volunteers for next year's quota.

In Ringwood, New Jersey, on Sunday, August 24th, Bishop McNulty dedicated a new church. The basic building had been the hall built by Fr. John Berchmans. Fr. Donatus is to be congratulated for his taste in planning the conversion. It is of simple elegance.

Some appointments made by the General Definitorium are of interest. Fr. Hyacinth Marinangeli was appointed Secretary General of the Order. Other appointments are: Fr. Alphonse Schnusenberg, Secretary for the Missions; Fr. Paschal Tosan, Commissary General of the Third Order; Fr. Antonine De Guglielmo, Secretary for Studies; Fr. Hugo Plassmann, Econome General; Fr. Alfred Polidori, Custos of the Holy Land; Fr. Apollinaris Van Leeuwen, Delegate General for Japan, Korea and the Philippines.

Briefs: Fr. Daniel Hurley seems to be doing very well after the operation and the latest report is that there is no malignancy. Fr. Gratian

Feltz, after a number of serious heart attacks, is on the road to recovery. Fr. Ralph Reilly continues as Councillor to the Delegate General in his area. Fr. Seraphin Priestley has been appointed Superior of the Hong Kong Procuration and Councillor to Fr. Dunstan Put, Delegate General to the Far East. Fr. Callistus Smith will give retreats in Anapolis and will visit Bolivia. Fr. Salvator Fink will once more double as Retreat Master and cameraman--this time in Japan. Fr. Justin McCarthy's first cartoon on national syndicate will appear November 4th. My Visitation of the Missions will have me in Kyriu for Christmas (December 14-27), in South America in the spring. It is my intention to spend the week of November 10th in Jamaica, where I shall look for a suitable location for next fall (1958), and also attend the Centenary Celebration of the coming of Franciscan Sisters to the island. The first group of Sisters was from Scotland. Fr. Stanislaus Blackowski arrived home recently. He is the first to be on vacation from Japan. The new course in Pastoral Theology is scheduled to get under way in Arch Street on September 30th. There will be three hours of class and two hours of work on class days and regular work schedule on non-class days. I was elected President of the new Conference of Major Religious Superiors in the United States. Bro. Francis X. Tokar will go to Croghan to give instruction in sandal making and cooking. He joins Bro. Boniface Sutter (instructor in bookbinding) and Bro. Paulinus Myette (instructor in carpentry). Congratulations to Bro. Capistran Polldavid on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee in the Order.

On Thursday, September 19th, Swissair Flight 884 brought the Most Reverend Eustace J. Smith and Fr. John Lambert Rowan to the United States from Beirut. His Excellency's feast day was celebrated at Thirty-first Street on Friday the 20th. On Friday afternoon, accompanied by Fr. John Lambert, he flew to Buffalo where they were to be the guests of Bishop Burke. At Buffalo, Fr. Claude delivered the car placed at their disposal by the Province. At Christ the King Seminary, His Excellency officiated at the fall Ordinations.

Pray for the success of our far-flung mission efforts and for the success of the Third Order Congress in Boston.

Sincerely and fraternally,

*Jebus Whelan, O.F.M.*

Minister Provincial