

Province of The Most Holy Name

Franciscan Fathers

135 WEST 31ST STREET
NEW YORK 1, NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL

November, 1955

My dear Confrere:

Fr. Francis X. Niederlander and myself left New York International Airport en route to Japan on Northwest Airlines September 19 at 9:45 a. m. -- 45 minutes late because of fog. We arrived at Seattle on schedule and were met by people from Olean who moved north of Seattle when the Socony Vacuum plant at Olean closed. We spent 24 hours visiting with three different families in that area. On Tuesday evening, September 20, at 9 p. m. we flew out of Seattle. After stops at Anchorage and Cold Bay, Alaska, we arrived in Tokyo at 3:30 p. m. Thursday, one hour late. Crossing the International Date Line caused us the loss of a day.

The new Super G. Turbo Prop Constellation covers the 7,000 miles between New York and Tokyo in 35 hours flying time. Our total time on this trip was 40 hours; repairs delayed us two hours at Cold Bay, three more hours were spent at various service stops.

Frs. Cormac Dungan, Victorin Rosboschil, Harold Finn, Seraphin Priestley, Lawrence Pafchik and Father Makano, a Japanese priest, pastor of our place in Maebashi, were all out at the Tokyo Airport to meet us. We spent the rest of Thursday, and Friday morning, at the Imperial Hotel bull-sessioning and resting. Friday afternoon we drove to the new Monastery of St. Francis of Assisi in Kiryu, Gumma.

Built on high ground, the new Monastery of St. Francis of Assisi in Kiryu is composed of three connected units. The chapel of reinforced concrete is the central unit; on either side of it is a unit constructed of wood with stucco. Although workers are still putting the finishing touches on this monastery, the Fathers are living in it. The entire second floor which is cloistered has 23 rooms for Friars, a rec room larger than the one at 31st Street, a choir loft for visits to the Blessed Sacrament, the various utilities needed for Friars' living quarters, and western plumbing.

The first floor has a prelatura, a combination of offices and parlors and four or six visitors' rooms depending on how much office space is needed. The chapel has one altar. A Mass chapel directly across the corridor from the main chapel entrance has five altars. On this same floor there is the refectory, kitchen, laundry, basement for a heating plant, two-car garage and various other utilities.

The chapel, planned and designed by a Benedictine, is roomy but somewhat severe. Behind the altar is a large rugged wooden cross with no

corpus. The Stations, erected on Saturday, September 24, by Fr. Raphael McInerney with the rest of us in attendance, have a peculiar history. They were drawn by a Japanese Carmelite while kneeling during the bombings of Tokyo. At first she did them with crayon and charcoal and, after the war, painted them. They were given to Fr. Robert Frawley for Takasaki. He in turn presented them to St. Francis Monastery at Kiryu.

On Sunday, September 25, with Fr. Victorin serving, I offered the first Mass in the new chapel and reserved the Blessed Sacrament. Fr. Victorin offered the second Mass; I served him.

The following morning, I opened the retreat for the Fathers in the Japanese Mission. Fr. Lawrence Pafchik joined the group so that all of our Friars in Japan with the exception of the three in language school made the first retreat at the new monastery. During the retreat, I had an opportunity to make the personal visitation of the Friars. Friday, after the retreat closed, I began moving around the Gumma area to make the local visitation. On Sunday I concluded visitation and was present at Fr. Stanislaus Blackowski's church in Isesaki when Bishop Doran, a Canadian Friar and an old China hand, confirmed a group of 41 Christians. Monday, October 3, I had the honor of baptizing five new Christians at Fr. Harold Finn's parish church in Kiryu.

At 5 p. m. that afternoon, with the Friars present, I blessed the monastery and enclosed the second floor as the cloister.

On Tuesday, the feast of Our Holy Father St. Francis, with many men and women religious and secular priests present, Archbishop Maxmilian de Furstenberg, Internuncio to Japan, solemnly blessed the chapel; following this I offered the Mass. Among the 75 lay people receiving Communion were the five whom I baptized the night before. You will read a more detailed account of this dedication in the next edition of the Annals.

Although the new monastery at Kiryu cannot be used as a parish unit, it will serve a number of the pressing needs of our Gumma Mission. As central headquarters of the Mission it will house local administration and be used for priests' retreats, Days of Recollection and a place of rest and relaxation for the missionaries. Fr. Robert Frawley has been appointed superior and from the new monastery he will handle a small parish at Omama. There are sufficient grounds to erect a number of outdoor shrines and the Stations of the Cross. So we hope to develop it as a place of pilgrimage and for Days of Recollection for the laity.

The Fathers of Holy Name Province in Japan have been directed to return to the central house each Monday afternoon in time for supper. After supper they will visit the Blessed Sacrament and say night prayers. During the evening they may have "rec" and/or a discussion of topics connected with the mission and/or a casus. On Tuesday following morning prayers, there will be meditation, Prime and Tierce. All the Fathers are to be present for these exercises, before or after which they will say Mass. At Tuesday

noon there will be Sext, Nones, particular examen, Vespers and Compline. On Tuesday at 4 p. m. they will recite Matins and Lauds and say the Stations; then they may return to their missions. Once a month two talks and a Holy Hour will be added to constitute a Day of Recollection.

While the visitation revealed a fine spirit among the Friars and definite progress in their work, it also offered evidence that our expansion in Gumma has been a little too rapid. We have practically no place in the mission where two Fathers are living together. In an attempt to promote more community life, we will cover Tomioka and Shimmachi from Takasaki where Fr. Louis Joyce will be pastor. There Frs. Ambrose Donehue and Anthony Moore will reside. However, they will have apartments at Tomioka and Shimmachi for staying overnight when necessary. Fr. Lucian Mulhern will reside with Fr. Solanus Gallagher at Tatebaya shi and maintain his apartment in Ota. Fr. Conrad Schomske who finishes school in early 1956 will live with Fr. Harold Finn at Kiryu and work in the Kiryu area where a couple of centers are developing. Frs. Cormac Dungan, Robert Frawley and, after early 1956, Jerome Donnelly will live at St. Francis Monastery in Kiryu as will Brothers Louis Black and Martin Dowling. After these changes are effected, Frs. Ralph Reilly and Stanislaus Blackowski will be the only Friars living alone. This situation can be corrected only after Frs. Raphael McInerney and Campion Lally finish at the language school in 1957. It begins to look as if more Brothers are needed in Kiryu.

Fr. Ralph Reilly's parish is on the edge of the Canto Plain, at the foot of the mountains in Shibukawa. He is building a combination church, hall and residence; in addition he is meeting all the requirements for a kindergarten. Shibukawa will eventually be the stepping-off place for the work in the hill country when we have the manpower to do so.

On Wednesday, October 5, the day after the dedication, Frs. Francis Xavier, Lawrence Pafchik and myself left by train for the naval station at Yokosuka, Fr. Lawrence's present assignment. We spent a few hours visiting this huge navy installation and shopping at its PX. That evening Frs. Cormac Dungan and Robert Frawley drove down from Gumma and joined us for dinner in the Club at Yokosuka. After dinner we returned to the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo.

We spent a good part of Thursday, October 6, at the Seminary in Tokyo joining in the celebration of the feast day of Fr. Prudent Monsett, Visitor of our Japanese Mission last spring. After the celebration we visited St. Francis Church in Tokyo which is staffed by the Fathers of the Canadian Province. There we met two Canadian Friars whom we had known in our simplex days at St. Bonaventure's: Frs. Peter Baptist Charbonneau and Ludgar Beaudet. Fr. Peter Baptist is at Sano and Fr. Ludgar is at Yokohama. We did some shopping in Tokyo Thursday afternoon.

The following day we visited Fr. Alphonse Schnusenberg, the General Delegate at the language school in Rapongi. The school has grown to the extent that a new building has become necessary. Now underway, this new

building has been promised for the spring. It will have 30 living rooms for Friars, 13 classrooms, a chapel and the usual utilities. After this visit with Fr. General Delegate, we went to the Catholic Center and visited briefly with Bishop Tagushi of Osaka in whose Diocese Fr. Gratian Feltz will labor. Although we were scheduled to leave Tokyo at 6 p. m., Friday, October 7, the plane was delayed until 8 a. m., Saturday, 14 hours late. Fr. Vincent Kroger, O.F.M., Minister Provincial of the Province of St. John Baptist, Cincinnati, who was traveling in the Orient and made an overnight visit to the Central House in Kiryu, returned on that same plane.

On the way back we visited with Fr. George Flanagan who is studying at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

The return trip being from West to East is 14 hours less flying time than the trip out. We returned in 21 hours flying time.

All personnel in the Province are reminded that we have need of volunteers for our missions in Japan, Brazil and Puerto Rico. If you are interested in applying and have not done so since January, 1955, please write to this office. If you applied before January, 1955, you must re-apply.

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

Fr. Germain Badgely to St. Joseph's Friary, East Rutherford, N. J., to assist Fr. William Hayes at Wood Ridge.

Fr. Dunstan Carroll to St. Thomas Friary, Beach Haven, N. J.

N. B. -- The Sacred Congregation of Rites' GENERAL DECREE ON REDUCING THE RUBRICS TO A SIMPLER FORM, dated March 23, 1955, becomes effective on January 1, 1956. The directives for January, 1956, given at the end of the 1955 Ordo are now obsolete. To insure its arrival by January 1, the 1956 Ordo incorporating all the changes will be mailed to all our houses about December 15.

Sincerely and fraternally,

John Whelan, O.F.M.

Minister Provincial