

# Province of The Most Holy Name

## Franciscan Fathers

135 WEST 31ST STREET  
NEW YORK 1, NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL

November, 1959

My dear Confreres:

In a special evening ceremony on October 1, 1959, at St. Clare's Hospital, New York City, Holy Name Province affiliated thirteen lay people to the Order. The Sisters of St. Clare's prepared and served the dinner following the ceremonies. A list of the new affiliates is appended to this letter.

The Allegany Sisters, now celebrating their centenary, invited me to celebrate Holy Mass and preach on October 4, the day set aside during the centenary year for members of the clergy who have helped the Sisters during the past years. That same evening I presided at Holy Mass and a banquet at St. Bonaventure University marking the annual award of the University's Catholic Action Medal. Dr. John L. Madden, Chief of Surgery at St. Clare's Hospital, New York City, received the decoration this year.

Fr. Cormac Dungan, superior of our Japanese Mission, and I left New York's Idlewild Airport for Japan on October 6. After a day's stop at Seattle--and a day's loss on the International Date Line--we arrived in Tokyo Friday afternoon, October 9. Very Rev. Apollinaris van Leeuwen, Delegate General, and many of our own Fathers met us at the Tokyo airport. After spending the night in Tokyo, we made the three-hour drive to Gumma.

Sunday afternoon we were present for a III Order convention at our monastery in Kiryu. One hundred and fifty Japanese (some of whom traveled 800 miles) assisted at the convention. Among the many objects of interest on display at the convention were some twenty items of printed material translated into Japanese by Fr. Conrad Schomske.

On Monday morning, October 12, I opened the retreat at our Kiryu monastery for twenty of our Fathers and one Brother. Fr. Augustine Lazanski, stationed in Matale, Ceylon, and Fr. Victorin Rosboschil, stationed in Hong Kong, made this retreat. On Tuesday evening during the retreat I offered Solemn Mass for the soul of Fr. William Curran. This is the second time I have offered Mass for a deceased Friar in the Mission areas. The first was Fr. Owen Leary in Coroioco.

The Kiryu monastery provides excellent facilities for days of recollection, priests' retreats, and pilgrimages. The Japanese have responded so well to the work of our Fathers that expansion of the monastery is necessary. We plan to add a combination auditorium and dormitory to the existing plant. Six of the outdoor stations on the monastery grounds have been completed. These are the 2nd, 4th, 8th, 11th, 12th and 13th. At the 14th Station a large mausoleum to be used for any of the Friars who may die on the Mission will be constructed providing civil authorities grant the permission.

The retreat terminated Friday, October 16, and on the Monday following I began visitation of our parishes in the Gumma area. Frs. Victorin, Augustine, Cormac, Campion Lally and Aloysius Reilly (the latter two chauffeured) accompanied me. We visited two missions each day. To see so much good being done was good for the soul--but two banquets a day are rough on the body. I shall describe the Missions in the order of our visitation.

Frs. Harold Finn, pastor at Kiryu, and Campion Lally, his assistant, have completed a new church. Their new residence is near completion and will offer welcome privacy and a modicum of comfort. The original parish building, a combination church and residence, will serve as a hall. Sections of it will also be remodeled to provide meeting rooms and parlors.

Fr. Jerome Donnelly, pastor at Omama, has his entire plant (chapel, residence and instructions rooms) in one building. A stepladder staircase leads to Fr. Jerome's apartment on the second floor. This approach insures him privacy. Omama is only a ten-minute drive from the Kiryu monastery.

For some years, the work of Fr. Lucian Mulhearn, pastor at Ota, has been plagued by the bad example of U. S. soldiers stationed at a base in his parish, and by a lack of proper parochial facilities. Now the base has been closed, and a new parish plant consisting of church, hall, and residence has been opened. Sunday, October 25, I offered the first Mass in the new church. Fr. Conrad Schomske, assistant at Ota, is presently vacationing in the U. S. A.

Fr. Solanus Gallagher is present pastor of Tatebayashi, whose two-year-old facilities comprise a church and residence. Fr. Sebastian McKenna will join Fr. Solanus as assistant and will begin to minister to Catholics in a town between Tatebayashi and Ota.

A new church and hall and a residence have been constructed at Fujioka, where Fr. Anthony Moore (now on U. S. vacation) is pastor. The residence is not a new building. Purchased from U. S. Army officers, it was dismantled, moved, and reassembled at Fujioka. Fr. Cary Keen is assistant here, Fr. Sebastian McKenna temporary pastor. This Mission was first established at Shinmachi. Land being more easily available at Fujioka, it was decided to purchase and build there. Shinmachi is now a separate Mission.

Fr. Stanislaus Blackowski's parish at Isesaki is carried on the Gumma list as the hospitality stop. It features a cook who prepares American-style meals. Fr. Juniper Lynch, part-time assistant here, has begun his third year in language school. Fr. Juniper comes to Isesaki twice a month. Isesaki's new residence expands the use of the old all-purpose building for instructions and meetings. There is ample room for a church.

Fr. Luke O'Connell is administering Tomiooka during Fr. Ambrose Donehue's U. S. vacation. As at Omama, all facilities here are in one sprawling building, a situation which results in some real inconveniences. In due time it will be replaced by more serviceable construction. Land is available.

Frs. Louis Joyce and Callistus Sweeney, pastor and assistant at Takasaki, have their church, kindergarten, meeting rooms, and residence all in one large building. Foundations for a separate rectory were being poured during my visit. Three Sisters from a Japanese community maintain a residence and another kindergarten in Takasaki.

Shibukawa, our westernmost parish in the Gumma mission, is served by Frs. Ralph Reilly and Raphael McInerney, pastor and assistant. Following the pattern of Fujioka, Fr. Ralph obtained and relocated a home that serves as a new residence. The original parish building serves for all purposes. With Fr. Raphael we visited Numata, a mission from Shibukawa. It was decided to place a resident pastor here. Fr. Robert Frawley will assume this post. As a result of this decision, Fr. Aloysius Reilly will move to the Kiryu monastery.

Our last visit was to Maebashi where Fr. Mackino, an English-speaking Japanese secular priest, is pastor. This parish has had a complete plant for many years. The church was redecorated in 1957 as part of the parish silver anniversary celebration. The parish hall and residence have been renovated recently. Fr. Mackino receives a subsidy from our mission headquarters. Maebashi, the state capital, was the scene of the Girard trial.

At a meeting of the Mission Council, a timetable for future construction was approved. It is as follows:

- a) 1961--Kiryu monastery; combination dormitory and small auditorium.
- b) 1962--A school to be used as combination Seraphic seminary and boys' school.
- c) 1963--A hospital.

A question remains as to whether Fathers of our Province or teaching Brothers will staff the boys' school. We are now seeking an American community of nuns to staff the hospital. We have not concluded the project of bringing Poor Clares to Gumma.

Fr. Augustine Lazanski provided the following information regarding his work in Ceylon:

Some ten years ago an Institute of native Franciscan Brothers, whose headquarters were in Maggona, Ceylon, decided to split into two language groups, Singhalese and Tamil. The latter group set up a new mother-house in Matale and petitioned our General Curia for a chaplain. The Curia, in turn, requested the late Fr. Thomas Plassmann to supply the Friar. Hence in June, 1952, Fr. Augustine left aboard the American Export Freighter "Exhibitor" to begin work among these Tamil-speaking Franciscans. He found the group to be of somewhat advanced age, due to their refusal to accept vocations for several years previous. He found, too, that his office as chaplain soon developed into that of Vice President in charge of everything, temporal as well as spiritual. In 1954 Fr. Augustine returned to the States, remained here two years, and then once more went back to Ceylon.

The Brothers are engaged in a number of apostolates with varying success. They train young men in the art of printing, assist priests with social work, conduct an orphanage and a small-scale Boys' Town. Twenty-eight boys are in the latter institution. Three hundred have been turned away due to lack of proper facilities.

Aside from his other duties, Fr. Augustine has managed such basic enterprises as compiling new Constitutions for the Brothers, a prayer book, and a Tamil version of the Little Office of the Blessed Mother. He is now working on a new translation (into Tamil) of the Constitutions. He plans a Ritual and Catechism.

PLANNED: Monasteries, St. Bonaventure University, San Juan; Monastery and Church, New Bedford; Church, Kingston, Jamaica; Laboratory Expansion, St. Raphael's, Lafayette.

The following persons were presented Documents of Affiliation with the Order of Friars Minor, October 1, 1959: Mr. and Mrs. James D. Alberse; Dr. and Mrs. V. Charles Ancona; Dr. and Mrs. Owen Cheevers; Dr. and Mrs. John Doyle; Mrs. John L. Madden; Dr. and Mrs. Joseph B. McCloskey; Dr. and Mrs. Richard W. Mullen.

Sincerely and fraternally,

*John Wheeler, O.F.M.*

Minister Provincial