

## REMEMBER BROTHER LAMBERT



Graduating from Mount Saint Joseph in May of 1936, Howard Bents entered the Congregation at Old Point Comfort in November of 1936 and received the Holy Habit and the name Lambert on Saint Joseph's Day in 1937. The mystery of his short postulancy died with Brother Lambert! Upon his graduation from Catholic University in 1942, he was assigned to Mission High School in Roxbury, beginning a very distinguished career in Xaverian education. Brother Lambert's early years at Mission were some of the happiest of his life, and he made lasting friendships with his Mission boys.

After a brief assignment to the Juniorate, Brother Lambert returned to his alma mater, Mount Saint Joseph, as Director of Residents in 1949, a position he held for four years. Again, during this assignment, Lambert made a deep impression on the young men he taught. In 1953 Brother Lambert was appointed Principal of Boys' Catholic High School in Malden, Massachusetts, beginning a new career as the reluctant "man in charge." When Brother Lambert asked to be relieved of his duties as Principal of Boys' Catholic, Brother William, the Provincial, accepted his resignation with the words, "You want out of the frying pan, but you're going to go into the fire." With those words Brother William appointed him the founding Principal of Ryken High School in Leonardtown, Maryland. Ryken High School was founded in mud and rain. Since the school building and the Juniorate dormitories were not ready for occupancy when the aspirants and the new students arrived in September of 1956, both the Brothers and the aspirants lived in the cabins at Camp Calvert until the winter cold finally drove the aspirants to Xaverian College and the faculty to Leonard Hall. Brother Lambert's journal of the founding of Ryken and the school's first year reads like a comedy of errors.

He wrote, "Rain! Rain! More rain! Mud!!! Everywhere mud!" Brother Lambert's further attempts to be relieved of authority were unavailing, and after a brief assignment to Flaget High School, he was appointed Director and Superior of Don Bosco Hall in Detroit, Michigan. When the Xaverian Brothers withdrew from Don Bosco Hall in 1965, it brought to an end a 97-year commitment which the community had made to various childcare institutions, beginning with Saint Mary's Industrial School in 1868. As reluctant as he was to be in charge, Brother Lambert very much regretted the withdrawal of the Brothers from Don Bosco Hall where he felt we did very significant work. He never quite forgave Brother Thomas More for this decision.

Brother Lambert was back in the classroom at Xaverian High School from 1965-1967 when he was appointed the Principal of Holy Name School in Brooklyn. He remained Principal of Holy Name until the Brothers withdrew from the school in 1971. Brother Lambert then returned to Xaverian High where he remained until he was appointed Provincial Treasurer in 1986. In 1992 he returned to Mount Saint Joseph as Director of the bookstore and remained there until he was incapacitated by a stroke in 1998. During his last years at the Mount, Brother Lambert was friend and father confessor to all from his place in the bookstore, a refuge to many boys who didn't quite fit in and who needed a kindly grandfather to pay attention to them.

Brother Lambert's death was particularly beautiful. During his last years at the Mount, he had become quite fond of the school's Chaplain, Father Michael Murphy, a Mount Saint Joseph graduate. When Brother Lambert was dying, Father Murphy was away. He returned unexpectedly to Baltimore and went immediately to see Brother Lambert. Although Lambert was not conscious, he seemed to sense Father Mike's presence. Father Mike anointed him, and ten minutes later, with Father Mike still present, Brother Lambert went home to God.

Brother Lambert was waked in the chapel at his beloved Mount Saint Joseph. Present at his wake and funeral were the son and daughter of Jack Cox, one of Lambert's Mission boys, who had traveled to Baltimore to honor their late father's life long devotion to Brother Lambert. A fitting tribute to Lambert's love for all the boys whom he taught over his long career! After a funeral at St Joseph's Monastery Church, Brother Lambert was laid to rest with his confreres at Bonnie Brae.