

PIONEERS IN FAITH

THE CYRENIAN COLLECTION

Early Histories of the Xaverian Brothers in America



Edited by Brother Kenney Gorman, C.F.X.

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P R E F A C E

In 1854, a small and struggling band of Xaverian Brothers, missionaries and European immigrants, arrived in Louisville, Kentucky at the invitation of Bishop Martin Spalding. They came as missionaries with little more than faith and hope, called to educate the sons of German and Irish immigrants who formed a vital part of the Catholic Church of that time. Their journey was long and demanding, and what awaited them was no easier. These Xaverian Brothers encountered hardship, uncertainty, and obstacles that at times seemed to threaten the very survival of their mission.

Yet they remained faithful. Trusting in God's providence and sustained by their shared commitment, these Brothers persevered in the work for which they had been sent. What began as a fragile and uncertain endeavor slowly took root, growing into an educational mission that strengthened the Church in Kentucky and, in time, extended its reach far beyond, touching communities throughout the United States.

This collection of brief biographies invites the reader to pause and reflect on those early beginnings and to encounter the Brothers whose lives laid the foundations of the Xaverian mission in America. In these pages, the Xaverian Charism is revealed not through extraordinary deeds, but through the steady fidelity of ordinary men—men whose devotion to the Gospel and generous service to their students allowed a small seed to grow into a great tree. Today, its branches continue to shelter and nourish schools of evangelization and learning across many states and dioceses.

This work is the fruit of the prayerful dedication and labor of Brother Kenney Gorman, CFX, together with all who assisted him in bringing this project to completion. With gratitude, we offer this collection to the Church, praying that all who read these Cyrenians may be quietly encouraged to serve the Lord and His mission with trust and generosity, each according to their own unique and cherished calling.

- Brother John D Hamilton, CFX / General Superior

A CYRENIAN

Using this word for a purpose of our own we give the definition as:

Cyrenian, to help by encouragement, to assist, to lighten the burden of others, as Simon the Cyrenian was compelled to assist our Lord in carrying the cross to Calvary's heights.

From the earliest days as a Xaverian Brother the writer had always two goals in view, the advancement of the Brotherhood and to forge it to the front ranks of educational societies; secondly, to assist all, especially the young members, whenever possible, in studies or work and encourage them in their vocation.

As nothing is better than emulation apart from spiritual benefit the author of the Cyrenians resolved to compile and write certain biographies believing that the perusal of them will benefit a novice or young religious. This and nothing else is the object of these papers.

In some Congregations there is a beautiful custom to read the biographies of their own members, preferably the Founders and pioneers. Especially in the novitiate is such reading very practicable.

Every community has been and ever will be influenced by the presence of a great personality. Even after the individual has passed away the effect of his life continues. The acquaintances of such persons chisels into and upon the mind a conception the fruition of which will affect the whole life.

Unfortunately we have as yet no such biographies. The writer's endeavor is to create such as far as he is able and to snatch a few moments of his otherwise well taken up time. Having broken a path, others, more competent, may follow.

All only for God and the good of our Congregation.

CYRENIAN NO. 1

Brother Philip, C.F.X.

First North American-born Brother to serve
in the Congregation of St. Francis Xavier

Originally published in 1922,
in commemoration of Br. Philip's

DIAMOND JUBILEE

(1862 – 1922)



CYRENIAN NO. 1

THE DIVINE MASTER encouraged his followers with these sweet words: "My yoke is sweet and my burden light." There are times, even among religious, when the sweetest yoke, carried for any period of time, bears heavily upon us and that we need a Simon Cyrenian to help us to carry our cross.

As the reluctant help of Simon Cyrenian eased our Lord's heavy burden so too the author hopes that these Cyrenians will lift the yoke that is perhaps pressing too heavily upon a young religious.

For ages mankind has indisputably accepted that in the life of man are certain periods which serve as causes for special entertaining functions. If many days were like a sandy desert, he will meet an oasis, if encountered storms he will find a haven, behind the darkest cloud he knows the sun is still shining.

Leaving off baser metals, such as iron and copper, we have the precious metals, silver, and gold and more valuable still our diamonds, each representing a life's epoch or Jubilee of twenty-five, fifty, and seventy-five years respectively. There has been a change in the latter by no less an authority than Queen Victoria who, when sixty years as queen over England, declared that sixty years are and ought to be the years of the diamond Jubilee. She celebrated the same in those years and it was universally accepted as a Social Law when it comes to individuals, but seventy-five is still retained when it refers to bodies such as classes, communities, political and religious bodies.

Among the Xaverian Brothers it is customary to count the years in religion from the day that one enters, from the day he steps boldly forth ready to prepare himself to consecrate his life to God and His cause. It is when a young man enters as a postulant that really his religious life begins.



Brother Philip Griffin, first native-born American Xaverian Brother.

The young Congregation of the Xaverian Brothers, since a colony settled in the United States on August 2, 1854, has had the rare satisfaction that two of its pioneers, Brother Stanislaus in 1902, and Brother Stephen in 1908, celebrated their diamond jubilee. Brother Martin came within one month of having the same satisfaction in 1906. These veteran pioneers were not only the foundation stones of the American edifice, but they had the honor of having been picked, chiseled and trimmed by the saintly founder, Brother Francis Xavier, Theodore Ryken. These pioneers have all gone to receive their plenteous reward. Another generation follows and this one too has sturdy, healthy, long lived individuals. First and foremost is Brother Philip, who coming December 3rd will, God willing, celebrate his Diamond Jubilee as having served God as a religious for sixty years, more than fifty of which were spent in the classroom.

If one wishes to examine the solidity of an edifice, he is not satisfied in merely examining the corner stone or the foundation stones which are often obscure, but he will test the stones that lie immediately upon the bottom layers and which too may be looked upon as belonging to the foundation and are part thereof.

In the Manual of Advice we are taught: The Brothers shall not speak of themselves, their relations, of what they did in the world, of their expectations, of the dowry or pension they brought to the Novitiate on entering the Congregation. Manual P. 56.

No Brother heeded this advice more closely than Brother Philip.

“We have very little knowledge of his earlier boyhood days. In the archives of the Province we find the following:

Charlestown, Mass., June 16. 1868

*To Mr. John Griffin,
The following is the certificate of your baptism as copied from the Record kept in St. Mary's Church in the city of Charlestown, Mass.*

March 7, 1850, I baptized John born yesterday of John Griffin and Catherine his wife. -Michael McGrath.

I am glad to learn that another of our Charlestown youths has chosen the better part. Many have already done so and I heartily thank God for the grace he thus confers on our city. May he bless and make you worthy of the high and holy state to which you are called.

Yours truly,

GEO. A. HAMILTON

Some eight years ago Brother Provincial Isidore was gathering the fragments of the Xaverian Brothers in America.

He asked Brother Philip to write his reminiscences and early connection with the Brotherhood. The result of the Provincial's request was in the style of a chronicle which he entitled “Random Randoms”, and from which much is culled.

About his 6th year we find him an inmate of St. Joseph's German orphan asylum in Louisville, Ky, then situated just opposite the Brother's humble home.

Brother Philip has still a faint recollection of having seen the first six pioneers and of having stood at the bier of the first deceased Xaverian, Brother Philip, who died in 1856.

No doubt he has seen the Founder, for he was in Louisville about that time for several weeks, but he could not distinguish him from the pioneers.

“When one is 72 years old and has spent sixty in the same congregation, one becomes reminiscent, has certain fixed ideas, has adopted certain maxims, has been molded in character and formed in habits - be they good, bad or indifferent, so that his daily companions may truly say: you cannot change him: nevertheless,

they should hopefully hope his declining years will mellow his ideas, maxims, character and habits in such a manner so as to be pleasing or acceptable to the majority of his companions.” - *From Random, Randoms*.

Brother Philip entered the Congregation in Louisville, Ky., December 3, 1862. He was the youngest boy ever accepted. Our late Brother Boniface came next in youth. Brother Philip entered when he was 12 years, 8 months. Brother Boniface, 12 years, 10 months. Brother Isidore, 13 years, 3 months. Brother Richard, 13 years, 5 months. We had then no Aspirants. When an applicant was accepted, he entered at once the postulanship but had generally to stay in this department several years before receiving the habit. Brother Isidore was the youngest when he received the habit, being then only 14 years and 5 months old. Brother Louis (Francis Walsh) was the second youngest, 14 years, 9 months. Brother Philip received the habit at the age of 15 years, 4 months. In *Random Randoms* he states: “No one coaxed me. After school hours I used to help the Brother cook in outdoor work. One day when going home, Brother Paul, the Superior said: ‘Johnnie, when are you coming to be a Brother?’ I answered, ‘Now, if you take.’ A few more questions and it was settled he would accept me on the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, November 21, 1862. A few days later he said, ‘I have no bed for you, you must wait for the Feast of St. Francis Xavier.’”

When Brother Philip entered, he made the seventeenth in the community, then the only one in America. There were then ten professed, two novices, and four postulants. Brother Philip has also the honor of being the first native born Xaverian. In 1922 we have 85 percent that claim America as their native place.

The earliest Xaverians in America had been trained in the schools of England and while there the Lancasterian, or monitor system, had reached the heights of enthusiasm. They brought this system with them and the young Brothers, mere boys, some of them, were put in class with an experienced teacher and were thus monitors or pupil teachers. Brother Philip was one of them and he and several others became teachers by doing. In the evening the monitors were shown their faults and ways to correct them, thus combining theory with practice.

Those early days of the Xaverians were strenuous and present and future members must admire the zeal of these pioneers and their immediate successors. They never complained. They taught from 8 to 11, and 1 to 4, from the first Monday in August till the very last day of June.

Besides overcrowded classes they attended to sacristy, altar decorations, altar boys, sodalities, singing for children’s services, played the organ, collected the boys that had left school on Sundays for games followed by instructions; they did janitor and sexton work, all this extra, not a cent remuneration.

Their diet was in accord with their poverty. The Brothers lived at one central house, on Green Street, from 1860-64; at St. Xavier’s Institute from 1864-1898. Those who taught in parochial schools took an apology of a luncheon from home. This lunch consisted of coffee prepared at the school, bread with molasses. One day in 1865, while Brother Philip was indulging in such a repast at St. Martin’s, the celebrated German missionary Father Wenninger, S. J., happened to see him. He looked and asked, “Is that all?” “Yes, Father.” “Well, this is an apostolic meal for apostolic men.” Saturday morning was generally fasting in honor of the Blessed Virgin, for good and faithful members, and this fasting, together with the Friday diet was hard on growing youths. How many a member of today may attribute his vocation to the fasts and prayers of those pioneers and their immediate successors? The European Brothers seemed to thrive on long hours of work and scanty meals and the younger seemed to look upon it as a matter of course. For five years they lived in cramped quarters without the least comfort enjoyed by an ordinary laborer.

The three last pioneers were Brother Stanislaus, who lived to be 87, Brother Stephen, 86, Brother Bernardine, 77, and those immediately following, such as Brother Philip; who is now 72, with three others still living (1922), have celebrated their golden Jubilee and whose ages hover over seventy.

Brother Philip received the habit July 9, 1865. He took the name of

Philip in fond remembrance of a boy friend, Philip Englert, who a little later exchanged his name with Peter Baptiste when he became a Franciscan. Hitherto Brother Philip was known as Johnnie Griffin and when he entered the classroom at St. Martin's it created quite a mirth and the boys had for a long time to battle with the difficulties in the change of names.

He taught for two years, 1865-66, at St. Martin's, then in 1867, at the Immaculate Conception where Brother Isidore was a pupil teacher under him. In 1868-1873 he taught at St. Boniface. His knowledge of German was so clear and accurate that people frequently disputed whether he came from Berlin or Vienna and their puzzled look was a study when he proudly said, "I am a native born American of Irish parents." In 1873, he was transferred to St. Xavier's Institute, now St. Xavier's College, where he taught five years. The years of his boyhood and early manhood were spent in Louisville, Ky. Louisville was his first Love; there he wreathed an evergreen garland which time never faded and associations which last to this day. As an efficient teacher he had few parallels and as a teacher of English Grammar he has no peer. He exacted thoroughness to a degree that gave him the sobriquet of "Teacher of Minuteness". To forget to dot an I or cross a T or fail in punctuation were in his eye criminal, and it was laughable to see him almost fall into spasms when pupils would in such minor points "murder the Queen's English."

His was a unique personage. Of a lively neryous disposition he never took interest in any athletic sports. An excellent singer, a fair performer on the organ, he could never whistle. One of his hobbies in early life as a religious was to visit the cemeteries and read the quaint epitaphs: he still follows this habit; it is his delight today to stroll through the avenues of a cemetery but no longer to criticize the grammar, but to hunt up the resting place of a former friend or acquaintance and to say a little prayer for them. "His red hair was no index of his temper. Nevertheless he could rise to the majestic heights of a King Lear in gesture and expression when anger or disappointment moved him." - *Excerpt from letter of John H. Gruber.*

But the religious life too, has its humorous side more genuine and

original than that of a comedian. To wander a little from the more serious the writer recalls vividly two laughable instances for he himself was a participant. In the 70's, the Brothers generally wore high silk hats, a Prince Albert coat and were rigged out like any gentleman of that period. The writer, owing to his youth and for other reasons, never wore such an outfit. One delightful Sunday afternoon the latter part of March, Brother Philip and the writer took a walk out Third Street in Louisville. Having walked a little more than a mile and coming to a sequestered spot beside which ran a prattling brook we stopped, and heeding the invitation, took off our shoes and stockings and bathed our feet in the cool water. We enjoyed ourselves about half an hour and were preparing to return to the Institute when, lo! Our feet had swollen and we could not get on our stockings, still less our shoes. To go home then, with silk hat, Prince Albert coat and bare feet was unthinkable. The only alternative was to wait till dark, avoid people and run through alleys, which we did.

Every now and then, after the melting of snow, the Ohio river would rise and frequently cause disaster. People by the thousand would go to see the inundations. The same two on an afternoon went down Fourth Street to see the flood. We had seen all that could be seen when we resolved to go over to Third Street to see the havoc there. To avoid going up to Main Street and then to Third, we proposed to make a short cut by way of O'Neil's Alley, which ran parallel and between those streets. When we came to the alley the rise prevented us to go any further and we were about to return when an elderly man with high boots stooped before Brother Philip and said, "Alle." "Alle what?" asked Brother Philip. "To get on me back, to be sure." Brother Philip straddled the human ferry and both crossed, but the laughable part was to see the shadow on a brick wall, a man with a high hat being ferried over on a man's back. The man returned and also carried Brother Philip's companion over. The poor man asked for something "to warm up," but neither of us had a penny.

In 1878, Brother Philip left the scenes of his childhood and youth, the field of his earliest zeal and enthusiasm, and was placed in charge of a newly established institution, St. James' Home, in Baltimore. During two years he directed its destinies. In 1880 he

was put in charge of a school in West Troy, N. J. The Brothers relinquished the field after a year. He then was called upon to take charge of the old Cathedral School in Richmond, Va. This was in 1881. Here he taught for nine years, when he was removed for a year to Lowell, Mass., (1890-91). Richmond clamored for his return and August, 1891, St. Peter's, Richmond was again directed by him, this time for a period of ten years. In 1901 he was transferred to his first Love, St. Xavier's College, Louisville, as Director where he remained two years, when in 1903, he was appointed Director of Old Point Comfort College, Va. The following year he was transferred to Mt. St. Joseph's College, Baltimore, where he taught for a number of years. In consideration of his fifty-three years of untiring zeal and great success as a teacher and being afflicted with partial deafness, he was put in the class of Xaverian Emeritus. But Brother Philip cannot be idle; he is now Librarian of the Brothers' large library at Mt. St. Joseph's College, Baltimore, and gathers specimens for a well-packed, well-selected museum.

Richmond was the field of his greatest activity. There he was director of the then Cathedral School for nineteen years, uninterruptedly except one year; there he finds the ripest and most bounteous fruits of his labor; and there his name became a household word in very many families.

Rev. F. Joseph Magri, the assistant for many years at St. Peter's Cathedral, on several occasions gave vent to his feeling and remarked: "It is an admitted fact that St. Peter's parish is the best parish in the diocese. In no other church does the number of men that approach the holy table exceed that of the women as it does here. The church on Sundays is filled with men and young men and even weekdays, especially in lent, on First Fridays, and days of devotions, men are noticeably numerous, and we all attribute it to Brother Philip and his colleagues, who produced such wonderful results."

After an absence of twenty years, Brother Philip visited the scenes of his labor. It proved to be an ovation, for his old pupils flocked from all quarters to meet him and to introduce their families. The invitations to come to see them had to be denied for he could not do justice to so many.

On his return from the visit he declared to his superiors with tears in his eyes: "Brother, I never realized before the beauty of our profession and the great good we are doing in it. Our former boys have grown to fine manhood, they remained true to their faith, married Catholic girls and their numerous progeny are reared in our faith. They are on the firing line of all that is good and noble. They are an honor to our faith, to the old state, and rank among the foremost of the city of Richmond. I never felt so proud in my life. God bless them all."

Brother Philip ends his *Random Randoms* with this apostrophe: "During three quarters of a century (1914) the ship of the Xaverians has had its fair sailings, its calms, its storms.

For fifty years (now sixty) I have experienced her fortune through fair and foul. I have seen her roll and pitch in adverse gales and I have seen her ride out from storm and stress stronger, fairer as the 'Love' of its crew, and now can bear witness to the verification of our motto, 'Through Concord small things will grow.'

"Animated with the enthusiasm of our holy Patron, let all Xaverians so live and so work that Divine Providence may continue to protect the ship of the Xaverians and thus we shall continue to procure for God all the glory which He has a right to expect from us - the proteges of St. Francis Xavier."

The occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Brother Philip, December 3, 1922.

Few Fragments from Former Pupils

“To dear Brother Philip,
The prayers said 33 years ago asking that you have rheumatism so we could get a holiday were not often heard. May the prayers we now offer for your future good health be heard and a generous response shown.”

- Louis B. Hatke.

“ I was in his class for two years. I consider that one of the fortunate events in my life. His Friday ‘sermons’ and his ‘pills’ had a salutary effect. God bless him and spare him many years.”

- James M. Finnegan.

“A past master in the art of handling boys, with the occasional aid of ‘Old Black Peter’. From his throne on Shockoe Hill he ruled the product of Richmond’s seven Hills and the majority of his subjects are a credit to him. Long life to him.”-P. J. Ryan.

“I have a warm spot in my heart for Old St. Peter’s and Brothers Philip, Raymond, Michael and other Xaverians. God bless them all and especially Brother Philip.”- Thos. A. Daffron.

“The many shafts of wit and I might use the term sarcasm on some trifling incident that would occur in the classroom and seemingly at times to be unnoticed by him, then when everything was going on in an orderly manner to hear him in his original way bring in the incident to illustrate his point was wonderful.”

- H. E. Tresnon.

CYRENIAN NO. 2

Brother Francis X. Dondorf, C.F.X.

of the Congregation of St. Francis Xavier

by

Brother Isadore, C.F.X.



Originally published by St. Mary's Industrial Press
in Baltimore, MD in 1922.

CYRENIAN NO. 2

FROM THE ADDRESS delivered by Brother Gilbert on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Bro. Philip, December 2, 1922, I excerpt: "An institution can never amount to anything until it has traditions. Until a student of a college or school can point with glowing pride to feats of renown achieved by their alumni, either on the athletic campus, in the hall of debate, in professional life, or amid the roar and din of battle, their esprit de corps must be sadly hampered. Do secular historians recount the tribulations of Valley Forge to no purpose? Has the recital of the pathetic and enduring torture of our long procession of illustrative martyrs no functions?"

Truly the Xaverians have great traditions. It is of great advantage to have a knowledge of them so that they may rouse the spirit of our institute to the height of enthusiasm.

It was a matter of coincidence that the first Cyrenian recorded events of the Diamond Jubilarian, Br. Philip. Taking events chronologically we have to retrace our steps eight years, to 1854, the year of the landing of the first colony of Xaverians on Columbia's free domain. The first six Xaverians in America were: Brother Paul, superior of the little band, who died in Louisville, Ky., 1885; Br. Vincent, the Benjamin who returned to Europe in 1856 and became later second Superior General, died 1899; Br. Ignatius, the Founder's first disciple who also returned in 1856 and who died in Preston, England, 1897; Br. Peter, who returned in 1858 but was appointed superior in 1866 of St. Xavier's, Louisville, and who returned again to Europe in 1872 and died in Mayfield, 1899. Br. Philip who died in Louisville, 1856; Br. Francis Xavier, the only one of the band that burned the ship behind him. He died in Louisville, October 16, 1874.

Brother Francis Xavier Dondorf is the subject of our story of the second Cyrenian.

He was born in the city of Aachen, French, Aix la Chapelle, April 10, 1816. His native city reached great importance under Charlemagne, who chose it as his favorite place of residence, adorned it with an imperial palace and chapel and gave orders that he should be buried there.

The parents of Br. Francis were blessed with worldly goods but more with piety and virtues. Two sisters of his and other near relations were blessed with religious vocations. His saintly mother inspired him with great piety and her example found a ready response in her young son, especially was he devout when in the Eucharistic presence, and he rarely failed, when passing a church, to pay a visit. Many a mother envied the happy mother of the boy Francis X. when he accompanied her to and from divine services, walking beside her with elastic step which betrayed joy and happiness.

On Sundays and holydays he was particularly fond of visiting the many wayside shrines that surround the city of Aix la Chapelle. Among the path leading to a chapel of our Lady of Sorrow were erected the stations of the cross, and, though only a boy, he followed the Via Crucis with marked piety whenever opportunity presented itself. This great devotion practiced as a boy and young man characterized him as a religious.

Aachen has within its historic Cathedral four great relics – the cloak of the Blessed Virgin, the swaddling clothes of the Infant Jesus, the loin cloth worn by our Lord on the cross, the cloth on which lay the head of St. John the Baptist. These relics are exposed every seven years and thousands of pilgrims come to venerate them. In 1881 as many as 158,968 pilgrims visited Aachen. – *Cath. Encycl. Vol. 1.*

Though Francis X. Dondorf always showed awesome veneration to these relics, to him infinitely greater was the Eucharistic God and frequently he would repeat in prayer the liturgical words: Sight, touch, and taste in Thee are each deceived The ear alone most safely is believed.

His early education he received in his native city and at the age of sixteen he had finished the courses of the Realschule. For years he held a clerical position in one of the Banks of Aachen, and also in the Post Office. But he found neither rest nor peace. In 1839 Mr. Theodore Ryken established the foundation of a teaching Brotherhood in Bruges, Belgium. During the first year of the formative period, Mr. Ryken was Founder, Superior, Subject-all in one, for his first disciple, Br. Ignatius (Anthony Melis), joined him July 9, 1840 – a year and a month after the foundation. The beginning was made; the seed showed a healthy germination, but the growth was very slow. Seeds and soft woods grow rapidly, but the sturdy oak is of slow growth.

Like the disciples of our Lord dispersed first through all Judea, so the Founder and his first two disciples spread through Catholic centers to find perhaps an anxious young man willing to make a heroic sacrifice and join the newly organized society.

It was at one of these visits that Anthony Melis came to Aachen and entered the venerable Cathedral to pray for success of his mission. There too came at the same time young F. X. Dondorf. The psychological moment had come to both. As their waves of thought intermingled, endorsed by the Divinity that dwelled in the tabernacle, their eyes met. The gentle “knock” was given and happily the hearer responded.

How wonderful are the ways of God! To some the beacon lay hidden in the wastebasket, to one in a pool of water, to another in a book or picture. The reflection of the beacon centers in the heart, is dominated by the will, but all enkindled by God himself. Mr. Melis and Mr. Dondorf walked together from the Cathedral to meet again, a few weeks later, at the motherhouse in Bruges, Belgium.

Does not the finger of God show clearly the vocation of Br. Francis? To leave his native city of Aachen, where there were six religious orders of laymen, the Alexian Brothers, had their motherhouse there – to leave these and to enter upon a venturesome religious life; this shows a true and wonderful call.

Mr. F. X. Dondorf entered the embryonic society September 30, 1842.

At that time there was no formal habit adopted. A cassock, the main feature, was readily agreed upon but there was less unity regarding a suitable collar. One of leather was proposed, but lost on a vote, a broad linen collar was protested by the Redemptorists, one of tiny white beads from six to eight layers was adopted for some time, but that caused great inconvenience when a string would break and the beads would fall, finally a linen collar of about an inch wide was adopted. During the first year the brothers wore a scapular such as the Alexian and Brothers of the Sacred Heart wear this day. On account of inconvenience this also was discarded.

On December 3, 1843, the Founder with seven others was clothed with the habit of the Congregation and on the following Easter Sunday, April 23, 1844, Br. Francis received the same favor. At the investment the Founder took the name of Francis Xavier and when Mr. Dondorf was clothed with the livery of the Congregation he retained the name of Francis without the Xavier, which, however, was added when he came to America.

Today, 1923, we have in the American Province, Br. Francis, Br. Franciscus, Br. Xavier, Br. Xaverius, besides, Francis or Xavier is sometimes attached to another name.

All for the honor of our glorious patron St. Francis Xavier.

In 1844 Br. Francis and a companion were sent to St. Trond, Belgium, to a normal school but owing to a pressure of want of Brothers he was recalled after a year. The authorities of the normal school certified to "his good conduct and depth of virtues." He was sent to the Walletjes and given a class. October 22, 1846, Br. Francis Xavier with eight others, Br. Francis Dondorf one of them, emitted their first vows of religion for one year; in 1847, all except Br. Francis vowed for life. Unfortunately he proved a failure as a teacher and being of a quiet, serious disposition, which the Founder interpreted as morose, melancholy, unsocial, and as these qualities are signs of unfitness to community life he was not admitted to

final vows and at the advice of the Founder, left the Congregation April 19, 1848. To fit himself for the life he so dearly loved, and to satiate a longing to return which had taken deep root, he attended the normal school of Langenhorst, Rhenish Prussia, and trusting completely in Divine Providence, without previous arrangements, presented himself again in Bruges, December 21, 1849. His success as a teacher gave satisfaction, and after the prescribed time of the novitiate, was permitted to make his vows for life, December 3, 1853. -*Chronicle in Bruges*

His return was never regretted by Br. Francis Xavier.

The Founder had in his mind's eye that the field for the Congregation should be in countries beyond the sea. The topic at recreations, the fervent prayers of the first disciples, their eagerness to be chosen and sent into new fields, filled hearts and mouths.

In 1848, a colony of Brothers landed in England and settled in Bury, but was transferred the next year to Manchester.

In 1854 a colony of six Brothers came to America and landed in New York, August 18. By a previous arrangement, Louisville, Ky. was their destination. Rt. Rev. Martin J. Spalding assigned them a residence, St. Patrick's School at 13th and Market Streets. The building was of three stories, the first served as church; the second, two classrooms; the third, the residence of the Brothers.

His Activity in Louisville, KY

The Founder accompanied the six pioneers. As there were more teachers than classrooms, the school of the Immaculate Conception commonly called "8th street" was simultaneously opened August 16, 1854. Br. Ignatius and Br. Vincent took charge of St. Patrick's, Br. Peter and Br. Francis that of the Immaculate Conception. Br. Paul was the superior, and Br. Philip did the domestic work.

The coming of the Brothers seems to have been at the most inopportune time. The Know Nothing party with its outspoken



The Xaverian Brothers in the United States in 1876, front row (L to R): Benjamin Stoerr (Nov.), Br. Isadore, Br. William, Br. Stanislaus, Br. Paul, Br. Martin, Br. Francis, Br. Peter, James McCormick (Nov.), Thomas Hawkins (Nov.), David Flynn (Nov.). Standing (L to R): Br. Anselm, Br. Hubert, Ignatius Tierney (Nov.), Patrick Geoghan (Nov.), Ferdinand Tangher (Nov.), Br. Basil, Br. Richard, Bonaventure Clifford (Nov.), Br. Phillip.

antagonism and hatred for all foreigners and especially Catholics was at its height in Louisville. The rumbling of volcanic threats were heard more audibly until the final eruption a year later on the so called Bloody Monday when conflagration, assassination and murder terrorized Louisville. The Brothers were decried as the vanguard of the papacy, they were accused of drilling young Irishmen in St. Patrick's Church at night and that the Brothers' house was stacked with munitions. A platoon of policemen was commissioned to examine and search the church and the Brothers' residence.

The Brothers were advised by the bishop and his vicar to keep in hiding till the storm would pass. Hastily they gathered the few articles for divine service and buried them in a vault in St. John's Cemetery, 26th St. Brothers Peter and Francis lived for a time with a family named H. Dirker, a great friend of the Brothers, while the others were the guests of Mr. Shelly, the care-taker of the cemetery. One day while Br. Francis and Mr. Dirker were on their way to

visit the other Brothers, and while at Broadway and Eleventh St., a Know-Nothing on the opposite side of the street leveled a gun saying, "This is for you", snapped the trigger; but fortunately the gun did not go off. -*Memoirs of Br. Richard*

On November 2, 1856, Br. Philip died, and on the 11th of the same month, Brothers Ignatius and Vincent were recalled to Europe. November 18, 1856, Br. Stephen arrived to replace Br. Philip. June 24, 1858, Br. Paul and Br. Peter were recalled to Europe, leaving a community of only two - Br. Francis and Br. Stephen. For two years these two veterans kept aglow the dying embers of Xaverianism in America.

It is to these two and Br. Paul included belongs preeminently the title of pioneer.

When schools were to open in August, 1858, there was only one teacher, Br. Francis, for the two schools of two classes each. The only alternative was to engage a teacher for St. Patrick's.

This was accordingly done with Br. Stephen, to take the smaller boys along with other duties.

This hired man remained till Christmas and his successor till June. -*Memoirs of Br. Stephen*

Matters went from bad to worse, and as no help came from Europe, the two Brothers abandoned St. Patrick's, and with their little effects moved to the school of the Immaculate Conception in rear of the church on Grayson St. The church is on the corner of 8th and Grayson. The school was part school, part dwelling. Rev. F. X. Van Dertekom was pastor and a great friend, it seems the only friend at that time of the Brothers. -*Memoirs of Br. Stephen*

This change to the second home of the Brothers occurred July 12, 1859. In making a few alterations, there were now two classes and two rooms for the privacy of the Brothers. During the summer vacation Rev. Van Dertekom went to Belgium to prevail on the

Founder to strengthen the Brotherhood in Louisville.

On the return of the pastor he found the classrooms overcrowded. A German family still occupied two small rooms of the school building. After their leaving the classes were enlarged and Br. Stephen had (1859) 125 boys, many had followed him from St. Patrick's, while Br. Francis in the upper grades had 85. - *Memoirs of Br. Stephen*

Br. Vincent was elected as second Superior General, February 2, 1860. In consequence of the change in the administration the long and oft promised addition of Brothers came July 1, 1860. It consisted of Br. Paul, Superior, Brothers Stanislaus, Basil, Innocent, Hubert, Clement, Bernardine and Benedict. Br. Francis held nominally the office of Master of Novices to which position he was now appointed officially.

During the interim of the first (1854) and second colony (1860), only three young men applied, Andrew O'Day, who remained three months, John O'Day, who remained three days, and Patrick McGrath, who persevered five months. It took more than natural heroism to persevere in those days.

The dying embers blown by new vigor soon blazed. Br. Joseph entered in 1861, the first American novice who persevered till death in 1904. Br. Philip entered in 1862. The Brothers, 1860, had now removed to their third home on Green Street, between Jackson and Hancock, near St. Boniface. In 1863, Br. Vincent visited the Brothers and appointed Br. Stephen as Master of Novices.

In *Random Randoms* we read: "Brother Francis, a saintly man, was novice master. He had not the natural gift of winning youngsters, still less the knack of meeting halfway poor human nature. Brother General Vincent on his visit in 1863, publicly thanked Br. Francis for his work and installed Br. Stephen as Master of Novices. (I tell you we were glad.)

From 1854-1860, Br. Francis taught at the Immaculate Conception, from 1860-1863, at St. Boniface; he was transferred to the Immaculate Conception in 1863, where he remained till 1868, when

he took charge of St. Martin's, where he directed the school till 1874, when the Brothers, owing to a disagreement, were withdrawn. The disagreement was, the pastor would not provide for a third teacher, though the two Brothers had over 200 pupils. Br. Isidore was pupil teacher under Br. Francis on 8th St., in 1867, and half of '68, when both took charge of St. Martin's. For five years the two were companions, day in, day out, and my reminiscences today of 55 years ago are as vivid as of yesterday. As a catechist, Br. Francis was incomparable. "When relating scenes of the Passion of Christ, he frequently shed tears. In those days catechetical instruction was invariably given in the morning, biblical before dismissing in the afternoon. Strict silence was observed going to and coming from school. Children even observed it and once I heard a child remark, 'that old man and his son never talk'. In the earlier days when Louisville was a sort of frontier town, small circuses came frequently, and they generally put up their tents on Chestnut Street, the street we often walked on going to school. If he saw at a distance a sign of the circus he would turn back half a block and go on Gray St. saying in a whisper, "Too many distractions on the other street."

But we did talk but strictly on school matters. He would ask: "What part of Grammar are you about to teach today? "What part of history?" Upon the assignment he would drive question after question on the subject. He was particular on the catechism, I had to explain it just as I was to impart it to the children. I had to tell him the brief anecdotes I had prepared suitable to the lesson. St. Martin's was a German school in which German was taught parallel with English. Singing was a daily routine, I had to hum the songs we were to sing that day. He disapproved all lively melodies ending in yodeling, but favored such as lauded honesty, sobriety, uprightness. Going home, for the Brothers of the ten parochial schools we had in Louisville, (1869-1893) all lived together at St. Xavier's Institute on 4th St. I was asked how I had taught this or that.

Few teachers ever had a more practical training. His exactitude, minuteness in trifles, poverty almost bordering on the ridiculous, evoke pleasant memories. One example of many similar ones: He noticed that the soles of my shoes wore off more on one side than on the other, to even matters we walked on the northern pavement of

the street down, and on the southern side up. This procedure had the desired effect. To note such events seems out of place, but then we are recording traditions, and such little acts show more the true religious than wonderful feats. In 1870, Br. Richard was sent to St. Martin's as assistant, and he partook: for four years of the joys and sorrows of those strenuous days.

Zeal for souls, the implanting of virtues, the training of pupils in solid, practical piety, were the chief efforts of Br. Francis. He was strict, extraordinarily so, but he was such with the best of intentions.

To have the pupils attend daily mass, Saturdays as well as school-days, was encouraged and weekly were awarded tickets which had purchasable value. On Sundays and holydays, the boys assembled in their classes after mass, the roll was called and absentees sent for to come to a later mass. Sodalties were everywhere established, plenty of games provided, but the main object was to give a half hour's instruction after the games. At St. Martin's from 60 to 80 young men from 15 to 18 years of age assembled every Sunday afternoon. Every month all approached holy communion in a body. Boys still attending school were not admitted to these sodalties. The parishioners of St. Martin's eulogized him as a saint.

But in the community at St. Xavier's Institute, Br. Francis was seen in his full religious life, there he was always an inspiration, there he always gave saintly example. His frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament, his great devotions in saying the stations of the cross, his enrapture after communion filled all with reverential awe. His was a prayerful voice and when he came out with *Bone Pastor, Ecce Panis; Salve Regina, &c.*, every one was moved to greater piety. His was a wonderful voice, said Br. Stanislaus our great musical judge, but Br. Francis only used it when the glory of God and His divine service were in question.

We are strongly inclined to believe Br. Francis was gifted with prophecy as the following incident will show:

One day while he with Brothers Isidore and Richard was going to school they passed the Newcomb house on 2nd and Broadway.

While passing Br. Francis remarked, "That would be a fine place for the Brothers." The two young Brothers laughed incredulously but he added, "We do not know what God has in store for us if we are faithful in his service, and do our duty." -*Memoirs of Br. Richard*

The Newcomb property was one of the finest on Broadway. Its beautiful, broad, well-kept lawn was the admiration of the passers-by. Twenty-five years later the Newcomb mansion became the home, their own home, of the Xavierians, and on the magnificent lawn has been erected St. Xavier's College.

From the chronicles of October 1874, I copy:

October 14. Br. Francis has been sick for two weeks; it seems his end is nigh. This morning with the greatest devotion he received the holy viaticum. On the feast of St. Teresa (October 15), to whom he always had great devotion, he seemed to improve but towards evening he suffered a relapse. Rev. Monteriol, the chaplain, anointed him. After the ceremony the priest told him in French that he was going to receive the reward of his labors to which he replied, "I wish I could add more to them". On the 16th, when the regular confessor came to hear the Brothers, the patient was asked if he desired the confessor. "No," he replied, "I am ready to die. I am prepared." At 7 o'clock P. M. his pulse and respiration gave evidence of the end. The community was called, prayers were recited during which he calmly expired.

His remains were laid to rest in the new lot in St. Louis Cemetery, Louisville, Ky. The Brothers who died previously in that city – Brothers Philip, Bonaventure, Ambrose – are buried in St. John's Cemetery, 26th St. Brother Francis spent his twenty years in America for the spiritual and educational welfare of the boys in Louisville, Ky.

The eloquent Rev. William J. Dunn, pastor of the Cathedral, preached the funeral sermon. After sympathizing with the Community at the loss of the valuable co-laborer and the model religious and asking prayers for his repose, the priest ended with: "Dear Brothers, reverently take the mortal remains of Brother

Francis to the cemetery, but keep his spirit in your community.”

For an inspiration to our aspirants and as a model to all that visit St. Joseph Juniorate of the Xaverian Brothers, Oak Hill, Peabody, Mass., we adorned the house with an oil painting of Brother Francis X. Dondorf of which the frontispiece of this brochure is a half-tone copy (seen on page 24.) The painting is the first of a series.

CYRENIAN NO. 3

Brother Stephen, C.F.X.
(Adolph Sommers)

of the Congregation of St. Francis Xavier

by
Brother Isadore, C.F.X.



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CYRENIAN NO. 3

“Give me the man who can hold on when others let go; who pushes ahead when others turn back; who stiffens up when others weaken; who advances when others retreat; who knows no such words as ‘can’t’ or ‘give up’ and I will show you a man who will win in the end, no matter what obstacles confront him.”

This quotation epitomizes the subject of the present Cyrenian, Brother Stephen. He was a man who showed qualities as are characterized in the first part of every clause given above.

The reproduction of a greater part of this brief biography brochure which I published in 1898 on the occasion of the celebration of his Golden Jubilee; to this I shall add extracts taken from his memoirs which he wrote, at my request, a year before he died.

Brother Stephen (Adolph Sommers), was born at Attendorn, near Muenster, Westphalia, Germany, April 6, 1825. His native place is a spot where the conditions which mold a human life are very favorable. Its natural aspects are simple, and peaceful slopes of meadows and pastures greet the eye.

The people are plain, Godfearing; their religion is a most sacred heirloom and the chief source of their happiness: industrious, because they earn their bread by their daily toil; independent, because each man owns the acres which he tills; brave, because fearing God they fear naught else; they live habitually in as vivid a consciousness of the Invisible as of the visible.

Mettle formed amid such a noble people could not long remain dormant. Adolph Sommers received only an elementary education, what today we would call a grammar school education, but every branch was so thoroughly taught that it formed a solid foundation upon which later any structure could be built. He learned the trade



BROTHER STEPHEN, C. F. X. (ADOLPH SOMMERS)

of a tailor when 15 years of age and after finishing his four years' apprenticeship, according to customs of the times, he became a journeyman, i.e., Journeyed away from home to perfect himself in his calling. This brought him to the city of Muenster. Here he saw how young men were subject to a multitude of allurements without any opposing influence. Silently but thoughtfully the young journeyman sat, and while his hands were busy following his assigned duties his mind was engendering plans for the betterment of a generation just budding into manhood. He associated himself with a few others who were of the same mind and had the same noble desires, companions who understood that their soul, if strengthened and encouraged by the force of the will, could rise to a supreme altitude of power, and by this means attract other well-meaning young men to follow in the wake to a common end. Young Adolph Sommers encouraged several of his friends to come to a meeting to devise plans, and to establish a society both beneficial and social.

What great good can be accomplished by a few energetic, zealous men! Young men who lead clean lives draw others like a loadstone draws iron filings. A young man of clean habits can sway others without his being aware of it, even a slang word, properly and timely used, has of ten a sermonizing influence. A profaner has not only been hushed when checked by, 'cut that out', but the rebuke given by a companion known for his respectability had a lasting effect.

In a poorly furnished room at Muenster, with Adolph Sommers as the prime mover and originator, was laid the foundation of a club or institute, a veritable mustard seed, which has since developed into a wide spreading tree whose branches extend not only over Germany but reach into distant lands and is now known as Kolping Institute, the Y.M.C.A. of Europe. Some of the young men, members of the first organization, journeyed to other cities taking with them the spirit of generosity, zeal, and piety so well exemplified by Adolph Sommers and having seen and appreciated the great amount of good accomplished in Muenster they organized similar clubs in the cities and towns where they located. The

young journeymen's guild Gessellenverein began to show itself everywhere. A young priest, Adolph Kolping now entered the field. He recognized that to bring the petty organizations into one grand union would be a greater benefit. In his efforts to develop the work, . Kolping was energetic and undaunted. Filled with the zeal of an apostle, he visited frequently the great industrial centers of Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Hungary. The society in Muenster had taken firm root when Father Kolping visited that city.

Mr. Sommers saw his ideal placed upon a pedestal, he knew his influence could be dispensed with and he modestly retired to sacrifice his life upon a still more costly altar. But, though he withdrew, his work continued and continues to this day to act as a fortress to virtue and opposing the evil influences that, like snares, beset the path of young men.

One evening engaged in the library of the Institute an article of a newspaper drew his attention. It was a brief story of the organization of a teaching order of Brothers that had been founded nine years previously and whose Founder with eight others had just then bound themselves to God's service by emitting the three religious vows. The beacon • light was seen, amidst prayers and meditation he found the way. For a whole year he deliberated on, 'to be or not to be', but when he reached his Rubicon he resolutely crossed it. He was then twenty-three years of age, years when life is sweetest. He resolved to abandon the empty allurements of the world and to serve God alone. He asked to be admitted into the newly organized congregation of the Xaverian Brothers and was admitted December 8, 1848.

There is an element of heroism in the brave and fearless manner in which he renounced the pleasures and prospects of the world. With the blessings of a father and mother, proud of the sacrifice of their son, he joined the little band at Bruges, Belgium, to share its misfortunes and partake of its labors.

On April 2, 1850, he was vested in the habit of the Congregation and on February 2, 1852, was admitted to the vows. Previous to his entrance he worked as a tailor, which employment he followed in

the congregation several years. Humbly and unassumedly the young novice plied his needle and little did his superiors think of the intellectual strength that was hid in the weak, physical frame until an incident raised the bushel and his talents manifested themselves.

Two of his confreres were arguing over the difficulty of a mathematical problem which to them appeared a perfect labyrinth. They made several attempts to loosen the Gordian knot but without success, when the young tailor, busy with his humble occupation, in modest silence interested himself in the argument and begged for a hearing. The two disputants were dumbfounded at the elucidation and reported to their superior their discovery. As a consequence Brother Stephen was sent to the normal school where his progress was most remarkable.

In 1854 the first colony of Brothers was sent to America. Previous to their departure the chief topic at recreations was 'America' and many a heart burned with the desire to be among the happy number to open this important mission. None was more anxious than Brother Stephen and none bore the disappointment with greater resignation. Like a good religious he was reconciled, for he knew that God looked upon obedience with greater pleasure than upon sacrifice. No man had more faith in prayer and he directed all his supplications to that one end to join the missions in America, if it be God's will. His prayers were shortly after heard. He was removed to England to learn the language of that country.

In 1856 an order came from the Founder for him to embark for America. He arrived in this country November 18, of that year. On his journey he met so many reverses that I take the liberty to copy largely from his own memoirs and call them

A COMEDY OF ERRORS.

On leaving Bruges I came to the depot for Ostend but I was too late and had to return to the Institute to wait for a later train. For this I was on time but came too late for the boat and consequently had to wait for twenty-four hours. When the time came to leave

Manchester for Liverpool, Brother Stanislaus accompanied me. Brother Stanislaus engaged a boy to carry my baggage to the R. R. Station. There were two stations in Manchester, the boy went to one, we went to the other and there we saw our train pulling out of the station. Searching for the missing boy we found him. We rushed back to the station just in time for the last train to Liverpool. We found lodging with a Belgian priest and though not a comfortable bed we rested well. Brother Stanislaus procured my ticket but was told to make haste as the tug was ready to leave. We had to hustle. Brother Stanislaus was anxious to inspect my cabin for, till then, he had never been on an ocean steamer but he was hustled off as the steamer was ready to sail.

Nothing uneventful happened on the journey till we reached Nova Scotia.

When near Halifax we were aroused from slumber by a terrible shock, immediately the steam was blown off, the engine reversed and our steamer stood still. Whatever was the cause of the shock we never learned as the captain and crew were reticent. Early on November 6th we landed in Boston and according to directions, I drove up to the Jesuits' house where I was introduced to an old father who knew our Founder. Having heard my commission and learning my destination he uttered these prophetic words: "Your Founder made a mistake in going to a Slavestate, the Eastern States are the best states for you to prosper and obtain vocations." I was then escorted to St. Marys Church where I met German priests. In the afternoon a brother brought me to a station and after a short ride I arrived at a steamer bound for New York. Unfortunately I had taken a second class ticket and consequently I had to remain on the lower deck. When supper time came they served a splendid meal but only for first-class passengers. On the boat I met a gentleman whose acquaintance I made while crossing the ocean. He was rather surprised to find me on the lower deck. From him I found out that for a dollar more I could have had the conveniences of the first class. He invited me up to see the beautiful steamer, while there a bell rang to retire, a clerk came along to collect the tickets and as I had only a second class one he told me I had no business up there

and hustled me down in spite of all the apologies of my companion. I had to sit the whole night on the lower deck but next morning I arrived in New York as contented as those on the upper deck. I was instructed to go to some friend of the Founder and to get from him money to take me to Louisville. I stopped off in Philadelphia to visit a friend of our ocean journey. The next day he persuaded me to buy a ticket for an Immigrant train it being cheaper. I was not far from Philadelphia when I discovered my mistake, too late. Every now and then our train was side-tracked to let others pass. On November 15th I arrived in Columbus, Ohio, where I had to change trains. I showed my ticket to an employee who pointed to a train which I boarded. When the conductor saw the ticket he said, 'wrong train.' He proposed to send us back from the next station, for there were several more. They went out, I remained, but when the conductor came again and saw me he grew angry and put me off, very roughly too, though I offered to pay him the difference. Politeness of conductors in those days was the attribute of very few. There I was, in the darkness of the night, in a wilderness, not knowing what to do. Happily I heard shortly after another train coming. It was a freight train and stopped at this little station. I pleaded with the conductor who was a humane man, explained my predicament and for a small sum he took me into the caboose and brought me the next day to Cincinnati.

Here I visited a family that came from Bruges. Mr. Van Hoyen, the head of the family accompanied me to St. Xavier's College conducted by the Jesuits. I had a commission to Rev. Van den Dries; S.J., and when I was ushered to his presence and I introduced myself as a brother he began a regular tirade saying, "You should have remained in your convent, there are too many fellows like you loafing about." When I explained further my mission he calmed down and treated me civilly.

That evening I took the boat for Louisville and early the next morning landed at the foot of Third street. I walked to Main street and not knowing whether to go east or west I walked a distance east till I met a gentleman and asked for directions. He told me I was going in a wrong direction but to go the way the river flows. I asked

myself, which way does the river flow? However, shortly after I found St. Patrick's and our brothers, Brothers Paul and Peter." While Brother Stephen was on his way to America, Brother Ignatius and Vincent had been recalled to Europe, Brother Philip had died and the colony had dwindled to three, Brother Stephen made the fourth. He began to do his assigned work at once.

In 1858, an order recalled also Brother Paul and Brother Peter leaving only two Xaverians, Brother Francis and Brother Stephen. More than an ordinary share of heroism was necessary to be thus left without hope or encouragement. But these men pushed ahead, they advanced, they knew no such words as 'can't'; these men of prayer anchored their hope in God and when Brother Stephen died in 1911, he had more reason to look with pride on the wonderful progress his dear congregation had made in America since those dark years than any other member of the Congregation. Like St. John, God spared him to see the infant order fairly established. In 1911 we had 188 professed members and 52 novices engaged in 32 schools spread over two Archdioceses and eight dioceses.

The first field of labor of Brother Stephen was St. Patrick's School, Louisville, but when the Brothers were recalled and only two were left having in charge two schools, that of St. Patrick and that of the Immaculate Conception on 8th street, there was but one alternative to abandon one of the schools. This was accordingly done, St. Patrick's was given up and the two Brothers removed to St. Mary's with all their scanty possessions. Brother Stephen had in 1859 one hundred and twenty-five little boys while Brother Francis had 85 in the upper grades. *Memoirs of Brother Stephen.*

It was at St. Mary's, or the Immaculate Conception, church and school that Brother Stephen spent most of his energies. More than thirty years of the 63 years of his religious life he taught at St. Mary's and in his later years he taught many of the children of his former pupils in the selfsame benches he taught their fathers.

Years later when he was on the staff of St. Xavier's College and when he visited St. Mary's many a child greeted him whose grandfather

was once a pupil of Brother Stephen.

Of the 55 years he labored most energetically in America 51 were spent in Louisville, Ky. In 1875 he was transferred to St. Mary's Industrial School in Baltimore. Here he was like a father among a large family, the refuge and, consolation of many a boy who was brought to this institution to find - what little he found elsewhere - gentlemen of the greatest sympathy who interested themselves in his behalf.

In 1879 he was again removed to Louisville to his beloved St. Mary's and later to St. Xavier's Institute, now St. Xavier's College, not to a haven of rest, but as energetic as if the prime of life was still sustaining him. He knew of no rest, wanted none and he was active to the last day. His worth may be summed up in the words of a venerable Passionist: "Brothers, you do not know what a treasure you have in this humble religious. As long as Brother Stephen lives, God's blessing will be visibly with you."

But it is with Brother Stephen as Novice Master that the readers of this Cyrenian are mostly interested.

In 1860 a second colony of Brothers arrived, a novitiate was opened and Brother Stephen was appointed master of novices. No better choice could have been made. He seemed to possess at once the far reaching vision of an eagle by which he discerned distant events and the minute observations of the sparrow for the small grains at its feet.

Rev. Felix Ward, C. P., in his excellent book 'The Passionists' p. 152 says: "St. Paul of the Cross declared that on the training of the novices and choice of Superiors would depend the future of the Congregation. Hence the care of the Passionists to avoid mistakes here. The Master of Novices must be a man of eminent qualifications for his office. No chances are taken in this case. He must be a man true and tried - a man of sound sense, correct judgment, great steadiness, a keen discerner of character, who can blend great gentleness with firmness, and win the confidence and command the respect of his young disciples; a man who has received

the best religious training himself, and has shown it in a holy life; a man of mature years and almost confirmed in grace; a man imbued with the spirit of the Order and aglow with enthusiasm for its work in the Church. He must protect the Order against the unfit and unworthy. He must instill into the minds of the novices the principles that will sustain them in fidelity to God, to conscience, to their vocation."

As master of novices Brother Stephen was the embodiment of gentleness and zeal, his occupation had no limits; during the day he taught a regular class, in the evening he instructed the novices and when the latter retired he wrested hours from his deserved repose to mend a habit of this one, some article of clothing of another, retiring more frequently after midnight than before. Of his novices there still live today (November, 1923), Brothers Philip, Isidore and Michael. We were then mere boys, our delight was to roam Saturday afternoons over the country, through woods, along brooks, we walked frequently from four to eight miles. We never were considerate enough to think how wearisome our master must have been. Brother Stephen never held any high position in the congregation though we may ask is there any higher than that of master of novices? He built no convents, directed none, was never appointed superior. He was always the same humble, pious, laborious Brother Stephen. His works had a spiritual spark in them, and men, failing to see the light of genius that burns too fiercely for their earth-dimmed eyes exclaim: "We see nothing, therefore, there can be nothing."

The life of man cannot be measured by his length of days. It is estimated not by years but by deeds, not by cycles of time so much as by eras of events. Yet, where are his deeds? Where are the magnificent structures he erected, where the religious he directed? The eye of man sees none, but in the records scanned by an All-seeing eye, his deeds shine conspicuously. Every act of man is followed by an ever widening circle of consequences and results and forever appears in novel and various phases of existence. It may itself become a propagating germ, to be multiplied and reproduced throughout all time, and finally absorbed in God Himself.

I clip from the Memoirs of Brother Richard the dropping of the curtain on the life of Brother Stephen.

“He was an exceedingly humble man. During his long life he naturally witnessed many changes some of which he considered departures from the original spirit and in his zeal for the welfare of religion he did not hesitate at times to voice his displeasure. If he thought he wounded the feeling of anyone by so doing, even though he was sixty years in religion this did not deter him from kneeling in the refectory to accuse himself publicly and ask pardon of the Brother whose feelings he had hurt. He was an enemy to innovations. Surely he had a right to be. None better than he knew at what cost his dear congregation had taken root in America and nothing was closer to his heart than to conserve its spirit of simplicity. When he heard that the Brothers were wearing linen cuffs when attired in civilian clothes as well as white straw hats, he expressed his dislike for the innovation. Some one said: “Brother Stephen, Brother Provincial has given his consent.” He bowed his head and said: “I have nothing more to say.” This shows how he submitted his judgment to that of obedience and would not further criticize, for to him superiors held the place of God.”

December 8, 1898. Brother Stephen celebrated his Golden and on the same date 1908 his Diamond Jubilee. On the occasion of the latter Brother John Chrysostom, Superior General Brother Gabriel, Provincial of England, Brother Isidore, Provincial of America and Brother Bernardine, a pioneer, were present. Brother Stephen's last sickness was ascribed to his unbounded spirit of poverty. On the 4th of July, 1911, the Brothers were treated to a cooling beverage. In the course of a few days it became flat and undrinkable and when he saw that it was being wasted he took a glass. This brought on dysentery and as he was then eighty-six years of age - it so weakened him that the feeble candle of life simply snuffed out. - *Memoirs of Brother Richard*

In his last illness he was the model of virtue that he certainly was during life. As his room was small and the heat intense, an electric fan was hired for his comfort. It was placed behind him, as we were

afraid he would object, but we could not hide the noise nor the cause. It proved a source of great disquiet to him; he was offending against Holy Poverty, nothing could convince him of the contrary, so as to ease his mind we were obliged to return it.

The flies were annoying, mosquitos likewise, so we had a screen made for his windows. When he saw that he said: “I will suffer for that in Purgatory.” In this instance we did not give in to him. This goes to show that the spirit of the true religious is never more in evidence than when earth is passing. Brother Stephen never used more of earth than was necessary and he wished to go to God in the same spirit. - *Chronicles at St. Xavier's*

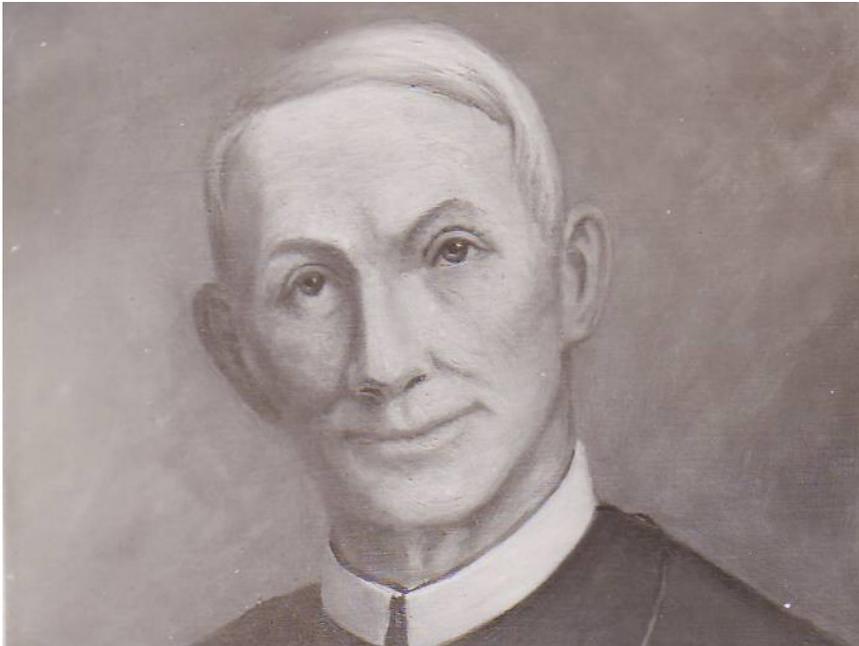
While he was compelled to lie in bed through sheer weakness it was a source of distress to him that he could not attend the community exercises and he feared that he was giving scandal. To quiet him a Brother always went to him and made the exercises with him. To see him pray was a sermon in itself, especially his recitation of the office, which he knew by heart, was inspiring. One would think that at the mention of Mary's holy name he really caught a look of our Blessed Mother as his eyes invariably assumed a heavenly look. - *Chronicles*

This spirit of prayer was second nature to Brother Stephen. The habits of a life time assert themselves at death. He was eager to pray at death not because he realized its necessity, but simply because he had to go on as he had gone for sixty odd years, living in the atmosphere of prayer.

On September 15, 1911, when the Most Reverend Papal Delegate, D. Falconio visited St. Xavier's College, he also visited the sick Brother Stephen. The latter felt highly complimented of having had such an august visitor. On the 17th the reverend chaplain, L. Deppen, just after class called the Brothers together with the remark: “Brothers, come and see a saint die.” All went to the room and recited the prayers for the dying, but the patient lingered till the 19th, when he surrendered his saintly soul to his Maker. His leaving us was not a death but a transition remarked the Reverend Chaplain. On the

21st his body was consigned to mother earth. His remains lie next to Brother Francis Dondorf. Twenty-four priests, many of them his former pupils, attended the funeral services.

May the memory of Brother Stephen never die! He is not only the co-founder of Xaverian institutions in America but he was their living inspiration for over fifty years. If his work is not to be in vain, we, his followers, must conserve that spirit which is nothing less than the spirit of God.



Next to an oil painting of Brother Francis X. Dondorf, at our Juniorate, Peabody, Mass., hangs also one of Brother Stephen. May the Memory of the Pioneers prove to be to our aspirants an inspiration to generosity and perseverance in the service of God.

As a perpetual memorial another oil painting of Brother Stephen adorns a parlor of St. Xavier's College, Louisville, Ky.

CYRENIAN NO. 4

Brother Paul, C.F.X.

(MARTIN VAN GERWEN)

of the Congregation of St. Francis Xavier

by

Brother Isadore, C.F.X.



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CYRENIAN NO. 4

IN THE drama of life there needs must be diverse participants. The star or leading actor or actress is most prominent throughout the performance, though many of the satellites throw their splendor in vivid flashes rivaling at times the major star itself. Every actor must play his part.

The saying “he is a born leader” is certainly true. Watching a class of youngsters practicing their various games one will notice how naturally some boys step to the front and are, generally, without any initiative, hearkened to by others.

These born leaders will come to the front, they are like a cork held under water, no matter how long you hold it down, release your hand and instantly it will come to the surface.

It may be the dream of an upright sheaf, it may be a person slow of speech, it may be the youngest and smallest son of an Isai, the finger of a Divine Destiny cannot be ignored. St. Peter, the head of the apostles, was neither the oldest nor wisest of the twelve but he had that initiative, something which the Divine Master recognized by making him the supreme head of the Church he established.

Or we may make use of another comparison. The most intricate machinery is composed of countless pegs, screws, cogs, bolts of all sizes and shapes, each necessary for the whole accomplishment of good if in its designed place but total misfits if wrongly placed. If in the plan of a Divine Providence you are destined for such a life, at such a place, under such circumstances you will fill your position for your and the general welfare. To follow this destination we call vocation. Such Brother Paul followed. He had scarcely finished his tenth year of religious life when he was appointed superior of the first colony sent to America in 1854; again, he headed the second colony in 1860 and this position as superior he held, now here, now there,

till his death in 1885.

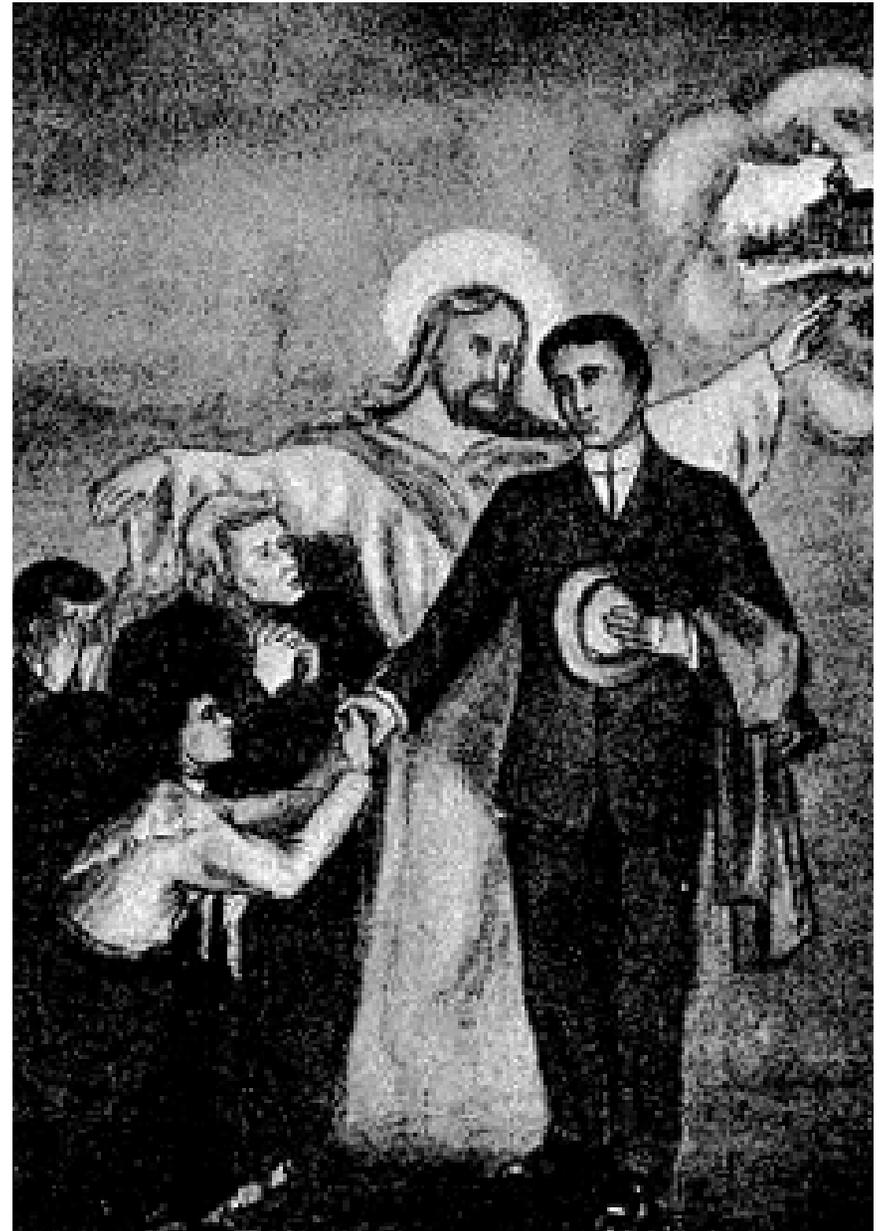
From the beginning our congregation was cosmopolitan. The Founder and most of his first disciples were Hollanders, the institution itself was founded in Belgium.

Of the six pioneers that came to America, four were Hollanders-Brothers Paul, Ignatius, Vincent and Peter; two were Germans-Brother Francis and Brother Philip. Brother Stephen, who came by himself in 1856, was German. The second colony, in 1860, consisted of one Englishman-Brother Clement, one Belgian-Brother Stanislaus, one Hollander-Brother Paul, who was previously recalled but selected again to head the second colony; five Germans-Brother Benedict, Brother Hubert, Brother Basil, Brother Bernardine, Brother Innocent.

Whether the choice was accidental or incidental matters little but we surely see it was providential. As St. Francis Xavier was the chosen patron of the congregation no greater honor could be given him than by following and imitating his example. In a letter to Simon Rodriguez, St. Francis wrote: "It has often occurred to me to think that Belgian and German fathers would do very well for the missions of Japan, inasmuch as they can bear cold and toil." -*Letters of St. Francis Xavier, Vol. 2, p.486.*

"One reason why the Founder selected Belgians and Hollanders as the pioneers to England and America was their aptitude to learn the English language. "It is a common opinion that Hollanders, of all non-English speaking people are the most apt of learning the language and adopting the customs of the United States. They proved themselves fit to stand the unavoidable hardships of pioneer life." -*Cath. Encycl., Vol. vii, p. 395*

The German Brothers that were among the first colonists came from the low lands of Germany, sections adjoining Holland; they were naturally closely allied to the people of that country in language and customs.



"You have not chosen Me but I have chosen you." (St. John 15, 16.);
M. Van Gerwen leaving for the novitiate.

THE GATHERING OF RECRUITS

The gathering of recruits for the newly established congregation was slow and toilsome. Brother Ignatius, the first disciple, was asked by the founder to become a fisher of men for God. He was partially successful - while visiting Aachen in 1842, he succeeded in winning Brother Francis Dondorf, but most of his efforts were unfruitful. To a boy no fishing spot seems more prolific than the holes near his native town or village.

Brother Ignatius, seeing his efforts so ineffective, wended his way to his native Gernert in North Brabant, Holland, and there threw out his line. His expectations were realized and Martin Van Gerwen crowned his labors.

Martin Van Gerwen was born April 25, 1819. In 1844, at the age of twenty-five, he joined the incipient Brotherhood. As he was of a quiet disposition he never spoke of his boyhood days; hence, our knowledge regarding his earlier life is very meager. He received the habit October 21, 1845, and was one of the first eight that, with the Founder, consecrated their lives to God, October 3, 1847.

On receiving the habit the name of Paul was exchanged for that of Martin. For some time after his profession he attended the normal school St. Trond, Belgium, where he distinguished himself as a young man of virtuous and industrious habits.

When in 1853 the all absorbing talk was America, it was a foregone conclusion that Brother Paul would be the Moses to lead the sons of St. Francis Xavier to the promised land.

The surmising became true and Brother Paul was appointed as the first superior. To him the establishment of the Brothers was a turbulent period. Misunderstanding between the Brother and the Bishop began from the start and this all about the salary.

By a mutual agreement between the Rt. Rev. Martin J. Spalding, Bishop of Louisville, and Theodore J. Ryken, Superior General of the Xaverian Brothers, the salary of each Brother was to be \$130.

Excerpt from the original agreement:

“The bishop agrees to pay annually to each Brother (the cook included) the sum of 130 Dollars, one hundred and thirty Dollars, or secure that each Brother gets the above amount. He also grants permission to the Brothers to establish a paying class to the extent of one third of the school but they cannot admit more without the consent of his lordship. If the receipts of the school exceed the amount of their salaries the Bishop allows the Brothers to retain the surplus for their own private purpose.”

The image shows a close-up of a handwritten signature in cursive ink. The signature reads: '+ M. J. Spalding Bishop of Louisville Superior General of the Xaverian Brothers'. The ink is dark and the paper appears aged and slightly textured.

Bishop Spalding's signature on the original agreement with the Xaverian Brothers.

There are nine points in the agreement.

It soon became apparent that the sum of \$130 could not possibly provide the Brothers with food, clothing and other living expenses. Of this they were assured by their confessor, Rev. J. Halpin, S. J., rector of St. Aloysius' select school. Brother Paul wrote to the Brother General of their predicament, who in turn ordered him to see the bishop and ask for an increase of salary. The bishop was displeased and showed the contract. The mistake was made by placing a wrong construction on the exchange value. One hundred and thirty dollars meant six hundred and fifty francs, a sum with which in those days one could live comfortably in Belgium. But considering the purchase value there is quite a difference, a fact which our Founder did not consider. A similar illustration we had ten years later. A melodeon for the chapel was needed. A suitable

one for our purpose could be bought for \$80. In the pre-provincial period the limit of expenses without a special permission from the Superior General was \$50. Brother Paul had, therefore, to write for special permission. The Brothers at headquarters in Belgium threw up their hands in holy horror and wanted to know why we needed a melodeon as expensive as 400 francs.

In consequence of the Brothers' inability to live on the pittance of the salary two were recalled in 1856 and two years later two others among them Brother Paul.

Pecuniary troubles and nothing else caused the withdrawal.

In 1860 the government at the motherhouse passed into the hands of Brother Vincent, one of the American pioneers. Early that year Rev. F. X. Van Deutekom, pastor of the church of the Immaculate Conception, went to Belgium and prevailed on the newly elected Brother General to send a second colony, which was again headed by Brother Paul.

The monetary disputes were amicably settled, for a salary of \$250 is mentioned in agreements of those dates entered between Rev. Van Deutekom and the Brothers; Rt. Rev. M. J. Spalding and the Brothers in the agreement regarding the Cathedral free school and others.

Another storm broke out but Brother Paul stood firm on the bridge. The bishop wanted Brother Paul to sign an agreement by which the Brothers were not to branch out to any other diocese till all the schools in the diocese of Louisville were sufficiently supplied with Brothers. Brother Paul, of course, would not enter upon such an agreement. He wrote to the Superior General which elicited the following reply:

Copied from the archives of Mt. St. Joseph's College: "The Superior General, impressed with the importance and after long and measured deliberations, has arrived at the following unalterable resolutions, that he cannot allow under any circumstances interference with the government and regulations of the Xaverian Brothers, neither can he

submit to any condition which would enforce upon them permanent abode in any locality. They will, however, on all occasions respect the rights of the bishop in his diocese.

"The Superior simply claims for his infant colony freedom of action, unchecked by any influence foreign to the society, unshackled by any regulations which might cramp its operations and lessen its usefulness. He hopes with the blessing of God that if left to his guidance which is in accordance with the spirit of the order it would thrive more rapidly, more fully develop its energies and sooner arrive at maturity of action. A glorious prospect opens before him.

"It is true the Brothers about to be sent are small in number, yet, he foresees that under the present government and that of his successors they will gradually spread themselves over the entire continent of America carrying the light of knowledge into every town and hamlet, and although laboring in a subordinate position, assisting the authorized pastors of the church in shedding the light of faith on the minds and in establishing the kingdom of love in the hearts of the present and of future generations.

"The Superior has only two objects in view, the promotion of the interests of religion and the sanctification of his Brothers and he conscientiously believes that by the concession of what he contends for these two objects will be more securely realized." And this too passed, but another soon followed.

The young Brotherhood in Belgium was in great financial distress and for several years the serious question was "To be or not to be". The Brothers in America were aware of this and I heard Brother Paul repeatedly say, "I dreaded the approach of the mail-carrier - for I was in constant fear a letter would come announcing the dissolution of the congregation".

The clergy of Louisville, foremost Father Bouchet, took advantage of this instability and tried by every means to induce Brother Paul and his associates to cut loose from Europe and to establish an

independent American Brotherhood. They exemplified their propositions by referring to the two institutions of Sisters, those of Nazareth and those of Loretto, sisterhoods founded in the diocese of Louisville and both most flourishing. Father Bouchet went so far as to invite Brother Paul to accompany him to Nazareth to witness the prosperity of that society. He laid before him various plans among which were to make St. Mary's College, Marion Co., the motherhouse with a novitiate. Brother Paul remained unmoved and took a still firmer position on the bridge.

Though the clouds of doubt hovered over the future he would, under all circumstances, remain faithful to true society to the welfare of which he had dedicated himself.

Had the suggested agreement to bind themselves exclusively to the diocese of Louisville become a fact, Rt. Rev. Martin J. Spalding would have been the first to feel its harsh measure. Upon the death of Archbishop F. P. Kendrick in 1863, the dignity of primate fell upon Bishop Martin J. Spalding who, in 1864 became Archbishop of the metropolitan see of Baltimore.

No sooner had he taken the government of the Archdiocese in hand than he saw its most urgent need, that of a protectory for boys of the Catholic faith.

The unfortunate boys that made a mistake, had tempting environments, or were orphans, were committed to the House of Refuge. The spirit of Know-nothingism had not fully vanished and priests had difficulty to reach the boys of Catholic faith, to give them instructions and administer the sacraments. The only alternative was for Catholics to have their own institution. The most prominent laymen were called to a general meeting and exhorted to assist the Archbishop and the clergy in this great and noble enterprise. A Board was organized, chartered; a site was bought and one of the greatest obstacles - who was to conduct the institution, was overcome. The Archbishop called on the Xaverians in Louisville to come to his aid and to accept the management of St. Mary's Industrial School just then opened. He asked further, as

a special personal favor, that Brother Paul be appointed as the first superintendent.

His request was granted and Brother Paul left Louisville August 16, 1866, to the greatest sorrow and regret of the community, consisting then of twenty-five members, of whom nine were professed, twelve novices and four postulants. Seven schools were under their charge, namely, St. Xavier's Institute, St. Boniface, Immaculate Conception, St. Patrick's, St. Martin's, St. John's, Cathedral School. Two years previously the Brothers had moved into their fourth home and were comfortably housed. There was a calm and all went on smoothly.

Brother Paul and a novice, Brother Augustine, arrived in Baltimore August 17th, and took up their quarters in the only partially constructed "Shanty" Brother Polycarp came from Belgium the latter part of the same month to join the community.

Books and all paraphernalia were, for a time at least, discarded; the Brothers' habits were laid aside after Mass and replaced by overalls. Axes, picks, shovels, rip-saws, were brought into requisition; trees were felled, roots blasted, shrubbery uprooted, roads constructed, sheds and outhouses built. The Archbishop and Monsignor E. McColgan were frequent visitors and Brother Paul often related how he treated them to luncheon, the two prelates sitting on a hewn tree drinking out of an oyster shell in lieu of a cup from a clear spring. Those were pioneer days and the work that of settlers.

From chronicles we copy:

"St. Mary's Industrial School was commenced by Brother Paul on August 17, 1866, the day that he arrived in Baltimore from Louisville: However, many preliminary preparations preceded before any inmates could be accepted. The reason was, as Brother Paul states in his first report to the Board of Trustees of St. Mary's Industrial School, that on his arrival in Baltimore, he found nothing but an unfinished frame building surrounded by the remains of a forest. Speaking of

a frame building, the better name would have been a shanty or a hut. Furniture, if they had any at all, was of the tripod style. Under these not very smiling prospects, Brother Paul commenced his noble work. On October 3, 1866, the first inmate was received and subsequently the number reached 45. On December 29, 1868, the number of inmates had increased to 88. More children would have been accepted but for want of sufficient means. December 30, 1869, the number was 122.”

The rooms of the Shanty were frequently and rapidly changed like scenes on a stage. The front room, first floor, was a chapel, for to the service of God belongs the first and best. After Mass the altar was curtained off and the body of the chapel was converted into a dining room, then into a class room. The second room too, served as a class and when the weather was inclement was used as a play or recreation room. The second floor was partitioned off, the Brothers occupying alcoves in the dormitory.

Under the kindly and sympathetic influence of Brother Paul the boys looked upon the institution as a true home. Their numbers increased rapidly and St. Marys’ prospered. This was in no small share due to the Passionist Fathers, who, from an early period, looked after the spiritual wants of the inmates.

“Brother Paul, the old Pioneer, left Louisville on the 16th of August, 1866, for Baltimore to commence this noble establishment for the poor, fatherless and wayward children. This laudable undertaking was projected by the large-hearted and generous Archbishop of Baltimore, Martin John Spalding, and assisted by the good and well-meaning Rev. Edward McColgan.

“Brother Paul was well known to Archbishop Spalding, and was by him considered as the right man who was eminently qualified for this great, yet onerous enterprise.

“Brother Paul being yet in the prime of life, full of energy and love for the great cause of religion, considered this important work as

a special favor of our dear Lord, for which He had selected him. The generous soul began this burdensome and humanly speaking, ungrateful undertaking with a zest and a zeal worthy of the saintly man. His success in advancing this gigantic work was great. Inmates increased at a rapid rate, large buildings were erected, several trades for the inmates were established and the poor fatherless and wayward children received here during their stay a sound English education and were provided with a trade after they left the institution.

“St. Mary’s Industrial School had, during the four or five years of its existence under the wise and prudent direction of Brother Paul, made rapid progress in every detail of the noble work for which it was established. The gigantic strides which it had made and was still making, called forth the well-deserved praise of many friends and many foes, yet, the good Brothers’ praiseworthy labors could not escape the envy to which ignoble minds are slaves:

‘Base envy withers at another’s joy
And hates that excellence it cannot reach.’

- Thompson

“This was the case with that great soul, Brother Paul, who was so much favored with success as the reward of his unselfish and generous labors. Envy could not suffer the prosperity of this humble laic and used her degrading means always at her command by spying out some blemish that she might lower these good results by defeat. Under the cloak of assisting the good Brother in his multitudinous labors, an ecclesiastic (Rev. Henry Volz) was appointed by the Board of Directors of St Mary’s Industrial School, or by ———, as Superintendent, who should have the supervision of the Institute and all its industrial works or trades established for the benefit of the child and the pecuniary resources derived from them for the support of the house. By this change, it will be observed, the power of acting as head of the Institution was transferred from the Brother to the priest. This change was one of the greatest blunders ever made by the authorities in regard to St. Mary’s. It was considered that the Rev. Appointee was endowed with special business-like qualities and that under his wise direction money would flow abundantly into

the treasury which the Board of Directors, to its great grief, had to admit was exactly the contrary. As soon as the Rev. Father Volz had entered upon his new avocation, he began to introduce many changes. The shoe and tailoring departments were at once placed, as he considered them, upon the most improved business principles. Leather was bought, shoes were made and sold, etc., and apparently all moved on to the satisfaction of the Board of Directors, which was nevertheless ignorant as to the financial standing respecting the various departments. The Rev. Superintendent commanded a high reputation which, as it seems, is sufficient guarantee to the Board of Trustees of St. Mary's to secure success for this institution. Unquestionably, the Rev. gentleman labored to the best of his ability and meant it well, yet it would have been preferable had the good old adage been observed by the authorities of the institution which says: "A shoemaker must not go beyond his last." The Rev. gentleman's father might have been a shoemaker, certain it is, he was a merchant in shoes and a prosperous business man. However, that did not insure that the son should be equally successful in the mercantile pursuit, especially not in his case, as he never prepared himself for that calling, but well for Holy Orders which alone should have engaged his special attention.

"What were the results of this unwise meddling with other peoples' business of which they had but a very limited knowledge? After a few months of an imaginary flourishing condition, the worthy treasurer had to admit that his pecuniary department stood not on a very firm basis and he began to fear that the whole proceedings of the Rev. Father Superintendent would, at an early date, end in a financial crash. This apprehension was soon verified by the treasurer's inability of paying the bills incurred by the new manager.

"Many of the poor inmates, after being abandoned, had to be sent to safe and charitable persons for want of means by the mismanagement of the Directors in placing a person over the Institution who was a perfect stranger to such works." - *Chronicles of Brother Bernardine.*

The congregation of the Xaverian Brothers had now passed its years of infancy, the anchor of hope that dragged for years became

firm and the time was ripe to stabilize the society. Accordingly the Superior General, Brother Vincent, issued an order for the convocation of the First General Chapter, August, 1869.

The meeting was presided over by Brother General. Besides the Founder, there were present twenty professed members of whom four represented America. Louisville sent Brothers Peter, Sup., Stephen, Hubert; Baltimore sent Brother Paul - noble souls all. It was at the end of this chapter that Brother Paul was changed to :Manchester, England, Brother Hubert to St. Mary's. Brother Peter returned to Louisville as superior.

What a thrill of joy must have animated our Founder when he saw himself surrounded by so many stalwart souls, men that passed with him through the many vicissitudes of the earlier years, men that fasted and prayed with him, men ever ready to suffer and labor with him for the accomplishments of the designs of Providence.

Among the many resolutions offered and debated was one that greatly affected and concerned America. A resolution was passed that Brothers should not hold the offices of sacristans bell-ringers, cleaning altars, candlesticks, &c., but no obstacles were made to take care of servers, teach them the prayers, how to serve, &c. Surely this was a wise ruling but it met with opposition in America. Several of the Brothers in parish schools carried their misdirected zeal too far; just to be rewarded with a smile of approval from the pastor or one of his curates they demeaned themselves and went so far as to scrub the bricks in the school yard, cleaned the toilets, rang the church bell for services, angelus, &c. The next Brother came along and protested to do janitor work and there was a friction.

I am sorry that I cannot place my finger on that particular resolution of the chapter. However, it proved to be an ingredient that caused fermentation and it needed hut a touch for ignition. That touch came as a result of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870. Nothing is more detrimental to religious peace and charity than nationality. It is the gun-cotton soared in stygian pools. It is my opinion that all nations claiming civilization when compared with others are on a

level. Were you to put heroic virtues and national good traits into one side of a scale and the vices and corruptions into the other side of any nation you would observe an equilibrium. The one nation has most heroic men and women, who, owing to their sanctity, have been raised to the dignity of saints; on the other hand, the same nation bemoans the degeneracy of many of her sons and daughters: saints of God on one side, assassins, murderers on the other. This race may have many votaries of Punch, that many who too slavishly pay court to Judy. Let the two stretch forth their wand, adherents will be drawn to them like iron filings to a magnet.

Every nation blazons with justice its great accomplishments and every nation has its dark and besmeared page in history which it tries in vain to keep hid. Every one is free to his own thoughts, his sympathies are his own and nothing is more futile than to try to change one's views in matters of nationality. In consequence of this European strife the Louisville community suffered a shock, an upheaval, which took years to stabilize. Brother Peter, the superior, was pronounced pro-French, he publicly boasted of it; many others coincided with his views. Of the twenty-four professed members, eight were German, all of them of the pioneer class and yet not fully imbued with Americanism. Of the ten novices, six were Germans or of German extraction.

Gladly would I throw the mantle of charity over these times but I am embodying the early history of the Brothers in America in this biographical sketch and "truth may be shamed, it cannot be blamed". Nationalism chased away charity.

St. Boniface was our very best parochial school. They had enrolled 502 boys, divided into five classes. Four of the teachers were German. Finding little peace and no charity at home they unfortunately sought consolations from without, from the Franciscans who had charge of the church. Two of the younger Fathers in their misdirected zeal advised them to join their order. It would be a great injustice were the blame of the clandestine act of the two misguided and inexperienced priests to fall on the Franciscans then in Louisville. The Brothers had no greater friends than the

Franciscans before this episode and this friendship lasts to this day. Fifty years have elapsed since that event and a person, an eyewitness, today is able to record events with complete coolness and utterly void of bias. Nor can I agree with the chronicler who states, "the Brothers departed with the intention to make a 'German Order'." That account is erroneous. They left to seek a haven, where their nationality would not be considered a vice. I cannot in the least connive at their actions but we may place a charitable construction on all.

As a result the Brothers were withdrawn from St. Boniface. We had then three other schools belonging to the Franciscans, each of which, one after another, dispensed with our services. The string was broken and bead after bead dropped. The schools we had in Louisville then were: Immaculate Conception, 1854-1898; St. Patrick's, 1854-1858, again 1860-1900, again 1910; St. John's, 1860 till the present; St. Boniface, 1860-1872; St. Martin's, 1863-1874.; Portland, 1867-1873; St. Peter's Cal., 1868-1872; St. Anthony, 1868-1870; Cathedral School, 1864-1875, again 1888-1899; St. Louis Bertrand, 1875-1885; St. Michael's, 1868-1877. The harm had been done. The mud had been raked.

In the midst of this stormy period, one of defection and losing of vocations, Brother Paul was appointed to take hold of the wheel, to reestablish order out of chaos, to be superior, for the third time, of the community in Louisville. Brother Peter left the next day for Baltimore, and July 6, 1872, for Europe.

Brother Paul was re-instated February 6, 1872. It is worthy of record that Brother Stephen, councilor to Brother Paul, repeatedly urged him to write to the Brother General explaining the whole affair, but Brother Peter's influence prevailed. During the earlier period of Brother Peter's administration the community in Louisville prospered. In 1869 there were registered fifty-nine Brothers and novices; in 1872 the number dwindled to thirty-seven, in 1874 it was ebb tide with twenty-one at St. Xavier's, eight were at St. Mary's Industrial School and four at St. Patrick's in Baltimore. Brother Paul was called to stem the flow of defection. Though the reparation was

slow and at first not the least encouraging, time brought better results. Hardly had the sable clouds of 1870-72 dispersed when another storm, by way of aftermath, appeared. In the second General Chapter, 1875, America was raised to a province with Brother Alexius as first provincial. This appointment gave great dissatisfaction as the professed Brothers in America, to a man, would have suggested Brother Paul had their views been consulted. Brother Alexius was not known to the Brothers in America except to twelve, eight of whom were with him at St. Mary's.

Brother Paul was the leader of the two first colonies, he was the pioneer superintendent of St. Mary's, he came to the rescue when the barque of Xaverianism was about to founder, he was our "stormy petrel" – no wonder the Brothers in America were recalcitrant.

All honor and glory to Brother Paul, he deserved all, more, far more, than could be proffered him, yet, at a distance of half a century and having somewhat an elevated position from which one can view past results with calmness, I firmly believe that Brother Paul never could have accomplished that which Brother Alexius has done. Brother Paul was not the financier that Brother Alexius was. Here again we bow to Divine Providence in the choice of Brother General and his councilors in appointing Brother Alexius as first provincial of the Xaverians in America.

Living now in the halcyon epoch of the province we may well look back to those stormy days that for a time chilled our very existence. "When the delightful season of May or June, with its fragrance and vegetation delights us we are too apt to discredit the winds of March and the mercurial state of the weather. March comes early in the year, proverbially it is the month of storms and winds and yet these disturbances are necessary. The winds shake the trees, the roots loosen the ground, the moisture from the snows and rains soak into the ground and moisten the soil. May not our earlier history be compared to March? These disturbances were necessary. Now after fifty years we look upon them as blessings. We smile at the discomfiture of those early days and enjoy the present prosperity. In studying a chart of the graphs of our earlier period especially

from 1866-1880 and note the rapid increase in numbers and as rapidly a decline we are inclined to look into the cause.

From the report of Brother Joseph of the American Province to the members of the General Chapter in 1881 we take this excerpt: "It is difficult to state the precise cause of the loss of so many members. Very likely it resulted from too easily accepting youths of tender age who had not sufficient knowledge of the religious life and keeping them in the same house with old Brothers, not having any other place to keep them; young men who from time to time presented themselves as candidates had to be kept with the professed. It is a well-known fact, that persons entering a community are generally very fervent, hence, easily scandalized. Seeing sometimes trifling faults committed by old members, had a detrimental effect." Again: "Prosperity begins to revive, hardly had the news of the foundation of the new province been received, than a change for the better set in. Many of the wavering became firm supporters of the good cause once more."

The great mistake was made in holding the Brothers too long in Louisville. Had they spread earlier, had they accepted other fields of the many offered, fields most promising, fields with a future, prosperity would have resulted earlier. The Jesuits in charge of the Holy Family school in Chicago were most anxious for us to accept their parochial school, then the largest in the country. In 1869 the Brothers at St. Xavier's, Louisville, had as many as fifty-seven members all huddled together to the detriment of health, to both body and soul.

The same objection may be lodged to remain in one section of the country. Concentrate forces may be a necessity in war but an institution like ours was called into existence to do good, to spread God's honor and glory. It seems to me to be more in line to do good, that instead of having a school where thirty teachers are needed it were better to have three schools in different cities with ten teachers each, or still better, six schools with five each. Spread should be the slogan and greater good will follow in the wake, there will be more chance for recruits.

Kentucky was once a fertile field and even today thirteen per cent. are natives of that state. But our blessings for novices became more visible after we spread into New England and threw anchor in Lowell, Mass., in 1882. Maryland was the first field outside of Kentucky, but even Maryland did not prove as prolific as New England.

During the thirteen years Brother Paul was superior of the Louisville community, 1872-1885, he was a model of a superior, always kind, willing to assist, to console here, and if need be, chide there. He encouraged education by word and example. He himself organized a class of Brothers and taught them French for an hour every evening. He was never absent from Community life, never late for prayers or any spiritual exercise; we never knew him to be sick until his last illness, neuralgia of the heart, and only the express order of the physician kept him to his room.

I take the liberty of copying part of the chronicles which I wrote myself thirty-nine years ago.

1885 - June 28. "The saddest event that ever befell St. Xavier's since its existence occurred today. Its founder and principal life, Brother Paul, superior, president, principal and all, was found dead this Sunday morning at 3:15 - died without a Brother near him, without the sacraments.

"During the past winter Brother Paul complained of pain in the arms, often very acute and again he was free from pain altogether. The physician was called and he pronounced it neuralgia. On Saturday, June 20th, the pain went to the heart and Dr. Holloway pronounced the case critical. However, he seemed to get better. From June 2-4th on, one of the Brothers, Brother Stephen or Brother Lawrence, remained constantly with him. On the 25th he felt well enough to sign the diplomas and sat with us at lunch.

On Friday and Saturday he walked about his room. Saturday night Brother Lawrence remained with him but Brother Paul considered others before himself and at 2 o'clock requested him to retire for he felt much better. By 3 o'clock the pain returned with greater severity

and Brother Lawrence was asked to run over to Dr. Holloway, who lived across the street. He returned in a few minutes and found Brother Paul sitting at his desk, head down-his soul had left the house of clay."

The funeral services took place from the Cathedral. The pupils of the Institute and representatives from the different parochial schools escorted the remains from the Institute to the Cathedral. Solemn Requiem Mass followed. Rev. Father Bax was celebrant; Rev. Brandt, deacon; Rev. Whelan, subdeacon. In the sanctuary were Rev.'s Dunn, Heising, Davis, Bachman, Sullivan, Rock, Bouchet.

Very Rev. Bouchet delivered the panegyric, taking as his text: "Let her works praise her at the gates".

At the grave Rev. Lawrence Bax, an intimate friend of Brother Paul, gave a short but touching eulogy, addressing first the Brothers, then the children. After reciting the rosary we bade farewell to all that remained of our superior, Brother Paul."

Brother Paul was sixty-six years old, forty of which he spent in religion.

In the second General Report of the American Province to the General Chapter assembled at Bruges in 1887, Brother Joseph gave this eulogy:

"Among the number we record the name of the Pioneer of the Brothers in America, the first superior} the standard bearer in every conflict through which the Order passed during about thirty-six years; the Venerable Brother Paul is he to whom I refer; and you all know that his name is synonymous to piety, charity, fidelity to duty and every virtue requisite to adorn a perfect religious. While the Congregation lives this holy, wise, and prudent Brother shall be revered by the Congregation on account of his many virtues and especially for his persistent endeavors to promote the glory of God, the welfare of mankind and the prosperity of the Congregation."

CYRENIAN NO. 5

Brother Stanislaus, C.F.X.

(PETER LEONARD HUBERT LUCAS)

of the Congregation of St. Francis Xavier

by

Brother Isadore, C.F.X.



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CYRENIAN NO. 5

WE KNOW well how contemptuously Nathaniel spoke of Nazareth. There are many Nathaniels who pass a like judgment on hamlets, villages, towns and cities that fall short to what appears to them their criterion. They forget the beautiful words of Gray

*“Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway’ d,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.”*

There are still more Nathaniels when it comes to countries. How many read history to whom new countries appeared during the World War as if called into existence by magic especially when autonomy was the promised sequence of the war. And yet these countries had existed for hundreds of years but oblivious as they were outshone by larger countries just as stars are invisible during a bright sunny day.

Does Belgium come under the category of insignificant states? In size it takes a low rank, as it is only about the size of our own Maryland but in celebrity it is in the foremost ranks.

Every High School boy knows from his Caesar that Belgium was one of the three parts into which all Gaul was divided. Every student of history knows the important part Belgium took in the Crusades, that Belgians were the leaders particularly in the first Crusade, they know too, that Belgium is considered the battle ground of Europe. There are perhaps fewer students that know that the Belgian navigator Josiah Vanden Bergh was the precursor of our own Christopher Columbus. It was that daring Fleming that visited the Azores a half century before Columbus added the other half of the great journey between Europe and America.¹ Even the great Magellan, according

¹ *Cath. Builders of the Nation, Vol. II, p. 16.*

to the same authors² was a native of Belgium. The Belgians and not the Hollanders, as is commonly believed, were the real founders of New York.

The religious institutions of the sons of St. Dominic, St. Francis and of St. Ignatius have ever flourished in the fertile Flemish land, and they furnished the first missionaries to the New World. I need but mention a few, Louis Hennepin, the companion of La Salle; Rev. Buisset; Rev. Philip Pierson, a missionary among the Hurons and later among the Sioux; Rev. J. B. de Ritter, in Pennsylvania and Rev. Louis Roels in Maryland, labored most successfully. Rev. Charles Nerinckx, whom Archbishop Spalding called “the second founder of the western missions” was the “Apostle of Kentucky”. But, “of all the men who devoted themselves to the civilization of the Indian aborigines in the United States, Pierre Jean De Smet, S.J., was the greatest and most practical.”

So, too, though to appearance of a less stellar magnitude Br. Stanislaus deserves a place in the hall of missionary fame and to us Xaverians he takes a foremost rank in our constellation.

Brother Stanislaus was born in Stockheim, in the department of Limberg, Belgium, August 15, 1817. He filled the apostolic number of our Founder’s first disciples. In baptism he received the name Peter, Leonard, Hubert and his family name was Lucas. We know very little of his earlier life as he was always of a reticent nature. To our great surprise he harbored little love for his native place and I heard him repeatedly say if Stockheim was floating down the Ohio River and were to land at Louisville he would get a pole and push it off. The manner in which he was called to the religious life is oblivious, we only know that when he arrived at the famous “het Walleetje” the novitiate of the lately established Congregation, April 5, 1842, it must have been late in the evening for he related how, the next morning he looked out of the window, looked along the walls and said to himself, “so this is a monastery”.

He was called that morning at half past four which seemed to him an ungodly hour, but seeing light in what appeared a neighbor’s

² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

home, he consoled himself by the thought that if people in the world get up that early to go to their work why should he complain. It was only later that he found out those neighbors were a part of his own Brothers who slept in another wing.

Along with the Founder, Theodore James Ryken, he received the habit December 3, 1843, pronounced his vows for one year October 22, 1846, and for life October 3, 1847. Brother Stanislaus was not only one of the first disciples but he may be honored as co-founder. The wearing of the cross on our breast as part of the habit was suggested by him and later adopted. Brother Stanislaus was imbued with the spirit of the Congregation by the saintly Founder himself, his whole religious life beautifully illustrated the piety, zeal, and self-sacrifice of the first Xaverians. We all know how poor the Congregation was at the start. The subject of this story related frequently an incident which showed abject poverty.

The Brothers wore then, and in Belgium wear still, knee-breeches and long black stockings under the habit. At manual labor they frequently take off the habit. Brother Stanislaus had a pair of hose very holey and so as not to show the bare skin he painted the holes with ink and as he did not put the same stocking on the same leg he had to daub ink again on the bare places until he had more spots than a leopard.

He was the first and only musician at the Walleetje but he was a born artist in music and the glory and honor he gave to God and His Saints cannot be recorded.

May 1, 1848, the first colony of Brothers left Belgium for England where they opened their first school in Bury, Lancashire, which two years later was transferred to St. Augustine, Manchester. Brother Stanislaus was one of the pioneers to England. To the Brothers in Manchester is ascribed of having introduced devotions to the Blessed Virgin, dormant for nearly three hundred years.

Brother Stanislaus would teach hymns to the Blessed Virgin in this school at a certain time and as the two schools had but one small melodeon, boys would carry the same from one school to another,

Brother Stanislaus teaching the hymns in both schools. The Vicar General, afterwards the first Bishop of Salford, authorized the Brothers to introduce the Month of May devotions, the wearing of the Scapular of Mount Carmel, they likewise established the Sodality of St. Joseph for Sunday School teachers.*

Here the Brothers imitated their great patron St. Francis Xavier. To gain adults to God and religion, St. Xavier would go about Goa and other cities in India, ring a small bell, and after he had gathered a number of children he would instruct them with the injunction to carry home to their elders what they had been taught. So too, his spiritual sons gathered the school children and instructed them to sing those hymns at home and to invite their parents to come to Church to hear the hymns.

Brother Stanislaus' years of activity in England lasted twelve years when he was selected, in 1860, to strengthen the second colony that came to America.

It was in this field of activity that we know him, not from his own humorous but often pathetic tales but from personal observation for a period of thirty-eight years.

For a few months he taught at the Immaculate Conception school on 8th St., Louisville, and after that at St. Patrick's where he taught well-nigh for thirty years. It is with St. Patrick's school that he was more thoroughly identified. Not only did he teach six hours a day, then the custom, but he busied himself with the children's choir, sodality, singing clubs and was the prime mover in parochial devotional activities from processions of the Blessed Sacrament to that in honor of St. Patrick, March 17.

To induce the Sodalists to attend faithfully he devised various schemes of games-checkers, dominoes, blow-pipes, a wooden cannon with a large marble as ball and a target of percussion caps the explosion of which would be a nerve test.

To create emulation he would put up prizes for the best shot,

**Brother Francis Xavier*, p. 15.

statuettes moulded by himself, for he was a sort of mechanical genius. Statuettes of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, under various titles from Mater Dei to our Lady of Lourdes and the Pieta, statues of St. Joseph, St. Patrick; of the crib of Bethlehem, statuettes single and in groups.

As he kept this up for more than forty Sundays a year for more than thirty years, the homes of St. Patrick's parishioners were flooded with images of God and His Saints and we may justly infer that by these means many a house-hold altar was established, to which a devoted mother, ever solicitous for early piety of her children, would lead them to prayers before retiring. Many a time would she explain to her children the signification and mysteries of these groups thereby giving the earliest catechetical instruction.

But the greatest and prime object of the meeting of the boys and young men of the Sodality was the Christian instruction of half an hour that followed those games. The greater number of the Sodalists were young men that had left school and were employed in various ways and a good sound instruction suitable to their age and circumstances was most beneficial.

I may add here an excerpt from a letter of Rt. Rev. Monsignor John J. Tierney of Mt. St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg.

..... "I knew Brother Stanislaus and revered him as he was my teacher in St. Patrick's School, 1866. He had an easy simple way of dealing with children. He corrected their faults, but did not lose their respect. On Sunday after Mass, up we went into the school-room where sodalities were held and good Brother Stanislaus had all sorts of "contraptions" in the form of games to make the serious exercises that followed less severe. His talks illustrated with short stories lifted our souls to the spiritual world, and I may say that my first good resolutions to do something for God were inspired by those simple instructions.

I think Brothers Stanislaus and Stephen, not to mention others,

were wonderful workers and great Saints. Although I continue to pray for them as the Church wishes, I do not hesitate in my private devotions to pray to them, since I believe that long ago they reached heaven. Nor would I have the least hesitancy in taking the place of either of them in eternity.”

As Brother Stanislaus was a musician par excellence his services were annually called into requisition to prepare the boys of St. Xavier’s Institute (now St. Xavier’s College) for the closing exercises, exhibition then called.

On account of the wonderful choruses he produced these exercises were well attended, and although admittance was charged the Brothers were obliged to hire the largest halls in Louisville to accommodate the great crowds. The choir of the Institute was greatly strengthened by the choicest singers from St. Patrick’s, Immaculate Conception and St. John’s. In the choice of choruses Brother Stanislaus had no peer. Many of these he brought from Europe, many he rearranged, for he was a composer: “Canal du Midi”, “Adieu”, “Bouche ferme”, “Hail Smiling Morn”, “Come Where the Lilies Bloom”, were incomparable choruses, sung by trained voices, and the baton swayed by a master’s hand.

The Brothers were repeatedly asked to reproduce those choruses and songs after the exhibition, guaranteeing full houses.

But it was at divine services that Brother Stanislaus was most enthusiastically fired with a greater glory to God and His Saints. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, generally 7 p.m., proved to be the acme of his art. The Brothers’ choir consisting of such voices as Brothers Francis Dondorf and Louis Dillon as bass, Brothers Anselm Hageman and Philip is tenor, Brothers Isidore and Peter Thome, alto; Joseph Niehof, Henry Stoerr. John Fach, William Henry and others soprano. It was a wonderful choir. As soon as the organ tones sounded every window of St. Joseph’s Infirmary was thrown up and filled with men, women and children most conspicuous the Sisters of Nazareth: on the sidewalk, on the street, a crowd gathered every Sunday evening to listen to

the hymns. It was not strange for that choir to produce on certain festival days Mozart’s twelfth or Beethoven’s Imperial Mass. The “O Salutaris” and “Tantum Ergo” were selected from the best of composers with every now and then an original composition from Brother Stanislaus. It was said that when he came to America, the Founder requested him that at every Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on a feast of our Blessed Mother, he would play and have sung a hymn to Mary. This custom exists in the novitiate today. His musical themes were many but unfortunately only remnants are to be found. But among the many hymns that of St. Francis Xavier appealed to us as the most soul-stirring, inspiring, martial of all his compositions. As there would be no Christmas without the *Adeste Fidelis*, no Easter without the oft repeated Alleluia, no patriotic assembly without the *Star Spangled Banner*, so true is there no genuine Xaverian function without this hymn to St. Francis. In his day we had many social family celebrations. Besides the great festivals of the Church we celebrated above all the feast of St. Xavier, the patronal feasts of the Brother Superiors, of the chaplain, Very Rev. Monterial, of the novice master, of the pioneers. Never was that hymn omitted. I may be wrong but I dare to say that very many enthusiasts that hail at suitable occasions the *Spangled Banner* could not recite the second verse of that national anthem and I dare to believe further that there are Xaverians found in this country who have forgotten or even perhaps never knew this our own hymn. In the earlier period it was considered a test of loyalty and as the eagle takes its young high in air to test its pure blood by looking into the rays of the sun without blinking, so the martial air of “Strike the Cymbal” would forecast the continued loyalty of the sons of St. Xavier.

I shall insert three stanzas so that there shall be no excuse on that score and in the hope that it will pass down generations to come.

HYMN TO ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

Strike the cymbal, roll the timbral
 Let the trump of triumph sound,
 Joyous singing tributes bringing.
 The isles exult and seas resound. (3)

Bonze's and Mahomet's delusion.
 Long had o'er the Indies spread
 Xavier came and in confusion,
 Demons from his presence fled.
 Lo, their infant arms extending,
 Indian children crave his aid,
 To their wants the Saint attending,
 Soon the heavenly call obey'd.

Prisons, insult, every danger,
 On our father's mission wait
 But the Saint to free a stranger
 Trusted to bounteous heaven his fate. (3)
 Sickness flies, his voice obeying,
 Blindness sees the cheering day,
 And the power of God displaying,
 Death unwilling yields his prey.
 Indian chiefs with wonder seeing,
 Senseless idols prostrate fall,
 Own the author of their being,
 And proclaim him Lord of all.

Great apostle, thee saluting,
 Here we meet with hearts sincere.
 Holy patron all uniting,
 We call on thee to hear our prayer. (3)
 You who faithfully attended,
 Those entrusted to thy care,
 And with ardent zeal defended
 'Gainst ev'ry danger of despair,
 Now in blissful mansions reigning
 Deign dear saint to hear our pray'r.
 Grace divine for us obtaining,
 Heav'nly blessings make us share.

The hymn is old but it should therefore not be despised. What present day song will outlive "Home sweet home," "My old Kentucky home" and dozens of similar tunes that will be embodied in the

future folks lore of the country when the so-called Jazz songs will be in oblivion.

With all the natural gifts for music that Br. Stanislaus was gifted there was never a Brother who was ever taught by him. He had not the impartative powers. It is far better to be less gifted, educated and trained in science or art but to be able and oft times willing to impart the same to others than to have the knowledge but unable to reach a helping hand to those clamoring for aid.

In the house, Br. Stanislaus was always a source of inspiration. Never absent, unless sick and under the doctor's care, from the earliest religious exercises; he was a community man in the meaning of the word. It was a custom in those days to study in the community room from 7:30 to 8:30 P.M. It was an edification to us youngsters to see Br. Stanislaus at the age of more than sixty years take out his slate and pencil and work problems in Algebra for which he had absolutely no prospect of ever standing in need. We thought then and know now he did it merely to give us an example. In 1885, at the death of Br. Paul, he was appointed Superior of St. Xavier's Institute. He accepted the position under protest and with the promise that at first Br. Lawrence and later Br. Stephen were to assist him. He held the name, the others shouldered the responsibilities until 1903, when he was relieved by our late Br. James. Br. Stanislaus was always revered and highly respected by all the Brothers not only owing to his age and being a co-founder of the Congregation but his personality was very striking. He was a great humorist and hundreds were the stories and anecdotes he would relate to every new-comer. As he was the first Xaverian to celebrate his golden Jubilee as a member of the Congregation in April, 1892, great preparations were made not only in Louisville but also here in Baltimore. We were always ready for excitement. We arranged a public entertainment to be given at Mt. St. Joseph's College to be co-operated with by the students of St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's of Baltimore City. St. Patrick's contingency came in the largest bus available drawn by six horses. St. Joseph's came in a smaller bus drawn by four horses. The Baltimore Sun of that date gave the following account: "The Golden Jubilee of Br. Stanislaus was celebrated yesterday at Mt. St. Joseph's

College on the Frederick Road, with a very pleasing entertainment. Volunteers were present from St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's Schools of this city. The instrumental music was furnished by the college orchestra, led by Professor Andrew Linhard, and comprising P. S. Warren, Wm. Fitzgerald, Matthew Dugan, Francis Cole, Leon de Bullet, John Woelfel, Wm. Murray, Frank Lynch, Harry Jansen, William Somers, J. W. McDonald and R. Wright. On the program were several recitations from popular operas which were well rendered by the chorus. The feature of the entertainment was the singing of the 'Jubilaeum', a song and chorus especially written by Br. Isidore and set to music by Br. Boniface, and sung by one hundred and fifty well-trained voices.

"Though the Jubilarian was more than 700 miles away, for he resided then in Louisville, Kv, the occasion, being the first of its kind, was of such a nature that the Brothers in Baltimore thought it fit to unite with the Brothers in Louisville in the celebration as to the proper date, April 5th."

JUBILAEUM. APRIL 5, 1892

All hail to thee thou golden crowned in years
 On this thy Jubilee! With joyous tears
 vVe hail our pioneer, foundation stone;
 But greater far, for fifty years thou'rt known
 As spouse of Christ, a true and faithful knight
 In education's realm, a shining light
 rro us that rallied round St. Xavier's flag
 And raised it high, that noble little flag.
 Thou wast among the first that gathered 'round
 Our Founder's standard, early thou hast found
 How sweet the yoke of Christ, ; in early days,
 In growing years, thou followdst righteous ways.
 To thousands virtues' paths thou pointest clear
 'The paths that lead to honor and God's fear;
 And t,rue the promise, thou shalt find thy name
 Inscribed in Christ's oven heart without a stain.
 And who can count the num'rous songs of praise,

The many sighs to God that thou didst raise,
 When to the magic touch of music's dart
 Thou pouredst forth the feelings of thy heart?
 The many prayers, songs and holy lays,
 The multitude of good these many days,
 The labors done by thy own zealous hands,
 Were lifted upward by angelic bands.
 Now soon thy life, according Nature's law,
 Bedecked with merits rich, to end must draw;
 Rejoice in this for God will call to Him
 Thy precious soul to ever chant the hymn
 Of praise and love in everlasting glee.
 His voice of justice then ,We call to thee,
 Well done, thou faithful son, and now behold
 Reward of which to thousands thou hast told.

Br. Stanislaus spent his whole life in the classroom. He had no degree from colleges but humbly he taught the thousands of boys that were confided to his instruction, guided hundreds of young men, long after they left the precincts of the class, along the paths of virtue.

Well may he say to those honored with degrees, "you instruct hundreds, God bless you for it; we, the parochial teachers, teach thousands; you form the leaders, we the masses, the people."

This reflection leads us to an article in the *Brooklyn Tablet* of November 1, 1924. "There is prevalent in the minds and conversations of many intelligent Catholics a misunderstanding on this question of teaching Brotherhoods which tends to defeat all efforts to get reputable candidates. It is far from uncommon to hear the assertion that a boy of piety and talent should not stop halfway at a Brotherhood but should go the full distance to the priesthood. Such an idea is not in harmony with the position of the Catholic Church. In her mind there is a distinct and honorable, yes and complete, calling which places a boy in the ranks of an aspirant for membership in the Catholic Brotherhoods. It is experienced as a difficult matter to enlist such aspirants but the task should not needlessly be rendered more difficult by the prevailing and loud-

spoken misunderstanding of which we now make complaint. The future of the Catholic high school movement for boys is bound up with the development of vocations to the Brotherhoods. The neglect or interference with the latter means a setback to the former."

Br. Stanislaus always had a scrupulous conscience and was always in dread of doing wrong. Br. Michael relates a story to this effect. Br. Stanislaus and he were taking a walk one day in autumn. When a good way in the country they passed a farm, under an apple tree lay strewn several bushels of apples. Fatigued the two looked with covetous eyes on the fruit and Br. Stanislaus expressed a wish to have an apple or two but they would not take any without the approval of the owner. Br. Michael sought the farmer and explained to him that there was an elderly gentleman near the gate who would be pleased to be allowed to pick an apple or two from those scattered under a tree. The farmer, astonished, called out toward the house to his wife, "Katie, come out here and see the most honest man from the city." Then going to the gate he invited the two into the house and placed before them the choicest fruits of the orchard.

Of the innumerable stories related of himself I recall a laughable one. In the class at St. Patrick's he had a clock which had stopped. Knowing that the Sister that taught in a room which separated the two classes by a wooden partition had a clock in such a position that by looking through a small knothole he could see it, and wishing to know the time he applied his eye to the knothole at the same time the Sister, probably for a like purpose, applied hers. What a confusion this brought to Br. Stanislaus!

In those early days high hats were common and the old gentleman always wore a so-called stove-pipe hat. One day being late and the children were marching into the church he had no time to change his civilian clothes but went to the choir loft to preside at the organ. He hung his hat on a gas-pipe attached to the organ not noticing a tiny flame. Just as he was in the midst of a hymn he saw the boys all looking with a mixture of glee and fear towards the organ and when he looked in that direction he saw a miniature volcano, smoke emanating from his hat.

On one occasion when he was sick the doctor who visited him forbade him this and that, cutting down his menu to a minimum. When the doctor had left the room he said to the bystanders, "Verrtexla too" (a common expression of his rolling the r's) "he did not forbid cheese," just then came from the bottom of the stairs, "Above all don't touch any cheese." Imagine the disappointment. Brother Stanislaus was eighty-five years of age when the celebration of his Diamond Jubilee of having been a member of the Congregation sixty years should have been celebrated, but he was in his years of dotage and consequently he could not have participated and his absence would have put a damper on the community. The day, April 5, 1902, was passed quietly except the great share of prayers that were especially offered for him. Although the vase was shattered, the flowers withered, its fragrance was not spent upon the desert air.

The innumerable hymns he played for the glory of God and His Saints, the hours he spent in making religious ceremonies most imposing, the untiring zeal in gathering the present and past pupils for the frequent reception of the sacraments were never wasted, each brought forth its fruit, each reproduced its own and the good he has done swells and swells till it breaks at the throne of a just God.

The influence of this religious has done more for Catholicism in the fields he labored particularly in Louisville, Ky., then can be estimated.

Though not a layman, for he had bound himself to a life of Christian perfection by the vows of religion, nevertheless, he was not a priest, and for that very reason, because he did not have the consolation of offering at the altar the Holy Sacrifice, he was able to give an example of what men, not priests, could be and should be, consistently and courageously; for the life of a teaching Brother calls for a degree of heroism that only those who know it intimately are able to appreciate. Brother Stanislaus and his likes unobtrusively moulded the boys entrusted to them into strong, ardent citizens devoted to those high ideals which distinguish Christian gentlemen from others less fortunate.

Ill as any order or congregation can afford to lose such a man we live in assurance that God will always fill such vacancies by others, quite as learned and devout as those who have gone home signed with the mark of faith and stamped with the seal of salvation.

Brother Julian was an eye-witness of Brother Stanislaus' last years and from his memoirs I make free to copy the following closing remarks:

"Thomas a Kempis says that sickness shows what a man is. Old age, then, shows what a man has been. Brother Stanislaus was a model of simplicity, charity, obedience and humility.

Even at the age of eighty-five, down on his knees would he go at table and accuse himself of some fault whereas there was really no fault at all. One instance suffices to show his humility. The doctor had ordered that the hearty fare of the community should not be given him as he would be unable to digest it. When he came to table the first meal after the orders were given and saw a lighter diet, in his childishness, for he was eighty-seven, he said: "They're starving me." He was not rebuked and the incident was forgotten by all except himself. The next meal, after grace, he accused himself and asked pardon for the scandal he had given. Strange! he should remember when at that time he could not remember the day of the week. Was it not the habit of a life-time asserting itself?

It was often said that the Founder in sending him to America, urged him to make the recreations pleasant for the Brothers. Brother Stanislaus faithfully observed this precept and when he was older, the younger members had no greater pleasure than to sit around Brother Stanislaus and listen to his stories. Naturally he got in the habit of repeating, and he would often say, "If you heard this before, whistle." Some would give a whistle and then another would claim he never heard it so the story would go.

Brother Stanislaus had many admirable traits, but the most admirable was to see him in chapel among the first: though he had permission to remain in because of his age. No matter how cold the morning, and it can be cold in Louisville, inside as well as out, and

it was cold for the heat was never on until the morning exercises were well over, Brother Stanislaus was never absent. A man of his caliber valued too highly the spiritual in his life to miss it lightly. For weeks before the end came, he had given up smoking, but at the last recreation on the evening of February 24, he was more lively than he had been for some time and smoked with unusual gusto. It was his last recreation on earth. That night about two o'clock, the Brother who occupied the room with him was awakened by heavy snoring, so he thought. He lay in bed for some time trying to get to sleep and as he was obliged to teach the next day, he finally got up to wake Brother Stanislaus, but found him unconscious. The doctor was hastily summoned and pronounced it a bursting of a blood vessel, the snapping of a chord, worn out-worn out in God's service for sixty odd years. The devoted chaplain, Reverend Louis Deppen, was not called. Possibly, owing to his age and the distance he would have to walk in the middle of a winter's night was the reason. However, who will say that Brother Stanislaus needed his ministrations? Each day for over sixty years he had said the community prayer to St. Barbara for a happy death and would she desert him? Even as she had come in the extreme hour to his holy patron St. Stanislaus, may we not think - nothing is impossible to God - that she came to Him?

Apart from three of the Brothers, none knew of his death until it was announced at morning prayer. It came as a shock for he had been so lively the night before. Genuine grief was felt by all and each seemed to feel the void his death left, for truly an inspiration had gone-or was it then only truly beginning to live?

His funeral was private, as is the custom of the Brothers when privacy may be had. Solemn Mass of Requiem was sung by the Reverend Louis Deppen assisted by the Reverend Charles Raffo and the Reverend John Hill, Reverend Doctor Schuhmann acting as Master of Ceremonies all being one-time pupils. Reverend Lawrence Bax preached, likening Brother Stanislaus to his baptismal patron, St. Peter, who was commissioned to feed the lambs of Christ's flock. Likewise, every pastor of the city and suburbs was present to honor one who had spent so many years for the welfare

of the youth of Louisville and whose fruits each was able to judge for Br. Stanislaus' work was city-wide.

Those who have had the privilege of living with Br. Stanislaus can vouch for the oft repeated saying of the late lamented Br. James: "If the saints were any better than Br. Stanislaus, then I have no conception for what a saint is."

A simple monument in St. Louis' cemetery, Louisville, Ky., marks the spot where rest the remains of St. Stanislaus with the plain inscription following his name, 1817-1904. In religion sixty-two years.

CYRENIAN NO. 6

Brother Hubert Boehmer, C. F. X.

of the Congregation of St. Francis Xavier

by

Brother Isadore, C.F.X.



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CYRENIAN NO. 6



BROTHER HUBERT BOEHMER, C. F. X.

IT WAS DURING the annual retreat of 1927 that I came across a record that showed that the subject of this story was born exactly a hundred years ago, August 17, 1827. I thought the occasion most suitable to collect whatever was available and hold him up in many ways worthy to be classed among our Cyrenians, moreover, he was one of the pioneers of the Xaverians that formed the second colony in 1860.

Hubert Boehmer was born of well-to-do parents in the city of Essen, in Rhenish Prussia, August 17, 1827. His father was a brewer, an occupation considered in that country as legitimate as brewing coffee in the kitchen. The home was one where could be breathed religious atmosphere; there was the family altar around which father and mother with their sons would assemble for pious devotions, grace before and after meals were as regular as in a cloister, every room in the house had one or more prints of saints or biblical and religious scenes and a crucifix was in every room or chamber.

The children were three, all boys, and in their tenderest years their future could readily be forecast. As it frequently happens with children who, impressed with the functions of divine service, imitate in their childlike way the various services, play, church, altar, mass, priest, etc., so the two younger, Frank and Henry acted the part of priest while Hubert, the oldest, taught the few little boys and girls that came occasionally to this "show" how to behave at such services and, child that he was, explained to them in all earnestness various parts.

This knowledge he received from his saintly mother whose whole heart and soul were wrapped up in the proper education of her children. It is from such homes that we get the great army of youths who are the pride of the Church and the hope of the country. The two little would-be priests entered later the seminary but Frank

had to give up owing to family urgency and Henry the youngest, entered the Jesuit Novitiate at Muenster. In 1871-73 a victim of the Kulturkampf, he along with all Jesuits was exiled. Father Boehmer, S.J., became a reknowned missionary in this country. (*Memoirs of Frank Boehmer*)

It is no wonder that the three showed such early signs, they had from the tenderest years the best teacher the world could offer-a mother. In the immediate neighborhood of Essen, at Heldenburg, is a shrine dedicated to. our Mother of Sorrows. Saturdays is generally the day mass is celebrated at this shrine and Hubert who delighted to serve the priest at the altar was frequently selected to perform the duties of server alternating with his two younger brothers. At Coeblar is a votive chapel also dedicated to the Mother of God. To this celebrated shrine, pilgrims from far come frequently and when the boys were strong enough to accompany their parents they were permitted to join the pilgrimage. These journeys were made on foot. On the way rosaries were recited and hymns were sung. In school Hubert was an apt pupil and after having gone throng the elementary and grammar grades with the best of records, he attended the Real School in his native city, at which he kept his previous excellent reputation.

Reading of these religious impressions of childhood, we must not infer that the boy, Hubert Boehmer and his brothers were super-boys, on the contrary, they were very normal boys who delighted in all sorts of sports. It is a pity to note that the boys of Germany had no sports such as we have here in America. Even a boy's toys had a tendency towards militarism - tin soldiers, cannons, wooden guns, blow-pipes with target practice. Boys would drill especially on holidays, selecting their own captains. Baseball, football, tennis and basketball were not even known by name. This was forty, fifty, sixty years ago and, of course, all this has changed. Young men had their own diversions-ten-pins, a very common game, shooting-galleries, singing societies, clubs for literary and scientific encouragement, later the more widely spread, turner-societies. (*Memoirs of Frank Boehmer*)

True to the law of the country Mr. Boehmer had to enlist when

he was twenty years of age. His well-grounded religious principles kept him from all contaminations generally ascribed to soldier life. Rhenish Prussia is the most thorough Catholic section of all northern Germany. The company to which he was assigned was composed mostly of Catholic young men. The attending at divine service on Sundays and Holydays was a military obligation. During his enlistment he made the campaign of 1848 to quell the revolution of South Germany, especially that of the little Grand Duchy of Baden. The present state of Germany with its republican government received its incipency seventy years previous, but though crushed by the overpowering hordes from Prussia and dormant for seventy years the germ showed life. It had not died. The revolutionary movement in 1848 began in France and as merely a river separates France from Baden it found most favorable soil there. The government granted many demands of the people for more liberal administrations but the outbreak occurred in 1849, the insurgents took possession of Karlsruhe, proclaimed a republic and established a provisional government. It was only through the aid of Prussia and the German Confederation that the revolution in Baden was repressed. Very many of the insurrectionists were banished or banished themselves and by thousands they came to these shores and settled principally in the great northwest, and the rapid growth of Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and many other cities is greatly due to them. Tell City in Indiana was settled chiefly Forty-eighters as they were generally termed.

Mr. Hubert Boehmer having served his country the full number of prescribed years, was honorably discharged.

Riffing had a fairly good portion of life's ups and downs and experiences he thought himself seriously of his future.

From boyhood he was a great admirer of the great Schiller and none of his many works pleased him more than Schiller's Meditation:

THE PILGRIM

Life's first beams were bright around me,

When I left my father's cot.
 Breaking every tie that bound me,
 To the dear and hallowed spot.
 Childish hopes and youthful pleasures,
 Freely I renounced them all;
 Went in quest of nobler treasures.
 Trusting to a higher call.
 For to me a voice had spoken.
 And a spirit seemed to say:
 Wander forth the path is broken;
 Yonder, eastward, lies the way.

Rest not, till the golden portal
 Thou hast reached; –there enter in;–
 And what thou hast procured as mortal,
 These, immortal life shall win.

Evening came, and morn succeeded;
 On I sped, and never tired;
 Cold, nor heat, nor storm, I heeded,
 Boundless, hope my soul inspired.
 Giant cliffs rose up before me;
 Horrid wilds around me lay;
 O'er the cliffs my spirit bore me;
 Through the wilds I forced my way.

Again and again he picked up the Pilgrim, and many were the minutes he pondered slowly and thoughtfully: “Yes, my first beams of life were bright, why should I leave my father's house? Why break every tie so dear to me? What nobler treasures could I expect, what has the future in store for me?”

Ah, a voice has spoken! Listen!

It was on one of those meditative evenings that he resolved to find the golden portal by attending a ball given in honor of one of his friends. Many an evening he spent at a dance for he was very fond of swinging his body to the rhythm of music. He enjoyed himself

this evening in a particular manner. Before going home he entered the club's library and casually read one of the many Catholic papers lying on a table. His eyes dilated when he read of a newly founded Brotherhood in Belgium. Between the lines of the advertisement he read:

“And a spirit seemed to say;
 Wander forth; the path is broken;
 Yonder, westward lies the way.”

That night sleep seemed to keep away and Schiller's meditation, the social circle of the evening, the advertisement of a teaching' Brotherhood in Belgium, crossed and recrossed in phantasmagoria.

Early the next morning he threw a surprise into the family circle by begging the parental blessing, for he was about to go to Belgium to enter a teaching brotherhood and to devote his life to the cause of Christian education. (*Memoirs of Mr. Frank Boehmer*)

His parents were glad that their eldest son was filled with such noble sentiments, and willingly gave the blessing.

“Rest not, till the golden portal
 Thou hast reached;–there enter in.”

He entered the novitiate October 17, 1850. He left his father's house, and broke every tie that bound him to all that was dear and hallowed.

He was clothed with the holy-habit February 2, 1851. His novitiate was a most strenuous one. Being naturally of a fiery and impetuous disposition his faults were numerous but he manfully took the corrections and penances imposed.

He was fond to relate some of the results of his ill temper. On one occasion he carried a number of dishes from one place to another and just as he was to deposit them they slipped and all broke except one, taking up this spared one he threw it in anger upon the fragments of the others saying: “you go, too.” Of course, he accused

himself and received a well-deserved reprimand, not so much for breaking many, but for willfully breaking that one. There must have been some cause why the years of his novitiate extended to seven years for he pronounced his vows September 8, 1858. He surely must have displayed some sterling good qualities to be retained after so many imperfections. But these trials made him immune in later years to severer tests.

July 1, 1860, he arrived from Europe with eight others and when schools opened in the middle of August we find Bro. Hubert belonging to the staff assigned to St. Boniface School. (*Mt. St. Joseph College Archives*)

In 1864 he was put in charge of the school. In those days there were several German schools in Louisville or rather schools in which German was taught side by side with English, generally half the day or three hours were devoted to one, the other three hours to the other language. Just after the Civil War, and several years before it, emigration from Germany was very strong and St. Boniface received a great share of young emigrants. The people had great confidence in the ability of Bro. Hubert. Having had a normal education in Germany was sufficient guarantee of efficiency and St. Boniface was the best attended school in Louisville from 1865-1872. Bro. Hubert was a most enthusiastic teacher, he was brim full of it. He even taught aloud during night in his sleep. Tradition has it that disturbing the sleepers one night, one of the Brothers sprinkled some water in his face to awaken him. He merely remarked, "Boys, let us go inside it's raining." He stopped a while then resumed his teaching. In the heated days of August and early September it was the custom in some schools, wherever possible, to give lessons in the open air to mitigate the heat by a shady spot.

Bro. Hubert was one of those rare happy men whose youthful ambitions were still pursued in his old age and though greatly harassed by a severe chronic asthma he was ever the enthusiastic teacher of his prime years.

One of the tragedies of life is that so many persons outlive their

real Interests and life becomes a, mere existence, a futile effort to fill time satisfactorily. In choosing a vocation, its permanence should be a prime consideration. St. Boniface school was then at the zenith of its glory. There was a well-organized society for young men who approached Holy Communion monthly, a sodality for younger boys and a circulating library. Dramas were given during the year on Sundays and feast-days the sanctuary was filled with well-trained, well-disciplined altar boys, Children attended Mass daily during which they sang. Bro. Hubert and his co-laborers impressed their pupils to lead lives as become true Christians and some they inspired to nobler and self-sacrificing lives. Of the more than a dozen boys who entered the Congregation between 1866-70; ten of them came from St. Boniface. True, only two persevered but the fault could hardly be counted theirs. They tried to live heroic lives and though they failed it was better than not to have tried at all. Had they had but a small fraction of the opportunities the aspirants of today have the records would show better results.

The seed of vocations is usually cast into the soul by principally two means-prayer and fervor in the teacher. A pupil of Bro. Hubert could not help admiring his zeal. He was always in the class before school opened, the blackboards were filled with the exercises of the day, ink-wells were filled, seats were dusted and as each pupil entered he was greeted with a smile. He was the last to leave, he gave no task which he did not correct and the time for penmanship was no rest time; but he went to each pupil and pointed out the errors in copying; he never omitted to give daily religious instructions which he illustrated by examples from Holy writ and the Lives of the Saints.

I had the happiness of being taught by him, though only for a short time, and I owe my religious vocation in part to him. Being then a boy of 13, my impression was very susceptible. In my earlier schooldays I was a member of the Holy Childhood and paid my monthly dues of a penny. Each contributor received a very small medal and a picture illustrating the effective work of missionary life. There were two Sisters of Charity snatching babies from hogs, there was a priest baptizing the babies and a religious in a black gown assisting in a general way. I was very fond of that picture and

treasured it highly. When I was taken to St. Boniface school and introduced to Bro. Hubert a lump gathered in my throat for here stood before me the identical religious I so often admired in the picture. Later, after we became acquainted, I told him how eager I was to be sent to India or China and he humorously replied, “yes, there will be many an opportunity for you to go to Indiana,” and I was happy in the thought and blissful in the ignorance for then I did not know the difference between India and Indiana.

As the number of boys that applied for admission between 1866 and 1870 increased, the superiors thought it necessary to establish a junior novitiate or postulancy Over which Bro. Hubert had charge after he came from school. Bro. Stephen was novice-master with about six novices over sixteen years of age, Bro. Hubert had charge of fourteen boys. For a while even those that had the habit such as Bro. Boniface, Bro. Isidore, Bro. Richard were under Bro. Hubert’s guidance. In those earlier days the Brothers rose at half-past four, the prayers and meditations were lengthier, but we boys were privileged, we slept till 5 o’clock and had but a short meditation.

Had Fenelon written about us he would have called us “the enfants terrible,” Those who had not the habit wore cassocks, and we looked like the little Benedictines of the early ages.

What a pity the poverty of the Brothers could find no means to better conditions. Those boys were greatly left to themselves, their homes were in the same city, they frequently met their earlier companions whose recitals of their “good times” left no favorable impressions on the boy who left all to follow the footsteps of Christ. The postulancy and novitiate were in connection with St. Xavier’s College and there were several instances where a boy – postulant left, but returned to St. Xavier’s as a student, and, of course, would “talk out of school”. They would tell their companions the Brothers’ mode of life, penances imposed, etc., etc. The young postulants and students of the Institute were kept apart but there were hundreds of occasions where they met.

These boys did not have a vocation was the cry. But very rarely any

boy or girl has a vocation, they do not enter with but for a vocation; i. e., boys who, by their piety and general fitness give promise of being worthy of the great gift bestowed upon them receive these graces at the moment of ordination or the young religious receives them when he pronounces his vows. All that is required is a right intention, and such fitness of nature and grace as afford a well-grounded hope that the candidate will willingly discharge the priestly or religious functions.

As to this question, “not with but for a vocation,” many may doubt its authenticity therefore, I shall take the liberty and cull from the “Religious Teacher and The Work of Vocations” by the Rev. J.B. Delannay, C.S.C., Ph.D., J.C.R., (p. 13): “Until quite recently, most spiritual writers placed the essential element of the Divine Call in a strong interior attraction towards the privileged life. If this sensible urging of the Holy Spirit was wanting, and if the desire or longing to be a priest or a religious was absent, there was no real vocation.”

A few years ago this theory was. dealt a strong blow by the work of a French priest, Canon Lahittou. In this book the author gave out as the traditional view of the Church, that Vocation to the priesthood did not consist in any subjective feeling or inclination for that State, but was conferred from without by the Bishop of the diocese. The practical conclusion of such a view is that we need not look for boys with a Vocation but rather for candidates for a Vocation. According to the same author, what in the old theory is termed “Vocation” is in reality a mere responsiveness to an actual grace which floods the mind with light, shows it the beauty of the priestly state, and strengthens the head, upholding it in the sacrifices required for the attainment of the sublime end. Vocation, then, is not from within, but from without.

The book stirred up a storm of protest among theologians, and there is authority for the statement that the book came perilously near the unpleasant notoriety of the Index. Pius X, however, intervened at the critical moment, and, by a special act of his Pontifical power created a Commission of Cardinals to examine the question. ‘The decision of this high Tribunal, which was later

indorsed by the Pope himself, was altogether in favor of the book and implied a definite approval of the chief doctrines taught in the work." Being a theory the question is open to debate.

What a pity so very many prefer to look through a kaleidoscope instead of plain glass. The word Brother seems to be a word of repugnance, something that seems to mean inferiority, even debased, and when a boy makes known his intention to become a Brother, at once a storm of opposition is raised. Why a Brother! If you want to serve God why not be a priest? Brothers have to work too hard, their life is one of continual labor, to be all your life amongst boys who are so little responsive, so ungrateful. Why bury your talent? Why waste your life in oblivion? You might be sent to a place like St. Mary's Industrial School, then what could you say? An avalanche of objections is heaped upon the poor boy and in consequence he becomes neither the one nor the other. These questions are put by persons of invincible ignorance. All honor and glory for the priesthood, they are an absolute necessity, they will live as a body to the end of time. "We shall not make any comparison for it cannot be made, but right here, let us recollect that these two callings are absolutely independent, they diverge, each follows the assigned duties of an Eternal Architect and a boy has no right to choose still less have his parents or friends the power to decide which way to follow.

On one occasion I spoke to a nun about a boy who had planned to join our Congregation. She was greatly interested in this boy and remarked that she had hoped he would become a priest. And why? Priest can forgive sins which a Brother cannot. The simple question put to her was, "Which is better prevention or cure?"

God selects His own; and He allows no interference. According to the Catholic Directory of 1927, there are in the U.S., 24,930 priests and only 2,481 Teaching Brothers.

The teacher be he a priest, brother, sister or lay, has a powerful influence in awakening vocations. At the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Bro. Micheal, C.F.X., May 27, 1927, a speaker

at the banquet given in his honor gave credit to the Jubilarian of having been instrumental of forty boys and young men embracing Holy Orders and at the banquet set to honor Bro. Richard, C.F.X., August 18, 1927 to his Diamond Jubilee, mention was made of his having added by example and precept to awaken twelve priestly vocation from one school, only, that of the Immaculate Conception in Louisville. Rev. J. B. Delannay, C.S.C., a few years ago quietly took a canvas of the priests he knew best. He found out that, roughly speaking, ninety out of a hundred of these priestly vocations were awakened, fostered, and made secure, after God, by the wise advice and kindly co-operation of some zealous Sister, who, with true insight, read the heart of the child, discerned his fitness for the higher state and accomplished the work of God thereby. Father McKenna O.P., is said to have attracted about two hundred boys to the priesthood.

The two fundamental means to cast the seed of vocations into the soul are prayer and fervor in the teacher. There is a third equally important and that is discipline. Where discipline reigns, souls are happy, active, grow. If on the contrary, chaos and anarchy are permitted to hold sway, souls suffer, and sin creeps in and works havoc. A school in which there is no discipline will be barren of vocations.

In 1869, Bro. Vincent, then general, called a general chapter, the first in the order of time.

The congregation had now existed thirty years, thirty years of instability, thirty years of the severest trials. This chapter was to crown the work of thirty years and to stabilize the structure. As may be expected the representative men from each colony were called. Louisville sent Bros. Peter, Sup., Stephen and Hubert; Baltimore; Bro. Paul. At the end of the chapter Bro. Paul was assigned to Manchester, England, Bro. Hubert taking his place as Superintendent of St. Mary's Industrial School- He had charge from September 1869-February 1871, when Bro. Paul was recalled to throw oil upon billowy waters Great and successful as Brother Hubert was as a teacher he met with less success in this new position.

Many and various were the exterior causes. An epidemic of typhus visited St. Mary's. Cots were erected on the sloping side of the hill which is crowned by St. Agnes' Hospital. Bro. Polycarp, a most self sacrificing man, ready at all times, Bro. Hubert's greatest prop, succumbed to the fatal malady, May 31, 1870. Any ordinary man would have sagged under such weights of misfortunes and momentarily Bro. Hubert's courage failed, but only to rise again more resolutely, if need be, to sacrifice his life. No sooner were the remains of Bro. Polycarp interred at St. Peter's Cemetery in Baltimore, than Bro. Hubert stood, a soldier at his post, going from cot to cot doing all sorts of work from the duties as superintendent to those of an orderly.

Able, nobly, and indefatigably several young Passionists, notably Father Charles Lang, came to his assistance and shared with him the fatigues. For days Bro. Hubert would not take his proper rest or even food, but when nature was too overpowering he merely dozed in a chair.

Through constant care and with the aid of Dr. D.F. Worthington, Dr. John Holiday, Dr. R. Goldsmith and others who offered their services, the epidemic was conquered - To show the authenticity of these dates and notes I take an excerpt from a Memorial History of St. Mary's Industrial School, by R. H. Goldsmith, M.D., 1880, 12th Annual Report, page 9:

"In 1870, an epidemic of Typhus Fever raged in our midst; but the active precautions adopted by the attending physician, Dr. D. F. Worthington, who placed the sick in tents in the open fields, soon caused the disease to disappear. But, alas! the destroyer struck down good Bro. Polycarp who fell a victim to his charity and Christian zeal-active in his duty to the inmates, he knew no fear. Constantly ministering to the sick. He was stricken with the fell disease and died at his post fearlessly."

"He died the death of the righteous."

Peace and tranquility had been restored, all went like clockwork but

it was a calm preceding a storm. From: the Second Annual Report of St. Mary's Industrial School for Boys, December HO, 1869, we excerpt Bro. Hubert's report, P. 5: "The difficulties to which a new institution is subjected are numerous, particularly in procuring competent mechanics to conduct each department properly. We have suffered in relying too much on the integrity of others; men who were employed in the shoe factory the first year took advantage of our inexperience, and by that means entailed a debt in that department. Last year was again unsuccessful, as the work of the boys was not sufficiently attractive to obtain a ready market for the sale of shoes." As the shoe factory proved to be a liability the Board of St. Mary's thought it wise to make a change in the government of the institution and placed full power into the hands of a priest Rev. Henry Volz. Bro. Hubert was to retain the name of superintendent but his power was shackled. Reference to this has been made in *Cyrenian No. 4*, (page 24).

Bro. Hubert, worn out by the constant care of the sick during the epidemic, constantly harassed by asthma and now by act declared incompetent to carry on the work as superintendent, succumbed to the allurements of his recalcitrant confreres at St. Boniface' Louisville and misled by their actions left St. Mary's to join them in Cincinnati February 1871. But like the dove that left the ark he found no rest and seeing his error he shortly after begged for re-admittance. Brother Stephen went to meet the wandering sheep and brought it back to his father's folds. There was great rejoicing in the Louisville community at the return of the penitent, though there were a few that acted the part of the son that remained with the father.

Bro. Hubert was now placed in charge of the school of the Immaculate Conception, Louisville. The many Vicissitudes during the two previous years changed him perceptibly. He lost his former enthusiasm though at times he proved himself again and his success was as effective as ever, but the spirit of community life seemed to have been dulled. Characteristically he was the life of the community the first ten years but asthma was making greater conquests. Many a time when in chapel preparing for Holy Communion he could not proceed but beckoned to one to get him a cup of hot coffee so he

could breathe more freely though he had to forego his communion. Though now a constant sufferer he kept up till the summer of 1880 when he was transferred to St. James Home, Baltimore. (12th Annual Report, St. Mary's Industrial School.)

Being now free from teaching and a new sphere of life before him he took in a new lease for life. It was natural in him to throw his whole heart and soul into every action of his labors. Bro. Hubert was the second superintendent of St. James Home having succeeded Bro. Philip who opened the establishment in 1878 and directed it with great success for two years. The subjects taught here were greater than those found in an ordinary school curriculum, the boy was taught the value of a dollar, when, where and how to use it, to be saving, to take care of his clothes, his person - Bro. Hubert went among the merchants, manufacturers, clerical offices wherever there was a possibility of placing a boy to earn his own living. He conscientiously looked after the spiritual welfare of his flock, in short, he was like a father among his children. And this laborious work he kept up for six years. Broken down entirely in health, he still wanted to stay in the vineyard, still begged to be in ser-vice and in 1886 he was sent to St. Patrick's in Baltimore. He kept himself busy with teaching to which profession he was surely born. He filled any breach that was made by sickness, assisted the less experienced teachers, labeled and repaired library books. He was never idle. But in less than a year he succumbed to asthma that had reduced him to a mere shadow of himself. He died January 24, 1887, at St. Patrick's. His remains are interred at Bonie Brae. (*Chronicles*, p. 61, Mt. St. J.C.)

Brother Hubert was a fervent religious and a model teacher. His spirit was one of enthusiasm - A born teacher, made perfect by education and practice both were dominated by a great zeal for a betterment of his fellow-beings. Like a St. Bernard he could ask himself: "Hubert, why didst thou come hither?" Unhesitatingly he could always answer - "To serve God in the noble profession of an educator." From this resolution made at the novitiate in 1850 he never swerved. The disease of asthma though extremely harrassing deterred him not from performing his duties as a religous and oft it

had been better had he kept to his room, his determination to live up to the resolutions of his novitiate overcame the temptations to ease. In the classroom his instructions were frequently interrupted by attacks of coughing and though it may be a proverb - "youth knows no sympathy nor gratitude," in his case, with his pupils, the saying was confounded.

Enthusiasm is the thing which makes the world go round. Without its driving power working nothing worth doing has ever been done - Love, friendship, attention, devotions to career or hobby - all these and most of the other things in life, are forms of enthusiasm. Real teaching (as Bro. H. always did) is ninety-percent enthusiasm. Amid the numberless duties of its profession, he as a teacher must be animated with the spirit that made Theodore Roosevelt spurn the sympathy of the visitor who pitied the President toiling, on a sultry afternoon in July, at his desk piled high with work. Though the beads of perspiration stood on his brow, Roosevelt smiled his brightest and broadest smile: "Keep your sympathy. I am happy because I like my job."

It should not be difficult for a religious teacher to glow with enthusiasm for his exalted mission. It should be easy for him to glow with the idea of having committed to his care the mind and the will - the immortal souls - of boys destined one day to constitute the main body of the Church Militant in the greatest country on earth.

CYRENIAN NO. 7

Brother Bernardine, C. F. X.

(J. GERARD RIDDER)

1836 – 1912

by

Brother Isadore, C.F.X.



Edited by Brothers Theodore and Aubert, (1945)

CYRENIAN NO. 7

IN WRITING these “Cyrenians,” these brief biographical sketches of our pioneers, I have experienced difficulty after difficulty in regard to their earlier days. As a rule these men were very reticent about their place of birth, their ancestry, their school days, their early associates. Brother Bernardine, the subject of this sketch, was no exception.

To the official records of the American Province I am indebted for the fact that he was born on September 12, 1836, at Altharen, Hanover. His birthplace I know as a village on the banks of the sleepy waters of the River Ems. Parenthetically I may here remark that at the time of Brother Bernardine’s birth, Hanover was one of the many independent kingdoms of Germany allied by consanguinity to the English realm. With the unification of the northern states of Germany in 1866 Hanover was Prussianized. Brother Bernardine was a Hanoverian; he loved the land of his birth; he was never in favor of the unification of Germany and the mere mention of the name of Prince Bismark, the prime mover in the consolidation, would almost throw him into a state of spasticity. Since this foible was well known in the community, someone at recreation would maneuver the conversation around to the mention of Bismark. The contemplated explosion was inevitable. But we are far ahead of ourselves. We know that Brother Bernardine studied for the priesthood. Why he left the seminary, why he changed the course of his vocation is a mystery. Certainly it was not for lack of talent, for in that he was abundantly blessed. Equally certain is the fact that his stay in the Seminary must have been quite lengthy, for he was a master of ritual and rubrics. Perhaps the “mystery” is not in Brother Bernardine leaving the seminary, but in his not confiding the reason to us who lived with him for half a century. In this reticence, as I have said, he was typical of his contemporaries.

On leaving the seminary, Mr. Ridder attached himself to a



horticulturist. Amidst flowers and shrubbery, totally unaware of the providential hand guiding him, he was mastering a science and an art that were to make him particularly valuable to an organization of which he knew nothing. Incidentally this horticulture was to be his greatest blessing fifty years later when as an old man he had to find something to do. After working-hours, young Ridder read, studied, and prayed. In some way he learned of a congregation of teaching Brothers, established in Belgium a few years previously. He investigated. Out of this came his vocation. On his twentieth birthday, September 13, 1856, he crossed the Rubicon of indecision and joined the Xaverian Brothers in Bruges, Belgium. On April 12, 1857, he was clothed in the habit. As names are given with the intention of providing a patron and a model, no name could have been more appropriate for Mr. Ridder than Bernardine, for in him devotion to Our Lady and to St. Joseph was outstanding. On the lovely feast of the - Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, September 8, 1858, he vowed his life to God in the cause of Christian Education.

At this time in Het Walletjes, the one house the community possessed, the general topic at recreation was the mission to America. Four of the six Brothers whom the Founder had led there in 1854 had been recalled; Brother Vincent and Brother Ignatius in 1856; Brothers Peter and Paul in 1858. Fired with true missionary spirit they gave such glorious descriptions of the great field in America that all of the little community hoped and prayed to be sent there.

On July 1, 1860, the second colony of Xaverians consisting of eight Brothers, arrived in Louisville, Kentucky. One of the number was Brother Bernardine. For the following three years, 1860-1863, he taught at St. Patrick's Parochial School. In August, 1863, when the Brothers accepted St. Martin's School, he was named principal. His one assistant was Postulant John Griffin, aged 13, afterward the famous Brother Philip. Due to the energy and the zeal of its pastor, Rev. Leonard Stuber, St. Martin's was a large and flourishing parish. Attendance at the parish school was naturally large, too large for two teachers. Fortunately the Ursulines, whose mother house was near by, kept the small boys.

As an illustration of the zeal of these men I recall that one pupil, Bernard Gruber, later Brother Boniface, was so impressed with the zeal and energy of the two Xaverians that he made application to join their ranks. Brother Boniface was one of our "firsts". Until 1864 the Brothers had lived on Green Street, near St. Boniface Church where they were accustomed to visit their Sacramental Master each day after classes had been dismissed. In 1864, the Brothers moved to a more spacious and convenient dwelling on Fourth Street, between Chestnut and Broadway. On August 20, 1864, the first postulant ever received at this new house arrived in the person of this same Bernard Gruber.

To return to Brother Bernardine and his first principals hip at St. Martin's. Here he gave full vent to his zeal. Not satisfied with teaching six hours daily, in English and in German, he taught the prayers for serving at Mass; assisted by Johnny Griffin's violin he taught the hymns to be sung at Mass, he laid out the vestments, he decorated the altars, and in addition to all this he established sodalities and societies. On Sunday afternoons he gathered the young men for whom he organized all sorts of games and to whom he always gave a brief religious instruction. In later years I heard at least two priests declare that from these religious instructions germinated their vocations.

Physically what sort of men was this human dynamo? When I first knew Brother Bernardine in August, 1866, I considered him a sickly, weak man who always seemed to be troubled with boils. Really it was pitiful to see him with bent neck following the call of duty. Spartan that he was he never seemed to tire. In addition to his full program in school and out of school, he acted as sacristan at St. Xavier's Institute, and one more devoted to his duties could hardly be found. He contributed much toward making the month of May, to Mary, Queen of May, most impressive, for in celebration of these months he prepared elaborate shrines beautifully decorated with flowers and lights. In the building of Christmas cribs, I rate him without peer, and I consider the one he built for Christmas, 1868, his masterpiece. I have seen hundreds of cribs; cribs in churches, cribs in chapels, cribs in schools - but I have never seen a crib to

equal that one at the Institute.

I am writing this on January 2, 1933, when another Christmas is paling into memory, and yet the recollection of that crib of 1868 is as thrilling as ever: green fields that in perspective extended far into Judean countryside, flocks of sheep tended by shepherds, and a stable as near a replica of the one at Bethlehem as could be imagined! To me, a boy of fifteen, nothing could have been more impressive. Reminiscing of those days of sixty-five years ago, I cannot resist the temptation to tell what happened to our Christmas crib when Brother Bernardine left the Institute.

The succeeding sacristan was one Brother Benedict, an incorrigible joker, whom we boys knew as one lacking all sense of aesthetics. The Brother Benedict creation at Christmas was unique; a plain crib flanked by two cedar trees on which bloomed dozens of paper roses! Fortunately Brother Benedict did give satisfaction in his particular field of endeavor, the kitchen.

In 1868, Brother Bernardine was the pioneer principal of the eighth parochial school we opened in Louisville, St. Peter and Paul is in the suburb then known as "California".

II

In 1870, Brother Bernardine was transferred from Louisville to St. Mary's Industrial School, Baltimore, Maryland. There may be readers whose views differ entirely from mine, but I have the advantage of being an actual witness to the fact that Brother Bernardine in his days at St. Mary's did more work and got less credit than any other person connected with that institution in the first sixty years of its existence.

When Brother Bernardine arrived at St. Mary's, Brother Hubert exercised a nominal control. The Board of Trustees managed the institution, and managed it in such a way that the Brothers were limited to acting as policemen, teaching their classes, and supervising the work in the shops. Economy was the order of the day.

Rev. Henry Volz, appointed by the Board as superintendent, had piled up debt on debt. As a consequence, both Brothers and boys had to suffer many deprivations especially in food and clothing. In vain the Brothers appealed to the Board to be more generous; apparently only a more rigid economy seemed to result. Conditions were unbearable. It was at this period that Brother Bernardine won his title of "Little Fighter". He was the spokesman for the Brothers in their appeals to the superintendent. Finally in 1872, Brother General Vincent notified Rt. Rev. Archbishop Bayley that the Brothers would withdraw as soon as others could be found to take charge of the institution.

To add to the general discomfort an epidemic of typhus resulted in several deaths. One of the victims was Brother Polycarp Von Dongen. These were the trials that wither the souls of ordinary men. At least two of the Brothers gave up their vocations. Brother Bernardine was of different mettle: a profound faith in prayer and an abiding trust in the Providence of God strengthened him. For this period I shall glean a few lines from his diary:

"In the firm hope that they would be relieved from their unenviable plight, the Brothers prepared for an early exit. Like the Israelites of old they were ready to move at a moment's notice ... It appears, however, that the Archbishop and the Board were not so ready to dispense with the Brothers."

On September 16, 1872, Brother Alexius arrived from Europe to take charge of the community at St. Mary's. Brother Bernardine acted as his spokesman, too. To the new Superior promises were made orally and in writing, but they were readily broken. The dissatisfaction remained, but no one appeared to replace the Brothers. Again and again they sent in their resignations. On each occasion they obtained promises that were not lived up to. In 1874, at the meeting of the Board on April 4, a friend of the Brothers, Cumberland Dugan, introduced successfully a motion that solved

most of the difficulties of the Brothers: viz.,

“Resolved that minor repairs, purchases of furniture, provisions, clothing, utensils, implements, etc., should be left to the discretion of the Brother Director who shall, however, render an account of same to the Executive Board at the next meeting.”

In his diary Brother Bernardine describes this successful motion as the first concession that Brother Alexius had been able to obtain from the misguided but well-meaning members of the Board.

Brother Bernardine was chief disciplinarian at St. Mary's and in this role he was particularly odious to the Board. There are two black spots on the pages of the early history of St. Mary's, and for them Brother Bernardine was the scapegoat chased into the desert by the men of authority, the high priests of the institution. To understand what went on, we must remember that the Brothers assigned to St. Mary's in the early days were men totally devoid of either experience or training for this particular type of work. As a result of this inexperience they too frequently imitated the management of similar institutions where difficulties were far greater because religion was not a factor to be considered. At St. Mary's provisions had been made for the incarceration of the more obstreperous boys. Unfortunately these cells were used too often. This was 1870 when systems of punishment altogether barbarous were in vogue in most institutions of this kind. In a few years the management saw the utter brutality of such procedure and razed the cells. The other objectionable feature at St. Mary's was the uniform which was very much that of a penal institution. The cells went early, but the uniform lasted down to Brother Dominic's administration in the late 80's.

Let us now turn to less distressing details concerning Brother Bernardine's work at St. Mary's. Of his zeal for the house of God we have already told in our account of his days in Louisville. At St. Mary's he assumed the responsibility of seeing that all ceremonials

were duly carried out. Father James Ryan, who as a young Passionist acted as chaplain at the Industrial School, told me that on rogation days the procession through the fields was carried out faithfully. The band played, the choir sang, the boys in the procession prayed the special prayers. A bucolic touch that he recalled was the picture of the cows on the other side of the fence bellowing as if they had lost their calves and frisking along for a closeup of this unusual sight. He also recalled the celebration of Corpus Christi with a procession to three outdoor altars resplendent in beauty. In these processions and in all the other church celebrations Brother Bernardine was the master of ceremonies, seeing to it that every detail was carried out to the letter and in accord with the spirit of the rubrics. Personally I can vouch for his fidelity to detail by stating that at a high mass for the dead he would, if necessary, make a solo of the fifty-seven lines of the “Dies Irae”.

In matters mundane Brother Bernardine was the prime mover. Of others this might be said figuratively; of Brother Bernardine it was the literal truth. He was a human mole. He wore overalls more frequently than he wore the habit. Whenever one visited St. Mary's in the early days, one would find Brother Bernardine in some ditch. One of his big undertakings was to find and tap springs all over the property to provide a reservoir of water. For years he was absorbed in finding springs, digging ditches, and laying pipe. This was a one-man enterprise: the bigger boys could provide little assistance; hired help was out of the question.¹

In 1884, Brother Bernardine was named Superintendent of St. Mary's Industrial School. Brother Alexius, who had been in charge since his arrival from Europe in 1872, in arranging to devote his full time to his office as Provincial, moved his headquarters to Mt. St. Joseph. Brother Bernardine's tenure of office was destined to be short-lived - three years. His position as superintendent did not interfere with his work with the shovel. He persevered in digging tunnels, ditches, and drains. He beautified the premises with a pond, embellishing it with borders of shrubbery, trees, and flower beds. As for the Board he was still outspoken in his demands for the

¹ Brother Bernardine told me that he was threatened with consumption or had it when he went to St. Mary's and that was why he worked outdoors. - Brother Theodore

needs of his charges. In one encounter he opposed certain members of the Board who had approved the plan of the County Commissioners in relocating Wilkens Avenue. A majority of the Board saw his point of view, and the avenue was located three hundred yards from the building line.

Brother Bernardine was superintendent of St. Mary's from 1884 to 1887. For a graphic pen picture of the Institution in those days we are indebted to H. L. Mencken's autobiographical "Happy Days".²

"By the time I knew him (grandfather Mencken) his days of struggle were over and he was in easy waters, but he still kept a good deal to himself, and when he took me off an afternoon, as a mere boy (Mencken was born in 1880) on one of his headlong buggy rides, he seldom paid a visit to anyone save the Xaverian Brothers at St. Mary's Industrial School, a bastille for problem boys about two miles from Hollis Street (site of his home). These holy men tried to teach their charges trades, and one of the trades they offered was that of cigarmaker. My grandfather, who dealt in Pennsylvania leaf tobacco, sold them their raw materials, and my father and uncle undertook to market their output in the end, an impossible matter, for the cheroots that the boys made were as hard as so many railroad spikes, and no one could smoke them. When my grandfather called upon the Xaverians the tobacco business was quickly disposed of, and he and they sat down to drink beer and debated theology. These discussions, as I recall them, seemed to last for hours, and while they were going on I had to sit in a gloomy hallway hung with gorry religious paintings - saints being burned, broken on the wheel and disemboweled, the Flood drowning scores of cows, horses, camels and sheep, the Crucifixion against a background of hairraising lightnings, and so on.

I was too young, of course, to follow the argument; moreover, it was often carried on in German. Nevertheless, I gathered that it neither resulted in agreement nor left any hard feelings. The Xaverians must have put in two or three

years trying to rescue my grandfather from his lamentable heresies, but they made no more impression on him than if they had addressed a clothing-store dummy, though it was plain he respected and enjoyed their effort. On his part, he failed just as dismally to seduce them from their oaths of chastity, poverty, and obedience. I met some of them years afterwards, and found they still remembered him with affection, though he had turned their pastoral teeth."

In this Mencken reminiscence the Brothers are unnamed. To those who know Brother Bernardine he had to be one of the disputants. He loved to argue. In these endurance tests grandfather Mencken had a worthy opponent who could not be talked down, who would not surrender, and who could take up the argument at any place and at any time as though there had been no intermission.

Brother Bernardine's departure from the superintendency of St. Mary's and his being succeeded by Brother Dominic is one of those cameo studies in irony. In 1887, Brother Bernardine was one of two delegates from the United States selected by Brother Alexius to accompany him to the Fourth General Chapter held in Bruges, Belgium. Brother Bernardine was an important man in the American Province. At St. Mary's at this time was Brother Dominic who had been relieved of his superiorship at Lowell, Mass., after a boating accident in which a Brother had been drowned. In Baltimore was the new Cardinal who had been invested in Rome that March. In a personal inspection of St. Mary's His Eminence met Brother Dominic and remarked, "There is the man to have charge of St. Mary's."³

A few days after his return from Europe, Brother Bernardine was relieved of his duties as superintendent; Brother Dominic took charge.

Ingratitude is the world's reward. As stated before - and it will bear repetition - no man living today did more for the good of St. Mary's Industrial School, no man bedewed the soil of the institution with more sweat from his brow than Brother did in the eighteen years

² *Happy Days*, H. L. Mencken, Alfred A., Knopf, New York, 1940, p. 100.

³ From the late Brother Sylvester as told to Brother Theodore.

in which he slaved for its welfare. He had his faults; at times he was cranky; perhaps he was self-willed; admittedly he was too close an economist, but in the heavenly ledger the credit side will far exceed the debit. Once, many years after Brother Bernardine's dismissal by the Board, I was talking to Father Dunn, then pastor of St. Mark's in Catonsville. He had dropped into the Mount. As we talked, we watched Brother Bernardine digging in a nearby garden bed. With a deep sigh, Father Dunn said, "Poor Brother Bernardine. II I asked him why such lamentations. He replied: "In the seventy's and eighty's while Brother Bernardine was at St. Mary's, I was private secretary to Monsignor Mccolgan. I knew the inside workings of the Board. I tell you, "and he paused to point to Brother Bernardine, "if ever a man was wronged, it was that man."

Shortly after his removal from St. Mary's, Brother Bernardine was back in the classroom, back in the very same school, St. Patrick's, Louisville, where he had started his career as a teacher on his arrival in this country in 1860, twenty-seven years before.

Two years later, in 1889, He was appointed to take charge of St. James Home, Baltimore. At this appointment Brother Philip was still amazed thirty-nine years later. Said he to me, four months before his death in 1928: "That Brother Bernardine" who was removed from St. Mary's at the request of the Board of Trustees should be two years later subjected to the same Board appears to me to be beyond human endurance. Brother Bernardine was too noble a man, too thorough a Religious to show any resentment. His appointment was the order of the Provincial; as a good religious he obeyed.⁴

As I look back over those years I am impressed by Brother Alexius' absolute confidence in "The Little Fighter." As I have chronicled already, he selected Brother Bernardine as one of the two delegates to the Fourth General Chapter. In 1895, he selected him as the one delegate from America to accompany him to the Extraordinary General Chapter called by Brother John Chrysostom as vicar to

⁴There was, perhaps, more to this move than either Brother Isidore or Brother Philip sensed. Brother Theodore overheard the Superior General, Brother Vincent, direct Brother Bernardine to tell them, presumably the Cardinal and the Board, that you have been appointed to take charge of St. James' Home.

the ailing Superior General, Brother Vincent. In 1899, he selected him for the Fifth General Chapter along with two very young men, Brothers Paul and James. This confidence was not confined to Brother Alexius. In the Provincial Chapter of 1899, a resolution was proposed and accepted that Brother Bernardine, owing to the frequent illness of Brother Alexius, was to be his assistant with the right of succession.

III

Late in September, 1899, the delegates returned from the Fifth General Chapter. Brother Alexius had been reappointed Provincial. Brother Bernardine was his first assistant. The first Provincial of the American Province was now in his seventy-sixth year; He had been a member of the Congregation for fifty-four years; he had been Provincial for twenty-four years; he was older than his years and practically spent; disciplinary problems which did not yield to routine treatment upset him; the defection of a superior was particularly distressing; he asked to retire to Belgium. Brother Bernardine was sixty-three; he did not look his years; he was lean and leathery; he was still "The Little Fighter". On his return from the General Chapter he did not assume his old charge at St. James' Home. He remained temporarily at Mt. St. Joseph. Early in 1900 he went to East Boston to pour the oil of kindness on the troubled waters of that community. He also acted as superior of the nearby community in Somerville. This was an unusual arrangement, but Brother Bernardine thought nothing of it. He would spend the night at East Boston; early the next morning he would proceed to Somerville and remain there for twenty-four hours; then he would put in a full day at East Boston. Alternating between the houses he kept things moving. This make-shift arrangement lasted until the death of Brother Alexius on February 24, 1900, when Brother Bernardine went to Baltimore and assumed the reins of authority. His career as acting Provincial was to last one month.

The new Provincial, Brother Dominic, assumed office on March 25, 1900. With his appointment there came a complete change in the personnel of the administration of the American Province. The New Provincial; had joined the Congregation in Louisville.

His assistants, Brother Joseph, Brother Isidore, Brother Paul and Brother Norbert had joined in Louisville and Baltimore. The pioneering days were over. Brother Bernardine who had joined in Belgium and had been received by the Founder faded out of the administrative picture.

In the summer of 1900, Brother Bernardine was named superior of St. Xavier's Louisville. He was sent there for the special task of superintending the construction of a new building. A year later when the building had been completed, he was sent Danvers, Mass., to replace Brother Cajetan as Director of the Juniorate. Here he was to remain for the next six years.

For Brother Bernardine St. John's Normal College, as the Juniorate was known, was a place of quiet retreat. At six-five he was out of the hurly burly; the rising generation had taken over, but he was still Brother Bernardine. He had a community of three or four Brothers and a small group of aspirants varying in number from twelve to twenty. To the Brothers he was no stranger. They knew his foibles. The arguments waxed strong at the common table where the aspirants sat petrified while the dining room rang with a denunciation of Freemasonry or Bismark. The awe-inspired aspirants could never fathom the smiles of the Brothers; the boys never smiled; they gathered up the dishes in fear and trembling.

To the boys in the Juniorate Brother Bernardine was an "old" man; they were all from twelve to sixteen. He was a very saintly "old" man who was absolute master of their existence. They revered him. His closest personal contact with them was in the two half-hour conferences that he gave each week, one on Wednesday afternoon and the other on Sunday morning. For the mid-week conference he followed a regular program in the Old Testament, reading and commenting on chapter after chapter. For the Sunday conference he read and explained the epistle and gospel of the day with the comments from Goffine that he wished to add. The conference room was the one classroom the Juniorate possessed. The master sat at the teacher's desk on a slightly elevated platform. The boys sat at big home-made desks on chairs usually described as "kitchen"

chairs. There was absolute silence. There was no levity in either the conference-master or the listeners. He was sternness personified.

Outside the conference room he was kind but never familiar. He could smile like an angel. There was something beatific about the way his face lit up. He was the one recruiter of those days, and many a vocation had its origin in that alluring smile. As the man in charge of the daily schedule he never forgot the boys' point of view. He would anticipate a holiday when he saw, for example, that a coming thaw would ruin skating or sledding or any outdoor activity. A regular school day became a holiday, with the school day made up later, and it was always made up. In the occasional disciplinary problems referred to him by the Brothers, he was coldly judicial. He heard both sides in the presence of those involved. He made his decision. That was the end of that: he never referred to it; no Brother dared to refer to it. For a major offence he dismissed the culprit from the Juniorate; for a minor offence he gave a correction, a very brief correction. No aspirant who ever stood rigidly at attention while Brother Bernardine's eyes burned through him had a ready answer for that solemn question: "Would the Boy Jesus have done that?" After a long pause, when the culprit finally managed to gulp, "No, Brother," he was sent about his business. He could spend the rest of his life pondering that high ideal.

The spirit of Brother Bernardine dominated the Juniorate. Noisy, chattering, rough-housing school boys kept silence faithfully at the prescribed times and in the prescribed places. Discipline was enforced by the oldest in religion present. In study hall in the morning at six there was no Brother present; the oldest took charge; the silence was perfect. There was no coddling. The school day began at nine and ended at four thirty. To this was added a study period before Mass, six to six-fifty, and one in the evening from seven to nine. There was no hired help except the cook, a handyman to assist Brother Bernardine, and a farmer. The boys did whatever work there was to be done. What no coddling meant to a Spartan like Brother Bernardine may be illustrated by the fact that he was most provoked when some visiting Brother in a spirit of pity gave an aspirant a nickel for carfare to Salem. This boy was the

sacristan, and it always had been the duty of the sacristan to walk to Salem and back, a round trip of twelve miles, to get a supply of altar breads. This was the regular procedure on every other Saturday in those days when there was no parcel post. When the boy returned from Salem in unusually fast time, Brother Bernardine found out the reason and explained to the philanthropist that he wanted no coddling. Brother Bernardine was no Scrooge, but to him riding on street cars was for weak women. Men walked. What irritated him especially was the implied rebuke in the apparently kind act of the philanthropist who had been the sacristan years before when he had been an aspirant. As a Brother he had apparently grown soft.

Brother Bernardine's six years at St. John's afforded him a great opportunity to wield his shovel and his pick ax. Once again he was leveling hillocks, digging drains, and planting flower beds. With the assistance of his one helper he built a new grotto of Lourdes. For such meager man power it was a gigantic task, but somehow it was completed. It was a rough-looking job but it seemed to breathe the spirit of the original at Lourdes. As a site for the May devotions it proved inspiring for the boys and the Brothers.

In 1906 Brother Bernardine celebrated his golden jubilee as a Xaverian Brother. He was as vigorous as ever. He was proud of the progress of the Xaverian Brothers. He had been through all the dark days. His faith had never wavered. He knew the dark days in Het Walletjes, he knew what it was to climb up the chimney from the open fire place when Mosby's Raiders raced into Louisville in Civil War days, he knew the days of the schism in 1872 when the fate of the Province hung in the balance, he knew St. Mary's, he knew all the days beyond recall, and he looked to the future - unafraid.

In the following summer while the Brothers of the surrounding communities were spending their vacation at St. John's, he was cognizant that some great plans were in the air. He was the old war horse champing at the bit. He had been in comparative retirement for six years.

Managing a handful of boys who needed only the slightest managing

had not consumed the tiny part of his energy. His physical labors had been to him only pleasant diversions. He had not been officially informed but he was conscious that there was in the air some great plan for the future of St. John's. Eventually the announcement came in August that the school was no longer to be limited to accepting boys who wished to become Brothers. It was to be a boarding school open to the general public. To Brother Bernardine, unconscious of his years, this was a great opportunity. It was an opportunity denied him. The necessity of infusing new blood for a new activity and the fact of Brother Bernardine's having reached the scriptural age of three score and ten, induced the authorities to lift the burden of responsibility from his shoulders and to retire him to Mt. St. Joseph's Baltimore. With heavy heart he bade Saint John's a last good bye.

IV

Brother Bernardine had come to his last great fight. He had to fight himself. He had to endure the most grueling of the ordeals that mankind is subject to in this vale of tears: vis., the helpless misery associated with one's passing from the active to the retired life where one shoulders no responsibility and plays no worthwhile part in the daily drama of the community. He had to fight that unfounded fear of not being wanted. For Brother Bernardine retirement was a severe trial. He felt as young as ever but he knew that the world had passed him by. In the first few weeks of his retirement he saw strange sights. Almost his first act at Mt. St. Joseph Is was to attend the funeral of the man who had retired him to the inactive list, Brother Dominic. There was a new Provincial, Brother Isidore, the third under whom he had served. The new Provincial was fifty years of age, but to Brother Bernardine he was a mere boy. He remembered the August 15, 1866, when he a grown man of thirty with ten years I experience in the Congregation had seen this new Provincial as a small boy aged twelve begin his first day in the Community by making his first Holy Communion. To our elders we never grow up.

The new Provincial was not unmindful of those who had borne the heat and burdens of the day. When he announced the members of

the Provincial Council, he named two honorary Councilors: two pioneers, Brother Stephen and Brother Bernardine. To Brother Bernardine this was a well-meant gesture, but to a man seventy-one years young it sounded the knell of doom.

Long before the death of Brother Dominic and long before the creation of the title of Honorary Councilor, Brother Bernardine had found something to do. This Golden Jubilarian who had received the habit on April 12, 1857, once again found peace of soul amidst humus and perennials and flower pots, the same as he had found it in the days following his departure from the seminary. It was Brother Isidore's wish that this septuagenarian spend his declining days in ease and comfort, but Brother Bernardine could not live without activity. By some sort of eminent domain, strictly on his own initiative, he assumed jurisdiction over the lawns around Mt. St. Joseph. To him work was no amusement adapted to the weak back of the gentleman farmer. He was more like one of Millais' peasants. Immediately after breakfast each morning he was in overalls. He had no use for make-shift arrangements. His was long range planning. As a part of this program of permanency he resorted to his great love, tunneling, and prepared a root cellar which would have done for a hermitage.⁵

As the years rolled by, he was a familiar figure on the lawns in front of the main building at the Mount. Some seemed to think that the inexhaustible was showing signs of exhaustion. Some even thought that they detected signs of lessened stamina, for they reported that at times in the late afternoon he actually paused for a moment's rest. I have seen him as he stood with both hands clasped on his long-handled shovel, seemingly surveying some distant spot. He would have scorned the suggestion that he cut down on his hours of work. He wanted no coddling.

Brothers not too well acquainted with Brother Bernardine might have thought that he was taciturn or sullen. To those who passed

⁵Brother Isidore delegated Brother Theodore to tell Brother Bernardine that plain lawns were more beautiful than lawns dotted with flower beds. To Brother Theodore also fell the task of discussing that root cellar "as big as a hermitage".

as he worked on flower bed or lawn, he gave at most a smile of recognition. The fact is that his observance of silence except at the stated periods for recreation would have done honor to a Trappist. At recreation he was conspicuous for his long stemmed pipe which through necessity he held at arm's length. He was so conspicuous that a set of bag pipes would not have attracted more attention.

Brother Bernardine's years at the Mount had one very special consolation. The Mount was his, since it had been through his efforts and through his prayers that the Congregation had acquired this property which in the course of the years was to become the central home of the Xaverians in the United States. Forty-two years previously, in 1875, when the Province had been set up, Brother Bernardine had been commissioned by Brother Alexius to find a suitable site for the novitiate which he planned to move from Louisville to Baltimore. On foot the searcher covered both sides of Wilkens Avenue and then both sides of Frederick Road from Catonsville down. One piece of property attracted him on Frederick Road where Maiden Choice Branch, also known as Bull Dog Creek, crossed the road through a culvert. It was "For Sale". The stone house on the property was and still is substantial. The grounds which were fairly large were close to the road, too close for the seclusion of a novitiate. Another place, the present site of the Mount took his breath. There was no indication that the place was for sale, but he turned from the road and walked down Grau's Lane. He eyed the residence, the land, the distance from the road, and said, "This is it". He did not know who owned the property, but he prayed: "Saint Joseph, obtain for us this site. If you come to our aid, in your honor shall be erected a statue." The property, known as "Seven Gates," was owned by Mrs. Emilia Lusby. Through the kindly assistance of a Passionist Father, Rev. Philip Birk, we acquired the house and the ten acre lot for \$10,000 which was about half the amount the late Mr. Lusby had paid for it four years previously. We acquired the property on April 8, 1876; the novitiate was blessed on Thanksgiving Day, November 26.

That promise to St. Joseph was a debt of honor. When the first building was erected, a statue of St. Joseph at Brother Bernardine's

earnest request, was placed high in a niche. In 1900, when a story was added to the novitiate wing, the statue was placed in an inconspicuous corner between the wing and the main building. Neither the statue which was gradually disintegrating nor its position where one saw it only by accident pleased. Brother Bernardine. To Brother Isidore he told the story of his promise to St. Joseph. He pleaded for a respectable statue. As a result, today we have that composition statue suitable for exposure to the elements, placed on the most conspicuous spot on the front lawn. Since 1900 it has stood there as a silent tribute to the great faith of a good man and a great saint.

Down to the end of his days our Cyrenian enjoyed splendid health. He was never absent from a community exercise. In late December 1911, he was anointed as a precautionary measure. Daily he appeared at Mass. On the morning of January 2, 1912, he did not appear. We knew that something was wrong. There was. He was beginning his last day on earth. On the following morning, while the community was at Mass, he died.

At the final obsequies, His Grace Bishop Corrigan, the auxiliary of Baltimore, presided and preached the eulogy. The Bishop knew Brother Bernardine from his days at St. Mary's. In the eulogy he stressed the fact that Brother Bernardine loved obedience and that his trouble at St. Mary's could be traced to the fact that the late departed could not understand how one could find it difficult to do what he had been commanded.

All that is mortal of Brother Bernardine rests at Bonnie Brae Cemetery, Baltimore. He spent fifty-five of his seventy-five years in the Congregation. He was the last of our pioneers; he was our last link with the Founder.

With his passing a new era had set in.

CYRENIAN NO. 8

Brother Joseph, C. F. X.

by

Brother Isadore, C.F.X.



Edited by Brothers Theodore and Aubert, (1945)

CYRENIAN NO. 8

HAVING COMPLETED the biographical sketches of the earliest pioneers, I feel impelled to add by way of aftermath, brief lives of those of our great men who as cuttings from other trees, were ingrafted to those stems that formed the Congregation in America.

Taking them in the order of their enrollment, the subject of this story comes first.

Michael Sullivan was born in Kanturk, County Cork, Ireland, September 27, 1832. His boyhood was that of an ordinary normal boy, a mixture of good and evil, the former predominating judging by the tree that resulted from the incline of the twig. As a boy he was even guilty once of a general fault of boys—he played truant. years afterwards when he was Director of Mount Saint Joseph's College, some twenty Brothers were enjoying recreation. Somehow the topic came on truancy and we asked that each confess honestly whether he was guilty of ever playing truant as a boy. Of the twenty, eighteen were guilty; the exceptions were Brothers Ignatius and Isidore. Brother Joseph, who was absent at first, came in later. We told him of the sand-trial and that each had confessed whether he was guilty of having played "hookey", and that without being insolent, we would like to know his stand on the question. Without hesitation, he replied, "Once, in Ireland when a circus came to town." Of course, such an answer caused great hilarity.

Mr. Sullivan as a young man came to America during the great immigration waves of 1840-1880. As he had a fair education in the business line, he obtained a position as assistant bookkeeper with the large industrial firm of D. Coleman & Company, Louisville, Kentucky. He often told us two stories of things that happened to him while he was employed by this company.

Being on one occasion puzzled with a compound-complex fraction,



he had recourse to the chief Bookkeeper. The gentleman discourteously turned in his swivel-chair and said, "Sir, I paid for my education." Mr. Sullivan went back to his desk and persevered till he had solved it. The other story he related by way of illustration how men of means look to minute points and how we as religious could learn the practice of poverty.

The president of the firm invited the officers of the firm, including the bookkeepers, to a dinner at his house. There were some twenty gentlemen at table. During the meal Mr. Coleman interrupted the general talk by begging their attention to something he observed just then. He noticed, he said, that a gentleman in cutting his meat bore on the knife in such a way that it caused dullness of the knife, whereas were he to hold the knife slightly slanted, it would help to keep it sharp. It is a very small matter, he continued, but in these very small matters lurks success.

The great Louisville and Nashville Railroad was under construction before the Civil War and Mr. Sullivan saw the opportunity to improve his condition and he accepted the office of procurator for the several hundred workmen constructing the road. It was his duty to canvass the rural neighborhood for provisions for this army and provide suitable lodgings for them.

We see here the wonderful designs of Providence of leading him to the great school of experience to enable him in later years continue the same duties in the society to which God called him.

We learn here that he was married to an estimable lady. Shortly after the marriage she died, and Mr. Sullivan never gave it a thought to contract another marriage but to devote his life to God and religion. Well may we use the words of that pagan Rhetorician Libanius when he learned that the youthful mother of St. John Chrysostom could never be induced to another marriage, turning towards his idolatrous hearers, he exclaimed: "O ye gods of Greece! What women among those Christians!"

Equally, if not more so, could in the case of Michael Sullivan, the

same words be applied substituting men for women.

Mr. Sullivan was an active member of St. John's parish only a few years previously organized. The little church on Jefferson Street was too small for the ever increasing congregation under the Rev. Lawrence Bax, and a lot on Walnut and Clay Streets was secured to remove the church thither. Great preparations were planned to make the laying of the cornerstone an event worthy of the Catholics of Louisville.

Mr. Sullivan, as one of the most prominent men of the parish, was chosen to act as chief marshal of the great parade. Having had little to do with horses and not being an expert horseman, he obtained a gentle horse from a livery stable and for several days rode out Preston Street where there were extensive fields called commons. Here he schooled himself to be worthy of the name of marshal. The great and solemn day for the procession came; religious societies from the various churches such as St. Boniface, Cathedral, St. Patrick's came; national societies such as Saarafield Rifles, Ancient Order of Hibernians joined the ranks. The societies formed, the marshal gave the command, the band struck up, the marshal's charger reared and struck out for the commons far out Preston Street. The procession kept on minus the marshal, the corner-stone was laid, the crowd dispersed and the marshal returned the horse.

Ecclesiastes said that "all is vanity..." "Most modem preachers say the same, or show it by their examples of true Christianity:

In short, all know, or very soon may know it; and in this scene of all-confused inanity by saint, by sage, by preacher and by poet, must I restrain me through the fear of strife, from holding up the nothingness of life?

- Byron: Don Juan

Michael Sullivan had a lucrative position, a bright future before him, hosts of friends, he lived an honest Christian life - but he was not happy.

In an impoverished double cottage near his home lived a religious community of ten men whose prime object was their self-sanctification and the raising and training of boys to become good Christians and good citizens by means of their teaching. He had seen in Ireland the Christian Brothers. These gentlemen, though same in intent and profession, differed in garb and name. He had observed them at St. John's Church leading the boys to divine services, he learned of their successes by the conversations of the people whose sons attended their school, and he began to formulate plans of the possibility of joining their ranks and to serve God more faithfully by becoming a religious .

Of the ten Brothers then living on Green Street only one, Brother Clement, was an Englishman; seven were Germans, and two Hollanders . And he an Irishman, how would he fit? Lacordaire, in one of his sermons remarked, "That religious of various nationalities, languages, customs, etc. should live in harmony and concord is the eighth wonder of this nineteenth century."

Shakespeare says,
"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

"How mean the order and perfection sought in the best product of the human thought compared to the great harmony that reigns In what the spirit of the world ordains." – Prior

These apparent obstacles did not hinder a character of Mr. Sullivan's type, and on March 17, 1861, he entered the community. What a happy coincidence, the month of March and the Feast of St. Joseph, two particular omens of final perseverance; even to this day, 1928, the 19th of March is one of our special days for postulants to receive the habit. The rule for postulate was waived in his case and on April 1, 1861 he was clothed in the livery of St. Francis Xavier and the name of Joseph given. The ceremony took place at St. John's Church. A certain Mr. Aloysius Carnes, a late convert, entered a few days after Mr. Sullivan and received the habit with Brother Joseph, taking the name of Augustine. In 1866, when St. Mary's Industrial

School opened he was sent along with Brother Paul but the trials were too great and he left as a novice shortly afterwards. Brother Joseph has the honor of being the first novice in America.

St. John's School was opened by the Brothers in 1860. Brother Clement and Brother Stephen were the first teachers.

When the parochial schools opened in August 1862, Brother Joseph was assigned to St. John's. He was welcomed by the pastor, Father Bax, and the parishioners who to the respect they held for him added now that of reverence. The younger element of St. John's were not of the gentlest sort. The majority came from outlying settlements and were as rough as their surroundings. The gentleness and patience of the teachers conquered their rude manners and very soon St. John's School acquired a good reputation.

From now on I tread firmer ground. I began to know him personally in 1866 and for twenty-five years we lived together under the same roof. Towards the 70's the influx to the Congregation was great especially among postulants, and as the duties were too great Brother Joseph was appointed as an assistant to Brother Stephen, the master of novices. Brother Joseph was in the midst of his first fervor and be it said to his great credit, he never deviated from it, consequently he was most anxious for us boys to follow his example. We had then at St. Xavier's fifty-seven members in a house to accommodate but forty. Necessity obliged the authorities to put two into each of the fourteen private rooms dividing the rather small rooms by a movable partition or fender. There was room for a bed and a washstand but putting on pantaloons one would have to stand on the bed. By luck or ill-luck Brother Isidore was put in the room with Brother Joseph. To whisper or to speak in the room was out of the question. I remember vividly the devotions practiced by Brother Joseph.

Among what I call devotional tortures he took with him to bed a bronze image of the Sacred Heart about six or eight inches high and a metal crucifix unusually large, the size many missionaries, especially the Passionists, wear when giving retreats.

To us Brother Joseph and Brother Stephen were living saints and we surely endeavored to make them so by trying their patience. The huddling together of so many in one house, not spreading out, were the greatest faults of the pre-provincial period. Want of confidence to select superiors for new missions seemed to be the main obstacle.

Twelve years elapsed before fledglings were considered strong enough and two Brothers left Louisville for Baltimore and six more before another band left the first settlement. Brother Paul headed the first, Brother Joseph the second of these exits.

In August 1872, Brother Joseph with Brothers Martin and Michael opened St. Patrick's School in Baltimore. The success the Brothers met at St. Mary's Industrial School induced Rev. John Gaitley to apply for Brothers for his school and after repeated petitioning succeeded. Success too crowned their efforts. Father Gaitley had a personal friend in Rev. Timothy O'Brien, pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Lowell, Massachusetts. Annually the reverend gentleman from the North visited his southern friend and in the course of conversations Father Gaitley eulogized his school and the principal of the same. By earnest pleas Father Gaitley with permission of Brother Alexius lately (1875) appointed provincial permitted Brother Joseph to leave St. Patrick's in Baltimore for St. Patrick's in Lowell in 1882 (Brothers Joseph, Eugene, Bonaventure).

Brother Joseph had tough Boys to deal with at the start in Louisville, he found them tougher at St. Patrick's in Baltimore and in the superlative degree in Lowell. He held forth there only one year when in 1883 he was called to take charge of Mt. St. Joseph's College. Owing to his ability and experience Brother Joseph was appointed first consular to Brother Provincial which office called for closer proximity and the following year 1884 the Provincial himself selected Mt. St. Joseph College as the 'headquarters of the province.

Brother Joseph was appointed Director of Mt. St. Joseph's College in August 1883. He held the position until his death, January 16, 1904.

Owing to the great scarcity of Brothers and especially for the office of novice master Brother Joseph was obliged to accept the dual office of director and master of novices. In the duties of the latter he was assisted by Brother Leonard. Besides he took upon himself other duties; he was procurator, bookkeeper for the college and province and directed the thousand and one minor sub-offices.

Mt. St. Joseph's College had in those days 1885-1900 a sort of tripartite government. Brother Isidore had charge of the educational department with strict limits. Brother Joseph had charge of the plant in general, including the novitiate. Brother Alexius, the Provincial, dominated the whole. To obtain any privilege such as taking a ball team outside the premises, to get accoutrements for any athletics, or permissions for little literary entertainments, was like going from Pilate to Herod, from Herod back to Pilate both fearing condemnation or permissions.

Brother Alexius unfortunately had too domineering a disposition and poor Brother Joseph, meekness and humility personified, stood humble and respectfully by absorbing religiously all blames. I recall dozens of instances in which I overstepped my bounds, where the blame should have fallen on me, but I was spared and the venom was cast upon Brother Joseph.

Brother Joseph was trained in the religious life by men who themselves were trained by the saintly founder; he received therefore, rules and the minutest customs from pristine sources, and he was solicitous that they be followed. In those days it was customary to have on Saturday evenings instead of spiritual reading, a spiritual conference something like a seminar. For that purpose with a great deal of labor he constructed a chart while still assistant novice master in Louisville, on which he tabulated the many and various subjects to be spoken of at these conferences. The subject was invariably opened by himself; then after some five minutes, he called upon this one and that one to give his views or points read up on that matter. The whole seminar was like pulling teeth, a shaking of the head was too frequently the response.

This beautiful and highly instructive procedure was unfortunately caught in the stream of time and lost in its maelstrom.

Another simple but pious custom he tried to earnestly resuscitate. He was taught and so were the early Xaverians a respectful attitude at the beginning of meditations. The first copies of our manual were written in them and the first edition of our printed books we read: "Let us throw ourselves..." To do this we were taught to move a step back and in a sort of swinging motion suit the action to the words. This could easily be done in Belgium where they have no pews but having pews this usage too fell into oblivion in our province. The Present manual has simply: "Act of Faith in the Presence of God."

A third simple act and surprisingly misunderstood by some of the best informed members. The old rule book had, "The Brothers must retire at the indication of the bell." This rule was deleted at the Tenth General Chapter in 1925. It was found altogether impracticable especially as the motherhouse of each of the Provinces had a boarding school in connection with the institution. But we are recording tradition and an explanation of this rule is in order; moreover, some members reputable by age and position had faulty ideas. Some thought it meant the bell that called for night prayers. In earlier times the Brothers after night prayers went to their rooms attended to nothing else without permission and retired as readily as possible. About five, the very latest fifteen minutes after, some one appointed rang a small hand bell and the lights were lowered, the majority extinguished. In the novitiate in Louisville Brother Stephen or Brother Joseph paraphrased the meditation for the next day till the tinkling of the bell.

Coming back to Brother Joseph in his days at Mt. St. Joseph's we see him taking a leading part in the principle events of the province. Appointed first consultor to Brother Provincial, the latter relied on him with the utmost confidence. Brother Joseph was one of the charter-members of St. Joseph College and again when it was re-chartered and Mount added to St. Joseph. He was a charter-member of St. John's Normal College, Danvers, Massachusetts, and Old Point Comfort College, Old Point Comfort, Virginia.

He frequently visited Washington and neighboring towns whenever he heard of the probability of another student. Before he died in 1904 the College had 125 boarders, an increase of 100 percent during his time of Directorship. Mt. St. Joseph's suffered annually from great weakness in staff members. Other schools were stripped to help newly acquired schools, but the Mount was laid bare, only a few old stumps left standing and with these are a few budding flowers. This seems to have been the annual trend of events and poor Brother Joseph would meekly bow to the wishes of his superior. He was close, very close but the revenue obliged him to be so. His charity in accepting pupils brought us often to the brink of penury. He was extremely abstemious, and with Spencer one should say:

His rawbone cheeks through penury and pine
Were shrunk into his jaws, as he did never dine.

This severe austerity no doubt hastened his steps to the grave. Again and again I remember him coming home after meals had been served he would satisfy himself munching dry bread so as not to trouble the cook. All protestations were of no avail. And his coming late was frequent as in the earlier days we had merely mule cars that passed the college every hour, later every half hour.

At the celebration of a Brother's Silver Jubilee, I asked Brother Joseph how he celebrated his; the ready reply was, "On that day I got the severest scolding in my religious life."

Till date, 1928, we have no one that was equal to him in keeping records or chronicles. To him we owe the greater part of our tradition. Wherever he had charge he recorded the minutest event and I have before me seven large account books of one hundred fifty-two pages each written by him. More than half of the stories contained in the eight CYRENIANS written so far were culled from his chronicles.

To keep a record in each house is not a rule but strongly advised by General Chapters, Provincial Chapters, by Brothers General by Brothers Provincial.

To Brother Joseph the wish of such authorities was a command which he followed with the greatest exactitude.

I copy this page from Brother Julian's MEN AND DEEDS, page 270-2.

On January 6, 1904 he became ill. The Doctor was summoned and pronounced it pneumonia. Other complications set in before the disease had spent itself, culminating in erysipelas. He was then seventy-two, and all hope was abandoned. To send him to a hospital was out of the question simply because he was Brother Joseph. To engage a lay-trained nurse was preposterous for the same reason, so the service of a Sister of the Bon Secours was enlisted. Would he have the Sister? No; she had to leave, and Brother Arcadius was in charge of him practically day and night. On the fifteenth, a change came for the worse. The Brothers were assembled to recite the prayers for the dying. Brother Joseph was conscious and joined in the responses. To all appearances, he calmly breathed his last. The bell was tolled; dispatches were sent; but he revived, and lived until the next morning, Saturday, the sixteenth of January.

Brother Joseph, shirking honors in life, had them paid to him in death. He, who would never allow distinctive marks at death, even to the Provincial, had them deservedly in his own case - one time when he had nothing to say. Cardinal Gibbons, who would not be in the city the day of the funeral, came out to the Mount to pay his respects to one whom he had revered as a simple religious. The reverend Rector of the Passionist Monastery, Father Charles Lang, offered the Monastery Church for the funeral. This was accepted as Brother Joseph was well known, and the chapel at the Mount would be too small.

Poor Brother Joseph! Would you have died easily had you known? Solemn Mass of Requiem was held at the church on the eighteenth, Father Charles, the celebrant; Fathers Cajetan and Florian, Deacon and Subdeacon. Many of the clergy of Baltimore were present, and the church was filled with friends from Baltimore and Washington. The eulogy, another departure from the principles of Brother

Joseph, was preached by the late Father Alphonsus, O.P., who concluded: "I esteem all men in charity; but before the religious who devotes his life to education, I bow my head in reverence, "and well may all who knew the grand old man, Brother Joseph, bow their heads in reverence at the mention of his hallowed name.

CYRENIAN NO. 9

Brother Isadore, C. F. X.

(WILLIAM MESSMER KUPPEL)

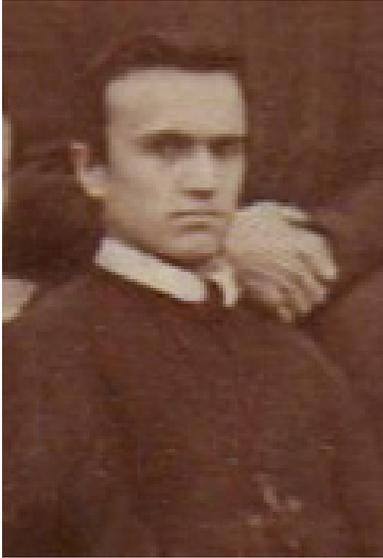
1853 - 1935



by

Brother Aubert, C.F.X.

CYRENIAN NO. 9



BROTHER ISADORE, C. F. X. (WILLIAM MESSMER KUPPEL), 1876.

- ENTERED THE CONGREGATION-1866
- ASSISTANT TO THE SUPERIOR GENERAL-1907-1931
- PROVINCIAL OF THE AMERICAN PROVINCE-1907-1925

ONE October evening in 1907 word spread through the community at Mount Saint Joseph's that the name of the new Provincial was to be announced within the hour. This rumor seemed to be more authentic than the usual rumor, for instructions soon followed that all were to assemble in the professed Brothers' library. This was certainly unusual in a community where professed and novices were never to speak except in rare cases of necessity, and where "necessity" was interpreted as something akin to, "Run for your life; the dam has broke."

Long before eight o'clock, the appointed hour, the community had assembled. Everybody was keyed up. Conversation was a blessed relief. All the barriers were down; novices buttonholed professed Brothers; "old men" grew confidential with aspirants. In the professed Brothers' library that night there was all the tenseness, the milling around, the buzz of excitement that mark the crowd waiting in front of Saint Peter's for a first glimpse of the new Pope.

By common consent the purpose in calling this extraordinary assembly must be the announcement of a new Provincial; the choice simply had to be either Brother James or Brother Isidore. These two gentlemen were the antithesis of each other: Brother James was a commanding figure; Brother Isidore, undistinguished in appearance. Brother James took to oratory on the slightest provocation; Brother Isidore, on very rare occasions. Brother James would have relied on his magic voice to master an angry mob; Brother Isidore would have resorted to sneezing powder. Brother James was the hidebound traditionalist; Brother Isidore, the gambling experimenter. Brother James was always "Brother James", Brother Isidore was just "Isidore." Brother James ruled, Brother Isidore led. Brother James and Brother Isidore were not rivals; they had a sincere mutual admiration; they were Xaverian Brothers first, last and always.

These evaluations, and others far more candid, were on everybody's tongue that October evening in long ago 1907. Everybody said what he had been thinking during the past month. Brother Dominic, the second Provincial, had died September 14; Brother Isadore had been acting Provincial; Brother John Chrysostom, the Superior General, had spent several weeks visiting the various communities in the American Province. In these days it was the custom, before a Provincial was named, to seek an opinion from those who had "emitted" the vow of stability. Brother Chrysostom had sought the opinions and now he was at the Mother House. Presumably he had kept his counsel to himself, but the community did not need his help. It was the consensus of opinion that the older men throughout the Province preferred Brother James but that the community at Mount Saint Joseph's to a man had voted for Brother Isadore.

This was the consensus of opinion, pure deduction, but it was very close to the facts. What the "experts" did not know that night was that Brother Isadore had met Brother John Chrysostom when he landed in New York, had explained to him certain personal considerations, and had secured a definite promise that he would not be named Provincial. The "speculators" did not know that the General on saying good-bye to Brother James in Louisville had told him that he was to be the next Provincial. (Brother James had confided this to Brother Julian.) Furthermore, the guessers did not know that during the past hour the General had been a very surprised man when Brother Theodore, one of the three scrutators, handed him the tally of the sixty-three votes cast. In spite of the natural wide scattering of votes Brother Isadore had fifteen votes more than Brother James. The General studied the sheet, read through the names of the choices with one and two votes, and then looked up at the scrutators, Brothers Bernardine, Walter, and Theodore. The die was cast: "Brother Isadore must be Provincial."

Eight o'clock sharp. In the doorway of the library stood Brother Isadore crying. The buzz of conversation ceased instantly. From some place someone made the announcement that Brother Isadore was the Provincial. The news meant nothing. Each one was asking himself, "What is he crying about?" He stepped into the library.

Almost with military precision the community drew up in two lines. Down the gauntlet he strode, still crying. Even the aspirants, on whom he doted, failed to draw a nod of recognition.

"Isadore crying... "Unprecedented."

The older members knew better. The youngsters knew only the Brother Isadore of "By Jacks" and "My dear young man," the slap on the back, the paternal arm over the shoulder. The elders knew more, "When Brother Joseph died, Isadore knelt at the bed and cried like a baby."

The assembly melted away. There was no celebrating. The professed members took up that never-ending pursuit of the elusive front page of the Sun-paper; Brother Theodore shepherded his novices upstairs to their quarters; Brother Alexander corralled his aspirants.

"The king is dead. Long live the king!"

II

The new Provincial was formally inducted into office on All Saints' Day, 1907, with Brother James assigned as the principal speaker. In his address he pledged his own loyalty and the loyalty of each member of the American Province. The new Provincial, as Brother Julian tells us, "outlined his field of endeavor, terming the first Provincial, Brother Alexius, the Gatherer and Financier; Brother Dominic, the Builder and Expander; while he would make it his chief purpose to attend to the intellectual wellbeing of the Brothers."

Brother Isadore's program was very definite. For the next eighteen years as Provincial he never for a moment allowed anything to interfere with the intellectual progress of the Brothers. He saw in his Provincial appointment the opportunity of carrying into effect on a grand scale the work he had been carrying on as an individual. For years he had been teaching the novices. This was a labor of love. As Prefect of Discipline and Prefect of Studies, his ordinary assignments at the Mount, he kept busy long after hours, but he always "made" time to teach the novices. He did more than teach; he fired group

after group with the ambition to go ahead and to get ahead.

During this same period, he had been the driving-force behind the community summer schools. For years he spent his vacation directing the summer school at St. John's Normal College. He was there to inspire, cajole, and instruct. Those were the days when he had learned of Longfellow's mountain climber who persisted in yodeling "Excelsior." That caught his fancy. He loved to declaim that one word "Excelsior," his enthusiasm blotting out his amateur acting.

Although this arch-enthusiast failed dismally in some respects, he succeeded admirably in developing a group of kindred enthusiasts who directed in the community houses during the school year the program of self-education.

But all this had been the work of one man; as Provincial he was in the driver's seat. To mix the figure, in carrying out his announced program he was forcing the Congregation in America to lift itself by its boot straps.

His first decision in matters educational was revolutionary. Aspirants who had been transferred from Saint John's in September, 1907, to make room for incoming students, were attending regular classes as a part of the Mount Saint Joseph's student body. The question was raised: "Will these aspirants study Latin?" Hitherto the study of Latin had been forbidden; it led straight to the priesthood. But Brother Isidore decided, "Sure, let them study Latin." In fifty seconds he had wiped out an inhibition of fifty years.

In this first year of his provincialate he discovered the existence of Harvard Summer School: Instantly he was all enthusiasm. "Within twenty-four hours he had gone over the list of Brothers, selected those whom he regarded as particularly ambitious, and notified them that they were "privileged" to attend this wonderful institution. Blissfully ignorant of college courses and none too sure of the content of high school curricula, he next assigned to this same Harvard the aspirants who lived around Boston. He assured them that he would make all the arrangements.

Came the day and the poor "kids" wandered around Harvard yard, found Sever Hall, filled out the required forms in triplicate, and made their way to the desk of Mr. Rand, director of the Harvard Summer School.

"Boys, I am sorry but there has been some misunderstanding. Brother Isidore wrote me about you. He has registered you for 'Latin for Teachers: Virgil, S 107.' With only one year of Latin, you would be handicapped. You had better forget that course. You are also registered in 'Greek for Beginners.' Try that. It will be difficult but not absolutely impossible."

The frightened aspirants did try Greek for Beginners and met as their instructor the acidulous Gulick, the gentleman who did the revision of White's Greek books. For associate searchers after the missing Sampa they had two ladies who spoke modern Greek well after having taught for fifteen years in an American College at Athens, two college students who had flunked Gulick's Course in Greek I, several teachers taking a hasty review, and one puzzled gentleman who assured Gulick that he looked to him for support in his contention with himself that Saint John Chrysostom was not always justified in his use of the optative.

One week with Gulick and the aspirants fled the classic confines of Harvard. When they reported to Mt. St. Joseph's that September, they gave the new Provincial a very enlightening report on Harvard Summer School. The professed members who had been "privileged" to attend substantiated the headline-report of the panicky aspirants.

'Excelsior!' The summer school program was not dropped, but the Provincial exercised greater caution - he stopped telling the men what they were to take. "In my eagerness to advance the Brothers I did some premature things, but all turned to our advantage."

His next step was to put the aspirants through high school. It was 1914, seven years after he took office, that his first aspirants actually finished a high school course. He had tried often, but invariably he would be forced to pull out the candidates and set them off on the course of teaching.

It was not until 1923, sixteen years after he took office, that he opened the Juniorate in Peabody. With the establishment of regular high school courses for the aspirants, the transition to college did not necessarily involve an I.Q. of 140 and up.

In 1915, the year after the first aspirants had finished high school, Brother Isidore was ready to go on. He began that year to send Brothers to Catholic University for a year in residence as graduate students. His playful fancy was that anybody could pick up the equivalent of an A. B. Why waste four years? "Excelsior!"

During all these years a great leavening process had been going on in Brother Isidore's "educational education." Beginning in 1907 he was to learn with amazement, although he learned very quickly, that high school courses called for a very definite and rather considerable amount of work each year in each subject. He found out that in Massachusetts they translated "subfreshman, first preparatory, second preparatory" as first year of high school, ninth grade, eighth grade.

And as for curricula content? In this so-called first year of high school, or freshman class, both teacher and pupil worked very hard to cover the amount of matter prescribed for English I, Algebra I, Latin I, Ancient History, and Religion. For years his boys as "sub-freshmen" at the Mount had covered those subjects, plus physics, bookkeeping, mechanical drawing, and German.

That day was past. He held no brief for the old days. He never winced when the course of studies at Mount Saint Joseph's, the school he loved so dearly, was revamped to meet the requirements of the nation-wide accepted content of high school curricula. The -course of studies of which he had been master from 1885 to 1907 was soon not even a memory.

In this educational program Brother Isidore built no Frankenstein. He was always the master. His self-education never stopped. He was eagerly anxious to learn. And learn he did, always keeping abreast of every forward move in the field of education. What somebody else knew and he did not know was a challenge.

From some place in his reading he picked up as his slogan: "A man's reach should exceed his grasp."

He was everlastingly reaching.

III

In *Men and Deeds* Brother Julian has told us: "Brother Isidore was a dreamer. Where another would see nothing, he saw possibilities. Often he was laughed at for his visions."

Beyond doubt Brother Isidore was the dreamer, yet he was very much the realist. His two natures were frequently in conflict. His actions were usually unpredictable. So much depended upon which side of his emotional nature ruled at a given moment. The emotionalist might be carried away by reading some tribute to the Code of Draco, but the realist broke loose in loud laughter when he learned of the chalk mark which one literal-minded superior had drawn on the floor of the community room as the line of demarcation between the professed members and the novices.

After he had passed the fifty-mark and after he had spent thirty-nine years as a subject, Brother Isidore became superior. At that age and after that training, his standards and attitudes had been fixed but our Cyrenian rebelled against standardization. Unconsciously he reacted to fixed notions; consciously he was a sort of Thomas Edison turned loose in a laboratory of the fixed observance.

For years he had been unofficially the spokesman of the men in the ranks. Assigned to the position of superior he was ill at ease. He was always a subject at heart. He wanted to mind his own business; he worried over his obligations of seeing that the rule was observed. He knew that he had to do it and do it he did, but never without inward qualms.

The business management of a large institution like Mount Saint Joseph's was pure Greek to him. As he put it: "I never bought a shoe string in my life." As superior of the house, and the de facto

business manager, he approved certain economies. The reaction was the usual one: "Isidore as superior will never do." His unpardonable economy was that of reducing the number of desserts served in the boys' dining-room on "big feast days."

"When Brother Joseph was here, we used to have thirty-two desserts."

To arrive at a total of "thirty-two" they must have considered each kind of cookie a different kind of dessert. Dessert in those days was either applesauce or prunes. But on a "big feast day," even under the planned economy of Brother Isidore, each boy found at his place at the table a soup plate heaped high with nuts, candy, cakes, a banana, an orange, an apple.

He laughed at every protest. His idea of dessert was a long, black radish shaved with a carpenter's plane into very thin slices, sprinkled generously with salt and pepper, and served at breakfast.

In 1907 he had completed three years as local superior. By that time he had gained an insight into many problems involved in human engineering. When the call came to assume the provincialship, he would much have preferred to retire to the ranks with his boyhood chums, Brother Philip and Brother Boniface. These two in 1907 were practically "passe"; the former had been named superior in 1878, the latter in 1882. The work had to go on: Xaverianism was very close to his heart. He took up the Cross.

An iconoclast all his life, he resisted as Provincial every attempt to eliminate that extra rosary on Sunday morning. "Tradition... We must preserve it." This traditionalist iconoclastically hailed all and sundry as Pat, Mike, James, and Philip with no regard for the elders' exhortations that the use of "Brother" was one of our customs. The daily May devotions at the Mount had to go on: "Devotion to our Lady is our heritage from the Pioneers." On the other hand he made the stories in the "Glories of Mary" the target of his good natured skepticism. He believed in miracles but not in those miracles. He believed so much in miracles that when they did not occur, he felt cheated.

To illustrate: one of the boys was drowned while skating in a pit on the north side of Frederick Avenue opposite the front gate of the Mount. When artificial respiration brought no results, the lifeless body was rushed into the main building. Death had come so suddenly that no one accepted it. There was always hope. But all hope faded away when nothing happened after a relic had been applied. Brother Isidore stood beside the corpse. He would not believe his eyes; the boy did not sit up. His romanticism curled up inside him for a moment when one of his brash aspirants whispered, "Alphonsus Liguori is dead."

As Provincial, Brother Isidore could be the soul of dignity especially when he donned his frock coat, but there were times when even this magic frock coat did not preserve his official dignity. Shortly after his appointment as Provincial, he made an official call on the Archbishop of Boston, who received him very graciously, put him and his companion at ease, praised the work of the Brothers, wished him God's blessing, and escorted the two Xaverians out of his office. The dignified Provincial, frock coat and all, had just finished putting on one rubber when he heard the Archbishop roar at the succeeding visitor. One rubber on, one rubber in his hand, Dignity bolted through the door and up Bay State Road. Brother Isidore could laugh at himself, and no one laughed louder than he as he described this scene in the various community houses. What he never knew was the reason for his companion's long delay in reaching Bay State Road; namely, the difficulty experienced in putting rubbers on his hands and then trying to pull gloves over his shoes.

The frock coat illustrates another point in Brother Isidore's conservatism: clothes. He would never wear a sack coat. He clung to the frock coat, the baggy trousers, and the Congress shoes. He would never wear a white sailor straw hat; for years he wore a black straw hat until some filial iconoclast presented him with a panama. When traveling he wore a dress shirt but only for warmth; in the summer it was usual to see his balbriggan undershirt showing at the side of his rabbi.

He was not enthusiastic over the big, baggy, home-made drawers,

tied at the ankles, and handed out to the novices with utter disregard for size, but he did crusade magnificently although vainly against these new-fangled “B. V. D’s.” In the early days of his provincialate he regularly devoted a conference during the week of the annual retreat to attacking this latest innovation. Of course, he never got the letters “B. V. D.” in their proper sequence but when the uproar died down, he sailed into these new-fangled union suits, “a cross between a pair of suspenders and a white handkerchief.” He had to say “white” because the official handkerchiefs for religious were still the big red or blue bandannas. High collars, too, used to stir up his ire: “Like a jackass sticking his head over a white-washed fence.”

Incidentally his conferences in the auditorium at Mt. St. Joseph’s during the week of retreat were always the high lights of the year. There, Provincial dignity went to the winds as he took the stump against the current evils. He never delivered a tirade ; he let fly his darts in the midst of laughter from the audience. It was supposedly good fun. At times he would drop the role of comedian and assume what he must have regarded as the tone and gesture of Peter the Hermit addressing the Christian princes assembled at Clermont. He would declaim in ringing tones: “Don’t ask for a change every year. You did not join the Xaverian Brothers to see the country. Don’t find fault with every superior. I could live with the devil for a year.”

He may have thought that he had worked his audience up to that emotional crisis where all would rise and shout, “God wills it,” but all he heard was loud laughter. Someone would whisper, “I’ve spent my year with the devil and I want a change.” “Then the laughter had spent itself, he would drop the Peter-the-Hermit pose; a big smile would spread over his face. He knew that everyone in the audience who had asked for a change would waylay him after the conference.

He loved to get a laugh and always at his own expense. Again and again he told stories of his difficulties with English. As a little boy in Louisville some native-borns asked him, “When did you come over?” The word he wanted began with an “m” but the answer he gave was: “I came over five minutes.” During his first days with the Brothers he had to explain the death of the community canary. He

did not know what caused the death. As he explained matters, “It would die before I eat mein supper.”

He had other difficulties than those of the English language. What was one to do when he had to have ink for the lesson in penmanship and the ink was frozen? He put the bottle of ink on the stove in the class room. It thawed, but the explosion splattered ink over everybody and everything.

The German language could be his downfall, too. On one of his trips to Europe he visited his native village where he met one of his cousins. Said he to her in his best German, “You have lost all your teeth.” She replied, “You have lost all your hair.” But he was not going to lose this battle of wits. Off his tongue came tripping, “Baboons don’t get bald.” He could not understand why his cousin laughed so long and so uproariously. The members of the American Province did laugh, and as long as they laughed he kept the joke in his repertory.

He could be so boyish, so naive, so care-free! He was only that until you found out that he had delivered one of those laughter-provoking conferences immediately after his return from answering a summons of the Apostolic Delegate who had read a list of charges prepared by a member of the community to support that worthy’s formal request that the Provincial be removed from office.

It wasn’t all beer and skittles; there were members of the community whose ideas of propriety were wholly at variance with those of our Grand Old Man. But he never worried. He had an iron will. During his eighteen years as Provincial he left his problems on the desk in his office. “When I cross that threshold to go to bed, I leave this office behind me. I have never lost sleep through worry.”

Brother Julian has already been quoted: “Where another would see nothing, he saw possibilities.” Brother Isidore was the ultimate in optimism. As for discovering possibilities he must have been gifted with telescopic vision or second sight. One day a Brother entered his office to ask for a change or to make some complaint. The Provincial

put down the letter he had been reading. He was all aglow. "By Jacks, here's improvement. This man has been a superior for two years and finally he has written me a letter without a single mistake in spelling."

The visiting Brother left and went his way rejoicing, I presume, that he had been found worthy. He had forgotten to make his request.

IV

"Esprit de corps" was Brother Isidore's favorite expression. He loved even the sound of the words. He loved to roll those "r's." To him "spirit" was everything. All his life he gave all that was in him to keep alive this spark of celestial fire.

He planned our educational program, set the machinery in motion, and stood by to keep it moving. Once started the movement soon acquired momentum to keep it rolling. But "esprit de corps" demanded attention for every hour of every day. Neglected it would wither and die.

For years he wrote every Brother in the Province a note of felicitation on his patronal feast. His famous "Blue Birds," so named from the color of the envelopes he used, kept flying over the Province. They were never routine performances; they were personal messages. Every Brother knew that his problems were known to the Provincial.

The purpose behind his annual publication of the "Ordo" and the "Xaveriana" was likewise to build up and foster morale. The individual came to know that he was not just one more Brother in some two-by-four community house; he was an integral part of the American Province.

A Provincial is a busy man, but Brother Isidore once again "made" time as only he could, to keep the Chronicles up to date. He planned better than he knew. Eventually these Chronicles were to supply the data for Men and Deeds. Historically-minded he saved everything for the archives which would be of assistance to the

historians of the future. His purpose is self-evident.

He would not let the American Province forget the past. It had a history to be proud of; it was founded by valiant souls who took up the Cross and would not lay it down. He found time to do eight biographical sketches: Brothers Philip, Paul, Bernardine, Hubert, Stanislaus, Francis Xavier, Stephen, and Joseph. These were his "Cyrenians." He pictured them as he knew them: human, stupid, scrupulous, valiant – even as you and I. The Cyrenians made us conscious of our heritage, and Brother Isidore kept feeding the flame of Xaverianism.

His idea of "esprit de corps" was not one circumscribed by the boundaries of the American Province. He realized that the Province is but part of a larger organization, the Xaverian Brothers. He was a Xaverian Brother and only incidentally assigned to the American Province. To keep that fact before the public he made it a practice to send the Brothers to visit the English and Belgian Provinces; he encouraged their Provincials to send visitors to America. For the same purpose he assigned some of the younger men to live at the Mother House; he invited the Europeans to exchange teachers with the American Province.

In 1914 as he watched the war clouds begin to take shape in Europe he feared for the lamp he had fed so long and so faithfully. In misery he relived the tragedy of the days of 1872 in Louisville, when the tiny community fought a miniature civil war as an aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War. He was a very much preoccupied man from the fateful June 28, 1914, when he read of the assassination at Sarajevo, until the following August 5th when he read the announcement that England had declared war on Germany.

That night he rose from table before the supper had been finished, rapped for order, and stood at his place waiting for absolute silence. He was ashy-pale. He was the embodiment of despair. He could have announced the approaching martyrdom of the whole community, and no one would have been surprised. He began to speak in sepulchral tones. What he told was the story of the days in Louisville when the arguments over the Franco-Prussian War split

the community and sent half of it to join the Franciscan Brothers. He did not say it, but everyone understood that this community tragedy was the opposite of “esprit de corps.” What he did say in very slow, distinct words was that as Provincial of the American Province he forbade each individual to discuss the war in community.

As a body we obeyed we never questioned his Americanism. We knew that he had been born in Germany; we also knew that he was as American as we were. We knew that he gloried in the Stars and Stripes; we knew that he would have died gladly in defense of it. The “esprit de corps” was such that Brother Julian forgetting the background wrote: “It should be said that during the Great War, the sentiment of the Brothers in this country before its entry in the war was naturally divided. Never a word of recrimination was heard.” This last sentence is a great tribute to a great body and to the apostle of its “esprit de corps.”

That spirit of Brother Isidore made itself felt in every house in every Province. When the American delegates to the General Chapter in 1937 arrived at the Mother-House in Bruges, they were welcomed with the usual hospitality and affection; Once they had made themselves at home, the Provincial of the Belgian Province, Brother Edmund, escorted them to a shady corner of the school yard and pointed to an ordinary settee, the kind seen in public parks. The settee was painted white. Said Brother Edmund: “We have had this bench painted white for Brother Isidore. This was his bench, and this is where he always sat. He will not come again; we shall miss him. Will you please honor us by using his bench?”

Twelve years out of office, two years dead, a member of another Province, at most an occasional visitor in life - he has left his memory as a living thing at the Mother House in Bruges.

V

The World War meant disturbed conditions for all the world. The after-the-war problems were more disturbing than those of the war. America endeavored “to return to normalcy,” but the return journey was rather difficult.

As head of the American Province Brother Isidore found himself floundering around, but he kept his head. Given time, he knew everything would right itself. He displayed his usual courage, accepted the inevitable, and did his work. When he prepared his report for the General Chapter to be held in Bruges in 1925, the years of peace were upon him.

The Revised Code of Canon Law, particularly the part applying to religious, was by this time well understood. For several years following 1918, the year the Code went into effect, there had been some confusion. The old ways were gone. Now it was major superiors and local superiors, terms of office and renewal of appointment but not to the same house, temporary vows and perpetual vows. All this and more. The vow of poverty had more temporary interpretations than the due-process clause in the Constitution of the United States and endless doctors arose in Israel as we prepared to write a new constitution and new book of rules to conform to the Code.

The responsible man, Brother Isidore, said the least and, of course, did the most. The third American Provincial kept his eye on the doughnut; he ignored the hole. He was proud of the work of the Xaverian Brothers and prouder to be their leader. He wrote: “I have next to God only the glory and success of the Congregation at heart. I am proud of having in 18 years increased the man-power 89 percent. In 1907 we had 200 members; in 1925 we have 323 living Xaverians, 56 died, making those who persevered 379. I had hoped to reach 100 percent.”

After the re-election of Brother Bernard as Superior General at the Chapter held in 1925, Brother Isidore returned to America as our first ex-Provincial. Brother Alexius and Brother Dominic had died in office. Brother Isidore had no delusions. He knew what the world thinks of ex-Provinceals or ex-anything. He was prepared to walk the valley of silence alone. What was he to do? At seventy-two he was not fit for the class room. At seventy-two he was not retiring. In his opinion he was no old man.

He did not have long to wait. The director of Saint Xavier's, Louisville, was desperately ill. Would Brother Isidore take over until the sick man recovered? He agreed instantly. He left Baltimore to replace temporarily a sick man; he arrived in Louisville to find him dead. He assumed charge at once. At seventy-two he was taking over the management of a very large community disrupted by the sudden death of the superior at the very beginning of a new school year.

His heart was great, his spirit of sacrifice greater, but at seventy-two he was unfitted for a local superiorship. He was very ill at ease. He was conscious of his inability to grasp the details; he had been away too long from actual school work. To add to his discomfiture he involved the Congregation in a real estate transaction calling for a payment of \$550,000. As he understood it, he had the oral approval of the Superior General to proceed to the purchase of the old Masonic Home as the site of a new Saint Xavier's. Once he had signed the papers, everybody and his brother told him that the place would never do, that he had been misled. The hue and cry bewildered him. When he learned that he did not have permission, at least that he had no evidence in writing to show that he had permission to spend \$550,000, he was glad to cry "quits." He offered no excuse; with his years of experience he admitted that he should have known better, that he should have had the permission in writing.

Fortunately his sixtieth anniversary as a member of the community occurred that summer. A conspiracy born out of love for him made every member of the Province anxious to raise his spirits. The celebrations were gala affairs. They had the desired effect: he put out of his mind Louisville and that \$550,000. The Diamond Jubilee celebration held at the novitiate in Old Point gave him back his old courage. "August 15, 1926: We had a glorious time. I had the pleasure to see eleven put on the livery of Saint Xavier, and fourteen make their temporary vows. The day was crowned by a unique reception given in my honor. Over 120 sat at table. Practically all the Brother Directors were present. Brother Gilbert surpassed and outstretched Brother Gilbert. His talk was thrill after thrill. His Holiness by his absence alone balked the process of canonization;

no devil's advocate could be found except my internal self. "Well, it's all over now. The next gathering will be at my funeral."

At his request he was assigned to Saint Mary's Industrial School. He felt that there among the little boys he could carry on. He wished to give to these under-privileged youngsters the benefit of his years of experience and the love of his great heart. Once again he visioned himself as an active soldier on the firing line, once again in the ranks of a common soldier. The worries of office would all be behind him.

He had another motive in asking to be assigned to Saint Mary's: "August 23, 1926 - I leave tomorrow for my new field, St. Mary's. To me the place has no dread, for I can be a Cyrenian to the young Brothers there. I have always loved the young just because I have felt their struggles and because I have sympathized with them. And for all this I have my earthly reward which, however, will not detract from my heavenly recompense."

He made no apologies for his supposed partiality to the younger members. All during his provincialate he had laughed off every complaint from elders. Good-naturedly he denied authorship of: "Good morning, young man. Where do you wish to go next year?"

After two years at St. Mary's Industrial School, he returned to Mt. Saint Joseph's, his home since 1885, and proceeded to work out a new routine. At seventy-five he asked for something to do. "December 2, 1928-Thank God I am enjoying my usual excellent health. I am quite at home but find work too easy compared to the years, 1885-1907, when I was busy 18 hours a day. During the other six I slept in the dormitory like a rabbit trying to keep one eye open. Now I teach three periods, one class with one boy only, and two periods with the Sisters from 2:30-4."

He was now practically retired. He who had made history in the American Province was to watch it being made. Some of the rapid changes left him breathless. In his nine years of retirement he was to live under three Provincials ; in the preceding sixty-

five years he had lived under two. In 1928 he was to see Brother Paul, his first assistant for many years, become Superior General, and to remember that in 1919 at the informal caucus held at Clapham College, London, prior to the Ninth General Chapter he had assured the English delegates that no American was to be considered, and that he had convinced them that there would be too many problems involving language, customs, food, manner of thought, and mode of living. But the greatest wonder of the old man's retirement was having lived to see Xaverian College in existence. "I remember the days when a Brother able to teach the eighth grade was looked upon as one worthy of respect." That wonder became joy unbounded when he witnessed the graduation of the first class from Catholic University and realized that others would follow in steady succession down the years. He was ready to cry, "Lord, dismiss Thy servant in peace."

In December, 1933, he wrote: "I am enjoying excellent health, (the optimist!) subject to the few little consequences of old age; such as, swollen ankles, sand-blindness in one eye (I can still see but indistinctly) which I have to cover when I read or write else I see double.

"The calves on my right leg are getting back to normal; for the last three years they were nineteen inches in circumference; now they are only fifteen. I did nothing to them. I showed them to several doctors, former boys here; they only laughed and said, 'Gee, what legs, made in Germany.'

"I rarely leave the house; my longest walk is over on the campus. On April 24 I passed my 80th line, and now for the goal."

In 1934 Brother Ambrose became Provincial. Here was one that Brother Isadore had accepted as an aspirant, clothed with the habit, admitted to the vows, and named superior. And now he was the new Provincial. The whole cycle had swung around. The succeeding generations were marching on. He was ready to go.

Unconcerned about himself, laughing at the predicaments brought

on by his swelling legs and disappearing voice, but alert to every interest of the Xaverian Brothers, he died at St. Agnes' Hospital, Baltimore, September 5, 1935, in his eighty-third year.

Brother Isidore has passed on. We shall never in the ordinary course of events see his like again. In the Congregation he moved, lived, and had his being. To us, his spiritual children, he has left a rich legacy. From some place in the Valhalla (he loved that word) of the Xaverian dead, he still declaims:

*To you from falling hands I throw
The torch: be yours to hold it high.*

CYRENIAN NO. 10

Brother Cajetan, C. F. X.

(CHARLES V ANTHOURNOUT)

1840 – 1911

This *Cyrenian* is devoted to Brother Cajetan, Charles Vanthournout. It is a reduction to writing of the story told by Brother Theodore to all and sundry these past thirty years. It contains very few direct quotations from Brother Theodore, because the whole story is a quotation from him unless otherwise indicated. He inspired the choice of subject, furnished the data – even the picture of Brother Cajetan, suggested the source of material, and read the copy page by page.



by

Brother Aubert, C.F.X.

Originally Published 1942



BROTHER CAJETAN, C.F.X. (1840 – 1911)

CYRENIAN NO. 10

CHARLES VANTHOURNOUT was born in Bruges, Belgium, June 22, 1840. Of his family we know from him that his father was a carpenter, “a joiner” he would say, who was in business for himself; that one of his sisters joined a very austere branch of the Franciscans; that there was more than rigorism in the Vanthournout’s there was art: a nephew played that famous carillon in the Bruges’ town hall. In 1856, when he was sixteen, Charles entered our Congregation. The exact date is important; it was November 24, the feast of St. John of the Cross, that St. John of whom the legend is that Christ appeared and said: “John, you have suffered much for me. “What shall I grant you?” and of whom the answer was: “Lord, to suffer and to be despised.” And that answer, “Lord, to suffer and be despised,” was the life-long prayer of Charles Vanthournout. Two years later on December 3, 1858, he received the habit and took the name of Cajetan, the first Cajetan having died April 23, 1857. To this new patron he became especially devoted, a devotion which he passed on to us when he compiled our manual of prayers; daily as a part of our mid-day prayers we honor as our patrons: St. Joseph, St. Xavier, and St. Cajetan.

Brother Cajetan’s first two years in the Congregation, 1856-1858, left their impress. Years later he wrote in “Fragments”: “To anyone who looked into the working of the Congregation as it stood in 1858, it soon became apparent that the religious training the Founder had hitherto given the Brothers, and which might have been enough for a community of secluded contemplatives, was inadequate to fit them as educators of youth. For two years the education of the Brothers had been overlooked, the studies left in the background, and as a natural consequence, talent arid energy lay in a semi-comatose condition.” This is very plain speaking, but Brother Cajetan was a candid soul, far more candid than tactful. He once told the Founder that he did not care for him. The Founder pointed out that conquest of one’s natural aversions was part of the struggle for perfection. The amusing part of Brother Cajetan’s

aversion is that its basis rested on his faith in phrenology: “I knew phrenology, and I knew from the color of his hair that he would not do.” In spite of the findings of phrenology he always insisted that the Founder was a Saint. “Some day he will be canonized.”

On August 15, 1860, Brother Cajetan pronounced his vows. He was among the first to pronounce their vows before the new superior general, Brother Vincent, who had assumed office, February 2, 1860. In the course of the next ten years he became one of the important men in the infant congregation. Still in his twenties he was superior of the Mother House with the Founder as one of his subjects. He was to learn an unforgettable lesson: the Founder taking a place as a member of the community even to the extent of doing his share in the preparation of the vegetables.

Brother Cajetan admired the business acumen of the new superior general. “Within his first six years in office I he had not only paid off the debt, but secured the property of the school in Rue Neuve and that of a farm. He had sold ‘Het Walletjes’ for two reasons: it was situated in a locality little likely to command the patronage of respectable families; during twenty years no fewer than forty Brothers had been carried off by sickness.”

After fifteen years at the Mother House, in 1871, when he was thirty-one, Brother Cajetan took charge of the Holy Trinity Orphanage, Mayfield, England. The chroniclers have not given us the details of what must have been classic encounters between the young man from Bruges and the Duchess of Leeds who had founded the orphanage. The best available source is the “Life of Mother Connelly.” Her society of the Holy Child Jesus conducted the girls’ part of the foundation. The Duchess is described as “a fearsome figure, grand, pious, peremptory, capricious.” She was a Caton, granddaughter of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and daughter of that Caton who laid out Carrollton in 1810 and Catonsville in 1811. The Duchess had ideas, and such ideas. Her sister, Lady Stafford, warned Mother Connelly to have nothing to do with that orphanage. “Your hair will turn gray before its time.” As her architect no one would do but Edward Welby Pugin, son of the great reviver

of Gothic architecture in England. “She liked her orphans to be pretty, and almost made good looks a condition of admittance. She reveled in the sound of “your Grace” except when she became the typical female looking for bargains. “Don’t call me ‘your Grace’ when we are out or I shall have to pay three times the right price for everything. Call me ‘My dear’ or ‘Mrs. Osborne’.” She insisted on doing the buying. Indignant at the Nuns’ sending out for two pennyworth of carraway seeds, she ordered a ton. “The salt she bought was built up into a wall and covered the whole of one side of the kitchen from the floor to the ceiling.” Of all this Brother Cajetan writes practically nothing in “Fragments.” In two unctuous paragraphs he glosses over his trying days at Mayfield. Years later in his conferences to his American novices he always smiled as he told of his bowing and scraping, and of his straining to squeeze in “yes, your Grace,” and “No, your Grace.”

Brother Bonaventure of the English Province remembers our Cyrenian: “In 1881, when as a boy of ten I arrived at Mayfield with my brother, Brother Cajetan was superior. There were six other Brothers and about thirty boys. Brother Cajetan was with us all the time: out walking, at meals, at prayers, in the dormitory. He did all he could to make us happy. He never spared himself. I recall vividly his giving up his dinner to a boy when the food was short.”

In 1874 the Duchess died. She did not provide sufficient endowment for her orphanages. For years it was a question on what day they would have to close. Finally, in 1884, ten years after the death of the Duchess, the Board of Managers arrived at a solution. The Nuns and the Brothers were authorized to conduct their separate orphanages as ordinary boarding schools, subject to the proviso: “The orphans elected to the original Foundations by the Trustees should be suitably maintained and educated.”

This decision was a great relief to both the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and to the Xaverian Brothers. Brother Cajetan was not destined to remain to enjoy the prospective prosperity. He was relegated to Bruges in 1886 when Holy Trinity Orphanage for Boys became Xaverian College.

A year later the Fourth General Chapter convened at Bruges. Brother Alexius, Provincial of the American Province, discussed the establishment of a novitiate in the United States. There was a novitiate, but this new novitiate was to be a thing apart. It was to have no connection with any other institution. He had acquired the land on Edmondson Avenue not far from Mt. St. Joseph, Baltimore, and he had the voted approval of the Provincial Chapter, 1883, that he proceed with the erection of the building. What he wanted before he committed himself to the building program was a man, tried and true, who could give his full time as novice master and who could also qualify as superior of a new foundation. He got his man. A month later Brother Joseph sat down and wrote in his famous log-book: "September 16, 1887. Arrived home from Europe in company with Brother Cajetan who is to act in future as assistant Provincial."

II

At forty-seven years of age our Cyrenian took over the training of the American novices. A less hardy soul would have quailed, but Brother Cajetan apparently never had a moment's misgiving. The assistant to the Provincial had been appointed novice master, and novice master he would be. He was a Belgian; he knew English-speaking people only from his experience at Mayfield; he replaced that pillar of the Congregation in America, Brother Joseph; he was to act as novice master in the house of which the former novice master was the superior. The courage to face this difficult assignment is best described in one of Brother Cajetan's favorite expressions: "Sir, you must have hair on your teeth!"

What impression did this newcomer make? Brother Paul Scanlon was one of the first to see him: "Sometime late at night I was roused out of a sound sleep by Brother Isidore. 'Joseph is back. He has the new novice master with him. Come down and see him.' Dressing hurriedly I followed Brother Isidore down stairs to the dining room. We both peeked in. There sat Brother Joseph eating a late supper and with him was the 'new' novice master. I thought he was the ugliest man I ever saw: those wrinkles and that voice."

Brother Theodore gives a more detailed picture: "Brother Cajetan was of medium height and very frail looking. He had a deep voice, dark brown hair, long nose, sharp black eyes. His appearance, his mannerisms, and even the tone of his voice indicated the ascetic."

Almost immediately Brother Cajetan made himself felt as the novice master. He was with the novices morning, noon, and night. He supervised prayer, work, study, and even sleep. He soon arranged with Brother Joseph for the separation of the novices from the professed, so that he could give them conferences and spiritual alms adapted to their special needs. He aimed at nothing less than perfect novices. He put them through an intensive study of the spiritual life. He went into a detailed study of the passions and of the means of conquering them. He labored incessantly to cultivate a spirit of prayer. He hammered home the obligations of the vows. He was very definite and very practical. To him authority was everything. "Obey you must." It was characteristic of him to dramatize a command by holding his right index finger on the side of his nose, and as he gave the command, to swing that right finger as a fencer swings his rapier into position for the word, "Go." He sought mortification, physical and mental; he ignored pain and discomfort; he set his novices a Spartan example. He was contemptuous of any seeking of one's ease: "Do not be a soft-soapy Sam!"

What impression did Brother Cajetan make on the novices? Excellent. They welcomed a full-time novice master: they had been on their own so much before. Was it strange having a Belgian dropped down in an American novitiate? Very. And stranger still was the man with whom they had to deal. He was strange in the sense that he was so different. He terrified most new arrivals with "Say the Our Father," "Say the Hail Mary." He greeted one newcomer in the parlor with, "Say the Apostles' Creed," and the candidate could not think of "I believe in God." He could do such things to the King's English as understood by these novices. When a name failed him, he fell back on "Brother Thing." When he was in good humor, he dismissed them from a private conference with, "Allez! Look sharp!" When he was provoked, he exploded with, "Go!" He could give such orders: "Do not telescope the prayers." "Do not sit on a warm chair,

sir; allow it first to cool.” “Turn that mirror round. I do not care to see my ugly face.”

Brother Cajetan has been gone from the old novitiate at Mount Saint Joseph for a long time, but his conferences on the spiritual way still remain as a sort of legacy to us: those meditations which we have each year as a part of our preparation for the feast of St. Francis Xavier are his. He wrote them for his novices. Brother Theodore says: “Each year when I hear those meditations all I have to do is close my eyes and once more I am back in the novitiate listening to that great master of the spiritual life.”

Hand in hand with Brother Cajetan’s efforts in establishing a properly organized novitiate went the herculean task of attempting to give those novices some sort of training in educational methods. He never knew how long they would remain with him. Brother Urban’s stay was rather typical: “I arrived in May; on July 24 I was in Louisville clothed in the habit and waiting to be assigned to a class room.” Brother Cajetan accepted these conditions as something beyond his control. He did what he could. He was practically the whole staff. He taught religion, English, and methodology preparing each lesson meticulously. In his presentation he featured a plan-book. In his teaching of English he followed the trend of the day. He made much of formal English grammar. He assigned poems for memory-work: “The Dove,” “Those Monks of Old,” “The Song of the Shirt,” “The Chieftain,” and, of course, “Excelsior.” This memory work served more than as an introduction to poetry and poetic forms. It served as a check on the novices’ use of their free time. It was Brother Cajetan’s practice to step up behind a novice who was gaping off into space, prod him in the ribs, and demand: “Recite for me!” The teaching of English by this gentleman from Bruges had its trying moments for the pupils. Brother Cajetan knew English grammar but he was never sure of his pronunciation. There was always that tendency to shift the accent. With rare abandon he would bang “develop” and “idiom” in the last syllable, he would make “melancholy” sound something like “lankily,” and his favorite “pedagogy” always took an accent on the “dag.” He could be bold, too. “Shillelagh” did not stop him; he made it rhyme with “ou la la.”

In all written assignments Brother Cajetan demanded neatness, order, method. Taking notes was his “sine qua non.” He reserved Wednesday and Saturday afternoons immediately after dinner for his special lectures on his favorite subject: Pe-dago-gy. His favorite authority was Dupanloup. As he held forth on Rewards and Punishments, How To Question, Character Training, etc., the novices took notes. They filled up note-book after notebook. Regularly the professor examined the notes and told the compilers what he thought of their attempts. He could be generous with praise. For a run of the mill performance he simply initialed the last page of notes with his “vf c” (vu frere Cajetan) which was regularly translated to mean “viewed by the fierce Cajetan.”

III

On September 2, 1891, Brother Cajetan bade good-bye to Baltimore and to the novitiate he had spent four years in organizing. Accompanied by two postulants and a traveling companion, Brother Damian, he set out for his second assignment in the American Province: the superiorship of St. John’s Normal College, Danvers, Mass., a foundation which existed in brick and mortar: it had no student body, no faculty, no program of studies; no means of support except the produce of its farm.

Within a few days of his arrival, Brother Cajetan had accepted the first applicant, the first and only one that year. To capitalize on this start he arranged to give the young man the habit. The American Province found itself with two novitiates; the one in Baltimore and this normal college. On Christmas morning, 1891, when the Rev. Thomas E. Power, the local pastor, said the first mass ever celebrated at St. John’s, this first applicant the young man from Danvers, received the habit and began his novitiate. Four novices who were teaching in nearby communities pronounced their vows. One of them was Brother Linus who thus began an association with St. John’s destined to last for over half a century.

The normal college knew all the inconveniences. It was two and a half miles away from the local church: a five-mile trip before

breakfast, four times a week, on foot, in the wagonette, in a pung in the dead of winter-was the prelude to just another day. The heating apparatus, modern for its day never gave satisfaction: this lack of satisfaction could be possibly attributed to the inexperienced firemen. The food was scanty and never properly prepared. Originally a Brother had acted as cook and housekeeper. After his departure the novices and aspirants took over, with the to-be-expected results. During his eleven years at St. John's Brother Cajetan was never able to find a satisfactory cook who would remain. He made novena after novena. As soon as he left, Miss Annie Keveney arrived to remain for the next forty years, first as cook and then as matron. The inconveniences did not bother our Cyrenian: he had endured them all his life.

The faculty of the normal college was Brother Cajetan and one assistant: successively Brothers Linus, Urban, and Benjamin. There was one class room: first, a corner of the basement, and then, the former kitchen on the first floor. The course of instruction embraced everything in the curriculum of a grammar school.

In 1896 the scope of the curriculum was increased to include other subjects. On November 2, the beloved Mr. John Mason began his long career at St. John's as a teacher of piano-forte. Brother Cajetan saw to it that all the aspirants and novices took piano lessons. Talent for music or a desire to take lessons did not enter into consideration. There was a strict injunction against skipping practice or wasting time by playing pieces not assigned. "We will have no ditties, please; we will have no ditties." Prior to the introduction of the study of instrumental music, Brother Cajetan had taken care of the department of vocal music. Brother Urban testifies to Brother Cajetan's prowess in this field: "Brother Cajetan taught the words of the hymns. The carrying of the melody depended on whoever had heard the tune before. Actually we had Vespers each Sunday done without organ accompaniment. Fortunately the chaplain could sing. When one of the novices had acquired a slight knowledge of the organ, Brother Cajetan told him: 'Next Sunday we must sing the "Iste Confessor."' It is very easy. It goes this way. Of course, we haven't the music but we'll get

along.' On the following Sunday Brother Cajetan and his choristers attempted 'Iste Confessor.' I don't think the Almighty ever heard such lugubrious notes as emanated from this choir master. The little organist quit pumping the organ as soon as he heard how far apart he and the vocalists had got. The soloist continued on undeterred through verse after verse, wildly gesticulating in an attempt to get the singers abreast of him. The melody of no two verses sounded similar. Even the chaplain failed on 'Iste Confessor.' He was a priest engaged in an act of public worship but only death could have stilled his laughter that day."

The year 1896 meant more than the introduction of music. It meant French. That was an event. This was so important that the entry appears in the log-book in Brother Cajetan's own hand-writing: "French added to the curriculum, Sept. 9." This is the only entry he ever made in his eleven years at the normal college. On that September 9, 1896, "Alexis Delatour" made his debut in the American Province, and for the past fifty years Alexis has been the password for all taught by Brother Cajetan. Who could forget: "In unison, please, after me. 'Premiere lecon. Le jeune Alexis Delatour etait un assez bon garçon, qui n'avait qu'un seul def aut, la paresse.' Very good. Now again. In unison. After me, please." And so, class after class took up with "The Robertsonian Method of Teaching French." It was great fun. Funnier still was the demonstration of progress- Each student was required to take his turn and read in French at breakfast "The Imitation of Christ." The late Brother Fabian excelled in this. He always read the two pages he had memorized. Brother Cajetan was enthused over the progress of these boys, particularly their progress in French. He scorned the Philistines like Brother Cyprian who asked: "Do you think these boys know what they are reading?" And that after Brother Fabian had given his usual excellent rendition!

The aspirants went to school twelve months a year but they could not go twenty-four hours a day. The head of the normal college had to keep them busy in their so-called "free time." There was that "steaming game of baseball," those long walks on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons-in a body and two' by two, those seasonal

variations: either skating on Beaver Brook or swimming in the Ipswich River. Brother Cajetan insisted on swimming until a near-drowning chilled his ardor. This swimming was a test of endurance: a six mile round trip over those killing grades of the Newburyport turnpike. It could have been preliminary training for that Kneip cure in which he had such faith. The Kneip cure! Soak yourself in a bath tub full of ice-cold water, soak a sheet in the same ice-cold water, then wrap yourself in the sheet, and climb into bed. Your survival was problematical.

The religious formation was exclusively the work of Brother Cajetan. For the formal conferences he used the chapel. He stood in the sanctuary with a prie-dieu in front of him, his right index finger hooked in the second button-hole of his habit, the next two fingers, webbed to the first joint, focusing the attention of all. At times he grew so emotional that tears streamed down his corrugated cheeks. The work of formation was not limited to these formal conferences. He also gave individual conferences in the privacy of his office. He expected to find the application of his conferences in the everyday happenings of the little community. He was ever on the alert for a breach of religious discipline. He corrected on the spot. His corrections left no bruised feelings. His charges understood him, and he in his own way understood them. In spite of his abrupt way he never lost the human touch. The aspirants of those days still recall with a kindly feeling the memory of the old man doling out cookies to them as they bent low over those hated weeds in the main driveway at St. John's. He could on short notice work himself up into a fever of excitement. Once he was so carried away with his talk on that "steaming game of baseball" that he handed out a hundred-dollar bill as the price of a baseball.

IV

There is another side to the picture of life at St. John's Normal College in the early days. Brother Urban touches on it in this fashion: "With the adults of the Congregation Brother Cajetan was not successful. His ideals, or rather his manner of presenting them, did not appeal. There was in his make-up no unbending. He was

tenacious of the authority vested in him."

Brother Cajetan was unpopular with the adult members, and this unpopularity had its beginning in 1892, the very first year that the professed members gathered at St. John's for their annual retreat. The visitors objected to this Belgian's idea of religious discipline, particularly to his regulations regarding smoking. There was to be no smoking during the week of retreat: such indulgence would dis-edify the aspirants. In subsequent years the prohibition was interpreted to mean no smoking except at the prescribed time and place. Brother Cajetan did the prescribing. To remove possible temptations he made it a practice at one time to gather all the pipes shortly after the morning smoke. With his concept of authority, he could not conceive of the existence of a second pipe. But exist it did. The consequent subterfuges, like climbing a tree to avoid him, were highly successful; but their success did not add to Brother Cajetan's prestige. The old fellow could be fooled.

In addition to his regulation regarding smoking, Brother Cajetan also laid down "ground rules." Passing certain limits put one out of bounds. A blue gate opposite the present barn was the barrier marking one out of bounds, but for the smokers it was a place of pilgrimage. The "blue gate" always calls for the story of the late Brother Alphonse. Both he and Brother Cajetan had voices with full organ effects. Their famous passage at arms went something like this:

"Brother Cajetan, I am going to the blue gate." "You are?"

"Yes, Brother."

"Why do you tell me that?"

"So as to get permission."

"You did not ask for permission."

"May I?"

"You may, my dear Brother. Delight in asking permission. It will lead to God. The obedience of the children committed to your care will be the temporal reward. This, my dear good Brother, is in your Book of Advice. Go!"

Living conditions at the normal college did not add to the peace of mind of the professed members. They slept four or five to a room on the top floor of the present Administration Building, old Porphyry Hall. They ate in the cellar. They washed the dishes. They helped out with the farm work. And with all this they were theoretically on vacation.

Gradually there grew up opposition to Brother Cajetan and to all that Brother Cajetan stood for, the novitiate at Danvers. The one at Mt. St. Joseph was the one, and one was plenty. The defections of the products of St. John's were another cause of complaint. "Put an American in there, and things will be different." And this pedagogy. "Fiddlesticks. Out with it. Forget it."

Brother Vincent, the second superior general, was relieved of office in 1805. With his passing went the appointment of Brother Cajetan as assistant to the Provincial. The new superior was Brother John Chrysostom whom Brother Cajetan knew from Mayfield as that funny, funny Irishman who could keep one laughing. In 1900 Brother Alexius died. Brother Dominic succeeded him. On his first visit to St. John's, four days after he took office, he was stirred by the poverty of the place. He pitied Brother Cajetan. The exact purpose of St. John's puzzled him. Brother Benjamin who was assisting Brother Cajetan at this time tells the story of Brother Dominic's bewilderment as he got it from Brother Isidore: "As soon as Brother Dominic got back from the North, he came over to the Mount. At once he started on St. John's. What kind of place is that normal college? I go there. I ring the bell. Nobody answers. I walk in. I hear some talking. I follow the sound. I walk into a class room. I find a handful of boys, all ages and sizes, and a little Brother teaching them. What kind of a place is that?"

In the following August Brother Cajetan was reassigned to the Belgian Province. Before he left St. John's the Brothers of the summer school arranged a farewell dinner - Brother Isidore was the speaker. He was in great form. He spoke glowingly of Brother Cajetan's fifteen years in America, went into details of what he had accomplished, used that "look around and" "See his monument," and

worked himself up into one of his characteristic anti-climaxes in which he dwelt on Brother Cajetan's going home to Bruges to rest his bones beside the Founder. During this speech Brother Cajetan cried and cried. He really loved America - The honor involved in resting in death beside the Founder had at that moment no appeal. He wanted America. He was depressed and remained depressed. He sailed for Europe a few days later. The fifteen-year man was gone: fifteen years in Bruges, fifteen years in England, fifteen years in America. A few days later his successor wrote: "August 15, 1901. Brother Bernardine was placed as Superior at St. John's Normal College in place of Reverend Brother Cajetan who had been called to Europe for the good of his health which was broken down from the long burden it had borne here for ten long years."

V

The fast and sudden uprooting of Brother Cajetan, in the ordinary course of events, should have written "finis" to his days among us, but such was not to be, and in this our Cyrenian had a unique experience even for him. Before he had time to grow acquainted again in his native Bruges with the cobble stones, the tiled roofs, the persistent ringing of the carillon every fifteen minutes, he was back in the United States. Brother Dominic had cabled for him, September 19. He arrived at Mt. St. Joseph, October 3.

For a time after his return to us Brother Cajetan was on his own. His health was none too good. He coughed, as he always had, incessantly. He was conscious of his heart. Years before he had startled Brother Urban with: "My dear Brother, I observe that the beat of my heart is irregular. If I do not appear for morning prayers, you will know that I have passed away in the night." He busied himself cataloging books in the Professed Brothers' library. He also did some writing. His "Fragments from the History of the Xaverian Brothers," a tiny sixty-six page booklet, has made debtors of all who delve into the history of our Congregation. All in all he was pretty much of a fifth wheel, but no one knew it better than he. Given the opportunity he could flash his old form. One retreat Sunday he filled in for Brother Joseph. Several of those making the retreat were

on the sick list; they felt the cold hand of death. Brother Cajetan was as sick as they but he would give the conference. For his subject he chose: "Abandonment (accent on the 'don') of One's Self to the Will of God and Conformity in Advance as to the Time, the Manner, and the Place of One's Death." The effect on the sick can well be imagined; even the sickest of them felt the warm surge of new life when Brother Joseph returned unexpectedly at noon.

After all those thirty years spent in the seat of authority Brother Cajetan had to exercise some show of the right to command. For his vassal he chose Harry Brown, porter at the Mount. He thought nothing of: "Mr. Brown, the parlor needs dusting." Harry resented this assumption of authority. He took his orders from Brother Joseph. There was friction which smacked of rank insubordination. Suddenly all misunderstanding melted away. One day Brother Cajetan appeared at the side door where Harry stood guard. He glared at Harry; Harry glared back. He shouted at Harry: "Mr. Brown, you will, please, go fetch me a pitcher of water." For some unknown reason Harry felt especially honored. He was back in a moment from the pump with the water sloshing over him and the surrounding country-side. He was all smiles. Before he handed the pitcher and what was left of the water to Brother Cajetan, he said quite enigmatically: "It takes me and you to run this place." Brother Cajetan beamed all over. A great friendship was born. Brother Cajetan had seen the light; he and Harry were of great importance only in their own minds.

Eventually a job was made for him. He was to supervise the novices teaching at St. Mary's Industrial School. At last he was in his element. He visited the classrooms, gave conferences to the teachers, and demonstrated model lessons. As a supervisor he was in his element but he was not a success. Times had changed. He was not the superior. His exercise of authority did not sit well with these novice-teachers. His pedagogy and methodology did not appeal. It was foreign stuff. It stood for regimentation, syllabi, plan book. The novices were more impressed by the technique of Brother Isidore who usually strode into a classroom with a great show of dignity, then smote the nearest hack to the accompaniment of "My dear

young man.' set up a great din, and worked himself and the whole class into a welter of excitement. Brother Cajetan's approach was just as studied but less theatric: the quick, light step; the professional aloofness; the proper impedimenta of books; the due regard for the dignity of the man contained in the child.

In September, 1904, Brother Cajetan was named superior of the new foundation at Elm Grove, West Virginia. This was to be another St. Mary's Industrial School on a small scale. When Brother Cajetan arrived, the place was not ready. He had to do without more than he had done without at Bruges, Mayfield, or Danvers. For a time he and his associates were dependent for their meals on the charity of some nearby Nuns. Things moved to a head rapidly. Brother Cajetan was relieved of his superiorship in three months. He was once more on the retired list.

In 1906 Brother Ignatius who was superior of St. Mary's, Norfolk, Virginia, asked for him. Brother Ignatius had been one of his novices. He wanted to shield him from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. When Brother Cajetan arrived in Norfolk, he went from class to class giving model lessons. He was ill at ease; something had snapped. The old fire and enthusiasm were gone. He was no longer the great teacher in Israel. Finally about Easter he went back to Belgium, went home to die. In Bruges he was a stranger after thirty-five years' absence. He was a novelty, too. He wore American trousers that showed under his habit in a house where all wore knee-length ones. He was assigned to a study hall used by the English boys. It was too much for him. He made a very poor impression. Neither the fog-horn voice, the duelist gesture as he swung his right index finger from the side of his nose, nor "My dear young men," silenced these "chaps." He moved out of this trying ordeal. In 1910 when his assistant at St. John's Normal College, Brother Benjamin, called on him, he was in charge of a poor school at Zedelghem where many of the boys came to school in their bare feet.

On February 19, 1911, our Cyrenian died at Houthoult, died alone in his chair while the community was at Vespers. Even in

death he went his way alone. All that is mortal of him lies in the little cemetery at Thourout. The little lot that contains the mortal remains of five of "Ours" is pathetically poor in contrast with that well-kept lot of "Ours" in Bruges. In death as in life Brother Cajetan missed out. He should be with the Founder and the Pioneers, but he is not-bodily. After all, perhaps, Thourout is the ideal resting place for Brother Cajetan: in death he has on his left the normal school; on his right, the Xaverian novitiate and house of studies. In life the normal school, the novitiate, and the house of studies were his chief concern. May God rest him!

CYRENIAN NO. 11

Brother Sulpicius, C. F. X.

(NICHOLAS CHARLES CROSS)



by

Brother Aubert, C.F.X.

Originally Published 1943

The material for this Cyrenian was gathered at different times and in various places. A few Brothers have related some of the community instances. Most of it, however, was related by the subject of the Cyrenian, during the years it was my happy privilege to live and work with him at St. Joseph, Bardstown. Down to the cave, converted by him into a Grotto of Lourdes, we frequently strolled. It was at the Grotto, over a period of years that he told me much of his early life and later experiences. To the late Very Rev. George Lyons, former supervisor of schools in the Archdiocese of Boston, we are indebted for the information concerning his work at St. Joseph, Somerville, and the part he took in the organization of the archdiocesan educational association and conferences. As a guest of Brother Sulpicius, Father Lyons spent some time at Bardstown during the summer weeks of 1912.

CYRENIAN NO. 11

THE LATE Rt. Rev. Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, convert, novelist lecturer, and commentator once remarked to Father Watt as the two were lunching leisurely at the Hare Street, Buntingford, Herts, English home of the former - "One of my almost continual surprises is to find so many great and accomplished souls secluded within Catholic cloistered walls, practically unknown to all except to the immediate community and often really unknown to those within the enclosure."

The observation of the celebrated Monsignor seems particularly applicable to Brother Sulpicius, C.F.X., who died at St. Joseph Juniorate, Oak Hill, Peabody, Massachusetts, June 9, 1931. Surely, the soul of Brother Sulpicius was great and accomplished; certainly, he was really unknown to many of his confreres with whom he lived and labored in the interest of catholic youth for a little more than forty-two years.

Brother Sulpicius, C.F.X. (Nicholas Charles Cross) was born in Sandusky, Ohio, May 10, 1868. The city of Sandusky, noted as an industrial center, extends for several miles along the shores of Lake Erie and broadens toward the rolling inlands of cultivated fruit orchards and abundantly yielding vineyards. Its wide shaded streets, numerous parks, and proximity to Cedar Point and Put-in-Bay have made Sandusky a favorite summer residential city.

Baptized in the Church of the Holy Angels, Sandusky, Charles Cross entered the parish school at the age of six. The school at that time was conducted by the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, a group of pious women, living in community, but without a distinctive habit or vows, and devoting their lives to elementary school teaching and social service work in the Diocese of Cleveland, of which the city of Sandusky was formerly a part.



BROTHER SULPICIOUS, C.F.X.

The Crosses were an exemplary Catholic family. The mother was a convert and like most convert mothers, she too, was exceptionally solicitous about the Catholic welfare and education of her growing family of four boys and two girls.

The catechetical lesson she heard each morning before the children left for school. • Each evening she assembled the family for reading from the Scriptures and how faithfully this custom was observed by the family can be gleaned from the following instance. One day, Charles had accompanied a group of young people of Holy Angels Parish on an outing to Put-in-Bay. It was late evening when he returned home. Tired from the outing, he immediately went to bed after short night prayers. Sometime after midnight he was awakened from a heavy sleep. Half awake and somewhat frightened he sat up in bed. Suddenly it dawned upon him that he had not read the customary daily chapter from the Scriptures. Without hesitation, he jumped out of bed, tip-toed into his mother's bedroom, took the Bible from the chiffonier, returned to his room and read a scriptural chapter before returning to bed.

At an early age Charles was taught the Mass prayers and at eight years of age he was an altar boy in the Church of the Holy Angels. The Rt. Rev. Monsignor Edward Graham, LL.D., for many years pastor of the Church, fostered various parish activities and features among which were social service work and semi-weekly catechetical instruction - for the youth of the parish who were attending the public high schools. Quite readily did Charles, himself a high school boy, respond to the request of Monsignor Graham when the latter asked for volunteers • to assist in organizing' catechetical classes. With an exceptional knowledge of Holy Scripture and Christian Doctrine, young Charles was particularly well fitted to answer the call of his pastor and during a period of two years, he assisted Monsignor Graham as catechist and instructor to groups of children and youth of parochial and high school ages. At the same time, he was a leader of the young Men's Club of Holy Angels Parish.

At seventeen years of age 'Charles began to think of his future. What would be his life work? How could he best fit into a sphere of action

that would contribute to his own salvation and assist his fellow men to attain the end for which all men are created? We find that it was rather difficult for him to determine his life work. His father and two older brothers had been employee of the New York Central Railroad Company for many years. They were holding responsible positions with the company and they were contributing much to further the interest and growth of that great railroad system in Northern Ohio.

After being graduated from high school, Charles remained at home for a year. As yet he was undecided just what course to pursue. He had thought of continuing his education at some college or university. The thought of a career had claimed his considerations for some time. In order to wait before determining his future definitely, he entered the office of the New York Central Railroad at Sandusky and during the period of a year or so, he worked under the supervision of one of his brothers. He proved to be a most efficient office assistant and his future seemed definitely determined. Success marked his endeavors and advancement to a more responsible position was already being contemplated by the railroad officials.

True to his character, young Charles said little, but thought much and considered seriously. After a busy day in the railroad office, he would spend an hour before the Blessed Sacrament in Holy Angels Church. We have no doubt that the hour was passed by pouring out devotional sentiments, of a lively faith and a loving adoration in the Presence of his Eucharistic Lord. We can readily believe that his closing prayer was an earnest plea to the Sacred Heart for enlightenment relative to his vocation and his life work.

God directs his chosen souls by various ways and through peculiar circumstances. Perhaps no two souls-elect are directed through the same channels of inspiration and grace. It is certain that when the inspiration came young Charles was ready to answer its call most generously.

One evening he called at Holy Angels rectory at the request of his

pastor. While waiting for the Monsignor, young Charles passed the time by reading a booklet entitled "A Xaverian Brother" which he had noticed on the table as he entered the reception room. After a few minutes conference departure with his pastor, he rose to depart. However, before his departure, he asked permission to take the booklet with him.

"Certainly," responded the Monsignor. "By the way, it might be well for you to consider the contents of the booklet well." These words of Monsignor Graham were the inspiration - they were the promptings of grace of a religious vocation for young Charles. Before retiring for the night, he read the booklet through several times. The matter was favorably presented. A detailed explanation of the life of a Xaverian Brother was clearly outlined and that same evening he resolved to waste no time. He felt positively sure that he was called to be a teaching Brother in the Congregation of St. Francis Xavier. He wrote to the Provincial of the Brothers on the following day and after a few weeks' correspondence, Charles resigned his position with the New York Central Railroad, bade an informal farewell to his home folk and left for Baltimore, where he entered the novitiate of the Xaverian Brothers on May 3, 1889, a few days before his twenty-first birthday. He was invested in the habit and received the name of Brother Sulpicius on the following July 13, and on July 11, 1891, he vowed his life to God according to the Rule and Constitutions of the Brothers of St. Francis Xavier.

Brother Sulpicius was first missioned at St. Xavier Institute, Louisville, located at that time on the present site of Loew's Theatre; He always considered himself particularly fortunate and favored that he was designated to begin his career as a religious teacher in Louisville.

"Wasn't I fortunate," he used to say, "to be sent to Louisville directly from the novitiate. At St. Xavier Institute, associated with pioneer Brothers who had been among the first Companions of the venerated Founder, and trained and molded by him as he particularly wanted his Brothers trained and molded for their work as religious teachers."

We can better appreciate this sentiment of Brother Sulpicius if we recall that St. Xavier, Louisville, is the cradle of Xaverianism in America, and that among the pioneers and first members of the Congregation in America there was a conviction, held almost sacred, "That one is not a full-fledged Xaverian unless he has been stationed at some time at St. Xavier."

From the first day he entered the class room until his death, he was the accomplished religious teacher. Older members of St. Xavier Alumni still remember him as "the religious through and through and always the masterful teacher." Some of Louisville's leading citizens were under his direction for he taught a class rank with the first year high of present day. Boys of that age are particularly impressionable; they seldom forget what happens and often the basic principles of their characters are solidified during the first year high school period.

Apart from school routine, Brother Sulpicius found time for extra-curricular activities. Upon his invitation, boys of his class met with him on Wednesday evenings and on Sunday afternoons for book reviews and discussions: As the St. Xavier library at that time numbered only a few volumes, the initiative teacher called at the city rectories for periodicals and books which had been shelved by the pastors. Even today a browse through St. Xavier library will find, occasionally, a book bearing the signature of a former Louisville pastor with an appended note - Presented to St. Xavier Library, 1895.

Around 1890, the Brothers were in charge of the senior grammar grades in many of Louisville's parochial schools. These charges entailed extra duties on Sunday mornings for there were altar boys to direct and catechetical classes to teach. All the Brothers lived at St Xavier Institute and each morning those teaching in parishes left the Institute in groups of two's or three's, for their respective schools. The Brothers teaching at the Institute would frequently accompany their confreres on Sunday mornings and assist the regular teachers in the discharge of their Sunday duties. From 1895 until 1900, Brother Sulpicius was the Sunday assistant at St. Patrick's. From 1900 until 1902, he assisted at the Cathedral. At the latter place, he

was placed in charge of the altar boys and the sanctuary ceremonies. Bishop William G. McCloskey, then ordinary of the diocese and a former rector of the American College, Rome, was punctilious about rubrics. The Bishop liked the ceremonies of the Church, and whenever possible, he pontificated with splendor and rubrical exactness. So well directed were the altar boys and so uniformly and properly were the ceremonies conducted that when any of the priestly officers of the Mass requested information about their duties the Bishop would invariably answer, "Ask Brother Sulpicius."

So great was the confidence placed in him by the Bishop and Cathedral clergy that for several months the Brother Provincial hesitated about assigning him to another mission although he needed his services elsewhere. Finally, the announcement of his removal was made, and, as was expected, the Bishop requested that the change be reconsidered. While the Brother Provincial was considerate, he did not intend to change his mind about the new appointment. He waited several weeks and then informed the Bishop that the new appointment was effective at once. The Bishop reluctantly withdrew his request. Calling Brother Sulpicius to his Brook Street residence, the Bishop presented him with a medal, bearing on one side the seal of the Diocese of Louisville; on the reverse side was the coat-of-arms of the Bishop. Until the day of his death, Brother Sulpicius kept the medal as one of his few treasured possessions.

TO WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA

The Provincial, Brother Dominic, appointed Brother Sulpicius to the Cathedral High School, Wheeling, August, 1902. At the Cathedral school he was made director of the high school department. This was an important assignment for, previous to his going to Wheeling, the Brothers were in charge of the Cathedral grammar grades, but only a two year high school course had been maintained by Bishop Donahue, at that time ordinary of the Wheeling Diocese, requested that a course equivalent to a complete high school curriculum should be introduced. To assume charge of the completed schedule was Brother Sulpicius' special mission to Wheeling. While the graded four years of high school and

departmental system of teaching did not become realities until some ten or twelve years later, the high school, as early as 1903, met the requirements of the state board of education, and the Cathedral High-graduates were admitted to the state university without examinations.

Brother Sulpicius remained at the Cathedral school only two years. Again the Provincial had another important office to fill. Although his time in Wheeling was brief, his memory is still vivid in the minds of his former Wheeling boys: Upon learning of his death in June, 1931, his former pupils assembled at the Cathedral for a Solemn High Mass for the repose of his soul. The late Rt. Rev. Monsignor Edward E. Weber, Vicar General of the Diocese, was celebrant of the Mass and Most Rev. John J. Swint, D.D., the present incumbent, presided at the Mass from his throne.

TO PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA

In August, 1904, Brother Sulpicius was appointed superior of St. Paul Academy, Portsmouth, Virginia. While not a large school, St. Paul was an important mission of the Brothers. The Catholic people of Portsmouth are descendants of the early pioneer families of America; many of them trace their ancestry to the English Catholics who had settled in colonial Maryland. The people have inherited a sterling Catholicity and they are particularly devoted to the clergy and religious who assist them in the welfare of their children. Somewhat of an exclusive type, they have borne willingly the double expenses of a private school and the taxes for public school maintenance. They have desired the best obtainable for their children. While St. Paul Academy was supported by the Catholics, especially for Catholic children, many non-Catholics who "wanted something a little better" recognized the particular fitness of the Brothers to train youth. When Brother Sulpicius assumed charge of St. Paul, nearly one-half of the student enrollment was non-Catholic. In referring to this fact, he would say:

"I was surely surprised on the second day of school after assuming charge. I was visiting the class rooms and correcting any errors in the data of enrollment. Nearly every room had a large percentage of

non-Catholic boys. One Brother had forty-two boys registered, but only twenty were Catholics. The others represented various Protestant denominations of Portsmouth and the immediate vicinity."

He took particular interest in the non-Catholic pupils. While not insisting upon their regular attendance at the daily Christian Doctrine classes, he was always glad when a non-Catholic boy expressed his desire to attend a Brother's religion class. Once a week, he assembled the non-Catholic boys for special instructions. These instructions generally assumed the nature of "a heart to heart talk" rather than an explanation of Christian Doctrine. During the course of his talks, he would impress the duty of obedience to parents and legal officials upon the minds and hearts of the boys. He would generally conclude his instructions by encouraging them to attend Sunday School and Church services with their parents or older brothers and sisters. A Protestant clergyman of Portsmouth noting the regularity at Sunday services of the boys of his congregation who were attending St. Paul Academy, not only commended Brother Sulpicius publicly from his pulpit, but called personally one afternoon at the school and thanked him for his encouragement and cooperation. "You are doing fine work, Brother, and I can see a great difference in my boys who are under your direction here at St. Paul," he said.

Brother Sulpicius had a great affection for Portsmouth its people, and its boys. Many years afterward, while reminiscing incidents and events of his missions, he said: "Of all the places I have ever been, I like Portsmouth the best. The people are wonderful and the boys are among the best I have ever contacted. Were I a man of worldly interests, I would, without hesitation, select Portsmouth as my permanent place of residence."

Father Brady, pastor of St. Paul Church, held Brother Sulpicius in great esteem. The pastor recognized in him a thorough religious and an exceptional school director. He too, was loath to see Brother Sulpicius depart from Portsmouth in 1906, when the Provincial, Brother Dominic, assigned him to the superiorship of St. Joseph School, Somerville, Massachusetts.

TO SOMERVILLE

“I almost reneged. Somehow, I couldn’t convince myself that I was the proper one for the superiorship of St. Joseph, Somerville,” commented Brother Sulpicius when referring to that appointment. He had spent the summer weeks of 1906 at Mt. St. Joseph, Baltimore, and it was late in the vacation period that Brother Provincial Dominic informed him of his new assignment.

“I have never been in New England and I doubt my ability to adjust myself to people and conditions ‘Up East’,” he explained to Brother Dominic.

“You will be all right. After a few months you will feel quite as much at home there as you did in Portsmouth,” replied the Provincial. With a *Fiat Voluntas Tua*, Brother Sulpicius reluctantly went to Somerville. Except to the trains which seemed to be always crashing into the back door of the Brothers’ residence, he seldom referred to his first years at Somerville.

“I couldn’t get used to those trains,” he often said. “Sometimes I would wake during the night and almost swear that the engine was coming into my room. It was during my fifth year only, that I finally got used to the trains so that they didn’t bother me any more.”

At St. Joseph he was supervisor of the entire school. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur taught the first four grades which were in the same building as the four senior classes, which were conducted by the Brothers. As principal and supervisor of the school, he gave his entire time to the standardization of each class and in a comparatively short time, St. Joseph School received a commendable rating for excellent scholarship and good discipline. Boys who finished the eighth grade received rewards of distinction in the archdiocesan examinations and they were generally leaders of their classes at Boston College High, Boston Latin, and English High.

During the school year of 1907 and 1908, the archdiocesan school conferences were inaugurated by the school supervisor.

The National Catholic Educational Association had recently been organized and the Boston Archdiocese was among the first to introduce a diocesan or sectional association. At first, the association limited its membership to the parochial schools. As St. Joseph, Somerville, was already recognized as a school of high standard, its principal was requested by the archdiocesan supervisor to assist in organizing the new association. Brother Sulpicius gave valuable service to the grammar school association, and later when the high schools were invited to join the association, he presided at the initial meeting of the high school teachers and outlined the purpose and ultimate aim of the association.

Always of a conservative and an ascetic type religiously, Brother Sulpicius was a progressive whenever there was question of educational matters, or the training and education of the Brothers.

“We must progress! We must be alert and do things! Xaverian schools must be better than others,” were sentiments he frequently emphasized,

During the summer of 1908, the American Province received a great shock! Even parents and close relatives of some of the Brothers stood in wonderment and consternation when they heard the news—eight senior Brothers were attending summer school sessions at Harvard University. “Oh, how awful! Never heard of such a thing! What, will the Archbishop think?” commented some of the Brothers’ parents. There was surface reason perhaps for the parents’ wonderment. The radical and modernistic views of Doctor Charles Eliot, Harvard’s President, had been recently challenged, aired, and condemned by the American Catholic Hierarchy. The President of Boston College had openly attacked Doctor Eliot’s views to the great satisfaction of Catholics and many non-Catholics. Fear of these modern ideas was what stirred the Brothers’ kin and friends. Brother Provincial Isidore had granted permission to the eight Brothers to attend the Harvard Summer School, only after consulting His Excellency, the Archbishop of Boston, and obtaining the latter’s approval and permission.

The Somerville house was made the summer center of the Brothers who were attending Harvard, and Brother Sulpicius, himself one

of the eight, acted as Superior and Procurator of the community. From Brother Isidore we learned that it was Brother Sulpicius who made the initial suggestion that the time was opportune for the Brothers to begin advanced educational courses, and to make this advancement a reality, he urged attendance at Harvard. When Brother Isidore reminded him of the modernistic tendencies of President Eliot and some of his associates, Brother Sulpicius replied- "We are not going to Harvard to attend religious or philosophical classes. We are going for purely secular subjects. There can be no reasonable objection to our request. Certainly we have sense enough to know what to accept and what to reject."

The attendance of these eight Brothers at Harvard was perhaps the beginning of the higher educational courses among the Xaverians. For several years the Somerville house continued to be the summer center for Brothers who wished to pursue higher courses at Harvard and later at Boston College.

The late Rt. Rev. Msgr. Christopher McGrath was the founder and first rector of St. Joseph, Somerville. He was a man of much culture, scholarly, and known widely for his well organized church and school. In the latter he was intensely interested. After his Mass and breakfast, he visited every class room daily as a dutiful routine of interest. He knew nearly every child in the school by his or her first name and, as he made his rounds through the many classes, he would frequently pause and inquire of a child about its home folk. Anyone can understand the spirit of mutual admiration that existed between Monsignor McGrath and Brother Sulpicius. Their common interests and efforts were concentrated on the school and to make it the best in the archdiocese of Boston was their ultimate endeavor. It was fortunate for Brother Sulpicius that he found in the Monsignor one who was interested foremost in the youth of the parish, for it helped to make him at ease and more confident of his welcome to St. Joseph, and to put aside any misgivings he might have had previously about adapting himself to his new environment.

He remained at St. Joseph for five years and when Brother Provincial Isidore designated him for a greater field of action, he

received letters and messages of grateful sentiments accompanied by expressions of esteem from Church dignitaries and business men of prominence. Quite naturally, Monsignor McGrath regretted his departure from St. Joseph, and at his leave taking, the Monsignor imparted a blessing and presented him a check for two hundred dollars and a silver watch.

THE MAN – HIS CHARACTER – HIS PERSONALITY

From what has been said, one might think that Brother Sulpicius was constantly in the limelight, that he was often among externs, and that he spoke or lectured much and frequently. Quite the opposite is true of him. He never had any time for a "show off" or "big talker." He seldom was absent from his community and few people really became well acquainted with him. He was a prodigious and indomitable worker. He read widely but conservatively. He planned carefully and wisely and his foresightedness was almost prophetic. Early in his religious career he found his specialties in teaching mathematics and sciences, but he likewise knew well and familiarly his Shakespeare, Browning, Wordsworth, and Thackeray, besides his Longfellow, Emerson, and Lowell. If one happened to be on a walk or a leisurely jaunt with him, he would often discuss a classic with the familiarity and accurateness of a master. He liked to get the opinions of others on some literary or current event topic, and then a quiet, inoffensive, humorous argument was sure to follow. He liked a debate and many a community recreation was enlivened as well as enlightened by his resourceful arguments. Of course, every one did not always agree with him; perhaps he had more opponents than colleagues, but the debate was the thing-he enjoyed it and if occasionally he was apparently defeated, he would laugh quietly and conclude, "You put up a good argument, but use your head; you know I am right!"

With externs he was discreetly reserved in speech and conduct. Sometimes he appeared to be cold-even frigid. Because of these characteristics, he seldom made a favorable impression on a mere introduction or slight acquaintance. He disliked formality and purely social calls and whenever possible he avoided both. He was

always glad to welcome a publishing concern's representative, for his interest was centered in schools and the best available text books.

"He was a funny old man!" recently remarked one who had been under his spiritual direction when he was postulant master at Peabody. He would have enjoyed that comment. He would have considered it a compliment. "Be yourself!" was a familiar saying of his. "Admire whom you will, but live your own life and don't throw away your own personality by trying to be like someone else. No . two persons were created just alike. God Almighty never intended they should be so."

During his first year at Somerville, a Brother from the East Boston community came to spend a weekend. At his departure he remarked to one of the Brothers of Somerville, "Gee, I wouldn't like to be in this community. I would be afraid of that superior."

"But, you don't know him," was the answer. "This is one community where charity reigns supreme. Good will, kindness, and thoughtfulness prevail here and I have never been as happy as I have been during this year." Two years later the East Boston Brother was transferred to the Somerville community. Within a few weeks, he changed his opinion about being afraid of the superior and instead he became one of Brother Sulpicius' devotees for the rest of his life. His kindness was often concealed under a veneer of sternness. Shortly after assuming charge of Bardstown he encountered a young Brother who wanted a new habit. Bardstown was encumbered with an enormous debt, which had been incurred by renovations and necessary improvements. Brother Sulpicius was supposed to meet current expenses, meet the interest, and pay something toward liquidation of the debt. The young Brother knew well the financial difficulties of the superior and he hesitated some time before making his request. However, eventually he decided to approach the superior diplomatically - so he thought. Going to the office he began somewhat timidly, "Brother Sulpicius, I would like to get something but it will cost about twelve dollars." Brother Sulpicius looked at him rather sternly and, thinking the Brother wanted to get some non-essential thing, answered rather 'harshly,

"Go on! Get out of here! You know we haven't any money here." Embarrassed and keenly hurt the Brother left the office without comment and went to the community room. Scarcely had he entered the room than he heard Brother Sulpicius coming down the hallway. The latter entered the community room just as the Brother was sitting down. With a smile brightening his face and with a ring of gentleness in his voice he asked, "What is it you want, Brother?"

"I was going to ask you for a new habit, but, if we can't afford it now, I can wait a few weeks longer," responded the Brother.

Brother Sulpicius answered quickly and assuringly, "Brother, by all means get a habit. Get your measurement today. Come to my room and I'll measure you now. If the Congregation can't feed and clothe us, then it better close up shop!" That incident was typical of Brother Sulpicius. He was the personification of kindness, but often you had to look for it under a cover of sternness.

During the first year at Bardstown, a Brother was taken ill. Upon examination by a Louisville specialist, it was discovered that the Brother was a victim of tuberculosis. Only the first stages of the disease were evident, but the doctor was cautious. He ordered a schedule of complete rest and special diet. Among the latter, fresh vegetables and fruits were prescribed. As Bardstown had no vegetable or fruit market, Brother Sulpicius went to Louisville and made arrangements with a wholesale market concern to have a variety of vegetables and fresh fruits ready for shipment to St. Joseph, Bardstown, twice weekly. During the summer of 1912, Brother Isidore designated a member of the St. Joseph community to go on a scouting trip through Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee, in quest of prospective boarding school students. On the morning of the Brother's departure, Brother Sulpicius gave him a hundred and fifty dollars for traveling expenses. "But I won't need all of that," considered the Brother. "Take it. You must not run short. Besides, that isn't too much for a six week scouting trip," enjoined Brother Sulpicius. At the end of the summer the Brother returned to Bardstown with a good account of his trip. He presented a satisfactory list of names of students who would enroll at St. Joseph

in September. He submitted a statement of financial expenditures and returned the balance. "But you spent hardly anything," said Brother Sulpicius when he noticed that the Brother had returned more than half of the original amount of money. "I didn't stint myself though. The clergy everywhere were very kind and insisted that I live with them while in their vicinity. I spent practically nothing for board and lodging," explained the Brother.

Generous, thoughtful, and considerate of others in the community, he was a living example of the Rule. His personal poverty was almost in excess. His room had no furniture except a small iron bed, a clothes press, a chiffonier or bureau, and a straight back chair. He never had but one suit of clothes, which served for both summer and winter. When he assumed charge of Bardstown, he got an inexpensive summer coat. His regular one was too heavy for the Kentucky summers. It can be said without exaggeration that he knew literally his Rule book and Thomas a Kempis' *Following Of Christ* by heart. When occasion was opportune, he would quote the Rule word for word. He liked nothing better than to check a Brother on the misinterpretation of the Rule. There was an occasion for an argument again and he never lost that opportunity for another debate, particularly when he knew he was right. "How are you going to live the Rule if you don't know it?" He would ask. Generally, that was his way of opening the spiritual reading session on Thursday evenings. The community enjoyed the time devoted to the reading of the Rule. It was one quarter of an hour of the week that everyone anticipated and no one wanted to miss. He would sit at the head of the community table, look over his glasses, open the Rule book, and then begin. Every article had to be thoroughly explained. After the explanations came the various ways of infraction. Two instances will suffice to show his method of expounding the Rule. Using the old copy of the Rule he would read: (words in parenthesis are his)

1. Brothers shall turn in their watches to the Superior (when broken, need repairing, or when they want a new one.)
2. After traveling, the Brothers shall give to the Superior a detailed account of their expenses and all funds remaining from the amount advanced to them (after you have laid in a good supply of cigars, cigarettes, and cheap magazines and labeled them sundries). While

upholding the dignity of the Rule, his comments were made in charity, mingled with a humor that permeated the entire community. "Keep the Rule!" was a frequent recommendation of his. His life was molded according to it. It was his life and it lived in him.

Perhaps to the end of his life, there were some who continued to feel uncomfortable in his presence. To these he appeared so unusual, rigid, and fixed. When we consider his rearing, religious training, and environment, we are not surprised that he made this rather unfavorable impression on some—even among his own Brothers in religion. He came from an unusually well-instructed Catholic family whose religion was the principal objective. He was taught from early boyhood to be sincere, thorough, and generous in his services. He could never do things by halves. He disliked thoroughly anything half-hearted or phlegmatic. He was a hard and incessant worker, but few knew his tasks or their accomplishments. He seldom spoke of himself and unless one succeeded in getting into the secret of his mind and heart, one knew practically nothing of his life, his real character, or his accomplishments. Consider the serious, well reared boy, generous almost to a fault, and determined to do little, unaccountable things in a big way, because they were all for God! That was what Charles Cross was when he entered the Xaverian novitiate and placed himself under the spiritual direction of the late Brother Cajetan, C.F.X., his novice master, who was noted for his rigidity and unrelenting religious discipline. Leaving the novitiate, Brother Sulpicius, in Louisville, continued his religious life and training under the direction of the American pioneers, Brothers Stephen and Stanislaus, who had been among the first disciples of the Venerable Founder. If at times he appeared distant, or even forbidding, we can understand how his determined character responded to a rigid religious training under these spiritual directors.

"It shouldn't be hard for a religious to rise promptly and be in Chapel for the first sign of the cross. If we were men of the world we would have to get up promptly and early; often too, when we would be feeling indisposed; for the coppers and nickels for our daily sustenance and our dependents would prompt us to be men of duty. Besides, we are not religious just for our own selfish motives. We are

religious; we keep the Rule; we say our prayers with devotion and assist at Holy Mass with attention and piety not to please ourselves but to please God. To please God! To give Him honor and glory should be our purpose as religious! Keep ourselves in the background. Put God in the limelight." These were his conference expressions when ever he summarized the religious life of a Xaverian Brother. The Mass was his particular devotion. He never tired of assisting at the Holy Sacrifice. He used the missal constantly and was solicituous that every member of the community was provided with a copy. When superior, he never permitted hymns to be sung or the rosary to be said during a Low Mass. "Pray the Mass from the missal," was his advice on assisting properly at the Holy Sacrifice.

He had a filial devotion to and a tender love for his Angel Guardian. Perhaps he learned this devotion from his mother, or his first teachers in Holy Angels School. He had implicit confidence in his Heavenly Guide. When something vexatious occurred or presented itself for solution, he would repair quietly to the chapel-generally in the darkness of the evening. Before the altar, with the light from the sanctuary lamp casting his silhouette upon the chapel wall, he prayed deyoutly and pleaded for guidance and light. Upon leaving the chapel he would usually repair to the community room with a smile heightening his features. "I have the solution to the problem," he would confide to one who understood the difficulty he was encountering. Then he would reveal a detailed account of the situation-the problem, its beginning, its development, and his decision in the matter. Asked how he was able to find out so much relative to the difficulty, he would smile and say simply, "Oh, my Angel Guardian told me everything. He directed me in my decision."

Asked once if he had much devotion to St. Francis Xavier, he shook his head. "Not much! But of course I always try to have special devotion to him during the Novena of Grace and the Novena preparatory to his feast. Yes, I do say a special prayer to him daily for a particular intention," he answered. He made much of the St. Francis Xavier Novenas. When he was superior, the novena prayers were said publicly during Benediction, which was imparted daily during the Novenas. December 3 was celebrated with solemnity

and festivity. A High Mass was always in order and the festival table was filled with substantial dishes and the seven desserts, so famous during Brother Isidore's directorship and provincialship.

Although he never used tobacco in any way, he usually accompanied the Brothers to the community room after the festival dinner on St. Francis Xavier Day. Sitting in his customary place at the head of the table, he would take a cigarette, look at it a moment, light it, and take three puffs. That was all! It was amusing to watch him hold the cigarette. It appeared entirely out of place in his possession as he tried to hold it gracefully between his right thumb and index finger. He seemed to feel a sense of relief when he finally deposited most of the un-smoked cigarette on the ash tray. "Just to be more sociable on St. Francis' Day," explained a member of the community when asked why he took only three puffs of a perfectly good cigarette.

TO BARDSTOWN

Brother Provincial Isidore spent the month of March, 1911 at St. Xavier, Louisville. For several years, the Brothers in Kentucky had sought a summer country residence away from the intense heat of down town Louisville. Old St. Joseph College, Bardstown, had ceased to function as a school in the late eighties. For a short time the buildings were occupied as the temporary quarters of St. Thomas Orphanage. Otherwise the property was unused. The buildings were in a state of decadency and deterioration. Brother Isidore had always been greatly interested in Old St. Joseph, which was founded in 1819 by the venerated Bishop Flaget, Kentucky's first Bishop, whose diocese extended from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes and included all territory west of the Allegheny mountains.

During his extended stay in Louisville, Brother Isidore approached Most Rev. Dennis O'Donaghue, and Very Rev. James P. Cronin, bishop and vicar general, respectively, of Louisville, relative to the acquisition of the Old St. Joseph property. "We want it for two reasons," explained Brother Isidore to the diocesan authorities. "First, we must have a summer country home for the Louisville Brothers. Second: It is time for the Xaverians to open a boarding

school for boys in Kentucky.” Needless to say, the Bishop and Vicar General welcomed the proposal of Brother Isidore. Within a few weeks the transfer of the property was completed. An architect and a contractor had the old buildings well under way of renovation and reconstruction before Brother Isidore left for Baltimore in early April. The buildings were to be ready for opening of school in September and a prospectus-catalog of the new school was compiled, printed and mailed to all priests in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Indiana before June 1.

Enthusiastic and optimistic Brother Isidore felt that the reopening of Old St. Joseph would be the greatest accomplishment of his provincialship. He wrote a spirited letter to all the houses of the American province. His letter gave a detailed account of the property, its transfer, its improvements then under way, and its prospects.

The American Brothers were guessing, they were scanning the Xaveriana, they were suggesting this superior and that one for the new post. The question - Who will be the new superior of St. Joseph, Bardstown, was the common inquiry and subject of discussion in every community. No one realized greater pleasure from the community contests than Brother Isidore. For weeks he received letters congratulating him on the appointment of the new superior. The congratulations were made in confidence and, of course, every letter suggested the name of a different Brother whom a group, or community, had already superioered. “By Jack!

Before July 1, Bardstown had twenty-two superiors, but not one of them was my selection,” chuckled Brother Isidore. He was greatly impressed, though, by the interest manifested in the new foundation by the Brothers of the American Province.

It was early June of that year. The archdiocesan examinations were scheduled for the third week of the month and Brother Sulpicius received notice to that effect from the supervisor’s office on June 7. That evening he went to the community chapel of the Somerville house to make his daily prolonged visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

While participating in the community interest in the Bardstown foundation, he didn’t enter into the discussions about the prospective superior. He was too conservative to express any opinion in the matter. He didn’t expect to be consulted about the affairs at Bardstown and unless pressed for an opinion he was non-committal. However, as he knelt in prayer in the Brothers’ chapel on that memorable June evening, he was constantly distracted by a thought which persisted in making an impression upon his mind – you will be appointed superior of Bardstown-kept disturbing him regardless of his efforts to rid himself of the distraction. “Foolish!” He said to himself later as he withdrew from the chapel and joined the community at recreation. The thought did not recur to him during the remainder of the evening. When he retired for the night he soon relapsed into a first sound sleep, during which the chapel distraction assumed the form of a dream.

“In my dream my Guardian Angel appeared to me and kept repeating those same words, ‘you will be appointed superior of Bardstown’,” he said, commenting on the incident years after. At the time he confided his distraction and dream to no one. The thought rather embarrassed him. Four days later, however, the distraction and dream became a reality. He received a blue bird (a Provincial letter) which contained the announcement of his appointment to the first superiorship of Bardstown and the accompanying official credentials. He was to report to Bardstown on July 10 and assume charge at once. He was to make preparations for the solemn opening day-September 9. His Excellency, the Apostolic Delegate, Most Reverend Diomedo Falconio would come to Bardstown for the special occasion which would be attended by other church dignitaries and state officials.

Upon his arrival at St. Joseph, Brother Sulpicius made a general survey of the buildings and premises. Plumbers, carpenters, steam-fitters, and painters were working over time in order to have the buildings ready for the opening day. At the end of the survey he looked disappointed.

“What do you think of the place?” Asked his Brother companion as

they walked toward the entrance gateway.

At first he said nothing. He simply looked around in the direction of the buildings. The look of disappointment was still evident. Urged again to express his opinion, he put his hands in his habit cincture, looked at the Brother and said: "In my opinion, it were far better if those old buildings had been razed; some of the material could have been used in the foundation and inner walls of a new, modern, impressive building that could have been erected with the money we are expending on these dilapidated, old skeletons. After all, they are old and in a wretched condition; it will take a mint of money to keep them in repair. A new building would have been more sensible, more serviceable, and less expensive."

"But it is believed that the old buildings will be the means of blending the historical interest of Old St. Joseph with that of the New St. Joseph. Alumni members may still be found who will continue their interest in the New St. Joseph and possibly they will encourage attendance at their old Alma Mater imbued with new life," explained the Brother.

"Humph!" quickly responded Brother Sulpicius with upturned chin. "Sentimentality again! Sentiment is rather expensive and besides, it never put coppers and nickels into anyone's pocket. Sentimentality is all right for the overburdened rich, but we haven't any money with which to speculate on sentiment. Sentimentality will bring here neither money nor students," he concluded.

Time, records, and experience have proved the sense and wisdom of his opinion and judgment.

The Apostolic Delegate, Most Reverend Diomede Falconio spent a week at St. Joseph after opening day. During the week he blessed the school chapel and altars and visited the historical Catholic Centers in the proximity of Bardstown - the Cistercian Abbey of our Lady of Gethsemane; Nazareth Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity; St. Rose and St. Catherine, the first foundations of the Dominican priests and sisters, respectively, in the United States;

the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross; St. Mary's; and Holy Cross. "This is a sacred state. It has a wealth of Catholic vigor and history," complimented the Apostolic Delegate upon his departure. Going to Louisville, he called at St. Xavier. Our venerable pioneer, Brother Stephen, lay dying in his humble little room on the first floor. Hearing of Brother Stephen's serious illness, His Excellency asked to visit him. As he entered the room he knelt at the bedside of the dying pioneer. Brother Stephen was still conscious, but weak. He could only whisper. He recognized His Excellency. He looked into his face as he knelt in prayer and whispered, "Oh, your blessing for a happy death!" At this request everyone in the room was greatly affected. Tears were visible in the kindly eyes of His Excellency as he stood and imparted the requested blessing. "There is a dying saint," he whispered to Father Louis Deppen, the Brothers' chaplain, as the two left the room a few minutes later. Three days later, September 19, 1911, good Brother Stephen, one of the first disciples of the Founder, American pioneer, saint - went to heaven!

Disappointed by his first impressions of Bardstown, Brother Sulpicius was, nevertheless, dauntless. He was militant! The morning after the solemn opening, he assembled the eighty-three boys-thirty-five boarders and forty-eight day students-in the study hall. Most of them had registered during the Summer weeks, or on opening day. After a short address of welcome, he gave the classification tests. The following morning the school was functioning with the order, regularity, and satisfaction of a school that had been long established. The school was the important thing! It was what he had been sent to Bardstown for a good school - and he was determined to make St. Joseph that from the very first day. Before the end of the first month, a boys' choir and altar society were organized; a debating club was instituted; an athletic meet had been held.

"We haven't modern buildings," he said one evening at a school conference, "but we can have, a good school. Earnest endeavor in the classroom on the part of the teachers; good discipline-firm, but just a well-planned recreational schedule; plenty of good food; these will produce a well satisfied student body and establish an

enviable reputation.”

When St. Joseph was opened under the direction of the Xaverians, only three Brothers were assigned to assist Brother Sulpicius in the new foundation. That fact was enough to discourage any superior. The numerous offices of a boarding school could hardly be filled and function efficiently with so few to assume responsibilities. However, before the end of a month three more Brothers were assigned to the community. Even with a staff of seven, everyone was doing the work of two, or even three men. Not wishing to overburden any one of his assistants (two of whom were ill most of the time) he assumed an almost inconceivable amount of work. Besides being superior and director, he did all the office work, correspondence, bookkeeping, issuing of reports, and financial statements. He directed the boys' choir and taught a Gregorian Chant Mass and hymns for Benediction. He conducted classes in Mathematics, Chemistry, English, and Stenography daily. He alone, looked after the boarders' laundry - saw that every article was properly marked and rightly placed. He presided at the evening study period and on Sunday mornings he gave a religious instruction and conference to the boarders after which he prefected the hour devoted to letter writing or reading. Still he found time for planning!

The community noticed that he spent much time on Sunday afternoons down at the cave. No one knew why. One evening late in March 1912, when the community assembled for spiritual reading, he announced: “Brothers, when we opened St. Joseph last September; I was decided on my first project. The cave would have to be converted into a Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes! The location is ideal! Go down into the deep ravine below the cave and look up - there are the recesses, the rocks overgrown with a wealth of ferns; the spring; the water fall below; and the brook flowing toward the Withdraw. An old acquaintance in Portsmouth, Virginia, will donate the statues of Our Lady and Bernadette. A local mason will begin next week on concrete steps leading down to the cave.” He was enthusiastic about the Grotto. By the middle of April everything was finished. The steps made the descent easy;

the statues were appropriately placed and the surroundings were cleared of excess shrubbery; vines, and trees. Descending into the deep ravine, and looking up, one could hardly be mistaken in pronouncing the Grotto at St. Joseph - perfect replica of the original Lourdes. May 8, 1912 was a memorable day! On that date, all the students assembled in the court outside the dining room. From the chapel came the cross bearer and two acolytes, wearing purple cassocks and lace surplices. They took their places between the two large sycamore trees at the end of the court. Behind them, lined up by two's stood the student body. Next came the seven Brothers followed by Father Martin R. Donahue, the school chaplain, vested in surplice, cope, and biretta, flanked by altar boys. It was an impressive procession that moved from the court, across the athletic field, around the borders of a newly planted field, down the steps - to the Grotto. The rosary was recited in unison as the procession wended its way from the court yard to the Grotto. Many of the town people had gathered to assist at the dedication. When all had assembled, Father Donahue mounted a rock near the statue of Our Lady. He was in great form for the occasion, and as he proceeded to extol the apparitions at Lourdes, the three or four hundred devotees of Our Lady listened with marked attention and interest. At the conclusion of the sermon, Father Donahue blessed the statues, rocks, water fall, brook, and ravine with water from the original Lourdes. A hymn and prayer to Our Lady concluded the services of dedication. The recessional formed and the rosary was again recited in unison. Proceeding to the school chapel, the participants assisted at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Thus ended a gala day - eventful in the annals of the New St. Joseph! Undoubtedly it was one of the happiest days in the life of Brother Sulpicius. He loved the Church, her ceremonies, her liturgy, and whatever promoted devotion and piety. During his four years as superior at Bardstown, evening pilgrimages to the Grotto, similar in formation and devotion to the first one, were made thrice weekly during the month of May. The Grotto was very dear to Brother Sulpicius. A visitor to St. Joseph was sure to see it before his departure.

A few days before his death. he was sitting in the community room

at the Juniorate. He had been perusing the latest issue of the Notre Dame Scholastic in which was a picture of the university's outdoor shrine of Our Lady. An accompanying article described the shrine and its history; it concluded by enumerating the approximate thousands of student visits made to the shrine during the recent month of Mary.

“Do you know it was Xaverian Brothers’ boys that renewed devotions at Notre Dame’s outdoor shrine of Our Lady!” he remarked to a Brother in the room. To the surprised listener, he continued, “The late Very Reverend John Cavanaugh, C.S.C., former President of Notre Dame, gave our boys the honor and credit of fostering the devotions at Notre Dame. Father Cavanaugh visited Bardstown on his way to Gethesemane in 1913. I accompanied him to Our Grotto. He was delighted with the shrine and its setting. ‘Boys formerly under the direction of the Xaverian Brothers have been instrumental in renewing May devotions at our university shrine’, he informed me.”

He considered this an important achievement for Xaverianism in America. “Our Brothers were the first to conduct outdoor pilgrimages and processions in honor of Our Lady in England since Reformation days; indirectly we enkindled the same devotion at one of the greatest Catholic universities in America,” he commented.

Rev. Harry Spalding, S.J., author of juvenile novels and former editor of the *Queens Work*, conducted the first student retreat at St. Joseph during Holy Week, 1912. After the boys’ departure for the Easter recess, Father Spalding remained at St. Joseph for the remainder of the week. Primarily coming to Bardstown to conduct the spiritual exercises, he prolonged his stay that he might gather data for a new novel and to visit relatives, many of whom were residents of Bardstown. He remained as a guest of the Brothers until late Easter Saturday. When leaving he remarked to one of the Brothers: “I have enjoyed my visit here. There is a wonderful spirit among the Brothers and the boys. You Brothers enter into the real spirit of Holy Week by your retreat and the observance of the liturgy, especially prescribed for the week. I am happy to have been

here and I hope in the very near future to return for another Holy Week observance.”

Under the auspices of the Most Rev. Dennis O’Donaghue, the diocesan clergy held their first annual retreat at St. Joseph during the last week of August, 1912. The retreat was conducted by the celebrated preacher, the Rev. Philip Birk, C.P., a commissioner of that other noted orator, the Rev. James Kent Stone (Father Fidelis of the Cross, C.P.) Many of the priestly retreatants had been students at Old St. Joseph when it was conducted by the diocesan clergy. The Most Rev. Bishop was an alumnus. So great a host to the clergy did Brother Sulpicius prove to be that they expressed a desire to return to, St. Joseph for their retreats in successive years. One priest commented to the Brother Procurator: “I think I shall ask the Bishop to relieve me of my parish duties and come to live with the Brothers. Do you think they would have me?” At the conclusion of the exercises Father Philip observed to the Brother Sacristan: “I have noticed your well-kept sanctuary and sacristy. Why, you have every thing here for conducting the ceremonies of the church liturgically! I have seen no better equipment in many parish churches-even cathedral.” St. Joseph reflected the personality and interest of Brother Sulpicius. One could see his work and his accomplishments every place. If other things had to wait his attention, the chapel laid first claim to his care. Nothing was too good for it! He personally supervised the furnishings of the sanctuary and the sacristy. Nothing was ever wanting in either. “Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament must come first. Give Him the best; then all things needed will come in due time,” he would say whenever he referred to the chapel and the ceremonies of the Church.

The Very Rev. Brother John Chrysostom, Superior General, Brother Provincial Isidore, and Brother Philip of the English Province, spent Christmas week, 1911, at St. Joseph. They came to attend the profession ceremony of three Brothers of the community. The vows were emitted on Christmas morning. Incidentally coming to receive the vows, the Superiors had a grave matter to discuss and settle. When the Brothers assumed control of the property, Brother Isidore was determined that the school should eventually develop

into a four year college course. "A real St. Joseph College," he said. He saw that the first prospectus-catalog was compiled and printed to that effect. High school boys would, of course, be accepted and a regular high school course would always be maintained, but the principal objective should be the development of the college course. "St. Joseph had been a college in the nineteenth century; why couldn't it be one in the twentieth?" Contended Brother Isidore. He had failed to grasp the fact that time had changed people and schools. When Brother Sulpicius was assigned to the superiorship, he was well acquainted with the development plan of Brother Isidore. In fact, the Provincial had conveyed his idea, confidentially, to Brother Sulpicius when the latter was assigned to Bardstown. Before he had been at St. Joseph two months he was convinced that the school would never develop into a flourishing college. For that matter it would never develop into any kind of a college.

"Everything is unfavorable to the project," he wrote to Brother Isidore. "The buildings are old and unsuitable for college men. The location is bad. (At that time only two trains over a branch line of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad went to Bardstown daily. The highways were undeveloped. There were still hair-pin turns-dirt and gravel roads.) Finally, we haven't sufficient Brothers to staff a college, and hired lay teachers are expensive and usually unsatisfactory." These were his convictions, but Brother Isidore was unchanged. He would await the arrival of the Superior General before discussing the college plan further. The subject was discussed during that Christmas week. So reasonably did Brother Sulpicius present his arguments against the college project, that all concerned concluded finally to shelve the idea, at least for the present.

"Make it a good preparatory school," contended Brother Sulpicius. "That is what we need here at present. We have an excellent field. Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee-have no Catholic boarding schools for boys. St. Joseph will be the only one in Kentucky after this year."

(St. Mary, near Lebanon, and Columbia, Owensboro, had announced that they would discontinue their high school departments within a year after the re-opening of St. Joseph).

Brother Isidore was determined to see a Xaverian College. "I want to see it right here in Kentucky. This is our field. Just look at St. Xavier graduates. Fifty or sixty young men leave St. Xavier annually. There isn't a Catholic college within a radius of a hundred miles of Louisville. If a St. Xavier graduate wants to attend a church college he just go to Xavier University, Cincinnati, or Notre Dame - but most of them matriculate either at the municipal or state university," he contended. All attending the conference agreed to these facts.

Before the conclusion of the conference, the Superior General, with the approval of Brother Isidore, appointed Brother Sulpicius "to be on the lookout for a suitable college site near Louisville." He lost no time! Before the end of the school year, he had decided on a place - an estate on Lexington Road, not far from the diocesan Mother House of the Ursuline Sisters.

"It is an ideal location!" he said to one of the Brothers of the St. Joseph community one evening after spending the day in Louisville. He had gone over the prospective property with a realtor. "The purchase price is ridiculously low. The property must be sold soon in order to settle an estate," he explained.

Before we could decide on even an option price for the property, a series of conferences would have to be held. The Superior General, who in the meantime had returned to Europe, would have to confer with his council. Then there were the Provincial and his council - finally, the diocesan authorities would have to be consulted. The heirs and the realtors were becoming impatient. They had many offers for cash settlements. They were anxious to dispose of the estate at an early date. Today the site is occupied by twelve imposing buildings of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary - the largest Protestant Seminary in the world.

"We shall see our own college - a Xaverian College," maintained Brother Sulpicius. "It is evident from facts that the Founder encouraged higher education. His first foundation, St. Francis Xavier Institute, Bruges, has the rating of a college. First we must

have our own scholasticate from which a Xaverian College for the higher education of secular young men will develop.”

This development of our educational system was very clear to him and when it was announced that the scholasticate at Silver Spring, Maryland, would be opened in the autumn of 1931, he was overjoyed. He had always encouraged such an institution where our young Xaverians could pursue courses leading to degrees before they would enter upon their teaching careers.

“They will need a broader field in which to labor and do research work,” he said a few months before his death. He was discussing the progress the Brothers were making at the Catholic University. When he was informed that many of them were high rating students and leaders of their classes, he was still convinced that they should go farther. “Keep them advancing until they reach their goals as professors, in our own Xaverian College,” he counseled.

After the status of St. Joseph was finally determined, Brother Sulpicius gave his available time, study; and experience of previous years in the field of Catholic education to developing St. Joseph into a Class A Preparatory School. He insisted that the classical and scientific courses should be retained. He saw fit, however, to make changes in the Business - English course as it had originally been outlined and followed. A General Course became its substitute. “Many of our boys come from farms and they want an education that will be practicable and adaptable to farm life,” he said. The General Course which he introduced met state requirements for graduation. It imparted a knowledge of bookkeeping and typewriting, with emphasis placed on English, history, general science, and commercial mathematics.

“You are doing a fine job on my boy!” exclaimed a Lexington tobacco planter whose son had finished the sophomore class. “I’ll have two or three more boys ready for St. Joseph in a year or so,” he concluded. His sentiments were typical of those expressed by parents, or guardians, who had sons, or wards, at St. Joseph. It was quite a pleasure for a Brother to go on a summer’s scouting trip, to

contact the boarders, their parents, and prospective students who had heard of the school’s excellent reputation through boy friends who were already in attendance.

“Our boys are the school’s best advertisement;” said Brother Sulpicius to a Cincinnati man who called to make inquiries, relative to enrolling his son. Rarely did one hear even a minor complaint from boys who were enrolled as resident students.

During his four years as principal, he was unrelenting in maintaining a high standard of scholarship. The discipline was strict but fair. Boys were allowed off campus but three times a week. On Sundays and Wednesdays they went on long hikes accompanied by a Brother. Silence was the uncompromising rule after the evening chapel visit and night prayers.

“Boys like strict and fair discipline. They like order; cleanliness and proper conduct,” he often insisted during a school conference. The favorable reaction of the student body proved the sense of his advice. Daily before school, he visited the class rooms to see that all was in readiness for the day. Once daily, he inspected the buildings and the premises.

While encouraging scholastic and recreational programs for the development of a well-balanced school schedule, he never permitted extra-curricular activities to interfere with daily school routine. “It isn’t fair to take time out of school. Parents are paying for their sons’ education. We must give them one hundred percent in return. Extracurricular activities must find their places outside of school hours,” he insisted. Except for major reasons, resident students were permitted to visit home only at the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter recesses.

Calling a Brother to the office one evening, he spread on the desk a large piece of drawing paper, on which he had sketched a plan of St. Joseph buildings and grounds. He asked the Brother to look at the plan. After several minutes he looked at the Brother and asked: “How do you like it?” “I don’t get the idea,” replied the Brother. He then went over

the plan, pointing out the important features and explaining.

“I have been working on this plan for some time. Our acreage is not sufficient to do any farming besides, the land is poor. This plan will convert the grounds into one large park. All fences will be removed; recreational courts, diamonds, and fields will be made; an outdoor swimming pool will be built on the site of the present barn; a driveway will encircle the entire property. With landscape the grounds with trees, shrubbery; and flower plots. We can make this property beautiful and inactive though it be old - I haven't mentioned the proposed - new building, which will be built here; (he pointed to a knoll north of the present buildings) that will be the school building; but it will come later.” He was very enthusiastic about the plan; especially so, since the Provincial had given it his hearty approval and commended him (on his proposed improvement plan.)

Brother Sulpicius could never quite understand the attitude of the Bardstown people toward St. Joseph. They seemed to rejoice when they learned that it was to reopen; but after the enthusiasm of opening day had passed, they appeared to forget or to be entirely indifferent toward the interest and progress of the school. At times they seemed to assume the attitude that St. Joseph should be a great asset to them personally and that the school, its resident students, and its income should be financial booms to them individually. Although the Congregation had expended many thousands of dollars on renovating and modernizing the old buildings, there were many things such as chapel, bedroom, recreation and classroom furniture and minor necessities still needed. Thinking that the town people, most of whom were in comfortable circumstances, if not actually wealthy - would welcome an opportunity to donate something, perhaps as a memorial. He reminded the people through an article published in two consecutive editions of the local paper of the various things the Brothers would welcome as donations, even though they be small. To the Brothers' chagrin practically nothing was given. Brother Sulpicius was keenly disappointed. He had expected some response, a few books for the school library would have been most welcome.

His many duties, his various offices at St. Joseph, and his personal interest in its progress, kept him confined to the school premises. Except to attend to an urgent business affair, he never went to Louisville. But few people in Bardstown knew him personally.

“He is a great religious educator!” Once exclaimed the Very Reverend Dean C. J. O'Connell, for forty years pastor of St. Joseph Proto-Cathedral, Bardstown. The Dean was a graduate of the University of Louvain, he had been a teacher and President of the Old St. Joseph College, when it was under the direction of the diocesan clergy.

“I like to listen to him while conducting a class,” continued Dean O'Connell, “often, I take my breviary and go into the chapel off the Proto-Cathedral sanctuary. If the windows of the nearby school building are open, I can hear him teaching chemistry. I think by auditing, unobserved, I have learned almost as much about science - as if I were actually a member of the class. He is a waster in the art of teaching!” Concluded the Dean.

Elias Banks was quite a character around Bardstown at the time Brother Sulpicius was superior at St. Joseph. He was an old colored man and deacon of the local colored Baptist Church. He had a few failings; among which was a decided weakness for Greenbriar Moon Shine. He was delivery man for one of the grocery stores in town, and through this office he often contacted Brother Sulpicius.

Whenever the deacon got too rich in “spirit”, he would invariably make his way to St. Joseph for a talk with Brother Sulpicius, who always received him kindly. After a straight talk, which contained much wholesome advice, Deacon Banks would leave with a quick step and a vow never “to sin again.” That same evening he would invite a few of his cronies, who shared his weakness, to a special revival service of thanksgiving at the Baptist meeting house.

Although Deacon Banks could neither read nor write, he would stand before his pals and with an upside-down hymn book in his

left hand and a yard stick in the right, he would lead in singing "De Ole Time Re'gion is Goot 'Nuf for Me!" So long would the special thanksgiving service continue and so boisterous would the revivalists become, that frequently the neighbors would summon the town policeman to quell the fervor of the spirits so that they could get a few hours sleep before daybreak.

"All right, your honor!" Apologetically, Deacon Banks would respond to the orders of the policeman, "But, your honor, just a moment! We must say just one loud prayer to de Lawd for my best friend - Brother Suspicious."

The next morning, Deacon Banks would appear at the kitchen door of St. Joseph with a market basket on his arm. To the colored cook he would say, "Here are some fine fish. I just caught them down at the Beachfork River; Now I want you to cook 'em good foe de Brothers - 'spec'ly for my ole standby, Brother Suspicious - he's the finest man in this here ole town!"

Within a week or ten days, Deacon Banks was back for more straight, talk. He would renew his vow; arrange for the night-revival; and appear at the kitchen door the following morning with the basket of fish for the Brothers, "spec'ly for my ole standby, Brother Suspicious."

By June 1914, St. Joseph had a record attendance. It had a capacity number of resident students. The school had established an excellent reputation throughout Kentucky and beyond its borders. Still Brother Sulpicius was discouraged. He was disheartened. The board and lodging rate paid by the resident students was not sufficient to meet current expenses, meet the large amount for interest, and attempt to pay something annually on the principal. He had been refused permission to advance the rates for resident students from two hundred and fifty dollars annually to four hundred dollars.

"You will lose the boarders," maintained Brother Isidore; but Brother Sulpicius knew local conditions. He had investigated the financial status of each boarder. In most instances, the parents, or

guardians, could well afford the increased rate without stint. Still permission was not granted to increase the rate. With the small income, he saw that St. Joseph would remain stationary; that he could not advance it; that he could not possibly proceed with the plan for improving and beautifying the grounds, although he had written permission to proceed with such a program. During the summer of 1914, he asked to be relieved of office. Brother Isidore insisted that he return to Bardstown, hoping he would decide during another year to remain for a second three-year term of office.

With a fiat he returned to St. Joseph during late August, 1914, after an extended stay at Mt. St. Joseph, Baltimore. The September registration of resident students exceeded any former enrollment. With the increase in numbers, it was necessary to provide more dormitory space. The fourth floor of the larger building was quickly made serviceable for dormitory purposes by equipping it with radiators and electrical fixtures. The junior students occupied the newly furnished dormitory in order to provide more space for the seniors on the third floor. His attitude toward the future of St. Joseph did not change during the year. Without a larger income from the resident students, he could not possibly further his plans for its progressive development. In June, 1915, he again asked to relinquish office, and after closing the affairs for the fiscal year he left for Baltimore. On the morning before his final departure, he spent some time at the Grotto. Then going to the chapel sacristy, he saw that everything was in order. Having satisfied himself that all was well, he knelt at the altar for that last visit to his Eucharistic Lord in the school chapel, where he had spent so many happy hours and which he had done so much to beautify and make devotional. On June 23, he took the two o'clock train bound for Baltimore. For the remaining years of his life he was never again to see St. Joseph, Bardstown.

TO MT. ST. JOSEPH

When the assignments were announced on August 15 of that year, Brother Sulpicius was missioned at "The Mount." During the next two years he was a faculty member, instructing classes in mathematics, physics, and chemistry. At the beginning of the

scholastic year of 1917, he was appointed Director of Studies at "The Mount" Unfortunately, in this office he encountered some difficulties and some embarrassing misunderstandings. By some of the faculty members his methods were considered too severe, too uncompromising, even somewhat antiquated. These differences in opinion often caused friction between the director's office and faculty members. These conditions, along with the fact that the malady to which he was to succumb twelve years later had already made itself evident, prompted him to relinquish his office as Director of Studies during the summer of 1919.

RETURN TO SOMERVILLE

Brother Isidore was very considerate of Brother Sulpicius at this time. The provincial knew he was an unwell man. He appreciated the monumental work he had done for the Congregation during the many years he had been an exemplary Brother of St. Francis Xavier. Brother Isidore wanted to show his appreciation, still he didn't know where to mission him. He even asked Brother Sulpicius where he would like to go.

"Wherever you send me," quickly responded Brother Sulpicius. To the very last he was the militant religious, ready at a moment's notice to do the will of God through his superiors.

After much consideration and thought, Brother Isidore reassigned him to the superiorship of St. Joseph, Somerville.

"You did great work there! St. Joseph, Somerville, is yet one of our best schools—the result of your untiring zeal and interest," he said to Brother Sulpicius as the latter left Baltimore on his return trip to the North.

Back in St. Joseph School, Somerville, he was enthusiastically welcomed by the clergy and people. Monsignor McGrath was overjoyed to receive him again and the old boys" proved their happiness and loyalty by presenting him a substantial purse, which he gave to a Xaverian Scholarship Burse for the education of the Brothers at the Catholic University.

By 1923, Brother Sulpicius was a very sick man. He was fully aware of his physical condition and no one better than he knew that he had not many more years to live. Aside from acting superior, he could not undertake many other duties. Occasionally he conducted a class or two but his work, usually, was confined to supervising the school.

The malady of which he was a patient, cheerful sufferer, first asserted itself when he was at St. Joseph, Bardstown. Apparently in robust health and still in prime, he was absent one evening from spiritual reading. It was something quite unusual for him ever to absent himself from a spiritual exercise. As the Brothers passed his room on the way from the community room to the chapel to recite the rosary, one of the Brothers heard Brother Sulpicius call him by name. Opening his door, he found him lying on the bed, fully clothed in his habit. He was conscious and actually laughing.

"What's the matter?" Asked the Brother greatly concerned.

"Oh, nothing! I got a little dizzy. Then, I became blind, so I just flopped myself on the bed," he explained.

The local doctor was summoned. High blood pressure to an advanced stage was the inevitable fact. He remained quiet for the rest of the evening, rested well during the night, and at the first sound of the rising bell the next morning he was up and in chapel for the first sign of the Cross. Although he followed a strict diet and the doctor's prescriptions scrupulously, he failed rapidly. Hemorrhages of the nose were frequent, and they embarrassed him greatly. "But they prolonged my life," he would say when discussing their frequency.

HIS FINAL MISSION - THE JUNIORATE

His six-year term of office at St. Joseph, Somerville, was completed in August, 1925. Still considerate of the great work he had done as a Xaverian and still wishing to show his appreciation of so valued a member of the Congregation, Brother Isidore insisted that Brother Sulpicius should decide his next mission. The Provincial realized

that the end was near. Probably his next assignment would be his last.

“Any place you say,” answered Brother Sulpicius in answer to the Provincial’s request that he should designate his next assignment.

“How about Peabody?” Hesitatingly asked Brother Isidore.

“I’ll go!” was the ready response. No more was necessary. The next day he went to the Juniorate. Incidentally, that was the last assignment made by Brother Isidore as Provincial. In a few days he relinquished his office after a leadership of eighteen years in the American Province.

At Peabody, Brother Sulpicius enjoyed the freedom from responsibilities and the quiet home life on a country estate. As long as able, he assisted in the class room imparting to the aspirants the knowledge he had acquired through long years of study and experience. From 1928 to 1931, he was the Spiritual Director of the postulants. His last conference imparted to them just a few hours before his death was an explanation of Chapter XVI - The Sick Brothers - from the Rule Book. He climaxed his instruction with the last words of the chapter: “The Brothers shall be buried in their religious habit.”

Probably it was prophetic that he should have chosen that particular chapter for his last instruction. Maybe his Angel Guardian suggested it!

After the conference, he went to the community room where the Brothers were assembled for evening recreation. Before long he was engrossed in his favorite game-arguing with a member of the community. The debate was still in progress when the bell for night prayers summoned the community to the chapel. Not another word did he say it was silence time. For him it was to be the great silence!

After night prayers, he retired to his room. A few moments after closing his door, a Brother in the next room heard a “thump” as if something had fallen. Thinking Brother Sulpicius might have stumbled over something, the Brother went to his room and rapped.

Receiving no response, he opened the door. Brother Sulpicius was lying on the floor - unconscious. Beckoning to one who was passing, the Brother was assisted in placing the body on the bed. Just one long deep breath - then an audible expulsion of the breath - Brother Sulpicius was no more! In the beautiful community cemetery of the Brothers at St. John’s, Danvers, Massachusetts, rest his remains.

After the Solemn High Mass celebrated in the Wheeling Cathedral for the repose of his soul, one of his former Cathedral High boys, now one of Wheeling’s most prominent citizens, eulogized him: “Brother Sulpicius was a religious gentleman. He knew why he wore the habit of a Brother of St. Francis Xavier.”

CYRENIAN NO. 12

Brother Mauricius, C. F. X.

(GEORGE A. LAUER)



by

Brother Joseph Gerard, C.F.X.

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BROTHER MAURICIUS, C.F.X. (1894 - 1949)

CYRENIAN NO. 12

SO consistent is the description of Brother Mauricius by all who remembered him as boy in Chicago, as a novice in 1915, and as African missionary in 1949, that one determines that the characteristics which distinguished him as a unique personality never varied; and that all subsequent influences in his life merely enhanced, never changed, his essential qualities. Perhaps an Apostleship of Prayer leaflet dated November 26, 1941, found in his manual at the time of his death eight years later, best reveals the one native tendency that illuminated his character and imprinted itself on all the actions of his life. The virtue suggested for practice in the leaflet is Order, defined as ‘the aim and purpose of all law which brings all things under Heaven’s holy laws.’ The honored grave in Africa topped by a gleaming white cross marks the terminus of the earthly road of a modest Xaverian who brought all things under God’s laws.

He was born George Albert Lauer on February 25, 1894. His father, a native Chicagoan of German descent, and his mother, a native of Oldham, England, fashioned a tightly-knit, religious family of three boys and two girls. George graduated from Blessed Sacrament School in 1907. For the time being, graduation from grade school ended his formal education. There is much evidence of Divine Wisdom that guided the holy mother in inculcating great strength of character in her son, and there is abundant evidence that he loved her deeply as only a spiritually strong son can love his mother. When she died at the age of twenty-seven, he gave her the supreme accolade of his love. Finding his home so empty without her, he prevailed upon his father to let him seek happiness elsewhere. His father, left with one other surviving child, a baby girl, had married a widow with a large family of her own; and from her George Lauer received no affection or love. His father, understanding the boy’s heartbreak, gave him his blessing, and in 1912, George left his Chicago home to work for a company making windmills.

His job took him to North Dakota where he engaged himself as a farmhand. At sixteen years of age, he relished the hard work and his robust frame hardened under the rigorous demands of the soil and the hostile climate of Dakota. Farming he enjoyed and would have made it his life's work, for the simplicity and austerity of the farmer's life were physical complements to the innate tendencies of his soul. But such a life was not to be his. A fall from a hay wagon tumbled him under the heavy wheels fracturing his right leg. In that unenlightened time, there was no workman's compensation, and an incapacitated farmhand was as useless as a lame horse.

Fired, George was set adrift penniless in a remote Dakota town to fend for himself. A charitable priest who admired the hardworking, religious young farmhand invited him to recuperate at the parish rectory. God's design for young Mister Lauer now grew clearer as they had grown in a strikingly parallel way for Ignatius Loyola centuries before. But there is one remarkable difference to be noted in effecting a parallel. George Lauer needed no conversion, no awakening to the beauties of his holy faith—he needed only direction. He found it one summer day in 1914, in an advertisement carried by the Sunday Visitor. He had always wanted to serve God in a quiet, selfless way, and now he would accept the invitation of the advertisement and become a Xaverian Brother. He wrote to Brother Alphonse, the novice master, informing him that the broken leg would be sufficiently healed for him to come to Baltimore by the fall. Brother Alphonse wrote an acceptance.

Whether it be the time of his investiture in the habit or the time of his first assignment to Brother Walter's community in Leonardtown in the fall of 1916, an old acquaintance would have noted no spectacular change in the manner, or personality of George Lauer, now Brother Mauricius. But there was a newer depth to the man as a religious. His natural reserve was enhanced by a professional dignity. He had become neither less nor more serious, but the formal dedication of his life had given him the sense of order that his character demanded; and the discerning might have noted a buoyant cheerfulness in his acceptance of all the sacrifices of the religious life. This newly acquired quality apart, anyone who had

known him as a boy as a farmhand, would have found in him as a religious the same person in the habits of life, in the steady routine in the simplicity of spirit that were his true self. He rose promptly, prayed fervently, conducted his classes with a scrupulous and fair discipline. He took his successes with the same equanimity he met reverses and heartaches. He never boasted and he never complained. This is the sum of the man.

There was much in which he excelled for he was a man of parts. Those who were with him in novitiate days at the Mount recall the strong swimmer and the superlative athlete. He was not just a good athlete, he was a superlative one for he had made himself so. When he was not memorizing scriptural quotations, including the entire passion according to Saint Luke, or participating in debates about the relative merits of various chapters in Thomas A. Kempis – all of which were common practices in Brother Sylvan's regime as a novice master, he was planning incredibly intense athletic practice sessions. The weekly walk up Athol Avenue into the country, or the occasional .all afternoon work periods devoted to planting shrubs and edges along the Mount's driveway occasionally interfered with his desire to be on the ball field and cost him some pain. As a baseball player he was the nonpareil. In fielding bunts, pegging to second he was a stand-out. Later as an athletic coach, he brought the same intensity, the same desire for excellence and his well-drilled teams reflected the dedication of the coach. The desire to excel in any task assigned him was a compelling one. The urging of conscience, of obligation, of precise and minute attention to details of thoroughness were the prime constituents of his labor which manifested themselves in extraordinary success with his fine football teams at Mission High and Saint John's, Danvers.

As a scholar he brought to his studies the same overwhelming impulse to excel. Mental discipline could not be irksome to a man who wished to be perfect in those things apposite to his calling. Diligently and swiftly he acquired the necessary credits to fit him for attaining the A.B. degree at Notre Dame. Personal glory never lured him in his pursuit of learning—only the desire to be a credit to his order and his profession. His superiors recognizing the altruism of

his motives assigned him to the Xaverian Community at Catholic University, where in 1928 he won his master's degree in foreign languages. Later he was to progress towards his doctorate at Boston University; but his transfer from Mission High to St. Michael's, Brooklyn, curtailed that phase of his education. He voiced no protest despite the disappointment, for he knew that he would pursue scholarship wherever he was stationed.

A natural desire for study helped make Brother Mauricius an excellent teacher. From Manchester Danvers, Boston, Brooklyn, Mayfield and Lira the encomiums to his teaching skill are universally consistent. The provincial Brother Osmund taking note of his brilliance as a teacher assigned him to teach the Brothers in the newly established Mount Summer School. There he taught French and German for many years to members of the community who remember him with respect and affection. But it was at St. Michael's that his teaching skill won him wide fame, and it is with St. Michael's that his name is always linked.

He was about thirty-nine years old when he reported to St. Michael's and was at the height of his physical and mental powers. He was of medium height and build. His hair was a dark brown, his eyes dark blue and keen under heavy eyebrows, and his complexion was dark. His mouth was set in such a way that even with his features composed as they generally were he always wore the trace of a smile, which gave a kind of habitual serenity to his countenance.

The St. Michael's community quickly noticed, as others before them, his quiet disposition. Although he was far from moody or unsociable, he was never boisterous. He spoke habitually in a well-modulated, even tone – so much so that one of the wags in the community immediately dubbed him the “whispering baritone.” Even in class if his marvelous equanimity of temper was overborne by some pupil's recalcitrance or meanness, his eyes would flash, and his neck redden; but his voice never shook with anger. In fact, he would speak more softly still. Tension in class he avoided, but attention: he demanded. Exacting in his demands upon the boys, he was tolerant of their occasional stupidities and clumsy errors. His punishments

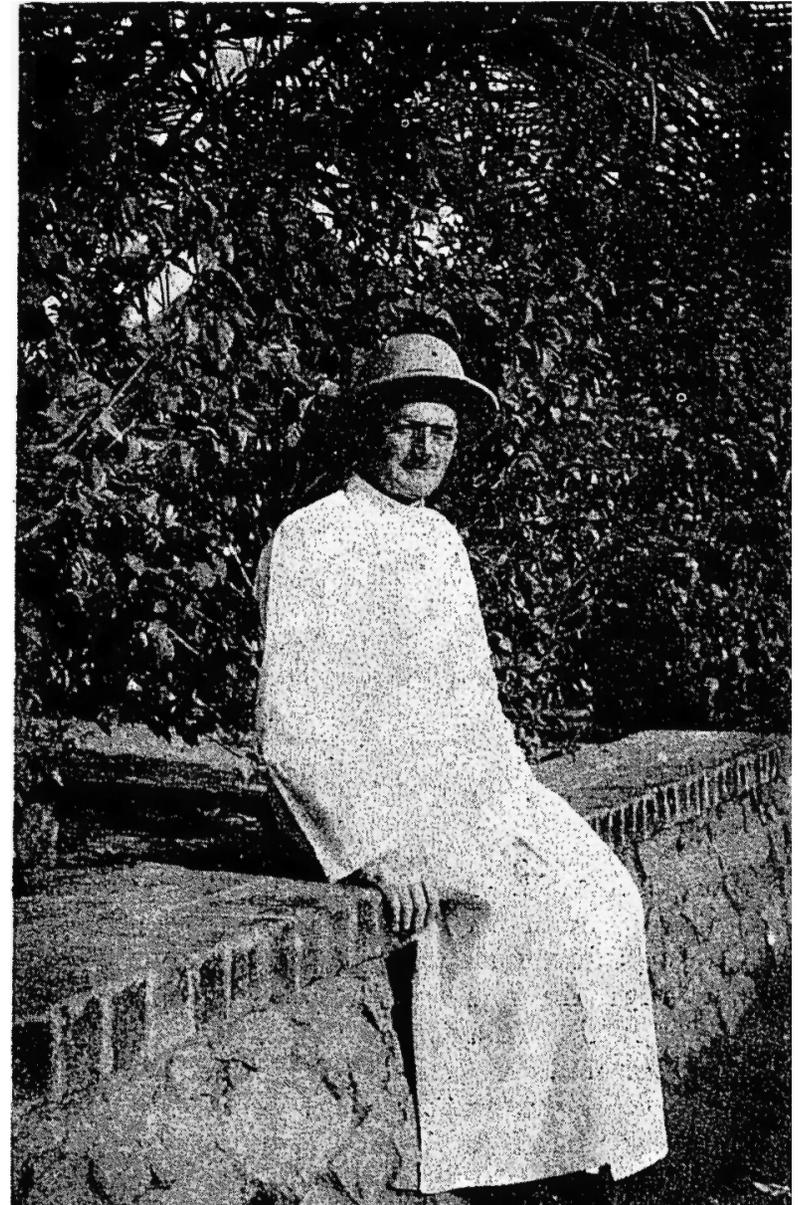
were swift and inevitably just. No offender ever escaped. If a boy played hookey on the last school day in June, he was sure to pay for it by spending the afternoons of the first school week of September in Jug class. ‘It is a marvelous tribute to his fairness that such a strict and stern teacher provoked only loyalty and praise from his students, many of whom carried on a life-long correspondence with the man who had trained them to things transcending the intricacies of the French verb and English composition.

In 1938, Brother Mauricius succeeded to the superiorship at St. Michael's. Again his magnificent self-discipline and self-effacement manifested themselves more pronouncedly in the garish light of office. Always wary of compliments given to himself, he thought that others too would not take kindly to praise and he spared them any affront to their humility by not singling them out for acclaim. Yet he was quick to appreciate a job well-done, and, at a special time, like on the weekly walks to the Redemptorists for confession, he would quietly confer a word of gratitude and would seem a little ashamed in the saying. He was most courteous and charitable to the members of the community, but he insisted that all things be orderly. If a Brother went to class with a loose thread projecting above his collar, or with a frayed crucifix cord he was sure to be told that all was not splendid. He had a habit of walking into a Brother's classroom and holding a large envelope before his mouth to prevent the class from hearing his dread message would tell the Brother that his bedroom needed cleaning, his bed a making, or his shoes a shining. It was somewhat difficult for the intense teacher to recall what he had been saying to the class about molecular energy or the Idylls of the King after Brother had just imparted to him that he had an ink stain on his left ear lobe, or had upset the apple cart by mistaking the telephone bell for the bell marking the end of a class period. To a Brother who was not enunciating clearly he would insist that the Brother read to him each evening from Poe's *The Bells* to develop his ability to project the liquid letters of the alphabet. Naturally the Brother thus instructed gained considerable merit and only years later could find the wisdom in the exercise and the necessary gratitude. The Brothers who taught French considered Brother a regular member of their classes, as he could be found always seated

at the rear heeding the Brother's method and pronunciation. Naturally the presence of the "man who came to French class" was quite nerve-wracking to the novice teachers. Now they swear by the man for making them fine mentors, but in the early 1940's they all wanted to be first year algebra teachers. Indeed his suggestions were wonderfully helpful to the new teacher. He taught the young Brothers how to plan their year's work and he upset the Improvisors in September by insisting that they know what lesson they would be teaching the first week of June. Occasionally, he would take over the class for demonstration purposes. He allowed ten minutes for review, ten minutes for board drill, twenty minutes for recitation and instruction and five minutes for outlining the homework. Then precisely at fifteen seconds before the bell, he would pick up his watch and his books and walk to the door, turning the knob as the bell sounded the end of class.

Any member of Brother Mauricius' community could look at the clock at any time of day and tell precisely what the superior was doing. At 7:35 a.m. he would tap his orange three times before slicing it. At four thirty, he would thrust his house key into the lock of the front door as he returned from school. At precisely five-ten he would enter the community room, go to his accustomed seat and read the paper for exactly twenty minutes. At 7:40 he would say his stations. From 8 to 8:59 he would be seated before his meticulously neat desk in the house office. At 9 o'clock sharp he would enter the community room to make a fourth in a game of hearts. However this passion for order did not make him less human. Once when a rebellious young Brother hid behind the piano the copy of Rodriguez that had been the standard spiritual reading for ten years he said not a word; he merely went to his room and brought back another copy. There are those that claimed he chuckled over the episode but full proof is wanting.

Though he had neither a high wit nor a gift for social chit-chat, he enjoyed a joke and wanted others, with all his heart, to have a good time. Quite regularly he would plan a party at the house and invite a neighboring community to share the fun. His inability to contribute to the chaff that makes up the substance of social repartee



BROTHER MAURICIUS IN THE BELGIAN CONGO, 1946

pained him deeply and he sought to compensate by making himself as inconspicuous as possible. One small anecdote that has won a kind of notoriety among those who knew and loved him was occasioned at a certain get-together at Saint Michael's. The party deemed him to be dull; he worried that the visitors were not having a good time. Urgently he whispered in serious tones to one of his community, "Joe, be funny!" In his simplicity and desire to please, he thought that one might turn on gaiety and wit as one turns on a faucet for water.

If social banter was not his forte, words for the more profound experiences of life came readily to him. He could evoke a smile from a boy who had flunked a scholarship exam; he could console the parents of a boy killed in an accident and remove their bitterness. He was at his best in sympathizing with the distressed and he had an uncanny ability to see when and why one was troubled. Of course it was the man's exceptional spirituality that gave weight and conviction to his words and made people remember and be grateful for them. To the gay and light-hearted he would be affable, but to the afflicted he was the soul of charity. Once when confined to Saint Joseph's Hospital in Manchester, New Hampshire, he learned that a fellow patient was a condemned murderer who had botched a suicide attempt and was refusing to repent of his crime. He sought permission from the police guarding the room of the killer to talk with the man. The kindness implicit in the visit, the sincerity of the Brother broke the resistance of the criminal who tearfully called for a priest so that he might confess his sin. These incidents are dramatic exceptions to the pattern of quiet unobtrusive charity that marked his daily life. The occasional kind word, the intangible feeling that this man was your friend, his complete self-effacement before others' interests made all who knew him his debtors and won him an esteem of which he was completely unaware.

One would look in vain for complex motivation in Brother Mauricius' eager desire to be among the first Xaverians to open an African mission. All his life he had sought to excel in the love of God and if proof of that love could be found in abandoning ties with his loved ones in America, then he must accept that test. On September 26, 1944, along with Brothers Vincent Engel

and Nathaniel, he set out for the Belgian Congo to help allay the shortage of Belgian Brothers occasioned by the war. On November 2, 1944, the first three American missionaries arrived at Jadotville. The thrill of that epic arrival is best described in Brother Vincent's own chronicle:

Thursday, November 2. This is All Souls. Our train is rolling through the Katango. By noon we are approaching Jadotville and the Fathers point out the landmarks. There is the church, there is the school, and now we are entering the station. Our Brothers and their students are there to welcome us. What a glorious sight! Now the train has stopped. There are handshakes, there are greetings, there are good-byes to our fellow travelers. A short walk takes us to our home in Africa. We give thanks to God for our safe arrival and soon we are seated at table for our first meal in Jadotville. We are home at last; Te Deum Laudamus.

With hearts truly grateful the three missionaries began their successful careers which lasted three years, when the Belgian authorities insisted that their nationals be taught only by Belgians. It was there in the Congo that God began the fires for the final holocaust. Years later Brother Mauricius confessed that at Jadotville an acute nostalgia and a depressing loneliness settled upon him. The climate and the food aggravated an old internal disorder and he suffered mentally and physically. But no word of complaint escaped him; the quality of his teaching did not suffer. Yet some noticed that he ate less and less and his once robust frame took on an unaccustomed gauntness.

In 1947, Brother Mauricius left the Congo to spend a year at Mayfield College, Sussex, England. Brother took to the English and they to him. Perhaps it was the natural reticence and reserve that was a heritage from Elizabeth Kirwin, his beloved English mother that won their respect. Here at Mayfield, his health somewhat improved except for ominous "rheumatic" twinges in his arms and shoulders. It was here at Mayfield he assumed a role not characteristic of him—the ex-tempore public speaker. Called upon to address a reunion of Mayfield Old Boys, he rose and launched forth in eulogy on the

Catholicism and culture of his native Chicago. He sought to correct the evil impression of Chicago that Hollywood had foisted upon the foreign market. So eloquent did he wax that his English audience gave him a standing ovation. He expressed a desire to return to the city of his birth before he died to see his beloved sister. But his wish was never gratified. In December of 1948, amidst unparalleled marks of affection from his English confreres and students, Brother Mauricius left England for Lira, Uganda, to be one of the original members of the first foreign mission community of the American province.

In a letter to his old friend, Brother Brendan Costello, then superior of Mayfield, he made it clear that this time he would not return from Africa. "This is the end," he wrote, "I shall never return." There is no histrionic flavor to the words, only the implication of submission to God's Will. There is no mention of the "rheumatic" twinges in his arms, but it seems certain that he had divined their meaning. Nothing of his serenity in the prescience of his impending death can be understood except by those who knew that all his life he had ordered all things under God's holy laws. It was this sparkling facet of his simplicity that sustained him now. He would accept his death as proceeding from the benevolent Wisdom of God. That was the ineluctable fact.

Many things converged to support the belief that during those five months at Lira, Brother Mauricius anticipated his death and prepared himself for the ultimate moment. His long thanksgivings after Holy Communion became even longer. He spent long hours before the Blessed Sacrament. His Brothers noticed that he was failing. The great physical stamina melted away. On the eve of his death he remarked that he had no appetite and felt profoundly weary. He thought it best if he retire early. It was June 17, 1949. Brother Nathanael's letter of June 18 describes the end:

At 12:30 on Wednesday morning I was awakened by Brother Mauricius' calling loudly for help at my room door, at the other end of the veranda from his room. With hardly time to get from under the insect netting and put on my slippers the call came again, this time from his room, with loud sobbing. As I dashed down

the veranda I felt sure that he had found Brother Vincent either dead or dying, and that the shock had unnerved him. Reaching his room, I found Brother Mauricius bent over double on his chair, and between sobs scarcely able to tell me that from his hips up and in his arms he had an agonizing pain and numbness. I suspected the cause and immediately flew across the campus to arouse Father Roman who came out of his room in a flash. Then I ran up to the sisters' convent for the nurse who came at once with morphia and camphor. The acting pastor, Father Pasettoo, was summoned also to find a hot-water bottle. Down to the room again, Brother Mauricius was quieter now and lying in bed. Sister gave him a mild injection of morphia which eased his pain so much that he kept saying that I should not send for the doctor, although two boys were already speeding to Lira-six miles away. I was told to prepare some hot water on our little kerosene pressure stove, leaving Father Romano, Father Pasetto, and Sister quietly talking to Brother Mauricius, who remarked that for some weeks he had felt pains in his arm. The burner was just beginning to pick up nicely when Father Romano dashed into the room where I was and yelled, "Come quickly! As I dashed to the foot of the bed he was gasping his last few breaths. As he was talking to the priests, the pain suddenly shot up his left arm and shoulder. All he said was, "That pain is here again," and clutching at his heart he fell back. He died at 1:30. Our conviction that major angina pectoris had claimed him was confirmed by the Doctor when he arrived one hour after God had called Brother Mauricius. Father Maestosi, with two fundi, was busy from two o'clock on making his coffin, which they completed at six. At 8 o'clock he was carried by the pupils to the church, with the entire mission as the guards of honor. There, a Missa Cantanta was sung, and he lay in state until four o'clock, the limit allowed by the authorities before interment. The Bishop was on the west Nile and couldn't be reached, but three priests and one of the Sacred Heart Brothers from Gulu came down. Brother Norbert was in Kenya on visitation. The British officials came in force and the D.C. (district commissioner) sent a lovely floral cross. The Goans, the Indians and the natives also had representations at the services. At four o'clock the office for the dead was chanted by seven priests, and the coffin was then carried by sixteen boys to the mission cemetery where a grave had been

prepared right next to the only other European grave, that of the Mission superior killed about ten years ago when his motor bike was hit by a lorry near Jaber, forty miles from here. Our Brother Mauricius is doubtless the first white man ever to die in this part of the Lango district.

His pupils had in five short months learned his rare qualities as a teacher—more discerning minds had perceived and appreciated his more hidden qualities of a simple, self-effacing and holy religious.

His work done, Brother Mauricius went to claim the reward of a supremely beautiful life. The qualities manifested in his boyhood days had burgeoned into towering virtues as a Xaverian Brother. Throughout his life he had manifested with uniform vigor a selfless submission to the Will of God. As novice, teacher, superior and missionary, he left a legacy of self-denial and self-effacement. And if one, only one of the myriad incidents in his life, had to be selected to typify the sterling value of his life as a Xaverian and his message to his Brothers it might emerge from an incident that occurred the very night before his sudden death. Charitably he urged his two confreres Brothers Nathanael and Vincent Engel to get away for a rest, adding, “Don’t think about me; I shall stay here and look after things.”

Stay he did. The hastily dug grave could not bury the spirit of the man nor contain the ample lessons of his life.

The eulogies addressed to his sister and to his niece, a religious, emphasize with singular fidelity the great love in which the man was held. Brother Brendan Costello wrote from Mayfield:

It would take an abler pen than mine to describe what feelings of respect and awe we had for him in his complete observance of his religious constitutions. If there is one thing of which we are certain it is that the cause of Xaverianism has been glorified; in so far that Lira has been made more hallow, in being the final resting place of a magnificent religious.

And his niece, a Dominican nun, in a letter to Brother Majella wrote:

I cannot overemphasize his unparalleled charity. I never heard Brother say an unkind word; every superior was a prince, every subject and associate a good religious, remarkable teacher, gifted scholar.

The Brooklyn Tablet eulogized in an editorial:

Brother Mauricius was an inspiration to the members of his order who looked up to him as an exemplary, self-sacrificing Christlike Religious. He exerted also a powerful influence for good on the boys whom he taught, who will remember him as an exacting teacher, but one in whom they could place their absolute trust.

One could cite other testaments to Brother Mauricius’ superlative stature as man, teacher and Xaverian, but to those of us who knew him such tributes to his fine intelligence, his capabilities as teacher and administrator, his self-sacrificing nature, his devotion to his rule are cloying and unnecessary.

On June 25, 1949, the Saint Michael’s boys he had taught during his fifteen years filled Saint Michael’s Church to attend a solemn mass of requiem. In the meantime all the forms of Mayfield met to offer their masses and Holy Communions for the soul of the Brother who had made in one short year such an impression on their lives. In Lira, the Sisters of the Assumption promised perpetual care of his grave.

Today a visitor to Lira would find his grave in the tiny cemetery a short distance from the Xaverian mission. He would see that the sisters and girls of the nearby mission had kept their pledge to tend the grave and the flowers that grow along the headstone. He would see that the base of the stone had been cut in a pyramidal fashion and the simple inscription reading:

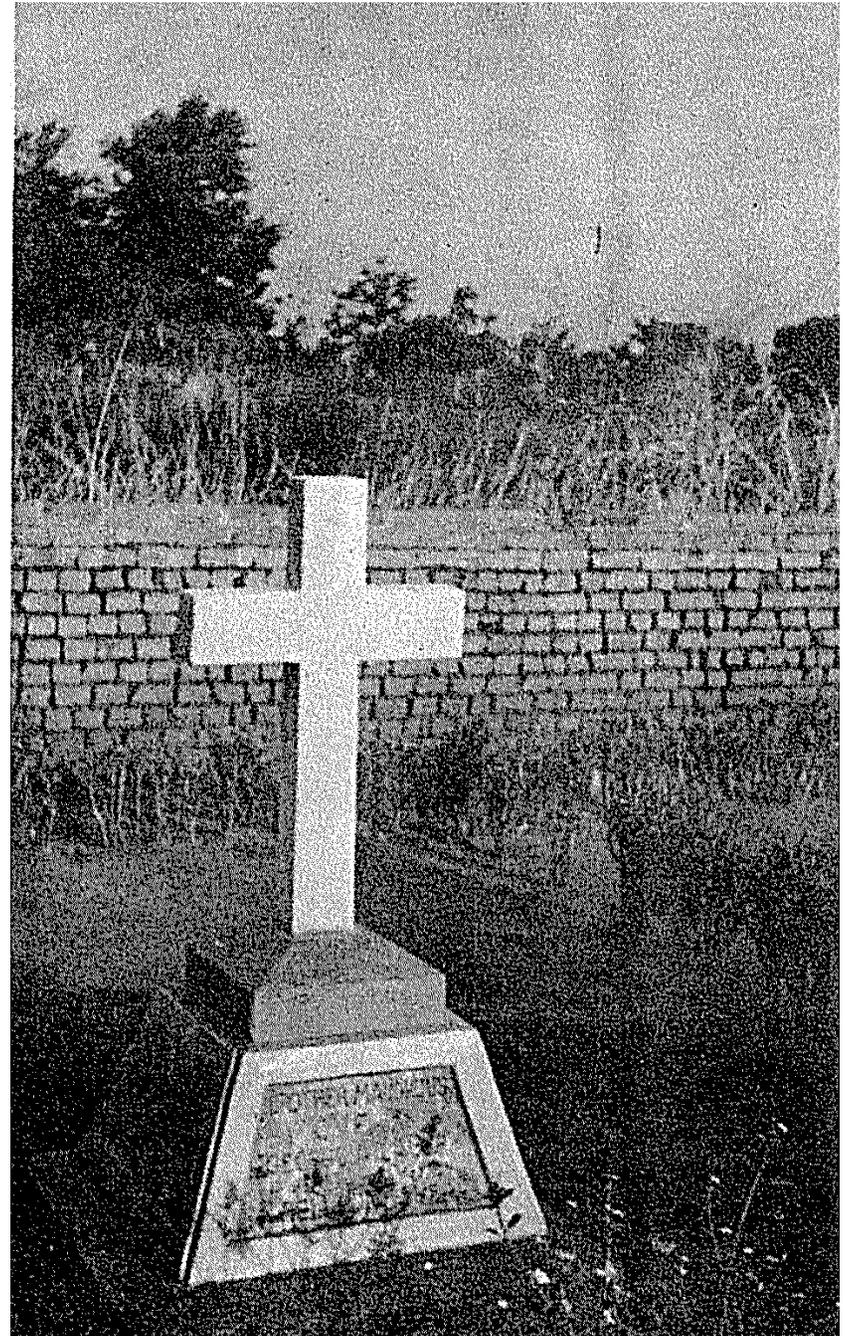
BROTHER MAURICIUS
C.F.X.
GEORGE A. LAUER
1895-1949
A RELIGIOUS 35 YEARS

Attached to the stone is a large white cross gleaming in the brilliant African sun standing as a pledge of the permanence to the Xaverian mission in Africa and as a sign of fulfillment for good Brother Mauricius, who had brought his entire life under God's Holy Laws.

May he rest in peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Brothers Vincent Engle, Brendan Costello, Majella, Jr., Jason, and Jogues and to Brother Mauricius' sister, Mrs. Buckman and his niece, Sister Mary Berehmans, O.P. the writer's thanks for their courteous and ample replies to his request for information about various phases of the life of Brother Mauricius.



CYRENIAN NO. 13

Brother Gilbert, C. F. X.

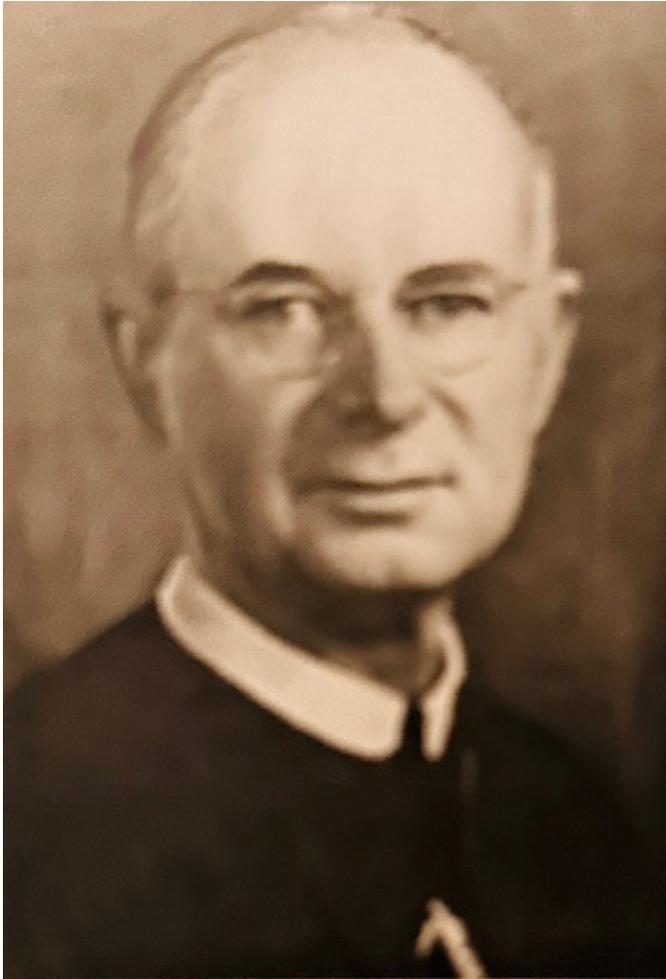
(PHILIP F. CAIRNES)



by

Brother Alexius Joseph, C.F.X.

Originally Published 1970



BROTHER GILBERT, C.F.X.

CYRENIAN NO. 13

INTRODUCTION

When a Brother attempts to write a Cyrenian, he could reflect to the words of old Brother Isidore: “Every community has been and ever will be influenced by the presence of a strong personality. Even after the individual has passed away, the effect of his life continues. A Cyrenian is to assist all, whenever possible, especially the younger members, in studies or work, to encourage them in their vocation.”

Boswell’s advice in the introduction to *The Life Of Samuel Johnson* is apropos:

Indeed I cannot conceive a more perfect mode of writing any man’s life, than only relating all the important events of it in their order, but interweaving what he privately wrote, and said, and thought; by which mankind are enabled, as it were, to see him live, and ‘to live o’er each scene I with him-as he actually advanced through the several stages of his life. “

Seemingly, God always deals with a race through individuals, never the multitude. He created Adam, preserved Moses, crowned David, and called Paul. In every crisis, God has raised a champion to stay the ravages of an invader. Long ago, a young man at Keith Academy put it quite well when he spoke of Brother Gilbert: “I found him, a little of him here, a little of him there, all of him everywhere. “

As St. Jerome wrote to Paulinus in 394, I can sense our Cyrenian, with a peep over my shoulder, warning: “Everyone knows that trades like farming, building, engineering, carpentry, all need apprenticeship. But when it comes to the trade of interpreting the Word of God... well, any talkative old granny, any old fellow in his

dotage, any frothy intellectual will blithely dissect and expound it without bothering to take any lessons in it. This is a childish way of going on, this is circus stuff, to set up as master in your own ignorance. Aye, to let my spleen speak ('ut cum stomacho loquar!'), it means that you don't know what you don't know."

A book which has the title, *Unless Some Man Show Me*, by Father Alexander Jones, saves me because of its very title. Our Cyrenian bore the name Philip. The author employed these words:

And behold, a man of Ethopia, of great authority
under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians,
who had charge over all her treasures,
had come to Jerusalem to adore.
And he was returning, sitting in his chariot,
reading Isaias the prophet.
And the spirit said to Philip: Go near and
join thyself to this chariot.
And Philip running thither, heard him
reading the prophet Isaias.
And he said, thinkest thou that thou under standest what
thou readest?
Who said, And how can I, unless some man shew me?

– Acts VIII, 27-31

It is our wish that this little book about our Cyrenian may be easy enough to make the reading of it a leisurely delight, yet dynamic enough to carry one on in days of renewal... with a glimpse of days before. For to him who sets out with the proper teacher on a voyage to life's discovery, it will reveal depths and beauty sufficient to address meaningfully and manage the questions of his identity, his relation to others, and to God.

"Some things more perfect are in their decay, Like a spark
that going out gives clearest light,
Such was my fate whose doleful dying day Began my joy and
termed fortunes spite.

Rue not my death, rejoice at my repose.
It was not death to me, but to my woe
The bud was opened to let out the rose,
The chains unloosed to let the captive go."

... born July 8, 1884

CHAPTER I

The "Missouri" was a slow "sea-going beetle" when she shoved off from Liverpool, bound for Boston, in mid-May 1882. The story of that saga of the sea never dimmed in family interest because the small group of passengers included five precious souls: youthful parents with their first-born child; the mother's sister, Aunt Catherine with her husband, "Uncle Billy" Flynn.

They arrived in Boston on June 15, with eyes seemingly "poked out on sticks," as the Irish would say, from watching so long for a sight of land. Now there were new plantings in America, slips from older roots that started in Ireland, at Cavan and the Vale of Glendalough. Both grandfathers emigrated to England following the famine of 1850, wishful for a livelihood that would hold together body and soul, expecting nothing more. Preston in England, birthplace of the poet Francis Thompson, was likewise the birthplace of the mother of our Cyrenian.

As soon as the father stretched his sea-legs on Boston's cobble-stone streets, he promptly converted shillings into coins of the new world, and bought newspapers. To be cut off from news media, his staff of life, for a month, would be comparable to depriving another man of air and water. Current topics, never scandal, provided mental food and this stimulated discussion. In discussion he employed no hints and disguises, and never lost an argument because when he won, he won; and when he lost, he won. No shilly-shally, vacillating, middle-of-the-roader, he called a spade a spade. Withal, the facts were punctuated with jovial wit, his greatest charm.

The father's first job was cutting ice at seven dollars per week, and soon an inspired change was made to Norcross Brothers, a construction company. He worked faithfully, and studied and became a licensed engineer. His nickname from fellow-workers was "Dynamite" a title of respect for the blast effects of a voice attached to the fuse and spark of quick reflexes. He brooked no challenge to his authority and earned cooperation and esteem.

His father called him Edward. When Grandpa came to the house, they would have a friendly glass before dinner. A typical appraisal was: "Edward, this a drink with determination. The cow that gave such good milk is well worth her keep." The actual source was from the creameries of two well-known Irishmen, Hennessey and Bushmill. At table Grandpa said grace, "Please God, make us able to eat all on the table." And when the repast was finished: "God be praised! We're all appaised!"

Grandpa carried a blackthorn stick, symbolic of his race. He could quote poetry about every crossroad in Ireland with such facility, the breath of his nostrils and the blood of his veins suggested there might be a metronome in his head, attuned to the lyrical cadences of Thomas More. Titles of "Poet Laureate" and "Limner to the King" were not meaningful, unless they had been conferred by King Brian Boru. After the Irish bards he rated another Gael, Robert Burns. No Anglo-Saxon rhymer could match for quality in simple appeal of style and theme, "The Cotter's Saturday Night."

With attention to the mother, let us say there is a mysterious quality, an ennobling virtue of righteousness to direct the character building of children. Yet undefinable, as her young instinctively know, the wise counsel that a mother can give to them, no other intelligence in the world can impart. A favorite expression with our Cyrenian's mother was, "God fits the back to the burden." She knew, rearing six boys and six girls.

Her voice was never raised above the tune of gentle kindness. The children's training period began at the earliest age of discernment and developed to confront each new situation. If any fledgling got

notions about establishing a social status with unapproved pals, it was nipped in the bud before long. She never attended the theater. Her alpha and omega were stereotypical pictures, magic lantern slides of "Rome and the Vatican" and "Ireland, a Nation" both were shown in the Church hall. In her home it was, "Everyone for the rosary," and "God bless us all."

In 1884, two years after the "Missouri" made the important run across the Atlantic, a new member was born to the family. Like Eddie, the second child was also a boy, christened Philip. He was described in early days as biddable, mindful in manners and conduct, a joy to every one. Philip was not rough, nor boisterous, nor quarrelsome; maybe more gentle than most youngsters, a distinction sometimes not worth having among boys. He had a cheerful, humorous personality, a good character along with natural refinement and keen judgment. He was well liked with the group at school.

Philip had a dog "Tammy," and like many Irish terriers "Tammy" had a streak of the gypsy in him. He had a fondness for straying beyond the parish bounds, when his master was in the district school, in order to find out what was going on over the hill. Come school dismissal, "Tammy" was right smack back. An alert and spunky dog, he had a healthy bark, and a satisfactory wag of tail. With every good reason for his perkiness, that terrier was fed the choicest victuals, calves' liver for three pennies, and Philip was a regular customer for the terrier.

Not only did he have a dandy dog, but Philip had also a few feathered friends as well: a little game bantam named "Ginger," and a couple of pigeons, two homing-birds, and a pair of muffed tumblers young lads came around to admire the pluck of "Ginger," to thrill at the tumblers somersaulting in flight, and to discuss matters like the possibility of entering homing pigeons in a race starting at some far away place, like Detroit! But for all his audacity "Ginger" ran afoul of another fowl with more pluck, to make a deeper and lasting impression. Some kids said it looked like an eaglet with clipped wings; but "Ginger's" finest hour was a dinner served in a fricassee sauce with mashed potatoes!

When Philip was nine years old, a Catholic school for boys was started at St. Joseph Parish Union Square, Somerville, under the direction of the Xaverian Brothers. Edward and Philip transferred from the district school to the Brothers' school, September 1893. A young classmate there, Billy O'Brien, son of a grocer, had a burning ambition to become a pitcher and the password was control, control! Most of the lads had baseball fever. Leo Hafford belonged to that group. Later he did well as a pitcher in the Tri-State League, Albany-Trenton-Lancaster. Fatal illness cut short his career. He and Philip were close friends.

In those early days, Mr. Snow was a truant officer who rode around on a bicycle in search of lads who preferred to be absent from school. Seemingly he searched more diligently for truants from the parochial school. The latter made for the fences and the railroad tracks where they knew the bicycle was of no help to Mr. Snow. When the latter left his vehicle to chase a truant through a yard, a confederate of the truant would borrow the bicycle and off he would go! Numerous boys with decent impulses were slowly reclaimed with the aid of a rattan that Brother Basil wielded with a tremendous swish against the bottom of his habit ... so effectively, that he solved the truancy problem.

If it is true to say the most effective lessons taught are read in the life and example of the teacher, rather than heard from his lips, then the lessons of the early Brothers may be counted among the greatest. Wild young souls slowed down, rough manners became courteous, sleeping intellects awakened, and clumsy hands became skillful. No graphs, no charts can spell out the response of boys to these relationships. They are valued as treasures, not kept in strong boxes, but locked in young hearts.

When Philip was finishing school, he wished to become a Brother. He asked his father's permission to enter the religious life, and at first the father fumed, as fathers might do when a son desires to go to God ahead of time. It likely caused the father chagrin and a feeling of loneliness, the thought of being separated from a fine, devoted genteel-mannered son.

Even strong men might wilt in the presence of what this youth had done the night before he received his first Holy Communion. That there would be neither scars nor shadows of scars on his conscience, he knelt besides his father's chair and asked pardon for any trouble he had ever caused, for any offence however slight. Then the same procedure was repeated at his mother's knee. What made this outward sign of contrition more significant was that the act of humility was performed in the presence of his brothers and sisters.

There was an opinion that the Irish could rule every country in the world but their own. This father could rule a tough group of workmen but he did not rule his own family, and he knew it well. There the gentle mother held complete sway over all hearts. So the father did not say to his son as Pericles did, "You must ask your mother," nor did this son have to ask his mother. She was before him in thought and purpose that one or more of her children might serve to be God's own. She never missed attending early Mass at St. Joseph in Union Square. Thinking that all her brood were snugly in bed, she often found on arrival at Church two of hers, Philip and Thomas. Between the two they served as Xaverian Brothers for ninety-six years; our Cyrenian, forty-seven, and Brother Samuel, forty-nine years.

The father might have surmised that Philip would be back home in a month, after finding restrictions of cloistered life not to his liking. He gave permission, but then the son wondered, was he doing the right thing since his father had hesitated before giving consent? This bothered the youth's conscience: should he go, or should he stay? He besought the help of his mother, but as dearly as she hoped he would persevere in his desire to serve God, she would not counsel him to stay, or to leave his home. The decision had to be entirely his.

Philip was never lacking in courage. He was not afraid the midnight hour he hurried through a swampy thicket... the kids had said this was where robbers hid to waylay the innocent. He was not in fear of the canebrake path because he was on his way to get the priest for grandma who had taken ill suddenly and was ready for death. He was thirteen then, now sixteen. We grow by will and mind. When Philip

decided to part company with all near and dear, he told one young friend of this decision, Leo Hafford. Then on the evening before he left for the Novitiate in Baltimore, some lads came to call for him. This time he told Eddie to let them know he would not be going out that evening.

The following day with an absence of tearful scenes he left as he had wished: bid good-bye, put on his little Eton cap, picked up his suitcase went to Union Square, rang the bell at Brothers residence, and said, "I am ready, Brother!"

That date was February 8, 1901. From a diary he had under date of February 9, 1901: "Left home yesterday, arrived today at Camden Station, Baltimore. Brother Joseph, Director at Mount Saint Joseph College, met me. I was much impressed with his simplicity." Two months later a second entry: "Received the Holy Habit today, April 7, 1901, at Mount Saint Joseph. Vested by Father Thomas O'Connor, C.P. Exchanged the name Philip Cairnes for that of Brother Gilbert."

"If seeds in the black earth
can turn into such beautiful roses,
What might not the heart of man become
In its long journey to the stars?"
– G.K. Chesterton

CHAPTER II

In a study of the history of the Catholic Church in the United States, you will find a sequence of growth existing from Maryland to Kentucky to Massachusetts. Our Cyrenian spent much of his life in the same three states.

At Mount Saint Joseph in the Novitiate he built upon the virtues of humility, courage, charity, and dynamic enthusiasm, so characteristic of those persons in his Somerville home. His spiritual preparation for two years was solid. He developed a personal

devotion of the three Hail Marys and the Memorare which remained with him daily throughout life... typical example of the holiness of humble, simple preparation. He was easy to approach and enjoyed helping others to feel they were important persons. Quietly he completed his high school work and started his teacher-training. For recreation he played a lively second base, was no threat at the bat, but was a dramatic baiter of umpires!

Louisville was his mission from 1903-1908. Early in his first year at St. Xavier he learned his brother Thomas, as well as his cousin Thomas Flynn, had joined the Brothers, October 23, 1903. The latter was the son of Aunt Catherine and "Uncle Billy" whom we met on the "Missouri" and he became Brother Gabriel. In Louisville, Brothers James, Julian, and Peter were some of the men from whom our Cyrenian early developed a great love for vocabulary, essays, organization, and poise. Brother Gilbert wrote several letters, January 27, 1904, and March 8, 1905, and later, seeking admission to the vows.

These letters are masterpieces of humility, sincerity, openness, and courage. He was professed July 2, 1905.

At St. Xavier, he seemingly encountered a few hard mattresses and a bit of conservatism. Today Stauffer's Inn at the same location, Broadway and Second, has brought about an improved resting solution. White straw hats, cuffs at the wrists, and romeos or congress shoes were new to our Cyrenian despite opposition, but with permission, gently prevailed, to win the right to dress accordingly. Meanwhile his class duties with English and mathematics, his pursuit of a college degree, and his helping young men athletically... all contributed to his growth and progress in Louisville.

From 1908-1917 Brother Gilbert was back at Mount Saint Joseph. He learned more about baseball from watching professionals like Connie Mack and Jack Dunn: pre-season indoor baseball plans, horse-collar targets for pitchers to control, bats neatly arranged for use when a game is scheduled, class uniforms... everything with style. In June 1916 he was one of our first to earn a Master's degree

at Catholic University, Washington. On June 14, of the same year, he asked permission to take the vow of Stability. During this time, Leo Hafford his boyhood chum died suddenly at St. Agnes Hospital, Baltimore. Brother Gilbert from his first day in religion had prayed daily for his friend and God made our Cyrenian the messenger in securing a priest to be with Leo Hafford in those last minutes.

Reference has been made to the vow of Stability. Until 1917, Brothers ten years professed, pronounced a fourth vow called Stability. This added no fourth obligation but was rather a signified intention to bind the Brothers more closely to the Congregation. Only Brothers with the fourth Vow were entitled to active and passive vote in elections. When most of these privileges were assured to religious of ten years professed by the new Codex, the vow of Stability was discontinued.

When Brother Theodore served as Novice Master, it was owing to the thoughtfulness of Brother Gilbert then one of the teachers at the Mount, that the work of the Novices was somewhat lightened. Our Cyrenian offered to initiate the boarders in the art of bed-making. Thereafter while Novices were at the Mount, they were relieved from this duty, not hard work in itself, but as Brother Julian says, "hardly in keeping with the respect due to the religious habit."

Brother Gilbert as a coach was a perfectionist and a master of strategy. At a time when coaches aimed for one run, he played for runs in numbers. To get them, he made use of the drag bunt as one tactic, employed often enough to confuse infielders. Although only twenty-seven years old he commanded great respect from college athletes because he knew how to get the best in them. He was not stern; rather by joking and good humor, he lead them to enjoy the game. His 1915 team played twenty-nine contests, and the opposition included: Holy Cross, Boston College, Fordham, Georgetown, Villanova, New York University and Maryland. That year the Mount lost only to the Naval Academy, and to Richmond of the International League, connected with the renowned Jack Dunn.

Some Mount names of the time recall fond memories_ for the older

generation: Ford (Rube) Meadows, Porter Wamsley, Walter Cahill, Lou Malone, John Wagner, Polly Martin, Joe Kenesch, Kibby Schmidt, Lefty Herbert, Joe Bird, Joe Lawyer, Howard Lambert, Jim Miskell, Henry Gallivan, John Jackson, Henry Camalier, Jim Brennan and John Nolan.

The first day our Cyrenian saw Babe Ruth at Saint Mary's Industrial School the lad was certainly funny to look at: a left-handed catcher, wearing blue overalls and a mask, no shin-guards, no chest protector, nor did he have a left-hander's glove. Brother Gilbert describes it this way: "He wore a glove on his throwing hand. Before he threw to second, he would shake the glove from his hand, and then juggled the ball up and down before throwing. But when he did, I could see he was not as funny as he looked. The ball traveled to second duece high. It went through the pitcher's box a yard off the ground and hit the target at second. I said to myself that is a great left-handed pitcher they have catching in there!"

Three times that day young Ruth hit homeruns. "The fourth time," Brother Gilbert recalled "the big fellow struck out, and if possible he looked even better." He was introduced to Jack Dunn by our Cyrenian... who was always ready to yield credit in their kindness and direction to Ruth... to five Brothers: Paul, Matthias, Herman, Alban and Bruno... all of whom have gone, as our Cyrenian would say, "to Vahalla, the resting place of champions."

One of Brother Gilbert's best competitors was Joe Barry, a catcher at Leonard Hall. He went to the Orioles and then to Connie Mack's Philadelphia Athletics. Joe died suddenly, and in the opinion of baseball men, a promising career was lost. Looking in other places, Ed and Bob Walsh from St. John's Danvers, sons of the famous Chicago White Sox hurler, were star pitchers during our Cyrenian's days of 1922-26. Joe Coleman at Malden Catholic was a solid pitcher for Connie Mack's team. His son, Joe, is now an outstanding hurler for the Washington Senators.

Baseball is considered the great game in America. In its long history Brother Gilbert certainly made an apostolic contribution in behalf

of the sport. He found pleasure in the language of the game and in some of the funny moments. His friend old-timer, Ben Egan, was an expert fun-seeker on Babe Ruth, for the rookie's first train ride to the Oriole camp: "After you get into the berth, pull up the ladder and put it in the hammock. " It was the same tricky Ben who told Ruth at the hotel near their training location: "Son, baseball players never wear pajamas, only in case of fire."

One occasion Brother Gilbert and Babe Ruth went to speak at a Sports Dinner in a small New England town. A gentleman who had not been nominated as the official greeter, awaited their arrival outside the hall, and recognizing Ruth, for everyone knew the famous slugger by then, assumed the responsibility of host. This unofficial greeter had on a glow that a breeze could have fanned to a flame. As he thrust himself on the big-leaguer, the latter turned to our Cyrenian and whispered: "It looks as if the committee on hospitality drank all the hospitality before the guests arrived. "

A young Brother in an early class recalls:

"We had the pleasure during the summer of meeting Brother Gilbert. On a visit to the Novitiate he spoke to us in the community room. There were many inspiring thoughts in a talk that sparkled with wit. The paramount thought was that which he developed from his statement that in our world today there is a great demand for longer backbones and shorter wishbones."

When the Brothers assumed charge of Mission Church High School, Roxbury, our Gyrenian served as its first Principal. After six years he moved to Malden in 1932 to become our first Principal at Malden Catholic. Here the debating group still bears his name, so too the football stadium. He completed his time in 1938, then taught for one year at St. Michael's Diocesan High School, Brooklyn. After that he was assigned to Keith Academy, Lowell as a teacher. In all four areas his person and his work continue to be recalled with warm affection and high esteem.

Long prominent in the life of the American Province of the

Xaverian Brothers, Brother Gilbert served as a Director also in Utica, Leonardtown, and Old Point. For thirty years he served as a delegate at each Provincial Chapter. In July 1937- and in April 1947 he was a delegate to General Chapters in Bruges... testimony of the esteem of his Brothers. It has been said he stopped at many churches and shrines in Europe to pray for all in his home, everyone in the history of the family, and for every Brother in the Congregation.

Brother Brendan Costello of happy memory beamed in a conversation with me several years ago as he spoke of Brother Gilbert. He described how one morning at Mayfield, England, after breakfast the entire community moved chairs around to face our Cyrenian as he spoke to them. They listened to him for almost two hours, interestingly alive was he. To be sure the vocabulary built-up and early essay study and poise in Louisville, along with his magnetic personality provided instruction and entertainment that morning for the Brothers at Mayfield.

As a community man and one who served as Director, our Cyrenian was very popular. Mission and Malden found him presiding at dinner as a first class meat carver. You passed your plate down to him and he did the honors. At recreation, "500" or bridge was the name of the game. He liked to say "venerable" for "vulnerable" and when a card play was good he used a pleasant expression of "nice, hot, white meat," as in turkey. He specialized a bit with a lively clog dance, and he enjoyed a pipe smoke occasionally. At Mission there was a dog, "Mugsie," a Boston terrier. While Brother Gilbert seemingly kept "Mugsie" at his proper weight, the Brothers were secretly and facetiously giving the animal an extra chop or two.

Brothers were happy with our Cyrenian for he was a relaxed leader. They said their prayers and performed duties well. His policy was to give a man a job he liked to do, knowing he would do it effectively. Occasionally he procrastinated. He secured good mattresses for the Brothers, a lesson learned from the past. Sometimes he was with Mr. John Giblin, Mr. Tom Lynch, or Mr. Dan McCarthy, close friends with the tumbler pigeons, a dog or two, and even the ducks on the old South Shore. A visitor to the community was greeted with

the most pleasant hospitality for Brother Gilbert was a good talker, but better, he was an expert listener.

CHAPTER III

Many persons have made mention of Brother Gilbert's ability to speak. He had that certain magic with words to fit them into colorful and thought-provoking phrases. With affection he spoke of dear old Brother Isidore:

"Brother Isidore went through life, or rather wandered through its tangled and bewildering labyrinth, looking upon it all with grave, solemn wonder of a child, a veritable Israelite in whom there was no guile. Without his eternal ejaculations of surprise, we would not know him. Without those incandescent mental gestures that accompanied his thunderations of "by Jacks"... and the frowns he feigned when it was his duty to scold, Brother Isidore would never have been the "Grand Old Man" to the boys, and the big-hearted, understanding, lovable man to the Xaverians.

"Brother Isidore, the link between pioneer days and our times, is gone ... but his memory will live. It will live in sacred association at Mt. St. Joseph. His talks to boys will reverberate in their lives for years to come. The old campus will hallow the memory of his familiar figure. The corridors will keep vibrant the echo of his firm step, and the chapel will murmur the whispering of the prayers that for fifty years he poured forth within its walls. To those removed from the Mount, it will be difficult to think of the place as something apart from Brother Isidore... for years to come it shall reap the harvest of his labors and prayers."

Brother Gilbert's meeting with others was strongly effective because his speech revealed truth in what he was, and knew, and sincerely believed. Others may not have agreed with him always... but they were not narrow personal opinions, rather they were founded on knowledge and insight, and communicated with understanding. He impressed me by his love of Ireland. I invite you to consider briefly his love for Ireland from a talk he delivered at St. Patrick's

Day entertainment, March 1929, under the auspices of the Xaverian Brothers, St. Michael's Diocesan High School, Brooklyn, New York.

"In harmony with the reawakening of the spirit of love in you, on, St. Patrick's Day, there will be a rebirth and resurrection of all nature in Ireland. There the green will spring from the dull dead clods of earth; and bursting asunder the fetters of wintry restraint, it will break forth in floral splendor and vernal verdure over meadow and woodland, and the rivers and streams free from the icy hands of their mountain fastness will chant their peans of praise to God, as they roll sparkingly to the freedom of the open sea; the flowers in field and the blossoms upon the bush will burden the air with their nectared fragrance; birds in the trees will distil the fragrance of the flowers with miracles of melody, informing the world that the voice of Ireland may be stilled, but the soul of Ireland lives.

"Today, my dear friends, your brothers and sisters in Ireland, their hearts and pulse beating and throbbing with newborn vigor and promise, gathered garlands from the gardens abloom, and marched prayerfully down the lengthening aisles of their biyouacs, and wreathed every green mound where a martyr lies with the symbol of their hope and gratitude, and then held up to God the shamrock, the symbol of the rich contribution which Ireland has made to civilization and humanity."

"Her long litany of martyrs and scholars... she pleaded to Saint Patrick for mercy, to God, upon those souls who loved Ireland dearer than their life, and to the sacrifices of whom, she owes under God, the benediction with which her children has been blessed through out the world. Let us too, be mindful of Ireland's glories as well as Ireland's tribulations on this St. Patrick's Day."

Our Cyrenian was a splendid conversationalist and an excellent raconteur. He was a much sought-after speaker for Communion breakfasts, and for club meetings. His limitless store of anecdotes always assured inspirational ideas in an effective manner. At times our Jewish friends especially in Brooklyn, New York, and in Brookline, Massachusetts, were pleased to welcome him as a guest speaker on a

topic of education or similar vein. Miss Mary Smith, secretary and teacher at St. John's Preparatory School, Danvers Massachusetts, is a niece of Brother Gilbert. During this research of our Cyrenian she has been very helpful. She once said to me that the truth in a person is not in what he does, but in what he thinks and believes:

“I suggest that you write the wonderful truth of the central figure in your story, this branch of the family of man, of Christ. For us, the Xaverian Brother is the expression of Christ living and walking in our world. Christ lives and walks again in all of us, too; it is just that the Brothers live Christ's life, His way and, His truth abundantly. The magnificent courage of these men places their complete trust in the Master and they follow Him in obedience, daring to delay the compensation of the present for that which is eternal.”

In my research for this Cyrenian, one question stands out, what was his secret? We become our true selves only insofar as we love others and are loved by them. God is also approached through human relationships. Thus every act of love toward another leads us simultaneously to a new awareness of God. In the diary of Dag Hammarskjold, his last prose entry, on Pentecost, 1961, there is a moving finale:

“I don't know Who... or What put the question, I don't know When it was put. I don't even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer yes to Something... or Someone... and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore my life in self surrender had a goal.”

Blessed is the man who recognizes love, it is the power of Being itself. Blessed is the man who recognizes it when it visits him and lets it transform his life ... for only he can know what it means to be. Father Martin J. Link puts it another way, somewhere in his Religion series: “Even a moment in love's presence awakened us to life and we knew the truth in Wilhelmsen's beautiful phrase, ‘What being loved makes being do is precisely be’... In the one who loves us, we hear God's voice in the realm of every day, are newly reminded of His abiding call that defines our existence as persons,

and with exquisite patience awaits our free response. The only thing is not to let it go unanswered . This is the secret of love is power over us. To be loved is to encounter Being itself, eternity in time, God's face among the faces of men.”

Close to the life of Brother Gilbert was this poem, found among the things he left for the world:

Lord, help me to live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way
That even when I kneel to pray
My prayer shall be for Others.

Help me in all the work I do
Ever to be sincere and true
And know that all I do for You
Must be done for Others.

Let self be crucified and slain
And buried deep; and all in vain
May efforts be to rise again
Unless to live for Others.

And when my work on earth is done
And my new work in Heaven begun
May I forget the crown I've won
While thinking still of Others.

Others, Lord, yes Others,
Let this my motto be,
Help me to live for Others,
That I may live for Thee.

CHAPTER IV

Brother Gilbert's personality fitted him well for his chosen life of teaching. He had a keen understanding of youth and a deep interest in all activities and the problems associated with the young. His

beneficent influence on young men was not limited. His kindly advise and stalwart example was an inspiration to many Brothers. His real stature as a religious teacher, a sincere friend, a good Xaverian, can be appreciated only by his family, his Brothers, and friends who knew him well.

On July 7, 1952, we record a typical note from a Brother now deceased: "One of the reasons I enjoyed making my retreat at St. John's Prep this year was I could visit Brother Gilbert's grave each day... as I did. I cannot with any degree of definiteness trace the beginning of my vocation, but I feel certain that his example had much to do with it."

At Utica, New York, our Cyrenian was thirty-five years old, well over six feet, prominent forehead, and dark hair that was beginning to recede and thin a bit even then. His blue-gray eyes were alive with intelligence. Behind his pince-nez glasses, his nose slightly prominent, his mouth expressive and generous, and his chin was firm. Big and warm and sympathetic were his voice and laughter. The latter bubbled up in him in undulating chuckles which was a happy thing to hear.

In those days he taught biology and algebra. "Who got 'em all?" was a reference to their home-work problems. Then in rapid fashion: "Good mawning, gentlemen, Mr. Zip, Zip, Zip, and three-cheers for Utica!" He had a cheer even for the slow lad with a kindly reference to the word osmosis, mixed, spreading, diffusion. Years later New Yorkers knew him as an accomplished orator, with picturesque vocabulary, flawless diction, sonorous periods ... as well as effervescent wit, a man who never failed to cast a spell upon his audience.

On Mission Hill in Roxbury, from a youngster at that time, we learn this gem: "He looked ten feet tall, dressed in a long, black cassock surmounted with a narrow, white collar. Rosary beads swished at his side, looking cable-size to my startled gaze. Speechless, I looked at this smiling giant, wondering who he was. As Brother Gilbert passed, I got a whiff of piney shaving lotion, and as I looked up, nose-wrinkling I received a friendly, big-handed pat on the head.

Later on when the call of vocation became a clarion peal, I realized that on occasion... knee-deep in Indian summer, just an eighth-grader, I had received its first distant dream-like tinkle. Destiny beckoned on the day I saw my first Xaverian... within four short years I was in close contact with the Brothers."

The impressions a teacher of strong character can make upon a teenager are deep and lasting. Our Cyrenian was quick to see the humorous side of life and loved to tell anecdotes, of which he had an inexhaustible fund. He was an enthusiastic teacher and his enthusiasm was infectious. Brother Joques described him this way: "The gracious friendliness of the tall, affable man in the black habit, who made me feel at ease as my older brother experienced too. I will always remember his challenge: 'You have as much brains in your head as your brother has in his little finger.'"

A writer-friend left a very descriptive opinion of Brother Gilbert: "There was an intense humanness about him. He possessed the humility, understanding, manliness, and the zest for life which inspired respect for his talents and reverence for the habit he wore. This writer will remember his vigorous stride, his hearty handshake, his boyish grin, and happy vibrant laughter. He carried with him an aura of happiness, of confidence, and warm friendliness. You felt better for a chance meeting with him on the street. You marveled at his stamina, and sat spell-bound at his oratory. You admired his intense interest in the youth of the city, for the boys in his class. Their mental broadening and their spiritual development were his constant concern. You noticed this immediately in conversation with him."

Countless stories might be told of the inconvenience he invited to help others. He would go anywhere at any time the regulations permitted to befriend an unfortunate man. Employers knew him for the visits he made to find work for men in need. Officials knew him for appeals he made to mitigate punishment of an erring husband or son; young men and women grasping blindly in a maze of spiritual difficulty knew him too, and remember him for the hope he brought into their lives. Emphasis has been placed on his knowledge of sports

and his ability to recognize talent in athletes. His knowledge in this area served only to make a humble man widely known. He was loved and respected more for his character, for his faith in God, and his desire to spread happiness and confidence in the hearts of others.

In my reading I find glimpses of our Cyrenian. Teilhard de Chardin would say, "Nothing here below is profane for those who know how to see. On the contrary everything is sacred." Lord Acton's definition of freedom fits also, "Not the power of doing what we like, but the right of being able to do what we ought."

A novel written by Morris West, called *Daughter of Silence*, brought home some relative thoughts of Brother Gilbert: "The rarest thing in the world? A man or woman wise enough to look the world in the eye and accept it, good or bad, for what it is at that moment. You had the grace to be gentle, so long as you keep that, you need not be afraid. No matter how far you fall, you will never quite fall out of the hand of God... you may need to remember that, sometime. It is in spending our life for others that we can be reminded... 'flowers fall to make the fruit grow, and that is the way it was intended to be from the beginning.'"

Just as his life was an inspiration, so too, was his death. When God called our Cyrenian to judgment, He found him on his knees in the stillness of a chapel. He ended his consecrated earthly life where he had started forty-six years previously... before an altar. The subject of his meditation at that hour of monthly retreat was, "Give an account of your stewardship, for now, you can be steward no longer. He had fulfilled the letter and the spirit of his vows .

Daily he had prayed for all who had befriended him, and for others whom he loved, especially those in need of God's mercy. Pinned to his clothing was a badge of the Sacred Heart, his symbol of loyalty and devotion. In the pocket of his coat he carried a small crucifix which, he secretly held in his hand when he was traveling... a reminder to him of his Savior's journey. When Brother Samuel visited his brother's room, he found the desk as our Cyrenian left it: a small hand Bible was there, a pair of Rosary beads, a photograph

of his mother, and the poem, *Others ... his cherished possessions, fountains of inspiration for service. These were signs for Brother Gilbert of a meaning deeply personal.*

On Friday evening, less than forty-eight hours before, our Cyrenian walked up and down the sidelines enjoying every play of the Keith St. John's football game. The following day he attended the Nuptial Mass of a relative in West Medford. At breakfast he entertained informally those near him, with stories and witticisms.

After the meal he accepted an invitation to accompany his brother Joseph and several other officials of the Boston Braves, to Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Throughout the trip he was the same, kind, affable and entertaining Brother Gilbert.

The next day, Sunday, he did not speak of being unwell. Certain it is that he was present at all the exercises of that day of retreat. It was during the final one, approaching three o'clock he expired peacefully, October 19, 1947. The requiem Mass was held at St. Peter's, Lowell, October 22. The celebrant was the Rev. Clarence Macksey, chaplain at Keith. Most Rev. John Wright, Auxiliary Bishop of Boston delivered the eulogy... the topic sentence, I well remember: "We shall never see his like again." Words which had been applied to David of Old.

At the funeral service many notables of the baseball world attended, a tribute to what our Cyrenian had done for the game by his timely friendship toward a young man, Babe Ruth. We knew of his aid to countless others through the medium of Catholic education, his loyalty to the Brothers, and his virtues. Sport leaders like Mr. Thomas Yawkey, Joseph Cronin, Lou Perini, John Quinn, Eddie Collins, and Joe Coleman were there. Unique was the presence of twelve-year old Frank Haggerty from Danvers... he had volunteered attendance for the ailing Babe Ruth in New York.

A long time ago, Brother Samuel used these golden words, mindful of Brother Gilbert:

“There is no death, The stars go down to rise on some fairer shore,
And bright as heaven’s jewelled crown, they ‘shine forevermore.’”

October 19, 1947 – A recent letter from Mr. Jack Dunn III, secretary of the Baltimore Orioles has this story:

Brother Gilbert was a dear friend of my grandfather. My memories of him are limited since I was quite young when grandfather died. However I do have one very vivid memory of an experience . It was Saturday evening and Brother Gilbert was at the house for dinner. My grandfather was quite a practical joker, and since Brother Gilbert also enjoyed a good laugh, the two frequently sought ways to play jokes on each other.

“On this particular occasion my grandfather had obtained a drinking-glass with a hole in it, so that when anyone drank from it, a trickle would secretly run down the chest of the drinker. Brother was the victim and in drinking from the glass, he later discovered his high collar was completely ruined. He did not have another with him, and inasmuch as all stores were usually closed on Saturday nights in those days, a problem was created, as it was necessary to secure another collar so that Brother Gilbert could attend Mass the following morning.

As I said before, this is one of my most vivid memories, as we rode all over town in search of another collar. Particularly clear is the keen sense of good humor which Brother Gilbert displayed throughout the entire incident.

P. S. We found another collar!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks go to the Brothers who so graciously helped by their reminiscences... to relive the scenes. I am deeply appreciative especially to Brothers Aubert and Joseph Gerard, who have been authors of other Cyrenians.

To all the members of the Cairnes family, I extend a generous “thank you” for many kindnesses, with a fraternal nod to the nephew of our Cyrenian, Brother Omer, CFX.

Finally... it was the desire of Elizabeth, a sister of Brother Gilbert, to write the story of his life ... so that, if it should edify one person, it might be the means of a soul coming closer to God, then her labor of love would be well spent. Her death in 1962 prevented her from doing so. I clearly remember what she once wrote of our Cyrenian: “It seemed for an instant as though he tenderly touched the top of my head, then hastened away.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume is the fruit of many years of writing, reading, reflection, and prayerful learning. It stands as a testament to the generosity, faith, and encouragement of many companions along the Xaverian way.

With profound gratitude, I acknowledge the late Brother Isidore Kuppel, C.F.X., whose wisdom and foresight gave life to nearly all of these Cyrenian stories recounting the early Xaverian Brothers in the United States. Brother Isidore not only preserved our history but also shaped our living tradition, developing treasured customs such as the Menology of Deceased Members, the annual Xaveriana of communities and ministries, the advancement of Brothers' education, Xaverian College, and school alumni associations. I remain deeply indebted to his life, memory, ministry, and enduring inspiration.

The Cyrenians are true historical treasures, illuminating the faith and perseverance of our early Brothers. I am grateful to Xaverian Associate Karen White, whose encouragement prompted the renewal of these stories. Our publishers, Marty and Clint Carraro, likewise expressed admiration for the spiritual depth and missionary zeal found within these pages.

In preparing this publication, I was blessed by the generous service of reviewer and editor Vicky Ullrich, whose family roots stretch back to the 1860s at Saint Patrick's parish in Louisville and whose family legacy includes proud alumni of St. Xavier High School and Flaget High School. Her careful attention strengthened both the clarity and spirit of this work.

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biographies would inspire emulation and spiritual benefit, especially for novices, young religious, and all who walk the Xaverian path.

Finally, with heartfelt gratitude, I honor our Xaverian forebearers for their faith, trust, witness, and perseverance. May these pages renew in us the courage to keep the Xaverian Flame alive for generations to come.

- Brother Kenney Gorman, CFX

PIONEERS IN FAITH THE CYRENIAN COLLECTION

The first Xaverian Brothers arrived in America in 1854 at the invitation of Bishop Martin J. Spalding to focus on the ministry of education, service, and spiritual formation to the marginalized.

This Collection of 13 "*Cyrenians*", or an individual Brother's personal history authored by his peers, tell the story of these pioneer Brothers as they embarked on a mission to provide Catholic education in America. Beginning by running schools in Louisville, Kentucky, and facing many financial, physical, political, and religious obstacles – these brave men of faith persevered through many hardships and tribulations.

Today, the Xaverian Brother Sponsored Schools network includes 13 schools that serve more than 11,000 students and families. The schools range in size from 400 to 1,500 students and are located in Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut.



Edited by Brother Kenney Gorman, C.F.X.