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THE MISSIONARY METHODS OF THE REDEMPTORISTS

The parish missions, or popular missions as they are also called, are a phenomenon of the dynamic renewal of pastoral life ushered in by the Council of Trent. During the four centuries since then they have become in all parts of the world familiar features of Catholic life. Their early impact on the people was sufficiently strong to arouse the hostility of the Enlightenment and the suspicions of Gallican and Josephist governments; and at all times since they began their influence on religious attitudes and practice has been such as to warrant more careful investigation than has been given them up to the present¹.

There is a certain basic pattern in the mission that is readily recognisable — a course of preaching and instructions with more than usual emphasis on approaching the Sacraments. While that very broad outline would be commonly admitted, yet there are sufficient variations to allow of there being different types or methods, the missions for example of the Jesuits, of the Passionists, of the Redemptorists and so on. It is a question of different emphases and practices which have been formulated in various pastoral writings and in the constitutions of some religious institutes particularly devoted to the missions.

Among the religious principally occupied in the missions the Redemptorists must be reckoned, and indeed as quite outstanding in that company. Their founder, St. Alphonsus, was himself an extraordinarily gifted preacher and a diligent student of the abundant literature on missionary practice that was to hand in his day². He was also able to claim that right from the beginning his institute had its own distinctive methods. Writing to a prospective candidate as early as July 1734, less than two years after the institute had been founded, he claimed that its missions were very much in demand and produced marvellous results, « because

¹ A comprehensive history of the popular missions is not generally available. In the present study we have used the excellent work of Antonius Meiberg C.S.S.R., *Historiae missionis paroecialis lineamenta*, completed in Holland 1953 and reproduced by cyclostyle.

² A bibliography of studies of the missionary principles and practice of St. Alphonsus may be seen in *Spic. Hist.* 8 (1960) 510-515.

we give them in a way different from that of any other Congregation »³.

In the course of the two and a half centuries since St. Alphonsus made that claim Redemptorist missionary practice has continued and spread to most countries of the world. From time to time the various provinces have produced *Directories* for their missions in order to preserve both their pastoral effectiveness and that specific character St. Alphonsus had claimed for them in the beginning. There is a collection of these *Directories* in their General Archives in Rome which, if perhaps not quite complete, is sufficiently ample to allow one to judge the course of development from the time of St. Alphonsus to the present⁴. And that is the purpose of the present article, to trace the changing course of missionary practice among the Redemptorists.

In order to keep this study of Redemptorist missions within the limits of a single article it has been found necessary to treat two centuries and a half of history in extremely summary fashion. The development has been brought into a few broad divisions of time, and within each division there has been an attempt to show the effectiveness of the mission *Directories* that were used in various countries in the course of the period. It is obvious that such treatment must be sketchy to the extent of being little more than schematic. But one may hope that even in such a form the study of Redemptorist missions will offer a small contribution to the long overdue investigation of the parish missions and their contribution to Catholic life since Trent⁵.

I. - ST. ALPHONSUS AND THE MISSIONS

Well before 1732 when he assembled the first members of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer St. Alphonsus had already been thoroughly schooled in the work of the parish missions. Since 1724 he had been associated with the Congregation of the Apostolic Missions, popularly known as the Propaganda⁶. Even while preparing for ordination he took part in missions in the city of Naples and the surrounding districts; and once ordained he soon became a popular

³ Maurice de Meulemeester C.S.S.R., *Origines de la Congrégation du Très Saint Rédempteur*, I, Louvain, 1953, p. 128-129.

⁴ A catalogue of these *Directories* found in the Redemptorist general archives was published in *Spic. Hist.* 15 (1967) 163-178.

⁵ There has appeared recently an excellent study of the popular missions in the United States during the last century. Jay P. Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism. The American Experience, 1830-1900*, University of Notre Dame, 1978.

⁶ For information concerning the Congregation *delle Apostoliche Missioni* cf. *Spic. Hist.* 8 (1960) 393-452.

and accomplished preacher⁷. If he was able to claim as early as 1734 that in the new institute the missions already had a distinctive method, it would not follow that the method was solely his. In the foundation years the Director, Mgr. Thomas Falcoia, exercised a constant supervision. He was himself a member of the missionary Congregation of the Pii Operarii and a distinguished preacher⁸.

Once the institute had been inaugurated it was seen as necessary that the prospective members be offered the means of learning its ways. At a very early stage an attempt was made to formulate the missionary methods. Falcoia wrote in August 1733 to ask how Alphonsus was progressing with a *Regolamento nelle missioni*⁹. As with so much other material that found its way to Falcoia's busy desk, it is not possible to say with any confidence what became of this particular project, seemingly the first formulation of Redemptorist mission practice. In any case, before long there did appear a clear regulation of how the missions were to be conducted.

The second General Congregation of the institute in 1747 read and approved a *Regolamento per le sante missioni*¹⁰. In addition to this more solemn promulgation there exist two other early texts which witness to Redemptorist practice in those first years. There is a manuscript of a *Regolamento per le sante missioni* annotated by the hand of St. Alphonsus¹¹. Among the comments jotted in the margin we find a couple of times the note *come sta dichiarato dal Padre*, which together with other indications seems to show that this was an earlier formulation prior to the Congregation of 1747 and possibly prepared for presentation to that body.

There is a third early text, written this time entirely in the hand of St. Alphonsus. It is entitled *Metodo per le missioni*¹². This

⁷ Cf. Maurice de Meulemeester C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, I, 19-21. There is a more extended account in Raimundo Telleria C.S.S.R., *San Alfonso Maria de Liguori, Fundador, Obispo y Doctor*, I, Madrid, 1950, p. 117-134. Cf. also Antonio Maria Tannoia, *Della vita ed istituto di S. Alfonso Maria de' Liguori*, Torino, 1857, L. I, p. 29-31.

⁸ Cf. Oreste Gregorio, *Mons. Tommaso Falcoia*, Rome, 1955.

⁹ The letter has been published in *Analecta Congregationis SS. Redemptoris*, Rome, 11 (1932) 238-239.

¹⁰ The text in Italian with a Latin translation may be seen in *Analecta* 1 (1922) 172-178, 206-212, 255-263.

¹¹ Published in *Analecta* 8 (1929) 242-249.

¹² The text of the *Metodo* has been published with the letters of St. Alphonsus. *Lettere di S. Alfonso de' Liguori*, III, Rome, 1890, 535-545. An English translation has been included in the *Centenary Edition* of the complete works of St. Alphonsus compiled by Eugene Grimm C.S.S.R., vol. XV, New York, 1890, p. 328-341.

Metodo, of St. Alphonsus' own composition it would appear, refers to the text of the *Regolamento* which he had annotated. In the text of the *Metodo* published with the Saint's letters its date is given as 1744. If that is to be accepted, then it would seem that the annotated text of the *Regolamento* must be of an earlier date. It is clear at least that quite early a formula of Redemptorist mission practice existed and that in 1747 it was formally imposed as legislation. It is evident that the claim of St. Alphonsus almost at the very beginning that missions were given in his institute in a manner different from that of other congregations was no exaggeration.

If we call this method, formulated in the legislation of the second General Congregation, Alphonsian that should not be interpreted as meaning that he alone was responsible for its elaboration. There is evidence enough that Falcoia for one was interested from the start in the *Regolamento*. A brief analysis of this « Alphonsian method » must, of course, be the starting point of our investigation of the Redemptorist missions.

1. - *The « Regolamento per le sante missioni »*

The *Regolamento* opens with a rather lengthy foreword in a style of exhortation¹³. The first sentence proclaims the glory of the holy missions as « one of the most evident works of Divine Charity for the salvation of souls in these times grown more corrupt than ever ». They have proved themselves as being capable of transforming even a Geneva into a sanctuary¹⁴. The members of the institute ought to be like Christ, the Supreme Missioner, « *al possibile nella sostanza e nel modo* »¹⁵. They should prepare themselves by silence, study and prayer until the age of thirty and then before joining the ranks of the missioners make a retreat of forty days and a general confession¹⁶.

The missioners of the institute were required to be single-minded, seeking only to bring to the people the grace of God for

¹³ The text annotated by St. Alphonsus as given in *Analecta* 8 (1929) has been used for citation. It is published more compactly without the parallel Latin translation.

¹⁴ *Analecta* 8 (1929) 242. It is, of course, a pious Italian mind that saw Protestant Geneva as the prototype of the evil in the world. A rather more sensitive judgement by the general chapter of 1764 substituted Babylon for the city of John Calvin.

¹⁵ *ibid.* 243.

¹⁶ *ibid.* 243.

the salvation of their souls and ready for any hardship or opposition that might come their way. They were to go out full of confidence, not in their own lengthy preparation, but in God alone, the Source of all good. They should trust in the Mother of God and in the Apostles, the heavenly patrons of the institute¹⁷.

Father de Meulemeester sees the mark of Falcoia's hand in this somewhat rhetorical introduction, notably in the expression *Sua Divina Maestà* and in the manner of proposing the ideal of the following of Christ. And he even argues with sound reasons that St. Alphonsus might well have considered withdrawing this section from the text submitted to the General Congregation¹⁸. Whatever may have been its authorship, this foreword was to serve as the model for introductions to future elaborations of Redemptorist missionary ideals, notably in the constitutions of 1764 and in the many provincial *Directories* that they inspired.

Following on this introduction there is a detailed exposition of the manner of giving the mission. The text approved in 1747 has the subheading « *Metodo per le missioni e de' loro esercizi* »¹⁹. For our analysis of the method we are justified in using the formulation of St. Alphonsus himself in the *Metodo per le missioni*, since it does not differ from the outline in the *Regolamento* and has the further advantage of being rather more succinct. One is also fortunate in being able to note the points he chose to emphasise²⁰.

There is a brief treatment of the preliminaries²¹, which in the *Regolamento* comprises nine paragraphs. The missionaries are to be chosen and sent by the superiors at the invitation of the bishop, priests or people of the place to be evangelised. Word should be sent in advance of the arrival of the missionaries in sufficient time to allow for adequate advertising and to make provision for their solemn reception and accomodation. After reciting together in the church the *Itinerarium clericorum* the missionaries are to set out on foot, since it was permitted to go on horseback only in case of necessity²².

¹⁷ *ibid.* 243.

¹⁸ Maurice de Meulemeester C.S.S.R. *op. cit.*, II (1957), 153. For the influence of the Pii Operarii cf. *Spic. Hist.* 8 (1960) 302-321.

¹⁹ *Analecta* 1 (1922) 175.

²⁰ In the present article the English version has been used as being more convenient for citation. Volume XV of the *Centenary Edition* in which it is contained is entitled *Preaching of God's Word*, which title will be retained for citations.

²¹ *Preaching of God's Word*, 128-129.

²² In the annotated text of the *Regolamento* St. Alphonsus has commented that

On arrival in the parish they should be met by the clergy of the place, who had been warned of their coming, and conducted in procession to the church to the singing or recitation of the *Benedictus*. At once a preacher should explain the purpose and procedure of the mission to the people and introduce his companions. If it should seem suitable the first sermon might be preached at once; but as a rule the formal exercises of the mission should not begin so soon. A note, however, adds: « It should be understood that in regard to the beginning of the missions, one should not be positively restricted to an inviolable rule: the circumstances of the places, persons etc. should be considered »²³.

Whether or not the mission began formally on the day of arrival, the *sentimenti di notte* or evening exhortations should commence right from the first night. The preacher of the *sentimenti* should leave the church accompanied by a little procession with lights and a crucifix and singing suitable hymns. Arriving at a piazza or other place where people could be assembled, the missionary should deliver a short *fervorino*, after which he should have the people join the procession back to the church, where they were to make an act of contrition and be dismissed after a blessing with the crucifix. This dramatic introduction of the mission « should not be omitted and it should continue during three or four evenings ». The *sentimenti* were to be concise, « should last a half or a quarter of an hour », and on each occasion should end with a sentence calculated to remain in the hearers' memories.

« The missionaries should attach great importance to these exhortations, which usually produce very great fruit in the holy missions; they should not on any account be omitted; they should not be improvised; and before going forth to deliver them one shall take care to prepare for them by fervent prayer »²⁴.

The opening sermon was particularly solemn²⁵. A procession of all the clergy made its way through the parish singing the litany of the Blessed Virgin; then, « the place most populated having been reached », a Father was to deliver a short exhortation, to urge the people to attend the exercises of the mission and to invite his hearers

on a long journey the missionaries should reckon their rate of travelling at sixteen miles a day. Cf. *Analecta* 8 (1929) 244.

²³ *Preaching of God's Word*, 330.

²⁴ *ibid.* 330-331.

²⁵ *ibid.* 331-332.

to come along at once to the church to hear the first sermon. The procession then returned to the church with pauses to allow the missionaries to encourage more and more to swell the ranks of those on the way to hear the solemn opening sermon. In the church five decades of the Rosary were recited; the sermon was delivered; and the function ended with a moving act of contrition inspired by the matter of the preaching.

For this opening function there was to be diligent preparation. In particular, care was to be taken to send two Fathers to call on and personally invite « the chief man of the place, the governor or any other distinguished person ». The clergy, of course, were exhorted to attend all the exercises « for the sake of good example ».

After that spectacular opening the mission was to proceed with careful attention to good order. « The exercises should take place punctually at the time fixed, namely the meditation at an early hour in the morning, Christian doctrine or catechism early after midday meal, and the evening sermon at an hour convenient for the close of the day »²⁶.

The meditation, early in the morning, « as soon as a suitable number of people have assembled », was preceded by five decades of the Rosary, after which a missionary on his knees in the pulpit made a short, familiar meditation. The theme of this exercise was to be « a subject pertaining to the purgative way ». It was concluded with an act of contrition without ceremony, the whole to take no more than three quarters of an hour²⁷.

The Christian doctrine or instruction was to be regarded as especially important, « one of the most precious and most important of the holy mission »²⁸. The meditation might be omitted if there was a shortage of manpower, « but never the instruction ». The subjects to be treated were « the precepts of the Decalogue and the manner of confessing ». The preacher was recommended to make « moral reflections and finish with acts of contrition etc ». Afterwards the prefect of the church should bring the children together and instruct them on confession and Communion.

Concerning the « principal or great sermon » there was little that needed to be said²⁹. It was to last, together with the act of con-

²⁶ *ibid.* 332.

²⁷ *ibid.* 333.

²⁸ *ibid.* 333-334.

²⁹ *ibid.* 334-335.

trition no more than an hour and a half; and the preacher should not conclude without urging the people to invoke the Blessed Virgin, for which purpose there was to be an image of her close by. To this very brief description there was added a warning to avoid excessively theatrical ceremonies or gestures. « It is forbidden to utter curses, to use the chain or other instrument to draw blood, to burn oneself with the torch and the like. But the superior may sometimes permit the use of the rope and of the skull, when this is done with zeal, prudence and discretion ».

Among the sermons of the mission or other spiritual exercises there ought always to be included one on the Blessed Virgin, as « it has been established by the General Chapter »³⁰.

After the treatment of the great sermon of the mission there came a longer paragraph dealing with the ceremonies or solemnities that might be associated with it³¹. Four or five times in the course of the mission the men might take the discipline (with cords) during the recitation of the *Miserere*, and on one evening there could be the « exercise of trailing the tongue », a formidable penitential act on a paved floor trampled by many dusty or muddy rustic feet. The penitential exercises were to be preceded by short exhortations after the style of the *sentimenti*.

On the last two or three evenings of the mission there took place the very moving ceremony of reconciliation. After the *sentimenti di pace*, called by the translators an exhortation of peace, two men known to have been at enmity and carefully schooled beforehand, were brought together to embrace publicly before the crucifix.

The last day of the mission was to be an occasion of particular solemnity³². There was to be in the morning a general Communion with public and solemn prayers of preparation and thanksgiving. The sermon in the evening was to be preceded as usual by the Rosary, during which a procession of the Blessed Sacrament was to go out of the church for the blessing of the fields. After the closing sermon there was Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and this was the only time it was given in the course of the mission.

³⁰ If we may accept 1744 as the date of the *Metodo*, then this decision must have been made by the first General Congregation held in 1743. The *Regolamento* accepted in 1747, in fact, says that this decision « sta determinato nella Congregazione generale prima ». Cf. *Analecra* 1 (1922) 211.

³¹ *Preaching of God's Word*, 355-356.

³² *ibid.* 336-337.

On the last three days, or at least two in smaller places, there were to be the exercises of the Devout Life³³. These « should never be omitted, according to a decree of the chapter: one should try to introduce them permanently ». In the evening after brief preliminary prayers a preacher was to give a half hour's instruction on mental prayer with a word on preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion and an explanation of the Rule of Life for the devout Christian. Then on his knees he was to make a meditation on the Passion or on the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin³⁴.

A warning followed to the effect that « one should not fail to make the mission last at least ten or twelve days in small places ». Then a word on the prefect of the church and his duties offered practical directions for the smooth and orderly conduct of the mission³⁵.

A final section gave some admonitions for the behaviour of the missionaries³⁶, their travel, table, rest and recreation together with the order of the day they were to observe in their own little community. At the end there came a word on retreats to nuns, the point of which was to stress that the missionary was before all else a man for the people.

« In the missions or other exercises of devotion for the people, when the bishop asks for them or prescribes them, the spiritual exercises shall be given to the religious or nuns, and one may be extraordinary confessor; but outside of these occasions, such a thing is forbidden, except for the nuns of the Most Holy Saviour when they show a great veneration for these exercises »³⁷.

2. - *The « Exercises of the Missions »*

In 1760 St. Alphonsus published *The Exercises of the Missions*³⁸. This adaptation of an existing work gives a practical treatment

³³ *ibid.* 337.

³⁴ It seems both from the *Metodo* and the *Regolamento* that the exercises of the Devout Life took place after the final sermon. In the *Esercizi di missione*, however, appended to the *Selva* and dating from 1760, it is said plainly that they are to be given before the sermon of the final blessing. Cf. *Opere ascetiche di S. Alfonso Maria de' Liguori*, III, Torino, 1867, p. 254; English translation in *Preaching of God's Word*, 230.

³⁵ *Preaching of God's Word*, 338.

³⁶ *ibid.* 338-340.

³⁷ The *Regolamento* adds that if a bishop should request these retreats to nuns, the Fathers should ask to be excused. Cf. *Analecta* 1 (1922) 263.

³⁸ Cf. Maurice de Meulemeester C.S.S.R., *Bibliographie générale des écrivains*

of the various features named in the *Metodo* and the *Regolamento*. Clearly, the method claimed by St. Alphonsus as specific could not have been entirely different from what was done by other missionary institutes. Father Meiberg rightly considers that it was in the general structuring of the mission that St. Alphonsus showed his originality, in opposing the commonly accepted *missione centrale* popularised by Paolo Segneri S. J., insisting on a sufficient number of missionaries and time to hear the confessions of all³⁹. We may safely add the practice of including the exercises of the Devout Life in the programme. These points which may be considered as characteristic of the method of St. Alphonsus show above all how precise and comprehensive was his notion of the conversion which was the aim of the mission.

Father Meiberg includes in this Alphonsian structuring of the mission programme one feature which was surprisingly omitted from both the *Metodo* and the *Regolamento*, the renewal. It seems that the practice of returning to the localities missionised in order to confirm the people in their conversion had been observed at least since 1735⁴⁰. In an unsuccessful attempt to gain royal approbation in 1736 through the well disposed minister of the crown, Marchese Gioacchino Montallegre, St. Alphonsus and Falcoia had argued that the Fathers « *da tempo in tempo ritornano... per ascoltare le confessioni e per confermare le anime ne' santi propositi fatti, con istruzioni, prediche, indirizzi e consigli spirituali ed altro* ». The name *rinnovazione di spirito* is met for the first time in a letter of Father Cesare Sportelli to St. Alphonsus in March 1741, by which time it must have been a well established institution. In the text submitted to the Holy See for approval in 1748 the renewal was mentioned and summarily described⁴¹. Cardinal Besozzi, *ponente* of the cause in the Sacred Congregation of the Council, commented that the renewal « *sane singulare est huius instituti medium* »⁴². When legislation for the Redempto-

rédeemptoristes, I, Louvain, 1933, p. 110-111. It appeared as Part III of the *Selva*. It drew its material from the work of Filippo di Mura, *Il missionario instruito* published in 1750. The adaptation of this work was made « for the greater convenience of the young members of the Congregation ».

³⁹ Cf. Antonius Meiberg C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 257-258.

⁴⁰ Cf. Oreste Gregorio C.S.S.R., *Saggio storico intorno alla « Rinnovazione di spirito »* in *Spic. Hist.* 15 (1967) 126-133.

⁴¹ Cf. *Documenta miscellanea ad regulam et spiritum Congregationis nostrae illustrandum*, Rome, 1904, p. 59; *Documenti intorno alla regola della Congregazione del SS. Redentore, 1725-1749* = *Bibliotheca Historica Congregationis SSmi Redemptoris*, IV, Rome, 1969, p. 400.

⁴² *Documenta miscellanea*, 79.

rists was codified by the general chapter of 1764 the renewal was included and explained. It is clear that from the time it was introduced the renewal in the mind of St. Alphonsus, and in fairness it must be said of Falcoia as well, had the same purpose as the exercises of the Devout Life, to confirm those converted by the mission in the Christian life.

3. - *The Constitutions of 1764*

A final and quite exhaustive formulation of missionary practice in the time of St. Alphonsus is to be found in the constitutions promulgated by the general chapter held in 1764⁴³. The first thing that occurs to one who reads these constitutions is that the formula has evidently grown a great deal from the terse *Metodo* or even the longer *Regolamento*. If Father de Meulemeester found cause to suspect Falcoia's hand in the *Regolamento*, then there is good reason also to see influences other than that of St. Alphonsus in the constitutions. The chapter of 1749, which had accepted the Pontifical Rule given early in that year, directed that the legislation of the institute be completed by suitable constitutions applying the new rule to everyday life and activity.

This task was entrusted to Father Paolo Cafaro, whose proposals were to be submitted to the next chapter, to be held in 1755. Father Cafaro died in 1753 with his work as yet incomplete, so that St. Alphonsus commissioned Father Antonio Tannoia to have the material ready for the subsequent chapter in 1764. Father Tannoia's draft had a somewhat turbulent passage, so that afterwards some disgruntled individuals spoke slightly of «Tannoia's constitutions»⁴⁴.

Father Tannoia spoke of himself as «the compiler» of the constitutions⁴⁵, in other words the collector of pre-existing legislation. Father Tellería has judged, after carefully identifying Tannoia's sour-

⁴³ The constitutions *Delle missioni ed altri esercizi* are to be seen in *Codex Regularum et Constitutionum Congregationis SS. Redemptoris*, Rome, 1896, p. 36-106. There are studies on the composition of these constitutions of 1764 by Oreste Gregorio, *Le costituzioni redentoriste del 1764* in *Spic. Hist.* 1 (1953) 121-144 and Raimundus Tellería, *De capitulo an. 1764 Nuceriae Paganorum celebrato necnon de eiusdem constitutionibus adnotationes historicae* in *Spic. Hist.* 1 (1953) 145-168.

⁴⁴ Cf. *Spic. Hist.* 1 (1953) 150.

⁴⁵ *ibid.* 132.

ces, that the material presented and accepted in 1764 represented « substantially » the way of life that had been followed since 1732⁴⁶. In particular, he examined the legislation *Delle missioni ed altri esercizi* and found that it reproduced « substantially » the earlier sources such as the old *Regolamento* and the *Breve istruzione degli esercizi di missione* of 1760, which he calls « the *Magna Charta* of the Alphonsonian missions »⁴⁷.

At first sight the constitutions, some seventy pages in length, may perhaps seem to be very far removed from the comfortably succinct *Metodo*, but closer examination shows that all the elements of the earlier texts can be recognised even though they have been very considerably elaborated. The prologue, for example, which Father de Meulemeester found so lengthy, has now grown to several times its original size⁴⁸. The elaboration in this and in other places is somewhat rhetorical, though always quite inspiring in expression. And there are places where the extended text introduces eminently practical material.

The section entitled *Della maniera di predicare* gives a brief and excellent summary of the familiar Alphonsonian insistence on how to preach « *come ha predicato Gesù Cristo ed i suoi santi Apostoli* »⁴⁹. Similar important development can be seen in the section *Del predicatore della sera*⁵⁰. Of particular value is constitution VII *Delle opere da stabilirsi in missione*⁵¹, which treats the exercises of the Devout Life in a manner that seems to summarise the experience of the past thirty or so years. « *Consiste propriamente la vita divota in una mezz'ora d'orazione* ». Constitution IX is entitled *Del direttorio per una missione*⁵², and it treats in detail the points we have gathered from the *Metodo* and the *Regolamento*.

The renewal is now given a more precise formula⁵³. It is to be held four or five months after the mission for the space of a few

⁴⁶ *ibid.* 150.

⁴⁷ *ibid.* 151-152.

⁴⁸ Cf. the section *Dell'idea delle missioni e disposizioni per quelle in Codex Regularum*, 37-41.

⁴⁹ *ibid.* 41-43.

⁵⁰ *ibid.* 53-56.

⁵¹ *ibid.* 69-72.

⁵² *ibid.* 72-88.

⁵³ *ibid.* 88-89.

days, during which things should be done as in the mission with a single exception. « *Solo l'esposizione del Venerabile proibita in missione si permette in tutti que' tre o quattro giorni che dura la rinnovazione* ».

Under the heading *Degl'impieghi alieni del nostro istituto* there is a lengthy treatment of incompatible works⁵⁴. Among other things it is still forbidden to give retreats to nuns outside the time of mission. The chapter after careful consideration exempted only « *le monache del SS. Redentore della città di Scala* »⁵⁵.

In his petition for Papal approval of his institute in 1748 St. Alphonsus assured Benedict XIV that he and his companions had by then preached their missions in the most isolated and neglected places of all six provinces of the Kingdom of Naples⁵⁶. His claim was warmly supported by the archbishop, Cardinal Spinelli, who added his comments to the petition⁵⁷. The first decade and a half of its existence had given sufficient evidence of the value of what St. Alphonsus had maintained from the beginning was a manner of giving missions that was proper to his new institute. For the years that followed to the end of the founder's life, which was not far short of the end of the century, it is not possible to give precise figures. But some contemporary statistics of activity for a part of the time have been published by the *Spicilegium*⁵⁸. It is possible to argue that the extraordinarily busy apostolate of the earliest years did not decrease in the course of the century, nor does it seem that there was any diminution of the excellent results of the missions.

II. - REDEMPTORIST MISSIONS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Towards the close of the eighteenth century the parish missions fell under official disfavour and suffered a decline to the extent that in some Catholic countries of Europe they ceased entirely. In

⁵⁴ *ibid.* 89-93.

⁵⁵ One would have to see this decision of the chapter as being not only an explicit exception in favour of the nuns at Scala, but also a very plain prohibition of the exercises to be given to the Redemptoristines established some twenty years or so in Foggia.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Documenta miscellanea*, 60.

⁵⁷ Cf. Maurice de Meulemeester C.S.S.R., *Origines*, II, 196.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Spic. Hist.* 8 (1960) 322-346; 10 (1962) 51-176.

Austria they were forbidden by the Josephist laws for half a century, while the victorious arms of the French Revolution carried to the puppet republics it established its own contempt for everything that to its enlightened eyes wore the guise of superstition. By about the third decade of the nineteenth century, however, more tolerant governments had removed most of the restrictions, and the parish missions quickly revived. After that delayed start the nineteenth century saw enormous activity which showed startlingly spectacular results in Europe and spread from there to the Americas⁵⁹.

1. - Neapolitan Missions

In 1820 the Redemptorists outside Italy were allowed to establish themselves in Vienna, and under Father Joseph Passerat, Vicar General in succession to St. Clement Hofbauer, they entered on a period of rapid expansion⁶⁰. The superior, anxious to see that this dramatic development remain authentically Redemptorist, sent Father Francis Springer to Pagani, the venerable house of St. Alphonsus and the residence of the Rector Major, to obtain first hand information about the manner of living among the Neapolitans and the way they gave their missions⁶¹.

Father Springer was an excellent reporter, as can be judged by his account of a mission given in Nocera from 9th November to 11th December 1823⁶². In fact the principal value of his narrative, as Father Josef Löw comments, consists in its offering a description of an important mission conducted « according to the genuinely Alphonsian method »⁶³. Father Springer does indeed give a vivid description of the various exercises we have seen indicated in the *Metodo* and the *Regolamento* as he saw them performed, adding his own

⁵⁹ Cf. Antonius Meiberg C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 272.

⁶⁰ For bibliographical data concerning Ven. Joseph Passerat cf. *Spic. Hist.* 2 (1954) 265.

⁶¹ *Spic. Hist.* 2 (1954) 295-364. There is a brief but most informative account of Father Springer in pages 300-305. See also *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 377-424.

⁶² His report is published in *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 25-43. Among other contemporary witnesses to Redemptorist practice on the missions is a rather lengthy manuscript in the domestic archives of the house of Scifelli, which is yet to be studied in detail. It is the work of Father Vincenzo Gagliardi and bears the title *Direttorio apostolico o sia metodo di missione in cui vi sono gli esercizi da farsi in essa per bene delle anime*. It is dated 1806. Cf. *Spic. Hist.* 30 (1982) 3-289.

⁶³ *ibid.* 27.

comments with an occasional polite but shrewd criticism. The report is careful and methodical, and everything is neatly summarised: « Thus the principal exercises of the mission are: the early morning exercise, the Rosary, the instruction, the great sermon, and they go on until the *vita divota* »⁶⁴.

The topics of the evening sermons are carefully listed in the order in which they were preached: Opening (*chiamata*), Mercy, Delay of Conversion, Mortal Sin as an Offence against God, Spiritual Effects of Sin, Temporal Effects of Sin, Scandal, Death of the Sinner, General Judgement, Hell: Pain of Sense, Hell: Pain of Loss, Hell: Eternity, Importance of Salvation, Difficulty of Salvation, Blasphemy, Who are Saved, Justice of God, The Number of Sins (limits of forgiveness), Folly of loving the world, when life is a journey towards eternity, Abandonment (of the sinner, it seems), Sin as renewing the Passion of Christ, The Madonna, The Blessed Sacrament, The Gifts of God, True Happiness consists in loving God, Heaven⁶⁵. To these twenty-six topics, which occupied the time needed for the confessions in that important parish, should be added the three days of the Devout Life and the final sermon on Perseverance. On ten evenings of the mission, therefore, the people were offered preaching of considerable positive inspiration. Moreover, one must bear in mind the frequent exhortations of St. Alphonsus that in every sermon the missionaries should seek to lead their hearers to love even by way of fear⁶⁶. Just the same, it must be said that the list of topics indicated a very lively mission indeed. The impression is amply verified by the spirited description Father Springer has given of the various spectacular ceremonies and solemnities.

After the procession to the parish church, which because of rain consisted only of a few damp clerics besides the eleven missionaries and the inevitable following of small boys⁶⁷, the mission soon gained momentum. Father Springer describes the packed church that heard the opening sermon, while the prefect of the church and a couple of other missionaries patrolled the crowd armed with canes, which they used (in moderation, no doubt) especially on the little boys packed

⁶⁴ *ibid.* 34.

⁶⁵ *ibid.* 30-31.

⁶⁶ Among many instances which might be quoted, in the *Esercizi di missione* he states succinctly: « The missionary should chiefly endeavour in every sermon that he preaches to leave his hearers inflamed with holy love ». *Preaching of God's Word*, 303.

⁶⁷ *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 28.

into the sanctuary⁶⁸. The *sentimenti di notte* on the first three nights are described just as they were directed in the *Esercizi di missione*, and Father Springer finds them simply *wunderschoen*⁶⁹. The discipline taken by the men he finds most effective, especially on the night when the sermon was on scandal and all the missionaries joined in. And he gives, too, a vivid account of the daunting ceremony of the *strascino della lingua*, with the penitents dragging their tongues along the floor from the door to the altar to make amends for the gall and vinegar given to Christ in His suffering⁷⁰.

Father Springer's interest was captured by the instruction of the children, a thorough catechising in the form of question and answer, in a place apart at which the missionaries' canes were once more in evidence⁷¹. The general Communion of children and adults, men and women, were occasions when the reporter as well as the people found himself moved⁷². The preparation for Communion for each group had its own special ceremonies to express sorrow, humility, love and desire in ways that were quite dramatic. This was especially so with the children, wearing crowns of thorns and greeting processions of the Divine Infant and of the crucifix. There was a great deal of weeping; little girls had convulsions; and Father Springer concludes: « *Das Geschrey ist unbeschreiblich* ». There were similar scenes, scarcely if any more restrained with the adult groups.

Father Springer frequently draws attention to various aspects of the exercises carefully calculated, he considers, to stir the people and arouse in them sentiments of repentance and love. He was particularly interested in the style of preaching, giving a brief but very clear description of the three « tones » used to such effect by preachers in Italy⁷³. He had reservations about the prudence of introducing the use of the « tones » among northern peoples, even though he recognised that at Nocera the missionaries in their perorations were able to reduce their hearers to « a weeping, sobbing, crying *pasta* ».

The description of the exercises of the Devout Life during the

⁶⁸ *ibid.* 29.

⁶⁹ *ibid.* 31.

⁷⁰ *ibid.* 31-33.

⁷¹ *ibid.* 34-35.

⁷² *ibid.* 35-38.

⁷³ *ibid.* 29-30. For a study of the « tones » in Redemptorist mission preaching cf. F. Di Capua, *La « Predica Grande » dei redentoristi e la « Modulatio oratoria » degli antichi* in *Spic. Hist.* 1 (1953) 234-240.

final days of the mission is of particular interest⁷⁴. On these days the exercises consisted of a meditation in the morning, the Rosary in the afternoon and at the usual time of the sermon the special features of the *vita divota*. These were instruction on the necessity of the prayer of petition (*preghiera*) and of mental prayer (*orazione*) with some practical demonstration of how easy it was to perform them. Among these practical meditations was one on the theme of the Passion, which Father Springer says was presented rather as a detailed description than in the form of mental prayer. He concludes that « in his poor judgement » the *vita divota* was the weakest of the exercises of the mission, seeming to be really nothing more than another attempt to play on the people's emotions. Is it right to see in Father Springer's description and opinion an indication of how much the *vita divota* had declined from what it had been in earlier times?

There is no mention of the renewal, which does not mean, of course, that it did not take place later. Father Springer does, however, speak of the exercises to the clergy and the *galantuomini*, the latter a class considerably altered in composition since Napoleonic times. He also speaks of the exercises preached to the nuns for eight days, permitted by the rule only at time of mission, but « they now look at that through their fingers »⁷⁵.

2. - *The Extension of the Missions in Italy*

Further information about the manner of giving missions among the Redemptorists in Italy has been made available by *Spicilegium*. In 1837 there was a mission in Finale in the Duchy of Modena and in 1840 another in the nearby village of Solara⁷⁶. These ventures introduced the Alphonsian missions into the north of Italy. They were made possible by the patronage of the pious Duke Francis IV of Modena, who had come to know the Redemptorists through his Austrian connections and introduced them into his Duchy in Modena, Finale and Montecchio. On the occasion of the foundation of Finale in 1836

⁷⁴ *ibid.* 38.

⁷⁵ *ibid.* 41.

⁷⁶ Correspondence and some contemporary accounts, including a long letter to a local newspaper, have been published as edited by Fathers Josef Löw and André Sampers in *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 44-67.

he had asked the new superior, Father Francis Doll, to arrange a mission for the town as soon as possible⁷⁷.

The community in Finale was composed of men from the other side of the Alps, Austrians and the survivors of a suppressed foundation in Lisbon. Father Doll's problem was that he had no one capable of satisfying the good Duke, not only because he and his companions were unacquainted with the Italian missions but they were far from comfortable with the language. He put his dilemma to the Rector Major, Father Camillo Ripoli. As a result he was promised three Neapolitan Fathers to carry the burden of the preaching, while he and his community were to assist in the confessional. In this way the mission in Finale came to be under the competent guidance of Father Ignazio Maria Sortino, rector of the house of Spoleto and a missionary of some renown⁷⁸.

The mission lasted from 29th April to 25th May 1837. Among the documents published by *Spicilegium* there are three that enable us to form a complete picture of the exercises. There is a very laudatory description in the letter to the editor of *La Voce della Verità* and the more sober and balanced judgement of Father Giuseppe Valle in his chronicles of the house and in his reminiscences of Finale written in the 1860's⁷⁹. In general one sees that the three Neapolitan Fathers trained in the methods of St. Alphonsus remained as faithful to what they had learned as did those described by Father Springer in Nocera. All of the exercises already described were repeated in Finale and with similar effects.

Father Valle's comments are shrewd, as can be seen especially from one instance. Speaking of the general Communions, which were every bit as spectacular and moving as those described by Father Springer, he strikes a slightly sour note, remarking about the men's Communion that of the two thousand who took part under the prominent leadership of civil and military dignitaries many did so for motives that were political rather than religious⁸⁰.

⁷⁷ For biographical data concerning Father Doll cf. *Spic. Hist.* 2 (1954) 248.

⁷⁸ Biographical data about Father Sortino are to be found in *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 47; Francesco Minervino C.S.S.R., *Catalogo dei redentoristi d'Italia 1732-1841 e dei redentoristi delle provincie meridionali d'Italia 1841-1869* = *Bibliotheca historica Congregationis SSmi Redemptoris*, VIII, Rome, 1978, p. 168.

⁷⁹ For an informative account of that interesting character, Father Valle, cf. Giuseppe Orlandi, *P. Giuseppe Maria Valle C.S.S.R., Contributo bio-bibliografico* in *Spic. Hist.* 25 (1977) 130-249.

⁸⁰ *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 62.

A new feature, not mentioned by Father Springer, is the erection of the *Calvario* on the last evening of the Devout Life after the reflection on the Passion⁸¹. This beautiful ceremony is described very much as it had been recommended by St. Alphonsus in the *Esercizi di missione*.

« After the last meditation of the exercises of the Devout Life the preacher announces that as a remembrance not only of the Passion of our Saviour but also of the mission five crosses would be erected [...] Hence, the meditation finished, five missionaries come from behind the high altar, carrying each a cross on his shoulder and walking one after the other with two torches before each cross. When they have reached the place destined to receive the crosses, they place them on the ground; and at the erection of each cross a suitable exhortation is given »⁸².

Neither in connection with the mission in Finale nor with that of Solara given three years later does Father Valle mention the *sentimenti di notte*, the moving invitation to the mission that had so impressed Father Springer. It does not necessarily follow that the exercise so warmly stressed by St. Alphonsus had disappeared: it could well have been that the *tedeschi* from beyond the Alps were judged to be not yet ready for such a new type of sacred oratory.

Reflecting in Frosinone after he had been expelled with his companions from the Duchy by the Piedmontese march to unity, Father Valle soberly evaluated the Finale mission. « In the first place, it is worth recording that the mission was most fruitful, and perhaps there had never been so much good done for souls in Finale, nor has there been since (at least up to the present year, 1866) »⁸³. He goes on to speak of the fervour shown by the very great numbers who eagerly sought direction in the spiritual life from the Fathers, continuing right up to the time the latter were compelled to leave Finale. The five crosses of the *Calvario* became such objects of veneration that a special shrine was built to enclose them. The Redemptorist church from the very first Sunday after the mission became an important centre for the spiritual life of the locality.

The mission of Solara in 1840 still had to depend on the Neapolitan Fathers to carry the burden of the work⁸⁴. Father Emmanuele

⁸¹ *ibid.* 59-60.

⁸² *Preaching of God's Word*, 247.

⁸³ *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 62-64.

⁸⁴ *ibid.* 65-67.

Baldari, who had taken part in the Finale mission and had stayed on afterwards to assist the German Fathers, was the preacher⁸⁵. The others with him were all members of the community of Finale, one young Neapolitan recently appointed, Father Valle and two « Germans ».

Father Valle has left two descriptions of this occasion as he had for the earlier mission. It seems to have started off rather badly with only « *poca gente* » present in the church for the opening: but after that the enthusiasm grew as the missionaries presented the familiar and well-tried exercises. The population of Solara, of some 1500, was swelled as large numbers were drawn from neighbouring hamlets. The *sentimenti di pace* or the ceremony of reconciliation of enemies fell a little bit flat since, as Father Valle says, « there were no enmities in the district ». The beautiful little ceremony of the *Calvario* was just as moving as it had been in Finale with the charming additional feature that each missionary was assisted by his own special « Cyrenian »⁸⁶.

From Father Valle's diligent pen we have the description of a third mission, given this time from the house of Montecchio⁸⁷. On this occasion the Fathers in the north did not need to summon help from their Neapolitan confrères. The mission was given in Acquafredda in the present province of Brescia from 2nd to 17th February 1847. It had been arranged by the devout and wealthy Di Rosa family, whose textile industry provided employment for about seventy women and girls in the little village of some seven hundred inhabitants. The saintly Paula Di Rosa, who was to be canonised by Pius XII in 1954, showed herself most attentive to the missionaries and a great support in ensuring the success of their work, as one of them attested: « If any good has been done in the district by the mission, it has been due most of all to Signora Paola »⁸⁸.

Father Valle's description is not as detailed as for the two

⁸⁵ For biographical data about Father Baldari cf. *Spic. Hist.* 2 (1965), 237-238; Francesco Minervino C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 21.

⁸⁶ *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 67. Father Valle adds that it was necessary to summon the help of the parish priest, because poor Father Baldari was not able to take part in the procession *col pericolo di costiparsi*.

⁸⁷ Father Josef Löw has published contemporary documents in *Spic. Hist.* 2 (1954) 87-104. He includes some interesting details from the Process of St. Paula di Rosa, daughter of the Cavaliere Clemente di Rosa whose patronage made the mission possible. Montecchio, the third Redemptorist house in the Duchy of Modena, was founded in 1843.

⁸⁸ *ibid.* 104.

previous ones. He speaks mainly about the difficulties put in the way of the missionaries by the parish priest. He does not, however, seem to have noticed a most interesting feature mentioned by a witness in St. Paula's process, that the Fathers had to be escorted to the church by armed police, so that Father Löw in presenting the reports in *Spicilegium* expresses his doubts of the good witness's memory⁸⁹. It is worth noting that in this very small village of only seven hundred inhabitants there was still a team of four missionaries, who remained for three weeks. In the same way the missions in Finale and Solara had been clearly in the tradition of St. Alphonsus, who always insisted on sufficient time and a sufficient number of missionaries.

3. - Father Berruti and the Missions

Just after the middle of the century there was available in Italy a publication very much like the later *Directories*. This was the *Metodo pratico degli esercizi di missione*, published in Naples in 1856 for the use of Redemptorists. The booklet of 202 pages was introduced by Father Celestino Berruti, Rector Major of the Congregation in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies⁹⁰. The chapter that had elected him in March 1855 had directed that the *rhetoricam quamdam veluti regulam* of St. Alphonsus should be revised so as to incorporate the modifications that later experience of the missions had introduced in the course of nearly a century⁹¹. Father Berruti in his introduction, signed in December 1855, announced that the revision had been completed, and he directed that the *Metodo pratico* now published be observed by all « *ad unguem et absque ulla interpretatione* »⁹².

The « rhetorical rule » of St. Alphonsus is referred to frequently in the revised text, as one would expect, and it soon becomes evident that the « rule » is in fact the *Esercizi di missione*⁹³. What must be

⁸⁹ *ibid.* 103.

⁹⁰ For biographical data and bibliography cf. *Spic. Hist.* 2 (1954) 238; Francesco Minervino C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 25. By a decree of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in 1853 the Redemptorists in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had been placed under their own Rector Major. Father Berruti was the second to hold that position, being elected by a general chapter in March 1855. He remained in office until 1869, when the Congregation was once more reunited.

⁹¹ *Metodo pratico*, 3.

⁹² *ibid.* 3.

⁹³ That is particularly unmistakable when in treating the *vita divota* on p. 85, the *Metodo pratico* refers to the *rettorica sacra* of St. Alphonsus by chapter and

suspected from the evidence already seen of the missions in Nocera and in the north of Italy appears now to be confirmed. The Redemptorists in Italy depended not only on the constitutions of 1764 as their guide to mission practice, but also and probably to a greater extent on the practical explanation of the mission exercises offered by St. Alphonsus himself. The promulgation made for the Redemptorists of the south in 1855 now gave this practice the force of legislation.

The new handbook for the missions frequently appeals to the teaching or practice of St. Alphonsus; but often enough there is reason to suspect that it is not so much a question of quoting him but of expressing how he has been interpreted in the course of the years. This interpretation is particularly in evidence in the article entitled *Precetti di S. Alfonso in ordine alle missioni*⁹⁴. This should not be taken as implying that the Neapolitans had simply put their own views into the mouth of St. Alphonsus. If, as seems quite likely, the principal or even the sole compiler of the *Metodo pratico* was Father Berruti himself, then the interpretation would certainly be trustworthy. Father Berruti was a diligent student of the life and writings of his founder, as he showed especially in his *Lo spirito di S. Alfonso M. de Liguori* published in Naples in 1857. If this was the style of the interpretation, then the *Metodo pratico* represented a healthy evolution from the original *Esercizi di missione*.

The *Metodo pratico* has a different arrangement from the *Esercizi*, adapted more to serving as a useful missionary's handbook. In the beginning there is handy information about such things as the opening of the mission, the way to arrange the platform for the preacher, how to keep order in the church; and then follows along familiar lines directions for the children's instruction, the Rosary and the catechism⁹⁵.

When the book then comes to treat the sermon, there is at once something new. « Previously there used to be a meditation in the morning, but since 1800 the practice has been introduced of having the sermon in the morning as well as in the evening »⁹⁶. The reason for the change is that many people find that their work does

subheading, and these correspond exactly to the section in the *Esercizi di missione* treating the same material. Other references, less explicit, are still quite identifiable.

⁹⁴ *Metodo pratico*, 139-149.

⁹⁵ *ibid.* 5-22. One is relieved to learn that now the prefect of the church is warned not to use a stick or a cane to control the people.

⁹⁶ *ibid.* 23-24.

not let them come to the church of an evening. The sermon was given first thing in the morning as soon as enough people had come to the church, and the usual accompanying ceremonies of the *predica grande* were somewhat modified. The morning meditation was still described by Father Springer in 1823, but by the middle of the century it would seem that it had practically disappeared apart from the three days of the Devout Life.

The sermon is treated rather more concisely than in the *Esercizi*, but not differing from it substantially⁹⁷. The use of the « tones » is restricted with very precise directions; and a list of sermons, almost identical with that noted by Father Springer, is offered. Another interesting difference from the earlier « rhetorical rule » is the mention of the *propositi*⁹⁸. Before the act of contrition the preacher makes a solemn application of the sermon. With crucifix and candles held before the pulpit, for four minutes or so for motives drawn from the sermon he urges the people to abandon sin and make a good confession. With the *propositi*, the dramatic act of contrition, the « tones » and spectacular ceremonies like the use of the skull, the parade of the picture of the damned, the discipline and the reconciliation, it is clear that the Italian Redemptorist missions were full of colour, movement and drama.

There is a fine treatment of the *sentimenti di notte* together with the *sentimenti* that followed the sermon⁹⁹. One is relieved to find that the *strascino* no longer entails dragging the tongue along the floor from the door to the altar, but has been reduced to a few crosses made on the floor with the tongue. There is also a description of the beautiful ceremony of the *Calvario* which Father Valle had found so moving¹⁰⁰.

The treatment of the Devout Life calls for some attention, as some of the variations mentioned at Nocera in 1823 seem to have been incorporated into official practice¹⁰¹. The section begins with a reference to the *rettorica sacra* of St. Alphonsus, which is easily identified as meaning the *Esercizi di missione*, and goes on to add: « But constant practice has changed its form ».

⁹⁷ *ibid.* 23-82.

⁹⁸ *ibid.* 67-82.

⁹⁹ *ibid.* 94-104.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.* 131-134.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* 85-89.

At the usual time for the catechism, that is the major instruction, there is an instruction for at least half an hour on the prayer of petition (*preghiera*), because « the people have no idea of this prayer », and « this prayer guarantees the fruit of the mission ». This instruction during the days of the Devout Life is an evident difference from the sermon on the prayer of petition which used to be included among the *prediche grandi* at the particular instance of St. Alphonsus. Then after a short interval during which pious objects, scapulars, rosaries, crucifixes, are blessed there is a further practical instruction on mental prayer (*orazione*), prayer that can be made « sitting, working, walking ». The preacher then makes for the people a practical meditation to show how the method (seek, think, resolve) made it so easy to pray. Even in the exercises of the Devout Life occasion is found for a dramatic play on the people's emotions with a moving appeal to the crucifix, the very sort of thing that Father Springer had noted in Nocera earlier in the century with the comment that in his poor opinion this was the weakest point of the mission.

There is no mention of the renewal. That is a disappointment, as it would be most desirable to have some witness to its evolution such as was provided for the exercises of the Devout Life. The fact that it was not included in Father Berruti's handbook does not, of course, prove that it no longer found its place in Redemptorist missionary practice. It is to some extent a consequence of the fact that the *Metodo pratico* was based, not on the constitutions of 1764, but on the *Esercizi di missione*. One is left to conjecture as to what extent this change of basis for missionary legislation may have contributed to the decline of the renewal witnessed in later Redemptorist observance.

4. - *The Missions outside Italy*

Italy had the advantage of an almost uninterrupted practice of the parish missions. And the evidence we have seen shows a continuous development among the Redemptorists, who from an early date chose to base their methods on the *Esercizi di missione*, the manual St. Alphonsus had composed for the practical training of his followers. In the lands north of the Alps Josephist and anticlerical legislation had made such an uninterrupted tradition impossible. When Father Springer came to Nocera in 1823 a new climate of freedom was beginning to offer hope that soon the missions would show

signs of flourishing even there. As we have seen, the Redemptorists from the north had their important contacts with the missions of their southern confrères. It is well, however, to keep in mind the caution expressed by Father Löw in editing Father Springer's report from Nocera¹⁰². It is not clear to what extent the northern missions were affected by the accounts of southern practice they were able to study, so that the Redemptorists beyond the Alps need to be examined almost independently, and in particular it is necessary to attend to what was to become almost a feature of their ways, their use of *Directories*.

(a) *The Earliest Missions*

The first mission of the Redemptorists outside Italy was in HAGENAU, a small city of over ten thousand inhabitants in the diocese of Strasbourg from 12th January to 7th March 1826. It was conducted simultaneously in the two parish churches of the city with exercises also in the hospital and in the large women's prison of some four hundred inmates. There is a collection of contemporary material describing the event available in *Spicilegium*¹⁰³. For this important venture the eight missionaries were assembled from Alsace and Switzerland together with two men who were on their way to make a new foundation in Lisbon. They were fortunate in having the help of Father Springer with his first hand knowledge of practice in southern Italy and whose moving farewell sermon has been preserved.

From the Bischenberg chronicles we learn that after a well attended start the mission gained momentum and had to be prolonged on account of the increasing attendance, which at the ceremony of planting the mission cross had grown to twenty thousand¹⁰⁴. As an example of the impact of the mission on the locality Josephine Brunner's pamphlet says that in the prison only seven obstinate souls

¹⁰² Cf. *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 27.

¹⁰³ *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 280-339. In the collection of contemporary documents assembled and edited by Fathers Josef Löw and André Sampers there is correspondence before and after the mission, an eyewitness account by some devout person, possibly a nun, copied by a certain Josephine Brunner and later printed in the form of a small pamphlet, an Italian translation of the German original of the account made by Father Sabelli, secretary to the Rector Major, Father Cogle, and finally an extract from the chronicles of the Redemptorist house of Bischenberg, which had the responsibility for the conduct of the mission. The final sermon of the mission, which was preached by Father Springer, is also included among the documents.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* 330.

would not go to confession, and that a few months after it was over the gaol was more like a convent than a prison¹⁰⁵.

The order of the day as described both by the pamphlet and the Bischenberg chronicles was a little different from what was done in Italy¹⁰⁶. The day opened with morning prayer followed by a meditation and a short instruction on confession and the commandments of God and of the Church. Before the evening sermon there was what the pamphlet calls *die sogenannte Glosse*, which is explained as being a very brief instruction on practices of devotion, the mysteries of the Rosary or sacred ceremonies. After that came the sermon, which was followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, all concluding with night prayers. Perhaps the most marked differences from Italian practice were the somewhat lesser emphasis given to the daily instruction and the solemn close of the evening exercise with Benediction.

Understandably enough, there was some difference in the solemnities or ceremonies of the mission. These are described in detail in the pamphlet¹⁰⁷. The emotionally charged and dramatic *Abbitte*, which came to be called in French the *Amende*, was most spectacular, as was also the renewal of baptismal vows in the context of a sermon on the Christian life. The sermon on the Blessed Virgin, so important in the practice of St. Alphonsus, became an occasion for an expression of devotion in the form of decorations and a procession. The general Communion was also solemn events, rather less so perhaps than in Italy. In place of the *Calvario* we have seen in Finale there was in Hagenau a great event that doubled the population of the city for the planting of the mission cross. This event took up most of the pamphlet's description of the ceremonies. It was a *crux ingens*, the Bischenberg chronicles report, carried and escorted in procession by nine hundred men in six relays of a hundred and fifty each. They formed a most impressive honour guard for the huge memorial of the mission¹⁰⁸.

The differences from Italian practice are evident enough, but they can hardly be called substantial. The most important difference is that the Devout Life has become obscured to the point where it has practically vanished. Father Thomas Landtwing in his account

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.* 300, 322. A more sober report says that fifty refused the Sacraments, though agreeing that the prison was transformed into a nunnery. Cf. p. 330.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.* 294, 337.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.* 301-317.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.* 338.

of early Redemptorist activity in Switzerland says that the mission in Hagenau was influenced by the practices of the *Société des Missions de France*¹⁰⁹. One might reasonably conjecture that such a connection was in the mind of the author of the pamphlet, introducing the lengthy description of the solemnities. The ceremonies in Hagenau are said to be little different from those used and made familiar by the *Missionen in Frankreich*, a phrase Father Sabelli translates as *le Missioni di Francia*¹¹⁰. The Society of the Missions of France, founded in 1808 by abbé Jean Baptiste Rauzan, was a pioneering group of the revival of the parish missions in France up until the time of its dissolution during the revolution of 1830¹¹¹. The Redemptorists appear to have had some association with them before 1826, which makes it all the more likely that they should have been ready to incorporate into their own practice what had been tried in the field they were about to enter.

Whatever may have been their origin, the few special or new features that appeared in Hagenau are easily discernible, and one can recognise them as they occur again in later practice. After the mission was over Father Alois Czech, rector of the house in Tschupru near Fribourg, wrote to the Rector Major, Father Cocle, that even though the mission may have been a little different from Italian practice and not entirely according to what was prescribed in the constitutions, the results seemed to show that it was pleasing to God¹¹².

The pamphlet speaks about the good effects of the mission as being still discernible about a year later¹¹³. Apart from the marvellous transformation of the women's prison it does not descend much into detail. Much more significant, however, are some reflections on Hagenau that the Rector Major, Father Cocle, jotted down in his diary¹¹⁴. The people of the city, it seems, had become so enthusiastic in the cause of religion after the mission that they were led to make some imprudent speeches and take some ill-advised action, with the result that the unstable restored government of the Bourbons suspected

¹⁰⁹ Th. Landtwing C.S.S.R., *Die Redemptoristen in Freiburg in der Schweiz, 1811-1847* = *Bibliotheca Historica Congregationis SSmi Redemptoris*, II, Rome, 1955, p. 84.

¹¹⁰ *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 301.

¹¹¹ Concerning the abbé Rauzan and his foundation cf. *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, X (1953), Rome, 555-556.

¹¹² Letter of 28th August 1826 in *Spic. Hist.* 4 (1956) 333.

¹¹³ *ibid.* 322.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.* 335.

sinister political forces at work. The Austrian Fathers in consequence found themselves obliged to leave Alsace, and even Father Joseph Passerat, Vicar General of the Redemptorists beyond the Alps, had to break off a canonical visitation in Bischenberg. This irritating « persecution » had the happy effect of giving occasion to the rapid increase of mission work in Switzerland; « and Father Czech even went to Geneva », notes Father Cogle with evident satisfaction.

The Redemptorists in SWITZERLAND, during the twenty years before they fell into official disfavour in 1847, had a most creditable record of mission work¹¹⁵. The Fathers there had been greatly encouraged by the heady experience of success in Hagenau, particularly since some of their own men had taken part in the mission there and they could draw on the further experience of the Austrians compelled to leave Alsace.

It is possible to discern further new features in these early Swiss missions. Useful evidence made available in *Spicilegium* makes it possible to see the structure of these missions which followed on from that first venture in Hagenau¹¹⁶.

The first impression one gets from the reports of Fathers Czech and Michael Neubert made available by *Spicilegium* is that the missions were more concentrated and intensive. In Jaun in 1828 the mission given by four Fathers lasted ten days, as did the one in Sachseln in the following year, in which five missionaries took part. The labours in the Fribourg district reported by Father Czech lasted a week or even less in some instances; but they were scarcely missions, but rather courses of preaching for the jubilee year. The mission in Carouge lasted three weeks or so in 1832 with two missionaries. It is really scarcely more than an impression of some concentration in time and effort. Nevertheless, that impression is well worth keeping in mind in view of certain later trends in regions of German speech.

The concentration of effort is much more in evidence in the order of the day followed in Switzerland and in the mission plan pro-

¹¹⁵ Cf. Th. Landtwing C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 77-88. There is a list of missions year by year in an appendix, p. 132-135.

¹¹⁶ *Spic. Hist.* 8 (1960) 347-390. Fathers Josef Löw and André Sampers have gathered documents of which the most useful for our purpose are the reports of Father Michael Neubert of missions in Jaun in 1828 and Sachseln in 1829 and of Father Alois Czech of works in the Fribourg district in 1830 and in Carouge in 1833. Father Neubert was to become in later years a busy and renowned missionary, while Father Czech was for long a kindly and competent superior. Father Neubert's reports are the more informative.

vided by Father Neubert¹¹⁷. And in this respect there is clearly a marked difference from earlier Redemptorist practice, even from that of Hagenau. Each day began with a meditation of half an hour followed by a sermon of an hour or so and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. In the evening there was what the Italian translator of the Jaun report calls a *controversa morale*¹¹⁸ and Father Neubert in his plan for Sachseln a *Conferenz*¹¹⁹. This was followed by the second sermon of the day and by Benediction.

Very likely the second mission sermon each day was introduced for reasons similar to those given by Father Berruti for the practice in Southern Italy; but it is clear from Father Neubert's plan that the two topics each day were quite different. There was no provision, it seems, for an instruction apart from the dialogued exposition of various moral topics that preceded the evening sermon. Father Landtwing gives a brief description of this exercise, which he calls the *Kontroverskonferenz*¹²⁰. Two missionaries took part, one speaking for the people and expressing their doubts and objections so as to give the preacher in the pulpit the opportunity of giving a little life to his exposition. Again, as in Hagenau, there seems to be nothing that resembles the exercises of the Devout Life, apart from the trend in the last few days to what one might call a more inspirational content of the preaching.

The solemnities were those that had proved themselves so successful in Hagenau; and once more Father Neubert was able to speak of the dramatic impact of the *Abbitte*, the renewal of baptismal vows and the planting of the big mission cross¹²¹.

Father Landtwing adds a further informative note concerning these early missions in Switzerland. In his lists of missions he includes several renewals¹²². From his careful examination of the records of the time he was able to say that generally the renewals lasted no more than three days, strongly recalling what we have seen as prescribed in the constitutions of 1764. The Fribourg house alone gave nine such renewals in the course of a single year¹²³. It would not be unreason-

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* 353, 361-363; Th. Landtwing C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 80.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.* 354.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.* 362.

¹²⁰ Th. Landtwing C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 80.

¹²¹ *Spic. Hist.* 8 (1960) 354-355, 365-375.

¹²² Th. Landtwing C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 132-135.

¹²³ *ibid.* 85.

able to see in this zeal for the renewal an instance of the cult of the constitutions of 1764 which had become characteristic of Redemptorist life under Father Passerat¹²⁴.

While the Fathers in Switzerland were commencing their short but intense missionary apostolate, a new field was opening up to the Redemptorists in BELGIUM. Established in Tournai since 1831, the community under the dynamic leadership of Father Frederick de Held began a period of rapid expansion that quickly rivalled earlier foundations and a busy and remarkably successful missionary activity¹²⁵. The first venture was in the province of Limburg, now in Dutch territory, in 1833. The mission in the parish of Gulpen and Wittem attracted much favourable comment. Father de Meulemeester quotes a letter of Mgr. Jean Laurent, later Vicar Apostolic of Luxembourg, who wrote to his brother of the huge crowds drawn to the churches, as many as fifteen thousand in Wittem in one day¹²⁶. As a consequence of this spectacular beginning the houses in Belgium and Holland by the middle of the century had already accumulated a most impressive tally of missions and renewals.

In AUSTRIA it was not easy to make a start with the parish missions in the face of continuing Josephist legislation. Some relaxation of the long prohibition was gained by the Jesuits, refugees from Russia, who asked for authorisation for missions in the province of Galicia. After long negotiation permission was given in 1832. Before long it was the turn of the Redemptorists, but not before they had made tedious and seemingly interminable explanations to Josephist officials¹²⁷.

The negotiations were opened by Johann Ehart, the zealous parish priest of Landeck in the Tyrol¹²⁸. In 1838 he had met Father Passerat and spoke with him about having Fathers preach in his parish for the *quarant'ore* devotions, which had long been the sub-

¹²⁴ Cf. E. Hosp C.S.S.R., *Geschichte der Redemptoristen-Regel in Oesterreich, 1819-1848*, Vienna, 1939.

¹²⁵ Maurice de Meulemeester C.S.S.R., *Glans Alphonsiennes*, Louvain, 1946, p. 27-36.

¹²⁶ Letter of 27th December 1833 *ibid.* 30.

¹²⁷ E. Hosp C.S.S.R., *Erbe des hl. Klemens Maria Hofbauer*, Vienna, 1953, p. 445-460.

¹²⁸ The beginnings of the missions in the Austrian Tyrol are described *ibid.* 460-491.

stitute found in the region for the missions. There was the usual Josephist round of interview with the local authorities, letters to exalted personages in Vienna, objections of all kinds to be answered: and at the end of it all there were in the early part of 1840 exercises lasting one week and given by five Fathers from the house in Innsbruck. Later in the year there was even a renewal.

The method followed was similar to those already working so successfully in Alsace, Switzerland and Belgium with much the same topics for the sermons and instructions and the same solemnities. As the Austrian missions, however, spread quickly through the Tyrol and to the rest of Austria, there were some differences from what was done in other parts of Europe. For one thing, the word « mission » could not be used, so that reports spoke of *Volksexerzitionen* or some similar name. Another important new feature was the appearance of the *Standesunterweisungen* or instructions for the « states of life », which had been introduced on the occasion of the first mission in Landeck¹²⁹. The rector of Innsbruck, trying to find a way of making up for the restriction of the preaching to a single week, talked the problem over with his companions and eventually they hit on the idea of separate instructions for men and women¹³⁰. For the German-speaking lands these features of the early Tyrolean missions remained, a concentration of effort into a shorter period of time and the special instructions for the « states of life ».

The early Redemptorist missions outside Italy were extraordinarily successful in capturing the support of clergy and people. Reports of the enthusiastic crowds such as we have seen for Hagenau and Wittem could be repeated many times over during the early 1800's. And in most Redemptorist houses the books revealed an almost incessant activity, showing how eagerly their missions were sought by bishops and priests. It was a most encouraging experience for the developing Redemptorist life in those northern lands, where its official toleration dated only from 1820. The missions continued to loom large in the minds of those who planned the direction to be taken when in 1841 provinces were erected in Austria, Switzerland and Belgium. And in the new provinces there were soon special regulations issued in the form of *Directories* for the missions and other pastoral activities.

¹²⁹ *ibid.* 527.

¹³⁰ Cf. Antonius Meiberg C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 313.

With the multiplication of the provinces, there was also an increase in the number of the *Directories*, as experience in new countries called for further guidelines. It is by examining these authoritative regulations that one can discover the way the Redemptorist missions were conducted.

Among the *Directories* in use during the nineteenth century it is possible to discern three broad trends. These trends should not be understood as though they implied great differences in practice. For all Redemptorists of traditions stemming from Father Passerat's regime there was throughout the nineteenth century a firm adherence to the constitutions of 1764, solemnly reaffirmed in the general chapter of 1855. Small variations, rather of the type we have seen in the earliest missions, did appear, and it is according to them that we speak of the three large divisions. Obviously, if we are to understand the distinctions in this way, it would be misleading to see the classification as anything but very loose.

(b) *The Belgian - Dutch Tradition*

Of the provinces erected in northern lands in 1841 that of Belgium was outstanding for its rapid development and its missionary activity. The first superior was Father Frederick de Held, a disciple of St. Clement Hofbauer and like him a man of immense zeal and energy. He had guided the Belgian foundations from the beginning. His province included the houses in Holland as well as Belgium, with those in England added after 1843 and after 1844 even those in far-off North America. It is not surprising that the Belgian province under such leadership should have produced the first *Directory* for missions and retreats¹³¹.

The first brief section of the little handbook deals with questions raised at a meeting of superiors in 1844. It presumes already existing broad norms for the missions, which are in fact the constitutions of 1764, to which reference is made in the answer to no. 8. What resulted from the meeting was a summary of the variations

¹³¹ *Dispositions diverses faites pour les missionnaires de la Congrégation du Très-Saint-Rédempteur de la province belge*, s.l., s.d. The little booklet contains three divisions: *Questions sur les missions proposées et résolues par les Supérieurs assemblés en l'an 1844*. This is of less than four pages. *Dispositions prises dans la réunion des Supérieurs le 1^{er} janvier 1849* is of three pages. The final section, occupying the rest of the sixteen pages of the whole booklet, gathers together the existing directions for conducting missions and retreats. It is entitled *Dispositions faites dans la Réunion Générale des Missionnaires le 23 juin 1849*.

that had been introduced by the experience of the past decade or so.

Decision no. 2 directs that an instruction replace the morning meditation with the people; and a further resolution, no. 5, speaks of the need of more instruction, appealing to the practice in Italy and recommending that in addition to the early morning instruction there be another on the occasion of the principal Mass. The solemnities in general are moderated, prudence being recommended in the general Communion and the *Amende honorable* being much curtailed with the prohibition to use some of the dramatic features of the earlier *Abbitte*. The planting of the mission cross is still recommended, but the ceremony of the renewal of the baptismal vows is now transferred to the close of the renewal.

The general impression of these first Belgian regulations is of a more austere form of the mission than had been the practice either in Italy or in the first works beyond the Alps. Benediction is still given each evening, but apart from that there is little to distract from the word of the preacher either in the instructions or in the sermons.

The discussions at the meeting of superiors on 1st January 1849, which form the second division of the booklet, were concerned mainly with broad regulations assigning spheres of responsibility in the acceptance of missions to the various houses and to the provincial and some prudent rules of behaviour. There was little particular regulation of mission practice apart from a warning that in a sermon on blasphemy the preacher should not explain his theme by means of examples.

The meeting of the missionaries in June of the same year was a much more important occasion, bringing together the special rules governing the apostolic works of the province. Its decisions are contained in pages 7 to 16 of the booklet, its third and final division. These decisions form in fact a real *Directory*, even though that name was not used at this early stage.

The « *Directory* » opens with a general statement. « The great Rules and Constitutions on the missions are obligatory in all parts which have not been formally dispensed in the appendix added in Latin to the same Rules »¹³². After this broad invocation of the rules

¹³² The Latin text referred to was most probably that printed in Liège in 1846. It reproduced a translation published in Fribourg in 1826. This version did not include the constitutions of 1764. Cf. *Spic. Hist.* 11 (1963) 482-483. Later in 1849, at some time after July, a new Latin version was published in Liège which was to be used in the chapter of 1855, assuming an official status. Cf. *Acta integra Capitulum Generalium Congregationis SS. Redemptoris ab anno 1749 usque ad annum 1894 celebratorum*, Rome, 1899, p. 310.

and constitutions this first Belgian « *Directory* » goes on to add a number of points of an eminently practical nature, some of which it is careful to note differed a little from the rules.

The concern for instruction noted in 1844 now introduces a new practice, that of a brief, familiar instruction in the evening in place of the explanation of the Rosary, no doubt what had been called in Hagenau *die sogenannte Glosse*. In no. 5 it is directed that the *amende honorable* be performed after the sermon on sacrilege, even though it was not mentioned in the rules. Treating of hymns during the mission, the meeting forbids them after the sermon, adding that it is likewise forbidden to make any announcement after the sermon. Clearly nothing must be allowed to spoil the effect of the preaching. Interesting is the recommendation that confessors called in to assist be given suitable guidelines, because « uniformity of practice in dealing with penitents contributes greatly to the successful outcome of the mission ».

The topics of the instructions and sermons are given in the shape of a plan. It is in four parts. In the first the instructions are on confession and the sermons on the Last Things; the second part is on particular sins and their occasions; the third on the duties of one's state in life; and the final part is « consecrated to the devout life or the means of perseverance ». The exercises of the Devout Life had obviously undergone a considerable transformation.

The solemnities or ceremonies of the mission are enumerated under a special heading. They are for the most part the ones that had become familiar since that first mission in Hagenau. Additions are few, among them the « sinners' bell », now met for the first time, the ringing of the church bell in the evening while the people led by a missionary recite five *paters* and *aves* for the conversion of sinners and the success of the mission. The *amende honorable* conducted with fitting moderation is to follow the sermon on bad Communion. The consecration to Our Lady is never to be omitted. In addition to the mission cross, which is to be erected in a purely religious ceremony from which all appearance of the profane should be removed, it is recommended that the Way of the Cross also be erected. Had those early Belgian missions experienced a taint of politics similar to that found by Father Valle in Finale?

A small section on renewals states merely that there should be no *amende* and that the exercises should close with the renewal of baptismal vows. Directions then follow for retreats to priests, nuns, seminarians and schoolchildren. And now there is no longer

question of looking at the constitutions through one's fingers, as Father Springer had found in Italy, but they are taken for granted without comment.

A similar *Directory* was produced by the Dutch province, which was separated from Belgium in 1855. It appeared in 1866, promulgated by the provincial, Father Konings, and it is also very short, being of only twenty-four pages¹³³. After the pattern of the parent Belgian booklet this new little handbook for missionaries confines itself to a small number of practical guidelines, presuming broadly that the venerated constitutions, now solemnly reaffirmed by the chapter of 1855, will be faithfully observed.

From Holland a province in England developed, being separated in 1865, and before long it too produced its own *Directory*¹³⁴. This little booklet of thirty-one pages was promulgated by Father Coffin, the provincial, after consultation with the superiors of the province. It opens with an extract from St. Alphonsus' *Exercises of the Mission* and a circular Father Coffin himself addressed to the province earlier in that year, 1877, in which the *Directory* was issued and which the superiors wished to be included. Again it is a question of no more than a small number of practical guidelines. Among these a new solemnity appears, namely the Way of the Cross with the preacher from the pulpit making the reflections at each station. Some directions that were apparently peculiar to English conditions concerned the prudent disposal of harmful literature surrendered to the missionaries¹³⁵ and the manner of arranging for the instruction and reception of converts to the faith.

This *Directory* of Father Coffin's was reproduced by the Irish province with very little change the year after it was made independent in 1898¹³⁶. It continued to provide the basis of later *Directories*,

¹³³ *Verordeningen voor de missiën en andere apostolische werkzaamheden*, s.l., s.d. The approbation given by the provincial, Father Konings, is dated 2nd August 1866.

¹³⁴ *The Directory of the Missions in the English Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*, London, 1877.

¹³⁵ This direction for the missionaries probably reflects the sort of incident as occurred during the mission in Kingston, Ireland in October 1855 leading to Father Vladimir Pecherin's being brought to trial on a charge of having publicly burnt a Bible. Cf. *Spic. Hist.* 28 (1980) 237-241 for a bibliography on Father Pecherin.

¹³⁶ *The Directory of the Missions in the Irish and Australian Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*, Belfast, 1899. In the same year the newly erected Irish province issued a further booklet which was occupied principally with

which with the passing years found occasion to make no more than slight alterations. This was the case with new publications in England in 1924¹³⁷, Ireland in 1927¹³⁸ and even in remote Australia in 1929 and as late as 1957¹³⁹. The small modifications occasioned by local circumstances are usually like the provision made in Australia for missions in lonely, isolated districts where it would be a considerable hardship for the people to assemble even once a day. Interestingly, the Irish and Australian *Directories* even retained the section on converts to the faith. Some modifications made in Ireland in this connection were amply justified by the highly successful Belfast mission to non-Catholics¹⁴⁰.

(c) *The German Tradition*

A somewhat different tradition is to be observed stemming from Austria. The Redemptorists there continued to be affected by the direction into which their first mission in the Tyrol had been channelled in 1840 by suspicious Josephist officials. From that beginning, so successful in spite of the difficulties, Austrian practice assumed certain characteristics, as one can learn from the fine *Directory* published in 1914¹⁴¹. Its 295 pages contain a thorough exposition of the exercises of the mission with plans for sermons and instructions and a brief but informative treatment of retreats.

The mission is visualised as being short — one to two weeks — with five or six days for the renewal¹⁴². Regretfully, it is noted, with changed times and over cautious parish clergy it seems impossible to devote as much time to the work as St. Alphonsus would re-

the *Apostolic Formula* of Father Raus, of which there will be occasion to speak shortly. *Provinciae Hibernicae C.S.S.R. consultatio provincialis 18-26 januarii 1899*, Limerick, 1899.

¹³⁷ *The Directory of the Missions in the English Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*, London, 1924.

¹³⁸ *Directory of the Apostolic Labours in the Irish Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*, Limerick, 1927.

¹³⁹ *The Directory of the Missions in the Australasian Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*, Sydney, 1929. Also *Redemptorist Mission Directory. Australasian Province*, s.l., s.d. (but 1957).

¹⁴⁰ D. Cumming, *A Mission in Ireland for non-Catholics* in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Review* 70 (1948) 481-494.

¹⁴¹ *Direktorium für Missionen und Renovationen zum Gebrauch der PP. Redemptoristen der Wiener Provinz*, Frankenstein, 1914.

¹⁴² *ibid.* 100-103.

commend¹⁴³. Also the ingenious expedient devised on the occasion of the first mission in the Tyrol, the *Standesunterweisungen*, have become permanently included in the Austrian practice¹⁴⁴. In any case, the instructions for the « states of life » have by now a more authoritative foundation: they had been recommended by the general chapter of 1855¹⁴⁵. The solemnities remain those that had been in common use since Hagenau, the *Abbitte* (now after a sermon on the Eucharist), Our Lady, the general Communion and the planting of the mission cross, all of them much more restrained than in the days of that first enthusiasm¹⁴⁶.

The Austrian *Directory* was a carefully produced work. It was based on an unpublished manuscript of Father Andreas Hamerle, and in all it listed fourteen sources used, some of them still in manuscript, but including two very interesting regular *Directories*¹⁴⁷. The earlier of the two, *Directorium pro Missionibus C.S.S.R.*, Altoetting, 1854, unfortunately seems to be no longer available for consultation, but the other, a *Directory* prepared for the Upper German province, confirms the impressions received from our examination of Austrian practice¹⁴⁸.

This latter *Directory* was published anonymously in 1885, but it was the posthumous publication of a work compiled by Father Michael Benger, author of a highly esteemed *Pastoraltheologie*¹⁴⁹. The work is the fruit of Father Benger's long experience of teaching pastoral theology and careful study of the writings of St. Alphonsus. Most of the text is devoted to the sermons and instructions of the mission with final comments on the renewal. We find the same features as had become established in Austria, from which the first houses in Germany had been founded. Father Benger offers plans for missions of eight or ten days, apparently not considering any other duration¹⁵⁰. He gives considerable attention to the *Standeslehren*,

¹⁴³ *ibid.* 21-25.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.* 66-73.

¹⁴⁵ *Codex Regularum*, 507.

¹⁴⁶ *Direktorium*, 82-84.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.* 7-8.

¹⁴⁸ *Directorium für die Missions-Vorträge zum Gebrauch für die Priester der Congregation des allerheiligsten Erlösers der oberdeutschen Provinz*, Regensburg, 1885.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Maurice de Meulemeester C.S.S.R., *Bibliographie générale*, II, 1935, p. 23.

¹⁵⁰ *Direktorium*, 94-95.

insisting that they must be carefully prepared and concise so as not to spoil their effect by boring the people¹⁵¹. As had come about in other parts of Europe, the *Abbitte* follows a sermon on the Eucharist which dwells particularly on bad Communion¹⁵². The brief space devoted to the Devout Life, summarily recommending that the instructions in Christian living be made in the course of appropriate sermons, shows clearly how the practice had declined since the days of St. Alphonsus¹⁵³.

These same features of the Austrian and Bavarian missions reappear in American practice. After all, most of the personnel of the North American foundations came originally from those lands. For the practice followed by the provinces of the United States we can consult the thorough exposition of Father Joseph Wissel, the first edition of whose detailed guide to Redemptorist missions appeared in 1875¹⁵⁴. Again the missions are short. « Very rarely should a mission be laid out for two full weeks »¹⁵⁵. And there is the same insistence on the instructions for the « states of life ». « Particular instructions for each of the states of life mentioned have become indispensable »¹⁵⁶. The ceremony of the *Abbitte* apparently had a somewhat checkered history in America and was eventually discontinued¹⁵⁷.

The second German province, now called the Cologne province established in 1859, seems to have reacted against the practices it had received through Bavaria. Father Bernhard Scholten has linked this reaction with the influence of the brilliant missionary, Father Johann Ambrosius Zobel¹⁵⁸. Father Zobel, a native of the Tyrol, had joined the Redemptorists in Switzerland and by way of Luxembourg had brought to the North German foundations an approach different from that of Austria and Bavaria. He was strongly opposed to the practice of shortening the time of the mission and of placing what

¹⁵¹ *ibid.* 87-90.

¹⁵² *ibid.* 44-46.

¹⁵³ *ibid.* 190.

¹⁵⁴ Joseph Wissel, *The Redemptorist on the American Missions* 3, 3 vols., Norwood, Mass., 1920.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.* I, 57.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.* I, 73.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.* I, 64-65.

¹⁵⁸ Bernhard Scholten C.S.S.R., *Die Volksmission der Redemptoristen in den letzten hundert Jahren in In Benedictione Memoria*, Bonn, 1959, p. 184-225. There is a biography of Father Zobel. Petrus Zender, *P. Joh. Ambrosius Zobel. Ein Lebensbild*, Luxembourg, 1894.

he considered too much emphasis on the *Standespredigten*¹⁵⁹. Certainly, the plans of mission quoted by Father Scholten show that the Cologne Redemptorists had struck out on their own line of development¹⁶⁰.

(d) *The French Tradition*

Another important missionary tradition can be found in the provinces that developed from Switzerland. The original Swiss province became, after the temporary disappearance of its houses there, the province of France and Switzerland; and that in turn by early in the present century had been divided into three provinces in France and one in Spain with several foundations along the Pacific coast of South America. The missions in these extensive regions were conducted with great zeal and vigour; and they owed their inspiration most of all to the leadership of one strong superior, Father Achille Desurmont¹⁶¹.

Like Father Benger Father Desurmont was a competent pastoral theologian, having to his credit a substantial work on the subject¹⁶². Superior for more than twenty years of the huge province of France and Switzerland, he used to repeat over and over in his exhortations to the province: « Esteem, study and love our Father, our incomparable Doctor [...] and you will do what Christ and the Church expect of you »¹⁶³. In everything to do with Redemptorist life and work his constant criterion was the teaching and practice of St. Alphonsus. And that was particularly so in his instructions concerning the missions. He prepared a study of mission practice which he sent to the houses to be discussed before he finally published it; and he recommended two basic norms by which to judge Redemptorist pastoral activity: the practice, that is to say the limits imposed by circumstances, and the ideal, which meant what was proposed by St. Alphonsus¹⁶⁴.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.* 202.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.* 199-202.

¹⁶¹ Cf. A. George C.S.S.R., *Le très révérend Père Achille Desurmont C.S.S.R., Provincial de France*, Paris, 1924.

¹⁶² *La Charité sacerdotale ou leçons élémentaires de théologie pastorale*, 2 vols., Paris, 1899. Publication was posthumous, Father Desurmont having died in the previous year.

¹⁶³ A. George C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 147.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.* 204.

He described the nature of his work and his own fundamental principles in the circular to the rectors. « So as to make as little innovation as possible and to put the work on a solid foundation we have followed the constitutions in order, refraining from comment when it seemed a constitution could be observed to the letter, and any necessary modifications we endeavoured to make as conformable as possible to the teachings of St. Alphonsus with due regard to our present circumstances of time and place »¹⁶⁵. That description can be seen to represent the character of the three works on missions which he issued, the first of them in 1875¹⁶⁶.

From the principles enunciated by Father Desurmont one would be led to expect that the French missionary tradition stemming from him would be such a meticulous application of the constitutions of 1764 that any departure from them would have been made only with extreme reluctance. It is an agreeable surprise, therefore, to find that the third of the *Directories*, the *Praxis missionariorum* of 1887, is an eminently practical work revealing a sound pastoral judgement. Some few points may be singled out as particularly representative.

As regards the duration of the mission the French *Directory* was precise and uncompromising¹⁶⁷. It was to last normally three weeks, but the local superior could authorise a longer duration, while it was not permitted to accept a mission of less than two weeks without the approval of the provincial. Lists of topics for sermons and instructions were divided into obligatory and optional, and they were sufficiently detailed to give the preacher not only clear guidelines but ample latitude as well¹⁶⁸.

The structuring of the mission presents certain interesting features¹⁶⁹. The morning instructions can be of two kinds. If those attending are *une petite portion d'élite*, then they are to be given a sort of retreat with topics suitably adapted, while if the hearers should belong rather to *la masse du peuple*, then the instructions should be

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.* 204.

¹⁶⁶ *De munere apostolico in Provincia Gallica C.S.S.R.*, Avon, 1875; *Congr. SS. Red. Prov. Gall. Exercice de notre saint ministère*, s.l., s.d. (but circa 1880); *Prov. Gall. C.S.S.R. Praxis missionariorum seu Constitutiones et earum applicationes quaedam, per mandata locis et temporibus accomodata*, Tours, 1887.

¹⁶⁷ *Praxis missionariorum*, 22.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.* 30-31; 82-85.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.* 56-62.

on confession and the commandments. Similarly, at a suitable time in the course of the day an exercise might be arranged for *la haute classe*, people who did not attend the evening exercise. To them should be given some suitable adaptation of the sermons they would otherwise miss altogether.

In the evening after two decades of the Rosary there is to be for *un demi-quart d'heure a glose*, or a succinct instruction drawn from a rather broader range of topics than that of the morning. Then follows the sermon, with Benediction closing the exercise.

In planning the sermons and instructions the missioners are required to adhere to three main divisions. In the first part, of at least five or six days, the topics aim at preparing the people for confession; in the second, of at least six or seven days, the preachers treat the eternal truths, sin and its occasions; and the final part, which is to last three days or so, is to be concerned with the exercises of the Devout Life, with instruction and practice on mental prayer in the mornings.

The solemnities of the mission are treated with the meticulous attention to detail characteristic of the *Directory*, and they are the ones that had become familiar to practice outside Italy with some new ones¹⁷⁰. With regard to the exercises of the Devout Life, a long extract from the constitutions is quoted followed by a brief reference to the third section of the mission plan¹⁷¹. More practical, perhaps, is the brief admonition concerning « associations of perseverance » to be established or reanimated. They are to be given « the spirit and the methods that St. Alphonsus and venerable Father Sarnelli have left us »¹⁷². For the renewals the directions are as precise as for the missions, without however offering any new inspiration¹⁷³.

III. - « THE SYSTEM OF ST. ALPHONSUS »

By the end of the century the Redemptorists, wherever they were established, had reason to be satisfied with an excellent record of mission work, almost uninterrupted and frequently achieving quite remarkable success. In 1894 their representatives came to a general

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.* 85-90.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.* 67-68.

¹⁷² *ibid.* 69.

¹⁷³ *ibid.* 70-72.

chapter, the first since 1855, with missions very much on their minds. The first decree of the chapter began with the direction that « a formula of the whole apostolic system of St. Alphonsus be prepared » to be given to the provinces « as uniform and altogether the same ». This formula was to be studied in all the provinces so as to form the basis of their provincial statutes to be submitted to the Superior General and to subsequent general chapters¹⁷⁴.

According to one of the capitulars, Father Wulfingh from Surinam, the decisions of the chapter had won warm support from Father Desurmont in all that concerned the system of St. Alphonsus and the missions¹⁷⁵. Father Desurmont was present in his capacity of Consultor General, and one would have to expect him to support measures so much like the principles he proposed for the *Directory* he prepared for his own province. That does not necessarily mean, of course, that he actually originated the decree, but it is possible to discern an influence, at least indirect, in its implementation.

Father Matthias Raus, elected Superior General in 1894, had been a student of Father Desurmont's and a member of the province of France and Switzerland until he came to Rome as Consultor in 1889¹⁷⁶. Father Desurmont's biographer describes his relations with the new Superior General by comparison with St. Bernard and Eugenius III¹⁷⁷. Allowing for a good measure of rhetorical exaggeration in the parallel, it is still right to see at least a considerable similarity in thought between the two. And it was Father Raus who prepared the formula required by the chapter that had elected him.

The formula appeared 24th May 1896 introduced and explained by an accompanying circular letter¹⁷⁸. In the circular Father Raus speaks of the document as having been composed by himself, describing in the first person singular the norms chosen and the methods used.

« It is clear first of all », he wrote, « that the system to be followed in our apostolic works is never expounded better than in our Rule and in the Constitutions that explain the Rule ». For that reason he saw his task as being simply to bring together into a neater

¹⁷⁴ *Acta integra*, 653.

¹⁷⁵ A. George C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 507.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.* 507.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.* 509-512.

¹⁷⁸ *Litterae circulares Reverendissimi Patris Matthiae Raus C.S.S.R. Superioris Generalis et Rectoris Majoris*, Rome, 1908, p. 70-74. The *Formula Systematis S.P.N. Alphonsi circa labores apostolicos* is in p. 75-102.

and more coherent form what was already in existing legislation¹⁷⁹. The resultant formula, therefore, was proposed as « the perfect ideal to which all our missionaries should aspire »¹⁸⁰. After that clear echo of Father Desurmont he went on to direct that the *Formula* now promulgated be studied in the various houses and provinces and suitable local statutes be added, as the chapter had decreed. From Father Raus's circular it is clear that he had proceeded according to the same principles his old and venerated superior had invoked in the French *Directory*.

A detailed examination of the *Formula* of 1896 would serve little purpose. It is clearly described in the accompanying circular. It was no more than a rearrangement of the contents of the rules and constitutions as they had existed with practically no alteration since 1764. It is more useful to discover what was the effect on Redemptorist mission practice of the « canonisation » of the observances of 1764.

In the first place, it is necessary to emphasise that any variation at all from established practices would be most improbable. From the beginning the Redemptorists outside Italy had adhered as closely as their circumstances permitted to the constitutions of 1764 both in their missions and in other observances. As Father Raus described his method in compiling the *Formula*, he made it clear that all he had done was to put the legislation on apostolic works into a different order without changing them in any other way. Consequently, after 1896 the missionaries were required to continue very much as they had been working all through the nineteenth century. It is not surprising, therefore, that the *Directory* of the Austrian province published in 1914 should merely list the *Formula* along with the other sources it had used¹⁸¹.

In some provinces the *Formula* seems to have had very little if any impact. The English province, for example, as late as 1948 published along with its provincial statutes a new edition of Father Coffin's *Directory* of 1877¹⁸². And as we have already noted, the

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.* 71.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.* 72.

¹⁸¹ *Direktorium*, 7.

¹⁸² It would burden the text too much to add references to publication details for all of the very large number of *Directories* and books of statutes which appeared between 1896 and the late nineteen forties. Such information may be obtained by reference to the very full list given in *Spic. Hist.* 15 (1967) 163-178.

same *Directory* with some slight modifications was issued in Australia at the even later date of 1957. In the Irish province in the same year as it promulgated its own edition of Father Coffin's *Directory*, 1899, it issued provincial statutes with comments on the *Formula*. Obviously, neither the *Formula* nor the Irish comments on it could have exercised any influence on what was already the established mission practice of the province.

Very much the same must be said of those provinces which published their directions for mission work in the shape of their comments on the *Formula*. A consultation in the Lower German province in 1897 commented on the *Formula*, spelling out the practice already established there. The same is to be said of the statutes of the Belgian province approved by the Superior General in 1898 which begin with a section entitled *Circa labores apostolicos iuxta formulam S. P. N. Alphonsi a Rmo Patre elaboratam*. The statutes of the Dutch province, published in 1908, commence also with comments on the *Formula*, and that is the pattern followed by the province of Baltimore in the east of the United States in 1901, 1912 and 1924 and that of St. Louis in 1915.

In spite of the decree of 1894 and Father Raus's circular letter there was no further reference to the *Formula* in subsequent general chapters in 1909 and 1921. Indicative, perhaps, of the inevitable neglect of the *Formula*, statutes of the Dutch province approved in 1923 give directions for the missions with reference directly to the appropriate constitutions without any mention of the *Formula*. In the French provinces legislation about the missions for Lyons and Paris in 1924 and Strasbourg in 1935 is attached to neither the constitutions nor the *Formula*. And that is the case also for the province of Prague, whose statutes were approved in 1925 and for the two provinces of Canada, that of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré for the French language in 1924 and 1940 and the English-speaking province of Toronto in 1926.

This rapid survey of Redemptorist missionary legislation following the chapter of 1894 makes it plain that the *Formula* or the systematic statement of St. Alphonsus' methods made no difference to mission practice¹⁸³. Whether in Italy or beyond the Alps the Redemptorists had always based their methods on their founder's teachings, and what variations existed could certainly not be called

¹⁸³ Not all available texts have been cited, only those that seemed to be sufficiently representative.

substantial. And that continued to be the pattern of their work on the missions until the period after the Second World War.

IV. - RECENT TRENDS

Father Bernhard Scholten speaks of annual mission conferences in the Cologne province from as early as 1923¹⁸⁴. Their aim was that by means of their painstaking study of mission practice it would be possible in time to produce a new *Directory*; and the themes of discussion mentioned by Father Scholten show how thoroughly the conferences examined the troubled times leading to what he called the « political, social and religious chaos » of the Second World War. These North German Redemptorists were well in advance of those in other parts of the world, who for the most part, if one can judge from their *Directories*, were coming to grips with the changing world only somewhere around the fifties.

The *Directories* issued in these post-war years are much less numerous than in the earlier part of the century. And they indicate no substantial change from the methods followed earlier. This is the case in the provinces of Baltimore¹⁸⁵ and Toronto¹⁸⁶. A *Directory*, however, of Brazil issued by the province of São Paulo at about the same time as these gives some refreshing indications of an attempt to adapt accepted methods to new circumstances¹⁸⁷. Founded by Redemptorists from Bavaria, the province had been canonically erected only in 1946. There were new features in these Brazilian missions, which must have been full of life with suggestions for no fewer than thirty-two possible solemnities, and these included a motorcade as well as several other less flamboyant processions. Each day there was a visit to the Blessed Sacrament with a devotional exhortation preached by one of the missionaries, this in addition to the instructions, sermons and special sessions for the different « states of life » which had been learned from the parent province. Two types of mission were visualised, one in which all the people participated together and another, the « specialised mission », in which there were separate

¹⁸⁴ Bernhard Scholten C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 192.

¹⁸⁵ *Mission Directory. Baltimore Province C.S.S.R.*, New York, 1958.

¹⁸⁶ *Resolutions Adopted by the Mission Conference of 1957 for the Toronto Province and Edmonton Vice-Province*, s.l. s.d.

¹⁸⁷ *Directorio das missões. Província de São Paulo e Vice-Província de Pôrto Alegre de Congregação do Santíssimo Redentor*, 1957, s.l.

exercises for men and women. The « means of perseverance », which were probably intended to replace the old exercises of the Devout Life, were occupied with organising the people into pious associations. The renewal took the form of a « Eucharistic week », which had its special exercises and solemnities. While the pattern of the mission as it existed in Europe is still easily discernible in this new *Directory*, there is also a very considerable addition of new features adapted to a new situation.

Some *Directories* which appeared in the sixties betray quite distinct signs of uncertainty. That of the province of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré in Canada begins with the warning that « like the Church and with it we have to work unceasingly to adapt our pastoral ministry to the needs of souls in a rapidly changing world »¹⁸⁸. In Australia in 1965 the authorities did not venture to authorise more than an *Interim Directory*¹⁸⁹. Just at this time, of course, the Second Vatican Council was in progress with its accompanying ferment in theological circles and a great deal of theorising about how the Church's pastoral activities would be affected. This is the sort of thinking reflected in the two *Directories*. It appeared also in that of the Neapolitan province which appeared in 1966, the first since Father Berruti's a century before¹⁹⁰. Reference is made to the conciliar decrees, particularly in explaining the procedures for a week of preaching on the liturgy.

As one would expect, the times which could produce such a formula as an *Interim Directory* witnessed also a certain amount of experimenting with new methods. The Neapolitan Liturgical Week was of this kind. Probably, the most important of the new methods tried during the post-war years was the General or Regional Mission which the Redemptorists and other institutes attempted in some countries, especially in Europe¹⁹¹. These have been exciting and encouraging ventures, but sober reflection has revealed certain aspects which raise doubts as to their suitability. Not the least is the fact that no matter how favourable may be the immediate impression on a locality, the lack of permanent pastoral structures transcending the parish and corresponding to the field of the mission's campaign makes it hard to maintain the mission's good effect.

¹⁸⁸ *Directoire et Statuts Provinciaux de la Province de Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré*, Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, 1964, p. 7. The emphasis is in the *Directory* itself.

¹⁸⁹ *Interim Directory of Apostolic Labours. Australasian Province of the Redemptorist Congregation*, Sydney, 1965.

¹⁹⁰ *Direttorio delle missioni*, Pagani, 1966.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Bernhard Scholten C.S.S.R., *op. cit.*, 196.

One factor which to an important extent has affected Redemptorist missions in recent years has been a sharp decline in the number of the missionaries. It is not merely that the overall numbers of the institute have fallen off. There has been an increase in the kinds of pastoral activities Redemptorists undertake, parochial work in particular having claimed a very large number of men. Redemptorists for some decades have not been as exclusively missionaries as they had been in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

From their beginning in 1732 Redemptorists have been occupied principally with the parish missions, and they have had their own method in giving them, « a way different from that of any other Congregation »¹⁹², St. Alphonsus claimed. Our examination of this method has shown that through two centuries and a half a very strong veneration for the founder has kept his own method alive. Differences have been very slight from one country to another, so that the similarity of practice has come close to uniformity, and that without the stimulus of Father Raus's *Formula*. Among the *Directories* the one which, perhaps, may be proposed as the most typical is that of the Roman province published in 1925¹⁹³. It was compiled by Father Augusto Manchi, who not only described the mission and its exercises but explained them from appropriate and ample quotations from the writings of St. Alphonsus. Even in provinces that differed from Roman practice nobody would have any difficulty in recognising the common inspiration.

This easily identifiable common inspiration continued to be the principal feature of Redemptorist missions until somewhere about the late nineteen fifties. Without the loss of the continuing dependence on the original impetus of the practice of the founder there has apparently intervened a new element. It is hardly anything that can be clearly identified. It is best described, rather, as a groping for ways that will work in modern conditions, the experimenting that has been mentioned. Perhaps the province of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré has come close to the mark in describing the modern Redemptorist missionary as one who has « *un esprit constamment inquiet* »¹⁹⁴.

¹⁹² Maurice de Meulemeester C.S.S.R., *Origines*, I, 128-129.

¹⁹³ *Il missionario redentorista. Direttorio delle missioni predicate dai Padri Redentoristi della Provincia Romana*, Rome, 1925.

¹⁹⁴ *Directoire*, 7.