

SPICILEGIUM HISTORICUM

Congregationis SSmi Redemptoris

Annus XXXIV

1986

Fasc. 1

STUDIA

SAMUEL J. BOLAND

THE REDEMPTORISTS AND THE PARISH MINISTRY

SUMMARY

1. The prohibition. 2. The Redemptorists in Warsaw. 3. The Passerat Regime. 4. The Smetana Regime. 5. Fathers Mauron and Raus. 6. The Murray Regime. 7. After World War II.

The institute that was established towards the end of 1732 in Scala, the picturesque little town on the heights above Amalfi, remained during its earliest years scarcely distinguishable from the Congregations of clerics which were so much a feature of Church life in Italy of those times¹. The similarity extended to the fact that the Redemptorists, like many, possibly most, of the contemporary institutes of priests concentrated on preaching popular missions. No doubt considerable impetus was given in this direction by the fact that St. Alphonsus, the founder and superior, was himself a capable and enthusiastic preacher and a well known exponent of missionary practice.

¹ Cf. M. De Meulemeester, *Origines de la Congrégation du Très Saint-Rédempteur*, I, Louvain, 1953, 12-14, where the author speaks of the remarkable proliferation of such institutes, especially in the Kingdom of Naples.

A brief experimenting with schools proved disappointing². From almost the beginning, therefore, the missions became the exclusive occupation of the institute. This was so much the case that early legislation specified certain activities, the care of souls among them, as prohibited on account of their being incompatible with the missions, declared to be the principal work of the Congregation³.

This concentration on the popular missions is certainly to be interpreted as reflecting the circumstances of time and place of Redemptorist origins, the south of Italy in the eighteenth century. The same is to be said of the prohibition to accept the cure of souls, or what we would call the parish ministry. It was only one among the occupations excluded as incompatible with the principal work, and apparently not the most serious of the perils to be avoided. Much more space and emphasis were expended on retreats to nuns and their spiritual direction, whereas at the end it was merely added, « for the same reason the cure of souls is also forbidden »⁴. If this prohibition of parishes should strike a modern reader almost as an atterthought, there would be some justification. While parish duties would so obviously hamper a missionary apostolate, it did not appear as an urgent problem in eighteenth century Naples, where there was no shortage of priests to look after the day-to-day pastoral duties.

It was different when times changed and the Redemptorists established themselves outside Italy. The community assembled in Warsaw by St. Clement Hofbauer and Father Thaddeus Hübl looked very different from those of Naples. When, however, some of St. Clement's companions questioned the authenticity of his work, the Rector Major, Father Pietro Paolo Blasucci, vindicated him after a thorough investigation⁵.

After the turn of the century in the improved climate that followed the fall of Napoleon the Congregation expanded north of the Alps, extending even to America. Both in Europe and the United States parishes were accepted with few apparent qualms. It was only

² De Meulemeester, I, 177-192.

³ *Documenti intorno alla Regola della Congregazione del SS. Redentore* (Biblioteca storica C.S.S.R., IV). eds. O. Gregorio & A. Sampers, Rome, 1969, 411, 415.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ J. Hofer, *St. Clement Maria Hofbauer*, E.T., J. Haas, New York, 1926, 169-175. Two Frenchmen, Fathers Joseph Passerat and Jacques Vannetlet, had complained about the excessive activity in the church of St. Benno's. In the end Father Blasucci warned St. Clement to be careful especially of Vannetlet, who showed signs of being more than a little neurotic.

about the middle of the century that there appeared signs of uneasiness lest this state of affairs might not be in accordance with the Rule.

Once the foreign missions began to attract more and more attention from Redemptorists the *cura animarum* in the sense of the Pontifical Rule of 1749 became much more common. It was the more readily acceptable, however, in that the need in mission lands was so much more evident. The situation emerged in the years following World War II that a very large proportion of the Congregation was engaged in these mission stations or parishes, which had multiplied even in Europe as well as in America. General chapters now gave attention to legislation for those engaged in the parish ministry, seen now as at least an actual occupation of Redemptorists.

It is the purpose of the present brief study to examine this development in more detail. It is an evolution which more than once was visited by growing pains. At least the information should provide the means of a clearer perspective of a work for many years undertaken by Redemptorists in spite of their seeing themselves regarded as « second class religious »⁶. That sort of insensitiveness is now a thing of the past, and nothing can be done to assuage those hurt feelings and resentments. A review of the story of Redemptorist parishes will contribute a little, we hope, to an appreciation of the more comprehensive concept of their proper ministry proposed in present legislation.

1. *The prohibition*

The newly founded institute was quickly at work. In the weeks before Lent of 1733 the little band enthusiastically preached missions in the tiny hamlets of the Tramonti region above Scala. The lonely folk who lived in poverty and pastured their few sheep and goats among those rugged hills were the abandoned souls who had fired the zeal of St. Alphonsus and of Vincenzo Mannarini, one of his first eager companions. The latter had his own ideas, and after that first mission campaign with some followers broke away; but the work continued with little interruption, thanks to those who came to reinforce the reduced numbers. That first experience of the missions

⁶ That expression was used during debate of the issue in the general chapter of 1963. Cf. *Acta integra capituli generalis XVI C.S.S.R.*, Rome, 1963, no. 1725.

amply satisfied the expectations of the founders⁷. During those earliest years the missions were so gratifyingly successful that they very quickly overshadowed the other apostolic venture of the first Redemptorists.

In Scala and in the second foundation of Villa degli Schiavi the new Congregation conducted schools. We have some evidence of St. Alphonsus' faithfully working to devise suitable regulations for the schools, but it is probably not unfair to suggest that his heart was not really in his task⁸. Mannarini and Donato, another of the first associates, were very much in favour of a teaching apostolate. Very probably, too, it was urged by Mgr. Tommaso Falcoia, *Direttore* of the new institute, an office which in effect made him major superior. Both before and after he became Bishop of Castellamare di Stabia he was interested in education. The troubles encountered in these first two schools, however, were in marked contrast to the continued success of the missions attested by the flattering comments of bishops and clergy. It was inevitable that when there was question of a third foundation, that of Ciorani, established in 1738, there was no longer any provision for a school. The very success of the missions had narrowed the scope of the young Congregation. Its ministry was clearly to be preaching, and that principally of missions.

That was undoubtedly the way St. Alphonsus saw it, and that from a very early date. In July 1734 he wrote to a prospective candidate about the missions, « which are the principal end of our institute »⁹. His previous experience with the *Missioni Apostoliche* since his ordination had given him a competence and an appreciation of the work which he never lost. It can scarcely be questioned that he really did see the missions as the principal end of the Congregation; and he continued to speak in that way after he became Rector Major in 1743. Writing to Pope Clement XIII in 1758 on the occasion of sending some of his writings, he spoke of the Redemptorists. « The end of our little Congregation is to evangelise by means of missions the poor abandoned people of the country districts »¹⁰. That expression, which was his normal way of speaking, was more absolute than the careful and precise formulation of the Rules of the Congregation,

⁷ Cf. De Meulemeester, I, 123-151 for an account of the missions between 1733 and 1740.

⁸ *ibid.*, 177-192.

⁹ *ibid.*, 128.

¹⁰ Letter of 24th August 1758 in *The Complete Works of St. Alphonsus (The Centenary Edition)* XXII, New York, 1897, 353.

even in those where his own authorship is to be discerned.

As long as the institute was under the guidance of Mgr. Falcoia there was no mention of incompatible occupations in the legislation. For that matter, in the *Regole grandi* the *Direttore* took eleven years to formulate there is precious little practical matter whatever. This first formula was a long, even rather tedious, exhortation to live according to the twelve virtues which were its framework.

After Falcoia's death in 1743 the development of Redemptorist legislation came into the more capable hands of St. Alphonsus. He prepared a text formulating the *Regole grandi* in more suitable terminology. This text, *Regole di Conza*, as it has been named by its editors, was read and approved by the Archbishop of Conza in 1748 on the occasion of the foundation of the house in Materdomini¹¹. In the section on government, which was an addition to Falcoia's formula, there is for the first time mention of the forbidden occupations¹².

In order that the subjects of the institute be free to attend to their duty, which is to assist the more neglected souls of the country districts with the holy missions and other exercises, they are forbidden to undertake the direction of monasteries of nuns, either in common or individually, or to be their ordinary or extraordinary confessors. It is permitted only at a time when missions or other exercises are being conducted in the same place where there is such a monastery. On such an occasion the spiritual exercises may be given and the nuns' confessions may be heard.

It is also forbidden to the subjects to have the direction of seminaries, to accept charge of parishes and to take part in processions or other public functions.

This is quite a categorical statement of Redemptorist apostolate. The missions are stated to be their duty (*impegno*). This priority of the missions is the reason for excluding the allurements of the career of spiritual director of nuns. It seems significant that the other incompatible works, seminaries, parishes and processions, are added in a brief concluding sentence.

In a text which bears the title, *Breve ristretto delle regole*, of about the same time as the *Regole di Conza*, the prohibition is repeated, this time under the heading of *Charity towards one's neighbour*¹³.

¹¹ *Documenti intorno alla Regola*, 282.

¹² *ibid.*, 383-384.

¹³ *ibid.*, 389.

After the warning against the siren songs of the nuns it is stated more succinctly: « It is also forbidden to have charge of seminaries or care of souls so as not to be distracted from the principal scope of the institute, to assist country people ». Perhaps it is worth noting that the missions are not mentioned in this instance as the special means of assisting the abandoned people in the rural areas.

There is a final text carefully prepared by St. Alphonsus which deserves to be noted. It was composed with the help of some canons of Naples and is called by its editors the *Transcript of Cossali* from the name of the secretary whose signature appears on the manuscript. It was the formula presented for the approval of the Holy See at the end of 1748. Again the significant passage comes under *Regola IV* on fraternal charity. And once more pride of place is given to the dangers of the nuns, after which the text adds: « In the same way it will also be forbidden to have charge of seminaries or care of souls, and also to give lenten courses »¹⁴.

The incompatible works were given a further mention in the same text, this time in an appendix, which dealt with government and the apostolate of the institute. It is the first point made in the section on the apostolate¹⁵.

The members of the Congregation are forbidden to direct seminaries or monasteries of nuns and even individual religious women, as was said above, since their principal task (*istituto*) is to help poor country folk by missions.

The missions, whose worth had been so thoroughly proved by experience, are again emphasised as the main task of the Redemptorist. But in this brief resume of the forbidden works the parishes are not mentioned, as they had been under the rule of charity. That oversight, if such it was, was corrected in the Pontifical Rule of 1749, given with the Papal approbation of the institute.

The Roman text of 1749 may be fairly described as more coldly juridic in form than the fervent expression of Redemptorist life in the *Transcript of Cossali* on which it was based, but it is more orderly and it has remained very much the framework of subsequent legislation. There is now a section on *Missions and Other Exercises* as Part I of the Rule. And right at the beginning the principle is stated.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 403.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 411.

« Since their being devoted to the missions is one of the principal ends of the institute, all shall give themselves principally to this duty »¹⁶. Having laid that basis, the Rule goes on to its regulations, among which is the prohibition of « distracting occupations » (*occupazioni distrattive*)¹⁷.

They shall not take part in processions or public functions; they shall not undertake the direction of seminaries or of nuns, in community or individually, whether cloistered or of a conservatory; nor shall they give them the spiritual exercises, since this is permitted only on the occasion of missions or other exercises conducted in places where such monasteries are situated or in their neighbourhood. For the same reason it is forbidden to have the care of souls or give lenten courses.

That balanced and clear statement of the priority of the missions proved to be not quite as final as it seemed. There was a brief questioning by the general chapter of the houses of the Pontifical States held in Scifelli in 1785. At that time the Congregation was sadly divided by reason of the *Regolamento* imposed by the King of Naples on the houses of his realm. The eight communities in the States of the Church had their own major superior, Father Francesco Antonio De Paola, a man of driving energy and, it must be confessed, no small measure of ambition¹⁸. The capitulars of Scifelli were men of moderation, but they did introduce some interesting innovations, which were quickly rectified¹⁹. The significant modifications for our present concerns are to be found in the text of the Rule promulgated after the chapter. The Pontifical Rule was altered (doctored would not be an unfair description) to read now as permitting even retreats to nuns, if the Ordinary should so request, and the acceptance of the care of souls, should the Superior General in a particular case judge it opportune²⁰.

This was hardly a revolutionary act. It was certainly a less

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 414.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 415.

¹⁸ Biographical data may be seen in *Spic. hist.*, 2(1954) 18, 22, 245; F. Minervino, *Catalogo dei Redentoristi d'Italia, 1732-1841 e dei Redentoristi delle provincie meridionali d'Italia, 1841-1869* (*Bibliotheca historica C.S.S.R.*, VIII), Rome, 1978, 60-61.

¹⁹ The Acta of the chapter together with the modified text of the Rule which it issued may be seen in *Acta integra Capitulum Generalium C.S.S.R. ab anno 1749 usque ad annum 1894 celebratorum*, Rome, 1899, 51-81. The constitutions of Scifelli have been published in *Spic. hist.*, 18(1970) 250-312.

²⁰ *Acta integra*, no. 175.

startling change than that of the decree that permitted schools « to teach to seculars grammar, rhetoric, literature, philosophy, theology and other sciences »²¹. That return to Scala and Villa degli Schiavi was bound to alarm the less venturesome spirits in the Kingdom of Naples, as indeed it did some of the men in the Papal States.

In the event the issues that seemed to be raised by Scifelli occasioned very little trouble. The divided Congregation healed its unhappy breach in a general chapter in 1793, which made a thorough revision of existing constitutions, or statutes as we say nowadays²². The capitulars were firm in excluding schools, declaring that their decree might not be dispensed even by the Rector Major, « so that our institute be not adulterated »²³. In the constitutions promulgated by the chapter much attention was devoted to the « distracting occupations », in order that the members « never be drawn away from the principal end of the missions »²⁴. The old prohibitions were repeated, and in the case of the cure of souls it was stated that such might not be accepted « with the title of parish priest, bursar etc. ».

Reading the various prohibitions of the parochial ministry formulated between 1747 and 1793 one gets the impression that it was included among the « distracting occupations » almost as an afterthought, put in rather for the sake of completeness. Until the chapter of Scifelli made its very tentative suggestion to introduce the schools, the principal danger had always been represented as retreats to nuns and their spiritual direction. Parishes, on the other hand, did not appear to present too grave or too proximate a threat.

That really represents the condition of Catholic life in eighteenth century Naples. Southern Italy was so generously provided with clergy, both secular and regular, that parish duties could hardly be suggested as an avenue of approach to needy, abandoned souls. Professor Owen Chadwick of Cambridge has described Italian society in the middle of the century²⁵.

The life of an Italian country town had an *ecclesiastical* appearance — cassocks everywhere, processions in the streets, bells frequent, crowds at services, priests not highly respected for their priesthood (too

²¹ *ibid.*, no. 149.

²² *ibid.*, nos. 237-459, p. 85-186.

²³ *ibid.*, no. 294.

²⁴ *ibid.*, no. 338.

²⁵ O. Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution*, Oxford, 1981, 99.

numerous for that) but only for other and more personal reasons. No child could escape the stamp of liturgical experience. It was part of the social order; at times it was the social order; at times it was too much of a social order.

Could it be that the frequency and ubiquity of those processions led to their being numbered among the « distracting occupations »? The parishes with pastoral care limited to a single place were obviously incompatible with the missionary apostolate; but would scarcely have been seriously considered, one would have thought, had it not been for that suggestion of the capitulars at Scifelli. Parish life would have been far too much what one would have taken for granted, part of what Chadwick called « the social order ». It was in wild regions like Tramonti, where St. Alphonsus and his first companions preached in 1733, that the ordinary parish ministry proved inadequate. And such rough, virtually trackless places were not uncommon. In order to evangelise them it was necessary to avoid being tied to centres that were managing very well indeed even without the Redemptorists. It seems fair to conclude that the ban on parishes was introduced into early legislation because they were so plainly incompatible with the missions, whose proven worth was so engrossing. Obviously, there was no reason to consider whether parishes in circumstances other than those of Southern Italy might not be a useful or even necessary work for abandoned souls.

2. The Redemptorists in Warsaw

When the Redemptorists first established themselves outside Italy, they came among people whose conditions made it clear that the Kingdom of Naples had been preserved from the worst evils of the age of the Enlightenment. St. Clement Hofbauer and Father Thaddæus Hübl, professed and ordained in the Papal States in 1785, at once set out for the north with the purpose of introducing the Congregation into new lands. Settling in Warsaw in 1787, they inaugurated a spectacularly busy and successful apostolate. The Polish people had suffered more than most from the wars of that violent century: their land had been invaded and divided; they had been indoctrinated by the new teachers of the times; and in the end they had become thoroughly and abjectly demoralised. St. Clement's first impressions of Warsaw were far from promising. « From the clergy

down to the poorest beggar, society is rotten to the core »²⁶. He met the challenge with the vigour that was so characteristic of him. In the German church of St. Benno's he and his rapidly growing community conducted an intensive pastoral activity which makes even the most demanding parish mission appear meagre by comparison: five sermons each day with two instructions on Sundays, three High Masses daily as well as various popular devotions, besides the seemingly unending confession work continuing until a late hour each night. This was the daily programme for about ten years before St. Benno's was closed in 1808²⁷.

This was the sort of thing that troubled some of the community and occasioned the request of Father Blasucci, the Rector Major, for an explanation. Certainly the « perpetual mission » in St. Benno's, to use the well-merited name by which it is known, was very different from the sort of thing that was familiar in Italy. Perhaps the most significant difference about this really extraordinary ministry was its being confined to the single pastoral centre, and that the city church of St. Benno's. When, however, in his eagerness to help harassed pastors St. Clement undertook regular parish work, the departure was more open to question.

Between 1795 and 1799 with the knowledge and warm encouragement of Father Blasucci he stationed three of his subjects in a neglected parish in Mitau in Courland. It did not prove a happy venture, mainly perhaps because of the troubled conditions, since two of the men left the Congregation in 1799²⁸. Two further ventures in the parish ministry were closer to home, Radzymin in 1798 and Lutkowka in 1803, both in neighbourhood of Warsaw²⁹.

Father Hofer, the biographer of St. Clement, wonders if the capitulars in Scifelli had the newly professed Germans in mind when they introduced into the Pontifical Rule their modifications concerning schools and parishes³⁰. It was about the time of the chapter that the two set out for Austria. The communities established in Warsaw and later in Southern Germany evidently followed a Rule that con-

²⁶ Hofer, 100. Father Hofer goes on to show from other contemporary accounts how accurately St. Clement judged the scene of his labours.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 98-100. Cf. also *Monumenta Hofbaueriana*. II, Torun, 1929, 42-46.

²⁸ *ibid.*, 110-112.

²⁹ *ibid.*, 155-156.

³⁰ Hofer, 57.

tained the modifications introduced at Scifelli. So much is apparent from the « Warsaw Rule », a Latin version of the Italian text, probably the work of St. Clement himself and dated 1789³¹. The text contained the Scifelli changes. What is particularly relevant to our present concerns is the Appendix which is found in a copy of this « Warsaw Rule » which seems to have been used in the short-lived house of Triberg³². There is considerable attention to the office of parish priest, his appointment, his authority and his assistants. It does seem highly probable that Scifelli did contemplate quite significant adaptations of the Redemptorist apostolate, whether or not it was with a view to northern lands. In Warsaw schools were opened at an early date, rather as an obvious thing to do; and they proved gratifyingly successful. And in a small way a parochial ministry was attempted.

Father Joseph Passerat, who was to succeed St. Clement as superior outside Italy, had early experience of the problems associated with the parish ministry among his subjects. Driven from pillar to post for more than a decade as he led his community in search of a home in Switzerland, he found it impossible to refuse pleas of bishops and their people, and he allowed some of his Fathers to be assigned to parishes. When he finally found a permanent residence in Valsainte, he could no longer reassemble his entire community. Redemptorists remained in parishes in Switzerland and even as far afield as Alsace³³.

Conditions during these early years in the north of Europe were certainly far from normal. They corresponded roughly with that turbulent era of the French Revolution and of Napoleon that moved an exasperated British statesman to exclaim: « Roll up the map of Europe »! The ventures into parochial ministry at this time should not, therefore, be given too much significance. It would appear that even the Rector Major, Father Blasucci, saw them that way. When he was voted into office in 1793, what justification St. Clement had found in the chapter of Scifelli was abolished by the revision of the former constitutions. Just the same, Father Blasucci did not insist

³¹ Cf. E. Hosp, *Geschichte der Redemptoristen-Regel in Österreich (1819-1848)*, Vienna, 1939, 11-16.

³² The text of the « Warsaw Rule » with the appendix is to be found in Hosp, 193-216.

³³ Cf. Hofer, 406-407. More information concerning parish work of the Redemptorists in Switzerland is to be found in *Spic. hist.*, 24(1976) 216-234; 29(1981) 389-404.

on the prohibition of schools and parishes in the Pontifical Rule. After the Congregation was authorised by the Austrian emperor in 1820, it was possible for the Vicar General, now Father Passerat, to introduce a more regular Redemptorist observance. The attitude to parishes in these more orderly years must obviously be more informative.

3. *The Passerat Regime*

When St. Clement died on 15th March 1820 fortune was beginning to smile on the Congregation. Later in the year his successor as Vicar General, Father Passerat, with the Emperor's approval, was able to assemble an eager young community in the fine monastery and church of Maria am Gestade in Vienna. Before he resigned his office in 1848 he saw the Redemptorists beyond the Alps expanded marvellously, even to England and to America. In spite of the immense fund of goodwill, even in the highest circles, which was the legacy he had received from his predecessor, there remained many an obstacle to be overcome. Austria was still under the Josephist laws.

Father Passerat, ever a champion of regular observance, was anxious from the start to begin the missions. He sent Father Franz Springer to Naples to study methods used in Italy³⁴. The man chosen was a good observer, able to assimilate what he learned, and he used to excellent effect what he had seen among his southern confrères when he led a team of missionaries in two parishes of Hagenau in Alsace in 1826³⁵. Even though this marked the beginning of a brilliant and successful tradition, it was to be several years yet before missions were more generally permitted. In Austria Joseph II had forbidden them in 1782, and it would not be until 1840 that the Redemptorists would be free to engage in what their Rule called « one of the principal ends of the institute ». The Redemptorists, increasing in numbers, did not lack occupation, but soon they were faced with appeals for parish work.

In Switzerland in spite of the strenuous efforts of Father Passerat since 1818, there were still Redemptorists serving in parishes. And in Poland, where the Congregation had been forcibly suppressed in 1808, there was a courageous attempt to gather the scattered con-

³⁴ Father Springer's report has been published in *Spic. hist.*, 2(1954) 295-364.

³⁵ On the mission in Hagenau see *Spic. hist.*, 4(1956) 280-339.

frères. Father Jan Podgórski, a tower of strength in the days of St. Benno's, in 1823 with the Vicar General's approval established a community in Piotrkowice, where he had charge of a parish³⁶. Before the community was dispersed by the government in 1834 it had given considerable promise, especially in the number of candidates attracted to it. Father Podgórski had the unhappiness of seeing his companions scattered and himself left with the responsibility for the parish, which he was unable to relinquish.

The wounds inflicted by Josephism on the Austrian Church were slow to heal. Some parishes remained in the hands of religious, largely on account of the people's earnest pleading. After forty years, however, of virtual suppression declining personnel made it increasingly difficult for the older Orders to meet their commitments. This need was already urgent by 1820, and very soon it was brought to Father Passerat's notice by a man it would be very hard indeed to refuse. Roman Zängerle, Prince Bishop of Seckau, had been a disciple of St. Clement and a close associate of those eager candidates who had been drawn to Maria am Gestade³⁷. It was at his request that Father Passerat made a foundation in Frohnleiten in 1826, the first in Austria outside Vienna³⁸. It had been a Servite parish, which was in danger of being abandoned, and the Redemptorists when asked worked most zealously and to excellent effect, even developing confraternities, an abomination to the Josephists, until the revolution year of 1848. In the same way and once more at the instance of Bishop Zängerle Father Passerat after much wrangling with the government authorities assumed charge of a parish in Marburg³⁹. Before it was overtaken by the revolution in 1848 the Marburg house proved an immense blessing especially for the Slav people of the neighbourhood.

On the whole the Rectors Major in distant Pagani were sympathetic with the problems of the Vicar General. For one thing, they were much better informed than had been the case in the days of St. Clement. While they encouraged Father Passerat to rectify the anomalies in Switzerland, where there were individuals scattered in

³⁶ Cf. *Spic. hist.*, 7(1959) 118-151.

³⁷ Cf. Hofer, 492.

³⁸ On the history of the house in Frohnleiten see *Spic. hist.*, 12(1964) 145-184; E. Hosp, *Erbe des heiligen Klemens*, Vienna, 1953, 158-160.

³⁹ On Marburg see *Spic. hist.*, 13(1965) 166-214; Hosp, *Erbe*, 283-289.

different parishes⁴⁰, they did not trouble him over the situation in Austria. Nor was there at first any question about the pioneers in America after 1832.

The first Redemptorists in the United States found themselves very much in a frontier country. The Bishops of Cincinnati and Detroit used the three Fathers in a succession of posts throughout their vast dioceses⁴¹. One cannot avoid the reflection that these early years must have been especially trying for the three Brothers of the founding band. It was not until they had struggled, often in isolation and always in poverty, for seven years that they had at last a permanent foundation. St. Philomena's in Pittsburg, established in 1839, was a parish, just like Frohnleiten and Marburg in the home country⁴². The foundations that followed, Rochester in New York State about the same time⁴³ and Baltimore in 1840⁴⁴, both had parishes attached. From these earliest times a pattern was set, without apparently any objection being raised.

The introduction of the Redemptorists into England in some respects resembled their early experiences in the United States, though the circumstances, needless to say, were vastly different⁴⁵. In the beginning it was a question, not of parishes, but of what were called missions. That was a name that spoke volumes for the long struggle of the English Catholics from penal laws to emancipation. The name, which continued to be used after the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850, usually designated a church and residence established by a wealthy Catholic landowner for the convenience of his own family and of his neighbours. Especially in the south, where the Redemptorists were first established, the congregation served by one of these missions was usually a mere handful of faithful. When the small community came to Falmouth in Cornwall in 1843 they found barely a dozen or so at Mass on their first Sunday. It was a challenge to

⁴⁰ M. De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, Louvain, 1956, 133-1344.

⁴¹ John F. Byrne, *The Redemptorist Centenaries*, Philadelphia, 1932. 41-79; M.J. Curley, *The Provincial Story*, New York, 1963, 1-57.

⁴² Byrne, 80-83; Curley, 50-53.

⁴³ The pioneers had worked in Rochester on earlier occasions, but their permanent presence in the city dates from 1839. Cf. Byrne, 126-127; Curley, 52-53.

⁴⁴ Cf. Byrne, 93-95; Curley, 53-54.

⁴⁵ The introduction of the Redemptorists into England is treated by J. Sharp, «The Redemptorists in the United Kingdom: the Early Years» in *The Clergy Review*, London, 67(1982) 383-392.

the zeal of the founders that they met with considerable credit. In the five years they remained they extended their ministry as far afield as Truro and the islands off the coast and built up a respectable Catholic presence in a region where previously they had been scarcely known. Falmouth was a busy seaport. More typical English missions were the foundations that followed, Lanherne, where Father Josef Prost acted as chaplain to the Carmelite nuns as well as pastor to the neighbours, Hanley Castle and Great Marlow. These were small places, supporting no more than two or at the most three Fathers and perhaps one Brother, but they made the Redemptorists known and appreciated. Hanley Castle under the kindly Father John Baptist Lans soon became a place for retreats favourably known among the disciples of John Henry Newman⁴⁶, and Great Marlow, when Father Prost became superior, looked like satisfying the high hopes of its founder and patron, Charles Scott Murray, M.P. for Buckinghamshire, when it had to be relinquished⁴⁷.

Father Passerat, before he resigned his office in 1848, had ample opportunity to consider the lawfulness of parish work for Redemptorists. It seems only fair to distinguish between his attitude to Switzerland and Poland and his policy in other places. He was uneasy about those who lived apart from the religious house, scattered in various parishes, and those who were able to exercise the parochial ministry more or less as a community. He showed considerable anxiety about the Swiss Fathers; and his dealing with those in Poland appears as lacking in sympathy for their very real difficulties. On the other hand, he showed no qualms, as far as we can judge, over accepting the parishes in Austria and the situation that developed in America and England. He certainly had a high appreciation for the missions and promoted them most zealously, but his objections to parishes do not seem to have been concerned with their being incompatible with the missions, which was the point made in the Pontifical Rule. What disturbed him more was the harm that might be done to the orderly life of the religious community. For this reason it seems right to discern a change of emphasis in the attitude of his successor, Father Rudolf von Smetana and those who came after him.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Spic. hist.*, 28(1980) 435.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Spic. hist.*, 11(1963) 404-406.

4. *The Smetana Regime*

The year 1848 was a troubled one for Europe. In March Austria suffered its revolution, which showed particular animosity against the Redemptorists, whose very success made them objects of jealousy. Their institute was suppressed and their houses closed⁴⁸. Father Passerat escaped from Vienna, and from Belgium resigned his office into the hands of the Holy See⁴⁹. Owing to the current disturbances, especially in Austria and Switzerland, the office of Vicar General beyond the Alps was allowed to lapse for a time, a situation that many hoped would become permanent. By 1850, however, it had become apparent that peaceful collaboration had become extremely difficult between what were now two branches of the institute; and the Holy See restored the Vicariate, appointing Father Smetana as Vicar General⁵⁰. The new superior, unable to return to Vienna, fixed his residence in Coblenz and prepared to meet his problems, of which there was no lack.

Towards the end of October he assembled at Bischenberg in Alsace an important meeting of superiors and vocals of each of the provinces under his jurisdiction⁵¹. Among those who met to discuss the problems of the times were the great Dutch missionary, Father Bernard Hafkenscheid, superior of the newly erected American province, and the energetic disciple of St. Clement, Father Frederick von Held, representing the houses in England. For the Vicar General it was a critical time, in which it was necessary to find security in the Rule. That is how he expressed himself in a circular to the scattered Austrian Redemptorists shortly after the meeting in Bischenberg. « If we are to restore the good order that has been disturbed by violent assaults, we must gather up the bonds of discipline which through necessity have become loosened and bring back regular observance »⁵².

In particular he came to a decision concerning those little missions in England, which he communicated to Father von Held during the meeting. Hanley Castle and Great Marlow were to be relinquished, and the little communities were to be gathered in a large mission house at Bishop Eton, Liverpool⁵³. This decision, confirmed by the assembly,

⁴⁸ Hosp, *Erbe*, 373-387.

⁴⁹ *Spic. hist.*, 2(1954) 50.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 54.

⁵¹ Cf. K. Dilgskron, *P. Rudolf von Smetana*, Vienna, 1902, 163-172.

⁵² *ibid.*, 173.

⁵³ K. Dilgskron, *P. Friedrich von Held*, Vienna, 1909, 263.

Father von Held undertook to implement faithfully, in spite of the unpleasantness he clearly foresaw. Closing the houses was a thankless task, which he was doubtless by no means sorry to delegate to Father Prost, superior in Great Marlow⁵⁴. Poor Father Prost dutifully braved the wrath of the Bishops of Birmingham, the formidable Ullathorne, and of Northampton, as well as the protests of Cardinal Wiseman of Westminster and the indignation of Scott Murray, who saw the ruin of his hopes for Great Marlow. Father von Held wrote to explain himself to Bishop Waring of Northampton, aggrieved at the sudden departure of the Redemptorists from his diocese. The policy was, he said, to retain only such foundations « as held out the hope of being able to found a full community ». Such a regular religious house was necessary, he went on, « for the accomplishment of the great objective of our Order, that is to give missions and retreats »⁵⁵. Father Prost, when it was all over, found himself superior of the new house in Bishop Eton and about to embark on a series of brilliantly successful missions. Just the same, he had his regrets at having to leave work and people he had come to love. It had been surely, he reflected sadly, after the mind of St. Alphonsus to care for the country folk about Great Marlow.

With Father Smetana the emphasis on the incompatibility with the missions as in the Pontifical Rule had returned. This point, made so firmly in the case of the English foundations, he had occasion to stress when better times returned to his native Austria. When the ban on Redemptorists was eased in 1852, there was question of the parishes in Frohnleiten and Marburg. But there had been important changes since they had been accepted by Father Passerat. Since 1840 the Redemptorists had been able to give missions, and now at their restoration there were urgent requests for them to continue. During the years of suppression, moreover, their numbers had been diminished by almost half, mainly through having made foundations in the south of Germany⁵⁶.

With fewer men to call on and so much promise in the missions, the choice was an obvious one. The small community in Marburg had remained after 1848, prudently dressing as secular priests; but now in 1852 the parish was surrendered to the diocese⁵⁷. In Frohnleiten, the

⁵⁴ Father Prost's account of the closing of the two houses may be seen in *Spic. hist.*, 11(1963) 406-408.

⁵⁵ Letter of 18th January 1851 quoted by Sharp, *art. cit.*, 388.

⁵⁶ Hosp. *Erbe*, 391.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 402.

earlier foundation, the government closed its ears to the people's pleas and insisted that the Fathers must go; and it was only with the greatest reluctance that it had yielded to the extent of allowing Father Wenzel Zyka to remain as parish priest. The question of Frohnleiten was discussed at a meeting of superiors at Eggenburg, but without coming to a decision. The new provincial, Father Adam Mangold, at the beginning of 1854 referred the matter to the Vicar General. As was to be expected, Father Smetana was not moved by representations of bishop and parishioners. At his direction Father Zyka resigned the parish. Lack of personnel did not allow him to satisfy even the further request of the bishop that Frohnleiten remain simply as a mission house⁵⁸.

Things did not run so smoothly when Father Smetana tried to extend his policy to America. He sent word that the houses in Detroit and Monroe were to be closed⁵⁹. These houses were seen, it would seem, as somewhat similar to the two English houses closed in 1851. They were small and offered little immediate promise of developing into larger foundations. Whatever the motives of the Vicar General, the Bishop of Detroit was outraged when the unfortunate provincial, Father George Ruland, informed him of the decision in 1854. His indignant reply described the poor man's letter as « very unjust, unreasonable and unchristianlike ». In his wrath he applied to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda to force the Redemptorists to remain in his diocese. The case dragged on until 1858, probably on account of some exaggeration in the bishop's statement of his complaints. At any rate, it was abundantly clear that it would be no easy matter to renounce parishes in America. This unhappy Detroit experience was still unresolved when the general chapter convoked by Father Smetana met in Rome in 1855.

5. *Fathers Mauron and Raus*

The capitulars who met in the recently acquired Villa Caserta were commendably expeditious about electing a Superior General in the person of Father Nicholas Mauron, superior of the province of France and Switzerland. Then they addressed themselves to the formidable task of examining the Constitutions of 1764 in order to

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 388-392.

⁵⁹ Byrne, 211-213; Curley, 127-129.

adapt them where necessary to the changed conditions of the institute, no longer confined to the Kingdom of Naples, but spread throughout the world (*in orbem terrarum*)⁶⁰. The section on works incompatible with the missions called for the exercise of some ingenuity. The retreats to nuns that had loomed largest among the forbidden works in St. Alphonsus' time could have been embarrassing, since they figured quite prominently among the activities of most of the capitulars. Their solution was the declaration that in the transalpine provinces such retreats could not be given on the occasion of missions⁶¹. When they came to consider the parishes, the situation in the United States was very much in their minds as they showed in their decisions⁶².

As regards parishes the chapter declared: By the word « parish » is not to be understood so-called mission stations with care of souls; with the exception, however, that in Europe mission stations of this kind are to be only rarely accepted, it being left to the judgment of the Superior General what should be opportune or necessary in each individual case.

America was to be left alone and Europe was to be protected as far as possible. Most probably the mission stations of which the chapter spoke were an institution familiar in most English-speaking lands during last century⁶³. They were also called quasi-parishes (*ad instar paroeciarum* in official language). Bishops in English-speaking lands especially were generally reluctant to erect canonical parishes, as they considered the greater freedom in placing personnel and altering parish boundaries was to their advantage in developing their dioceses. Needless to say, it was highly unlikely that such an institution find its way into Europe. And one must surely see the decision as dangerously close to quibbling. After all, what had been forbidden originally had been simply the care of souls (*cura d'anime*).

Father Mauron, elected Superior General, saw himself as the defender of the Rule, and for that reason he was anxious to prevent the American example influence other parts of the Congregation. He welcomed the offer of a foundation in Chile in 1860 because, as he explained to Father Kockerols, the Belgian provincial, « there we could live in community as we do in Europe and without the quasi-

⁶⁰ *Acta integra*, no. 988.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, no. 1036.

⁶² *ibid.*, no. 1037.

⁶³ Cf. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, XI, New York, 1911, 499-503.

cure of souls as in the United States »⁶⁴. Father Mauron's dreams of Chile came to nothing, principally because of the inefficient leadership he selected. He had no more success when he turned his attention to the United States themselves. The American provincial from 1865 to 1877 was most sympathetic to the Superior General's views concerning parishes. Father Joseph Helmprecht was eager to promote the missions⁶⁵.

The Mission Church in Boston, founded in 1871, has a name that bears witness to good intentions in its regard⁶⁶. Good intentions, sad to say, were not enough to save Father Helmprecht from the necessity agreeing to undertake parish duties as well as maintain a community of missionaries. A similar fate befell his attempted mission houses in St. Louis and St. Alphonsus, New York. In answer to the Superior General's repeated urging Father Helmprecht had at length to explain why his earnest efforts to establish houses without parish duties had not succeeded. The bishops in the United States were under great pressure to provide pastoral care for the rapidly increasing Catholic population, being increased in the latter half of the century by a flood of immigrants. And there was the further practical consideration that experience had shown that mission work alone could not guarantee financial support for a community⁶⁷.

On 2nd July 1893 Father Mauron convoked a general chapter, the first to be held since the one that had elected him thirty-eight years earlier. Less than a fortnight later, on the thirteenth, he died, something of which his failing health had been giving warning for more than ten years. The chapter he had called came together on 25th February of the following year and elected Father Matthias Raus, also of the province of France and Switzerland, to succeed him. The capitulars, reviewing half a century and more of considerable achievement, assessed their Redemptorist life in the light of an enthusiastic rediscovery of St. Alphonsus, their founder. One of the fruits of their reflections was the declaration: « Though missions to Catholics are the primary and proximate end of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, missions to unbelievers are not only not opposed but altogether in keeping with this end »⁶⁸. The capitulars, we are informed

⁶⁴ Cf. *Spic. hist.*, 30(1982) 387.

⁶⁵ Cf. Curley, 152-180.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 167.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 168.

⁶⁸ *Acta integra*, no. 1352.

by the *Acta*, all showed their approval by rising to their feet, « and some even clapped ». This very decorous enthusiasm marked an important new stage in Redemptorist history. Those « mission stations » of the United States which had exercised the previous chapter were now given a new and much more credible significance.

Before the year was out it seemed that the decision about foreign missions was already having effect. The Dutch and Upper German (Munich) provinces, in response to appeals by Brazilian bishops, made foundations in the country. It would not be correct, of course, to see these ventures as what had been intended by the capitulars, missions to unbelievers. Just the same, they aimed at meeting the needs of bishops who found it impossible to provide ordinary pastoral care for their people. It was in some respects very similar to the situation in the United States in 1832, and once more the Redemptorists met the need by accepting parishes⁶⁹. There were, however, important developments in foreign missions in the stricter sense during Father Raus's time. The Belgian province established a string of missions in the Congo, now Zaire⁷⁰. The same flourishing province had worked in the West Indies for almost half a century, when in 1902 its foundations became the vice-province of Roseau⁷¹. In 1906 the Irish province made the first Redemptorist foundation in Asia, Opon in the Philippines⁷². Whether or not in the sense understood in 1855, the twentieth century was beginning with a dramatic increase in the number of mission stations. That was possibly the principal legacy Father Raus bequeathed to his successor.

6. The Murray Regime

During the general chapter held in 1909 Father Raus resigned, to be succeeded by the Irish provincial, Father Patrick Murray⁷³. As

⁶⁹ The Dutch foundations in Brazil are treated in W. Perriens, *Vice-provinciae Hollando-Braziliacae res gestae per quinque lustra, 1894-1919*, Rio de Janeiro, 1920. The German presence is treated in G. Brandhuber (ed.), *Die Redemptoristen*, Bamberg, 1932, 256-261.

⁷⁰ See M. Kratz, *La mission des Rédemptoristes Belges au Bas-Congo. La période des semailles (1899-1920)*, Brussels, 1970.

⁷¹ Concerning the work of the Belgians in the West Indies see A. Boni, *In den Westindischen Archipel*. Bruges, 1944.

⁷² M. Bailly, *Small Net in a Big Sea. The Redemptorists in the Philippines, 1905-1929*, Cebu City, n.d.; *Spic. hist.*, 27(1979) 228-255.

⁷³ For biographical data concerning Father Murray cf. *Spic. Hist.*, 9(1961) 3-79.

the Congregation entered the twentieth century it clung tightly to the cherished traditions that linked it to its origins. In almost two centuries, however, its expansion to all the continents of the world had necessitated some departures from the practice of St. Alphonsus. In particular the *cura d'anime* forbidden by the Pontifical Rule as a distracting occupation was very much included among the works undertaken by Redemptorists in the Americas, in Africa and the Philippines. There is evidence of some uneasiness in the careful distinction drawn between parishes and mission stations; and it is this uncomfortable sense that all was not right that was manifested more and more during the thirty-eight years Father Murray was Superior General.

In the beginning he continued the policy of his predecessor with regard to the new ground that had been opened since the Chapter of 1894. As superior of the Irish province he had experience of that policy in the parish of Opon for which he had been responsible. Possibly as a consequence, he appears to have had no qualms about accepting a second parish in the Philippines. When the Archbishop of Manila offered the parish of Malate in August 1912, it was accepted so promptly that within a few months, in spite of the long time necessary for correspondence, the contract was signed. It would not be misrepresenting the negotiations to say that the Superior General rather snapped up the offer. Father Baily in his account of the early days in the Philippines suggests that the unhesitating decision betrayed a lack of confidence in the future of the missions in the Philippines⁷⁴. When, a couple of years later, he commissioned Father Edmund Gleeson, superior in Australia, to make a canonical visitation of the Philippine houses, Father Murray accepted without comment the report praising the parish work and warmly recommending its continuance⁷⁵.

There was evidence of some change of attitude during the general chapter in 1921, during which there was a thorough examination of Rule and Constitutions in order to make adaptations required by the recently promulgated Code of Canon Law. The matter of parishes occupied the capitulars during three sessions, and before the debate ended the Superior General intervened. Addressing the chapter, he cited the example of those provinces which of necessity had

⁷⁴ Baily, 48-49; Cf. also S.J. Boland, *The Redemptorists in Luzon*, Manila, 1982, 15-15.

⁷⁵ Cf. General archives of the Redemptorists, Rome (quoted AGR). XIII D,

from the beginning undertaken parochial duties⁷⁶. Obviously, he was speaking of the American and Canadian provinces. The Constitution was then amended to read: « As regards parishes, the Rule is to be kept and therefore they shall not ordinarily be accepted, unless in the Rector Major's opinion their acceptance is a necessary means for obtaining the principal end »⁷⁷.

Evidence of the changed attitude appeared, as was probably to be expected, in dealings with the Philippines, where Father Murray's own Irish confrères were committed to parishes. In 1922 the Superior General wrote to the newly appointed superior in Malate, warning him that the parish was not to be considered as definitively accepted⁷⁸. During the years that followed superiors, from Father Murray down to the poor, harrassed rector on the spot, repeatedly appealed to the archbishop to allow the Redemptorists to resign from the parish. At length in February of 1928 the Irish provincial, visiting the Philippines, in an interview with the archbishop bluntly declared that the community was leaving Malate with as little delay as possible⁷⁹. Then on Holy Thursday, 5th April, a cable arrived from the Superior General ordering the community to suspend at once its preparations for departure.

Archbishop O'Doherty of Manila was a wily and formidable opponent. After that rather stormy interview with the Irish provincial he sent a cable to the superior of the Baltimore province, offering a city parish in which the work would be mainly in English⁸⁰. The Superior General replied to the American provincial's report in March, pointing out that he considered it inopportune to have another province working in the Philippines along with the Irish Fathers. And he did not fail to correct the false impression given by the archbishop: it would be imperative to learn the difficult Tagalog language⁸¹. Just

Cebu, Visitations. Father Gleeson had been a priest of the Maitland diocese before taking his vows as a Redemptorist in 1905. He was appointed Visitor (equivalently vice-provincial) of the Australian houses in 1912. Consecrated coadjutor Bishop of Maitland in 1929, he succeeded to the see two years later and died in Mayfield in 1956.

⁷⁶ *Acta integra Capituli Generalis XII C.S.S.R.*, Rome, 1921, no. 1529.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ Cf. Boland, 28.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁰ AGR, VII Ba, Provincialia, James Barron to Murray, 29th February 1928. The letter enclosed the cable from Manila, stating that « Brother Redemptorists » were withdrawing through lack of personnel.

⁸¹ AGR, VII, Ba, Provincialia, Murray to Barron, 28th March 1928.

a few days after so summarily dismissing the matter Father Murray learned to his dismay to what lengths the archbishop was prepared to go to win his point. A letter from the Sacred Consistorial Congregation brought word that the Archbishop of Manila had written personally to the Holy Father, asking him to intervene « with his august word » and have American Redemptorists sent to Malate⁸². This wholly unexpected communication was, of course, the reason for that cable suspending the departure of the community from Manila. Father Murray put off his reply to the Sacred Congregation until he should have conferred with the Irish provincial, on his way home from the Philippines⁸³. While he waited to see what would eventuate he wrote to Father Barron, provincial of Baltimore, warning him that the matter of the Philippines was in the hands of the Holy See, « as the Archbishop of Manila is sending telegram after telegram, urging the Holy Father to force me to send your Fathers there to Manila »⁸⁴. By that time he had sent off his own delayed reply to the Sacred Congregation⁸⁵. It was a long statement, pointing out the outstanding success of the missions in the Philippines, which had convinced the Bishop of Cebu to allow the Fathers to leave Opon for a residence in the city without parochial duties. He concluded with a plea, which revealed more of his attitude to parishes.

Should I follow my own inclination, I would beg your Eminence and through you the Holy Father kindly to suggest to His Excellency, the Archbishop of Manila, to give us a foundation in the suburbs of Manila without the care of a parish, as the Bishop of Cebu has done, and leave us free for the missions. In such a case it would not be possible to transfer to the American Fathers the parish now in the charge of our Irish Fathers, in view of the fact that the parochial ministry has introduced into the provinces of the United States of America, as happens everywhere, certain relaxations, particularly in matters of poverty, recollection and entertainment, the experience of which through contact with the Baltimore Fathers in Manila would do great harm to our Irish and Australian provinces.

It looks as though here we have the basic cause of the increasingly firm stand against parishes adopted by the Superior General.

⁸² AGR, XIII D, Cebu, Provincialia, S. Cong. Concistorialis to Murray, 31st March 1928.

⁸³ AGR, XIII D, Cebu, Provincialia, Murray to S. Cong. Concistorialis, 3rd April 1928.

⁸⁴ AGR, VII Ba, Provincialia, Murray to Barron, 29th May 1928.

⁸⁵ AGR, XIII D, Cebu, Provincialia, Murray to S. Cong. Concistorialis, 4th May 1928.

He feared they were undermining the religious spirit. In any case, his fears about Manila were finally allayed in October, when the Sacred Congregation informed him that Archbishop O'Doherty had at last yielded⁸⁶. As a matter of fact, the astute old man had also for some time been negotiating with the Irish Society of St. Columban and in the end had persuaded them to take over Malate.

The tussle over Malate, in which even the Pope found himself involved, seems to be a significant stage in the development of Father Murray's policy about parishes. After it he did have a very definite attitude, which he was able to express forcibly enough to convince others. So much may be gathered from a letter of the American Consul General, Father McEnniry, to Father Barron's successor, Father Andrew Kuhn. He wrote at length about the « parish-minded » attitude in the American provinces, declaring that he had personally been convinced by his discussion with « Father General and the other consultors »⁸⁷.

The principal object of our Congregation is to give regular, formal missions. In the history of the Church the deterioration of many Orders has resulted from their departing from their principal object or in making other objects *aeque principalia*. To accomplish the immense good of real missions our whole training and our whole life must fit us and keep us fit for this work. This is done by the exact observance of our Rule, written with this precise object in view. Other activities can interfere with the exact observance of the Rule, and thus wean some of our men away from the missionary spirit.

The matter of parishes emerged once more in debate during the general chapter held in 1936⁸⁸. After it had been decided not to change the formula decided in 1921 the Superior General made a statement of his manner of acting in authorising the acceptance of parishes, as he had been empowered to do. He made his disapproval apparent in the broad principle that ordinarily parish work was easier than preaching missions. It seems fair to see the memory of the Malate experience in his policy, when he gives as reasons for agreeing to parochial duties when the Holy See insists or when a bishop makes it a condition for a new foundation. Before the discussion of parishes ended Father Murray took occasion to speak again, this time in praise

⁸⁶ AGR, XII D, Cebu, Provincialia, S. Cong. Concistorialis to Murray, 17th October 1928.

⁸⁷ AGR, VII, Ba, Provincialia, McEnniry to Kuhn, 13th August 1930.

⁸⁸ *Acta integra Capituli Generalis XIII C.S.S.R.*, Rome, 1936, no. 1602.

of parish work being undertaken in Bolivia⁸⁹. The parishes there were far more extensive than those in most other places, and they were served by communities of six or eight Fathers. The more regular life in such houses he obviously saw as compensating for the parishes.

The position regarding parishes before World War II, therefore, was one of stern official disapproval, and this in spite of a growing commitment to the parochial ministry. The Superior General's opposition was well known, one might gather from a remark of Father McEnniry to the Baltimore provincial. He spoke of an African bishop who had mentioned to Pius XI that he was thinking of asking the Redemptorists to take charge of a parish in his diocese. The Pope replied that the Redemptorists would certainly do excellent work, but that for a parish the bishop should apply to the Superior General, adding « and I do not think you will succeed »⁹⁰.

7. After World War II

During the general chapter of 1947 Father Murray resigned, to be succeeded by Father Leonard Buijs of Holland⁹¹. The capitulars made no more than passing reference to the parish ministry. It was during the years that followed that the question became one that had at last to be squarely faced. After the experience of the war there was so much reconstruction needed both in ecclesiastical and civil affairs that the Redemptorists found themselves very much affected. In particular there was a very considerable change in their apostolic activities. Even in Europe parishes were accepted in increasing numbers. The effects are discernible in the catalogue of the Congregation published in 1955⁹². Of the twenty-seven provinces fewer than half a dozen were without responsibilities for parishes. This quite dramatic change had come about within a very short space of time. It is not surprising, therefore, that a new attitude had been manifested during the general chapter of the previous year. It had been convoked to elect a successor to Father Buijs, who had died in 1953.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, The vice-province of La Paz in Bolivia had been developed by the Strasbourg province since 1910. Cf. P. Henlé, *Lebensbilder verstorbener Redemptoristen der Strassburger Ordensprovinz*, Strasbourg, 1937, 82-100.

⁹⁰ AGR, VII, Ba, Provincialia, McEnniry to Kuhn, 13th August 1930.

⁹¹ For biographical data on Father Buijs see *Spic. hist.*, ((1953) 11-58; 4(1956) 425-461.

⁹² *Catalogus C.S.S.R.*, 1955, Louvain, 1955. This very informative catalogue included among other useful items the pastoral activity of each house.

Acting with unusual despatch, the capitulars in the second ballot chose Father William Gaudreau of the Baltimore province and then turned their attention to what they obviously saw as their principal task. They voted unanimously that the new Superior General be asked to undertake a revision of the Constitutions, and that « even the text of the Pontifical Rule should not be excluded from that revision »⁹³. The remaining sessions were occupied mainly with preparing material for the revision, clarifying principles and suggesting adaptations. When it came to the matter of the parishes it was suggested that the existing legislation was sufficient, but in need of some explanation⁹⁴. In particular it was asked that there be formulated a satisfactory definition of those « mission stations », which had been mentioned regularly since 1855. The purpose of this definition was to emphasise the mission work being done among unbelievers; but the capitulars also insisted that provinces with parish duties should provide adequate training for those assigned to such occupations. The discussions in 1954, however, were never seen as more than preparatory for the subsequent chapter, when the revision of the Constitutions, and possibly even of the Pontifical Rule, should be submitted.

In the chapter of 1963 there was a mood for change considerably more radical than had been contemplated in 1954. The work of the commission that had functioned in the intervening years was rejected in favour of a complete revision of both Rule and Constitutions to be undertaken by the capitulars themselves. Debate was vigorous throughout, and the official *Acta* indicate that it was particularly so over the topic of parishes. The discussion occupied four sessions⁹⁵, and it proved most revealing. One capitular pointed out at an early stage that there were more Redemptorists occupied in parish duties than in missions⁹⁶. This thought seemed to trouble many who spoke, insisting that due notice should be taken of the facts and less insistence made on a principle which no longer represented the real condition of the institute. One man argued with evident feeling that it was necessary to take due cognisance of the

⁹³ *Acta integra Capituli Generalis XV C.S.S.R.*, Rome, 1954, no. 1669.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, no. 1686.

⁹⁵ *Acta integra Capituli Generalis XVI C.S.S.R.*, Rome, 1963, nos. 1725-1728.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, no. 1725.

parishes so that many good Redemptorists should no longer see themselves reduced to the level of second class religious⁹⁷.

The outcome of this, the most thorough discussion of the question by Redemptorists, is to be found in the text of the Constitutions produced by the chapter to replace the old Pontifical Rule. Missions were now described as « the chief of all the works of the Congregation », to which it should especially devote its efforts⁹⁸. Parishes could be lawfully accepted with the consent of the Rector Major, and should be served « in a missionary manner »⁹⁹. These Constitutions, it was understood, were the basic legislation, requiring further explanation and definition in capitular statutes, to be formulated in the next chapter.

As it happened, the projected chapter had to give place to the special general chapter required by Pope Paul VI in his *motu proprio* of 1966 for the complete revision of religious legislation. For the Redemptorists this task of producing new Constitutions and Statutes was undertaken in a chapter which met in 1967 and 1969 and whose work was approved by the Holy See on 2nd February 1982. So much plain speaking in 1963, it seems, had removed many prejudices and assuaged many a sensitivity. The debate was now much calmer, and it found expression in a statute on the parochial ministry as one among other « forms of missionary work »¹⁰⁰. It required that those assigned to parish work should be whole-hearted in their dedication, as befits those « engaged in a continual mission ».

This simple formula, as can be seen, retains a faint memory of the anxious efforts of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to be true to the letter of legislation seen as the precious heritage of St. Alphonsus. It was at times a somewhat tortuous path through those « mission stations » of 1855 and the insistence of the Holy See and bishops, which in 1936 was admitted as justifying some deviation from principle. In the end, it has to be said that the gradual coming to grips with Redemptorist parish ministry represents the passage from the much simpler conditions of eighteenth century Naples to the Church of 1982.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 136, no. 8.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 137, no. 15.

¹⁰⁰ *Constitutions and Statutes C.S.S.R.*, Rome, 1982, p. 84.