

## † R. P. Iosephus Brunner (1912-1952)

(Prov. S. Lud.)

Festo Annuntiationis BMV anni currentis in domo novitiatus De Soto, Missouri, e quieto ac pacifico somno ad aeterna praemia vocatus est, quadragesimo vitae suae anno, P. Iosephus Brunner, qui brevi sua vita tanta perfecit, ut liceat ei applicare verba biblica: *Quis est hic, et laudabimus eum? fecit enim mirabilia in vita sua* (Eccli. 31, 9).

Ortum duxit e paroecia nostra Chicagiensi S. Michaelis 18 Sept. 1912, et fratris Francisci natu maioris exemplum secutus, vota Instituti Alfonsiani emisit festo S. Alfonsi a. 1935. Festo SS. Apostolorum Petri et Pauli 1938 in sacello collegii Oconomowoc sacerdotio auctus est.

Exinde usque ad obitum semper ostendit singularem spiritum sacrificii, oblivionis sui dilectionisque animarum et Instituti, primum (1939-1944) qua administrator (*Business Manager*) periodici *The Liguorian*. Ei debentur duo opera nova hodieum florentissima, mercatus scilicet libellorum (*The Pamphlet Office*) et Foedus Gerardinum (*The League of Saint Gerard*).

Inde a Iulio 1944 ad Maium 1948 confrater noster adscriptus erat Missioni (hodie Vice-Provinciae) de Manaus, de qua videsis *Analecta XXIII* (1951), 75-80. Erant primi nostri passus in illo novo campo, et P. Iosephus Brunner haec ardua initia expertus est in statione tunc omnium difficillima Coari. Post eius obitum de eo scripsere folia *The Redemptorist Amazonian Missions*, Maio 1952 (et confratres inquirant nobis, si haec verba in suo idiomate relinquimus):

*« Fr. Brunner's interest in the missions was not learned from books; he learned the hard way — in the field. For three years he wrestled with the problems of missionary life in our then most difficult mission in distant Coari. He was among the men who dug the first foundations for the buildings in the hot tropical sun of Coari... who plotted the missionary journey in our first boat up and down unknown and dangerous rivers and jungle-hedged lakes... who faced the first ignorance, superstitions and hostility of the natives against the intruding foreigners. He knew what it was to live for months on rice and fish — without meat. He knew what it was to battle disease-laden mosquitoes and then toss for days in the throes of malaria, hoping to die for relief yet afraid to die and abandon these poor people who needed him so badly. Fr. Brunner's outlook on the missions was tender and sympathetic... softened by sufferings and toughened by a steel resolve to be a missionary... ».*

Redux e Brasilia, Brasilianae (et Asianae) Missioni suae Provinciae admirabili studio zeloque inservire pergebat qua Missionum praedicator et Procurator. Quae inde a mense Maio 1948 usque ad vitae finem hoc modo praestiterit, solus Deus accurate scit. Audiant illi qui idiomatis Anglici gnari sunt denuo vocem confratrum Vice-Provinciae de Manaus:

*« Fr. Brunner was our oneman army of supply — one man to keep thirty-three missionary soldiers working, fighting, moving forward. His was a gigantic task; he was a giant who accomplished the task. No matter what was needed on the mission front either in Brazil or in Siam, Fr. Brunner knew no rest until it was found, bought, packed, trucked, loaded on ship and forwarded to the mission field... An incalculable amount of*

*work... took dreadful toll of Fr. Brunner's energy, yet served to fire his zeal... Everything from aspirin tablets to farm tractors and jeeps... No missionary ever asked Fr. Brunner in vain. He was like Christ in that; he, too, could say: « Ask and you shall receive ». We always asked and always received!*

*« He also ran a one-man advertising agency for the missions. Give him an empty pulpit, a vacant platform, or an unused soap box and you would hear a ringing appeal in favor of the Redemptorist Missions. The mission fields of Siam and Brazil were his theme in season and out of season. He wrote... begging for funds and material, thanking benefactors, opening likely opportunities. And he had no secretary. No dollar ever went unacknowledged, never was a cent diverted from its missionary purpose.»*

P. Ios. Brunner, sic thesauros colligens pro suis dilectis Missionibus, manebat semper bonus religiosus paupertatis amantissimus. Itinerans ne centesimam quidem nummi partem dilapidabat, sicut eius in itinere comites eiusque notulae superstites testantur. Ne ephemeridem quidem recentem emere volebat, nisi forte sperabat inde aliquam notitiam suis Missionibus utilem, velut de proxima navigatione in Thailandiam vel Brasiliam septentrionalem.

Sic bonus P. Ios. Brunner non sibi vixit, sed aliis, Christo et animabus. Num quis dicet eum stulte fecisse et pro aliis praemature se occidisse? Beatus ille, quem amor Christi et animarum Christi sanguine redemptarum sic stultum facit!

P. Ios Brunner gloriosam resurrectionem exspectat in nostro caemeterio Glenview prope Chicagiam. R.I.P.