

CENTENNIAL SNAPSHOTS

3. Father Noël-Marie Decamps



Born 23 December 1884 in Carnieres, Belgium, of a Walloon (French-speaking) family, Noel Decamps joined the Redemptorists and made his religious vows in Saint-Trond, Belgium, on 29 September 1904. He was sent to Galicia to study Polish and was ordained by Bishop Novak, coadjutor to Cardinal Puzyna, in Podgorze, Poland on 6 December 1908. When he arrived in Canada, he first began to work among the Polish of Ottawa, but was advised by Father Achiel Delaere to dedicate himself to those who did not have enough priests speaking their language: the Ukrainians. Decamps immediately petitioned to join the Ukrainian-Byzantine rite and began to study the language and rite with the Basilians of Ottawa. He arrived in Yorkton on 24 July 1909, where he served the Ukrainian-speaking settlers in the Yorkton and Ituna districts. He was instrumental in the founding of a temporary monastery in Hubbard, Saskatchewan (later moved to Ituna), and in the founding

of the Sacred Heart Institute for young women and St. Joseph's College for young men—both now combined in Sacred Heart High School, Yorkton. While Superior of Yorkton from 1916 to 1921, he opened the minor seminary (later St. Vladimir's College, Roblin, Manitoba) in August 1917 and in 1920 enlarged the monastery to house the students. Through his efforts, and with the financial help of the contemplative order of nuns, the Redemptoristines, the interior of the church of the Most Holy Mother of God in Yorkton was painted and decorated in 1919-20 and a grotto was built in her honour in 1921. Besides his pastoral work, he was also the director and a teacher in the minor seminary, master of novices, consultor to Father Achiel Delaere in all of the work of the Eastern-rite Redemptorists in Canada, and a preacher of missions in Canada. Suffering from chronic ill health, he had a number of unsuccessful operations to correct chronic intestinal and haemorrhoidal bleeding before and during his stay in Canada. While in constant pain from inexpert and primitive surgeries, the herculean work of building the Ukrainian missions of western Canada with little or no money and too few co-workers exhausted his strength and his patience. He returned to Belgium on 16 March 1924, and left the Redemptorists on 15 September 1934 to retire to a quieter parish life in Quaregnon, Belgium. A friend to the Redemptorists until his death, he followed the activities of the Eastern-rite Redemptorists in North America with great interest, helped serve the Eastern European immigrants in Belgium, and was always available for advice. He died in Nimy, Belgium in 1956 at the age of 71. Vichna Pamiat'!



Ukrainian Redemptorists 100 years

The year 2006 marks 100 years since the Redemptorists began formally working with eastern European immigrants in North America and eventually around the world in their own rite. This series of 'Bulletin Inserts' is dedicated to the pioneer Redemptorist Fathers and Brothers of the Yorkton Province. For more information about the Redemptorists, contact: the Redemptorist Vocation Office: 250 Jefferson Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2V 0M6, Canada or visit our website: www.yorktonredemptorists.com