

CENTENNIAL SNAPSHOTS

14. Father Albert Coulie, CSSR

Albert Coulie was born into a large French-speaking family in Comines, Belgium on February 27, 1891. A brilliant student in the Redemptorists' minor seminary in Saint-Trond, he entered the Redemptorists' novitiate there and was professed on August 2, 1908. While he was studying for the priesthood, the Germans invaded Belgium and Albert volunteered for the Belgian Army and served (1914-18) as a stretcher-bearer throughout the First World War. Constantly surrounded by mutilation and death, he learned first-hand about self-sacrifice, terror, and despair. After the war he returned to the major seminary and was ordained in Namen, Belgium, on February 2, 1921. Father Albert Coulie was then sent to learn English and Ukrainian in England before being sent to Canada. He also worked in the Redemptorists' own publishing house in Brussels to learn typesetting and printing to prepare for an assignment at the newly-established Redemptorist printing shop, The Redeemer's Voice, in Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

Once he was given permission to celebrate the liturgy in the Byzantine rite, he left for Saskatchewan in 1922 and, to his amazement, discovered that winter could last eight months and the thermometer could dip to minus fifty centigrade. Besides his work in the press training the other Redemptorists and the typesetters, he was assigned to the chapels outside Yorkton and bragged that he learned to use a dogsled to reach them on weekends. During the week, he taught in the minor seminary in St. Mary's, Yorkton. In 1930, when most of the Belgian pioneers were leaving Canada, he returned to Belgium and to the Latin rite. He preached missions and retreats in Wallonie, (French-speaking Belgium) as well as in Uganda (former Belgian Congo). When he was 50, Father Coulie was named a missionary to Haiti. While he learned Creole and worked in the Haitian parishes and missions, he sometimes wrote to his former colleagues in Canada to state that he had experienced both extreme heat and cold as a missionary. He returned to Belgium during the Second World War but had to flee and spend the war in the underground movement once the Gestapo discovered that he was working against the Germans. In 1946, Father Albert Coulie returned to Haiti and preached parish missions until his death from heart trouble on January 8, 1964 at the age of 74. He was buried in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. 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