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THE REDEMPTORISTS IN THE FOREIGN MISSION FIELD

From the earliest times of their institute Redemptorists have been known most of all as preachers. Their name has been associated with the popular missions: but at the time of their foundation they looked to a broader horizon, making a formal commitment to bringing the word of redemption to unbelievers. At an early date that explicit direction towards the foreign missions disappeared, but there remained a readiness to undertake such activities that in time found expression in various ways and most likely revealed a more profound orientation towards bringing to those most in need the Christian message.

For a long time for Redemptorists the foreign missions meant rather the expansion of their activities outside Europe. In fact, that implied mainly their seeking new fields where they might carry on the parish missions in which they had acquired over the years considerable skill and renown. This was the attitude that prevailed until the end of the nineteenth century, when with a sudden burst of enthusiasm they embraced once more the wider aims they had originally received from their founder, St. Alphonsus. In more recent years their labours in many parts of the world have become increasingly devoted to evangelisation in the stricter sense of bringing the faith to the pagan world.

There has undoubtedly been an evolution of the Redemptorist apostolate; and underlying this gradual opening out to new ventures there has been an important change in the way the Congregation has seen itself and its mission in the Church. This is the principal fruit of studying the extension of Redemptorist life and work beyond the European lands of their origin.

Return to the foreign missions originally contemplated by St. Alphonsus has entailed for Redemptorists a rethinking especially of their commitment to the popular missions, which is seen as being far from exclusive. It was not easy to recognise that the two works were not really incompatible. During last century there were some unhappy attempts to continue in distant lands the works that had become so familiar in Europe. There seems to have been even some reluctance in undertaking foreign missions. In the end the expansion of the Congregation through so many countries has meant especially a renewed emphasis on a

characteristic aspect of the zeal of St. Alphonsus, his compassion for the most abandoned.

ST. ALPHONSUS AND THE FOREIGN MISSIONS

There is evidence that St. Alphonsus was strongly attracted to the foreign missions. In July 1734 he wrote to his former spiritual director, the Oratorian Tommaso Pagano, proposing as a theoretical case of conscience the question as to whether a priest was obliged to assist the neglected people of the Cape of Good Hope¹. He put the case as having been suggested by the remembered conversation of Father Matteo Ripa, the Chinese missionary and founder of the College of the Holy Family in Naples, where Alphonsus had lived for a time². Though expressed in general terms, discussing the grave or extreme need of the people of the Cape and the corresponding obligation in pastoral charity to come to their aid, it was clearly a question of whether or not Alphonsus himself was bound to go to South Africa. That is how Pagano himself understood it. In a letter of 4th August he replied to his former penitent, strongly urging him not to leave his present good work³.

About the same time St. Alphonsus must have put the case to his actual director, Mgr. Falcoia, who replied in a letter dated 20th July⁴. He expressed himself with some firmness, as is natural seeing his most trusted associate appeared to be wavering in his commitment to the Congregation the two men had founded just two years earlier. The wish to go to abandoned souls, he told his penitent, was to be praised, but there were other things to be kept in mind. What about the rest of Africa, he asked, as well as Asia and America? Were there not abandoned souls there as well? And, for that matter, what about Europe? That was the point, of course; and he went on to argue that the new institute was already working for abandoned souls closer to hand.

The attraction had revealed itself as early as when Alphonsus had been living in the Chinese College, the popular name of Father

¹ *The Centenary Edition. The Complete Works of St. Alphonsus de' Liguori*, XVIII, New York, 1891, 60-62; *Lettere di S. Alfonso M. De' Liguori*, I, Rome, 1887, 40-42.

² Concerning the association of Matteo Ripa with St. Alphonsus cf. *Spic. hist.*, 6 (1958) 309-330.

³ Quoted in *The Centenary Edition*, XVIII, 60.

⁴ T. FALCOIA, *Lettere a S. Alfonso, Ripa, Sportelli, Crostarosa*, ed. O. Gregorio [Rome, 1963], 223.

Ripa's house. Recounting the history of his missionary institute, Ripa gave some attention to Alphonsus and his interest in the missions to the Chinese. « Although he was not a member of our Congregation, he was willing to join and cherished a desire to preach the holy Gospel in China, as he frequently mentioned to his own director »⁵. This attraction towards the missions to unbelievers Alphonsus evidently expressed as preaching to the abandoned souls of South Africa, since Falcoia's reply repeated the phrase with some emphasis and even a little heavy-handed irony. He was able to remind his penitent that the newly founded institute aimed precisely at working for abandoned souls. In the earliest texts of the rule of the Congregation that was how its purpose was expressed⁶. In the rule approved by the Holy See in 1749 this purpose was expressed as « preaching the word of God to the poor »⁷. In these formulae it can scarcely be doubted that among the abandoned, needy, poor, St. Alphonsus, whatever about Falcoia, definitely included those who had no knowledge of the Gospel.

It would be, however, unfair to suggest that Falcoia was opposed to the foreign missions. In the earliest texts of the rule, in which his views carried most weight, there was a strong emphasis on preaching to unbelievers. In the summary or *Compendio della Regola*, which was followed while Falcoia worked on a fuller draft, it was required that « each be ready to go to the lands of unbelievers and heretics »⁸. The *Regole Grandi* of Falcoia put it more emphatically. « Let each subject of our institute ardently desire to be sent to the missions among the unbelievers and heretics »⁹. They were even to desire martyrdom in the cause of spreading the Gospel.

After the death of Falcoia in 1743 a General Congregation assembled in Ciorani gave more definite shape to the institute, adopting the religious vows. In addition to the ordinary obligations

⁵ M. RIPA, *Storia della fondazione della Congregazione e del Collegio de' Cinesi sotto il titolo della Santa Famiglia*, Naples, 1832, III, 8. The passage was quoted from an earlier edition by A. Tannoia, *Della vita ed istituto del Venerabile Servo di Dio, Alfonso M Liguori, Vescovo di S. Agata de' Goti e fondatore della Congregazione de' preti missionarii del SS. Redentore*, Book I, Naples, 1798, 54.

⁶ See, for example, O. Gregorio and A. Sampers, (eds.), *Documenti intorno alla Regola della Congregazione del SS. Redentore, 1725-1749* (Bibliotheca Historica C.S.S.R., IV) Rome, 1969, pp. 293, 385, 400.

⁷ *ibid.*, 413.

⁸ *ibid.*, 295.

⁹ *ibid.*, 321.

of poverty, chastity and obedience the members were to bind themselves by a special *voto annesso* « to go on the missions, even to unbelievers, when sent by the Sovereign Pontiff or the Rector Major »¹⁰.

The vow to go on the foreign missions was included in the text submitted to the Holy See in 1748 for approbation¹¹. In the Pontifical Rule approved in February of the following year it was omitted on the recommendation, it seems, of Cardinal Spinelli of Naples, who argued that the members of the institute would be fully occupied with their work among the country folk of their own country¹². That was the way Falcoia had dissuaded St. Alphonsus from his dreams of the Cape of Good Hope; and there was much common sense in the argument. The early years of the Congregation had been so busy with the popular missions throughout the Kingdom of Naples that there was little if any time for other activities. In a memorial addressed to the king in December 1759 St. Alphonsus described how the labours of the Congregation, beginning in the neighbourhood of Salerno and Naples, had extended to the most remote provinces of the kingdom, with as many as forty or fifty missions each year¹³.

Despite the removal of the explicit orientation to the foreign missions, however, and the increase of occupations close at hand, there remained a strong attraction. In July 1758 Father Fabrizio Cimino wrote in the name of St. Alphonsus a circular letter to communicate the news « that he has been asked to send young men to the foreign missions of Asia »¹⁴. The letter went on to ask in terms of great fervour for volunteers to work among Nestorians seeking reunion with the Roman Church. Within a week or so Alphonsus was able to write with evident gratification to the students in Ciorani: « The petitions you have sent me have afforded me great joy: be assured that I say this sincerely. I should be most desirous of seeing several of our young men go among the heathen to give their lives for Jesus Christ »¹⁵. The project came to nothing, it seems, as

¹⁰ The decree of the General Congregation may be seen in M. De Meulemeester, *Origines de la Congrégation du Très Saint-Rédempteur*, II, Louvain, 1957, 240.

¹¹ *Documenti intorno alla Regola*, 401.

¹² *Documenta miscellanea ad regulam et spiritum Congregationis nostrae illustrandum*, Rome, 1904, 77.

¹³ Cf. M. De Meulemeester, *op. cit.*, 272-274.

¹⁴ Letter of 18th July 1758, *The Centenary Edition*, XVIII, 507-508.

¹⁵ Letter of 27th July 1758, *The Centenary Edition*, XVIII, 508-510.

there is no record of further correspondence on the matter; but the incident shows plainly that the passage of thirty years or so had not dulled the vision Alphonsus had cherished during his days in the Chinese College.

That desire to work for the most abandoned which had drawn St. Alphonsus to the neglected people of South Africa remained with his Congregation, enshrined in its rules. But the heavy demands of the parish missions tended to preclude work among the unbelievers. It would not be misrepresenting events to speak of this as restricting the earlier broader concept of the Redemptorist apostolate. The very success of the home missions, continuing through the nineteenth century, tended to concentrate attention and activity, so that it was quite late when the Congregation recovered that enthusiasm that had been so characteristic of its founder.

THE EARLY TRANSALPINES

In 1787, the year of St. Alphonsus' death, two enterprising and courageous Redemptorists, St. Clement Hofbauer and Father Thaddeus Hübl, established the Congregation in Warsaw. In the German church of St. Benno's they inaugurated an extraordinarily vigorous pastoral activity, which has been called a perpetual mission and which attracted vocations to an extent that it was soon necessary to think of new foundations. Europe, however, and Poland in particular did not offer favourable conditions for religious communities. As one disappointment succeeded another in Southern Germany and Switzerland, St. Clement turned his gaze overseas.

A long letter to Father Hübl in August 1806 spoke seriously of trying to establish the Congregation in Canada¹⁶. St. Clement had apparently given considerable thought to the project, as his instructions to his friend were fairly detailed; but the preoccupation with America was more probably the measure of his frustration in Europe. He protested: « I never feel more contented than when I am thinking of the savages of Canada », but in almost the same breath he speaks of finding there « a place where we can peacefully await the dawn of better times, while we are educating and training missionaries for unfortunate Europe ». One would be inclined to call this sort of apostolate foreign missions in reverse.

¹⁶ The letter dated 7th August 1806 is in *Monumenta Hofbaueriana*, VI, Turin, 1932, 27-30. Cf. also J. Hofer-J. Haas, *St. Clement Maria Hofbauer*, New York, 1926, 237-239. The letter is quoted at some length.

But the American dream does not represent the real thinking of a man of such practical pastoral sense as Clement Hofbauer. In 1815 he agreed to a request from the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda to provide men for the struggling Catholic mission in Bucharest. It was not easy to comply, since the house in Warsaw had been forcibly suppressed seven years earlier, and he was able to do little more than keep in touch by letter with his scattered subjects. He had misgivings about the Roumanian venture, where his Fathers would be associated with Franciscans under an Italian Bishop. It was very much a patchwork mission¹⁷.

After some negotiation St. Clement reached agreement with the Bishop and sent Father Joseph Forthuber with two clerical students and one Brother. He followed anxiously the fortunes of the missionaries as they met with the difficulties he had foreseen; but when through the zeal and enterprise of Father Forthuber they had consolidated their position, he began to speak of missions throughout the Balkans. On 15th March 1816 he wrote to the Nuncio in Vienna, enthusiastically explaining his plans for Roumanians, Greeks and Bulgarians¹⁸. He had hopes that the little house on the outskirts of Bucharest would become one day for the Balkan region what St. Benno's had been for Warsaw and Poland. Realising, perhaps that he had allowed himself to be carried away, he ended on a lighter note that was still more than half serious, declaring that he « prayed the Blessed Virgin to let you suffer all manner of mental agony and remorse of conscience until you have used all your influence and aroused all your energy to provide everything needed for the salvation of this people ».

Unfortunately, his plans and dreams in the end came to nothing. After the little gains in the first year or so the community in Bucharest met with troubles from the public authorities and the Orthodox as well as from their own Bishop, so that in the end they had to return to Vienna shortly after St. Clement's death in 1820.

¹⁷ Documentation concerning the Bucharest foundation can be found in *Monumenta Hofbaueriana*, XIV, Rome 1951, 1-66. Cf. also J. Hofer-J. Haas, *op. cit.*, 372-379.

¹⁸ The letter to Archbishop Severoli can be seen in *Monumenta Hofbaueriana*, XIV, 16-17. Father Forthuber, the superior of the community, was born on 1st January 1789 and had been one of the young men who followed Father Passerat during his wanderings in Switzerland. Professed in 1811 and ordained priest 23rd May 1812, he was summoned to Vienna by St. Clement and arrived there early in 1813. After the failure of the mission in Bucharest he returned to Vienna and was dispensed from his vows in 1837. Cf. *Monumenta Hofbaueriana*, XIII, Cracow, 1932, 30.

The next Vicar General of the Redemptorists outside Italy attempted a similar mission in the Balkans, which met with a similar disappointment.

Father Joseph Passerat also responded in 1835 to a request from Propaganda on behalf of the small Catholic community in Philippopolis in Bulgaria. The superior he appointed, Father John Nepomucene Fortner, was given the faculties of a Vicar Apostolic. With his companions, two Fathers and a Brother, he was received warmly by the whole populace, including even the Moslems and the Orthodox. After that beginning, so full of promise, the mission encountered a series of disasters. The trouble began with the outbreak of plague, which carried off Father Fortner after only one year. Father Passerat tried hard to keep the work alive, but after four Fathers had succumbed to disease, in 1840 he reluctantly recalled the survivors¹⁹.

When the Austrian Redemptorists were dispersed by a hostile government, two of them gladly agreed to a request of the Nuncio and went to care for the small Catholic community in Christiania in Norway²⁰. Their work between 1849 and 1854 was very much that of pioneering the faith in a Protestant environment, and in that it was similar to the equally brief experiences in the Balkans among the Moslems and Orthodox. All these missionary expeditions reveal a spirit which recalls that which moved St. Alphonsus to look to South Africa and the Near East, a concern for those in need of spiritual help, for abandoned souls. It is to be regretted that missions undertaken with so much generosity should have had such a brief existence.

It was a different story with the highly successful foundation made in 1832 in the United States, the first outside Europe²¹. But even though the American Church was to remain subject to Propaganda for many years more, the large numbers of Redemptorists from Europe who built up the province there were certainly not foreign missionaries in the sense of preaching to the unbelievers. The earliest Fathers who arrived in 1832 did attempt to evangelise the Indians,

¹⁹ The story of the Bulgarian mission is related in C. Mader, *Die Congregation des allerh. Erlösers in Oesterreich*, Vienna, 1887, 81-92; 333-336; E. Hosp, *Erbe des heiligen Klemens Maria Hofbauer*, Vienna, 1953, 338-352; H. Girouille-J. Carr, *Life of the Venerable Joseph Passerat*, London, 1928, 411-419.

²⁰ Cf. C. MADER, *op. cit.*, 434-439.

²¹ The history of the Redemptorists in the United States is related especially by J.F. Byrne, *The Redemptorist Centenaries*, Philadelphia, 1932 and M. CURLEY, *The Provincial Story*, New York, 1963.

a work which had been very much in their mind from the start, and one or other did labour to excellent effect among the Negroes; but the significance of the American foundations was that they carried the Congregation outside of Europe. And that was to remain very much the pattern of thinking of superiors throughout the rest of the century.

BEGINNINGS IN SOUTH AMERICA

In 1855 a General Chapter elected the thirty-seven year old Father Nicholas Mauron Superior General. His authority did not extend to all Redemptorists, since two years earlier a papal decree had put those in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies under an independent Rector Major. Within a short time the two branches of the Congregation had occasion to reveal different attitudes to the foreign missions.

The year after his election Father Mauron found himself faced with a situation of considerable delicacy that had arisen in the West Indies²². Mgr. George Talbot, the English convert and trusted confidant of Pius IX in matters concerning the English-speaking world, approached the Redemptorists through the Consultor General, Father Edward Douglas. On the island of St. Thomas, then under Danish rule, there was a most unpleasant schism, with the majority of the people noisily demanding the return of a popular young priest who had been transferred on account of his intrigues. When Father Mauron put the matter to his consultors in July 1856, it was in terms that were far from enthusiastic. If responsibility for St. Thomas was not accepted, he told them, they might find themselves compelled by Propaganda to take some other place that would prove even more disagreeable²³. It was to be almost two years before two Fathers at length arrived in the West Indies, which does seem to indicate reluctance on the part of superiors. The reason for the long delay is suggested by the greeting the Bishop of Roseau gave to the superior of the mission, Father Joseph Prost. « I know very well that religious orders do not prosper unless they are living and working according to their rules »²⁴. It was certainly the strong emphasis on

²² Cf. J.G. DALY, *Conflict in Paradise. Redemptorist Mission in the Virgin Islands, 1855-1860*, St. Louis, 1972.

²³ *ibid.*, 9.

²⁴ *ibid.*, 13.

a meticulous observance of practices established in Europe that contributed largely to the sorry failure of an attempted foundation in Chile a couple of years later.

When in May 1860 Father Mauron was approached by the Archbishop of Santiago with a request for a Redemptorist foundation in Rengo, a village in his archdiocese, he showed himself much more willing to accept than he had been in the case of St. Thomas²⁵. There were two Belgian Fathers and a Brother in Rengo before the year was out. In his appeal to the Belgian provincial Father Mauron had explained his eagerness. He had long been hoping to make a foundation in South America, he said, because there it would be possible to live in community « just as in Europe »²⁶. Since Chile was already a Catholic country, it would be possible to live « entirely in keeping with the rule and the intentions of St. Alphonsus », and he spoke blithely of sending two Fathers who would prepare a monastery large enough to house a community of ten missionaries. This pipe dream was far from what one normally understands of foreign missions. The planned transfer of a European community to South America was quickly seen to be unrealistic when the two precursors saw for themselves what was to be their new home. In a matter only of months the foundation had collapsed, because as Father Philippe Noel, the unhappy superior, explained to the Archbishop, it was impossible to have a suitable house²⁷.

Shortly before the Chilean fiasco the other branch of the Redemptorists, those of Southern Italy, had themselves sent a mission to South America, but with quite different objectives and with a much more creditable outcome²⁸. Father Celestino Berruti, the Rector Major, himself approached the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda on behalf of three of his subjects who had taken a vow to preach the faith in pagan lands²⁹. His letter was written about August of 1858, just when Propaganda wished to re-establish the long abandoned Jesuit reductions in the region of the Orinoco in the present republic of Colombia. One of the volunteers, Father Enrico Tirino, was duly appointed Prefect Apostolic of Casanare and with his two companions, still in their twenties, was given charge of a vast area

²⁵ Concerning the attempted foundation in Rengo cf. *Spic. hist.*, 30 (1982) 369-399.

²⁶ *ibid.*, 370.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 393.

²⁸ Concerning the Neapolitan mission to Casanare cf. *Spic. hist.*, 31 (1983) 175-231.

²⁹ *ibid.*, 181-182.

of jungle inhabited by a variety of Indian tribes, whom the three missionaries were expected to Christianise and civilise³⁰. In November 1859 the three took charge of their territory, « roughly three times the size of France », as young Father Gioacchino D'Elia described it with awe and quite innocent exaggeration³¹. The missionaries took up residence in widely separated villages and set to work without delay. Very quickly they had tangible results to describe, chapels rebuilt, long neglected Sacraments administered and already numbers of Indians under instruction. Unhappily, disaster struck. Father Tirino was drowned; Father D'Elia died of fever; and to cap it all Father Vittorio Lojodice was expelled by an anticlerical government. By the time the lone survivor left, in July 1861, the members of the failed Chilean venture were uncomfortably taking their leave of the Archbishop of Santiago. There is no doubt that the spirit that had been expressed by St. Alphonsus in his concern for the Cape of Good Hope and the Nestorian mission was very much alive in the Neapolitan Redemptorists. It is this, no doubt, that explains the later career of Father Lojodice, the missionary of Casanare, who helped his northern confrères in their expansion into Spain and towards the end of the century to Argentina³².

The nineteenth century was a time of intense missionary activity, and it was inevitable that Father Mauron be faced with a further request for manpower. Maybe when it did come he regarded it as the disagreeable sort of request he had feared when there was question of St. Thomas. One gets the impression that he took that view of the request for help in the Vicariate Apostolic of Surinam, Dutch Guiana, late in November 1864³³. Father John Baptist Swinkels, provincial in Holland, had already been in correspondence with the Superior General about work in Curaçao and had discovered that Father Mauron had become quite opposed to foreign missions³⁴.

The missions in Surinam had been in the care of the Dutch secular clergy, whose resources were strained by the long responsi-

³⁰ *ibid.*, 186.

³¹ *ibid.*, 180.

³² Concerning this remarkable character cf. T. Ramos, *Victor Lojodice, Fundador en España de la Congregación del Santísimo Redentor*; Madrid, 1921; A. Sánchez, *El R.P. Victor Lojodice*, Buenos Aires, 1937; C. Henze, *Un pioniere del Signore nei due emisferi, il Servo di Dio, Vittorio Lojodice, missionario Redentorista (1834-1916)*, Rome, 1947.

³³ The negotiations about Surinam are treated in *Studia Dondersiana* (Bibliotheca Historica C.S.S.R., XI), Rome, 1982, 104-128.

³⁴ *ibid.*, 114.

bility. The death of the Vicar Apostolic, Mgr. Schepers, in November 1863 was the occasion for Propaganda to look for some alternative arrangement, and at an early stage the Redemptorists came under consideration. Father Mauron had been alerted, and when he was approached by Propaganda politely declined on the plea that the Dutch province, not yet ten years in existence, was short of personnel. This was no more than a pretext, as he explained to Father Swinkels his real reason was his misgivings about the unpredictable consequences of such a departure from accepted practices³⁵. In the end, in April 1865, the Superior General found himself unable to hold out any longer. In his finally accepting the mission he made a point of specifying that in Paramaribo, the principal town of the colony, there should be a regular religious house, as he had previously insisted for the Chilean venture³⁶.

Father Swinkels was duly named Vicar Apostolic, and under his guidance and that of his successors the mission of Surinam brought much credit to the Redemptorists. The pioneers were fortunate in the inspiration of Blessed Peter Donders, already serving as a missionary in Surinam, who with one of his companions at once joined the Congregation. His work for the lepers of Batavia and for the Indians and runaway slaves in the jungle was continued zealously by his new confrères; and within a short time the Redemptorists of northern Europe found themselves in a position of being able to boast of a genuine and highly successful mission to unbelievers³⁷.

When a further occasion for expansion into South America presented itself in 1870, Father Mauron no longer tried to keep the organisation in his own hands. Two Bishops from Ecuador, in Rome for the first Vatican Council, requested foundations in their dioceses. The Superior General referred them to the able and energetic superior of the province of France and Switzerland, Father Achille Desurmont³⁸. The foundations of Cuenca and Riobamba were brilliantly

³⁵ *ibid.*, 115.

³⁶ *ibid.*, 120.

³⁷ On Blessed Peter Donders see the various articles in *Studia Dondersiana* and the various biographies, especially J.B. Kronenburg-J. Carr, *The Venerable Servant of God, Peter Donders C.S.S.R.*, London, 1930. On the mission of Surinam see [A. Bossers], *Beknopte geschiedenis der Katholieke Kerk in Suriname*, Gulpen, 1884.

³⁸ Father Desurmont was provincial for more than twenty years, a time of considerable development of the province of France and Switzerland. Cf. A. George, *Le très révérend Père Achille Desurmont provincial de France*, Paris, 1924.

successful, and before the end of the century had given rise to further expansion in Colombia, Peru and Chile³⁹.

The sturdy growth in South America towards the end of last century was due most of all to the exceptionally gifted men whose ability and delication made it possible. Jean-Pierre Didier, appointed Visitor by Father Desurmont, contributed most by his leadership towards placing the Ecuador foundations on so solid a basis. He later served as vice-provincial in Spain and in Argentina⁴⁰. His companion in 1870, Father Felix Grisar, first superior of Cuenca, had an equally memorable career in Peru and Argentina before ending his life in Puerto Rico⁴¹. Also deserving of mention is the man who introduced the Redemptorists into Chile, Father Pierre Mergès, a vigorous missionary in many parts of South America, whose name is associated most of all with the house in Santiago which he established in 1876 and in which he died in 1889⁴². For the most part these South American foundations merely transplanted the Congregation from Europe to the New World, so that they can hardly be called foreign missions in the stricter sense of preaching to the unbelievers. It is to the credit, however, of these French missionaries that they turned also to the Indian population and with excellent results. A man of particular merit in this regard is Father Juan Lobato. One of the first to join the Congregation in South America, he was himself of Indian parentage, and after his ordination in 1878 he began at once to work among his own people. It was his remarkable success among the Indians of Ecuador and Peru that established his reputation as an outstanding preacher⁴³. In others like himself there reappeared that spirit that had attracted St. Alphonsus to South Africa and St. Clement and Father Passerat to the Balkans, concern for the needy, for abandoned souls.

The introduction of the Redemptorists into Argentina resulted from quite different circumstances, but its achievements were no less

³⁹ Cf. E. GAUTRON, *La croix sur les Andes*, Paris [1938].

⁴⁰ Cf. J. QUIGNARD, *Vie du T.R.P. Didier C.S.S.R., fondateur et premier visiteur des missions du Pacifique*, Paris, 1904.

⁴¹ Among various notes on the career of Father Grisar cf. especially *Annales Provinciae Hispanicae*, II, Madrid, 1927, 217-223 and [A. Krebs], *Kurze Lebensbilder der verstorbenen Redemptoristen der Ordensprovinz von Nieder-Deutschland*, I, Dülmen, 1896, 290-300.

⁴² Cf. C. LIÉGÉY, *Le Réverend Père Mergès, missionnaire Rédemptoriste, 1832-1889. Esquisse biographique*, St. Etienne, 1912.

⁴³ There is a brief note on Father Lobato in [J.-B. Lorthioit], *Mémorial Alphonsien*, Tourcoing, 1929, 588.

commendable. When Father Michael Heilig, the veteran missionary and superior, was appointed to assume responsibility for the Lower German province, he found himself confronted by the *Kulturkampf* laws. With their pastoral activity drastically curtailed at home the wise old superior looked further afield to find occupation for his subjects. He was able to consult the able and experienced Father Didier, on whose advice he despatched a small community to Buenos Aires⁴⁴. The pioneers in Argentina had the advantage of the knowledge of Spanish America gained by the foundations on the Pacific coast. Father Grisar was named first Visitor to Argentina in 1885, and he was succeeded by Father Didier himself. Even the venerable survivor of that first tragic mission to Casanare, Father Lojodice, came to lend a hand. He arrived in Buenos Aires in 1887 to remain with the young and rapidly growing vice-province until his death in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1916. As was the case in the earlier expansion into South America, the Argentinian foundations were little more than extending to a new land the life and work familiar to Redemptorists in Europe.

Different again was the occasion of the Spanish Redemptorists' short-lived foundation in Puerto Rico. Registered by the government as a Congregation of foreign missionaries, they were exempt from military service; but to justify their status it was necessary that they have at least one house in some Spanish colony⁴⁵. Father Mauron, the Superior General, accordingly had Father Didier arrange for one on his journey to Argentina in 1887. The veteran missionary handled the matter expeditiously in spite of the unwelcoming attitude of the Bishop of San Juan, and was able to leave his travelling companion, Father Pedro Lopez, in the small town of San German to wait for a community to arrive from Spain. When Puerto Rico was occupied by the Americans in 1898 the little community, then established in San Juan, was impoverished, and after struggling on for more than a year abandoned the foundation in 1900.

It is evident that for a long time the Redemptorists shared that early interest shown in South America by Father Mauron. But it must be said that however successful the foundations may have proved, just as they had in the United States, they were only to a

⁴⁴ The beginning of the Argentinian foundation is treated in G. Brandhuber (ed.), *Die Redemptoristen, 1732-1932*, 273-275.

⁴⁵ The establishment of the Spanish house in Puerto Rico is treated in *Annales Provinciae Hispanicae*, II, Madrid, 1927, 14-16.

quite negligible extent missions to unbelievers. The same must be said of the planting of the Congregation in Australia by the English province in 1882⁴⁶. A movement towards the foreign missions in the strictest sense would be manifested only during the General Chapter that met to elect a successor to Father Mauron.

THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 1894

The Chapter of 1894 was the first since the one that had elected Father Mauron in 1855. In the meantime the Congregation had extended considerably outside Europe and had found itself engaged to some small degree in missions to unbelievers, notably in Surinam and some other parts of South America. The capitulars were thus disposed to receive favourably a proposed decree.

« Following in the footsteps of St. Alphonsus, who held nothing dearer than that his sons nourish a great desire to spread the holy faith of Jesus Christ even in pagan lands, the Chapter declares: Even though missions among Catholics are the primary and immediate end of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, still missions to the pagans are not opposed to its end but are in keeping with it »⁴⁷.

This was the first time such a statement had appeared in Redemptorist legislation since the vow to go on foreign missions had been removed in the Pontifical Rule of 1749. The cautiously worded decree was accepted unanimously and with some altogether seemly show of enthusiasm. « All rose to their feet », the *Acta* primly record, « And some even clapped »⁴⁸.

In the same year as the Chapter there were two more important ventures into South America, this time to Brazil. The Dutch province from its vantage point in Surinam had long known of the needs of the Church in Brazil. For that reason it responded readily when in 1893 the Superior General at length yielded to repeated requests for a foundation in the archdiocese of Mariana. A community came to Juiz de Fora early in 1894, and from that beginning there developed in time the province of Rio de Janeiro⁴⁹. Shortly

⁴⁶ On the Australian foundation cf. *Spic. hist.*, 25 (1977) 250-271.

⁴⁷ *Acta integra capitulorum generalium C.S.S.R. ab anno 1749 ad annum 1894 celebratorum*, Rome, 1899, no. 1352, p. 671.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Cf. W. PERRIENS, *Vice-provinciae Hollandico-Brasiliae C.S.S.R. res gestae per quinque Iustra 1894-1919*, Rio de Janeiro, 1920.

after the Chapter the Bishops of São Paulo and Goiânia approached the newly elected Superior General, Father Matthias Raus, who listened sympathetically to their pleas. He turned to the Upper German province, which despatched two communities without delay. The house in Aparecida had charge of an increasingly popular pilgrimage church; and from it the vigorous province of São Paulo soon developed⁵⁰. These foundations, like those on the Pacific coast, were made for the Catholic people deprived of spiritual help, but they found occasion, at least in the São Paulo vice-province, to work for a quite numerous class of non-Christians. Father Laurence Hubbauer during the 1920s began a fruitful apostolate among the large Japanese community⁵¹.

It was not long before a foreign mission in the more proper sense intended by the Chapter was undertaken. The vice-province of Matadi established by the Belgians on the Congo did occupy itself with evangelising the native population⁵². The foundation in 1899 replaced the clergy of the diocese of Ghent who had cared for the small European population and the workers on the railway under construction. Very soon, however, the Redemptorists extended their work to the non-Christians with a rapid multiplication of mission stations. This expansion is owing most of all to the energetic leadership of Father Joseph Haintz, Visitor from 1904. In 1911 Matadi was erected into a Prefecture Apostolic, very fittingly with Father Haintz as first Prefect, and in 1930 it became a Vicariate Apostolic served by Redemptorists.

The mission of the Belgians on the Congo in more than one sense marked a new direction for Redemptorists. In the twentieth century they would look to lands other than the Americas. In 1906 the Irish province took charge of the parish of Opon in the diocese of Cebu, Philippines, the first Redemptorist foundation in Asia⁵³. It had been the Irish provincial who suggested the move, touched as he had been by the plight of the people, impoverished by war and desperately short of clergy. In the Philippines the Fathers found a field of pastoral activity totally strange to European experience. The

⁵⁰ Cf. G. BRANDHUBER, *op. cit.*, 256-260.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 259.

⁵² Cf. M. KRATZ, *La mission des Rédemptoristes Belges au Bas-Congo. La période des semailles (1899-1920)*, Brussels, 1970.

⁵³ Cf. M. BAILY, *Small Net in a Big Sea. The Redemptorists in the Philippines, 1905-1929*, Cebu, [1978]; *Spic. hist.*, 27 (1979) 228-255.

Philippines were a Catholic nation, but long deprived of priestly ministrations so that the parish missions took on a new character. They were attended by large and eager crowds for whom it was necessary to offer as thorough an instruction in the faith as the short time available permitted and to administer the Sacraments, often to people deprived of them for years. Great ceremonies to rectify civil marriages became a feature of the early Philippines missions. It was exhausting work, but most gratifying in seeing the evident appreciation of the people. With the arrival of Redemptorists from Australia it has become possible to erect two vice-provinces.

A final foundation made while Father Raus was Superior General was that of the Spanish province in Mexico. Rather better planned than the earlier venture in Puerto Rico, the Mexican vice-province in time gave rise to the further presence of the Congregation throughout Central America. Father Pedro Perez and some companions were sent to Mexico in 1908 for the purpose of establishing the Redemptorists there. He did that to such excellent effect that by 1925 there was quite a large vice-province, when the Calles regime began a harsh application of the anticlerical laws of the country, which was in fact a severe persecution. The Spanish Fathers were expelled, but they seized on every opportunity of continuing their work and succeeded in establishing the Congregation in every republic from Panama to Venezuela. In 1930 it was possible to resume the work so harshly interrupted in Mexico. The province that in time emerged together with the vice-province of San Salvador remains as a monument to Father Perez⁵⁴.

Further expansion in Africa came when the English province accepted a foundation in Pretoria in 1912; and so the Redemptorists came at last to that land which had once aroused the missionary zeal of St. Alphonsus. Though not really as he had visualised it, the work was truly for abandoned souls. Catholics are a minority in South Africa, and the notorious apartheid laws make the condition of the Black and Coloured population truly to be pitied. The English Fathers have extended their work to newly independent Zimbabwe, where it is very much the same as in South Africa, trying to spread the faith among a sadly underprivileged people while caring for the Catholics in an unsympathetic atmosphere. The Prefecture Apostolic of Rustenburg was entrusted to the Redemptorists in 1949. The region, larger in area than Belgium, had been the charge of a single

⁵⁴ The foundation in Mexico and Central America are treated by R. Tellería, *Un instituto misionero*, Madrid, 1932, 457-556.

priest, who cared for the couple of hundred European Catholics while trying to do what little he could for the native African population which was overwhelmingly pagan. This at last was very much the sort of mission St. Alphonsus had in mind⁵⁵.

Pius XI, who became Pope in 1922, was most interested, as is well known, in developing the foreign missions, and the Prefect of Propaganda under this « Pope of the missions » was the Dutch Redemptorist Cardinal van Rossum, who naturally turned to his own confrères for help on more than one occasion. He appealed to the Superior General, Father Murray, in one of his earliest anxieties, the long-suffering Church of Vietnam.

In the course of the nineteenth century the Vietnamese Catholics had been subjected to severe and protracted persecution. Those who suffered martyrdom in these repeated attacks on « the foreign religion » numbered some thousands before the region came under French rule in 1884. An Apostolic Visitor sent to the country in 1922 recommended parish missions among other means of strengthening Catholic life. That suggestion was enough to have Cardinal van Rossum think at once of his fellow Redemptorists. Father Murray was agreeable and handed on the request to the French-speaking province of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré in Canada. Three missionaries were sent off in 1925⁵⁶.

The house in Hué founded by Father Hubert Cousineau marked an important development of the Redemptorist missions in Asia. Generously supported with personnel from the home province, the Fathers were able to preach the missions expected of them and at the same time provide instruction for the non-Christians as well as undertake social activity among the working classes. From the beginning they promoted vocations among the Vietnamese with the result that numbers increased and houses multiplied so that it was possible in 1964 to erect the first Asian Redemptorist province, that of Saigon. One can scarcely doubt that this success would have been most gratifying to St. Alphonsus with his veneration for Matteo Ripa and his early association with the Chinese College in Naples. He would have been even more pleased with the second project for which Cardinal van Rossum asked assistance.

⁵⁵ On the South African foundation cf. *Analecta C.S.S.R.*, Rome, 29 (1957) 99-107.

⁵⁶ Cf. T. PINTAL, *Les Pères Rédemptoristes dans l'Indochine Française*, Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré, 1928.

A matter to which Propaganda attached great importance was the appointment of Bishops from among the Chinese clergy, so as to make the Church of their country less dependent on personnel from Europe. That was the principal task entrusted to Mgr. Celso Costantini when in 1922 he was sent as Apostolic Delegate to Peking. While in China he was attracted to the plan of Father Philip Tchao to found a religious institute of Chinese priests to preach the Gospel to their own countrymen. Father Tchao was one of the six Bishops elect who accompanied the Delegate to Rome to be consecrated by Pius XI. The retreat in preparation early in 1926 was preached in the house of Sant'Alfonso by the Dutch Redemptorist, Father John Jansen. Both Mgr. Costantini and Bishop Tchao decided to seek the help of the Redemptorists in the project they now heartily shared. They made their request through Cardinal van Rossum, asking for Fathers to assist in establishing the new institute. Father Murray agreed and entrusted the task to the Spanish province⁵⁷.

Three Fathers arrived in Peking in April 1928. For some months they were guests of the Apostolic Delegate until they had become familiar enough with the language to assist the institute yet to be established. Unfortunately, during those first months one of the party died, so that it was left to Fathers Segundo Rodriguez and José Morán to begin the work in Süanhwa. They took up their duties on 9th November 1928, an auspicious date for Redemptorists, whose own Congregation had begun on that same day in 1732. The two Spaniards at once prepared the programme of training with which they were familiar: juvenate, novitiate and studentate. The Congregation of the Disciples of the Lord was formally inaugurated on 19th February 1929, and the first novitiate opened at the end of March. The two Fathers assisted with teaching the gratifyingly numerous candidates as well as supervising their religious formation. The one shadow on the bright promise of these busy years was that the real founder, the saintly new Bishop Tchao had not survived to see the commencement of his Congregation, having died barely a year after his return from Rome. Mgr. Costantini, however, took a keen interest in all that was done, and it was at his insistence that Fathers Rodriguez and Morán undertook the difficult task of preparing the rule. The Delegate wished the sections on government and the apostolate to be modelled on the Redemptorist rules and the rest to be adapted according to what had been planned by the deceased Bishop Tchao.

⁵⁷ The mission in China is treated by R. Tellería, *op. cit.*, 557-575.

The two surviving pioneers were joined by reinforcements, some of whom assisted with the work of teaching the juvenists and students of the new Congregation while the others established a Redemptorists house in Siping in September 1929. Situated in the province of Honan in the very centre of China, Siping introduced the Spaniards to a new mission field, where the Catholics numbered no more than a meagre handful. The work was hard and the rewards, if slow in coming, were tangible and encouraging. There were nearly forty candidates beginning their training as Redemptorists in 1941, when the war with Japan made it necessary to close the juvenate. In the very uncertain years that followed the Fathers held on and even managed to make a foundation in Peking in 1946 as residence for the vice-provincial. The regime of Mao Tse Tung put an end to all that had been so painfully accomplished. The houses were closed in 1948 and the Fathers expelled.

Though the Redemptorists had to leave China, they did not by any means see their work completely destroyed. The Disciples of the Lord, like themselves, had to go into exile. They found a home in Taiwan, where in 1952 Propaganda entrusted to them care of the archdiocese of Taipei. From there they have spread further afield with houses in Indonesia and Malaysia. Through them the Spanish Redemptorists may fairly claim that they continue to work among non-Christians⁵⁸.

The foundations made by the Irish province in India and Sri Lanka from 1939 in a short time rivalled the rapidly growing vice-province in Vietnam. In the beginning of 1939 a community under the vigorous leadership of Father Matthew Hickey took up residence in the hill city of Kandy, Sri Lanka. In the following year the same genial superior made a further foundation in Bangalore in India itself. Vocations multiplied and new houses were opened, so that as early as 1945 a vice-province was erected, which became fully autonomous in 1972 with an Indian Redemptorist as first provincial. This was just over a hundred years since the first Indian Redemptorist had died in Bombay in 1863. Father Francisco Menezes had a remarkable career in the Congregation. Born in Goa, he had met the Redemptorists when they had not long been established in Lisbon, taking his vows among them in 1830. Soon after his ordination he was expelled with the rest of the community by the revolution that broke out three years later, and he made his way to Italy by way

⁵⁸ Cf. *Dizionario degli istituti di perfezione*, Rome, III (1976) 704-705.

of Belgium. In 1843 he was sent by Propaganda to India as Apostolic Missioner and for the last twenty years of his life he laboured among his own people. His lonely efforts for India are now being continued by his confrères of the province of Bangalore⁵⁹.

RECENT LEGISLATION ON THE MISSIONS

In 1947 Father Murray summoned a General Chapter, which accepted the resignation he tendered after his long term of thirty-eight years in office. To succeed him Father Leonard Buijs of the Dutch province was elected in the third session, and he presided for the remainder of the Chapter.

There was keen and prolonged discussion of the foreign missions, the first time such a thing had occurred since that memorable occasion in 1894 when the venerable capitulars had so warmly endorsed them, « some even clapping ». At length in order to put an end to the excessively protracted debate, which seems to have developed into a series of encomia, the newly elected Superior General proposed for approval three points which had emerged from the long discussion: (i) it was desirable that the foreign missions be more publicly praised and acknowledged as an authentic ministry of the Congregation; (ii) for the present constitutions would remain unchanged; and (iii) a statute would be prepared to be presented for approval by the next General Chapter⁶⁰.

Shortly before the Chapter ended Father Buijs announced that he intended to treat in a circular letter « matters concerning our missions to unbelievers and heretics »⁶¹. Unhappily, this intention was unfulfilled at his untimely death in 1953. He had, however, made his mind clear in his second circular, his first after the end of the Chapter. « Providence seems to be calling on the Congregation to devote itself more than in the past to the ministry of the foreign missions »⁶².

The Chapter that met in 1954 to elect a successor to Father Buijs was the one that should have discussed the statute prepared according to what had been decreed in 1947. Its decision, however,

⁵⁹ The career of Father Menezes is treated in *Spic. hist.*, 23 (1975) 200-220.

⁶⁰ *Acta integra capituli generalis XIV Romae celebrati anno 1947*, Rome, 1948, no. 1639, p. 24-25.

⁶¹ *ibid.*, no. 1662, p. 50.

⁶² Circular of 2nd July 1947 in *Analecta* 19 (1940-1947) 188.

has a disappointing look about it. The Chapter merely left it to « those skilled in such matters » to prepare a special constitution on « missions to pagans etc. »⁶³. The apparently unsatisfactory nature of this decree is explained by the fact that it had been earlier decided that the Superior General see to a thorough revision of the constitutions⁶⁴. This meant that the long-awaited statute on the foreign missions was now to be included in the revised legislation expected at the next Chapter to be held in nine years' time.

In 1963 the venerable capitulars exchanged their views at times with some warmth, *vehementer*, as the *Acta* report on more than one occasion. It was a serious business, a question of new constitutions, a term that now replaced what had previously been understood by the rule⁶⁵. After being formulated in a commission and scrutinised in public debate a terse statement was finally approved. « They shall highly esteem missions among people who have not yet come to the faith through the Gospel of Christ »⁶⁶. These few words contained what had been proposed in 1947 and prepared in the years that followed. But in 1963 the Second Vatican Council was in session, and it was to occasion much revision in Church affairs. Redemptorist legislation, no matter how recent, was also to be renewed.

The capitulars in 1963 had determined that their revision of the constitutions should be complemented within three years by a further Chapter to revise also the statutes⁶⁷. The *motu proprio*, however, of Paul VI, « *Ecclesiae Sanctae* », intervened and occasioned a change in the scope of the forthcoming Chapter. When it met in 1967 and 1969 its task was to review existing legislation according to the norms prescribed by the Pope. A new text of constitutions and statutes was formulated and was eventually polished by a subsequent Chapter in 1979 for presentation for the Holy See's approval, which was granted on 2nd February 1982. Now the Congregation's commitment to the foreign missions is briefly stated in the constitutions. Redemptorists are sent to, among others, « those who have never heard the Church's message », which formula is

⁶³ *Acta integra capituli generalis XV Romae celebrati anno 1954*, Rome, 1954, no. 1675, p. 22.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, no. 1669, p. 15.

⁶⁵ *Acta integra capituli generalis XVI Romae celebrati anno 1963*, Rome, 1963, no. 1730, p. 53.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, no. 1728, p. 50.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, no. 1740, p. 69.

expanded by a lengthy statute providing guidelines of a kind faintly visualised in 1947⁶⁸.

THE MISSIONS SINCE WORLD WAR II

Father Buijs had suggested that Divine Providence seemed to be calling on the Congregation to devote itself more than in the past to the foreign missions. And indeed since the war there has been a considerable increase in the works among unbelievers undertaken by the various provinces.

The French provinces of Lyons and Paris had established missions in the region of the Niger in October and November of 1946⁶⁹. It was a project that had been maturing for ten years but which had been impeded by the war years. From as early as 1936 more than one Vicar Apostolic of the extensive region of French West Africa had appealed for help to the Lyons province. Negotiations were slow, but one man took the matter very much to heart. Father Constant Quillard, of the community that had been established in Algiers since 1930, obtained permission to visit the territory in 1941. In the following year the Prefecture Apostolic of Niamey was entrusted to the Society of the African Missions. At the end of the war the superiors of the Society, embarrassed by the serious decline of their manpower, begged the Redemptorists to relieve them of the charge. After agreement had been achieved with Father Murray and the two French provincials, with the approval of Propaganda Father Quillard was appointed Prefect Apostolic of Niamey on 15th July 1946. Fathers from the provinces of Lyons and Paris accompanied him to Africa to take up his charge. From this beginning there developed the two vice-provinces of Niamey and Fada N'Gourma.

Besides these missions and those of the Belgian and English provinces others have turned to Africa. The Portuguese Redemptorists have been working in Angola since 1954, and in more recent years the Spanish province has shared with the Belgians care of the extensive missions in Zaire, the flourishing vice-province of Matadi.

More extensive than the African missions has been Redemptorist expansion in Asia. After the war years several of the older provinces turned their attention towards the peoples of the Far East.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Constitutions and Statutes C.S.S.R.*, Rome, 1982, Const. 3, p. 22, st. 011, p. 80-81.

⁶⁹ For the beginning of the mission in Niamey and Fada N'Gourma cf. *Analecta*, 20 (1948) 241-242.

Americans of the St. Louis province, led by Father Clarence Duhart, came to Thailand in 1948. The growth has been surprisingly rapid in a country overwhelmingly Buddhist in religion. Father Duhart became first Bishop of Udonthani; and when he resigned in 1975 he was succeeded by a Thai Redemptorist. Vocations from among the people of Thailand have been numerous enough to give good reason to hope for the future of the vice-province of Bangkok.

Japan, which had suffered severely towards the end of the war, was the object of particular concern for the Holy See. The Japanese Bishops appealed directly to Pius XII for missionaries; and he in turn had the Apostolic Delegate in Canada approach the Redemptorists in that country. The provinces of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré and Toronto responded with enthusiasm. Father Louis-Philippe Lévesque, who had been Consultor General to Father Murray, led a community to make a foundation in Kamakura in the diocese of Yokohama in August 1948. With the foundation of a house in Tokyo in the following year to serve as a house of studies the superior of the expanding mission moved to the capital. In a short time the vice-province, increased by Japanese vocations, was able to offer promise for its future⁷⁰.

Within only a few weeks of the foundation in Kamakura the Toronto province established a community in Maizuru in the diocese of Osaka⁷¹. The vice-province that eventuated also attracted vocations among the Japanese. In 1982 the two Canadian vice-provinces were united. The Munich province had followed their lead in September 1954, taking charge of the mission district of Sendai in the Prefecture Apostolic of Kagoshima in the south of the island of Kiushu⁷². In *The Victories of the Martyrs* St. Alphonsus had written with feeling of the Church in Japan, so that one can scarcely doubt that he would have been gratified to know of his Congregation's having so substantial a presence among the Japanese people, so predominantly non-Christian.

The other German province, that of Cologne, also expressed the wish to have charge of a foreign mission. Father William Gaudreau, Superior General, was able to inform them that the Sacred

⁷⁰ On the vice-province of Tokyo cf. *Analecta*, 20 (1948) 178-179; 24 (1952) 99-101.

⁷¹ On the work of the Toronto province in Japan cf. *Analecta*, 21 (1949) 156-157; 24 (1952) 148-151.

⁷² On the vice-province of Kagoshima cf. *Analecta*, 26 (1954) 172-174.

Congregation of Propaganda was looking for help in the missions of Sumba and Sumbawa in Indonesia. The Cologne provincial readily undertook the charge, and in November 1956 Father Gerard Legeland with five companions introduced the Redemptorists into a new mission field. From the residence of the vice-provincial in Weetebula on Sumba the mission maintains a number of stations on the two islands entrusted to its care⁷³. In 1959 Propaganda was able to name Father Legeland first Prefect Apostolic of Weetebula.

The assistance given to the dioceses of South America, long in need of priests, has continued. The province of St. Louis answered a call from Manaus on the Amazon in 1943, the beginning of a vice-province of that name. Fathers of the province of Strasbourg had been established among the scattered peoples of Bolivia since 1910. In addition to the vice-province of La Paz, in 1942 at the request of the Holy See they accepted care of the Vicariate Apostolic of Reyes, which became after 1951 the responsibility of the newly erected Swiss province. The northern region of Argentina, known as Chaco, which borders on Bolivia, is a similar sparsely populated area. Polish Redemptorists came to the Chaco in 1938, and their foundations have developed into the vice-province of Resistencia, erected in 1955.

This broad and incomplete review of Redemptorist expansion outside Europe shows clearly that, apart from the heroic attempt of the Neapolitans in Casanare, the dream of St. Alphonsus of labouring among the unbelievers was not recaptured until the present century. But that does not by any means imply that throughout the eighteen hundreds his ideals had been forgotten. The many South American foundations, from that of Surinam onwards, were a generous and laudable response to appeals from Bishops to provide for the needs of their people. Independence from Spain and Portugal had been won by the new republics at the high cost of deprivation of pastoral care. This was the need which the Redemptorists, true to their founder, sought to alleviate. That argument St. Alphonsus seems to have advanced for his going to the Cape of Good Hope, to help abandoned souls, certainly inspired the development of the South American provinces. Probably learned from Matteo Ripa, the concern for abandoned souls has proved a precious heritage of the Redemptorists.

It is to the credit of the Congregation that the provinces have so generally contributed their men and resources to the expansion outside Europe. From 1832 when the first Redemptorists were sent from Austria to the New World there has a sincere and practical interest in continuing what was then commenced. Even the tiny province of Wellington, erected only in 1970, has its own foreign mission of Safotu, Western

⁷³ On the vice-province of Weetebula cf. *Analecta*, 28 (1956) 237-239.

Samoa, introducing the Redemptorists into that most recent of mission fields: Oceania, that immense region of islands, soft breezes and waving palm trees.

The very efficiently established foundations in Ecuador in 1870 inaugurated a development in Central and South America which has considerably emphasised the fact that the Congregation is no longer as European as it once was. It is for that reason a particularly significant expansion, even though it would not be correct to speak of them as foreign missions in the same way as those of Africa and Asia.

In a certain important sense the remarkable growth in Asia is more significant. It has been accomplished among non-Christian peoples for the most part, and it has been successful to an extent that puts a strong accent on Asia for Redemptorists. The provinces which developed so quickly in Vietnam and India represent achievements that are altogether admirable. In addition there are vice-provinces that offer substantial promise in the Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Indonesia and in Malaysia, where the Australian province has been at work since 1936.

In the context of this expansion in Asia it is fitting that there be mention of the mission established by the Belgian Redemptorists in the Middle East. Answering an urgent appeal of Propaganda in 1952, two Fathers embraced the Chaldean Rite in order to assist those, both Uniate and Nestorian, who had been forced into exile from Iraq in 1932. From a first small foundation in Lebanon the mission has since extended to Baghdad. Almost exactly two hundred years after St. Alphonsus appealed for volunteers to work among the schismatic Chaldeans his Congregation has finally satisfied the wish he expressed with such fervour.