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THE REDEMPTORISTS IN MINISTRY
AT THE OLD SPANISH MISSIONS
IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS
1923-1956

INTRODUCTION

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EPILOGUE

INTRODUCTION

The Redemptorists began their ministry at the Old Spanish Missions of San Antonio, Texas, on April 22, 1923. At this time they were members of the St. Louis, Missouri, province, and went out to serve the Old Missions from their Spanish-speaking parish community of *Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro*, Our Lady of Perpetual Help. This event was recorded in the community's daily annals:

when their San Antonio era began. For they were *not new* Missions, but only new to the area. All three had a previous existence in East Texas, some one-hundred and fifty miles northeast of present-day Houston, and near the city of Nacogdoches⁶. It is significant that their previous locations were a scant forty miles from today's state of Louisiana (called «New France» in those days), which spread east of the Sabine River, the modern Texas-Louisiana border. The Spaniards were once keenly concerned about French encroachment, so beginning in 1690 «Spanish officials determined to secure [their] extensive terrain with a combination of missions and praesidios»⁷. But later, various factors brought about the relocation of these three East Texas Missions to San Antonio; the factors included persistent harassment by the French, severe droughts, epidemics – probably malaria – and a strategic downsizing of Spanish military forces in East Texas⁸.

When the three Missions were moved to San Antonio in 1731, there was, of course, no transfer of the mission compound buildings, but rather an emigration by wagon train of Franciscan friars, Spanish soldiers, and civilian settlers⁹.

Once arrived in San Antonio, the group which formed Mission Concepción, was placed midway between San Antonio de Valero and San José. Whereas, the group belonging to San Juan Capistrano was placed south of San José, but still adjacent to the San Antonio River. Coming at the very end of the chain, and likewise on the river, was placed San Francisco de la Espada, two and one-half miles below San Juan Capistrano¹⁰.

⁶ Félix D. ALMARÁZ, JR., *The San Antonio Missions and Their System of Land Tenure*, Austin 1989, 3. Félix D. ALMARÁZ, Jr., is the Peter T. Flawn Distinguished Professor of Borderlands History at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is the author of numerous books and articles in his field, recipient of multiple Distinguished Achievement Awards, former President of the Texas State Historical Association and the Texas Catholic Historical Society, and a friend of the Redemptorists.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 3, 4. Also Marion A. HABIG, *The Alamo Chain of Missions, A History of San Antonio's Five Old Missions*, Chicago 1968, 119, 145, 192.

⁸ Félix D. ALMARÁZ, JR. *The San Antonio Missions, Land Tenure*, 3, 4.

⁹ Marion A. HABIG, *The Alamo Chain*, 120-121.

¹⁰ While still in East Texas, the Mission San Juan Capistrano had the

Each mission had its own enclosed compound, outside of which were fields for cultivating crops. Eventually each developed ranches for grazing livestock; the ranches were at a distance (often miles away) from their mission compounds.

2. - *The Purpose and Accomplishments of the Old Spanish Missions*

Any extensive analysis of the Old Spanish Missions would be outside our purpose. Yet, some comments are in order as to the purpose and relative success of these historic Missions. The Spaniards developed their «Mission System» in order to serve a two-fold purpose: to serve *The Crown*, and to serve *The Cross*. *The Crown* wanted to extend Spain's empire by military means. The interest of *The Cross* was the religious conversion of the «heathen natives» to Christianity by the Franciscan friars who came, for the most part, from two college *conventos* in Zacatecas and Querétaro, México. Toward this dual purpose, in the territory now known as the state of Texas, Spain established its system of missions. In general terms, most were located in the lowest southeastern third of modern-day Texas¹¹. Many of the Texas Missions were in existence some seventy years *before* the famous missions of California. They were theoretically a combination of a church, a fortress, and a small civil municipality¹².

How to measure their success is problematic. As a system they lasted about seventy years, but they *flourished* only about thirty years. To some degree they were exploitative, like the colonialism of other nations¹³. Nevertheless, without romanticizing the system, we can say they were and are a part of historical reality. According to one author, to the Franciscan friars of eighteenth-century Texas can be attributed the introduction of the

name *San José de los Nazonis*. San Francisco de la Espada had the name *San Francisco de los Tejas*. *Ibid.*, 156, 179, 192.

¹¹ James Wakefield BURKE, *A Forgotten Glory: The Missions of Old Texas*, Waco TX, 13. *A Forgotten Glory*. Burke's study numbers the Texas Spanish missions at fifty, but this calculation is debatable. Exact numeration may be difficult because of changing boundaries and allegiances.

¹² Folder/Brochure «*San Antonio Mission*», cited in footnote 3 above, 1.

¹³ Félix D. ALMARÁZ, JR., *The San Antonio Missions, Land Tenure*, 1.

horse, the cow, the honeybee, the state flower called the bluebonnet, a «most pleasant architecture», and the names of countless rivers and villages¹⁴. Without doubt, as a group the friars were valiant, intelligent and dedicated. Outstanding among them was Venerable Antonio Margil, the founder of Mission San José.

Not to be overlooked among the friars' contributions was the ingenious system of ground-level aqueducts which they developed for irrigation. Engineered to perfection, these *acequias* drew water from the San Antonio River and were slanted downwards ever so slightly en route to irrigating the mission crops¹⁵.

The post-1800 history of San Antonio's Old Spanish Missions is too involved to elucidate here. Instead, we offer the following salient facts in summary form. As a result of an 1813 Spanish colonial decree, the missions were completely secularized by 1824. Subsequently they fell into disrepair and sometimes into ruins. Many disputes arose over who was responsible for any repair or maintenance, and there was even more wrangling over *who owned* the mission lands and their outlying *ranchos*. The last of the Franciscans departed in 1824. A diocesan priest, Father Francis Bouchu, took an interest in Espada Mission in the 1850s. He himself did extensive repairs at Espada, and then served as its pastor (as well as at San Juan and San José) between 1873 and his death in 1907¹⁶. Following him, for a while Claretian Missionaries served Espada, and sometimes San Juan Capistrano¹⁷. In the intervening years, prior to the Redemptorists' arrival in 1923, there are some records of occasional ministry by additional diocesan priests¹⁸.

¹⁴ James Wakefield BURKE, *A Forgotten Glory*, 14.

¹⁵ This *acequia* system included an extended stone aqueduct which transported the irrigation water over *La Piedra* Creek, and still does! This aqueduct is still standing today about one mile north of Espada mission. It is supported by two stone arches, and still carries water over the creek—a tourist attraction that has become famous. Marion A. HABIG, *The Alamo Chain*, 208.

¹⁶ Francis BOUCHU (1829-1907), a native of France. Ordained Galveston 1855, parish priest at Cathedral in San Antonio, took up residence at Espada Mission possibly in 1858. Very devoted to residents near the Old Missions. *Ibid.*, 225-227.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹⁸ As will be seen later, there grew a gradual interest by San Antonio

3. – *The Redemptorists' Thirty-Three Years at the Old Spanish Missions*

As the reader will remember, it was from the Spanish-speaking parish of *Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro* that the Redemptorists ventured out to their ministry at the Old Spanish Missions. *Perpetuo Socorro* was located on a ridge of land which sloped upward from downtown San Antonio, the city *Centro* being about a mile from the parish. In 1911, Bishop John W. Shaw¹⁹ had a deep concern for the neglected and economically poor Mexican-American population of this area east of downtown. He turned to the provincial of the Redemptorist St. Louis Province, Father Thomas Brown, pleading for help.

As it happened, the Redemptorists had just begun their foundation of St. Gerard Majella not far away. But St. Gerard's was for the *English speaking*, and, frankly, those of Mexican descent did not feel welcome. Ethnicity constituted a huge difference. Nevertheless, the provincial turned to forty-six year-old Father John Muehlsiepen²⁰, one of the men in the St. Gerard's community. Muehlsiepen gave Brown a wholehearted Yes!

bishops and archbishops in the restoration of the missions. Of special note will be Archbishop Robert Emmet Lucey's movement toward *total* restoration – and how this, strangely, played a key role in the Redemptorist departure from the missions in 1956.

¹⁹ John W. SHAW (1863-1934) was born in Mobile, Alabama. Bishop of San Antonio from 1911-1918, he was then named Archbishop of New Orleans, Louisiana, and died in that position sixteen years later.

²⁰ John MUEHLSIEPEN, (1865-1936) a native of Saan, Prussia. He had desired to enter the seminary in his native land, but seminaries were closed then because of church-state difficulties. He came to the U.S. at the invitation of his uncle, a priest in St. Louis, and eventually entered the Redemptorist seminary, then in Kansas City, MO. Professed at Kirkwood 1891, and ordained in Kansas City 1896, he is credited with fostering many vocations to priesthood and religious life. In his later years of paralyzed confinement at Santa Rosa Hospital, San Antonio, he was tenderly cared for the Sisters of the Incarnate Word who conducted Santa Rosa – the same congregation which taught at Espada Mission School. Denver Province *Memorabilia*, 2005 edition. See also Arthur PATTON, *John Muehlsiepen: Apostle to the Mexicans of Texas*, in *Let Us Now Praise Great Men*, No. 10, Redemptorist Historical Studies – North America, Redemptorists – Denver 2003, 137-152.

This priest was, by all accounts, a holy and zealous man. It was he who put the stamp of generosity and faith onto the future ministry of the Redemptorists of *Perpetuo Socorro*. «*Padre Juan*», as he came to be known, began by going off to México and returning in eight months with enough fluency in Spanish (his third language) to begin this new endeavor. By April of 1913 he had a parish in operation, utilizing a small, private chapel on Vine Street. By 1914 he had collected enough funds to build a new church – as well as a school with over 150 students. The Religious Sisters of the Holy Ghost and Mary Immaculate had stepped forward to be the teachers in Perpetual Help's school²¹.

Sadly, only five years after beginning this Mexican-American apostolate the beloved *Padre Juan* was afflicted with a disease which resulted in his total paralysis. He was to linger in this condition for another eighteen years until 1936. When Muehlsiepen's illness struck, the Redemptorists could not supply men for Perpetual Help immediately, and two other priests²² filled the gap until 1921.

However, before Father Muehlsiepen's death he dictated the following words which are preserved in the Redemptorist archives: «Regarding the well-being of our mission, I put it in the hands of the providence of God and the protection of our good Mother of Perpetual Help. "*Deus providebit*"»²³.

Thus Padre Juan Muehlsiepen spoke of the foundation of the community of Our Lady of Perpetual Help as «our mission».

²¹ These Sisters, now named Sisters of the Holy Spirit, were mostly Irish who «came out to America». Their service in Perpetual Help School continued until it closed in 1974. As of 2008 and this writing, several of them continue to volunteer their teaching in the Religious Education Program of Perpetual Help parish.

²² These priests were of the Josephite Congregation, and exiles from México: Fathers José Sanchez and Francisco Soriano. Gerald C. Bass, *Working for Plentiful Redemption: a History of the New Orleans Vice-province*, New Orleans 1995, 271.

²³ The Latin quotation: «God will provide». Muehlsiepen's death is recorded in OLPH-SAT II, 132-135, «Sunday July 25, 1936». The dictated quotation is found in RADP, Personalalia, Father J. B. Muehlsiepen. See also Arthur PATTON, as in note 20 above.

In some aspects, at its founding in 1913, this was the first «foreign mission» of the Redemptorist St. Louis Province. The language and culture were «foreign» – for no one in the province at that time was of Mexican descent, and no one spoke Spanish from birth. Moreover Texas was not the native place of any member of the province²⁴, and the long months of semi-tropical heat meant a huge adjustment to almost everyone who was sent there. Still, the dynamic generosity of Father Juan Muehlsiepen took strong and vibrant root in the men who followed him.

By 1921, with the permission of Bishop Drossaerts, and at the urging of a Redemptorist official from Rome, Father Fidelis Speidel, the Redemptorists were able to reestablish themselves at Perpetual Help. Soon they had built a large rectory (parish offices included) at 2101 Nebraska Street²⁵, and by 1930 there was a staff of Redemptorist priests and professed Brothers which varied in number between eight and twelve²⁶. By then, the Redemptorists were caring not only for the home-base parish, but at the

²⁴ It was not until 1930 that two native speakers of Spanish, both born in México, were ordained for the St. Louis province, namely Fathers Prudencio Martínez (of Coahuila) and Juan López (of Tamaulipas). The distinction of being the first native-born Texan ordained for the province went to Father Alvin Billimek, but not until 1938.

²⁵ Gerald C. BASS, *Working for Plentiful Redemption*, 271. Technically, the parish was canonically established in 1921 when the rectory was opened; so from 1913 until 1918 it was, according to Church Law, a «mission» of St. Gerard's. This fine point of law was almost certainly lost on the people whom the Redemptorists served at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. – It might be noted that Nebraska Street has in later years been renamed «Martin Luther King Boulevard», and the parish offices now (2008) reside at 618 South Grimes.

²⁶ Special mention must be made of Brother Juan Gómez (1895-1984). He was born Justo Gómez in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, México. His family moved to San Antonio, TX, in 1912, where Justo became acquainted with Padre Juan Muehlsiepen. Justo helped Padre Juan in the early days of the foundation at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. In 1920, Justo was professed as Brother Juan, C.Ss.R., at De Soto, Missouri. Returning to San Antonio, the outstanding Brother Juan spent his entire active life as a Redemptorist, except for a few short months, among the Mexican-Americans at Perpetual Help. The author of this article was in the same community, attending him the night he died in the Redemptorist Health Care Center, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, October 8, 1984. Brother Juan's dear friend, Archbishop Patrick F. Flores of San Antonio, conducted his funeral liturgy at *Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro*.

same time for as many as fifteen other churches, chapels, and communities in South Central Texas. Over the following years the total Hispanic outmissions which the *Perpetuo Socorro* community served were to number twenty-two. Most were in distant rural locations, reachable on dusty roads in the seasonal droughts – which then turned into ruddy quagmires when rains came²⁷. In 1932, the historian T. L. Skinner, C.S.S.R., stated that this ministry in the Spanish language «developed into a care of about twenty-three thousand souls»²⁸. From 1923 until 1956, this Redemptorist ministry included the Old Spanish Missions which had been originally in the hands of the Franciscan friars from México.

4. – *Concentrating on Three of the Old Spanish Missions, 1923-1956*

The reader will remember that in 1923 *four* of the Old Spanish Missions came under the care of the Spanish-speaking Redemptorists of Perpetual Help *according to their community annals*. However, the number *four* is indeed a misconception, and it is strange that this misconception has endured among Redemptorist historians.

The original listing of April 22, 1923, *included Mission Concepción*. But never once in the Perpetual Help annals is there a record of any sacramental ministry by a Redemptorist at Mission

²⁷ Gerald C. BASS, *Working for Plentiful Redemption*, 326. This work lists these twenty outstations: St. Alfonso (location on the west side of San Antonio); St. Catherine's Chapel; The Old Spanish Missions of San José, San Juan Capistrano, San Francisco de la Espada, (*mistakenly*, as will be seen,) Concepción; Elmendorf, TX; Sasparamco, TX; Greytown, TX; Cañada Verde, TX; Southton, TX; La Parita, TX; Picoso, TX; Calaveras, TX; Martinez; New Berlin, TX; Campbell, TX; Westhoff, TX; Nixon, TX, Seguin, TX; Stockdale, TX, and LaVernia, TX. – Besides these so-called *outstations*, the priests of the parish extended their ministry to three convents of Religious Sisters, serving as regular chaplains, offering daily Mass and providing weekly confessions (Sisters of the Holy Ghost on Yucca Street, The Good Shepherd Sisters on Montana Street, and the Carmelites on Walters Street), not to mention being, four times yearly, what was known as «extraordinary confessors» in a number of other Sisters' convents. *Ibid.*, 280.

²⁸ T. L. SKINNER, *The Redemptorists in the West*, St. Louis 1933, 139.

Concepción. Nor was any Redemptorist ever shown as being in charge of Concepción when, every year, a complete roster of each community member and his respective ministry was provided under the date of January 1.

Still, Father Gerald Bass, C.Ss.R., in his *Working for Plentiful Redemption*, maintained that the Redemptorists worked in four of the old missions, Concepción being one of them²⁹. Peter Geiermann, C.Ss.R., stated the same in his Volume II of *Annals of the St. Louis Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*³⁰. Father T. L. Skinner in his *Redemptorists in the West*, does not give a clear account. For in one sentence Skinner says that Bishop Drossaerts³¹ asked the Redemptorist to take charge of «the four old ‘Missions’». Then in the next sentence Skinner states, «Three of these missions... were put under the care of the Redemptorists»³².

Professor Félix D. Almaráz, Jr., of the University of Texas-San Antonio, has made it very clear that it was impossible that Mission Concepción was ever part of the Redemptorist ministry. «By 1923, when the Redemptorists accepted charge of “the Old Spanish Missions” Concepción was excluded from the agreement of conveyance, because it was already part of the campus of the new [Archdiocesan] seminary under construction»³³.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 278. The Vice-province of New Orleans (as will be mentioned later) became a subdivision of the St. Louis Province in 1952. After suppression in 2005, the Vice-province membership and territory became part of the Denver Province.

³⁰ Peter C. GEIERMANN, *Annals of the St. Louis Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer*, III, 1913-1922), St. Louis 1924, 573.

³¹ Arthur Jerome Drossaerts (1862-1940) was born in Breda, the Netherlands. He succeeded Bishop Shaw in San Antonio in 1918 and became the first Archbishop of San Antonio when it was raised to archdiocesan status in 1926. Drossaerts died as San Antonio’s archbishop in 1940.

³² T. L. SKINNER, *The Redemptorists in the West*, 427. Skinner quotes no source for either of his seemingly contradictory statements.

³³ Personal letter Almaráz to Enderle, July 23, 2007. Moreover, Professor Almaráz has also called the author’s attention to a quotation from the work of Joseph W. SCHMITZ, *Six Missions of Texas*, Dorman H. Winfrey, coordinator, Waco TX 1965, 96-97: «In 1911, at the request of Bishop Shaw, the Society of Mary [the Marianists] gave Mission Concepción and the surrounding property to the Bishop of San Antonio, and in return received unencumbered title of

The upshot of this confusion on the part of Redemptorist authors, and its subsequent clarification, is that, in this section, we now focus on *three*, not four, of the Old Spanish Missions: San José, San Juan Capistrano, and San Francisco de la Espada between the years 1923 and 1931³⁴.

As seen in the first pages of this article, the beginning date for Redemptorist ministry at the Old Spanish Missions was on the Third Sunday after Easter, April 22, 1923. Father Edward Molloy³⁵, the forty-year old Rector, assigned himself to make the first Redemptorist appearance at the missions. He went to celebrate the 9:00 o'clock morning Mass at San Francisco de la Espada, and then motored two and one-half miles north to San Juan Capistrano for the 10:30 Mass.

A week later, on April 29, it was the turn of Mission San José to see a Redemptorist. The interior of the church at St. José was still in ruins, so the Mass was celebrated in what referred to as «the old sacristy»³⁶.

It took about six months for the Perpetual Help Redemptorist community to organize the regular ministry at the Missions. There were very rustic living accommodations at Espada, so it was possible for one of the men to remain there overnight if necessary. In fact, Father John Hecker³⁷, spent the entire month

St. Mary's College located in downtown San Antonio». See also Félix D. ALMARÁZ, JR., *The Return of the Franciscans to Texas, 1891-1931*, in *Catholic Southwest: a Journal of History and Culture* 7 (1996) 91-114, especially 106. – This article, hereinafter cited as ALMARÁZ, *Return*.

³⁴ We shall shortly discuss what event in 1931 reduced the Redemptorist ministry to *just two* of these missions.

³⁵ Edward MOLLOY (1881-1953), a native of Gusset's Cove, Newfoundland, Canada; professed in Kansas City 1903; ordained in St. Louis 1908. As a young missionary in Idaho, he went into the mines to speak to the workers. He was characterized as «determined man [who] had few doubts», and one who spent an hour before the Blessed Sacrament each afternoon. Denver Province *Memorabilia*, 2005 edition.

³⁶ OLPH-SAT Annals I, 10, «April 29, 1923»; see also 17, «July 29, 1923». In the early days, and even today, the southernmost – or last – in the line of Missions, San Francisco de la Espada, has been referred to simply as «Espada», and this article will henceforth do the same.

³⁷ John HECKER (1874-1939), a native of Chicago, professed at Kirkwood 1891, ordained there also 1896, had a varied career. He taught at both the

of May 1923 living at Espada so that he could take a census of the people who lived near the Old Missions. In doing so he did «battle with dogs, snakes, and other living things»³⁸. Following that, various priests were assigned by turns at the three different Mission locations, presumably to have them meet the people and become accustomed to the surroundings.

By October of 1923 a class of Confirmation candidates had been prepared at all three Missions, and Bishop Drossaerts came to each mission to confer the sacrament. San Juan had the largest number of confirmands, sixty-two, with twenty-six at San José and eleven at Espada³⁹.

At Espada much attention had to be given to the school. Its buildings were badly in need of repair, but more importantly, the Redemptorists agreed to provide the Sisters of the Incarnate Word who taught in the school the «opportunities of assisting at Mass four times a week»⁴⁰.

This school at Espada was never destined to be large⁴¹, but one is reminded that in those days there was, especially in Redemptorist locations, a non-negotiable dedication to Catholic education. That same dedication was embodied in the heroic lives of the Incarnate Word Sisters. Sister Pauline Fiero was one of these. She taught in the Espada school from its beginning and recorded in her diary-scrapbook: «Many indeed have been the privations and sacrifices endured by the Sisters at the Espada Mission... but the Sisters are willing to do any sacrifice for the sake of given [sic] the Espada Mission children a Catholic education and teaching them to love and serve their God»⁴².

preparatory and theology seminaries, was novice master, parish priest, and missionary. Denver Province *Memorabilia* 2005 edition.

³⁸ OLPH-SAT Annals I, 13, «June 4, 1923». See also *ibid.*, 47, «July 31, 1924».

³⁹ Sacramental records for 1923 preserved at the present church office, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 618 S. Grimes Street, San Antonio, TX, 78203. These same records are on microfilm at the San Antonio Chancery Archives.

⁴⁰ OLPH-SAT Annals I, 20, «September 20, 1923».

⁴¹ The author could find no yearly enrollment at Espada school larger than the figure for 1948: 130 students.

⁴² Sister Pauline FIERO, «Personal Diary and Scrapbook», 130, *Personalia*, Archives of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Incarnate Word University, San Antonio, TX.

The same Sister likewise recalled that during the 1920s and early 1930s «...the classrooms were in very bad condition... The rain came down in torrents when there was a heavy pour. Often the teachers and the pupils had to be confined to one corner of the room, so as to be able to keep dry»⁴³.

After the first month of rotating the community members in a team effort to serve the people of the Old Spanish Mission, the Redemptorists settled on entrusting everything at the three locations to a single *Padre*. First came Father John Hecker, who served as pastor for about one year, and he was followed by Father Nicholas Meissen⁴⁴. They provided Sunday Masses in each of the three Missions, with Espada having the weekday Masses to benefit the children and the Sisters when school was in session September through May. In September of 1924 Father Meissen was officially appointed «Chaplain to the Incarnate Word Sisters». The meant that, in addition to offering the school Masses, he agreed to provide them with a monthly spiritual talk and the availability of weekly confession⁴⁵.

It was Father Meissen also who introduced a system of Sunday collection envelopes and the annalist recorded that this brought «gratifying success» for church support⁴⁶. How permanently gratifying the system was may be questioned, for in all the years to come multiple fundraisers were a common resort in order to supplement the Sunday collections. The most elaborate fundraisers were the parish festivals, called in Spanish *Jamaicas* or simply *Fiestas*, which were held especially to observe patronal feast days. But there were also dramas, musicals, dances, barbecues, and bunco parties⁴⁷.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 128. Espada Mission School was finally to close in 1967, after fifty-two years of service to the poor children of the area.

⁴⁴ Nicholas MEISSEN (1893-1966) was a native of Inglewood, CA, professed at DeSoto 1918, ordained at Oconomowoc 1923. A parish priest and well-known missionary with a very kind personality. Denver Province *Memorabilia* 2005 edition.

⁴⁵ OLPH-SAT Annals I, 49, «September 1, 1924».

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 66, «April 19, 1925».

⁴⁷ References to these fundraisers are constant throughout the OLPH-SAT Annals. One of these was held at Espada on the patronal feast of St. Francis, October 4, 1925. It was considered «very successful» for having a profit of

Incomplete but indicative financial records of Old Missions are preserved in the archives of the Redemptorists in Denver. By any standard, these show meager income at the missions and regular deficit annual balances. It is possible that the Redemptorist St. Louis province chose to carry some of the burden, subsidizing the ministry at these Missions from its central office⁴⁸.

On February 8, 1924, the dynamic Father Edward Molloy had a special announcement for his community of Redemptorists at *Perpetuo Socorro*. The caretaking of many small and poor «Mexican stations» was a great apostolic effort, he said. But it took the men away from what was the specialty of all Redemptorists: the preaching of popular parish missions! Molloy's announcement was that from then on Redemptorist parish missions were going to be preached in Spanish with regularity at all their far-flung «Mexican stations».

First, the men were to go out and conduct a careful census of each station, and use the opportunity to invite people to the preaching events. The annalist, clearly delighted by Molloy's announcement, penned the exclamation: «All hail to the Mexican missions!» Consequently, by the end of March 1924, each of the

«over a hundred dollars». OLPH-SAT I, 72. – Bunco is a familial game using three dice.

⁴⁸ RADP, File Folders of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, San Antonio. These «books» are actually flimsy notebooks, done by hand. – A very interesting, but somewhat hard-to-interpret, 1950 document can also be found in RADP, *ibid*. It is entitled, «*An Exact Accounting of Some of the Expenses Incurred by the Redemptorist Fathers in the Mexican Work of the Archdiocese of San Antonio*». It was compiled by the Redemptorist Father David Mineau in response to a San Antonio Chancery enquiry as to Redemptorist financial contributions which were made in the years 1946-1950 (see letter, Bernard Popp to Mineau, September 25, 1950, same folders). Mineau chose to begin his «exact accounting» at the date of the founding of Perpetual Help by Father Muehlsiepen in 1913, itemizing every contribution of the Redemptorists until 1944; his final Grand Total was \$ 113,045.13. In fairness, one must observe the manner in which Mineau estimated certain contributed services. If valid, *some of the expenditures* by the St. Louis Province *might be presumed* to have been to the benefit of the ministry of the Old Spanish Missions, for these missions were included under general nomenclature of the «Mexican work» (as *all ministry* originating at the *parish* of Perpetual Help was generally referred to in those days). This topic may deserve further research.

three Old Spanish Missions had tasted the experience Redemptorist parish mission preaching. The annals reported that all had «fine results»⁴⁹.

In each of the following years, until 1956, these parish missions continued to be preached. Often they occurred during lent. However, if occasionally the mission did not take place during this penitential season, then a series of weekly sermons called «Lenten Courses» were substituted. Certain Redemptorists were assigned by whichever Rector was in office at Perpetual Help, and sometimes the Rector also mandated which topics were to be addressed⁵⁰.

After a few years, the spiritual life of the three Old Missions was supported by sodalities, societies, and confraternities, as well as by weekly Marian devotions and catechetical instructions for the young⁵¹.

Early in 1926, just three years after beginning ministry at the Old Missions, the *Perpetuo Socorro* Redemptorists had both the joy and sadness of seeing fellow Redemptorists from México arriving at their door. These men, who were almost all natives of Spain, were exiles from the terrible persecution of the Church which was then raging across the border only 130 miles distant. It was natural that the exiles gravitated toward the large Spanish-speaking residence on Nebraska Street in east San Antonio, where their fellow Redemptorists welcomed them with open hearts.

In a genuine missionary spirit, these Redemptorists-in-exile soon involved themselves not only at the main *Perpetuo So-*

⁴⁹ OLPH-SAT Annals I, 33, «February 8, 1924»; 35, «February 28, 1924»; and continuing through «March 2, 9, 16, and 23».

⁵⁰ It is worth observing that these «directions by the Rector» of what took place at the Old Missions clearly shows that the ministry at the Old Missions was considered as *not being entirely canonically separate* from *Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro*. Later we will see that this reality and mode of thinking was challenged by Archbishop Robert Emmet Lucey. He made it clear that, by Canon Law, the Old Spanish Missions were not canonically «no man's land».

⁵¹ OLPH-SAT Annals II, 32. A newspaper clipping overlay dated in handwriting «April 10, 1931» explains this active parish life in the Old Missions, but the name of the newspaper is not in evidence in the clipped article.

corro parish, but also in the «outstations», and especially at the Old Spanish Missions. It is recorded that the people loved them dearly, no matter that their Castilian Spanish sounded a bit different to the ear⁵².

A regrettable (and unexplainable) omission in the Redemptorist annals of this era is that no mention is made of the nighttime thunderous collapse of the historic church tower at Mission San José on March 9, 1928. However, Professor Félix D. Almaráz, Jr.⁵³, has used newspaper reports of the day in order to assemble an account of what most probably took place, and the aftermath of the calamity.

There had been heavy rainstorms, and these were the likely cause of the weakening and eventual collapse of the tower. Immediately, however, Archbishop Arthur J. Drossaerts moved to restore the tower, aided by three professionals (an architect, an engineer, and a building contractor). Within a year the tower was restored to its original configuration⁵⁴.

We come now to the account of how in 1931 the Redemptorists' ministry in the Old Spanish Missions was reduced from *three* to just *two* of these missions, as they gave up Mission San José. In doing so, we draw upon the previously cited 1996 article of Dr. Félix D. Almaráz, Jr., in which he has described the Franciscans' return to San José after an absence of 107 years⁵⁵. To his account we add items from Redemptorist sources.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 83 «February 3, 1926». On p. 83 there is an article attached from the *San Antonio Express-News*, March 11, 1927, «Exiled Priests from México Assigned to San Antonio». See also *ibid.*, 83 «February 27, 1926». Although space does not allow for the story of these exiled Redemptorists to be told in full here, it deserves comprehensive treatment in the future, especially to tell of their valiant attempts to re-enter México under various creative disguises.

⁵³ On Professor Almaráz, see note 6 above.

⁵⁴ Félix D. ALMARÁZ, JR., *The San Antonio Missions After Secularization, 1800-1983, Volume Two of a History of the San Antonio Missions*, San Antonio. This work, as of this writing, remains in ms. form at the National Park Headquarters Archives, 2202 Roosevelt Blvd., San Antonio TX 78210. A rumor of sabotage of the tower was never proved. For a somewhat different account, see also Marion A. HABIG, *San Antonio's Mission San José*, 153. One can only conjecture how this event escaped the Redemptorist annalist in OLPH-SAT Annals I, «March 9, 1928».

⁵⁵ See note 33 above.

Almaráz gives proper credit to the efforts of a man named Francis J. Bowen, «son of a prominent physician... [as well as] an educated, pious, zealous tertiary layman⁵⁶». But Bowen had to persevere from 1891 until 1931, and through the tenure of four successive prelates of San Antonio, before seeing the arrival of the friars at San José⁵⁷.

During these four decades, with Bowen respectfully pleading, suggesting, and encouraging in the background, complicated negotiations went on between the San Antonio prelates and two separate provinces of the Franciscans. Bishop Jean C. Neraz bluntly refused in 1892 to have the friars return, stating «my priests would be opposed to such an invasion⁵⁸». In 1910 Bishop John W. Shaw «readily agreed to allow the Franciscans to enter the diocese», only to be forced to rescind this invitation when his chancery officials objected⁵⁹.

It was only in 1929 that Archbishop Arthur J. Drossaerts, after intermittent correspondence with the Franciscans of both the Chicago and Cincinnati provinces, agreed to have the Chicago group come to San Antonio and take over Mission San José.

Meanwhile, as we have seen, in 1923 the same Archbishop Drossaerts had asked the Redemptorists of Our Lady of Perpetual Help to attend the people at San José, along with those at Capistrano, and Espada.

Reading only the annals of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, one could think that the Redemptorists were not informed of the impending return of the Franciscans to San Antonio and Mission San José, since these annals have no clear mention of this change until it was almost at hand. But other Redemptorist sources show that at least two factors were leading up to some modifica-

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 92. A «tertiary», of course, is an affiliated Third Order Franciscan.

⁵⁷ These prelates, with their years in office, were Bishops Jean C. Neraz (1881-1894), John A. Forest (1895-1911), John W. Shaw (1911-1918), and Archbishop Arthur J. Drossaerts (1918-1940).

⁵⁸ Félix D. ALMARÁZ, *The Return*, 99. It was the St. John the Baptist province of Franciscans (headquartered in Cincinnati, OH), who were refused entry.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 103. This time it was the Sacred Heart province of friars, then headquartered in Chicago, who were not allowed to come. Later they were headquartered in St. Louis, MO.

tion in the Redemptorist ministry.

First, the Redemptorist Superior General, Patrick Murray, during a Canonical Visitation from Rome in 1926, was sorely displeased that the men at Perpetual Help had too many «out-missions», most of them at some distance from their home community⁶⁰. Secondly, at this time the Redemptorists were asking Archbishop Drossaerts to keep his promise of «relieving us of one or the other outlying mission, so that a couple of our men can give some of the Mexican missions which priests are clamoring for»⁶¹.

Thus on February 4, 1931, the local superior/pastor Edward Fastner wrote to his St. Louis provincial, Edward Cantwell, stating that there were «rumblings that the Franciscans are to take over the 3 old historic missions which we are now attending... As yet nothing definite has been said... Whatever you shall arrange dear Rev. Father will be cheerfully carried out»⁶².

How much information was in possession of the *entire* Perpetual Help community is not certain, but by April 17, 1931, the provincial wrote definite news to Father Fastner in San Antonio, «...I saw the Franciscan Provincial the other day, and he told me his Fathers were to take over the San José Mission very soon. This will make your Sunday program a little lighter»⁶³. So now the situation was becoming more focused, and perhaps carried some consolation insofar as the Redemptorists would still have Capistrano and Espada.

⁶⁰ RAPD, letter, Edward Molloy to provincial Edward Cantwell, August 17, 1926.

⁶¹ RAPD, letter, Edward Fastner to provincial Edward Cantwell, August 8, 1930. This preaching of more Redemptorist missions to the Hispanic flock was something decided, as said above, in 1924. See also RAPD, letter, Cantwell to Drossaerts, September 16, 1930. – Edward Fastner, b. St. Paul, MN January 7, 1896; prof., DeSoto, August 2, 1916; ordained, Oconomowoc, May 29, 1921; d. Edgerton, WI, December 14, 1965; he was able to preach parish missions equally well in English, Spanish and German. He had also taught in the minor seminary. – Edward Cantwell, b. Madison, WI, May 2, 1871; prof., Kirkwood, September 8, 1891; ordained, DeSoto, October 28, 1896; died Glenview, IL, June 1, 1947. Once known as the «Orator of Michigan», was provincial of St. Louis Prov. for three terms, 1924-1936. He is also remembered as having «the soul of hospitality» toward any visitor.

⁶² RAPD, letter Fastner to Cantwell, February 4, 1931.

⁶³ RAPD, letter Cantwell to Faster, April 17, 1931. Emphasis is Cantwell's.

Meanwhile, however, the Perpetual Help annals seem to indicate that *the manner* in which the Franciscan return (and the transition at San José) came to pass, carried some sense of slight, if not hurt, for the Redemptorists. Witness the following annals entry of March 5, 1931. (A preliminary note: the «celebration» refers to commemorative ceremonies in the presence of noted dignitaries for the bicentennial of the founding of the city of San Antonio by a 1731 Royal Decree and a bicentennial tribute to the founding of the «last three» of the Missions).

«During the celebration there were but four [Redemptorists] ... and these were but onlookers. On March 5th a Mass was said in San Juan and Espada by a Franciscan Padre. That a mass was to be said by a Franciscan on this day in the missions of which we have charge, we learnt from the newspapers. Fr. Garriga, Chairperson of the Committee on Religious celebration, never informed us of this. The Redemptorists and their work at these missions was left unnoticed in the accounts that appeared in the daily papers. Just one article mentioned the fact that we had charge of them»⁶⁴.

Although it was thought that the Franciscans were to take over Mission San José «very soon», it was not until the autumn of the year that the dedication of their new residence took place on October 25, 1931⁶⁵. The dedication was done with impressive ceremonies and with 7000 people attending!

According to Professor Almaráz, the Redemptorists had announced that they would «relinquish canonical responsibility

⁶⁴ OLPH-SAT Annals II, 20, «March 4, 1931». Again, the annalist is believed to have been Father Joseph Hasler. – Mariano Simon GARRIGA (1886-1965), a native of Port Isabel, TX. Studied at St. Mary's College, Kansas, and St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee. Ordained San Antonio, 1911, served in various parishes and chancery positions of San Antonio Archdiocese, and was army chaplain in World War I. Later, was very involved in restoration of Mission San José. In 1936 ordained bishop as coadjutor of diocese of Corpus Christi with right of succession; became Ordinary of Corpus Christi diocese in 1949.

⁶⁵ A Redemptorist source states that one cause of the delay was «some property litigation with squatters on the historic mission spot». RAPD, letter Fastner to Cantwell, June 3, 1931.

on Sunday, November 8, 1931⁶⁶». But another delay set in as the friars waited for utilities (water and gas) to be connected⁶⁷. No one knew how long this delay would last, so it seems the Redemptorists had no idea how long they would continue at San José. When they did get word, the annalist at Perpetual Help again recorded with a bit of pique:

«The news came to us by telephone. Today is Friday and since we did not know the exact Sunday that would last see us at the mission, we said nothing on the previous Sunday that could be understood as a farewell talk. The appearance of the Franciscans at the mission on the following Sunday morning must have been a surprise to the very small number of Mexican and American parishioners. We have been in charge of this mission since April 22, 1923. During this time various padres of the community labored zealously there, especially Frs. Hecker, Meissen, and [Eugene] Wehner»⁶⁸.

But whatever annoyance or disappointment there may have been, it appears to have been short-lived. For by the next summer on July 13, 1932, Father Edward Fastner could report to his provincial Cantwell in St. Louis, «The Franciscans at San José are good friends of ours.» Then Fastner confirmed that the friars had pursued two purposes in their return to San Antonio: to attend the people of San José, but also to provide a residence for their infirm: «Nearly all of their men are sickly, so that their place is rather a kind of sanitarium than a mission center. We still have the other two old Missions which manage to hold up their end financially»⁶⁹.

⁶⁶ Félix D. ALMARÁZ, *Return*, 113.

⁶⁷ Marion A. HABIG, *San Antonio's Mission San José*, 159.

⁶⁸ OLPH-SAT Annals II, 34-35, «November 13, 1931». There is an incongruity of verb tenses in this entry. The annalist, believed to be Father Joseph Hasler, may have been bringing the annals up to date *some days after these two events took place*, viz., the telephone call on November 13 saying that the Franciscans were taking charge, and indeed after they did offer Sunday Mass on November 15. – Eugene WEHNER (1892-1971) a native of St. Louis, professed DeSoto, 1920, ordained Oconomowoc, WI, 1925. Besides a devoted parish priest and missionary among the Spanish-speaking, he taught at the preparatory seminary at Oakland, and was also director of the (post-ordination) second novitiate program for nine years.

⁶⁹ RAPD, letter, Fastner to Cantwell, July 13, 1932.

5. – *Serving only two of the Old Spanish Missions*

Moving onward, the Redemptorists spent the next twenty-five years in service to just two of the Old Spanish Missions, San Juan Capistrano and San Francisco de la Espada.

Father Eugene Wehner had taken charge of the Old Missions' ministry in 1927 and was to continue until 1935. It was during his tenure when suddenly in 1932 word spread that there was «hidden treasure» at Espada. The Great Depression was gripping San Antonio, as it was the rest of the nation. Many people were poorer than ever, and desperately hungry. Perhaps the hope of finding ancient treasure was fanned by these conditions. According to the Redemptorist annals, an elderly gentleman claimed that a «reliable source» had told him that the ancient treasure was buried «near the altar» of the little Mission church of Espada. So onward came the treasure hunters, some even equipped with an undefined «electrical instrument» for fail-safe detection of the treasure.

Eventually the sad report was spread that no treasure was found⁷⁰. However, from our viewpoint some seventy-five years later, perhaps the best treasure was the succession of men who fulfilled the leading pastoral role at San Juan and Espada throughout the Great Depression and through the attendant hardships of World War II. Following Father Wehner came Fathers John Aubuchon⁷¹ (briefly in 1933 and again in 1934), Frederick Mann⁷² (1936-1941), and Marshall Gherman (1941-1946). Following them were the three priests who served in the post-World War II Re-

⁷⁰ OLPH-SAT Annals II, 49, «July 21, 1932».

⁷¹ John AUBUCHON (1904-1980), a native of St. Louis, professed DeSoto 1926, ordained Oconomowoc 1935. He had the distinction of being both born on, and dying on Christmas Day. Besides parish priest and mission preacher, he also served as U.S. Army chaplain in World War II. Denver Province *Memoriabilia*, 2005 edition.

⁷² Frederick MANN (1901-1960), a native of Chicago, professed DeSoto 1927, ordained Oconomowoc 1932. Besides San Antonio, he had very effective Hispanic ministry in Denver where he was also acclaimed for his work with sufferers from alcohol addiction. He was also noted for his work in psychology. Denver Province *Memoriabilia*, 2005 edition. – Biographical notes of others listed on this page will appear later.

covery years: Raymond Nowak (1946-1953), Henry Schultz (1953-1956), and Eugene Staub (briefly in 1956). These were the men officially at the helm, but many times their back-up substitutes were others from the community of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

At the Espada Mission the small school struggled onward through the 1930s and the Depression. Somehow or other Father Eugene Wehner found the means to refurbish the existing classrooms, and even added two new ones⁷³.

The memories of people who were young students attending the Espada school in those days are warm and vivid. One such student exclaimed emphatically to the author in 2006, «We loved school!»! Another could describe in detail the marching band they had, the sports they played, and the Festival Day display of the girl-students' embroidery, crochet work, and hand-painted seashells. These arts and crafts were taught to them by the Incarnate Word Sisters⁷⁴.

A constant concern of the Espada compound in the 1930s and into the 1940s was that it lacked a dependable and pure water supply. Various attempts at drilling, or digging, reliable wells had been to no avail, as the wells would suddenly dry up. When this occurred, drinking water had to be carried to the school from nearby homes whose wells were still producing water. Children and their teachers then dipped drinking water from earthen crocks⁷⁵. We will see later that it was not until 1945 that this water problem was finally to be solved!

⁷³ Undated ms., *A Short History of San Francisco De La Espada Mission, San Antonio*. This typewritten ms. is found in the Archives of the Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Incarnate Word University, San Antonio. No author is provided. However, the contents indicate that one of the Sisters very familiar with the circumstances of the school. The best conjecture is that the author was Sister Raphael Eccell, C.C.V.I., who wrote similar remembrances. Internal evidence places this document in 1945.

⁷⁴ Interviews with the author by Mrs. María González Martínez, Mrs. Minnie McRae, Mrs. Fernanda Martínez Ramírez, and Mrs. María Ayala, August 22 and 24, 2006.

⁷⁵ *A Short History of San Francisco De La Espada Mission, San Antonio, passim*. See footnote 62.

Some statistics provided at the end of 1933 are indicative of the sacramental ministry of the two Missions of Espada and San Juan Capistrano:

	ESPADA	SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO
Infant Baptisms	30	20
Deaths	8	3
Communions	3064	600
First Communions	17	13
Marriages	4	2
Revalidations	3	1
Confirmations	58	36
Students in School	115	---

Continuing through the 1930s, the general spiritual needs of the people at the two Missions were attended to by the community liturgies Sundays and Holy Days, the preaching of parish missions and special seasonal devotions, along with home visits and care of the sick.

The well-organized catechetical program continued to be part of Mission life. This program received very good publicity in an extensive January 1932 article by Father Martin S. Bringazi, C.S.S.R., in a Catholic publication called *The Southern Messenger*. There are also many references to the catechetical efforts at the Old Spanish Missions which appear in the Annals of the Redemptorist community at the home-base parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help⁷⁶.

In the spring and summer (April through July) 1936, an interesting and different activity was brought to the Old Missions by the scholarly Father Frederick Mann, newly-appointed as Redemptorist leader of the ministry there. He carefully prepared and delivered a lecture series on the «*History of the Old*

⁷⁶ Martin S. BRINGAZI, *Among the Lambs of Christ's Flock*, in *The Southern Messenger* XXXIX, January 1932. Also OLPH-SAT II, 79 (1934); II, 144 (1937); II, 171 (1939); II, 203 (summer session 1940); II, 220 (summer session, 1941; II, 277 (1944). There are still women parishioners living in Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish who, as teenagers, served as lay catechists for the little children of the Old Spanish Missions. They report that they were transported by automobile the twelve miles each way by volunteers or by the priests.

Spanish Missions». These lectures had a different format in each of the two locations that Mann served. Topics included the fortifications which had been in place atop the thick walls which circled the ancient compounds, the techniques the Franciscan friars used to convert the natives to Catholicism, and the unique *acequia* systems which irrigated the peoples' crops. Responding to advance advertisements, many San Antonio residents came out to the Missions to appreciate the lectures. With a view to doing some incidental fundraising, Father Mann made sure that his parishioners also provided for the sale of various refreshment and food items, «including tamales»⁷⁷.

After Arthur Jerome Drossaerts died in 1940 while still archbishop of San Antonio, his replacement was named a few months later: Robert Emmet Lucey, a native of Los Angeles, who had been serving as bishop of Amarillo, Texas, since 1934. After barely a year in office in San Antonio, Archbishop Lucey ordered that «Discussion Clubs» had to be organized in every parish. These were a combination of adult religious education and faith sharing. In response to this mandate, Father Marshall Gherman⁷⁸ (who had taken over the Old Missions in January 1941) started four of these Discussion Groups at San Juan Capistrano⁷⁹. (Besides what may have been provided in various societies and confraternities, this is the only instance which the author discovered of *adult* religious education taking place in the Old Missions).

⁷⁷ Félix D. ALMARÁZ, JR., with the assistance of Gilbert R. CRUZ, *The San Antonio Missions After Secularization, 1800-1983*. Volume II of a *History of the San Antonio Missions*, 260. It was this ms, in possession of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park Headquarters, which alerted the author to these lectures of Father Mann. Details of the lectures are also given in the Catholic newspaper *Southern Messenger* July 23, 1936, p. 5. Bound volumes of the *Southern Messenger* are available in the library of the University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio.

⁷⁸ Marshall GHERMAN (1905-1959), native of De Soto, MO, professed DeSoto 1926, ordained Oconomowoc 1932. After San Antonio, he spent a brief time as instructor in Spanish at the Kirkwood seminary, then went to more Hispanic ministry in North Dakota. Died of cancer in St. Louis. Denver Province *Memorabilia* 2005 edition.

⁷⁹ OLPH-SAT Annals II, 231. The author remembers that his parents, who were parishioners of St. Gerard's, hosted these Discussion Groups in their home.

The United States entered World War II in December 1941, and San Antonio, with its four large-scale Army and Army Air Corps installations, began to teem with signs of the war. Military personnel were in evidence in large numbers, and fighter aircraft and huge bombers flew training missions in the skies overhead. The population was conscious that San Antonio could easily be a prime target if an enemy attack ever came. So along with the mandatory draft of young men into military service, and with the strict rationing of food, clothing, shoes, and fuel, there were city-wide practice sessions for knowing what emergency measures to take in case of an actual air-raid.

In general, however, the Redemptorist community annals do not make frequent mention of the war, except for the occasional drop-in visits of various Redemptorists who were now in uniform as military chaplains.

In 1942 there was an incident which caused a sudden stir among the community members at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. On June 11, a mystery priest arrived at the rectory with startling news. The annalist gives no name to the priest, but writes simply: «A secular priest came here today with the news that [he] had been given the Old Missions to care for. He looked them over – then changed his mind». Beyond that cryptic statement, there is no clue as to what church authority had given this diocesan priest «the care of the Old Missions»⁸⁰. The fact is that this apostolate at the Old Missions was to remain in Redemptorist hands for another fourteen years.

It was finally in the spring of 1945 that Father Marshall Gherman solved the problem of the need for plentiful and pure water at Mission Espada. Or, better to say, the Lord and Gherman did so. This *padre* set out to dig a shallow well near the old *acequia*, intending to use a sophisticated filter system to make the well water safe for drinking. As he proceeded, he suddenly tapped into a fresh, gushing spring! The Sisters of the Incarnate Word had been praying for a miracle, and could not be convinced that it was anything less⁸¹.

⁸⁰ OLPH-SAT, II, «June 11, 1942».

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 11. An original newspaper article, dated May 27, 1945, in the

The same Gherman made many other physical plant improvements at the Old Missions. The episode of his well-drilling which resulted in the arguably miraculous, gushing spring was just one of his achievements. He also installed sanitary rest-rooms (presumably a result of the new, dependable water supply), electricity in the churches of both Espada and San Juan Capistrano, social halls at both locations – with a well-equipped kitchen in the Espada hall – and acquired a «previously-owned» school bus to transport the San Juan children south to the Espada school⁸².

After Gherman, the next Redemptorist to serve the Old Missions was a short, stocky, muscular individual, Father Raymond J. Nowak⁸³. He was destined to remain on the scene from 1946 until 1953. Early in his Redemptorist life he received the rather appropriate nickname «Tarz» – short for «Tarzan» of motion picture fame. This priest could simply do many things. His Spanish was «flawless and he worked on it constantly». He could fix automobiles, clocks and radios. His signature appearance was the cigar jutting out from one corner of his mouth⁸⁴.

Despite his gruff exterior, Father Nowak's relationship with the people was cordial, friendly, and strong. He endeared himself especially to the Incarnate Word Sisters in the Espada school.

Archives of the Incarnate Word Sisters, verifies this occurrence. Unfortunately, the newspaper clipping, while giving the date, does not supply the newspaper of origin.

⁸² These improvements are contained in a letter found in the Archdiocesan Chancery Archives, San Antonio, Redemptorist File Folder, 1943-54. The letter is entitled «Petition to Retain Father Marshall Gherman at Espada and San Juan Capistrano». It is signed by fifty-two individuals. As for electricity in the church, this may have been *improved* wiring, although the petition say Gherman «provided electricity in the churches». To the same Redemptorist goes credit for having set up a school lunch program for the children at Espada; see *Short History of the Espada Mission*, 6, referred to in note 62.

⁸³ Raymond J. NOWAK (1913-1984), a native of Detroit, professed De-Soto, 1935; ordained Oconomowoc 1940. Late in life he served as bursar for the Vice-province of New Orleans, but for most of his priesthood he was either a pastor or an associate pastor. Denver Province *Memorabilia*, 2005 edition.

⁸⁴ Gary LAUENSTEIN, *Fully Devoted: The Hispanic Apostolate of the St. Louis Province of Redemptorists*, Denver 1996, 100-101. The author of this article also has personal memories of Father Nowak.

In their Espada annals they recall his outfitting their kitchen with new equipment, especially a new cooking stove and a new refrigerator. For their protection he also got them a «German Police Dog named Rover», and saw to it that they eventually had telephone service in their convent⁸⁵.

In the summer of 1951, as the school was not in session and the Sisters were away, Father Nowak refurbished their entire living quarters. The Sisters' annals record, «he did it all, with the aid of one helper»⁸⁶.

To cap off the story of Father Ray Nowak, who «could do it all», we can add that in 1950 he also doubled the capacity of the available water for Espada Mission by successfully digging another well. Then from this second well he was able to supply water not only inside the compound, but to more than thirty families near the Mission⁸⁷.

Meanwhile, another small congregation of people was added to the care of Father Ray Nowak. It was located in an area called Southton, some two miles east and south of Espada Mission, where there was a small church dedicated to St. Anne. For some time the Redemptorists of Our Lady of Perpetual Help had cared for this small flock of faithful at St. Anne's⁸⁸. Now, by an

⁸⁵ Annals of Espada School, located in the Archives of the Incarnate Word Sisters, University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio; entries of «August 17, 1947», «January 26, 1948», «August 19, 1947», and «August 22, 1949». Perhaps unfamiliar with canine breeds, the Sister annalist actually wrote, «a Police German dog».

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, «August 1951».

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁸⁸ In the possession of San Francisco de la Espada Mission there is a *Record Book of Baptisms for the Church of St. Anne, Southton, Texas*. The title page of this small Record Book has a handwritten date of December 15, 1922. Opposite the title page, is a handwritten note, no author given, which states that a certain Mrs. Parraele of Rochester, New York, had donated the sum of \$ 1000.00 so that the church of St. Anne could be built. Her request was specifically that the church be dedicated in honor of *St. Anne de Beaupré*. – (North of Rochester, New York, by about 300 miles is the famous Canadian shrine of *St. Anne de Beaupré*, which is served by French-speaking Redemptorists and which is also the headquarters of the Redemptorist Province by the same name. One wonders about some connection of Mrs. Parrele, the Shrine of *St. Anne de Beaupré*, and her wanting the Southton church so named). This note goes on to

official decree of Archbishop Lucey on April 3, 1947, Southton was «made a mission» of the Old Spanish Mission of Espada. This decree further stated that the three congregations of Mission Espada, Mission San Juan, and St. Anne's in Southton now constituted a single, valid territorial parish with Nowak as pastor⁸⁹.

The two Old Spanish Missions continued to have relatively small numbers, as shown by the statistics of January 1949. Espada had 127 families and 388 total members. San Juan had 144 families and 472 total members⁹⁰.

In November 1952 a major administrative change occurred among the United States Redemptorists. The Oakland Vice-province (in those states comprising roughly the western third of the nation) became a full province, and the New Orleans Vice-province was established. The latter was created in an arc of eight southern states, including Texas. Practically, this meant that in the south most major decisions and all pastoral assignments would emanate from an office in New Orleans, Louisiana.

This administrative change would have an important role in the events of late 1955 and early 1956 that would spell the departure of the Redemptorists from the Old Spanish Missions.

say: «Before the church was completed mass was celebrated [by Redemptorists] in an unfurnished attic of one of the brick houses, out in the open in the shade of some trees, and also in an abandoned commissary hut». The author is grateful to Father Lawrence Brummer, O.F.M., current pastor of Espada Mission, for making this discovery available.

⁸⁹ Letter, Lucey to Nowak, April 3, 1947, Chancery Archives of San Antonio, Redemptorist File Folder, 1943-54. This letter had other stipulations which were born of Church Law (canonical) requirements. For instance, Lucey granted Nowak a variance, that he did not have to reside within his parish limits, thus allowing him to live at the community of Perpetual Help, and to commute to his «canonical parish». – The declaration of the three entities (Espada, San Juan, and St. Anne's-Southton) constituting *one parish* was not unexpected. For two years earlier, on April 21, 1945, Lucey had informed the priests at Perpetual Help that all their «Mexican missions/outstations» were *canonically irregular*, or in his words, «no-man's land», and that they lacked juridical status. Furthermore, all the marriages, etc., performed in these places were *valid only by way of common error*. (See OLPH-SAT III, 19, «April 21, 1945»). The move to full, unified parish status of Espada, San Juan, and St. Anne's-Southton in 1947 was the archbishop's solution to rectifying an irregular situation.

⁹⁰ OLPH-SAT, III, 74 (on a separate overlay sheet).

6. – *The Beginning of the End of the Ministry at the Old Spanish Missions*

Virtually the last Redemptorist pastor to serve at the Old Spanish Missions was Father Henry Schultz. A very determined, but also gentle and zealous man, Schultz had come to the community at Perpetual Help on January 3, 1951, and came into the care of Espada, San Juan (and St. Anne's-Southton) on September 1, 1953. He was thirty years-old at the time⁹¹.

The annals indicate that he continued the pattern set by his predecessors. For the Missions he provided the regular celebration of liturgies, the holding of annual missions preached by Redemptorists, and other special preaching events. The San Juan children were bussed to the Espada school where the ever-faithful Sisters continued as teachers. *Jamaicas* and *Fiestas* and more fundraisers were held to help pay the bills.

One variation to note from previous years is that in the «Marian Year» of 1954, Schultz brought in a *Jesuit* priest to preach for this centennial observance of the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception. However, simultaneously, a Redemptorist, a certain Father Alonso, an exile from México, preached at San Juan Capistrano⁹².

It can be said that the year 1955 marked the first of the events which led to the departure of the Redemptorists the following year. Archbishop Robert E. Lucey had begun to spearhead a major restoration of the Mission of San Francisco de la Espada. Alongside the archbishop was the distinguished architect Harvey P. Smith⁹³, who some years earlier, had guided res-

⁹¹ Henry SCHULTZ (1922-1996), a native of Milwaukee, professed De-Soto 1944, ordained Oconomowoc 1949, he served in a number of parishes in the southern U.S.A., usually in Spanish-speaking settings, and for a while as Vocation Director for the Vice-province. Forced to retire in 1988 because of a progressive neurological disease, he died at St. Clement's Health Center, Liguori, MO. Denver Province *Memorabilia* 2005 edition, and reminiscences of author.

⁹² OLPH-SAT III, 188. The Jesuit is not named in the annals.

⁹³ Harvey Partridge SMITH (1889-1964), native of Minneapolis, educated at Northwestern University, University of Arizona, Chicago Institute of Art, and the *École des Beaux-Arts* of Paris. «His field notes and drawings provide an

toration work at the Queen of the Missions, San José, and at other historic locations around San Antonio.

Part of the restoration work brought about a serious conflict between the archbishop and Father Henry Schultz. The conflict was over a road which entered the Espada compound from the west, then took a gently-curving (almost 90°) turn to the right passing the front of the church, and then proceeded to the south end of the compound as it exited toward the truck farms of the local people⁹⁴. In short, the conflict escalated, and, after various superiors became involved, it eventually led to the departure of the Redemptorists from the Missions.

The Redemptorist historian Father Gerald Bass, author of the history of the Vice-province of New Orleans takes up the story:

«At the end of 1955 Archbishop Lucey, in his relationship with the Redemptorists, acted in what seems to have been an arbitrary manner... The Archbishop threatened to remove from the Archdiocese Father Robert Rebholz⁹⁵ and Father Henry Schultz [who was] in charge of Espada Mission and other mission stations. His stated complaint was that these two men were uncooperative with certain demands made by himself regarding certain physical improvements on the church properties and in regard to sending certain reports to the chancery. In his written complaints the Archbishop was plainly inconsistent. Part of the story, as testified by Father Rebholz, involved the Archbishop's insistence that repairs to the Espada Mission which he had ordered, be carried out immediately, even though this involved the closing of the access road to the mission, and [sic] which also gave access to the parishioner's homes and their truck farms at

invaluable record of the condition of the missions before and after restoration». *Handbook of Texas Online*.

⁹⁴ This road is clearly shown on a map-drawing in Marion A. HABIG, *The Alamo Chain*, 230.

⁹⁵ Robert John REBHOZ (1916-1995), native of Milwaukee, professed DeSoto 1938, ordained Oconomowoc 1943. An excellent parish priest and missionary, affable, approachable, he worked mostly among the Spanish-speaking. At the time of the difficult relationship with Archbishop Lucey, he was superior of the Redemptorists, and therefore of Father Henry Schultz, at the Perpetual Help community. Died of prostate cancer, St. Clement's Health Center, Liguori, MO.

the time of harvest. The people protested and Father Schultz took their side. The archbishop refused to hold off the restoration work and demanded that Schultz build a bridge which would have given proper access to the poor people's land. This, of course was an impossible request. The men of the parish had expressed a willingness to cooperate in the matter after the harvest, but Lucey demanded immediate action.

Father [William] Reintjes⁹⁶, Vice Provincial, met with the Archbishop in early January, 1956, to ask him to reconsider his intention to remove these two priests. He informed the Archbishop that if these two men were removed the Redemptorists would be unable to continue the care of the parish of Elmendorf with its missions of Saspamco, Graytown and Cañada Verde, and the Espada mission, because of a lack of Spanish-speaking priests. But the Archbishop was adamant and insisted on the transfer of the two priests out of San Antonio...

In the end... [Father Reintjes] informed the Archbishop that as of April 2, 1956 the Redemptorists would give up the pastoral care of the missions of Espada, San Juan and Southton, since no replacement could be found for Father Schultz...

Thus in 1956 the [Redemptorist] community gave back to the diocese the care of the old Franciscan Missions... Two diocesan priests were appointed to reside at San Francisco de la Espada and to care for it and also San Juan Capistrano as a mission station»⁹⁷.

That the road in question was vital to the economic survival of the people surrounding Espada mission has been confirmed by the author in a series of recent personal interviews with parishioners who have lived their entire lives within the shadow of Mission Espada. In 1955 and 1956, when the controversy between the archbishop and the Redemptorists took place, the interviewees were approximately twenty to thirty years old, and some of them were young married people. In these interviews,

⁹⁶ William REINTJES (1893-1978), native of Kansas City, professed DeSoto 1915, ordained Oconomowoc 1920. A *Summa cum Laude* Roman graduate as a Doctor of Canon Law, he taught Canon Law and Moral Theology in the theology seminary. Advocate of Social Justice in labor issues, he was the second Vice-provincial of New Orleans. A cerebral stroke made him an invalid the last twenty years of life. Denver Province *Memorabilia* 2005 edition.

⁹⁷ Gerald C. BASS, *Working for Plentiful Redemption*, 315-316.

they spoke of the hard work which they and their families put into the various market crops of table corn, okra, onions, carrots, tomatoes, radishes, squash, and pumpkins – as well as orchard crops of plums and peaches. When their menfolk took produce to market on the near west side of downtown San Antonio, they had to leave as early as 1:00 A.M. The road through the Mission compound was in those days the only way leading to and from the fields and crops.

It must be mentioned that one of those interviewed, Mrs. Minnie McRae, added an important detail, namely, that because of the proximity of the road to the historic church, the archbishop feared that the vibrations from the passing traffic would weaken the ancient church structure.

A further detail was added by Mrs. María Ayala. She said that in 1956 Archbishop Lucey put pressure on her to sell three and half acres so that a new road could be constructed totally *outside* the Mission compound. She expanded on this by saying that through Father Charles Herzig⁹⁸, who came to her home several times, the archbishop told her, «You have to sell»⁹⁹.

Almost forty years after the conflict, in January of 1994, Father Rebholz could still remember his personal pain in being removed from the Archdiocese by Archbishop Lucey. This letter was addressed by Rebholz to the above-mentioned Father Gerald Bass, and we quote from it, in part, to enlarge on some of the details of these difficult days¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁸ Charles E. HERZIG (1929-1991), native of San Antonio, ordained priest in San Antonio May 31, 1955, he was ordained the first bishop of Tyler, TX, February 24, 1987. Cfr *Anuario Pontificio* 1991.

⁹⁹ These interviews were conducted by the author on August 24 and 26, 2006. Those interviewed included Mrs. María Ayala, Mrs. Minnie McRae, Mrs. María González Martínez, and Mrs. Fernanda Martínez Ramírez. At the time of the interviews all were still parishioners of Espada Mission. Others were contacted for interviews but pleaded illness, or, in some cases, had no clear memory recall.

¹⁰⁰ Letter Robert Rebholz to Gerald Bass, January 27, 1994, RADP, Vice-province of New Orleans File, Gerald Bass correspondence. Where the name «Schultz» occurs in brackets the original Rebholz letter has «Herman» which was the nickname of Father Henry Schultz, and even preferred by Schultz. A copy of this letter is in possession of the author. Thanks is due to Father Richard Luberti, C.Ss.R., who first discovered this correspondence in the New Orleans Vice-province archives.

«It was the most painful experience I have ever suffered in my life and I am sure I can say that for all the P.H. [Our Lady of Perpetual Help] community at that time.

The reason for the removal had nothing to do with disobedience on anyone's part. One evening Father [Schultz] came to me to tell me that the Archbishop wanted him... to build a bridge. This may sound ludicrous but hear me out.

It happened that the archbishop wanted to restore the Missions we care for, San Juan and San Francisco de la Espada. The company he hired began by closing off the access road, I do believe it was the only road too, to the parishioners homes and their «truck» farms. It was the time of the harvest that all this happened. The people were up in arms and as I understood it to be, threatened to put the archbishop into court¹⁰¹.

That is where Fr. Schultz and I come in. We were supposed to build a bridge to be able to re-route the old road, I suppose, and we were supposed to do it right now. Of course, the work on the restoration had to go on. The people had agreed with Father [Schultz] to look in to the matter after the harvest, but no, the work of restoration had to go on.

I told Father [Schultz] that he did well to manifest to the chancery the problem of the people at hand and to wait til [sic] the harvest etc. was over.

The archbishop would have nothing of the delay and pushed forward by writing Fr. Schultz and myself off.

About the alleged disobedience you mention, – I called the chancery as soon as I received the letter of dismissal. I wanted them to tell me of the cases in which I was supposed to have been disobedient. The office of the chancery refused me any appointment. We, as Redemptorists have it in our bones to respect and obey all superiors. During the period of 11 years during which I had been stationed at P. H. no such complaint had ever been registered against me... I do believe that it means that much to us Redemptorists. I do not see a reason in the world why we should suffer such a black mark on our services, especially when

¹⁰¹ Father Gary LAUENSTEIN in his work *Fully Devoted: The Hispanic Apostolate of the St. Louis Province of Redemptorists*, Denver 1996, 289, also refers to a lawsuit and in stronger terms: «The pastor [Fr. Schultz], Fr. Rebholz's subordinate, took the measure of suing the Bishop [Archbishop Lucey]». However, a search of the Bexar County [San Antonio, Texas] Court records, up to the date of this article, has yielded no record of a lawsuit.

such great work had been done through the years at P.H.

And may I just mention in passing, though this should be held up in glory, how wonderful our Vice-provincial Fr. Reintjes was to us at this difficult time. As soon as he heard of the matter, he called me to come over to New Orleans to explain all to him. He was most sympathetic and took immediate action on so great an injustice to all of us Redemptorists¹⁰².

And that is exactly how it was – and so let it be stated. Sincerely,

s/ Bob Rebholz, C.Ss.R.».

As indicated here by Rebholz (and by Bass above) it did not take long for the Canon Lawyer/Vice-provincial William Reintjes to get further involved in the controversy. Reintjes went westward from New Orleans to the San Antonio Chancery Office to meet with Archbishop Lucey on January 9, 1956¹⁰³. He describes this meeting in a letter of January 14, 1956, written to the St. Louis Provincial, making these salient points:

1. Reintjes asked the Archbishop to reconsider his decision to expel Rebholz and Schultz from his archdiocese, giving as reasons that he (Reintjes) had no Spanish-speaking priests to replace them. Lucey refused to withdraw the expulsion of Rebholz and Schultz, citing the three-and-one half month delay of Rebholz in the extermination of termites in the Sisters Convent at Our Lady of Perpetual Help (as Lucey had asked)¹⁰⁴, and the almost five-months delay of Schultz in turning in funds from the «Espada Mission Offering Box»¹⁰⁵ despite repeated requests from the Chancery.

¹⁰² This meeting of Rebholz and Reintjes, probably in December 1956, is also attested to in a letter, Reintjes to McCormick, January 2, 1956, RAPD, New Orleans Vice-province files. John McCormick was the St. Louis Provincial and therefore a superior of Vice-provincial Reintjes.

¹⁰³ The actual date of this meeting is clear from RADP, New Orleans Vice-province file, memo Reintjes to St. Louis Provincial McCormick dated February 20, 1956. In the same memo it is also clear that the archbishop was invoking the expulsion of Rebholz and Schultz under the provisions of (1917 Code of Canon Law) Can. 454 # 5.

¹⁰⁴ In his December meeting with Reintjes (see footnote 91), Rebholz explained that he had found a contractor who would do the extermination job at a good cost, but the man could not come for several weeks. The chancery office had called weekly to ask what had been done about the convent.

¹⁰⁵ The «Mission Offering Box» had long been a point of contention. Ap-

2. Then, as for the road closing, the Archbishop had a different story. He denied that «he had asked Father Schultz to build a road to replace the public highway which he (the Archbishop) had closed by building a wall. He said he had merely asked Father Schultz to have his parishioners cut down some trees and bushes, which obstructed the view at the bend in the new road».

3. Reintjes said he let the Lucey talk on, and then returned to his request that the Redemptorists be permitted to stay. When the Archbishop refused, Reintjes told him he would get a new pastor for Our Lady of Perpetual Help, but he could guarantee no others to staff the various mission stations, including the Old Spanish Missions.

In further describing this meeting, Reintjes said he did not want to press the Archbishop too hard, «for there was some fault on the part of the two Fathers»¹⁰⁶.

On February 20, 1956, the Vice-provincial Reintjes sent a letter to Archbishop Lucey informing the latter that the Redemptorists would be giving up the Old Spanish Missions of Espada and San Juan, as well as the community of Southton. The effective date of withdrawal would be April 2, 1956¹⁰⁷.

parently these boxes were of a type provided for visitors to make contributions for the upkeep/restoration at San Juan and Espada Missions. Years earlier on September 19, 1946, the Redemptorists had asked Lucey's approval to use these contributions to help pay the teaching Sisters' salaries, noting that the offerings totaled only about \$ 17.00 a month. A note of Lucey October 2, 1946, commenting to his secretary about the request wrote: «Here is a letter from [Redemptorist] Father [Leo] Hagemann who would like to steal the Mission offerings». – See *Chancery Office Archives, San Antonio, Redemptorist File Folder, 1943-54*. – Later, between July and December 1955, the Chancery's Msgr. Bernard Popp, reminded Fr. Schultz by telephone and letters that he was tardy in submitting these monthly Mission offerings. On December 12, Popp threatened canonical penalties, but the afternoon mail arriving at the Chancery included Schultz's payment by check. Though the amount was not huge, it seems Schultz was to some degree negligent. *Ibid.*, under stated dates. – The aforementioned Msgr. Bernard Popp is currently a retired auxiliary bishop in San Antonio, quite affable and of advanced years. When approached by the author, he pleaded failing memory, saying he had no recollections of any of this «so long ago».

¹⁰⁶ Letter, Reintjes to Provincial John McCormick, RAPD, January 14, 1956, Vice-province of New Orleans File.

¹⁰⁷ Letter, Reintjes to Lucey, RAPD, February 20, 1956, Vice-province of

On March 6, 1956 Lucey wrote an inter-office memorandum, no addressees named. In this memorandum he stated that he had told Father Reintjes that no Spanish-speaking priest was needed at this post. (No record to confirm this «statement» to Reintjes can be found in the Reintjes papers). Further he went on to state that the Vice-provincial had not conferred with him «to learn if a diocesan priest can be assigned to that Church or even if we will be able to give the people Mass on Sundays and Holy Days». Moreover, that «He [Reintjes] has delivered to me an ultimatum effective April 2 without previous warning, without my approval and in a manner which closes the door to any possible negotiation or conference looking to an amicable solution of the problem». The archbishop, still in the same memorandum, questioned whether any of Reintjes' decisions in the future would perhaps be «unpredictable... even irresponsible»¹⁰⁸.

We present the above memorandum only with the commentary that it stands in contrast to what Father Reintjes reported to his superior, the St. Louis Provincial John McCormick. On the contrary, Reintjes reported to McCormick that in the January 9, 1956, meeting, Archbishop Lucey was cordial and gracious, «and on my part I was the same with him»¹⁰⁹.

However, we have perhaps an indication of Lucey's residual anger, for twice within the next few months he was reported to have spoken directly to two different Redemptorists that he was thinking of taking away the [English-speaking] parish of St. Gerard's, San Antonio, from the Redemptorists. (These remarks were reported to the Vice-provincial Reintjes. In turn, Reintjes began what then proved to be a successful search for documents showing that St. Gerard's had been granted to the Redemptorists «*in perpetuum*»¹¹⁰).

New Orleans File.

¹⁰⁸ Archives Archdiocese of San Antonio, Chancery Office, Redemptorist File Folder, March 6, 1956. When the archbishop speaks of «this post», and «that Church» it seems that he means the triple responsibility of Espada/San Juan/St. Anne's Southton.

¹⁰⁹ Letter and memorandum, Reintjes to Provincial McCormick, March 3, 1956, RAPD, Vice-province of New Orleans file.

¹¹⁰ Letters Reintjes to Provincial John McCormick, March 3, 1956

7. – *The Finale*

February 12, 1956, was the day of Father Henry Schultz's departure from the Old Spanish Missions of Espada and San Juan Capistrano. He was transferred to St. Gerard Majella Parish, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He had cared for the Old Missions for two and one-half years, since September of 1953.

Replacing Schultz, on a temporary basis for just seven weeks, was the Redemptorist Father Eugene Staub¹¹¹.

On April 2, 1956, the sad and cryptic line in the Redemptorist annals at Our Lady of Perpetual Help states, «Fr. Staub¹¹² (and CSsR) relinquished Espada today»¹¹³.

On this same day, April 2, the annalist of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word inscribed a bit more extensive notice, accompanied by a warm tribute:

«[Today was] the Redemptorist Farewell to Espada in the person of dear Father Eugene Staub who had been with us a few short weeks in which he endeared himself to young and old alike. We hope and pray the Good God to repay a hundredfold the Redemptorist Fathers who labored so faithfully in this portion of the Lord's vineyard with his poor ones. Father Eugene installed our present pastor, Father Edward Bartsch, a secular priest, who is a resident pastor. We welcome him and wish him success in his endeavor»¹¹⁴.

and March 8, 1956, RAPD, Vice-province of New Orleans file.

¹¹¹ Incarnate Word Sisters Annals, Espada School, 93, «February 12, 1956».

¹¹² Eugene STAUB (1927-2005), a native of New Orleans, professed DeSoto 1947, ordained Oconomowoc 1952. He served as associate pastor, pastor, and missionary always in the Vice-province of New Orleans. He was very devoted to preparing Sunday homilies. Afflicted with cancer and strokes in later years, he died Baton Rouge. – The author of this article contacted Father Staub while researching the conflict with Archbishop Lucey. In an undated letter, but postmarked October 28, 2004, Staub replied: «I have little to say in answering. I was told nothing about the problem of Schultz and Rebolz with the Archbishop. It was kept a secret with [sic] me. I was given charge of the Missions for about four months. Nothing was told me until a year or so later». Letter, Staub to Enderle, in personal possession of author. As stated above, Staub's stay at the missions was really less than two months.

¹¹³ OLPH-SAT III, 215, «April 2, 1956».

¹¹⁴ Incarnate Word Sisters Annals, Espada School, 94, «April 2, 1956».

EPILOGUE

There was high praise indeed contained in the farewell just quoted. It was tucked away, in subtle fashion, inside the Sister's statement about laboring at the Old Spanish Mission for the Lord's *poor ones*.

This implied that during the Depression and World War II, the Redemptorists, with day-in, day-out fidelity had stood by their flock who suffered not only economic poverty but also ethnic discrimination and rejection before the brighter days of civil rights and more just working conditions in the United States.

It further implied that the Redemptorists probably never dreamed of being preservationists of buildings and compounds, nor that tens of thousands of people would visit the sites of the Old Missions as tourists, as they currently do.

It is far more likely, that those Redemptorists simply came to serve the Lord's poor ones. They came to serve in a language and culture that were foreign to them. Yet they fit in well, they loved and were loved, and some, like the cigar-smoking Father Ray Nowak even mastered the language quite well.

This kind of pastoral ministry, of course, was in their bones. It was the tradition handed down by Alphonsus Liguori, the Neapolitan nobleman-saint who was their founder. In almost the same year as the Old Spanish Missions came to the banks of the San Antonio River, Liguori left his beloved Naples and with a handful of priest-companions went out to the poor in rural southern Italy. Among goat- and sheep-herders and charcoal burners, he and they lived and worked with the neglected ones of that time and locale. Eventually their band grew into a missionary congregation spread through seventy-two countries.

Divine Providence, we believe, led Liguori and companions in Baroque Italy. So, too, we believe that, even amid the painful misunderstandings of 1956, the same Providence led the sons of Liguori to arrive at, minister for some thirty-three years, and then depart the Old Spanish Missions. For it seems that, even in departing, they were laboring for, and speaking out honorably, as the Sister-annalist wrote, on behalf of *the Lord's poor ones*.

SUMMARY

From 1923 until 1956 the Redemptorists served at first three, and then at two, of the famed Old Spanish Missions of San Antonio, Texas. Long before these missions were within the borders of the U.S.A., Franciscans from México had established and cared for these venerable locations. With the collapse of the colonial system, the Franciscan *padres* departed, but the people remained at the missions, attended only sporadically by Catholic clergymen. In 1923 the bishop of San Antonio asked the Redemptorists of the (then) St. Louis Province to take up the ministry among the Spanish-speaking people of the missions. To do so, the Redemptorists had to travel some thirteen miles from their parish residence at *Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro*. They continued this ministry for thirty-three years among the mission people who suffered both dire poverty and racial discrimination. This article begins with a brief history of the Old Missions; then it describes in detail the tenure of the Redemptorists. Special attention is given to the sad conflict with the archbishop which led to the Redemptorists' departure.

RESUMEN

Desde 1923 a 1956 los Redentoristas atendieron primero tres y después dos de las Antiguas Misiones de San Antonio, Texas. Mucho antes de que estas Misiones quedaran dentro de las fronteras de EE.UU., los franciscanos de México habían fundado y promovido estos venerables lugares. Con el colapso del sistema colonial, los *padres* franciscanos tuvieron que marcharse, pero la gente quedó en las Misiones recibiendo sólo esporádicamente atención religiosa. En 1923 el obispo de San Antonio pidió a los redentoristas de la que entonces era Provincia de St. Louis, que incluyeran en su apostolado a los hispanohablantes de las Misiones, que estaban a unas 13 millas de su residencia, la parroquia *Nuestra Señora del Perpetuo Socorro*. Este apostolado entre la gente de las Misiones, que sufrían extrema pobreza y discriminación racial, duró 33 años. Este artículo comienza con una breve historia de las Antiguas Misiones y luego describe detalladamente la actividad pastoral de los redentoristas. Se dedica especial atención al triste conflicto con el arzobispo, que llevó a la salida de los redentoristas.