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Assumption Province Has Lay Brother As Founder

(Continued from Page 1-A)

A year later the Assumption province-to-be numbered only six friars: three priests and three lay-brothers. Their monastery was a small frame building on a hillside; the church was barely outlined in its foundations. Marshlands surround the projects on all sides.

Yet from these headquarters the three Franciscan priests went forth to Polish colonies, preaching missions, organizing parishes, catechising. The lay-brothers continued their manual labor of constructing a church and monastery, draining off swamps, beginning a farm.

Around this settlement, as expected, a village of Catholic immigrants soon sprang up, naming itself Pulaski for one of the heroes of its fatherland.

IN NOVEMBER, 1900 the novitiate of the Assumption province was duly opened at Pulaski, Wis. Nine years later, on June 12, 1907, the first two cleric-novices were ordained to the priesthood. Yet even with the addition of Fathers Francis Manel and Anthony Wisniewski there was more work than zealous sacerdotal hands could handle; it was still almost exclusively preaching and catechising.

1900 marked the first major project in the field of education. The Assumption province opened its major seminary that year in connection with St. Mary of the Angels monastery in Green Bay, Wis. It was hoped that the younger generation of priests could be spared a few additional years from parish work to give them the opportunity of higher studies, thus leading to an expansion of their work in the educational field.

In 1901 the Superiors of the province laid the foundation for the seraphic high school, St. Bonaventure, at Pulaski, Wis. An increasing student-body necessitated the building of additions in 1903 and 1910, and the steady growth of enrollment from large cities of the midwest eventually indicated a change of site.

The present location of St. Bonaventure at Sturtevant, Wis., seven miles west of Racine, was purchased in 1921 together with enough farm land to make the institution practically self-sustaining.

THIS SECOND major educational project of the province has continued to grow and expand, both materially and morally. Its Alumni Association numbers an impressive host of professional men, some of whom have attained unusual distinction in their chosen work.

Lack of space and the advisability of having another high school near the area whence proceed a good percentage of students caused the Superiors to seek a suitable site in the eastern states, the new St. Anthony Minor Seminary and High School at Watkins Glen.

A third major project in the field of pedagogy which has grown in breadth of scope and importance was the establishment of the Franciscan Printery in 1907 by the energetic Father Francis Manel.

From humble beginnings of two small rooms in the monastery to a modern, well equipped three-story brick building in 1949; from a few hundred subscribers for one Polish-language periodical ("Miesiecznik Franciszkanski") to the publication of approximately 40,000 copies of that periodical plus a like amount of copies for a Polish language Almanac plus a growing circulation list for the three year-old periodical "Franciscan Message" and a score of prayer books in Polish and English as well as a wide range of leaflets and pamphlets—that is the brief history of the Franciscan Printery at Pulaski, Wisconsin.

It has the unique distinction of being the only Catholic institutional publishing house staffed entirely, in all departments, by members of its Order.

Through the years friaries and rectories ascribed to the Assumption province were founded at Krakow and Hofa Park, Wis., besides those already mentioned at Pulaski and Green Bay, Wis.

In 1931 a house of philosophical studies (St. Francis monastery and college) was erected near Burlington, Wis. which has since then become the first step in the higher education of the priests of the province. It is accredited with the univeralties of Wisconsin and Marquette to grant A.B. degrees to its students.

THIS MAY WELL be considered the third major educational project of the Assumption province, and is brought into full focus about seven years later Maurice, patron of missionaries, at Cedar Lake, Ind.

Continuing the original preaching and teaching mission of its first friar priests, the Assumption province opened St. Anthony friary at Ben Avon, Pa. in 1936, as the western home of its missionary group of priests. 1938 saw the foundation of the junior theologate in Our Lady of Lourdes Seminary and the Stella Maris Retreat House at Cedar Lake, Indiana.

April 15, 1939 was a momentous date for the Assumption province, for with the previous approval of the Holy See the highest Superiors of the Franciscan Order elevated the Commissariat of the Assumption B.V.M. to the status of a full province.

The first Superiors Provincial were: Fr. Isidore Cwiklinski, O.F.M., provincial; Fr. Cyril Plontek, O.F.M., viceprovincial or custos; Fathers Ferdinand Pawlowski, Joseph Landowski, Anthony Lesnaik and Theophane Kalinowski, provincial definitors.

In July, 1939 another friary, St. Paschal Mission House, was opened at Toledo, Ohio. In 1940 another mission house was founded in Saginaw, Mich. in honor of St. Leonard of Port Maurice, patron of missionaries, at Cedar Lake, Ind. and at Hopkinton, Mass. (later removed to Canton, Mass.) under the patronage of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The new primary building was completed and blessed at Pulaski, Wis. in 1941, just a short year before another friary and mission house in honor of St. Bernardine was dedicated in 1942 at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

During the war years, of course, expansion and building projects of private institutions were considerably decelerated, when not brought to a complete standstill. Soon after 1945, however, everything began to boom.

In the Assumption province the Superiors began to send larger groups of friar priests to universities in the United States and abroad against the day when a larger staff of teachers would become imperative for servicing the institutions of learning entrusted to their care.

In 1948 the spectacle of the negro missions beckoned so urgently, that four friar priests were assigned to pioneer field work in Mississippi. Others, not

Will Teach In Padua High School

Seven of the Franciscan Friars of Assumption Province who will lectured in St. Anthony Minor Seminary and High School at the former Glen Springs, Watkins Glen, are shown above (from left) Fathers Norman, O.F.M.; Henry, O.F.M.; Chevrolin, O.F.M.; and C l a u g e, O.F.M.; and Brother Boniface, O.F.M.

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