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## Atonement Friars

### 'That All May Be One'

St. John's Atonement Seminary, nestled in the valley of the picturesque hills of Schuylker County, Montour Falls, N.Y., is a Mecca for young advocates for Christian Unity as well as a training center for boys of high school age aspiring to the priesthood.

Although the X's and Y's of Algebra, the Amoeba in Biology and Caesar in Latin form a major part of the curriculum, a highly developed Church Unity Apostolate training program plays a prominent role in the daily schedule of the Future Friars of the Atonement.

The loftiness of their goals is reflected in the impressive red brick, six storied seminary building (formerly the Cook Academy) which towers over Route 14, just one mile from Watkins Glen. Even though it houses the future specialists in impressive fields like Church Unity and Ecumenism, ivory-towered stuffiness is not characteristic of these young men so dedicated to the Ideals of St. Francis, charity, practicality and hospitality.

The new dimension in seminary training is under the able direction of the Rector, the Very Reverend Theophane Murphy, S.A., a former Bostonian, who is assisted by twelve faculty members. After seventeen years in preaching the Unity Apostolate, he was appointed to St. John's Seminary in 1958.

The Student Body numbers over 110 who although hail from many states throughout the country share in common a deeply imbued spirit of their Atonement Vocation — to devote their lives and efforts to the cause of fulfilling the Last Supper Prayer of Christ: "That they all may be One."

Their well-balanced maturity and dedication to the work of Religious Christian Unity of these teenage boys do not give rise to the element of surprise in view of the short history of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement.

Paradoxically, the Religious Community was originally founded as an Anglican Preaching Order designed to rival the Catholic Church in the missionary conquest of souls. However, its early active apostolate revealed another purpose which disturbed the Anglican Hierarchy — to reunite all Protestant Churches to the Holy See. At the dawn of the twentieth Century, to entertain an idea and plan for religious unity was pure fantasy. Since the lines of demarcation between Catholicism and Protestantism were so clearly defined, any hope of reunion to religious leaders of both sides seemed impossible.

The Founder of this maverick religious movement, the Very Reverend Paul James Francis, S.A., was not discouraged by opposition, but continued to write, preach and pray for the corporate reunion of all Churches to Rome.

His establishment of the Chant of Unity Octave, a prayer movement for the conversion of the world to Christ, finally led to his own conversion to Catholicism in 1909. Its present-day observance by both Catholics and Protestants alike has taken on astronomical proportions.

Father Theophane, S.A., in relating the story of the Atonement Friars, said: "His-

tory might evaluate Father Paul as a visionary whose ideas were much ahead of his time, but it also must make the fair judgment that his early apostolate for religious unity had a great effect in sparking major unity movements in Catholic and Protestant circles."

The Franciscan dreamer left the heritage of his Apostolate to his spiritual sons. The Atonement Seminarians take singular pride in the fact that two Graymoor priests, former students of St. John's, who were singled out by the Holy Father because of their contributions to the Unity Apostolate to be members of the Preparatory Commissions for the coming Ecumenical Council.

Reverend Edward Hanahoe, S.A., Director of the Chair of Unity Apostolate, whose office is located at Graymoor, Garrison, N.Y., was appointed Consultant to the Secretariat of Christian Unity. Reverend Dunstan Donovan, S.A., former member of the Oriental Congregation in Rome, was designated a Consultant to the Commission of Oriental Church Affairs.

Although difficult to pronounce, the commonplace word for these future Graymoor priests, Ecumenical, as Father Theophane, S.A., explained, has a Greek origin—Oikoumene — which means the whole world. The Catholic Church adopted it to signify a meeting of the Bishops of the world, in union with the Holy See, to discuss and deliberate on matters concerning the Universal Church under the leadership of the Roman Pontiff. The imminent Second Vatican Council will mark the twenty-second held in the Church.

To the young students of the St. John's, the Council has a special significance. Not only have the Graymoor Friars taken an active part in its preparation, but by the positive design of the Holy Father, it will deal with Christian Unity and may become a turning point in promoting closer understanding between the Church and the Non-Catholic world.

A program well devised by the Atonement Fathers' Commission on Studies governs each stage of the seminary training in the progressive development of the young neophytes into zealous advocates for religious unity.

Father Theophane, S.A., who is in charge of the Minor Seminary program, said: "Even in the early years, an active part in the Apostolate although limited is encouraged, but particular stress is placed on prayer for unity." The young men are reminded of its particular importance which His Holiness, Pope John XXIII gave to it in his recent letter to the Atonement Community. He said: "Prayer, in fact, is the first and principal means to be used to bring about this yearned-for unity, as your beloved Founder, Father Paul Watson, so clearly saw..."

Seminary regulations call for Christ's prayer for Unity to be recited at the beginning and conclusion of all activities for the success of the Second Vatican Council and the enlightenment of Non-Catholics.

To stimulate interest in the Unity Apostolate, a carefully supervised active program is offered.

"To be unity-minded is to

be a missionary," said the Father Rector of St. John's. In keeping with this principle, the young men are expected to be active members of the Catholic Student's Mission Crusade. In a special Newsletter, edited by the seminarians, missionary appeal letters are sent to interested people throughout the United States. In reply to these campaigns, tons of clothing, toys, literature and medical supplies are received, sorted, packaged and mailed to needy missionaries. Personal sacrifice is added to this mammoth project. Nickles and dimes are accumulated by abstaining from candy and ice cream and sent to Japan, Africa and South America to aid in the construction of many needed churches and schools.

The admonition of St. Paul: "Faith cometh by hearing," instilled a love for preaching in the Saintly Founder of the Atonement Friars and moved him to incorporate a special public speaking program for his spiritual sons. Every opportunity is afforded to the young student to develop the art of persuasive speaking. Participation in plays and Catholic Evidence Guild meetings give them the necessary confidence, the development of clear expression and experience for use in their future priesthood. The success of the program is evidenced by the many oratorical awards received by the seminarians.

To supplement public speaking classes, techniques in the use of the modern media of communication are taught to the students. The worthwhile project developed into an Audio-Tape Lending Library. These tapes have been adapted from past Ave Maria Hour Programs and available to Catholics and Non-Catholics who are interested in a better understanding of the Church's teachings. Countless requests are received each year.

The Ave Maria Hour is a radio program produced by the Friars of the Atonement for the past twenty-seven years. It is broadcast by over 350 stations in the United States and Canada.

When the signal bell rings for recreation, the seminar-

### 25 Years Ago

(From the files of Catholic Courier Journal, Sept. 14, 1937)

Installation of Bishop James Edward Kearney as fifth Bishop of Rochester was scheduled for Armistice Day, Nov. 11, in the Pro-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

While the Angelus bells broke the Sunday twilight silence, the simple turn of a key by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles F. Shay, last to serve as pastor, closed forever the doors of St. Patrick's Cathedral, on the historic site at Platt St. and Plymouth Ave. North.

New quarters of the Chancery opened on the third floor, Columbus Civic Center with separate offices for Monsignor William M. Hart, administrator; Monsignor William F. Bergen, chancellor and Rev. Lawrence B. Casey, vice chancellor. An office for Bishop Kearney was being prepared for his arrival in November.



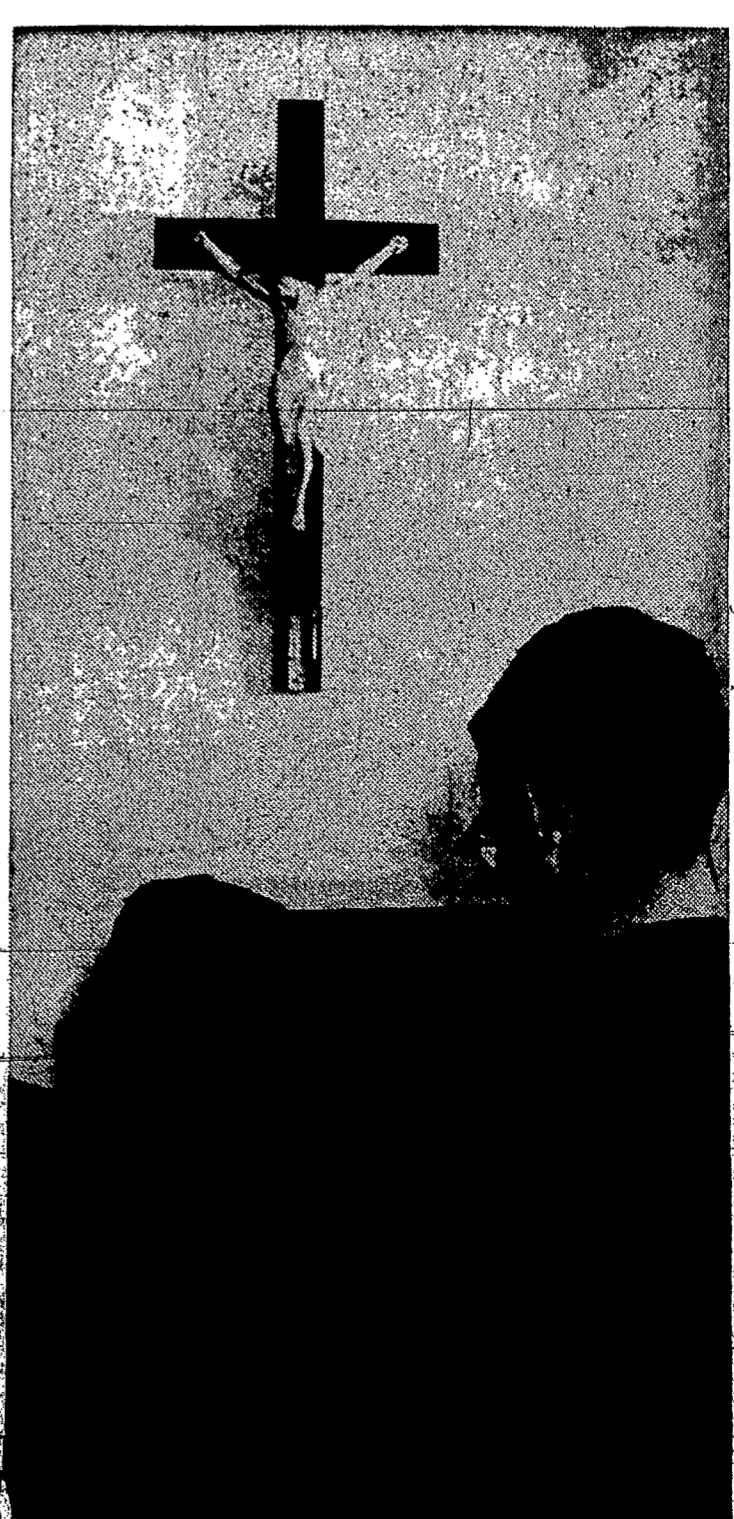
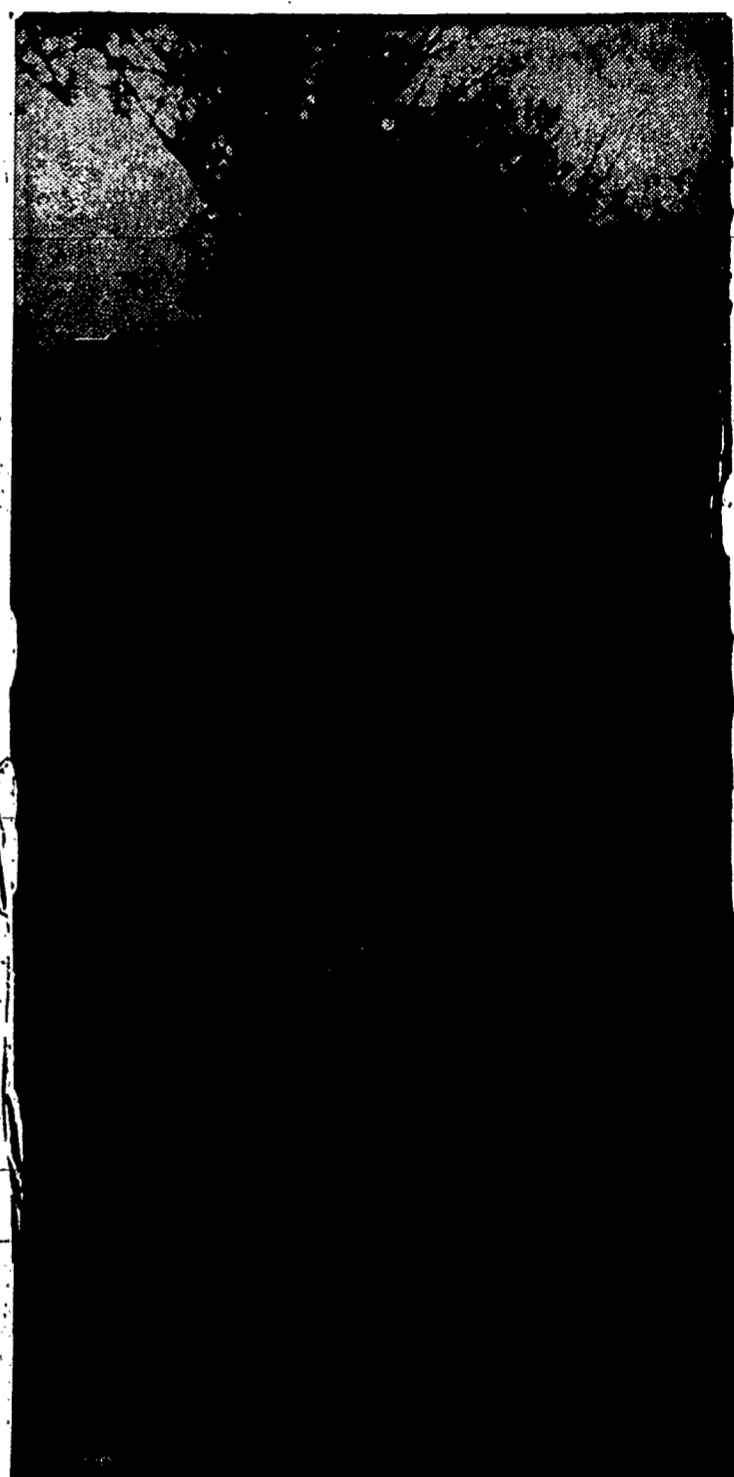
ian's garb of a black cassock and white cord is removed and a strenuous athletic program begins on the baseball diamond, basketball and tennis courts. Sports form a proper balance with studies to give a sound body as well as a sound mind. The spirited teamwork that is learned so well in the Unity Apostolate training proves useful in sport competition and has earned for St. John's many coveted trophies which are on display in the lobby.

St. John's Minor Seminary marks the beginning in the training of a future Atonement priest. Upon the completion of four years of high school, the student is sent to St. Joseph's Novitiate, Saranac Lake, N.Y., where he spends one year in spiritual retreat in preparation for his profession of the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

As a professed Friar, he begins his specialization in the subject of Philosophy at St. Pius X Seminary, Graymoor, Garrison, N.Y., which prepares him for the study of Theology at the Atonement Seminary of the Holy Ghost in Washington, D.C.

The work in the Unity Apostolate for the newly-ordained Friar-Priest may take on various forms: teaching, writing, preaching, radio, foreign or home missions.

The students of St. John's Atonement Seminary within a short time of their entrance learn the value of sacrifice and challenge which they willingly and cheerfully accept to bring a closer fulfillment of their purpose: "That all may be One" by a fruitful harvest of souls to the Church.



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