

Brother Heribert (Herbert), 1914-1916

Brother Heribert, the second provincial was appointed six months before the outbreak of World War I. A man with frail health, the complex sties of administering the Province in wartime forced him to resign his post in 1916, one year before the end of his term. His administration rat from March 1914 to August 1916.

He was born Jacques Maitras on April 10, 1871, in the village of Usson, in the Department of the Loire, France. In 1886 he started his early religious training at the Novitiate of Notre Dame de l'Hermitage, where the Blessed Founder of the Institute had toiled and died. Motivated & the desire for missionary work in America, he set sail for New York in 1891.(5.)

The local superiors saw in the newly arrived teacher at St. Mary's in Manchester, New Hampshire, a man of leadership. In the following yearn previous to his appointment as provincial, he was given but five years of teaching assignments. During most of the ears he served as director of the Marist schools in Granby, Canada (1895); in Montreal, P.Q. (1891-1892); in St. Romuald, P.Q., which he founded (1897-1902), and in St. Anne School in Lawrence, Massachusetts (1902-1906). After a year of stud' at the Second Novitiate in France (1906-1907), he was appointed master of novices in-St . Hyacinthe, Canada (1907-1910), and in Poughkeepsie, New York (1910-1914).(6.)

Most of the problems which weighed so heavily on Brother Heribert were the result of World War I and the activities in connection with the celebration of the centennial of the founding of the brothers.(7.) The province which he was given to direct in 1914 counted one hundred and eighty brothers. Two of the fourteen schools in the province were soon to disappear. The Manitoba district which had enjoyed a certain amount of success suffered its first setback as a Marist field of apostolate. In 1914 Brother Heribert wags forced to withdraw the brothers from St. Anne Des Chenes and from St. Norbert. This decision was due to the logs of brother who returned to Europe to serve in the French armed services.(8.)

In August 1914, Germany declared war on France. The French Government ordered a general mobilization in order to stop the invasion of Germans through Belgium. An immediate effect of this news during the summer vacation was to shock the French brothers who taught in the American Province. Letters from the families of these brothers contained appeals for them to return to serve their country's colors. Anti-clerical in the French Assembly threatened Frenchmen abroad (missionaries) with severe penalties if they did not return to serve. Brothers who were visit Ing in France during the crisis were not allowed to return to America. Others who did not wish to discredit their families were allowed to return to France to join the army. A few others, who wished to remain in this country, joined the United States Army.

The personnel problem which thus developed caused great difficulty for Brother Heribert when he had to assign brothers in August 1971. About twenty-five brothers returned to France or joined the armed forces during the war from this province. During one week, in March 1916, he received news of the death of two brothers at the war front. They were Brother Ignatius, aged thirty-seven, who had left from Manchester, New Hampshire; and Brother Joseph Floribert, aged thirty, formerly of St. Ann's Academy in New York City.(9.)

Other losses by death in the Province included the death of two experienced teachers: Brother Peter Raphael, the director of St. Peter's School in Poughkeepsie; and Brother Namase, who taught in Manchester, New Hampshire. Young professed brothers, who were received into the Institute in 1914 and in 1915, were prematurely selected to replace the men who died or who were involved in the war.(10.)

In the midst of the war thought had to be given to the centennial of the founding of the Institute. Therefore in November 1915 the Provincial Council decided that the time was ripe to begin a special drive to raise funds for the construction of a provincial house. A special souvenir journal was considered for publication during the centennial observances. Whatever funds might accrue from such a journal were allocated for the Provincial house.(11.)

The important social and financial problems of a provincial in the centennial celebrations were heavier than Brother Heribert could bear. He resigned therefore as Provincial in favor of Brother Dacianus, a vigorous and imaginative administrator.