

Brother Dacianus, 1916-1918

Like the two Provincials who preceded him, Brother Dacianus was a Frenchman. He arrived in the United States in 1893, a year when eighteen other French brothers joined the eighty French missionaries in the North American Province.(12.)

Brother Dacianus, Antoine Guillot, was born on December 24, 1874 in the village of Chazailles near Lyons, in the Loire district of France. He was received into the Institute at Notre Dame de l'Hermitage in the same district. After various assignments in French schools, he volunteered for missionary work in America, where he taught for eleven years at St. Ann's Academy, New York. He was assigned to his first administrative post as director of St. Joseph School in Haverhill, Massachusetts (1906-1909). In 1910 Brother Dacianus was given the important post of director of St. Ann's Academy in New York City. Shortly after his second term as director he was called upon to succeed Brother Heribert.

During his short administration he continued to withdraw brothers from western Canada. In 1917, after consultation with his council, the plan to erect a separate province in that region was abandoned.(13.) The first Marist community there, at St. Boniface College (1910), was withdrawn. After 1917 only the prosperous school at St. Pierre Jolys remained.

Compensating elements however appeared elsewhere in the -Province. The respective communities were able to adjust to the rising standard of living. A yearly increase of salary of fifty dollars was given to each brother teaching in the parochial schools, so that each of these brothers earned \$500 to 1600 annually for his community. The added revenue went into the repair and expansion of the houses of studies in Poughkeepsie. Moreover, for the first time the brothers were allowed to attend local universities. Previous to this, special classes were conducted in Poughkeepsie to prepare the brothers for exams of the New York State 'Life Certificate' and the Marist Diploma.

As the year 1917 neared, Brother Dacianus shouldered the responsibilities of the many religious and civic observances marking the centenary of the founding of the Marist Brothers in 1817. On January 2, 1917, special Masses of Thanksgiving were held in every Marist community. In April public observances were begun in Manitoba, Canada. In May colorful religious ceremonies and civic receptions drew thousands of students and friends of the brothers to the four parish schools in New England where the brothers taught. The several communities in New York City observed the occasion during the month of June. Masses of Thanksgiving were celebrated in the respective parish churches. A special choir of forty brothers from the area sang at all the Masses and Benedictions. His Eminence James Cardinal Farley, presided at the St. Ann's Academy-St. Jean Baptiste Mass of Thanksgiving. A special civic reception held at the Lexington Opera House was arranged by the combined Marist communities of the City.(14.) Auxiliary Bishop Patrick Hayes, the future Cardinal-Archbishop of New York, represented Cardinal Farley. Among the celebrated guests who attended were Bourke Cockran, famous orator and jurist; and John McCormack., the noted tenor. Both were former students of the brothers in Ireland and France. The closing ceremonies of the centennial were held in August 1917 at the Provincial House in Poughkeepsie, New York.(15.) Several early Marist pioneer members of the North American Province, who belonged to the Canadian Province attended.

A Special souvenir book, The Centennial Book of the Marist Brothers, was published to mark the occasion. The first part features a brief history of the congregation, and of the different Marist schools and house of studies in the Province. The second part comprised all the sermons and allocations which had been delivered at the religious and civic functions. A significant remark made by Reverend Havens Richards, S.J., pastor of St. Ignatius Church in New York City, typified the recognition of the work of the brothers:

It (the Marist Institute) now had over four thousand members teaching in almost all parts of the world. It has invaded the United States from Canada, with a spiritual invasion, and is rapidly prospering and spreading. And what this mission of great workers has accomplished by so humble means is due, I am sure, to the supernatural spirit of the Venerable Founder and the spirit he had bequeathed them.(16.)

Illustrations in the centennial book sketched the proposed centennial chapel and Provincial House. Moreover revenues accrued from its distribution brought the plans for a new Provincial House closer to reality. Unfortunately, the fund again had to be used for other necessary projects during the early twenties.

After twenty active months in office Brother Dacianus was relieved from the provincialship and the administration of the 'Province was once again given to Brother Heribert, the former Provincial.