

Brother Zephiriny. 1907-1909

Brother Zephiriny's administration like those of his two predecessors, covered a two year period (1901-1909) during which he carried out the established policies of expansion and professional advancement.(31.) An early pioneer in New York City, this talented and energetic man highlighted his administration by his interest in that area.

Brother Zephiriny was born Rene' Martin on July 1 , 1861 at Lyons France. He entered the Institute at Notre Dame de l'Hermitage Novitiate in 1876. Five years later he was assigned to teach at the school at St. Etienne (1881-1888) and at the brothers' Normal School at St. Chamond (1881-1891) in France. In 1891 Brother Zephiriny was chosen to found the first Marist school in New York City. In preparation for this assignment he was sent to London to study English. The following year he was on his way to New York City to establish the community at St. Jean Baptiste School, and to become soon after the founder of St. Ann's Academy.(32.)

In 1904 he left St. Ann's Academy for a new assignment at Iberville, where he directed a school from 1905 until his appointment as provincial two years later. It was at this time that he was commissioned to locate a suitable site for an American house of studies which became known as St. Ann's Hermitage in Poughkeepsie, New York. (33.)

As head of the Marist Brothers in North Americas Brother Zephiriny stressed the importance of expanding in the New York area. In Poughkeepsie, for instance he arranged the purchase of the Beck property, adjacent to the juniorate property, in order to establish an American novitiate. This was in 1908, the year when the first candidates entered what became known as St. min's Hermitage Novitiate. In spite of a serious shortage of manpower, he sent three brothers to St. Peter's Grammar School in Poughkeepsie. His interest in Marist expansion in the United States also led to the acquisition of permanent site for Camp St. Ann's (St. Ann's Academy summer camp) at Isle LaMotte, Vermont on Lake Champlain.

In order to improve the teachers training program Brother Zephiriny divided the Commission of Studies into two groups. Brother Joseph Emeric was appointed director of studies for the New York area and supervisor of schools. For the Canadian area Brother Pierre Gonzales held similar positions. The work done by both organizers proved invaluable for Brothers seeking accreditation from the various state agencies.(34.)

At the end of Brother Zephiriny's two year administrations he returned to New York States where he edited the "American Catholic Hymnal at the Poughkeepsie novitiate. In 1911 he was assigned to sub-master of this Novitiate. He served in that capacity for some years with the exception of 1913 when the Superior General delegated him to make the canonical visitation of the South African Marist communities. In 1920 he became master of novices a position he held until his health gave way three years later. Until his sudden death on December 29 1927 he lived in semi-retirement at St. Ann's Hermitage.