

Brother Linus William, 1953-1958

Brother Linus William (William Francis Hall) was appointed the ninth and last provincial of the United States Province which was divided during his administration. The five years he served in office were also characterized by an increase in the number of brothers available for teaching assignments, by a significant advancement in the professional depth of the brothers, by the addition of nine schools to the province and the missions, and by a general modernization program. These characteristics served to pattern the blueprints for the future of the Institute in the United States, and to the establishment of two independent provinces on February 23, 1959.

Brother Linus William, who was destined to govern the brothers at such a significant time in the history of the American Province, was born in New York City, on July 20, 1904. Following his graduation from St. Ignatius Loyola School in New York City in 1919, he entered the Poughkeepsie Juniorate. He was given the Marist cassock on July 26, 1920. Before beginning his scholastic training (1924-1926), young Brother Linus taught for three years at Boys' Catholic Grammar School in Savannah, Georgia. From 1926 until 1934, he taught in the High School Departments at St. Ann's Academy and St. Agnes School in New York City.

At the age of thirty he was assigned as principal of Mount St. Michael in upper New York City (1934-1937). During the following years, he assumed the directorships of St. Ann's Academy (1937-1940) (1948-1953) of Champagnat Hall, Washington., D. C. (1940-1942); of Marist Preparatory, Esopus, New York (1942-1948); and of the Provincial House in Poughkeepsie (1948).(3.)

These varied administrative posts and his experience as a provincial consultor for fifteen years (1938-1953) prepared Brother Linus William for the arduous duties of the Expansion Period.

At the beginning of his term in office Brother Provincial found the direction of his large Province required some delegation of authority. This he confided to Brother Paul Ambrose, who became President of Marian College and Director of Studies (1954), and Provincial Visitor (1955). In the latter capacity Brother Paul Ambrose relieved Brother Provincial of the annual visitations of the three training centers.

During Brother Linus William's administration the increasing number of brothers enabled him to establish faculties at six new American schools and three foreign missions. The American Marist Brothers were thus introduced into the dioceses of Newark, New Jersey (1954) and Corpus Christi, Texas (1957).

In the New York metropolitan area where there were two Marist-owned schools prospering, a third one was established. In Bayonne, New Jersey, Marist High School was opened in the wooden structures of Holy Family Academy in September 1954. While awaiting a more suitable site, the school used "emergency facilities" in a nearby parish.(4.)

That same year seven brothers were assigned to Resurrection Ascension Grammar School in Rego Park, New York. This was a significant move, for it was a reversal of a Transition Period policy of withdrawing brothers from elementary schools for high school work.

In other schools growing pains were eased by new constructions. In 1956 and 1957, the two Academies in New York City expanded their facilities to accommodate the growing number of students and members of the faculty. At Mount St. Michael two stories were added to the brothers residence. Upon completion of this project thirty-two additional rooms were provided in this building which is now known as Champagnat Hall. Because it was financially inadvisable to expand facilities at obsolescent St. Ann's Academy, the administration decided to seek a new location for the school in the diocese of Brooklyn. The outcome was a four story building, Archbishop Molloy High School in Jamaica, Long Island. Then in 1957 the faculty and students vacated the old St. Ann's and moved into a beautiful modern school. On May 4, 1958 Most Reverend Brian McEntegart, Bishop of Brooklyn dedicated the school.(5.)

Similar building problems affected diocesan schools which the brothers staffed. In 1959, Francis Cardinal Spellman dedicated a new gymnasium at Bishop Dubois High School in New York City. At Manhasset, New

York, Monsignor John K. Sharp, Pastor of St. Mary's Parish, doubled the facilities for the parish co-institutional high school by adding a new school building for boys to the parish plant. Most Reverend Walter Kellenberg of the newly created Diocese of Rockville Center (1957), dedicated the new building on June 19, 1958.(6.)

In the Poughkeepsie area the brothers accepted the invitation to staff two schools; Holy Trinity Grammar School in 1957, and our Lady of Lourdes High School in 1958.

In that city four buildings were completed and dedicated at Marian College during this administration. Cardinal Spellman dedicated the first, the chapel, on May 20, 1954.(7.) Four years later he returned to dedicate the dining room-study hall building, an administration center, a dormitory building, and officiated at the ground breaking ceremonies for a new classroom building.(8.) It was on this occasion he offered his personal congratulations to a diamond and four golden jubilarians. The latter were among the first novices to be received into the Institute at the Poughkeepsie Novitiate in 1908.

What these jubilarians had known as The Hermitage had changed radically in fifty years. The monastic appearance which had characterized the old property had given way to the recent development program for Marist College. The farm, orchards, and gardens, which had been the scene of fruitful activity for almost fifty years, yielded to spacious campus and ultra-modern buildings. The older brothers, workers of the first hours, had passed on. The new generation of brothers had little time for farming, for construction work claimed their energies and interests.

The changes at St. Ann's Hermitage brought an end to the old Juniorate-Provincial House, which had served as the center of the province for forty-one years. The work of a demolition company, and a fire the night of October 23, 1958 razed the old wooden structure to the ground.(9.) With it the things of the past seem to be buried, and a future of many changes to be ahead.

In the meantime across the Hudson River at the new Provincial House in Esopus, the Provincial Administration had plans for the expansion of Marist Preparatory facilities. The building which had once served as the Superintendent's residence on the Oliver H. Payne estate was renovated during the summer of 1957. Upon the completion of the work, the seniors took possession of the building, which became known as the "Seniorate." On this property also a new site was chosen for a second community cemetery in 1953. During Brother Linus' administration fourteen brothers were laid to rest here. Among them were Brother Joseph Leo, director of the Marist community of Marmion Academy, Aurora, Illinois (1951.x.) ; Brother Placid Robert, Director General of Esopus (1957); and Brother Nicholas Mary, the Marist Supervisor of community schools (1957).(10.)

This administration also sanctioned a number of additional apostolic activities by the brothers. Scholastics at Marian College were sent every week to do catechetical work at the New York School for Retarded Children at Wasaic, New York (1956); at the Hudson State Hospital in Poughkeepsie, (1957). Other Marist activities included released time instructions at Marlboro Junior High School in Marlboro, New York (1957), at the Wiltwick School for Boys, Esopus (1956); and at St. Joan of Arc Religious Vacation School at West Hurley, New York (1957). In the South similar instructions were also offered at Fort Gordon, Augusta, Georgia.(11.)

Elsewhere in the Province, a modernization and expansion program was also under way. Brother George Camille, who had just completed two terms as principal of Central Catholic High School in Lawrence, Massachusetts, was given in 1957 the direction of a program to improve the facilities in this school.(12.) This ten year project involved the addition of a faculty residence and classroom building.

Another area of feverish Marist activity was at Camp Marist at Center Ossipee, New Hampshire. At this camp a number of bungalows were constructed by the brothers, the beach facilities were expanded, and the property was landscaped. But the most impressive project which the brothers completed here was Our Lady of Fatima Chapel. The work which was begun in the summer of 1955, was delayed in the collapse of the building during the winter of 1956. Under the direction of Brother Joannes Marius, a capable designer and contractor, the original plans were altered to prevent similar accidents in the future.(13.) On August 9, 1958, Most Reverend Matthew F. Brady, the late Bishop of Manchester, New Hampshire dedicated the magnificent colonial-type chapel.

In Wheeling, West Virginia, in Augusta, Georgia, in Brownsville, Texas, the Marist Brothers enjoyed the results of progressive thinking. Archbishop John J. Swint of Wheeling began a four year program to rebuild the cathedral school (1957-1961).(14.) A gymnasium was completed in 1958. A new school building was started to provide the boys' department with the needed modern facilities. In Augusta, Georgia, a new ranch-type co-institutional high school and brothers' residence was completed for September, 1957. The first building, named "Aquinas High School," replaced the century old Boys' Catholic High School, and Mount St. Joseph Academy, (high school) for girls of that city. Archbishop Gerald P. O'Hara, Bishop of Savannah-Atlanta, officiated at the dedication of this school on November 3, 1957. In the Southwest the American Province acquired two Texas schools that same year. The two St. Joseph Academies of Brownsville and Laredo had been staffed by Marist Brothers from the Mexican Province. At the request of the General Council, the American Province undertook to send brothers to replace those from Mexico, for the latter were needed in schools of the Mexican Province. When the Province accepted the Academies, it also assumed the financial burdens of relocating and constructing the Academy of Brownsville. When it was completed Most Reverend M. S. Garriga, Bishop of Corpus Christi, dedicated it in April 1958.

Although this administration staffed two new schools, it withdrew the brothers from three others in the Province. In schools where there were both the high school and grammar grades, the brothers were withdrawn from the grades. This was the case at St. Helena High School in New York city (1955); and at St. Ann's Academy, New York City (1957). The community of Marmion Academy, Aurora, Illinois was also recalled.

Mission Apostolate

The schools in the Philippine mission territory followed the developments in the United States schools. The original buildings at Cotabato, Marbel, Lagao and Kidapawan were replaced by concrete and brick structures. These projects were financed by returns from tuition charged in the mission schools, but especially by funds raised by the Marist Mission League, the Propagation of the Faith Society; and from mission collections in Marist schools and churches in various dioceses.

To further strengthen Marist influence in the Philippine Islands a college department was opened in 1954 at Notre Dame of Marbel High School. A year later a fifth mission high school was staffed at Dadiangas in the Cotabato Vicariate. To staff the Philippine schools fourteen American brothers and six native Filipino brothers were added to those already there. In 1956 the government of this mission changed hands. That year Brother Louis Omer, the local Provincial Visitor returned to the United States and was replaced by Brother Maurus James.(15.)

Professional Advancement

The religious and professional advancement of the brothers was also stressed during this administration. Evidence of this appeared in the inauguration of the Marist Educational Conferences. Under the chairmanship of Brother Paul Ambrose, Director of Studies, several brothers were appointed to formulate plans for the first Marist Educational Conference to be held at Mount St. Michael Academy in New York City in December 1955. The purpose of this Conference and of those that followed is found in the words of the keynote speaker, Brother Paul Ambrose:

As for the purpose of this Conference, I would like to refer to the words of the Blessed Founder as he called the Brothers to attend the first Conference (Easter time, 1840). He wanted the Conference to be a help to the Brothers because 'above all we must be good catechists, but we must also endeavor to become capable teachers. (16.)

He also noted:

. . . . [To] acquire professional depth by integrating and sharing. Another specific purpose of the Conference is to exploit our potential in the Province in the various fields by having various panels. Here, I would say, is the main

work of the Conference.(17.)

One of the first results of this Conference was the inauguration of a number of departmental societies, to re-examine existing curricula, syllabi and policies. As a result of constructive criticism and imaginative planning, new policies and improved syllabi have been introduced into the Marist schools.

In September of 1956 Brother Nicholas Mary, who had retired as director of St. Mary's High School in Manhasset, New York, was named to the position-of Supervisor of Marist Schools. He automatically became chairman of the Marist Educational Conferences. To complement the first Conference which took inspiration from a keynote entitled "Father Champagnat, Model of Religious Educators," he chose for the 1956 Conference a correlated theme: "Towards a Greater Uniformity in Our Marist Schools." Following the second Conference, a pamphlet with the title "Chairman of Departments," encouraged schools with large faculties to organize permanent departments for the purpose of adopting uniform policies in all departments of a school.

Shortly before the convocation of the Third Marist Educational Conference in November, 1957, Brother Nicholas Mary died suddenly. As Conference chairman he was replaced by Brother Daniel Mary of the Marian College faculty. The keynote of this meeting was "Towards a Philosophy of Education for American Marist High Schools."

The fourth and fifth conferences offered as themes "The Role of the Marist School in the Development of the Complete Personality" and "The Marist Brother, Religious, Teacher and Scholar." These meetings were under the direction of the new Marist Supervisor, Brother Bernard Gregory.

The conferences were inaugurated at an opportune time in the history of the Province. For this was a time when a greater number of young teachers were coming from Marian College. The professional encouragement and helps offered by the assembled teachers to these young teachers helped to foster the program of professional depth.

The importance of professional depth became more evident as the need developed for professors for Marian College and for administrators in the expanding school system. In order to resolve this problem Champagnat Hall in Washington, D. C., which had been rented to another congregation since 1950, was reopened as a Marist house of studies in September 1956. Three brothers were released from teaching to begin graduate work in physics and chemistry at Catholic University. During the summers a great number of brothers were sent to Champagnat Hall for the same purpose. In addition many other brothers started work towards a doctorate at various universities.

To better prepare the young religious and the number of lay students (1957) admitted to Marian College the Religion Department there revised its special syllabus. The new syllabus called for a number of courses for the postulants and novices and an additional three year program.

Due to the necessity, Marian College scholastics were assigned to teaching positions before graduation. To compensate, Marian College Extension courses were offered at several New York and New England schools from 1946 on. This practice, however, was limited and was discontinued in 1959 after the policy of sending of degreed personnel was adopted. In the Novitiate the policy of only admitting high school graduates and discontinuing the senior year of high school brought a program of uniformity to this school.

General Developments

Among the notable events of Brother Linus William's first administration were the observance of the Marian Year (1954), and the Beatification of the Founder, Marcellin Champagnat (1955). The first event coincided with the completion and dedication of the Marian College chapel. Pilgrimage to this shrine drew hundreds of people. The most notable of these pilgrimages occurred in October 1954, when the Holy Name Rally sponsored by the respective societies of Dutchess and Putnam Deaneries was held in front of the chapel on the campus.(18.)

Marian Year observances also included special services in May at Mount St. Michael Academy, where all the Marist schools in the New York metropolitan area were in attendance.

The long awaited event of beatification of Marcellin Champagnat became possible when the Sacred Congregation of Rites in Rome notified the Superior General that two miracles attributed to the holy Founder were declared authentic.(19.) Following the announcement, Pope Pius XII decreed that the solemn ceremony of beatification was to be held on Pentecost Sunday, May 29, 1955. Among the hundreds of Marist brothers who witnessed these unforgettable ceremonies were thirteen brothers from the American Province. The delegation was headed by Brother Henry Charles who represented Brother Provincial.(20.)

Throughout the Province on that day, special prayers of thanksgiving were followed by fraternal rejoicing. On the newly Blessed's feastday, June 6th, Masses of Thanksgiving were again offered in all Marist communities. In the New York metropolitan area the Mass was offered by a former Marist student, Auxiliary Bishop Edward Dargin, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, which was filled to capacity as brothers, student representations from Marist schools, and friends of the Institute gathers: to honor the Founder. Another former student, Monsignor John McClafferty of Catholic University delivered the allocution. Throughout the Marist world as well as throughout the Province, students and friends joined the brothers in thanksgiving and rejoicing.

Several worthwhile customs were introduced by Brother Linus. Such were the use of an English translation of the Office of the Blessed Mother (1956) and a retreat at aster cancelling one of the summer retreats.

What might be considered the climax of this administration occurred in September 1958. It was the occasion of the convocation of the Fifteenth General Chapter of the Institute at Grugliasco, Italy. Four American brothers participated in this Chapter: Reverend Brother Thomas Austin, Assistant General; Brother Linus William, Provincial; Brother Paul Ambrose, Provincial Visitor; and Brother Louis Omer, Director of Cardinal Hayes Marist community in New York City. The last two were elected as delegates by the perpetually professed brothers of the Province.

After an eight day retreat the capitulants began the business of the Chapter. Their first act was the election of a new superior general and ten assistants. Reverend Brother Charles Raphael, a Belgian, was elected Superior General for a term of nine years, and Brother Paul Ambrose and Brother Lorenzo (of the Province of Levis, Canada) were elected Assistants General for the American and Canadian Provinces respectively.(21.) Legislative acts passed by the Chapter affected the geographic structure of many provinces, reduced the term of office for the major superiors to nine years instead of twelve years, set the convocation of future chapters every nine years and approved the plans for the transfer of the Mother House from St. Genis Laval, France, to Rome, Italy.

Several time-honored customs disappeared at this Chapter. The roman collar replaced the traditional "rabat" in most countries. In a few provinces the Provincial Councils voted to retain the "rabat," as a strongly distinctive mark of the Marist.(22.) The family name replaced the given religious name to designate a brother. The Marian Office, more liturgical in composition, replaced the Office of the Blessed Virgin.(23.)

Strong appeal was made to the members of the Chapter to send brothers to study at Jesu Magister, a special inter-congregational division for male religious of the Lateran University in Rome.(24.) This appeal also stressed the importance of Catholic Action, and of Marist alumni organizations throughout the world.

After the Chapter the Provincial Administration of the United States Province was directed by the General Council to draw up plans to divide the Province. During the next four months the necessary measures to carry out this directive were discussed and adopted. On January 1, 1959 their plan for the division was accepted by the General Council. One month later the indult of approbation from the Vatican made the division official.(25.)

Division of the Province, 1959

During the Expansion Period of the Province.- the General Council had made certain requests which altered the original plans for the development of the Province. The personnel and financial problems which arose from the

acceptance of the St. Joseph Academies in Laredo and in Brownsville, Texas, and of the future mission territory of Japan counseled the postponement-of this division until such time as these schools could be properly integrated into the Province.(26.) Nevertheless, the General Council found that the benefits to be derived from the division would outweigh the advantages of postponement. The Provincial Council therefore presented to the General Council its recommendations on the many questions arising from the proposed division.(27.)

The announcement of the canonical erection of the Esopus and Poughkeepsie Provinces was made in a letter from Brother Paul Ambrose, Assistant General:

In its meeting on January 23, 1959, the General Council approved the division of the United States Province along the lines and under the terms submitted by the Provincial Council in its deliberations on January 1, 1959. The Holy See, by its Indult No. 94/59, dated February 2, 1959, has formally authorized that division, and the erection of the two new Provinces of ESOPUS and POUGHKEEPSIE, The following was then approved by the General Council at its meeting on February 11, 1959.(28.)

There followed a list of establishments which were to constitute the two provinces. For the most part the provinces were organized along geographic lines. For obvious reasons; the question of finances and vocations caused exceptions to be made. Brother Mary Andrew, the Provincial Bursar, was instrumental in offering to the Council the necessary information involving the difficult questions of financial stability for the two independent provinces.(29.)

The Province of Poughkeepsie was also called St. Ann's Province, after the traditional patroness of the United States Province. The Provincial Administration of this Province was assigned residence at Marian College in Poughkeepsie. The following is the list of establishments which constituted the new province:

- Marian College, Poughkeepsie, New York
- Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
- Holy Trinity School, Poughkeepsie, New York
- Mount St. Michael Academy, New York City
- Bishop Dubois High School, New York City
- Cardinal Hayes High School, New York City
- St. Agnes High School, New York City
- Central Catholic High School, Lawrence, Massachusetts
- St. Joseph High School, Lowell, Massachusetts
- St. Joseph Novitiate, Tynsgboro, Massachusetts
- Champagnat Hall, Washington, D. C.
- Camp Sunset, Platte kill, New York
- Marist Brothers School, Kobe, Japan
- Central Catholic High School, Wheeling, West Virginia(30.)

Most of the schools were thus situated on the eastern shore of the Hudson River in New York State or in New England. The others were in Washington, D.C., and West Virginia.

Brother John Lawrence, Director of Archbishop Molloy High School in Jamaica, Long Island was appointed the first provincial of the Poughkeepsie Province. His four consultants were Brother Leo Vincent, Director of Mount Saint Michael; Brother John Arthur, Director of Bishop Dubois High School; Brother Nilus Vincent, Treasurer at Marian College; and Brother Kieran Thomas, Director of Marian College.

Brother Linus William was appointed the Provincial of the Esopus Province. This province was given the patron, St. Joseph. Most of the schools assigned to it were situated along the western shore of the Hudson River, those on Long Island and in the South. This Province included:

- Marist Provincial House, Esopus, New York
- Marist Preparatory, Esopus, New York
- St. Peter's School, Haverstraw, New York

- Archbishop Molloy, Jamaica, Long Island
- St. Mary's High School, Manhasset, Long Island
- Resurrection-Ascension School, Rego Park, Long Island
- St. Helena High School, New York
- Marist High School, Bayonne, New Jersey
- Aquinas High School, Augusta, Georgia
- St. Joseph Academy, Laredo, Texas
- St. Joseph Academy, Brownsville, Texas
- Camp Marist, Center Ossipee, New Hampshire
- Notre Dame of Cotabato High School, Philippines
- Notre Dame of Marbel College and High School, Philippines
- Notre Dame of Lagao High School, Philippines
- Notre Dame of Kidapawan High School, Philippines
- Notre Dame of Dadiangas High School, Philippines(31.)

Brothers named to assist Brother Linus William in the Provincial Council were Brother Leo Sylvius, Director of Marist High School, Bayonne, New Jersey; Brother Athanasius Norbert, Archbishop Molloy High School, Jamaica, Long Island; Brother Stephen Urban, Director of Marist Preparatory;; Brother James Damian, Dean of Studies at Archbishop Molloy High School.(32.)

The Provincial Bursars named for the two Provinces were Brother Mary Andrew for Poughkeepsie, and Brother Francis Michael for Esopus.

Because such a division required separate houses of studies, the financial obligations of each province became heavier. Brother Assistant General's historic letter cautioned:

In communicating this information to the brothers of the two new Provinces, may I take this occasion to enlist the cooperation of each brother to a greater spirit of economy, so that everyone will help his Province to guarantee the funds which will be needed for the new training houses. Furthermore, each brother, by his prayers, and by his personal efforts at recruiting, should contribute towards filling these training centers with carefully selected candidates.(33.)

The new training centers referred to included an Esopus Province Novitiate and a Poughkeepsie Province Juniorate. Because the initial cost of these centers would have been too great a financial burden at the time, temporary solutions were found in the months that followed. Arrangements were made for the education of all scholastics at Marian College.

Shortly afterwards, Reverend Brother Paul Ambrose, Assistant General, visited the Marist communities in the United States to help in the transformation of the United States Province into two autonomous ones. In a statement made on April 12, 1960 he reviewed the historical development of the Marist brothers in the United States:

The fantastic growth of the United States Province in recent years made the division imperative. Of the many factors which precipitated this growth, there are two which stand out in my opinion: the professional and religious depth of the training of our brothers in recent years which has resulted in a much higher percentage of perseverance; the unstinting generosity of the Province for the Mission fields assigned to it in the Far East which resulted in the coordinated work of the brothers, parents and benefactors to supply material held on the one hand, on the other, the valuable qualified personnel sent over at great sacrifice to spread Marist influence. This depth and this generosity have definitely merited Gods blessings on the Provinces. The years ahead will only witness an intensification and acceleration of this growth in the spirit of humility of our Blessed Founder.(34.)