

Brother John Lawrence, 1959-

Brother John Lawrence, the first provincial of the Poughkeepsie Province, was born John O'Shea, on February 10, 1908, in New York City. He was educated at St. Agnes Grammar School in New York City and at Marist Houses of Studies in Poughkeepsie, New York. On July 26, 1923 he was invested with the Marist cassock, and received his religious name.

After his years of training Brother John was assigned for three months to St. Michael School in Montreal, Canada in 1925; then to St. Anne's School in Lawrence, Massachusetts (1925-1926); and to Mount St. Michael in New York City in 1926. Eleven years later he was appointed principal of this latter school. In 1941 Brother John became the founding director of the Marist community at Cardinal Hayes High School in New York City. At the end of his first term in 1944, he was transferred to the directorship of Central Catholic High School in Lawrence, Massachusetts.(43.) In 1949 he returned as director of Mount St. Michael High School.(44.) Three years later he left this school to attend the Second Novitiate exercises as St. Quentin, France. Shortly after his return to the United States in February 1953, he assumed the directorship of St. Ann's Academy in New York City, replacing Brother Linus William, who had been named Provincial. When St. Ann's was transferred to new quarters at Archbishop Molloy High School in Jamaica, Long Island in 1957 he continued as its director for two years until he was appointed Provincial.(45.)

As Provincial Brother John Lawrence's first problem was that of personnel. Two hundred and fifty-nine brothers and fourteen schools comprised his Province. The need of additional teachers for the faculties at Marist College and at Our Lady of Lourdes High School in Poughkeepsie became a first concern. One year later his limited personnel forced him to reduce the number of brothers in seven Marist communities in order to staff a new juniorate at Cold Spring-on-Hudson, New York.

Several building programs also claimed his attention. At Marist College a large classroom building was begun. Two years later a government loan enabled the expansion program to include a dormitory on the southwestern section of the campus. At Central Catholic High School in Lawrence, new residence facilities were completed within a year after Brother John's administration began. The recently purchased Cold Springs juniorate now called Marist Hall underwent major alterations and plans were drawn to include a gymnasium building. Brother Leo Vincent, retiring Director of Mount St. Michael Academy in 1960, was named master of juniors and Director of the community. At Central Catholic High School in Wheeling, the construction of a new school was completed and dedicated on March 26, 1961. An ultra-modern high school in Kumamoto, Japan was completed in April 1961.(46.)

Three occasions have already been worthy of mention during Brother John's administration: the celebration on January 2, 1960, of the silver jubilee of the founding of Central Catholic High School in Lawrence, and the dedication by Cardinal Spellman of Our Lady of Lourdes High School in Poughkeepsie, on May 1, 1960 and the above mentioned dedication at Wheeling.

Brother Provincial also had occasion to rejoice in the honor conferred on one of his subjects, Brother Joseph Stephane, a teacher at Mount St. Michael in New York City. In November 1959, this Brother, who recently counted fifty years of service in the classroom received "Les Palmes Academique" from the French government. Scholastic honors also came to other brothers of his Province in the form of fellowships and grants. Brother Provincial, himself, was honored by the National Conference of Male Religious by electing him President of the Executive Committee.

All indications show that the future of the Poughkeepsie Province is promising. What is to be expected can be seen in a report made in 1960 by Brother Provincial:

At this writing we mark the completion of the first year in the history of the Province of Poughkeepsie. Naturally, we share with the Esopus Province the manpower shortage that was accentuated by the division. The next year or two should witness an alleviation of the situation while the next decade is expected to foster a growth and expansion, the result of a stepped-up vocational recruiting program. But, however fruitful these

efforts may be, when viewed in the light of the limitless needs of our Catholic schools during the same period, we shall fall far short of measuring up to the challenge. As all school systems will practically double themselves, both in buildings and personnel, within the next fifteen years, only an ultra-optimist may foresee our religious congregations answering fully the need. Our young province covers but a small corner of the Catholic educational world. A field rich in Catholic heritage and religious vocations has barely been scratched in the New England area. Westward through Ohio to Illinois and the northern mid-west, schools as yet unbuilt beckon us. The spread of Mary's banner held aloft by Marist hands through these fertile areas becomes the objective of this province in the years ahead. May none of us lack the courage and sense of dedication that such a program entails. Ad Jesum per Mariam.(47.)

On December 1, 1960 Brother John Lawrence transferred the Provincial House residence from Marist College, Poughkeepsie to Nicholas House at Marist Hall, Cold Spring-on-Hudson, New York. It is from here that Brother John and his provincial council study the future and plan to guide the developing province into the apostolate awaiting it.(48.)