

THE COLLEGE OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS, DOMINICAN HOUSE OF STUDIES AT RIVER FOREST, ILL.

By BRO. BERNARD WALKER, O. P.



THE dedication on September 13th last of the College of St. Thomas Aquinas at River Forest, Ill., marks a new epoch in the history of the Dominican Order in the United States. True to the Order's historic tradition of locating in the populous cities and at the great centers of intellectual life, our present Provincial, the Very Reverend Raymond Meagher, O. P., S. T. Lr., LL. D., in November, 1922, purchased a site of eighty acres in one of the most beautiful western suburbs of Chicago. One half of the tract was set aside as conventual grounds; the other half reserved for sale as homesites on which it is planned to erect houses of the old English type.

Again true to the glorious traditions of the Order, which it will be recalled played no unimportant part in the development of Gothic architecture, a structure was planned which would at once confirm this ancient Order's connection with the great monuments of the faith of the Middle Ages, and at the same time give proof that its reputation as a "building order," even in the United States, is not unmerited.

But like all great undertakings, the difficulties to be encountered were overwhelming. The financial resources of the province were sorely tried by the purchase of the site. Trusting more in the Providence of God than in human prudence, the Very Reverend Father Provincial set about the task with a confidence and courage that overcame all obstacles. An urgent appeal was addressed to the many friends of the Order throughout the country, and nobly did they respond. Ground was broken on October 22, 1923. Before long the workmen encountered a substratum of quicksand. This delayed building operations for four months, for it was found necessary to change the plans, to construct a large underground drainage reservoir, and to tile the property before proceeding with the foundation. In all twenty-two months were required to complete the structure.

In the latter part of August of this year, the house was ready for occupancy. Consequently on August 27th the first contingent

of sixty-five novices arrived from St. Rose's. Four days later another group of twenty-five arrived from St. Joseph's. The house was at once erected into a vicariate with the Reverend Albert Casey, O. P., S. T. Lr., as superior.

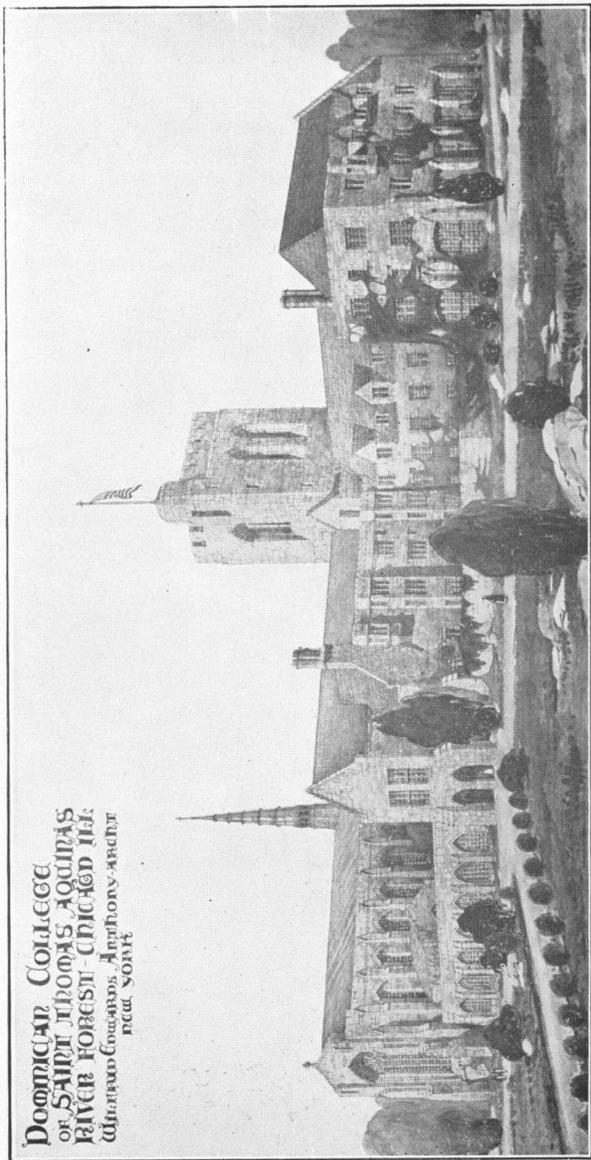
The celebration incident to its dedication began on Wednesday evening, September 9th, when the building was thrown open for inspection by county, municipal and village officials and their wives. An informal dinner was served at six o'clock in the refectory.

Saturday, September 12th, designated "Sisters' Day," gave representatives of all the Sisterhoods located in Chicago and immediate vicinity, and Dominican Sisters from the various Motherhouses scattered throughout the country, an opportunity of going through the building before the establishment of cloister. At 10 o'clock at the temporary altar erected in the refectory, which will, until the construction of the chapel proper, serve as a choir, the Very Reverend Father Provincial, Raymond Meagher, O. P., S. T. Lr., celebrated Solemn High Mass, with the Very Reverend D. J. Kennedy, O. P., S. T. M., of the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C., acting as deacon; and the Very Reverend Albert Casey, O. P., S. T. Lr., Prior of the new house, as subdeacon. A choir of sixty novices sang the Mass. Very Reverend M. J. Ripple, O. P., P. G., delivered a masterly sermon suitable to the occasion. The choirs of white robed religious and the varied habits of the Sisters who filled the chapel, presented a novel and inspiring sight. Luncheon was served at 12:30 to more than four hundred Sisters.

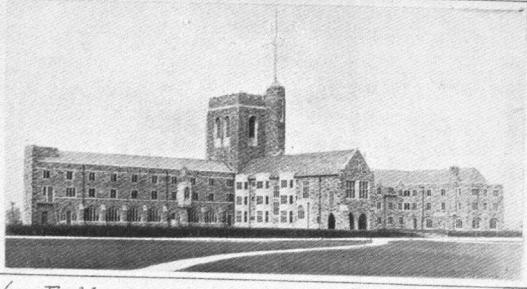
On Sunday, September 13th, at 10 o'clock, his Eminence Cardinal Mundelein dedicated the new structure to the service of religion. Solemn High Mass was again celebrated by the Very Reverend Raymond Meagher, the Very Reverend Fathers Kennedy and Casey serving respectively as deacon and subdeacon. The Most Reverend John T. McNicholas, O. P., D. D., Archbishop of Cincinnati, preached the dedicatory sermon. The house could not contain the crowds that flocked to see the formal establishment of the Friars Preachers in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Among the other dignitaries of the Church, who lent their presence to grace the occasion, were the Right Reverend J. G. Pinten, D. D., Bishop of Superior, and many Monsignori and clergy of the Archdioceses of Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Paul.

DOMINICAN COLLEGE
of SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS
RIVER FOREST - CHICAGO ILL.

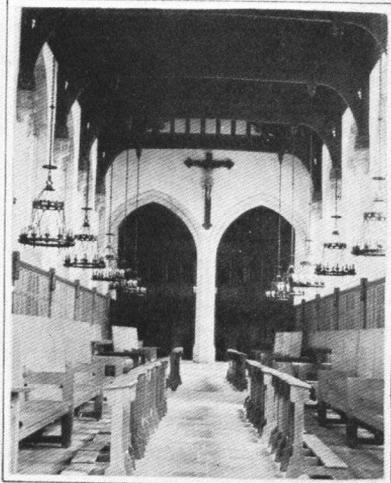
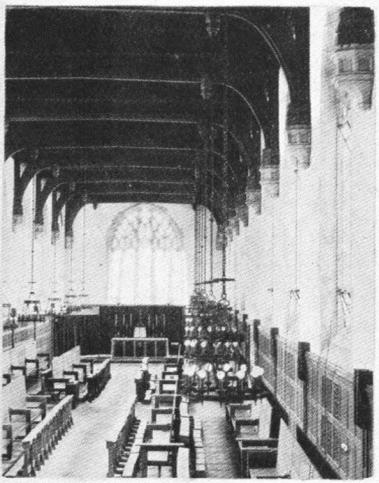
WILLIAM COUGHRAN, ARCHBISHOP
NEW YORK



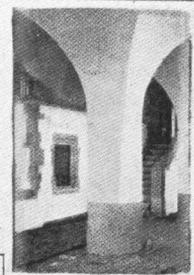
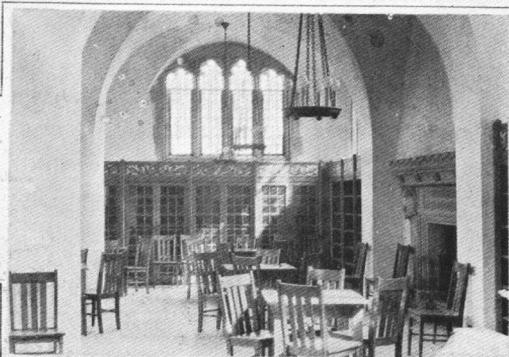
DOMINICAN HOUSE OF STUDIES, CHICAGO, ILL.



Main Building. — details of Tower.



Refectory. (front & rear views). Temporarily used as Choir.



Students' Commons — details of pulpit & stairway.

In honor of the occasion many Dominican Fathers came from all parts of the Province. There were present the Reverend Fathers: Very Rev. J. S. Wilburn, O. P., from St. Rose Priory, Kentucky; Very Rev. W. G. Moran, O. P., Very Rev. M. J. Ripple, O. P., Very Rev. J. H. Healy, O. P., and Rev. M. A. Sheehan, O. P., from St. Vincent's Priory, New York; Very Rev. W. G. Scanlon, O. P., from St. Dominic's Convent, Washington, D. C.; Very Rev. J. P. Aldridge, O. P., Rev. J. C. Timony, O. P., and Rev. J. R. Dooley, O. P., from Holy Rosary Priory, Minneapolis; Very Rev. H. Ignatius Smith, O. P., Very Rev. D. J. Kennedy, O. P., and Very Rev. E. G. Fitzgerald, O. P., from the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C.; Very Rev. G. I. Conlon, O. P., from St. Antoninus' Priory, Newark, N. J.; Very Rev. T. L. Crowley, O. P., and Rev. R. L. Rumaggi, O. P., from St. Mary's Priory, New Haven, Conn.; Very Rev. J. A. Dempsey, O. P., and Rev. T. M. Schwertner, O. P., from St. Catherine's, New York; Rev. J. P. Roach, O. P., from Zanesville, Ohio; Rev. J. B. Hegarty, O. P., St. Patrick's Church, and Rev. J. A. Jordan, O. P., Rev. C. M. Mulvey, O. P., and Rev. C. L. Davis, O. P., Aquinas College, Columbus, Ohio; Rev. D. M. Galliher, O. P., and Rev. G. P. Thamm, O. P., from Providence College; Rev. M. T. McNicholas, O. P., Jersey City; Rev. T. S. McDermott, O. P., Kansas City; Rev. P. A. Maher, O. P., H. J. McManus, O. P., Rev. S. J. Moran, O. P., and Rev. T. a'K. Rielly, O. P., from Youngstown, Ohio.

At the conclusion of the ceremonies His Eminence, after welcoming the new community to his archdiocese, read a cablegram from His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, granting the Apostolic Benediction to all present and to all Dominicans in the province. Dinner was served to the visiting clergy at 12:30. At 4 o'clock the public was invited to attend the solemn singing of Compline. This gave the people of Chicago the first opportunity in their own city to hear the beautiful melodies of Dominican Chant. The chapel was again crowded to overflowing. Reverend J. H. Healy, O. P., Superior of the Eastern Mission Band, preached an inspiring sermon on this occasion. Solemn Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament brought the dedicatory ceremonies to a close.

Two days later the entire community of more than one hundred religious entered into their annual ten day retreat which

was conducted by the Very Reverend J. P. Aldridge, O. P., S. T. M., Prior of Holy Rosary Convent, Minneapolis. The timely arrival of the requisite papers from the Master General of the Order at Rome permitted the establishment of the new institution into a formal convent and house of studies. The Very Reverend Father Provincial then made the following assignments:

Very Rev. D. A. Casey, O. P., S. T. Lr., Prior.

Very Rev. J. H. Foster, O. P., S. T. Lr., Sub-Prior, Lector Primarius, Professor of Logic, Ontology, Exegesis and Introduction to Sacred Scripture.

Rev. L. A. Smith, O. P., S. T. Lr., Novice-Master, Professor of Apologetics and History of the Order of Preachers.

Rev. V. R. Walker, O. P., S. T. Lr., J. C. B., Professor of Theodicy, Ethics, and History of Philosophy. Librarian.

Rev. J. J. Welsh, O. P., S. T. Lr., Ph. D., Professor of Cosmology, Psychology and History of Philosophy.

Rev. G. B. Stratemeier, O. P., S. T. Lr., Ph. D., Sub-Novice-Master, Professor of Apologetics and Church History. Sacristan.

Rev. J. D. Walsh, O. P., Procurator and Master of Lay Brothers.

Classes were begun on September 28th. From henceforth the students of the Dominican Order in this province, after the completion of their simple novitiate at St. Rose, will for a period of three years make their philosophical studies at the new House of Studies in River Forest before entering upon their theological course at Washington.

Their new home is ideally located and the environment most conducive to study. It faces North Harlem Avenue on the east, and is flanked on the south by West Division Street. The building, an English Gothic structure, is constructed of seam-faced granite of pleasing variety with window and door facings and all trimmings in limestone. Roughly speaking, the building forms a cross, with the main axis running north and south. At the intersection an imposing bell tower commands the whole edifice.

The central block or entrance contains sixteen rooms for the Fathers and guests. On the ground floor a suite of three additional rooms is set aside as the "Cardinal's Suite," which comprises an office, bed-room and dining room. Two reception rooms and a public oratory are also provided. The Fathers' Commons

and Library, which is quite spacious and unique in many respects, is located on the second floor of this wing with ceiling extending into the roof.

The northern cross arm, with its return wing running east, forms a quadrangle with the central block that will eventually be enclosed by a wall, thus providing a beautiful cloister garth for the novices. This entire L shaped wing is taken up with novices' cells, eighty in number. These cells are small and bare of ornamentation, but well lighted and ventilated. Each contains a built-in closet, book shelves and laver, and is equipped with bed, desk and chair. The temporary refectory is located in the basement of this northern cross arm. In addition to novices' cells the return east wing also contains the Novices' Commons and Library, height for the beautiful vaulted ceiling of which was obtained by going down below ground level. It is entered by a flight of stone steps from the Novices' corridor at their own private entrance, and has a balcony leading out into the Novices' quad. It is floored with uneven flagging, and among its many interesting features contains a unique rostrum or reading pulpit, a large open fireplace, and spacious book shelves reaching from the floor to the high window sills.

On the ground floor of the southern cross arm a beautiful cloister leads to the four class rooms and the proposed chapel. The second and third floors of this wing contain the infirmary, the Novitiate Chapel, and twenty-eight additional cells for the Novices. When building operations now under consideration are completed this cross arm will have a southern wing extending east and west that will house the chapel and library. The eastern half of this new wing will form another quadrangle on the south of the central block to balance that on the north. It too will be enclosed to form a garth for the Fathers, but will differ from the Novices' quad in that it will be surrounded on three sides by cloisters, one of which will flank the chapel and afford entrance thereto.

The Fathers' wing and the Novices' two wings above described converge under the tower in the refectory, which occupies the entire axis of the central block. The floor is several feet above the level of the main floor, and is entered by a flight of stone steps. The refectory, which is 150 ft. long, is of the most charming Mediaeval design—with high roof, tall windows, flag-

stone floor with elevated platform for the tables, open fireplace, paneled wainscoting reaching to the windows, and a high reading pulpit built in the wall. The beautifully carved wooden entrance screen, which extends almost to the roof, transforms the connecting passages between the Novices' two wings on the second and third floors into two charming galleries. Its completeness, its severe simplicity establish it at once without architectural peer in the United States. At present the refectory is used as the choir. As will be noted from the accompanying cut, the tables are easily convertible into choir or chapter benches. In the basement under the refectory are located the kitchens, bakery, refrigerating plant, engine and boiler rooms, etc.

The building, though ancient in architectural design, is modern throughout. It is however, consistently devoid of that luxurious, effeminate refinement which so characterizes the age. It is its simple artistic beauty that makes it a work of art. Even the ironwork on the doors—the hinges, bolts and bars—show forth the perfection of detail which marked the genius of the builders. The wooden screen at the entrance to the refectory suggests the handiwork of those master craftsmen of the Mediaeval guilds.

It is but proper that such interior beauty should have a corresponding exterior. Accordingly the grounds are under the care of landscape gardeners, who after extensive terracing, grading and seeding, are now engaged in gracing the lawn with a varied assortment of trees and shrubs. A beautiful limestone drive affords entrance from the east and south. Several winding foot paths make every part of the lawn easily accessible. The grounds in the rear of the building afford ample space for an athletic field and truck garden.

This monumental achievement cannot but argue well for the future of St. Joseph's Province. Worthy of the best traditions of the Order, this new house of studies, with its external and interior architectural beauty and perfection must exert an elevating influence on the neophytes cloistered within its walls. It will ever remain as a monument to the genius of American Dominicans. It will bear eloquent testimony to the administrative zeal of the Very Reverend Father Provincial, through whose untiring effort, plans so well conceived are now brought to fruition. To him and to all those whose self-sacrificing devotion and gener-

osity made its construction possible, this house will stand as a lasting memorial. The architect, Wilfred Edwards Anthony, and the Frank O'Hare Construction Company may well be gratified by this pleasing evidence of their genius and industry.

May the Angelic Doctor in whose honor the new convent is named, watch over and guard the moral and intellectual life of the young men who drink of the fountains of his learning within its sacred portals, that they may bring to God's holy ministry such holiness of life, such fecundity of learning, as will bear abundant fruit in giving honor and glory to God, and in bringing conversion to sinners, that they may faithfully and loyally serve His Church and shed lustre on the glorious traditions of the Order of Friars Preachers.

Bethlehem's Woods

By BRO. AUGUSTINE ROBERTS, O. P.

Midst darkened silence, ere the beams
Of dawn illumine the skies,
On manger pallet, wrapped in dreams,
A heavenly Infant lies.

Oh, manger blessed! Oh, gift of Might!
Thy rough-hewn slabs foretell
A coming Calvary's rougher height,
With resting place more fell.

No gem more grand, no boon more dear,
Can human hearts e'er seek.
Oh, learn from this how all things drear
Bring glory to the meek.