

✠ REVEREND THOMAS M. SCHWERTNER, O.P., ✠  
S.T.Lr., LL.D.

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OUR Blessed Mother has taken another eminent Dominican preacher, teacher and author under the protecting folds of her mantle. On February 17, 1934, Thomas M. Schwertner, O.P., S.T.Lr., LL.D., noted throughout the country for his preaching and literary works, departed from this earth to receive his eternal reward.

Benedict Thomas Schwertner was born at Canton, Ohio, on March 14, 1883. He was the youngest child of Anton and Christina Schwertner. His early education was received in the parochial school of St. Peter's, Canton, Ohio, and his college education at Canisius, Buffalo, N. Y. Late in 1901, when he was eighteen years old, he received the habit of the Friar Preacher at St. Rose's Priory in Kentucky, and on December 25, 1902, he made his religious profession there. Having finished his Philosophy course he went to St. Joseph's Priory, Somerset, Ohio, in the summer of 1904. At its opening in the summer of 1905 he came to the house of Studies in Washington, D. C., to complete his theological course. During the three years before ordination he attended the Catholic University of America to specialize in history, in which subject he was later to be recognized as an authority. On June 21, 1908, he was ordained to the priesthood in the old chapel of the Catholic University by the Most Rev. Dennis Joseph O'Connell.

The Order, ever anxious to develop the talents of its members, sent Father Schwertner abroad to study. Living at San Clemente he studied at the Minerva in Rome, from 1908 to 1909. As the climate of Rome did not agree with him he was sent to Hawkesyard Priory, Rugeley, England, where he obtained the Lectorate of Sacred Theology in 1910. During the following two years he studied ecclesiastical history at the University of Freiburg, Switzerland.

Upon his return to this country in 1912 he was assigned to St. Catherine's Church, New York City, N. Y. He was made editor of *The Rosary Magazine* in July, 1915, and he journeyed to Washington, D. C., twice a week to teach Church History at the House of Studies. Between September, 1916, and the early part

of 1917, he resided in Washington, where he continued in the rôle of teacher and editor. In 1917 he was relieved of teaching to devote all his talents to the editorship of *The Rosary Magazine*. In 1927 he became Pastor of the Holy Name Parish, Philadelphia. At the expiration of his three years' term as superior he was assigned to St. Vincent Ferrer's Priory, New York City. Having been editor of *The Rosary* for sixteen years he resigned the editorship in January, 1931. He was then assigned to the Eastern Missionary band and labored on the missions until late in 1933, when, due to heart trouble, he was relieved of this work and was again sent to St. Vincent Ferrer's in New York. He devoted himself to literary work, especially to the field of Dominican spirituality. His heart trouble increased and cancer attacked his esophagus, so the doctors advised him to go to the Mayo Clinic at Rochester, Minnesota. Then some friends arrived in New York, who were bound for Europe. That he might have more time with them, he received permission to spend a few days at the New Yorker Hotel. There he died from a sudden heart attack on February 17, 1934. His death was a great loss to the Province.

Bishop Augustus John Schwertner of Wichita, Kansas, his brother, sang the solemn requiem Mass in St. Vincent Ferrer's, New York City, on February 21, 1934. The Very Rev. Peter Guilday, Ph.D., professor of Church History at the Catholic University of America, delivered the funeral oration. The Very Rev. Thomas F. Conlon, O.P., national director of the Holy Name Society, was deacon at the Mass, and the Rev. Paul Elnen, O.P., Fr. Schwertner's nephew, was subdeacon.

The most notable of Fr. Schwertner's literary works are: *The Seven Hundredth Anniversary of the Order of Preachers*, of which he was coauthor, *The Holy Name Society and Its National Convention*, *The Eucharistic Renaissance*, *The Crown of Mary*, *Blessed Sacrament Confraternity Manual*, and *The Life of St. Albert*. He also wrote several smaller biographical and devotional books. Everything that came from his pen was a literary gem in which was mirrored the depth of thought, the clearness of perception and the artistic taste and brilliant style of this talented son of St. Dominic.

May he rest in peace.

L.M.S.