

OBITUARY

THE VERY REV. ARTHUR V. HIGGINS, O. P., S. T. M.

The Province of St. Joseph has sustained another sad loss in the death of Father Arthur Vincent Higgins, one of the grand old champions of Dominican ideals in the United States. Fr. Higgins departed this life after an illness of several years which forced him to retire from the front line of active duty. Intrenched by the consolations and sacred rites of Holy Mother Church, he answered the summons of the Angel of Death at St. Louis, Mo., on Easter Sunday, in the fifty-second year of his religious profession and the forty-second of his sacerdotal life.

Perry County, Ohio, the scene of many years of his arduous labor in the ministry of the Lord, claims him as one of her illustrious sons. There he was born on February 29, 1848, about one mile from New Lexington, on the Somerset Road. The youth who was to shine as a brilliant intellectual luminary among Dominicans of the New World began his studies at Old St. Joseph's College, Somerset, Ohio, now of happy memory to Ohioans of the fifties. The depletion in the ranks of the students of St. Joseph's caused by the call to the colors at the outbreak of the Civil War forced the closing of this revered institution. Unable to enlist in the fight for the preservation of the Union because of his youth, Fr. Higgins further pursued his studies under the direction of the Dominican Fathers at St. Joseph's Convent until he entered the same as a novice.

On November 9, 1865, he made his profession of solemn vows as a son of Saint Dominic. His ordination to the priesthood took place on October 18, 1871, also at St. Joseph's, where he made his philosophical and theological studies. Fr. Higgins subsequently was Novice Master at St. Joseph's for nearly ten years.

He was elected Prior of St. Joseph's in 1883, and August 31, 1884, received the degree of Master of Theology, Bishop Watterson of Columbus preaching the sermon. He was

placed in charge of St. Mary's, New Haven, Conn., in 1886, where he remained until he was elected Provincial in 1892.

Endowed with genius of intellect and a singularly retentive memory, Fr. Higgins stands out as a giant in the intellectual life of the Dominicans of the United States. He was everywhere recognized as one of the best philosophers and theologians in the country. One of the most eminent theologians in the country today, is authority for the statement that he never met in this land or in the Old World, a man with such a breadth and profundity of learning. His knowledge of English, Latin and Greek was most unusual. His extraordinary intellectual gifts and thorough knowledge of the classics made him the frequent advisor of many prominent educators of secular institutions who held him in highest esteem. His sermons and writings had the richness and beauty of thought and purity of diction that portrayed the master mind. He was often called to assist on the missions. But Father Higgins was preeminently a student and educator, fifteen years of his priestly life having been spent as a professor.

Withal he was a humble friar, lovable in character and of a kindly, quiet disposition. These traits won and held the affection of all with whom he came into contact. Traits they were which, together with his love for things divine and his distinguished attainments, must keep his memory alive in the generation with which he lived and labored.

The funeral obsequies were held at his old convent, St. Joseph's, Somerset, Ohio, on Thursday, April 12. The solemn requiem Mass was sung by the Very Rev. D. J. Kennedy, O. P., S. T. M., Regent of the House of Studies, Washington, D. C., assisted by Rev. J. E. Kernan, O. P., of St. Patrick's Church, Columbus, O., as deacon, and Rev. J. D. Fowler, O. P., pastor of the Church of the Holy Name, Kansas City, Mo., subdeacon. The Very Rev. L. F. Kearney, O. P., S. T. M., pastor of St. Thomas Church, Zanesville, O., delivered the eulogy. Frs. Kearney, Kennedy and Kernan were novices under Fr. Higgins. A large gathering of the Fathers of the Province were also in attendance. R. I. P.

—John Welsh, O. P.