



FIRST PROVINCIAL OF THE PROVINCE OF ST. ALBERT THE GREAT  
VERY REVEREND RALPH PETER O'BRIEN, O.P., S.T.L.R., PH.D.

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# DOMINICANA

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## THE PROVINCE OF ST. ALBERT THE GREAT



THE feast of the Patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, December 22, 1939, the seven hundredth and twenty-third anniversary of the confirmation of the Order of Preachers in 1216, marked a very important event in the history of the Dominican Order in the United States. On that day, amidst impressive ceremonies held in the chapel of the Dominican House of Studies, River Forest, Illinois, a new Province was formally established under the patronage of St. Albert the Great. In the presence of the community of the House of Studies, delegates from the various houses of the new Province and representatives from the Province of St. Joseph, the Very Reverend T. S. McDermott, O.P., S.T.Lr., LL.D., Provincial of St. Joseph's Province, acting as the delegate of the Most Reverend M. S. Gillet, Master General of the Order, erected the new Province and installed the Very Reverend Ralph Peter O'Brien, O.P., S.T.Lr., Ph.D., as the first Prior Provincial.

The territory of the new Province had until this time been part of the Province of St. Joseph. The first step leading to its institution was the creation of the Western vicariate of St. Albert the Great in 1933, with the Very Reverend William R. Burke, O.P., P.G., as Vicar-Provincial. Its elevation to the status of a Province brings the number of Dominican Provinces in the United States to three. The Province of St. Joseph which formerly embraced the entire United States east of the Rocky Mountains, was founded in 1805. On the Pacific Coast, where Dominicans have been laboring since the middle of the nineteenth century, the Congregation of the Most Holy Name of Jesus was created a Province in 1912.

The Province of St. Albert includes the territories of the following Ecclesiastical Provinces: Chicago, Milwaukee, New Orleans, St. Louis, St. Paul, San Antonio, Santa Fe, and Dubuque. Within this

territory are the States of Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Mississippi, Alabama and western Florida.

The new Province contains three priories: St. Thomas Aquinas (the House of Studies), River Forest, Ill.; Holy Rosary, Minneapolis, Minn.; and St. Anthony's New Orleans. The Provincial's residence is at the House of Studies, River Forest, Ill. In addition to the priories the Province has the following houses: St. Albert the Great, Minneapolis, Minn.; Blessed Sacrament, Madison, Wisconsin; St. Pius, Chicago, Ill.; Holy Trinity, Chicago, Ill.; Fenwick High School, Oak Park, Ill.; Holy Name, Kansas City, Mo.; St. Dominic, Denver, Colo.; Holy Rosary, Houston, Texas; St. Margaret, Boyce, La.; St. Dominic, New Orleans, La.; Mater Dolorosa, Independence, La.; Our Lady of Pompeii, Tickfaw, La.; Holy Ghost, Hammond, La.; St. Joseph, Ponchatoula, La.; and St. Helena, Amite, La.

The Very Reverend Fathers W. R. Burke, O.P., P.G., J. A. Driscoll, O.P., S.T.Lr., Ph.D., Prior of St. Thomas Aquinas' Priory, River Forest, Ill.; H. A. Kelly, O.P., Prior of Holy Rosary Priory, Minneapolis, Minn.; G. R. Scholz, Prior of St. Anthony's Priory, New Orleans, La.; W. R. Lawler, O.P., P.G., and the Reverend Father J. S. Considine, O.P., S.T.Lr., have been appointed members of the Council of the new Province.

The Very Reverend R. P. O'Brien, who as Provincial will direct the newly created Province for the next four years, was born in Chicago on October 26, 1897. His early education was received in the parochial school of St. Agatha's parish and St. Ignatius High School in Chicago. After completing his studies under the Dominican Fathers at Aquinas College, Columbus, Ohio, Father O'Brien entered the Dominican novitiate at Somerset, Ohio. There, on September 14, 1916 he was clothed in the habit of the Order of Preachers, and in the following year made his profession. A year of philosophical studies at St. Rose Priory, Springfield, Kentucky, was followed by five years of philosophy and theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D. C. On June 14, 1923, he was ordained to the priesthood by the Most Reverend Michael J. Curley, Archbishop of Baltimore.

At the close of another year of theology in Washington, Father O'Brien received the degree of Lector of Sacred Theology. Two years of higher studies followed at the Collegio Angelico, the Dominican International House of Studies in Rome, where Father

O'Brien received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1926. On his return to the United States, he was assigned to the House of Studies, River Forest, Ill., where he was Professor of Philosophy until August, 1929. For the next five years Father O'Brien taught Moral Theology at the House of Studies, Washington, D. C. In December, 1934, he was elected Prior of the Dominican House of Studies, River Forest, Ill., which office he filled until his recent appointment as first Provincial of the Province of St. Albert the Great. In addition to his duties as Prior Father O'Brien taught philosophy and theology at River Forest. He has also been a lecturer for the Catholic Thought Association since its inception in 1935. During the past four summers he has been a special lecturer in philosophy at the Summer Session of Catholic University.

To his new position as Provincial Father O'Brien brings the energy and ability of a talented scholar and an able administrator. His success in the responsible positions he has already occupied gives promise of a bright future for the Province entrusted to his guidance. In the name of the Fathers and Brothers of St. Joseph's Province DOMINICANA extends to the first Provincial of the Province of St. Albert its sincere congratulations and good wishes for continued success in his Dominican labors for God and souls.