

✠ THE VERY REVEREND RAYMOND JAMES MEAGHER, O.P. ✠

Ex-Provincial of St. Joseph's Province

The Very Reverend Raymond Meagher, O.P., died October 19, 1954 in Georgetown University Hospital, Washington, D.C., after a long illness. He was eighty-one years of age, and had been a Dominican for sixty-five years. Seventeen of those years Father Meagher served as Provincial of St. Joseph's Province which then embraced most of the United States. The end of his long and fruitful service to the Church in the Order marks the close of a chapter in the history of American Dominicanism.

Father Meagher was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on December 24, 1872. He was the fourth of six children brought into the world by William and Mary Meagher, both from County Tipperary, Ireland. His early education was received at the Dudley School in Boston and at the Boston Latin School. During the autumn of 1887 he went to St. Rose Priory, Springfield, Kentucky, where the Dominican habit was given to him the following April. He made profession of vows on April 6, 1889 at the youthful age of sixteen, and was sent to St. Joseph's Priory the next fall for his studies in philosophy and theology. In 1894 he went to the Dominican studium at Louvain, Belgium, to finish his studies. Bishop Joseph Van Reeth, S.J., of Galle, Ceylon, ordained him priest in St. Ignatius Church at Louvain on September 8, 1895. The following year Father Meagher received the degree of Lectorate in Sacred Theology.

Upon his return to the United States he was assigned to St. Joseph's Priory, Somerset, Ohio as Procurator and professor of philosophy. After two and a half years he went in 1899 to St. Peter's Church, Memphis, Tennessee. During October of the same year Father Meagher was assigned as pastor and superior of St. Antoninus' Church in Newark, New Jersey. He was appointed the first prior there in 1906, but the same year the Dominicans of St. Vincent Ferrer's in New York City elected him their prior. It was under his zealous direction that the grand sum of \$100,000 was raised to build the present Church of St. Vincent Ferrer. In 1910 he was elected prior of St. Dominic's, Washington, D.C., where he remained until the fall of 1913 when he became Provincial of St. Joseph's Province. Father Meagher was Provincial until the autumn of 1930 because the repeated postulations of the Dominican electors were granted by the Order's Head with the Holy See's consent.

The period of Father Meagher's Provincialship marks a magnificent growth within the Dominican Order in the United States. During his first term he initiated the "Association to Help Poor and Worthy Boys to the Priesthood," which bore its fruit in the increased number of vocations for the Province. There was also a great growth in the number of institutions throughout the Province; fifteen in all were added including twelve churches, Providence College, the House of Studies at River Forest, Illinois, and Fenwick High School in Chicago. An increase was also manifested in the membership of the Holy Name Society, the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, and the Third Order of St. Dominic. The *Torch*, official organ for the Third Order members, was started. Education, the missions home and abroad, the writing apostolate, all in service of the Church developed under Father Meagher's leadership. He encouraged the students writing for *Dominicana* in preparation for their work as Dominican priests.

Father Meagher celebrated his Silver Jubilee as a Dominican priest on September 8, 1920. The Most Reverend John T. McNicholas, O.P., Bishop of Duluth, preached the sermon at St. Vincent Ferrer's where the Jubilarian celebrated a Solemn Mass. After Father Terence Stephen McDermott succeeded him as Provincial of St. Joseph's Province in 1930, Father Meagher remained at St. Vincent Ferrer's until 1933 when he became pastor and superior of St. Peter's, Memphis, Tennessee, where he had been assigned in 1899. During the latter part of 1939 he left St. Peter's and retired to St. Dominic's in the Nation's Capital. On September 8, 1945, his Golden Jubilee in the Dominican priesthood, he requested only a day of quiet thanksgiving. The celebration at St. Dominic's Priory was, therefore, of most modest proportions.

On October 22, 1954, a Solemn Requiem Mass was offered for Father Meagher at ten o'clock in St. Dominic's Church. The Very Rev. John H. Healy, O.P., P.G., was celebrant, Very Rev. James J. McLarney, O.P., was deacon, and the subdeacon was Rev. Joseph R. Caien, O.P. The Rev. Ignatius Smith, O.P., preached the eulogy in which he referred to Father Meagher as one of God's giants in the Order and in the Church. The Most Rev. John M. McNamara, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, D.C., presided at the Mass and imparted the final absolution. The choir was provided by the Dominican students of the House of Studies in Washington, D.C. The burial took place at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in the Nation's Capital.

To Father Meagher's family and friends *Dominicana* offers its sincerest and heartfelt sympathy. *May his soul rest in peace!*