

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CENTENARY



ON THE FEAST of Saint Antoninus, May 10, 1957, The Most Reverend Michael Browne, O.P., Master General of the Dominican Order, issued a special encyclical letter commemorating the Seventh Centenary of Saint Hyacinth's death. Today's Dominicans, he wrote in part, should ever strive to follow the example set for them by their illustrious predecessor Saint Hyacinth and should continue to pray and beseech him to ask Almighty God once more to allow peace and tranquility and freedom for the Catholic Church to reign in Poland and in the other oppressed nations of the world. He also asked that special solemnities be held in every house and convent of the Order in this centenary year.

Then, the successor of Saint Dominic learned from the government authorities that he would be granted a temporary visa to enter Poland in order to be present for the special ceremonies to be held there. However, he would only be allowed to go to Cracow but could not visit the other houses for his canonical visitation.

On the 16th of August, Father Browne arrived in the city of Cracow, along with Fathers Theophilus Szczurecki (of the Polish Province) and Raymond Spiazzi (of the Province of Saint Peter Martyr in Italy) who accompanied him from Rome. On Saturday, August 17, the Master General celebrated a Solemn High Mass and, on the following day, His Eminence Cardinal Wyszynski celebrated a Solemn Pontifical Mass. On that Sunday afternoon, a great procession in which many dignitaries participated, including the Cardinal Primate of Poland and Father Browne, marched through the streets of Cracow. The route was lined with an immense crowd of the faithful. After the procession, the Cardinal preached a moving sermon, his first given in Cracow since his release from prison.

In a recent letter to the Master General, His Holiness Pope Pius XII stressed the necessity of uniting these centenary celebrations and the international congress of preaching held in Rome from September 17 to 21 and attended by Dominicans from all over the world. His Holiness referred to the Saint as the "Pride of Poland and the Dominican Order." The Holy Father noted that the Saint lived at the same time as Saint Dominic and reflected in a special way the examples and virtues of the founder of the Order. The Pontiff added that the success of Saint Hyacinth's apostolate was the result of his holiness, which made his preaching effective, and this will serve as an inspiration to the delegates.