



V. Rev. Raymond Meagher, O. P., S. T. Lr., LL. D., Provincial, Jubilarian

DOMINICANA

New Series

SEPTEMBER, 1920

Vol. V. No. 2

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No event in the history of St. Joseph's Province in this country has served to unite in loyal love and grateful acknowledgement the combined efforts of the Fathers of the Province as the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the ordination of Very Reverend Raymond Meagher, O. P., Provincial. A meeting of the pastors of the Province was held at St. Vincent's Convent, New York City, July 27th, at which committees were appointed and plans discussed for the fitting celebration of this personal and provincial event on September the eighth.

The celebration planned at the meeting of the Fathers consisted of a Solemn High Mass celebrated by Father Meagher with Very Rev. Father Heagen, O. P., Ex-Provincial and Rev. R. F. Larpenteur, O. P., deacon and sub-deacon respectively. These latter two worthy members of the Province were ordained on the same day as Father Provincial. The sermon at the Solemn Mass was preached by the Right Rev. John T. McNicholas, O. P., Bishop of Duluth, a life long friend of the Jubilarian. The celebration was welcomed by many members of the Hierarchy and by all the representatives of the Dominican family throughout the United States.

Father Meagher was born in Boston, December 24th, 1872. At the age of fourteen he entered the Dominican Order at St. Rose Priory, Springfield, Ky., and in April of the following year, he received the white habit of the Order of Preachers. One year later he made profession of his vows and was sent for his philosophical studies to St. Joseph's Convent, Somerset, Ohio. In 1894 together with Fathers Heagen and Larpenteur he was sent to Louvain to complete his theological studies. This was looked upon as a fitting recognition of the brilliancy he had manifested in his studies and his ardent devotion to duty. In

1895, on September 8th, he was ordained priest by Right Rev. Joseph Van Reeth, S. J., Bishop of Galle, Africa. For one year after ordination Father Meagher continued his studies with remarkable distinction and in 1896 successfully passed the examination for the degree of Lectorate in Sacred Theology. After this Father Meagher returned to the United States and for two and one-half years taught Philosophy at the House of Studies, Somerset, Ohio. In 1899 he was assigned to parish work at St. Peter's Church, Memphis, Tenn., and in October of the same year he was appointed pastor in the parish of St. Antoninus, Newark, N. J. Under his inspiring enthusiasm this young parish grew apace and after five years of apostolic work Father Meagher erected there the present stately Convent and was appointed the first Prior. In 1907 he was elected Prior of the Convent of St. Vincent Ferrer, New York City. It was under his zealous direction there that a fund of one hundred thousand dollars was raised to begin the construction of the present St. Vincent Ferrer's Church. In 1910 Father Meagher was elected Prior of St. Dominic's Convent, Washington, D. C., and while there completely renovated and redecored the stately Church. In 1913 Father Meagher was chosen by the Fathers of the Province to take up, as Provincial the leadership of the Dominican cause in the United States. The success with which he met this task and the loving confidence in which he was held was manifested in October, 1917 by the Fathers of the Province when they re-elected him as Provincial.

It would be difficult to pick out any one trait or any special line of interest that has made Father Meagher a leader not only among the Dominicans of the United States but also in ecclesiastical and civic affairs throughout the country. His Catholic interests have been so broad and his comprehension of the mission of the Order, of the Church and of the country, has been so acute and quick to action that it is almost impossible to say, as in the lives of other successful public men, just what has been the motive force of his success.

The sifting of his achievements makes one say that the all inspiring objective of his activity was the extension of the influence of Holy Mother Church. His one ambition has been to spread through the Order of Preachers the power of the Church, always sustaining and strengthening the authority of the Bishops and pastors, according to the traditions of the Dominican

Order. His ideals have been the glory of the Church, through every possible service that could be offered, under his direction, by the Dominican Fathers in the United States, without thought of his own personal interests or sacrifices. In this light those who have noted the remarkable advance of Dominican achievements in this country under his guidance can understand the condition of affairs today.

The burning patriotic spirit that spread through the Province like wild-fire during the war was due to the spark set by Father Meagher. It was with regret that he could not give active service himself; it was with regret that he was forced to retain for the needs of the Church in this country, the applications, for service with the troops, of those priests who wished to imitate him; it was with the satisfaction of Dominican duty thoroughly fulfilled that he could send,—at the cost of the sacrifice of himself, his work and his friends,—into the service the willing volunteer Dominican priests who set a record for numbers and bravery that will always stand.

In his Dominican desire to serve the interests of the Church through the Bishops of the Dioceses of the United States, Father Meagher has been responsible for the acceptance on the part of the Dominican Fathers of the foundations at Pleasantville, N. Y., Hawthorne, N. Y., Valhalla, N. Y., Providence, R. I., and Jersey City, N. J.

In 1917 Father Meagher began a campaign to arouse the interest of and to obtain the offerings of those who realized the extreme needs of those poor boys who were called by God to the priesthood but who, through lack of funds were unable to reach their goal. His Association for the Education of Poor Boys for the Priesthood has proven a God-send for the poor but deserving aspirants for the priesthood in the United States because already over fifty thousand of our good laity have given their contributing membership to the cause initiated by Father Meagher. Throughout the campaign for this cause he has been dominated by the same purpose that has inspired his private vocations to the priesthood,—the wider extension of the Catholic Church and the welfare of humanity.

Father Meagher has also manifested his zeal for the development of the Church in this country by the way in which he has taken up the cause of Catholic education. His idea has been to work for the equipment of not only a thoroughly trained

clergy but also of a Catholic laity imbued with the ideals of the Catholic Church and prepared to realize them in intelligent action. For that reason he has sacrificed other works of the Province in order that Dominican priests, incomparably trained in University matters, could be provided for Aquinas College, Columbus, Ohio, and his particular project,—Providence College, R. I. In the latter he has seen the beginnings of his ambition,—to provide for the Catholic Church in this country a course of education for young men that would be beyond criticism from a secular and religious standpoint.

With these disinterested efforts for the success of Mother Church before us, it would be expected that the special aims of the Order in the same direction would be successfully taken care of by Father Meagher. In this expectation we are not disappointed. The Dominican Missionary Bands, under the direction of those whom he has wisely appointed and persistently assisted, have sustained and increased their successful reputations of unswerving assistance to the Bishops and pastors in their efforts for the salvation of souls. Both in his encouragement of the missionaries in their arduous work and in his cooperation with the younger priests in their training for missionary work, he has shown himself truly Dominican.

Under the direction of Father Meagher, the Confraternities which Holy Mother Church has entrusted to the Dominican Fathers in this country, have shown a remarkable increase on account of the sympathetic cooperation he has shown and the directional inspiration he has given to those in charge of these works. Under his direction the Holy Father repeatedly blessed the work of the Holy Name Society, appointed a Cardinal Protector in the person of Cardinal Boggiani, O. P., and never ceased to express his admiration over the fact that the great Confraternity of the Holy Name had grown to the membership of one million six hundred thousand. In proportion also was the growth of the Rosary Confraternity, under the encouragement that Father Meagher gave the missionaries in the propagation of this devotion. A more direct avenue to an understanding of his zeal for the extension of the Order and the Church might be found in the encouragement he has given to the extension of the Third Order of St. Dominic. From 1917, when he decided to reorganize this great lay Apostolate, its membership has grown until it now numbers over seven thousand and its activity has

extended to specialized works that are giving advantageous assistance to religion in many dioceses.

Father Meagher has always been assured of the value rendered to the Catholic cause by the Catholic press. It was because of this that Dominican writers have been encouraged and Dominican publications fostered under the encouragement that he has given at the cost of financial sacrifice. "The Holy Name Journal" has risen to an unprecedented prominence of authority in the world of manly Catholic opinion and "The Rosary Magazine" stands preeminent as the honest means of expression of general Catholic news. "The Rosary Bulletin," the official publication of the Rosary Confraternity in the United States, has shown results under his direction that guarantee a phenomenal future.

During the leadership of Father Meagher as Provincial was inaugurated a new publication, "The Torch," the official monthly Bulletin of Dominican Tertiaries in the United States. It is not with exaggeration that a disinterested party says that Father Meagher has been responsible, by his encouragement and support of this publication, for the advancement of the greatest intellectual and religious movement that the country has every seen.

It would be ungrateful to write such a difficult appreciation of Father Meagher's devotion to Dominican interests without attempting the more difficult task of thanking him on behalf of the Novices for the sustained interest he has taken, by financial and personal sacrifice, in the "DOMINICANA." The Novices have always felt that while the older men of the Province love him for his kindly consideration, the younger men and especially the Novices, venerate him for the religious interest he has taken in each one of them personally. No ambition has been thwarted and every laudible aim has been encouraged by our Father Provincial. And in no way has this fatherly interest been more manifest than in the encouragement he has shown to the future authors, editors and other laboring priests of the Province in their humble writings in the DOMINICANA.

The latest development of Dominican activity under the direction of Father Meagher is one that reflects the friendship that has always existed between him and our dear Master General, Most Rev. Louis Theissling, O. P. Our General has always been devoted as a disciple of St. Dominic to the extension of Catholic religion among the heathens and Father Meagher has

always looked forward to the day when the Dominicans in the United States would serve the cause of the Church in a wider way by undertaking missionary work among the heathens. The personal friendship existing between Father Theissling and Father Meagher, from the days that the Master General was visitor of the Dominicans in this country seemed to have hastened the realization of this traditional ideal. There is no more glorious achievement in the record of our Father Provincial than the announcement that very shortly we shall be sending members of the Province of St. Joseph to the fertile missionary fields of China.

It has been difficult to summarize the achievements of the Province under the direction of Father Meagher but it is not difficult to crystallize the sentiment of the members of the Province and especially that of the Novices on the occasion of the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination. We thank him; we congratulate him; we offer prayers in gratitude and in hope; we promise to work for him and his cause,—the cause of God's Church and Dominic's Order.

—Bro. Ambrose Smith, O. P.

