

## REV. BROTHER VINCENT CORRIGAN, O. P.

**A** LIFE of unusual interest, heroism and sanctity came to a pathetic close in Providence Hospital, Washington, D. C., on the morning of July 6, 1916, when Rev. Brother Vincent Corrigan, O. P., surrendered his soul to God. Brother Vincent had been a member of the Dominican Order almost four years; and, had he lived, would have been raised to the priesthood before the end of the year.

Dr. John P. Corrigan was born in County Roscommon, Ireland, on November 10, 1855. His parents were Dominic Corrigan and Bridget Flanagan. John was the eldest of eight children. At the age of thirteen he emigrated to this country with his parents and family, settling in Fall River, Mass. He had received a good rudimentary education in his native land, and upon his arrival in Fall River attended the schools there. Later he went to Saint Laurent College, Montreal, with the intention of becoming a priest. Here John distinguished himself by his industry, intelligence and special excellence in English literature. On the completion of his college course he entered the seminary, finished his philosophy and began the study of theology. Then his health failed and physicians ordered him to abandon his studies.

On regaining his health Mr. Corrigan took up the study of medicine at New York University from which he was graduated in 1883 with the degree M. D. He practised medicine in Bellevue Hospital in New York City, afterwards returning to Fall River. In a short time, however, he went to Pawtucket, R. I. In Pawtucket Dr. Corrigan continued as a general practitioner until about fifteen years ago, when he made postgraduate courses at Columbia and

Harvard Universities, specializing on the eye, ear, nose and throat. In these departments, as he had done in his previous medical practice, he soon gained a high reputation among the members of his profession, and became chief of the staff of the eye, ear, nose and throat departments of the Memorial Hospital, Pawtucket, and of St. Joseph's Hospital, Providence, and was also a member of the staff of the Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital of New York City. For several years he was president of the Pawtucket Medical Society. He was also a member of the University Club of New York, and a charter member of the Pawtucket Council, Knights of Columbus.

In 1887 Dr. Corrigan married Miss Eleanor Ford of New York City by whom he had two children — Eleanor and Thomas. The former is now Sister M. Aquinas, O. S. D., of Blauvelt, N. Y., while the latter is a newspaper man of note in his native city. Mrs. Corrigan died a few months after the birth of her son.

His wife had not been long dead when Dr. Corrigan began again to direct his thoughts to the priesthood. Obligations to his children, however, necessitated the postponement of his hopes. For more than twenty years he looked eagerly forward to the day when his children should be educated and settled that he might be free to seek the seclusion of a convent home and the consolations of a priestly life. This day did not come until 1912 when his application for admission into the Dominican Order was accepted. In the meantime Dr. Corrigan was noted for his keen interest in all Catholic activities. He was a close friend of Bishop Harkins and enjoyed the intimate confidence of the venerable old Dominican Apostle, Father Charles H.

McKenna. Of his Catholic life, work, and character as a physician, perhaps no tribute could speak more eloquently or more truthfully than that paid him by his revered pastor, Father J. C. Tennian, who wrote as follows to the Prior of Saint Joseph's Convent in the summer of 1912:

"Very Reverend dear Father McShane:

"It gives me extreme pleasure to recommend to you Dr. John P. Corrigan

is not of recent growth, it was centered in his heart years ago but heretofore set aside in the fulfillment of absolutely parental duties.

"Now that he sees the Promised Land in sight, I fervently hope and pray that he may not be Moses-like denied entrance to it."

On September 1, 1912, Dr. Corrigan at the age of fifty-seven years, with twenty-one young men between the



**Rev. Brother Vincent Corrigan**

of this parish. I can assure you he is one of the best types of Catholic manhood I have ever met and intimately known in my thirty-four years experience as a priest. By his practical, unostentatious piety, good example and never wearying kindness to the poor and sickly he has done more for the cause of religion in this community than any other man, lay or professional. His desire to enter your Order

ages of seventeen and twenty-five, began the customary ten-day retreat in preparation for the reception of the habit of Saint Dominic. Ten days later his noble soul was made supremely happy when, as Brother Vincent, he was clothed with the white wool of St. Dominic. His year of novitiate, begun with fervor and humility, was so continued and concluded happily. His unaffected piety, humility and simplicity;

his affability and winning disposition, which endeared him to all was a source of inspiration to his fellow novices. On September 18, 1913, he made his religious profession and was sent at the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, to continue his theological studies, interrupted thirty-two years before. Here a brilliant and retentive memory and keen judgment ranked him high among his fellow students. Early last May he passed a splendid examination in theology. In September he was to be solemnly professed and his priestly ordination would have followed shortly afterwards.

About mid-June Brother Vincent suffered what appeared to be a slight illness. Examination, however, proved that his was a serious case of heart disease. In the hope that rest and change of climate would benefit him he went with the students to their summer home at Ocean City, Md. But here a steady decline set in and his life was despaired of. On June 27, having been anointed and fortified by the reception of Holy Viaticum, Brother Vincent, surrounded by his brethren, pronounced his last or solemn profession. Then with perfect resignation he placed his soul in the custody of his Maker.

On July 3, the Very Rev. E. G. Fitzgerald, O. P., S. T. Lr., Prior of the House of Studies, went to Ocean City to visit Brother Vincent. Seeing there was no hope of recovery, Father Fitzgerald determined upon his immediate removal to Washington in the hope that the sick man might rally sufficiently for ordination, and thus die as he had wished to live, a priest.

It was a vain hope. God had decreed a further sacrifice. In Providence Hospital, Washington, the pious student gradually grew weaker until July 6, when he passed away without a struggle. As had been Brother Vincent's life, so was his death—beautiful and deeply edifying. It has never been the writer's happiness to witness greater resignation, or one pass to God with sentiments of greater confidence and hope. There is a baptism of desire. If there be such a thing as an ordination of desire, the departed Friar died a priest of God.

The obsequies were held in the chapel of the House of studies, Washington, D. C., in the presence of the community and a large gathering of friends. The Novice-master, Rev. J. A. Dempsey, O. P., S. T. Lr., celebrated the Solemn Requiem Mass, assisted by Rev. Frs. D. P. Coughlin, O. P., as deacon and W. A. Sullivan, O. P., as subdeacon. The final absolution was imparted by Father Dempsey and the interment took place in the Dominican plot at Mount Olivet Cemetery, Washington.

Brother Vincent is survived by the two children already mentioned and the following brothers and sisters: Michael H., Dominic and Patrick Corrigan, Miss Annie Corrigan, Mrs. Barrett and Sister M. Teresita of the Sisters of Mercy. To these the Dominicans of the Province of St. Joseph extend profound sympathy, while they themselves lament the loss of a saintly brother and esteemed friend.

—Justin McManus, O. P.

