

Rev. W. R. Lawler, O.P., while the final absolution was given by the Very Rev. J. P. Aldridge, O.P.

To the relatives and friends of Father Timony DOMINICANA, in the name of the priests and brothers of the Province, extends sincere and heartfelt sympathy. R.I.P.

Chrysostom Graham, O.P.

✠ **BROTHER ALPHONSE BILLINGTON, O.P.** ✠

Joseph Billington, later known as Bro. Alphonse, O.P., was born on October 26, 1857, in Lancashire, England, in the town of Preston, of a distinguished family which never lost the faith even in Reformation times. One of his relatives, Father Edmund Arrowsmith, S.J., was martyred in Lancaster, August 28, 1628, a victim of the Puritan persecution. Bro. Alphonse originally intended to become a priest and so he made his studies at St. Joseph's Missionary College at Mill Hill near London and at St. Alban's College, Valladolid, Spain. His health was somewhat impaired at this time so he gave up the idea of going on for the priesthood. He was a good student, however, and all through his life he kept up an interest in Spanish and Latin. While he was studying for the priesthood, he tutored in Latin a young man who later on became a bishop in England. While still a young man he came to the United States and took up printing as a trade. His home was in Brooklyn, New York, and it was here that he met Helen Browne, an Irish girl, whom he married in 1887. The idea of a higher vocation seemed to persist, however, so he and his wife agreed to live together "as brother and sister" with the mutual promise that when one should die the other would enter religion. Under this agreement they had more than thirty years of perfectly happy married life, and when Mrs. Billington died in February, 1921, her husband prepared to fulfill his promise of entering religion. Father Joseph F. Murphy, pastor of St. Vincent Ferrer's Church in Brooklyn, who knew Mr. Billington at this time, pays high tribute to his character, saying that he was prominent in Holy Name work, of an amiable and charitable disposition, and always anxious to help anyone who was in need. Father Murphy recommended the

Dominicans to Mr. Billington, and so in October, 1921, he came to the House of Studies in Washington where he began his life in religion as a lay brother, being too old to go on for the priesthood. After a postulancy of six months he received the habit and began his novitiate in April, 1922, as Bro. Alphonse. He made his first simple profession on April 23, 1923, and after a renewal of simple vows in 1926 for another three years, he made his Solemn Profession in April, 1929.

Bro. Alphonse was a model religious and lay brother, devoted to his work, amiable, charitable. His piety was deeply fervent, but unostentatious and sensible. He was loved and revered by all who knew him. His extreme modesty was the reason why some never even suspected his many accomplishments. His previous training prepared him to be house printer, and his knowledge of music was surprisingly great for a man who was entirely self-taught along this line. When the community was busily occupied and he was less likely to be noticed, he used to steal down to the organ, and with capuce on his head, enjoy an hour with the instrument he loved so much. Bro. Alphonse survived several serious illnesses before the one which finally brought him to his eternal reward on Monday afternoon, February 3, 1930. In spite of the fact that he was well on in years (seventy-three), his death was rather a shock to every member of the community, not only because of the personal affection which all had for him, but because he has left vacant a place which can hardly be filled by anyone else.

While the body was lying in state, the Novices took turns watching and reciting the Psalter. Tuesday evening, February 4, the *Office of the Dead* was chanted in choir, and the service was attended in a body by the Washington members of the Third Order of St. Dominic, in whose work Bro. Alphonse took a great interest. On Wednesday, February 5, at 9 a. m. a Solemn High Mass of Requiem was sung by the community, which was followed by the *Libera* Procession and the full office for the interment of Brethren of our Order. The celebrant of the Mass was the Rev. A. L. McMahon, O.P., with Rev. Justin Routh, O.P., as deacon, and Rev. Martin Killian, O.P., as subdeacon. Interment was made in the Dominican plot at Mt. Olivet Cemetery. Requiescat in pace.

Bede Campbell, O.P.