



ANDREW CARDINAL FRUHWIRTH, O.P.

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WHEN news of the canonization of St. Albert the Great and of his proclamation as Doctor of the Universal Church was conveyed to Cardinal Frühwirth, he uttered the words of the Prophet Simeon: "Now dismiss thy servant, O Lord." A little more than a year later the Lord called the eminent churchman to Himself. On February 9, 1933, Andrew Cardinal Frühwirth, Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church, and eldest member of the College of Cardinals, died in Rome. Amid the soft strains of the *Salve Regina*, chanted by his fellow Dominicans, the saintly old Cardinal, eighty-seven years of age, gave up his soul to its Maker.

Whenever mention is made of the canonization of St. Albert the Great the name of Cardinal Frühwirth will come to mind. He was the very soul of the movement which finally culminated in the elevation of his brother Dominican to the rank of Saint and Doctor of the Church. No effort was too great, no labor too difficult for him to undergo in that cause. Almost every action of his final years on this earth was directed to that end. All his hopes seem to have been centered on that goal. When it was finally attained he could utter his "*Nunc dimittis*."

His life bears a marked resemblance to that of Albert. Like Albert he spent many years in teaching; like Albert he held many positions of responsibility in the Order. Both were called by Popes to high ecclesiastical offices; both remained at heart humble Friar Preachers. These things, and many more, had the Saint and the Cardinal in common.

A rapid survey of his life will serve to give some idea of the truly great character of Cardinal Frühwirth. Born at St. Anna of Aigen in Styria, Austria, on August 21, 1845, he entered the Dominican Order at the age of eighteen. After the usual course of studies, he was ordained to the priesthood on July 5, 1866. He was then sent to the *Studium Generale* at Rome to pursue a course of higher studies, obtaining the degree of Lector in Sacred Theology in 1870. The following years were spent in teaching in his own Province, chiefly at the convent of St. Anne, Graz.

During these years the future Cardinal held many positions

of responsibility in the Order. His remarkable talents as a leader seem to have been recognized early, for we find that two years after his return from Rome he was elected to the office of sub-prior of his convent. Promotions came rapidly. He successively held the offices of Prior and Provincial, and finally, the highest honor the Order could bestow, Master General.

In his office as Master General, Father Frühwirth displayed rare prudence and judgment. Those were dark days for the Order, and indeed for the Church, especially in France and Italy. Yet with his exceptional tact and diplomacy, he did much to encourage and strengthen his brother religious in their dreary moments.

In his first letter to the whole Order Father Frühwirth called particular attention to the obligation of the Order to promote the causes of saintly Dominicans. He himself set the example. During his tenure of office many of the members of the Order of Preachers were beatified. Among others we may mention Peter Sanz and his companions, Ignatius Delgado and his companions, Pope Innocent V, and Raymond of Capua. It is probable that at this early date he became interested in the cause of Albert the Great.

During his regime Father Frühwirth devoted much attention to Dominican history. It was by his orders that an accurate and critical edition of the Acts of the General Chapters from 1220 to 1844 was published. To him also must go the credit for founding the *Analecta*, the official publication of the Order. Through his efforts and zeal the historic convent of Santa Maria della Quercia, near Viterbo, was finally bought back from the Italian government who had taken it over in the political upheaval of 1870. The garden of the convent of Santa Sabina in Rome, hallowed by memories of Saint Dominic and Saint Thomas Aquinas, was also restored to the Order at this time.

When his term as Master General had expired, Father Frühwirth remained at Rome, the trusted adviser of the Pope. At this time he was actively engaged in the crusade against the errors of Modernism. In 1907 he was made titular Archbishop of Eraclea and sent as Papal Nuntio to Bavaria. It is difficult to evaluate properly his work in this field. In the troublesome days preceding the World War the situation required a man of rare skill and great prudence. Though diplomatic work was

completely new to him, Archbishop Frühwirth conducted the affairs of his office with extraordinary ability. In appreciation of his services, Benedict XV singled out Archbishop Frühwirth from the group of Papal Legates as worthy of special commendation, and created him Cardinal of the Church on December 6, 1915.

In November, 1916, the Cardinal took up his residence in Rome, devoting his attention to the affairs of the whole Church. In 1925 he was made Grand Penitentiary by Pius XI, and two years later became Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church.

His last years were devoted to the fulfillment of his cherished desire—to see the name of Albert the Great inscribed on the catalogue of Saints and Doctors of the Church. That done, he was content to depart from this world.

It is interesting to note that his health was judged to be so precarious in his boyhood that he was advised to discontinue his studies. Later on, when he had joined the Order of Preachers, it was thought that the strict fast and rigid observance would be too severe for his weak constitution. But God, in His Divine Providence, had chosen Andrew Frühwirth for mighty things. By the aid of special grace he attained to a patriarchal age, for "They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of the house of our God."¹

J. E. M.

¹ Ps. xci, 14.

DOCTOR UNIVERSALIS

*A youth, the threads of life took hold.
With humble industry
He plied his loom 'til weak and old
And wove a tapestry.*

*He wove with multi-colored thread
A pattern ever new,
Divergent, yet which always led
Through skeins of golden hue.*

*And when the tapestry was done
The gold appeared not odd;
It interlaced the threads as one:
The golden skein was God.*

William Lannen, O.P.