

OBITUARY

THE MOST REV. HENRY M. DESQUEYROUS, O. P.

On the twenty-first day of December, 1917, the venerable Father Henry Maria Desqueyrous, Procurator General of the Friars Preachers, died at Rome after a prolonged illness, being in the seventy-third year of his life and in the fifty-third of his religious profession. By his unswerving fidelity to duty, by his persistent striving after perfection, by his stern adherence to the austerities of his Order, Father Desqueyrous was a tower of strength for the Order of Preachers and an ornament to the Catholic Church. In his passing, a noble soul went to its reward.

Born on July 29th, 1844, at La Reole in the Diocese of Bordeaux, Peter Desqueyrous spent only a few years in his native village. While yet a lad his parents took up their abode in the gay city of Paris. Here young Peter came under the beneficent influence of Monsignor de Segur, a renowned apologist of the last century, who sowed in his soul the seeds of his sacerdotal vocation. Following the direction of de Segur, he entered the seminary of the Diocese of Poitiers and pursued his clerical studies with great earnestness. After having received minor orders, he was attracted through a Friar Preacher, Father Matthew Lacomte, to don the white wool of St. Dominic. Obedient to this attraction, he entered the Dominican convent at Lyons, where he received the name of Brother Henry and where, after a year of novitiate, he made his religious profession on June 30, 1865. His theological studies having been successfully pursued for three years, he was ordained to the priesthood on May 1, 1868.

Father Desqueyrous threw himself most ardently into the spirit of his vocation from the first days of religious life; and he seems in a special manner to have been drawn to the sterner and more austere aspects of the life of the Friar Preacher. Not only during his first fervor, but also throughout the succeeding stages of his long and full career, he grappled heroically with the obstacles impeding his own

advance in perfection; and to render less difficult the advance of others, when in official capacity, he insisted on those tightening restraints prescribed by the Rule and Constitutions of the Order, which serve as moral barriers for the friary against the inroads of the unchristian world.

Shortly after the completion of his studies, Father Desqueyrous began his apostolate of preaching, which work he continued to do almost exclusively for about thirty years, travelling through many dioceses in France and Switzerland. His special field was that of retreats to the clergy and to religious communities.

He served as prior for two convents at different times during the latter part of his life; first at Poitiers, where he also became novice-master after finishing his term of office as prior; and, secondly, at Lyons where he was not permitted to finish his term as prior because he was called to Rome to be socius to the Master General, at that time Father Andrew Frühwirth, lately become Cardinal.

Upon his advent to the Eternal City he discharged his office in the Curia of the General so well that in 1904 the new Master General, Most Reverend Hyacinth M. Cormier, appointed him Procurator General, which office he filled with remarkable efficiency. While occupying this office he visited Dominican convents of America in 1907, everywhere urging an increased love for the ideals of monastic observances.

During the past few years Father Desqueyrous weakened in his bodily health though not in his spiritual vigor. Last November he underwent a surgical operation, which failed to restore his enfeebled frame, for he daily grew weaker and weaker and finally lost his grip on life. Surrounded by his confrères and fortified by the last sacraments of Holy Mother Church, Father Desqueyrous passed away. His funeral was held from the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, and was attended by Cardinals Vanutelli and Frühwirth, many other prelates, and representatives of the religious institutions of the city. Requiescat in Pace.

—Xavier Dolan, O. P.