

THE VERY REVEREND

✠ RAPHAEL WALTER FARRELL, O.P., S.T.M. ✠

In Chicago, on the morning of November 23, 1951, Father Walter Farrell was found to have died peacefully during the night in his sleep. Although he had been in weak health throughout a great part of his life, his sudden death came as a profound shock to all. Thus, in his untimely and unexpected death at the age of forty-nine, the Church in America has lost a renowned priest, the Dominican Order a glorious scholar, and the Province of St. Albert its most illustrious son.

Father Farrell was born in Chicago, Illinois, on July 21, 1902. He acquired his elementary education at the parochial schools of Notre Dame and St. Columbanus in Chicago, and prior to his entrance into the Dominican Order, he completed his high school and college courses at Chicago's Quigley Preparatory Seminary. Father Farrell was clothed in the habit of St. Dominic at St. Joseph's Priory in Somerset, Ohio, on September 14, 1920, and after a year of novitiate, he made his profession in the Order of Preachers. He pursued the prescribed philosophical and theological studies at St. Rose Priory in Springfield, Kentucky, and at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. On June 9, 1927, the Most Rev. Michael J. Curley, Archbishop of Baltimore, ordained him to the priesthood in St. Dominic's Church in Washington. Upon finishing the regular course in theology during the year after ordination, he was awarded the degree of Lector of Sacred Theology. Father Farrell then spent two years at the University of Fribourg, in Fribourg, Switzerland, where he did graduate work in the field of theology. In 1930, the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology was conferred upon him at Fribourg.

Returning to the United States, Father Farrell began a brilliant career as teacher, writer, and lecturer which made him one of the best-known priests in America. From 1930 until 1933, Father Farrell was professor of dogmatic theology and Assistant to the Master of Students at St. Joseph's Priory, Somerset, Ohio, and during the last of these three years he filled the office of subprior at Somerset. In 1933, he began teaching theology at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington; with this house his memory is distinctively associated, for it was at Washington that he passed the longest span of his years

as a priest—the years which saw the undertaking of his most conspicuous achievements. He was named Pro-Regent of Studies for the Province of St. Joseph in 1938, and Regent of Studies in 1939, a post which he retained until 1945. From 1940 until 1945, Father Farrell was President of the Dominican Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Washington. In Rome, at the Convent of Santa Sabina, on May 23, 1940, the Master General of the Order of Preachers elevated Father Farrell to the dignity of Master of Sacred Theology, the most eminent degree in the Dominican Order, in recognition of his outstanding accomplishments and extraordinary erudition in the sphere of theology. When the Province of St. Joseph was divided territorially in 1939, Father Farrell became affiliated with the newly established Province of St. Albert, but he continued his work in St. Joseph's Province until his term as Regent of Studies came to a close in 1945.

From 1942 until 1945, Father Farrell served as a chaplain with the United States Navy, and for more than a year he was engaged in active duty aboard the aircraft carrier *U. S. S. Yorktown*. In poor health for many years, at first he could not meet the physical requirements for induction into the chaplains' corps. At his request, President Roosevelt personally intervened in Father Farrell's favor. His noble character never failed to make a deep impression upon all the servicemen who knew him, and his courage and high devotion to duty won for him unstinted acclaim.

Father Farrell was nationally known as a preacher of retreats, and as a lecturer in philosophy and theology, but it is his literary work which stands as his immortal monument. Pre-eminent among all the writings which flowed from his gifted pen is his towering four-volume masterpiece *The Companion to the Summa*, published from 1939 to 1941. It was at once acknowledged a classic in the realm of English theological literature. With this work, Father Farrell, perhaps more than any other, helped to popularize the *Summa*; he was a pioneer in the teaching of theology to the laity. *Essence of the Natural Law*, his first book, was published in 1930, and his latest book, *The Looking Glass*, came from the presses just a few months before his death. Father Farrell was a frequent contributor to theological journals and Catholic magazines, his articles appearing in such publications as *The Thomist*, *Cross and Crown*, *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, *New Scholasticism*, *The Sign*, and other religious periodicals. He was a founder of the theological quarterly, *The Thomist*, edited by the Dominican Fathers of St. Joseph's Province, and he was associate editor of *Cross and Crown*, the Thomistic quarterly of spiritual theology. In 1942 he was the recipient of the annual Catholic Literary

Award of the Gallery of Living Catholic Authors. Despite the fact that he was never a man of robust health, his untiring industry and his unswerving zeal for carrying out the Dominican ideal made him a constant source of inspiration and wonder to all who were privileged to live with him. At the time of his death, he was at work on several projects, among which was the first draft of a life of Christ he had planned to publish.

Father Farrell's funeral was held on November 27, 1951, at St. Pius' Church in Chicago. The Solemn Requiem Mass was offered by the Very Rev. J. E. Marr, O.P., Prior of the Dominican House of Studies in River Forest, Illinois, where Father Farrell was assigned at the time he died. The deacon was the Very Rev. W. H. Kane, O.P., S.T.M., also of the House at River Forest, and the subdeacon was the Rev. E. S. Carlson, O.P., Regent of Studies for St. Albert's Province. The eulogy was preached by the Very Rev. L. E. Hughes, O.P., Provincial of St. Albert's Province. Father Hughes characterized the deceased as "the brightest ornament in American Dominican history . . . one of those rare geniuses God grants to His Church for special needs and works," and he foretold that "his name and influence will live for generations." His Eminence, Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago, presided at the funeral Mass and imparted the final absolution. Present in the sanctuary were the Most Rev. Leo Binz, D.D., Coadjutor to the Archbishop of Dubuque, and the Most Rev. William E. Cousins, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, and Pastor of Father Farrell's boyhood parish of St. Columbanus. The church was filled with a vast number of Dominicans, representing both Father Farrell's own Province, and the Province of St. Joseph where he lived and labored for most of his life. Also in attendance were many Monsignori and members of the secular clergy as well as representatives of a great number of religious orders, giving evidence of the esteem and prominence Father Farrell's rich endowments commanded even outside of his own Order. Burial took place in the Dominican Fathers' plot in All Saints Cemetery.

To Father Farrell's brother and sister, and to all his relatives and friends, *Dominicana* offers a sincere expression of sympathy. *May his valiant soul rest in peace!*