



RIGHT REVEREND PAUL ADAM CURRAN, O.P., P.G.

*Prefect Apostolic, Kienow, China*

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**Prefect-Apostolic of Kienow, Fukien, China**

On Wednesday evening, September 23, the Right Rev. Paul A. Curran, O.P., P.G., Prefect-Apostolic of Kienow, Fukien, China, died suddenly at the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C. In this city for the annual National Mission Secretariat conducted at the Catholic University of America, he was visiting at the House of Studies when the fatal heart attack occurred. Monsignor Curran was sixty-four years old. A member of the Dominican Order for over forty years, he had been a priest for thirty-five years, and had functioned as Prefect-Apostolic since 1948.

In the sudden death of this great missionary, the Province of St. Joseph and the Church in China suffers no small loss. Monsignor Curran was ever an exemplary son of St. Dominic. As the pioneer missionary of the province in the Chinese apostolate, he gave himself whole-heartedly to the work of evangelization in the missions assigned to his care. He understood and loved dearly the Chinese people. Over a span of nearly a quarter of a century spent in China, he was entrusted with the duties and responsibilities, in turn, of Vicar-Provincial, religious superior and pastor of the Dominican missions in Kienow, and eventually he was designated by the Holy See to be Prefect-Apostolic in the Province of Fukien. His accomplishments in each capacity were always rewarding of that trust.

Paul A. Curran was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on July 26, 1889. He was one of five children of Adam and Ann (Gaffney) Curran, natives of Ireland. At St. Peter's parochial school, McKeesport, Pennsylvania, he acquired his elementary education, and obtained high-school training at Holy Ghost College, Pittsburgh, (now known as Duquesne University). Later, he attended St. Charles College, Catonsville, Maryland. It was during these years that he decided to serve Christ as a priest in the Order of Friars Preachers. In the autumn of 1912 he entered the novitiate of the Order at St. Joseph's Priory, Somerset, Ohio, and on September tenth that year was invested with the habit. After the customary year of probation, he pronounced simple vows on September 18, 1913, following which he was sent to the House of Studies in Washington to pursue his course in philosophy and theology. The prescribed course of studies complete, he was ordained to the sacred priesthood on May 10, 1918, in the chapel of the House of Studies, Washington, by the Most Rev.

Thomas J. Shahan, Rector of the Catholic University of America.

Following ordination, Father Curran was assigned to parochial work at St. Thomas', Zanesville, Ohio, and later, at St. Vincent Ferrer's in New York City. When, in 1922, the Provincial requested volunteers to inaugurate St. Joseph's Province first foreign mission work, Father Curran was among the first to respond. His generous proffer was accepted, and in July of the next year he and another Dominican, Brother James Murphy, O.P., left San Francisco bound for far-off China. Their ultimate destination was Kienning-Fu, in the province of Fukien—one of the most mountainous and inaccessible parts of China, and one which had been virtually without priests for some sixteen years. Arriving in Shanghai, the little party of missionaries began the long and arduous journey by land and boat to this outpost of Christianity, where, during the next two decades they and others from the province were to spread the Gospel of Christ.

With the arrival of additional American Dominicans in the next few years, Father Curran was appointed Vicar-Provincial (1925). In 1929 he completed the building of Our Lady of the Rosary Church at Kienning-Fu, and in 1932 was named Superior of the missions in Fukien, of which there were several by this time. He resigned this post in 1937, and was chosen to be pastor of Our Lady of the Valley Church in Kuaten. A year later, he was transferred to the newly-built Church of St. Louis Bertrand in Pucheng. Returning to the United States in 1938 to represent the Dominican missions at a Provincial Chapter of the Order, Father Curran was unable to go back to China until 1946, due to war-time conditions. In the interim he served as pastor of St. Peter's Church, Memphis, Tennessee. When he did return to his beloved Chinese he was made pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Kienyang, and then once again appointed Vicar-Provincial.

Two years later the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith named Father Curran Prefect-Apostolic of Kienow, with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. During this year, also, he was awarded the distinctively Dominican degree of 'Preacher General' by the Most Rev. Emmanuel Suarez, O.P., S.T.M., Master-General, in recognition of his long and exceptional work in the missions. Compelled to leave China in 1951 by the advance of the Communist forces, Monsignor Curran arrived in this country harboring the slim but fervent hope that it would soon be possible for him to return to his vicariate. He was residing at St. Dominic's Priory, Youngstown, Ohio, at the time of his death.

On Saturday, September 26, 1953, a Solemn Mass of Requiem was offered for Monsignor Curran at St. Dominic's Church, Wash-

ington, D. C. The celebrant of the Mass was the Rev. Richard E. Vahey, O.P., Director of the Rosary Mission Society. The Rev. H. J. McManus, O.P., assisted as deacon and the Rev. Matthew Chen, O.P., as subdeacon. The eulogy was preached by the Very Rev. Ignatius Smith, O.P., Dean of the School of Philosophy, Catholic University. Father Smith characterized the deceased as "... one of God's noblest gentlemen, an exemplary religious of the Order of Preachers, a kindly pastor, a zealous apostle and a distinguished prelate." The Most Rev. John M. McNamara, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, and the Most Rev. Peregrino de la Fuente, O.P., Bishop of Batanes and Babuyan, Philippine Islands, were seated in the sanctuary for the Funeral Mass. Bishop McNamara imparted the final absolution. Present also was a large representation of Monsignor Curran's fellow-Dominicans, headed by the Very Rev. Terence S. McDermott, O.P., S.T.M., Provincial. The Mass was sung by a choir of Dominican Students from the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C.

On Monday morning September 28, a Solemn Funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Joseph's Church, Somerset, Ohio, by the Very Rev. B. C. Werner, O.P., P.G. Assisting as deacon was the Rev. W. F. Cassidy, O.P., with the Very Rev. B. H. Scheerer, O.P., Sub-prior of St. Rose Priory, Springfield, Kentucky, serving as subdeacon. The eulogy was delivered by the Rev. W. F. Cassidy, O.P. The Bishop of Columbus, Most Rev. Michael J. Ready, D.D., presided at the Mass. A large delegation of priests, Sisters, relatives and friends of Monsignor Curran were in attendance. Burial took place in the Dominican Fathers' plot in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

To Monsignor Curran's brother, and to all his relatives and friends, *Dominicana* offers sincere condolences. *May his soul rest in peace!*