

## THE MOST REVEREND

✠ PAUL AUGUSTINE SKEHAN, O.P., S.T.M. ✠

Procurator General of the Order of Preachers

On August 5, 1954, Most Rev. Paul Augustine Skehan died of a heart attack in a Roman hospital. He was fifty-four years of age, and had been Procurator General of the Dominican Order since 1946. His death came only thirty-six days after the Master General was killed in an automobile accident. Thus Dominicans the world over have been deprived of their two highest superiors, and are praying that two other staunch leaders will be forthcoming.

Father Skehan was born November 17, 1899, at Anderson, Indiana. He was the oldest son of Charles Francis and Laura Cecilia Sullivan Skehan. One of his younger brothers is Rev. Philip Cyprian Skehan, O.P., of Providence College, R. I. Paul Skehan started his grammar school education at St. Mary's, Anderson, Ind., and continued it at Cathedral School, Indianapolis, Ind., at Cathedral School in Pittsburgh, Pa., and completed it at Our Lady of Lourdes School, Indianapolis, Ind. He received his secondary school training at Shortridge High School, Indianapolis, Ind., and at Hyde Park High School, Chicago, Ill. He began college at Bryant and Stratton Business College, Chicago, Ill., and then went to Providence College, Providence, R. I. before entering the Dominican novitiate.

Having received the Dominican habit in the novitiate of St. Joseph's Priory, Somerset, Ohio, on August 23, 1921, he was called Brother Augustine in religion, and made profession of vows on August 24, 1922. His studies in philosophy were at St. Rose Priory, Springfield, Kentucky, from 1922-24, and the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C., from 1924-25. He took special courses in philosophy at the Catholic University of America from 1925-29 while pursuing his studies in theology at Washington. Bishop Thomas J. Shahan, Rector of Catholic University, ordained Brother Augustine a priest at St. Dominic's Church, Washington, D. C., on June 21, 1928.

Father Skehan's first assignment was to St. Joseph's Priory, Somerset, Ohio, where he taught dogma and was socius of the Master of Students. During October of 1930, he was sent to study

Canon Law at the Collegio Angelico in Rome. He became professor of Canon Law at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, in 1932. Returning to Rome in 1936 Father Skehan taught Canon Law at the Angelicum. The next year he came back to America where he was instructor on the faculty of Canon Law, and Magister Spiritus of the young Fathers at the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C. In 1938 Father Skehan was named assistant secretary of the Apostolic Delegation in the nation's capital. The same year he was made Pro-Magister Studiorum of the Studium Generale, Washington, D. C., and also a member of the commission to draw up plans for a philosophical and theological quarterly. Later he became a member on the board of editors of the *Thomist*, the periodical born of these plans. The year 1938 also saw him named Provincial Promotor of Causes of Beatification and Canonization. During 1939-40 Father Skehan was assistant professor of Canon Law at C. U. He became Master of Studies and Ordinary Professor of Canon Law at the Pontifical Faculty of Theology, Washington, D. C., in 1941.

Father Skehan was appointed the 102nd Procurator General of the Order of Preachers in 1946, the second most responsible position in governing Dominicans. His duty was to take care of all business between the Order and the Holy See. He performed the work of his office with a keen appreciation of its responsibility, as befits a true son of St. Dominic.

The many degrees merited by Father Skehan are a striking testimony to the reasonableness of the great confidence placed in him by the Church and Order. He was a Bachelor of Arts from Providence College; a Lector of Sacred Theology from the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C., April 27, 1929; a Master of Arts in Philosophy from the Catholic University of America, June, 1929; a Doctor of Canon Law from Collegio Angelico, Rome, June, 1932; and finally his intellectual efforts in behalf of the Church were crowned on January 15, 1948, when he received the degree of the Master of Sacred Theology from the late Father Suarez. In that same year Father Skehan was appointed a member of one of the special commissions of the Sacred Congregation of Sacraments in Rome. He was also an official of the Sacred Congregation of the Affairs of Religious. In 1950 the University of Santo Tomas in Manila awarded him an honorary degree in law.

Father Skehan had been ill two months after a heart attack. He seemed to be recovering and was getting ready for a trip to

the United States upon leaving the hospital. But a second heart attack on August 5th proved fatal. A funeral Mass was offered for the happy repose of his soul in Rome at the Church of Santa Sabina on August 8th. Father Timothy M. Sparks, O.P., S.T.M., North American Socius of the Master General, accompanied his body to America.

Rev. Philip C. Skehan, O.P., of Providence, College, R. I., a brother of the late Procurator General, was celebrant at the Solemn Requiem Mass offered August 13, 1954, in St. Vincent Ferrer Church, Manhattan. The deacon was Very Rev. Timothy M. Sparks, O.P., S.T.M., and Very Rev. William D. Marrin, O.P., P.G., pastor and prior of St. Vincent Ferrer's Church and Vicar-Provincial of the Province of St. Joseph was sub-deacon. Very Rev. Harold C. Boyd, O.P., P.G., assistant director of the Eastern Mission Band, preached the eulogy. Cardinal Spellman's representative was Auxiliary Bishop Joseph P. Donahue of New York, who presided and gave the final absolution. Father Skehan was buried in the Dominican Cemetery at Pleasantville, N. Y.

To Father Skehan's brother, Rev. Philip Skehan, O.P., to his mother, sister, and uncle, Rev. John J. Sullivan, O.P., of Providence College, and to all his family and friends, *Dominicana* offers deepest sympathy. *May he rest in peace!*