

✠ THE REVEREND WILLIAM RICHARD CLARK, O.P. ✠

Few of the great crowd attending the annual commencement exercises of Providence College on the morning of June 4, 1957 were aware that, only a short distance from where they stood, one of the best-known members of the college faculty lay dying. Father William R. Clark who had been helping to organize the academic procession suddenly collapsed outside of Albertus Magnus Hall. Doctor Edwin B. O'Reilly, the college physician, immediately left his place in the procession and rushed to the stricken priest's aid. Brother-priests administered Extreme Unction while a Providence Fire Department rescue squad tried in vain to revive Father Clark. The exertion and excitement of the day's activities were thought to have induced a fatal heart attack.

William Richard Clark was born in Louisville, Kentucky on December 15, 1906. He was one of eight children born to Stephen William and Anna Louise Clark. Having completed his elementary schooling at St. Paul's in Pleasure Ridge, Kentucky, Father Clark attended St. Xavier's High School in Louisville for a year before deciding to enter the preparatory seminary of the Dominican Order, then at Aquinas High School in Columbus, Ohio. At the completion of his collegiate studies at Providence College, Father Clark went to Saint Rose Priory in Springfield in his home state where he received the habit of a Friar Preacher on September 10, 1926 and where he made his profession of vows a year and a day later. He pursued his philosophical studies at the Dominican House of Studies in River Forest, Illinois and moved to St. Joseph's Priory, Somerset, Ohio and the House of Studies in Washington for the study of Sacred Theology. On the morning of June 17, 1933, Archbishop Michael J. Curley of Baltimore ordained William Richard Clark to the Sacred Priesthood.

After the completion of a fourth year of Theology and of an additional year's study at the Catholic University of America, Father Clark was assigned to the faculty of Providence College where he taught from 1935-1938. During the next two years, the young priest was assigned to St. Dominic's Priory in Washington so that he might attend Catholic University again, this time to earn his Ph.D. In 1940, he returned to Providence College where he remained until his death.

A noted sociologist, Father Clark was one of the most prominent members of the college faculty and was well-known throughout the State of Rhode Island. At the time of his death, he was the Associate Dean of Studies, Director of the School of Adult Education and Head of the Sociology Department. He was especially noted for his work in the field of marriage forums and counselling and was the editor of a popular book on the subject. He was also a member of many sociological societies and organizations, both Catholic and secular.

On the morning of June 8, 1957, in St. Pius' Church in Providence, the Most Reverend Russell J. McVinney, D.D., Bishop of Providence, celebrated a Solemn Pontifical Mass of Requiem for Father Clark which was attended by more than 200 priests, including the entire faculty of Providence College and scores of the diocesan clergy. The Very Rev. Robert J. Slavin, O.P., President of the College, acted as assistant priest to His Excellency and the Rev. Vincent C. Dore, O.P., Religious Superior and Dean of Studies, was the Deacon of the Mass. Father Frederick C. Hickey, O.P. was Subdeacon and Fathers Edward B. Halton, O.P. and Lloyd A. Mahler, O.P. acted as Acolytes. The Rev. Charles V. Fennell, O.P. preached the eulogy and the Mass was sung by a choir of Dominican priests under the direction of the Rev. Leo S. Cannon, O.P. In addition to many diocesan and religious priests, several monsignori were in attendance, among whom were: Rt. Rev. Msgr. Thomas V. Cassidy, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Bernard J. Lennon, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Matthew F. Clarke, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Charles J. Mahoney, Very Rev. Msgr. William F. Murray and Very Rev. Msgr. Charles H. Lynch, all of the Providence Diocese. Also present were U. S. Senator John O. Pastore, U. S. Congressman John E. Fogarty, both of Rhode Island, and Lieut. Governor Armand J. Cote and Mayor Walter H. Reynolds, representing the state and city respectively, and many other civic officials.

The Very Rev. William D. Marrin, O.P., Provincial of St. Joseph's Province, conducted the committal rites in the Dominican Community Cemetery on the campus Father Clark loved so well.

Father William R. Clark is survived by his father, Mr. Stephen W. Clark, three brothers and three sisters, all of Louisville, Kentucky. To them as well as to Father Clark's other relatives and friends, *Dominicana* extends its sincere condolences. *May he rest in peace.*