

## CHAPTER XX

### THE MINISTRY OF THE EXERCISES

#### § I THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES AND RETREATS

Father John Polanco, secretary-general of the Society of Jesus in the life-time of its founder, recorded it as his opinion that the activity *par excellence* of a Jesuit is the molding of souls by means of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. This epoch-making little book, "very useful," so the papal brief of approbation declares, "for the edification and spiritual progress of the faithful," was published at Rome in 1548, being the first Jesuit book to issue from the press. It is the Jesuit's adequate and comprehensive spiritual guide as far as any human literary product can perform such a service, it embodies the spirituality which he seeks to develop in his own soul as also the spirituality which he seeks to impart to others. "To make a retreat" is the conventional locution for the process of going through the Exercises, the term "retreat" connoting the silence, the seclusion, the withdrawal from secular interests and occupations which provide the proper atmosphere for the performance of the Exercises. Again, one does not properly "preach" a retreat, one "directs" or "gives" it, for a retreat on the Ignatian plan is not a series of sermons but an organized system of meditations on spiritual truths with examinations of conscience and other exercises of a sacred nature, the director merely proposing matter for reflection and not delivering set discourses. At the same time, the so-called popular missions or parochial revivals conducted in churches by Jesuit preachers are in reality a form of the Ignatian Exercises, which suggest the content as well as the development of the more important sermons<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The standard critical edition with historical and textual commentaries is *Exercitia Spiritualia Sancti Ignatii de Loyola et eorum Directoria* (Madrid, 1919). There are numerous English translations of the Exercises, e.g., Joseph Rickaby, S.J., *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, Spanish and English with a Continuous Commentary* (London, 1923), W. Longridge, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (London, 1919), Elder Mullan, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (New York, 1914). Cf. also Joseph Rickaby, S.J., *How I made my Retreat* (London, 1911), H. V. Gill, S.J., *Jesuit Spirituality* (Dublin, 1936), James P. Monaghan, S.J., *Teach me Thy Paths* (Chicago, 1936). "A place in the first rank of all that helps towards this end has been won by those

When Father Roothaan became General in 1829, he found that the *Spiritual Exercises* had fallen into neglect in the Society and that their true nature was sometimes obscured in the minds even of Jesuits themselves. To remedy this state of things he carried on a vigorous campaign of exposition of the true idea of the Exercises, one feature of which was the publication in 1835 of a new edition of the work with a fresh Latin translation of his own from the Spanish text and with accompanying commentaries. The result was that the Exercises began to be restored to their proper place in the life of the Society. The use of them was better understood and the results attending their performance became more substantial. The gradual recovery which the Society thus made of effective use of its official manual of spiritual training made itself felt among the Jesuits of the Middle West. Ignatian retreats, however, had been conducted by them from their first arrival in the field. Mother Duchesne noted in a letter to her superior, St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, that her nuns were greatly pleased with the manner in which Father Van Quickenborne had brought them through the Exercises.<sup>2</sup> But retreat-giving was withal a ministry of rare occurrence. "The Spiritual Exercises according to the method of our Holy Father," Verhaegen wrote to the General in 1829, "are not given to any outsiders except the Religious of the Sacred Heart."<sup>3</sup> Somewhat later a Missouri Jesuit was writing to Father Roothaan in Rome that the fathers and scholastics had as yet received no explicit instruction in the manner of giving the Exercises. But a belated copy of Father Roothaan's new edition found its way to Missouri and Father De Theux promptly made use of it for the enlightenment of his brethren. In 1838 Father Roothaan on forwarding to Verhaegen a copy of his edition stressed the importance even for the scholastics of study of the Exer-

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Spiritual Exercises that St. Ignatius, under a divine inspiration, introduced into the Church. For although, in the goodness and pity of God there has never lacked men who should aptly set forth deep thoughts upon heavenly things before the eyes of the Faithful—yet Ignatius was the first to begin to teach a certain system and special method of going through Spiritual Retreats. Accordingly, this little book, so small in bulk yet so wonderful, has from its very first edition been solemnly approved by the Roman Pontiffs, they have loudly extolled it, have furthered it by their Apostolic Authority and have never ceased to lead men to use it, by heaping the gift of holy indulgences upon it and gracing it with ever renewed praises." Encyclical (*Motu Proprio*) of Pius XI, 1922 *Catholic Mind* (New York), Nov. 8, 1922. Pius XI named St. Ignatius Loyola "the heavenly patron of all Spiritual Exercises."

<sup>2</sup> Duchesne à Barat, September 29, 1823. General Archives of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

<sup>3</sup> Verhaegen ad Roothaan, January 12, 1829 (AA). For an account of the General's activities in regard to the Exercises cf. Pietro Pirri, S.J., *P. Giovanni Roothaan XXI Generale della compagnia di Gesù* (Rome, 1930), Chap. XI.

cises "Both the Fathers and the young men should learn how to give the Exercises properly These have always been the Society's chief instrument for the salvation as well as of its own members as of others, but their efficacy depends above everything else on the way in which they are handled I should like to know from your Reverence what is being done in this regard" <sup>4</sup>

No one entered more eagerly into Father Roothaan's concern for the Exercises or did more to bring their importance home to his confrères than Father Gleizal As master of novices he had exceptional opportunity to accustom the young Jesuits, as Father Roothaan had desired, to the use of St Ignatius's classic treatise In 1856 he attributed the prevailing good spirit among the novices to "the Exercises of our Holy Father," which had "become a paramount object of study here" <sup>5</sup> This study was not a recent introduction at Florissant On assuming charge of the novitiate six years before Gleizal had begun to give the novices a conference every day on the Exercises "I am convinced," he made known to Father Roothaan, "that by means of the Exercises they [the novices] can procure the greater glory of God much more readily and efficaciously than by any other means, as they can also [by the same means] seize and retain the spirit of the Society This is a matter which in my opinion has been a little neglected from time to time in this Province I am even beginning to have them [novices] give the Exercises, e g , to our coadjutor-brothers, who come here for the purpose [of making them] I am not at all dissatisfied with the results obtained by those who have given them so far" <sup>6</sup>

Once the ministry of retreats got under way there was never any lack of opportunity for this outlet of apostolic energy and zeal especially among the Catholic sisterhoods Here a tradition of devoted and effective service was eventually built up and it has lasted to our own day Father Gleizal conducted retreats for Mother Guerin's valiant band of pioneer nuns at Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, Father Arnouldt did the same for numerous communities of nuns in and around Cincinnati, and Father Coppens presided in 1869 over the first Chicago retreat of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Retreats for the clergy have always been regarded by the Jesuits as a ministry particularly fruitful of good results In the early thirties Father Peter Kenney, the Visitor, gave the Exercises to the priests of the Bardstown diocese as did also Father John McElroy of the Maryland Province some years later The earliest recorded clergy retreat conducted by a western Jesuit was apparently the one which Father

<sup>4</sup> Roothaan ad Verhaegen, May 19, 1838 (AA)

<sup>5</sup> Gleizal à Roothaan, February 6, 1856 (AA)

<sup>6</sup> Gleizal à Roothaan, January 22, 1850 (AA)

Di Maria gave in April, 1847, to the priests of the Chicago diocese.<sup>7</sup> It took place in the newly opened University of St. Mary of the Lake in Chicago and was the first ever made by the clergy of the northern diocese. "F[ather] Van Hulst," De Smet noted in a letter written to a friend in 1856, "is actually [i.e., at present] giving a retreat to the priests in Kentucky—he has given one in Milwaukee to the clergy and another in Indiana. A good number of FF [Fathers] have passed their vacation giving retreats in monasteries and to the laity in Illinois and Missouri."<sup>8</sup> The priests "in Kentucky" mentioned in De Smet's letter were those of the Louisville diocese. Bishop Spalding was keenly appreciative of this retreat as he made known to Archbishop Purcell: "The thirty-three priests of my diocese who made their retreat at Bardstown gave me most satisfaction and consolation by their edifying regularity. The retreat could scarcely have gone on better. Father Van Hulst, the Director, is truly a man of God. I made some good resolutions which I hope God will give me the grace to keep with your good prayers."<sup>9</sup> A few years later (September, 1860) Bishop Spalding wrote again to the Archbishop of Cincinnati: "By the way, we had a glorious retreat by Father Smarius."<sup>10</sup> Father Damen was also regarded as a skilful director of clerical retreats. The number of retreats conducted on behalf of the clergy and of communities of religious women went on increasing, amounting in one summer-period (c. 1865) to over sixty. As a rule the Exercises were thus given only during the summer months. In 1856 Father Brunner, who was resident for a few years in the vice-province, expressed to the Father General the edification he received on seeing the fathers of St. Louis University, though fatigued with the year's work of the class-room, spend the summer vacations in giving the Exercises with many tokens of success.<sup>11</sup>

It was only in the first decade of the present century that the mid-western Jesuits began to conduct retreats on behalf of laymen in series and as an organized form of the ministry. But in earlier days such retreats were not unknown. They were given as a rule at the novitiate and to individuals only, rarely to groups. What was probably the first retreat held for a number of laymen in common was one which Father Damen directed at the novitiate on behalf of a small group of St. Louisans.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Garraghan, *Catholic Church in Chicago, 1673-1871* (Chicago, 1921), p. 111.

<sup>8</sup> De Smet to Duerinck, August 14, 1856 (A).

<sup>9</sup> Spalding to Purcell, September 9, 1856 (I).

<sup>10</sup> Spalding to Purcell, September 21, 1860 (I).

<sup>11</sup> Brunner ad Beckx, October 26, 1856 (AA).

<sup>12</sup> Members of Damen's "Gentleman's Sodality" of St. Francis Xavier Church, St. Louis, made up the group.

The retreats of which there has been question in the foregoing paragraphs are generally described as "closed," the idea being that the participants withdraw entirely from their usual occupations for a period running all the way from two or three to thirty days, spending this time in silence and recollection, generally in some religious institution or in a house particularly designed for the purpose. But there is another type of retreat, though the term is here used with less propriety, one, namely, in which the participants do not forego their customary occupations but merely assemble once or twice a day, generally in the parish church, to listen to a series of sermons or instructions delivered either by a diocesan clergyman or by a priest of some religious order. To this type belongs the popular or parish mission, which has for its object the infusion of new spiritual vigor into a parish or congregation. The method used by Jesuit missionaries to secure this end is that of the Ignatian Exercises as found particularly in the first of the four so-called weeks or groups of exercises that make up the series. The *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius present in their entirety a succession of thoughts or topics for personal reflection admirably selected and combined with a view to stimulate the soul to a faithful observance of the complete Christian rule of life, "do good and avoid evil." The meaning of life, the value of the human soul, sin, judgment, hell, the reception of the sacraments, are topics particularly stressed in the parish-mission. In the pre-suppression Society of Jesus the preaching of missions after the method of the Exercises was carried on extensively, in the restored Society it was resumed gradually in proportion as circumstances permitted the assignment of men to this important ministry.

Evidences of the use of the parochial revival by the regular and sometimes secular clergy of the United States appear in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Already in the twenties Father Francis Patrick Kenrick, later Archbishop of Baltimore, was going up and down the countryside sustaining the faith of the scattered Catholics of Kentucky by means of missionary revivals. The Redemptorists were the first to place regular missionary bands in the field, missions having been conducted by them from the thirties on.<sup>13</sup> Among the middle-western Jesuits the preaching of missions as a steady and regular employment assigned to certain fathers began in 1848 with the inauguration of Father Francis Xavier Weninger's justly celebrated missionary work in the German-speaking parishes of the United States. Even in the earlier stages of their history they had not failed, when opportunity offered, to conduct parochial missions here and there as the most

<sup>13</sup> Benjamin J. Webb, *Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky* (Louisville, 1884), pp. 95, 378, T. L. Skinner, C. S. S. R., *The Redemptorists in the West* (St. Louis, 1932).

effective means of reviving religious fervor. The missions preached by Father Verhaegen at Portage des Sioux in 1828, by Father Van Lommel at Dardenne in 1831 and by Father Gleizal at Florissant in 1838 were commended at the time for the happy results which attended them. On Palm Sunday night, 1851, Father Verhaegen opened a three-days' course of "spiritual exercises for the people," in St. Mary's Cathedral, Chicago, with an introductory sermon on the Exercises of St. Ignatius. Two years later, in 1853, Father Gleizal preached a week's mission in the same cathedral while his fellow-Jesuit, Father Weninger, was simultaneously conducting in St. Joseph's Church his first mission in the city of Chicago.

#### § 2 FRANCIS XAVIER WENINGER

The career of Father Weninger is an episode of importance in the story of the upbuilding of Catholicism in the United States. He was born August 31, 1805, in his father's castle of Wildhaus in Marburg, Province of Styria, Austria. His mother was a member of the nobility, his father a wealthy landowner with connections at the Hapsburg court. As a student at the University of Vienna he enjoyed the personal patronage of the Empress of Austria. Doctor of divinity, fellow of the University of Gratz and professor of dogmatic theology at twenty-five, he became a Jesuit at twenty-seven, entering the Austro-Hungarian Province October 31, 1832. He had a gift for preaching and giving missions and the success he met with in this ministry during his sixteen years of Jesuit life in Austria was noteworthy. But his zeal sought a soil more in need of cultivation than his native land. The United States of America, with its German-speaking population, increasing daily as the tide of immigration rolled in on its shores, seemed to offer the most inviting field for the exercise of his special gifts.

Then the year 1848 drew near, the well-known year of the revolution. I was hearing at the same time about the emigration to America, then, too, the Church in Austria and Germany was being greatly hampered in her movements. Moreover, as was already said, I knew by experience the immeasurable blessings of missions for the people. Accordingly I wrote to the General, Father Roothaan, and informed him that while I was ready to go anywhere in the world if he so willed it, I would still petition him for an appointment to America, there to give missions to the people.<sup>14</sup>

Father Weninger had his wish, going to America in 1848 with encouragement from Father Roothaan, the General, to pursue there his

<sup>14</sup> F. X. Weninger, S. J., *Erinnerungen aus Meiner Leben in Europa und Amerika durch achtzig Jahre—1805 bis 1885*, I, 16 (A). Weninger's *Erinnerungen* are unpublished. Sketches of his career are in *Central Blatt and Social Justice* (St. Louis), June-December, 1927, and *WL*, 18, 43-68 (1889).

career of missionary-preacher Assigned with his companion on the journey from Europe, Father Christopher Genelli, to the Missouri Vice-province, he was first employed as a professor of dogmatic theology in St. Xavier's College, Cincinnati, where in the intervals of teaching a few scholastics were pursuing their studies in divinity. As early as December, 1848, at Oldenburg in Indiana he gave his first mission in the United States. A glowing notice of it signed by the Oldenburg pastor appeared in the Cincinnati *Wahrheitsfreund*.

On December 8, on the feast, accordingly, of the "Immaculate Conception," the mission at Oldenburg opened with a solemn procession in the newly built church, it lasted until December 18, ten days and a half. Not a single Catholic who attended the mission failed to go to confession. People came here from a distance of 15, 18 and 20 miles and even farther, some of them starting on the way with horse and wagon at two in the morning so as not to lose anything of the mission. Though the missionary preached three times daily and even four times, including the talk at communion, he all along drew tears of repentance and consolation from the eyes of his hearers. Often there was general sobbing and weeping throughout the church. One of the most telling sermons was at the solemn reparation before the Blessed Sacrament, but even more stirring was the renewal of the baptismal vows and most stirring of all the parting sermon. Oh God, the very thought of it brings tears to my eyes! Parting in the new house of God, parting at the cemetery, parting at the foot of the great mission-cross where from fifteen to sixteen hundred voices cried out together to heaven "live Jesus!" "live Jesus and Mary!" "long live the Church!" "long live the holy cross!" "Jesus, no more sin!" One must indeed have had a heart of stone not to be moved by such a display of feeling. I close with the wish that every German settlement in North America may share the same happiness of a regular mission, which is the only thing that can effect in a few days a basic and thoroughgoing renewal of spirit in a parish and one that will last for a long time, for such a regular mission so-called retreats are no substitute. In a regular mission the people are instructed and reconciled to God, one class after another, and this produces general and lasting fruit. May the Lord's blessing preserve this fruit and increase it richly in my dear parish of Oldenburg.<sup>15</sup>

Similar striking results attended a mission given in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in the fall of 1849. The account of it which follows bears the name of the pastor of the local German congregation, Reverend Edward Faller.

Pursuant to an announcement in your esteemed paper of the previous week, the Catholics of Fort Wayne had the unspeakable happiness of enjoying a regular mission under the sound direction of the Rev. F. X. Weninger.

<sup>15</sup> *Idem*, I 45. What the writer understands by "retreats" he explains in his account (*infra*) of the method followed by him in conducting missions.

Only one who has attended such a mission can form any idea of the happy results that follow from it

How consoling, thought I to myself, as I read the account of the mission of Oldenburg How clean of heart the good people of Oldenburg must be, among whom the holy mission has done such great and almost incredible good But greater things still have probably taken place in Fort Wayne Who could have believed that the faithful of the vicinity would get up at midnight so as to be present at the first Mass with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at half past six? What an impressive sight to behold the clouds of dust on the roads stirred up by the crowds of people hurrying to church from a distance of eight to ten and even twenty-five miles! Who could remain unmoved to see during the sermons of the distinguished preacher, sometimes four in number, tears of contrition glistening on the faces of the most hard-hearted, persons who perhaps had neglected their religious duties for years At the instructions given to the various classes [men, women, and others] it became evident for the first time how numerous is the Catholic population of Fort Wayne At the conclusion of the mission as also on Monday the entire parish went in procession from the old common church, now the English one, to the newly built German church of brick It was an impressive spectacle as the great throng with the processional cross at its head and with recitation of the rosary and the pealing of the bells of both churches moved towards the newly erected church<sup>16</sup>

Father Weninger was now launched on the full tide of his missionary career The energy with which he pursued his calling is suggested by a bare recital of the localities in which he preached missions during the three years, 1849, 1850 and 1851 The list includes Cincinnati, O., Louisville, Ky, Munster, Brookville and Fort Wayne, Ind, Wapakoneta, Chillicothe, Massillon, Canton, Portsmouth, Hamilton, White Oak, Lancaster, O, New Westphalia, St Louis, New Bremen, Mo, Belleville, Ill, Cleveland, O, Chicago, Ill, Milwaukee, Wis, Port Washington, Wis, Sheboygan, Mich, Green Bav, Manitowoc, Burlington, Wis, Quincy, Ill, Washington and Herman, Mo At the beginning of 1852 he was in New Orleans and on the occasion of this, his first visit to the South, preached a mission to a congregation of slaves recruited from three Louisiana plantations Before Father Weninger's missionary labors came to an end hardly a town of any size between the Atlantic and Pacific had been left unvisited.

An incident occurring in Buffalo in 1855 points to the reputation enjoyed by Father Weninger at this time when he had been only six years on the American missions. The trustees of St Louis's Church in Buffalo, having shown themselves recalcitrant to ecclesiastical authority,

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<sup>16</sup> *Idem*, I 54 It is not improbable that the accounts of the Oldenberg and Fort Wayne missions were from Weninger's own hand, their perfervid tone seems to suggest this



were excommunicated by the Right Rev. John Timon, bishop of the diocese, while the church itself was placed under an interdict. The trouble grew out of an attempt by the trustees to manage the temporalities of the church independently of the Bishop. In 1854 Bishop Timon was present at the definition in Rome by Pius IX of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. At the very moment that the Holy Father pronounced the words of the decree, he cast his eyes in spirit on the Virgin Mother, so he afterwards informed Father Weninger, and recommended to her his schismatic congregation of St. Louis. Immediately on his return to Buffalo the Bishop invited Father Weninger to conduct a mission for the misguided parishioners in the hope that his zealous intervention might heal the schism. Father Weninger accepted his task, "the hardest in all my missionary experience," but stipulated that the interdict be first removed. Bishop Timon agreed to this, publishing a formal notice to that effect.

Buffalo, May 18, 1855

The pious, learned and zealous Missionary, Father Weninger (wishing to labor for the salvation of souls in the only German church of this diocese which has not yet heard his noble and truly Christian eloquence), requests me to withdraw the interdict from the church of St. Louis and the excommunication from the trustees. I can refuse nothing to the worthy priest of God, consenting, therefore, to his request, I hereby declare that the excommunication will cease as soon as the holy *Triduan* [triduum] in St. Louis church will begin.

John, Bishop of Buffalo

The efforts of Father Weninger on this occasion to heal the breach between the schismatic congregation and its ecclesiastical superior appear to have been on the whole successful though the embers of the controversy smouldered for many years after.<sup>17</sup>

At first Father Weninger addressed German congregations only, later, he conducted missions also in English. In the case of mixed congregations it was his custom to deliver four sermons daily in the language of each nationality, in English and German, or in English and French. If all three nationalities were before him, he gave the same sermon three times over in the three languages, and this four times a day. The sermons were necessarily short to bring this formidable program within the range of physical possibility. Though his English was notably defective, his intense zeal and enthusiasm made a deep impression on his hearers, who after hearing him preach in the vernacular, came in great numbers to the sacraments. A computation made in 1879, when he was seventy-four years of age and was still possessed of re-

<sup>17</sup> C. G. Deuther, *The Life and Times of Right Rev. John Timon, D.D., First Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Buffalo* (Buffalo, 1870), p. 211.

markable vigor, revealed that he had conducted in thirty-one years over eight hundred missions, preached thirty thousand times, made between two thousand and three thousand converts, and journeyed over two hundred thousand miles "In all that time he never met with a serious accident, his voice never failed him, and his strength was unimpaired though he never accommodated either his clothing or his manner of life to change of season or climate" <sup>18</sup>

Father Weninger left on record the method which he followed in conducting his remarkable missions <sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Menology of the Missouri Province* (St Louis, 1925) (A) "On Sunday March 1st Rev F Weninger, the great missionary and writer in German, begins a mission in our church here [St Xavier's, Cincinnati] We hope and trust that his English, which is poor, will not prevent the usual results of such missions for he is a saint in appearance and very deed" Swagers à Deynoodt, Feb 27, 1874 Archives of the North Belgian Province, S J

<sup>19</sup> *WL*, 18 60 *et seq* (1889) "Now since 14 years I continually am giving Missions in the woods as well as in the metropolis going to every chapel, no matter how many families there are In the course of the year I am preaching over 1000 times every year, because I have to preach in a single week about 50 times If in German alone about 25 times There are heard at the Missions about 25-30 thousand general confessions every year and received more or less about 100 Protestants Consequently I received during these Missions about 1400 protestant families to the church, not comprising the children in that number which are saved for Catholic education in mixed marriages, whose number is incredibly large Many hundred Mission Crosses design [designate?] those places where I was giving Missions from the shores of the Atlantic and the Mexican Gulf to the height of the Alleghany and the quarries of Dacotah Territory" Weninger to De Smet, September 15, 1862 (A)

Several appearances of what was reputed to be a miraculous cross took place in connection with Father Weninger's missions, two of them at Guttenburg, Iowa, 1853 and 1856, and one at Alpena, Michigan, 1858 Father Marco, pastor of St Mary's Church at Grand Rapids, Michigan, made a written statement under date of September 12, 1858, concerning the Alpena apparition He said in part "At this solemnity an extraordinary event occurred, for as soon as the holy cross had been dedicated and was about being raised, there appeared on the blue sky, surrounded by a cluster of light clouds, a regularly formed, large, white and well designed cross, which disappeared at the moment the missionary cross was sunk in the ground The whole crowd present gazed with amazement at this striking appearance and you could hear persons most difficult [slow?] to believe utter these words 'This is more than natural!'" (A) Father Marco later took oath that he had seen the cross and seventy-one of his parishioners signed a statement under date of December 6, 1861, to the same effect (Missour 6-XXVII, 71) Father Weninger himself drew up for the General an account of seven such apparitions under the caption, *De apparitionibus S Crucis aliusque extraordinarius signis occasione erectionis Crucis Missionis* (Missour 6-XXVII, 68) (AA). Testimony as to the one at Guttenburg was taken by the local pastor, Reverend Henry Rensen on January 8, 1854 (Missour 6-XXVII, 70) For an informing account of the Guttenburg case, see M M Hoffman, "A Miracle in Mid-America?" in *Mid-America* (1931), 14 57-63

The principal thing to be noted is that the missions which I conducted are not to be confounded with the [open] retreats. In the latter one simply delivers sermons or gives instructions for three, five or eight days, twice a day, and in the meantime allows the people to prepare for confession, without preparing the different classes of people according to their various states of life. I myself gave such retreats in Europe in the places in which I was teaching. It is true that by these retreats much good is often accomplished, but they do not result in such a thorough regeneration of a congregation that each class of the parishioners may profit. This regeneration consists rather in a thorough instruction of each portion of the congregation—married men and married women, young men and young women, and children. For this purpose, instructions adapted to these particular states, separate confessions for the different classes, and general Communions at stated times, are of immeasurable utility. In the first place, there is in an invitation to a sermon meant for a particular state in life something specially attractive, which induces the members of these respective classes to come willingly to these separate conferences. This is especially so in the case of young men and married men who have neglected the practice of their religion or who have almost given it up. In the second place, you can never in the presence of one class of hearers, recall to their consideration, at least fully and circumstantially and with a view to their fulfilment, any or all of their specific duties, without inviting the criticism of the other classes of the congregation. In the third place, this parcelling out of the congregation provides also for the practicability and certainty of confession. The missionary is enabled, in this way, to place before a whole class the points upon which these particular members of the parish are to examine and accuse themselves, and the confessor will thus perhaps rid himself of much of his otherwise superfluous labor. Besides, with this method, there is much less dissipation of mind and more earnestness displayed by all classes. By it the missionary holds the reins of the whole mission in his own hands. However I do not give this plan as a rule for other missionaries, it will overtax the ordinary strength of most preachers. What surprises me, although it was the holy will of God, is that God gave me the strength necessary to carry out such a plan for thirty-seven years.

As regards the number of times one is to preach, I myself gave ordinarily two set sermons, one of these class-conferences and an address, thus preaching four times a day. When, as was frequently the case, the congregation was a mixed one, of English, German or French, I had to preach eight times a day, or upwards of sixty times in eight days. If it happened that all three nationalities were present in large numbers in a congregation, the leading points had to be put before each nationality. Then, of course, each sermon is considerably shorter, the three taking an hour and a half. Such a mission, in the three languages, is very taxing upon the missionary, but the effect is far greater than when a special mission is given to each nationality.

What relates to the matter of the sermons, the instructions to the various classes of exercitants, the address, the solemnities to be observed, together with the whole conduct of the mission, I have embraced in my three volumes

entitled respectively, *The Mission*, *The Renewal of the Mission*, and *Practical Hints*. The solicitude to be exerted for the continuance of the fruit of the mission after it has closed, and the practical working of its effects, I have minutely dwelt upon in the *Practical Hints*. To this end, the erection of sodalities for the various classes in the parish, the visiting of the mission cross, and, above all, a care to provide fitting books for family reading and in keeping with the mission, books that will prove useful for home reading and self-instruction, help very efficaciously. There is no dearth of good books I know, but I speak here of the spread of those books which suit precisely the chief need of the faithful nowadays and particularly in America.

For, first of all, the faithful everywhere, but especially in America, should clearly understand, and be in a condition to instruct others, that there is but one religion revealed by God and that there is but one church founded by Christ, viz. the first Christian Church, the Roman Catholic Church, which is the only saving Church. They should know, in this way, that there are not as many kinds of churches as there are Christian denominations that believe in Christ, but that those only are, in the full meaning of the word, Christians, who recognize themselves as children of that church which Christ founded. Furthermore, every Catholic should also be in a condition to give a satisfactory answer and explanation to every objection brought against the teaching of the Church. To aid them in this, I wrote the work entitled, *Catholicity, Protestantism and Infidelity*.

Secondly, all the faithful should be so instructed in the doctrines of the Catholic Church that they can, in turn, teach every one that the doctrine which they, as children of the Catholic Church, are obliged to believe, was taught from the earliest days of Christianity, and is in keeping with the teachings of Holy Writ and the tradition of the Fathers.

Thirdly, every Catholic should be intimately persuaded, that to attain to salvation, it will not alone suffice that our faith be orthodox, but our lives also must be conformed to Christ, and we must constantly advance in his knowledge and love. Now, next to a thorough grounding in the doctrine of the Church, nothing more effectually conduces to this than the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was to foster this devotion that I wrote the *Sacred Heart Mission Book*.

Fourthly, Catholics must believe without any admixture of error in their faith, hence they should admit the infallible teaching authority of the head of the Church. In fact, fundamental instruction upon this point has become a matter of paramount importance for Catholics since the definition of the Vatican Council. The young, in particular, need this instruction, that the silly raillery of the enemy may not lead them into error. To supply a copious source of instruction for all upon this doctrine, I published *The Infallibility of the Pope in defining Matters of Faith*.

Fifthly, the whole tendency of Catholic life is directed heavenwards. What is heaven? The answer to this important question I have given in my *Easter in Heaven*.

Sixthly, are there any of the faithful who have already secured for them-

selves the blessedness of paradise? Yes, the saints have secured the happiness of heaven for all eternity. Who are the saints and what were they? I have answered this question in my *Lives of the Saints*. Here, to a short account of their lives, I have in each instance appended a brief exhortation to their imitation and indicated methods of actually profiting by their example.

In addition to these works I published a series of three catechisms for ordinary and for more advanced students of the Catholic doctrine.

These seven works constitute a small house-library, and, when giving missions, I have exerted myself, as I always do, so far as to prevail upon the families attending the mission exercises to secure all these works. I withdraw from my labors with the reflection: "What more, dear people, can I do for all of you or any one of you, than I have done, what greater solicitude am I capable of exhibiting for the future welfare of any and of all of you?"

The unusual display of religious fervor attending Father Weninger's initial efforts in the missionary field was more or less typical of the long series of parochial revivals associated with his name. All through his career bishops and priests came forward to render spontaneous testimony to the striking results of his ministry. Father James Rolando, a Lazarist, after a mission given by the Jesuit in St. Vincent's Church, St. Louis, wrote of him that he was "an outstanding example of the virtues, especially of humility, meekness, ardent zeal . . . a man beloved of God and men . . . powerful in word and work." Father Murphy, in citing the Lazarist's letter, comments: "Letters to the same effect are sent me from every quarter . . . let that one suffice for the many."<sup>20</sup> Said Bishop Loras of Dubuque in 1853: "The good he has done to his compatriots is immense. I hope it will be lasting seeing that he has left wise regulations behind him in every parish . . . Father Weninger's disinterestedness has been remarked and it has lent not a little force to his words. He has constantly refused all gifts in money offered him by the Germans, adding that he came not to make money but to gain souls." "Not in vain," Father Krautbauer, pastor of St. Peter's Church, Rochester, N. Y., wrote in 1854, "does Father Weninger claim St. Xavier as patron and bear his name, for he is indeed the Xavier of Germany in America."<sup>21</sup> The missionary's work during the single year, 1853, led Father Gleizal to comment on it in a letter to the General:

From January 1, 1853 up to January 1, 1854, Father Weninger, who works the whole year round without respite, has evangelized 5 dioceses and 27 parishes, has given 32 missions, planted 32 crosses, heard 30,000 con-

<sup>20</sup> Murphy ad Roothaan, March 28, 1852 (AA)

<sup>21</sup> Loras à Murphy, December 22, 1853, Krautbauer ad Murphy, April 4, 1854 (AA).

fessions, preached 900 sermons, converted 50 Protestants, and given a clergy retreat. It must be remarked that the confessions which he has heard are almost all general, half of them being confessions of men. Moreover, most of the men would soon have lost the faith without the aid of the missions. The good, therefore, which he has done is simply incalculable. The unremitting labor to which he gives himself up is in my eyes a prodigy. Never in all my life have I seen so much work achieved in so short a time and by a single man. Judge by this of what could be done in our position if only we had the work of the missions a little more at heart.<sup>22</sup>

In 1859 Bishop Odin of Galveston witnessed to Father Weninger's missionary success in Texas.

Last Monday, July the 25th, Rev. Father Weninger closed his missionary labors in the diocese of Galveston. He arrived here on the 10th of March and from that moment until now, his exertions for the salvation of souls have been incessant and most arduous. He has given missions in Galveston, Houston, Victoria, San Antonio, Costro-ville, D'haws, Fredricksburg, New Braunspels, Austin, Ross Prairie, Frclsberg and Bernard. Everywhere his labors have been crowned with the most consoling success. Oh, how many poor sinners have been reconciled to a God whom they had long forgotten, how many have been awakened from their deep lethargy and brought back to a sense of their religious duties! Even our separated brethren have been much edified and benefited by his pious instructions. Several of them through his ministry have had the happiness to know and embrace our holy faith. His fatigues, privations and sufferings have been very great in our poor Texas, but like the Apostle he delights to be deemed worthy to suffer for the sake of his divine master. We may truly say of this indefatigable successor of the apostles, *transit benefaciendo*. I will never be able to return to God sufficient thanks for all the good he has done in Texas. He carries with him my most sincere gratitude, that of the clergy and of the faithful. May God reward him for the great services he has rendered to the diocese.<sup>23</sup>

In Father William Stack Murphy, vice-provincial of Missouri, Father Weninger found a superior of more than ordinary sympathy and insight. In his routine correspondence with the General Father Murphy had occasion at times to comment on the missionary's activi-

<sup>22</sup> Gleizal à Beckx, February 20, 1854 (AA). It may have been Gleizal's statistical account that led Father Beckx to bring Weninger's work to the notice of Pius IX. "For the consolation of your Reverence I add that on the 5th of this month I was received in audience by his Holiness and told him various things about your Reverence's work on the Missions, all which his Holiness was delighted to hear. I asked his Holiness at the end to give your Reverence his special blessing, which he did with the greatest cordiality." Beckx ad Weninger, April 8, 1854 (AA).

<sup>23</sup> Odin to Druyts, July 28, 1859 (A).

ties The comment was uniformly appreciative, often warmly so, though he was equally frank in setting down whatever strictures were passed on the energetic missionary's methods. Thus, when Father Weninger showed himself somewhat unobservant of certain regulations in regard to the publication of books by members of the Society, Father Murphy wrote to the Father General

He is not so ready, after the manner of authors, to suffer a check to be put upon his pen The fourth edition is now being issued of his splendid work, *de Vitis Sanctorum* [Lives of the Saints], originally printed in Germany, it is bought and read with astonishing eagerness He is extremely popular everywhere as a missionary The Bishops call for him on all sides He is of the greatest assistance to the clergy during their retreats, but he seems to displease a bit as he catechizes them and treats them as if they were ignorant I really don't know whether he is wrong here as many of them are without instruction and without knowledge of essential things that pertain to the priesthood As to Ours, they complain that he does not take a companion and is unwilling to work with his own brethren, to whom his usual reply is that he does not find any one to work with him harmoniously and steadily in the vineyard of the Lord A really great man and yet human It would be more perfect [in him], if I mistake not, were he to act and judge in a different way, and yet I should not wish to restrain or hamper so unusual a worker, who perhaps is not to blame Moreover, he says it would be difficult to meet the expense if two went together <sup>24</sup>

Further comments of Father Murphy on Weninger are met with in letters of 1861 and 1862

Father Weninger has lately brought out an excellent work in English, a *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, to which Bishop Luers has given the most cordial indorsement in writing One of the Redemptorists (an Irishman) told me that among them [Germans] he enjoys the highest reputation for labor and piety but that in their opinion he dispatches his missions too quickly, an opinion shared also by our German Fathers This peculiarity results chiefly from the fact that he is practically alone [on the missions] Father Damen adds in regard to him that owing to the excessive expenses he incurs for decorations and music, he is a burden on the poorer parishes and for this reason in some places receives no invitation to return and in others is not invited at all . . . Recently he brought out in Cincinnati a golden book, *Protestantism and Infidelity* Another edition is being prepared, with improvements here and there by our Cincinnati folk, perhaps at the suggestion of some of the bishops lately assembled there in Council The style is being given a more English flavor, for it "Germanized" [*Germanizabat*] in places There is a certain candor and attractiveness about the book with arguments and facts right to the point and all graphically put He declares that he will

<sup>24</sup> Murphy ad Beckx, April 24, 1856 (AA)

circulate as many as 100,000 copies. A bold thing to say and yet not rash or ridiculous in the mouth of this man <sup>25</sup>

Father Weninger was apparently not free from what in the language of religious orders are called "singularities." No caution is more frequently insisted upon in the spiritual training their members undergo than to beware of departures from that normal manner of procedure according to the religious rule which is recognized to be a guarantee of correct and sane behavior. And yet, while the caution is a wise and even necessary one, the fact remains that even canonized saints of the Church have been known to show certain idiosyncrasies or oddities of deportment which are by no means to be made an object of conscious imitation by others. So in the case of Father Weninger, while there could be no question of his genuine personal virtue and tremendous zeal, there were certain mannerisms or peculiarities of his, for instance his inability or reluctance, whatever it was, to share his ministerial labors with a companion, that the Society of Jesus would consider reprehensible in its average type of missionary. "He is accounted a saint," Father Sopranis said of him in 1860, "a veritable model in zeal and union with God." But there was noted in him, the Visitor went on to say, "a certain independence of superiors and several things not according to the rule and spirit of the Society . . . He publishes [books] without submitting them to censorship." And in replying to the Visitor on this head, Father Beckx himself observed "He [Weninger] is singularly gifted . . . The Lord's blessing on his activities is a generous one. But he is a man *sui generis*, for he does not a few things which in him perhaps are harmless or even good, but which ought not to be tolerated in others." <sup>26</sup>

A practice of Father Weninger which elicited unfavorable comment for a while was that of selling his own books on the missions with a view to providing the faithful with reading-matter of a religious nature which otherwise they could not so easily procure. Father Ehrensberger in 1851 protested against "this good, nay saintly Father's praising of his own books so loudly on the missions. He carries around with him and sells whole boxes of his *Leben der Heiligen* and *Liebesbund*. Certainly he has nothing else in view but to do spiritual good. He himself will get nothing out of it in the way of temporal gain. Still there are everywhere malicious persons . . . who slander him." In February,

<sup>25</sup> Murphy ad Beckx, March 24, 1861, Murphy à Beckx, February 21, 1862 (AA)

<sup>26</sup> Sopranis à Beckx, November 17, 1860, Beckx ad Sopranis, December 14, 1860 (AA) "*Multa scribit, sed parum castigata in lucem edit*," Beckx ad O'Neil, Oct 2, 1874 (A).



1852, Father Weninger explained his conduct to the General in regard to these two seeming counts against him, namely, that he advertised his own books lavishly and laid himself open to suspicion of commercialism. Father Murphy followed shortly with these lines to the General:

Father Weninger renders an account to your Paternity of what concerns his books. Fathers Spicher, Goeldlin, and Wippen find that what he does in this connection is, so to say, absolutely necessary and that immense and lasting good results therefrom without the inconveniences that might occur in Europe. The Archbishop [of St. Louis] has pleaded with me to give a free hand in everything to a man so eminently apostolic, and esteemed, too, so highly by Bishop Henni of Milwaukee. Ours say that it would be difficult to be his companion, but that the priests and faithful admire everything he does. I except Father Patschowski, who judges of the matter quite otherwise, and perhaps one or two others. I await the decision of your Paternity.<sup>27</sup>

At a later period Father Weninger was required by the Father General to discontinue the practice of selling his own books on the missions. While there were presumedly circumstances which rendered the practice inadvisable, the missionary no doubt had the right idea as to the importance of good popular literature of a religious nature in the divine warfare of the Church. In his "Relation" of 1862-1863 he undertook to show "how efficacious a means for the salvation of souls is to be found in the circulation of good books." Of the favorable reception given his own books one or other instance has already been given. His *Lives of the Saints* reached its fourth edition in 1856, his *Devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary* went through four editions in nine months, his *Epitome Pastorale* met with the approval of the bishops, his *Protestantism and Infidelity* reached a sale of 30,000 copies by 1862, the fourth German and seventh English edition of the book appearing in 1863. "Although rather superficial in its character," says a contemporary estimate in Italian, probably from Father Sopranis, "it is doing great good among Protestants of ordinary education, a result which must be attributed as much to the sanctity and prayers of its very zealous author as to the intrinsic merits of the book." Whatever income accrued to Father Weninger from the sale of his books was applied by him to some pious or philanthropic cause. Thus, in 1869, he sent Father Beckx six hundred and twenty-nine dollars to be distributed among poor priests.<sup>28</sup> Father Weninger's published works as listed in Sommervogel's

<sup>27</sup> Murphy à Beckx, March 3, 1852 (AA)

<sup>28</sup> Beckx ad Weninger, August 29, 1869 (AA) Father Weninger was active in promoting the canonization (1888) of Peter Claver, "saint of the slave-trade." A series of striking cures which he obtained by applying relics of the holy Jesuit

*Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus* number forty-seven in German, sixteen in English, either translations or original productions, three in Latin and eight in French, besides several elaborate pieces of sacred music.

Father Weninger's active missionary career was continued up to within a few years of his death, which occurred at Cincinnati, June 29, 1888. He had lived eighty-three years, of which fifty-six were spent in the Society of Jesus. Of the various influences that went to the saving of the faith of the German Catholic immigrant in the United States during the past century, the labors, whether in the pulpit or with the pen, of this Americanized Austrian had a highly important place

### § 3 GERMAN RURAL MISSIONS

The German Catholic immigrants of the nineteenth century found themselves for years after their arrival in the United States in anything but a satisfactory position as concerned their religious well-being. German-speaking priests were few in number, while many of those actually in the ministry were lacking in energy and zeal or otherwise not of the type which the circumstances required. A letter of Father Ehrensberger to the General, dated from Cincinnati, November 30, 1851, presents a detailed and searching survey of the situation. On the whole the condition of the German Catholic immigrants was a distressing one especially in the rural districts. Those residing in the larger towns, "receive at least sufficient service, . . . pastors, schools, rather nice churches, etc. But a considerable part of them live in the backwoods where, separated for the most part from one another, they cultivate the land. For this particular section of the Lord's vineyard barely one or other priest is available. There is great scarcity of German priests, most of them preferring the more comfortable life of the big cities." Moreover, heretics and perverse men were making efforts to turn the Germans aside from the true faith and as a consequence many

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included the two which were accepted by the Congregation of Rites in Rome as truly miraculous and used accordingly for the saint's canonization. The principals in these two miraculous cures (described in the Decree of Canonization) were Barbara Dressen of Milwaukee and Ignatius Strecker of St. Louis. "When called to the witness-stand, I testified that I had imposed the relics and that cures constantly happened." Weninger's own account (dated, Cincinnati, Feb. 26, 1888) of his devotion to Claver and the numerous cures he was instrumental in working through the saint's intercession is in *WL*, 17: 106-9 (1888). The Ludwig-Missionsverein of Munich had the services of Father Weninger for many years as intermediary in the distribution of its alms to needy German parishes and institutions in the United States. His activities in this regard are recorded in Theodore Roemer, O. M. Cap., *The Ludwig-Missionsverein and the Church in the United States, 1838-1918* (Washington, 1934), pp. 92-103.

of the latter were going over to the sects, especially the Methodists. "Even of those who do not abjure the faith, many die without the sacraments. The children are not instructed in the elements of Christian doctrine. For the most part they attend the 'government schools' to the great detriment and even loss of the faith."<sup>29</sup>

To meet the spiritual needs of the German Catholics in out-of-town localities, most of whom were engaged in farming, centrally situated residences as those of Washington and New Westphalia in Missouri, with their staff of resident pastors, were, no doubt, an important and even necessary factor and as such were more than justifying themselves. But something more seemed to be required at the moment, and this was a group of "itinerant" missionaries, not burdened with parochial duties, but free to visit the rural congregations and scattered knots of German settlers and do for them what Father Weninger was doing for the regularly organized congregations of cities and towns. This was an idea broached by Father Joseph Patschowski, pastor of St. Joseph's Church in St. Louis, and he enlarged upon it in a communication to Father Roothaan, September 10, 1852. The General readily caught the idea, which appealed to him, and he wrote with his own hand on the margin of the Missourian's letter "*Utinam! Libenter tentabimus*" ("would we could do it! we shall gladly try"). Then came Father Roothaan's appeal to the superior at St. Louis to carry the plan into effect. "We have been written to concerning the remarkable fruit which missionaries [going out] from a residence set up especially for this purpose could gather in among the settlers, especially the Germans, a fruit more abundant than what is reaped in the stations"<sup>30</sup> Father Murphy on his part was sympathetic to the proposal. "You recommend me to begin our little country missions. No one desires the work more than myself, but we need men. I hope that towards the end of the next summer we shall be able to make a little start. Good Father Patschowski has a great desire to be of the party, very likely he will get his wish." Father Patschowski, so Murphy thought, had a weak chest, this, he further stated, was certainly the case with Father Tschieder, whom the General suggested should be given a share in the undertaking.<sup>31</sup>

The plan proposed by Father Patschowski to the General was that of a centrally located residence, St. Joseph's in St. Louis for example, as headquarters for two fathers to be employed steadily in giving so-called country missions. The harvest in prospect was great, especially in the diocese of Chicago. "How many people living more or less at a distance in woods and fields can see a priest scarcely once a year and if they see

<sup>29</sup> Ehrensberger ad Roothaan, November 30, 1851. (AA)

<sup>30</sup> Roothaan ad Murphy, November 9, 1852. (AA)

<sup>31</sup> Murphy à Roothaan, April 1, 1853. (AA).

one they cannot understand his language! What a misery! What a dangerous situation especially in America where so many enemies are prowling about on all sides making every effort to pervert the Catholics" <sup>32</sup> The fall of 1853 saw the German rural missions finally set on foot. There were now four fathers attached to St. Joseph's in St. Louis, two for the parish and two for the new venture. Fathers Patschowski and Spicher, so the vice-provincial informed the General, were delighted with the new arrangement. "Fathers Patschowski and Ehrensberger gave their first 'itinerant' mission at Teutopolis, a German settlement in Illinois, where the pastor and the people did not get along. Harmony has been reestablished. It is natural enough for the Germans not to agree with foreign priests who do not understand their language, but it happens only too often that their compatriots also displease them. It is claimed that they wish to rule both pastor and parish, that they treat these last as hired hands who have need to be watched. The pastors find them defiant and exacting. Either the spirit of the country spoils them or the secret societies are working among them. At Buffalo at present there prevails a schism which Monsignor Bedini has not been able to put down. It is the quarrel in miniature of 'the priesthood and the empire.' But the Church will triumph in the long run" <sup>33</sup>

Unhappily the important work which promised so much for the German Catholic immigrants of the Middle West came to an abrupt end with the recall of many of the German-speaking Jesuits to Europe. Father Murphy had foreseen this difficulty even before the rural missions were begun. "According to a letter from Reverend Father Faller [provincial of Upper Germany] there is question of his leaving again to all his subjects the choice of attaching themselves definitely to the Vice-province or of repatriating themselves. I am afraid the majority will decide to leave. In this case what will become of us? Where shall the residences and colleges stand? And as to the German missions which we must begin, they will be adjourned indefinitely. Father Faller promises us 'volunteers,' as he puts it, but time is needed to enable them to replace those who leave and who are more or less at home in the country and consequently very useful" <sup>34</sup> In December, 1853, Fathers Spicher and Ehrensberger were definitely recalled to Europe. "I regret that our little German missions," Father Murphy informed the newly elected General, Peter Beckx, "find themselves, as a consequence, stopped at the very beginning of the work. . . . However the matter may be arranged, it would be bad grace for me to complain in

<sup>32</sup> Patschowski ad Roothaan, April 13, 1853 (AA)

<sup>33</sup> Murphy à Beckx, 1853 (AA).

<sup>34</sup> Murphy à Roothaan, April 1, 1853 (AA)

view of all that Germany has done for America and will, so I hope, continue to do in the future”<sup>35</sup>

In the event the preaching of rural missions, Father Patschowski's own plan for saving the faith of the scattered German settlers, was not resumed by the midwestern Jesuits. He himself died prematurely in 1859 and at the period of his demise does not seem to have been employed in this particular occupation. The problem all along was to find German-speaking priests. The Missouri Vice-province itself counted few such and these or most of them were needed to serve the numerous German parishes organized by the Jesuits in St. Louis and in Osage and Franklin Counties, Missouri. As to the exiled members of the province of Upper Germany domiciled in the West since 1848, they were subject to recall at any time by their superior and could not be counted upon for permanent service. “The men of the Vice-Province,” said Father Murphy in 1853, “find that we are doing a great deal for the Germans.” It is true that he withdrew Fathers Weber and Kalcher from Ohio, but this was a necessary measure.

When I asked the Archbishop of St. Louis to take Washington where the Society would turn over to him a fine piece of property, he answered me that he needed five German priests for places which are entirely abandoned. The residence of New Westphalia, which is Father Ehrensberger's, is merely the center of a batch of little stations, so that Ours are always out in the country. It is the same with Washington and with Father Brunner, who is evangelizing an entire district in Wisconsin, where by this time he has built his seventh church. I say nothing of Father Weninger or of the little Gallo-Germanic mission [Loose Creek] of Father Goeldlin. There are five German parishes in this city [St. Louis], the one in which piety reigns supreme is St. Joseph's, served by Fathers Patschowski and Seisl. The Archbishop, it is maintained, would readily take it in charge, but we shall always need a German church, if only to occupy some of Ours who would not fit in well elsewhere.<sup>36</sup>

It was perhaps human on the part of the fathers in charge of the German parishes, eager to obtain additional help if it were at all possible, to make complaint at times that the German Catholics were being slighted. The matter has already been touched upon. It suffices here to cite the words of Father Gleizal written in 1858 to Father Beckx:

Catalogue in hand I see in the Vice-Province 3 colleges. Now the Germans are admitted to them just as the Americans and treated in the same way. We have two churches in St. Louis, one for the Americans [English-

<sup>35</sup> Murphy à Beckx, December 8, 1856 (AA).

<sup>36</sup> Murphy à Pierling, March 4, 1854 (AA).

speaking Catholics], the other for the Germans We have 5 out-of-town missions or residences, of these 5, three are German Of the 12 missionaries employed out of town, 8 are occupied in taking care of the Germans We have no American missionary, I refer to *operari excurrentes*, for missions, retreats, etc We have three for the German population and one of them is occupied all year with these missions<sup>37</sup> In view of these facts it seems to me it is impossible to say that we are neglecting the Germans<sup>38</sup>

What concerned the Father General most of all was that nothing resembling even remotely national feeling or prejudice should be allowed to creep into the situation "Would that Ours at least," he wrote in 1855 to Father De Smet, "might keep far from them the so-called spirit of nationality, a spirit utterly opposed to the spirit of Christ and of the Society"<sup>39</sup> Happily there never was any serious problem on this score among the Jesuits of the West, who with all their diversified strains of blood managed to work together with remarkable unity of feeling and suppression of undue national or racial sympathies.

#### § 4. ENGLISH PAROCHIAL MISSIONS

The success which Father Weninger was meeting with in his "*Volksmissionen*" among the German parishes of the United States was the occasion that led to a similar ministry on behalf of the English-speaking parishes of the country As far back as 1843 Father Murphy, then rector of St Mary's College, Lebanon, Kentucky, was expressing to Father Roothaan the hope that something would eventually be done in this regard "As to Kentucky I hope to see the day when we shall have two *missionaires ambulants*, who will go from town to town to set forth the dogmas of the faith. One always succeeds in this country when after the manner of St. Francis de Sales nothing more is done than set forth and prove Catholic belief without even mentioning heresy, the more so as this people is less Protestant than Catholic."<sup>40</sup> One need not acquiesce in Father Murphy's estimate of the religious attitude of the Kentuckians of his day to recognize with him the value of the popular mission as a most effective instrument for the spread of the Gospel Three years' experience of its use led Father Weninger to urge it upon Father Roothaan as an imperative need of the Church in the United States

Incredible would be the results if in every ecclesiastical Province of North America two of our Fathers conversant with English were to devote them-

<sup>37</sup> This was Father Weninger

<sup>38</sup> Gleizal à Beckx, October 4, 1855. (A)

<sup>39</sup> Beckx ad De Smet, July 28, 1855 (AA)

<sup>40</sup> Murphy à Roothaan, July 11, 1843

selves entirely to the giving of missions in all the dioceses. The Bishops everywhere would wish for nothing better, for many thousands of Irish immigrants perish for lack of priests to take care of them. Here and there you find some who have not been to confession for 10, 12 and more years and who labor under the utmost ignorance in religious matters although as far as outward profession goes they cling with the greatest persistence to the Catholic faith.<sup>41</sup>

In the correspondence of the day addressed by Missouri Jesuits to general headquarters no point indeed was stressed more persistently than the need of these so-called parish missions. If the General could not supply the need, at least it was to be made clear to him that the need existed. Two letters received by Father Beckx in the opening month of 1854 are characteristic. Father Gleizal, always a keen observer of conditions and a skilful correspondent besides, touches off the situation in these words:

Another point which demands the attention of his Paternity not less than the preceding ones is the work of the *missions ambulants* not only for the Germans but especially for the Americans and the Irish. It is impossible to form an idea of the situation in the United States outside of the cities. The Catholics for want of priests to visit them lose the faith while their children for the most part are borne away by the torrent of infidelity. Even in the cities missions are quite necessary. The Redemptorists have realized this thoroughly, and so besides having a band of missionaries, very small, it is true, they have opened residences in nearly all the big cities. In this way they do an immense amount of good, they make themselves known and stimulate vocations, getting, as a matter of fact, many more subjects than we do. It is my opinion that two Fathers engaged just now on the missions would gain many souls for God and many subjects for the Society. The point I touch on here is often a subject of conversation with a great many of Ours and all express regret that nothing is being done along this line. Only let the work of the colleges be simplified and it will be possible to make a beginning of the work of the missions for the Americans and the Irish. Bishop Miége is of the opinion that I should communicate with your Paternity on this subject, he thinks as I do that the work of the missions is the work of works, the more so as the Archbishop of St. Louis would be delighted to see the inception among us of a ministry which he desires with all his heart.<sup>42</sup>

A similar appeal was made by Father De Smet

Father Weninger accomplishes an incalculable amount of good by the many missions he gives in the different states. Sufficient proof of this will be found in the fruits which he gathered single-handed in the course of the past

<sup>41</sup> Weninger, *Relatio*, 1851 (A)

<sup>42</sup> Gleizal à Roothaan, January 20, 1842 (AA) "*Missions ambulants*," i.e., literally "walking" or better "itinerant" missions

year, an account of which has perhaps reached your Paternity by this time Fathers Ehrensberger and Patschowski had scarcely begun to give missions to their countrymen when the first was recalled by superiors to his own Province, a circumstance that must perforce check the good results of their worthy enterprise. It is much to be desired that we have missionary Fathers for the Irish and American Catholics as also for such as are desirous of becoming Catholics, a class very numerous in a large number of localities.<sup>43</sup>

In July of the same year, 1854, Father De Smet returned to the same theme in a letter to Father Cicaterrì of Maryland.

Our German missionaries are doing much good in Missouri and Illinois. Besides the apostolic F. Weninger, so blessed by heaven, there are three Fathers appointed to give missions in German through the country, and as they know English sufficiently, they attend to others [non-Germans] occasionally. Last year F. Gleizal directed the clerical retreat of Milwaukee and he has just finished that of Louisville. Dr. O'Regan [who is] to be consecrated next Tuesday Bishop of Chicago, spent ten days in retreat under the same good Father. We are impatiently looking forward to the time when we shall have a body of Missionaries for American Catholics. This we also recommend to your good prayers.<sup>44</sup>

Ardent Father Weninger on his part kept on urging the matter with increasing vehemence. "And if St. Francis Xavier," he exclaims in a letter of May, 1858, to Father Beckx, "was unable to understand with what conscience the Doctors of the Sorbonne could live in comfort in Paris while so many souls in the Indies were in the meantime going to hell, who, I ask, will understand how it comes about that so many Fathers here in the colleges are teaching boys Algebra and performing chemical experiments for them while at the same time before their very eyes numbers of souls are being driven headlong down the way of perdition? . . . We must indeed do the one thing and not omit the other. Colleges are necessary and most excellent things, but they are not what is chiefly and much less what is exclusively needed in the present condition of things in this country."<sup>45</sup>

In 1858 the long discussed project of missions for the English-speaking parishes finally began to get under way. Among the important matters to which the Second Provincial Council of Cincinnati, held in the spring of that year, gave its attention was that of parochial missions or retreats. On April 7 Bishop Spalding of Louisville wrote to Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati:

<sup>43</sup> De Smet à Beckx, February 25, 1854 (AA)

<sup>44</sup> De Smet to Cicaterrì, July 23, 1854 (A)

<sup>45</sup> Weninger ad Beckx, May 29, 1858 (AA).



By the way our mission at the Cathedral preached by F [Father] Smarius has succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations F Smarius is a most effective and practical preacher and such Retreats do immense good As the J [esuits] seem now disposed to employ their Fathers in this good work I think it highly important that, as the Provincial [Druyts] is *impeditus* [on account of deafness] one of his consultors appointed by him should represent the Order at our Council and I have made this suggestion to Fathers Smarius and Converse not doubting that you would ratify it His advice will be important in the additional question on Missions

To Father Druyts in St Louis Bishop Spalding wrote April 8

As your infirmity of hearing will make it inconvenient or impossible for your Reverence to attend the Provincial Council in *propria persona*, I think it very important that one of your Consultors, *puta*, F Verdin or F De Smet should be appointed your proxy to represent the Society at the Council I have already written to the Archbishop on the subject, and though I have not had time to hear from him I am confident he will be glad to avail himself of the suggestion, in fact, I take it upon myself to say that any Father whom you will so appoint will be more than welcome The subject of retreats for the people and that of schools and education generally will be under discussion and it is very important that one of yours should be in attendance <sup>46</sup>

In response to the invitation of the Bishop of Louisville, Father De Smet as representing the Missouri Vice-province was present at the council, which convened in Cincinnati, May 2, 1858, eight dioceses being represented Among its recommendations was one that a mission be held from time to time in every parish of the ecclesiastical province. It commended the great good resulting from the missions conducted by certain fathers of the Missouri Vice-province and expressed a wish that additional fathers be employed in this promising field of labor. In the name of the council and at its instance, Bishop Rosecrans in a letter of May 8, 1858, officially conveyed to Father Druyts the wishes of the bishops. They were glad to open up the ecclesiastical province of Cincinnati to Jesuit missionary zeal, petitioning him to appoint four or five fathers for the work and forward their names to the metropolitan so that invitations might be received from the parishes They further desired that Bishop Rosecrans express to Father Druyts the satisfaction of soul they lately felt over the fruits resulting from the missions which Father Smarius had conducted both in Cincinnati and in Louisville as

<sup>46</sup> Spalding to Purcell, April 7, 1858 (I), Spalding to Druyts, April 8, 1858 (A) "If F Provincial of Jesuits appoint a proxy, I beg you to welcome him at the Council" Spalding to Purcell, April 14, 1858 (CAA) Fathers Smarius, Converse and others who were giving missions at intervals at this period were not steadily engaged in this work but had other regular occupations

also the very lively hope they conceived that with his cooperation as well as with their own good will in his regard, such fruits might be multiplied and scattered through the various congregations of the ecclesiastical province entrusted to their care. At St. Louis Father Druyts's consultors were all of the opinion that the invitation from the bishops should be accepted. "We realize indeed," observed Father Druyts in reporting the matter to the General, "that we are not well prepared just now to give these missions, but who can look with indifference and without sorrow on the ruin of so many souls, as is happening according to the testimony of all our missionaries." Then, as a means of relieving the pressure caused by scarcity of men at this critical juncture, he asked the General for the privilege of shortening by some months the period of tertianship in the case of some of the fathers, particularly Damen, Smarius, Driscoll and Goeldin.<sup>47</sup>

On May 20 Father Druyts signified to Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati his readiness to comply with the wishes expressed by the council

We all feel grateful to your Grace and to the Rt Rev Bishops of the Province for the confidence reposed in our Fathers. For years past many of us have ardently desired to see some of us set apart for preaching retreats or giving missions wherever their services might be lawfully called for, but it has so happened that our small force has got considerably scattered and has been so disposed of as to render it difficult just now to comply with the wishes of your Grace and the Rt Rev Bishops of the Province. Our colleges owing to the double course of studies (mercantile and classical) carried on in each of them are a great drawback to these missions. Were it not for them, we could more freely avail ourselves of the gracious and kindly offer of the Council. However, we shall make every effort to bring about a commencement of the missions and set two or three Fathers apart for them.<sup>48</sup>

The readiness with which Father Druyts thus offered to second the wishes of Archbishop Purcell and his fellow-prelates met with instant approval on the part of Father Beckx. "In a matter of such importance belonging as it does to the principal activities of our Institute, your Reverence will endeavor to comply effectually with the highly reasonable wishes of the Bishops. I have several times in the past commended this same ministry to Ours in America, for I believe it to be of exceeding profit for the salvation of souls."<sup>49</sup>

In the summer of 1858 the assurances given by Druyts to Archbishop Purcell were made good by the appointment of Father Ferdinand Coosemans as "itinerant" missionary, with headquarters at St.

<sup>47</sup> Druyts ad Beckx, May 19, 1858 (AA)

<sup>48</sup> Druyts to Purcell, May 20, 1858 (A)

<sup>49</sup> Beckx ad Druyts, 1858 (A)

Xavier College, Cincinnati Much as Father Druyts would have liked to supply additional workers for this important ministry, the slender membership of the vice-province forbade The bishops had asked for five or six fathers and Druyts in his letter to the Archbishop of Cincinnati had held out hopes that at least two or three would be supplied In the end he found himself in a position to assign only a single missionary to the work in hand Father Coosemans was accordingly to take up single-handed the task of evangelizing the eight dioceses of the ecclesiastical province of Cincinnati This young Belgian priest, now only in his thirty-fifth year, who had filled for two years the post of rector of St Joseph's College, Bardstown, Kentucky, came to his new duties direct from Florissant, where he had just passed through the exercises of the tertianship Later, as provincial, he was to win general commendation for the prudence and whole-hearted charity with which he discharged the duties of his office Mild-mannered, patient, self-effacing, a man of prayer and the interior life, he left everywhere the impression of being what the Constitutions of his order intended a Jesuit to be In the pulpit he showed ability of no mean order, his preaching being marked by an engaging simplicity and unction that greatly impressed his hearers A letter of Father Murphy's to the General, November 15, 1852, has this postscript "I take up the pen again, full as I am of the first sermon of Father Coosemans, a Belgian, excellent matter and form, good delivery, accent and English perfect" <sup>50</sup> Brief accounts of the success he met with in his new field of labor were penned by Father Coosemans for his superior in St Louis

I arrived here [Lexington, Ky ] on Saturday night and opened the Jubilee on the following day during High Mass I preached three times that day and twice on the succeeding days The mission was very well attended throughout The crowd of listeners seemed to increase every night, a good portion of them were protestants The time intervening between the instructions was spent in the confessional Rev Fr McMahon, the assistant-pastor to Fr Aelen, told me that he anticipated from three to four hundred communions The communions given up to this day from Sunday last amount already to 500 and a number are expected to go tomorrow A great many cases of several years' standing have made their peace with God I regret that I cannot stay till Monday Last night a great many scapulars were distributed A great misery again—not scapulars enough An excitement of the right kind was created, thanks be to God, and I trust that the effects of it will be lasting A M D G

You will please, dear Father, excuse this scrawl I always go on the principle that a line of some sort is better than nothing A day or two of rest at present would be of benefit . but *fiat voluntas Dei*

<sup>50</sup> Murphy à Roothaan, November 15, 1852 (AA).

The mission at Frankfort [Kentucky] lasted five days. The Lord be praised for the good done. The three first days were rainy, but this did not prevent the people from coming, although there were no extra inducements. For as there is no choir in the beautiful new little gothic church which has just been completed, we could have no singing and no benedictions. There was nothing but a dry instruction and prayers. Still I was kept busy very nearly all the time in the confessional from the second till the last day included. When I arrived there, Rev. Mr. Lancaster, the pastor of Frankfort, told me that when the Redemptorist F. F. [Fathers] gave the mission three years ago there were 350 or 380 (I forget) communions, but that he did not expect to have anything like that number this time. Yet yesterday morning the number of communicants ran to between 350 and 380, and F. [Father] Lancaster said that he remembers about 20 regulars [regular communicants] who could not come yet on account of the heavy rains we have had. Last Thursday night I gave the scapular to about 200, if not more.

On my return to Cincinnati I had to pass by Lexington and I understand that the number of communicants had risen to about 600. Another good effect of the Jubilee—there was the squashing of a Catholic [?] secret society, which had been in operation for several weeks or months.

Some of the Lexingtonians showed a wish to become acquainted with me—But thank the Lord that I was so much engaged in other business that I had no time to make acquaintances. *En revanche* one wrote for my address to send me a stole, another sent me \$5.00 to help me home, another a couple of handkerchiefs, etc.<sup>51</sup>

The work of the first father whom the vice-province of Missouri was able to put into the field for the preaching of English missions was to be of short duration. In January, 1859, Father Coosemans was called to the presidency of St. Louis University. By no one was his retirement from the missionary field more keenly felt than by Father Weninger, who lost no time in voicing a protest to the General. A postscript to a letter of Father Beckx's addressed to Father Druyts reads: "I have just this minute received a letter from Father Weninger, who begs most earnestly that Father Coosemans be allowed to continue the work of giving missions which he has begun. He declares that the salvation of many souls demands it and that this ministry is of far greater importance A. M. D. G. than the office of Rector. You can talk this matter over with good Father Weninger."<sup>52</sup> In September of the same year, 1859, the General wrote again to the vice-provincial, adverting to the fact that one advantage to result from the proposed closing of St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, would be to render certain fathers available for other occupations. "In this way it would be possible to find another

<sup>51</sup> Coosemans to Druyts, 1858 (A)

<sup>52</sup> Beckx ad Druyts, 1859 (A)

missionary to replace Father Coosemans, and even, a thing I have frequently recommended, to increase the number of workers (*operarii*) appointed, in accordance with the express desire of the Bishops, to go through the various dioceses giving missions and the spiritual exercises Could not Father Damen, among others, be put at this work? However, I do not insist on this, for I know that he labors with great fruit in Chicago.”<sup>53</sup>

In February and again in March, 1860, Father Beckx returned to the subject of missions

Once more, accordingly, I commend to your Reverence these “itinerant” missions, as they are called, for they are highly in keeping with our vocation and fruitful for the salvation of souls, as ought to be abundantly evident to you from the single case of Father Weninger To open new Residences requires an increased staff and multiplies burdens, while to go up and down the country giving missions is a ministry that can result in the richest of harvests, even though very few workers be engaged in it

I commend most earnestly to your Reverence the work of the missions It is a source of great joy and consolation to me to read of the fruits gathered in this ministry, particularly by Fathers Weninger and Damen, and I desire that more Fathers, as far as circumstances permit, be assigned to the missions In this way much good can be accomplished by Ours in various places The Vice-Province neither has at present nor can it soon train up a sufficient number of men to manage many colleges or residences Consequently, after the manner of our Lord and the early Fathers, let us continue to go about over a wide extent of country doing good<sup>54</sup>

Though the Father General was thus urgent in his appeals that the English missions be immediately set on foot, Father Druyts for all his good-will was at a loss to know how to take the step In a letter of May 16, 1860, he protested that the missions were not being neglected, but that he had not understood it was expected of him to take the work immediately in hand That would have been a difficult thing to do at the moment. Father Damen could not absent himself entirely from Chicago where he was building a monumental church and had to collect the funds necessary for this purpose Father Driscoll of Cincinnati was likewise engaged in building a new church, moreover he could be used only for the smaller missions Father Smarius was needed in St. Louis, at least from time to time, as a preacher, “the number of which among us is not considerable” Of all the fathers in the residences of the vice-province Druyts could not recommend a single one for the missions “Like the Bishops, especially in the West of the

<sup>53</sup> Beckx ad Druyts, September, 1859 (A)

<sup>54</sup> Beckx ad Druyts, February, 1860, March, 1860 (A)

United States, the Vice-Province has been forced in very many cases, I think, to admit second-class subjects in the way of talent, forced to admit doubtful subjects in the way of vocation and this on the one hand because desirable (really good) candidates do not present themselves and on the other hand because one can scarcely abandon activities that were begun many years ago Your Paternity, so we are hoping, will still have patience with your children of Missouri.”<sup>55</sup>

Father Beckx’s comment on Druyts’s puzzlement over the situation was reassuring

From both your letters as also from a letter of Father Weninger, I am glad to acknowledge that the work of the missions has not been neglected by the Vice-Province and it has been a great consolation for me to learn of the fruits which the zeal of the workers, Fathers Weninger and Damen in particular, has gathered in with the blessing of God Moreover, in view of the circumstances as set forth by your Reverence, I see that it is scarcely possible as yet to have a house of missionaries in the proper sense of the word in the Vice-Province with its small contingent of men or to dispose things in such wise that the missionaries will not have to be applied, now and then, to other occupations, but this does not matter greatly, provided the missions be not neglected and that due care be taken of the health of the missionaries, all the more precious as they are so few in number Wherefore all the greater pains ought to be taken to give the young men a solid foundation so that in time and by degrees they may become helpers and successors to those strenuous men<sup>56</sup>

#### § 5 ARNOLD DAMEN AND HIS ASSOCIATES

What was unusual in the status of Father Coosemans during the few months he spent on the missions was that this constituted his exclusive occupation. It was the first step taken by the midwestern Jesuits towards assigning men steadily to this important ministry instead of withdrawing them at intervals from other occupations for an occasional foray into the missionary field. But some years were to pass before this arrangement, interrupted by the recall of Coosemans, was restored by the organization of bands of “itinerant” missionaries employed all the year around in this apostolic work. Even Father Arnold Damen, who more than any one else was instrumental in organizing and carrying through the work of Jesuit parish-missions in the Middle United States, was pastor of a great congregation in Chicago and superior of his fellow-religious in that city during fifteen years of his notable career on the missions When in 1872 Father Beckx relieved him of the Chicago superiorship, it was on the ground that the two occupations, that of

<sup>55</sup> Druyts ad Beckx, May 16, 1860 (A)

<sup>56</sup> Beckx ad Druyts, 1860 (A)

superior of a religious house and that of missionary, were incompatible in the same individual

Father Damen was of large and impressive physique with energy to match. The most characteristic thing about him was his unflagging zeal in the ministry. As a pulpit-orator he was earnest and effective, hitting the mark no less by the physical appeal of voice and gesture than by the burden of his discourses, which was ever the essential truths of salvation and the peremptory duties of Christian life. A straightforward pursuit of God's glory and deep personal piety marked his labors from the beginning and he was said to have made a vow early in his Jesuit career to decline no task, however unpleasant, tendered him by his superiors. "I can say of this good Father," Father Coosemans wrote of him to the General, "that he is not only a good missionary, but an exemplary religious" <sup>57</sup>

Father Damen's ability as an efficient dispenser of the divine word was not obvious from the first. For some time following his ordination in 1845 he was, if one may credit tradition, considered by his superiors to be incompetent for the office of preacher and as a consequence was seldom or ever assigned to it. But the following year, 1846, while engaged in delivering the instructions after vespers on Sunday afternoons in the Jesuit church of St. Louis he revealed himself as a pulpit orator of unusual power. Some of his hearers on these occasions recalled in after years the deep impression made upon them by his forcible and striking utterances, which they could not help regarding at the time as prophetic of the success that awaited him in the ministry of the spoken word. From this period his gifts as a preacher met with recognition and his sermons during the decade 1847-1857, while he was pastor of the College Church in St. Louis, were eagerly listened to by all classes of persons. Subsequently his success in the pulpit brought him a reputation that was in a measure nation-wide. "His was an eloquence," wrote one who knew him intimately, "that carried the multitude with irresistible force. His stately figure, his powerful yet musical and sympathetic voice and above all, his heart strong in its affections and his soul's convictions with its deep and inspiring piety made him in all the missions the most successful preacher to the masses of the people" <sup>58</sup>. "He is a tall, portly man," so Lesperance portrayed him, "with handsome head and dignified bearing that inspires respect in any assembly."

In the midsummer of 1856 Father Damen, while still retaining his pastorate in St. Louis, made what appears to have been his first appear-

<sup>57</sup> Coosemans à Beckx, May 18, 1864 (AA). Joseph P. Conroy, S.J., *Arnold Damen, S.J. a Chapter in the Making of Chicago* (New York, 1930), is an excellent account.

<sup>58</sup> WL, 19, 224.

ance in the missionary field. The occasion was a mission preached in St Mary's Cathedral, Chicago, with the assistance of Fathers Isidore Boudreaux, Benedict Masselis and Michael Corbett. A published notice under date of August 26, 1856, from the pen, it would appear, of Father Dillon, pastor of the Holy Name Church, Chicago, records the gratifying results that attended the efforts of the preachers.

The spiritual retreat which our Right Rev Bishop [O'Regan] has provided for the Catholics of this city has just now closed. For the last three weeks the exercises have been conducted by five Jesuit Fathers under the guidance of Father Damen. The fruits of their holy and successful labors are already manifest. Many Protestants have embraced the Catholic religion, and the Catholics—to be counted by thousands—many, very many of whom had for years neglected their spiritual interests, crowded the churches and confessionals.

The zeal, the piety and labors of Father Damen and his associates, and his practical and persuasive eloquence, have won for these eminent servants of God the love and veneration of all our citizens, Protestant and Catholic. From four in the morning until after midnight, these zealous Fathers and the parochial clergymen have been occupied with the duties of religion, yet all this was insufficient, such was the holy importunity of the people whom God moved to profit by their ministry.

It is understood that twelve thousand, at least, have received communion. None of the churches could accommodate the multitude that crowded from all parts of the city. The Cathedral, with its galleries newly put up, being found altogether too small, the mission was transferred to the large enclosure on the North Side known as the church of the Holy Name and here, as if nothing had been previously done, a new harvest is found already mature.

Years of spiritual indolence are atoned for and a new life—the life of grace—is begun by hundreds who for many long years knew not how great a blessing this was. How consoling to the heart of the Right Rev Bishop and of the Missionaries must not be this fruit of their labors, this fresh evidence of the vitality of the Catholic spirit, which it would seem neither time nor circumstances the most unfavorable to its culture can root out of the soul of the sincere believer.

This is the third retreat with which, within the brief period of five months, the Catholics of Chicago have been blessed, the first being given by the Jesuit Father Weninger, and the second soon after by the Redemptorist, Father Krutil. May we not hope that henceforth the religious progress of our city will keep even in advance of its astonishing material prosperity.

*Concedat Deus Amen.*

M Dillon <sup>59</sup>

For Father Damen this Chicago mission was the turning-point of his career, leading as it did to his assignment the following spring to the

<sup>59</sup> St. Louis *Leader*, August 15, 1856



northern metropolis as the permanent field of his activities. The story of the upbuilding at his hands of a great urban parish is a chapter of interest in the history of the Church in the United States during the period of immigration. It is enough to say here that inaugurating his work in that city in the May of 1857 by the erection of a temporary church, he saw a few months later the foundations laid of what was to become one of the most imposing shrines of Christian worship in the Middle West. As early as the winter of 1857-1858, while the edifice was still in process of construction, he had begun to conduct a series of missionary revivals in Chicago and outside. To Father Beckx he reported in August, 1858, the success that attended his ministry in this connection. His letter is in English, an unusual circumstance in correspondence addressed to the Father General

I have been engaged giving missions or retreats during the whole winter which have produced an immense amount of fruit I have given the spiritual exercises in Chicago in two churches, in which we had 9000 confessions I have also given the exercises in the city of Peoria, where we had two thousand confessions, in Dubuque (Cathedral church) over four thousand confessions, in Galena two thousand confessions, in Rockford eight hundred confessions In all these places religion had suffered very severely, several Catholics had fallen away from religion, many had become protestants or infidels, all these have been brought to their religion and many protestants have been converted to our holy religion I have had the consolation of baptizing several protestants, among whom two protestants ministers or preachers In all these places where retreats have been given the perseverance of the converted sinners and protestants is truly edifying and consoling I receive from time to time letters of the Bishops or pastors testifying to the consoling effects of the retreats We have received about eighty protestants and infidels into the church In the retreats the crowds that attended the instructions were really most extraordinary, we were in the confessionals from early in the morning till 11 or 12 o'clock at night and our great grief was that we could not hear the confessions of all the poor sinners who presented themselves although several nights we did not go to bed at all but remained all night in the confessionals The secular clergy and Dominicans assisted us in hearing the confessions I preached three or four times every day . in one of the missions or retreats I gave in the winter the church in which I gave the mission was sold for debts while I was giving the exercises The church was bought by a protestant for \$700, but Divine Providence sent him to listen to the exercises of the retreat, he was moved, convinced, etc and before the end of the retreat I had the consolation of receiving him into the church and of course the church which he had bought was restored to the pastor or rather to the Bishop of the diocese This was in Galena, Ill <sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Damen to Beckx, August, 1858 (AA)

Part of the winter of 1858-1859 was spent by Father Damen at Florissant, where he went through an abbreviated tertianship, his duties in Chicago not permitting him to spend the normal period of time in this important stage of Jesuit formation. But he managed to continue the preaching of parish missions, though on a reduced scale, as he informed Father Beckx, this time writing in French

As I was absent during these two months, I was unable to give many missions during this winter. I gave one at Mehan settlement, one at Peoria, one at our church in Milwaukee and another at the Cathedral of the same city. In all these missions I preached two or three times a day, the exercises being followed by the most consoling results. Everywhere the churches were filled and there were crowds around the confessional from early morning until midnight, at which hour we retired for rest to resume the work at half-past five in the morning. We were everywhere in need of more confessors for many poor sinners after having waited whole days before the confessional were forced to give up hope of being able to make their confessions. I was indeed deeply distressed that these poor souls, after having been faithful to the grace that moved them interiorly, their hearts being filled with the compunction that the Holy Spirit had poured into them, were so unfortunate as not to be able to reconcile themselves with God, our Fathers at Milwaukee shared my sentiments. How often have I desired to be employed entirely on the missions, for, as the Bishop of Milwaukee observed to me, I am made to be a missionary. After preaching two or three times a day for two months and being in the confessional from five in the morning to twelve at night, I am only just tired and my voice is as strong and clear as when I started out although I ordinarily preach an hour or an hour and a half and with great vehemence for the more a preacher thunders from the pulpit the more the Irish and the Americans like him. You can form no idea, Very Reverend Father, how much good is done here by these missions or retreats, how many poor sinners are brought back to God after having neglected the sacraments for years, how many sacrilegious confessions are made good, how many vices are rooted out and virtues inculcated. It is for these reasons, Very Reverend Father, that I earnestly pray you to urge Father-Provincial to choose two or three Fathers for the missions exclusively and how happy should I be were I to be of their number. Yes, I would thank God for it with all my heart. Still I do not ask for it for I have always been convinced that it is a very dangerous thing for religious to ask for anything, that is to say, for themselves, for I am not afraid at all to ask for things that concern the general good, and I am going right away to give your Paternity a proof of this. I will ask you, since you cannot help us with money, to make us a present of fourteen paintings of the Way of the Cross for our new church.<sup>61</sup>

As though the building of a great-sized house of worship in Chicago with all the financial problems it entailed was not a matter quite suffi-

<sup>61</sup> Damen à Beckx, May 11, 1859 (AA).

cient to absorb his energies, Father Damen was thus at the same time a preacher of parish-missions up and down the Middle West. This fruitful ministry was largely a personal venture of his own. The work of the English missions had not as yet been systematically taken up by the vice-province. Father Wippern was regretting to the General in August, 1859, that it had been suspended by the call of Father Coosemans to the presidency of St. Louis University with no successor to step into the breach.<sup>62</sup>

In the winter of 1860-1861 a more or less serious attempt seems to have been made to inaugurate the English missions on a systematic basis. In March, 1861, Father Weninger was expressing himself on the subject to the General with characteristic eagerness:

Thanks be to God and the Blessed Virgin that the English missions have been begun. In the last one, which was given by Father Damen with the help of Father Tschieder at St. Patrick's in St. Louis, 10,000 went to Holy Communion, 200 received the Scapular of the Blessed Virgin Mary and 270 adults were confirmed. Moreover, nineteen American Protestants were received into the Church. I earnestly beg your Paternity to commend Very Reverend Visitor [Sopranis] for having made a start of this ministry at the hands of Ours. He consented reluctantly as he feared the colleges would suffer harm thereby, but let your Paternity be convinced that the missions are the very sort of employment necessary above all others even for the good results of the colleges themselves. Let only your Paternity admonish and encourage Reverend Father Visitor and the Fathers of the Province to persevere with every effort in the beginnings made and develop them and we shall hear of wonders. And if only three Fathers, to be steadily employed on the missions, were available for each archdiocese, more would be accomplished. A M D G for the salvation of souls and the good of the Society in one year than in 100 years through the colleges. Facts speak. These colleges are not so-called "Bobadilla [<sup>?</sup>] colleges." In every English mission Father Damen receives 14, 16, 20 Protestants, in a certain mission he received as many as 60.<sup>63</sup>

Though Father Weninger writes as though the preaching of English missions was already a regularly organized activity of the vice-province, some time was yet to elapse before this was actually the case. No one could say that the work was on a satisfactory basis as long as Father Damen was the only one engaged in it with merely the occasional cooperation of one or other of his confrères. A companion-priest regularly appointed to share his labors on the missions was a recognized need but it was one which it seemed impossible for the moment to

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<sup>62</sup> Wippern ad Beckx, August 4, 1859 (AA)

<sup>63</sup> Weninger ad Beckx, March 17, 1861 (AA)

supply Father Beckx in 1861 and again in 1862 was still encouraging Father Damen in his hopes for a better organization of the missions

Your Reverence is right in considering the work of the missions to be among the primary ones of our Institute and highly deserving of all our solicitude. If at any time this be true, especially is it true now amid the wide-spread agitation of wars, highly discouraging as this is to college studies. I have already repeatedly recommended the Superiors of the Vice-Province and will recommend them afresh to promote missions of this sort and spiritual exercises for the public. For the rest, it is clear to me also that you cannot be equal for any length of time to so great a weight of labor and that for this reason also companions ought to be assigned you. I have recommended and will continue to recommend to both Father Visitor and Father Provincial that they lend you assistance if by any manner of means it can be done.<sup>64</sup>

Meantime, until a regular staff of missionaries could be provided, Father Damen continued to work the field alone and with excellent results. At Detroit in the spring of 1860 his voice failed him in the very midst of a most trying mission. The appeal for a substitute which he quickly sent to Father Druyts in St. Louis did not lack vehemence.

In the name of God send Father Smarius or at least Father Coosemans. My voice has given out. I am so hoarse I can hardly be heard. I force myself because I see the terrible condition in which religion is. So many have apostatized from the church, so many have abandoned the practice of religious duties that I cannot but exert myself to bring back so many lost souls. At the same time I may lose my voice forever if I continue. Do then for God's sake send Smarius or Coosemans to help me. You know well that I am the last man to call for assistance when I can do it myself. But I must acknowledge this time that I cannot. I am strong myself and feel myself devoured with zeal, but my voice fails me. The people are attending in crowds and do expect a great deal from this mission. The good of souls, then, the glory of God and of our Society demands that you send some one at once to help me. Oh, think how large a city this is, how many souls bought by the precious blood of Christ. Do then for God's sake, send Father Smarius or Coosemans.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Beckx ad Damen, December 14, 1861, July 12, 1862 (AA)

<sup>65</sup> Damen to Druyts, March 11, 1860 (AA) "Rev. Father Damen, S. J., was giving an extraordinary mission at the Cathedral, which was continued for three weeks, during which time we (from 10 to 14 and sometimes 16 confessors) were from early in the morning until late at night constantly occupied in the confessional. This mission was indeed extraordinary in its good effects and in the sensation it created throughout the city and we had the consolation of giving the Holy Communion to 7,500 persons and of receiving 67 protestants into the Church." Lefevere to Purcell, April 2, 1860 (I)

Further illustration of Damen's downright earnestness and eager zeal, as also of the success which attended his efforts even when working alone, is supplied by a letter of his to Father Coosemans

On the 9th of October I opened the mission in Evansville, Ind to the English speaking congregation, which is small The pastor thought I might have 300 communions The mission was very well attended All seem to have given up all temporal concerns in order to attend to the one thing necessary, so that the sermons during the day were almost as well attended as the night [ones] I preached three times per day, was in the confessional from 6 o'clock in the morning until 11 or 12 o'clock at night The Protestants attended in large crowds and seemed very much delighted with the discourses on the doctrines of the church Many declared that they were convinced that the Catholic church is the only true church and that they would inform themselves by reading and visits to the pastor and join the church later Six Protestants were baptized and prepared for 1st communion, others were postponed, not being sufficiently instructed The six were married persons and of course gaining them we gain the children We had 600 communions, revalidated several marriages, invested with the scapular some four hundred persons and established the Society of the Sacred Heart, some 200 persons joined it On the 16th of October the mission was concluded at night with a grand illumination, [and] the consecration of the congregation to the Immaculate Mother Then 24 young ladies dressed in white with long white veils and crown[s] of flowers on their heads standing around the altar with papers in their hands read the renovation of the baptismal vows in a loud voice There was a breathless silence in the church, interrupted only by the sobs of the people Then I made a second appeal to the people (for the ceremony commenced with the sermon on perseverance) and said "You have heard, my dear people, this solemn renunciation of Satan and his works But you are able to speak for yourselves Declare aloud, before God, the blessed Jesus here on the altar, his holy angels around the holy tabernacle, the venerable Bishop and your good Pastor Speak out, do you renounce the devil?" There was a bursting out like the roaring of the thunder "I renounce him" "And do you renounce all his works, that is, all sin?" The same answer was given "Who shall be your leader and guide for the future?" All cried aloud, "Jesus, forever!" All this was done with an abundance of tears and many sobs It came on them so unexpectedly, not being prepared for it Then all the congregation arose and made the profession of faith aloud, after which all raised their hands to heaven, promised aloud that they would live and die in the Catholic church, that they would lay down their lives and shed all their blood rather than give up one iota of the Catholic faith, after which I gave the papal benediction The next morning at 8 o'clock we had a high-mass of thanksgiving I bade them farewell, let them weep as long as they chose and was off in the cars to Columbus, Ind, a small place where I was four days All the Catholics went to communion Some leaders of secret societies abandoned

then societies and returned to the church, two Protestants became Catholics, some apostates returned to the faith and many Protestants acknowledged that the Catholic religion is true. This place is visited but once a month. I was to St Vincent's church, Shelby Co., where I remained 5 days. This is a small congregation in the woods of Indiana, settled by Kentuckian farmers. They have Mass once a month on Sunday. All the Protestants as well as the Catholics gave up their work to attend the mission, all the Catholics approached the sacraments, two excepted. Many came a distance of 10 or 20 miles, bringing their dinners along and remaining at the church the whole day.

I preached 3 times per day as usual and gave one hour catechism. 5 Protestants were received into the church and some old persons received their 1st communions. I regretted that I could not stay longer, for I had good grounds to believe that all the Protestants would become Catholics, if I had stayed 4 or 5 days longer, but my appointment was for Chicago to preach the novena of the Immaculate Conception. We planted a cross 30 feet high 12 inches square with the inscription (Mission by the Jesuit Fathers, 1862), although I was the only Jesuit there.<sup>66</sup>

The decisive turning-point in the development of the ministry of popular missions, as exercised by the midwestern Jesuits, was the assignment in the summer of 1861 of Father Cornelius Smarius to the Chicago residence. Here his status was to be that of *missionarius excurrens* or "travelling missionary," either as team-mate to Father Damen or on his own account. Later, in 1864, Fathers James Van Goch and James Converse were assigned to Fathers Damen and Smarius respectively as companion missionaries. In 1865 Father Converse was replaced by Father Florentine Boudreaux. Still later, others were put in the field to reenforce the missionary band. In 1874 at St Gabriel's Church, New York, Father Damen was assisted by Fathers Van Goch, Zealand, Masselis, Niederkorn, Putten and Koopmans. In the mid-seventies Fathers Hillman and Henry Bronsgeest were accessions to the missionary-staff. The significant thing about these preachers of English missions is that they were not American-born, but, almost without exception, men of Dutch birth. The process of the melting-pot had gone on with astonishing swiftness in the case of these sturdy sons of Holland. The instance is of course by no means a unique one in the story of the European immigrant on American soil. The ease with which great numbers of the foreign-born have adjusted themselves to their new environment, the success with which they have come to use the language of their adopted country in spoken and written speech, are common-places in the history of the United States. Of this success no more interesting example can be cited than Smarius.

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<sup>66</sup> Damen to Coosemans, January 29, 1863 (A)

Cornelius Smarius, a native of Tilburg in Holland, where he was born in 1823, was eighteen when he arrived in America to become a Jesuit novice at Florissant. Literary gifts and a talent for public speaking had marked him from boyhood days. At St. Xavier College, Cincinnati, he conducted classes in rhetoric and the humanities through a period of six years, 1843-1849, all the while perfecting himself in English and reading much in history, of which he was to make frequent and effective use in his public lectures and addresses. Then, having gotten up during his teaching days enough of moral theology to qualify for ordination, he received the priesthood at the hands of Bishop Van de Velde, July 31, 1849. Four years, 1852-1856, were devoted to dogmatic theology, under the French Jesuits at Fordham, New York, an exceptional opportunity for systematic study to be enjoyed by a midwestern Jesuit at this early date. Of this opportunity the young priest took every advantage, giving himself especially to study of the great patristic literature of the Church. When he returned to St. Louis in 1856, he at once stepped into prominence as a lecturer and preacher of power. His Sunday evening lectures at the College Church, of which he became pastor on the death of Father Gleizal in 1858, were listened to eagerly by Catholics and non-Catholics alike, and read by others in the columns of the *St. Louis Republican*. "We look for fruit from all this," wrote Father Druyts to the General in 1860, "several Protestants are already receiving private instruction and three have been publicly baptized."<sup>67</sup> "Went up to Jesuit Church [Chicago] this evening," reads an entry in the diary of William J. Onahan, August 16, 1861. "Heard Father Smarius on Sin and its Enormity. Of course I was pleased beyond measure with his discourse." "When will St. Louis," asked Judge Robert A. Bakewell in 1879, "again have a public speaker that would move an audience as could Father Smarius?"<sup>68</sup> Of the impression made by this Americanized Hollander on his contemporaries a vivid record survives in lines written by John Lesperance:

His [Smarius's] rhetoric classes for many years were the most brilliant that the University perhaps ever had. For a foreigner, his command of English was a simple wonder. I think that a selection of his poems should be made and published. I have heard many great speakers at home and abroad, but none that more thoroughly realized my ideas of a born orator. He had a splendid presence and a resonant voice, but beyond that was not specially favored by nature. His head, though shapely, was small and almost completely bald, his neck was short and he wore spectacles, a drawback which he frequently regretted, as preventing him from mastering his audience through the

<sup>67</sup> Druyts to Beckx, January 1, 1860 (AA)

<sup>68</sup> *St. Louis Republican*, June 25, 1879 (AA). Extracts from Onahan's diary are in *Mid-America*, 14: 64-72 (1931)

eye Yet his oratorical efforts were irresistible, particularly because they were not due to rhetoric but were the outcome of the deepest learning The thing which gave his eloquence the character of genius was its intense human sentiment He would go along for a while in the best academic fashion—he generally wrote his discourses—when suddenly something would strike him either in the sequence of his thoughts or in the attitude of his audience and then he would be transformed The broad chest would swell, the eye flash, the head toss, the voice peal like a chime of bells and the play of the imagination would be such as to throw off a series of images—in climax or anti-climax—that I can compare to nothing so well as to the fabled mirages of the Magic Mirror At a commencement day at St John's College, Fordham, N Y, in 1864, I remember that somehow everything had gone wrong and a dismal failure was imminent, when Father Smarius, who was then on a visit and had been invited to address some words to the graduates, changed the whole aspect of affairs in a few minutes He spoke not more than a quarter of an hour, but the effect was electrical and the audience almost beside itself His first introduction to our people in St Louis was through his famous lecture on the "Pagan and Christian Families," which he dictated to me, only a little shaver, and read from my manuscript I was as proud as Punch of that circumstance I remember that Rev Henry Giles and the eloquent Uriah Wright were on the platform that night and declared that they had never heard a grander performance Poor Father Smarius died at an early age, all too soon for the good work that lay in store for him <sup>69</sup>

Father Smarius's *Points of Controversy*, first published in 1866, is still in demand as an effective manual of Catholic apologetics His lecture, *The Christian and Pagan Families*, his funeral oration over Governor Bissell of Illinois, who died a Catholic, and his address to the Missouri and Independent Guards in their camp at the St Louis Fair Grounds, 1860, are examples of an oratory dignified and impressive, if too overwrought for the simpler taste of more recent days Perhaps one may describe it as Websterian, the sonorous swing of the sentences has something about it to suggest the manner of America's classic orator But while Smarius spoke and wrote English with an idiomatic propriety and wealth of diction remarkable in one who came by the language not as an inherited gift but as a laborious acquisition, his literary manner shows a pseudo-classicism quite foreign to present-day standards of speech A passage from his St Louis Fair Grounds address of 1860 follows

There are periods in the life of a nation when its dearest interests cannot be protected from open violence neither [*sic*] by the powerful sway of reason nor the soothing influence of persuasive eloquence, when nothing but the dread sound of the tocsin and the deafening roll of the drum can intimidate

<sup>69</sup> *Idem*, September 13, 1879



the reckless heart whose blinded passions carry fear and dismay along the deserted streets of a troubled city or death and carnage along the highways of a nation. On occasions like these, not infrequent in the history of republican as well as despotic peoples, we need men whose skill in arms is equal to their courageous determination to defend the weak, to maintain order and to protect the land from universal anarchy or despotism. We need men, who, like the Achilles, the Fabii, the Cincinnati of yore, are ready to exchange the distaff, the ploughshare and the spade, for the musket and the spear, men, who like Dearborn and Brooks will fling away the lancet to grasp the sword, or, like Pierce leave the plough in the furrow to take their stand at the cannon's mouth. Men, who like Green, forsake the anvil to wield the sledge-hammer of destructive war, who like Putnam, turn the hunter's rifle upon the preying wolf in human guise, who, like Whipple, seize the harpoon to strike the pirate in the heart, who, like our great, our immortal hero, George Washington, drop the compass and the chain to direct the doubtful fortunes of the battlefield.

The address to the soldiers at the St. Louis Fair Grounds, while not conceived in any militaristic vein, does not hesitate to award the soldier a place of distinction in the social organism. The peroration is as follows:

Citizen-soldiers, allow me to express my inmost conviction of mind that you have been formed according to this or a similar model. Allow me to cherish the thought that you are as faithful to your God as you are loyal to the Republic, whose interests you are pledged to protect, whose liberties you are sworn to defend. Let posterity recognize in you loyal patriots and faithful Christians. In the hour of danger, the most holy, the most important privileges and guarantees of freedom are in your hands. Should your country call you from the peaceful fireside of your family to the field of battle, remember our altars as well as our houses. Wave the Banner of the Cross wherever you display the flag of Republican Freedom. Screen us from the despotism of religious fanaticism as you would from the tyranny of the ruthless invader. Be warriors, be heroes, be braves, but above all, be Christians.<sup>70</sup>

With Father Smarius devoting his talent for public speaking to the preaching of popular missions, this ministry began to assume proportions in keeping with the importance that attached to it. From his day to our own it has been steadily maintained as a recognized activity among the many that engage the Jesuits of the Middle West. Their zealous labors in this particular field were not confined to their territory proper, they reached out as early as the mid-sixties to the eastern United States. The reputation which the western missionaries acquired in the East

<sup>70</sup> *Idem*, undated clipping Deuther, *Life and Times of Bishop Timon*, 308-310, has an appreciation of the Buffalo prelate by Father Smarius.

was due largely, it has been asserted, to Father Smarius's impressive lectures, which were always a feature of the missions in which he was engaged and were generally delivered when the mission proper was over. When Fathers Damen and Smarius cooperated in the same revival, the evening sermons, the most important part of the program, were given as a rule by the latter. A mission conducted at the Cincinnati cathedral in 1863 was described thus by Father John Schultz, rector at the time of St. Xavier College in that city

The mission at the Cathedral is succeeding marvelously. Every evening church and basement are filled with an immense audience. Father Smarius preaches in the church and Father Damen in the basement at the same time, while two large chapels are filled with persons, some of them from 50 to 60 years old, who are preparing for first communion and confirmation. From 10 to 12 priests, regulars and seculars, are employed in hearing confessions. The Archbishop and the members of his household appear to be in admiration at it. The mission will continue up to next Sunday and then, after Father Damen's departure for Illinois, Father Smarius will give instructions in dogma during a few days longer. Before going to Cincinnati Father Smarius gave missions in two towns of Bishop Miége's Vicariate. At Leavenworth alone, besides the conversion of a great number of Catholics who had not been to the sacraments for many years, 30 Protestants received Baptism either during the mission or a few days later. It is inconceivable, Very Reverend Father, what immense good is wrought in the country by means of missions and to what extent these missions are necessary. Oh! that we only had a larger number of capable subjects who might be employed in this sacred ministry.<sup>71</sup>

In the same year, 1863, a two-weeks' mission preached by Fathers Damen and Smarius in St. Francis Xavier Church, St. Louis, met with noteworthy response. There were forty baptisms of converts and twelve thousand confessions. Many who had been away from the sacraments for ten, twenty, fifty years were reconciled to the Church. Not a few baptized Catholics after sixty or seventy years of a life without God made confession of their sins for the first time. Yet, strangely enough, the methods of the two missionaries did not commend themselves to all. Father Joseph Keller, delicate and sensitive of temper and probably for that reason too exacting a critic, ("a rather severe appraiser of men and things," Father Murphy called him,) declared that a cold chill seized him as he listened to Smarius inveighing with unconventional bluntness against the sins of the flesh or indulging in language about Protestants which seemed extreme. Moreover, there was in Father Damen, so Keller felt, too obvious a desire to profit by the mission

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<sup>71</sup> Schultz à Beckx, March 15, 1863 (AA)

in a material way by gathering in the offerings which on these occasions the missionary hoped to receive as a means of financing his great building projects in Chicago. At the close of the mission Father Coosemans brought these strictures to the notice of the missionaries. "I will certainly say [of Father Smarius]," comments Keller, "that he is accustomed to receive with willingness the admonitions of Superiors, but it would be difficult for him to amend, seeing that in these things there is in his judgment no defect at all. . . . perhaps it is we who are at fault in complaining about these things. Perhaps we are too timid, too cautious. Certainly, if we can here apply the maxim, 'by their fruits you shall know them,' we shall have to confess that these Fathers are dear to God and are led by the spirit of God." <sup>72</sup>

It was in the East, in the great urban communities of Catholic immigrants that had grown up in that section of the country, that the western missionaries scored their most notable successes. A three-weeks' mission which they conducted at St. Francis Xavier's, New York, in 1863, with twenty-two confessors in attendance and seventy receptions of converts into the Church as one of the results, was considered on all sides to have been, so John Gilmary Shea, the historian, wrote to Father De Smet, the most notable ever preached in the metropolis. In 1865 a mission, preached also in New York by Fathers Damen and Van Goch, resulted in twelve thousand communions, ninety-seven conversions from Protestantism and five hundred first communions of adults. "Father Damen attributes this extraordinary success to the prayers of the little orphans, who implored without ceasing the Lord's clemency on these poor sinners, while the Brothers were engaged in instructing the men, and the Sisters, the women, so as to prepare them to approach the sacraments worthily." <sup>73</sup> Later in the same year, 1865, three more New York missions, with Fathers Damen, Smarius and Van Goch officiating, yielded eighteen thousand communions and seventy-two conversions of Protestants. Again, an Albany mission, conducted in the same year by Fathers Damen and Smarius had among other fruits fourteen thousand communions, forty-one conversions of non-Catholics and between four and five hundred first communions of fathers and mothers of families and other adults. Moreover, a number of Catholics who had become masons renounced their membership in the lodges. "May God in His goodness," prayed Father Coosemans in reporting these interesting facts to the General, "preserve Father Damen, for many years to come, and deliver him from the indispositions to which he is subject from time to time." <sup>74</sup> The striking results attending these large-scale eastern re-

<sup>72</sup> Keller ad Beckx, April 21, 1863 (AA)

<sup>73</sup> Coosemans à Beckx, February 18, 1865 (AA)

<sup>74</sup> Coosemans à Beckx, August 11, 1865 (AA)

vivals had the effect of causing the services of the western missionaries to be much in demand in other sections of the country. Early in 1865 Bishop Elder was petitioning Father Coosemans in the most pressing manner to send fathers to Natchez and Vicksburg. The petition had to be denied. "Unfortunately the missionaries [themselves] cannot accede to his request and I scarcely have men of sufficient leisure to send there. Oh! that we had a greater number of men so as to respond to all these requests" <sup>75</sup>

The enthusiasm that marked the eastern missions was due no doubt in part to the circumstance that these religious revivals were a novelty in Catholic parish life in the country. That of 1863 at St. Francis Xavier's, New York, was described in this manner by one of the participating preachers:

Our mission finished yesterday. I scarcely venture to give you a description of it, I have so many things to tell you. The last instruction had to be given in three different places at the same time. Father Smarius preached in the church to men and women, Father Damen in the large college hall to men only, while Father O'Reilly had only women in the basement of the church. Each of the three orators was greeted with the sight of crowds of people thronging with every eagerness to hear him. In order that the student-galleries might be thrown open to the public, the students were given places in the sanctuary. The stage from which the Father preached was crowded with men standing up. At the entrance to the hall, a hundred auditors, unable to find room in the hall, were ranged along the steps of the stairway. Several controversial sermons were given in the church. The Protestants came in good number. Last Sunday after high mass twenty of them were baptized in presence of the whole congregation. The first to approach the baptismal font was a worthy minister. The public was next edified by the abjuration of four perverts from Catholicism. Baptized by Catholic priests, they had allowed themselves to be carried away little by little by the religion that is here predominant. On the preceding day a number were reconciled to the Church while others at the same time were being given religious instruction. As to the Catholics, it is enough to say that the confessions began the second day of the mission and that thereafter there was no falling-off in the crowds around the confessionals. In spite of the number of confessors (fifteen to thirty) every evening thousands had to go home without having had a chance to confess, for people came from every corner of the city and from near-by towns. Last Sunday evening, the street in front of the church was so blocked that it was impossible to make one's way through. "Why haven't these Fathers a bigger church," was what you heard on all sides. I knew of persons from distant quarters of the city who took lodgings in the vicinity so as to be in time for the mission. Today is the close of the triduum in honor of the Japanese martyrs. The confessions continue as numerous as ever, I don't

<sup>75</sup> Coosemans à Beckx, February 18, 1865 (AA)

know when they will stop Let us bless God for all the good that has been done on this occasion <sup>76</sup>

A notice of the same mission was carried in a local Catholic paper

From fifteen to thirty priests were occupied without interruption from morning to night in hearing confessions, and with what glorious success their fatiguing labors were crowned! During these days of grace, twenty-thousand persons approached the tribunal of penance Fifty-seven persons made their abjuration and some others are preparing for the same by receiving instructions What a rich harvest of souls gathered into the granary of the Lord during the three weeks' work of the mission! In completing this great success we are reminded of the first labors of the Society of Jesus in America when the people came in crowds with contrite hearts to ask of the minister of religion the grace of baptism <sup>77</sup>

Coming as they did in immediate contact with Catholic immigrant groups in various parts of the country, the missionaries had exceptional opportunities for appreciating their religious needs Father Smarius's analysis of the situation among them is informing

The continual immigration of the numerous Catholics coming from almost all the countries of Europe, especially Ireland and Germany, and the lack of apostolic workers in proportion to the increase of this immigration have demonstrated the importance and the necessity of these exercises [missions] Thousands of Catholics, especially in the most populous of the cities, live in complete negligence of their Christian duties and of the sacraments To recall them to their obligations requires an extraordinary means Now the announcement of the mission made and repeated several times before the opening-day excites curiosity and attracts souls that still have any trace of religion left in them The result is the return of many a prodigal son, as also notable victories over rooted vices and bad habits

The same need exists at least relatively in the smaller towns and in the villages The working classes and farmers are often at a considerable distance from the little chapels which the zeal of priests and the generosity of the poor have built in the interior of our States And these farmers and laborers have only from time to time the spiritual succor necessary to nourish the spirit of religion which, like the lamp, is extinguished for lack of saving oil, to wit, instruction and the sacraments The missions have the effect of making the spirit of faith revive among them and of reawakening the salutary interest which they ought to have in their own souls and in those of their children To give you a convincing proof of it, permit me to tell you that in nearly all our missions we find hundreds of men and women, self-styled Catholics, who haven't been to confession for ten, twenty, thirty and forty years One

<sup>76</sup> *Précis Historiques* (Brussels), 13 60

<sup>77</sup> *Idem*, 13 61

can state without exaggeration that a fifth part of the Catholics who present themselves in our missions are found to be in this deplorable state <sup>78</sup>

In the fall of 1869 Father Smarius began his last round of missions with health greatly impaired by the insidious advances of a deep-seated organic malady. But he met his engagements with dogged perseverance. His last public appearance was at Albany, New York, where his physical weakness was so extreme that he had to be carried into the pulpit. Returning to Chicago, he there patiently awaited the end, which the physicians declared would not be long in coming. When news of his condition reached the East, the scene of his most brilliant apostolic triumphs, fervent prayers were offered on all sides that God might spare him to the Church. The *Freeman's Journal* of New York called upon its readers to storm heaven on behalf of this missionary, who was "still in middle age and with so special a gift for touching the hearts of men. . . . In the fewness of Catholic missionaries armed and devoted to their work we Catholics find a reason for asking the Lord not to cut off Father Smarius in the middle of his days." But the sands of the missionary's busy life had run out. He died March 1, 1870, having approached within two days of his forty-seventh year. "During the last weeks of his life," said Father Coosemans in reporting his death to the General, "this good Father was reduced to a very painful state. He could move neither arms nor legs which were in great part paralyzed. It was necessary to feed him like a child. He was perfectly resigned to the will of God, and while during life he was very much afraid of death he was perfectly calm and free from all fear from the moment he learned there was no longer any hope for him. His death is a great loss to the Society and the Church in the United States." <sup>79</sup>

The tributes rendered to the dead missionary by the Catholic press of the United States reveal the place he had filled in the religious life of the land. The *Catholic Tablet* of New York deplored the loss of "this eminent Jesuit and apostolic priest [His] fame is as wide as the country which owes so much to his zeal and fruitful labors. This news will carry sorrow not only to his brethren of the Company of Jesus among whom he towered by his eloquence and learning like some tall son of Anak, but to thousands of the laity who have been drawn by the fervor of this man of God from the ways of sin or nearer to God" <sup>80</sup> "He died comparatively young," commented the Cincinnati *Catholic Telegraph*, "but in a few years he had completed a long term filled and

<sup>78</sup>*Idem*, 13 66 The *Précis* (Feb 1, 1864, pp 61-68) contains two letters of Smarius about his missions Cf also *Études* (Paris), Sept-Oct, 1863

<sup>79</sup> Coosemans à Beckx, March 6, 1870 (AA)

<sup>80</sup> *Catholic Tablet*, March 5, 1870

crowded with deeds of heroic devotion to the duties of his high calling, the memory of which will not soon pass away As a controversial writer, as a lecturer, as a giver of missions, he had in this country few equals, and no superiors, and amid all the praises which his giant talents won for him from his friends that revered him and religious foes that admired while they feared him, he was ever the humble, faithful disciple of the School of Loyola in which he was trained to heaven”<sup>81</sup>

The work of the popular missions, pursued all through the sixties with visible tokens of success, was not interrupted by the death of Father Smarius In the season 1874-1875 (the work ordinarily ran from the fall to the late spring of the following year), Father Damen had six or seven fathers assisting him with more or less of regularity on the

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<sup>81</sup> *Catholic Telegraph* (Cincinnati), March 3, 1870 A Jesuit contemporary of Father Smarius who also achieved distinction in the pulpit was Father James Bouchard The red man's native gift of eloquence showed itself in this son of Kistalwa, a Delaware chief, and Marie Bouchard, born in the United States of French parents He was born according to De Smet in Muskagóla, "a small village in the United States", but according to a Jesuit register, in St Jacques (parish?), Louisiana He bore in his early days the Indian name of Watomika or "Swift-footed" He was educated at Marietta College, Ohio, was there ordained a Presbyterian minister and then sent on duty to St Louis, where passing the Jesuit church one day he entered it in a mood of curiosity at the moment the children were flocking in for their catechetical instruction It was the beginning of his attraction to the Catholic Church, into which he was received at the age of twenty-three, becoming a Jesuit in 1848 "Last month," Father Van de Velde informed the Father General in June, 1847, "a young man about 24 years old, formerly a minister with the Methodists and afterwards with the Calvinists, was converted to the Catholic faith His father was an Indian of mixed blood of the Delaware tribe, his mother, who is still living, is of American or European stock They were married in Indian or pagan fashion, always lived together and begot three children The young man now asks to be admitted into the Society He is pious, modest, intelligent and seems to be firm in the faith He studied Latin and Greek for awhile and wishes to devote himself to the salvation of the Indians I consulted the Right Reverend Bishop, whose opinion is that nothing stands in the way of his studying philosophy and theology and afterwards being raised to the priesthood He will remain here in the college until your Paternity decides whether or not he can be admitted" Van de Velde ad Roothaan, June 14, 1847 (AA) In 1861 Father Bouchard at his own request was assigned to the California Mission and in it spent the remaining twenty-eight years of his life His popularity as a preacher on the Pacific coast was very great and probably no other Catholic clergyman in that section of the country was ever more effective in the ministry of the pulpit, which carried him from California to Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington Territory and British Columbia There is a sketch of Father Bouchard in De Smet's *Western Missions and Missionaries* based on an autobiographical memoir in the Archives of the North Belgian Province, S J The best account is in *Lettere Edificante Torinese della Compagnia di Gesù* (Turin) [April, 1893], pp 253-260 For Bouchard's autobiography, cf *Mid-America*, October, 1937

missions In the season 1876-1877 the missionaries were organized into two bands, one of six fathers led by Father Damen, the other of two or three under Father John Coghlan The territory visited this year included Middle West, East and South. The first mission was given at Edina, Missouri Then followed a large-scale one at All Saints, Chicago, where Father Damen was assisted by Fathers Zealand, Niederkorn, Bronsgeest, Hillman and Massels From Chicago the missionaries named, with the exception of Father Niederkorn, who was replaced by Father John Condon, proceeded to Brooklyn, New York, where three missions were preached, all marked with gratifying results In addition to the regular mission-program, the fathers preached and lectured in various churches in and around Brooklyn A small mission was given in fashionable Rockaway, Long Island, and on one occasion the entire missionary staff went on board the war-vessels at the Navy Yard and heard the confessions of the marines, sailors, recruits and prisoners Then followed revivals at the Immaculate Conception, Philadelphia, and at St Francis de Sales's, Boston, after which the fathers travelled south to begin a mission at St Patrick's, New Orleans Here thirty converts were counted, among them General Longstreet Archbishop Perche and his clergy were gratified with the results obtained and believed that a signal impetus had been given to Catholic life in the metropolis The missionaries, on the other hand, thought they noted in the people a certain lukewarmness and indifference that stood out in sharp contrast to the piety and fervor they were wont to encounter in the eastern and western states While in New Orleans two of the priests went on board the United States gunboat *Plymouth* to afford the Catholic sailors an opportunity of complying with their Easter duties Then followed engagements at Mobile and Pensacola, and later in Chicago, Osage Mission and Parsons, Kansas

In April, 1877, Father Damen and his companions were back in the East, exercising their missionary zeal in Philadelphia and later in Lynn, Massachusetts A two-weeks' mission at the Annunciation, Chicago, in June brought the season to a close The years' work showed the following general results communions, 71,545, converts, 276, first communions of adults, 906, confirmations, 1,782 Meantime the second missionary group, led by Father Coghlan, had evangelized various points in West and East, including Morris, Illinois, St Mary's Landing, Missouri, Detroit, Omaha, Denver, Boulder, Georgetown, Central City, Pueblo (the last five in Colorado), Troy (New York), Shamokin (Penn.), Davenport (Iowa), East St Louis, Bunker Hill, Bethalto, Gillespie, Litchfield (the last five in Illinois), Oliphant, Pa, Pleasant Valley, Pa, Rochelle, Ill The season's labors yielded these results



communions, 44,720, converts, 208, first communions of adults, 558, confirmations, 274.<sup>82</sup>

The missions, it is unnecessary to say, were not conducted in haphazard fashion, but according to a method which was perfected gradually in the light of accumulating experience. The larger missions lasted as a rule two weeks and a half, the order of exercises as followed in the early seventies being this 5 A M, Mass. and sermon, 8 30 A M., Mass and sermon, 3 P.M, Way of the Cross, 7 30 P M, rosary, sermon and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The first week was for the women, the second for the men, i.e those whose week it was were alone admitted to the evening services and had the privilege of going to confession first. The advantages of this arrangement were regarded as three-fold, it gave all a chance to attend the exercises, it made it possible to seat all the men, who, having in most cases worked hard all day, were tired out at night, finally, the women, having already made the mission, were stirred to fervor and as a result were ready to urge their husbands, sons, or brothers to avail themselves of its graces.

The subject matter of the sermons was drawn largely from the Jesuit's official manual of ascetical practice, the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, the exercises particularly stressed being those which belong to the first week or stage of spiritual training. Father Frederick Garesché, S J., a western missionary contemporary with Father Damen, though not associated with the latter in his work, sketches in this fashion the sequence of topics dealt with in the course of a mission.

The topics treated in the morning lectures are the integrity and sincerity of confession, and instructions on the proper way of making use of that sacrament, together with catechetical and familiar explanations of the commandments. In the evening discourses we intersperse doctrinal sermons with the matter treated in the first week of the exercises. At the high mass of the first Sunday we speak of the advantages and objects of the mission and the spirit with which the people should enter on it, trying to move the hearts of the people by appeals to the memory of their deceased parents, their own early childhood, their possibly near end. In the afternoon at vespers the same subject is continued with a more direct treatment of the necessity of attending to their salvation. In the evening we dwell upon the creation of man, and the use of creatures. On Monday evening we lecture on the doctrine and use of penance in the Catholic Church, treating the subject catechetically and controversially. On Tuesday evening the subject is the nature and enormity of mortal sin. On Wednesday we treat of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. On

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<sup>82</sup> *Abrégé de l'Oeuvre des Missions données par le Rev Père Damen, S J, et ses cinq Compagnons* (ms) (AA) By "confirmations" are meant persons prepared for the reception of this sacrament.

Thursday we speak on personal sins, making, as it were, a general confession of a sinful life. On Friday the sermon is on Judgment or on Hell, or on both combined. Here also we introduce the different kinds of sin, especially those more enormous crimes of the age which are beginning to corrupt even the Catholic body and to which on less solemn occasions we scarcely dare more than allude. On Saturday we have no evening sermon. On the Second Sunday we treat at high mass of devotion to the B[lessed] Virgin as taught and practised by the Church, in the afternoon on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and in the evening upon the one, true, visible and infallible Church of Christ. Monday evening sees the close of the mission in a sermon on perseverance and the ordinary means for attaining that final grace, the avoidance of occasion of sin, prayers, weekly mass, monthly or quarterly confession. Then come the Papal Benediction, and Benediction of the B[lessed] Sacrament. We sometimes have little children prepared, nicely dressed in white, one of whom reads in the name of the congregation an act of consecration to the Mother of God. We celebrate a mass of requiem for deceased friends and relatives on Tuesday morning, at which we speak on devotion to the blessed souls in Purgatory, and in the evening give a public Lecture on some of the current Catholic topics of the day, on some doctrinal matter or point of controversy. Every day from 2 to 3 P. M. or after the evening sermons non-Catholics are invited to come and propose their doubts. On Tuesday we commence the confessions by the children who have made their first communion and are under sixteen years of age. On Wednesday and the other days that we remain in the place we are ready from 5 A. M. to 10 30 P. M. to hear confessions. The only intermissions are for meals, a half hour after breakfast, an hour after dinner, and another hour, including supper, before the evening service. When the situation of the confessionals allows it, we continue to receive penitents during the sermons, taking a recess, however, of a quarter of an hour after two hours' work, according to rule. By hard and constant work we find that two missionaries, in a week such as I have described, can, unaided, prepare one thousand for communion. For any number exceeding this they have to appeal to neighboring clergymen. The pastor has always enough to do in superintending everything and in running after delinquent sheep. The Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday are spent in resting or travelling to the next mission. Hard work you will say, and yet I have known men who were worn out in College life regain their health and strength in this treadmill of the missions. The only exhausting part of the labor is the time spent in the confessional.<sup>83</sup>

A curious feature of these early parish-missions was the large number of adults who made their first holy communion on such occasions. This delay in receiving the sacrament was due in most cases to neglect on the part of the parents. It was difficult or rather practically impossible for the pastors to get the children to take the necessary instruction. The frequent absence, too, of parish schools, not yet organized on their

<sup>83</sup> *WL*, 2. 130.

present effective basis, helps to explain the phenomenon. In the 1876-1877 series of missions conducted by Damen and his colleagues there were 1,464 first communions of adults, in the 1877-78 series, 1,980. The manner of dealing with these belated first communicants is explained by Father Garesche:

During this sermon, in accordance with an invitation extended for weeks together before the mission and enforced by an announcement at every one of the exercises, the assistant missionary receives in the school-room, the parlor of the pastoral residence or some other suitable place, those persons over sixteen years of age who have never made their first communion. I regard this as one of the greatest fruits of the mission, and decidedly the most difficult and trying of all the exercises. The average of such classes is perhaps greater than you would suppose. In one mission where there were 1100 communicants and where the pastor was noted for his zealous care for his flock, knowing almost every one by name, and where, too, there was little or no floating population, we unearthed about 20 such cases. I should think that the general average would prove to be about 40 to every thousand communicants.<sup>84</sup>

Another remarkable thing about these missions was the number of non-Catholics received into the Church. Conversions, however, did not seem to be confined merely to the period of parochial revivals. At the end of the Civil War receptions of converts at the Jesuit church in Washington were averaging five or six a week. Accessions to the church were said to be particularly frequent among the soldiers then being mustered out of service. But it was during the missions that the bulk of the harvest was gathered in. Some casual statistics in the matter have already been given. A series of parochial revivals preached by Fathers Damen and Smarius in the early sixties averaged twenty conversions to a mission. For the season 1876-1877 the total number recorded by the western missionaries in their activities throughout the country was 484, for the season 1877-1878, it was 451. In 1879, after their missionary excursions from Chicago had been in progress twenty-two years, it was reckoned that Father Damen and his associates had made twelve thousand conversions to the Faith. Great importance was attached by them to the public reception into the Church of non-Catholics during, but especially, at the close of the mission. As one of the missionaries wrote: "If, moreover, Almighty God gives the grace of conversion to a number of Protestants, the ceremony of their baptism or reception into the Church creates great enthusiasm amongst the Catholics, who glory with a laudable pride that so many are gathered into the fold."<sup>85</sup> The

<sup>84</sup> *Loc cit*

<sup>85</sup> *Idem*, 7 164



Francis X. Weninger, S.J. (1805-1888)

Arnold Damen, S.J. (1815-1890)





Cornelius Smarius, S J (1823-1870)



John Coghlan, S J (1829-1897)

practice of present-day Jesuit missionaries in America in this regard is different, inasmuch as they generally prefer to require from converts a longer period of instruction and to leave their actual reception into the Church to the pastors, a thing which ordinarily takes place only several weeks after the mission is over.

The conversions that ensued as one of the many happy results of the missions were largely due under God, there is reason to believe, to the controversial sermons delivered by Father Damen and his confrères. It was customary for him to give two discourses of this type during each week of a mission. Three of these discourses or lectures, the *Catholic Church and the Bible*, *Confession*, and *Transubstantiation*, were circulated in printed form, reaching a sale of one hundred thousand copies. They are marked by a simple, straightforward, practical air calculated to impress the average person where a more pretentious presentation of Catholic teaching might fail of its purpose. The fact that these lectures are still in frequent demand as likely to appeal to the non-Catholic mind indicates that they possess permanent value in the literature of Catholic apologetics. A passage from one of them will bring home their practical character.

But here is your misfortune, you are a one-sided people, you never examine both sides of the question. Tell me candidly, now, did you ever read a Catholic book in your life? "No, Sir. I would not take up a Catholic book!" "But you have read a great many books against Catholicity?" "Yes, I have and that is the very reason I do not want to read any more about it." Well, that shows you are a one-sided people. How can you give an impartial judgment, when you have examined but one side of the question? What would you say of a judge who sits in the criminal court when a policeman brings in a poor fellow, and says to the judge "Judge, this man is guilty of such a crime." "Well, then, hang him," says the judge. "But," says the poor man, "judge, I am innocent, and I am able to prove my innocence. I am able to bring you evidence and witnesses to prove that I am innocent." But the policeman insists that he is guilty. "Well, then," says the judge, "hang him anyhow." (Laughter.) What would you say of such a judge? "Ah!" you would say, "unjust, cruel, bloodthirsty man—you are guilty of shedding innocent blood. Why do you not hear the man? Why do you not hear his evidence, and his witnesses, and his proofs? You are guilty of the blood of an innocent man, and you have condemned him without examination." Well, now, my dear Protestant friends, allow me to tell you, (and I hope you will not be offended, for no man of sense can be offended by the truth), that is the way you have been treating the Catholics all the time. "Hang them, anyhow," you say. "Did you ever read a Catholic book?" Never in your life—and then you condemn us, condemn us without knowing what we are. Is that the part of a sensible man? Is that just, I ask you? It is very hard to tell you that you have been acting so unjustly to us Catholics, but, certainly,

none of you can be offended, for you know it is a fact You have been condemning us, you have been turning us into ridicule, you have been holding us up to the odium of the people, without knowing what the Catholic religion is at all That is the way Jesus Christ was treated, and that is the way you are treating the followers of Jesus Christ Oh! my dear Protestant friends, do become more just, more fair, more honest and charitable towards your fellow man Condemn him not without knowing that he really deserves to be condemned Do not examine one side of the question, but give a fair hearing to both sides Do I ask anything unreasonable? Is that not fair and just? I would therefore recommend to you to procure yourselves Catholic books You have read a great many books against us, now examine the other side of the question Procure yourselves Catholic books, in which our doctrines are thoroughly stated and thoroughly defended I recommend to you the three following books "Protestantism and Catholicity", second book, "Points of Controversy", and the third book, "The Manual of Instruction" You can get these three books during the Mission, at the door of the Church If you do not remember the titles of the books, only mention the three books recommended, and the young man will hand them to you <sup>86</sup>

In 1875 certain features of Father Damen's missions were called into question by one or other of his fellow-Jesuits as being open to objection. These features were the sale of books and other objects of piety in the course of the mission and the paid lecture, which usually followed by a day or so the close of the mission At a conference in Chicago presided over by the Father Provincial, Thomas O'Neil, Father Damen was called upon to justify his practice in this regard, which he did to the satisfaction of all present, being directed thereupon to write at once to the Father General in explanation of his missionary methods He said in his letter to Father Beckx

As regards the sale of books, we have nothing to do with that It is the pastor of the parish who chooses some one to sell pious books, rosaries, medals, and other objects of piety and the profit from the sale is applied by the pastor to his church or school or to the poor We have nothing to do with it—it's the affair of the pastor of the church and not our affair at all The same thing is done in all the missions which are given by missionaries of other religious orders, the Redemptorists, Lazarists, Passionists, Dominicans and all others The only profit we derive from it is the copyrights [royalties] on books written by our Fathers [Weninger and Smarius] and that amounts to very little Still it gives us means of bestowing a little alms from time to time and giving gratis books of instruction to Protestants The pastors and bishops want it absolutely and they take charge of it for the benefit of their churches and schools To forbid it is to forbid the missions to our Fathers Father Weninger will tell you the same thing.

<sup>86</sup> "Lecture on Confession" in *Life and Lectures of the Great Jesuit Missionary Rev Arnold Damen, S J* (Chicago, 1896), p 52.

It is customary in the United States and the Canadas to invite orators or popular lecturers of some reputation to give lectures, controversial, dogmatic or historical. An admission-fee of 50 cents for the lecture is charged and the receipts go towards the building of churches or schools, to the aid of hospitals, asylums, orphans, the poor, etc. It is a method of procuring means and alms for works of piety, religion, mercy and charity which is approved by Archbishops and Bishops, Catholics and Protestants. Everybody does it.

All churches, schools, religious institutions are very much embarrassed by debts and the Bishops and Reverend pastors generally ask me to give a lecture after the mission to help them in the difficulties they meet with in keeping up the parish schools or paying the church-debts or supporting the orphans or doing some other thing of the sort. I never refuse them and they give me half the receipts of the lecture to help me pay off the debts on our establishment in Chicago.

I never give lectures of this sort unless the Bishops and pastors so desire it. If the Bishops do not desire it, it isn't done.

It has been written to you that the Bishops and Vicar-Generals have condemned lectures of this kind. This is untrue. For the same Bishop about whom they wrote to you asked me very urgently at the time I was giving a mission in his Cathedral to continue to give these lectures in his diocese and to begin in his episcopal city after the mission so as to help his schools, which he could not support without such means.<sup>87</sup>

In 1875, when Father Damen was penning this explanation, applications were already coming in for missions to be given two years later.

If I could double myself and give four missions at one and the same time, I could not satisfy all the requests with which they press me to come to their assistance. Is not this a refutation of the charge that my manner of giving missions with a lecture hurts the good name of the Society? For 18 years I have been giving missions in the United States and Canada, always in the principal churches and Cathedrals, and everywhere the Bishops and pastors beg me to come back. There was a Bishop [McQuaid of Rochester] much opposed to the Society who would not allow the Jesuits to enter his diocese, especially after the Vatican Council. Well, at the urgent petition of two of the most respected pastors of his diocese, he allowed me to give two missions, which produced such an amount of fruit that this same Bishop invited me to preach the Jubilee in his Cathedral and is now our greatest friend. He wants us whenever we pass through his episcopal city to put up at his palace and he makes us ride in his own carriage.<sup>88</sup>

In acknowledging Father Damen's presentation of his case, Father Beckx was warm in his commendation of the devoted missionary's work. "There was never any doubt in me or others as to your zeal and energetic labor. What is more, your eagerness for the divine glory and for

<sup>87</sup> Damen à Beckx, August 17, 1875 (AA)

<sup>88</sup> *Idem*



souls has always, as far as I know, been a source of edification." At the same time, however, Father Beckx was insistent that the practices that had given rise to complaint, if continued at all, should be carried on under definite restrictions.<sup>89</sup>

Father Damen continued his apostolate of the spoken word with undiminished zeal up to within a brief period of his death. While conducting a mission in Wyoming at the advanced age of seventy-five, he was stricken with paralysis and died in Omaha six months later, January 1, 1890. The work of the Jesuit popular missions in the United States was largely a creation of his energy and zeal. "For ten years," he affirmed in 1868, "I have been Superior of the missions in the United States. To speak the truth, it was I who began these missions or spiritual exercises to the [English-speaking] people. Eleven years ago such exercises were given but rarely."<sup>90</sup> Seven years later, in 1875, the eastern Jesuits entered for the first time in a large way into this absorbing ministry, putting a band of six energetic workers into the field. In the West the tradition of systematic service to the parishes through the preaching of popular missions set up by Father Damen and his Jesuit cooperators has remained unbroken. Today a group of middlewestern Jesuits are regularly employed in giving parish-missions. As to the memorable parochial revivals conducted in the sixties and seventies with palpable, one might almost say, spectacular results, it is an interesting speculation just what was the contribution made by them to the process by which the immigrant in the United States has been enabled in large measure to keep the Faith.<sup>91</sup> The zealous diligence of pastors, parish schools, Catholic papers and books and Catholic societies, to say nothing of the sacraments of the Church, have all no doubt made their influence felt, but no inconsiderable measure of the spiritual forces that were at work to maintain the Faith in the Catholic population of the country must have been supplied by the "travelling missionaries" of the Society of Jesus and other religious orders. When the pioneer middlewestern Jesuits with their Generals behind them set themselves to the ministry of the popular mission as the most crying need of the hour for the Catholic Church in the United States, they undertook a work that justified itself in its results.

<sup>89</sup> Beckx ad Damen, October 20, 1875 (AA)

<sup>90</sup> Damen à Beckx, June 25, 1868 (AA) Father Damen must be speaking here only of Jesuit missions in the English language. Popular missions were being preached by the Redemptorists as early as the thirties. Cf. *supra*, § 1

<sup>91</sup> Gerald Shaughnessy, S.M., *Has the Immigrant Kept the Faith? A Study of Immigration and Catholic Growth in the United States* (New York, 1925). The author's conclusion, "no great loss to Catholicity [through leakage] has occurred in the United States" (p. 255), while apparently supported by scholarly research, has not met with general acceptance.