

PART III

JESUIT GROWTH IN THE MIDDLE WEST THE
FIFTIES AND SIXTIES

CHAPTER XVII

THE SUCCESSION OF SUPERIORS, 1851-1871

§ I OVEREAGER ZEAL

Father Elet was taken to task by Father Roothaan, as has been seen, for attempting a larger program of work than was warranted by the slender resources at his command. The General laid it down as a principle that Providence does not desire of its earthly agents any effort or enterprise for which the adequate human means are not at hand, to attempt a work when the necessary conditions for its success are not available bespeaks a zeal that is not *ad sobrietatem* and is in a sense a flying in the face of Providence. "If God does not supply the means," he pointed out, "it is a sign that He does not desire, at least for the present, the end in view, however good this may be in itself, and so on this score our minds ought to be quite at rest"¹ At the same time, there were actual pressing needs in education and the ministry that called or seemed to call for immediate relief and the urge to provide for them when it was at all possible to do so and leave to Providence the task of meeting future needs in properly trained men was apparently too great at times to be resisted. Thus the future was, in a measure, mortgaged for the sake of the present. As Father Roothaan saw it, the sacrifices which the western Jesuits ought to have made for the training of the younger members with a view to their greater efficiency in later years were made rather in favor of students in schools and colleges of whom, prior to their admission, there was no real obligation on the part of the Society to provide. This was not a policy, it is plain, of prudence and foresight, but at worst it was nothing more than mistaken zeal or the defect of a virtue, the virtue being a whole-souled and unhesitating altruism. The matter was put pointedly by Father Druyts when he wrote to Father Beckx "What else could we

¹ Obviously the General did not mean to discountenance all pious ventures made on a basis of trust in Providence and without apparent adequate human means to support them. Monumental works of charity and zeal are often begun, to use an Americanism, "on a shoe-string." What Father Roothaan deprecated was such a multiplication of activities as under the circumstances was really ill-advised from any standpoint of prudence, human or divine. Roothaan ad Van de Velde, June 2, 1844 (AA)

have done when distressing appeals for help were being heard on every side?"² At all events, with a truly generous, if shortsighted, disregard for their own domestic interests, the Jesuits of the West were giving lavishly of their energy and devotion in class-room, parish and Indian mission alike

At the risk of some repetition it may be of interest to recall here the situation in the vice-province of Missouri in Father Elet's time as it was graphically set before the General by Father Gleizal in his capacity of consultor.

A thought has been pursuing me for some days, I cannot of myself decide whether it comes from on high or from some other source I think I can do no better than communicate it to you precisely and simply, your Paternity will do about it as he thinks fit The one thing above everything else that determines me to take the present step is the greater glory of God, the good of our Society, and in particular the good of our Vice-Province

I must first of all speak out a truth which will in no way displease your Paternity, it is that with all our ignorance of the Institute and the very imperfect state of our Vice-Province, there reigns among Ours, in my opinion, a spirit of union, of devotion and of sacrifice altogether worthy of admiration There is no one here when there is question of work and suffering for the good of the Society who lags a single step behind, but with all that it is possible to see that we do not make a single step forward whereas in this country everything moves with giant steps and even with the rapidity of a steam engine The entire body of our young men is being sacrificed to the very imperfect instruction given in our colleges. I say very imperfect seeing that studies are made so superficially and in such fashion that one is sometimes tempted to ask one's self whether in some of our colleges it is possible to point out any difference between one of our American universities and a European normal school Catalogue in hand, I can name from 20 to 29 scholastics who have been in the Society for 10, 12, 15 years, and yet have made none of the Society's studies or have made them very imperfectly The method of studying here consists in giving several hours to teaching or prefecting and the rest of the time to preparing for or attending some or other class So much for those who are regarded here as being applied to their studies The others are plunged up to the neck in teaching The result is that of all of Ours who have been educated in the Vice-Province there is not a single one who has passed through the mould of the Society and can be called a trained Jesuit

Is it not deplorable, Very Reverend Father, to see such a state of things, especially when you consider that you have in the Vice-Province 79 priests and 47 scholastics (these numbers include, it is true, those from other Provinces), moreover, among our young men there are quite a number of talented subjects, and some of them are of brilliant parts and would match any subjects, it makes no difference which, from the other Provinces if

² Druyts ad Beckx, May 19, 1858 (AA)

only they had the advantage of being trained. If only there was hope of soon getting out of this labyrinth, one might say, patience for a while! But any hope of this kind is without foundation. Reverend Father Provincial Elet speaking to me a few days ago of the novices who will take their vows next year told me that Ours of the Province of Germany having to leave us soon, he would be obliged to do with them [the novices] as was done before with the others, namely, throw them into teaching without making them pass through the Juniorate. The cause of the evil which I point out is in my opinion 1, that we have too much work on our hands, 2, that we have taken up ministries which are foreign to the Society, such as the government of parishes and teaching in schools which elsewhere would be conducted by the Brothers of Christian Schools, 3, that we have subjects raised to the priesthood who ought to continue to be students, we do not do enough for the training of our men, i.e., we neglect the Juniorate after the Novitiate as also the last probation. Here I am nearly 14 years in the Province and I don't know a single member who has made his 3rd year of probation in due form.

In the present state of things it seems to me that with some good will in the matter the evil is not without remedy. 1, we could and we should give up the administration of parishes. At a single stroke we should have at our disposal 16 Fathers, the majority of whom might be able to render service in our colleges. Moreover, his Grace, the Archbishop of St. Louis, who for sometime now has seemed so devoted to us and who knows very well what ministries the Society should take in hand and what it should reject, would be edified to see us endeavoring as far as possible to draw close to the spirit of our Institute. He would besides admire our generosity were he to see us put into his hands well organized parishes with churches and rectories in good condition, all of which he could forthwith dispose of in favor of his priests, some of whom are in a state of real poverty. The secular priests would employ us all the more readily in missions and retreats, which our Fathers give elsewhere with so much success for souls and for the good of the Church. In one of the diocesan statutes issued by his Grace, the Archbishop, after his last synod, the secular priests are earnestly invited to employ Ours for giving retreats in their parishes on the plan of those given in Europe. I know that some of them have shown and still show a sort of repugnance to ceding churches and the annexed property owned by us in the parishes which the Society administers under the pretext or rather for the reason that we ought to have a care for the goods of the Society and not sacrifice them. If I am not mistaken, I believe it is by means of funds coming from the parishes or from the Association of the Propagation of the Faith or from other alms that these goods have been acquired with the exception perhaps of some of the churches of Father Helias. However it be, it seems to me that the Society by ceding these goods to the bishop would lose nothing thereby. As to his Grace, the Archbishop of Cincinnati, I know that he is very sensitive and that a change of policy such as I speak of and for which he might not be prepared might perhaps displease him. Yet, as he is an eminently virtuous man, if your

Paternity were to write to him on the subject to make him realize that the good of the Society demands such a change, I believe that he would readily yield, the more so as I know that his Grace has the greatest esteem for and confidence in your Paternity

I would suggest the transformation of the boarding-school at Cincinnati into a day-school, holding out at the same time hopes to the people of the town that a boarding-school will some day be opened in the neighborhood of Cincinnati. This town with its large population would furnish for the time being a sufficient number of pupils. Our Fathers [there], though less numerous than they are now, would make themselves more useful to the faithful than they do at present and the drawbacks of the location would thus be remedied, for the college building and the playgrounds are entirely too small for a boarding-school in a town such as Cincinnati. With this arrangement how many subjects we should be able to save and apply to studies and Jesuit training, which after all is the capital point for us!

My idea is that as long as we haven't at the head of the Province a man who has himself passed through all the stages of the Institute and at the head of the scholastic two or three professors who are first-class men exclusively engaged in teaching, it will be difficult to make the improvement which the Province stands in need of. I fear that our young men seeing themselves occupied so long as schoolmasters without hope of ever making the studies required by the Institute may become disaffected little by little and be tempted to abandon their vocation, although up to this nothing of the kind has happened. On the other hand, should it chance that we are given a Superior not well acquainted with the country, he might do harm with the best will in the world. Men like a Father Brocard or a Father Larkin are rare.³

The policy of exhausting the resources of the vice-province on immediate needs without looking to the future was, it is unnecessary to say, seen in its true light by Father Roothaan as also by more than one of the Missouri Jesuits themselves. What Father Gleizal thought on the matter has just been seen. Following up his remonstrances with Elet on this head the General took occasion to express himself again on the matter in the letter of June 15, 1851, addressed to Father Murphy, in which he appointed the latter successor of Elet and Visitor of the midwestern Jesuits.

Certainly this Vice-Province born of true heroism on the part of its first founders has had neither time nor opportunity to shape itself in conformity with the Institute, the knowledge and especially the practical knowledge of which is lacking among its members. What is worse, there is lacking any efficacious will to acquire this knowledge and this practice. As a result there are many miseries, and serious ones too, mingled with an amount of virtue,

³ Gleizal à Roothaan, October 28, 1850 (A). As to Father Gleizal's statement that the "government of parishes" is a ministry "foreign to the Society," cf *infra*, Chap. XIX, note 1.

generosity, and admirable devotion amid activities multiplied to excess. But there is no order in these activities, for too much has been attempted and the limits of capacity have been passed

Nearly ten years later Father Isidore Boudreaux wrote in a similar strain. "The radical defect which one might charge against our Vice-Province is that it did too much for others and too little for ourselves. It was founded by novices or, to speak more correctly, by men who never made what might properly be called a novitiate. They saw an amount of good to be done on every side. They wanted to do all the good that offered itself, they devoted, sacrificed themselves and sacrificed those who came to join them. Not knowing precisely in what the training of a Jesuit consisted, they had no adequate regard for such training and thought it was enough to devote themselves to the salvation of souls without troubling themselves too much about spirituality or studies. They have formed a generation of men in many respects inferior to themselves. The bulk of the Vice-Province is composed of men who, apart from the graces that always accompany religious, do not surpass good secular priests in learning or virtue."⁴ At about the same time the situation among his brethren was moving Father Keller to these reflections "Though excellent men possessed of solid virtue are not wanting among us, still we have come to this pass that, after steadily taking on during nearly all the forty years the Vice-Province has been founded more work than we could properly acquit ourselves of according to the Institute and after hurrying our young men through their education, we are in the end merely a handful and lack competent men."⁵

§ 2. WILLIAM STACK MURPHY

Father Elet's administration of his office issued in the end in such a measure of dissatisfaction that Father Roothaan resorted to the expedient of supplanting him by a Visitor with all the powers of vice-provincial. Petitions had in fact reached the General from the vice-province that such a measure be taken and Father Murphy was proposed by some of the petitioners as a desirable incumbent of the office in question. Father Roothaan in appointing him Visitor, June 15, 1851, let him know, for his encouragement, so he said, that his services had

⁴ I Boudreaux à Beckx January 27, 1860 (AA)

⁵ Father Beckx himself summed up the situation in these words "There are many excellent men among you whose only shortcoming is that without any fault of their own they were unable to procure adequate formation. They have done too much for others and too little for themselves overborne as they were by activities beyond measure"

thus been asked for ⁶ Father Murphy arrived in St Louis August 24, 1851, his predecessor's death following a few weeks later.

Though Father Murphy did not by any means solve the many vexing educational and other problems which beset the vice-province, he gave at all events a decisive impetus to the better organization of which it stood in need. Father Gleizal ventured in 1854 the prediction that Murphy's administration would mark a turning-point in the history of the midwestern Jesuits, and so in many respects it proved to be. None of his predecessors from Van Quickenborne to Elet had succeeded in governing to the complete satisfaction of the Father General, they had all on one occasion or other been called to task for not measuring up to the Ignatian ideal of the Jesuit superior. Father Murphy's management of affairs, on the other hand, appears never to have elicited anything but commendation from headquarters. It was his advantage, as it had not been that of his predecessors, to have passed step by step through all the normal stages of Jesuit training and this in a well organized province of the Society. It could not be said of him as was said by Father Roothaan in 1844 of the Missouri personnel, that it consisted entirely of men who had never seen the genuine Society of Jesus in action.

Father William Stack Murphy, a native of Cork in Ireland, was at this time in the prime of his powers, being forty-eight years of age ⁷ He had made his classical studies at the Jesuit college of St Acheul near Amiens and entered the Society of Jesus in the province of France in the same year, 1823, that saw the arrival of the Jesuits at Florissant. In 1835 he was assigned to the faculty of St Mary's College, which the French Jesuits were conducting near Lebanon, Kentucky, and in 1839 was made rector of the institution. He left Kentucky with the French Jesuits in 1846 when the latter took over St John's College at Fordham, New York, where he was employed as professor at the time of his summons to Missouri.

⁶ In the official registers of the vice-province Murphy's term of office is dated from August 15, 1851. Cf. also Murphy to Archbishop Blanc, September 9, 1851: "It has pleased Divine Providence that I should take his [Flet's] place on the 15th ult. having been transferred by my Superior from New York" (1). Father Murphy had taken the vows of a spiritual coadjutor, but on being made Missouri vice-provincial was raised to the profession of the four vows August 15, 1851. Père Vivier in his Jesuit necrology, 1814-1894 (Paris, 1897, p. 329) has 1852 for 1851, evidently a mistake. Jesuit law requires that all major superiors in the Society be solemnly professed. On the completion of their training, Jesuit priests are assigned to one of two permanent grades in the Society, the spiritual coadjutors and the professed of four vows, the fourth vow being one of special obedience to the Pope.

⁷ William S. Murphy, born April 29, 1803, entered the Society of Jesus August 27, 1823, died in New Orleans, October 23, 1875.

Impressions made by Father Murphy on contemporaries are here and there on record. Benjamin Webb, Kentucky's pioneer Catholic journalist, admired him greatly. "Like other members of his family he was possessed of a ready wit, conjoined to an amicable disposition. I have met with few men who could render themselves more charming in conversation. He had a great store of anecdotes and these he was in the habit of repeating at proper times much to the interest and amusement of his intimate friends. He was an effective preacher and a pleasing one. In the matter of literary taste and classic scholarship he had few equals. He had much distinguished himself in France in the ancient classics especially in Latin authors. . . . He was a complete master in English literature. It is doubtful, indeed, if there was another in the country at the time who knew better the capabilities of his vernacular."⁸ Another estimate of Father Murphy comes from the pen of John Lesperance, a one-time Jesuit and subsequently a figure of distinction in Canadian journalism.

A better read classical scholar I never met and his residence at Rome and Paris had made him a master of the Italian and French languages. Father Murphy could be a man of the world when he liked and his dry wit was racy of the soil, but his character was essentially introspective and his temper that of an ascetic. The book that he knew by heart and constantly meditated was the *Imitation*. The adaptations to the various needs of life which he got out of this little book were marvelous. He often told me that if you opened à Kempis with a point of a pen-knife you would be sure to find a passage suited to your then condition of mind, and he frequently startled his friends by apt citations from the mystic volume. I remember on one occasion when a very worthy

⁸ Webb, *op cit*, p. 393. As an example of Murphy's Latin style the following account of the historic Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854 in its bearings on Bishop Miège's vicariate is cited: "Vicariatus Revmi Miegé in terram frequenter habitatam celerrime excrescit. Scilicet tota Indica regio in duas Provincias [Kansas and Nebraska] nuper est divisa. Singulis colonis 150 jugera publice assignantur. Infinita hominum multitudo in dies eo immigrat, jam conventus agunt, jam sub arboribus edunt. Diaria Motus vero ac tumultus mox futuri. Scilicet plane contra pacta conventa anni 1820 [Missouri Compromise] inter status omnes in quibus servitus aethiopica existit et reliquos res geritur, quippe lege cautum erat ne ultra lineam quandam geographicam novae provinciae deinceps instituendae mancipia admitterent. Nuper vero lex eatenus mutata est ut singulis statibus rite administratis liceat ex colonorum suffragiis istiusmodi servos habendos vel prohibendos intra fines suos statuere. Inde fit ut qui legem ita mutatam indignantur nullum non moveant lapidem quo major evadat mancipia respuentium numerus cum ad suffragia ventum fuerit. Quin etiam, data pecunia, in dies efficiunt ut coloni mox suffragia ex sententia laturi creberrimi adventent. Missouriiani vero Kentuckiani allique qui secum servos adduxerunt arma ac vim parant negantque se mancipia ejici passuros. Interea Indi miserissimi, irruentibus Americanis, sibi abeundum esse perspicunt nec tamen quo se conferant satis sciunt cum omnia undique ab hisdem occupentur." Murphy ad Beckx, September 14, 1854. (AA)

person had reported to him the results of an important work which he had undertaken and unaccountably failed in, Father Murphy threw up his silver-bound glasses on his forehead, raised his finger-nails close to his eyes (a habit with him when very reflective) and murmured these oracular words, *Passione interdum movemur et zelum putamus*—"We are sometimes swayed by passion and fancy it is zeal" These words have haunted me through life and how often have I tested their truth⁹

Some words of Judge Robert A. Bakewell of St. Louis spoken in 1879 are also pertinent "Who that knew them can forget De Smet or Murphy?—fine gentlemen, as the French say, to the end of their finger nails, men of distinguished families who left country and home to 'plant the flag of Christian education in what was then considered the outskirts of civilization'"¹⁰

Father Murphy's reception by his brethren in the West was a cordial one "They have given me the best possible reception everywhere and so far I have met only with respect and affection. I would not attribute it all to the novelty [of the thing]. The bishops have shown me much kindness. As far as I can judge, domestic discipline is on a pretty good footing."¹¹ "Father Murphy's arrival," wrote Gleizal to the General, "has been a very pleasant one and everybody received him with open arms. He was not himself expecting what he found among us. He is truly the man we needed for superior and I am convinced that the little Vice-Province of Missouri under his administration will be a source of consolation. There are many imperfections among us but there is also much good will."¹² Gleizal had been acting superior of the vice-province during Elet's illness and Murphy should like to have retained his services in the capacity of socius, but his residence at Florissant, where he was rector and master of novices, made it impracticable for him to take on this additional office "Florissant is only six leagues away," so Father Murphy on his arrival in St. Louis informed Father Roothaan, "but what a road!"¹³ De Smet, Elet's socius, continued to serve under Murphy in the same office and uniform mutual understanding and sympathy marked at all times the relations between the two. Before the end of his first year in St. Louis the new vice-provincial had written to the General

⁹ St. Louis *Republican*, September 13, 1879

¹⁰ *Idem*, June 25, 1879

¹¹ Murphy à Roothaan, 1851 (AA) Roothaan had written previously to Elet "I have been consoled to see that the choice of Father Murphy has been in keeping with your wishes. He is indeed, so it seems to me, the man that suits the circumstances. I hope he will have the confidence of all as he has of yourself." Roothaan ad Elet, September 24, 1851 (AA)

¹² Gleizal à Roothaan, October 7, 1851. (AA)

¹³ Murphy à Roothaan, September 4, 1851

With the help of God and as far as my meagre store of energy and judgment allows, I am setting myself to put the affairs of the Vice-Province on a good footing. I flatter myself that my successor will find every facility for action. I believe that the religious spirit is gaining more and more. I am organizing the annual retreats in a way to make them most effective, but what shall I say of the studies of ours? Everything possible must be done for the young men, the priests and the scholastics who are along in years shall have to content themselves with what is strictly necessary. One thing gives me some little consolation, namely, that one can get along here more easily and with infinitely less in the way of attainments than is required in Europe. There are books of instruction and of controversy in English and these leave nothing to be desired, our men exploit them admirably. Metaphysical and scholastic questions never come up here and as to moral [theology] there are helps enough. What people sometimes say, *inter caecos beati unoculi* ["blessed are the one-eyed among the blind"], finds application here. According to this standard the Vice-Province is not unworthy of its mother. I am not afraid to say that in the eyes of the people it shines to the greater glory of God in respect both to virtue and learning. I do not maintain that strangers who have seen things *en passant* have always been deceived, here as elsewhere there will always be things to correct and reform, but they have never laid aside the spectacles and standards of their own country and consequently their views and calculations have often been short-sighted, narrow, inexact. *Ita judico in Domino* ["So do I judge in the Lord"]¹⁴

To the General's suggestion of January 7, 1852, that the scholastics engaged in their divinity studies devote themselves to these exclusively, Father Murphy replied that this could not be done and for two reasons: first, their places in the three colleges, all of them boarding-schools, could not be supplied, secondly, a great many teachers had to be employed in the colleges in view of their varying qualifications for the tasks on hand. Some handled Latin effectively, but not Greek, some were excellent in the languages but not in other subjects. "As a result scholastics sometimes have enough time at their disposal to give themselves to study and in this way they combine the two things as far as circumstances permit and for the most part with satisfactory results. It is certain that foreigners pick up the language of the country and a knowledge of practical things in amazing fashion." At the same time, however, Murphy declared his intention of assigning a few of the more promising youths entirely to study without other occupations to embarrass them.¹⁵

There was no lack of earnestness and good will among the men of his jurisdiction, so the new superior was quick to realize "How

¹⁴ Murphy à Roothaan, July 2, 1851 (AA)

¹⁵ Murphy à Roothaan, April 1, 1851 (AA)

many places to fill and what a dearth of subjects! What need for study and what a desire for it! Thank God! there is a hunger and thirst for justice The interior spirit increases and will increase This is a good deal”¹⁶ Yet, despite his insight into the problems before him and his desire to settle them in the right way, Father Murphy found out as his predecessors had found out before him that circumstances are inexorable things and often play havoc with the best laid plans. “Every year,” he commented in 1854, “some mishap occurs to disarrange all our plans for the literary and religious education of our men”¹⁷ His first thought was always to build up a properly trained and efficient personnel, under him the expansion of the vice-province into new fields of endeavor received a definite check Conservative by temper, he was also so by design and this, if for no other reason, in obedience to the peremptory instructions of Father Roothaan, who was convinced that premature and exaggerated expansion was the cause of all the existing difficulties of the vice-province. Even without any such direction of his policy from headquarters, Father Murphy would not easily have made new ventures in the enterprising, not to say daring manner of Fathers Verhagen and Elet. In the management of business matters of moment he was not indeed at his best Gleizal observed that his talent lay in the internal and domestic government of the Society, not in the conduct of its external affairs, while De Smet noted in his handling of an important piece of business in Louisville a shiftiness and indecision which did not help to clarify the situation Further, Father Murphy stood out in opposition to all his consultants against the acceptance of Milwaukee as a new field of work, and was brought to take it over only by the positive wish of the Father General However, as internal organization, not outward growth, was the peremptory need of the vice-province in the fifties, he proved to be the very type of superior which the circumstances then demanded.

Father Murphy was to show himself a shrewd and penetrating observer of current situations and events He wrote in 1852 “As for myself, I prefer to do business with the native American bishops rather than with the European ones In matters of business, they lay their dignity aside, they want to deal as equal with equal, the rule with them is *veniam petimus damusque* Niceness, sentiment, conventionalities, and other such things are not in fashion in America”¹⁸ The splendid possibilities of America often elicited comment “Clearly this country becomes every day more important and interesting One would say

¹⁶ Murphy à Roothaan, April 23, 1852 (AA)

¹⁷ Murphy à Beckx, July 23, 1854 (AA)

¹⁸ Murphy à Pierling, November 15, 1852 (AA)

Providence desires it to occupy the first place. Everything the Society will do to establish and put itself on a good footing here cannot but contribute to the prosperity of the Church in general. Perhaps one day Catholicism will come to take refuge here as did the ancestors of the Marylanders.”¹⁹

The Know-Nothing movement came and went during Father Murphy’s administration. Like most Catholics of the day he was alarmed by it more than circumstances warranted. He wrote in 1854: “The Secret Societies are seeking to destroy the church. Their political influence is so great that they govern the elections. German emigration is becoming more numerous than the Irish. It is claimed that the Secret Societies are going to lay a heavy hand on the Catholics. It is probable that they will soon give a President to the United States and will make the laws. Then will come the reaction.”²⁰ Later came the attack on the Apostolic Nuncio, Msgr. Bedini, and his consequent withdrawal from the country. “Father Weninger has had the honor of being hung with him in effigy . . . The plottings and violent demonstrations of the German refugees do not permit him [Bedini] to continue on his rounds.” In these circumstances Father Murphy regretted much the appearance and circulation in the country of a letter written by a Neapolitan Jesuit to the King of Naples on the ticklish question of absolute monarchy.

The Louisville riot of 1855 proved to be the death-knell of Know-Nothingism. “It is marvelous,” commented Murphy, “what excitement has been caused by this Louisville riot. That day of slaughter and pillage will, so it is hoped, utterly destroy the anti-Catholic faction, which is already in collapse. The attempt to unite the native non-Catholics and separate the Germans from the Irish has been futile. These latter, as always, are being cultivated by the American Democrats, who, so it seems, will soon get the better of their non-Catholic opponents. The native American Catholics see at length that they will not be safe unless they support their European brethren for they are in one and the same boat . . . Father Stonestreet writes ‘the American Catholics have finally but very reluctantly withal gone over to the Democrats.’”²¹

The more important facts of Father Murphy’s administration of the Missouri Vice-Province meet with mention on other pages of this history. An idea of what he managed to accomplish in the gross may be gathered from the words of Father Gleizal written to the General

¹⁹ Murphy à Roothaan, December 8, 1852 (AA)

²⁰ Murphy à Roothaan, July 8, 1854 (AA)

²¹ Murphy ad Beckx, August 2, 1855 (AA)

on occasions when report was current that the vice-provincial was about to be relieved of office. "It would be a misfortune for us to be deprived of Reverend Father Murphy who has succeeded so well in winning the confidence of the entire Vice-Province and who so far has been able to give to our little boat only a slight push ahead Retained in office sometime longer at least, he would help us in the best of fashion to make great strides forward" "The thought of our Provincial's leaving us fills me with alarm He has succeeded so well in acquiring an absolute ascendancy over all his subjects with so much kindness and at the same time so much forcefulness that his government will make an epoch in the Vice-Province The religious spirit has been [ms ?] preserved and increased in a striking manner in each and every one of us It may be very difficult for his successor to do what he has done with so little noise and so much success" ²² Again, Gleizal wrote in 1856 "We owe all possible thanks under God to Rev. Father Provincial, who, whether by his choice of competent men to govern after his own example or by his appeals in public and private, has so marvelously promoted throughout the whole Province progress in spirit and the pursuit of virtue So in the colleges and practically all the houses there is shining forth a love of spiritual things, fraternal charity, regular discipline, and a certain spirit of happiness which the Holy Ghost alone can pour into the heart" ²³

The New York-Canada Mission, to which jurisdiction Father Murphy belonged, had been set up by French Jesuits and was accordingly short-handed in members conversant with English It was this circumstance in particular that accounted for his recall to the East after five years of service in the West. "Under pressure of this need," Father Beckx wrote to him, May 10, 1856, "I must give my consent to your returning to that part of the country I am hoping the Missouri Vice-province will suffer no harm by your departure and that someone else may be found to continue and perfect what your Reverence has begun for the progress of that Province" Two months later the General announced to Father Murphy the appointment of Father John Baptist Druyts as vice-provincial "For the rest, I thank your Reverence most cordially on this occasion for the zeal and earnestness with which you have promoted the welfare of the Vice-Province. It gives me great joy of soul to be able to say on the report of Ours that your Reverence has been of great service to the Vice-Province I hope that your successor will preserve and even enlarge the good results that have been achieved." ²⁴

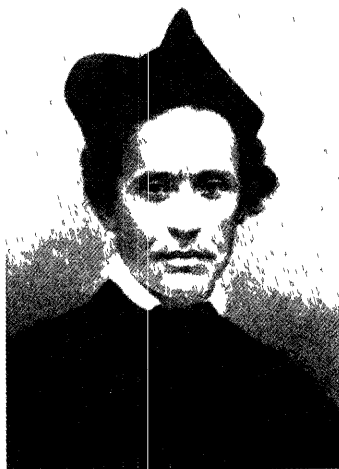
²² Gleizal à Beckx, August 12, 1854, June 10, 1855 (AA)

²³ Gleizal ad Beckx, February 4, 1856 (AA)

²⁴ Beckx ad Murphy, July 17, 1856 (AA)



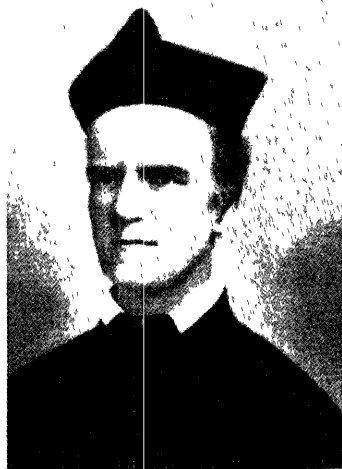
William Stacl Murphy, S J
(1803-1875)



John Baptist Druyts, S J
(1811-1864)



Ferdinand Coosemans, S J
(1823-1878)



Joseph E Keller, S J
(1827-1886)

de chemin de fer, point de télégraphe. Pas d'autre
quarante jours que j'y a passé, ça en voir
que tout allait bien. Il y a une dizaine de
violast qui, qui donnaient, y a autre prison de
fer, et de vaccination. Le P. J. (1851) est un
actif, ferme, et on lui manque que cet air de prêt
et de tranquillité qui convient sur tout à un maître
des novices. Les règles sont parfaitement soignées, corps et âme.
Cette maison de St Louis va très bien. Le P. Nelson
et le ministre (P. Scheider, Suisse) sont excellents,
le P. Elias a eu la bonnemedie de réunir les quatre
directeurs pendant les vacances et d'arranger
avec eux la discipline domestique et le règlement,
de manière à faciliter l'observation des ordonnances
de V. Paternali. On remarque que les points convenus
entr'aux vous ont été communiqués. Mon séjour
ne est une copie de vos lettres très utile et très pratique
mais, l'expérience se voit que trop, après qu'il faut
laisser aux officiers, d'habitude, toute leur autorité.
Aussi me sur, je bien, et on dit de faire le P. Nelson ou
le ministre, tout ce fait par eux en fait de uniforme
d'après mes suggestions, sans que par ailleurs rien
mêle en attendant que la Visite se fasse en
régler. J'aurais bien voulu passer quelques jours
dans les trois autres collèges, avant la Toussaint
mais les saux sont si basses qu'il faudrait trop
de temps, et d'argent pour faire ces excursions. Le
mois prochain remédiera à ce double inconvénient.
J'apprends que le P. Song a établi une discipline si
sévère que quelques uns craignent des suites fâcheuses.
Pour peu que des inférieurs, le soutiennent, il le patira.
Il a déjà 1120 élèves de pensionnaires, presque tous
protobants dont il n'a que quarante actuellement.
Sur ces 1120 élèves internes, je crois connaître le terrain,
c'est l'engagement à continuer, comme il a commencé,
d'autant plus que les expulsés ont été remplacés sur
le champ par des nouveaux. Les évènements de la dernière
pour cogner et de la pensionnaire, malgré l'absence de la vacance
c. n. d. trois élèves novices, on voit le nombre des externes
est augmenté cette année. Louisvill est réduit à l'extrême.

Page of a letter of W S Murphy, S J, to the Father General, John Roothaan,
October 8, 1851 General Archives of the Society of Jesus, Rome

§ 3. JOHN BAPTIST DRUYTS

The selection of Father Druyts for vice-provincial had been made in 1854, at which time it was planned to retire him from the presidency of St. Louis University and give him a year or so of relief from executive duties. During this period he was to make his tertianship, an abbreviated one, after the fashion of the day. Father Murphy wrote at the time to the General: "That he is a little deaf is something of a drawback, but the trouble, so it seems, is of a nature to embarrass him much less as provincial than as rector and this latter office he has filled ever since 1847 to the utmost satisfaction of all. Meantime, and this is the most important thing in his case, he will have almost a complete rest in mind and body for a year and will come out at the end in good health and entirely restored. This will be a source of great joy to all of Ours for it is a marvel how acceptable he is to them and deservedly so. We must also be glad that the master of novices will remain in office for we scarcely have anyone to succeed Father Gleizal."²⁵ In the event Father Druyts did not assume the duties of vice-provincial until the summer of 1856. "On the receipt of your Paternity's letter," Murphy informed the General, August 23, 1856, "Reverend Father J. B. Druyts became Vice-Provincial to the joy of all. May God be with him in all things so that, if his predecessor has left anything good behind him, this may grow in power and if anything evil, this may find a remedy."²⁶

The new superior of the midwestern Jesuits, a native Belgian like all his predecessors in this office except Murphy, was now in his forty-sixth year. For seven years, 1847-1854, he had filled with distinction the post of president of St. Louis University. What won him the affection of all was the obvious sincerity and goodness of his life, his self-effacement, his readiness to be at other people's service. Numerous testimonies from his associates stress the fact that he was a man of more than ordinary virtue. "Clearly," wrote Father Weninger, "a man according to God's own heart, a sterling character and perfect in his way." Father Isidore Boudreaux's words are equally emphatic: "I believe God helps him greatly with His lights, for he appears to me to be a man completely mortified, who never seems to seek himself in

²⁵ Murphy ad Beckx, October 30, 1854. (AA) Father Druyts was admitted to the solemn vows of the professed October 30, 1854, on ground of his "talents for governing and preaching."

²⁶ Murphy ad Beckx, August 23, 1856. (AA) Father De Smet wrote on the occasion to Father Duerinck, August 17, 1856: "A change has long been expected as the FF [Fathers] in New York were constantly urging the return of Reverend Father Murphy. The most disappointed has been the appointed himself—all his endeavors will be to make us all happy in our holy vocation" (A).

anything.”²⁷ John Lesperance, who knew Druyts intimately, portrayed him in this manner

The man who did most to continue and consolidate the work of the pioneers was Father Druyts, whose term in office marked the turning-point in the history of the University. He was eminently practical, a financier, a builder, and a skillful administrator generally. In this skeptical age we must use our words gingerly, but of Father Druyts’s virtues, the true denomination is that they were heroic. He was a saint, single-minded, utterly without guile, unconventional, firm as a monolith where there was need, and like Wolsey,

“to those men that sought him
Sweet as summer”

He presented a combination of rare qualities which go to make up the exceptions among men. The last years of his life were a martyrdom, but he died in harness.²⁸

The tasks that fell to him as vice-provincial Father Druyts discharged with a vigorous hand. He gave the initial impulse to the Society’s work in Milwaukee, sending thither its first Jesuit community though acceptance of the field had already been negotiated by his predecessor. He also inaugurated Jesuit enterprise in Chicago, sending Father Damen in 1857 to that rapidly growing center. His efforts to provide for the education of the scholastics culminated in the establishment of a house of studies at the College Farm on the outer edge of St. Louis. Probably the outstanding feature of his management of affairs was his unalterably high-minded and spiritual outlook. “It has pleased God this year,” he wrote to Father Beckx in 1859, “to visit many of Ours with infirmities. May the name of the Lord be blessed!”²⁹

In the beginning of 1861 Father Felix Sopranis, whom the General had appointed Visitor of all the houses of the Society of Jesus in North America, was in the vice-province in the discharge of his official duties. Meantime Father Druyts, whose chronic headaches were finally resulting in softening of the brain, was becoming incapacitated for the duties of his office. “For quite a while,” said Father Isidore Boudreaux in a letter to the General, “his affliction has apparently deprived him of the free use of his faculties. I have proposed Father Coosemans as his successor. In my opinion he is the only one of our Vice-Province whom it is safe to designate.”³⁰ Druyt’s condition at this time was apparently not so very critical, as Father Boudreaux recommended that he be made assistant to Father Coosemans, to whom he would

²⁷ I Boudreaux à Beckx, May 12, 1859 (AA)

²⁸ St. Louis *Republican*, September 13, 1879

²⁹ Druyts ad Beckx, April 18, 1859 (AA)

³⁰ I Boudreaux à Beckx, January 15, 1861 (AA)

prove a valuable aid in view of his intimate acquaintance with the affairs of the vice-province. The Visitor did appoint Coosemans vice-provincial but only temporarily and until such time as Father Murphy, the erstwhile incumbent of the office, could be sent for from New Orleans, where he had gone after a serious illness at Fordham. Father Murphy took up for the second time the duties of Missouri vice-provincial in February, 1861.

On June 18, 1861, Father Druyts passed away. De Smet on returning to St. Louis in April had found him paralyzed. "He recognized me and wished to communicate with me about a number of business affairs and transactions. Several times he made efforts to do so but each time after a few words became confused and lost. Still I have been able to straighten out a number of things with the notes which he left behind."³¹ Father Coosemans in reporting his death to the General affirmed that a certain saintly person in St. Louis maintained she knew by divine revelation that Father Druyts had gone directly to heaven without having passed through the purgatorial fires. "Is this a trick of the imagination? I really do not know. But this is certain,—during life he was remarkable for his humility as for his patience in suffering and constancy in work. More than once have I heard some one exclaim, 'but how humble he is!' Father Van Hulst, who was his confessor during the last years of his life, declared to me that during all the time he was the confidant of the interior secrets of his heart he does not think that Father Druyts was ever guilty of a deliberate venial sin. *Pretiosa in conspectu Domini!*"³² Father Murphy, too, in his incisive way paid tribute to the memory of the deceased.

Reverend Father Druyts died on June 18 quietly and calmly, having received the sacraments two days before. It is not certain whether he was in possession of his senses or was conscious of the approach of death. A man truly meek and humble of heart, lovable, venerable, of angelical countenance even in the coffin, of quick and penetrating mind but without learning for he never had opportunity to study. Owing to his deafness he scarcely shared in recreation of any kind for several years past. Moreover, he took on himself all sorts of business and beyond measure, as a result brain fag and in the end an incurable lesion.³³

In 1862 Father Murphy was made defendant in a suit brought against him in the Circuit Court of St. Louis by Cornelius O'Brien,

³¹ De Smet à Beckx, October 2, 1861 (AA)

³² Coosemans à Beckx, June 25, 1861 (AA)

³³ Murphy ad Beckx, August 14, 1861 (AA) "No Superior was ever more generally loved than was Father Druyts, a paragon of charity, prudence, and practical good sense." Diary of Father Walter Hill (A)

a one-time Jesuit scholastic, to recover compensation in money for services rendered by him while in the order. O'Brien, a native-born Irishman, had been received as a scholastic-novice at Florissant, July 13, 1850, being then twenty-two years of age. At the end of twenty months he was pronounced by Father Gleizal, the novice-master, to be unsuited for the Society and was sent to the vice-provincial, who placed him provisionally as a teacher in the Jesuit school recently opened in Louisville, Kentucky. Having succeeded fairly well in the duties assigned him, he was allowed in answer to his own earnest pleading to take his vows, which he did at Bardstown. He taught subsequently at Bardstown, Milwaukee and St. Louis, did a year of philosophy in St. Louis and also two years of moral theology, the latter at the College Farm scholasticate. His ill-success, however, in the examinations he underwent was so pronounced that it was concluded he could not consistently be advanced to the priesthood. Moreover, this circumstance, together with his general unfitness for the Jesuit life, induced Father Murphy, with the approval of Father Sopranis, the Visitor, to release him from his vows. Mr. O'Brien acquiesced in this step, having previously declared his unwillingness to remain in the order if his superiors were of the opinion that he had no genuine call to it. The date of his dismissal was July 21, 1861.

Bishop Miége of Kansas having signified his willingness to accept Mr. O'Brien for his jurisdiction, apparently in the hope that the young man might later qualify for the priesthood, the latter left St. Louis at once for the West, but within a month or so he had returned to St. Louis. Here he put in a claim for money in compensation for the years he had spent as a teacher in Jesuit schools, overlooking the fact that he had for years been receiving education and support in the Society of Jesus gratis. Having failed to extort the money from Father Murphy, he carried out the threats he had made to bring the matter into court. He retained two non-Catholic lawyers while the vice-provincial engaged as his attorney Alexander Garesché together with the firm of Glover and Shepley. The trial began March 21, 1861, and a verdict was rendered five days later. The plaintiff demanded in all \$7,253.33, this amount covering what he alleged was due him for four years of teaching at a thousand dollars a year, for two years and a fraction of prefecting at twelve hundred dollars a year, for twenty months of servant's work as a novice at twelve dollars a month. Counsel for the defense produced in court O'Brien's signature to a document which he had signed as a novice to the effect that he had read the Jesuit rules, approved of the same, and was willing to live according to their provisions. Counsel then proceeded to point out that these rules and especially the Jesuit's vow of poverty withdrew from the

plaintiff all personal right to any pecuniary compensation from the Society for services rendered in teaching or other occupations. Alexander Garesché's closing address to the jury was an effective presentation of the case for the defense, the speaker declaring his pride that he had this opportunity to plead for justice on behalf of an organization of men to whom he himself as a product of its training was a thousandfold indebted. The two-hour speech of the prosecuting attorney which brought the trial to an end made scarcely any attempt to rebut the evidence produced by the defense, it was nothing more than a frank and impassioned appeal to the religious prejudices of the jury. The Society of Jesus was criticized, its rules and vows were held up to ridicule, and the thread-bare calumnies of its enemies duly rehearsed. The jury, reduced to ten by sickness, was divided, though from the beginning six held out strongly for the defense. Two who wavered for a while were won over to their side leaving two who were so firmly bent on rendering a verdict for the prosecution that nothing could be done except to agree on a compromise. This was done by the jury's finding for the plaintiff, but awarding him only one cent of compensation, a verdict which relieved him of the necessity of paying costs. There was general dissatisfaction shared even by the judge over this miscarriage of justice in view of the obviously worthless nature of the case presented by the prosecution and Father Murphy's attorneys were eager to enter motion for a new trial. But he objected to any such step, especially in view of the fact that the verdict was after all a virtual victory for the defense and was so interpreted by the public. Nevertheless, his attorneys, apparently on their own account, entered motion to have the Court assess the costs on the plaintiff, which it did by a decision rendered April 2, 1862. The Judge declared on this occasion from the bench "that the thing was as clear to him as noonday, that the signed statement of Cornelius [O'Brien] was sufficient to deprive him of all rights to compensation, that, even apart from this document, the petitioner had willingly and knowingly renounced all hope of reward from the beginning and accordingly had no reason for claiming it now, that therefore he ought to be condemned and is hereby duly condemned to pay the costs" ³⁴

Father De Smet wrote the following account of the case to a correspondent

The famous law-suit gave us some little trouble and uneasiness—it lasted five days and terminated in a one-cent verdict in favor of O'Brien. It is certainly more than the individual deserved. In justice the verdict should have

³⁴ The account in the text follows a Latin statement of the case drawn up by Father Keller for the General (AA)

been in favor of the Society, but even such as it is we have reason to be satisfied. We might have got a new trial, but the Archbishop, Alexander Garesche, the public in general declared it a triumph for us. Mr. Glover, our Protestant lawyer, wished to call for a new trial, but as we did not consent, he at least [*sic*] of his own accord, pleaded that the costs (about \$25 00 [?]) should be paid by O'Brien. I know not how this terminated. The jury was reduced by sickness to ten, all Protestants except one Jew, all the Catholics having been rejected. Eight of the jurymen were on our side, two against us, of the blue stocking Methodist gentry led on by the bitterest of anti-Catholic feeling, which they openly manifested—after five hours discussion among themselves it was agreed to give the fellow instead of \$7300 00 a verdict of one cent, that he might not be obliged to pay costs. His lawyer has given to understand that he had been deceived in respect to the nature and circumstances of the case. Poor O'B did not appear after the second day in court and lawyer Glover said in his speech "that there was yet some hope for O'B since he was not dead to shame." We must pity the man and pray for him.³⁵

It had been the Visitor's idea in calling Murphy to St. Louis, where he arrived in February, 1861, to retain him for a second term as vice-provincial, an arrangement which was well received on all sides. "It is a very special Providence for the Vice-Province," observed De Smet in October of the same year, "that, on the loss of our very worthy Father Druyts, Father Murphy had recovered his health so as to be able to return to St. Louis to replace him. As he knows the Vice-Province through and through, his arrival has been a consolation to everybody. We are hoping to keep him among us quite a while longer."³⁶

Father Murphy had apparently not quite recovered from the disorder, seemingly of a nervous or cerebral nature, which had temporarily afflicted him at Fordham. Moreover, his return to St. Louis occurred in the first year of the Civil War and the acute political situation in Missouri and especially in St. Louis, so Father Verhaegen surmised, reacted upon him, making him unduly fretful and apprehensive. "His government as far as I can judge," Father Coosemans as a consultant of the vice-province wrote to the General, "is what the rule demands—spiritual, mild, exact. Still for all that I find that he is not the man he was before his illness. His mind lacks its old time steadiness and I sometimes fear that he is threatened with a return of the infirmity which

³⁵ De Smet to Oakley, April 1, 1852 (A). "We have been advised to prepare a legal document in English which can be produced at any time. It is a sad necessity, but such is poor human nature that we are obliged to take this precaution." De Smet to Paresce, March 27, 1861 (A).

³⁶ De Smet à Murphy, October 20, 1861 (AA).

obliged him to leave New York ”³⁷ Father Sopranis, having solicited an opinion from Murphy’s consultors, was advised by them that the latter’s state of health was such as to require his removal from office. This step was soon taken, Father Ferdinand Coosemans being installed as vice-provincial on July 16, 1862. Father Murphy, after spending some time at Florissant as professor of the juniors, was permitted at his request to go to New Orleans, which he did by steamer from New York. He wrote thence to Father De Smet November 15, 1862: “Things are prosperous here at Fordham and in the city and likely to continue. My old acquaintances protest against my cadaverous photograph. Father Visitor did not recognize me, Father Thebaud says that it makes me a man of eighty, another says that it is a sitting corpse. So you see you have murdered your friend at parting. Too much kindness kills people sometimes. . . 999 affectionate things to F [Father] Provincial, F Socius, F Rector and the community. There is no possibility of their being forgotten or your Reverence by a grateful brother in Xt ”³⁸

Father Murphy spent the remainder of his years in ministerial work in New Orleans, dying there at seventy-two. In the history of the midwestern Jesuits he is a figure of mark, lending them, as he did, his invaluable services at a critical turn in their affairs and giving them what circumstances had made it difficult for them previously to enjoy—a manner of government in accordance with Jesuit ideals and demands.

§ 4 FERDINAND COOSEMANS

When Father Coosemans took in hand the management of the vice-province he was only thirty-nine, having been born in the same year, 1823, that saw the arrival of Van Quickenborne and his novices at Florissant. He was a native of Brussels, entered the Society at Florissant in 1842, and there also, in the chapel of the recently finished

³⁷ Coosemans à Beckx, October 25, 1861 (AA)

³⁸ In New Orleans Father Murphy was confessor to the Sisters of Mercy of that city. “They [the nuns] noticed that he had a great love for that book of books, the ‘Imitation of Christ’ . . . Naturally he was reputed a most skilful Director, equally suited to silks or rags, though he preferred the latter. Persons of higher gifts of intellect found him specially adapted to them. Brownson, the great Reviewer, was wont to say that he never met anyone who could see through the windings of his soul like Father Murphy. Fourteen years of his priestly life were spent in New Orleans, the Indian summer of a beautiful career. He was loved and trusted by his brethren in no common degree and few men had and retained so many sterling friends. He had to no small extent the dangerous gift of winning hearts, but he won them only for his Creator. . . . In any company Father Murphy would be distinguished.” Mary Theresa Austin Carroll, *Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Charity* (New York, 1895), 4 37.

"Rock Building," was ordained in 1851 to the priesthood by Bishop Van De Velde. Bishop Miége was eager to secure the services of the fervent young priest for the Indian missions, for which he had volunteered, but Father Schultz was sent instead. Father Murphy wrote at the time "Father Coosemans does considerable good among our pupils [in St. Louis], he is meek and humble of heart, but his physique is scarcely suited to the hardships and privations of the desert."³⁹ In 1852 Miége again asked for Coosemans and was again put off, Father Van Hulst being assigned to him. This time Coosemans could not be replaced in his Spanish class at the University. At thirty-one the youthful Jesuit was vice-rector at Bardstown, which post he occupied exactly three years, not, however, with distinction, he became involved in difficulties with the student body and was thereupon relieved of office. A better success in administration awaited him in St. Louis where he was rector of the University from 1859 until his appointment as vice-provincial in 1862.

Ferdinand Cooseman's virtue had something striking about it and could not go unnoticed by his religious brethren. Father Murphy described him as "rather youthful in appearance and bodily build, but modest withal and edifying, straightforward, forceful, diligent, teachable, very spiritual, a good and fervent preacher." Again, Murphy wrote of him, "a man of truly fervent piety and angelical life, with whom I do not deal except with a sort of reverence. If only years are granted him, he will, so it would seem, attain to eminence."⁴⁰ Father Sopranis characterized him as "a man simple, upright, very humble, and close to God." Still another account notes his "wonderful prudence, confidence in God, and charity towards those under his charge."

Father Coosemans, having made scarcely any divinity studies whatever in course, had been admitted to the body of the Society of Jesus in 1859 in the grade of spiritual coadjutor. In view of the fact that Jesuit law requires all major superiors to be "professed," it was necessary for him on becoming vice-provincial, as had also been the case with Father Murphy, to be advanced to what is known in the Society of Jesus as the profession of the four solemn vows. This was accordingly arranged by the General, Father Coosemans pronouncing the vows in

³⁹ Murphy à Roothaan, November 10, 1851 (AA). "There is also a scholastic, 29 years of age, (Brother Coosemans), who desires the missions with ardor and who seems to have everything necessary for a good missionary." Miége à Roothaan, February 13, 1851 (AA). Elet had engaged to send Coosemans to the Indians if the General would allow him to be ordained before finishing his studies. He could, Miége urged, complete his theology as easily while learning an Indian language as while teaching and perfecting in a college.

⁴⁰ Murphy à Beckx, August 14, 1861 (AA).

question on the same day, July 16, 1861, on which he was installed at St. Louis University as vice-provincial. Two days later he wrote the General, Father Beckx

I send your Paternity enclosed herewith a copy of the vows which in spite of my unworthiness the Lord in His goodness permitted me to take on the Feast of our Lady of Mt. Carmel. May His Holy Name be blessed for this grace as also for the cross which he sent me at the same time. This same day, July 16, it was announced in the refectory that your Paternity had named me Vice-Provincial of the Vice-Province of Missouri. I know, in a measure at least, my incapacity, very Reverend Father, and I know that this opinion is shared if not by all at least by others besides myself in the Vice-Province. Still this does not discourage me for it is not in my weakness but in the Lord that I place my confidence and I do not at all call into doubt what our Holy Founder says in his letter on obedience, namely, that the Lord will supply whatever may be wanting in his minister whether it be virtue or other good qualities.⁴¹

In proposing Father Coosemans to the General as vice-provincial the Visitor at the same time proposed Father Joseph Keller as socius, an office held the preceding twelve years by Father De Smet. "In this manner," reflects Father Sopranis, "we shall look to the present needs of the Vice-Province for he [Keller] will supply what is lacking in Father Coosemans as regards knowledge of the Institute, and we shall look to its future needs also, for with this arrangement he will one day become competent to fill the same post himself."⁴² Father Sopranis's expectation that Fathers Coosemans and Keller would make a good working pair was borne out by the event. Some years later, when Coosemans had fully demonstrated his capacity for office, Father Isidore Boudreaux wrote with a note of enthusiasm, "I believe we have never had a like provincial in Missouri," and he commented on "the combination of sanctity and wisdom if not in the same person, at least in the same administration."⁴³

Father Keller, a Bavarian, now not quite thirty-five, had made his classical studies at St. Louis University. From the first he gave promise of excellent service to his order. Noviceship ended, he was sent by Father Van De Velde to Rome for his divinity studies. In 1856, at which time he was prefect of studies in Cincinnati, Father Gleizal singled him out for mention in a letter to the General. "His talents

⁴¹ Coosemans à Roothaan, July 18, 1862 (AA). The four provincial consultors, Fathers De Smet, Keller, Verhaegen, and Isidore Boudreaux, made a sworn statement that Father Coosemans in their judgment was competent to govern the province.

⁴² Sopranis ad Beckx, March 21, 1862 (AA).

⁴³ I Boudreaux à Beckx, July 16, 1868 (AA).

for study are so outstanding that I venture to say without being rash that he will one day become an ornament of the Society in these parts.”⁴⁴ Father Murphy, always a shrewd appraiser of character, thought him too exacting. He described him as “scholarly and talented, forceful and prudent, but rather a severe judge of men and things and hence testy and impatient of other people’s mediocrity. The streak of hardness in him will be eliminated by degrees.”⁴⁵ Another estimate of Father Keller belongs to the same period. “His general outlook on things is admirable, but he is too much given to seeing the defects of persons and things and does not look enough at their good side. He looks straight at his ideal and cannot suffer mediocrity. He has great keenness and penetration of mind, but relies too much on his own judgment.” These estimates of character were made when Father Keller was still young and before he had filled a superiorship of any kind though he had been prefect of studies. With time the youthful limitations were corrected and he showed himself eventually an acceptable and altogether efficient superior according to the Jesuit ideal. He was a genuine person, simple and without pretense. When the time came for him to take his final vows, he petitioned, in view of his meagre theological studies, to be designated a spiritual coadjutor but was directed by Father Beckx to make the profession.

Of particular note about Father Coosemans was his steady preoccupation with prayer and things of the spirit amid all the cares and distractions of administration. Father Isidore Boudreaux, always happy in portraying his Jesuit confrères, wrote of him after he had been vice-provincial a little over a month. “He seems even more united to God than in the past and shows clearly that he counts not on his own wisdom but on light from on high. At the same time, he is busily taken up with affairs of administration. He enters on office under circumstances that could not be more trying, but what assures me is that he is a man of God.”⁴⁶

At the moment Father Coosemans became vice-provincial the Civil War was a little more than one year old. His administration covered, therefore, the subsequent years of the great conflict as also the critical period of reconstruction. Through these eventful times with the difficult problems they begot, as those of the military draft and the various test-oaths, Father Coosemans piloted the little bark of the midwestern Jesuits without disaster or untoward incident of any kind. Though his associates were entirely satisfied with his conduct of affairs, he was never in the least satisfied with himself but looked forward yearningly to

⁴⁴ Gleizal à Beckx, February 4, 1856 (AA)

⁴⁵ Murphy ad Beckx, August 14, 1861 (AA)

⁴⁶ I Boudreaux à Beckx, August 20, 1862 (AA)

the moment when he should be allowed to return to a private capacity in the order. At the beginning of his third year, as also of his fourth year in office, he inquired of Father Beckx whether he might not forward names for a successor "If I could only, and that right soon, go back again to the life of obedience, of entire dependence on the will of a local superior" Again, on concluding his fifth year as provincial, he appealed once more to the Father General "Yesterday evening, while I was making my adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, the thought struck me that I might without displeasing our Lord recall to your Paternity that in a few months I shall have finished five years as provincial. If you judge it well to name my successor, I shall return thanks with all my heart to our Lord and to your Paternity However, let the good pleasure of our Lord be accomplished in all things and always"⁴⁷

A council of the ecclesiastical province of St Louis, to convene in May, 1864, having been announced, Father Coosemans sought to absent himself with the approval of the General on the ground that, not having made adequate theological studies, he would perforce render a very unsatisfactory account of himself before the assembled prelates and so bring discredit on the religious body which he represented But Father Beckx entertained no such fears and instructed the Missouri superior to attend the council, which in the sequel did not convene Perhaps the severest shock which Father Coosemans's diffidence ever had to endure came in 1864 when he found himself under consideration as successor to Bishop Spalding in the see of Louisville In a meeting of the consultors of the Louisville diocese held before the departure of Bishop Spalding for Baltimore, of which see he had been named archbishop, the names of two or three Jesuits were proposed as suitable incumbents of the see about to be vacated Father Verdin, superior at Bardstown, who was among those present at the meeting, protested the nomination of the Jesuits, alleging a pledge given by the Holy Father that members of the Society would no longer be called upon to accept ecclesiastical dignities The Jesuits were thereupon struck off the list and two diocesan priests together with a Dominican substituted instead, after which the list was sent to the bishops of the ecclesiastical province of Cincinnati as the choice of the Kentucky clergy for a new Bishop of Louisville At Detroit, where the bishops met, the selection made at Louisville did not please in all respects and for the clergyman who was third in the terna was substituted Father Coosemans That a Jesuit should after all be put on the list is probably to be explained by the circumstance that, as Bishop Spalding was not present at the

⁴⁷ Coosemans à Beckx, January 19, 1865, February 7, 1868

Detroit meeting, Father Verdin's protest against the naming of Jesuits was not brought to the notice of the prelates there assembled. Father Coosemans, when word of his nomination reached him, hastened to inform the Father General of his embarrassment. "I continue to renew the simple vow on the subject of ecclesiastical dignities, for the rest I abandon myself with confidence and without reserve to our Lord and to your Paternity, being well aware that you are taking care of me." Father Beckx, who was asked by Cardinal Barnabo, Prefect of the Propaganda, to supply information regarding Coosemans, presumably advised against his appointment and the diocesan priest, Father Peter Joseph Lavialle became the eventual choice of the Holy See for Louisville.⁴⁸

The simplicity and humility of the saints were thus uniformly in evidence in the personality of Ferdinand Coosemans. A further instance in point, as revealed in some lines of his written to the Father General, will be in place.

As I was in the chapel here in the Residence [Chicago], the thought came to me to ask your Paternity to be so good as to give me a year of study in theology when you shall find it proper to name another Provincial for Missouri. This thought came to me four or five years ago, but I rejected it until now. Faithful to the recommendation of our Holy Father, Saint Ignatius, I earnestly prayed our Lord the next day, which was the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, to be pleased to enlighten me as to whether I was to make the request or not. I have since then done the same thing from time to time and as I still feel the same desire I do not hesitate to lay it before your Paternity. I could during this year make up a little of what I am lacking in by studying or at least reading attentively a good abridgment of Dogmatic Theology, a little Canon Law, and Ecclesiastical History, and by repeating Moral [Theology]. You know, Very Reverend Father, that I have never had a single year entirely to myself for Philosophy or Theology, and this lack of acquaintance with things which every Jesuit is supposed to know has often hampered me and exposed me to compromising the reputation of the Society before others. So far, I have taken refuge in silence and obscurity.⁴⁹

Father Felix Sopranis's visit to America as the General's representative resulted in certain wise enactments affecting Jesuit domestic life and, in general, made in numerous ways for the better organization of the Society of Jesus in this part of the world. Notice will subsequently be taken of the negotiations he was drawn into in connection with the proposed common scholasticate for the North American prov-

⁴⁸ Coosemans à Beckx, August 7, 1864, October 4, 1864. The professed members of the Society of Jesus make a special vow not to accept ecclesiastical dignities except under an order of obedience from the Holy See.

⁴⁹ Coosemans à Beckx, February 12, 1869 (AA).

inces and missions and with the problem of the Bardstown college. As to the general position of Jesuit affairs in America, Father Sopranis reported to headquarters that there was something wanting in the Society here from Canada to California, for which circumstances he assigned two causes: first, a lack of the special spiritual and academic training which the Jesuit Institute prescribes for its members, and, secondly, a too ambitious program of work.⁵⁰ One especially significant comment he made on American Jesuits: They were forward, he said, in urging opinions as to their own affairs with the Father General, but, once the latter had spoken, they acquiesced in the decision without a murmur. This, after all, was an attitude well within the limits of the Jesuit spirit and rule, adjusting, as it did, the demands of obedience to free representation of personal opinion to superiors.

The raising, December 3, 1863, of the Missouri Vice-Province to the rank of a province was mainly due to the personal initiative of Father Sopranis. During his stay in the vice-province he came to know that more than one of its members was cherishing the hope that the Father General might see his way to granting this favor. Father Gleizal, always eager in his ardent way to see the Society of Jesus prosper in the Middle West, had appealed to Father Beckx in 1856: "Pardon me, your Paternity, if I be rash in petitioning that you deign to raise our vice-province to the grade of province after the pattern of the Maryland Province, the membership of which is not much in excess of ours."⁵¹ Father Sopranis, however, was not at first disposed to recommend any change in the status of the western Jesuits, in one of his reports to the Father General he even criticized the erection of the vice-province in 1840 as premature, a view contested by one of the General's assistants, Father Villefort, who undertook to show (1862) that the erection not only of the Missouri Vice-province but of a number of new provinces besides had been attended with the happiest results.

But Father Sopranis was not wedded to his opinion, in fact, on his own initiative he finally proposed to Father Beckx that Missouri be erected into a province, writing as follows:

There is one matter left which I don't think should be passed over in silence with your Paternity. Here and there in this Vice-Province, as I found out more than once, there is cherished in all earnestness the desire that your Paternity do away with the "Vice" in the Vice-Province and decree that Missouri be a province. Last year when I was Visitor here a certain individual wished to persuade me that this *ought to be done*, but I answered him that a business of this nature would have to be left to the Father General. Now,

⁵⁰ Sopranis ad Beckx, April 15, 1862 (AA)

⁵¹ Gleizal ad Beckx, February 4, 1856 (AA)

of my own accord (*motu proprio*) I propose this matter to your Paternity's consideration. Were this to be done, so I judge, it would help mightily to raise the spirits of those Fathers, who, without any fault of their own indeed, are destitute of higher studies but not of a genuine love of the Society and of an efficacious will to devote themselves heart and soul and this even beyond measure to the A M D G according to the spirit of the same Society.⁵²

The General's answer, which is dated a month later than Father Sopranis's communication, declared that the reason why Missouri had not been made a province sooner was the prevailing shortage of properly trained men. "This shortage has not yet been corrected, though it begins now to be so, and therefore to foster this good will I am ready indeed to grant this favor. But does not the uncertain state of the country suggest delay?"⁵³ These words were penned while the Civil War was in full swing.

Meanwhile, Father Coosemans had himself written to Father Beckx on the subject. "I also intended to ask your Paternity for another favor, that of being so good as to look on us with a favorable eye and eliminate the (prefix) "*Vice*" from the Vice-Province so that it may become the Province of Missouri pure and simple. But perhaps the time has not yet come to grant us this grace, this is why I leave the matter entirely in the hands of our Lord and of your Paternity."⁵⁴

Though Father Beckx in his answer to Father Coosemans's letter of May 30, 1863, had suggested that the change in question be postponed until the end of the Civil War, it was actually carried through before the year was over. On November 7, 1863, the General wrote to Coosemans: "I have forwarded to your Reverence the decree of erection of the Province of Missouri, which will abundantly make manifest to you how greatly I love you in the Lord and how eagerly I desire the progress of all of you in every manner of perfection. Let your Reverence make this decree known to his entire Province and signify to the members that it is my very earnest desire that they cooperate faithfully with God's grace and, by close observance of religious discipline, show themselves worthy companions of Jesus and sons of St. Ignatius."⁵⁵ On December 3 following, "at the instance of Father Visitor," so it was declared in the decree of the General read on the occasion, formal announcement was made at St. Louis University of the erection of the province of Missouri. In a communication addressed to the General two weeks later Father Coosemans said: "The eve of the Feast of St. Francis

⁵² Sopranis ad Beckx, March 2, 1862 (AA)

⁵³ Beckx ad Sopranis, April 2, 1862 (AA)

⁵⁴ Coosemans à Beckx, May 30, 1863 (AA)

⁵⁵ Beckx à Coosemans, November 7, 1863 (AA)

Xavier on my return from Westphalia and Washington, Missouri, where I had made my annual visitation, I learned from Reverend Father Sopranis the happy news that on November 7 your Paternity had the kindness to sign the decree of erection of the Province of Missouri. I tender you my very humble thanks, Very Reverend Father, in the name of all the members of our little province for this remarkable favor which you have had the goodness to grant I pray our Lord through the intercession of His Holy Mother to shed on your Paternity an abundance of His heavenly lights and graces in order that you may continue during long years to govern in the joy of the Lord and with success the Society of Jesus, of which we have the happiness to form a part”⁵⁶

In the summer of 1868 the first provincial congregation of the Missouri Jesuits since the organization of the province convened in St Louis Father Isidore Boudreaux sent an account of it to Father Beckx

Our Provincial Congregation took place on June 30 and the two following days It was the first to be held in our province It was a very consoling sight for all to see this happy beginning God seems to bless our little province, which grows more and more every day and which gains not less in regard to numbers than regularity For those who have seen our humble beginnings in Missouri and who have followed step by step our progress for the last 45 years there can be only one feeling—that of gratitude to God For it must be remembered that our Province was not begun by *trained Jesuits* but by untrained novices, who remained for years strangers to the customs of the Society In the beginning few things were done in accordance with the Institute Studies especially were neglected and were almost nothing at all It is now scarcely fifteen years since they opened their eyes to the necessity of having the young men study. But if it is permitted us to regret that our beginnings were not more in conformity with the customs of the Society, we cannot deny ourselves a sentiment of respect and gratitude toward those who have founded the Province Their toils were long and faithful, they were devoted men Several have gone to receive their recompense, others of them still live on and have the satisfaction of seeing the tree which they planted extend its branches from the great American Lakes to the Rocky Mountains and beyond According to all appearances, our province is called to do great things That whole region which I have just spoken of is inhabited by people the majority of whom are ignorant of our holy religion, but who show themselves more and more disposed to listen to the voice of our missionaries—it depends then on us to fill the role which Providence seems to assign us

In connection with the Provincial Congregation it will not be out of place to speak to your Paternity of the persons who composed it.

Father Provincial [Coosemans] presided worthily On the occasion of his journey to Europe he had procured a *praxis congregationis provincialis*, which

⁵⁶ Coosemans à Beckx, December 18, 1863 (AA).

was followed to the letter Everything which the good Father said whether in his little opening address or during the Congregation or at its close seemed to me very apropos I did not think him capable of doing so well The one who shone most in the congregation was Father Keller Appointed secretary, he drew up the minutes with a readiness of diction and an accuracy which evoked the admiration of all present He was elected procurator almost unanimously Every time he spoke in the congregation he gave proof of a great deal of judgment Father O'Neil, ex-rector of St Louis University, showed as much judgment, if not more Then came in my opinion Fathers Smarius, Weninger and De Bleck, especially the first, everything he said always seemed to me deep, sensible and clear I think we could form another class with Fathers Verdin, Wippenn, Nussbaum, Hill, Stuntebeck and Garesche Father Verdin spoke a good deal but perhaps not with the same appropriateness as those mentioned above With much more reason could one say the same thing of Father Garesche The others in this class did not say anything of note As to Father Hill it was rather through modesty that he refrained, for he is a man of depth Finally, came those of the left, namely Fathers Schultz, Tehan, and myself We said nothing worthy of remark ⁵⁷

One of the surviving founders of the province, identified in various intimate ways with its early history, was missing from the provincial congregation of 1868. This was Father Verhaegen who, while the congregation was sitting in St Louis, lay on his death-bed at St Charles A letter from Father Coosemans to the General has these lines

I announce to your Paternity the death of Father Verhaegen, who passed 47 years of his life working for the greater glory of God in this new world After having filled the Society's most important posts in the Province he was sent to St Charles where for some years subsequently he exercised the sacred ministry Towards the end of his life his patience was tried by his finding it impossible to leave the house and go to the church, which is some distance from the residence He suffered this trial with resignation and spent his time, most of it at least, in study and prayer for he did not know what it was to be idle Less than a month ago he had an attack of brain fever from which he never quite recovered, he could not endure the excessive heat we had during this month and on the 21st instant about half past nine in the evening he peacefully gave up his soul into the hands of the Lord ⁵⁸

The choice of the provincial congregation of 1868 for procurator to Rome fell on Father Joseph Keller, who discharged the commission assigned to him ⁵⁹ On his return voyage aboard the *Pereire* in company

⁵⁷ I. Boudreaux à Beckx, July 16, 1868 (AA)

⁵⁸ Coosemans à Beckx, July 26, 1868 (AA)

⁵⁹ "On his arrival in Rome he will give your Reverence an exact and detailed account of the personnel and affairs of our Province" Coosemans à Beckx, October 2, 1868 (AA)

with Father Joseph O'Callaghan, the procurator from Maryland, and a Jesuit coadjutor-brother he met with a tragic experience. A storm almost wrecked the vessel in mid-ocean and several of the passengers lost their lives, among them Father O'Callaghan. The *Pereire* was brought back by its captain to Havre and Father Keller returned to America on another boat. On landing in New York, he wrote at once to Father Coosemans:

I am still badly bruised. I can scarcely write. Your Reverence will excuse this letter, which is not just what I desire, but something must be said on so sad a subject. At half past two on January 21 [1869] a mountain of water fell upon the boat and shattered the bridge. The water and debris struck the passengers, knocked them over, threw them about, injured and killed them, and the boat was on the point of going to the bottom. Eight killed, twenty injured. Father O'Callaghan, who was seated near a table, had his spine broken and his chest driven in. They say he breathed for ten minutes after he was got free from the wreckage. As for myself, I was crushed by the water and left unconscious. It was only the next day that I learned what happened. Father O'Callaghan had already been thrown into the sea with the rest of the dead. A Canadian Abbé had conducted services at an altar of some kind while the frightful tempest went on raging. Brother Berardi will have his leg amputated and when cured will go to Paris to await orders from his Superiors.⁶⁰

News of the occurrence was promptly forwarded by Father Coosemans to the General. "We are very grateful to our good Master and to His holy Mother for thus restoring to us our dear procurator while the poor province of Maryland has had to deplore the loss of its own. We have not failed to call for Masses and rosaries of thanksgiving. I am happy to be able to announce to your Paternity that good Father Keller is entirely cured of the injuries he received on aboard the *Pereire*. He has a healthier and more vigorous look than ever."⁶¹

The province in its opening years saw its ranks invaded frequently by death. A brief notice of these losses was generally communicated to the General by Father Coosemans or some other one of the fathers. Mr. Conrad Broekeland, a Missouri scholastic, died at Georgetown College July 12, 1864, having just completed his second year of philosophy. "He died resigned to the will of God," wrote Father Coosemans, "and happy to be called from this world the day of the feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel." "On St. Ignatius' day," continued Coosemans in the same letter to Father Beckx, "died in Cincinnati the

⁶⁰ Keller à Coosemans, January 26, 1869 (AA). Brother Salvatore Berardi of the Jesuit province of Naples did not recover, but died at Havre, February 2, 1869.

⁶¹ Coosemans à Beckx, 1869 (AA).

coadjutor-brother Francis Van der Borght. He was a very hard working brother, full of zeal, and despite the multiplied distractions and occupations of his charge [sacristan] an exact observer of religious discipline. After suffering some ten days from typhoid fever he gave his last sigh during the pontifical Mass which was being celebrated in the church for the consecration of the main altar."

The career of Father Francis Xavier Horstmann, who died at the novitiate on May 26, 1865, "in great sentiments of peace and happiness after being fortified with all the sacraments of the Church," was an interesting one. For fifteen years he had been a sufferer from asthma and a year before had contracted dropsy, which was the immediate cause of his death. A few days before the end he confided to Father Boudreaux, rector of the novitiate, that his call to the Society had been a remarkable one. Overcome with a strange sadness as he was hunting one day with a friend, he heard what seemed to be a child's voice coming from out a tree and telling him that, if he wished to find peace of soul, he must enter the Society of Jesus. Numerous obstacles, above all the affection of a very devoted mother, arose in his way, but he surmounted them all and became a Jesuit. "He preserved consciousness," wrote Father Boudreaux, "as also his habitual gaiety up to death . . . His beautiful death proves that in entering the Society he had chosen the better part."⁶²

Towards the end of the sixties the Jesuits of the province of Germany succeeded in organizing a mission in the United States with the cordial approval and cooperation of Father Coosemans. When the project was first broached to him in Rome in the summer of 1867, it failed for some reason or other to engage his sympathy, only on his return to America, when he met Father Perron, superior of the New York-Canada Mission, in New York and heard him enlarge on the merits of the project, did he determine to lend it his support. As Coosemans saw the matter, the Church had very much to gain were the German Jesuits enabled to open residences of their own in America dependent on their own province of Germany. Accordingly, on his return to St. Louis he laid the matter before his consultors, November 19, 1867. They expressed their approval, the territory of the projected mission to be, as the minutes of the board expressed it, "the Lake region from the city of Buffalo to the state of Wisconsin" Father Coosemans then reported the affair to the General

A German Mission or Vice-Province of this sort could be set up without prejudice to the existing provinces and missions by taking for territorial limits

⁶² Coosemans à Beckx, August 7, 1864, Boudreaux à Beckx, June 1, 1865 (AA)

certain dioceses of the ecclesiastical provinces of New York, Baltimore and Cincinnati. On the supposition, then, that the German Fathers begin by establishing themselves in Buffalo, they could extend thence to the West and settle in Toledo in the diocese of Cleveland, where they would be received by the Bishop with open arms. Toledo is on the confines of the state of Michigan (diocese of Detroit), in which so far there is no house of the Society. The new mission might with time take the name of this state and would have for territory the dioceses of Buffalo in New York state, of Cleveland and Fort Wayne in Ohio [*sic*], of Detroit in Michigan, and even the dioceses of Erie, Pittsburgh, and Wheeling in Pennsylvania [*sic*], which belong at present to the Province of Maryland.⁶³

The plan of a German mission in the United States did not commend itself immediately to Father Beckx and he reserved it for more mature consideration. Not the least of the difficulties in the way, so it appeared to him, was the likelihood that the Jesuits temporarily attached to the Missouri Province but still technically dependent on the superior of the German Province would be withdrawn from Missouri to help staff the proposed mission. Having received the approval of his consultors, February 2, 1862, Father Coosemans wrote the following day to the provincial of Germany, Father Roder:

I received your esteemed letter of January 4. After taking advice with my consultors on the subject of a new mission in the United States to depend on the German Province, I am happy to be able to answer to the different points which you propose:

1 I should be very well satisfied to have you come and establish yourselves in this country. There are places enough and there is an immense amount of good to be done.

2 The most favorable localities are the states of Michigan and Wisconsin because the German element is more numerous there and emigration continues to head more in that direction than in others. As to Kansas, the Father Consultors believe, and rightly so, that you would be disappointed in your expectations.⁶⁴ Besides, as the Province of Missouri already has three establishments in the state, namely, Leavenworth, St. Mary's among the Potawotomies, and the Catholic Osage Mission, I do not think that another province could well start a mission there without mutual embarrassment. In Wisconsin we have a residence in Milwaukee, a city where Bishop Henni,

⁶³ Coosemans à Beckx, November 22, 1867 (AA)

⁶⁴ Bishop Miège had come to learn of the German provincial's idea of settling his men in Kansas and on his own account had extended him a cordial invitation to do so. "I know nothing that would give me so much consolation as the establishing of the German Province in Kansas. Nothing now remains for me to do except assure you that if you send your good Fathers to Kansas, I shall do everything I possibly can for them." Miège à Roder, February 7, 1868. Arch. Prov. Low. Germ.

who is of German or Swiss origin, has his see. It is proposed to cede this residence to you so that you could make of Milwaukee a center from which you might spread out into Minnesota, which is west of Wisconsin, and into Michigan, a state lying to the east. As we should have to start a house in some other place, I should expect you to reimburse the Province for the money it would expend therein in building the residence and acquiring a new site.⁶⁵ I should also expect you not to deprive us of subjects belonging to your Province as Fathers Tschieder, Weber, Goeldlin, and others, who are so necessary for keeping up the German residences in our own Province.

Bishop Henni has long been anxious for us to build a college on the property he bought with the money given him for this purpose, but up to the present we have not met his wishes for lack of men and means. What we have there just now is a parish school, which numbers 360 pupils. With the exception of two Fathers and two scholastics, the professors are laymen. The language spoken in the school is English, seeing that nearly all the parishioners are Irish. However, most of Milwaukee is German. Before proceeding further, I must tell you that on passing through New York on my return from Europe, I had a conversation with Father Perron on the subject of a new mission, following which I wrote to Father General to propose to him a plan to this effect. His Paternity found a number of difficulties in it and thought the time for it had not arrived. Perhaps in view of this new proposition he might change his opinion and not hesitate any longer to give his consent. It is for you, Reverend Father, to obtain it from his Paternity. In case you succeed, I would advise you to send here as soon as possible one or two prudent and experienced Fathers to explore the country, come to an understanding with the Bishops, and make purchases and all necessary arrangements before you dispatch the group of members destined to begin the new mission. In this way we should avoid misunderstanding and things would adjust themselves to the satisfaction of those most concerned. (A M D G)

P. S.—I forgot to tell you that Father Perron, Superior of New York and Canada, proposed to cede to you Buffalo at the extreme west of New York state, where there are one or two German residences.

In the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin land is sold they say at 50, 100 and up to 500 francs an acre according to its location.⁶⁶

The suggestion made by Father Coosemans that the provincial of Germany send a father to the United States to negotiate the affair in hand was acted upon without delay. Father Peter Spicher arrived in New York September 17, 1868, as Father Roder's special representative

⁶⁵ Coosemans wrote the General that in the event of Milwaukee being given to the German mission, he would be in a position to accede to the wishes of Bishop Hennessy of Dubuque, "a great friend of the Society, and start a residence in his diocese and so take possession [i. e. as a field of religious work] of the state of Iowa, which it seems, would naturally constitute a part of the Missouri Province."

⁶⁶ Coosemans à Roder, February 3, 1868. Archives of the Province of Lower Germany.

to organize the contemplated mission, which in the meantime had received the General's approbation "The news of his arrival," Father Coosemans hastened to inform the German provincial, "and of the impending establishment of a new mission in the vast country has filled us with joy There will be no difficulty in finding a considerable district where you will have a free field Next week I shall have an interview with Father Spicher on the subject and I can assure you that I shall lend him cordial cooperation for the success of the enterprise on behalf of which he has been sent here" ⁶⁷

The last week of September Father Spicher was in St. Louis, where he was no stranger, as he had resided there a while with his German fellow-exiles of 1848 "I have signified to him in writing," Father Coosemans assured the Father General, "that on our part there is no difficulty or obstacle in the way of the German Fathers establishing themselves in the diocese of Cleveland and in the states of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota" ⁶⁸

In August, 1868, Father Coosemans in company with Father Wipern was in conference in Milwaukee with the Bishop-elect of La Crosse, the Right Reverend Michael Heiss The prelate was desirous of obtaining several German-speaking Jesuits either for Prairie du Chien or for any other place in his diocese which they might deem more desirable "His offers," so Coosemans informed the provincial of Germany, "are very advantageous, it would seem" ⁶⁹ What the offers were does not appear but apparently there was question among other things of opening a college

At the request of Father Spicher that he express his mind on the Prairie du Chien proposal, Father Coosemans wrote December 23, 1868, to Father Roder saying that it would be wiser to start, not with a college, but with a residence for missionaries on the plan of the Chicago residence for the fathers engaged in preaching English missions "While the missionary Fathers would give missions not only in Missouri but in the other states of the Union to which the bishops would not fail to invite them, other Fathers could be stationed at Prairie Du Chien to provide for the spiritual needs of the faithful, and of the children, for whom it would be necessary to establish a good parochial school After some time they could commence a college for the day scholars and boarders A day-school only on the plan of the Ratio is out of the question, I believe, seeing that Prairie Du Chien would never furnish scholars enough for a classical course." Fear had been expressed by one of the Father Coosemans's consultors that a "college at Prairie du

⁶⁷ Coosemans à Roder, September 18, 1868 Arch Prov L G

⁶⁸ Coosemans ad Beckx, October 2, 1868 (AA)

⁶⁹ Coosemans à Roder, August 12, 1868 Arch Prov L G

Chien would react unfavorably on the boarding-department of St. Louis University, but Father Coosemans did not share this apprehension. "I believe that, as the country continues to grow more and more in population, there will be enough children to fill the two establishments, so that no harm will result on either side."⁷⁰ For the moment the German Jesuits declined the opening thus within their reach at Prairie Du Chien. In July, 1869, Father Damen reported to St. Louis that Mr. John Lawler, a resident of that historic Wisconsin town, was ready to convey to the Jesuits in fee-simple a spacious property with a building located thereon as also a church to be erected at his expense.⁷¹ Circumstances precluded the acceptance of this generous offer though in the sequel the Jesuits of the Buffalo Mission were to see themselves in 1880 in possession of Mr. Lawler's gift and conducting, thanks to it, a successful school for boys, the Campion College of later days.

Though the Buffalo Mission, as it came to be called, had been established in 1869 and within a year had opened residences in Buffalo and Toledo, it was not until the midsummer of 1871 that its territorial limits were finally determined upon. In a letter addressed to the Missouri provincial, April 17, 1871, Father Beckx had expressed his desire that this important matter be arranged by mutual agreement between the superiors of the American provinces and the missions and to guide them in reaching a conclusion he laid down the principle "It seems expedient that there be not in the same diocese and never in any case in the same city houses belonging to different provinces." Father Coosemans and his council deliberated on the affair June 19, 1871. After adopting the General's principle that anything like an *imperium in imperio* was to be avoided, they agreed to allow the Buffalo Mission "the dioceses of Cleveland, Fort Wayne, Detroit, and also, if the Buffalo Mission so desired, the whole state of Wisconsin, not excluding the city of Milwaukee and this because of the large German population of the state in question." Finally, at a meeting held at Woodstock College, Maryland, August 3, 1871, and attended by the provincials of Maryland and Missouri, the superiors of the New York-Canada and the Buffalo Missions, and the ex-provincials, Fathers Coosemans and Perron, it was agreed to designate the territory of the Buffalo Mission as follows "The dioceses of Buffalo, Erie, Fort Wayne, Rochester, Cleveland, Detroit, Marquette, St. Paul, La Crosse, Green Bay and one station in Milwaukee or else in Racine or Madison." The agreement was subscribed to in writing by the superiors present and was later ratified by Father Beckx. The Buffalo Mission, having in the course of time established colleges in Buffalo, Cleveland, Prairie Du Chien, and

⁷⁰ Coosemans à Roder, December 23, 1868 Arch. Prov. L. G.

⁷¹ *Liber consultationum* (A)

Toledo, a novitiate at Parma on the outskirts of Cleveland, and residences in Boston, Mankato and Burlington, Iowa, was maintained until September 1, 1907, when it was dissolved by decree of Very Reverend Father Wernz, its territory and personnel being divided between the provinces of Maryland—New York and Missouri.⁷²

The appointment in 1869 of Father Keller as provincial of Maryland was not a pleasant bit of news to Father Coosemans, who had been expecting that his alert assistant would shortly become his successor in the office of provincial "Yesterday I received your letter of July 10 with the decree appointing Father Keller Provincial of Maryland *Deus dedit, Deus abstulit, sit nomen Domini benedictum* When deploring the loss of Father O'Callaghan, I rejoiced that my successor had been preserved But *homo proponit, Deus disponit*"⁷³

Father Keller served Maryland in the capacity of provincial during the years 1869-1877. He was subsequently rector, first of St. Louis University and then of Woodstock College, and spent his last years as assistant to the General for the English-speaking countries "He was," says an historian of Woodstock College, "a man of God, suave, apparently cold but fatherly, with a warm heart, not soft but exact in the maintenance of discipline. The community was startled to see him apparently so stoical burst into tears as he said the last prayers over the grave of his old friend Mr. Lancaster in the little cemetery of Woodstock. He was an accomplished linguist and could address each member of the community correctly and fluently in his own tongue whether English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Flemish or Dutch"⁷⁴ Father Keller's services in every post he filled were of the highest order, his own province of Missouri being especially in his debt for the inspira-

⁷² In 1873 the Buffalo Mission sought to be authorized to open a house in Iowa. The Missouri authorities demurred, their objection being sustained by the Father General, who, however, later gave his consent but on condition that the house be transferred to the Missouri Province as soon as the latter was in a position to staff it. The residence thus established by the Buffalo Jesuits in Burlington, Iowa, was maintained down to 1890. The only Iowa house at any time under the jurisdiction of the Missouri Jesuits was the Potawatomi Mission of St. Joseph at Council Bluffs. In 1887 Archbishop Heiss offered the superior of the Buffalo Mission the direction of his diocesan seminary of St. Francis on the outskirts of Milwaukee. The Missouri provincial and his consultors were favorable to the plan, but objection having been entered by the local authorities of Marquette College, it was not carried through. Detroit as being in Michigan was originally in the Buffalo Mission territory, hence Bishop Borgess when he wished to introduce the Jesuits into Detroit, first addressed himself to the Buffalo fathers. They declined the invitation and subsequently authorized the Missouri provincial to accept it, which he did, Detroit College being opened by him in 1877.

⁷³ Coosemans à Beckx, August 5, 1869 (AA)

⁷⁴ WL, 56 16

tion he was to scholarship and all things else that belong to the Society of Jesus at its best.⁷⁵

After occupying the office for what in Jesuit government was the unusually long period of nine years Father Coosemans was at length relieved of the provincialship, Father Thomas O'Neil succeeding him June 27, 1871. "I cannot pass over this occasion," wrote the General to Coosemans on the occasion, "without thanking you sincerely for the fidelity with which you have discharged the office of provincial for nine years and steadily made effort to promote the good of the Province."⁷⁶ The seven years of life that remained to him were spent in Chicago

⁷⁵ Father Keller died February 4, 1886, at the Jesuit General's headquarters in Fiesole in the environs of Florence, Italy. His health, never robust, did not adjust itself to the peculiarities of the Italian climate. He wrote in 1883 to the Missouri provincial, Father Bushart: "Winter is not good in Italy. You don't see much of winter, but you feel it. I have a stove, but it don't warm me. My hands are swollen and sore from cold, but on the whole my health is better than it was. I am a fish out of water, but as long as it lasts I intend to face the music, and do all I can to perform my duty. So you need not spare me." In 1885 Father Keller was cautioned by his physician not to remain in Italy during the winter. "My opinion is that the only thing to be done is to get away from here entirely, so as not to come back. The whole affair is a puzzle, and as yet I see no way out of it except to die soon though the Doctor says that in a suitable climate I ought to have ten or twenty years (?)." For some reason or other Father Keller remained at Fiesole. An account of his last moments was communicated by Father Alexander Charnley to Father Bushart: "Just a week before his death he had another seizure (of paralysis), which was more complete, and he had to be put to bed. For a few days there was some improvement and hope of a partial rally, but on Tuesday February 2, after taking some food he found himself incapable of throwing up phlegm which gathered in his throat—he began to choke. He had received Holy Communion after midnight that morning and now he expressed, as well as he could, his desire to receive Extreme Unction, which was given to him at once. We all thought he was dying, and in the presence of the entire community, the prayers were said for the agonizing. He remained, however, in much the same state, in great suffering, a long and terrible agony, unable to eject the phlegm, unable to take any nourishment, yet quite conscious for over 50 hours. During the last hour or so the breathing was easier and he passed calmly and peacefully away. For some time he had prayed earnestly for death—conscious of his inability for further exertion, and convinced that his case was hopeless. Sad as his loss is, for all appreciated the clearness and soundness of his judgment and admired his great patience and resignation under sufferings so cruel and so prolonged, we could hardly have wished to have him live longer in the state to which he was reduced. I am sure he will be much lamented and much prayed for in his dear Province of Missouri. This morning we all said the Office of the Dead for him—he will be buried to-night or to-morrow along side of two other venerable Assistants." Charnley to Bushart, February 5, 1886. (A) Father Felix Sopranis, one-time Visitor of the Jesuit houses in America, was one of the assistants buried in Fiesole, where he died May 4, 1876, at the age of 77.

⁷⁶ Beckx ad Coosemans, July 19, 1871 (AA)

where he died February 7, 1878, at the comparatively early age of fifty-five. The circumstances of his death are recorded in a letter addressed by Father Rudolph J. Meyer to Father Coosemans's brother in Belgium. The writer was at this time prefect of studies in St. Ignatius College, Chicago.

You were happy to have had a brother who for all his deep and even excessive humility was so distinguished, but you are still happier now in having a powerful intercessor in Heaven. His death will not surprise you. Everybody was long expecting it. He did not suffer, he even thought himself stronger than ever, but we knew very well he could not survive another seizure of paralysis, the disease that attacked him three years ago.

On February 7, the very day of the death of Pius IX, to whom he was so devoted during life, he also took his flight to Heaven as he had desired. After confessing a number of nuns, he had returned about eleven in the morning of February 6 in high spirits to the College and on entering good-naturedly rallied the brother-porter, who had recently been ill. "Well, well," he said, "you wanted to die, but did not succeed." He then went with the community to the refectory, sat at my left, took his soup, and began to partake of some bits of meat and other dishes. But suddenly he found himself unable to go on. His right hand had lost its strength. As soon as this was noticed, he was led to my room, which is the one nearest to the refectory, and there he remained about two hours. Ever since I have regarded with a sort of reverence the bed on which he lay. He was then carried to his own room. He was no longer able to speak, but expressed himself as well as he could and made a short confession, which otherwise was unnecessary for one who had gone to confession in the morning and whose whole life was nothing else but a continual preparation for death. Finally, he received Extreme Unction and lost the use of his senses. He continued in this condition all during the night and the next day until twenty minutes past six in the evening when he gave his last sigh without any effort or even change of countenance. His lips bore the same smile that was so natural to him during life. The body did not give the impression of being a corpse, it was regarded rather as a relic.⁷⁷

Father Coosemans even amid the pressing duties of rector or provincial spent much of his time by day and night in the chapel, habitually saying there on his knees the entire divine office of the day. "He presented," in the words of an official obituary, "an ideal of piety, modesty and humility, to which God added the grace of a transparent saintliness of feature."

Now that an attempt has been made to sketch the personalities of the men who for twenty years directed the destinies of the midwestern

⁷⁷ Meyer à M. Coosemans, February 27, 1878. Archives of the Province of North Belgium.

Jesuits, it will be pertinent to indicate here, however briefly, one or other particular trait of this group of Catholic workers in education and the ministry. Probably what was most characteristic about them was an absorbing devotion to work, a readiness to spend and be spent in the service of the neighbor. The Maryland superior, Father Dzierozynski, after a visit to Florissant in 1827, informed the Father General that the Jesuit priests he found employed there on the western frontier were doing the work of twice their number. Father Gleizal witnessed in 1850 that every member of the vice-province seemed to be doing the work that ordinarily might be expected of three, and Father Murphy noted a similar condition.⁷⁸ On the other hand, Father Roothaan pointed out that these charges of his in western America were a somewhat unconventional body of men, not particularly concerned to follow the beaten path of Jesuit precedent and tradition. But the explanation of the phenomenon was at hand, as Father Roothaan himself plainly recognized. The pioneer Missouri Jesuits had not themselves undergone normal Jesuit training, to paraphrase the General's words, they had never seen the Society of Jesus functioning in due manner, as it was actually functioning at the time in some at least of the well organized Jesuit provinces of Europe. As a matter of fact, literal Jesuit prescriptions had sometimes to be modified to suit frontier conditions though very probably the modification was on occasion carried farther than need required.

The saving grace of this situation was the evident good will that animated all, superiors and subjects alike. "There are many defects among us," Father Gleizal observed in 1851, "but there is also much good will." The same idea found expression in the words of Father Aschwanden, one of the exiled German Jesuits who found a home in the Missouri Vice-province in 1848. "The spirit can be good though many things be lacking on the surface and I really believe such is the case here."⁷⁹ Father Elet put the matter still more unequivocally when he wrote in 1850. "The spirit of prompt obedience, of sacrifice, of abnegation has been the very soul and life of this Vice-Province from the beginning."⁸⁰ It will be of interest to cite in this connection the witness of two European Jesuits who had opportunity to know the Jesuits of the West from residence in their houses. Father Joseph Brunner, a German refugee of 1848, who did noteworthy missionary work at Green Bay and other localities in Wisconsin during the fifties, expressed himself thus to Father Beckx:

⁷⁸ Gleizal à Roothaan, January 22, 1850 (AA)

⁷⁹ Aschwanden ad Roothaan, August 28, 1848 (AA)

⁸⁰ Elet ad Roothaan, 1850 (AA)

Of the nine years approximately that I lived in America, I spent almost four in Missouri and five in Wisconsin, and on my return journey I visited Ours in Cincinnati and New York. Now, wherever I went, our men were a source to me at once of consolation and edification by reason of the fervor and zeal with which they devoted themselves to their own salvation and that of their neighbor. Religious discipline flourishes in the houses, so also mutual charity, union of hearts, and that genuine spirit of the Society, which, as it despises nothing, so likewise shrinks from nothing, provided it makes in some way or other for the greater glory of God. Certain it is that the Fathers of the college of St. Louis, Missouri, all during the summer vacations, apart from the time spent in making their own retreats and despite the circumstance that they were tired out with the work of the class-room, were engaged in giving sacred missions everywhere with notable success and fruit.⁸¹

Father Nicholas Congiato on leaving Kentucky for California in 1854 after his rectorship at Bardstown wrote from New York to Father Beckx:

Speaking of the Province of Missouri, I cannot refrain from saying that I have left it with the utmost regret. I loved this Province and loved it because I saw flourishing in it the true spirit of the Society. I shall never forget the good example in every kind of virtue which I received therein in the space of six years. There is regular observance, zeal for the salvation of souls, and the glory of God, obedience, docility, self-sacrifice, and all that in a more than ordinary degree. May the Lord continue to bless it.⁸²

To these spontaneous testimonies from competent observers as to the existence among the Jesuits of the Middle West of a thoroughly sound religious spirit may be added the witness of the Visitor, Father Sopranis. He summed up his impressions by letting the Father General know that he found among these men "a genuine love of the Society and an efficacious will to spend themselves entirely and even beyond measure for the greater Glory of God." The veteran Verhaegen, who had assisted at the birth of the Jesuit province of Missouri thirty-eight years before, was delighted to hear the spirit which prevailed among his associates commended by the General's representative. "In his [Sopranis's] last exhortation to the Fathers and scholastics, I heard him speak of the spirit which flourished in the Province as being not merely good, but effectively so."⁸³ The tradition of sacrifice and zeal in the

⁸¹ Brunner ad Beckx, October 26, 1856 (AA)

⁸² Congiato à Beckx, October 8, 1854 (AA)

⁸³ Verhaegen ad Beckx, January 15, 1861 (AA). Father Sopranis, who had arrived in New York October 25, 1859, began his visitation of the Missouri Vice-province July 31, 1860, continued it until the end of August, when he went to Frederick, Md., to give the Tertiaries the "long retreat," which he did in Septem-

vineyard of the Lord set up by Van Quickenborne and his confrères had in truth been steadily maintained and was to be a precious heritage passed on from one generation to another of the Jesuits of the West.

ber, and then returned to the Middle West in October, finishing with his duties there in December, when he left St. Louis for New Orleans. He returned to Rome in the summer of 1861 to report on his visitation of the American houses to the General and in October of the same year left thence for the United States to complete the work of the visitation, remaining there until January, 1864.