

## CHAPTER XV

### THE SUCCESSION OF SUPERIORS, 1831-1848

#### § I THEODORE DE THEUX, 1831-1836

It is proposed in this and one or other following chapter to trace the more general lines of development in early Jesuit growth in the Middle West with special reference to the succession of superiors and the more outstanding incidents of their respective terms of office.

On February 27, 1831, Father Theodore De Theux succeeded Father Van Quickenborne as superior of the Missouri Mission. The career of Van Quickenborne, who as organizer and first superior of the mission was the central figure in its initial activities, has already been detailed. As to De Theux, his nomination to the post of superior of the mission was taken by his fellow-Jesuits as an earnest of increased prosperity for their labors in the West "We promise ourselves," Father Verhaegen wrote on the occasion, "many blessings from the prudent administration of Rev Father De Theux" Attached to the Missouri Mission since October, 1825, he had been brought during his five years and more of residence in the West into intimate touch with its members, whose esteem he enjoyed as a man of high spiritual purpose, minute observance of religious discipline, and whole-souled loyalty to the Jesuit ideal of life

And yet Father De Theux's admirable traits as a religious were offset in a measure by idiosyncrasies not in keeping with the spirit of the Jesuit rule As minister in St Louis College he showed unnecessary severity of manner in the discharge of his official duties The students were irritated and the Jesuit members of the institution put to a prolonged and painful trial of patience. At the same time behind the austerity of manner and the untactful insistence on the details of religious observance was a transparent uprightness of intention which won for De Theux the esteem and deference, if not at all times the affection of his associates. It was evidence enough of the virtue of those associates, as one of them pointed out to the Father General, that they were always loyally submissive to as exacting a superior as was Father De Theux. Verhaegen, rector of St. Louis College, could deprecate De Theux's severity and write at the same time to the Father General "For the rest, I look upon him as the model of our house by reason of

his regularity and love of God, and I revere him as such.”<sup>1</sup> Again, he is characterized by Verhaegen as “a man solidly pious, most observant of religious discipline and most scrupulous in exacting it and therefore a treasure to us”

The fears entertained that Father De Theux’s austere ways would work to his prejudice as superior of the mission did not prove to be groundless. Father Kenney observed of him and Father Van Quickenborne that he had never known Jesuit superiors to be so severe. He found De Theux a man of excellent intentions but unbending judgment, almost unaware of his bias to rigorism, and even, it would appear, with an untenable philosophy of government, as though a religious superior must rule less by ways of sympathy and conciliation than by a steady and obtrusive show of authority.<sup>2</sup> To Father Kenney’s strictures on the Missouri superior Father Roothaan made answer. “I have admonished him most earnestly (as I did so often, and in the beginning, it would seem, not without result) in regard to mildness in government *Bone Deus*, that men who are bearing the heat and burden of the day should be treated so! Excellent man though he be, he is by no means a good superior.”<sup>3</sup> Later, in 1833, Roothaan had this counsel to give De Theux “Seeing that even thoroughly religious men are liable to become faint-hearted, I cannot sufficiently recommend to your reverence to encourage and support them. In a word, a man of the Society ought so to bear himself, that, even if he must refuse what is asked for, he will send everybody away entirely satisfied.”<sup>4</sup> When the first three years of De Theux’s administration had slipped by, Father Roothaan would have removed him from office had a successor been available. As it was, he continued to hold up to him the “*suaviter in modo*” as indispensable to the Jesuit ideal of government and he enjoined him in scriptural phrase not to attempt to rule with a rod of iron, “*in virga ferrea*”

It is obvious that among the gifts which nature vouchsafed to Father De Theux was not included the *savoir faire* which goes a good length to the making of the successful manager of men. Father Smedts, who knew him intimately, observed that he was a capital companion so long as he was not filling a position of authority.<sup>5</sup> Temperament had much to do with inclining De Theux to severity; but early training was in all probability the chief factor in giving him a bent in this direction. The opinion of one of his novices on this head will be cited presently

<sup>1</sup> Verhaegen ad Roothaan, January 13, 1831. (AA)

<sup>2</sup> Kenney ad Roothaan, January 27, 1832 (AA)

<sup>3</sup> Roothaan ad Kenney, May 12, 1832 (AA)

<sup>4</sup> Roothaan ad De Theux, November 9, 1832 (AA)

<sup>5</sup> Smedts ad Roothaan, July 10, 1835 (AA)

Testimony to the same effect comes from Father Ferdinand Helias, according to whom De Theux was brought up from his earliest years as a "rigorist."<sup>6</sup>

The most important of the tasks taken in hand by Father De Theux during his administration of the mission was the opening and gradual organization of the novitiate. He was also at pains to provide itinerant missionaries to the Catholic settlers scattered in small groups up and down Missouri and Illinois and he made the preliminary arrangements for the opening of the Kickapoo Mission. It is enough to record here that the years he spent as superior of the mission were crowded with various duties and occupations with the result that often little leisure remained to him after discharging the official routine of business. He wrote to his mother towards the end of 1834 "You will readily excuse my silence towards you all, for, think of it, it is now three months and a half since I have written to our Very Rev. Father General. I am in confusion over it, but what can I do? After the fashion of old sinners, I have been putting the thing off from day to day by reason of a multiplicity of occupations which have taken up all my time since the end of November."<sup>7</sup>

That De Theux kept up a steady correspondence with his mother, Madame De Theux of Liege, brings out the interesting circumstance that this man of rigid, unelastic views and austere habits of life was by no means without his human and appealing side. Grace does not eliminate nature but perfects it and the highest reaches of asceticism are compatible with all the depths and tenderness of human sympathy. Not a few of his associates, as De Smet and Elet, felt towards De Theux as towards one who had supported them in seasons of trial and by his considerate care in their regard earned from them a lasting return of gratitude.<sup>8</sup>

As superior of the mission Father De Theux was often in correspondence with Bishop Rosati. His letters, stiff and formal in manner, and marked by recurrent pious sentiments, are a true reflection of the writer's personality. Affairs of business relieved now and then by a note of familiarity make up their contents. Thus he reminds Rosati of his promise "to come and breathe the good country air of Florissant under the roof of St. Stanislaus", requests him to give the tonsure and minor orders to the novices at Florissant, but a few days later addresses him again to say that on referring to the Institute of the Society he finds that scholastics are to be presented for tonsure only after their first vows, writes to the prelate when the latter was in the East for infor-

<sup>6</sup> Helias ad Roothaan, February, 1838 (AA)

<sup>7</sup> *Le Père Theodore De Theux* (Ms) (A)

<sup>8</sup> Elet ad Roothaan, July 14, 1835 (AA).

mation as to the missing baggage of three novices who had lately arrived at Florissant.<sup>9</sup>

On being relieved of the charge of superior of the mission in the spring of 1836, De Theux continued to discharge for a while the duties of master of novices, after which he was called to the professorship of dogmatic theology in the scholasticate newly opened in St. Louis University. Verhaegen had considered him for moral theology but feared to entrust this subject to him in view of his well-known tendencies to rigorism. De Theux was subsequently employed at Grand Coteau in Louisiana, Cincinnati, and St. Charles in Missouri. At Cincinnati Father Elet, rector of St. Xavier College, expressed more than once to the Father General his appreciation of the services rendered by the former superior. "We are fortunate in having with us saintly Father De Theux and he on his part seems quite well satisfied to find himself in Cincinnati. What happiness for me that I can show him gratitude for the care he formerly took of me. And what shall I say of good Father De Theux, who by his exemplary piety has succeeded in winning the confidence of all who know him! Were he to treble himself, he could not answer all the calls made upon him by those who wish to profit by his good advice. He continues to attend the hospital, which is a mile from the college, moreover, he is chaplain to the boarders with the Sisters of Notre Dame, besides visiting once a week the boys' orphan asylum and that of the girls. In the college he is spiritual father and minister of the scholastics and with all this he is ever in good humor. In this respect he is much improved."<sup>10</sup>

In Cincinnati Father De Theux was held in high veneration by Bishop Purcell. When that prelate, alarmed over the anti-Catholic agitation of 1844, asked advice of the Jesuit as to what measures had best be taken under the circumstances, the latter, who was notably devout to the Blessed Virgin, suggested that he join with the other American prelates in soliciting from the Holy See permission to add the word "Immaculate" to "Conception" in the Preface of the Mass. The petition was made and granted.<sup>11</sup>

In 1843 Vice-provincial Van de Velde and others were suggesting to the General that De Theux be reappointed master of novices.<sup>12</sup> "All seem to regret," wrote Father Carrell, the future Bishop of Covington, "that Father De Theux, a truly venerable and holy man, does not fill

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<sup>9</sup> In the St. Louis Archdiocesan Archives are numerous letters from De Theux to Rosati.

<sup>10</sup> Elet ad Roothaan, September 15, 1842, April 29, 1844 (AA).

<sup>11</sup> Sketch by Thomas Hughes, S. J., in Jesuit menology (A). The original source for the statement in the text cannot be ascertained.

<sup>12</sup> Carrell to Roothaan, August 2, 1844 (AA).

the all important office of master of novices" Father Roothaan at first demurred, suggesting Father Mignard for the position, but later acquiesced in the preference expressed by the fathers of Missouri. For some or other reason there was delay in the appointment. Meantime, De Theux died at St. Charles, Missouri, February 28, 1846, having lived fifty-seven years. His death, Father Van de Velde wrote to the General, was that of the saints. It took place on a Saturday in accordance with his life-long desire to pass away on a day especially consecrated to the Blessed Virgin. The struggling little group of western Jesuits could ill afford to lose the services of so inspiring a figure among them as was Father De Theux. Father Roothaan, on his part, was quick to appreciate the loss which his passing entailed on the vice-province of Missouri. "Look! you have a lost a man," so he expressed himself to Father Van de Velde, "who above all others walked in the spirit," and he could wish that more men of the same type were found among the Jesuits of the West.<sup>13</sup>

A pen-picture of Father De Theux, drawn by a novice of his, Father Isidore Boudreaux, himself a distinguished master of novices in his day, deserves reproduction.

Father De Theux had a great apprehension of the judgments of God. This fear influenced more or less the details of his life. The seminary where he made his theological studies had not yet adopted the ideas of Saint Liguori, holding to the rigorism of Dens and other authors of the same stamp. When he sought subsequently to conform to the milder doctrines followed in the Society, it was difficult for him to rid himself of his first impressions. On the other hand, he was of a timorous conscience, excessively so, perhaps. So education and natural disposition worked together to incline him to rigor. This tendency showed itself especially when he was superior. The thought of responsibility frightened him and the severity with which he could be reproached, perhaps on good grounds, had its source here.

For the rest, the adage "noblesse oblige" was realized in him. The staple of his character was straightforwardness. He was literally incapable of insincerities. One might easily suppose that a man of this temper was devoid of feeling. Far from it, under an exterior which breathed authority, he had a sympathetic heart. His spiritual children had only to consult him in their troubles to experience the full range of his kindness and charity.

Father De Theux was eminently a man of God. His whole exterior breathed asceticism. Those who lived with him could see that this union with God was rarely interrupted. His piety was remarkable. He generally said his breviary on his knees before the Blessed Sacrament. During the celebration of the holy mysteries, he gave evidence of the profound respect that dominated him. He was a man of profound humility. He never made the least allusion to his family, which was of high rank in Belgium.

<sup>13</sup> Roothaan ad Van de Velde, June 1, 1846 (AA)

Physically, Father De Theux was a remarkable man. An imposing build—masculine traits—an aquiline nose—in a word, a noble figure for all its austerity. One would have thought oneself in the presence of an old Roman.

A portrait? There is none anywhere. But an engraving which represents Saint Liguori in prayer—a profile—resembles him perfectly. This is the opinion of many who knew Father De Theux. There is a copy of it in our college in Detroit. The saint is there represented in prayer, almost in ecstasy. So did Father De Theux appear in his moments of intimate union with God. I have always congratulated myself on having had him for master of novices. The mere recollection of him still does me good.<sup>13a</sup>

## § 2 PETER VERHAEGEN, 1836-1843

On March 26, 1836, Father Peter Verhaegen, executive head of St. Louis College since its inception as a Jesuit institution in 1829, took up the duties of superior of the Missouri Mission in succession to Father De Theux. Verhaegen's success in administering the affairs of the college had been obvious to all and plainly recommended him as one to whose hands the more responsible charge of governing the mission might be safely entrusted. Of the group of Jesuits associated in the founding of the mission, he was the most conspicuous for literary and scientific attainments. Foreign-born and foreign-educated up to his twenty-first year, he acquired a mastery over written English that left little to be desired in accuracy and idiomatic propriety and ease. Latin, on the other hand, he wrote with the grace and finish so often acquired by ecclesiastics trained in the seminaries of Europe. To literary attainments he joined, moreover, a fund of scholarly information on a wide range of subjects, and his opinion, particularly on all matters of ecclesiastical lore, was valued highly. But Verhaegen was not typically a bookman or scholarly recluse. His temperament inclined him rather to action and social intercourse and a man of affairs we accordingly find him all through his career in the Society of Jesus, which utilized his executive abilities in one superiorship after another. To the social qualities of the man, his tactful address and genial, pleasant companionship there is frequent witness on the part of contemporaries. He made numerous friends among clergy and laity, conspicuous among them, Bishop Rosati and Senator Benton. As theologian of the Bishop of St. Louis he was present at the Third Provincial Council of Baltimore in 1837. "I say nothing," wrote Father Roothaan in authorizing his presence at the council, "of the manner of dealing with the chief pastors of America, or of the humility and reverence with which our men

<sup>13a</sup> Boudreaux à Kieckens, September 5, 1881. Archives, College St. Michel, Brussels.

should conduct themselves [on such occasions] Your reverence knows how Fathers Laynez and Salmeron bore themselves”<sup>14</sup>

Verhaegen's tenure of office as superior of the mission was marked by a succession of new undertakings on the part of the Missouri Jesuits, who with increase of numbers found themselves in a position to extend more and more the range of their activities. Under him a start was made in resident missionary work among the Indians, which more than anything else was the motive behind the establishment of the Missouri Mission. The Kickapoo Mission, 1836, was followed in 1838 by the two Potawatomi missions at Council Bluffs and Sugar Creek. These apostolic ventures, none of which was to meet with particular success except the one centered at Sugar Creek, were followed by the inauguration in 1841 of the Oregon or Rocky Mountain Missions, by far the most ambitious and far reaching in results of all the missionary enterprises taken in hand by the Jesuits of St. Louis. While thus setting up centers of resident missionary endeavor on behalf of the Indians, Verhaegen was mindful not to neglect the field for ministerial effort that lay closer to hand in the groups of Catholic settlers rapidly forming in the interior of Missouri. St. Joseph's Residence, opened in 1838 in New Westphalia, Gasconade County, and St. Francis Borgia's Residence, opened in the same year in Washington, Franklin County, were destined to develop into two important foci of parochial and missionary activity resulting in the establishment of numerous Catholic parishes in the counties on either side of the Missouri River as far upstate as Chariton County. Finally, in the field of higher education, limited at the time of Verhaegen's accession to office to the single college of St. Louis, important advances were made by the transfer to the jurisdiction of the Missouri superior of St. Charles College, Grand Coteau, Louisiana (1838), and St. Xavier College, Cincinnati (1840).

To maintain effective oversight of these varied interests missionary, parochial and educational, and to visit periodically in person, as his office required him to do, these widely scattered centres of Jesuit activity, were tasks to strain in no slight measure the physical powers of the superior, especially at a period when facilities for travelling were still in the pioneer stage of development. To Verhaegen in particular, a large, portly man, travelling over such vast stretches of territory as the mission embraced might appear to have presented almost insurmountable difficulties. Yet the extent and frequency of the journeys he undertook in discharge of the duties of visitation and other business, as recorded in the *Annual Letters*, afford evidence that such was not the case. We find him, for instance, setting out from St. Louis for

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<sup>14</sup> Roothaan ad Verhaegen, December 6, 1836 (AA).

Washington in the spring of 1838 to negotiate with government for the opening of the Council Bluffs Mission. The journey consumed thirteen days, today it is a matter of some twenty-two hours by rail and many fewer by air. Having returned to St. Louis, Verhaegen departed thence after a brief respite to visit the Kickapoo Mission near Fort Leavenworth and also to ascertain by a personal tour of inspection the prospects for a missionary center among the Potawatomi of the Osage River. A Missouri River steamer brought him to the Kickapoo. From thence to the Potawatomi travelling was by horseback with more than one night spent in the open on the wind-swept prairie. From the Potawatomi Verhaegen journeyed on horse all the way back to St. Louis, a distance of several hundred miles, with stops at Westport, Independence, Westphalia and other points. A rest of several weeks in St. Louis followed, after which he was again in motion, this time accompanying Bishop Rosati on a confirmation tour through the interior of the state. Returning to St. Louis he found awaiting him a decree from the Father General attaching the Jesuit houses in Louisiana to the Missouri Mission and enjoining the superior of the latter to undertake at once the visitation of his new territory. So, in November, 1838, Verhaegen boarded a Mississippi River steamer bound for the South. Truly 1838 was a year of strenuous journeyings by land and water for the superior of the Missouri Mission. It may here be noted that while Fathers Van Quickenborne and De Theux resided at the novitiate during their incumbency as superiors of the mission, Father Verhaegen on assuming the superiorship in 1836 continued to reside at St. Louis University, which has remained almost without interruption the administrative headquarters of the Jesuit province of Missouri down to our own day.<sup>15</sup>

In the first year of Father Verhaegen's administration the total membership of the Missouri Mission was only forty-five, of which number eighteen were priests, thirteen scholastics and fourteen coadjutor-brothers. Three years later, at the beginning of 1840, the number had risen to seventy-one. Having thus notably increased its numbers in so short a period and given other evidences of substantial growth, the mission was ripe for transformation into a vice-province. Shortly after his accession to office Verhaegen had appealed to the Father General for information as to the requirements necessary for the status of a vice-province. The answer stated the requirements to be these: 1° a fitting number of members (*competens sociorum numerus*), 2° a satisfactory organization of studies as regarded both the Society's own students and outsiders (*externi*) in accordance with the *Ratio Studiorum*, 3° a still greater zeal on the part of the older members of the mission for the

<sup>15</sup> For a short period Verhaegen, while superior of the mission, resided at Florissant where he discharged also the duties of master of novices.



cultivation of the interior spirit of the religious life and for the observance of the rules<sup>16</sup> Three years later Father Roothaan had satisfied himself that the requirements thus laid down had been or were being met and he issued accordingly under date of September 24, 1839, a decree erecting the mission of Missouri into a vice-province The decree dwelt on the expansion the mission had undergone in recent years through the accession of new members and the union with it of the college of St. Charles recently established in Louisiana. There were now in the mission seven stations or residences (*evangelicorum operariorum stationes*) and two colleges with a large attendance of students, giving hope that the mission would eventually grow to the proportions of a province. "Therefore, with a view to gratify the wishes of the Jesuits engaged with strenuous zeal in cultivating this toilsome vineyard of the Lord, to give them a token of his confidence in their regard and to bring them into closer touch with the head of the order by the holding of triennial congregations and the sending of a procurator to Rome, the General, in agreement with his assistants raises the mission of Missouri to the rank of a vice-province and appoints its present superior, Father Peter Verhaegen, vice-provincial of the same" The decree of erection was promulgated at St. Louis University on March 9, 1840, which date is accordingly to be reckoned the birthday of the vice-province of Missouri.<sup>17</sup> Its personnel at the moment consisted of twenty-three fathers, twenty-three scholastics and twenty-five coadjutor-brothers, or seventy-one members in all "Behold, the second step to a Province!" the General wrote on this occasion to a father in St. Louis. "Here is a new incentive to carry on God's work with renewed ardor and fervor." In the capacity of vice-provincial Father Verhaegen was to retain for three years the direction of the midwestern Jesuits

Just at the time the vice-province was starting on its career Verhaegen received from Bishop Rosati a request that he discharge the duties of vicar-general and administrator of the diocese during the prelate's impending absence from St. Louis The Fourth Provincial Council of Baltimore was to convene and after attending its sessions Rosati was to make his *ad limina* visit to Rome Verhaegen first suggested that some other priest of the diocese be appointed to the post, but neither his own nor the Bishop's efforts to find a satisfactory substitute met with success He finally acquiesced in the petition, but not before stipulating that the southern part of the diocese be administered by the superior of the seminary at the Barrens in Perry County and that the temporalities of the diocese be looked after by a lay man, a

<sup>16</sup> Roothaan ad Verhaegen, September 20, 1836 (AA)

<sup>17</sup> *Decretum erectionis Vice-Provinciae Missourianae Datum Universitatis S. Ludovici* (A)

duty which the Bishop assigned to Marie Le Duc. Father Verhaegen's note of acceptance was brief

I have given mature consideration, Monseigneur, to the office the duties of which you ask me to discharge I dare not say no, and I am afraid to say yes I wish, with all my heart, that Monseigneur could find some one else to take his place so that I might have nothing whatever to do with the affair, at the same time I should not wish by my refusal to prevent his journey In this case I offer to take on myself whatever duties Monseigneur may wish to confide to me and shall do everything in my power to meet his expectations I have written these lines, Monseigneur, to relieve you of the anxiety you must naturally feel in regard to this important matter which must be settled before you take your departure<sup>18</sup>

On April 24, 1840, Father Verhaegen took up his residence in the Bishop's house on Walnut Street and a few days later Rosati left St. Louis, whither in the designs of Providence he was never to return.<sup>19</sup> Once a week the administrator of the St. Louis diocese spent the greater

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<sup>18</sup> Verhaegen à Rosati, March 13, 1840 (C) Bishop Rosati, who ordained Verhaegen, came to know him when he was pastor at St. Charles and later when he used to come at intervals to the cathedral to preach "The sermon preached by Reverend Father Verhaegen delighted everybody One would like to get it that it may be printed" Rosati à De Theux, July 4, 1832, Kenrick Seminary Archives Rosati frequently had Verhaegen with him on visitation and confirmation trips and other occasions Thus the two were at Gravois (now Kirkwood) "fourteen miles from St. Louis," July 8, 1838, Father Aelen, S. J., celebrating Mass and Verhaegen preaching "The Church could not hold the people" Rosati's Diary The account of the diocesan visitation of September-October, 1838, in which Verhaegen accompanied Rosati, fills several pages in the latter's diary (Cf. *supra*, Chap. XIV, § 1) Verhaegen also accompanied Rosati to the Third Provincial Council of Baltimore, 1837 "1837, March 28 Left St. Louis at 3 p.m. on the *Ontario* with Reverend Father Peter Verhaegen, Superior of the Missouri Mission of the Society of Jesus, whom, according to a custom introduced in preceding councils with the common consent of the Fathers, I had invited to the Third Provincial Synod of Baltimore" Rosati's Diary The first diocesan synod of St. Louis, which opened April 21, 1839, began with a four-day retreat to the assembled clergy conducted by Verhaegen, who also composed the pastoral letter read in all the churches of the diocese after the synod Rosati's Diary, April 9, 1839 Four days before Rosati left St. Louis never to return, he made his will, naming as his heir Father Verhaegen and, in default of him, Father Timon, and, in default of the last-named, Father Elct Diary, April 21, 1840 It is interesting to note that Bishop Rosati's final entry (Rome, December 14, 1840), in his diary brings him into connection with the Jesuits "*Vesp ad Te Deum in Eccl. Soc. Jesu*" ("In the evening to the Te Deum in the church of the Society of Jesus")

<sup>19</sup> *Diarium Umv. S. Ludov.* (A) "April 26, [1840], Sunday after Easter I have designated the Reverend Mr. Peter Verhaegen Vicar General and Superior of the Episcopal Residence in which for the future he will reside until my return from Europe" Rosati's Diary

part of a day at St. Louis University, attending there to the duties that continued to devolve upon him as vice-provincial

Somewhat later Verhaegen acquainted Father Roothaan with the circumstances that had led him to take upon himself responsibilities foreign to the vocation of a Jesuit priest

The Very Reverend Bishop, who is most devoted to our Society, has left for Baltimore to be present at the Provincial Council I did not go to it because in my opinion the money that would have to be spent can be used to better purpose and also because some of Ours will attend the said council and so our Society is going to be properly represented But a still more serious reason has detained me here. When the council is over, the Bishop is to go to Europe and although, by reason of the parishes committed to the care of Ours I have already to exercise episcopal powers and that with the utmost solicitude, he asked me so earnestly and so insistently to take upon myself the entire burden during the full period of his absence from the diocese that, on the recommendation of the older fathers whom I consulted, I could not refuse this service to our excellent prelate I resisted as far as I prudently might . . . With tears in his eyes the Bishop begged me repeatedly to sacrifice myself for some months for the good of religion, unless I did so, he could not by any manner of means, so he said, undertake that journey which he considered to be so necessary to the diocese and which could not be given up without considerable harm as a result <sup>20</sup>

Father Verhaegen was to prove himself a faithful correspondent, keeping the Bishop fully informed down to the least details on the affairs of the diocese. As he had expected, he found his new office not altogether free from embarrassment

I try as far as possible to satisfy everybody, but that cannot always be done, no matter in what community As for myself, I have my own shortcomings and notions, others, I believe have theirs So, if Mr F—, with all his good qualities, is not always satisfied with me, this must not appear surprising. There are different ways of seeing and judging And yet there is ordinarily only one best way, and the man who adopts it according to his lights follows the only course which prudence dictates When Monseigneur was here, criticism fell on him, now it is only fair that it fall on his substitute So far I have made no changes in the order of the house or the administration of the cathedral. My intention, Monseigneur, has been to restore things into your hands on your return just as I found them when I came here.<sup>21</sup>

Some further extracts from Verhaegen's correspondence with Rosati follow.

<sup>20</sup> Verhaegen ad Roothaan March 18, 1840 (AA)

<sup>21</sup> Verhaegen à Rosati, July 8, 1840 (C)

Here at the Bishop's house everything goes well Our enclosure is perfect We have started a Sunday-school in the old chapel and, with certain good people to stand the expense, have fitted up two rooms nicely The lower room, which has no connection with the one above, is occupied by the small boys who are taught by four or five gentlemen of town, the upper room is for the little girls, who are instructed by the Sisters of Charity assisted by some pious ladies<sup>22</sup> About 250 children attend the school, which is doing incalculable good Our Catholic children no longer think about the sectarian schools and, as far as I can judge, the parents are delighted with the progress their children have made in the short space of two months The exterior of the cathedral is in good shape The roof is considered a masterpiece The architect of the court-house insists on getting Brother Huet to cover the roof of that building with copper<sup>23</sup> It has been a costly piece of work, but I dare say that with the painstaking labor of the good brother it would have cost one-third as much again The clock keeps perfect time ever since I had new copper hands made, with gilding by Brother Huet The weights which the wheels had formerly to drag often damaged the mechanism and were very wearing on it This defect has been remedied The tower is really fine and the dial painted black with gilt figures makes an excellent effect . . . Our poor furnaces! I tried on one occasion to heat the church and used up a great quantity of wood and coal in the attempt, but all in vain No heat was perceptible in the church Mr Le Duc has promised to go and look at those in the Episcopalian church, which are a perfect success<sup>24</sup> . . . As to piety I think I can assure you there has been considerable improvement Every Sunday we have from 50 to 80 communions in the Cathedral and on All Soul's day [Rev ] Mr Renault counted 350<sup>25</sup>

You know, Monseigneur, that during this winter, which still holds on, no work on the church of the Holy Trinity has been possible I had the walls covered with boards to protect them from rain, snow and hail What did they do? They stole the boards and not content with that, as the houses are not rented, they carried their boldness so far as to make away with the doors and windows Mr Le Duc has put things in order again, by allowing a man to occupy one of the houses free of charge, but on condition that he take care of the others When I speak to this good gentleman of going ahead with the work on the church, he shrugs his shoulders and answers that the means at his disposal do not allow him even to think of it<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> The Mother Seton Sisters of Charity, whose mother-house was at Emmitsburg in Maryland They came to St Louis in 1828 to assume charge of St Louis's first hospital, founded by John Mullanphy They also conducted an orphan asylum which stood immediately west of the cathedral

<sup>23</sup> Brother Charles Huet, S J Born August 26, 1805, became a Jesuit February 3, 1835, and accompanied De Smet to the Rocky Mountains, where he died in 1856

<sup>24</sup> Marie Philippe Le Duc, born in Paris, France, 1772, died in St Louis, 1842 He was real estate and financial agent to Bishop Rosati

<sup>25</sup> Verhaegen à Rosati, St Louis, 1840 (C)

<sup>26</sup> Verhaegen à Rosati, St Louis, February 26, 1841 (C) The Holy Trinity

So you ask me, Monseigneur, to suggest some ways in which your journey may be made most useful to the diocese. You know how deeply I am interested in everything that can contribute to its prosperity. I believe it would be well for you to procure a good French preacher for the cathedral and two good preachers for the Americans. 2° Bring a few good priests along with you, for I do not see where you can place them to advantage unless they know English. 3° Bring only what is absolutely necessary. Believe me, money is worth more to you than articles, which, however beautiful, useful and suitable they may be, will cost you very dear when delivered here. *Expertus loquor*. 4° Get rid of all shame in the good cause in which you are engaged,—ask, beg, knock everywhere, *et aperietur vobis*. 5° Do not forget to go to Belgium. The Belgians, pardon my frankness, are the most generous people in the world when there is question of propagating the holy religion they profess.<sup>27</sup>

In choosing Verhaegen to be administrator of the diocese Bishop Rosati had no intention of resting there, he had it in mind also to secure the Jesuit's appointment as his successor in the see of St. Louis. Two days before leaving the city he sent to Rome a list of three names, technically called a *terna*, from which a selection might be made for a coadjutor-bishop of St. Louis with right of succession. Arranged in order, with Latin words indicating the degree of preference, were the names of Peter J. Verhaegen, S. J., *dignissimus*, John Timon, C. M., *dignior*, and J. M. Odin, C. M., *dignus*. Five years before, in 1835, Bishop Rosati, even then seeking the appointment of a coadjutor, had drawn up, if not actually submitted to Rome, another *terna*, the names being the same as in the list of 1840, but in this order, Timon, Odin and Verhaegen.<sup>28</sup> In the event none of the ecclesiastics named on the lists of 1835 and 1840 was to be Rosati's successor, they being all passed over in favor of the Reverend Peter Richard Kenrick, a young priest of Irish birth attached to the diocese of Philadelphia.

Kenrick, who was a brother of Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick of

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Church (never completed) was in the block bounded by Marion, Carroll, Eighth and Ninth Streets. The corner-stone was laid in 1839 by Bishop Rosati.

<sup>27</sup> Verhaegen à Rosati, St. Louis, December 16, 1840 (C)

<sup>28</sup> *SLCHR*, 2:15. Rosati ad Franzoni, May 9, 1835. Transcript in Kenrick Seminary Archives. A letter from Bishop Rosati to Bishop Dubois, July 7, 1835, gives the *terna* as Timon, Verhaegen, Pise. Cf. also Archbishop Eccleston of Baltimore to Bishop Blanc of New Orleans, February 25, 1841 (CAA). "I should presume from the tenor of a letter from Bp. Rosati that he has informed all the Bishops of the Province that he has proposed another list of names for the coadjutorship of St. Louis: Revd. Peter Kenrick, V. Revd. F. Verhaegen, S. J.—Rev. Ed. Purcell. Had not Revd. Mr. Kenrick shown so strange a vacillation of mind relative to his design of entering the Society of Jesus, I would have felt little hesitation about the nomination, particularly as I hope that the Ven. Bishop will yet be long spared to govern his noble diocese."

Philadelphia, was in 1837 pastor of St. Mary's Church in that city as also director of an incipient diocesan seminary. It was apparently in that year that Rosati first made his acquaintance. He was highly impressed with him from the start. "Father Kenrick," he wrote in his diary, May 12, 1837, "a priest, *numerus omnibus solutus*." Another entry, May 27, 1840, reads "Here [in Philadelphia] I saw his [the Bishop's] brother, the Reverend Mr. Peter Richard Kenrick, and admiring more and more his piety, learning, modesty and other virtues, I was all afire with the desire of obtaining him for my coadjutor." A biographer of the two Kenricks is authority for the statement that Rosati questioned the Bishop of Philadelphia as to the fitness of his brother for the dignity in question. The information which he received being favorable, Rosati, on arriving in Rome, solicited from the Holy See the appointment of Father Kenrick to the coadjutorship of St. Louis.<sup>29</sup> It so happened that Kenrick had himself been in Rome the preceding year, and he was there for the purpose of seeking admission into the Society of Jesus, having brought with him commendatory letters to the Jesuit General from his brother, the Bishop of Philadelphia.<sup>30</sup> The step which the young priest proposed to take did not meet with the approval of his friends in the diocese of Philadelphia, which they feared would suffer severely by his withdrawal. Father Michael O'Connor, subsequently the first Bishop of Pittsburgh, which dignity he was ultimately to surrender to become a Jesuit, made serious efforts to dissuade him from his purpose. "I would not venture," he wrote to Father Kenrick, November 23, 1839, "to urge any reason that I would not think capable of standing the most strict scrutiny of anyone fresh from even the third, ay even the fourth week of the exercises of St. Ignatius."<sup>31</sup> To Father Cullen, through whose hands he communicated his letter of protest to Kenrick, Father O'Connor wrote "If Mr. Kenrick has entered the Jesuits, destroy this. If not, give it to him and impress its contents on him. It will be a most foolish thing for him to abandon Philadelphia—the diocese will suffer severely." In June, 1840, Bishop Kenrick confided to Cullen "My brother has just published the *Life of St. Ignatius* and is engaged in preparing that of St. Francis X[avier]. You see where his heart lies. Those works have delayed the execution of his purpose but I fear not changed it."<sup>32</sup> In the end Kenrick was definitely turned aside from his purpose. It has been asserted, but on no documentary grounds, that Father Roothaan himself was responsible for this development, having presumably judged that the young priest's talents

<sup>29</sup> John J. Shea, *The Two Kenricks* (Philadelphia, 1904), p. 275.

<sup>30</sup> Shea, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

<sup>31</sup> *RACHS*, 7, 343.

<sup>32</sup> *Idem*, 7, 306.

would be employed to better purpose in the ranks of the diocesan clergy

Bishop Rosati, having succeeded in securing Father Kenrick as his Coadjutor, left Rome to return to America. The Coadjutor-elect received episcopal consecration in Philadelphia at the hands of Bishop Rosati November 30, 1841, Bishops Kenrick of Philadelphia and Lefevere of Detroit being the assistant prelates. This important event having been announced by Rosati to his flock in a pastoral letter issued from Philadelphia, Bishop Kenrick arrived in St. Louis in December, 1841, and was there given a cordial welcome on all hands. Verhaegen had already conveyed to Rosati June 4, 1841, his satisfaction at the news of Kenrick's appointment. "You may imagine, Monseigneur, how glad I was to hear of the nomination of my excellent friend, the Rev. Mr. Kenrick. The choice could not have been better. May he come soon to take my place at the Bishop's house. His zeal will find there everything it could desire. While regretting that we are to be deprived for a still longer period of your presence, I cannot refrain from blessing Providence for having committed to your hands so important a negotiation. I expect the happiest results from your mission. For this intention fervent prayers will be addressed to the Most High throughout your diocese. Let us labor, Monseigneur, your remark is so true, 'we shall rest in heaven' " <sup>33</sup>

On Kenrick's arrival in St. Louis Verhaegen was at once relieved of the charge of administrator. To Father Roothaan he expressed the satisfaction he felt at being thus made free of a "disagreeable burden." "Taught by experience I now know practically with what prudence our Institute provides that we be excluded from every ecclesiastical dignity " <sup>34</sup> Bishop Rosati died in Rome September 25, 1843, after having accomplished with success on behalf of the Holy See a delicate diplomatic mission to the republic of Hayti. In him the Jesuits of St. Louis lost a sympathetic friend and supporter. Writing to Archbishop Kenrick of St. Louis in 1850, Bishop Van de Velde of Chicago paid the deceased prelate an affectionate tribute.

He did on all occasions all he could to encourage and aid us [the Jesuits] and to extend our influence in his Diocese. It was he also who first suggested the plan of building a small church in the neighborhood of the farm and who advised, encouraged and *urged* us to build the present church of St. Francis Xavier [St. Louis]. He was ever looked upon by all Ours (if I may call them so) as a kind Father and generous Benefactor and I feel sure that his memory will always be held in benediction by the Fathers of the Missouri Province. You will pardon my weakness if I state that the

<sup>33</sup> Verhaegen à Rosati, St. Louis, June 4, 1841 (C)

<sup>34</sup> Verhaegen ad Roothaan, December 6, 1841 (C)

tears roll down my cheeks while I trace these lines I was a particular favorite of his, and never, never shall his affectionate kindness towards me and my religious brethren be obliterated from my mind <sup>35</sup>

At intervals, normally every three years, the provinces (and sometimes by concession lesser administrative units) of the Society of Jesus elect one of their members to sit in a council or congregation under the presidency of the Father General. The chief matter brought under discussion on these occasions is the question whether circumstances justify the convoking of a general congregation of the order. The mission of Missouri, having been raised to the rank of a vice-province, was now accorded the privilege of sending a representative, called a procurator, to these triennial congregations, a privilege which it exercised for the first time in 1841 <sup>36</sup> A congregation of procurators being summoned to meet in Rome in the fall of that year, a quasi vice-provincial congregation was held in St. Louis on August 12 of that year. When the rules regulating such assemblies were applied, it was found that only seven fathers were qualified to vote on this occasion nor were all seven actually present, the votes of the Louisiana fathers being obtained by mail. This makeshift assembly went on record as opposed to the convoking of a regular vice-provincial congregation during the current year but in favor of sending a procurator to Rome. The choice for this office fell on Father Van de Velde, rector of St. Louis University, with Father Mignard as substitute. On August 20, with seven fathers in attendance, Verhaegen, Van de Velde, Elet, Smedts, De Vos, Van Assche and Mignard, another meeting was held in St. Louis for the purpose of determining on the so-called postulata or specific petitions which the procurator was to present to the General in Rome. The postulata agreed upon were (1) that the right of a seat in the vice-provincial congregations thereafter to be held be accorded to the superiors of the major residences, as St. Charles, Sugar Creek,

<sup>35</sup> Van de Velde to Kenrick, February 28, 1850 (A). Bishop Rosati wrote in a letter of October 20, 1826, to Father Baccari "Certainly no jealousy on our part (witness what I did to establish and strengthen the Jesuits)" *SLCHR*, 5 67

<sup>36</sup> According to the Jesuit Institute only the provinces have strictly the right to be represented in a congregation of procurators. However, Father Roothaan in the decree of erection of the vice-province, as cited above, makes particular mention of the election of procurators. A provincial congregation, if convened for the election of a procurator to Rome, has a membership of forty, if convened for the election of deputies to a general congregation, a membership of fifty. Those entitled to a seat in a provincial congregation include the provincial, ex-provincials, the procurator (treasurer) of the province, local superiors appointed directly by the General, and the professed fathers of solemn vows, the latter being admitted according to seniority in the profession and in numbers sufficient to make up the numerical strength of the congregation, whether forty or fifty.



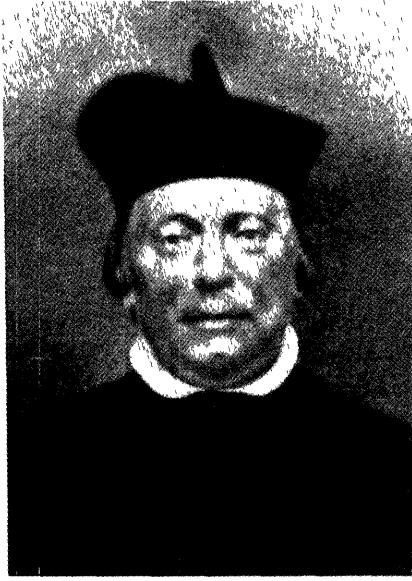
the Rocky Mountains, (2) that such Jesuits in Belgium as desired to come to America be allowed to do so, (3) that a procurator or financial agent of the Missouri Vice-province to hold office for three years be stationed in Belgium, (4) that the French fathers of the provinces of France or Lyons residing in houses of the Missouri Vice-province be either permanently attached to the same or be not recalled before five or six years, in this latter case an option to be given to them to remain if they so desired <sup>37</sup>

Father Van de Velde, who had been temporarily replaced as rector of St. Louis University by Father Carrell, sailed from New York on September 16, 1841, in company with Father Dubuisson, the procurator from Maryland Meeting the procurators of England and Ireland in Paris, the two American Jesuits set out in their company for Lyons and Marseilles, arriving in Rome on November 3 The congregation opened on the 14th While it was in session the sudden death occurred of one of its members, Father Peter Kenney, the one-time Visitor of Missouri During his stay in the capital of the Christian world Van de Velde had several audiences with the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XVI, who showed himself deeply interested in the Jesuit missions of western America. Besides transacting the official business committed to him as procurator, Van de Velde busied himself in securing what aid he could for the vice-province both in recruits and financial help He petitioned the Father General that as compensation for the Belgian members said to have been retained in Maryland despite their desire to go to Missouri, certain Maryland subjects, as Father Samuel Barber and the scholastics, John Blox and James Ward, be transferred to Missouri either permanently or for a time. No action was taken on this petition except in the case of Mr Blox and this not till several years later. A few Jesuits of the province of Rome signified to Van de Velde their desire to go to Missouri, among them Fathers Manfredini and Passaglia and a scholastic, Joseph Finotti. To impress on the Father General the exceeding meagreness of the Missouri personnel, Van de Velde pointed out to him in a written memorial that a staff of only forty-five men were conducting three colleges, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Grand Coteau, while at the same time Georgetown alone could count a faculty of fifty-seven

As to Missouri finances, Father Van de Velde, who knew them intimately, having been for years treasurer of the mission, represented their condition at the moment as alarming Debts amounting in the aggregate to 17,016 francs or \$3,190.62 were being carried. These represented, it would appear, interest dues on certain loans, among them

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<sup>37</sup> *Liber Consultationum* (A)



Peter Verhaegen (1800-1868), pioneer midwestern Jesuit

St Louis University, October the 20<sup>th</sup> 1838

Reverend of dear Father,

Your favorability to the State of Missouri is I well know, to me, what I am  
in need, that any thing relating to it will be acceptable to you I will of course, enclose  
you with some details which will interest you On the 33<sup>rd</sup> ult we had at St Louis the ceremony  
of what is called here (do not think the inauguration of the new organ of our cathedral. It is  
a splendid piece of workmanship & the performances on the occasion were truly enrapturing  
It cost 4000 \$lls It is supposed superior to any other in the U S, but I must disagree  
with others on this supposition, unless, perhaps, my unfavorable opinion of the strength of  
the organ must be attributed to the wretched corner which it occupies near the altar The  
organ of Fredericktown has undoubtedly a better effect Rev<sup>d</sup> Janis Van der Volde delivered  
a discourse analogous to the ceremony The spoke of table, pipes, bellows, stops & other  
queer contrivances & was listened to with much attention by at least 3000 persons The collection  
made after the discourse amounted to 300 \$lls

First page of a letter written by Peter Verhaegen, S J, to William McSherry, S J,  
October 20, 1838 Archives of the Maryland-New York Province, S J

Le Rév. P. Vie Provincial a demandé encore qu'il soit permis au P. Van de Velde de retourner pour la Belgique et la Hollande, et s'y occuper des affaires de la Vice-Province, s'y procurer une Orgue, des cloches pour la nouvelle Eglise, - de quêter pour les Missions pendant son séjour en Europe, - de visiter les parents et amis des religieux de la Vice-Province de Missouri - de faire un tour en Angleterre pour le même objet, et de y procurer des Sermons Anglais, et des livres de Controverse et de piété qui pourront être utiles au Missouri, et de faire imprimer des Sermons Anglais soit en Belgique soit en Angleterre, pour l'usage des Missions des Etats Unis.

Les Recteurs de l'Université de St Louis & du Collège de St Ger Paris de Cincinnati ont aussi demandé qu'une partie de la somme allouée par l'Appointement soit appropriée pour l'achat de plusieurs instruments et petits nécessaires à ces Institutions pour l'enseignement de la Physique et de la Chimie

#### Remarques générales -

La Compagnie jouit d'une bonne réputation dans la Vice-Province du Missouri. Les Ecclésiastiques nous paraissent très-attachés. Plusieurs des Pères et Scholastiques sont surchargés d'ouvrage, parce qu'il y en a peu qui aient les qualités nécessaires pour être utiles dans le pays - Pour les Collèges il faut qu'on sache bien l'Anglais, le Français, l'Arithmétique et les Mathématiques - Pour les Missions l'Anglais est absolument nécessaire, ainsi que la Controverse pour refuter les Ministres Protestants, et pour les conférences dans un pays où les Anglais ou Américains, les Allemands et les Français ou Créoles sont tous entrés, on devrait savoir les langues de ces peuples respectifs.

Les Dettes de la Vice-Province montent à environ \$ 4000, outre 3000 francs pour lesquels le Rév. Provincial a été sur la Belgique, avant mon départ pour Rome.

those from the province of Belgium for the new church in St. Louis, as also a loan from the Ghyseghem family in Belgium in favor of St. Louis University. There was no prospect, so Father Van de Velde maintained, of discharging this burden of debt unless the Father General permitted him to seek aid in Belgium, as Father Verhaegen was most anxious for him to do. Permission to this effect having been obtained from the General, subject to the Belgian provincial's approval, Van de Velde left Rome on December 16 for Belgium where he remained until July of the following year.<sup>38</sup>

From Belgium Van de Velde forwarded to Father Roothaan a further statement of the financial problems he was earnestly endeavoring to solve. At his departure from St. Louis the rector of the novitiate, Father De Vos, had asked him to do his utmost to secure help for that hard-pressed institution, where the novices, more numerous than ever before, were still housed, uncomfortably so, in the original log building. Moreover, since his arrival in Belgium Van de Velde had received fresh word from Father Verhaegen concerning the poverty of the novitiate. "It is absolutely necessary that we build a new house at the novitiate," urged Van de Velde, "the old one built of wood by the first novices—Fathers Verhaegen, Elet, De Smet, Van Assche, Smedts and Verreydt, threatens to go to ruin and although the novices two years ago made bricks with their own hands for the construction of another building, so far it has not been possible to begin it for lack of means. Hired labor is exceedingly dear there and the number of novices for the last two or three years has been so great that we had to incur debts to support them, and yet, even with the help they were able to render, they have had to suffer much."<sup>39</sup> Besides the novitiate, the scholasticate, opened in December, 1841, at the College Farm, was urgently in need of aid. As to St. Louis University, its income was not meeting the living expenses of the faculty, which in a brief time had grown in numbers from twenty to thirty-five.

To add to Father Van de Velde's perplexities an important source of revenue on which the Jesuits of the American West had been relying for some years back now seemed about to disappear. About 1836, a confraternity or association under the name of St. Francis Xavier was organized in the province of North Brabant, Holland, with the object of collecting funds for the Belgian Jesuits of western America. A few years later it was proposed by the officers of the Lyons Association of the Propagation of the Faith that this Dutch association amalgamate with their own. This the officers of the smaller association agreed to

<sup>38</sup> These data are found in a written memorial addressed by Van de Velde to the General (AA).

<sup>39</sup> Van de Velde à Roothaan, March 28, 1842 (AA).

do, on condition, however, that the funds they collected would continue to be applied to the Jesuit Mission of Missouri. The Papal internuncio at The Hague, Msgr Ferrieri, assured Father Van de Velde that the Lyons officials would raise no difficulty on this score, and would see to it that the funds turned in by the Association of St. Xavier were not diverted from their original purpose. But Van der Velde, who undertook a journey to France to take the matter up personally with the General Council of the French association, was informed in the name of the latter by its treasurer, M. Choiselet-Gallien, that the question would have to be referred to Father Roothaan, who personally distributed all the monies allocated by Lyons to the Society of Jesus. The union between the French and Dutch associations, thus delayed for a while, was later effected on the understanding mentioned above, after Van de Velde had written to officials of the Dutch association advising that no opposition be made to the proposed union. Up to September, 1841, the money thus collected in the Catholic Netherlands for Missouri, about four thousand florins or sixteen hundred dollars annually, had been regularly placed in the hands of the Missouri procurator in Belgium, Father Van Ryckenvorsel, who used as much of it as was necessary to defray the travelling expenses of novices going to Florissant, the surplus being taken along with them and delivered to the procurator of the vice-province in St. Louis. The expenses, however, of the Florissant novices leaving Europe in October, 1841, had to be met by Father Van Ryckenvorsel with borrowed money, as the funds of the Association of St. Francis Xavier were apparently not available at the moment. Some twenty candidates had offered themselves to Van de Velde for Missouri before March, 1842, but he declined to receive them, having no means at hand to meet the expenses of their journey to America.

Father Franckeville, the Belgian provincial, at first raised no objection to Father Van de Velde's collecting money within the limits of his province, but he subsequently withdrew his consent, engaging at the same time, however, to obtain a loan of one hundred thousand francs on behalf of Missouri from M. De Boey, who had on previous occasions made substantial gifts to the Jesuits of Missouri. The affair was negotiated personally by Franckeville, Van de Velde not meeting De Boey until all the details had been satisfactorily arranged. The loan, which was to run for fifteen years, with interest at five per cent, was intended to cover the cost of construction of the new "College Church" in St. Louis, then in process of erection. The debt thus assumed proved later to be distinctly burdensome for the vice-province, which was unable at times to meet the interest dues, these being on several occasions paid by Father Roothaan himself. Efforts were made

by Van de Velde when he became vice-provincial to have De Smet prevail upon M. De Boey to remit the debt, at least in his will. Meantime, though the fact never became known to the authorities of the vice-province during De Boey's life-time, the latter in his will assigned to Father Roothaan his claim to the borrowed money. When De Boey died in 1851, Father Roothaan remitted the debt in favor of the vice-province.<sup>40</sup>

On the whole Van de Velde did not consider his visit to Belgium to have been successful as regarded its main purpose, which was to secure financial aid for urgent Jesuit needs. "Our fathers in Missouri," he wrote disappointedly to the General, "were thoroughly persuaded that, being a man of affairs, I should succeed in all my undertakings for the good of the province."<sup>41</sup> Only a few weeks before he had, as on other occasions, confided his worries to Father Roothaan. "If I suffered alone, I would keep silence, it is the lot of my brethren and especially of our dear novices that I deplore when I compare it with the lot of the novices of the Provinces which I have visited. . . . Ought we to start new stations or residences? We haven't a single chasuble, not an alb, nor a chalice, nor a missal is left us. Here there is a superabundance of everything and everything is rich and precious."<sup>42</sup>

No doubt Father Franckeville had excellent reasons for not allowing Van de Velde a free hand in soliciting financial aid from the Belgian public. The following year, De Smet, being in Belgium on a similar mission on behalf of the vice-province, obtained the permission in question and was successful in obtaining aid. Yet Van de Velde did not leave Europe without something to show for his visit abroad. He had received by way of donations a considerable quantity of church goods, including altar furniture and linen, paintings, rosaries and crucifixes. These supplies were destined for the churches of the vice-province, especially for the new "College Church" in St. Louis. Unhappily, the entire shipment of fifteen or sixteen boxes was destroyed in the burning of a Mississippi River steamer between New Orleans and St. Louis. The articles had been insured in New Orleans at two thousand dollars (?), half their estimated value.

Returning to St. Louis October 22, 1842, Van de Velde resumed his duties as rector of the University. The erection of the first Jesuit church in St. Louis, which under the name of St. Francis Xavier or the "College Church" stood for almost half a century at Ninth Street and Christy Avenue, led to financial embarrassment. The plans for the

<sup>40</sup> For a sketch of De Boey, cf. *infra*, Chap. XXXVII, § 2, cf. also Chap. XVI, § 5.

<sup>41</sup> Van de Velde à Roothaan, April 28, 1842 (AA).

<sup>42</sup> Van de Velde à Roothaan, March 28, 1842 (AA).

new edifice, drawn by the pastor-in-charge, Father Peter Verheyden, "skilled in architecture," so Father Verhaegen assured the General, met with approval from the officers of the University. The cost, as figured by Verheyden, was not to go beyond forty thousand dollars. Of this sum approximately ten thousand dollars was covered by popular subscription, the prevailing dull times not permitting of a larger contribution from the public. Later, as construction proceeded, it was found that the church would cost some fifty-five thousand dollars. But, as Verhaegen observed to the General, this could scarcely be considered an extravagant outlay when one bore in mind that "the clock was made, the bells were bought and the structure was equal in size to two ordinary structures" <sup>43</sup> Miscalculation of building costs is a pitfall not always avoided even by men of the profession. But an excess cost of fifteen thousand dollars bringing with it, as it did, new and unexpected obligations helped, with other circumstances, to precipitate a financial crisis. At a meeting of the vice-provincial consultors, January 11, 1843, it was decided that pews, to be sold or rented, should be installed as quickly as possible in the lower church, that the pastors should canvas the city for new subscriptions or payments on old ones, and that, if possible, a loan should be negotiated with a view to finishing the upper church at the earliest possible date. Finally, Father Verheyden, the innocent cause of the critical situation, was assigned to the remote mission-post of Westport on the Missouri frontier, the management of the church funds being thereupon placed entirely in the experienced hands of Father Van de Velde. The debts now to be liquidated had been contracted during his absence in Europe through a desire, ill-advised, so it seemed to him, to hurry the church forward to completion. The first step he took towards retrieving the situation was to issue time-notes to the creditors. "We ran the risk," he wrote to Father Roothaan, "of seeing our church attached by the creditors." There was danger too, of the University being taken over and sold, or as an alternative, of Van de Velde's going to a debtor's prison. All told, the debts contracted amounted now to forty-five thousand dollars <sup>44</sup>

Meantime, Father De Smet had been commissioned by Father Verhaegen to arrange in Europe for a loan of ten thousand dollars. The memorial on the subject which he was to present to the Father General and which was drawn up by Verhaegen represented that money could not be obtained in St. Louis except at ten or fifteen per cent and was obtained with difficulty even at that. The church had been begun in fairly prosperous times when the college was laying aside three or four thousand a year, which money, it was expected, would go to the liquidation

<sup>43</sup> Verhaegen ad Roothaan, January 20, 1843 (AA)

<sup>44</sup> Van de Velde à Roothaan, May 3, 1843 (AA)

of the church debts. At present, the college was scarcely self-sustaining. In fine, the church, if it carried no debts, would have sufficed for the support of the novitiate and scholasticate. "Meanwhile," wrote Verhaegen to the General after De Smet's departure from St. Louis, "I beg your Paternity to deign to be as generous as possible towards our Vice-Province in financial help this year at least, and not to refuse the requests which under stress of extreme necessity I have made to you through Father De Smet . . . I do not see how the creditors can be satisfied unless Father De Smet be authorized to collect or borrow money either in Belgium or England" A loan of seventy thousand francs which De Smet succeeded in obtaining in Belgium tided over the crisis in St. Louis. Six years later the church debt, estimated then at forty thousand dollars, was still being carried by the vice-province. Finally, in 1850 the church, with all its obligations, was transferred to the University and the vice-province was thus rid of an incumbrance which it could not contrive to carry with ease.

When Father Verhaegen took over the administration of the Missouri Mission in 1836 the latter was apparently free from financial embarrassment of any kind. Father De Theux was conservative in money matters and allowed no disquieting burden of debts to develop. No attempt at expansion is to be credited to him with perhaps the single exception of the Indian Mission, which indeed he inaugurated only under pressure from the Father General. Under Verhaegen there was development in many directions, but there were also disconcerting financial worries. To Father Roothaan it seemed that much of the responsibility for the economic difficulties in which the vice-province had become involved attached to Father Verhaegen himself. In the opinion of those around him the latter was not at his best in the management of temporalities. Father Roothaan, dependent for the most part on the intelligence that reached him confidentially from the vice-province, called him to task for lack of prudence and foresight.<sup>45</sup> Before the financial situation had cleared up Father Verhaegen was given a successor, a relief which he himself had more than once petitioned for. "Father Verhaegen has often asked us to be relieved of office," the General wrote to the new vice-provincial, Father Van de Velde, "besides, he has been carrying that burden, an exceedingly heavy one in all conscience, far beyond the period usual in the Society."<sup>46</sup> Father Verhaegen was in his eighth year of office as superior of the vice-province of Missouri when on September 17, 1843, he was succeeded in the charge by Van de Velde. During Verhaegen's administration the Jesuits of the West made many substantial gains. Among other constructive measures, he

<sup>45</sup> Roothaan ad Verhaegen, March 9, 1843 (AA)

<sup>46</sup> Roothaan ad Van de Velde, July 17, 1843 (AA)



established the Society in Cincinnati and opened up the Rocky Mountain Missions, probably the most important missionary enterprise on behalf of the American red men taken in hand by the Catholic Church in the United States. On relinquishing his post as superior Verhaegen was assigned the pastorate of St. Charles, in which quiet Missouri town he sought to enjoy for a spell at least the "blessed tranquillity," as he phrased it, which he could not find amid the engrossing cares of office. But his retirement to the ranks was not for long. The confidence which Father Roothaan continued to repose in Verhaegen as a superior is indicated by the circumstance that only a few months after the close of his administration in Missouri he was named superior of the Jesuit province of Maryland. Here his term of office covered the period 1844-1847, after which he returned to the West to become first Jesuit rector of St. Joseph's College at Bardstown, Kentucky.

### § 3. JAMES OLIVER VAN DE VELDE, 1843-1848

Father Van de Velde was installed in the office of superior of the vice-province of Missouri at St. Louis University, on September 17, 1843. He was at this time forty-eight years of age, having been born in Lebbeke, on the outskirts of Termonde, Belgium, April 3, 1795. While a candidate for the priesthood in the Grand Seminary of Mechlin he had come under the spell of the heroic Father Nerinckx, then in Belgium in search of financial aid and clerical workers for the destitute missions of Kentucky. It was agreed between the two that Van de Velde should accompany the missionary on his return to America and complete his theological studies in Bishop Flaget's seminary at Bardstown. Accordingly, in company with Father Nerinckx and a party of clerical recruits, among them several young Belgians on their way to the Jesuit novitiate at Georgetown College, he crossed the Atlantic in the spring of 1817 in the brig *Mars*, Captain Hall. Before their departure from Belgium Nerinckx had advised Van de Velde to become a Jesuit as the likeliest way of realizing his ambition to be a missionary in the New World, but the young man demurred resolutely to any such proposal, having conceived some lively prejudices against the Society of Jesus. The voyage to America was an eventful one. The ship's captain and mate seem to have possessed no knowledge of navigation beyond the most rudimentary with the result that she was taken absurdly out of her course. At last, more by a lucky chance than by any skilful management on the part of the ship's officers, the *Mars* found her way into the harbor of Baltimore. During one of the storms met with on the way Mr. Van de Velde had been thrown violently on the deck of the vessel, the shock rupturing a blood-vessel and inducing a

fever which for a while seriously impaired his health. On the day after his arrival in Baltimore Father Simon Bruté, the future Bishop of Vincennes, had the kindness to visit him on board the ship, from which he was conveyed in a carriage to St. Mary's College, of which institution Bruté was president.

By this time young Van de Velde had undergone a complete reversal of feeling towards the Society of Jesus. One day in the course of the voyage now happily ended he took into his hands, for want of something more interesting to read, the *Dictionnaire Geographique* of the Abbé De Feller and began to peruse its pages. The author's account of the missions of the Society of Jesus in Asia, in Africa, in the New World, interested him keenly. Above all he was deeply impressed by De Feller's observation that the enemies of the Jesuits will generally be found to be the enemies of the Church. A serious train of reflection was started in his mind with the result that, seeing his former prejudices against the Society of Jesus to be groundless and conceiving now a very high regard for its character and manner of life, he resolved to become a Jesuit himself at the first opportunity. After a few weeks' stay at St. Mary's College, Baltimore, where he recovered from the effects of the accident he had met with on board ship, he was received into the Jesuit novitiate at Georgetown College, August 23, 1817. He remained fourteen years at Georgetown, where he was raised to the priesthood in 1827 and where he discharged various duties, among them those of professor of belles-lettres and librarian of the college. The last named occupation was particularly congenial to him and he notes in a memoir, with evident satisfaction, the circumstance that he found the library of Georgetown College, when he assumed its management in 1818, a mere handful of some two hundred books and left it in 1831 a great collection of twenty thousand volumes. In that year Van de Velde was attached by the Visitor, Father Kenney, to the teaching staff of the newly opened Jesuit college in St. Louis.<sup>47</sup>

In St. Louis Van de Velde discharged successively various offices of distinction in the college,—professor of belles-lettres, vice-president, president. Engaged though he was through a long period of years in various executive duties, his tastes were typically those of the student and scholar. His aptitude for languages was remarkable, a contemporary official record of his attainments noting his acquaintance with English, French, Flemish, German, Spanish and Italian. In his easy mastery of English he gave striking proof of the success with which Jesuits of Bel-

<sup>47</sup> *Biographical Sketch of the Rt Rev Dr Van de Velde, second Bishop of Chicago, Illinois, and subsequently second Bishop of Natchez, Mississippi* (23 pp Ms) (A) Van de Velde himself wrote the sketch. It is reproduced in the *Illinois Catholic Historical Review*, 9 56 et seq (1926)

gian origin settled in America acquired the language of their adopted country. As a preacher he was much before the public in the pulpits of the cathedral and St. Francis Xavier Church, St. Louis, while as a speaker on civic occasions his services appear to have been also in demand. Whatever the immediate effect of his spoken utterances may have been, his addresses on these occasions read impressively in printed form.

In his letter of July 17, 1843, appointing Father Van de Velde vice-provincial the General of the Society called attention to the nationally diversified character of the membership of the vice-province. "Since the Society among you is recruited from various nationalities, its personnel being marked accordingly by differences in training and studies, the superior's first concern should be for charity to the end that all in the house may be of one mind, that there be equal solicitude for all and that the manner of living be uniform and common in all respects." Nothing indeed could better illustrate the extent to which the Catholic Church in the United States at this period was drawing upon Europe for the needed ministerial help in its parishes and schools than the complexion of the Missouri Jesuits from the standpoint of origin. The quotas for the various countries represented on the membership list for July 1, 1846, were as follows: Ireland, forty-five, Belgium, forty-two, Holland, sixteen, United States, sixteen, Germany, thirteen, Italy, eleven, France, nine, and Spain, two. Of the forty-five Irish members, all but five were coadjutor-brothers. The dominant element was the Belgian. The eighty-seven fathers and scholastics included thirty-three Belgians, thirteen Hollanders, thirteen Americans, eight Frenchmen, seven Italians, six Germans, five Irishmen, two Spaniards. Founded and recruited by Belgian Jesuits and supported largely during its early stage of development by Belgian material aid, the Society of Jesus in mid-America long bore the impress left upon it by its pioneer members of that nationality. All the superiors, whether of the Missouri Mission, Vice-Province or Province, up to as late a date as 1870, were, with the single exception of Father William Stack Murphy, of Belgian birth. It was noted of the early Society of Jesus that native sons of various lands of Europe were often to be found working harmoniously together in the same house in a broad spirit of international charity. The same phenomenon was repeating itself among the Jesuits of the Middle West. "We have," wrote Van de Velde, "French, Belgians, Americans, Spaniards, Irish, Germans, Hollanders, but all live together as if they were of the same country."

Shortly before assuming the management of the vice-province Father Van de Velde had been requested by Father Roothaan, who declared himself ready to lend what aid he could, to forward him an

exact statement of its debts and of the interest dues that had to be met. On October 12, 1843, Van de Velde accordingly addressed the General on the financial situation that confronted him as he entered on the duties of vice-provincial "A few weeks ago I sent your Paternity a statement of the debts etc of our new church. The loan made us by the Belgian Province came just in time to stop proceedings against us on the part of the banks. But the finances of our vice-province are still in a very sorry condition. . . . There is nothing left in the bank. I have just borrowed \$100 to meet travelling expenses from St Louis [to Louisiana] and I am afraid that nothing will be sent us this year from the allocation [of the Propagation of the Faith]" The usual appropriation from this source, so Van de Velde explained, would remain in Belgium to pay the interest on the Belgian debts. The rest would probably remain in Paris to pay the expenses of a party of missionaries destined for the Rocky Mountains<sup>48</sup>

For some years the interest on the De Boey and Ghysegheem debts was paid, it would appear, by Father Roothaan, but the aid he was in a position to furnish did not relieve altogether the fiscal distress of the western Jesuits. In 1846 Van de Velde was still urgently appealing to him for help, and he expressed the startling apprehension that the Jesuits might have to sell all their property, which on account of the war with Mexico would not bring half its real value, and leave Missouri.<sup>49</sup> His fears were happily not verified by the event. But the straitened condition of the finances of the vice-province continued all through his years of office despite his steady efforts to remedy it. At the same time skilful administration on his part averted anything like actual collapse. On being relieved of the office of vice provincial he was directed by Father Roothaan to retain that of procurator "Continue, therefore, to fill this post with the same industry and success with which you have filled it up to this"<sup>50</sup>

The Association of the Propagation of the Faith was still engaged in its historic work of financing the growing but materially destitute Church in the United States. Its liberal appropriations in favor of the Missouri Vice-province continued to be a most important factor in making it possible for the latter to maintain its varied activities in operation. St. Louis University appears to have been about the only Jesuit house of the western group that was not sharing in its benefactions. "While the two other colleges [Cincinnati and Grand Coteau]," Father Van de Velde wrote in 1843, "and all the residences and mis-

<sup>48</sup> Van de Velde à Roothaan, October 12, 1843 (AA)

<sup>49</sup> Van de Velde à Roothaan, July 4, 1846 (AA)

<sup>50</sup> Roothaan ad Van de Velde, March 16, 1848 (AA)

sions have received assistance from the Propagation of the Faith, St Louis has never received a single penny”<sup>51</sup>

In accordance with the distribution by the Father General of the thirty-two thousand francs appropriated in 1843, twelve thousand francs were applied to the payment of interest on the debts contracted by the vice-province in Belgium, and five thousand to the scholasticate, novitiate, and Potawatomi Mission apiece, while the same sum was placed at the disposition of the vice-provincial. The amount allotted to the Potawatomi Mission appeared somewhat excessive to Van de Velde, who ventured to make the matter a subject of mild protest to Father Roothaan. It is the function of the general superior of a religious order to call subordinate superiors to task when they give evidence of losing sight of the high ideals which should inspire their management of affairs. On this occasion Father Roothaan did not fail to recall to Van de Velde the deep concern for missions among the heathen that has always characterized the Society of Jesus. “This would be indeed to have a wrong understanding of the actual needs of the Vice-Province and to fulfill improperly the end of the Society.” The General was even fearful that some token of divine disfavor might be visited upon the vice-province if the Indians were to fall back into their old-time habits for want of material help, or if the good dispositions of the unconverted Indians were not to be encouraged.<sup>52</sup>

In 1846 a change of policy was announced by the Association of the Propagation of the Faith. Theretofore the mission or vice-province of Missouri as such had been regularly listed among its beneficiaries, but it was now decided to make appropriations only to the Indian missions conducted by the vice-province, the colleges and other houses being thus left without aid from this particular quarter. This arrangement, cutting off as it did a highly important source of material help on which he had been accustomed to rely, elicited a protest from Father Van de Velde.

When your Paternity made known to me the resolution taken by the Directors at Lyons to drop the Vice-Province of Missouri from their list, I explained to you how Count Von Vrecken and others, acting in the name of the directors of the concern, had finally succeeded in prevailing upon the Associations of the Diocese of Ghent and of North Brabant (Holland) (where that of St Francis Xavier had been established expressly and exclusively to serve the urgent needs of our Province) to unite with the Association of the Propagation of the Faith after having been assured by explicit and frequently reiterated promises that the funds to come from those quarters

<sup>51</sup> Van de Velde à Roothaan, August 23, 1843 (AA). But see *supra*, p. 369.

<sup>52</sup> Roothaan à Van de Velde, April 25, 1844 (AA).

would not be diverted from their destination. It was after the meeting of the Paris Council, which took place April 28 or 29, 1842, and in which the promises made by M. Van Vrecken were confirmed, that I wrote myself to M. Van Vrecken, just then appointed vicar-apostolic of Breda, and to M. Kuyten, president of the Seminary of Bois-le-Duc, who were the head officials of the Association of St. Francis Xavier, to induce them to overcome the repugnance they have long felt towards union with the said Association of the Propagation of the Faith. The union took place somewhat later, but on the condition indicated above, namely, that we should not suffer thereby, and now these Gentlemen, after having drained all our resources, refuse to come to the assistance of our province as such and are willing only to appropriate a rather modest sum to our Indian missions. So the debts of our Province, far from diminishing, will only increase from year to year. They amount now, including the new debts in France and Belgium, to 86,118 dollars or 459,262 francs. And so I, the Provincial of Missouri, perhaps the only one in the whole Society who has not a single cent of income whatsoever, and no resources except what comes to me from the charity of the faithful of Europe, shall have nothing for the support of our young scholastics, not a penny for the support of the novitiate, where they have begun to build a house, (the old one of wood built by Fathers Van Quickenborne, Verhaegen, De Smet, Elet, and the others with their own hands now falling into ruins), and I shall see myself forced to dismiss the novices, as your Paternity has already permitted me to do. I shall have nothing now for our rural missionaries who almost all have recourse to me and some of whom will have neither clothes to cover them nor bread to eat unless they go and beg it. As to myself, I shall have nothing with which to meet the incidental expenses of my office as provincial, not even the means of buying myself clothes and other indispensable things . . .

All our consultois are of the opinion that we ought to write to the Bishops of Belgium and to the Vicars Apostolic of North Brabant to let them know our state of distress and induce them to separate from the Association of Lyons and Paris and to form again a special society to relieve the needs of their compatriot missionaries as is done by the Leopoldine Association of Vienna. Last year Belgium alone contributed 177,686 francs and North Brabant 36,873 francs, in all 241,560 [214,559] francs. Of this sum it seems that they have allotted us scarcely one sixteenth, although most of our fathers and scholastics are of these two countries and although their number here in our vice-province is perhaps greater than that found in all the other foreign missions combined. For we have here 22 Fathers and 11 scholastics who are Belgians, 9 of them being from the diocese of Ghent and as many again from the diocese of Malines, moreover, we have 9 Fathers and 4 scholastics from North Brabant, besides 12 coadjutor-brothers from these two countries, which makes 58 members from these two countries [Holland and Belgium], while the personnel of our vice-province numbers 154. Of the Fathers 32 are missionaries, 14 of them among the Indians.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Van de Velde à Roothaan, July 4, 1846 (AA)

The proposal put forward by Father Van de Velde—that a Dutch-Belgian aid association on the lines of the Leopoldine Association of Vienna be established evidently did not meet with the favor of Father Roothaan, who preferred to intervene with Lyons in Father Van de Velde's behalf. His intervention seems to have borne fruit, for on June 25, 1847, the president of the Lyons Association wrote to Father Roothaan expressing the willingness of that body to remove whatever restrictions had been previously set on the funds appropriated to Missouri.

The year 1847 found the vice-province still lacking by a large margin the number of fathers normally required to fill out a regularly constituted congregation for the election of a procurator to be sent to Rome. A meeting of procurators was announced for the fall of that year. Accordingly a congregation by way of consultation (*per modum consultationum*) was held at St. Louis University on August 3, 1847, with only six fathers in attendance, Van de Velde, Smedts, Van Assche, Carrell, O'Loughlen, and Elet. Besides Van de Velde, Elet was the only professed father of solemn vows present, there being in fact at that time only two members of this grade in the vice-province, as Father Verhaegen was at the moment occupying the post of provincial of Maryland. Father Joset, superior of the Oregon Missions, who was entitled to a seat in the congregation, was at too great a distance from St. Louis to attend. The choice of the quasi-congregation for procurator fell on Elet, with De Smet, then in Belgium, as substitute. It was, moreover, voted that the vice-province would likewise send the substitute procurator to Rome. This last decision, however, was negatived by Father Roothaan, who objected to De Smet's going to Rome on account of the expense which the journey would entail.<sup>54</sup>

Besides taking part in the deliberations of the congregation of procurators, which was held in the fall of 1847, Father Elet went over carefully with Father Roothaan the condition of affairs in the vice-province he represented. In a memorandum presented to the latter he notes that he has secured a small batch (*pauci omnino*) of recruits for Missouri, including two coadjutor-brothers from the Roman Province, two fathers, three scholastics and a brother or two from the province of Turin, a father from the Belgian Province, and a scholastic from that of Switzerland. Of these only six actually found their way to Missouri, Fathers Miége, Ponzighone, and Charles Elet, a brother of the Missouri procurator, Messrs. Messea and Schuster and Brother Bettini, who seems to have accompanied Father Elet on his return to America.

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<sup>54</sup> *Liber Consultationum* (A)

Brother Serafini of the Roman Province, a painter of merit, for whom Father Elet had already set aside a thousand francs to procure him painting-materials and other necessaries, was on the list but remained in his province. As to the number of men he might rely upon from the dispersed province of Switzerland, Elet was especially anxious to be informed on this head so that a conclusion might be reached in regard to the college of Bardstown, which Bishop Flaget had offered to the Society. Further points in Elet's memorandum touch the qualifications most to be desired in recruits for Missouri as also the question of the scholastics' studies.

Those speaking German or French are more serviceable *ceteris paribus* than those who speak only Italian. Those who have passed thirty experience, generally speaking, great difficulty in learning English, consequently younger men, even scholastics, are to be preferred to Fathers somewhat on in years.

The following ought to be set studying theology in the scholasticate the next scholastic year, seeing that very much is to be hoped from them: Fathers Maessele, Van den Eycken, Druyts (already rector of St. Louis University), and O'Loghlen, and the scholastics De Bieck, Verdin, Smarius, Fastié. With the arrival of the new scholastics from Europe and the return of our own from Louisiana, matters can be so adjusted as to allow time to the rest [of the scholastics] for studying philosophy or theology in the college even though a beginning be made with the Bardstown College.

The new house of St. Stanislaus, which is very roomy, would suit perfectly for a scholasticate. The air is very wholesome, the gardens quite extensive and the farm would provide all the necessaries of life. It is a place remote from all noise and occasion of distraction, they [the scholastics] could live apart from the novices.<sup>55</sup>

In January, 1848, Father Elet was in Lyons, having with his companion, apparently Brother Bettini, met, it would seem, with severely cold weather on the journey from Rome. "It was fortunate that I had been at pains to bring my travelling-companion a hooded cloak with a good lining, and that the diligence was well filled. Rev. Father Jourdan received us so hospitably that we soon forgot all our miseries and how should we dare to complain with the sight before us of our exiled brethren of Switzerland, poorly clothed and showing, some of them, signs of the distressing experiences through which they had passed."<sup>56</sup>

A call at the general headquarters of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons resulted only in Father Elet's learning that the amount of the appropriation for Missouri could not be deter-

<sup>55</sup> It was probably after his departure from Rome that Elet drew up these memoranda (in Latin) for the General.

<sup>56</sup> Elet à Roothaan, January, 1848 (AA)



mined before April and would depend on the volume of the receipts. The Prefect of the city was also visited, this functionary having had, it would seem, some government money at his disposition for the foreign missions, but nothing came of this appeal for secular aid. From France Elet passed to Belgium, which was not to be spared by the revolutionary ferment now making itself felt over the entire continent. Conditions in Belgium soon became so uncertain that he made hasty preparations to leave for America. "Poor Europe," he wrote in a letter, as he turned with relief from the turmoil of the Old World to the peace and security that awaited him in the New. He arrived in St. Louis at the end of May, having made the transatlantic voyage in company with Father De Smet.

Under Father Van de Velde, whose administration of the vice-province was now drawing to a close, a number of new constructions had been taken in hand and carried forward wholly or in part to completion. These included the churches of St. Joseph in St. Louis, St. Francis Borgia at Washington and St. Joseph at New Westphalia, all in Missouri. Moreover, most of the work on the so-called "Rock Building" of the novitiate at Florissant was carried on during his incumbency. Finally, he negotiated with the Indian Office for the subsidizing of a school among the Osage Indians, an educational experiment which was to issue in a measure of success remarkable in the history of Indian schools of the period. A member of the vice-province characterized Van de Velde's administration as "mild." The same epithet fitted the man himself. He was of an easy, affable temper and had a liveliness of manner that was not typically Belgian. In the handling of business affairs he showed capacity of no mean order. Father Roothaan in pointing out to the officials of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith the loss sustained by the Missouri Jesuits when Van de Velde was raised to the episcopate, affirmed that of all the members of the vice-province he was the one who best understood its temporal concerns.<sup>57</sup> As a Jesuit he was distinguished by a most affectionate attachment to his order, as was indicated by the extreme reluctance with which he left its obedience to enter the ranks of the hierarchy.

<sup>57</sup> Roothaan à MM, etc., Feb. 16, 1849 (AA)