

WHAT IS AN O. M. C. ?

p. 3-17: brief history
of Order Friars
Minor Conventual

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Compliments of

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"O. M. C." became popular because of incorporation title in U.S., viz., "Order Minor Conventuals" but now replaced by common use of official title "O. F. M. CONV."

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WHAT IS AN O. M. C. ?



BY

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FRIARS MINOR CONVENTUAL

Mt. St. Francis, Indiana

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*The form of the Franciscan Habit as worn by
the Friars Minor Conventual*

WHAT IS AN O. M. C. ?

PERHAPS you have met a religious who signed after his name the initials, O.M.C.

Perhaps you have wondered just what those letters mean. What is an O.M.C.?

Here is an answer to that question.

An O.M.C. is a Franciscan, a member of the Order started by Saint Francis of Assisi in 1209, and called by him the Friars Minor, "the Little Brothers."

The letters O.M.C. are initials for the longer term, Order of Friars Minor Conventual. Other abbreviations are O.F.M. Conv., and O.M. Conv.

You see, nowadays, there are three kinds of Franciscans or Friars Minor.

One is the O.M.C. kind, the Friars Minor Conventual. They wear a black habit, or garb, consisting of a loose tunic shaped like a cross and tied about the waist with a white cord. Hanging from the cord is the seven decade rosary, "The Franciscan Crown." Over their shoulders they wear a cape-like garment, called a cowl, curved across the chest in front and coming to a point in the back. Attached to the cape at the neck is a hood, called a capuche. Commonly, however, cowl and hood are referred to simply as the "capuche." Because of the color of their habit, these Friars Minor are often called Black Franciscans. Some time ago Conventual friars wore gray and were known as the Gray Friars.

Another kind of Friar Minor uses the initials O.F.M. They stand simply for Order of Friars Minor. A longer title for these friars is the Order of Friars Minor of the Leonine Union. But that is a rather heavy burden for a name, and it is usually shortened to the O.F.M. These friars wear a brown habit, white cord with rosary, shorter cowl and fuller capuche than the Conventual friars. They are also known as the Brown Franciscans.

A third kind is the O.F.M. Cap. These initials mean Order of Friars Minor Capuchin. Their name comes from the long capuche they wear. It is long and pointed, does not come over the shoulders, and opens into a large hood at the neckband. These friars also wear a brown habit with a white cord and rosary. Most of these Franciscans wear beards. They are commonly called simply Capuchins.

Color of the Habit

NOW it is rather strange, but true, that none of the three modern branches of the Franciscan Order uses the original Franciscan color which was neither brown nor black, but gray. St. Francis did not specify any color for the garb of the friars. But the habit he himself wore, still in existence in the Conventual church in Assisi, is a sort of ashen gray. Ancient legislation, when it mentions the color of the habit, designates it as gray. Franciscan bishops still wear gray. Explanations of how the change from gray to brown and black came about are, however, too long and too complicated to put forth here.

It is enough that we point out that O.M.C., like O.F.M., or O.F.M. Cap., means that the man—priest, brother, or student—who adds it to his

name is a Franciscan. He belongs to one of the three great branches into which the First Order of St. Francis gradually divided.

In case that sounds a little complicated, let's go back a bit in Franciscan history to St. Francis himself.

St. Francis the Founder

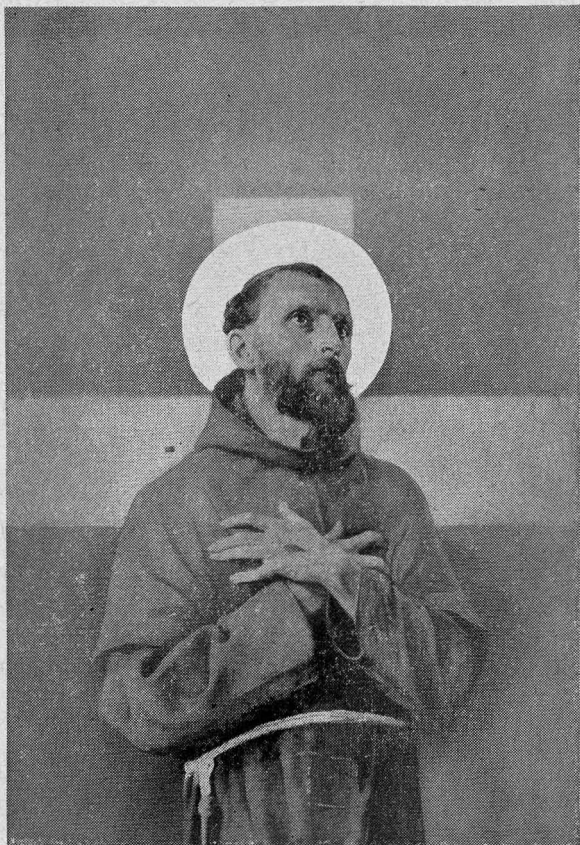
YOU have certainly heard of St. Francis of Assisi. Although he lived over seven hundred years ago, he is still one of the best loved saints of all times. People know him by several affectionate names: "Il Poverello," for instance, which means the "Little Poor Man," and recalls the story of his giving up his wealth to be very poor like Christ. Or they call him "Brother Joy," because he had such great fun in making himself a saint. Still another title he earned is "Everybody's Saint Francis," because from his day to ours he has been loved by Christian and pagan, Catholic and non-Catholic alike.

Even when he was alive he was very much "Everybody's St. Francis." He had a knack of making holiness attractive. Almost everyone who saw or heard how this little man of Assisi served God so well and enjoyed it so hugely wanted to follow him. They wanted to be Franciscans.

Becoming like a saint isn't, of course, accomplished just by the simple process of wanting to do so. After all, there could be only one Saint Francis. Reaching sainthood requires a lot of grace from God. And not every one is able to do the same kind of thing even in religious life. But Saint Francis did what he could for everybody.

Three Franciscan Orders

HE founded three Franciscan Orders. The First Order, called Friars Minor, is for men—priests and brothers. The Second Order, called



St. Francis of Assisi

Poor Clares, is for women. The Third Order is for lay people, men and women who stay in their homes and with their families. For each of these Orders Saint Francis wrote a special rule of life. Down to the present day these rules of Saint Francis have been guides for a way of life that leads to sanctity.

Division of the Order

NOW it is important to remember that these rules of Saint Francis were written for human beings. And when you get even a few human beings together, you are likely to have differences of opinion. When you get thousands of human beings together, you are almost certain to have a great number of differences of opinion. That such a condition should arise in the Franciscan Order, spreading rapidly over the world and being accepted by thousands, is not at all surprising.

Disagreements about the meaning of the Rule and divisions among the friars existed even while Saint Francis still lived. After the Founder died, these differences grew. There were many reasons for this. One chief reason was that the original Rule was concerned largely with principles, not with specific details of management. A second was that the Order grew swiftly to enormous numbers whose management became an increasingly difficult problem. It takes a lot of organization to hold together a group having members all over the world. Naturally when superiors in the new Order began making regulations for situations not covered in the basic Rule, not everyone agreed with the wisdom of the decisions.

For instance, conflicts arose early about such things as just how the friars could observe the strict poverty that St. Francis himself had practiced and still find places where the friars could live. Remember that there were now not just a few friars but thousands upon thousands of them. Superiors in the Order—and Church authorities outside it—insisted that the friars dwell in places where their prayer and work and study could be regulated and provided for by law. Some of the friars thought the Rule demanded that they live in lonely, solitary places called *monasteria* (hermitages); others held that the growth and work of the Order made it necessary for the friars to be gathered together in larger houses. Such a place where a number of men lived together was called a *conventus* (convent). Thus arose in the Franciscan Order the terms, “Conventual” referring to the latter, and “non-conventual” for the former.

Room for both viewpoints was found in the Order, although not without some brotherly quarreling. Friars who wanted to spend their time in solitary prayer and penance and meditation, who wished to take little active part in affairs of the Church, who wanted nothing of study and found in bible and breviary library enough for their needs, who wanted to be free to go and come as they pleased and rely solely on begging for their support—all these lived in the non-conventual places or hermitages. Among them were numbers of very holy men.

On the other hand the greater part of the Order, the Community as such, at the direction of the major superiors, called Generals, and with the approval of the Popes, was gathered into large

houses called "convents." There they could follow the Rule which declared that "those friars to whom God has given the grace to work shall work faithfully and devotedly." There, too, they could prepare to preach the gospel by studying theology and Sacred Scripture. From the convents they could go forth well equipped as missionaries, preachers, and teachers.

In the convents developed the power and splendor of the Order. There studied and taught great scholars and learned doctors; from them went forth the great missionaries to the Tartars and the Moors; from them were chosen friars to carry out important assignments for the Church; in them arose such great saints as St. Anthony and St. Bonaventure. From the friars in the convents were chosen a host of men to be bishops, cardinals, Popes.

But even with this arrangement there was only one government in the Order for almost two centuries. Authority was in the hands of the men who lived in the convents. They ruled by authority granted them in the Rule of St. Francis and according to its precepts, following, where needed, interpretations given by the highest authority in the Church, the Popes.

Friars Minor Observant

SOME of the friars felt that such papal interpretations of the Rule were in reality a violation of the Rule. They disliked the development of the Order and wanted to return to the days of its early simplicity. They clamored for the right to observe the Rule without any of the interpretations given by the Popes. In 1415, at the Council

of Constance, their plea was heard. They were allowed to form a semi-independent branch of the Franciscan Order under the name of "Friars Minor Observant." Their superior was called a Vicar-General, chosen from their own number, but subject still to the Minister General of the main part of the Order, the Conventual Franciscans. Thus arose two great elements in the Order, the Conventuals and the Observants. But there was yet no real division in the Order.

Then under Pope Leo X, in 1517, a final and definite separation took place. In that year the Observants and other groups united to them were given their own Minister General and other superiors. The Conventual Franciscans continued to exist as before with their own General, but they no longer had any jurisdiction over those Franciscans called Observants. There were now two distinct branches in the one Franciscan Order.

Friars Minor Capuchin

ODDLY enough, after this settlement of affairs, the Observant Franciscans, who had risen as an organization out of complaints against large houses and arrangements to meet the needs of a growing Order, soon found themselves in the same situation as the early community. They became the object of the same kind of reaction or reform. On July 3, 1528, only eleven years after the Great Separation, Matteo de Bascio, a member of the Observants, got permission from Pope Clement VII for himself and his companions to found a reform of the Observants. His new organization was placed at his own request under the protection of the Friars Minor Conventual. This new group

of Franciscans became known as the Friars Minor Capuchin from the long capuche they wore. For almost a hundred years these friars were subject to the Friars Minor Conventual. Then in 1619, under Paul V, the Capuchins were allowed to elect their own General and become an independent branch of the Franciscan Family. Thus since 1619 the First Order of Franciscans has had three independent branches: the Friars Minor Conventual, the Friars Minor Observant, and the Friars Minor Capuchin.

Further Observant Reforms

STILL other reforms took place within the Observant branch. Within sixty years of Pope Leo's famous decision, four divisions of the Observants were in existence. In addition to the Observants proper there were the so-called Reformed Observants, the Recollects, and the Alcantarines or Discalced friars. All these, in 1897, Pope Leo XIII brought together in one body. The union of the various Observant branches, made by Leo XIII in 1897, was called simply "Order of Friars Minor." In justice to the other two families, Pope Pius X on October 4, 1909, in a bull commanded the group which Leo XIII had unified to call itself Order of Friars Minor of the Leonine Union. Members of this Union are popularly known as the Brown Franciscans and constitute the largest section of the Franciscan Order.

The Order of Friars Minor Conventual and the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin continued as before with their own constitutions, privileges, and traditions. That is the situation in the present day among the Friars Minor. Pope Pius X wrote

in 1909: "All three families rightly claim Saint Francis as their common Father; all three belong equally to the same First Order; all three Generals may equally claim as their predecessors, St. Francis and his successors who exercised supreme jurisdiction over the Order of Friars Minor—a title not distinctive of any one family but common to all three and differentiated only by the addition of 'Observants of the Leonine Union' or 'Conventual' or 'Capuchin.'"

Lest the term "reform" which is always met frequently in any account of the Franciscan Order be misunderstood, it should be remembered that the word does not always indicate that the friars who were not members of a reform group had given up the ideals of Saint Francis. As a matter of fact, a reform in Franciscan history often is merely the introduction of a stricter form of life, sometimes stricter than that required by the Franciscan Rule. The number of reforms in the Order show that some friars were always striving to get back to the kind of life practiced by St. Francis and his first companions—a way of life that cannot be reproduced on the large scale which every successive reform attained. Changes always had to come. They were always regretted. But, be it noted, when changes were made they were authorized by the Holy See.

Growth of the Order

→ **T**AKEN together the Franciscan First Order with its three branches is the largest religious Order of men in the Church at the present time. It supplies more priests and brothers than any other religious Order, not only to Christian coun-

tries, but also to mission lands. And it should be emphasized that all these Friars consider themselves as brothers. With the passing of time differences have largely been wiped out. Differences in organization, activities, shape and color of habit, family traditions, and so on, remain, of course. But there is a brotherly bond arising from having a common founder, following a single rule though with different constitutions, holding to the same principles of religious life, and in large part sharing a common history.

Saints

ALL three families rightly regard the men and achievements of the Order before the division as common property. Naturally they also glory in the record of the holy men, great men, and great



*St. Anthony
of Padua*

deeds that, by the blessing of God, form a part of their own chronicles. For instance, along with the other branches, the Friars Minor Conventual count as their own the Saints and Blessed of the Franciscan Order before 1517. Many of them in life were friars of the convents, and at any rate all lived under the rule of the Conventual elements of the community. In their memories the Conventual friars take particular pride. Moreover they rejoice at the long list of al-

most two hundred Conventual friars reputed to

have lived and died in the odor of sanctity since the separation. Four Conventual friars have been raised to the altar: St. Joseph of Cupertino (d. 1663), Bl. Godfrey Jones (martyred in England, 1598), Bl. Bonaventure of Potenza (d. 1711), Bl. John Francis Burté (martyred during the French Revolution, 1792). The names of fifteen friars are before the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The Minor Conventuals have in all ages produced holy men.

Scholars

AS with saints of the Order, so with scholars and other men of reputation. The Friars Minor Conventual lay claim to the learned masters and doctors of the olden days of the Order. To the Conventuals, Alexander of Hales, St. Bonaventure, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, Nicholas of Lyra, are fellow friars. While, however, they have valid claim to their kinship and fame, they willingly share the past glories of greatness, sanctity, and learning with other branches. Likewise they rejoice in their knowledge that since 1517 the level of learning in the Order has been kept high and has been signalized by eminent men in theology, history, science, music, and research. The Order has always had men of encyclopedic mind and world-wide reputation for learning.

Popes

BUT in the realm of history the proudest boast of the Conventual friars is that when the Holy Spirit saw fit to elevate a son of Saint Francis to the chair of St. Peter, He made his se-

lection from the friars who had elected to live in community. Six friars in all exchanged the Franciscan garb of poverty and penance for the white robes of papal power. A seventh died the day of his election. Still another stood to be elected Pope had not the King of Spain interposed a veto. The list of friars elected to the See of Peter is as follows:

1. Vicedominus de Vicedominis, elected Sept. 6, 1276. Dying the day of his election, he was never crowned pope and is not counted among the list of Sovereign Pontiffs.

2. Nicholas IV (Jerome Massi of Ascoli) elected Feb. 22, 1288.

3. Alexander V (Pietro Filargo) elected at the Council of Pisa, June 26, 1409.

4. Sixtus IV (Francesco della Rovere) elected Aug. 9, 1471.

5. Julius II (Giuliano della Rovere) elected Nov. 1, 1503.

6. Sixtus V (Felice Peretti) elected April 24, 1583.

7. Clement XIV (Lorenzo Ganganelli) elected May 19, 1769.

(Cardinal Lorenzo Brancati, O.M.C., (d. 1673), called by Pope Alexander VII, "the right arm of the Apostolic See," was vetoed for the papacy by the King of Spain.)

Franciscan Sanctuaries

OTHER ties binding present day Conventual friars to the traditions of their spiritual forebears are found in the ancient convents and relics

of the Order still in their possession. Since the earliest days of the Order they have been custodians of the body of Saint Francis in the world famous basilica in the holy Founder's native city.

At Assisi the Conventual friars have the basilica of St. Francis, one of the most noted churches in the world. Sheltering the body of St. Francis, the church was given by Pope Gregory IX the title of, "Mother and Head of the Whole Order of Friars Minor." Thousands of visitors come annually in peace time to the shrine of St. Francis. Some come to pray at the tomb of the saint; others visit to view the works of art found in the paintings of Giotto and other masters. Besides the body of the



*The Basilica of St. Francis and the Sacred Convent
in Assisi*

saint, other Franciscan relics preserved at the Sacred Convent are the original Rule of the Order, the Last Testament of St. Francis, the Blessing of

St. Francis to Brother Leo, the habit worn by St. Francis, his sandals, his hair shirt, the ivory horn given him by the Sultan of Egypt and used by him to call the people to listen to his sermons.

The friars have also watched over the remains of the Wonder Worker of Padua, St. Anthony, since the day of his death. They have been from time immemorial in Bagnorea, the birthplace of St. Bonaventure, and have there the custody of the only relic of the saint's body. Some other famous shrines in Conventual custody are: the stable, now converted into a chapel, where St. Francis, ^{is said} to have been born; Rivotorto, near Assisi where St. Francis lived with his first companions, the Cradle of the Franciscan Order; the convent of Camposampiero near Padua, once the castle wherein St. Anthony was privileged to hold Christ in his arms; the Church of the Holy Cross in Florence, called the "Westminster Abbey of Italy"; the basilica of the Twelve Apostles in Rome, adjoining which is the convent wherein lives the Minister General of the Friars Minor Conventual.

Scattered over the world are many Conventual houses where the friars have been since the days of Saint Francis. They are in Wuerzburg, Germany, since 1221; in Vienna, Austria, since 1224; in Graz, Austria, since 1230; in Prague, Bohemia, since 1226; in Bruenn in Moravia since 1231, in Oppau in Silesia since 1234; in Cracow, Poland, since 1237; in Fribourg, Switzerland, since 1256.

All these things serve to keep the present day Friars Minor Conventual aware of their connection with the great history of the Order and inspired to strive to make themselves worthy of the tradition for holiness and learning and zeal that is a part of their Order.

THE FRANCISCAN WAY OF LIFE

THE religious life of the Friar Minor Conventual is regulated by the Rule of Saint Francis, by the Constitutions of the Order, and by Provincial Statutes.

The Rule of Saint Francis is the foundation stone of the religious life of the friars and outlines in twelve short chapters the purpose and ideals of the Order as well as the obligations imposed upon its members.



*St. Francis and
Christ Crucified*

The Constitutions of the Order explain in detail the twelve chapters of the Rule. The latest revision of Conventual Constitutions was made in 1932.

Provincial Statutes provide for local customs, circumstances, and conditions.

The opening chapters of the Rule of Saint Francis, in a few simple words, summarize the nature of the religious life lived by a Friar Minor: "This is the Rule and Life of the Friars Minor, namely, to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience, without property, and in chastity."

Thus the basis of the Franciscan life is close imitation of Jesus Christ by the observance of the three religious vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Friars first pronounce simple, temporary

vows, binding for a period of three years; then they renew their profession in solemn perpetual vows obliging for life.

The Vows

THE vow of obedience requires the Friar Minor Conventual to follow the direction of his superiors in all matters which concern the good of the Order and the good of the Church. A double contract results from this vow: the superiors are obliged to regulate the life of the convents, or friaries, according to the laws of the Order; the subjects are obliged to cooperate in observing that religious life. Furthermore, the Friars Minor Conventual not only are bound to observe the usual vow of obedience, but through their Founder they are specifically held to obey and reverence the Holy Father. In his Rule, St. Francis wrote: "Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope, Honorius III, and his successors canonically elected." Faithfulness to that point of the rule has always been a matter of pride with the Friars Minor Conventual.

Poverty, the bride of St. Francis, demands of the Franciscan friar a great simplicity in his mode of life. When a friar pronounces his solemn vow of poverty, he automatically renounces the right of ownership and the right of inheritance; he loses all personal right to acquire and dispose of property, no matter of what nature it may be, and he depends entirely upon the Order for his maintenance. The Order, however, assumes the obligation of providing for all its members until their death.

The vow of chastity brings the friar closer to God. By giving up his right to marry, he is always

free to serve the Divine Master; without attachment to any person, the friar is ready to work for God's cause in any place or land.

Spirituality

TO keep the vows of religion demands a strong spiritual nature. Spiritual strength is drawn from prayer and penance. Hence the Rule of St. Francis and the Constitutions of the Order provide a program of prayer and penance to keep the friars strong.

The main prayer of the friars is the Divine Office. Every solemnly professed friar who is a cleric, i.e., a priest or a student for the priesthood, must say the Office daily. This Office is the same as that said by secular priests except for Franciscan feasts. In every friary where there are four or more clerics, this Office must be recited or chanted together. Friars who are not clerics have other prayers to say daily instead of the Divine Office.

Other prayers prescribed daily for all friars are: the Conventual Mass, meditation, or mental prayer, examination of conscience, the rosary, and daily remembrance of the dead, especially members and benefactors of the Order. Moreover an annual retreat is prescribed for all members of the Order.

St. Francis called his friars "Brothers of Penance," hence the whole life of the Conventual friar is a means of penance, of denying himself and keeping himself in subjection. But other specific modes of penance are fixed by the Rule. Among them are the regulations concerning fast and abstinence. The Friars Minor Conventual must fast from the feast of All Saints until Christmas, on

all Fridays of the year, on the vigil of all the feast days of the Blessed Virgin, vigils of feasts of St. Francis, St. Bonaventure, and St. Anthony of Padua. In addition, according to the Rule every friar is bound to observe the general fasts and abstinences commanded by the Church.

Apostolate

FRANCISCAN friars do not, of course, consider their vocation as given them for their benefit alone. Like St. Francis the friars are eager for the salvation of souls. Any type of activity promising attainment of that end they have accepted in the past and do today as their field of labor. It can hardly be said of them, as it can of other Orders, that they have a special apostolate. For them the need of the hour is the will of God. As needed they have been and are teachers, preachers, writers, missionaries at home and in foreign lands, pastors, anything and everything to further the kingdom of God. If they have any especially beloved work it is, possibly, that of preaching in simple fashion the Word of God. If they have any class of people for whom they love particularly to work, it is certainly that of the poor and the neglected.

It is impossible to summarize the Order's achievements in the various apostolates. Let it be enough to say, as history proves, that all lands have known the ministrations of the Order's members, every heresy since its existence has heard its voice raised in opposition, the great universities have listened to its teachings. Through its efforts have the sick been solaced, the poor aided, the pagans converted, sinners made saints.

Organization

THE Order is governed by a set of superiors, called "ministers," elected to terms of three or six years. At the head of the Order is the Minister



*The Most Reverend Bede Hess, the 112th Minister
General of the Friars Minor Conventual*

General with his council. For purposes of govern-
ment the Order is divided into provinces. At the
head of each province is the Minister Provincial
and his council. The province is sub-divided into

custodies with an official called the Custos. Custodies are formed of individual friaries or convents. If the friary houses four or more friars its head is designated a Guardian, otherwise simply as Superior. Over all, representing the Order at the Holy See, is the Cardinal Protector, appointed to that position by the Pope.

Membership in the Order comprises priests, students for the priesthood, and brothers. Students for the priesthood pass through a three-fold period of training: preparatory, novitiate, and seminary. The preparatory phase embraces generally high school and junior college. The novitiate is a year of formation and trial of religious character in the spirit of the Order. After the novitiate the candidate pronounces simple temporary vows for three years, and enters the major seminary where he pursues a course of study in philosophy and theology. In due time he is advanced to solemn perpetual vows and the various minor and major orders. At the conclusion of his years of study he is ordained to the priesthood. He then takes up the work for which his training and ability fit him and to which his superiors assign him.

Franciscan brothers serve a period as candidates, then as postulants, later as novices. The total time of these periods must be at least seventeen months, often is more. After his novitiate the lay brother is admitted to vows as is the cleric student. His work is to assist by prayer and manual labor in the efforts of the friars for the salvation of souls.

According to the latest available census of the Order, the Friars Minor Conventual total at the present time over two thousand members distributed in twenty-three separate countries. These

priests
+
brothers

How many years

19
Jer. Fig
195

areas of activity include the mission fields in China, Japan, East Indies, Rhodesia in South Africa, and the Orient. Among their mission endeavors the friars take particular pride in the work



Friars Minor Conventual of the Chinese Commissariate

||| among the schismatics of the Orient. Their fields of work in Moldavia (part of Roumania) and around Constantinople in Turkey are among the oldest missionary enterprises of the Friars Minor.

To facilitate work in Moldavia many of the Conventual friars have adopted the Greek rite.

United States

ALTHOUGH the records of the Church in our land are dotted here and there with the names of Conventual friars in the eighteenth century, it was not until 1851 that a concerted effort was made to bring the Order to America. In that year, the Most Rev. J. M. Odin, then Bishop of Galveston, Texas, requested the Most Rev. Hyacinth Gualerni, Minister General of the Order, to establish a community in Galveston to supply the religious needs of German speaking people of that district. In answer to that invitation, the Most Reverend General gave permission to five friars to found the first convent of the Order in the United States. For this purpose five friars, Frs. Bonaventure Keller, superior, Leopold M. Moczygamba, Dominic Mesens, Anthony Miller, and a lay brother, Giles Augustin, sailed from Havre, France, on July 6, 1852.

Upon arrival in Texas, these friars immediately took charge of several parishes and missions offered them by Bishop Odin. For a number of years they labored in Texas in behalf of the German speaking population and met with such success that they sought from Rome the status of a commissariate of the Order—the better to make for permanence and to provide for expansion.

To secure this permission Fr. Leopold Moczygamba journeyed to Rome in 1858. His request granted by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious, he returned to America as the first Commissary General of the Conventual Commis-

→ sariate of the Immaculate Conception. With him came other workers for the new vineyard.

→ Within a year the Fathers decided to forsake their Texas foundations for places in the East. At Philadelphia, Pa., Utica, N.Y., and Syracuse, N.Y., they established convents and took charge of parishes. From those foundations the Order in America grew and prospered.

→ Today the Conventuals in America are divided into four provinces. The oldest of these is the Immaculate Conception Province with the motherhouse at 812 North Salina Street, Syracuse, N.Y. Next is the St. Anthony Province with headquarters in St. Stanislaus Friary, 566 Front Street, Chicopee, Mass. Third is Our Lady of Consolation Province with Provincial residence at 2222 West Market Street, Louisville, Kentucky. Youngest of the provinces is that of St. Bonaventure whose motherhouse is at 955 East Ringwood Road, Lake Forest, Illinois.

→ The cause of religion has called the friars in America to a wide diversity of activities. They are engaged in teaching in high schools, minor and major seminaries, and are represented on the faculty of Catholic University in Washington. They have the care of souls in parishes ranging from metropolitan congregations to rural flocks. They publish magazines and papers in English, Polish, and Croatian, and contribute to other religious periodicals. They serve as chaplains in prisons and hospitals. They conduct missions and retreats for lay people and religious groups. They have the custody of the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, Ohio, and strive to spread devotion to the Mother of God under that title. They also have

custody of the Shrine of Catherine Tekakwitha, at Fonda, N. Y. In the home mission field they work to improve the lot, spiritually and materially, of the Mexican, Negro, and Indian. Friars of American origin labor in England for the restoration of faith in that country. They carry on the tradition of sharing their Franciscan way of serving God with the laity by promoting and directing the Third Order. They supply the consolations of religion for Catholics of foreign extraction in the United States and Canada. At the time of this writing, they are meeting the latest claim on the resources of the priesthood by serving as chaplains in the Army, Navy, and Marines.

In all their manifold activities the Conventual Friars, now as always, are striving to fill the oldest of Franciscan purposes, to do the work of God by meeting the varied needs of the times.

Their one desire is that in the future they may be granted the blessing of God to enable them to continue their work.

May Almighty God, at whose pleasure they serve, heed their prayers, bless them and their friends, and inspire large numbers of ardent young men to join their ranks as Franciscans, O.M.C.



Anyone desiring further information on the Friars Minor Conventual may secure it by writing to any of the Very Reverend Fathers Provincial, O. M. C., at the Provincial headquarters listed on page 26, or to "Father Guardian" at one of the following addresses:

St. Bonaventure Seminary
625 Michigan Ave., N. E.
Washington 17, D. C.

St. Anthony-on-Hudson
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January 18, 1944

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