

The Late Very Rev. Fr. W. Ledochowski.

Crusaders all over the world have heard with sorrow of the death of their first Director-General, Very Rev. Fr. Wlodimir Ledochowski, the General of the Society of Jesus. About the beginning of December a cablegram had been received from Rome that he had undergone a surgical operation and had been given the last sacraments. Later news, however, said that there were some signs of rallying. But his old, battered frame, for long the prey to many ailments and yet ever taxed to the utmost limit, had already spent itself out in the service of the Master. The end came peacefully on Sunday, 13th. December.

Wlodimir Ledochowski was born of a noble Polish family at Loosdorf in Lower Austria on October 7th., 1866. After finishing his higher education in Vienna, he joined the Grand Seminary of Tarnow in Galicia, and soon proceeded to the German College, Rome, to continue his courses in the Gregorian University. At the age of 23, after taking the Doctor's degree in philosophy and before being ordained, he decided to join the Society of Jesus, and so entered the novitiate at Starawies for the Province of Galicia. On finishing the novitiate, he spent four years in Cracow to refresh his studies in philosophy and theology. In 1894 he was ordained priest, and in '95-96, he made the third year of probation at Tarnopol. Thus in an unusually brief space of seven years his Jesuit training was completed, and he came to Cracow to join the staff of the magazine "Universal Review" published by the Polish Jesuits. In 1901, he pronounced the solemn vows of profession, and became the Provincial of Galicia. Five years later, he came to Rome to be the "Assistant for Germany", that is, the special advisor to the General in the government of six Provinces in and about Germany. On the death of Fr. Wernz, Fr. Ledochowski was elected General on February 11th., 1915.

The history of his work during the following 23 years is one with the history of the Society of Jesus and of the Church in general; and it would not be possible to summarize it here. But the Crusaders should not forget that their young association owes almost all that it is to the constant encouragement and to the wise guidance he has been giving either personally or through the Provincials to the local directors of the Apostleship of Prayer. He has indeed been a man behind the scenes; the Crusaders themselves rarely heard of him. But their directors knew well his inspiring personality. He has ever been watching, guiding, and exhorting the Crusade, every now and then suggesting some new method of progress, or obtaining for the Crusaders fresh spiritual favours and blessings from the Holy Father, and always encouraging zeal and initiative wherever it was found. In 1932, for the sake of greater uniformity and more intimate union among the various Crusade centres of the world, he appointed a special General Secretary for the Crusade in addition to the Delegate Director General of the Apostleship of Prayer. No wonder then that the Crusade, though begun only after Fr. Ledochowski became General, already has a membership of over four millions, and forms (to quote the words of Pope Pius XI) "a select body of soldiers working cheerfully for the expansion of the Kingdom of Christ, and nourishing themselves with the Eucharistic Bread."

Fr. Ledochowski has now gone away from our midst. While praying for the repose of his soul, let us also thank God for having used him as the instrument for so much good, and let us resolve to carry on the work of the Crusade with all our energy.

Fr. Ledochowski

Ledochowski
El Dec 42

Part of a brief biographical study.

Wlodimir Ledochowski was born of a noble Polish family on the 7th. of October, 1866, at Loosdorf in the diocese of St. Hippolitus, in Lower Austria. His father was Count Antoine Ledochowski, and his mother Countess Salis de Zizers, of Swiss origin, of the family of St. Francis.

Many of the qualities which shone so eminently in the future General were to some extent characteristic of the Ledochowsky family. Count Antoine's father had been a prominent political figure in his native Russian Poland, and the alien government finding him too powerful a foe, had exiled him after one of the frequent outbursts of the national spirit. It was thus that Count Antoine happened to settle down in Lower Austria. The family had many branches scattered in various parts of Europe, chiefly in Galicia and Austria where Polish Catholicism thrived best. There were some even in distant France; an elderly cousin of Wlodimir was Colonel Ledochowski who joined the Paris military school of Saint-Cyr in 1853 and later had a brilliant career in the French army. Another

who made the family name illustrious was Miecislav Cardinal Ledochowski, the uncle of Wlodimir. As Archbishop of Gnesen-Posen he offered a heroic resistance to Bismarck and German protestantism in order to uphold religious instruction to the Polish people. Threats and fines could not intimidate him and in 1874, he was siezed and imprisoned. While in the dungeon of Ostrowo, the Pope made him a Cardinal. Two years later the government released him from prison, but banished him from the country. In 1892, he became Prefect of the Propaganda, an office in which he did much splendid work for the missions, until his death ten years later.

Wlodimir Ledochowski did his early classical studies in an academy for nobles in Vienna known as 'Theresianum'. On finishing his course here he spent one year studying for the law, and then decided to join the ecclesiastical state, and entered the Grand-Seminary of Tarnow in Galicia. At Tarnow the stay was brief. After two years of theological studies, he proceeded to Rome to

Top of Congregation of nuns in Poland. He often, more work among the nuns, the cause of the nuns.

The sister of Fr. General Wlodimir was the founder of a Congregation of nuns in Poland. He often, more work among the nuns, the cause of the nuns.

he was made a Cardinal by the Pope

joined the Grand-Seminary of Tarnow in Galicia to become a priest

at Tarnow

attend lectures ~~at~~ at the Gregorian University run by the Jesuits, and had himself enrolled in the German and Hungarian College on October 26th., 1887. Another two years were spent in Rome, during which time he took the Doctor's degree in philosophy. It had been a brilliant career all through, and at Rome, in the inspiring vicinity of his uncle, the great Cardinal and confessor of the faith, the future promised to be more brilliant still. But at this time God seems to have ~~xx~~ shown to him that his true vocation was not a life of ecclesiastical honours, but a dedicated life of a humble religious in the Society of

Jesus. At the end of the academic year 1889, he bade what he supposed a lasting farewell to Rome and on September 24th.

Dr was then that he decided to join the Society of Jesus and so
 joined the novitiate of the Galician Province at Starawies in Poland.

The next few years were spent in the comparative obscurity of a Jesuit in training; but in the case of Włodimir Ledochowski the period was exceptionally brief. For an average young man who joins the Order at the close of his secular studies, the period of training lasts for about fifteen years. The first two years are the noviceship. The candidate is given an intensive training in the exercises of religious life and in the spirit proper to the Society of Jesus, and at the close of the period he pronounces the "first" vows. The next two or three years, called the "juniorate", are devoted to the study of the classical languages, literature and the sciences, and afterwards another three years to Scholastic Philosophy. Then there is usually a break of three or more years during which the young Jesuit goes to a school or college as a teacher or prefect. After this once more he goes back to his books for four years and devotes his whole attention to the sacred science of Theology, and is ordained a priest. The training is not yet over. One more year he spends in prayer and recollection - "the third year of probation", as it is called - [to revivify his spiritual life, to make himself 'an instrument united to God'] before he is launched on his life's work in ~~xx~~ school or parish or wherever God's greater glory needs him. [At the end of the "third year"

he usually pronounces ~~his~~ the "last" vows; or if he is to be a professed member of the Order, he waits till a period of seven-teen years since his entrance ~~into~~ shall have elapsed, and then he pronounces the "four solemn vows of profession".

This is the normal course; but exceptions are not unheard of, and Fr. Ledochowski was a most singular exception. After his novitiate he proceeded to Cracow for the immediate preparation for the priesthood. There was no need of the classical studies of the "Juniorate", and philosophy and theology could be shortened to four years since he had done a good deal already.

On June 10th., 1894, he received the sacerdotal ordination at the hands of Cardinal Dunajewski, Prince-Bishop of Cracow, and the following year he went to Tarnapol in Galicia, two hundred miles eastward, where he did "the third year of probation." Thus in 1896, only seven years after his joining the novitiate, his Jesuit training was completed, and he was at the disposal of his superiors for whatever work they saw fit for him.

His first appointment was as a member of the staff of the Polish periodical "Przegląd Powszechny" or "Universal Review" run by the Jesuits in Cracow. Eventually he became the Editor of the paper, the first of the series of responsible posts he was to hold in the Society till his death, and also the superior of the Residence. *Subsequently, he became* where the fathers stayed, and later the Residence. In 1900, he was appointed Rector of the great Jesuit College in Cracow. *In 1901 he was made Provincial for the whole of Galicia.* He remained in this post only for a brief period, for in the following year, the office of the Provincial of Galicia being vacant, Fr. Ledochowski, as yet only twelve years ~~into~~ a Jesuit, was nominated. On 25th. March, 1901, though the customary interval of seventeen years was not completed, he was allowed to pronounce the "four solemn vows of profession", and on the same day took up the government of the Galician Province, first with the title of Vice-Provincial, and from 21st. February, 1902, onwards with the full powers of the Provincial. *in his official capacity* In 1906, he went to Rome to take part in the General Congregation of the Order which met to elect a successor to the General Fr. Martin who had just died. His singular powers of administration

were widely known even then outside his own Province, so that

though so short a time in the Society and just forty years of age,

he was one of those who obtained a large number of suffrages

for the Generalship. The person actually chosen was Fr. Wernz, the

eminent professor of Canon Law at the Gregorian; but Fr. Ledo-

chowski found himself attached to the General's Curia in the

important post of "Assistant for Germany". The Provinces of the

Society were grouped for purposes of government under a small

number of "Assistencies" - five in all at that time, that of

Germany comprising the Provinces of Germany, Austria, Belgium,

Galicia, Holland and Hungary. It was Fr. Ledochowski's office

to be the special consultant of the General in matters concern-

ing these six Provinces. Little is recorded of his work during

the next nine years; the office of an Assistant is by its very

nature one of intense devotedness, but of least publicity. But

these were years when he had the opportunity of acquiring an

intimate knowledge of the affairs of the Society. Besides in

1909, he had to make an official visitation of the six Provinces,

by which he obtained a personal knowledge of a good part of

the Society. All who met him during his tour kept a vivid recollec-

tion of his fine courtesy, frank cordiality, and supernatural

outlook. There was something distinctive about the ^{young} Father Assis-

tant - a breadth of vision, tenacity of purpose, and courage in

execution, ^{far above the ordinary} startling mastery of details, and above all a ~~high~~

^a high appreciation of the spiritual values, qualities which

he possessed to a surpassing degree.

After the death of Fr. Wernz, the General Congregation met

again in Rome in 1915; it was not the least surprising to any one

that when the elections took place on the 11th. February, Fr.

Ledochowski was found to have the required majority of

suffrages. He was indeed one of the youngest ever chosen for the

Generalship; but the qualities required by the Constitutions for

the General are not age or influence, but "the habit of intimate

union and familiarity with God in prayer as well as in all other

actions", exemplary virtue, devotedness to the Society and love and sympathy towards all. The Fathers electors knew that the person whom they had chosen possessed all these qualities in an eminent degree. Thus on the feast of our Lady of Lourdes, began the long and fruitful period of the Generalship of Fr. Ledochowski. It has been observed that there is a particular fitness in this date - Fr. Ledochowski had been born on the feast of our Lady of the Rosary; he had joined the Society on the feast of our Lady of Mercy; he pronounced the Vows of a professed member of the Society on our Lady's Annunciation; and now also when he assumed the supreme government of the Society, our Lady seemed to have taken him under her special tutelage. Anticipating a little, we may observe here that one of his last official acts as General was to obtain for the Order a special feast of our Lady under the title "Queen of the Society".

~~xxxxxx~~ Part II dealing about the Generalate is to follow

Part II Generalate

There is something amusing about the way this election, ^w an election to a supremely spiritual office, [made in the presence of God, in the spirit of prayer] was viewed by the secular press and by partisan papers. It was a time when political feelings ran high, the war was in full progress, [There had been heavy naval losses on either side, the rapid advance on Paris had just been stopped by the battle of Marne; men had died in their thousands like flies; and the stage was setting for the trying trench warfare.] Men looked at everything through coloured spectacles. On the day after the election Le Journal of Paris published a ludicrous account of it under the caption "The new Black Pope is a man of Berlin", making it appear as though grave political issues had been settled and the Jesuits had gone over to the German side. M. Clemenceau, the atheistic leader of French Free Masonry and of the Empire, published a longer and more menacing diatribe, threatening the Jesuits to beware the consequences of the choice.

But events proved that few fears and anticipations of political leaders were as unfounded as this about the slight figure in plain black robe, whose voice was not to be heard in political forums, whose subjects [counted in a few thousands, not in millions] had no consciences of kings to guide, no resources of capitalism to deploy, who formed indeed an army, a foreign legion but with the arms not of steel and explosive, but with the arms of intellectual leadership, with the sword of the spirit. No General perhaps eschewed the meshes of politics as sedulously, ^{as he} [even though he was faithful co-worker of a Pope who now and again brought the full weight of his authority to bear upon certain political issues, and though direct dealing with civil power seemed on occasions to be quite justifiable.] When governments of certain countries like Brazil officially praised and thanked the work of the Jesuits, such marks ~~XXXX~~ of favour were indeed received by the General; but he did not seek them, nor set great store by them. And when the common rights of humanity were denied to the Jesuits, as in 1932 by the

Reds of Spain, and a protest was called for, he did not make it himself, but left it to the Pope to do so. ~~She~~ He left politics and politicians to themselves; but in other spheres, in those properly belonging to him, he laboured strenuously and achieved much good with the grace of God. We shall try to see what that labour and achievement was.

The major part of Ledochowski's régime ~~lasting~~ coincided with that post-war period of reconstruction of Europe and of the world, hectic progress, social upheavals, new political experiments, the period of dictators and mass movements. Great forces were unleashed in the political, social, economic spheres, having their repercussions on the intellectual and spiritual life of man. The Church during this period was blessed with a great Pontiff, Pius XI, who realized that he was living through great times, who used to the full the good that was in the world, met new evils with new remedies, and successfully vindicated the paramount rights of the Church as the guardian of truth and the guide of men. It was Fr. Ledochowski's aim to be of "some use to the Pope" as he put it, to make the band of men under him serve the cause of God and His Church with those special means which modern conditions put at their disposal.

Before coming to the details of the régime, we may have a historical view of the major events. Soon after the election, the General had to transfer his Curia to Switzerland, due to ^{increasing} the hostilities of Italy against Germany-Austria [increasing and the declaration of war being imminent]. At the end of the war he returned to Rome and took up residence in the German College as before. The work that faced him was immense. Most of the Provinces, especially those of France and Germany had suffered greatly from the war. The best men, the flower of youth, had been killed on the front; many houses had been demolished, and others given over to the military were far from habitable; all sources of income were gone and most of the works had to be started anew. Many houses were on the verge of extreme penury. In many cases the General himself had to come to the rescue, to organize relief from places

which had not been so badly hit, and to set things going. Hardy had normal life ^{been established, than began the immense work of a special} begin than preparations were set afoot for the ^{of the Order;} 27th General Congregation, which had to approve the new Epitome of the Institute, which ~~is~~ it was the General's work to ~~make ready~~ make ready. We who are unfamiliar with details of government may not easily realize what an amount of responsible work this entailed. ^{A marvellous little volume called the} The Epitome which forms today a textbook for every Jesuit was published ^{as a result of this Congregation.} in 1924. Meanwhile the work and personnel of the Curia was increasing and accommodation in the German College being all too insufficient, new buildings for the Curia were erected in what later came to be a part of the Vatican State. The new buildings were occupied by the Curia in 1927. Another great work of about the same time was providing the Gregorian University with its present stately buildings and the vastly improved staff taken from the different Provinces of the Society. A few years later came the 28th General Congregation, the preparation and conduct of which meant almost as much work as for the previous one.

These major enterprises have been in addition to the routine work of the General's Curia, ^{which involves a vast amount of correspondence} and to realize the extent and responsibility of that work we must have some idea of the Society's government. It has been described as a highly centralized monarchy. To the General come reports ^{all over the world} [from every province, every college,] every community where Jesuits live; all subordinate officials have to send to him at regular intervals detailed accounts of works undertaken, of success or failure and of whatever else might be of use in matters of government. It is the General's ~~work~~ work to compare, to sift, to draw conclusions, to issue orders regarding appointments of superiors, ^{and} to direct policies, to canalize efforts, ^{and} sometimes even to administer reprimands, and to order drastic alteration. This ^{characteristic of the Order} extreme centralization puts at the General's disposal vast resources, and hence there devolves upon him [a great amount of work and] a high degree of responsibility for personal supervision, ~~or~~ for gui-

dance not only in the wider policies but even in the minute details. It is this that ~~is~~ constitutes the routine work of the General's Curia, and on the thoroughness, efficiency, godliness of this work depends to a degree not seen elsewhere the progress of the Society, the achievement of its ~~main~~ aim, A. M. D. G.

- This work naturally entails a voluminous correspondence, ~~to the~~ letters to assistances, provinces, houses and even to individuals, in charge of special works, - not to speak of the longer epistles to the whole Society, written on special occasions to exhort ~~his~~ ^{the members to} subjects ~~the~~ the genuine spirit of the Order, to apostolic fervour, to zeal for personal sanctification. One such letter was written on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the first vows of St. Ignatius and his companions on Montmartre. The letter ranks easily among the greatest ever written by Generals of the Society. It deals ~~with~~ not with high policies of government or grand plans for Church expansion, but with the simple daily spiritual duties of every Jesuit, about Mass and Communion, rosary and spiritual reading, meditation and examination of conscience, breviary and other religious exercises of the day, - about those four or five hours every day when away from the crowded activity of external life the religious withdraws ~~into~~ into ~~the~~ communing with God to gain the strength for his life, to make himself an instrument united to God. ~~In~~ In that letter we have ~~something~~ something of a mirror of Fr. Ledochowski's own life, ~~there~~ there we can see how he regarded all the external grandeur and progress entirely secondary and of little moment compared to the inner, the spiritual life. Letters of this type there are many written during the past 28 years; there are others also concerning affairs of ^{external} government, letters which show a surprisingly accurate knowledge of men and local conditions in the most remote ^{corners} parts of the world, a mastery of the parts as well as of the whole, a breadth of vision, and permeating all a high supernatural idealism, confidence in God, zeal ~~to~~ ever to procure through a vast diversity of means the one aim, God's greater glory.

*How especially this work has been carried on
may be seen from the numberless letters
Fr. Ledochowski has written during the past 28 years.*

The results achieved have also been remarkable.

[This has been the work, and now we may inquire what has been the result achieved at least as far as seen externally.] When Fr. Ledochowski became General there were nearly ^{17,000 + 16,196} 17,000 Jesuits distributed in 27 Provinces forming 5 Assistencies; today there are 8 Assistencies, 50 Provinces and over 27,000 Jesuits. Looking at the General's correspondence it is easy to see how far his own zeal and initiative have been responsible ~~for~~ ^(in spite of persecutions in certain ranks) for this rapid increase. Numbers by themselves will not speak much unless we cast a glance, however cursory, over ^{some of the} the different works undertaken. [A special mission for Russia was prepared; and there are now Jesuits using an oriental rite and they have ~~opened~~ a special chapel in the ~~Curia~~ Curia.] Following the papal encyclical on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, the work of retreats was promoted everywhere; new houses of retreats were built including a large one in Rome itself. During a single year 1937, 16000 retreats were preached by Jesuit Fathers. Realizing the power of the press, in modern times, ^{a special feature of his generalate was the press} great stress was laid on using ~~this~~ as a means of apostolate for the cause of God; a house of writers was started in the Curia; and new journals begun in various places. At the Vatican Exhibition of 1936 it was shown that Jesuit Fathers publish 1,100 periodicals; the number in 1915 was just above 200. These 1,100 include 27 journals of general culture like the Month, The New Review, 70 on social questions, like the Christian Democrat. ^{The Communist} [The two lay associations proper to the Society, the Apostleship of Prayer and the Sodality of our Lady were given a new vigour and a more efficient central organization. General secretariates were established in the Curia under Fr. General's direct supervision. The Apostleship of Prayer today has 35 million members and publishes 72 Messengers of the Sacred Heart; and its section The Eucharistic Crusade which began in 1915 has a membership of over 4 million. The Sodality in countries like America has become an efficient means of Catholic Action.] Another great work ~~was~~ ^{where priests are educated,} was the conducting of seminaries. ^{Fr. Ledochowski} The General has been the cause of Jesuits undertaking many new seminaries often sacrificing for them eminent men, and in his lett

tervs to Provincials he asks that the work of seminaries should be regarded as the apple of the eye.

An aspect of ^{Jesuit activity} ~~Christian apostolate~~ which posterity might regard as specially characteristic of this Fr. General is the work of the Missions in non-Christian lands. Through his own frequent letters to Provincials and to the Society, through mission conferences and exhibitions in Rome and elsewhere, through lectures and periodicals, through every means available not excepting radio broadcasts and movie films, the General ~~had~~ tried to elicit enthusiasm for the missions and to organize financial aid. He asked that every ~~xxxxxx~~ Province of the Society should have its own mission. He frequently sent visitors and sometimes called the mission superiors to his own Curia for special conferences in order to make the existing Missions more active and fruitful. As Pius XI has been called the Pope of the missions, Fr. Ledochowski has been called the Jesuit General of the missions. ~~It~~ It is not surprising then that during this generalate the number of missions in charge of the Order has increased from 29 to 46 and the personnel from ^{about} 2,000 to nearly double that number. The statistics of these 46 missions the 400,000 of the young educated, the 150 orphanages, the 70 hospitals and so on, make an impressive record. We in India have special reasons to be thankful to this General of the Missions, ^{for during the last 28 years} A great part of the Indian Mission field is under the Jesuits, and vast improvements have been witnessed ^{in the various fields of Jesuit activity in India} ~~during these 28 years.~~

Raising the Madura Mission to the rank of Vice-Province, & starting two new Colleges in this mission, undertaking the Bangalore College, & beginning the New Review, dividing the missions of Bombay and Bengal, undertaking the Patna mission, starting three new novitiates and the Poona theological - all ~~these~~ these are a few of the external, and perhaps not the most important, signs of progress of the Indian Missions. ~~For~~ For all this under God we have to be thankful to Fr. Ledochowski's zeal and initiative to a large extent.

When all is said we feel we have not spoken of what is most important. We have tried to measure things divine by human stan-

standards, and our estimate is all too imperfect. As for the results achieved what is important is how far God's glory has been achieved, and whether God has blessed the work. And that must necessarily remain hidden from man. *As the exact measure of that is not given to man here,* But there is one thing which we might regard as a sign of God's favour, and that is the great number of miracles He has worked through the intercession of deceased members of the Society, and which have led to their being raised to the honours of the altar. The number of saints and blessed of the Society in 1915 was 119 and now they are 189. And as for the work of the General himself, the chief part is not the external government, ^{or} the official correspondence, but his own saintly personal life, the prayers offered, the intimate communings with God which gave the supernatural efficacy, the floods of graces obtained which alchemized, so to say, the dross, the base metal of the work of individuals and provinces into the pure gold divine. But all this remains a secret between God and himself and it is not ours to enter into it.

generalate
The great part of this coincided with that post-war period of reconstruction of Europe and of the world, hectic progress, social upheavals, new political experiments, the period of dictators and mass movements. Great forces were unleashed in the political, economic and social spheres, which had their repercussions in the intellectual and spiritual life of man. The *Society of Jesus* Church during this period ~~was~~ ^{General} blessed with a great Pontiff, Pius XI, who realized that he was living through great times, who used to the full the good that was in the world, ^{he} *taught his men to* and tried to serve most efficiently the cause of God ~~and~~ ^{and} new evils with new remedies, ~~and successfully vindicated the paramount~~ rights of the Church as the guardian of truth and the guide of men. It was Fr. Ledochowski's sole ambition to be of some use to the Pope as he put it, to make the band of men under him serve most efficiently the cause of God and His Church. And there is no doubt that he succeeded to a great extent, thanks be to God. ^{Those who know say that this generalate}

would be looked upon as one of the greatest in the Society of Jesus, next only to those of St. Ignatius and Fr. Claudius Aquaviva.

Fr. Ledochowski has now gone away from our midst. While praying for the repose of his soul, let us also thank God for having used him as the instrument for so much good, and let us hope that one day God would grant it to us to accord this man of God higher honours than these.

Our feelings of Gratitude to God who has made him Fr. Ledochowski the instrument of so much good while he lived cannot but be mingled with those of sorrow when we remember that his great figure has now passed away from our midst. May his soul rest in peace.

Introduction

About the beginning of December a cablegram had been received from Rome that Fr. Ledochowski had undergone a surgical operation and that he had been given the last Sacraments. Later news was more comforting, but his old, battered frame, for long the prey to many ailments and yet ever taxed to the utmost limit, has already spent itself out in the service of the Master. The end came peacefully on Sunday, December 13th.

Call may end of 1900 was 5/29/01

HE KNEW NO FEAR

He knew no fear. Who but Fr. Michael Pro, S.J., the Mexican martyr? If he were not as daring and fearless as he was, he might have remained many hundreds of miles away from the Mexican border. Instead he was to be found wherever danger was greatest. For several years he administered to the spiritual needs of his people, flouting all the ungodly laws of the persecuting government. On scores of occasions he almost put his neck into the noose which his enemies had prepared for him; his very fearlessness saved him.

One day he had arranged to say Mass in a house in the suburbs of a Mexican city. A good number of fervent Catholics had gathered in the house long before the priest was due. Arrangements had been made with the utmost secrecy; but somehow the enemies guessed that something was afoot. This was their chance. They speedily despatched two ~~soldiers~~ soldiers to watch the house.

Fr. Pro came at the appointed hour. He ~~was~~ saw the two uniforms; and his brain began to work speedily. To enter meant certain capture; to turn back meant yielding to fear, abandoning the people who were gathered in the house and perhaps betraying himself. He prayed for cool nerves and quickly walked up to the gate. Putting on a look of official dignity, he wrote down the number of the house in ~~the~~ ~~book~~. He opened his vest as if to show to ~~the~~ ~~police~~ his secret police badge - which of course was not there - and said in the tone of a superior talking to subordinates: "There is big game here."

The ~~soldiers~~ soldiers saluted Fr. Pro, ~~and~~ convinced that he was one of the bosses of the secret police department, and allowed him to go in.

The people looked terror-stricken when they ~~was~~ saw him. How dared he come there? Capture seemed imminent; he should hide behind a ~~wall~~ ward-robe, they said. Fr. Pro smiled and said: "We cannot be safer. The soldiers are there to guard us."

But the people would not believe. For them Fr. Pro was too precious to be lost. They pointed out to the roof. "There is a way for you to escape," they said.

He had come in as a C.I.D. officer, and would go out in the same capacity, he said. Of course it was out of the question to say Mass on that day. He remained in the house for a sufficiently long time to give to the ~~soldiers~~ soldiers the impression that the "boss" was making a thorough search of the house. Then he went out the way he had come in. He received two magnificent military salutes, but deigned no explanation to them of his finds.

Another time he was caught in a more difficult predicament. He was distributing Communion at a Eucharistic station. A servant suddenly rushed in crying: "The police." Yes, the police was there, and it was impossible for the priest to

"Be calm", said Fr. Pro. "Hide your veils and disperse into the rooms. Remember, dead silence."

Fr. Pro took out a cigarette and fitted it into an extremely long holder. He hid the Blessed Sacrament in his breast. He knew that it wasn't exactly liturgical to be smoking with the Blessed Sacrament on one's person; but the Lord understands, he said to himself.

The police entered in great bluster. "There is ~~ax~~ public worship going on here," they said.

"You want to make fund of me? " asked Fr. Pro, apparently in great annoyance.

"We have orders to search the premises", announced the cops.

The contented smoker did not seem averse to any searching. He even offered to help them with the job; and since they were new to the place they were happy to have his help.

But he was also new to the place. "This is a bedroom", he said opening a door; it turned out to be a study. "Here is a workroom", he said when he came to a landing; but it was a dressing room.

After a few mistakes Fr. Pro realized that he should be more on the guard, and no more proffer information without strict need.

The search was thorough. They saw a good many ladies busy at odd jobs in various rooms; but there was no priest anywhere. Baffled they bade goodbye to Fr. Pro thanking ~~the~~ him for his services.

Fr. Pro finished the round of Communion slowly and then ~~left~~ left the house. He saw that the police were still at the gate; they had not yet found the priest, and insisted on guarding the house till they found him.

M. THEKAEKARA S.J.

He knew no fear.

But they can't catch him

to fool the Bolsheviks

and a ready resourcefulness

A cool head and a great daring were Fr. Pro's

of Fr. Michael Pro, the Mexican martyr.

most prized possessions. But for the first time

first
According he would not have done the world of good

he did; ^{and} but for the ^{second} first he would have put his

head into the Bolshevik noose long before without

? tantalizing the forest-hunters for such a long period.

One day he had arranged to say mass in a prison house in the suburb of a Mexican city.

A good number of fervent Catholics had gathered in the house long before the priest was due. But

Somehow the enemies smelt a rat. Arrangements

had been made with the utmost secrecy; but

Somehow the enemies smelt a rat. This was

their great chance. They speedily despatched two soldiers to guard the house.

Fr. Pro came at the appointed hour. He saw the two uniforms, and his brain began to work speedily. To enter meant certain capture; to turn

back to meanly yielding to fear, abandoning the
people who were gathered in that regard, so as
perhaps betraying himself. He prayed for cool
nerves and quietly walked up to the gate.
Putting on a look of official dignity, he ^{cried down} scribbled
the number of the bar house too in his notebook.
Then he opened his vest as if to show to the two
privates his secret police badge - which of
course was not there - and said ^{in the tone of a} superior
talking to subordinates:
"Fashion: Here is big game here."

The soldiers saluted the 'official' Fr. Pro, Con-
vinced that he was one of the bosses of the
secret police department, and allowed him to
go into.

The people looked terror-stricken when they
saw him. How dared he come here? Capture
was imminent; he should hide behind a wall.
Kobe, they said. Fr. Pro smiled and said: "We
cannot be safer than when we are. The soldier

are there to guard us."

But the people would not believe. For them Fr. Pko was too precious to be lost. They pointed to the roof & "There is a way for you to escape," they said.

He had come in as a C. I. D. officer, and would go out in the same capacity, he said.

Of course it was out of the question to say Mass that day. He remained in the house for a sufficiently long time to give to the soldiers the impression that he was their 'boss' was making a thorough search of the house. Then he went out the way he had come in. He received two magnificent military salutes, but designed no explanation to them of his finds.

Another time he was caught in a more difficult predicament. He was distributing Communion at a Eucharistic station. A servant suddenly

burst in crying: "The police." Yes, the police
was there, and it was impossible for the priest to
retreat. "Be calm," said Fr. Pro. "Hide your veils
and disperse into the various rooms. Don't Remem-
ber, dead silence!"

The Fr. Pro took out a cigarette and fitted
it into an extremely long holder. He hid the Blessed
Sacrament in his breast. He knew that it wasn't
exactly ~~not~~ exactly liturgical to be smoking with
the Blessed Sacrament on one's body-person; but
the Lord understands, he said to himself.

The police entered in great bluster. "There
is public worship going on here," they said.

"You want to make fun of me?" asked Fr. Pro
feigning slight annoyance.

"We have the orders to search the house ^{premises},"

The contented smoker did not seem averse to
any searching. He even offered to help them with

job; and since they were new to the place they were happy to have his help.

But he was also new to the place. "This is a bedroom," he said opening a door; it turned out to be a study. "Here is a workroom," he said when he came to a landing; but it was a dressing room.

After a few mistakes Fr. Pro realized that he should be more on his guard, so and so more proper information without a true strict need.

The search was thorough. They saw a god ^{of old jobs} many ladies busy in various rooms; but there was no priest anywhere. Perhaps they had ^{goodbye to Fr. Pro thanking them for his services.}

Fr. Pro called people of his people ^{leisurely} from their ^{leisurely}

Fr. Pro finished the rooms of Communion ^{leisurely} and then left the house. He saw that the police were ^{at the gate} still guarding the house; so they had not yet found

the priest, and insisted on guarding the house
till they found him.

He knew no fear. Who but Fr. Michael Pro. S. J.,
the Mexican martyr? If he were white-skinned,
not as daring and fearless as he was, he might
have remained many hundreds of miles away
from the Mexican border. Instead he was to be
found wherever danger was greatest. For
several years he administered to the real spiri-
tual needs of his people, flouting all the unjust
laws of ^{the} persecuting government. On
secret occasions he almost put his neck into
the noose which his enemies had prepared for
him; but his very fearlessness came to his
rescue. Saved him.

The Martyr of Fr. Pro.