

## Chapter One

### THE COMING OF FR. de BOYNES

On December 11, 1919 Fr. Norbert de Boynes arrived in Boston as a visitor of the Maryland-New York Province which had been established in 1879 from the union of the Maryland Province (including New England) and the New York independent mission. For a year this united province was officially termed the New York Province from its largest city. Then, due to protests, it was entitled the Maryland-New York Province.

Fr. de Boynes had docked from France at Halifax on December 9 and was received in Boston by Father Provincial Joseph H. Rockwell, who accompanied him to provincial headquarters at 30 West 16th Street, New York City. The day of his arrival in Boston, when his credentials were presumably shown, is considered the official arrival of Fr. de Boynes as visitor.

From 1923 to the General Congregation of 1946, Fr. de Boynes was French assistant. He was also acting vicar general of the Society from April 19, 1944 until the election of Fr. John B. Janssens as General in 1946. Contrary, therefore, to a common opinion, Fr. de Boynes was not French assistant when he arrived as visitor. He was then the local superior at Le Mans. For six years from 1912-1918 he had been the provincial of France. He presumably had a knowledge of English since all but six years of his training had been in French houses located in England. He had been a tertian in Wales. He had also served as novice master in the French novitiate located in England.

Fr. Joseph Rockwell, who met the visitor, was affectionately or otherwise known as Roxy. A native of the Boston area, he had been prefect of studies at Boston College from 1901 to 1907 when one prefect served both college and high school. During these Boston years he was active in convert work and was the human instrument in the conversion of the street preachers, David Goldstein and Martha Moore Avery. He later served as socius to Provincial Joseph F. Hanselman (1907-1911). In 1911 he was appointed rector at Xavier College in New York City and in 1913 rector at Brooklyn College where St. Francis Xavier College had been moved. In 1920, while Fr. Rockwell was provincial (1918-1922), Brooklyn College was closed. After his term as provincial, he served at Weston College as house treasurer, spiritual father and province treasurer. He died on August 1, 1927 and was buried at Holy Cross.

He was a thoroughly self-disciplined Jesuit with strict ideas

about not shaking hands with women. Carrying a breviary in one's hand precluded anything more than a bow. It would appear that he somewhat mellowed while living among the philosophers, who alone were the scholastic body at Weston in his days. These scholastics, who were often forbidden to walk on Concord or Sudbury Roads, would walk there with Fr. Rockwell during afternoon recreation, since the ban did not affect the faculty. Listening to Fr. Rockwell in such circumstances was not only a way to learn about weather predictions, of which he considered himself an authority, but a source of information on the history of Eastern U.S. Jesuits as a group and as individuals. He could also serve as an ombudsman in softening sometimes arbitrary requirements of officials, especially ministers. He acted quietly in these matters, never taking credit to himself, but insisting on fairness.

While Fr. de Boynes was the first technical visitor to the combined Maryland-New York Province, there had also been an equivalent visitor in Rev. Edward I. Purbrick, S.J., an English province Jesuit, who was provincial from March 14, 1897 to June 6, 1901.

Some years prior to 1897 there had been a concerted effort to hand over certain parishes to the diocesan clergy. The churches involved were not national (as Trinity in Boston or Nativity in New York) or poor (such as many in the Maryland Counties of those days) but those unconnected with some educational establishment (as Troy and Providence). In 1889 the Goshenhoppen (or Bally) parish was relinquished, although it had had Society connections as early as 1741. On May 20, 1891, St. Mary's in Alexandria, Virginia (where Robert Fulton was born) was given over to the local bishop. In 1893 a serious effort to close St. Joseph's in Troy, whose Jesuit commitment dated from 1848 under Bishop (later, archbishop and cardinal) McCloskey, was deferred, due to the pleadings of the bishop of Albany, Troy city officials and the parishioners and friends of St. Joseph's Church. Perhaps it was easier for an English-born provincial to surrender this church on June 26, 1900, even though it was this church and its Jesuit staff which had been so instrumental in establishing early pilgrimages to the Martyrs Shrine at Auriesville from its beginnings in 1884. In 1901 the withdrawal occurred from Conewago, Pennsylvania, where the parish had gone back to pre-suppression times.

In 1899, one year previous to the Troy closing, the New England area was affected by this relinquishing of churches. In early 1899 Jesuits withdrew from St. Joseph's in Providence. In 1877, five years after he became the first bishop of Providence, Bishop Thomas J. Hendricken, previously the pastor of the Immaculate Conception Church in Waterbury, Connecticut, invited the Maryland Province Jesuits to accept parochial responsibility for St. Joseph's.

Its first Jesuit pastor was Fr. John Bapst, a clerical exile

from Switzerland, who had been assigned to the Maryland Province in 1848. At once he began his labors among Indians and whites in upper Maine, and in 1854 suffered the well-known tarring and feathering at Ellsworth. He built St. John's in Bangor which was to become a source of difficulty between the Jesuits and the first separate bishop of Portland, Maine, Bishop David Bacon. When the bishop insisted on assigning the parish to one of his own priests, the then provincial, Fr. Burchard Villiger, another Swiss exile, withdrew the Jesuits from Maine in 1859. One wonders whether there was ground enough to withdraw entirely from a fruitful work because no other existing location or parish was thought to be central enough at the time to maintain this northern mission. Bishop Bacon is often referred to as lordly. Perhaps he was too much so for any good to be accomplished by Jesuits anywhere in Maine during his regime which extended to 1874.

Fr. Bapst, from 1860-1863 was the rector and professor of moral theology at the common U.S. scholasticate at Harrison Avenue and James Street. At the opening of classes at Boston College in 1864 (one year after its chartering) he was president. From 1869 to 1873, although a member of the Maryland Province, he was appointed superior of the independent New York-Canadian mission where, among other things, he began an Eastern mission band, and obtained a summer villa at Cold Springs Harbor on Long Island.

Then, in 1877, he received his last active appointment as superior in Providence. This work lasted only two years. After a brief period as spiritual father both at Holy Cross and Boston College, he was an invalid from 1881 to 1887. He first rested at West Park, New York, the novitiate of the New York Mission from 1876-1885, and its juniorate from 1876 to 1880. From 1883-1885, he was at Frederick, Maryland, the noviceship of the old Maryland Mission and of the new Maryland-New York Province. His final days, due to a breakdown caused by the traumatic experience at Ellsworth, were spent in Mount Hope Sanitarium in Baltimore where he died on November 2, 1887. He was buried at Woodstock.

Fr. Bapst, it has been seen, served in Providence only two years. The tenure of some who followed him was also brief. Fr. William Cleary, after whom the present parish grammar school is named, was pastor from 1879 to May, 1884. Fr. Frederick Gockeln served from 1884 to his death in November 1886. Fr. Patrick Toner became pastor in very late 1886 and died on January 15, 1887. Fr. Neil McKinnon was then acting pastor for six months, but survived. Fr. Andrew Brennan, the half-brother of Fr. James V. Kelly, and a Civil War drummer boy, survived a whole term from 1879 to 1894. Fr. Daniel Haugh was pastor for one year (1894 to 1895). Fr. James Noonan held the position from 1895 until November 1898 when he went to Jamaica to be appointed the first American superior of the mission. He was followed by Fr. James J. Bric who came with instructions to close the Jesuit service of the church. This closing

occurred on January 11, 1899. Fr. Bric in later years told Fr. Matthew Donovan, then a regent at Boston College High School, that on his next appointment to St. Mary's in Boston, he had instructions to close St. Mary's as a Jesuit church. What happened is a matter of conjecture, since no withdrawal from that church took place.

The withdrawal from this series of parishes from 1889 to 1901 is a distinctive characteristic of this period. Whatever might have been the grounds for this, there is plausibility in the explanation that personnel in increased numbers would gradually be required for Jamaica, where school and parish work were transferred in 1894 from the English Province to the Maryland-New York Province.

Perhaps St. Ignatius Parish on Park Avenue was retained by the Jesuits because Fr. Neil McKinnon, in 1899, began the construction of Loyola School so that this church might be, in a loose sense, a collegiate church. However, Fr. McKinnon did have some very laudable pastoral and academic reasons for this venture. This parish, under the name of St. Lawrence, had been given to the Maryland Province in 1866 by Bishop McCloskey at the suggestion of the final diocesan pastor -- an ex-Jesuit. It originally ran from 65th Street to 100th Street, and from 8th Avenue to the East River. This parish in a variety of ways has affected the New England Province. From 1914 to 1924 it was the locale of the academic and pastoral work of Fr. Killroy, its first provincial. It was the parish of Mrs. Grant, an important donor to Weston, and many times quietly to the province. It was also a place of worship for the youthful Mrs. Byron Miller, a significant benefactress in her own right of Cheverus High School and its Jesuit staff. So providentially, something is owed to Fr. Neil McKinnon, who conjoined the parish with a school and, most probably thereby, saved it as a church of the Society.

Fr. Purbrick's provincialate from March 1897 to January 8, 1901 was not exhausted in closing parishes. As will be seen later, he devised a new ownership for the villa at Keyser Island. One of the ascetical signs of Fr. Purbrick's provincialate was his insistence that butter not be served at the ordinary dinner table. The late Fr. Gerald A. Dillon, S.J., long a socius, minister, teacher of classical grammar and tones, and catechetical instructor to novices at Poughkeepsie, Yonkers and Shadowbrook from 1903 to his death in 1925, was wont to say that some of his disabilities stemmed from this absence of butter. This ruling on butter had gone into effect as far back as when Fr. Dillon was a regent at Holy Cross.

However, whether one considers Fr. Purbrick's provincialate as a "visit" or not, there were three earlier and official visits to the Maryland Mission and Province, and the third of these visits equally concerned the New York Mission. The first two visits, in 1819 and 1830, were by Fr. Peter Kenney, S.J. and the third was by Fr. Felix Sopranis, S.J. in the early 1860's. Fr. Kenney was one of the first recruits to the restored Society in Ireland. In his first visit

(1819-1820) he was interested in establishing a daily time order, moving the novitiate from the college at Georgetown to a place such as Whitemarsh in Maryland and separating the office of the provincial from the rectorship at Georgetown. Particularly was he zealous in urging more careful academic preparation for the scholastics. Under his impact, several scholastics were sent abroad to study in Italy in the 1820's. Under St. Joseph Pignatelli the restoration had begun early in Italy and studies were already carefully organized there.

One of those Maryland men who studied abroad at this time was later the first rector of Holy Cross, Fr. Thomas Mulledy (after whom there now stands a dormitory there and a portion of the faculty residence at Georgetown). Fr. William McSherry, who became the first provincial in 1833 of the Maryland Province, was also one of these students. He remained in Italy after his studies and taught at Turin when Fr. John Roothan, later General, was its superior. Also among these students was George Fenwick, the first prefect of studies at Holy Cross and its first rhetoric teacher. He is commonly identified with the numerous members of the Healy family, early students at Holy Cross, including James, later bishop of Portland, and Patrick, a rector at Georgetown.

James Ryder, the great pulpit orator of his day, was another sent to study in Italy. Because of his contacts he was able, in 1840, to recruit some Italian Jesuits for work in the Maryland Province. These recruits antedated the exiles of the revolutions of 1848 and 1860. Among his recruits were Anthony Ciampi, three times a rector of Holy Cross and Angelo Paresce, a novice master and provincial.

Fr. Kenney returned as visitor in 1830 and was simultaneously provincial and visitor. An unpleasant bit of unverified, but persistent, rumor states that Archbishop Ambrose Marechal, prior to his death on January 29, 1828, revealed he had withheld his intention in an ordination of Jesuits. The arrival of Fr. Kenney, who was often sought out by bishops to be one of their colleagues, had given rise to the still unverified story that he was made a bishop to ordain as quietly as possible. However, the better modern scholarship attributes these episcopal powers to Fr. Fidelis Grivel, then the master of novices.

The tangible part of Fr. Kenney's second visit was to solidify the Missouri Mission which Fr. General Roothan had detached from the Maryland Mission on September 23, 1830. On the eve of Fr. Kenney's departure in July 1833, the announcement was made at Georgetown that the Maryland Mission had been established as a province on February 2, 1833 with Fr. William McSherry, S.J. as its first provincial.

A later visitor was Fr. Felix Sopranis who, prior to his appointment as visitor in 1860, had taught philosophy at Holy Cross and served as tertian instructor at Frederick. In Sopranis' time the

chief problem was the establishment of a national scholasticate to give organized courses outside of existing colleges such as Georgetown for Maryland scholastics and Fordham for the New York Mission scholastics. Regency tended to be overextended due to needs of growing colleges, and theologians seemed to teach or prefect in colleges as much as they studied theology.

For a time the use of land at Conewago, Pennsylvania was seriously considered. However, it was decided, in 1860, to make use of the already built, but not yet used, facilities constructed by Fr. John McElroy for Boston College. Since a faculty was not yet available to open a college in Boston, its two (then unconnected) structures served the temporary need for a scholasticate for all the U.S. Jesuit provinces and missions for a three-year period. Civil War prices were high in Boston; non-Bostonians found the climate to be, in their words, rough. Fr. Sopranis, though he praised the spirit of study, bemoaned the lack of a garden or yard and foresaw moral dangers in such a city location. The Fr. Sopranis cast of mind is still alive these days when there is discussion of the merits or demerits of a novitiate on the less fashionable end of Newbury Street.

Concerning this national scholasticate at Boston which lasted only three years, it should be pointed out that its teaching staff was essentially foreign-born. Represented were members of the provinces of Naples, Upper Germany, Austria, Rome and Turin. Two were members of the Maryland province -- Fr. Robert Fulton and Bishop O'Connor.

During the last term, the resigned bishop, of Pittsburg, Michael O'Connor, S.J. taught theology. After 17 years as a bishop, he had resigned in 1860. Following a preparatory retreat at Frederick, he went to Germany for his novitiate in December 1860. He strove to keep from his fellow novices that he was a resigned bishop. An inadvertent "pax vobis" made his former state a matter of public knowledge. On his return to the United States, he made a solemn profession, by special dispensation, in the Immaculate Conception Church on December 23, 1862. Fr. Sopranis, the visitor, received his vows.

After the closing of the scholasticate in the summer of 1863, Bishop O'Connor spent most of his remaining 10 years as socius to the Maryland provincial. He was so intent on the view that even a national scholasticate, such as was being readied for 1869 at Woodstock, Maryland, could never have numerous students so he convinced other consultants to make the new building one story less than had been planned. He died too soon to see the inadequacy of his view.

So much for visitations, real and apparent, prior to the arrival of Fr. de Boynes. As his socius for his travels, correspondence, appointments, insights, Fr. de Boynes had Fr. Patrick F. O'Gorman, S.J. who since 1906 had been the prefect of studies at Loyola School in New York. Fr. de Boynes had an opportunity to see what different

schools, parishes, houses of study and houses of writers and retreats looked like. He saw their personnel and their clients. He could hardly believe the volume of work in the confessional and pulpit that could be done in evening hours. The number of men receiving Communion was to him a surprise.

In visiting colleges he sampled classrooms. The present writer, as a freshman at Holy Cross, experienced a visit by Fr. de Boynes accompanied by Fr. James A. Mullen, S.J., prefect of studies. He was among those pupils called on to translate and/or appreciate an Horatian ode long previously studied with meticulous care. It prepared him somewhat for an occasional staged performance when he himself visited classes both as college and secondary school prefect from 1951 to 1968.

Before making a detailed account of the plans proposed for the division of the united province and the necessary financial settlements, some overall statement might be ventured on the bearing of the visit on the everyday life of the Jesuits.

By the summer of 1920, regency, which had usually been of five years duration, began to be cut to four and soon to three. There was stress on the continued wearing of the biretta at meals (until February 2, 1954 in New England), and the wearing of the cassock at table as well as elsewhere even in the stickiest of weather. The black or grey manualia jacket should be worn when necessity or special circumstances permitted the doffing of the cassock in or out of one's room. Although a province prefect's office was proposed, there was no new real emphasis on specialized training for the educational institutions for externs, even though there was as much need at the time as when it was seriously taken up in the 1930's.

Prayer life, as will be seen from a detailed study of Fr. de Boynes' memorial of his visitation, was properly fostered, but with none of the freedom or flexibility which the 31st General Congregation brought about. The basic characteristics of the Society's prayer life from Acquaviva's time, and reinforced by so great a general as Roothan, were given strong impetus. It is not surprising then that the shifts stemming from the 31st General Congregation brought not only greater flexibility, but also a share at foolhardiness.