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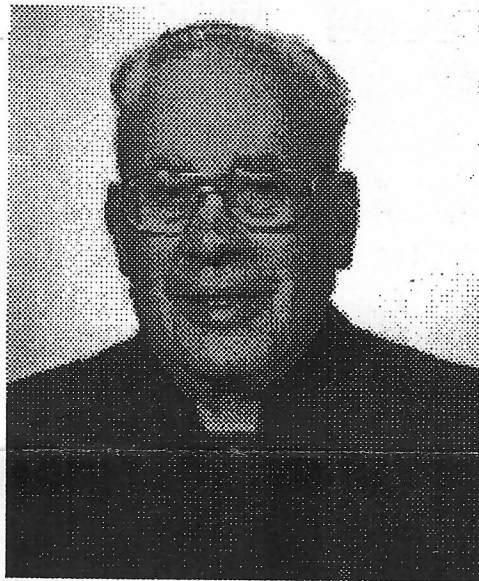
June, 1996

Dear Friars,

In just a few months I will have my 70th birthday. That is not important except when I relate it with the life of our brother, Father Bonaventure Imhoff.

More than one year before I was born, Father Bonaventure entered the novitiate. A few months before I was born, he made his first profession of vows.

Father Bonaventure has had a unique and wonderful life in our community. We have the privilege of celebrating, this year, his 65th anniversary of ordination, his 70th anniversary of profession, and his 92nd birthday.



A brief review of Father Bonaventure's life, as friar and priest, reveals the exceptional contributions he has made to our province and to the Church through these many years.

Father Bonaventure was born July 9, 1904 of Joseph and Barbara (Amrhein) Imhoff in Utica, New York. He completed his high school education in Utica in 1924 and then entered St. Francis Seminary at Floyd Knobs, Indiana for one year of pre-novitiate. He began his novitiate year at Syracuse on July 12, 1925, with Father Ferdinand Mayer as his novice master.

Father Bonaventure made his first profession on July 18, 1926 in Syracuse and then went on to St. Anthony-on-Hudson for two years of philosophy and three years of theology. On July 18, 1929 he professed his solemn vows. From 1931 to 1932, he studied at the Catholic University in Washington, DC.

He was ordained a priest by Bishop Edmund F. Gibbons at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Albany on May 30, 1931, after which he returned to Catholic University where he earned the Licentiate in Canon Law in 1932.

Father Bonaventure's first assignment, 1932-33, was at St. Peter and Paul Parish in Camden, as associate pastor. From 1933-34, he served as associate pastor at Assumption Parish in Syracuse. He was the assistant novice master from 1934 through 1938 and then Prefect of Discipline at Washington, DC from 1938-39.

From 1939 to 1946 he served as Cleric Master, first at St. Anthony-on-Hudson, and then at St. Bonaventure Friary in Washington, DC.

On May 15, 1946, together with Fathers David Schulze, Bertrand Hodes, Roman Ondecko, Eustace Brosenne and Hilary Micketinac, Father Bonaventure sailed from New York on the United Fruit Company Boat "Cape Avinof" for Costa Rica, arriving at Limon on May 21. His first permanent station was as Superior in Sabanilla. From 1952 to 1955, he was the rector of the first seminary at Alajuela and became Commissary Provincial during this period. From 1955 to 1964, he served as Novice Master, first at Sabanilla and then at Alajuela.

After 18 years in the Costa Rica mission, Father Bonaventure returned to the Province in April of 1964, where he served as associate pastor at St. Mary's, Nassau for a short time. In September of 1965, he was chaplain at Seaview Hospital, Staten Island (1965-66), at St. Elizabeth Hospital, Utica (1966-73), and at the Little Sisters of the Poor in Albany (1973-79).

In 1979, at the age of 75, he continued in residence at Our Lady of Angels Friary in Albany where he actively participated in a variety of priestly ministries. He remained tireless in his efforts to be of service to the friars and the people of Our Lady of Angels Parish, right up to the time that he took up residence at Our Lady of Hope, with the Little Sisters of the Poor in March, 1993.

Father Bonaventure, even at Our Lady of Hope, continues to be a wonderful Franciscan and priestly example to everyone. The Sisters repeatedly comment on the great contribution his presence makes to the entire community at the Residence. Father Bonaventure has proven to be a real companion and brother to Father Ed Costello, who has served as chaplain at Our Lady of Hope for several years.

Father Bonaventure continues his enthusiasm for the Province and always finds the energy to attend the various province and parish events at Our Lady of Angels, where he is *de familia*. Ed Costello is always there to provide transportation.

On Wednesday, May 29, the friars at Our Lady of Angels hosted Father Bonaventure with a special celebration of his 65th anniversary of ordination, attended by several friars of the Albany area.

On Thursday, May 30, the actual day of his 65th anniversary, a beautiful tribute was paid to Father Bonaventure by the Little Sisters of the Poor. At 11 AM, a Mass of thanksgiving was celebrated in which he took full participation. I was the major celebrant and homilist, with Ed Costello, Robert Amrhein, Alvin Somerville, Simon Mohr, Terence Pescatore, Angelus Netzer concelebrating. James Amrhein, Robert Lynch and Nicholas Lorson attended. At the end of the Mass, Father Bonaventure spoke strongly and clearly about his experiences in Costa Rica and expressed his thanks to everyone present.

Dinner was served in the dining room of Our Lady of Hope right after the Mass. Father Bonaventure enjoyed the presence of members of his family and, of course, his cousins, Robert and James Amrhein.

On July 9, we will join Father Bonaventure in the celebration of his 92nd birthday. And again, in another few weeks, on July 18, he will celebrate another milestone in his long and wonderful life - the 70th anniversary of his profession.

On behalf of all the friars of the Province, I congratulate Father Bonaventure heartily, thank him for his magnificent Franciscan and priestly example, and assure him of our prayers for God's continued blessings of good health, peace and all good things.

Fraternally in Christ,



Saint Anthony
Pray for Us