

Rev. Aloysius P. Brady, O.Carm.
1858-1915
By Rev. Anthony C. Dressel, O.Carm.

FROM THE files of Mount Hope Retreat we have received valuable data which has made it possible to record in our history the age, birth-place, and parents of Father Aloysius Brady. An old letter from Rome has enabled us to discover the dates of his religious profession and his ordination.

Peter Brady, as he was known in his youth, was born on February 13, 1858, at Tarah County, Cavan, Ireland. He was the son of Michael Brady and Mary O'Reilly. He made his preliminary and academic studies at home and then, like many another boy, desired to be a missionary in America. He applied to the Carmelites in Dublin for this purpose.

At the age of sixteen he was sent to Rome to make his novitiate, and to enter upon his studies for the priesthood. He received the habit in 1874, taking Aloysius as his religious name. He was professed in 1875, and was ordained in Rome in 1882. He was slated for the Kentucky Commissariate, but that new foundation having ceased operations the year previous—owing to the death of several Fathers and the serious illness of others — he was incardinated into the Province of the Most Pure Heart of Mary immediately upon being ordained. Very Rev. Anastasius Smitz accepted him.

Arriving in the United States in 1882, he became a member of the Englewood community, and was placed in charge of Mt. Carmel Church, Tenafly, which at the time was a mission from Englewood. Here he succeeded Rev. Theodore McDonald, the first Carmelite pastor, and was in charge from October 19, 1882, to April 21, 1885.

The old parishioners, among whom investigation was made, remembered him as having been a nice young man of a rather nervous temperament. He was gracious in his ways, kind to the sick, and always highly interested in the children of the little town. But as kind as he tried to be, his restless disposition made him cross a thousand bridges long before he reached them. He anticipated things far in advance of their happening, so much so that, when he was due to preach, he would memorize the sermons and then go up to the Palisades and preach to the trees and to the river. Finally his health began to suffer.

Naturally this could not go on. In three years his health was ruined, his nerves snapped, and he succumbed to a state of frustration and melancholia, and knew nothing until, by the grace of God, he became rational and received all the sacraments before he died—thirty years later.

Immediately after his first term as pastor in 1885, Father Brady underwent a total collapse and was sent to New Baltimore, to regain his strength. As his condition rapidly became worse, he was sent to Providence Retreat in Buffalo, New York. This institution kept him for four months and then declared him incurable. Because he had come from the State of Pennsylvania, he was removed from Buffalo and placed in the Pennsylvania State Hospital, Harrisburg, where he remained almost six years. The late Father Cyril C. Kehoe, according to Mt. Hope authorities, made the arrangements with Mt. Hope Retreat for his transfer.

Father Brady arrived in Mt. Hope on July 12, 1892, and remained there until his death December 31, 1915. His case was diagnosed as melancholia—patient very dull, inattentive, careless, and suffering hallucinations of hearing. This was his constant condition for twenty-three years. He was hospitalized for thirty years, and was faithfully supported by the Order during that long period. Most of the friars did not even know him.

The immediate cause of his death was chronic nephritis and valvular disease of the heart. A few days before his death his mind totally cleared, and he received the Sacraments. He remembered nothing that had happened since he left the little parish in Tenafly. The Very Rev. Basil A. Kahler, Provincial at the time, went to Baltimore, claimed the body, and brought it to Pittsburgh. The Solemn Requiem Mass was sung by Father Basil with Father Anthony Dressel and Father Vincent Metzler assisting, in the presence of the Pittsburgh community.

Father Brady was buried in the Carmelite circle in Mt. Carmel Cemetery and, later, an appropriate marker was placed on his grave. The *Liber Provinciae* says that a question was asked about Father Brady's name having been left off the voting list for the Chapter of 1890. The recorded answer was that the poor man was in an asylum and incapable of voting. Beyond this the book records nothing.

He lived to be fifty-seven years of age—was three years a priest when his illness came upon him—and was forty years professed. Thus the poor man's life was spent almost entirely under hospital care. How strange are the ways of Providence! How correctly does not Father Tabb say: "God sees the upper side of the weaving of life and we see only the under side with its knots and twists." There can be no question that God sends such crosses into religious families, as He does in worldly homes, to make occasions and opportunities for virtue, for love, for sympathy, and for compassion. As God is love, so also is religion.

When the Divine Master said "Having nothing, you possess all things," He pictured an ideal religious community, one which could carry such cases as Father Brady's through to a happy and glorious conclusion, where the outside world would have failed dismally in the attempt. That is the reward God gives, even on earth, to those who take up His cross and follow Him. That is the reward of poverty.

How much to the point are not the beautiful words of Father Faber in the Great Father: "The love of God is broader Than the measure of man's mind, And the Heart of the Eternal Is most wonderfully kind."

Certainly a story like this should bolster the love and loyalty of all members of the Order. Just as we make our vows until death, so the religious Order stands by like a faithful mother until death, and then follows us up with her prayers and sacrifices. No organization in the world provides better for the spiritual and temporal needs of a member than the Church, and its marvelous religious Orders. By giving up all things for God and His glory, a religious has everything. How true are the words of Christ: "He that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it" (Matt. 10-39).