

REV. LOUIS CHARLES GALLIGAN, O.CARM. (1891-1925)

By the Rev. Anthony C. Dressel, O.Carm.

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Father Louis Galligan, the son of James Galligan and Susan Roth-well was born in Chicago, Illinois, November 9, 1891, and was baptized in the Church of St. Columba, then under the direction of the Carmelite Fathers. He was deeply attached to his home and passionately fond of his mother. When he was not at school or at the church where he was an altar boy, he was at home. Perhaps he had a premonition of a separation that was to come. His school days were happy, and he was a popular leader with his classmates. During his high school years the sudden death of his mother left him unconsolable. Day after day he became worse, and finally the late Father Lawrence Diether, who was pastor at St. Columba's Church, seeing no improvement in the boy, suggested that he take him to St. Cyril's College, to have him stay there and to throw him in with the other boys in the hope that the new surroundings would distract him and help overcome his sorrow.

Here it was that he found his vocation. The plan worked splendidly; and, when the time came for him to go home, he asked to be allowed to study for the priesthood and to join the Order. He was accepted in 1905 and proved to be a brilliant student. He entered the novitiate under the direction of Father Kreidt at New Baltimore, September 8, 1907. He was professed a year later in 1908. From the novitiate he was sent back to the college in Chicago and there finished his classics and philosophy. While he was very pious, he was full of pranks. Two Brazilian students will remember him for many years. He was the head of a "raiding party" which one night threw one of these men into a tub of freezing water to teach him that displays of temper, even when being teased, are not profitable. He was sent to Rome for higher studies and there gave a splendid account of himself. He was ordained in Rome on June 17, 1916.

He served as assistant in Englewood from 1918 to 1921, where he was immensely popular. The people still recall him and hold him in fond memory. He was active, kind and especially sympathetic with the aged, the sick and the poor. During the influenza epidemic he endeared himself to all. While in Englewood he conducted a very successful chapel for the Italian people under the title of St. Anthony's Mission. His work and that of the Missionary Aid Society was deeply appreciated.

The Provincial Chapter of 1924 elected him Prior and president of Mount Carmel College, Niagara Falls, Ontario. He received a warm welcome when he arrived at Niagara to take charge. After one year of service at Niagara, his splendid career came to a sudden end. On July 18, 1925, he suffered a heart attack while driving an automobile and died before medical aid could be summoned. Father Telesphorus Becher, who was with him, was not injured and administered the last rites. It was thought at first that Father Louis had been killed in an accident. Father Becher, however, explained that the road had been clear and that apparently Father Louis felt the attack coming on for his last conscious action was to pull on the emergency brake, which

prevented the car from going into the river but caused it to skid. The coroner's jury in its verdict, decided that he had tried to bring the car to a stop when the attack seized him and that the wreck itself had been caused by the sudden attack. The coroner thought that death had resulted from the extraordinary effort put forth at the wheel.

His body was taken to Chicago where solemn services for him were held at St. Cyril's Church. Father Lawrence gave the last absolution and preached the funeral sermon. Father Louis had been his candidate for the Order, and we know that Father Lawrence's lessons were deeply rooted in the young priest's heart.

Thus Father Galligan finished a short but very useful life at the age of thirty-four. He could have been, had he lived longer, of much use to our Province, but God's ways are not ours. It is sometimes thought the Father Galligan was apt to look lightly upon serious things, to have been a little too worldly and careless, but those who lived close to him assure us that this was not true. In fact they testify that he could become so serious that he often bordered on scrupulosity. Besides his exceptional devotion to the aged, the poor and the sick proved that he was in every respect an excellent religious and a pious priest. The untimely loss of Father Galligan was deeply felt throughout the Province. Much had been expected of him and much he could have accomplished, especially since the steady growth of our schools at Niagara and Chicago caused the Province to feel the want of men badly.

There was very little of the genius in Father Galligan's makeup, but he was a tireless worker. Whatever task was assigned to him he undertook cheerfully and carried out thoroughly. It is possible that the gradual failure of his health, which culminated in the final heart attack, had been caused by over-study, overwork and hidden worries which he so successfully managed to conceal behind his everyday cheerfulness.

The following tribute from the Rev. Silverius J. Quigley, who had been Father Galligan's pastor and superior, is a beautiful pen-picture of the young man: "Father Louis C. Galligan was appointed Assistant Pastor of St. Cecilia's Church, Englewood, N. J., in the summer of 1918. From the very first he threw all his youthful energy, learning and zeal into the work assigned to him.

"Under his direction a number of enthusiastic ladies formed St. Anthony's Aid Society through the activity of which St. Anthony's Mission House was opened on Van Brunt Street in Englewood, to look after the Italian population of the Fourth Ward.

"The World War came to the United States in 1918 and with it the influenza epidemic which swept over the city of Englewood, as it did all over the country. Many Englewood citizens were stricken with the disease. St. Cecilia's parish lost some of its best parishioners. The school and church had to be closed as were all the schools and churches of Englewood. Many were the calls on the clergy, both day and night, for the administration of the Sacraments. The Englewood Hospital was filled with sufferers. Finally the

Englewood Field Club was turned into a temporary hospital to shelter the afflicted. Both of these places were visited many times during each day and each night by Father Galligan. He watched over the sick as a Guardian Angel, and his presence brought great comfort and consolation to Catholics and Protestants alike. His work in these two institutions was highly commended in a letter by the Mayor and the City Council.

"Father Louis Galligan was a good priest. He was not only pious and learned but was also possessed of a kindly, sympathetic spirit that went out to all amongst whom he worked so zealously for the honor of God and for the salvation of souls. His memory still lives in the hearts of the people of Englewood whom he served so faithfully and so well."