

Br. Cassien Gauthier

Br. Cassien Gauthier was born November 11th 1915, in Timmins Ontario. He was the third child in a family of twelve children which had seven boys and five girls. His father Polydore or Paul Edward and mother Anna Venne gave him the baptismal name of Roland. After eight years of primary schooling in Timmins he entered the Capuchin Minor Seminary in Ottawa in 1928. He began novitiate in Limoilou on July 1st 1934 and there received the name of Br. Cassien. On July 2nd 1935, he pronounced his first vows and made solemn vows three years later. He did his philosophical and theological studies with the Capuchins at Pointe-aux-Trembles. On June 22nd 1941, he was ordained to the priesthood.

After a year as vicar in the parish of Saint Francis of Assisi in Ottawa (1942-1943), he was sent to Brébeuf, Manitoba, because the Belgian Capuchins in Western Canada were unable to obtain the help needed in personnel. He stayed with our province until he left for India in 1946. The greater part of his apostolic life was in India, first as a missionary in Gorakhpur, then as provincial superior of the Capuchin Indian commissariat in the south of India.

Br. Cassien arrived in India in 1947, and spent a few months studying the Hindi language in Azamgarh. He then worked for a year in Francispur. From 1948, he was in charge of the station of Shahganj and the administration of the school until 1957. That year he was appointed by the minister General of our Order as superior provincial of the Indian Capuchins in Coimbatore in the south of India. He prepared the foundation of a new province which would later on produce other provinces according to the Latin or Syro-Malabar rites. The hot temperatures and frugal meals and hard work affected his health and in 1963, he returned to Canada.

He spent his remaining years in pastoral work in the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes and Sainte Jude Porcupine until 1993. He then retired to a senior's home in Timmins where he acted as chaplain. He was known by many in the area since he was very personable, a great talker with a wonderful memory.

Suffering from heart problems Br. Cassien was first hospitalized in Timmins and then transported by plane and ambulance to the infirmary of La Reparation in Montreal on November 17, 1998. He died on April 26, 2004 and following the funeral mass was buried in the mausoleum of the French Capuchin at La Réparation in Montreal.

