

Br. Antoine-Marie De Lykochine

Br. Antoine-Marie was born at Binderlingshoff in Lithuania, on the fourth of July, 1900. His was a well-to-do family during the czarist regime. Gregoire was educated in St. Petersburg, Russia and later in Berlin. While there with the other members of his family, World War I broke out, and all were interned as civic prisoners until the conflict between Germany and Russia ended.

The family then returned to Russia, but soon there was the Bolshevik Revolution and his father Alexander who was a Senator and Councilor was taken prisoner and shortly thereafter killed. The mother, Melanie de Dolivo Dobroyolsky, sent her son to Innsbruck. She died within a year, leaving Gregory stranded and penniless. The Cardinal-Archbishop of Malines, Belgium, having heard about his plight (De Lykochine's were reputedly of nobility) placed him in the Jesuit University of Antwerp, Belgium. Some time afterward, Gregoire, whose family practiced the Russian-Orthodox religion, declared his intention to become Roman Catholic. Cardinal Mercier received him into the Church. It was not surprising that soon Gregoire, coming from a devout family and now being the protégé of a highly placed prelate, felt a call to devote himself in the priestly ministry. He chose the Capuchin Order in Belgium. He made his Novitiate (year of probation) in 1923, his first vows in May 29, 1924, his solemn vows May 29, 1927. He completed his theological studies, and was ordained a priest on May 25, 1929.

Meanwhile the Belgian Capuchins had taken up Ministry to the Flemish and Dutch immigrants in Canada since 1927. But they found in and beyond the boundaries of their parishes many people of Eastern-European background: Polish, Czech, Slovak, and Ukrainian that they felt inadequate to minister to them. Antoine-Marie accepted the challenge and came to Canada in 1937. He was put in charge of St. Anne of the Lakes, Erieau, Ontario. He remained in the Blenheim area for one and a half years. Hungering for solitude and a contemplative life he took refuge with the Trappists in Oka, Quebec where he spent one and a half years. On his return to the Capuchins, he received his obedience to go and work among the Métis in Toutes Aides. He began by visiting the schools and homes of Toutes Aides and to get around more easily he learned to drive an automobile. He could speak six languages and understood others and so was able to visit in the northern regions of Manitoba both Catholics and Protestants. St. Mary's Chapel in Meadow Portage became his home. At this mission he brought an organ, an elegant clock and a bell. He was interested in both music and art and like beautiful ceremonies. There he built two additions at the back of the chapel; one serving as a sacristy and the other a place of retreat and quiet. He collected money to build a school. He also ministered in the missions of Spence Lake, Fishery, and Small Water Hen and also preached many times in Polish to the people of Rorketon. He even added another Mission Post to the three existing Missions of Toutes Aides namely Salt Point, located 70 miles away.



March 24

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Six years later in 1953, he switched over to the Capuchin Province of La Savoie, France residing in Annecy (1953-1954); Meylan (1954-1957); Chatillon(1957-1960) where he died March 24, 1980. Each year he spent two months in the Hermitage of Monte Casale where his fluency in many foreign languages allowed him to be an interpreter for pilgrims coming from various nations. Alluding to the many stages in his long life, he once jokingly said: "I belong to a family of Nomads!" At last now he is at home with the Father!

