



UAC NEWSLETTER

June/July 2011

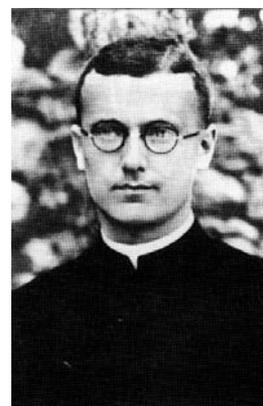
Dear brothers and sisters in the Union

This month brings biographical material on the cause for beatification of **Franz Denis REINISCH**, SAC, prepared by Fr. Jan Korycki, SAC, Postulator General of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, as well as other UAC news.

1. CAUSES FOR BEATIFICATION OF MEMBERS OF THE UAC AT DIOCESAN LEVEL (continued)

Franz Denis REINISCH, priest, a member of the Sacred Heart Province of the S.A.C. in Germany, born on February 1st 1903 in Feldkirch-Levis (Austria), died by being decapitated by the Nazis in Brandenburg on August 21st 1942. His cause for Beatification has not yet been opened officially, but the preparation for it is well advanced.

After his final exams, Franz studied law for one year at the University of Innsbruck and Kiel. In 1923 he participated in a 30 day Ignatian retreat. Little by little the decision to become a priest in order to win souls for Christ matured within him. With this goal, he began to study philosophy at Innsbruck in autumn of 1923 and in 1925 he entered the Major Seminary of Bressanone. On June 29th 1928 he became a diocesan priest. Shortly after, on November 3rd 1928 he entered the Society of the Pallottines, where he made his first consecration on December 8th 1930. Subsequently, he dedicated himself to the teaching of Philosophy to candidates for the priesthood in Untermerzbach (for 2 years). There, he studied theology for another year in Salzburg, and engaged in various pastoral activities. In his pastoral service he showed enthusiasm for the apostolic movement Schönstatt, founded by Fr. Josef Kentenich, a Pallottine. Fr. Reinisch saw in this movement a modern realisation of the apostolic ideas of Saint Vincent Pallotti. In 1938 the superiors entrusted him with the spiritual care of the men who were enrolled among the members of the Movement.



After having expressed his disapproval of the oath of allegiance to Hitler, the secret police in Berlin (Gestapo), on September 12th 1940, forbade him to hold meetings or preach in the whole territory of the Reich. Several months later, on March 1st 1941, he was ordered to get ready for military service, which provoked a great interior struggle within him. In his diary, for the date of March 1st, he wrote: "What does Divine Providence want of me? For a long time I have had a sense that I will not remain alive much longer. ... And perhaps that hour has come? ... *Mater et Regina ter admirabilis* (Mother and Queen thrice-admirable), help me!" In this state of mind, Fr. Reinisch sought advice from Fr. Josef Kentenich, according to whom he could remain faithful to his decision to sacrifice his own life, but mustn't throw it away; the eventual sacrifice had to be left to the Providence of God, which would be manifest itself in the circumstances. After that, Fr. Franz entrusted himself totally to the Lord and to his Most Holy Mother Mary, offering his life for the realisation of the Will of God. He wrote, among other things: "Christ and *Mater Ter Admirabilis* (Mother Thrice-Admirable), give me the clarity and the determination, the spirit of fortitude and of love, but also that of penitence and of expiation. Whatever happens, I want to be ready to do the Will of the Father! ... Vincent Pallotti, Founder and Father, pray for me!"

Through these spiritual experiences, the decision not to take the oath of allegiance to Hitler became even clearer. Even if different people, such as the Apostolic Administrator of Innsbruck, the Provincial Rector of the Pallottines in Friedberg and two military chaplains, while appreciating his personal conviction, advised him to revise his decision, he, in conscience, felt obliged to refuse the oath asked of him. This refusal cost him arrest, imprisonment in Berlin and the trial which was held on July 7th 1942, concluding with his being sentenced to death.

According to the testimony of Rev. Heinrich Kreuzberg who, as military chaplain of the prison in Berlin, assisted Fr. Reinisch for six weeks, he repeatedly examined the correctness of his decision and said once: "With the grace of God I do not wish to and cannot act against my conscience. As a Christian I can never

take the oath of allegiance to a man like Hitler... Every time I make an examination of conscience, I cannot decide any differently... Someone must protest against such an abuse of authority, and I feel called to make such a protest". To his Provincial Superior he wrote: "The love of Christ urges me on to do everything for the infinite glory of God, for the destruction of sin and for the salvation of souls, and for this I am also ready to die". Fr. Reinisch was up all night praying the night before the execution, which happened by beheading on August 21st 1942. His mortal remains now rest in Vallendar, at the Shrine of the *Mater Ter Admirabilis*.

In the general Archives of the S.A.C., there is a copy of a letter of the Rector General of the Pallottines, addressed to the Holy Father and sent on 9.08.1943, in which all of the circumstances of the death of Fr. Reinisch are laid out. In reply, Cardinal Luigi Maglione, the Secretary of State, said that, faced with the example given by our confrere, the Holy Father was unsure whether to express his condolences for the loss of such a valiant member or to congratulate the Society for the glory which he merited.

2. Germany: The National Coordination Council of the UAC in **Germany** will hold its **fourth National Congress** from September 16th to 18th in Hofstetten; the theme of the Congress will be "Our charism of being together – a sign of hope for the Church". The participants in the Congress will discuss our Pallottine understanding of Church and the image we have of Church as we strive for an ever deeper commitment in the service of the Church in daily life. Let us unite in prayer for the success of this time of renewal.

3. New Members of the UAC: On June 24th, the twenty four (24) members of the Youth Community SHEMA, based in Itagui, Medellin, Colombia, made their Act of Apostolic Commitment. They had two years of formation. The community was founded to evangelize young persons through music, theatre and youth encounters. It reaches out to marginalized young persons, from dysfunctional families, who are in danger of becoming involved in drug addiction and urban violence.

Avella, Italy: On Saturday July 2nd, the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, in Avella, Italy, during a Celebration of the Act of Apostolic Commitment presided over by Mons. Lino D'Onofrio, Vicar General of the Dioceses of Nola, a group of thirteen (13) persons made the Act. The Celebration was animated by the Local Community and by the children of the new members.

4. Theological Symposium in Mysore, India. The Pallottine family in India organized a Theological Symposium at the Pallottine Theologate, Prabodhana, Mysore, Karnataka, India, from June 24th to 29th this year. The topic was "The Theological Foundations and Pastoral Implications of the Pallottine Charism", and the method followed was the presentation of a paper on a given topic, this was followed by a response to the paper and an analysis of it by another speaker, then group discussion took place and each unit concluded with an open plenary session. An invitation to participate was sent out last year to the English speaking Pallottine world and the response was very good, with a total of 115/120 persons taking part, the majority of whom were from India, but with members from Poland, Germany, the US, Ireland, Australia and Italy also present. While many of those who took part were members of the core communities, other members of the UAC from Australia and India also participated, along with one Hindu collaborator. It was a very ambitious undertaking and the organizers and coordinators deserve a well-earned word of thanks. The quality of the presentations was excellent, they were meticulously prepared and delivered and the discussion was animated and lively. Among the guest speakers were Bishop Seamus Freeman, Fr. Jacob Nampudakam, Rector General, Fr. Derry Murphy, President of the UAC, Fr. Frank Donio from the U.S.A., Fr. Paul Rheinbay from Germany and Sr. Bernadetta Turecka, Superior of the Missionary Sisters in Poland.

On June 29th, Bishop Freeman ordained to the diaconate 18 Pallottine students from the two Provinces and the Region in India. There are 69 Pallottine Students in the Theologate and they are joined by some students from other congregations. It is very impressive to see so many clerical vocations to the Pallottine way of life in this day and age.

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