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The oldest Catholic newspaper of Saskatchewan, recommended by Rt. Rev. Bishop Pascal of Prince Albert and † Most Rev. Archbishop Langevin of St. Boniface, and published by the Benedictine Fathers of St. Peter's Abbey at Muenster, Saskatchewan, Canada.

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The Death of Right Reverend Abbot BRUNO DOERFLER, O.S.B.

I. O. G. D.

CHAOTIC as our mind remains in consequence of the awful calamity which has befallen us, we, nevertheless, feel it a reverence due our beloved Abbot, whom the good God has called from our midst, and a duty to our kind readers, who are undoubtedly shocked at the sad thought, to review as well as time and circumstances permit, a few generalities concerning the far-reaching activities of the Rt. Rev. Abbot Bruno Doerfler, O. S. B., with a few particulars concerning his trip to Saskatoon, June 7th, as Vicar General and Administrator of the Diocese of Prince Albert, and his return trip to Muenster the following Friday, June 13th, in a hearse.

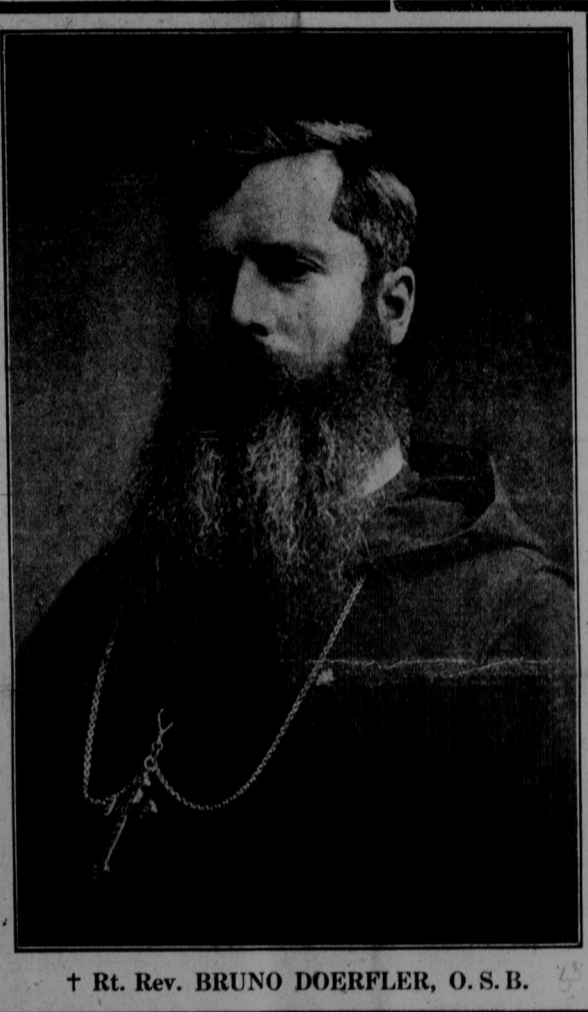
George Doerfler was born at Richfield, Minn., on Dec. 29, 1866. He remained on his father's farm till his 21st year, when he left for St. John's University to pursue the studies of the commercial course. Having completed both the commercial and the classical course, he was admitted into the Benedictine Order and received the name Fr. Bruno, O. S. B. A year later, July 11, 1893 he pronounced the holy vows. Fr. Bruno's superiors were not slow to recognize his gifts of the mind and sent him for further mental development to the renowned Benedictine institution of learning in Rome, called the Anselmianum, where he remained from 1893 to 1899, when he was ordained priest by a member of the sacred college of cardinals.

Almost immediately upon his return to Minnesota, he was appointed Rector of St. John's University. After his term of rector had expired in 1902, he held the position of Abbey Librarian till he in 1905 assumed the duties of Editor of the St. Peter's Bote.

Abbot Bruno can truly be regarded as the founder of the St. Peter's Colony, having been the first Benedictine to set foot upon what is now known as the St. Peter's Colony, Sask. The Colony owes its foundation and organization to his reports of the country and to his encouragement. Since that time he ever evinced an intense interest in the Colony and a longing to make the Colony his field of labor, though the wishes of his superiors for a time denied him this privilege.

The term of the Rt. Rev. Alfred Mayer as Prior of St. Peter's Monastery having expired in April, 1906, Father Bruno was chosen by the young community to succeed Father Alfred in the direction of the monastic family, which election was confirmed by Rome on June 27. In this difficult office Prior Bruno presided with the greatest wisdom, prudence and fatherly care. In the same year in which falls his election as Prior, the present monastery was erected and some two years later the present grand church west of the monastery. That Prior Bruno had won the hearts of his monks by his fatherly solicitude in ruling the community, can readily be conjectured from the fact that he was, upon the suggestion of the Rt. Rev. Peter Engel, then Praeses of the American Cassinese Congregation of Benedictines, appointed as Abbot. On August 15th, 1911, the St. Peter's Priory was raised by Rome to an Abbey and as its first Abbot was named the Rt. Rev. Bruno Doerfler. Oct. 18th, being the day set by the Abbot-elect for the abbatial benediction, was a day of great rejoicing. The Rt. Rev. Albert Pascal, O. M. I., imparted the benediction at which many priests and several prelates were present to witness, rejoice and take part in the impressive ceremonies. Besides the Rt. Rev. Bishop, there were present the Rt. Rev. Abbots Peter Engel, and Innocent Wolf, O. S. B., of Atchison, Kansas. The spacious church was thronged with a large concourse of faithful who had come to receive the blessing of the first Abbot of the first Benedictine Abbey in Canada. Telegrams and letters of congratulations poured in from all sides, Europe not excepted. Even his Excellency Msgr. Stagni, Apostolic delegate to Canada honored the new Abbot with his telegram of congratulations. From that day on more than ever did the Abbot devote all his energies to the upbuilding of the community, the spread of the Catholic press, the welfare of the diocese, the interests of Catholic societies, of education, etc.

As the benediction of the Abbot was a day of rejoicing to all western Canada, so these days of mourning at the Abbot's death are days of profound sorrow to the church of Canada, to the Colony, to the Benedictine Order, and above all to his struggling



† Rt. Rev. BRUNO DOERFLER, O. S. B.

little community. Never has the monastery, nor the Colony, suffered such grief; at every turn one meets eyes red with weeping.

On May 26th, the Rt. Rev. Abbot was in Battleford on diocesan business and on returning next day, he felt unwell and was confined to bed the greater part of the day. This may be regarded as the first serious sign of ill health connected with the abbot's last illness. On June 7, the Rt. Rev. Abbot Bruno began his Confirmation trip which he was unable to make last fall as had been intended by the bishop and him, owing to the ravages of the influenza. About to make use for the first time of the indulgence obtained for him from Rome by Bishop Pascal, which empowered him to administer during the next five years the sacrament of Confirmation in the diocese of Prince Albert, he left for Saskatoon where he was to administer Confirmation on Whitsunday. He had bidden us his last farewell. At the distribution of Holy Communion during the nine o'clock mass which he celebrated, he became seriously ill. In spite of the fact that he was scarcely able to finish his mass and had to be carried to the parish house after mass, he, nevertheless, was loath to disappoint the eager expectants of the Holy Ghost, and towards evening declared himself strong enough to administer the sacrament to at least the converts and those who lived a great distance from the church, in all about twenty-five souls, which he did, but only with the greatest difficulty. This was the first and last time the Abbot made use of the indulgence. Next day, Monday, the Abbot considered himself sufficiently strong to risk the trip to Humboldt, and, having arrived there, he was received by Father Prior and Father Bernard and immediately conveyed to the hospital, where, he knew, he would receive the best possible treatment. His case, an affection of the heart, was not considered so serious as to keep him abed for more than a week, but he never rose from his bed again. He was reported as steadily improving, but on Thursday, July 12th, things took a turn for the worse. At 4:50 p. m. a telephone message reached the little community at the monastery that Father Abbot was dying. The community was as if struck by lightning. Had the good God entirely forsaken us? How many senseless, broken-meaningless but well meant-ejaculations pierced heaven! Rev. Father Bernard was summoned as soon as possible, and he with Father Prior Peter sped onward to Humboldt where they arrived shortly - only to find Father Abbot's lifeless form. The choir of angels had sped him to his reward.

Of the Fathers present and assisting at the death bed of our dear Father Abbot, there were the Rev. Father Lawrence, who had

Ora et labora.

been shortly before at the monastery to see the beautiful decorations of the church and who on his way back to his mission, stopped at Humboldt to pay Father Abbot a visit; the Rev. Father Benedict of Humboldt, and the Rev. Th. Schmid. Father Lawrence imparted absolution to Father Abbot and recited the prayers of the dying; Father Schmid administered the sacrament of Extreme Unction. Father Abbot passed away into a better world, well prepared and fortified with the sacraments of Holy Mother Church, conscious almost to the very last, when he quietly dropped off into a peaceful sleep - as though the angels tried to speed him quietly and quickly to their company above before we should be aware of it.

A telegram was immediately despatched to the Rt. Rev. Peter Engel of St. John's Abbey. The corpse was embalmed the same evening. The mournful tolling of the bell sadly announced the heartrending message to the inhabitants surrounding Muenster. Next morning, Friday, the remaining scaffolding was removed - the painting of the sanctuary of the church having been completed the afternoon before, - and the church suitably trimmed with the signs of mourning. At 9:30 a.m. a solemn Requiem Mass was sung by Father Prior assisted by Father Lawrence and Bernard as deacon and subdeacon respectively. The funeral procession accompanied by a goodly number of automobiles from Muenster left Humboldt at 2:00 p. m. It was composed of many mourners and was met some distance from the church by the school children and members of the Volksverein, who immediately preceded the hearse with their insignia. The Rev. Fathers Dominic, Matthias, Bernard, Leo, Rudolph and Casimir took part in the procession, and with the rest of the community, received the corpse at the church door. Father Prior officiated at the reception of the corpse, while the community sang in mournful chant the Miserere. The bodily remains of our beloved abbot lie in state in the sanctuary, to the completion of which he looked forward with such joyful expectation. He never saw the painting of the sanctuary entirely completed, but hoped to see the work completed upon his return from his confirmation trip; and so it was completed for his return home, where he was received by the saddest and most heartbroken of Communities. Would that he might at least have seen the grand work of art completed, which was executed with such careful skill as a gift to him! Had he, had anyone ever the slightest idea that he should never behold this grandeur, dedicated to his memory; that the first ceremony to be held in the newly decorated sanctuary was to be a solemn Requiem for the repose of his own soul? But last week he made a diagram and plan for the laying out and beautifying of the cemetery yonder. Already work was taken up by the members of the parish, a road begun southward from the monastery to the cemetery and around the cemetery, but who entertained such a thought as that the Abbot himself should be the first to be carried by this new road to God's acre and be laid to rest according to the plans drawn by his consecrated hands but a week before? On Saturday, June 14th, a high-mass was again celebrated for our departed Abbot. On Monday again, and likewise on Tuesday, Wednesday, pontifical services and burial after the chanting of the office of the dead.

In the death of Abbot Bruno, the Catholic Church loses the staunch support of one of her learned prelates. Abbot Bruno has been known throughout all Canada for his learning as well as for his zeal in the cause of Holy Mother Church. As a doctor of Canon Law, his advice and counsel were eagerly sought.

As Vicar-General of the Diocese of Prince Albert, Abbot Bruno was ever a strong support to his bishop who gladly shared his labor with him, being grateful to have at hand a man of such ability in the governing of church matters as was his Vicar General. Especially in the last few years, when the bishop's health began to fail and the administration rested with the Abbot, did his activities resemble more the duties of bishop than those of Abbot of a community. The bishop considered him indispensable to the government of the diocese and eagerly sought his advice, performing nothing of note without first consulting his Vicar General. In him Bishop Pascal has lost a sincere and devoted friend. Who of those acquainted with the bishop and his Vicar General has not perceived the intimate friendship that existed between them? One would almost wish the bishop blissful unconsciousness of the Abbot's death while he is abroad; and we fear the good bishop will be heart-broken at the sad message. May the good God help our kind bishop and assist him in his sad predicament. He has our heartfelt sympathy, though we hardly believe he can miss his bosom friend and assistant more than we, the Abbot's spiritual sons, miss his fatherly solicitude.

With Abbot Bruno has passed away the actual founder and General Director of the Volksverein, to which position he was elected last January. Father Abbot has shown himself an eager-sup-

(Continued on page 2.)