

ST. ANSGAR'S



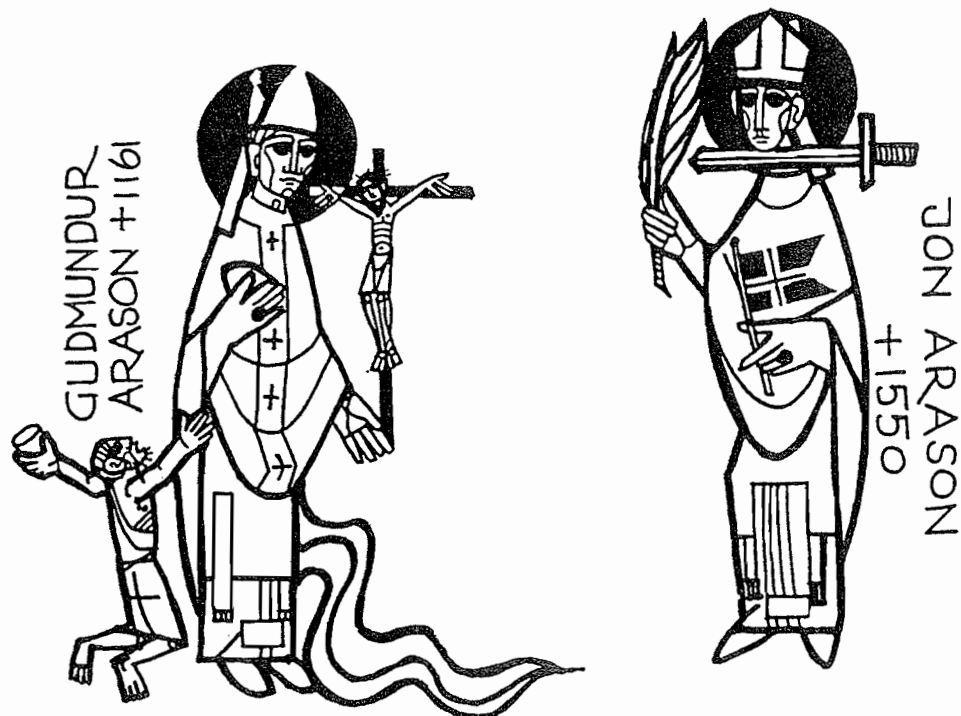
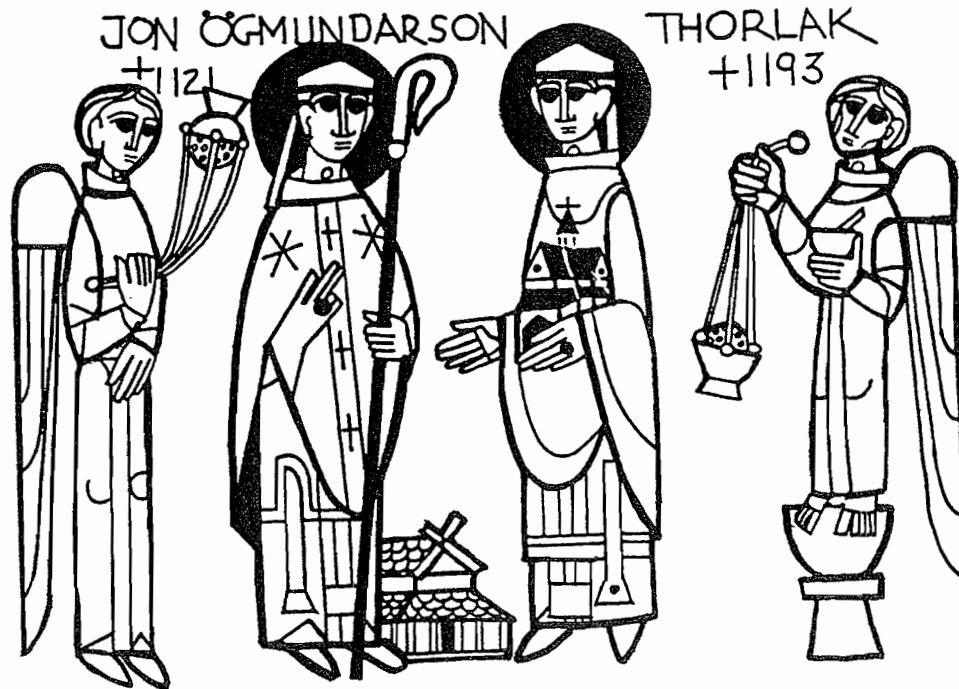
BULLETIN

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THE FOUR SAINTS OF ICELAND



Biography

Jón Ögmundarson was born 1052 at Breidabólstaður in Fljótshlíð in Southern Iceland. He went to school at Skálholt and became a disciple of the first Bishop in Iceland, Isleifur Gissurarson. When Jón had received his ordination as a subdeacon, he went abroad to add to his knowledge and pilgrimaged all the way to Rome. On his way home he found Sæmundur the Learned, who had for many years studied in the "Black School" (presumably Sorbonne).

Shortly after the year 1100 the leaders of the people in Northern Iceland asked the Bishop of Skálholt, Gissur Isleifsson (the son of the first Bishop), to establish a new Diocese in the North. They pointed to the fact that it was a long way for them to travel to Skálholt and it was not just that the most populated part of Iceland was without a Bishop seat. Bishop Gissur was sympathetic to their petition, not the least because this arrangement would prevent the country from ever being without a Bishop. Jón Ögmundarson was elected as the first Bishop in Northern Iceland. Gissur Isleifsson is thought to have used his influence in favor of Jón. They had been good friends ever since they were schoolmates in Skálholt and Gissur may also have wanted a man with educated background from the South to lay the foundation of the new Diocese.

Jón Ögmundarson had one serious defect as a future Bishop: He had twice been married (but had no children). For this reason the Archbishop in Lund (then belonging to the Danish King) refused to ordain Jón and sent him to the Holy Father. The Pope, Paschal II, gave his approval. Jón returned back to Lund and received his ordination there on the 29th of April 1106.

As a Bishop Jón Ögmundarson is mainly remembered for having strengthened the morality in his Di-

ocese and having depleted many of the remains of heathendom. He ordered people to attend Mass and Divine Offices, especially on feast-days. Everyone was obligated to begin the day by crossing himself and singing "Credo in deum". In addition to that he demanded that everyone know "Pater Noster" and "Ave Maria", cross themselves before meals and praise the Lord seven times a day. He tried to forbid obscene songs at dancing, but this had only limited result. However, he had greater success when he gave the prescription that the weekdays should be called by their order "as did the Fathers in the Bible" instead of calling them after the names of the pagan gods.

The greatest achievement of Jón Ögmundarson was undoubtedly the foundation of a cathedral school at Hólar and of a Benedictine Monastery at Thingeyri. In the beginning the monks lived in a small community with a Prior but the place became a real Monastery in 1133 after Jón's death. This Monastery was one of the foremost cultural seats in Iceland in the Middle Ages.

The school at Hólar marked a new epoch in the history of Christianity in Iceland. This was the first cathedral School in the country, all schools until then being private ones. Jón Ögmundarson cared very much about his school. He even got teachers from abroad. Two are known by names: One, the headmaster, coming from Gotland (Southern Sweden), the other presumably a Frenchman. The subjects must have been the typical "septem artes liberales" but the learning of Latin and chants was especially emphasized. The Bishop himself was a good musician, playing a lyre and had an exceptionally beautiful singing voice. Hólar became a culture seat. A steady stream of people came to Hólar to study or to experience the sublimity of the religious life at the Bishop seat.

The Christian life flourished in the diocese of Hólar in the first part of the 12th century, the Bishop leading by giving examples of asceticism and devotion. According to the story, Jón Ögmundarson was strict to the sinners but mild to those who regretted their mischiefs and he took special care of the poor and widows.

Veneration

Already in his life Jón Ögmundarson was famous for the power of his prayers and his visionary abilities. But he does not seem to have been venerated as a holy man until about 80 years after his death. There may be reason for this. At the time of Jón Ögmundarson's death the Church in Iceland was still not fully mature. The last remains of paganism had just recently been uprooted, perhaps mostly by the initiative of Jón Ögmundarson. No Monastery was in the country except for a small one at Thingeyri, which was not fully established until after Jón's death. The idea of an Icelandic Saint seemed therefore to be premature. After all the Icelanders already had their patron, Saint Olaf, the Norwegian King. It could be considered presumptuous if the Icelanders put forth their own national saint thus diminishing the importance of Saint Olaf. These speculations are not without grounds in the light of the fact that the Archbishop in Trondheim was reluctant to accept the cult

of Saint Thorlak and of Jón Ögmundarson some decades later.

In December 1198 the Bishop, Brandur Sæmundarson, at Hólar authorized that the bones of Jón Ögmundarson be exhumed from earth and washed. At the same time the grave of another Bishop at Hólar, Björn Gilsson (1147-1160), was opened and the bones of both of them were placed in new coffins and their graves remained open. The reason for this may have been the exhumation of the mortal remains of Saint Thorlak a few months earlier.

The winter of 1199-1200 was unusually hard in Northern Iceland. A votive was then made to Jón Ögmundarson at the instigation of a woman who had, in a dream, received this advice from Jón himself. Soon after the weather changed for the better. This same winter the superiority of Jón Ögmundarson compared with Björn Gilsson was confirmed when, at Jón's grave, Bishop Brandur was healed from a disease. This was considered a miracle. On the 3rd of March 1200, the relics of Jón Ögmundarson were ceremonially exhumed from earth and entered in the Cathedral at Hólar. At Althing this summer it was decided that the death date of Jón Ögmundarson, the 23rd of April, should be commemorated with a special mass ("summun festum", according to sources from the 15th century). Shortly after this event Gunnlaugur Leifsson began to write the history of Jón Ögmundarson in Latin, mostly at the initiative of Gudmundur Arason, who later became a Bishop at Hólar. Many stories of miracles were also compiled. In the year 1315 the day of translation (the 3rd of March) was made a special feast day ("duplex festum") by the Norwegian Bishop at Hólar, Audunn Thorbergsson.

Sources from 14th and 15th centuries, e.g., votive letters, prove that Jón Ögmundarson was venerated as a holy man. His shrine was placed above the high altar of the Cathedral at Hólar and in that church there was also a golden statue of him, made after a successful votive appeal during the hard winter 1320/21.

The center of the veneration was the Cathedral at Hólar. In the beginning it was dedicated to the Virgin Mary but around 1300 when a new Cathedral was built, Jón Ögmundarson also became its patron. It is difficult to say in how many churches Jón Ögmundarson was held in special reverence because he sometimes was mixed up with John the Evangelist or John the Baptist, all of them bearing the same (or similar) name in Icelandic. With certainty nine churches had pictures of Jón Ögmundarson. Two of these churches were in the diocese of Skálholt.

It is a fact that Jón Ögmundarson has always been in the shadow of the other national saint, Thorlak Thorhallsson, and has never been so popular as Bishop Gudmundur Arason (1160-1237). One reason might be that the life of Jón Ögmundarson was not so dramatic as that of the two others. Some critics have said that Jón was made a saint to countervail the influence of Saint Thorlak, the patron of Skálholt. Anyway, the opinions of scholars in recent years are favorable even more so than of Saint Thorlak and Gudmundur. Jón Ögmundarson is respected for the renaissance of culture and religious life during his office as Bishop at Hólar.

Gunnar F. Gudmundsson

Sources

At the beginning of the 13th century a Benedictine monk at the monastery of Thingeyri, Gunnlaugur Leifsson, wrote the history of Jón Ögmundarson in Latin. This had obviously the purpose of introducing Jón to the Church authority so that he might be canonized. This legend is now only preserved in an Icelandic translation. The legend of Jón Ögmundarson is a very tendentious work and must be taken with precaution when looking for historical facts.

Jón Ögmundarson is mentioned in Icelandic chronicles and his name also occasionally appears in documents which have been published in *Diplomatarium Islandicum*. Professor Magnús Már Lárusson has made a thorough account of Jón Ögmundarson in an article in *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder* 7. (Copenhagen 1981, sec. ed. 608-612). Last it should be mentioned that Jón Ögmundarson lives in the tales of the nation as a companion of the famous Priest at Oddi, Sæmundur the Learned.



Gudmundur Arason was born in 1161 at the farm Grjótá in Hörgárdal in North Iceland, an illegitimate child of a noble parentage. At an early age he was sent to his uncle, who was a Priest, to study for the Priesthood. According to the story Gudmundur made great progress, received his first ordination when only 12 years old, became Deacon two years later and was ordained a Priest at the age of 24.

Gudmundur was a quarrelsome and a restless child but two events had a deep effect on him and seem to have changed him permanently. The one was the consequence of a shipwreck when he was going to Norway together with his tutor. He broke his leg when a huge wave fell over the ship and it took him many months to recover

after much suffering. The other blow came shortly after Gudmundur's Ordination when one of his closest friends, the son of the Bishop at Hólar, died from a disease. Gudmundur now became very enthusiastic in his devotion and mortification so much that some people thought he was losing his mind. He was restless, moved from one parish to another and occasionally gave instructions to young disciples. The power of his prayers and his blessings, especially of water-springs, made him well-known all over the country.

In the year 1201 Brandur Sæmundarson, the Bishop at Hólar, died. It was a custom that a new Bishop was chosen at Althing (the national assembly) at Thingvellir. This time the election took place at a meeting in the Diocese of Hólar in order to escape the influence of the chiefs in the Bishopric of Skálholt. The majority of the people at the meeting wanted to have Gudmundur Arason as the next Bishop at Hólar. Gudmundur hesitated but accepted at last. Undoubtedly his devotional life and piety was in favor of him and also that the other nominee was from the Diocese of Skálholt, which was not well seen in North Iceland. It was also rumored that by the election of Gudmundur the leader of the chiefs in North Iceland would in fact rule over the Church in the Diocese of Hólar because Gudmundur was closely related to his wife. But this proved to be wrong.

Gudmundur Arason was a sincere supporter of the ideal, followed and proclaimed in these years by the mendicant orders, that the Church should not live in wealth but give her earnings to the poor. "The heritage of Jesus the crucified is for the poor", Gudmundur is said to have announced. The generosity of the new Bishop to the poor made the chiefs worried because they were, to some extent at least, responsible for the economy of the Bishopric. More serious was the disagreement which arose when the Bishop began to claim the rights of the Church. His predecessor in this matter was Saint Thorlak, the Bishop at Skálholt, who forty years earlier had tried to force the chiefs to acknowledge the authority of the Bishop over the private churches. The Althing was both legislative assembly and the highest court in Iceland. Gudmundur Arason was the first to maintain that the Church authority alone should judge in spiritual matters. This view had been confirmed in 1196 by Pope Celestine III in a letter to the Archbishop in Trondheim. The chiefs in North Iceland were not ready to accept this and for almost 30 years Bishop Gudmundur was constantly fighting with them. No wonder that his contemporaries saw much resemblance between him and Saint Thomas Becket. Gudmundur on the other hand was a great admirer of Saint Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan. An attempt was made to solve the problem by appealing to the Archbishop in Trondheim, and even the King of Norway became involved but apparently with limited results. At a later stage Gudmundur is said to have appealed to the Pope, himself. The Holy Father was seemingly not very pleased with Gudmundur's behavior, judging from a quote in his letter in one of the stories of Gudmundur Arason: "Si vult cedere, cedat."

Most of his time as a Bishop, Gudmundur Arason was in exile, in Norway but mainly wandering about the country with a flock of poor people after him. Some of his followers behaved themselves mischievously, stealing from farmers and even killing people. In the year 1232

the Archbishop in Trondheim at last managed to make a compromise between Gudmundur Arason and his opponents. After that the Bishop could live at Hólar in peace. He died there in 1237 at 76 years of age. Gudmundur left the church divided and out of control but people continued to admire and love him for his benevolence and charity.

Veneration

Already in his life Gudmundur Arason was thought to be able to work miracles. After his death the stories about him and his miracles continued to increase. But a formal veneration was initiated by the Norwegian Bishop at Hólar, Audunn Thorbergsson, who in the year 1315 exhumed the mortal remains of Gudmundur and brought them into the Cathedral.

In the middle of the 13th century the Abbot Arngrímur Brandsson wrote the history of Gudmundur Arason in Latin. This was the first step to have Gudmundur canonized by the Pope. In 1365 a votive was made to the Virgin Mary and Gudmundur Arason. It was promised to collect money which should either be sent to the Pope to bring about the canonization of Gudmundur or given to the poor. In 1376 this was repeated when learned and laymen promised to give 1/120 of their properties "so that Gudmundur could enter the community of the holy people," as the chronicles say. In 1403 it was decided to make a shrine for the relics of Gudmundur.

There are some indications that these efforts of the Icelanders resulted in the beatification of Gudmundur. The English bishop at Hólar, Jón Vilhjálmsson Craxton, uses the word "beatus" of Gudmundur in a letter from 1430. After this Gudmundur is invariably called "beatus" or even "sanctus" in sources from 15th and 16th centuries. No later than in 1477 the death date of Gudmundur (the 16th of March) was commemorated by a special Mass. In a votive letter from that year it is decided that the day before Gudmundur's Mass there should be "dry-fasting".

In the 16th century the Bishops Jón Arason at Hólar and Ögmundur Pálsson at Skálholt were in the lead of having Gudmundur canonized. In a letter from the 6th of August 1524 the delegate of the Archbishop in Trondheim tells him that the Pope preferred to follow the examples of his predecessors, Leo X and Adrian VI, not to canonize Gudmundur. Later in the letter it is indicated that a canonization during the reign of Pope Adrian VI was impossible because of the large sum of money that was required ("Nam veram canonizationem non deberet expedire cum tribus milibus ducatis, sicut fieri vidi sub Adriano papa . . ."). But the delegate adds that some kind of canonization was possible ("... alium modum quasi similem canonizatione obtinere . . .") and for that purpose information about the beatified Bishop ("beato episcopo") was necessary. It could be good to send 300 ducats to expedite the case.

Two years later the Bishop Jón Arason declares that he had sent money to the Archbishop who had promised to let Gudmundur be canonized if it was God's will. But this came to nothing in the turmoil of the Reformation.

No Iclander has been so much venerated as Gudmundur Arason, even after the Reformation in some places in Iceland. One reason may be that he travelled

more about the country than any other person during his time, everywhere caring for people and blessing water-springs which were said to have healing effects. At least 70 water-springs in Iceland are named after him (the watersupply of Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland, comes from one of these "Gvendarbrunnur". Gvendur is a nick-name from Gudmundur). The people of Iceland have showed their esteem and love for their Bishop by always calling him Gudmundur (or Gvendur) the Good.

Epilogue

There have been different opinions about Gudmundur Arason among scholars. Some have criticized him for fanaticism and accused him of always appealing to foreign authorities, i.e., the Archbishop and even the King of Nor-



*The present church and bell tower,
a memorial to Jón Arason at Hólar*

way himself. Thus he had started a process that reached its highest point 1262/1264 when the Icelanders lost their independence. Others have stressed the complexity of the personality and maintain no less the sincere devotion and charity of Gudmundur Arason.

Sources

Rich material is available about the life of Gudmundur Arason, both independent stories and interpolations in the so-called Sturlunga saga, which describes some great events in Iceland in the 13th century. In addition, chronicles and Diplomatarium Islandicum are important sources. It should also be mentioned that the name of Gudmundur Arason is connected with more places in Iceland than the name of any other person.

Gudmundur Arason

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Gunnar F. Gudmundsson



I. Growing up and first years of education

Thorlak was born in the year 1133 at Hlidarendi in Fljotshlid in Southern Iceland. His father Thorhallur was a seafarer before commencing farming, but his mother Halla was said to be intelligent and beneficial. Even in his early years Thorlak was eager to learn "but did not indulge in play or irrational behaviour" as told in his legend. His mother realized what potential the lad had, and moved with her son to Oddi, which at that time was one of the wealthiest church estates in the land and a great educational seat. At Oddi, Thorlak studied Christian doctrine under the guidance of Priest Eyjolfur, who was the son of Saemundur frodi (the wise). Thorlak studied well because he is said to have been ordained a deacon at the young age of fifteen.

In the year 1148 Bishop Magnus Einarsson passed away, and Skalholt was without a Bishop for the next four years. As a result there were not many clerics about and therefore it was thought wise to ask Bishop Bjorn Gilsson at Holar to become the ordainer at Althing. He conceded to the people's wishes and ordained novices, among them Thorlak Thorhallsson. Thorlak was then not yet twenty and it was highly unusual that such a young man would be ordained to the priesthood. In Thorlak's legend it is said that during the first seasons he had taken on to serve small but prosperous parishes and he obtained wealth and popularity with ease.

When Thorlak had served as a Priest in Iceland for two or three years, he sailed abroad for education. First the

road took him to Paris which was then the principal city for education on the Continent, but thereafter Thorlak went to Lincoln in England and was a total of six years abroad.¹

II. Education abroad

The twelfth century was a changing era in the history of the Catholic Church. During that time the Church was in the process of a renewal and she grew increasingly strong as a religious institution and a political power on the Continent. The famous monastery at Cluny in Burgundy, France was founded shortly after the year 900. There was at that time within the Church a large reform movement which continued almost without a halt until the thirteenth century and perhaps reached its peak with the life and works of St. Francis of Assisi. The core of the reformers' message was the demand of poverty in the spirit of the Apostles and the old Catholic Church and imitation of Christ.

One of the best known reformers of the twelfth century was Bernard of Clairvaux who died in 1153, during which time Thorlak sailed abroad to study at the centre of reform in France. Bernard was a vigorous pioneer of the Cistercian Order which was a renewed branch on the tree of the deeply rooted Benedictine observance. A monastery of the Benedictine Order had indeed been founded at Thingeyri in Northern Iceland about the time Thorlak was born. During this time the administrators of the Church had disputes with temporal powers regarding the legal rights of the Church.

In the year 1073 one of the monks at the reformed monastery of Cluny, Hildebrand, became Pope and took the name Gregory VII. Two years later he issued a bull (dictatus papae) in which he declared that the Pope was the Supreme Ruler of Christendom and therefore it was his right alone to appoint to the highest positions of the Church. Following this the Church's administrators could not tolerate that churches and abbeys were owned by secular princes or other laymen as was the custom, for example, in Iceland at that time. To pursue these ideals it was vital to strengthen the solidarity within the Church and mark the priesthood's uniqueness within society.

Some time before Gregory VII became Pope, he had presided over a council in Rome, where it was demanded that Priests at cathedrals and other similar institutions, obey certain rules and live in poverty. After the council, it was emphasized that poverty, celibacy and obedience were virtues which all priests should adjust to, even though they were outside monastic orders.

Many priests were in Orders associated with St. Augustine, and there was an attempt to get all secular Priests in ecclesiastical institutions to follow his rule of religious life. The Augustinian Order was divided into a few communities and one of them was connected with the monastery of St. Victor in Paris.² This monastery was to play a great role in the history of Iceland, because it is believed that Thorlak had studied in the monastery's school. After returning to Iceland, Thorlak became a monk of the Augustinian Order and it is known that the Archbishops in Trondheim during the days of Thorlak were under great influence from the monastery of St. Victor.³

It is clear by what was mentioned before that the unity of the Church was growing in the twelfth century and the Pope's Church was on the advance. Intellectual

life was flourishing and a golden era of scholarship begun. About the year 1140, there was published a great body of ecclesiastical law, which the monk Gratian, a university teacher in Bologna, Italy, had compiled. Until that time single law and legal stipulations had been scattered about to the great inconvenience of the rulers of the Church. The publication of the body of canon law, associated with the monk Gratian, was to strengthen the Church as an institution and make her image clearly perceptible. This is mentioned here, because in all probability Thorlak went to Lincoln in England to study the new discipline, canon law as working there were known specialists in that field.

III. The Abbot

When Thorlak returned to Iceland, he stayed a few winters with his uncles. In Thorlak's legend it is said that his uncles had encouraged him to marry. It is especially mentioned in his legend that superiors were not bothered if priests married widows. It is interesting that Thorlak gave in to the uncles' provocation, as priests were forbidden to marry according to the Lateran Council's decree of 1139.

He went with his uncles to visit a wealthy widow with the objective to ask for her hand in marriage. He was somewhat tormented by his conscience, because the night before he planned to propose, a man came to him in his dreams, dignified in appearance and distinguished in style.

He is to have said to Thorlak: "I know, you intend to ask for this woman's hand in marriage, but you shall not let that matter speak, as so it will not be and another bride much superior is intended for you, and you shall acquire no other". Here it is signified that the Church was the bride that Thorlak was to unite with, and it is not mentioned that he had gone on other proposal tours.

After this event Thorlak became priest at Kirkjubaer in Sida and remained there for six years. Then it so happened that a rich man named Thorkell, who was getting old, wanted to donate to Christ and saints a part of his belongings. He came to Thorlak and asked him to found in Thykkvibaer a canon house: monasteries of St. Augustine's Order were so named. That was easily done as Thorlak himself had considered to enter an order.

The monastery was founded in 1168 and Thorlak became administrator, first as a Prior and later as Abbot. Thorlak's administration of the monastery was highly spoken of, and it is said that men had arrived at Thorlak's canon house from different monastic lives, both from within the country and from abroad, to see and learn good manners. The monastery at Thykkvibaer was a great cultural seat and the influence from there was to enrich Icelandic literature. Already during Thorlak's monastery years it was claimed that he could turn matters for the better with his benediction and religious chant.

IV. The Bishop

In the year 1174, at the request of Skalholt's Bishop Klaengur Thorsteinsson, there was to be elected a Bishop at Althing, as he was becoming old and said to be unfit for official duties. Althing was not unanimous about a candidate for Bishop and the matter was then referred to Klaengur, and he selected Thorlak as his successor. One of the deciding factors was that Thorlak was con-

sidered to be a great fund raiser, because the financial balance of the Diocese was very poor. Also Thorlak's education and beautiful lifestyle, which he was well known for, had been to his advantage. Finally it is believed that Jon Loftsson in Oddi, who was one of the greatest among chiefs in Iceland, had supported Thorlak, Jon was the first cousin of Eyjolfur, Thorlak's master.

Iceland had been under the Archdiocese in Trondheim, Norway for 12 years during this time. When the Archdiocese was established shortly after the middle of the twelfth century, the Church in Norway had approved many demands that she had lodged, which were in the spirit of the reform occurring in the Church at that time, as mentioned previously.

During this time the archiepiscopal chair was occupied by Eysteinn Erlendsson, a man of Icelandic ancestry, who had received his education in the same area as Thorlak. Thorlak is to have received instructions during his journey for ordination, to pioneer the ideals of the Universal Church just as it had been done to some extent on the Continent. This was reiterated in the Archbishop's letters to Thorlak and especially emphasized that the Bishop take control over the churches which were then in the hands of the chiefs and that he try to reform the morality of the people.

The episcopate was somewhat difficult for Thorlak. One of the reasons was that chiefs led by Jon Loftsson would not hand over to the Bishop the control of their churches as so stated by canon law. They argued that they or their parents had established the churches and had handed over to the churches a great deal of belongings on the condition that they or their children would regulate them for the unforeseeable future. These conditions or contracts had been confirmed by prior Bishops and the legislative council of Althing, and the chiefs maintained that canon law and the Archbishop's orders could change nothing in that respect. At that the Bishop could not interfere.

Thorlak was more troubled by people's bad morals. In the days of Thorlak it was common that chiefs and other men kept mistresses and had children with them. It is even mentioned that Thorlak's predecessor in the diocese, Klaengur Thorsteinsson, had a concubine and with her a child. The Archbishop in Trondheim had learned of this and the news even travelled south to the

Apostolic See and is thought to have been the main reason that Bishop Klaengur resigned from office.⁴ Thorlak's principal opponent in this case was as before Jon Loftsson. He had an affair with Thorlak's sister, Ragnheidur, and had two sons with her. One was Pall, who was to succeed Thorlak as a Bishop, after his death. The Bishop threatened excommunication if Jon did not cease his cohabitation with Ragnheidur, but Jon had his way. He later decided to separate from Ragnheidur and confessed to the Bishop. It should be noted that during this time it was wise for Thorlak to move with caution in his dealing with the Country's dignitaries, since he could no longer expect the Archbishop's support, because he was under attack in his conflict with the royal power in Norway.

The main plan in Thorlak's attempt to edify the country and to get approved the Church's jurisdiction in moral affairs, was to impose a penitential. The penitential was a list of punishable misdeeds and it prescribed what penance men had to take on to get absolution. This penitential was among the strictest then known in Europe.⁵ It was both to be a directive for teachers in moral affairs and increase the Church's influence in the country, by allowing her interference into people's daily life. The Bishop had no other way of imposing the law except his power to excommunicate, in case his message was not obeyed. As far as is known, Thorlak was first among Bishops to use this power to some extent, but no other Bishop before him had, as forcefully as he, seen to it that the teaching of the Church was adhered to.

Thorlak had always been in poor health, but he often exhausted himself with fasting and other austerities. During one of his visitations in the South he caught a disease and died after three months in bed. He was sixty years of age.

V. The Saint

Four years after Thorlak's death, he appeared in a dream to a Priest in the North and so instructed that his body should be removed from earth, and after petitioning him whether there would be any signs indicating his sanctity, the Priest told Bishop Brandur at Holar of his dream; and the result was that in the following summer, Bishop Brandur sent his representative with letters to Bishop Pall and other dignitaries at Althing. In these letters it was told how many in the North had received cure, comfort in sorrow and support in opposition by votive offerings to Bishop Thorlak. Men convened in Althing about these matters and it was decided that Bishop Pall declare in the legislative council that all men should be allowed a votive appeal to the "beatified Bishop Thorlak". On July 20th, 1198, five years after Thorlak's death, his mortal remains were exhumed from ground and entered in the Cathedral at Skalholt. In the year 1237 it was decided to commemorate this day to Bishop Thorlak with a special mass, the feast of Thorlak. During the summer of 1199 another feast of Thorlak was made legal at Althing and it was to be celebrated on Thorlak's death date, December 23rd.

In a short time there was collected at Skalholt a great amount of money that men had given to Saint Thorlak. Bishop Pall had a shrine made, big and beautiful for Thorlak's relic. This shrine is said to have cost the same

SKALHOLTSBISKUPAR

ISLEIFUR-GISSURARSON	1056-1080	JON GERREKSSON	1426-1447
GISSUR ISLEIFSSON	1082-1115	JON VILHJALMSSON CRAXTON	1447-1451
FORLAKUR RUDOLFSSON	1115-1132	GODSEIN COMABER	1451-1457
MAGNUS EINARSSON	1132-1148	MARCELLUS	1457-1465
KLÆNGUR ÞORSTEINSSON	1148-1174	JON STEFANSSON KRABBE	1465-1470
ÞORLAKUR ÞORHALLSSON	1174-1190	SVENN ÞÓRVALDSSON	1470-1477
PALL JONSSON	1190-1201	MAGNUS EYJOLFSSON	1477-1484
MAGNUS GISSURARSON	1201-1207	STEFAN JONSSON	1484-1501
SIGVARDUR ÞETTYARDSSON	1207-1209	OGMUNDUR PÁLSSON	1501-1510
ARNI ÞORLÁKSSON	1209-1209	GISSUR EINARSSON	1510-1514
ARNI HELGASON	1204-1226	MARTEIN EINARSSON	1514-1537
CRIMUR SKUTUSON	1226	GISEL JONSSON	1537-1547
JON HALLDÓRSON	1226-1238	ODDUR EINARSSON	1547-1550
JON INDRIDASON	1238-1241	GISEL ODDSSON	1550-1556
JON SIGURDSSON	1241-1248	BRYNJOLFUR SYGESSON	1556-1574
ÞYRUR ÞVARSSON	1248-1260	ODDUR ÞORLÁKSSON	1574-1597
ÞORARINN SIGURDSSON	1260-1264	JON ÞORLÁKSSON VIDALIN	1597-1700
ODDGEIR ÞORSTEINSSON	1264-1291	JON ARNARSON	1700-1703
MIKÆL	1291-1292	ÓLAFUR GÍSLASON	1703-1708
VILJIN BIRNIRSSON	1292-1406	FINNUR JONSSON	1708-1720
JON ÞÓRÐI	1406-1415	HANNES FINNSSON	1720-1736
ARNE GLAFSSON	1415-1420	GRÍR VIDALIN	1736-1751

The Series Episcoporum in the Skalholt Church

as 480 cows and stood above the high altar in Skalholt until the Protestant Reformation, but was then taken from the church and stripped of all its decorations. It is long since lost.

Source material indicates that a shrine of St. Thorlak was in Skalholt almost until 1800. It is not known if it was the ancient main shrine or another shrine containing Thorlak's mortal remains. Small simple reliquaries with Bishop Thorlak's relics have without doubt existed in many places, especially in those churches that bore his name. In 1823 Steingrímur Jónsson, then pastor in Oddi but later Bishop, sent a reliquary from the church at Keldur to His Majesty's Council of Archaeology in Copenhagen. It is now in the possession of the Danish National Museum. In his letter dated August 15th, 1823, to Finnur Magnússon, professor at the University of Copenhagen, Steingrímur conjectures that this is the shrine of St. Thorlak.⁶

Bishop Thorlak's mortal remains are also to be found in the Church of Magnus at Kirkjubæur in the Faroe Islands. In the sanctuary's end wall a lead box containing seven relics has been placed and one of them is said to be from the grave of Thorlak, Bishop of Skalholt. This place in the wall is called the Golden Locker. It is covered with a stone plaque and sculptured with the Crucifixion and inscription in Latin of what the wall contains.⁷ It is not known if other churches abroad had such memorabilia of Bishop Thorlak. It is thought that 56 churches in Iceland were dedicated to Thorlak. No saint had such a popularity with the exception of the Virgin Mary, Peter the Apostle and Saint Olaf.⁸

Thorlak was also well known in other countries, namely Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the Faroe Islands and on the British Isles. Thorlak's fame even carried south to Constantinople with Norsemen, who had joined the emperor's mercenary troops. In one book of miracles it is said that a church had been erected for Thorlak in Constantinople in gratitude for having given the Norsemen in the service of the emperor victory over pagans.

There are also source materials about Thorlak's altar in the Church of the Cross in Bergen, and in Germany Thorlak was held in esteem as he was one of the patron saints of the brotherhood of Iceland Merchants, which was founded in Hamburg, April 4th, 1500.⁹ Even now though there is a new custom in force in those countries where Thorlak's sainthood was the most honored, his name has not been fully forgotten and he has even been shown respect. One of the recent examples of this is from the beginning of this century. In the year 1907 a new window was placed in the chapel of the theological seminary at Lincoln where Thorlak had studied and it shows Bishop Thorlak in full vestment.¹⁰ It should also be mentioned that Icelandic students in Copenhagen have for a long time celebrated so-called "Thorlak's festival" in the memory of the saint during the feast of Thorlak, held on December 23rd.

Until the year 1200 it was the approved way, that Bishop or Bishops' convention declare a man's sainthood. That is how it was done with most or all Norse saints antedating Thorlak. However, this went against the efforts in the twelfth century to combine ecclesiastic laws and strengthen the Church's central power. Therefore, Pope Alexander III issued the instruction dur-

ing the period 1171 to 1180 that from then on it was only the Pope's divine right to canonize men. This decision did not become common rule until after the year 1234, during Pope Gregory IX's pontificate.¹¹

It seems that men in Iceland were not certain if Bishop Thorlak should be considered a saint by canonical standards. However in the early thirteenth century efforts were notably made to have Thorlak canonized by the Apostolic See. This is witnessed to by fragments from Bishop Thorlak's legend in Latin dated about the year 1200.¹² It is not known how forcefully this matter was pursued but the results were unsuccessful. Thorlak is, however, mentioned in the great Bollandist Collection about the saints of the Catholic Church and his name is in the Liturgical Calendar for the Bishopric of Copenhagen, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, which The Sacred Congregation of Sacraments and Divine Worship approved in the year 1979.

Dr. Hinrik Frehen, Bishop of Reykjavik from December 8th, 1968 until his death October 31st, 1986, did his utmost to have this matter concluded and sent in a letter and necessary documents about Bishop Thorlak to The Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints. It was therefore a well-earned pleasure when Bishop Hinrik received a letter from Pope John Paul II, stating that Bishop Thorlak was a holy man and confirmed that "the holy Bishop Thorlak is the patron saint of the Icelandic people before God". This letter was written January 14th, 1984.¹³

What was it that made Thorlak a saint? At first sight he did not seem to be a strong character. He is so described as being of medium height, hair reddish brown and straight, long faced, eyes kind and pale, fair, handshake limp and white hands, gracious, courteous and honest, slender with small physical stature and bent shoulders. He was no orator, but poor at speech. Thorlak could be merry with the cheerful. It is said that he had enjoyed stories, poems, instrumental music and wise men's speeches and dreams. But his lifestyle and daily schedule was the living proof that he was an unusual man. Thorlak kept the habits all his life that he had submitted to in the monastery at Þykkvibæur. He celebrated daily canonical hours, and woke at nights to pray and consumed so little food that men thought he would pass on. Before the major feasts, Thorlak had poor men called together, twelve or nine or seven, and went to them in secret to wash their feet and then dry them with his hair in the spirit of his Master. Thorlak is an example of a man who did his best to live in conformity with the teachings of Christ and went far in that effort.

More reasons for Thorlak's sainthood can without doubt be found. He was for the Cathedral at Skalholt and other churches dedicated to him a considerable source of finances. The reason for this was that Thorlak was considered a powerful intercessor and that is why people gave votive gifts.

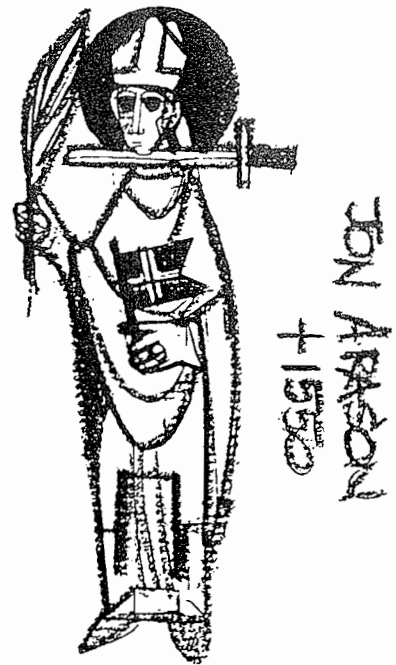
On the other hand and not least, the Church that venerates her own patron is in better condition than without one. Bishops Pall and Brandur realized that a national saint would increase the public's communion and strengthen religious beliefs, the Church of the land nourishes on both.

In the end it should be mentioned that on the death of Archbishop Eysteinn Erlendsson, who has been mentioned before, his mortal remains were placed in a shrine and positioned in the Cathedral of Trondheim, as was proper for a holy man. Such a dignity was as justified for Thorlak if the archbishop was quoted correctly when asked his opinion of Thorlak. The archbishop is to have said: "I can tell you how wise his actions have seemed to me and that I would choose such a life in heaven for myself as I have seen exemplified by his life".

NOTES

1. The foremost narrative source on the life of Thorlak is *Þorláks saga* in scientific edition of Jón Helgason (Byskupa sögur. Editiones Arnarnæðar, Series a, vol. 13.2. København 1978).
2. General survey is in: R.W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (Hutchinson, London 1975), 126-162; August Franzen, *Kleine Kirchengeschichte* (Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau 1970), 188-194.
3. At least one of the Augustinian's monasteries in Iceland, at Helgafell close to Stykkisholmur, was connected with St. Victor according to sources from the 15th century. This monastery had originally been founded in Flatey, 1172, probably under the direction of Thorlak who was then abbot at Thykkvibaer, see below (Jarl Gallén, "Augustinkorherar") *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder* 1 (Rosenkilde og Bagger, København 1980), 281-282.
4. Sveinbjörn Rafnsson, "Um Þorlák biskup Þórhallsson". *Almanak Félags katólskra leikmanna* (Reykjavík 1986), 4-6.
5. Sveinbjörn Rafnsson, "Þorláksskriftir og hjónskapur á 12. og 13. öld". *Saga* (Reykjavík 1982), 114; same, "Penitential of St. Þorlákur". *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law*, new series, vol. 15 (Berkeley, Calif. 1985), 19-30.
6. Sveinbjörn Rafnsson, "Enn um Þorláksskrifn". *Arbók Hins íslenska fornleifafélags* (Reykjavík 1976), 164.
7. Hannes Pétursson, *Eyjarnar áttán. Dagbók úr Fereyjarferð 1965* (Reykjavík 1967), 55.
8. Jakob Benediktsson, "Þorlákur helgi Þórhallsson". *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder* 20 (Rosenkilde og Bagger, København 1982), 387-388.
9. *Diplomatarium Islandicum* XVI, 457.
10. Kolbeinn Þorleifsson, "Lincoln og Island á 12. öld" (second part). *Lesbók Morgunbladsins* September 4th, 1982.
11. *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* 9 (1970), 713 (Canonisation). According to David Hugh Farmer in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (1987, p. xx) recent studies indicate that the cult of new saints was put on to a legal basis by Pope Innocent III (1199-1216).
12. Jón Helgason, "Þorláks saga helga". *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder* 20, 389.
13. *Merki Krossins* II 1981, 12 (periodical of the Catholic Church in Iceland), same, I 1985, 16-17 and 30.

Gunnar F. Guðmundsson



Jón Arason was born in 1484, a grandson of the Prior at Möðruvellir (Augustian order) and a nephew of the Abbot of the monastery at Þvera (MunkaPverð of the Benedictine Order). He most probably studied at MunkaPverð and at the same time worked to support his mother after the father's death. The first year after his Ordination (24 years old) he was a Priest at Helgastaðir in Reykjadalur (Northern Iceland) which was a rather poor parish and lived there with a concubine (a life style which was not very uncouth at least of low-rank Priests in Iceland). During the next years his promotion was remarkably quick. He became a Dean, acted as a sheriff (sýslumaður) in one of the Counties in Northern Iceland, received from the Archbishop in Norway the custody of the wealthiest benefice in the Country and was appointed a Director (ráðsmaður) of the Bishops seat at Hólar. Without any doubt, good abilities explain to some extent this rapid success but the plague at the end of the 15th century and the consequent shortage of Priests may also have paved the way for Jón Arason.

When the Bishop at Hólar, Gottskálk Nikulásson, died, Jón Arason was appointed *Officialis*. Two years later (1522) he was elected Bishop "by all of the Priests in the North except one". Later this year the Bishop of Skálholt, Ögmundur Pálsson, came to Iceland from his Ordination in Norway. There the supervision of the Diocese of Hólar had been entrusted to him following the death of Bishop Gottskálk. At once Ögmundur Pálsson set himself against the election of Bishop Jón Arason for the reason that it had taken place without his agreement. The clergy in the Diocese of Hólar resisted his orders and Jón Arason managed to leave the Country in spite of Ögmundur's great efforts to arrest him. Bishop Ögmundur excommunicated Jón Arason and sent a letter to the Archbishop in Norway, and to the King, complaining about "the Priest who had stolen gold, silver, butter" and other properties of the Cathedral of Hólar. He even wrote a letter to the Pope asking for his sanction to make Jón Arason obey. Ögmundur reminded the Holy

Father or the historical fact that the Diocese of Hólar was an offspring of Skálholt and "it seems to us fair and sensible that daughter should not rise up against her mother . . .". The Pope gave Ögmundur permission to make all necessary arrangements within the limits of Church Law. But this came to nothing. Jón Arason won the favor of the Danish King, Frederick I, who needed Jón's support in the Norwegian Council to be fully accepted as a King of Norway. By recommendation of the King, Jón Arason went to the Archbishop in Norway (Olafur Engilbertsson) and was ordained Bishop in the late summer of 1524 (the letter of Ordination is from the 7th of September). Before that a clerical court in Bergen had judged him innocent of all accusations and his honor was completely restored.

During the next years there was a great hostility between the two Bishops, Jón Arason and Ögmundur Pálsson. In the summer 1527, the two Bishops came to Althing, each of them with many hundred followers. It was an extraordinary event in the history of Iceland that the Bishops were prepared to fight. But friends of both sides and Abbots intervened and managed to make a permanent peace between the two Church leaders.



Memorial and grave of Bp. Arason in the Hólar bell tower

When Jón Arason became a Bishop he sent his concubine away, providing her with a farm to live on. She gave it to the Cathedral of Hólar and lived there for the rest of her life, making vestments and embroideries for the Church. They had nine children, three of whom became Priests and the fourth a Lawman.

Jón Arason enjoyed great respect in his Diocese. A historian who made a special research on this period of the history of Iceland describes the work and deeds of the Bishop in this way: "Bishop Jón seems on the whole

to have been a mild and merciful man, not trying to find fault with the laymen, neither as a Bishop, a sheriff, nor as a governor for Northern Iceland during an interregnum 1534-1537. He tried to settle judicial affairs and law-breaking in a peaceful manner and without fuss. People in the North were generally fond of him and those law-breakers who came under his jurisdiction did not want to make quarrels with him, but willingly accepted their penalties according to laws". However, Jón Arason could go to the extremes when he thought that the rights of the Church were violated. In such events he sometimes used force, not always without the suffering of innocent people, but there is no evidence that he himself used weapons.

Jón Arason was without any doubt the foremost poet during his time. Some of his verses, sometimes self-ironic, are still well-known. But more important are his religious poems. They bear witness to sincere faith and strong conviction of God's mercy through the sufferings of Jesus Christ and the prayers of his Mother, Mary, and John the Apostle.

When the Danish King, Frederick I, died in 1533, a civil war broke out. It ended 1536 with the victory of the candidate of the Lutheran party, Christian III. The next year the Lutheran Church was officially established in Denmark.

In the summer 1541, the regulations of the Lutheran Church were accepted at Althing in the presence of Danish soldiers. The year before, a Lutheran man, Gissur Einarsson, became "Superintendent" at Skálholt and the old Catholic Bishop, Ögmundur Pálsson, was by then in jail. These regulations were just valid in the diocese of Skálholt because Bishop Jón Arason stood firmly against them. He wanted to be loyal to the King "and live and die under the protection of Kristján Friðriksson (the Icelandic name of the King)", as he states in one of his letters, but in his opinion the new regulations were against Icelandic laws and violating the right of the Nation. By this Jón Arason meant that the Icelandic Church law accepted by the national assembly of Althing stipulated that there should only be one Church in the Country. And there was no doubt about what Church that should be: the Church that was under the leadership of the Pope. ("Every Christian is obligated to be obedient to the Pope in Rome", as it says in the laws). If the King was going to force him and some of his sons to believe something that was wrong according to their conviction they asked for permission to move to other countries with their belongings.

The next years there was an informal "armistice" between the Catholics in the North and the Lutherans in the South. The strategy of the King and his Bishop at Skálholt was presumably to wait until Jón Arason gave up because of old age or passed on. But this changed very rapidly in 1548 when the Lutheran Bishop, Gissur Einarsson, died, not 40 years old. Jón Arason saw it as his duty to take control of the diocese as long as it was without a Bishop. Encouraged by him, the Catholic Priests in the Diocese elected one from their group to become the next Bishop at Skálholt as did the Lutherans. In spite of the risk Jón Arason sent his candidate, Sigvarður Halldórsson, to the Danish King to get his confirmation as was the custom in these days, thus showing the King loyalty and confidence. Sigvarður

did not come back to Iceland but was made to learn the Catechism of Luther, but the Lutheran candidate, Marteinn Einarsson, returned as a Bishop of Skálholt. This may have convinced Jón Arason that the Danish King was not the protector of the Church but her persecutor. He now made his last and boldest attempt to restore the Catholic Church in the Country.

In the summer of 1548, Jón Arason wrote a letter to the Holy Father in Rome. This letter is lost but from the answer of Pope Paul III, one can come close to its content. It was about the Peter's pence, which no longer could be brought to the right destination and obviously Jón Arason was also seeking advice and encouragement. When he received the letter from the Pope he handled it with such respect that he did not want to open it until all the Priests in the Diocese were present in the Cathedral and while it was recited he stood in full vestments before the main altar with his hands raised to Heaven. There are also some slight indications that Jón Arason wrote to the Emperor Charles V, whose vassal in Schleswig and Holstein was the Danish king.

By now the authorities considered Jón Arason to be a revolutionary, refusing to obey orders and meet the King. One of the King's officials in Iceland, Daði Guðmundsson, got the order to arrest Jón Arason. But Jón made a counterattack, accusing this man for grave sins, i.e., adultery. Jón fortified the residence at Hólar and prepared himself for the last fight.

In the autumn of 1549 Jón Arason went to Skálholt together with his men, arrested the Lutheran Bishop, Marteinn Einarsson, and put him in jail at Hólar. The next summer he made his way to Viðey (an island close to Reykjavík) where he restored the Augustinian monastery and expelled the Danes who had settled there. After this deed he made a verse boasting of "the old man who dispersed the Danes into the sea with a lot of noise". In another verse he says that "the world would deceive him badly if he was to be sentenced by a Danish family and die for the power of the King". Later that summer he had an appointment with Daði Guðmundsson, the King's official, in order to bring suit against him. But Daði came well prepared, defeated Jón Arason and his men in a battle and brought him and two of his sons as captives to Skálholt. The idea was to keep them in jail to the next summer when a new assembly at Althing came together and let them be judged there. But none had the courage to keep them out of fear for revenge. So the conclusion was "that the axe and the earth keep them best". It is said that Jón Arason was offered freedom after his sons, the lawman Ari and the Priest Björn, had been beheaded but he wanted to pay for their faithfulness and follow them into the death. They were executed at Skálholt the 7th of November 1550.

The following year fishermen from the North made a cruel revenge, killing 14 men according to some sources. The Priest Sigurður, son of Jón Arason, together with 30 others, brought the bodies back to Hólar where they were received with great reverence. In one story it says that a bell in the Cathedral suddenly began to toll and with such intensity that it finally exploded for grief.

Conclusion

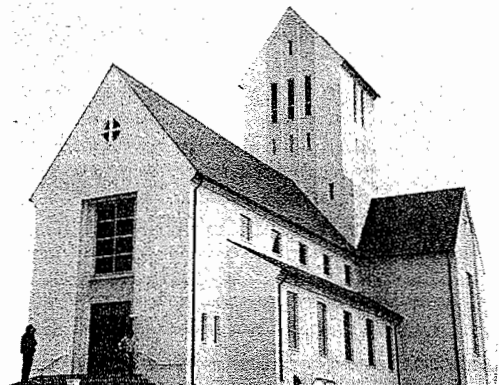
Jón Arason's next generations admired him for his

heroic conduct, trying to forget the fact that he was a Catholic Bishop. The first real criticism of him is to be found in *Historia Ecclesiastica Islandiae*, especially in volume II (Copenhagen 1774, p. 644-645), written by the Lutheran Bishop Finnur Jónsson who dedicated this work to the Danish King. Finnur Jónsson blamed Jón Arason for having been obstinate, ambitious and revolutionary in his actions. This is exactly what later came to be Jón Arason's credit. As a fighter against the Danish authorities Jón Arason has been remembered and honored by the Icelandic people ever since the last century. Jón Arason and his sons were the "last Icelanders" and "there has never been a person who was more Icelandic or Nordic in mind or more unapal in reality than Jón Arason". By this he is stressing Jón Arason's independence in mind and actions and his fight for the cause of the nation. Some modern historians tend to describe Jón Arason as a "renaissance lord", meaning that he could as well handle a sword as a crozier. A more balanced judgment is required. Jón Arason was first and foremost a Catholic Bishop, loyal to the Danish King as long as he did his duty to protect the Church. In these days the Church and State were so intertwined, the sacred and the secular, that it was not easily separated. The cause of the Church was at the same time the cause of the Nation. The reputation of Jón Arason may also benefit from the fact that he is the ancestor of most, if not all, Icelanders today.

Sources

Many primary sources have been preserved about Jón Arason, Bishop at Hólar. Most of them are published in *Diplomatarium Islandicum*. Numerous stories, tales and poems about Jón Arason (and by him) are collected in the 3rd volume of *Byskupa Sögur* (Histories of Bishops) published by HÍð íslenska bókmenntafélag (The Icelandic Literary Society). Jón Arason has been a popular theme of study for scholars ever since the early days of the national movement in Iceland in the middle of the last century. The most important research works are *Menn og menntir I* (Reykjavík 1919) by Dr. Páll Eggert Olason and *Herra Jón Arason* (Reykjavík 1950) by Dr. Guóbrandur Jónsson. In addition to this the dramatic life of Jón Arason has inspired renowned Icelandic authors to write historical novels and theatrical plays about the last Catholic Bishop in Iceland and in all Nordic Countries.

Gunnar F. Guðmundsson



The church at Skálholt

A SIDEWAYS GLANCE AT STATISTICS!

STATISTICS FOR SCANDINAVIAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES AS OF 1 JANUARY 1992

	Denmark	Finland	Iceland	South Norway	Middle Norway	North Norway	Sweden
Population	5,162,126	4,997,436	260,000	3,103,840	611,838	465,000	8,644,119
Catholics ¹	29,960	5,078	2,500	31,050	1,844	986	147,414
Protestants ²	4,904,000	4,378,273	257,500	2,900,000	579,000	845,000	7,627,159
Orthodox	c. 400	52,646	0	c. 2,500	440	0	c. 100,000
Jews	c. 3,500	990	0	c. 800	c. 300	0	c. 9,000
Mohammedans	c. 60,000	772	0	c. 30,000	0	0	c. 45,000
Bishops ³	2	1	1	2	0	1	2
Priests	97	20	12	46	8	10	121
Secular Priests	36	3	7	16	1	2	56
Religious Priests	61	17	5	30	6	8	65
Permanent Deacons	2	2	0	9	0	0	10
Candidates for the Priesthood	7	1	2	2	0	1	10
Brothers	5	1	0	3	0	0	13
Religious Orders of Men	11	2	3	6	2	1	11
Sisters' Communities	318	40	0	198	3	35	248
Religious Orders of Women	14	6	4	9	1	4	21
Parishes	52	7	4	19	5	6	37
Churches and Chapels	88	12	5	50	5	7	80
Kindergartens	11	2	1	5	0	0	9
Catholic Schools	25	2	1	3	0	0	2
Their Students	8,443	565	120	833	0	0	267
Hospitals and Nursing Homes	17	0	0	2	1	0	2
Baptisms	532	120	42	654	0	16	1,349
Confirmations	361	87	27	267	0	8	625
Marriages	152	56	21	147	0	6	269
Ordinations to the Priesthood	1	0	0	2	0	1	4
Deaths	237	33	3	0	0	0	313
Patron Saint	St. Canute King, July 10	St. Henry January 19	St. Thorlak July 20	St. Olav July 29	St. Olav July 29	St. Olav July 29	St. Birgitta Oct. 7 St. Erik May 18

¹ In addition to registered Catholics, there is an indeterminate number of other immigrants. ² This number is largely made up of members of the State 'Folk' Church in each of these Lands. ³ The figures for Denmark and Norway include a retired Bishop.

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Papal Address to Nordic Bishops

On Saturday, 29 February, the Holy Father received the members of the Scandinavian Episcopal Conference at the conclusion of their ad limina visit. The Pope addressed the Bishops of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Iceland in German, touching upon the various areas of the life of the Church in their northern lands.

Dear Brothers,

1. I bid you a hearty welcome today to the See of the Bishop of Rome as you make your *ad limina visit* this year. With you, the Pastors of the area of the Scandinavian Bishops' Conference, I greet all the priests, religious and faithful whom you represent. My grateful thanks go also to those who have preceded you in your ministry in the northern lands. The main purpose of the visit *ad limina Apostolorum* is, through the visit to the tombs of the leaders of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, to think anew about the mission and tasks related to your episcopal office.

Your Dioceses include whole countries in the northern part of the European continent which have the benefit of a rich Christian heritage with extremely remarkable human and cultural achievements. I myself was able to witness this on the occasion of my Pastoral Visit to your lands in 1989, of which I retain a vivid, happy and grateful memory.

Ecumenical cooperation has brought positive developments

2. During those days in your beloved countries I was able to observe the spirit of increasing ecumenical cooperation and immediate understanding. I especially recall the ecumenical meetings in Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, in Turku and in Uppsala. During my meeting with you in Oslo on 1 June 1989, I said: "The growth of ecumenism in your countries gives us a reason to thank God that we have been able in the last decades to overcome many prejudices and misunderstandings and discover much that we have in common. If it is true that we still have a long way to go to reach full unity in faith and ecclesial communion, it is then all the more important that Christians, in view of an increasing dechristianization of the world today, begin now to do together everything that is possible and desirable".

Today it gives me great satisfaction that the ecumenical aspect of my pastoral visit has brought about further positive developments. In some countries the rights of the minority Churches have seen an exemplary improvement. Their Majesties, King Carl XVI Gustav of Sweden and Queen Sylvia, paid me an official visit on 3 May 1991. Archbishop Werkström came to Rome with Bishop Brandenburg in October 1990; during this meeting Archbishop Werkström presented me with the idea of holding an ecumenical prayer service in St. Peter's, which took place a year later. In 1991, in a gesture of friendship, the Lutheran Bishops' Conference invited the Catholic Bishops to take part in their annual day of recollection.

In Norway the Norwegian Catholic Lutheran Discussion Group was established in 1979; after much fruitful work they have presented their reports on the themes of "Eucharist", "Authority in the Church" and "Justification". Our Confrère, Bishop Hans Martensen,

has been a member of the International Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue Commission since 1967; from 1973 to 1983 he was Co-Chairman of this Commission.

In Finland, too, ecumenical cooperation has become very positive. The Primate of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, Archbishop John Vikström, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Karelia and All Finland, Johannes, and our confrère, Bishop Paul Verschuren, recently came to Rome to take part in an ecumenical prayer service. The visit they paid me was a further sign of the good, open ecumenical atmosphere in Finland, which this year celebrates the 75th anniversary of its independence as a republic.

The first meeting of the Lutheran and Catholic Bishops of all five Nordic countries has far-reaching significance; it took place in Sigtuna last September. In addition to their reflections on my Pastoral Visit of 1989 and considerations on the mission and task of the Bishop, the meeting was devoted to the important topic of the common tasks of the Church in Europe. I thank you very much for the many initiatives in your countries in recent years which clearly show the seriousness of the ecumenical commitment on all sides. I also encourage you to pursue the creative contacts which have intensified since my visit. It is a matter of letting the new theological insights be expressed in deeds and undertaking the steps that are theologically justifiable.

The first ecumenical celebration in St. Peter's on 5 October last year, with the participation of the Lutheran Archbishops of Sweden and Finland in the presence of Their Majesties, the King and Queen of Sweden, is to be seen in this connection. By their participation in the conclusion of the jubilee celebrations of the canonization of Birgitta of Sweden 600 years ago, the representatives of the Lutheran Church emphasized that they see themselves as the heirs of a historical tradition which also includes the Reformation. This is a step which, from our side, is undoubtedly to be welcomed.

This ecumenical celebration was also an authentic example of the application of the resolutions of the Second Vatican Council, which said: "In certain circumstances, such as in prayer services 'for unity' and during ecumenical gatherings, it is allowable, indeed desirable, that Catholics should join in prayer with their separated brethren" (Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, p. 8).

In everything we seek unity in the faith. Our common faith must be the bond uniting all Christians. The external expression of this common faith may differ according to time and place; such a diversity is not only legitimate, but enriching, as long as the basic unity of the faith is ensured. Therefore the Second Vatican Council declared that "in order to restore communion and unity . . . one must 'impose no burden beyond what is indispensable' (Acts 15:28)" (Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, n. 18).

3. In your reports you were very open in describing the difficulties connected with the symptoms of secularization. If we start with the marked situation of diaspora in your Dioceses, it becomes apparent that the pressure of the society in which the Catholic communities exist has an even stronger effect. However, you must not let yourselves become discouraged. Even though your com-

munities are not very numerous, and they are often very small, they are quite alive. There are many signs of hope. Your pastoral efforts were not in vain, nor are they now. Go forward with your co-workers in the priestly ministry, the religious, the committed laity, and all the believers. Be sure to tell them of my confidence.

In this regard I would like to mention the activity of the new movements which has developed rather well in recent years. Giving thanks to God, the Giver of all good gifts, I learned that several new monasteries of nuns have been established in recent years: there are Carmels in the Dioceses of Helsinki and in Tromsø; the Sisters of St. Birgitta have established a home in Turku; the Benedictine nuns work in the Diocese of Stockholm.

Moral responsibility touches all areas of life

4. What seems to be of doubtless significance for your pastoral work is the basic concept of the human person, who is conscious of his or her responsibility in the family and society. From their faith Christians must understand the meaning of life and *for* life and base their conduct on it. Because of the Gospel commandment to love God and neighbour, it is not possible to separate the life of the individual and society into areas of moral relevance and irrelevance. From the start, moral responsibilities cannot be dismissed as useless when it is a matter of the dignity of the person in the areas of life in general, as well as in education, health, work, economics and help for the most needy and those who are weaker in general. This is most of all to be kept in view in matters concerning further advances in science and technology.

As Christians we are aware that the concept of the human person and the demands placed on the human person represent an ideal which, with God's help, we strive for precisely when human weakness and imperfections get in the way. Humbly recognizing human imperfections does not at all imply that we give up striving for the ideal. Recognizing that there are many transgressions in the area of morality does not justify amorality. It must be a question of our proclaiming the true greatness of the human person so that no area of life may be ignored.

In this regard the great value of marriage and the family for society is to be pointed out. With great satisfaction I have learned that in some Dioceses, most of all in the area of the Diocese of Stockholm, pronounced positive symptoms and tendencies can be observed showing a return to family values. Economic, social and hedonistic points of view must not hinder giving new life to the growth of families and the desire for them. In the region of the Diocese of Stockholm this aspect has substantially regained balance, in so far as a new openness to children can be observed.

The Second Vatican Council quite aptly declared: "All members of the family, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility of building, day by day, the communion of persons, making the family a 'school of deeper humanity'" (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, n. 52).

The family, too, is always caught up in the tension between the actual and the ideal, as was pointed out in the Apostolic Letter *Familiaris consortio*: "Family communion can only be preserved and perfected through a

great spirit of sacrifice. It requires, in fact, a ready and generous openness of each and all to understanding, to forbearance, to pardon, to reconciliation. There is no family that does not know how selfishness, discord, tension and conflict violently attack and at times mortally wound its own communion: hence there arise the many and varied forms of division in family life. But, at the same time, every family is called by the God of peace to have the joyous and renewing experience of 'reconciliation', that is, communion re-established, unity restored" (*Familiaris consortio*, n. 21).

The protection of the family as the nucleus of society is entrusted to your special pastoral care. Marriages that are irregular according to religious law and sometimes civil law as well, such as the so-called "trial marriages" and the free unions harm the family institution (cf. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 79, ff.). Therefore, those people also need our pastoral care, as do the divorced and remarried. In all things concerning the care of the latter category Church law must be observed.

5. Your reports give eloquent testimony of how, together with your priests, religious and faithful, you are seeking to build up the Church, and this despite relatively limited means. My special thanks go to you and all those who work in the fields of youth ministry and education for their self-sacrificing apostolate.

Vocations to the priesthood are satisfactory. In this regard I may make mention of the philosophy seminary in Stockholm which gives cause for justified hope. I have also learned to my great joy, of the establishment of the Swedish College in Rome for theology students. In this regard it is an advantage that the future priests already know one another when they begin their ministry.

As for what concerns women religious, there are vocations to the contemplative life while there is definitely a lack of vocations to the so-called "active" communities. Therefore, I urgently ask you and your faithful to persist in your pastoral zeal and pray for vocations to the religious life.

I thank you for your solidarity with Eastern and Central Europe

6. In the social field may I emphasize everything you do to promote the spirit of solidarity and service. The Gospel encourages all Christ's disciples in this regard. We must not just surrender to fate and sit back and watch so many of our sisters and brothers suffer in poverty and misery. I cordially thank your faithful for their solidarity with their fellow men and women in Eastern and Central Europe and in the Third World, too; through it they give a striking example of moral responsibility for others.

The individual Caritas groups also perform a very good service, most of all in your own countries in the area of providing help for refugees and the homeless. For a year now our brother in the Episcopate, Bishop Kenney, has been active as President of European Caritas.

At the same time, may I encourage you to continue in your commitment, especially in giving young people the hope for a better future through a good education, as well as ensuring the necessities of life for the adults

who are able to work. The disabled, the elderly and the infirm need our special attention, as do the citizens who come from foreign countries. Only in *this* way can a truly human society be born. The Church's social teaching encourages the faithful and all people of good will to serve their sisters and brothers.

7. Since 23 October 1988, the Church in the Nordic countries has had a new Blessed: Niels Steensen. Through his example, as well as his speech and writings, he was a model for the life of many people. May his strong trust in the guidance of divine Providence in all of life's situ-

ations be both an example and an inspiration for you and all those entrusted to your care. May he guide and protect you in the exercise of your responsibility in guiding the community of the faithful; the ultimate responsibility in directing a Diocese is always in the Bishop's hands.

With you I pray to the Lord for the Dioceses and ecclesiastical jurisdictions entrusted to you, and I beseech the intercession of the saints of your countries. I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, your priests, deacons, religious and all the faithful.

L'Osservatore Romano — N. 10-11 March 1992

Nordic Bishops' Conference and Ad Limina Visit

All of the Nordic Bishops met in Rome, February 24th through March 4th, for the Bishops' meeting and the ad limina visit.

The usual Bishops' Meeting began in the expectation of the "ad limina" visit to the Holy Father. Every five years every Roman Catholic Diocesan Bishop must make a personal report and visit to the Holy Father. There is a written report submitted some months (in theory six months) before. Many in the Diocese submitted reports to the Bishop which only he reads for his assistance in writing the ad limina Report.

In the Bishops' Meeting reports are heard on the Bishops' Conference activities and concerns. There are usually lively discussions and exchange of ideas in a fraternal and very kind even jolly way. Sometimes there is a study day with outside experts invited — a sort of episcopal renewal. The bishops form a very warm and fraternal community. In fact the Bishops' Meeting (twice a year at least) could be called a support group!

In many ways the challenges of the Catholic Church in other lands are quite diverse from Iceland. The large numbers of refugees, including Catholics from the Eastern Catholic Church have not as yet arrived in Iceland. The need for vocations, priests, religious, greater lay involvement we all share. Ecumenical questions are a great concern of the Catholic Church, in all of our Northern countries. All are very happy with the tremendous progress made, concerned for the present felt need to somehow break the hard kernel of a few difficult basic differences in belief and move on toward greater and greater unity. Despite the challenges, the Bishops are positive and optimistic for ecumenism. In the North one only has to see how far we have come to be encouraged and buoyed up! The meeting of our Nordic Bishops with our Lutheran counterparts in Sigtuna in Sept. 1991 is a great step forward and now scheduled for Oslo 1993 and every two years.

An ad limina visit means meetings with certain Vatican Congregations and Councils who wish to speak with us or with whom the Bishops have some matters of interest. Gradually meetings were scheduled with the Council for Church Unity, the Social Communications Council, the Council on the Laity, the Oriental Congregation, Congregation of Bishops (having chief responsibility for the ad limina reports), the Congregation for the Faith, Caritas International, Congregation for the Clergy, and the Council for immigration.

The ad limina visit involves a private audience for each Bishop with the Holy Father for some 15 minutes, a group meeting at which the President of the Bishops' Conference delivers an address to His Holiness and in the case of the Nordic Bishops — and luckily so — a luncheon as guests of His Holiness.

The greatest moment, however, is the concelebration of Holy Mass with His Holiness and the Nordic priests and seminarians in Rome, including the beloved Priest-Chancellor of the Diocese of Reykjavik, Jakob Rolland and John McKeon, our first year theology student at the Angelicum University. Regretably, our Icelandic theology student at the Gregorian University, Atli Jónsson was in Iceland for pastoral experience and private study for exams. We missed him, but of course he has been the private tutor of His Holiness in Icelandic.

We all had to arrive at 6:30 A.M. on February 28th before the Bronze Door. Bishops and priests vested in a large conference room. Then we were ushered into the papal chapel at 7. His Holiness knelt in prayer before the altar. In ten minutes or so he rose and vested at the altar. Mass was celebrated in English at the request of the Holy Father. Bp. Paul Verschuren of Helsinki read the Gospel. The first reading was by Father Jon Smith, Rector of the new Swedish College in Rome. On the musical side Séra Jakob Rolland led us all in beautiful song through the Mass as only he can do. His Holiness celebrated with great care and devotion. Bp. Verschuren, President of the Nordic Bishops' Conference, and Bishop Hubertus Brandenburg of Stockholm (Vice-President) assisted at the right and left of His Holiness.

His Holiness himself distributed the Eucharist to our seminarians and guests.

There was a joyful song for thanksgiving and ten minutes of silent prayer with His Holiness before the altar.

Then we all returned to the large room where Monsignor Stanislaw Dziwisz arranged us in small groups. His Holiness greeted each. Photos were taken. He passed quietly and simply from group to group and with a final wave said, "See you at lunch!"

The luncheon, however, was suddenly changed to the 29th! One has to be ready for last minute changes in the Vatican!

What is it like to have the private audience?

The door opens as Monsignor Bryan Chestle leads me to the Holy Father who is waiting to greet me. You are ushered to a chair. He asks about Iceland and remembers

how cold it was in 1989. He has never forgotten the cold North or the warm response of all Icelanders from our most beautiful President in the world to young Icelanders serving Mass and dinner! He is pleased to hear of all of the positive growth of the Catholic Church in Iceland, particularly in cordiality, friendship and exchange with Lutheran Brothers and Sisters — Bishops and Priests.

His Holiness receives a letter from your Bishop, blesses some religious articles (he even blessed the letter which contained a broad concern for a problem in the Universal Church)!

His Holiness shows me to the door and presents a small package of souvenirs given to him by his faithful valet Gugel, poses for official photos, gives a warm handshake and embrace — and the private visit is over as your Bishop walks out of the office on air, buoyed by the loving care and concern of the Holy Father for the Church in Iceland, and all Icelanders — a truly saintly and charismatic leader in our world!

On Saturday, Feb. 29th, came our Nordic Bishops' Meeting with the Holy Father. We were ushered into his office to seats arranged to each side of a centrally located seat. There were microphones and once all were seated Bp. Verschuren delivered his prepared address to His Holiness — standing and reading. His Holiness in turn, seated, gave his own (and longer) speech of some 15 minutes.

On the conclusion of the speeches there was a blessing and a group photo. A special Nordic Bible was presented to His Holiness and we departed as His Holiness again said, "See you at lunch!"

Monsignor Bryan Chestle arranged for us to be taken by a Swiss Guard to the Sistine Chapel. We admired the great restoration of the Chapel supported by Japanese

TV! As always, we were in awe of the work of Michelangelo.

Then we left by the private door guided again by our own Swiss guard to the area of the papal apartment. The Pope's private secretaries guided us to a comfortable sitting room where we waited. After some 15 minutes suddenly a side door opened and in peered the Pope! We were startled! "Lunch time!" he said and ushered us to follow after him. We paused at the private chapel for prayers and then we entered a small dining room and the Pope led us in a short grace before meals. Conversation with His Holiness was lively and interesting and light. He was full of smiles and even made pleasantries. As course followed course, His Holiness delighted in coursing through the intertwined history of Poland and the Nordic countries! There was an appetizer, pasta, salad, meat course and vegetables (always wine and mineral water, too!, as well as bread sticks!) cheese, fruit and coffee. His Holiness was at ease and so were we. I dared to snap a photo. He smiled and commented "A real American with a Japanese camera!"

After lunch His Holiness led us to his chapel for a short prayer.

Then His Holiness bade each farewell at the door. As he greeted me, he said — "Poor fellow, Iceland is so cold! Blessings to Iceland and all Icelanders."

And our last papal greeting was over for the ad limina of 1992. It was a blessing and, although continuous movement and meeting, a great joy and privilege to represent the Diocese of Reykjavik, and not only Catholic Icelanders, but all Icelanders for whom the Holy Father has such an affection and care!

The Most Rev. Alfred J. Jolson

News From Denmark

The parish of St. Paul in Tårstrup has a new church building. It will cost c. a million dollars, much of this money coming from Germany. The Church will be near the Catholic school and so will provide a center for Catholic activity in Tårstrup.

On May 29, a new Church and Cistercian Convent were dedicated in Sostrup. The complex cost c. 2.6 million dollars and was in large part a gift from the Bonifatius Organization in Germany. It is the first enclosed convent in the traditional sense which has been built in Denmark since the Reformation. The Sisters came to Denmark in 1921. Without shelter or money, they were received by Count Holstein Ledreborg. The Church and Convent are built of red stone. The tabernacle is housed in the trunk of a 400 year old oak to symbolize the burning bush of Moses.

Two priests who are well known to St. Ansgar's members celebrated Jubilees this year. Paul D'Auchamp was 80 in March. On 29 June he celebrated 40 years in the Priesthood. Ib Anderson was 75 in July. He has filled a number of posts in the Diocese including that of Vicar General. He announced that he was finally resigning from the last of his many assignments this summer.

There are 55 Catholics in Greenland. They belong to the parish of Christ the King in Nuuk. This is the world's

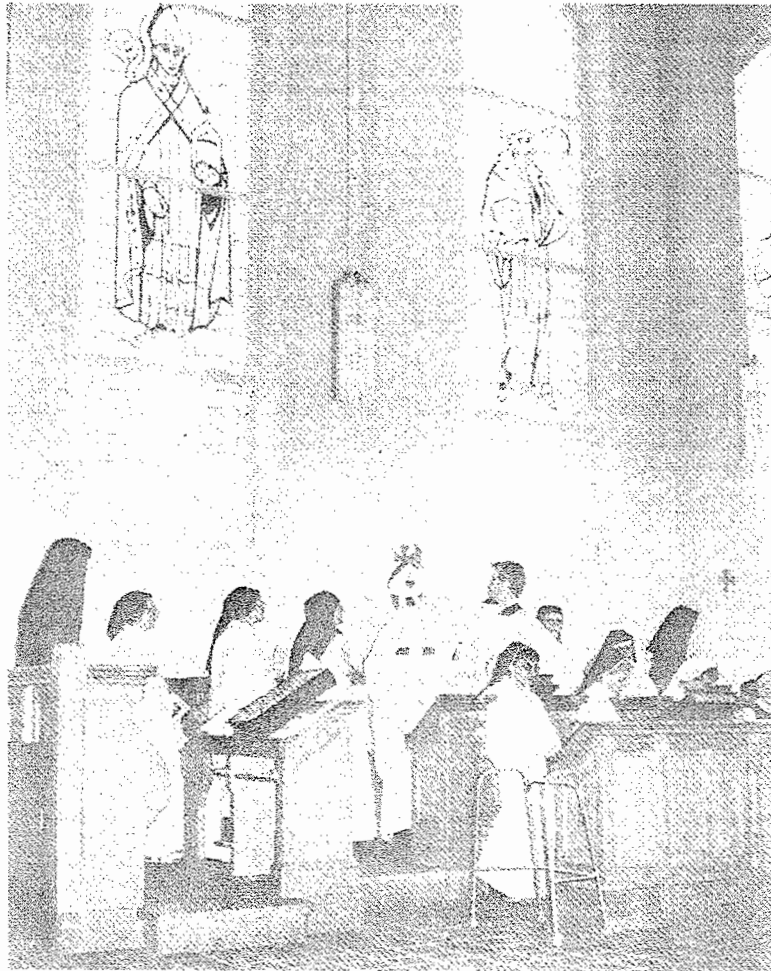


Pastor Paul D'Auchamp testing æbleskiver in his younger days. Part of his seminary training was done in America

largest parish. It began 31 years ago. In an Anniversary sermon, Bishop Martinsen stressed that the Catholic presence in Greenland reminded the Congregation that it had the responsibility of bearing witness to the long period when the Church was united and also to the world-

wide unity of the Catholic Church today. The parish began when an Oblate Priest, Father Michael Wolfe, came to Greenland and put up a Janesway tent. The present Pastor is Franz Hoyos. There are also a group of the Small Sisters of Jesus present. Greenland only allowed

the "folk" Church to practice in its territory until 1953 when religious liberty began. The Parish has ten children under 16 years of age. Most of the parishioners are Danes and other foreigners. In the middle ages there were 23 Churches and two monasteries.



Bishop Martensen anoints a Consecration Cross in the Convent Chapel at Sostrup

A Letter From The Bishop of Helsinki

It is a pleasure to try to fulfill the wish of the editor of *St. Ansgar's Bulletin* and to highlight some important events in the life of the Finnish Catholic Church during the last six months.

To begin with statistics, the number of Catholics passed the five-thousand mark. This explains why the number of parishes in the diocese is increasing from five to seven. The first new parish has been erected in the Southeast of Finland, in Kouvola, and at the moment plans are prepared for the building of a small church and parish-hall there. In exactly the opposite direction, more towards the Northwest of the country, in Oulu or Uleåborg, a new church and parish-hall have been taken into use on the 28th of December last year. The intention is

to canonically erect the parish there at a later date. Its name is, however, already chosen: the parish will be dedicated to the Holy Family of Nazareth. It is especially due to the neo-catechumenal movement, that the church in Oulu was built. This lay movement is not the only one trying to establish itself in the diocese. Active are also the Focolari and representatives of Opus Dei. The latest lay-movement to be founded in Finland is Dominican. Its members have their spiritual leader in the Dominican Father, Martti Voutilainen, who inspires them to a deeper realization of their calling as laymen. But the founding of this group has not been the only reason for Father Martti to be satisfied. In January he received in Turku all the Dominican brothers of the North-European coun-

tries, the so-called Dacian region satisfaction, and celebrated with them the unveiling of a plaque in the backyard of an apartment house to indicate the place of a medieval Dominican monastery on that spot.



Sakari Pykälä carving the statue of St. Henrik

The feast of the Patron Saint of Finland and of our diocese, Henry, on the 19th of January, received this year special attention, as Finland celebrates this year the 75th anniversary of its independence. To honour the occasion, the Catholic Diocese had asked a Finnish artist to sculpt a wooden statue of the saint. After the Baron de la Chapelle had generously offered a tree from his property, the artist set to work and prepared a statue of about two meters high, which was then transported to the Basilica of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome.

There it was solemnly unveiled in an ecumenical service attended by the Lutheran and Orthodox Archbishops of Finland and myself. Naturally, we had also asked for an audience with the Holy Father. After the visit of the Pope to Finland and to the other Dioceses of our Bishops' Conference in 1989, after the commemoration of the canonization of St. Birgitta in Rome last year, this common visit from Finland to Rome was a new sign of the honest desire to intensify ecumenical endeavors towards Christian unity.

A month later, in February of this year, the Scandinavian Bishops' Conference gathered in Rome for the visit, which the Bishops are due to make to the Holy Father once every five years, the so-called visit *ad limina*. I mention it in this letter, because the Holy Father gave an interesting address to the Bishops, in which he remembered with obvious gratitude his visit to our Countries, the ecumenical contacts with, especially, representatives of the Lutheran Churches in our part of Europe, and the feast of Saint Birgitta.

The readers of St. Ansgar's *Bulletin* may remember, that among the sisters present in our Diocese of Helsinki, not only the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood but also the Carmelite Sisters come from the United States. Both communities I like to mention. Firstly the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Missouri, because they handed over the administration of the English School in Helsinki to the Board of that school. The Superior General and Sister Gracias, member of the general council, had come from the States for this occasion and witnessed the event, which was in its own way historical, for it meant the end of a long period of important service by the Sisters to the school. For this reason it could also have been a very sad occasion, if well-founded hopes, that the work and spirit of the Sisters will continue to influence the future of the school, had not softened this aspect of sadness. Secondly the Carmelite Sisters need to be mentioned, as they are looking for a new and better location for their monastery. Hopefully they will succeed very soon in their efforts and find their real home in Finland.

Grateful for the interest the readers of the St. Ansgar's *Bulletin* show for our Catholic Church, I recommend our Diocese and Finland to your prayers. As I have just been visiting Estonia and Latvia and seen something of the great need, in which the Catholic Churches there operate, I dare to suggest, that you remember them in a very special way.

Yours sincerely,
+ Paul Verschuren, Bishop of Helsinki

News From Iceland

A BRIEF HISTORY

On November 7th 1988, the President of Caritas International, Cardinal do Nascimento from Angola, visited Iceland. His mission was to organize the establishment of Caritas Iceland.

As a result of the Cardinal's visit, Caritas Iceland was launched in February 1989 by Bishop Alfred Jolson, S.J., of Reykjavík. The Bishop wrote the statute of the organization and soon thereafter Caritas Iceland was approved

by the Icelandic Ministry of Justice and Church Affairs as an official registered charitable organization. The first chairman of Caritas Iceland was Sister Emanuelle Brügge-mann, C.S.J.

Cardinal do Nascimento wrote to Bishop Jolson on March 8th 1989: 'It is really outstanding that you and your small Catholic minority have succeeded in structuring Caritas Iceland. We are proud to include you in the Caritas Internationalis family'.

In the spring of 1991 Bishop Jolson appointed Guðrún Marteinson, former Director of Nursing Services at St. Joseph's Hospital, Landakot, as Chairman.

Her committee included Father Hjalti Þorkelsson as Vice President, Ursula Sigurgeirsson as Treasurer and Lynn Knudsen as Secretary. In March 1992 Gunnar Fridriksson took over Father Hjalti's responsibilities as Vice President.

One of Guðrún's first duties as Caritas Chairman was the privilege of welcoming Bishop William Kenney of Sweden and Father Robert Vitello from Caritas International in Rome to Iceland on March 21st 1991.

The purpose of their trip was to help the new Caritas committee understand the scope and functions of the Caritas International organization, the workings of the Nordic Catholic Development Aid Fund and to prepare Guðrún for her upcoming trip to Rome for the General Assembly Meeting.

Guðrún attended the General Assembly in Rome, May 21-29, 1991. At this historic meeting Caritas Iceland became an official member of Caritas Internationalis.

Caritas Iceland's first major project for the Advent collection of 1991 was the sponsoring of the purchase of recreational equipment for Icelandic teenagers in a home for drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

Secondly, Caritas was able to donate \$2,500 to the Icelandic Red Cross for their newly formed 'HELP-LINE' (Græna Línan) project, which enables young people from all over the country to call anonymously and receive counselling from qualified professionals.

The Lenten Collection was held in liaison with Caritas Denmark and was made possible by the generous donations of the Catholic community in Iceland and by several private donations from people supporting the goals of Caritas Iceland.

We are most happy to be hosting this meeting of NKU and hope for continued cooperation between our countries in order to achieve the goals of Caritas here in Iceland, in Scandinavia and throughout the world.

Caritas Iceland
May 21st 1992
Reykjavík, Iceland

A Letter From The Bishop of Oslo

In 1993 we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Parish of St. Olav. In 1842, Pastor Gottfried Ignatius Montz from Stockholm baptized a child of the French Consul in Christiania. Later in that same year the 60 Catholics then living in Christiania sent a petition to King Carl Johan requesting permission to establish their own parish. The petition was granted by Royal Resolution on the 6th March 1843, whereafter Bishop Jacob Lorenz Studach in Stockholm appointed Pastor Montz as Parish Priest in Christiania. The first public Catholic Holy Mass since the time of the Reformation was held in a temporary chapel in a building on the corner of Youngsgate and Storgaten on Palm Sunday, the 9th April 1843. Two years later the so-called Dissenter Law was passed which, with certain exceptions, guaranteed freedom of religion.

Last year I appointed a committee headed by Einar T. Larsen to supervise the Jubilee celebrations in the Catholic Diocese of Oslo. This committee will also coordinate the work of various sub-committees. One sub-committee will be in charge of the liturgy, another is preparing a mobile exhibition, a third will organize a series of lectures, etc. Our children and youth will have their own arrangements run by the Association of Norwegian Catholic Youth.

Bishop Gran is in charge of the production of a Jubilee book for which the main contributing authors will be Vera Hendriksen, Oskar Garstein, Fr. Bernt Eidsvig and Lars Roar Langslet. The book will cover the history of the Church in Norway from the time the country was Christianized until the present day.

Our Diocese will mark the Jubilee in all parishes during Mass on Maundy Thursday, 1993. As the day itself falls within Holy Week we will not celebrate the Jubilee until after Easter, first with a reception in the Oslo City Hall on the evening of the 7th May and the next day with Holy Mass in the Oslo Cathedral (Vår Frelses kirke)

at 12:00 noon. The Royal family has been invited to take part in this event, but has not yet given a definitive reply.

The Catholic Diocese of Trondheim has invited all Catholics in Norway to assemble for Divine service in Nidaros Cathedral on the evening of the Feast of St. Olav, 29th July, and a pilgrimage to see the play "The Story of Olav the Holy" at Stiklestad the following Sunday. In addition to the Conference of Nordic Bishops, many foreign guests have also been invited.

A pilgrimage to Rome has been arranged for the autumn of 1993 which will include an audience with the Holy Father and a Mass celebrated at the altar of St. Olav in San Carlo al Corso. It will be the 100th anniversary of the consecration of this chapel and the gift to the chapel of the large altarpiece of St. Olav by Pope Leo XIII.

The main purpose of the celebration of this Jubilee is, however, not these outward signs and symbols but that we should make use of the year 1993 for introspection and regeneration within ourselves. We should ask ourselves: What does it mean to me to be a Catholic in today's world? Is my faith still the guiding light in my life? Does my life bear witness to the fact that I am a child of God? This Jubilee will have attained its full meaning and purpose only if it wakes us to renewed religious involvement.

+ Gerhard Schwenzer
Bishop

News From Norway

St. Magnus Church in Lillestrøm, opened in 1988, has been awarded yet a fourth prize: the prestigious "Anton Christian Honens Fonds" diploma. Set up to encourage a better and purer architecture in Norway, it is architecture's equivalent of an "Oscar".

In April, Paul Pham Huu Y was ordained a priest by Bishop Schwenzer in St. Olav's Cathedral in Oslo.

Born in Vietnam, he emigrated to Norway in 1988. He ministers at the Vietnamese pastoral center in Oslo.

In April, Rev. Claes Tande, a canon lawyer on the marriage tribunal for both Norway and Iceland, was appointed temporary editor of the Norwegian Catholic periodical *Broen*. Your editor and your president met Father Tande when he visited New York in December, 1991. We congratulate him and send our good wishes for success in his many responsibilities.

The annual pilgrimage in honor of St. Olav, with a visit to Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim where he was buried, and Mass in the chapel at Stiklestad where he was martyred, followed by an open air performance of

the story of his life, took place last July as usual. Suppressed after the Reformation, "Olsok" is again beginning to be celebrated by Norwegian Lutherans, especially in those places having some connection with his life.

Early this Fall, Norway lost a highly respected sculptor, Ragnhild Butenschön, shortly before her 80th birthday. One of her best known works is the statue of St. Olav which stands beside the entrance to the cathedral in Oslo. A humble woman, never satisfied with her achievements, she said in an interview that it was a decisive experience for her when she recognized that perfection is not found on earth, but only in God. May she rest in peace.

A Letter From The Bishop of North Norway

Dear Christians,

As most of you know 12 Carmelite Sisters came to Tromsø on September 8, 1990, in order to found a contemplative convent. Most of them are Polish Sisters who six years ago founded a contemplative convent in Iceland, since the Dutch Carmelite Sisters had to give up the convent because of lack of personnel and return to the Netherlands.

The new convent on Iceland made such great progress that they now were able to found a new convent. In spite of several other better offers the Sisters chose to accept my invitation to come to Norway and found a Carmelite convent at Tromsø, which we are very glad about and which we consider to be one of the most wonderful events that happened in our Church District in the last decades.



The special mission of the Carmelites is to bear witness to the meaning of prayer in this world and in the lives of each of the faithful. To pray, that is to say, to lift up one's mind and heart to God — with or without words. Something that concerns us all.

But we all know how our daily activities, work and spare time, can distract us from a life of prayer, how they can be an obstacle to the spiritual union with God. And it is this very unification with God that is the essence of contemplation. Contemplation is a form of spiritual prayer without words or reasoning thoughts. One is seeking silence and one's mind is concentrating on God's presence and love. One can say that contemplation means being with God in silence and love. By such mutual contacts between God and man a more and more confidential

relation between God and man is being established. In order to make such a unification with God possible, i.e., to dedicate one's life to God in prayer, a certain style of life withdrawn from the world is demanded. Only then is man capable of being sensitive to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. This solitude and silence is marked by the strict enclosure that goes with a contemplative convent.

The continuous prayer would be impossible without reserving a time for the concentrated prayer. In a Carmelite convent two hours daily are being used for this kind of prayer and meditation in the chapel. This includes praying the daily Office together. That liturgical prayer gives nourishment to a person's individual prayers. No one should assume that the nuns lead this life in isolation and prayer only to attain salvation for themselves. When they live in the presence of God getting more and more into contact with Him, all of us and the whole world are concerned. In an invisible and mysterious manner they are lifting up us and the whole world to God.

This kind of monastic life is not lacking a social aspect, it is only placed on a higher level. We are used to persons of religious orders helping people in need, either serving them as a nurse, a teacher, or in childcare, old-age assistance or otherwise.

The Carmelite nuns practice charity by recommending our concerns and worries to God. They include our prayer intentions in their daily prayer. The Carmelite nuns are, by their way of living, a constant reminder of Jesus' words to Martha: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her".

Edith Stein, a philosopher and martyr of our time, who was beatified by Pope John Paul II some years ago, said it in this way: "Prayer is the greatest of all things that the human mind can achieve".

Prayer, fasting, self-denial, charity are the classical virtues in order to advance on the way to perfection. We are all on this way or have to take this way, unless we don't mind our lives turning out to be a failure. This is where the Carmelite Sisters can give a hint that points to the only thing that is needful.

And it is this very point that may be difficult for us to see. A little more than a hundred years ago the St. Elisabeth Sisters came to Northern Norway in order to help a needy population by showing charity towards their

material needs. These material needs even if not completely covered, have become much less. But the spiritual need by no means becomes less, rather the opposite. And it is in this situation that the Carmelite Sisters appeal to us: "Make it your first care to find the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be yours without the asking."

It was with great joy that the Carmelite Sisters received a personal letter from our present Pope John Paul II, dated 8th November 1990. In this letter the Pope wrote: "It is a great joy for me that you have come to Tromsø, to a new place, where you have been well received by your Bishop. I am glad that you go in for your mission in honour of God and in honour of the Holy Immaculate Mother of Jesus. I wish you new and good vocations so that the local Church may be strengthened and that it, by your prayer, receives the grace that it needs".

With the Carmelite convent we have got a religious centre in our prelature that we very much appreciate. The Carmelite Sisters participate in raising the worship of God that we as the local Church have to perform to

a higher level while simultaneously assisting us with their interceding prayers, if only we accept their testimony to the meaning of prayer they are hearing by their way of living so that we have ourselves inspired to go that way of prayer somewhat more quietly than before.

May the benefits of their lives for us be that the spirit of prayer will be spread in full measure among the faithful in the Prelature of Tromsø and in all the country.

+ Gerhard Goebel

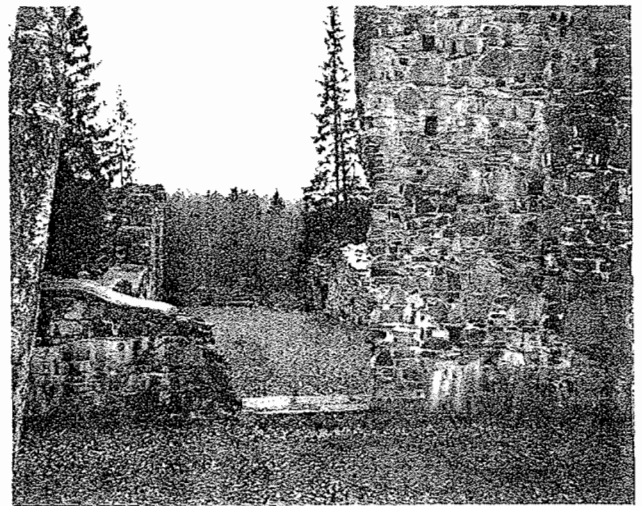
(Translation: Peter Josef Hartmann MSF, Bodø)

We have learned of the ordination in Our Lady's Church, Tromsø, last year of Torbjørn Olsen, formerly a minister in the Norwegian (Lutheran) Church. In his statement he stressed that his decision did not result from any displeasure with the Norwegian Church: he feels nothing but respect and gratitude for what it has given him. His decision came as a response to what he experienced as a personal call to belong to a global, rather than a national church.

Munkeby – A Norwegian Medieval Monastery

Some fifty miles north of Trondheim and a few miles inland from Levanger are the ruins of a church at Munkeby or Munkebu, 'the home of monks'. The name suggests a monastic past which is upheld by local tradition. The scene was described by a Danish traveller in the eighteenth century. Like so many other travelling scholars of the time he was deeply moved by the romantic and picturesque attraction of medieval ruins, similar to that described by enthusiasts throughout Europe and immortalized by William Wordsworth's famous poem about Tintern Abbey. The Dane concluded that 'In former times there was a monastery there. This is confirmed by common tradition, irrespective of the fact that, strangely, there is not a jot in either older or more recent writings'. A plan drawn by a Norwegian scholar in 1813 shows three buildings besides the church in what is the usual position for claustral buildings. He noted that they 'were of wood, but only the foundation corner stones have remained'. This corresponds to the wooden buildings that are known to have existed at the nearby Cistercian abbey at Tautra.

So far monastic origins rested on oral tradition backed up by archaeological evidence. However, the nineteenth century saw an explosion in historical studies based on the scrutiny of texts, and this inevitably ruled out hearsay evidence and the findings of other disciplines. One historian claimed that as the church had served as parish church until 1589 'it is not likely that there had been a monastery there', and in the standard work on monasticism in Norway published in 1847, C.C.A. Lange likewise dismissed the monastic theory on the basis that there were other places in Norway with this connotation in their names, although he did include Munkeby in his list of 'dubious monasteries'. The argument was reiterated by another historian in 1906. According to him 'conclusive proof that it was not a monastery is the fact that this is nowhere referred to. Our information regarding the middle ages is not that poor that a Nor-



Munkeby

wegian monastery which is truly known to have existed should not receive a single mention in the sources'.

Shortly afterwards, however, such evidence in the form of a papal bull from 1475 was unearthed in the Vatican Archives by the Norwegian Professor Alexander Bugge, the first and last time Munkeby is referred to by name, incontrovertible evidence that it had been a monastery. It is said to have been a Cistercian monastery, situated in the far north and to have been long deserted. Abbot Stephen de Trugge, with the consent of his bishop and his superior, the abbot of Tautra, had plans to re-establish monastic life there, had made a start in rebuilding the derelict structure but the effort seems to have failed and nothing more is heard of it.

When and how was Munkeby founded and how long did the monks remain there? Most likely it was the daughter of Tautra, founded 1207 from Lyse near Bergen, on a tiny island in the Trondheim Fjord some thirty miles south of Munkeby. However, this theory has to be dismissed because of a passage in the Life of St. Olaf, the king martyred in 1030, written by Archbishop Erlendsson. A young man, described as a member of 'the family of Cistercian monks', who was deaf and dumb is said to have been cured at the spot where Olaf was slain at Stiklestad in the vicinity of his abbey. The author had heard this from the local priest and it was confirmed by the abbot and the brethren in whose service the young man had been. The Life was written in the 1180s which rules out Tautra which was not founded until 1207, and the 'abbey nearby' refers to Munkeby, only a short distance from Stiklestad.

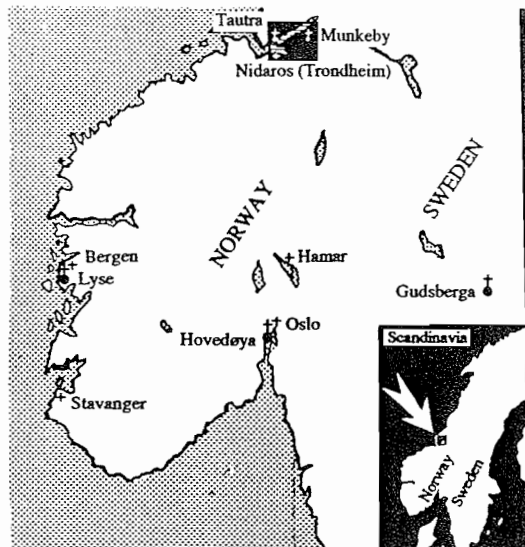
Munkeby was therefore founded from Lyse sometime before the 1180s and quite possibly before Erlendsson became archbishop in 1161 as there is no reference in his Life of Olaf of involvement by him in its foundation. This would also accord with the average number of years that elapsed between the foundation of the other four Scandinavian abbeys that established colonies and their first daughter houses, namely fourteen years, which, when applied to Lyse, gives a foundation date for Munkeby of 1160. The relationship with Lyse is further underlined by a modern authority for whom the monastic origin of Munkeby was conclusive, for a 'study of the plan of the church, compared, for example, with that of Lyse ought to have removed any doubt that there might still have been'. The cruciform church with its aisleless nave corresponds almost exactly to that of Lyse, and this, significantly, is not unlike that of the first church at its English mother-house, Fountains.

The fact that Tautra had extensive lands in the immediate neighborhood of Munkeby — 42 holdings out of a total of 120 — establishes a relationship between the two which, from our present knowledge of Cistercian history and practice, points to a move to Tautra in 1207. This then was one of the many site changes both in Scandinavia and elsewhere, following which the vacated site at Munkeby continued as a grange under Tautra. The monks only stayed at Munkeby for around fifty years which explains why there is not a single reference to it in the statutes of the Cistercian General Chapter although every other abbey then in existence in Scandinavia occurs in these. It also explains why it does not feature in any Cistercian work of reference.

The move may have been connected with a fire which, according to local legend and corroborated by archaeological evidence, destroyed the monastery at Munkeby. Although not far apart, the move may have been in part caused by better communication, and climate may also have played a part. The Danish traveller in the eighteenth century remarked that 'The island has the characteristic that there spring comes earlier and winter later than in the surrounding neighborhood. Frequently this amounts to a difference of fourteen days and sometimes even three weeks. Everything that grows there, including corn and fruit, is very fine, and there are no poisonous animals'.

Reverting to the attempted re-foundation in 1475,

Abbot Stephen de Trugge may have been the 'holy Brother Staffan' from Tautra mentioned by a Norwegian writer in 1600 as having lived some seventy years previously, in other words around 1530. He 'prophesied



about many things in his time, about the change of religion . . . and the destruction of monasteries and monks, and the spoliation of their libraries and sacristies . . . and much else which has since come about'. A parallel story found its way into a book on Swedish saints published in Cologne in 1623 by a Catholic exile, Vastovius. Among these are a monk called Stephen who had lived around 1510 and about whom he says: 'Even to this day the reputation of the outstanding monk, Stephen, thrives among the Goths and the Swedes, that is, long before the new teaching of Luther hatched in Saxony and spread to his country. He foretold many things that were to be introduced by the heresy and that the Catholic religion then was to be diminished, and he therefore witnessed to the faith by his miracles'. Stephen was the first abbot of Husaby or Gudsberga in Sweden, founded in 1486 as one of the last Cistercian abbeys anywhere before the Reformation and the most northerly in Sweden. The legend of his life was widespread and lived on in Scandinavia for a couple of centuries. In 1703 Messenius included Stephen in his work on Nordic Saints, referring to him as a 'prophet who followed the statutes of St. Bernard . . . an outstanding inhabitant of the monastery of Husaby who spoke many things about the future to the Swedes and foretold especially about silver and the mine which was to be discovered and flourish at Löfåsen'. Another author has Stephen foretelling that when moss grew on the roof of the new monastery this would be demolished, an event which in fact occurred. Another legend connects Stephen with a rock formation near the abbey shaped like a chair, still known as 'Saint Stephen's Chair', upon which he is supposed to have sat when he predicted the discovery of the silver mine.

In these legends it is hard to distinguish fact from fiction, but I believe, nevertheless, that through the mist of all these embroidered stories, we may dimly perceive an historical figure. The similarity of the stories from Norway and Sweden allows us to advance the possibility

that the abbot who failed at Munkeby is one and the same as the one who succeeded eleven years later at Gudsberga. They bore the same name, the failed attempt preceded the successful foundation by only a few years at a time when Cistercian foundations had become exceedingly rare, and the route up the valleys, across the mountain passes and down to the fjords toward the shrine of St. Olaf at Trondheim had been well-trodden for centuries. If the identification is correct, we have in the Munkeby/Gudsberga link what a Norwegian historian has aptly described as 'the last flowering of the Cistercian Order in Scandinavia', evidence of a remarkable spiritual vitality on the eve of their extinction, a fitting bridge between the scant evidence of the early pioneering days at Munkeby and the late efforts at a revival.

James France

This article is an abridged version of a paper given for the Institute of Cistercian Studies during the 27th International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in May, 1992. An unabridged version will be published in *Cistercian Studies*. It is based on, and a continuation of, James France's four decades of research in the preparation of his recent book *The Cistercians in Scandinavia*.

The latter is the definitive work on this subject; no other study of its breadth and depth has appeared in any language and, of the partial studies available, there is very little in English beyond the fine book and articles on the Danish Cistercians by Dr. Brian McGuire. The scholar will appreciate the bibliography (over 430 entries in seven languages) and the detailed index. But the nonscholar also will find it enjoyable reading. In vivid style it describes daily life in the monasteries, and as further aids to visualization, the author has included maps, diagrams and numerous photographs. The book is published by Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, MI and is available from St. Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, MA 01562.

We are most grateful to Mr. France for allowing us to publish his article and hope he will consider sending us others for future issues of the *Bulletin*.

Although all the Cistercian monasteries in Scandinavia were closed by the Reformation, there is again a Cistercian presence there: besides the Trappists in Denmark, Rev. Robert Anderson, O.C.S.O., is a Norwegian hermit in Norway. The latest news St. Ansgar's has received is that Sr. Ina Andresen, O.C.S.O., a Norwegian who entered the Trappistine monastery in Laval, France, eighteen years ago, has been given permission to test the feasibility of a foundation in Norway. The site under consideration is the small island in the Trondheim Fjord on which the Cistercian monastery of Tautra once stood. The mayor of Trondheim is very interested in the project and the apostolic administrator of Middle Norway, Rev. Georg Müller, S.S.C.C., has given his permission. A support group of Norwegian Catholics prays daily for this intention and meets monthly to learn about Cistercian spirituality.

Three young women are interested in joining Sr. Ina: the Norwegian will begin her postulancy at Mt. St. Mary's Abbey (Wrentham, MA) in February; the two others

will join Sr. Ina in Norway as soon as they get permission to emigrate. The planned monastery will house 15-20 nuns; provision will also be made to receive guests for retreat. All are greatly encouraged by the way in which things have developed — faster than they dared to hope. Please pray that, if it is God's will, they will find the help they need to establish themselves on a secure financial base. Any of our readers who would like to assist them materially may send their contributions to the League for forwarding. Please make your check payable to St. Ansgar's and write "For Sr. Ina" in its lower left-hand corner; put "For St. Ina" on the lower left-hand corner of the envelope as well.

Ansgar (Leif) Kristensen

Fortified by the sacraments of the Church, Fr. Ansgar died in the evening of 13 June 1992, in his beloved Denmark.

Born on 9 June 1941 in Naestved, Denmark, Fr. Ansgar became a convert to the Catholic faith and entered the Danish foundation of Conception Abbey. Sometime after the foundation was discontinued, Fr. Ansgar entered Mt. Saviour Monastery where he was professed 2 June 1968. He was ordained 21 March 1977. Fr. Ansgar's education included a BA from Immaculate Conception Seminary, studies in theology at the University of Munster, an STB degree from S. Anselm in Rome and the SSL from the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem.

Fr. Ansgar participated in the full range of duties at Mt. Saviour from milking cows, to guest master, assistant director of oblates, teaching and serving on a myriad of committees. He was also of service to the Benedictine Confederation as one of the secretaries of Abbot Primates Rembert Weakland and Victor Damert. Fr. Ansgar worked on the Benedictine Catalogus Monasteriorum for two editions and wrote the Essay on The Role and Interpretation of Scripture in the Rule of Benedict for RB 1980.

For the past ten years Fr. Ansgar has been chaplain of the Benedictine nuns at Aaserbaken and working at the Apostolic Delegation for Scandinavia located in Rungsted, Denmark. He received the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice award from Pope John Paul II for his service there.

Our brother Ansgar was an excellent linguist and although he was rather shy and reserved, he was an astute observer of people and events. He had a very dry sense of humor and could carry on a wonderful tease that one would long mistake for seriousness.

He is survived by his sister, Margit, who is with UNICEF in Mauritania and by all of us at Mt. Saviour.

Bishop Hans Martensen of Copenhagen said the Mass of Christian Burial at the Cathedral on Friday, June 19th. Burial will be in the monastic cemetery at Mt. Saviour. Fr. Ansgar served the Church, the Benedictine Confederation, and our monastic fellowship. We ask your prayers that Christ may bring us all together to everlasting life.

Fr. Martin
and the
Monks
of

Mt. Saviour Monastery
Pine City, New York

News From Sweden

In the fall meeting of the Nordic Bishops' Conference, Catholic Bishops met with Protestant Bishops to discuss ecumenical concerns. The meeting, called by the Archbishop of Uppsala, discussed the continuing impact of the papal visit on Scandinavia and the responsibilities of Bishops in modern Europe.

Of the 10,000 Eritreans in Sweden, almost 2,000 of them are Catholic. Several times a year they celebrate their Eastern Rite in Stockholm at St. Eugenia. They have no priest of their own in Sweden, but one permanent Deacon, Kiflemarian Hamde, is Eritrean. They would like to have a priest of their own in Sweden. The church in Eritrea was founded in 330 when the patriarch, Athanasius, consecrated a Bishop for that country.

The incredible problems of a missioning Church in Sweden are pointed out in one page of *Katolsk Kyrkotidning*. The parish of Umeå comprises 1/6 of the area of Sweden. Each weekend the Pastor, Per Idergard travels about 540 miles to Mass stations in the northern part of Sweden. There are seven places where Mass is said, not all of them having a Mass said each week. Work has begun on a church building in Umeå which, till now, has had inadequate facilities. Fr. Idergard explains his usual weekend: Friday evening he is at one of the outposts of the Congregation. When he goes to Skellefteå he has a Chapel and good facilities. In three other places he says Mass regularly and in two places less often. He spends 10 to 12 hours driving. Many of the parishioners also drive 500 miles to Mass. He sees his main problem to be the meager contact the people have with a priest rather than the stress of continual driving.

It should be pointed out that north of Umeå is the parish of Luleå which has four outposts and distance and climate conditions sound equally forbidding.

In Stockholm a new 'chapel congregation' is being formed in Hanninge which is in the southern part of Stockholm. Deacon Erik Kennet Pålsson is responsible for the work which has taken space in an office complex. Mass will be said each Friday. On the second and fourth Sunday of the month, Mass will be said in space lent by the Swedish Church. There are 2,500 Catholics in the area.

The Vatican has named Archbishop Giovanni Ceirano to be the new Apostolic Nuncio for Scandinavia. He will have his offices in Copenhagen.

Yes, To Mixed Marriages?

STOCKHOLM

Mixed marriages, joint celebration of the eucharist and local ecumenism.

These are some of the questions which the Church of Sweden and the Catholics intend to discuss during this and the next year.

Archbishop Bertil Werkström and the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm, Hubertus Brandenburg, both took part when new discussions were initiated between the Church of Sweden and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm.

The new discussions are intended to deal mainly with church policy and pastoral theology. "Among the

matters which we intend to discuss is the question of how far it is possible to go in ecumenical work in practical terms", says Dr. Sven-Erik Brodd, who is one of the representatives of the Church of Sweden.

Important Discussions

He also points out that the Church of Sweden regards these discussions as very important. "The fact that both the Bishops' Meeting and the Church of Sweden Central Board have appointed representatives, indicates how important these discussions are for the Church of Sweden", says Sven-Erik Brodd.

Johan Hasslow

A Study Center for Stockholm

A stone's throw from Stockholm's Royal Institute of Technology (Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan) stands a pleasant old building which will soon house the study center and student residence that we call Lärkstadens Studiecetrum. "Lärkstaden" is the name of this particular neighborhood, characterized by a charming, rather English style of architecture not found elsewhere in our gracious city.

The residence, as such, will be open to both Catholic and non-Catholic students studying in Stockholm's vicinity, but Lärkstadens Studiecetrum will be much more than a mere dormitory. It will have common rooms where non-residents can study and meet, it will organize cultural and sports activities as well as provide spiritual formation; it will even have some common rooms reserved for activities for teenagers, not to mention the boys' club in its renovated basement. The study center will also boast a Catholic chapel seating fifty and a Catholic chaplain will also be living in the residence. The means of spiritual formation will be cared for by Opus Dei, the first personal prelature in the Catholic Church.

A similar residence was begun on a much smaller scale three years ago in Täby, a northern suburb of Stockholm, but, with the growth of the activities, the house rented for the purposes proved too small and out of the way.

Since Lärkstadens Studiecetrum is an initiative of a privately formed foundation and is not intended as some kind of official Catholic residence, it will not rely on funds coming from Sweden's Catholic diocese. That is why it needs more donations than just the generous contributions of students and families directly in contact with its activities.

We need your help! For more information, contact LARKSTADENS STUDIECENTRUM, Tyrgatan 2, 114 27 STOCKHOLM. And, if you're ever in Stockholm, look us up!

Dennis Searby
Oct. 31, 1992

Books On Scandinavia

Unlike many Saints, Ansgar was fortunate from the beginning in the matter of books. His *Vita* by Rimbert is lively and factual. Rimbert, Ansgar's successor as the Bishop of Bremen-Hamburg, knew Ansgar, possibly went on one of the missionary journeys to Sweden with him, and was a warm admirer. He sees Ansgar as a follower of St. Martin, monk, bishop and missionary. He writes a carefully organized life consisting of a preface, an account of childhood and early visions, his life as a bishop and then an appreciation of his various claims on sanctity. We are given the exact cause of his death: chronic dysentery, and then we are reminded that his death caused the same emotions as that of St. Martin: universal sorrow and general wailing.

In order to be a real saint, it helped to be a martyr in the early centuries of the Church. That Ansgar escaped martyrdom at the hands of Vikings and pirates is remarkable but it makes him only a 'white' martyr. Rimbert claims for him a hidden martyrship. He did not lack courage, only a persecutor. Rimbert reminds us that he faced the same perils as Paul. Even if he did not achieve a literal martyrdom, Ansgar longed for it and thought he had been promised such a death.

Boken om Ansgar is an annotated translation of Rimbert's *Vita*. It is done in modern Swedish and replaces a translation from 1926. There are admirable footnotes and a series of interpretive essays by some of Sweden's medievalists. Rimbert is one of the few contemporary sources for information about ninth century Sweden and Denmark and so this data is sifted out for us. There is also an attempt to follow the cult of Ansgar in Sweden. For those of you who read Swedish, this book is indispensable for its insight into Ansgar's mission and Scandinavian culture.

Ansgar: Monch und Apostel des Nordens is an attempt to explain the relevance of Ansgar for our time. Ansgar is seen as eternally calling to a renewed and deepened sense of mission and awakening us to a longing for the unity of the Church. There is a lengthy biography of Ansgar, based on Rimbert, a discussion of Catholic life and missionary activity in Scandinavia following Ansgar, a discussion of the work of the German St. Ansgar Societies and an article on the relics of Ansgar. It is beautifully illustrated and was written for the occasion of the visit of the Holy Father to Scandinavia. A book to treasure.

A very curious book came to us, we know not how. It is called *Good Old Ansgar* and it is a telling of Ansgar's life for children. It is a coloring book and someone had the inspired idea of basing the drawings on Hagar in the funnies. It is so easy for us to forget that the life of Ansgar is one of our best sources of information about real Vikings as opposed to operatic creations. The problem comes with the text which reads as if written by a protestant ICEL team for the children of Lake Wobegon. Facts are wildly garbled. Ansgar goes to the Dominican School at Corbey, a neat trick for one born 370 years before Dominic. Ansgar was heard singing "Glory be to God on high" and "Lord have mercy" and "other songs from the Church Service." Actually we could reproduce some of the doggerel poetry, but it will only encourage

the ICEL people to go and do likewise.

Rimbert, *Boken om Ansgar*. tr. Eva Odelman. Stockholm: Proprius Förlag. 1986.

Senger, Basilius, OSB, *Ansgar*. Dülmen: Laumann Verlag. 1989.

Jorgensen, Philip M., *Good Old Ansgar*. Calgary: Foothill Books. 1975.

Father John E. Halborg

First Evangelist of the First Diocese

By REV. VINCENT A. YZERMANS

This small booklet of 36 pages compresses into its format one of the most concise histories ever published of "the first evangelization of the western hemisphere . . .". Monsignor Yzermans, currently stationed at the Benedictine Blue Cloud Abbey in Marvin, South Dakota, has long had an interest in the religious history of the Scandinavian countries. The quincentenary celebrations last year connected with the Columbus discovery voyage inspired him to investigate what had transpired (especially from an evangelization perspective) some five centuries earlier on the North American Continent.

And so here we have presented to us, in a most interesting and thought provoking way, the story of the discovery of Greenland in 985 by Eric the Red, and the subsequent settling of the island and the surrounding areas into what is now Labrador, and the introduction of Christianity by his son Leif Ericsson who had been commissioned by King Olaf of Norway "to proclaim Christianity there". Monsignor gives the names of the principals involved, relevant dates and other data, and makes the history come alive. We are introduced not only to such well-known and famous names as Eric the Red and his son Leif Ericsson, but to such now virtually unknown early pioneers as disparate as explorers Bjarni Herjulfson and Thorstein, Eric's older brother, and Einar Hafidason, a scholarly priest who around 1280 wrote a work called *Icelandic Annals*, now an excellent material source. We are also informed of such individuals as Thorfinn Karlsefne and Gudrid, the parents of Snorre, the first child of European parents to be born on the American Continent.

Monsignor Yzermans describes in some detail how the first diocese of the Western Hemisphere, that is, the Diocese of Gardar, came into being and its subsequent history from the appointment of its first Bishop, the learned and hard-working Bishop Arnold. Also given are the names of subsequent early Bishops like Peter Stars, Robert Ryngman and Gobelinius Bolant, great individuals who labored hard for the Church in their day but now all but forgotten. Rather uniquely, I believe, Monsignor describes several letters which seven Popes had addressed to the New World settlements, and makes these epistles describe some of the history, a very good method to make the reader appreciate primary sources. What this reviewer, as a former librarian, also found

worthwhile, was the clear references to all historical sources. In the same vein, Monsignor's selected bibliography is outstanding, especially for a publication of this length. An attractive front cover and several illustrations also enhance the publication, though I would make one minor caveat, namely, that the cartoon at the end page of Leif Ericsson greeting a bewildered looking Columbus detracts just a bit from this very scholarly, fascinating, and most rewarding study.

The *U.S. Catholic Historian* carried this work as an article in its Summer 1992 issue. Thank you, Mon-

signor Yzermans, for helping to preserve and make available a portion of a truly fascinating history.

Nicholas Falco

OSLO (CNI): The remaining 28 Norwegian stave churches will, in the next five years, be secured against fire. It will cost more than USD 10 mill. Fantoft stave church, one of the greatest tourist attractions in the city of Bergen, burnt down in half an hour one early June night. The Norwegian stave churches are a special architectural phenomenon. They are made of wood and tar. In the Middle Ages, about 1,000 stave churches were built.

Church of Norway News

Sentimental and Practical Journeys



The church complex at Helsingborg

Iceland

It was a difficult trip from America. A stentorian voice insisted on informing the whole plane about the state of affairs in South Africa throughout the night.

So it was with special pleasure that I was met at the Airport by Bishop Jolson. We rode back to Reykjavik with a cloud ahead of us which the Bishop thought might be from a volcanic eruption but which turned out to be less ominous. Along the road are the signs of an ancient path through that part of the Country. Life in older Ice-

land must have been very isolated indeed. This also explains the ability of the people to hold on to medieval customs long after the imposition on them of the Danish King's new religion. Here, as in Norway, the Reformation was resisted not only because it was a novelty but because it was connected with Danish imperialism. Jón Arason, who led a revolt against this policy, is both a Catholic martyr and an Icelandic hero. It is strange how often (in our times Poland and Ireland) the ties of the international Catholic Church are seen as vital to the national survival of a particular culture.

Until fairly recently, Iceland remained an island populated by descendants of its original settlers. Today there are new immigrants and prominent among them are Poles and Philipinos. The Church is doing its best to serve them with Chaplains and help in immigration problems.

While a great many things happened in my three full days in Iceland, I should like to stress a few of them. The first evening Bishop Jolson and I went to a meeting of Caritas Iceland. This is a branch of the European Catholic international aid society. The importance of sharing in the concerns of the international Church is crucial if a Church is not to become insular in thinking as well as in geography. We met at the home of Stefnun Arna Magnussonar where we were treated to a wonderful fish stew. Reykjavik has a theater which shows narrated movies of Iceland's remarkable scenery — it is highly recommendable. However there is no substitute for the real thing and I took a one-day trip around Southern Iceland. It is difficult not to make these reports into travelogues, but I would recommend the trip which includes Skálholt over the boring trips arranged by the Airline and included in your ticket. Of course, besides the remarkable waterfalls and other scenery, for a Catholic the high point of the trip is Skálholt, itself, where Jón Arason and his sons were killed in their struggle to free Iceland. The present church building there is of recent vintage and somehow rather cold and uninter-

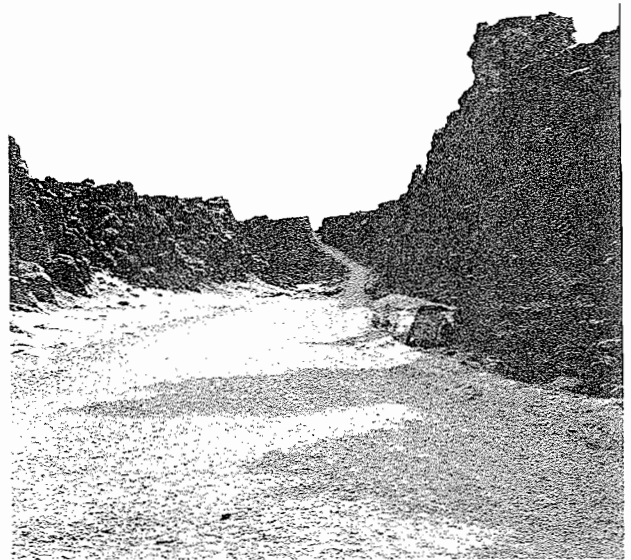
esting despite the fact that it has some ancient stones in its crypt. A nearby stone marks the execution of the Arasons and one is overwhelmed by the strange religious-national tragedy which happened here in 1550.

Another sight on this trip is Thingvellir, the site of the oldest modern parliament. Iceland adopted Christianity as its religion in the year 1000. The sagas give a colorful description of this period. There is an almost burlesque account of a missionary Bishop who is accompanied by a convert who has a habit of forgetting himself and killing gainsayers. In the valley below Thingvellir is the rift between the plates on which the continents of Europe and America rest. I found myself contemplating the Norsemen in the new world and resolving to do some reading and to make inquiries on this matter.

Eiríkur the Red is considered the great colonizer of Greenland, the first European settlement in the New World and which lasted for centuries. A violent man, he left Norway because of some killings and continued his bloody path in Iceland. In about 985 he settled in Greenland which he gave that attractive name so that people would be tempted to go there. He remained a pagan but his wife, his son, Leif the Lucky, and most of the Icelanders became Christian, Leif doing so at the court of Olaf Tryggvason.



Bishop Jolson and Fr. Halborg



Thingvellir: the continental rift

The basic information about this period of history is contained in *The Greenlanders* and *Eirík's Saga*. They are published in translation by Penguin Press. It is amazing how many 'experts' in this period have never read this basic source material. As a midwestern child, I thought that the Viking appearances were the equivalent for Scandinavians to appearances of the Virgin for Catholics. I learned to be skeptical. There are, however, four reasons to think that the Vikings came to the North American Continent: the almost contemporary account of Adam of Bremen, the excavations in Canada, the re-

cent finding of an American soft shell crab in Denmark, that is the fossil of one dating from this period, and the sagas. The latter must be critically read and many of the claims made cannot be trusted. Magnus Magnusson and Herman Pálsson, in the Penguin introduction, point out that the two sagas do not agree in detail and are "unsatisfactory as historical sources." (p. 39) The two men think that this is the historical core of these sagas: Historical characters are described, journeys were made along the Atlantic American coast and a settlement(s) of short duration was/were made. (p. 41) For our purposes we would add that the settlers were at least nominally Catholic although no attempt seems to have been made to Christianize the natives. One of the most interesting people we encounter in the sagas is Gudrid Thorbjörnsdatter. She gave birth to a son in North America from whom many important people descended. Gudrid made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and died as an anchoress. Our one time member, Sigrid Undset, wrote that the national romanticism "led to an admiration for the 'deeds of the forefathers,' which was both naive and uncritical, and degenerated at times into vulgar or sentimental boasting." (*Saga of Saints*, p. 21)

At the same time I find myself becoming engrossed in the sagas and eddas reflective of the Scandinavian personality. The honest portrayal of people, warts and all, reminded me of the Scandinavian penchant to be painfully honest. There is also the strain of practicality which reaches over the years. In the middle of the fantastic tales of gods, the Hovamol brings us back to a world of sound farmer sense:

'Tis the best of drinking if one brings back
His wisdom with him home. (127)

One of the responsibilities of the Bishop of Iceland is to oversee the Catholic chaplaincy at the United States Airforce Base at Keflavik. We went there on the Fourth of July and the base had an open house for Icelanders which was both festive and very American with many booths for refreshments and games. I had never seen a Service Chapel, so it was good to see the variety of families and singles who devoutly celebrated Mass. Afterwards there was a coffee hour and it seemed very American indeed with most of the States represented. On the way back to Reykjavik we drove past the construction site of the new Church in Hafnar fjödur. This parish was begun by priests of the Legion of Mary but now is a parish where Icelandic priests work. The church building is beautiful in location, on the top of a hill, and also in plan, being constructed around an atrium. Unfortunately, there is not enough money to finish it (see Bishop Jolson's letter) and only part of it will be completed at this time. A meeting with Gunnar Gudmundsson proved to be very productive. It provided the group of Saints' Lives which form the first part of the *Bulletin* and also gave an opportunity to discuss a wide variety of questions as to Icelandic church history. He is now on leave from teaching to work on the later medieval history of the Church in Iceland. It will be part of a multi-volume history of religion in Iceland produced by the folk church.

My thanks to Bishop Jolson, many priests, religious and layfolk, who made this visit so profitable and informative.

Father John E. Halborg

South Sweden

In planning my summer travels for the League, John Dwight (who greets all of you) and I noticed the heavy concentration of Catholic churches and religious institutions in the South of Skåne. Rather than over-dividing my time, I decided to let St. Birgitta decide my boundaries which would be Vadstena on the north and Maribo in Denmark on the south. This meant that most of my time would be spent in Sweden, although my Father, for whom Sweden began with Småland (Varend), would have said that I spent almost my whole time in Denmark, forgetting recent history. In any event I saw most of the churches and many of the priests and religious of this area. In what follows I will only deal with some of the highlights in order to avoid becoming too diffuse or sounding like a tour guide.

HELSINGBORG

This beautiful city has much to recommend it to the tourist but its prime medieval relic is the Church of St. Mary with its rich musical heritage (Buxtehude being numbered among its Cantors). Today, after wars and religious changes, the interior of the red brick gothic church is a little bleak, but the architecture is lovely. The Catholic history of Helsingborg may be divided into two parts. In the middle ages, Helsingborg had a number of churches and convents and monasteries. It belonged to Denmark and when the new religion was adopted all of these buildings and institutions were destroyed in or after 1536. From then to the middle of the nineteenth century (by which time it had become Swedish) no citizen could be Catholic. In fact, in its Swedish years, Catholics travelled across the sound to Helsingør as Denmark gained a measure of religious tolerance before Sweden.

The revival of the Catholic Church in Helsingborg is closely tied to Gisela Trapp née Henckel. She was an artist who painted rather in the style of Carl Larsson and was interested in the middle ages. Among her accomplishments was the saving of the Vadstena Convent when it was threatened with destruction by the State. In 1915 she became a Catholic and spent much of the rest of her life (dying in 1958) in Catholic causes and in painting murals in Catholic churches. On her death she left her estate to the Catholic Church in Helsingborg. Another important figure in the development of this parish is Monsignore B.D. Assarson who edited the Catholic paper for some time and also produced a hymnal which was unusual for its time as it included non-Catholic Swedish hymns. Assarson's positive attitude to the folk church, particularly its high church wing, was also unusual. He also saw Skåne as having a special role in uniting Sweden and Denmark as its culture shared traits of both nations. For this he was much criticized but in today's Europe, the role of border areas as unitive rather than divisive is of great importance.

When I asked the cab driver to take me to St. Clement's Church he was at a loss but when I mentioned a Convent he knew where to go. I, in turn, tried to remem-

ber how to understand and speak Skånsk. The parish has used the Trapp resources to build up a charming complex of buildings including apartments for the elderly, pre-school facilities and a convent. The membership, which has grown to several thousand persons, was too large for the small church and so several years ago it was enlarged by building out sideways. The result is a church which seats about 350 persons. The corpus on the crucifix is particularly notable being from the thirteenth century. I cannot be too grateful to Father Marian Jancarz and the Sisters of Mary who were such generous hosts. All of them have their ethnic roots in Poland, part of the many Polish priests and religious who now serve in Sweden. One of the Sisters said, on returning from her vacation in Poland, that coming to Sweden was like returning home.

As part of the bequest of Gisela Trapp, the parish owns a house and chapel in Arild where Mass is said on summer evenings. Arild is a little seaside resort town of great charm. St. Arild was a medieval boy who was drowned by his stepfather and came back to land in a stone which the credulous may visit. Parts of his legend are painted on the chapel walls. There was a large crowd at Mass and many persons had to stand outside the doors and look in to the chapel for Mass. There were many visitors from Germany and after Mass we had a little party on the lawn. After the main Mass in Helsingborg there was also a coffee hour. It was interesting to meet the congregation. A large percentage of them were Polish in origin but some were native Swedes who had been received into the Church. In the gracious social room, a wonderful portrait of Pius VII, painted perhaps by Ingres, towered above

us. Both Sunday and weekday Masses were well attended. One must feel that the Catholic Church is again striking deep roots in the town of Helsingborg.

To Vadstena

Four years ago we had been in Vadstena when the church was being restored. Four years is too long to be away from the wonders of this entrancing town. Fr. Jancarz was driving to Stockholm with some Polish priests and he offered to take me to Vadstena. It is hard to describe the charm of the 'blue' church with its wealth of medieval statuary and altar pieces. And, in the center of the monks' chancel is the shrine which contains relics of St. Birgitta and other Swedish Saints. The restored church is less like a museum than it was formerly and more a place of worship. As it has been described recently in the *Bulletin*, I will not repeat this description. One of the new acquisitions in the church is a small statue of St. Katherine. In a church which contains magnificent statuary, it looks insignificant but one can only be thankful that at last Katherine is remembered in the church she devoted her life to see built. We are also happy to see this statue blessed by the Pope and found in a church used by protestants.

Of course, one of the main reasons to come to Vadstena is to see the modern establishment of the Order of the Holy Saviour which has its convent across the way from the medieval buildings. Bridgettine hospitality is noted and so it was to be expected that the house would be well-filled. Among the guests was a priest



*"There she found Lord Arild"
a painting by Gisela Trapp*

from Ansgarsverk in Germany who described the problems in providing buildings and equipment for the Churches in eastern Germany.

For many Americans, Vadstena is also Sister Patricia. Sister has been setting the Office with music for the use of the Convent. We had a long talk about the past trials of the convent which I had never understood before. We also talked about the hopeful present and the future. Many of the Sisters at Vadstena are of Swedish birth. There is a good range in ages; many of them, including the Lady Abbess, being quite young. Some years ago the



St. Katherine at Vadstena

Sisters built a large addition to the Convent and the final payments will soon come due. Sister said that everything possible was being done to see that these payments will be made.

It was over 35 years since I first saw Vadstena and I decided that I must be rebaptized in Lake Vättern. It took some doing and some daring to sink into its chilly bosom but it was a remembrance of the snows of yesteryear.

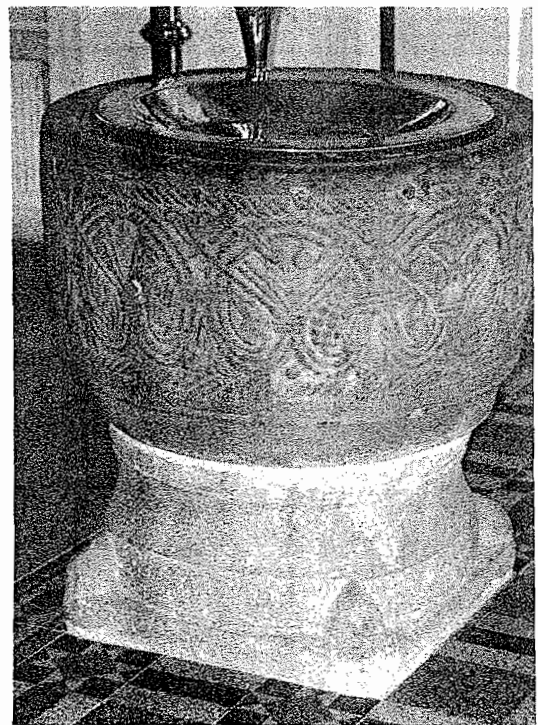
VÄXJÖ

The Cathedral in Växjö is a survivor from the middle ages when this was one of the smallest and poorest dioceses in Sweden. In its last renovation, it was much improved but had acquired a dominating glittery cross. This has now been lowered from above the altar and does not seem as offensive. For an American, the Emigrant Museum is important. It currently features exhibitions on life in the Swedish settlements in the United States and also in South America. The Art Museum in

Växjö features a portrait of Nils Dacke, a Catholic revolutionary of the sixteenth century, who can seem both to be a folk hero against Gustav Vasa's despotism and a Catholic martyr. For an inland town, Växjö has a surprisingly continuous Catholic history. The Dacke rebellion took place in 1542-1543. In the eighteenth century Catholic artisans came to Växjö. Occasionally a Priest said Mass for the Sardinian wife of a local industrialist. Priests made the long trip here from Malmö and finally in 1951 the English Passionists began regular work here. A parish was formed in 1954 and a church building was dedicated in 1967. St. Michael was the first Catholic Church to be built in Småland after the reformation. In 1984 the Passionists left Växjö in an effort to concentrate their efforts on the west coast of Sweden. The present pastor is Father Paul Redmond from England. This year, Växjö celebrates the 650th anniversary of its founding; the parish is 40 years old. It also is served by Polish Sisters. Some Polish Sisters have begun the work of establishing a new parish in nearby Älmhult. It is hoped that this will develop into a new parish. There is also, of course, a parish in Jönköping, Sweden's Jerusalem, staffed by Polish Franciscans.

HÖÖR

Were it not that Höör is an ancestral home, I would not mention it, but it is of interest to the Catholic. The original church was built by the stone masons who had just finished the cathedral in Lund. Some evidence of their work is still noticeable in the enlarged present building, including the original baptismal font. It was Bo Giertz, Lutheran Bishop of Göteborg, who noted



Baptismal font at Höör

that we pay a good deal of attention to where our ancestors are buried but we should be more interested in where they received the new life in Christ. The altar with its reredos was carved in the seventeenth century. Hence, it is post-reformation. However, the central panel has a lovely carved Madonna and Child. During the last century it was removed, perhaps because it was too Catholic for the sensibilities of the time. It has now been restored to its place of honor. As such it is an interesting contrast to some Catholic churches where Our Lady has been banished to a dark corner.

TOMELILLA

One of my priorities in visiting Sweden was to be in Tomelilla for St. Benedict's Day at the new Benedictine Convent. On the map, this seemed rather difficult but help was on the way in the form of an ancient station wagon and a young Swedish seminarian, Anders Nilsson. Anders and his family have lived in South Africa and are now returning to their native Sweden. Before entering the Seminary, Anders had worked with the Brothers of Mother Theresa in Stockholm helping, among others, AIDS victims. Our company also included a young immigrant lad from Lebanon and Ulla Johnson, born in Sweden, having taught in America for many years, and now living in retirement in California. She had become a Catholic in America and was delighted to find the Catholic Church so firmly rooted in her native land.

Mariavall is newly built in the midst of a plantation of pine trees. Its 36 acres were donated by Count Eric Sparre. He is a third generation Catholic as is his wife who is a member of the Bielke family. Mariavall now has 13 nuns. The concrete Convent is built in the style we once called 'the new brutalism.' The chapel is yet to be built, what has been built is quite large. Mass was said by a Benedictine priest from Ö Sönnarslöv. After lunch, Ivo Dubois gave a lecture on the plans for European unification (EEC). To long-time readers of this *Bulletin*, the subject of the need for Europe to discover its common roots and structure is well known. Fr. John La Farge preached this thesis almost every year in the *Bulletin*. Often this was done against the background of the Communist problem which now does not seem to be so threatening as does modern disintegration and the lack of values. Ambassador Dubois stressed the Catholic roots of the idea of a united Europe in the thinking of such men as Adenauer, most of these spokesmen were Catholic.

In a sense Benedict, himself, may be said to be the father of an European identity. While the economic side of unity is often stressed in today's deliberations, Dubois said that the cultural and spiritual sides of unity were even more important.

It is interesting to note the concurrent notes of unity and separatism at work in today's Europe. We are aware of the breakup of Yugoslavia and Czecho-Slovakia. There is an organization called the Federalist Union of European Folk Groups with headquarters in Flensburg which is made up of groups from larger nations. In an article in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, Anders Edström claimed that European unity would make such border cultures as Skåne more important. In a lengthy article in *Dagbladet*, the Swedish Ambassador to the Vatican, Lars Bergquist,

writes that Sweden must understand the Catholic way of thinking in which the separate states exist and so does the



*Count and Countess Sparre and
Count Hamilton at Tomelilla*

universal state of the Vatican and the Church if Sweden is to enter into the new European unity. In Catholic Europe, "Ideals are first of all guiding stars and it is impossible and not even necessary to live up to them." Protestant states such as Sweden tend to lose contact with the larger connection. "I want us to be conscious of the other reality which exists. I believe in a unity in multiplicity."

The day was not ended. We drove to Ystad to see the new Catholic church. Ystad is a lovely town, looking more Danish than Swedish; it was the last territory Denmark lost on the peninsula. The church is a rebuilt old stone mason's yard. It fits beautifully into the surrounding old houses and the interior still shows signs of the industrial architecture. We were very impressed with the church proper and what we could see of the other rooms. Having seen more new or remodeled churches in a month than I can tell, I would however say that more attention should be paid to giving the altar its due prominence. Frontals might help to soften the often rigid lines of new churches and reduce the picnic table look. They could be of a modern design, consonant with their surroundings.

We then drove on to the Carmelite monastery and guest house at Tågarp. Vespers were being said in the little house in the flat Scania landscape, golden with ripe wheat. From there we went to Malmö and saw Maria in Rosengård.

Rosengård is no bed of roses. The area looks rather like an American housing project although the grounds are somewhat neater. It has a high crime rate and into it have been settled many of the recent immigrants, some of them illegal or suspicious of registering in their new country after leaving a police state behind. Masses are said in Polish, Croatian, Spanish, Italian, Vietnamese and even Swedish. Some of these language groups have facilities in the impressive building where these ministries are located. The church is dominated by an impressive crucifix carved by Eva Spångberg who also carved the powerful figure of Mary. Miss Johnson commented on the seeming affluence of the Church in Sweden which could build such structures, but I reminded her that they relied on the goodness of German Catholics and that Swedish Catholics had problems in

maintaining these churches once they are built as many of them are poor immigrants. Sweden also has the problem of getting these groups to interrelate. Surely this parish would make an interesting sociological study.

GLUMSLÖV

On June 16, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Carmel at Glumslöv held its annual Celebration and again Anders Nilsson drove. This Carmel is the largest convent in Sweden and this year one of its founding sisters, Sister Mary of Jesus was celebrating the fiftieth year of her life as a Carmelite nun. Sister comes from Gent and on my visit there I met her brother who is a bishop. The small chapel was filled for the Mass. In the homily, Carmelite Father Anders Aborelius said that Mary of Jesus would be like the blessed Mother who wanted to point to Jesus and share him, even as she lived her quiet life at Nazareth. The sisters sang some delightful Spanish Canciones. We also had the good fortune to meet Per Beskow again and talk about a project of doing a compilation of lives of Swedish Saints.



*Seminarian Anders Nilsson and
Sister Barbara at Helsingborg*

Near us stood a young man whom we also met the next day on the train to Göteborg. He was from a small town in Norway and was probably the only Catholic there. He was about to do his military service and then hoped to enter the Carmelite monastery. In your goodness remember Henning Rören in your prayers.

LUND

I had a little time to spare one morning in Lund and I spent it reacquainting myself with the romanesque cathedral. The church was heavily restored in the last century and that has made it "Not what there used to be" in the words of John Betjeman. But enough remains to give the feeling of the ancient church and some of the details, such as the statue of St. Lawrence and the choir benches are superb indeed.

I was really in Lund to see the Catholic Presence. Four years ago we had peeked at the new Catholic Church of St. Thomas. At the invitation of the Church Secretary, we had an opportunity to see the whole Church. Father Arne-Dominique Fjeld, O.P., was our guide. When the Church was erected, an effort was made to fit it into the profile of Lund's low-lying ochre houses. This succeeded rather well. Perhaps the Church itself suffers from being

unfocused with the altar on the long wall of the nave. As often in Sweden, the Church has wonderful rooms for activities. It is also responsible for student work at the University, but right now this is on a 'downer', part of the cyclical experience in student work.

The Dominican house has now been renamed St. Mary Magdalene, its medieval name. It has a splendid location, just north of the Lundagård with its wonderful old trees and it is in the University area. The house will need a good deal of remodeling. The area in which the Fathers plan to locate their library is now being used by a social agency. Plans for a ground floor chapel are prepared and that work will soon begin. It is hoped that there will be a community of five priests and some remodeling will be needed to provide rooms. In addition there will be a small area for student housing. There is also a lovely backyard and garage space. At the present time, two priests are from France, Fr. Fjeld came from Oslo, and Fr. Axel Carlberg came from Canada. He learned of the Dominicans in Sweden by reading this *Bulletin*. It was shown to him by our good friend, Fr. Leland in Toronto. I was thanked for the *Bulletin* and several people noted how useful Fr. Carlberg has been. He teaches at the University and also is on the Priests' Council.

MALMÖ

Malmö has long been one of my favorite Scandinavian cities. It retains its medieval street plan and some of its old houses as well as lovely parks. Unfortunately its only medieval Church is St. Peter's as the rest were torn down at the Reformation by that great urbanist, King Fredrik I. St. Peter's is an example of the Baltic gothic brick church, a duplicate of the old Our Lady's Church in Copenhagen before the British decided to urban renew that city.

The Catholic parish in Malmö has published a fascinating pamphlet, *Ett Årtusende Katolskt Liv i Malmö och Skåne* (A Thousand Years of Catholic Life in Malmö and Skåne). Medieval Malmö had several churches, convents and a hospital run by the House of the Holy Spirit. One of the most famous Franciscans from Malmö was Jacobus de Dacia who worked as a missionary in Mexico when the Order was suppressed in Sweden. We read,

He fought for complete equality for the Indians, who had hitherto been denied Ordination, Communion, Confirmation and Last Rites. He was the first person in his area to give the Indians Communion and was attacked for this reason by the brothers . . . At his death, 20 October 1566 or 1567, he had the reputation of being a Saint.

The wave of vandalism which introduced the faith of the sixteenth century into Malmö has been well chronicled. Many of those who attacked the monastery and other Catholic institutions were less motivated by religious motives than by their coveting the commercial interests of the Church including control of the harbor.

After Catholic emancipation in Sweden (1783) there were occasional visits by priests to Malmö and finally in 1864 a pastoral center was begun in Göteborg and in Malmö in 1870.

The present Church of Our Saviour was ready for use in 1960. It was the first Catholic Church in Sweden to use modern architecture and presents an imposing pro-

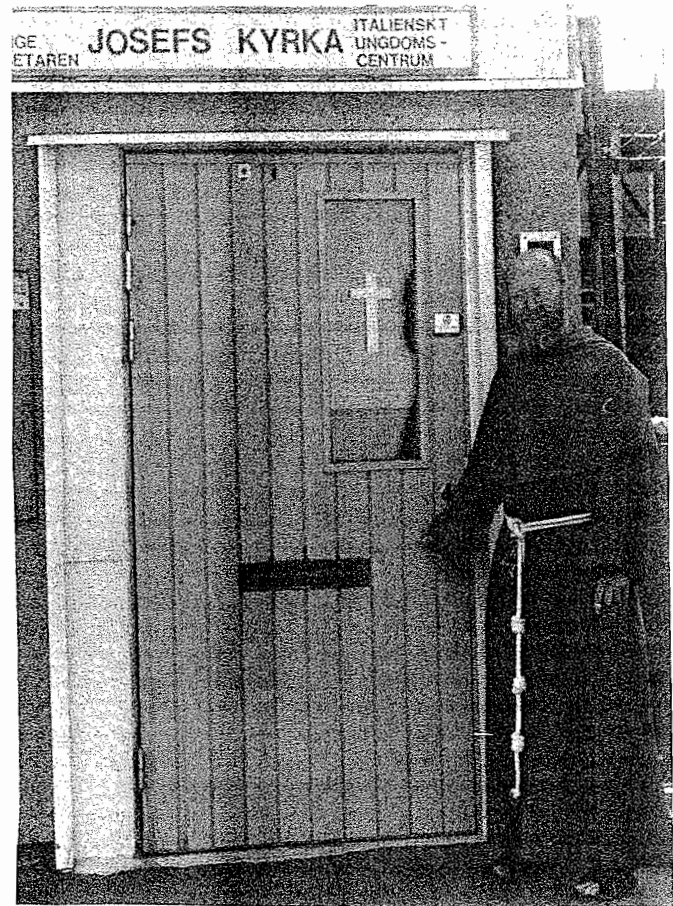
file with its high tower and its building complex. The Pastor at that time was Johannes Koch, now Dean of the Stockholm Cathedral and brother of the present pastor, Bernhard Koch. Fr. Koch was a very gracious host, sharing some very welcome gin and tonic and lunch. I enjoyed Fr. Koch's interpretation of his years in Sweden which go back to the time of Bishop Mueller. We were joined by his Assistant, Fr. Scheuss. We saw the large complex of buildings and met the Elizabeth Sisters who work in the parish and operate a nursery in one of the buildings. They also operate a nursing home in Malmö. At one time this was the parish for all of Southern Sweden. Gradually, its territory has shrunk, but it remains one of the largest parishes in Sweden. Most of the Masses are done in Swedish with special language at Masses now being said at St. Mary's. The problem of inculturation is very real in Sweden. Solutions are hotly debated in church circles. Our members should remember this problem as they pray for the Catholics in Scandinavia.

GÖTEBORG / Gothenburg

Catholic growth in Sweden has been especially marked in the area known as the west coast. As noted, Göteborg (Gothenburg) was the first church for the returned Catholic Church outside of Stockholm. Christ the King remains one of the largest parishes in the Diocese. Its rather heavy looking group of buildings lies near to the center of town in an area of parks. When the church was built in an area called Heden (the downs) it was nicknamed Hedendomen (heathendom). Despite this name, the church has grown as has its school, which is too large for its space. I had a short visit with the Pastor, Fr. John McCormack, CP, and we discussed the problem that somehow the Church is not as practical as it seems. Various solutions have been suggested including acquiring one of the excess churches of the Folk Church.

On Saturday morning, I called Father Frans-Eric Larson, the Servant of the Brotherhood of Saint Francis in Partille, a suburb of Gothenburg. He decided that I would be lost in the outskirts of the city if I took the train, so he arranged to meet me at the station. Fr. Larson is a midwesterner of slightly younger vintage than myself, so we knew many people in common. We were also able to discuss the liturgical movement of the 50s and 60s in the Lutheran and Catholic Churches. Time passed swiftly. The Franciscans have a house in what was a community of homes for directors of a nearby factory. To the house has been added a very pleasant chapel seating under one hundred. In addition to Fr. Larson there are two brothers and a postulant who will be studying in America next year.

We drove to the Church of St. Paul of the Cross in Angered. This parish is staffed with Polish Passionists. We met Brother Gabriel Moran who had been in Jönköping and asked to be remembered to the League. This Church was organized in 1985, it was formerly part of the Gothenburg parish and has several thousand members. The building is pleasant and light with a rectory on the second floor. We also saw a center for Italian work, Saint Joseph the Worker. It was on the second floor of a factory and we saw a pleasantly old-fashioned chapel and a variety of meeting rooms.



Father Larson at St. Joseph Italian Center

DENMARK

The trains going south from Copenhagen to Hamburg are named after famous northern Europeans: Hamlet, Thomas Mann, Thorvaldsen, Søren Kierkegaard, Karen Blixen. A strange assortment, and I rather worried how I would deal with S.K. for several hours. I finally decided that he would see the irony in the situation and that he would be a better travel companion than Hamlet. I was on my way to Maribo (where Mary dwells) in Lolland to see the Chapel (all that remains) of the medieval Bridgettine convent. In our time it has become a Folk Church cathedral but Maribo does have a Catholic parish church and also a Franciscan monastery. It was Margrethe, "the Dame of our Kingdoms" who decided that Denmark should have a Bridgettine convent. As always, her motives were partly political and partly spiritual. Establishing a Swedish founded order in Denmark would help to cement relations between the three kingdoms. But Margrethe was also a religious woman and I see no reason to doubt her attachment to the Bridgettine order.

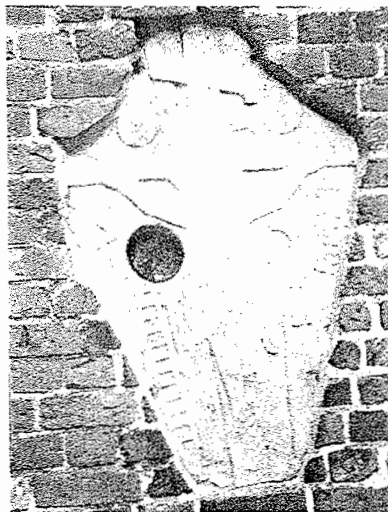
I had never seen the flat and fertile plains of Lolland before. Maribo itself is a very pretty town with a center which resembles an English market town. When Christian III introduced the faith of his time in 1536, the convent buildings at Maribo became a 'convent' for noble women, that is, a boarding house for ladies not wanted at home.

At some point later, all of the structures except for the Chapel were torn down and the chapel was also threatened. It, however, was recycled as the town church (when that structure burned) and eventually it became a cathedral. In its location it closely resembles Vadstena convent: There is a large cemetery before the east end of the church. To the west, behind the monk's chancel is a lovely swimming place. The church is constructed of warm red brick but in size and style much resembles the church at Vadstena. A remarkable survivor from the middle ages is a set in bas relief of the crucifixion placed near the main entrance. It has a round indentation to the side of Christ painted red into which the pilgrim placed his fingers, thus symbolically touching the wound of Christ. I have never thought Thomas actually did this, but I thought that doing this symbolically was not too sanguinary.

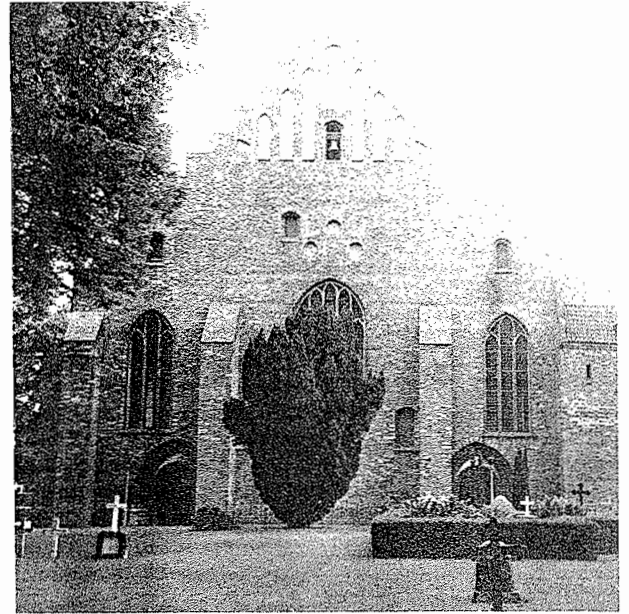
The church structure remains largely unchanged. The platform over the nave on which the nuns heard Mass has been removed but the side balconies on which they walked to and from devotions remain. So does the door of grace and glory through which the newly consecrated nuns entered the convent, never again to emerge. Birgitta did not want painted walls in her convents and the only frescoes at Maribo are a few consecration crosses and a small section of decorative painting in the area of the nun's chancel.

This convent was actually founded in 1418. Little remains of the medieval inventory. The triumphal cross is shown on a side wall. In it, the most important convent relics were hidden from the reformers. In 1818, they were found and are now on view in the former monk's choir. They include one of the nails of the cross.

I paid a short visit to the Chancery which is across the street from the Cathedral. By mistake, I pushed the button of Msgr. Ib Anderssen who told me that he was retiring from the last of his many positions in the diocese. We wish him ad multos annos. I had for some time wanted to see Jesu Hjerter Kirke (Heart of Jesus Church).



Crucifix at Maribo



Maribo Chapel

Jesu Hjerter is a large complex, at one time it included a school. There is something unmistakably Catholic about the block of hard red brick buildings. The interior of the Church has been carefully restored and much of the inventory from its various periods has been preserved. The Pastor, Fr. Gerhard Sanders, is a man of great charm. A typical Sunday schedule at the parish includes a Latin, a Danish and an Italian Mass. It is only a few blocks from the train station, we recommend it to the attention of our members on vacation in Copenhagen.

Father John E. Halborg

St. Ansgar's Donates Books

During the Fall of 1990, our League and our President donated a small but valuable set of books and monographs to Fordham University's Lincoln Center Library including a complete set of all of the extant copies of the Society's annual *Bulletin* dating back to its formation in 1910. We are proud to note that the *Bulletin* is considered the publication par excellence in its field. At the donation ceremony, our president, Mr. Viggo F.E. Rambusch, recalled to the small assembly gathered for the occasion that the *Bulletin*, begun by his parents near the turn of the century, acquired a reputation almost immediately of being a publication which could be counted upon to provide up-to-date information on the Church in the Scandinavian countries.

Mr. Rambusch was quite enthusiastic when he spoke about the Collection to answer a number of questions directed to him. "Most of these volumes have been long out of print, and are now virtually unattainable any-

where", he noted. Though not all the volumes deal with Catholicism in Scandinavia, most by their very nature make some reflection on the subject. *Torpo Stavkirke*, as an example, a small pamphlet published in Oslo in 1951, describes the unique wooden "stave churches" of Norway, now virtually all the property of the state, but all of which were begun by the Catholics of the Medieval period. Other books such as *The Church in the Northern Countries* published in 1949 deal specifically with Catholicism. This volume bears the imprint of America Press and recalls the fact that "America", the very well-known Jesuit weekly was an early pioneer in the publishing of scholarly books as well.

Our president was especially proud of the fact that another volume among the donation was the *Saxo Grammaticus*. The volume sheds light on the exploration of the Vikings in Iceland at the end of the 9th century and the beginning of the 10th century, and subsequent inroads from there into Nova Scotia and perhaps elsewhere near the northern edges of what is now the United States.

Nicholas Falco

The League in 1992

During the year the League had six regular meetings. It also came together for the annual picnic and Mass at Vikingsborg and the coffee hour given by the Daughters of St. Birgitta. The Mass was said by the retired Ordinary of Bridgeport, Bishop Curtis. Earlier we had held our Annual Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral on the Feast Day of St. Ansgar.

We wish to note that after many years, Mr. Viggo Rambusch asked to be relieved of his duties as President. The league acceded to his wishes but has retained him as Honorary President. The 'honorary' is, to be sure, more than an empty formula. Our new president is our well-known faithful member, Dr. Astrid O'Brien.

The annual St. Lucia party was held at St. Thomas More Church with three of our priests celebrating. The Lucia was Cara Rambusch who bore the crown of lighted candles. We wish to thank all of our members who supported the League so generously by taking raffle tickets.

Under the leadership of Dr. O'Brien, and with the help of God's blessings and guidance, we look back on 83 years and forward to continual work for the Church in Scandinavia.

V.R. and J.E.H.

The front cover is the work of Mr. Robert Rambusch. It is based on a frontal in the Museum at Reykjavik. He has devised attributes for each of them which the reader can discover in the following Lives of the Saints. We are very thankful to him for this artistic and spiritual contribution to the Bulletin.

May They Rest In Peace

Mrs. Mary G. Browne, Port Henry, N.Y.
Rev. Gilbert Callahan, Colorado Springs, Col.
Sister A.C. Casey, St. Paul, Minn.
Mr. Michael Crowley, New Bedford, Mass.
Mrs. Marion Demers, Worcester, Mass.
Brother Hildebrand Flint, O.S.B., Gloucester, England

Ms. Lucille G. Garvey, Scranton, Pa.
Msgr. Thomas S. Hendrickson, Hankinson, North Dakota
Fr. Ansgar (Leif) Kristensen, O.S.B., Denmark
Mr. J. Frank Morris, Flushing, N.Y.
Mrs. Dorothy Nielson, Whiting, N.J.
Mr. and Mrs. James O'Brien, Elmhurst, N.Y.
Fr. Nelius O'Connor, County Kerry, Ireland
Rev. Anthony O'Flynn, S.J., New Orleans, Louisiana
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Fred G. Schwartz, Wheeling, West Virginia
Miss Marguerite Shevlin, Chicago, Ill.
Mr. Jerry J. Storms, Victor, N.Y.
Mr. Andrew Trimble, Staten Island, N.Y.
Mrs. Rachel Trimble, Staten Island, N.Y.
Mrs. Leonard E. Van Der Weel, Dunkirk, N.Y.
Rev. Joseph Zrinyi, S.J., Washington, D.C.

New Members

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Ms. Ellen I. Andrews, Bronxville, N.Y.
Sister Mary Ansgar, O.P., Bodø, Norway
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Mrs. Karen B. Borland, Buffalo, N.Y.
Saint Anthony Carpenter, New York, N.Y.
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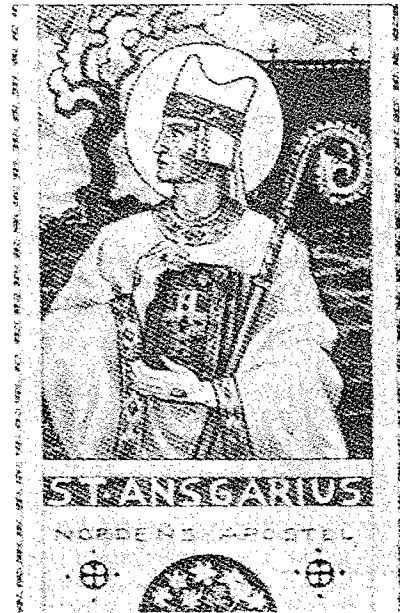
PRAYER FOR SCANDINAVIA

O Jesus, our God and Savior, by the merits of Your Most Precious Blood, shed for all men, we ask You to look with special love upon the peoples of Scandinavia. Grant peace and holiness to Your Church in these countries. Instill zeal, courage and confidence in the hearts of their bishops, priests, religious and faithful.

Promote the work of Unity among all Christian people, giving them courage and humility to seek the means of advancing this Cause for which you prayed and gave Your life. Grant to all who profess belief in You, harmony and love, as well as the grace to grow in holiness and to attain eternal salvation.

We ask these blessings through Your Virgin Mother, St. Ansgar and all the saints of these lands, for the honor and glory of Your Name, and for the welfare of Your Church. Amen.

Fr. Titus Cranny, S.A., National Director of Unity Apostolate, Graymoor. (with permission of superiors)



Scandinavian Feast Days

Mass is said by our Chaplain for the intention of the League on the Feasts of our patrons as follows: St. Canute (Denmark) and St. Henry (Finland), January 19th, St. Ansgar (Scandinavia), February 3rd, St. Olav (Norway), July 29th, St. Birgitta or Bridget, October 8th, and St. Erik (Sweden), October 8th.

Honorary Patron

MOST REV. ALFRED J. JOLSON, S.J., *Bishop of Reykjavik*

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 Mrs. Frances Wilks, *Assistant Secretary*
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The officers of the League are unpaid volunteers; no salaries are paid to anyone.

For facts about the Church in Scandinavia and general information, please address Corresponding Secretary, at Headquarters.

This BULLETIN is published annually at year's end for our Members, and is supported by their dues. If not yet a Member and you wish to receive the BULLETIN regularly, please fill out the attached blank, together with your check or money order. (All are welcome.) Please notify us of any change of address.

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