

Fr. Francis Baumeister, SCJ

1885-1946

A quiet and unassuming man by nature, Fr. Francis Baumeister, SCJ, first came to the community in Sittard, Holland. He professed first vows in 1908 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1913. Soon after, he was off to the missions of Affica.

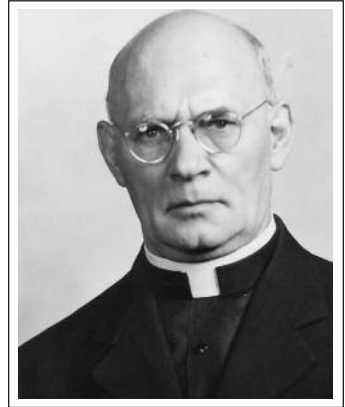
For almost ten years, Fr. Baumeister ministered in Cameroun and later Fernando Poo. Bound for Spain, he left Africa in 1922 to help build a new province. He spent another ten years there and then packed his bags and headed to the United States.

His first assignment in the young North American Province was at St. Joseph's Indian School. In 1943, he was transferred to the novitiate in Ste. Marie and later became spiritual director at Sacred Heart Monastery.

"In the short time Father was with us here at the monastery, he won the esteem and confidence of all of us. If the admonitions he gave us when we came to him with our spiritual problems were an encouragement and spurred us on to new efforts, his example was equally encouraging," wrote one of his students.

His last two years were plagued with heart trouble, which frustrated him. As his health deteriorated, he was unable to celebrate Mass, "and for a priest not to offer Holy Mass is a real hell," he said.

Always anxious to learn more about the Sacred Heart and his faith, he spent much of the time that he was confined in bed studying and re-reading books on the founder and the community's spirituality. When students came to visit him at his sick bed, he would spend hours talking with them about spirituality and the Church; always challenging them to think harder.



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