

Life of SAINT CLEMENT MARY HOFBAUER, C.SS.R.

(John Dvorak.)

“The Apostle of Vienna,” 1751-1821.

By a Redemptorist.

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THE HISTORICAL SETTING.

THE years that span the life of Saint Clement Hofbauer were troubled years for Europe. They were years of great political crises; of gigantic upheavals in nearly every State of Europe; of wars and revolutions; of fierce social strife and class hatred. Clement Mary Hofbauer was growing up as a boy when the Seven Years' War was bleeding Austria white. He was in his twenties when the American War of Independence dragged on between the North American States and England. He was in his thirties when the French Revolution broke upon Europe, and the blood of the aristocracy purpled the highroads of France. He was in Poland when that great patriot, Kosciusko, rose and fell. He was in Warsaw when that city was besieged on two occasions. He was working within twenty miles of the field of Austerlitz when Napoleon shattered the forces of Russia and Austria. He was evangelizing those very places over which were marching the French armies in the unending campaigns of the French Emperor. Truly, he lived in an era of great social strife and political disturbance.

And those days in which he lived were dark days for God's Church. Smitten by the strong arm of the tyrant from without, betrayed by some of her own children from within, the Church was in her agony from the birth of Saint Clement almost to his death. Great men sprang forth to do battle against the Church as the thunders of revolution were rolling through Europe. Through the writings of Markus Anton Wittola (Jansenist) and Ignaz Von Born, supported by the influence of Emperor Joseph II, the Church was crippled in her activities in Austria and Germany; while Voltaire and Rousseau scattered the seeds of infidelity in France and in those countries to which its sway extended. It was in the lifetime of our saint that the Jesuits were suppressed and exiled. It was in his lifetime that Pope Pius VI was dragged a prisoner to France, and died in prison there; and his successor, Pope Pius VII, spent six years, too, as a prisoner under Napoleon. Such were the years in which the lot of our saint was cast, and such were the storms, that swept over Church and State as this champion battled for the cause of Christ. And when, at length, peace settled on Europe, Saint Clement Hofbauer's star had set. His energy was spent; his strength was sapped; his work was done. An old man, rich in merits, he calmly awaited the summons to render account of his stewardship to God.

One must keep this historical background well in mind, if one wishes to grasp the heroic nature of the deeds Saint Clement wrought in the service of Christ, or if one wishes to understand how it came to pass that, despite his shining success in winning souls to Christ, he failed during his lifetime to achieve the great purpose of his life — namely, the transplanting of the Congregation of the Redemptorists beyond the Alps — a purpose to which he bent all the energies of his soul and body.

HIS BOYHOOD.

Born 26 December 1751 in the village of Tasswitz, in Moravia — then a province of Austria, now part of the Czech Republic — Clement Mary Hofbauer (Dvorak in Moravian) gazed with infant eyes upon woodland scenery of surpassing beauty. Sprung from thoroughly pious, yet humble, parents, Clement drew his first breath in an atmosphere of great faith and piety. He started life with two great assets, destined in after-life to play such an important part in the gigantic task to which he set his soul: the first, the precious gift of a vivid faith so strong, so deep, so abiding, that he was immune from all temptations against it; the second, the blessing of a sound and healthy constitution. Without either of these possessions, he could never have accomplished his work that made him immortal.

Clement Hofbauer was the youngest of twelve children, and the early deaths of some of these cast shadows from time to time upon the bright, happy, pious place in which he grew up as a child. But these sorrows paled away before the death of his father, when little Clement was about seven years of age. He carried the memory of that sorrow to his grave. The untold affliction of his mother, widowed by this untimely death, intensified his sorrow. Above his tomb today may be seen a painting portraying an incident at this time — the mother bringing Clement to the crucifix and saying: “My child, behold your Father from this time onwards.” Great traits of character are often chiselled by the sharp instrument of sorrow. An early sorrow often awakens in a young soul a premature sense of responsibility, and sets and shapes its career. Sorrow and sanctity are nearly allied, and often go hand in hand. From the saint’s references in after-life to this early grief there is no doubt that it gave a distinct impetus to his soul in the direction of the saints. We find him at this time tenderly devoted to Our Blessed Lady: saying the Rosary, fasting on Saturday in her honour, making special preparations for her feasts throughout the year.

Clement’s piety grew with the years, till it found definite expression in the longing to become a priest. Becoming a priest, however, meant education, and education meant money, and here the first insuperable difficulty presented itself, as Clement, rich in spiritual treasures; was poor in the goods of this world. This difficulty did not vanish as he grew to manhood’s years, and Clement was forced to earn his bread as an apprentice to a baker. It was pathetic, indeed, to see this young soul, ablaze with the desire of seeking the ministry of *the priesthood*, yet constrained to pursue his humble calling in a world from which his soul shrank. But this temporary setback to his intentions only served to burn the desire of the priesthood deeper into his soul. And deep it needed to be, for great storms were destined in after-years to sweep over his life, when he would need great fortitude and zeal to sustain him. What seem accidents to us are often the set design of Almighty God; and in those obstacles to Clement’s desires we see the guiding hand of God, Who, in those weary years of anxious waiting, was gradually setting the current of his very being, more deeply and more directly to Himself.

THE HERMIT.

It was during those years of his apprenticeship that he set out on a pilgrimage to Rome to refresh his piety, as well as to do penance. During this pilgrimage, he visited a certain hermitage, in a place called Tivoli, in the Papal States. Situated on a rising eminence, the chapel of the hermitage was dedicated to Our Blessed Lady, possessing, as it did, an ancient Byzantine picture of the Madonna. Six hermits formed the community in the hermitage near by. Beautifully nestling amid olive trees, this home of piety made a cogent appeal to the heart of Clement Hofbauer, so that when he returned to his work and his home his thoughts and dreams often turned to Tivoli. And now that the path to the priesthood seemed definitely closed to him, he thought of passing his life as a hermit.

Soon we find him, at the age of twenty, setting out for the Papal States to become a hermit at Tivoli. He was accompanied by a companion with the same intention, Peter Kunzmann. They travelled the whole journey on foot. Up hill and down dale they went; over mountain slope, by riverbed, they journeyed on, their spirits fired by the fervour of their bold resolution. On arriving at their journey's end, they had little difficulty in obtaining the necessary permission to enter the community. It was at this reception into the ranks of the hermits that our saint — whose Christian name was John — received the name of Clement, after the martyred Bishop of Ancyra (died in 312). Here in this quiet, secluded hermitage a divine peace and happiness settled upon Clement's soul. Here he drank deeply at God's fountain. It was a life of work and prayer — for such was the daily rule of the hermits. But, beautiful and holy and happy as it was, Clement Hofbauer felt it was not his vocation. The desire to influence other hearts in the cause of religion; the desire to extend his activities far afield, became more and more pronounced as the months went by, till at last, confident that he was doing the Will of God, he severed all connection with the hermits at Tivoli and returned to Austria.

On his return, he was able, through the influence of a priest friend, to enter a college of Humanities at a place called Bruck.

In return for board and education, he was expected to render certain services to the monks who controlled the school. He was twenty-one when he first took up his Latin grammar. The incongruity of a man of his years studying with juniors was completely forgotten in the all-absorbing consciousness that by persevering he would one day reach the goal of his ambition — the priesthood. After four years' study, unforeseen difficulties presented themselves, and he was forced to relinquish his studies. As time was not in his favour, his vocation now seemed hopeless.

But the God-tending character of his soul reveals itself in a second endeavour to follow the life of a hermit. He made an effort to re-join the hermits at Tivoli, but failed, as accidents prevented his reaching Rome. He succeeded, however, in establishing a hermitage not far from his native place, and here he followed a life of asceticism for nearly two years. It was in this hermitage that Clement fostered within his soul that spirit of mortification and self-discipline which enabled him in after-years to triumph over crushing misfortunes. But the increasing number of pilgrims to Clement's hermitage robbed him of solitude, and in the end he withdrew from the place altogether. Seeking other and more secluded retreats, Clement met with difficulties from the civil authorities, and — sad reading it surely makes — he returned to the baker's humble work at the age of twenty-nine years.

It was a lonely heart that throbbed beneath the humble garb of the baker as he began again where he had started ten years before. Ten years is no small period in one's life; and for our saint what efforts, what sacrifices, what prayers, what hopes, what bitter disappointments, were concentrated

in that decade of his life as he keenly pursued the prize for which his fervent soul thirsted — the priesthood! And never more than now did failure stare him blankly in the face; and never more than now did he see written in large letters across the horizon of his life the inexorable decree that the great desire that blazed within his breast — to be a priest — was never to be realized. Gaze upon him as he treads, unknown, the streets of the beautiful city of Vienna. A great heart beats within that breast, and by God's grace, his day will come. He shall walk those streets again when the years have snowed his hairs and when the storms of life have furrowed his brows — he shall come, the hero of a great cause, and many a head shall bow in reverence before him. The greatest orators and writers shall circle around him, and listen humbly to his saintly words. And when a century of years shall have run their course, the name of this unknown baker shall be written in golden letters across the heavens, while an emperor shall bow the knee before the dust of his remains, and a hundred thousand voices shall cry out to the Heaven that harbours him:

“Saint Clement, pray for us.”

THE PRIESTHOOD.

Soon the shadows were to rise and a bright light shine full on Clement's life, filling him with high and golden hopes. Small incidents have sometimes far-reaching consequences. A rainy day at Waterloo lost Napoleon an empire and changed the fate of Europe. A rainy day sent Clement on the career and mission of his great life. It happened thus: He used to serve Mass daily at Saint Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna, and one morning after Mass he noticed some ladies waiting at the porch of the church till the rain, which was falling fast, should cease. Clement, in his eagerness to assist others, approached them and offered his services to engage a carriage for them. They accepted his offer; and when the carriage had arrived, they invited Clement to accompany them. These good ladies — three sisters, who were people of some means — showed no little interest when they heard Clement's history. With tears in his eyes, he told his story: a tale of high aspirations with no hope of realization; a tale of feverish journeyings to and fro to satisfy the urge within his soul, but all roads leading back to the place whence he started. Touched by what they heard, the ladies promised Clement the necessary financial aid to prosecute his studies for the priesthood, and thus in this simple way was the path to the priesthood opened to him.

Backed by the support of his new patrons, Clement lost no time, and entered the University of Vienna. One can imagine with what enthusiasm Clement addressed himself to his studies. It is recorded of him that he studied late into the night, dispelling sleep by walking to and fro with the book in one hand and a candle in the other. He spent three or four years at the University studying philosophy and theology, and other subjects included in those courses. It was here he first became acquainted with the writings of Saint Alphonsus, especially his “*Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*” and, the “*Way of the Cross*”. Clement highly relished those beautiful devotions, and blessed the hand that wrote them. At this time, he used to spend the whole of Sunday morning in the church, and the sexton in one of the neighbouring churches often spoke in after-years of the fervour of our saint serving Mass. Every year at holiday time, he went on a pilgrimage to Rome. He always made the journey on foot. This afforded more scope to practise mortification and prayer, and thereby to reap richer spiritual advantages from the pilgrimages.

A new decree was issued by the Austrian Government, changing the curriculum for students of theology at the University. This decree extended the course to six years, and it forbade Bishops to ordain aspirants who had not completed that course. Clement, who had completed but one year, took alarm at this edict, as it would postpone his ordination for some years; and he formed the resolution of prosecuting his studies at Rome when next he went there on pilgrimage.

Another student, Thaddeus Hubl, in similar difficulties, learned of Clement's plans, and went with him to Rome. This was in 1784, when Clement was thirty-three and his companion twenty-three years of age. By mere accident the two pilgrims, on arriving at Rome, settled in the neighbourhood of a small Redemptorist monastery — San Giuliano. Attached to the monastery of San Giuliano was a chapel where the Redemptorists said their prayers. On the morning following the arrival of the pilgrims in this neighbourhood, their sleep was broken at an early hour by the tones of the community bell that called the Redemptorists to their morning meditation. Full of fervour, Clement and his companion set out in the direction of San Giuliano; being under the impression that Mass was being celebrated. When they arrived, they found the Fathers silently making their meditation. Clement was deeply impressed; and he and Hubl approached the monastery and asked to see the Superior, to enquire about the Redemptorist Rule. Father Landi, the Superior, was soon with them, supplying them with the necessary information. In case they wished to embrace the life and Rule, of the Redemptorists, Father Landi placed before them forms of application for admission to the Congregation. Clement never hesitated. With a firm hand, he affixed his signature. Every word of Father Landi sank deep into Clement's soul. When Clement learned that the Rule made the Redemptorist an apostle outside and a Carthusian at home his soul was enraptured. Here, indeed, would his longing be satisfied. Here was that splendid mixture of the life of the apostle and of the hermit for which his soul yearned.

But different sentiments stirred the soul of his young friend. Hubl hesitated about signing the application form, and preferred to wait. Not possessing a fraction of the experience of Clement, he was doubtful as to what precisely he should do. Clement was not a little troubled at this unforeseen hesitancy. Hubl's doubts, however, were to live only for a day. As Clement prayed for him that night a great change began to steal over Hubl's soul, and next day he expressed a desire to enter the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

On 24 October 1784, the two postulants received the religious habit from Father Landi, who became their Novice-Master. Clement Hofbauer never saw Saint Alphonsus, though at this time the saint was living at Nocera; yet Clement had the good fortune of being trained under one of Saint Alphonsus's companions, Father Landi. Father Landi had a long experience of the life of the Redemptorist, having spent forty years in the Congregation, and was altogether singularly qualified for moulding the minds of Clement and his friend.

The Novitiate, a time of silence and fervour, according to Clement himself, was the happiest period of his life. The usual period spent in the Novitiate — twelve months — was shortened to five months for Clement and his companion; and they were professed together on the Feast of Saint Joseph, 19 March 1785. Ten days later, they were ordained to the Priesthood.

A divine calm and peace settled on Clement's soul. The fevered thirst that had burned within his soul was quenched for ever. He laid at the altar, on the morning of his ordination, all the hardships and disappointments that attended his efforts to be a priest. A great chapter closed in the life of Clement, never to be reopened.

ACROSS THE ALPS.

It was during his Novitiate that the daring idea of transplanting the Congregation beyond the Alps occurred to Father Clement Hofbauer, and shortly after his ordination the matter developed, and was soon under the consideration of the Superior-General. His sanction was obtained, and Father Hofbauer and Father Hubl set out for Vienna in October 1785. Saint Alphonsus, who was still

alive, predicted their success. It shows what an impression Father Clement had made upon his superiors during the short time he was in the Congregation when he could be entrusted with this bold and responsible project of founding a branch of the Congregation in a country where no Redemptorist ever trod before. The idea of spreading the Congregation was not a new or unwelcome one. Both Father de Paula and Saint Alphonsus — owing to the restrictions placed upon their activities by the Neapolitan Government — came to the conclusion that the Congregation could never function normally unless it spread beyond the Alps. Thus the advent of the two ‘Germans’ — Fathers Hofbauer and Hubl — to the Congregation and their request to found a branch in Germany were regarded in the Congregation as providential.

With the Pope’s blessing and with a letter of recommendation from Cardinal Albani to the Nuncio in Vienna, Father Hofbauer addressed himself to this new and daring task — namely, establishing a house of the Congregation in Vienna. The two Redemptorists spent a whole year in a fruitless endeavour to obtain the necessary permission of the Government to establish a monastery. Fate seemed to be against them. The Church in Austria had fallen on evil days. The spirit of opposition to Papal authority in ecclesiastical matters by the civil authorities was waxing strong. It was fostered by the support of the Emperor Joseph II, so much so that it was named after him — Josephism. It was not so much a heresy as a spirit of interference by the State in Church matters. But it was a blighting evil that crippled the Church in her activities, and left a legacy of evil in its wake. Great forces were being arrayed against the Church in Austria. Heroes were needed to defend her; and we shall see later that Clement Hofbauer was one. Defeated for the moment in Austria, he transferred the scene of battle to other lands, and, finally, returned to Austria to achieve a far-reaching victory.

WARSAW — SAINT BENNO’S.

Failing to obtain a foundation in Vienna, Clement resolved on the bold plan of setting out for Russian Poland, where, under the Empress Catherine, Catholic priests exiled from other European countries found some measure of relief. It was there the unfortunate ex-Jesuits found a home when the great storm of persecution broke upon them, practically all over Europe. After a short visit to his home in Tasswitz, Clement and his companion set out for Warsaw in February 1787. On the way, they met an old friend of Father Hofbauer’s — Peter Kunzmann. Peter had joined the Tivoli hermits the same day as Clement, but after some years had left the hermitage, and, at the present moment, was on a pilgrimage. Hearing of the project of the two Fathers, he resolved to join them. He became a lay brother in the community at Warsaw, and remained faithful to his vocation till death.

There was at this time in Warsaw a Catholic society called the Confraternity of Saint Benno. Its object was to minister to the sick and to take charge of the poor orphan children. They received possession of a church in Warsaw, with some buildings adjoining it, after the Jesuits, who had been in charge of them, had been suppressed. When Father Hofbauer and his companions arrived in the city, with the approval of King Stanislaus, they were offered these buildings by the Confraternity, on condition that sermons were preached to the German population in the city and that a school be opened for the orphan poor. These terms being accepted by Father Hofbauer, the church and the adjacent buildings were delivered over to his charge. It was understood that this arrangement was only temporary, but, in effect, the foundation was a permanent one.

The pioneer is usually a hero, and so with Clement. It needed courage and fortitude to face the situation that presented itself. The monastery of five rooms was in a dilapidated condition. The sleeping apartments offered a feeble resistance to winds and rain. Having no beds, the three

companions slept on the floor. Surely, the prospect was a chilling one! But it could not cool the fervour of Saint Clement. What pained him most was the fact that the church was neglected, too, and that dust and dirt tarnished the house of God. The burning zeal of Clement soon showed in the changes that came. The two Fathers set to work immediately in the confessional and the pulpit, while Kunzmann took charge of the kitchen. Although things brightened somewhat as the years went on, still the community suffered continually, more or less, in their material wants. Even four years after their arrival in Warsaw, they were short of wine for the church; also of oil and of candles, so that Propaganda came to their aid in 1791. It was on that occasion that the Pope was so pleased with the zeal of Clement and his companions that he said: "It is evident that the spirit of their founder {Saint Alphonsus} has been handed on to these men."

With regard to spiritual labours, the Fathers had an uphill battle. For long, they were distrusted by the Poles, who regarded them as Lutherans in disguise, with political aims beneath the cloak of religion. The Poles regarded the school of Clement as an effort to denationalize and to Germanize them. But, as the years rolled on, Clement succeeded in dispelling prejudices and softening hearts.

There was one political event that firmly established Clement in the affections of the people and crowned his labours with astounding success. That event took place in January 1793, when Russia and Prussia agreed to partition Poland. That great hero who finds even to this day a sanctuary in the hearts of the Poles — Kosciusko — made a gallant effort to save his unfortunate country. In the first great battle with the enemy, he raised the hopes of his countrymen by winning a notable victory over the Russians at Cracow. But Kosciusko's victory was as short-lived as it was glorious; and soon the great patriot was vanquished. Warsaw, which went in full sympathy with the revolution, was besieged by the Prussians, who, after three months' siege, failed to capture the city. Two weeks later, it was stormed by the Russians under that brilliant general, Suworow, and captured. The slaughter was frightful: over fifteen thousand men, women and children were massacred. Warsaw fell under Russian administration for nearly two years, and this was the end of Polish independence.

Now all these events favoured Clement. In the first place, owing to the terrors of war, the people thronged the church and gathered around the confessionals, and forever, as we have said, Clement was established in the hearts of the people. The grip that the Fathers had on the souls of the people never relaxed: it meant success after success in spiritualizing them. Secondly, the Russian Administration proved very friendly to the Fathers. They actually added to the Redemptorist buildings, and Saint Benno's was honoured during this time by a visit from the Russian commander.

By this time, the community had received many recruits, mostly Germans. The community was rich, however, in possessing one Polish Father, the young, angelic and vigorous Father Podgorski.

With all these advantages, Saint Clement established in Saint Benno's Church what he called "a Perpetual Mission": that is to say, he followed out every day in Saint Benno's the same spiritual programme followed by the Redemptorist Fathers in their missions in different places. The people responded in a striking manner to the efforts of the Fathers. One may gather some idea of the activity of Saint Benno's when one realizes that five sermons were preached every day — three sermons to the Polish congregations and two to the German congregations. Also, there were three High Masses celebrated every day. Besides, there were various other exercises in the forenoon and the afternoon, as, for example, the Way of the Cross, Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin.

Saint Benno's Church seated, at this time, over a thousand people; and on weekdays as well as on Sundays it was overcrowded, according to a report of Clement himself. From morn till night, he worked unceasingly, day after day, year after year. God's hand alone could write the record of the good done for human souls in those years in Warsaw. No sluggard he in the vineyard of the Lord. Every fibre, every muscle was dedicated to the great work for Christ. And Christ did sorely need great champions, because society at that time, in Warsaw, was rotten to the core. Virulent diseases need powerful antidotes; and the "Perpetual Mission" in Warsaw, with all its sermons and ceremonies, was not one whit superfluous. And Clement studied the sources of evil and promptly set himself to destroy them. Thus, he felt a great deal of vice could be attributed to ignorance of Catholic doctrine, and, consequently, the sermons and instructions at Saint Benno's Church covered the range of doctrinal and moral truth. Again, he saw the dangers surrounding the poorer girls, and established an industrial school for them, where they could learn some accomplishment that would raise them above the level of those domestic occupations that spelt danger for them. He gathered together some ladies, who took charge of these girls, and taught them languages and sewing and embroidery work. These ladies formed a kind of community, and Clement gave them the name of Sisters of Saint Joseph. One can realize what a wholesome effect this project had upon the whole community.

A school for boys, which he had undertaken the first day he had entered into possession of Saint Benno's, had been a brilliant success from the start. The number of poor boys — many of whom were fed and clothed and housed by Saint Clement — was about two hundred. This number increased rapidly as the years went by. Although Clement had the boys under his control from the beginning, it was only about eight years later, that he instituted Saint Casimir's — the girls' school — which was under the care of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. These two schools had an indescribable effect on the whole community of Warsaw. Like running brooks of limpid purity, they flowed forth purifying the cesspools and stagnant waters of the city.

Another society that was a source of untold help in quickening the spiritual life of Warsaw, and reforming its morals, was the Congregation of the Oblates. This Congregation was a lay organisation, composed of men and women of a splendid Catholic type, whose labour it was to spread the good seed of Christianity far and wide. They were not merely to give good example by their own virtues, but were to spread wholesome Catholic literature among the people. The saint actually established a printing plant in the monastery at Saint Benno's. As the members of this Congregation were taken from all sections of society, we can see how Saint Clement could say that he owed the greatest measure of success to this Congregation.

Clement had succeeded in his first foundation beyond the Alps, and that in a manner that astonished himself. The great spiritual lamps at Saint Benno's, lighted by himself and fed from the oil of his zeal, grew brighter day by day, and year by year. Such was the reverence for Clement in Warsaw and its surroundings that people were ready — as he himself said — to kiss the hem of his garment. The fame of Saint Benno's extended far beyond the confines of the city of Warsaw; and the name of Clement Hofbauer was sent all over Europe by the enemies of the Church. Clement was destined to realize this later on, when he essayed to establish foundations outside Warsaw.

But soon the clouds of disaster shall gather on the horizon. A dark night of trial and sorrow is soon to close in upon him, and it is then that we shall see our saint in all his greatness. We have seen him in the full tide of success, but it is in failure and disaster that we shall see the sublime grandeur of his noble soul. Through the medium of a dark glass, we get the measure of the sun; through the dark medium of sorrow and suffering, we get the measure of the saint. It is when his

hands and his feet are crucified that a saint reveals himself as a hero with heroic, transcendent virtues. The saint never surrenders: he is ever mending his torn nets; he never tires; he never despairs; his soul is ever at peace; exiled from one country, he pitches his tent in another, as though he were there from the beginning; torn from his companions, he fights on alone; the wrath of his enemies breaks on him in vain, for he offers them the hand of friendship. Thus, too, dear reader, shall Clement play the role of the saint in the chapter of sorrow that now opens for him.

WANDERINGS.

It was quite clear to Saint Clement that if his work was to continue in Warsaw, he would need recruits, and recruits specially trained on religious lines. It was equally clear to him that Saint Benno's was not the place for thus training the young clerics and students, and that for two reasons. First, the hostile Prussian Administration of Warsaw was so powerful that restrictions were placed on the work of the Redemptorists in Warsaw. One such restriction was that they could not receive novices under twenty-four years of age. It is quite evident that the mind of the young man of twenty-four years of age is already set, and not amenable to the severe moulding that the religious life demands; and, again, men of that age have already an occupation in the world, and are not likely to change to the religious life. With this restriction on the reception of novices, Clement saw the failure of the community of Saint Benno's unless he established another foundation in other lands. A second reason for seeking another foundation for the training of novices and clerics was the fact that the extraordinary spiritual activity of Saint Benno's made it unsuitable for the training of Redemptorist novices and students, who, according to their Rule, should be far removed from all distraction, even though the distraction is the result of spiritual labour. Prayer and recollection are the spiritual food of the novice or student. Saint Benno's — the centre of so much activity — was, consequently, not an ideal place for their training.

Now began those long and laborious journeys in search of a foundation, which bring vividly to mind the journeying of the Apostle, Saint Paul. In the next decade of years, Clement travelled from one end of Europe to the other, and this he did two or three times. Friends here and there advised him of different places where he might establish a branch house of the Congregation, but when he arrived there difficulties of one kind or another presented themselves, and one by one his hopes vanished like dreams of the night. It was on one of these journeys that he visited Rome and had an audience with the Pope, who bestowed on him, as a remembrance, a set of Rosary beads.

These years of travel were lonely, dreary, troubled years. There were none of the comforts and facilities of today. Through many a mountain pass, over many an open plain, he passed. Cold and hunger and weariness pressed heavily upon him. Twice was he laid low with a dangerous illness. Once was he cast into prison at Cracow, where he was interned for three months before he escaped, to make his way back to Warsaw. A good deal of Clement's failure must be attributed to the awful chaos following upon the constant campaigns of Napoleon; and still more the evil influence of Freemasonry, which got new life at the French Revolution, and which waxed strong and powerful with the victories of the French armies all over Europe. Saint Clement referred to it as a vast conspiracy against the Church. It permeated all sections of society, especially the wealthier classes. It was a foul and ungodly evil. Like some monstrous octopus, it flung its tentacles over Europe, holding in its coils all those who held the reins of power. This was the enemy ever in the way of our saint. He wrestled with it in vain. In the end, he was overwhelmed completely.

MOUNT THABOR.

At times, it looked as though Clement would succeed, as, for instance, when he got a foothold in the diocese of Constance, in a place called Mount Thabor, on the borders of Switzerland. There had been a convent here already, with a community of Carmelite nuns; and to the convent was attached a church and another building comprising two rooms. This latter place was handed over to Clement, who was also given charge of the church. He began work here by introducing the "Perpetual Mission," which had had such success in Warsaw. And here, again, Clement met with astonishing success in gathering the crowds to the church, in melting their hearts by his fiery eloquence, and in regenerating their souls in the Sacrament of Penance. Here, too, recruits came to join Clement, so that, in a short time, he was sorely pressed for room in any shape or form. Every corner was occupied. Some were sleeping in the garret of the church; while others were sleeping in a tower that stood apart, without doors or windows, and having no means of approach except a ladder. When we remember that the Redemptorist community had grown so big that it now comprised six Fathers, four Brothers, nine Novices and several Students, we can see, in the first place, how vast the success of Clement's efforts; and, secondly, to what sore straits he was reduced from want of accommodation. He tried to secure possession of some Government buildings near at hand, but failed. It was at this critical juncture that a new prospect opened up before our saint.

FRIBURG.

A delegation of citizens of Friburg, hearing of the wonders of Clement and his apostles at Mount Thabor, presented themselves and requested the services of the Fathers at the famous Friburg shrine. The shrine was a shrine of Our Blessed Lady. It had been the centre of pilgrimages from France and Germany and Switzerland, but in recent times had lost much of its popularity. To the shrine was attached a large building, capable of accommodating comfortably between thirty and forty persons. This building was at the disposal of those in charge of the shrine; and there was, moreover, a sufficiently good income. Situated in mountain fastnesses, and surrounded by woodland, it was an ideal place for the spiritual training of students and novices. Our saint succeeded in getting charge of the shrine, and took possession of the spacious building. Here he settled the students, thereby relieving the strain at Mount Thabor. Here, again, he preached with all the fire and zeal of his soul; and here, as in Warsaw, the people gathered around him.

But Father Clement's success excited the fury of his enemies, and they were legion, but as he had possession only for six months, they concentrated all their strength in an effort to dislodge him when the six months had expired. Again, his enemies won. Indeed, all ministrations on the part of the Fathers ceased compulsorily after five months. Although the students and one Father remained on for a year and a half, the foundation was a failure, and with the downfall of Friburg came the collapse also of Mount Thabor.

BABENHAUSEN.

Clement made yet another effort, and succeeded in obtaining a foundation in Swabia. Here in a place not far from Babenhausen — for he was not allowed to preach there — in the parish of Weinreid, Clement was invited to use the pulpit and the confessional. Here again the same magical transformation among the people was effected. The people he met here were the most plastic and good natured Father Clement had ever encountered. Although he ministered to them for only eight months or so, yet his name still falls from the lips of Catholics in that region. The prince of the little principality to which Babenhausen belonged was very friendly to the Fathers, and on one occasion invited them to preach there. As the Feast of the Most Holy Redeemer was approaching, Clement preached an Octave. So great was the spiritual stir in the place that the prince was forced

to ask him to desist from preaching or ministering. A few months later Babenhausen fell under the administration of the Bavarian Government, which forthwith expelled the whole community from the country.

DERELICT.

After this crushing calamity, that destroyed the hopes of twelve long years, many a brave priest would have faltered, but not so Clement Hofbauer. If Europe denies him his desire, he will pass beyond its boundaries, even though those boundaries be the great rolling Atlantic. He calmly opens his map and studies it; his eye passes over the mapped ocean and rests on North America. He determines at once to sail for Canada and work among the Indians. Writing to his companions in Warsaw, he says: "If you could see how eagerly we are studying the maps of North America you would think we had taken leave of our senses. . . . Our resolution is taken." What an indomitable spirit animated this great man! What tenacious perseverance! What fortitude! One wonders what prodigies our saint would have achieved had he lived in any other age but that hectic age of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars! As an apostle for Christ, he stood peerless and alone in the battle against the enemies of the Church. The Nuncio at Vienna, Monsignor Severoli, writing to another ecclesiastic about our saint, said: "My confidential conversation with him revealed him to me as a man so superior to other men that I should venture to compare him with very few. There shines forth in him an extraordinary zeal for the Catholic religion."

What was the great secret of Clement's wonderful calm under crushing misfortunes? Of his stubborn perseverance against overwhelming odds? Of his striking fortitude? It was his wonderful and vivid faith. He knew that failure or success mattered not in the eyes of God. What did matter, and matter much, was whether one was doing one's best for God's sake. This wonderful faith and wonderful resignation to God's Will are the keynote of all his letters in those days of persecution. Writing to Saint Benno's after the last reverse at Babenhausen, he says: "Have courage, God is the Master of the Universe. He directs everything to His own glory and to our welfare; and no one can resist Him. So far as I am myself concerned, in this crisis I have abandoned myself to His Will. In all these conspiracies set on foot to harass and afflict us, I can see God's guiding Hand leading us there where He wishes us to be."

SORROW.

Darker days have yet to dawn for our saint. Greater trials await him. The first of these great trials, and one which sent a deeper shaft into his soul than any other he had yet experienced was the death of his lifelong friend and companion, the gentle Father Hubl. As we have seen, they had met at the University of Vienna as students; they journeyed to Rome together; they both joined the Redemptorists and together they transplanted, at enormous self-sacrifice, the Congregation beyond the Alps; they had the same spiritual aims; they shared the same sorrows; they worked for the same end. And now, this sudden snap in that long chain of the most tender associations!

And what lent a darker hue to the death of Father Hubl was the tragedy of which he had been the victim some short time before. He was lured one night from the Monastery at Saint Benno's under the plea of a sick call, a carriage waiting for him at the door. He had not ridden far when he was blindfolded and led before a body of men, who demanded from him a promise that he would cease certain ministrations in the church. And the good Father refusing, the cowardly ruffians fell upon him and beat him nearly to death. He had not fully recovered his health when he went to the hospital to attend those suffering from an epidemic then sweeping over Poland. In his weak state,

Father Hubl caught the epidemic and died a martyr of charity in the arms of his lifelong friend, Saint Clement Hofbauer. He died on 4 July 1807, in his forty-seventh year. That date was written in the soul of Clement in letters of blood. The first surge of emotion within his soul nearly overwhelmed him. The great world would still roll on round the sun, but to Clement Hofbauer that world would never be the same. A great soul had left it for ever. Never did Clement find it so hard to say, "Oh Lord, Your Will be done!" And yet he said it, and said it times without number. Writing to a friend four months later regarding Father Hubl's death, Clement said: "I am resigned to do the Will of God. I constantly protest that I desire only what God wills; still, I must admit that since his death I have not had one happy hour."

CATASTROPHE.

But he had little time for sorrow, for catastrophe came upon him — the expulsion of his whole community, of over forty members — half of whom were priests — from Warsaw. The overthrow of the Austrians in 1805 by the Emperor Napoleon and his combined victories over Prussia in 1806 and over Russia in 1807 placed the French Emperor in a position to dictate his will to the European States. Napoleon's lieutenant, Marshal Davoust (Davout), the hero of Auerstaedt, was quartered in Warsaw with one of the French armies. Various evil reports reached him from those German and Swiss States whence Clement had been expelled, to the effect that the Redemptorists were opposed to Napoleon, and were in league with the Bourbons. The French commander reported matters to Napoleon. Things reached a crisis when one night at the devotions some French officers entered the church to scoff at the religious ceremonies. The Catholic congregation resented it, and soon a melee took place in the church, when the French officers were beaten and ejected. Marshal Davoust held an enquiry, but a very one-sided one, in which only the evidence of the officers was taken. The Redemptorists were blamed, and Napoleon, informed on those one-sided lines, ordered the expulsion of the Redemptorists from all the German States; and especially were they to be expelled from Warsaw.

On 17 June 1808, the decree of Napoleon was executed. As the Fathers were conducting the morning services in the church before a fairly large congregation, a body of soldiers filed up the street leading to Saint Benno's. The whole monastery and church were soon surrounded, and the Fathers were gathered into their monastery and held prisoners there for three days, in which time they were to pack up their belongings. On 20 June, they were taken away in a wagon to the fortress of Kuestrin. After being interned here for four weeks, they were ordered to disband and go, each to his own home or place. Clement parted with his community, many of whom he was destined never to see again, and then he set out for Vienna.

It was twenty-three years since Father Clement and Father Hubl had set out from Vienna to found a branch of the Redemptorist Congregation beyond the Alps. Now Clement returns to that city: his friend and companion no longer by his side, and the great structure they both had laboured to erect shattered to the dust. A dark chapter has closed, but every line of it breathes forth the heroic virtues and greatness of Clement Hofbauer. He was tried in the fires of tribulation, and was not found wanting. Listen to those beautiful words of his written in a letter which describes his expulsion: "We resign ourselves to the lot which by the Will of God has befallen us. It is indeed sweet to suffer when, as in our case, one has nothing with which to reproach oneself."

When the waves of an angry sea crash on the deck of a tossing vessel, threatening to sweep every mortal to destruction, the mariner sometimes lashes himself to the mast with cord and rope and faces the fury of the gale: so with our saint; with the strands of hope he knit his soul to his God in the teeth of the storm, and looked to the dawn of a brighter day.

“THE APOSTLE OF VIENNA.”

When Father Clement arrived at Vienna, a friend, Baron Penchler, obtained lodgings for him in a house near the Italian National Church. Here he was appointed assistant priest to the Rector of the Italian Church, who was now a feeble old man. Clement’s activities in the pulpit were much restricted, so that he could not use freely those powers that had reformed Warsaw. In the confessional, however, his zeal became known, and his little circle of penitents grew, till soon it included some of the greatest figures in Vienna.

Among others may be mentioned (Karl Wilhelm Friedrich) Frederick Schlegel, whose name in literature is immortal. Schlegel’s early writings, like his early career, were sadly at variance with Christian principles. In Berlin, he first met his wife, Dorothy, the daughter of the famous Mendelssohn, who was herself a lady of talent and culture. They were married at Paris about four years before Clement’s advent to Vienna; and, after a patient search for the truth, they both embraced the Catholic Faith, and were received into the True Fold in Cologne. Some months later they removed to Vienna, at about the time our saint went there. Baron Penchler introduced Frederick Schlegel and his wife, Dorothy, to Father Clement, and the two placed themselves under his spiritual direction. Frederick Schlegel, on account of his literary fame, exercised a wholesome and far-reaching effect upon Viennese social circles by his frequentation of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion. Dorothy Schlegel was, if anything, more amendable to the spiritual counsels of the saint, and blossomed forth into a beautiful type of Christian womanhood.

The fame of Frederick Schlegel in the world of letters attracted many great men to his home. But none so welcome as Father Clement Hofbauer. Here, then, at the fireside of his literary friend, Father Clement became acquainted with some of the most famous writers and artists and philosophers in Europe; and here, too, one by one these fell under the spell of the saint. In this humble and unobtrusive way, he gained a hold upon the influential circles in Austria; and by degrees, he conceived that far-reaching movement of his which resulted in rousing the upper classes from their spiritual torpor.

It was here that the painter, Friedrich August von Klinkowström (or Klinkowstroem) — a strict Protestant — yielded to the saintly influence of Father Clement, and not only became a convert to the Catholic Church, but pledged himself to the great spiritual campaign against the scepticism and religious indifference of the age. (His wife Louise had preceded him into the Church.)

ADAM VON MULLER.

Here, too, Saint Clement made the intimate acquaintance of that man of genius, Adam von Muller (Adam Heinrich Müller), a recent convert to the Church, who was probably the greatest savant in Germany at that time. It was while reading Edmund Burke’s *“Reflections on the French Revolution”* that Muller’s thoughts first turned to the Catholic Church. Burke had paid a glowing tribute to the spirit of the Middle Ages, and Muller rightly attributed that spirit of chivalry, so characteristic of those times, to the influence of the Catholic Church and her sublime teaching. From the study, then, of the social conditions of the Middle Ages, Muller turned his thoughts to the Catholic Church, which had created them. His conversion took place about three years before Father Clement arrived in Vienna.

A series of lectures delivered in Vienna riveted the attention of the upper classes in Vienna upon Muller, and he was asked soon afterwards by the Archduke Maximilian d’Este to consider

founding an institute where the sons of the nobility could obtain an education permeated with Catholic thought and founded on Catholic principles. Many great Catholic professors were invited to co-operate in the work, and the buildings of the Karolye Palace were placed at their disposal. Father Clement was invited by Muller to act as spiritual director to this great institute.

But this grand and far-reaching work was brought to nought by the machinations of the enemies of the Church. Evil influence was brought to bear on the Emperor, who refused his approbation.

Nevertheless, during the short time that it lasted, our saint extended his acquaintance with the intellectual circles, and fortified his hold upon the upper classes.

FREDERICK WERNER.

About this time, too, there entered into the life of the saint another whose strange career makes highly interesting reading, Frederick Zachary Werner (Zacharias Werner), a great poet and dramatist. No conversion to the Catholic Church at that time caused such a sensation as that of Werner. At the time that Father Clement and his companions were battling against their enemies in Warsaw, Werner was enjoying a Government position there in the city. So great was Werner's hostility to the saint at that time that he expressed himself in the following blasphemous manner: "I would give a hundred ducats to obtain possession of the large crucifix at Saint Benno's that I might break it on the shoulders of the religious there." After some years in Warsaw, Werner travelled about Europe writing dramas that brought him fame, but leading a life of high carnival and dissipation.

In 1809, he went to Rome, where a great change was effected in his soul; and, after great internal struggles, he submitted to the Catholic Church. Werner's zeal for his new Faith knew no bounds. An apostolic zeal seized his soul, and he thirsted to preach and spread the Gospel. After spending some time in a seminary, he was ordained a priest. Werner was then forty-six years of age. His defence of Catholic doctrine was now as ardent as his hostility to it had been vehement before. Soon he was hailed as the greatest pulpit orator of the day. It was shortly after his conversion that Father Werner met our saint. Werner was only too conscious of his own weak and fickle character, and placed himself unreservedly in the strong hands of Clement Hofbauer. "I know," he said, "but three men of superhuman energy, Napoleon, Goethe, and Clement Hofbauer." Under Clement's saintly direction Werner steadily persevered in the grace of God. He himself used to say: "It is to Hofbauer I owe it that I became a thorough Catholic." If Saint Clement's acquaintance was a priceless asset to Werner, Werner's acquaintance and friendship were a great boon to our saint, as it cast him into higher relief among the learned ones of his day, thus enabling him to achieve the regeneration of Austria.

JOSEPH VON PILAT.

Another great tower of strength to Father Clement at this time was Joseph von Pilat — secretary to the great Austrian statesman of European fame, Metternich. Pilat's wife, Elizabeth, and Klinkowstroem's wife, Louise, were sisters — both Protestants of the stricter type. Through the acquaintance and influence of Father Clement, these two sisters were converted to the Catholic Faith, and placed themselves under his spiritual guidance. The conversion of his wife prepared the way for the conversion of Joseph von Pilat himself. Speaking of his conversion to his wife, Pilat said: "My eventual return to Catholic life is owing entirely to Father Hofbauer's fatherly care and interest." Pilat chose our saint as his confessor, and these relations were broken only by the death of Saint Clement. As Joseph von Pilat's home was constantly visited by the higher State officials

and members of the aristocracy, and as he was editor of Vienna's leading paper, he became a pillar of support to the efforts of our saint in his great spiritual campaign.

Thus, our saint became the centre of a great religious movement similar to the Oxford Movement in England. In the meantime, his daily life centred round the Convent of Saint Ursula's, to which he was appointed chaplain, April 1813. Before his coming only occasional sermons were preached there, but the saint introduced the regular Sunday sermon. Soon the little church was crowded to overflowing, and penitents increased about the sacristy where he heard confessions. He lived in a house opposite the convent. He rose each morning at four o'clock. Then, after meditation, he said Mass and made his Thanksgiving. He used to spend the rest of the day visiting the sick and the poor. He was often seen at a late hour at night going through the city to visit some dying person, with a lantern in his hand, a big mantle cast over his shoulders, and a cloth cap on his head.

CONGRESS OF VIENNA, 1814.

In the year 1814, the historic Congress of Vienna took place. As its object was to restore peace and order to Europe, our saint's hopes were raised with regard to the advancement of religion and the institution of his Congregation beyond the Alps. Vain hopes! Whatever was expected of the famous Congress, the condition of the Catholic Church in Austria was not improved; and Clement's hopes for an establishment of his Order were not realized. It seemed as if failure was for ever to cast its shadow on the saint, and proved beyond all doubt the heroic nature of his fortitude. It is noteworthy that at the home of one of our saint's devoted penitents, the pious Countess Julia Zichy, the monarchs of Russia, Prussia and Austria spent New Year's night.

Also, Clement had several visits from the Crown Prince Louis of Bavaria, the visit on one occasion lasting from half-past eight in the evening till half-past two in the morning. All this social influence the good priest exercised for one sole object — the advancement of the cause of God.

Two more famous conversions were effected by Father Hofbauer at this time of the Congress in Vienna — namely, the conversions of (Johann Friedrich Heinrich) Frederick Schlosser and that of his wife, Sophia. Writing fifty years afterwards, Sophia says of our saint: — "It is hardly possible to describe the impression that this saintly man made. The keynote of his whole character was love for God and for God's Holy Church, resulting in an unquenchable longing to lead souls to God." Another conversion at this time that consoled the saint was that of Augusta von Mengershausen — a sister to the wife of Pilat — and to the wife of Klinkowstroem. Augusta later became a nun.

Another venture by Clement to found a monastery beyond the Alps — this time in the Balkans — gave little hope of success. Two Fathers and two clerics, as well as one lay brother, were appointed to make the effort. Success came their way for a time as regards evangelizing the people; but the foundation of a monastery was never realized. Better news came from Switzerland, where Father Passerat, one of Clement's companions, succeeded in wresting from the Government approval of a monastery. Still, even there, the Fathers were much restricted in their activities by the civil authorities.

"THE HOFBAUER CIRCLE."

About the year 1818, a distinct movement towards the Catholic Church, a notable awakening in religious practice, began to manifest itself in the University of Austria. But when two famous

professors — Dr. Madlener and Dr. Veith — became converts to the Church, a decided impetus was given to the movement. After their conversion, both the professors made the acquaintance of Father Clement, and remained his steadfast friends ever afterwards.

Then some University students were introduced to him and began to spend some evenings with him discussing religion. The kindly and irresistibly attractive ways of the saint held them fast. Soon those students passed on the work to other students, and so the circle extended till it reached the number of fifty students. They opened their souls to him in confession, unfolded their difficulties, and recounted their doubts, and drank in his counsel and advice. It was said that Clement inspired in those who first met him the desire to reveal all the secrets of their conscience to him, and, once that was done, that it was impossible to leave him. There is no more homely and beautiful picture of our saint than that in which he is the centre of this circle of students. Evening after evening, they repaired to his little home. He received them kindly, set the table, and gave them of his hospitality. Then, after the evening meal, they listened to him as he lectured them on the Church: her difficulties, her success, her ways and her means. And when we remember his own life, and the heroic part he played in the vanguard of the Church's army, we can understand the surprising interest he awakened in the breasts of these young men. What a life was his who entertained them evening after evening! And how their hearts beat in sympathy as he told, chapter after chapter, the story of his triumphs and his failures.

What spiritual reading did those students need to quicken their fervour other than conversation with this living saint! What golden opportunities they had! When we remember his long, varied experience, his knowledge of human nature, his insight into the human conscience, the rich treasures of grace within his own soul; when we remember what a master he was in spirituality, we can gauge the power for good he possessed over these young men. When he heard them debating points of religion he would warn them that argumentation never effected the conversion of anyone. He would say that the best argument they could use with others was the good example of their own lives: that the lustre of one's own religion and virtue was its best credential. The students saw in the saint himself the best illustration of his words. It is little wonder, then, that long years after his death they treasured his memory as a precious possession, and recalled his counsels as gems from Heaven.

We have seen already how a Catholic institution, where the upper classes could receive a splendid education on truly Catholic lines, had been attempted by Adam von Muller. And we have seen, too, that the effort was not successful. Now, however Clement returned to the same project. The Archduke Maximilian again supported the attempt, and this time it succeeded. Klinkowstroem took charge; and in the sixteen years of its existence, over two hundred pupils passed through it. The success of the Klinkowstroem Institute, as it was called, gave our saint some of the meed of consolation in his advancing years.

As the University of Vienna was the stronghold of the Church's enemies, we can see at once the worth and significance of the saint's apostolate among students. A Catholic force was taking definite shape within the walls of the University, and that force was assuming an uncompromising stand. Professors who allowed their anti-Catholic bias to creep into their lectures were quickly challenged. A healthy warfare was being waged in that erstwhile peaceful home of Rationalism. But while our saint was achieving notable success by the creation of the "Hofbauer Circle," as it was called, nevertheless he was playing a dangerous role, as he was concentrating all the wrath of the enemies of the Church on himself. A determined effort was finally made to break him, and when the storm broke, it nearly swept his work to utter ruin.

HIS LAST SORROW.

According to the laws existing for some time in Austria, Religious Orders were forbidden admittance within its boundaries, and communication with foreign superiors declared illegal. The enemies of the saint opened their attack upon him along these lines. He was cited before a tribunal and charged with being in communication with a Superior outside the Austrian realm. He was found guilty; and, by way of penalty, he was given the option to obtain a release from his vows or to suffer banishment from his native land. Rather than seek release from his vows, Clement accepted expulsion. As he ever cherished the hope that his dream of establishing his Congregation in Austria would be one day realized, this decision was a crushing blow. Then it was found to be beyond the jurisdiction of these judges to inflict this penalty. The Archbishop of Vienna drew the attention of the Emperor to this legal injustice. An enquiry was ordered. The court was censured, and our saint was saved. Nay, more, not only was the saint permitted to remain in Austria, but reliable information reached him to the effect that the matter of legalizing a branch of the Congregation in Austria was being considered by the Government. The ageing Father Clement and his friends were transported with joy at this sudden change in his fortunes. They began to make preparations for the foundation of a large novitiate, while they waited from day to day for the Imperial decree of approbation.

THE END.

Feverishly those days of waiting passed over the head of our saint. Alas! A strange but definite conviction came to him that his eyes would never read the long-hoped-for decree. He was in sight of the promised land. Would he ever enter it? His strength was noticeably failing, and dangerous symptoms were manifesting themselves. One day after a Requiem High Mass the saint was so exhausted that a friend brought him home in a carriage. At home, he went to a bed from which he was destined never to rise. After receiving Holy Communion in the early hours of 15 March 1821, he lapsed into unconsciousness. At twelve o'clock midday, the Angelus bell rang out. Ere its echoes died away the soul of the saint passed to eternity. John Clement Mary Hofbauer was dead. The purest heart that beat in human breast in those dark days had ceased to beat, and the last page of a noble and inspiring life was closed for ever. "Religion in Austria," said Pius VII, "has lost its chief support."

The Imperial decree approving of the establishment of his Congregation in Austria — that decree that the saint so long yearned to hold in his hand and to see — arrived on the day of his death. It was placed on his dead body. His cold hands could not hold it. His sightless eyes could not read it. But there it lay, upon the dead body of the saintly priest. On that day of the saint's death, the Congregation was established beyond the Alps. From that day, it flourished and prospered with remarkable rapidity, till it spread far beyond the confines even of Europe.

Vienna was stirred to its depths at the news of the saint's death. A dense mass of humanity, embracing all sections of society, followed the saint to his grave. Soon all the mortal remains of John Clement Mary Hofbauer crumbled into the dust of the grave, but his name and his work are imperishable. He was beatified on 29 January 1888 and canonized amid great splendour by Pope Saint Pius X on 20 March 1909.
