

SAINT  
JOHN  
NEUMANN

*His Writings  
and Spirituality*

Richard Boever, C.Ss.R.



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## FOREWORD

FATHER BOEVER has creatively written a biography of St. John Neumann in the first person as if the saint were speaking to the reader. Father Boever's desire to focus on the humanity of St. John Neumann rather than on his accomplishments is achieved in a unique way. Direct quotes from St. John Neumann throughout the text provide a moving context for the experiences of his life rooted in a deep trust in God.

In Part I, the chronology of St. John's life includes the development of his deep faith from the early years to his death while bishop of Philadelphia. The reader is privileged to peer into his heart during the discernment of a priestly vocation and his perseverance in traveling across the ocean to the United States where he is ordained. St. John's letters to his family in Bohemia are both tender and stirring in describing his challenges and joys of serving in the developing Church in America. His life as missionary and bishop convey the holiness and humility that attracted so many souls to being disciples of Jesus Christ.

In Part II, historical documents such as the letters to his family and pastoral letters to the clergy and faithful of Philadelphia enable us to ponder our own current day in the context of his life and times.

This book invites each of us to accompany St. John Neumann along his path of faithful discipleship, deepening our own commitment of discipleship in living out our unique vocation in Christ.

*Justin Cardinal Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia  
July 15, 2010*

## PREFACE

WHO IS YOUR favorite saint? The Catholic Church offers the witness of many men and women who have followed Jesus Christ in extraordinary ways. The first saint that comes to my mind is Mary, the Mother of Jesus. No human being played a greater role in the history of salvation. As a young woman her *yes* to God brings the living God into her womb. Her request at Cana leads Jesus to perform his first miracle when he changes water into wine. We find Mary, ever faithful, under the cross as her flesh and blood dies an agonizing death. Mary also is in the cenacle on the first Pentecost with the apostles awaiting the outpouring of the Holy Spirit promised by the risen Jesus.

I love St. Joseph, the husband of Mary. He taught his foster son the Jewish faith and how to be a carpenter. The impetuous Peter, the doubting Thomas, and zealous Paul all inspire me. The story of Mary Magdalene rushing from the empty tomb on Easter to announce the good news of the risen Lord also moves me deeply.

In the days of the early Church, we had heroic martyrs who shed their blood for the faith, learned teachers who possessed great insights into the mystery of God, and soul-searching mystics who went into the desert to find the Lord. From the Middle Ages come some of our greatest saints: the beloved Francis of Assisi, the soldier Ignatius who founded the society of Jesuits, Catherine of Siena who courageously challenged a pope, and Theresa of Avila, who eventually became the renowned reformer of her Carmelite

community. I also want to mention the founder of my own Redemptorist community, St. Alphonsus Liguori, who is the patron saint of moral theologians.

I love the story of Thomas More, a lawyer and political figure, who chose to hold onto his principles even in the face of death. Katherine Drexel, a wealthy woman of Philadelphia, spent her fortune to educate the poorest in society. The courage of early American martyrs who died while bringing the faith to the New World also come to mind.

Recent stories in the media have focused on Mother—now Blessed—Theresa of Calcutta and her diaries, which detail the hope she held onto despite trials, doubts, and questions. Her struggle to hold onto her faith despite these powerful temptations demonstrates her humanity and makes her all the more inspirational to me. I also think of two saints who lived in modern times: Maximilian Kolbe, who died at the hands of Nazi guards so a married father could live, and Edith Stein (St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross), a Holocaust victim.

While I admire the great saints who founded religious communities, who died heroic deaths for Christ, and who wrote weighty books on theological discourse, the ones who resonate with me the most are those who faced the same day-to-day challenges that I do in my own life. When St. Thérèse of Lisieux died at the age of twenty-four, she was known only to her family and friends. She struggled with health issues, felt the sting of rejection by others in her religious community, had doubts about God's existence, and even wondered about taking her own life. She loved what she called the Little Way: being faithful to Jesus in ordinary matters. Today, she is one of the most popular saints in the world.

I first heard about St. John Neumann in 1968 when I was in my year of novitiate as a Redemptorist in Ilchester, Maryland.

During our novitiate, we were introduced to the holy men of Redemptorist history. We learned about St. Alphonsus Liguori, St. Gerard Majella, and St. Clement Hofbauer. These men were giants in the Congregation, and they did great works for God and the Church. Novice master Father Leo Henighan, C.Ss.R., also had us read about Blessed John Neumann, who was not yet canonized. Neumann was one of the early pioneers of the Redemptorists in North America. He landed in New York from Prachatitz, Bohemia, eager to serve the many immigrants who were moving to the New World. Neumann was ordained a priest for the Diocese of New York, and he labored zealously for the souls in his care. Eventually, he felt a deep yearning for community life and this led him to join the Redemptorists in 1840. In fact, he was the first man to join our Congregation in America. And with a great sense of reluctance on his part, Neumann became the Superior of the Redemptorists in the United States. With even greater trepidation, he obediently accepted the pope's command to become the fourth bishop of Philadelphia.

When we asked the novice master why Neumann was being considered for canonization, he spoke to us about some of the significant works that Bishop Neumann performed throughout his life. He was the first vice provincial of the Redemptorists in America. As bishop of Philadelphia, Neumann worked to develop what eventually would become the modern Catholic school system. He also was instrumental in successfully increasing devotion to the Eucharist by organizing the 40 Hours eucharistic practices. And he was zealous about reaching out to new immigrants pouring into the United States from Europe. But what I remember most from the novice master's talks about Neumann more than forty years ago was this simple phrase: "He did ordinary things in an extraordinary way." These words recall what Jesus said in Luke



16:10: “The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones.” The hallmark of sanctity is not necessarily doing great things for God. Rather, holiness is doing the will of God in our daily lives like St. John Neumann did in his. Neumann’s commitment to prayer, to his vocation as a religious and a priest, to the love of God, and to the love of his neighbor are the hallmarks of St. John Neumann’s spirituality. This is a path to God that all of us can follow.

Certainly, Father Richard Boever, C.Ss.R., has written a timely book. The anti-Catholicism that Neumann experienced in his lifetime was very public. And in our modern age—particularly in some media coverage—people of faith are sometimes dismissed or ridiculed in subtle ways. St. John Neumann was an immigrant who came to the United States, and became an American citizen. In fact, he was the first male American citizen to be canonized by the Catholic Church. This good saint spent a great deal of his ministry caring for many European immigrants. In our society today, immigration is a topic of continuing debate. We pray that the example of St. John Neumann will lead us to a just and compassionate policy toward those seeking to enter our nation, a land of immigrants. Many parents today are looking for alternatives to some aspects of the educational system. Charter schools are on the rise, and some parents home-school their children. St. John Neumann fostered the development of the Catholic school system—a system that continues today. And in spite of many challenges, the Catholic school system continues to provide a quality academic education for students as they grow in the knowledge and practice of their faith.

As you read this very fine book, you will come to know an outstanding man who has much to teach us today. The use of

Neumann's own writings—especially his letters—brings the reader into a very close relationship with the saint. It is clear from Father Richard Boever's commentary that he is most learned about John Neumann. Even more important, it is very apparent that Father Richard Boever loves this saint.

May all readers who enter into the life of St. John Neumann through this book receive inspiration as they come to know this American immigrant saint. And may all readers be moved to follow Jesus the Redeemer in doing ordinary things extraordinarily well—just as St. John Neumann did throughout his lifetime.

*Patrick F. Woods, C.Ss.R.  
Provincial Superior  
Baltimore Province*

# INTRODUCTION

MY BROTHER has a farm about eighty miles southwest of St. Louis where he raises Angus cattle for the market. On the property, he has built a cabin in an isolated place farther from the main house—a place I often use as a hermitage. A wind chime hangs there.

Wind chimes like this one are rather simple constructs. Five or six aluminum tubes of varying lengths emit a note when they are struck by a wooden disk hanging in the middle of them. Each has a unique tone and, I am told by a man who knows music much better than I, that the breeze rings a perfect A-minor chord. Most of the time when I look at the wind chime, I notice little more than the aluminum tubes. The tubes are the most evident visual, but the wooden disk that makes them chime is actually the heart of the instrument.

Much has been written about John Neumann—his heroic virtue, his development of a school system, his devotion to the Eucharist, his untiring energy when it came to visiting distant places where his ministry was most needed. These are monumental accomplishments. They are much like the aluminum tubes of a wind chime that ring the notes. And the heart of the saint is like the wooden disk that chimes the work of his hands—much has been written about the works of St. John Neumann.

I began my study of St. John Neumann when I was a doctoral student at St. Louis University in search of material for my dissertation. I knew that the Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province

were responsible for collecting primary sources for the recently canonized (1977) John Nepomucene Neumann—the first male American citizen to receive this honor. St. John Neumann became the focus of my dissertation. That was thirty years ago. Since then, I have remained “in contact” with St. John Neumann by praying with him, writing things about him, and admiring him from afar. This recent adventure—the evolution of this book—has been a different experience.

One day I wrote the archivist who safeguards the Neumann material in Brooklyn and told him that I found myself deeply touched by Neumann, and crying as I was researching. This response to the saint was unfamiliar to me. I admired Neumann, questioned him, and imitated him. In his response, the archivist congratulated me, and then said that perhaps I had finally fallen in love with this saint. The archivist told me that there were some wonderful historical biographies about St. John Neumann, but that the authors who had written about him were simply presenting him to the public—they did not seem to convey a love for the man himself. Perhaps, the archivist said, this book will finally touch readers and show them that the saint is not only worthy of imitation, but also of friendship. I certainly hope so.

In this book, you will find materials that are intended to help you get to know the saint better—not only for his accomplishments, but also as a person. Some of the material will simply present the facts, as is the case with the chronology. But some material takes a bit more liberty and poetic license. I wrote this biography in the first person—as if St. John Neumann was telling his own story. The book is not a historical document as such, but it is historically sound. Whenever possible, I also used the words from Neumann’s journal, letters, and ecclesiastical instructions to tell his story. His words are not footnoted, but I have placed

them in italics to distinguish them from my own interludes to help carry his story.

Following this biography, the reader will find an article about Neumann's spirituality; heartwarming excerpts from Neumann's funeral; words from a letter sent back to Europe by one of Neumann's confreres describing the funeral; a sermon given the day before his funeral by his vicar general; the funeral eulogy of Archbishop Francis Patrick Kenrick of Baltimore; and a memorial poem given to Neumann by the citizens of Prachatitz. These help bring some facets of Neumann's personality to fuller light.

The remaining items, which include letters Neumann wrote to his family and friends from America and his pastoral letters to the clergy and the faithful of Philadelphia, help reveal his personality. I'm hopeful that this material will help readers understand Neumann more fully and recognize him as one of the great saints of heaven.

A special thanks to the Redemptorists of the Baltimore Province who have preserved so much excellent material from the life of St. John Neumann and who continue to treasure these materials as a patrimony of the province. Special thanks also to two Redemptorists who read and commented on this book, Fr. Ray Corriveau of the Toronto Province and Fr. John Murray of the Baltimore Province. Their comments were most helpful.

Finally, thanks is merited by the Redemptorists of the Denver Province for establishing the wonderful publishing house at Liguori, Missouri, and to the men and women serving this apostolate now for their attention to the many details of publishing this book.

Pope Benedict XV said of Neumann, "The merits of an active man are measured not so much in the number of deeds performed, as in their thoroughness and stability. For true activity does not consist in mere noise, it is not the creature of a day, but it unfolds

itself in the present, it is the fruit of the past and should be the good seed of the future. Are not these very characteristics the mark of the activity of Venerable Neumann? Bearing all this in mind, no one will any longer doubt that the simplicity of the work performed by our venerable servant of God did not hinder him from becoming a marvelous example of activity. Their very simplicity has forced us...to impress on our children...the proclamation of the heroic virtues of Neumann, since all find in the new hero an example not difficult to imitate.”

*Richard Boever, C.Ss.R.*

# CHRONOLOGY

|         |              |                                                                       |
|---------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1811    | March 28     | Born and baptized                                                     |
| 1818    |              | Began school in Prachatitz—First Confession                           |
| 1819    |              | Confirmation                                                          |
| 1821    |              | First Communion                                                       |
| 1823–29 |              | Studies at Gymnasium in Budweis                                       |
| 1829–31 |              | Studies on the philosophy level in Budweis                            |
| 1831–33 |              | Seminary studies in Budweis                                           |
| 1832    | July 21      | Tonsure and minor orders                                              |
| 1833–35 |              | Seminary in Prague                                                    |
| 1835    | July 8       | Finished studies, but ordination delayed                              |
| 1836    | February 8   | Left Prachatitz for America                                           |
| 1836    | April 20     | Set sail on the <i>Europa</i> for America                             |
| 1836    | June 2       | Disembarked at New York City                                          |
| 1836    | June 19      | Ordained a subdeacon                                                  |
| 1836    | June 24      | Ordained a deacon                                                     |
| 1836    | June 25      | Ordained a priest,<br>Old St. Patrick's Church in New York City       |
| 1836    | June 26      | First Mass at St. Nicholas Church,<br>New York City                   |
| 1836    | June 29      | Set out for ministry north of Buffalo                                 |
| 1836    | July 12      | Arrived in Buffalo and served parishes<br>north of that city          |
| 1839    | September 25 | Wenzel Neumann joins his brother in parishes<br>in New York State     |
| 1840    | October 18   | Left Buffalo and the Diocese of New York<br>to join the Redemptorists |
| 1840    | November 30  | Neumann becomes a Redemptorist novice                                 |

|         |            |                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1842    | January 16 | Profession of vows as a Redemptorist<br>(first C.Ss.R. to do so in North America)                                                                              |
| 1844–47 | March 5    | Named superior and pastor of St. Philomena's<br>Parish, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania                                                                               |
| 1847    | January 27 | Called to Baltimore to rest after exhaustion                                                                                                                   |
| 1847    | February 9 | Appointed vicegerent of the Redemptorists<br>in North America                                                                                                  |
| 1847    | Summer     | School Sisters of Notre Dame arrived in Baltimore                                                                                                              |
| 1849    | January 9  | B. Hafkenschied appointed vice provincial<br>of North America<br>Neumann named consulter of the vice province<br>and rector of St. Alphonsus Parish, Baltimore |
| 1852    | March 28   | Ordained Bishop of Philadelphia by Archbishop<br>Francis Kenrick of Baltimore                                                                                  |
| 1852    | April 28   | First meeting forming the Catholic School<br>Board of Philadelphia                                                                                             |
| 1853    |            | 40 Hours Devotions inaugurated                                                                                                                                 |
| 1854    | October 21 | Went to Rome for the Solemn Declaration<br>of the Immaculate Conception                                                                                        |
| 1855    | February   | Visited family and friends in Bohemia                                                                                                                          |
| 1856    | May 26     | First Sisters of St. Francis profess their vows<br>before Bishop Neumann                                                                                       |
| 1857    | April      | James F. Wood appointed coadjutor<br>Bishop of Philadelphia with right of succession                                                                           |
| 1858    | Sept 13    | Exterior of cathedral completed,<br>cross and keystone placed on structure                                                                                     |
| 1860    | January 5  | At 3 PM, St. John Neumann died<br>while on an errand                                                                                                           |
| 1860    | January 10 | Neumann buried in crypt at St. Peter's Church,<br>Philadelphia                                                                                                 |

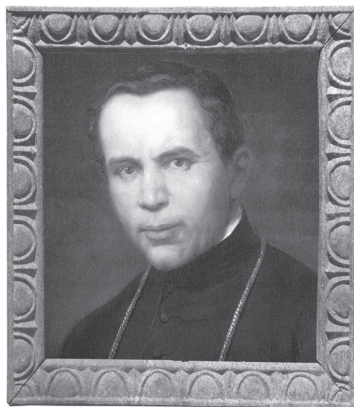


PART I

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John N. Neumann

*A Biography  
in the First Person*



## SETTING THE SCENE

THE DAY I ARRIVED in New York City was the center point in my life. It was Trinity Sunday, 1836, when the ship the *Europa*—which sailed out of Havre—arrived in New York Harbor. As we approached shore, everyone on board pressed up against the railing, gazing through the mist at the welcome sight of our new home. *In spite of the heavy rains, we all stood on deck as long as anything could be seen and took delight in the beautiful green of the shore, in the light red houses and the landed estates which could not be painted more beautifully.... What happiness may not the just man feel, when on his*

*deathbed he sees the end of his misery approach and the land of his yearning lie before him.*

I came to America to be a minister. And much like the Lord's desert experience, my journey also began in a kind of desert—the desert of the high seas. For forty days I sailed, sometimes tossed mercilessly by towering waves, other times with



St. John Neumann sets foot on American soil.  
(Window in Neumann Shrine, Philadelphia)

hardly any movement in the sails, a frightening stillness to endure. I could not help but think how these experiences were like the spiritual life—sometimes in mortal combat with the powers of evil, and other times fighting a battle with an overpowering stillness.

Time and time again, I asked the captain to allow me to go ashore. We were quarantine on board due to illness among some of the passengers on the ship. I was well and wanted to get on with my journey, even though I had no idea what was in store for me. I only had one dollar left to my name, and I had not yet received word from Bishop Dubois of New York about whether he needed a German priest in the diocese. I did know that the bishop of Philadelphia no longer was in need of a German-speaking priest and I was worried about whether I would be able to minister to people after spending so many years preparing for this work. In the years to come, I would know firsthand the very real need for priests in America. In fact, I often found myself wishing that I could duplicate myself several times over! *The need of Catholic priests and the spiritual desolation of the faithful (were) increasing day by day. Judging from a human standpoint, the disproportion would have lamentable results, only God alone is the support of His Church.* Finally, after asking the captain of the *Europa* for several days if I could go ashore, he wearied of my supplications and permitted me to go to Staten Island where I caught a ferry to the city itself. I breathed a sigh of relief and said a prayer of gratitude once I landed on shore.

Obviously, there was no one to meet me in New York; neither did I know the layout of the city nor any destinations to find once I arrived there. Nevertheless, I found great solace in walking through the city, looking for clues about where to go next. I wanted, of course, to find a Catholic church and I walked down endless blocks in the rain all day. It was a good thing that I was

already accustomed to walking long distances at a quick pace. But by the end of the day, I still had not satisfied my quest. That night, I stayed with a Swiss family, and they were able to point me in the direction of a Catholic church the next morning. The church unfortunately was an English-speaking parish. This should not have surprised me as I now was in an English-speaking country. The people at the church directed me to the cathedral, where it just so happened a German-speaking priest resided with the bishop. An hour later, I found my sanctuary. Father Raffener greeted me like a long-lost brother. I found out that he also traveled to North America back in 1832 to join the Redemptorists after hearing about the need for priests. He was, however, delayed in New York City by inclement weather. And as it turned out, he never left the city. He saw the great need for priests after getting involved with the German-speaking immigrants who lived there. So Father Raffener remained as a priest in the diocese, in the same place where he first arrived in North America.

As it turned out, my anxiety about being ordained was unnecessary. Father Raffener told me that three weeks prior, a letter was sent to Europe saying that I had been accepted into the diocese of New York! Since I had already set sail by the time the letter was sent, I did not receive the correspondence. The bishop informed me that I would be ordained as soon as he returned from a pastoral visit to a remote area in the diocese. What a wonderful bishop!

*Thanks, a thousand thanks to You, my Jesus, for having prepared a place for me in Your sanctuary. Now free from anxiety, I can enter into myself. This I do the more gladly as I know it to be my duty. O, what emotions were mine when, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, I set foot on American soil!...My God, how can I thank You for Your goodness in sending me to so paternal, so pious a man! Here I am at last! Doubt and uncertainty have vanished like mist before*

*the rays of the sun. I may now look forward with confidence to the speedy attainment of my hopes. Silently, O my Jesus, silently but surely have You disentangled the knot which once appeared to me so difficult....My God, I am seized with fear when I consider the sanctity of the office that awaits me and compare with it my own unworthiness. Lord, punish me not in Your anger! Take from me the burden, or dear Lord, increase my strength and faith, my hope and charity, a thousandfold! Enkindle in my heart charity toward my neighbor. In such sentiments I would be willing to die; I would not care what might happen to me....O Jesus, I must henceforth labor for the salvation of others. Do You strengthen my weakness! Be You forever praised, dearest Jesus, my Lord and my God! Behold, my life, my strength, my whole being, all that I have, all that I am, I devote to Your greater glory.*

## MY EARLY LIFE

I WAS IN MY TWENTIES when I knew that I would dedicate myself to the North American missions. But this knowledge and determination did not spring up overnight. The seed was planted in the earliest days of my life when I was still living with my parents, Philip Neumann and Agnes Lebis. My father was born on October 16, 1774, in Obernburg, a town in Bavaria. He moved to Prachatitz, my hometown, in 1802 when he was twenty-eight years old to ply his trade as a stocking weaver. At that time, commerce between Bavaria and Bohemia was common, and German was the language we normally spoke at home. My mother was Czech, but I would not study the language until years later when I was in the seminary. My classmate, Krbec, helped me learn Czech grammar and vocabulary; in exchange, I lectured him in Italian, a language he admired for its beauty. This study greatly helped me master other Slavic dialects which were useful to me during my pastoral ministry in America.

My father and mother married in 1805, and I was the third of six children. Catherine, the first-born, later married Matthias Berger and had one son, John. This nephew of mine later became a Redemptorist priest and missionary in America like his uncle and gave me great joy. He would be the man who wrote my first biography using his sources both with family in Bohemia and Redemptorist confreres with whom he lived. Veronica, my second elder sister, married Anthony Kandl, but they had no children. I

was the third child of the Phillip Neumann family, born March 28, 1811, which fell on Good Friday that year. My baptism took place on the very day of my birth in the parish church of St. James and I was given the name of the protector of Bohemia, John Nepomucene. The three children of the family born after me all became religious. Joanna entered the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo and became known as Sister Mary Caroline. My sister



Young John Neumann  
(Baltimore Province Archives)

Aloysia followed in Joanna's footsteps, joining the Sisters of Charity after caring for my father until his death. Then there was Wenzel, my dear little brother who came to join me in New York. In 1841, he became a Redemptorist brother in my own congregation and became known as Brother Wenceslaus.

The family tree of my parents did not survive beyond two generations but their accomplishments as Christian parents surely will bring them great reward. *We were brought up in the old-fashioned school. Our parents were both deeply Christian. While our father from morning to night supervised the apprentices and workers, of which there were at times five or six in our house, our mother never missed a day hearing Mass. She always took with her one or the other of the children who was not yet in school....In my case there was needed at times the promise of a penny or something similar to bring me to Mass, rosary and Stations of the Cross.* I received my first confession when I was seven years old, confirmation when I was eight, and First Holy Communion when I was nine.

As I grew in age, I found myself becoming more intrigued with the wonders of nature, which is not to say that I did not also love my religion and the life of the parish. I was always fervent in my devotion and did have a dread of sin. At age seven, I entered the local school and did well in my studies during those first six years of schooling. My love of books began in these early days—a love that sometimes tended to lend itself to a bit of extravagance later in life. The entire culture surrounding me during my upbringing was in tune with my family’s deeply held beliefs—there was never a contrast or division between religion and intellectual life. This allowed me to pursue my curiosities without a great fear of violating my religious convictions. *I had acquired from my father, who was a great lover of books, a decided passion for reading. As a result, the time that others spent in sports or bird catching, I spent in reading all the books I could get hold of. This is the reason why my mother often called me the little bookworm. I was accustomed to fill up the many idle hours and days with nothing else but the reading of all sorts of books that I could get my hands on, without thinking of being selective.*

In my seventh year, I made my First Confession and in



Parish Church at Prachatitz (Author)

the summer of 1819, I was confirmed by The Most Reverend Bishop of Budweis. For as long as anyone could remember, no bishop had ever visited our remote mountain village. As a result, the huge crowd and the solemnity were indescribable and the memories remained so vivid in my memory that I can recall the smallest details of the

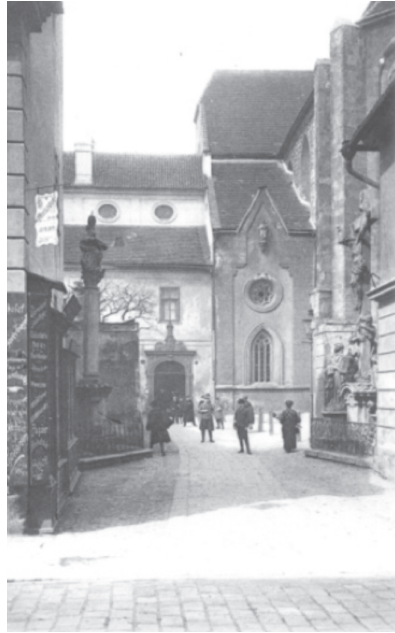


occasion. If I recall correctly, I was not yet ten years old when I mastered the *Larger Catechism*. As a result, I was admitted to First Holy Communion with the older communicants at the school. I have no particularly strong recollection of the day; in Bohemia, it was not the custom to observe the day as solemnly as in other countries. Thereafter, we received Communion every three months.

During my school years, I was taken by the wonders that surrounded me. One night, I was unable to sleep because I was fascinated by the moon's ability to float in space without falling into the vast expanse of the universe. My told mother me to go to bed, and to let the moon float on its own. During my last year in the local school, I was tutored in Latin, along with ten or twelve other students. This was the custom for boys who intended to enter the study of science in the upper grades. I also began to study botany with the parish catechist in the church gardens. This interest continued into adulthood, and I often would collect botanical specimens from the forests of New York. *I have made use of the opportunity thus afforded to extend my knowledge of botany. I gather the flowers on my way, many of them unknown in your country. Had I an opportunity I would send to Bohemia specimens of the rare and curious plants I everywhere meet.*

At age twelve, I finished schooling in Prachatitz and entered the gymnasium in Budweis under the direction of the Piarist Fathers. Budweis was a day's journey from home. I boarded with three others students. *Room and board were very cheap and the cost no more than sixteen florins for the ten months. Actually, I had very little studying to do. The catechist at home, during our few lessons each week, made us learn so much that with little preparation we could have been immediately promoted into the third class. That, however, was not permitted. I used the many idle hours and days in more and more reading—all kinds of books, whatever I could indiscriminately get my*

*hands on.* In my third year at Budweis, however, I ran into a problem. We had a very old, good-natured professor who had an unfortunate addiction to liquor. As might be imagined, we made no progress in our studies. In fact, I forgot much of what the catechist at home had taught me. During that third year, our professor, intoxicated as usual, came to our examination which was presided over by the reverend superintendent. The unfortunate man was, of course, compelled to withdraw. Soon



Budweis Gymnasium (Baltimore Province Archives)

after, he died by his own hand. His successor was as strict as he was learned, and he wanted us to crowd into six months the studies that should have been done in the previous two and a half years. This required too much of most of the pupils—especially after developing bad habits under his predecessor. As might be expected, this caused many students to be left behind.

In these years of gymnasium, I was dissatisfied with the teacher of Christian doctrine. He was the very personification of dryness, and a stickler for verbatim recitations. I had no memory for words, so the two hours of religious instruction were very irksome to me. When at the end of the gymnasium years of school, I was exhausted and some of my grades were not as good as they should have been, my father figured I was finished with my studies and that I was ready to exchange my books for a trade. It would