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Bernard Brady, O.P., Parish Priest of Derryvullen, 1770-1800 (?)

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BERNARD BRADY, O.P., PARISH PRIEST OF DERRYVULLEN,
1770-1800 (?).

Fr. Brady was born about 1730 in the diocese of Kilmore and the county of Cavan : he received the Dominican habit as a 'son' of the convent of Cavan in the Irish college of Holy Cross at Louvain in or about the year 1751.¹ There he remained for the following nineteen years. He was ordained a priest in the episcopal chapel at Malines on 10 June 1756.² His studies completed, he was taken onto the teaching staff of the college (for the friars taught their own Dominican students at home) and rose by slow degrees through the various stages of the academic hierarchy. He was in turn appointed lector of philosophy (25 Aug 1759), master of students (8 Aug 1761), second regent (13 Aug 1763), and finally first regent or rector (8 Nov 1766).³ In recognition of his labours he was named *praesentatus* in theology (S.T.P.) on 28 November 1767. Two years later (18 Mar 1769) he received the permission of the Master General to retire to Ireland, his doctor having advised a return to his native climate.⁴

About 1770, very soon after his arrival in Ireland, the bishop of Clogher appointed him parish priest of Derryvullen and vicar-general of the diocese.⁵ Instead of associating himself with his native convent of Cavan, he took an interest in the convent of Gola, to which the General formally transfiliated him on 11 July 1772.⁶ On 31 December 1774 he was raised by the same authority to the rank of Master in Sacred Theology.⁷ In April 1776, in company with many priests of Clogher diocese, he signed a letter requesting the bishop to name as his coadjutor the Rev. Hugh O'Reilly, P.P. of Magher-Ross, who had been vicar-general for the previous twenty-two years.⁸ In this

1 The date of his birth and his age on reception of the habit can be deduced from two lists of Irish Dominicans : that in *Hibernia Dominicana*, p. 448; and that for 1767 published in *Collectanea Hibernica*, No. 8 (1965) 101. Thomas de Burgo puts Brady down as a son of Derry convent, but (although Brady had good friends in the diocese of Raphoe) one must follow the registers of the Master General which describe him as a son of Cavan.

2 A. M. Bogaerts, *De Dominikanen in de Wijdingsregisters van het Aartsbisdom Mechelen*, Brussels (1965) 268. This list is more accurate than that published in *I.E.R.*, 1951-2.

3 Archives of the Dominican Master General (hereafter AGOP), IV 231, pp. 3, 11, 18, 44.

4 AGOP IV 231, p. 46 and IV 240, p. 2.

5 This was stated by John Connolly, O.P., in 1780. Propaganda Archives (hereafter APF), SC *Irlanda* 14, ff. 295-6.

6 AGOP IV 240, p. 6.

7 AGOP IV 240, p. 8.

8 APF, SC *Irlanda* 12, f. 489rv.

letter, Fr. Brady signed himself as a master in theology, vicar-provincial of his Order (probably for Ulster), prior of Gola, and P.P. of Derryvullen. In the same year the clergy of Raphoe petitioned Rome to appoint Anthony Coyle as coadjutor to their own bishop. Their letter mentioned (9 Nov 1776) that the bishop favoured Fr. Bernard Brady for the post, but that since he was a native of the diocese of Kilmore and the county of Cavan, he should not be preferred to Fr. Coyle who had been vicar-general of Raphoe for twenty years.⁹

About four years later another Brady, bishop of Dromore, passed to his reward while staying with his Franciscan brothers at Capranica, north of Rome (4 Jul 1780). Within a fortnight of his decease, Fr. John Connolly, O.P., of San Clemente, wrote to the prefect of Propaganda suggesting Fr. Bernard Brady as his successor.¹⁰ Connolly claimed that for the previous ten years Brady had been in charge of a parish entrusted to him by the bishop on his return from Louvain, and that the bishop had made him vicar-general in the same year as that in which he gave him the parish. He was an exemplary, learned, and zealous man of about fifty, who during his nineteen years at Louvain had twice refused the priorship through humility.¹¹ Connolly added that he himself had been among Brady's students in the college. On 29 August 1780 the bishop and coadjutor of Raphoe likewise recommended Fr. Brady for the vacant see of Dromore, stating that he had long been both parish priest and vicar in the diocese of Clogher.¹²

Despite these two recommendations (for Raphoe in 1776 and for Dromore in 1780), Fr. Bernard Brady was never raised to the hierarchy. All one can say of his later career is that he died before September 1801 when another was promoted to the mastership of theology left vacant in the Dominican province on his death.¹³

— HUGH FENNING, O.P.

9 APF, SOCG 846, f. 173rv.

10 APF, SC *Irlanda* 14, ff. 295-6. This Connolly, later bishop of New York, seems to have had Clogher connections. See P. O'Maola-gáin, 'An early history of Fermanagh', *Clogher Record*, Vol. II, No. 1 (1957) 63, where this Fr. Connolly is shown translating into Italian the preface to a ms. of Brian Maguire, now in the Vatican library.

11 If he refused the priorship it was before, not after, election.

12 APF, SOCG 855, f. 348r.

13 AGOP IV 240, p. 32. The successor was Fr. Peter James Magennis.