

COMMENTARY

A DOMINICAN CENTENARY. This year marks two centenaries that have a special importance for English Dominicans. It was in 1558 that Dominican life, as it had been known in England since the arrival of the first friars in 1221, came to an end. The Priory of St Bartholomew the Great at Smithfield, where the regular life of the Friar Preachers had been re-established under the brief Marian revival, was surrendered with the accession of Elizabeth, and the organized existence of the Order in England was destroyed. For a hundred years the English Dominican Province maintained a precarious identity abroad, with some of its members working amidst all the perils and uncertainties of the mission in England itself. But on April 17, 1658, a priory of the English Province, with full monastic observance, was established at Bornhem, in Flanders, with Father Thomas (later Cardinal) Howard as its first Prior. From this foundation dates the modern history of the English Dominicans, though nearly another two centuries were to pass before the Order was able to resume its full life in England.

To celebrate this tercentenary, Father Godfrey Anstruther has written a history of 'A Hundred Homeless Years', and we are glad to print an extract from this important study on the eve of its publication. It is a reminder of how much the English Dominican Province—and indeed the Catholic Church in this country—owes to Cardinal Howard. By a happy coincidence, we also print Professor David Knowles's review article of Père Vicaire's recent magisterial life of St Dominic. At last it is possible to see St Dominic in his full stature and to realize the providential importance of his vocation. BLACKFRIARS has never regarded itself as merely the house journal of the Order of Preachers, but we are sure our readers will welcome these authoritative reminders of the Church's debt to St Dominic and his Order.