

SIMON BRUTE' DE REMUR  
FIRST BISHOP OF VINCENNES

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## PREFACE

Simon William Gabriel Brute' de Remur stands out as one of the greatest figures in the Hierarchy of early United States History. His education together with his practicability made him a suitable candidate for the office to which he was appointed in 1834 by the Apostolic Brief, "Maximas Inter", of Gregory XVI. This appointment was the newly created See of Vincennes, one of the oldest settlements of the Northwest. The requests and petitions of the Second Provincial Council of Baltimore brought about the establishment of this Diocese and the appointment of Simon Brute' as its first Bishop. Although the acceptance of such a high office was not in accord with the desires of such a humble man as Father Brute', he finally acquiesced and accepted the position. There were others who also did not wish to see him fulfill that office. Bishop John England of Charleston, South Carolina voted against the nomination, although he and Brute' were the best of friends. The reason for Bishop England's disapproval being that he thought such a brilliant and talented man as Father Brute' was irreplaceable as professor at Mount Saint Mary's Seminary, Emmitsburg, and as Chaplain at the Convent of the Sisters of Charity. However, the new See soon found him to be its rightful possessor. A teacher and a scholar "par excellence" Simon Brute' did not shun any type of work, whether it was

physical or mental. He was a true Shepherd, a true apostle, calling forth his flock, never leading them astray but always steering them forth to a greater spirituality. This "Light of the Church" in the Northwest, this man of God towered above the seemingly insurmountable difficulties and hardships of the early days of the Faith in Indiana. The Church in Indiana, in fact the whole Church in the United States reveres him as a saintly pioneer Father and Apostle.

Richard A. Mode

### Priest and Scholar

On the Saturday before Trinity Sunday, June 10, 1808, a young Frenchman, Simon William Gabriel Brute' de Remur was ordained to the Holy Priesthood. The ceremony took place in the Parish Church of Saint Sulpice, the officiating Prelate being Monsigneur Andre', retired Bishop of the Diocese of Quimper. The next day, June 11, 1808 at the altar of the Blessed Virgin in the same church, this young man, now a Priest offered his First Holy Mass'. Simon Brute' had once determined to become a Doctor, and he had spent a long time in the study of medicine at Rennes and at the Medical School in Paris, where he took his degree in the year 1803. Of the eleven hundred students enrolled in the school he was first place among them. (1) Yet the young, ambitious, and scholarly Brute' was never to practice the medical profession, but he entered the Seminary of Saint Sulpice in 1804. The reasons he abandoned such a career for which he seemed particularly suitable are attributed to two, i.e., besides divine grace. First of all, John Gilmary Shea mentions the unforgettable impressions that the Abbe' Carron, under whom he had made his First Communion, had made upon him. There can be no doubt that the Abbe' instilled in him an inclination towards the service of God. (2) Bishop Aldering in his History of Vincennes quotes Bishop Bayley as being under the conviction that the French Revolution which

Simon Brute' had witnessed as a boy had made a lasting impression upon him. (3) So much so that he was willing to give up his would be career as a physician of the body (for there were many physicians in France at the time) and take care of souls. He had decided that he would be spiritual doctor, for so many French priests had been massacred and persecuted during the bloody revolution. This was the second reason for entering the Seminary. Throughout the whole of his seminary studies he showed such eagerness for his work, and especially that of Theology, that upon being ordained he took up the professorship of the Chair of Theology at the Sulpician Seminary at Rennes.

In 1809 Father Flaget, the new Bishop-elect of the Diocese of Bardstown in Kentucky, visited France. This was the event that was to bring Brute' to America. For years, however before Flaget's arrival, Simon Brute' had thought of being a missionary. Now Bishop-elect Flaget offered him this opportunity, to come to a mission field, The United States of America. Having gained the permission of his superiors, and resigning his position at the Seminary of Rennes, he left France for the United States on July 10, 1810. (June 10, 1810?) Father Brute' had become a member of the Society of Saint Sulpice only a few years before, thus he was extremely interested in their work in the United States. Bishop Flaget and Father Brute'

landed in New York in the early part of August arriving at Baltimore on the tenth day of that month. In Baltimore he was assigned to the Sulpician Seminary where he was to be a professor. For several years after his arrival in the United States he taught Philosophy there. He spent a short time on the eastern coast engaged in mission activities in 1812. In the same year he found himself at Mount Saint Mary's, near Emmitsburg, Maryland. While Brute' was a very scholarly man, he seemed to have a great amount of difficulty with the learning and study of English. He wrote the following in a letter to Bishop Flaget:

Day of St. Frances of Chantal, Baltimore, being there these two days---Je suis exile sur l'Eastern Shore of Maryland, where I serve with Mr. Monally, at St. Joseph's Talbot county. I went there the first days of my vacation. I am trying to learn practically my English. I have said Mass and preached, bad preaching as it may be, in six places. This must force this dreadful English into my backward head, or I must renounce forever to know it. I have seen Mr. Marechal only a moment; he is gone with the Archbishop to Carroll Manor. (4)

Father Brute' was to remain at Mount Saint Mary's near Emmitsburg until his appointment as Bishop of Vincennes, the only exceptions being his trip to France in 1815, and his term as President of St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, 1815-18. Father Brute' sailed to France in 1815 anxious to see his mother and to stir up interest among the French in Sulpician Missions of the United States. His companion as far as Bordeaux was William Seton, the son of Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton, the Foundress of the Sisters of Charity at

Emmitsburg. Mother Seton had entrusted her son to Father Brute' so that he might accompany him to Leghorn where he was to join the Filicchi Brothers in a commercial business. However, Father Brute' was forced to leave him at Marseilles and to send him on from there. He went on to Rennes. He returned in the same year, 1815. Upon his arrival he was appointed President of Saint Mary's College in Baltimore. Because of his executive ability and scholarly merit he was well suited to such a position. The office was not too agreeable to him, but he willingly accepted it as God's Will. Sister Mary Godecker in her book, "Simon Brute' de Remur" gives an excerpt from his letter to Garnier, the director of the St. Sulpice Seminary in France. It reads as follows:

I am recalled from Emmitsburg and made President of the college at Baltimore. Everyone considers it a fatal move, but Marechal demands it. We presented our protestations, but were unable to change matters. However, things must follow their natural course since I have been taken away. I accepted the presidency through urgency because Mr. Marechal refused it. You may hear of these facts without appreciating them, but nevertheless, it is true that M. Dubois is overburdened at the Mountain. (5)

From 1815-1818 Father Brute' was to be President at Saint Mary's, Baltimore, but in February, 1818 he returned to Mount Saint Mary's at Emmitsburg where he was to remain until his appointment as Bishop of Vincennes.



The Second Council of Baltimore and the  
Establishment of the Diocese of Vincennes

The Second Council of Baltimore was summoned to meet on Sunday, October 20, 1833 in the primatial See of Baltimore. One Archbishop and nine Bishops attended, this Council having a greater attendance than the first. Among those present were Archbishop Whitefield of Baltimore, Bishop John England of Charleston, S. Car., Bishop Joseph Rosati of St. Louis, Mo., Bishop Benedict Fenwick of Boston, Mass., Bishop John DuBois of New York, Bishop John Purcell of Cincinnati, Ohio. Bishop Flaget of Bardstown, Kentucky was the only member of the Hierarchy in actual charge of a Diocese that was absent. A number of Provincials of order were also present, the superiors of Society of Jesus, the Dominicans, and the Sulpicians being in attendance. (6)

During the sessions the Fathers made the petition to the Holy See for the erection of a Diocese at Vincennes, the whole See embracing Indiana and eastern Illinois. In the year 1832 Bishops Flaget and Rosati had made the suggestion to erect the See and presented the name of Simon Brute' de Remur as a candidate for the office of Bishop. Yet it was not until the Second Council of Baltimore met in 1833 that the fathers proposed the erection of this Diocese. In the petition to the Sacred Congregation they offered the names of Brute', Blanc, and Loras as possible candidates for the office of Bishop.

Although the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda did meet in January, 1834 and discussed the Council and approved of some of its decrees, the See of Vincennes was not to be established until three months later on May 6, 1834.

Most of the Fathers of the Council had favored Brute<sup>1</sup> as a possible candidate for the new See except for Bishop England of Charleston, S. Car., who was one of Brute's best and closest friends. Bishop England had frowned upon the nomination for fear that they would be removing a man too versed in the work he was doing and too necessary in that position. There were also others who opposed the nomination of Brute<sup>1</sup> but they will be discussed at another time.

"Maximas Inter"

Pope Gregory XVI granted the petitions of the Second Council of Baltimore on May 6, 1834 when he established the Diocese of Vincennes. Bishop Flaget of Bardstown had been one of the strongest advocates of the establishment of this See because it relieved him of a certain portion of his large Diocese. This new Diocese was to be a suffragan See of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The Bull, Maximas Inter, establishing the new Diocese of Vincennes reads as follows:

Gregory XVI, Sovereign Pontiff. For a perpetual memorial. Among the very great and weighty cares and anxieties which continually burden and harass us in the government and administration of the universal church entrusted to us by Divine Providence, the most urgent assuredly is that which regards the state of all the dioceses throughout the world: for in us it belongs, in virtue of our supreme power and judgment, to establish them, to determine and change their limits, as times and circumstances, and especially the spiritual good and advantage of the faithful, appear to require it. Since, therefore, by the united suffrages of our venerable brothers, the bishops of North America, it has seemed very fitting, in order to extend and strengthen the Catholic religion in the province or state of Indiana, to erect and establish, with certain fixed limits, a new diocese, whose see shall be at the city of Vincennes, we have referred for examination, a subject of so much importance to the congregation of our venerable brothers, the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, who are placed over the concerns of the propaganda. Having therefore, weighed all things maturely and considered particularly the spiritual good which would accrue to people of those countries, by the advice and counsel of the same, our venerable brothers, we are assured that the establishment of this new diocese and episcopal see would be very useful. Of our own will, therefore, and of our certain knowledge, and in the plenitude of our apostolic power,

we, by these letters, do erect and establish in the province or state of Indiana, in North America, a new diocese, of which the see shall be the city of Vincennes, from which city the diocese shall receive its title. The extent of the diocese shall be the state of Indiana, and one part of Illinois, the other part to be attached to the diocese of St. Louis, so that the limits of each diocese in the state of Illinois be determined in the following manner: Beginning from the river Ohio, which separates Kentucky from Illinois on the south, directly from Fort Massac, let a right line be drawn through the eastern boundaries of the counties of Johnson, Franklin, Jefferson, Marion, Fayette, Shelby, and Macon, to the Grand Rapids of the Illinois river, which are eight miles from (above) the town of Ottawa, in the county of Lassele, and hence to the northern boundary of that state, so that the western part of the state of Illinois belong to the diocese of Saint Louis, and the eastern part to the diocese of Vincennes.

We, therefore, ordain that these letters are and shall be inviolate, valid and efficacious; that they have and retain their full power and entire force, and that each and every article specified by us, be strictly fulfilled, and thus, as aforesaid, be without authority judged and defined, by all ordinary judges whatsoever, and even delegated auditors of causes, the apostolical palaces and the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church withholding from each and all of them any right to assign a different judgment or interpretation; and that if any such be attempted knowingly, or through ignorance, by anyone whatever may be his authority, the same shall be null and void, apostolic constitutions and ordinances and all other things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's under the ring of the Fisherman, the 6th day of May, 1834, and in the fourth year of our Pontificate. For Cardinal Albano.

A. PICCHIONI. (7)

Nomination of Simon Brute' de Remur  
as the First Bishop of Vincennes-1834

Father Brute' was informed of his appointment in the summer of 1834, July 22, when the Papal documents reached him at Mount Saint Mary's, Emmitsburg, Maryland. A letter from Cardinal Pedicini, The Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, offering his congratulations was among the papers. As has been said before this office was not in accordance with the wishes of such a humble man as Simon Brute'. It seems that he was not the only one who seemed to be opposed to the nomination, for one of his best friends, Bishop John England announced that "Brute' was named against my judgment for Vincennes". Bishop Kenrick was also in the ranks of the opposition. He is quoted as saying that if the Council had listened to Bishop John England that "that an old man with the most strange eccentricities of mind would not have been sent in the decline of life spent in Collegiate exercises to be an apostle of a new diocese". (8) No one could have been more opposed to the appointment than the man appointed, Simon Brute'. He was well aware of certain incapacabilities which might make him unsuitable for fulfilling the office, but he felt the bitter criticism of friends and those who now attacked his nomination. Yet he was hesitant to decline the appointment because of his strong desire to do always the Will of God.

Thus in July, 1834, he went to Baltimore where he made a retreat of four days after which he decided to accept the office of Bishop, if Bishops Flaget, Rosati, David, and Bishop Purcell would insist upon him taking the appointment. Of course these Bishops of the West were in full agreement that Bishop Brute' should accept, and this he did amidst criticism and scorn of certain peoples. Although most of Bishop Brute's life had been spent in the Seminary as a Professor, and he had developed a few eccentricities, he was most zealous for souls. He was determined to do the utmost for his flock.

The Consecration of Bishop Brute'--His First  
Pontifical Mass and Pastoral Letter

On October 28, 1834 Simon Brute' de Remur was consecrated the first Bishop of Vincennes in the Cathedral of Saint Louis, Saint Louis, Missouri. Bishop Benedict Flaget of Bardstown, Kentucky officiated as Consecrator and Bishop Joseph Rosati of Saint Louis, and Bishop John Purcell of Cincinnati, Ohio assisted as co-consecrators. The Reverend Mr. Hitzelberger preached the sermon for the occasion. A number of clergy were present since the Cathedral had been consecrated but two days before and many priests had come to Saint Louis for this ceremony.

The day following the consecration Bishop Brute' wrote his First Pastoral letter to the members of the new Diocese of Vincennes. The letter was one of encouragement and it is very edifying in tone. Since it is rather lengthy it will not be quoted here in its entirety, but the following excerpt will show the general trend of the letter.

Your Bishop, beloved brethern, entering thus on his holy duty, begs humbly and earnestly your prayers, and entreats also fervently, the God of mercy to bless you; to fill you with that spirit of peace, charity, and piety, which has the best promises both of the present time and of the life to come. Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"--may he ever find the pastor and the flock His faithful followers, and receive them together in the kingdom of His glory. May He give rest to those who are gone before us,--your departed friends, for whom we shall henceforth unite our prayers to yours, especially at the divine sacrifice." (9)

Bishop Rosati asked Bishop Brute' to officially

pontificate for the first time on November 1, 1834, the Feast of All Saints, which he did in the Cathedral of Saint Louis. Since the whole octave of the Dedication of the Cathedral was one of festivities, there were sermons each morning and night. Bishop Brute' preached two of these sermons, one a paraphrase of the Magnificat, and the other on the subject of Heaven and Eternity.

On November 3, 1834, Bishops Flaget, Purcell and Brute' together with some priests and a seminarian left Saint Louis for Vincennes. They arrived at Vincennes two days later on November 5, 1834, since they travelled by stage the journey was longer. A delegation of Vincennes' citizens greeted them upon their arrival, Father Lalumiere being the official welcomer. The news of Archbishop Whitfield's death was also reported to them by this group, and immediately the prelates and priests recited the De Profundis for the repose of the soul of their Metropolitan. In the evening of the fifth of November, the Installation ceremony took place in Saint Francis Xavier Cathedral. Bishop Flaget performing the ceremony and delivering a sermon. Bishop Brute' also delivered a sermon. These two sermons were preached in French. Bishop Purcell delivered a sermon, which was both inspiring and eloquent, in English. As the various biographers tell us during the whole of the week solemn services were conducted in the morning and in the evening.

On Sunday, November 11, Bishop Brute' pontificated in



his Cathedral for the first time. Father Hitzelberger was deacon, and Father Lalumiere was sub-deacon. The reverend Father Petit, S.J. acted as Master of Ceremonies. Both Bishop Flaget and Purcell were present in the sanctuary. Bishop Flaget preached at the gospel in French and Bishop Purcell after the Mass in English. The following article in the Vincennes Gazette makes note of the occasion of Bishop Brute's arrival and his installation.

The Right Reverend Doctor Brute', Bishop of Vincennes, lately consecrated in St. Louis arrived at his episcopal residence on Wednesday. He came accompanied by the Honorable Bishop of Bardstown, Kentucky, Doctor Flaget, and the Bishop of Cincinnati, Doctor Purcell. The installation, according to the prescribed forms of the Catholic Church, took place on the evening of his arrival; when after the address of Doctor Flaget to the new Prelate and his reply, Doctor Purcell spoke in English to a numerous and respectable congregation. Every evening during this week at half past six o'clock, an English discourse will be delivered. On Sunday a Pontifical Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Brute' at eleven o'clock, a.m. at which Dr. Flaget will address the congregation in French. Vespers will commence at three o'clock, and at candle light or about half past six o'clock an English sermon will be preached. (10)

### First Diocesan Visit

One week after Bishop Brute's Installation as Bishop of Vincennes he decided to make a Visitation of his new Diocese. Accordingly he sent the Reverend Mr. Lalumiere to report on the eastern part of his diocese, and the Reverend Mr. Ferneding to the south. The Bishop himself took the Northwest half to see what conditions were there. Since the Bishop wished to make a trip to France as soon as possible, he began to make the Visitation right away not even waiting for the Spring. However until the warmer weather came he made only small trips to the churches and missions nearby.

From the twenty-ninth day of April, 1835 till the twenty-third of May of the same year Bishop Brute' travelled through his Diocese. During this time he covered over six hundred miles, most of which was done on horseback. He visited the missions and churches of Danville, Chicago, Michigan City, LaPorte, and South Bend. He also stopped at two Indian villages which were under the direction of the Reverend Mr. Deseille. It was May, 1835, when he arrived at the first of these villages. This one being presided over by Chief Chickakos, Chief of this branch of the Potawatomi. The Chief presented Bishop Brute' with a small area of land, asking that it might be a testimony of their faith until "Christ should come again". Bishop Brute' aside from his Visitations

to these Indian villages also visited Terre Haute on the Wabash where he already found missions established.

All throughout his trip Bishop Brute' was becoming more aware of the tremendous needs of his Diocese. He not only needed material aid, but what is more, he needed laborers for his missions much more. Priests were needed so badly, and only a few had offered their services. It is said that the only reason these did was because they were in trouble with their Bishops. But Bishop Brute' would have none of these men, for he said, "Vincennes would not be aided by such creatures". (11)

The Church at Chicago was thriving at this time, and the people, both Catholics and Protestants, thought that they should have a Bishop with them. They asked Bishop Brute' to stay with them and to make his residence with them. A brick church was being built, and as Bishop Brute' says they were confident of the future.

The Bishop now had a clear picture of the situation of his Diocese, and it wasn't too pleasant a picture. He was desperately in need of spiritual and material aid as soon as he could get it. France offered him the answer. He would have recourse to his friends there as he had done so many times before. He would not just write a letter, but he would go in person. He had turned to his fatherland before, now he would do so again. . . . .

### The European Visit

After Bishop Brute' had made a Visitation of his diocese, he was more convinced than ever of the great need of priests. He knew that he would be unable to obtain missionaries from other dioceses, so he decided to journey to France where he felt confident that he would be able to secure some men. This trip would also afford him the opportunity to solicit material aid for the diocese.

On August 8, 1835 at ten o'clock in the morning, he sailed from New York on the "Rhône", and he reached the port of Havre du Grace on September 5, 1835. During the days which he spent in Europe the Bishop met with the kindest welcomes and material aid. Wherever he asked for help, he received it and often far more than he had really expected. The Empress of Austria and Prince Metternich aided in various ways and they did all they could to help him. These things we know from his correspondence.

Bishop Brute' secured a number of men, priests and clerics to work in his diocese, numbering about twenty, among these were two men who were destined to succeed him as Bishop of Vincennes. One was the Abbe' Celestin de la Hailandiere and the other Maurice de St. Palais. (12)

Before returning home to the United States, Bishop Brute' wished to visit Rome and have an audience with the Holy Father, Gregory XVI. He reached Rome around the twenty-eighth of February, and on the twenty-ninth of

the same month he was received in private audience with the Holy Father. Gregory received him quite cordially, and spoke with him concerning the American missions. Cardinal Fesch, the Uncle of Napoleon, presented him with four valuable paintings, and Cardinal Mai gave him a number of expensive books. While he was in Rome Bishop Brute' also drew up a retrospect of whole Catholic Church in the United States which he submitted to the Sacred Congregation. (13) He left Rome on the seventeenth of March, and went on to France where he was to meet the prospective missionaries for his diocese, and they all left together from Paris on the twenty-ninth of May, arriving in Havre on the first of June, 1836 where they set sail for New York on a merchantman.

The little band of missionaries arrived in New York on the twentieth of July, 1836. They were not able to depart immediately for Vincennes as the custom officers demanded several days for the examination of all the baggage.

### Achievements of Bishop Brute'

Although Bishop Brute' had spent thirteen months away from his diocese during his trip to Europe, his return to Vincennes was greeted by all with joy. For the people of Vincennes had learned to know and love their saintly Bishop. Not only had he obtained a large amount of funds, even including a donation from the Holy See, but most of all he had secured laborers for the Vineyard. These, everyone knew, were to be the greatest help to the Diocese.

The gifts which he had received in Europe were expended in a judicious way. He established a Diocesan Seminary which was located near the Cathedral, and also an Orphan Asylum and a free school. This was probably the first free school of its kind in the State of Indiana. Whatever of the money was left he spent on the refinishing of the Cathedral and the support of several small churches and missions in the Diocese. The twenty priests and seminarians he brought with him from France he distributed throughout the Diocese in the places for which they were most needed. Father de la Hailandiere was made pastor of the Cathedral and he lived with Bishop Brute'. Father St. Palais he sent to St. Peter's Church on White River along with Father Lalumiere. The other priests he sent to various missions.

The Seminary which was erected next to the Cathedral housed three subdeacons and two deacons in the year 1838. When Bishop Brute' first came to the Diocese as its Shepherd there were only two priests, in 1838 there were thirteen priests, and ten who were in Major Orders, thus making the total of twenty-three who were working in the Diocese or preparing to work by studying in the Seminary. The Bishop himself taught in the seminary, theology and various other subjects. Not only was he Pastor of the Diocese, and Pastor of the Congregation at Vincennes, but now he was even teaching. His efforts were untiring and dauntless. He labored unceasingly for the propagation of the Faith in Indiana. Besides teaching in the seminary the Bishop also taught in one of the academies in Vincennes.

But Bishop Brute' was beginning to become weary from so much laboring, although he would not complain. He continued these strenuous deeds, and he even found time to do more than these daily tasks. He wrote to each of his clergy two letters each month, hoping to become more closely united to them. Still more, he was writing for the Catholic Press.

He never thought of rest. His main idea, his main interest was the conversion of souls. This is why Bishop Brute' was able to accomplish so much in the five short years he was to be Bishop of Vincennes.

The Provincial Council of  
Baltimore.-----1837

On Easter Monday, March 27, 1837, Bishop Brute' left Vincennes to attend the Third Council of Baltimore. Stopping at New Albany, he proceeded to go on to Louisville, where he met for the first time, Bishop Chabrat, Coadjutor of Bardstown, Kentucky. In the company of Bishop Chabrat, Bishop Brute' left Louisville for Baltimore by way of stage coach. When they crossed the Ohio River Bishop Brute' was forced to ride on the outside of the coach with the driver. It was this exposure to the cold that caused him to contract a severe cold which was eventually to cause his death.

The two Prelates arrived in Baltimore several days later, and on April 15, Bishop Brute' journeyed to Emmitsburg where he ordained two men to the Priesthood, the Reverends Julian Benoit and Vincent Bacquelin. The Third Provincial Council of Baltimore opened on Sunday, April 16, 1837 so he returned to Baltimore on the afternoon of the same day.

At the opening Archbishop Eccleston celebrated a Pontifical Mass, and the Right Reverend Francis Patrick Kenrick, Coadjutor of Philadelphia preached the sermon. Bishop Brute' took the Pontifical Oath at the end of the Mass along with Bishops Chabrat, Blanc, and Clancy, who had been made Bishops since the last Council meeting. (14)

The First Public Session began on Monday afternoon, April 17. Nine Dioceses were represented, including the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Bishop Brute' was assisted by



his consulting theologian, Father Richard <sup>K</sup>Henrick, who was later to become Bishop of St. Louis, Missouri.

The Fathers at the Council petitioned the Holy See to erect Dioceses at Nashville, Natchez, and Dubuque. The Bishop of Vincennes was not too pleased over this decision as he thought that an Archdiocese for the West should have been established immediately. Likewise he did not like the silence of the Council on the respective Sees of Pittsburg and Richmond, and he thought that the erection of a Diocese at Dubuque was unnecessary at the time.

The Decrees of the Council also dealt with ordinations, the support of aged and infirm priests, church property, uniform observance of the Roman Ritual, and the collection of money by priests outside their Diocese. It forbade the clergy to bring ecclesiastical cases before the civil courts, and consented to the abrogation of Easter Monday and Pentecost Monday as Holy days of Obligation. The final decree dealt with the convocation of the next council to be held on the Fourth Sunday after Easter, 1840. The Council ended on April 23, 1837.

Bishop Brute' departed from Baltimore on April 27th, and went to Cincinnati, where he took a short rest until May 6, 1837. The Bishop's health was not in too good a condition, and it was not helped much by the journey from Cincinnati to Vincennes. His health was being undermined and this long trip only served to agitate the condition of

his lungs. The work that he faced upon arrival in Vincennes was not too encouraging. As usual there were numerous pleads for priests and he did not have any to send. The whole picture was very discouraging, and he did not know whom to ask for aid.

The health of the Bishop continued in a critical condition, but yet he was determined to visit the Diocese, for he considered a delay of his visit to the northern missions would be very detrimental.

The Last Visitation of the Diocese--  
Bishop Brute's Failing Health and Illness

When Bishop Brute' returned from the Third Provincial Council of Baltimore his health was broken. The exposure to the wind and the cold which he was forced to endure during the long trip to Baltimore and the return trip had brought about a serious cold and he was extremely weak from this illness. Although the Bishop was in a critical condition he continued on and began a Visitation of his Diocese. He left Vincennes on Monday, May 29, in the company of the Reverend Mr. Petit, and travelled to Logansport, a distance of about a hundred miles, arriving there almost seven days later. From Logansport they journeyed to South Bend to see the Reverend Mr. Deseille who had been expelled from the Indian Reservations. They then continued on to Fort Wayne where they spent several days with Father Mueller. After this visit The Bishop in the company of Fathers Petit and Mueller visited a German Colony a few miles from Fort Wayne. After traveling more than six hundred miles on horseback they returned to Vincennes.

In September, 1838, Bishop Brute' in the company of Father Benoit, visited the missions of Perry and Dubois Counties. The first town they visited was Rome on the Ohio River. There were not many Catholics there, but a few miles away at St. Mary's on Oil Creek they found a number of Catholics. From here they crossed over into Kentucky and called on Fathers Coomes and Wathen. Again crossing the Ohio they

visited a part of Harrison County and then went on to Jasper, Indiana in Dubois County. At Jasper they found a large colony of German Catholics. Having traveled two hundred miles on horseback this time, Bishop Brute' returned to Vincennes, leaving Father Benoit at Rome.

Bishop Brute' had traveled seven hundred miles during the months of June and July, and six hundred miles during August and September. His health seemed to be invigorated at times by being outside in the air, but as soon as he remained in the house he suffered from a bronchial condition. The Bishop's health was on the decline and his condition was becoming very weakened. The health of Simon Brute' was now in such a condition that he was forced to take a rest. Thus he went to Perrysville, Missouri where he rested for about three weeks.

He resumed his Visitation on April 27th, 1838. He went first to Washington, Daviess County, and from here he continued on to St. Peter's eight miles away. On May 2, with Father Shawe and a layman he went to the Knobs, and from this mission he made the journey to Madison where Father Shawe was building a stone church ninety feet long and fifty feet wide. After stopping at New Albany the Bishop once again returned home to Vincennes.

On June 30, 1838, Bishop Brute' started on another visitation tour. On this trip he went to Lawrence County, Illinois, New Alsace, Blue Creek, Shelbyville, and Terre

Haute. From Terre Haute he continued on into the Illinois district stopping at Paris Prairie. He then went to Jasper and Evansville to care for the souls there. He returned once more to the episcopal city, but his stay was short as he started out again on the twenty-fourth of July. This time he visited Mt. Carmel, Coffee, Shawneetown, and some other missions in southern Illinois. These Visitations were wearing him out, and although he was almost completely weary of his laborious tasks, he continued on in his work.

Bishop Brute' had petitioned for a coadjutor, but no word was heard for some time. Archbishop Eccleston had been appealed to, but as yet he had done nothing. Now Bishop Brute' wrote again begging for this help. Since May, he had traveled over 1600 miles, visiting the missions in the southern and central parts of the immense Diocese embracing over 53,000 square miles.

On August 22, 1838, Bishop Brute' left the episcopal city, and started on the Visitation of the north. He visited Joliet, Chicago, Logansport, Michigan City, LaPorte, Niles, South Bend, and then returned by way of Indianapolis. Although the Bishop knew that his health was not good and that life was at an ebb for him, he continued in that great work of his, the salvation of souls.

On April 18, 1839, Bishop Brute' began his last of the Visitations. He tells of this Visitation in the following

note to Father Francois at Logansport:

I intend to absent myself for a few days. I am going to Washington, then to Mt. Pleasant, to see Father St. Palais, then to Father Neyron, afterwards to Bardstown, and finally, perhaps, to Madison. I shall be home before Pentecost, if God grants me life or re-animates my health which has been much impaired these last three weeks. (15)

Sister Mary Godecker in her book "Simon Brute' de Remur" speaks of Bishop Brute' having three reasons for making this Visitation. First, he hoped that it would help prolong his life, secondly, he wished to assist and encourage his clergy, and lastly, he wanted to make a retreat at Bardstown. He apparently knew that this would be his last journey. When he had reached Madison on the fourth day of May, 1839, he was very ill, yet he was called upon in the absence of a priest to make three sick calls. After this he went to Evansville, and on to Kaskaskia, and then finally to Vincennes, where he arrived on the seventeenth of May.

Yet the Apostolic career of Simon Brute' de Remur did not end with his last visitation of the Diocese of Vincennes. He was still busied with Diocesan affairs, even after his return, when his health was in such a condition that it was beginning to tell the sad tale of his approaching death. The knowledge that he was soon to die did not in the least disturb his peace of mind. This peace and joy of spirit and complete resignation to the will of God we see from a letter written to his brother, Augustine on May 29th:

My health is failing fast. My days are vanishing, but

every day my heart experiences greater joy at the un-  
remitting progress of the church. Although I should  
like to remain a little longer I am resigned to the  
Master's Will. (16)

### Bishop Brute's Death

Bishop Brute' was fully aware that he was not to live much longer as also were the clergy cognizant of the fact. He had worn himself out for the Diocese of which he had been made Shepherd only five short years before. The works that he had accomplished in these years were of such magnitude that no ordinary man could have accomplished them. Brute' was a man of strong determinations and a strong will-power, thus he was able to do much more than a man who would not have such capabilities to back him up.

In the early part of June Bishop Brute's condition became so serious that it was not thought that he would live even a few days. However, on June 7, he rallied enough to give directions for his funeral and the final provisions for the Diocese. He continued to grow weak, and even though he walked about three days before his death, it was apparent that he was aware of his approaching death. Whenever friends came to visit with him and sought to console him he would ask them to read to him from the "Imitation of Christ".

On Friday, June 21, Bishop Brute' received all the rites of the Church. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday he seemed somewhat better and walked about somewhat. On Tuesday evening he grew very weak and at nine-thirty he whispered to Father Vabret, "Oh my dear child, I have the whole day yet to stay with you, tomorrow with God in heaven". (17) Again he is



quoted as saying to another friend, "I am going home". The Bishop sat in his chair most of the day, although it was apparent he was dying. He warned all about him that the next day would bring death to him. Even in these last hours he spent time trying to bring back to the fold some women who had abandoned the practice of their religion. In his chair he wrote to them, expressing a strong desire to see them in the fold once again. After supper on Tuesday the prayers for the dying were said, and at one-thirty the next morning, Bishop Brute' breathed forth his soul to God while speaking very affectionately to those attending him in these last moments. Those who surrounded his bed were edified by the devoutness and sincerity with which the Bishop answered the prayers for the dying, and when the final moment had come, how calmly he gave up his soul to God. The Bishop had passed away into the arms of the Good God to whom his whole life had been dedicated. This was on June 26, 1839.

No agonies or distortions of body would ever at any time during the long wait for death make this man of the Lord complain. "He was going Home".

### Bishop Brute's Sanctity

Bishop Brute' died as he had lived, a man of prayer and love for the Church. His life had been an example to all. It was a true life of sanctity. Although the Bishop was never physically strong, his strength was found in the deep spirituality which he possessed. It was this spirituality that made those who knew him when he was still a professor at Mount Saint Mary's, to call him the "Angel of the Mountain".

It is recorded in many of his biographies that he had an intense love for the Blessed Sacrament and that he often spent the whole night in prayer before the Tabernacle, even the whole of the night, while the rest of the world was asleep! The great love of this man for the sacred duties of the Priesthood, particularly the distributing of the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, that prompted him to say, "This is the fifth time today that I have touched my sovereign Lord, The King of Glory".

The salvation of souls was the ruling thought of the Bishop at all times. He was willing to do anything that he could in order to save a soul or to bring it closer to the Lord. No task was too great, no distance too long, or no obstacle too blocking. All these he overcame because he possessed the Apostolic character. All felt that saintliness of his.

On the lips of Simon Brute' were often found the words,

"God is all", "His adorable will be done, all the rest is nothing". With the greatest possible resignation he accepted all trials, his impoverished state while Bishop, his lack of priests to accomplish all he wished to do for the Diocese, and many hardships, which came to him as Bishop.

In quoting Archbishop Bayley's "Memoirs of Bishop Brute'" we find the following:

It is no disparagement of those holy and eminent men who have adorned the annals of the Catholic Church in the United States--of a Carroll, a Cheverus, a Dubois, and a Flaget--to say that no one has ever exerted a more beneficial influence in favor of the Catholic Religion than Bishop Brute.

Bishop Brute's life is an example of what great deeds can be accomplished in short periods of time, for it was only given to him to spend five years as a Bishop before he was called to his "True Home".

This is the sanctity of a man whose simplicity was so beautiful that all recognized it and loved this man whose spirit was determined by the love of God and His Holy Mother, Mary, and that unceasing, courageous love for the Church. Behold this "great priest" who had come to the Northwest to give the message of love and salvation to the inhabitants, he was a man of God, this was Simon Brute' de Remur.

FOOTNOTES

1. Henry Alerding, A History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Vincennes, p. 104.
2. John Gilmary Shea, A History of the Catholic Church in the United States-1808-15-1843, pp. 640-41.
3. Henry Alerding, op. cit., pp. 104-105.
4. Henry Alerding, op. cit., p. 107.
5. Sister Mary Salesia Godecker, O.S.B., Ph.D., Simon Brute' De Remur, First Bishop of Vincennes, p. 81.
6. John Gilmary Shea, op. cit., pp. 432-433.
7. Charles Blanchard, A History of the Catholic Church in Indiana, pp. 49-50.
8. Peter Guilday, The Life and Times of John England, II, p. 533.
9. The Catholic Record, May 14, 1891.
10. Charles Blanchard, op. cit., pp. 55-59.
11. Sister Mary Salesia Godecker, O.S.B., Ph.D., op. cit. p. 239.
12. Sister Mary Salesia Godecker, O.S.B., Ph.D., op. cit., pp. 271-72.
13. Idem, p. 268.
14. Idem, p. 307.
15. Idem, p. 390.
16. Idem, p. 395.
17. Henry Alerding, op. cit., p. 159.

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13. "The Story of a Diocese", The Indiana Catholic and Record. (25th Anniversary Issue, 1934)
14. "The First Five Bishops of the Diocese of Vincennes". The Eternal Light Magazine, Vol. 20, No. 7, July, 1932. (20th Anniversary Edition)

### Criticism of Principal Sources

Simon Brute' De Remur-First Bishop of Vincennes  
Sister Mary Salesia Godecker, O.S. B., Ph. D.

"This work takes high rank by its scholarly completeness and careful documentation, by the importance and interest of its subject, and by the spiritual edification which the saintly bishop conveys in death as he did throughout his life" (Catholic World 133: 630, August '31)

History of the Catholic Church in the United States-  
1808-15 to 1843  
John Gilmary Shea

"Told with unquestionable honesty" (Catholic World 53: 144-6, April '91)

The Diocese of Vincennes  
Reverend Henry Alerding

"A work of deep historical research and accuracy"  
(The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 6, 151a)

