



## Father Otto Hopfenmüller

Lorenz Hopfenmüller was born on May 29, 1844, in Weismain, Germany. He became a priest of the Diocese of Bamberg and was ordained on October 6, 1866, at the age of twenty-two. After completing doctoral studies at the University of Würzburg, he was appointed to St Martin's Parish in Bamberg. In 1872 he became editor of the Bamberger Volksblatt, a Catholic newspaper. As a direct result of his involvement in the apostolate of the press, he came into conflict with the anti-Catholic authorities and was imprisoned several times.

In 1878 he was transferred to Reichmannsdorf and then in 1882 to Seussling. He did much to combat the extreme poverty he encountered in both these towns. He came into contact with Father Bonaventura Lüthen of the Catholic Teaching Society, who placed advertisements for *Der Missionär* in his newspaper.

After the death of his mother, he felt able to fulfil his long term plan of joining a religious community, which would enable him to go to the foreign missions. In 1887 he went to Rome and became a member of the Catholic Teaching Society. In the novitiate he took the religious name Otto. The founder, Father Francis Jordan, soon entrusted him with the formation of the candidates. He also used his skills as a journalist for the benefit of the Society.

In 1889 he was sent, together with the twenty-three year old Father Angelus Münzloher and Brothers Joseph Bachle and Marianus Schumm, to Assam in North East India, where he became the first Superior. The work of this new mission was carried out with great zeal and energy. Father Otto wrote both a catechism and a life of Jesus and Mary in the Khasi language, and he had begun to translate the Schuster's Bible Stories. However, he fell ill with meningitis as a result of a heat stroke and died on August 21, 1890.

Father Otto Hopfenmüller was a man with many talents and tremendous energy and it was a great encouragement to the newly formed Society when he joined. In his own words he says, "I have chosen to join the newly founded Catholic Teaching Society in Rome because it is in need of workers and because it has a good spirit, and in it I think I will be able to bear fruit for the Kingdom of God."

It is certain that Father Jordan would not have been able to take on the responsibility for the mission in Assam without the knowledge that the leadership of the mission could be entrusted to Father Otto. Father Jordan knew he could rely on his energy, deep spirituality, and extensive priestly experience. Although Father Otto Hopfenmüller died at the early age of forty-six, no one could doubt that he lived an accomplished and fulfilled Christian life.