Thomas Ozanne, son of Allen and Grace Ozanne, was born on November 5, 1946. He was one of three children. Thomas was raised in Lexington, Nebraska, and was a member of Saint Ann Parish. He began his preparation for the priesthood at Sacred Heart College, Wichita, Kansas in 1970. Later, he studied at Precious Blood Seminary, Liberty, Missouri; and Saint John Seminary, Collegeville, Minnesota. He was incorporated as a member of the Society of the Precious Blood on April 11, 1973 and was ordained a priest on June 1, 1974.

Upon the completion of his priestly studies, Father Ozanne began his ministry at Saint Mary Parish, Nebraska City, as assistant pastor. He was also the director of guidance at Nebraska City Lourdes. While assigned to Nebraska City, he became an Army chaplain. From 1980 to 1992, Father Ozanne was on active duty with the Army. He earned the Meritorious Service Medal with a third Oak Leaf Cluster, and an Army Achievement Medal. He was also a member of the Order of Saint Barbara. In 1993, Father Ozanne retired from the Army. After his retirement, he served Saint James Parish, Liberty, Missouri; Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary; Saint Francis Xavier Parish, Saint Joseph, Missouri; and Saint Mary Hospital, Blue Springs, Missouri.

Father Thomas Ozanne was called to his eternal reward on April 2, 2003. The funeral Mass was held at Saint Francis Xavier Church in Saint Joseph, Missouri. Father Ozanne was buried in Saint Ann Cemetery in Lexington, Nebraska. His family and friends described him as a good man with a sense of humor.
"The Eucharist is a straining towards the goal, a foretaste of the fullness of joy promised by Christ; it is in some way an anticipation of heaven, the 'pledge of future glory'."

— Pope John Paul II, "Ecclesia de Eucharistia"
April 2, 2005

Karol Jozef Wojtyla was born to Karol and Emilia Wojtyla on May 18, 1920 in Wadowice, Poland. He was the younger of their two sons. He knew suffering early in life with the passing of his mother when he was eight years old. Three years later, he lost his older brother. After graduating from high school in Wadowice, Karol and his father moved to Kracow, where the younger Karol studied drama at the Jagiellonian University. Following the Nazi occupation of Poland, the university was closed and Karol had to work in a stone quarry and chemical factory.

In 1942, not long after the death of his father, he secretly enrolled in the seminary. He continued to study for the priesthood at the major seminary in Kracow and was ordained a priest in 1946. Father Wojtyla was sent to study in Rome and received a doctorate in theology. Upon his return to Poland, he ministered as a parish priest, university chaplain, and seminary professor. He also studied philosophy and theology at Lublin Catholic University. In 1958, Father Wojtyla was made Auxiliary Bishop of Kracow. He was named Archbishop of Kracow in 1964, and later created a Cardinal in 1967.

Following the sudden death of Pope John Paul I in 1978, Cardinal Wojtyla was elected Roman Pontiff. He chose the name John Paul II. His nearly twenty-seven year pontificate made an inestimably large impact upon the Church. He spoke the truth of the Gospel in love and with courage throughout his papacy. Pope John Paul II made hundreds of visits around the world, wrote prolifically, canonized four hundred eighty-two Saints, promulgated the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and reformed both the Eastern and Western Codes of Canon Law. He was noted for his deep devotion to Our Lady and his great affection for the young, whom he called to be authentic witnesses to Christ. This truly Holy Father of souls passed away on the eve of Divine Mercy Sunday, April 2, 2005. His cause for beatification was officially begun on June 28, 2005.
“This night is truly extraordinary, one in which the blazing light of the Risen Christ definitively defeats the dark power of evil and death, and rekindles hope and joy in the hearts of believers. Dear friends, guided by the liturgy, let us pray to the Lord Jesus so that the world may see and recognize that, thanks to His passion, death and Resurrection, what was destroyed is rebuilt, what was aging is renewed and completely restored, more beautiful than ever, to its original wholeness.”

(From the message of Pope John Paul II, Holy Saturday, March 26, 2005)
Michael Shine was born on May 19, 1868, in County Clark, Ireland. The family migrated to Springfield, Massachusetts, when Michael was a small child. Later, Michael taught at Epiphany College until his mother became ill. He cared for her until she died and then entered St. Mary Seminary. On December 19, 1896, at age 31, he was ordained by Cardinal Gibbons for the Lincoln Diocese.

Father Shine's assignments included Red Cloud, Riverton, Glen Rock and Superior from January to May of 1897; Harvard, Aurora and Nelson 1897-1899; Sutton and Fairfield 1899-1903; St. Theresa Pro-Cathedral, Agnew and Cortland 1903-1908; and Plattsmouth 1908-1927.

On June 18, 1925, Father Shine was honored with the title of Domestic Prelate. He was invested at Plattsmouth on January 10, 1926. In 1925, Monsignor Shine was also appointed to the Diocesan Board of Consultors.

During his entire priestly life of almost three decades, Monsignor Shine collected data on the history of the diocese. It has been said that his research included 12,000 letters. Yet, he could never be persuaded to organize the data into a book since he considered his work incomplete. At the time of his death on April 2, 1927, Monsignor Shine was vice president of the Nebraska State Historical Society.
April 4, 1912  Rev. Boniface Depman, O.F.M.

Father Boniface was born on June 29, 1841 in Muenster, Germany, where he began his studies for the priesthood. Responding to the invitation of Bishop James F. Wood of Philadelphia, he came to the United States in August of 1862. On February 2, 1864, he was ordained to the priesthood.

After serving the Church for 13 years as a diocesan priest, he asked to be received into the Franciscan Order. Father Boniface made his profession of vows as a Franciscan on February 10, 1879.

In 1882, Father Boniface was sent to the Franciscan Monastery in Columbus, Nebraska. From there he served many Catholics who lived south of the Platte River in Butler County. He continued his priestly ministrations in that area until 1886, when he was transferred to Quincy, Illinois. Later he was assigned to the office of Vicar of the Monastery in Cleveland. He held that office for 23 years.

God called his faithful servant from this life on April 4, 1912. The Chronicle of Cleveland stated: "He was a true Nathaniel, in whom there was no guile. He was a strict observer of the holy rule and always present at the divine office in choir. He was beloved by all both seculars and regulars."
John H. Howe was born on October 31, 1912 in Superior, Wisconsin. He attended Cathedral High School in Superior, Crosier College in Onamia, Minnesota, and Saint Francis Seminary in Wisconsin. On June 3, 1939, he was ordained in the Church of Saint Anne in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Father Howe spent the first four years of his priestly apostolate in Falls City and at the Cathedral of Saint Mary in Lincoln. Later he served as administrator of Holy Family Church in Lincoln, as associate director of CYO, chaplain of the Newman Club, and as an instructor at Saint Elizabeth Hospital. From 1945 to 1946, he studied Canon Law at the Catholic University in Washington, D.C. From 1946 to 1958 he served the Catholics in and around Osceola.

For 26 years, from 1958 to 1984, Father Howe was pastor of Holdrege and Smithfield mission. This was followed by two years as pastor of Mother of Sorrows Church in Grant, and two years as pastor of Minden and Heartwell. On June 15, 1988, Father Howe retired to Bonacum House in Lincoln.

During the Octave of Easter, on Friday, April 4, 1997, God called Father Howe to his eternal home. Bishop Bruskewitz celebrated the Holy Mass of Christian Burial on April 8, 1997, in the Cathedral of the Risen Christ in Lincoln. Burial was in the Catholic section of the Osceola Cemetery in Osceola, Nebraska.

In his homily, Father James Divis referred to Father Howe as a mentor who used every opportunity to teach. He was a taskmaster and a perfectionist, but with a deeply compassionate heart.

"After death, true life; after desolation, true consolation; a life which delivers our souls from death, and a consolation which restrains our eyes from tears."

(St. Augustine)
John Copenhaver was born on June 14, 1960 in Kansas City, Kansas. He attended college in Nebraska and Kansas before entering Mount Saint Mary Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland, where he received his degree in Theology.

Father Copenhaver was ordained on May 28, 1988 at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ in Lincoln by Bishop Glennon P. Flavin.

Father Copenhaver served in various parishes and institutions in the diocese during his years of active ministry. He retired in 2012 and took up residence at Marianna, a retirement community for priests near Fremont, Nebraska.

Father Copenhaver died on Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021 at the Methodist Hospital in Fremont, Nebraska. A private Rosary and funeral Mass and burial were held on April 9, 2021 at Holy Angels Church in Basekor, Kansas.

“Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.”

~ Thomas Moore ~
John English was born on April 14, 1855 in Kenosha, Wisconsin. He studied at St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore and at Our Lady of the Angels Seminary in Niagara, New York. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 7, 1879, by Bishop S. V. Ryan in Buffalo, New York, for the Vicariate of Nebraska.

After serving at St. Philomena Cathedral in Omaha for four years, Father English was appointed pastor of Exeter in 1883. Five years later, he was named pastor of St. Cecilia in Hastings. During his administration a half block of land was purchased on Seventh Street. The church and rectory were then moved to that site. The church was also enlarged and a bell tower was erected.

In 1894, Bishop Bonacum appointed Father English as pastor of Saint Mary Parish in David City. In 1896, Father English transferred to the Omaha Diocese. He was associated with the parish in Hubbard, Nebraska when he died on April 4, 1917.

Father Henry W. Casper, S.J. described Father English. “He was a handsome young priest of some athletic ability. Besides he shot a good game of pool and had a personality that fitted these talents. Father English warmed his way into people’s hearts because of his easygoing manner. Life held a fine attraction for him. More zealous priests have labored in the vicariate, but few were better liked.”
April 5, 1936  Rev. Nicholas Stolz

Nicholas Stolz was born on December 11, 1859, at Nespelt, Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. He was ordained on June 24, 1886, by Archbishop Heiss for the Diocese of Omaha which at that time included all of the State of Nebraska. Father Stolz arrived in Omaha on July 16, 1886.

In order to help Father Stolz become acclimated to life in the United States, Bishop O'Connor sent him as assistant in Burchard for one month. On September 20, 1886, he was named pastor of Kearney. In the spring of 1887, Father Stolz was assigned to Bellwood. He also served at Roseland, Hastings, and Rulo until May of 1890 when he left the Diocese of Lincoln for South Dakota.

Father Stolz spent the remainder of his priestly life in South Dakota. He died at Saint Bernard Hospital in Milbank, South Dakota, on April 5, 1936.

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"If we have died with him, then we shall live with him.
If we hold firm, then we shall reign with him.
If we disown him, then he will disown us.
We may be unfaithful, but he is always faithful,
for he cannot disown his own self."

2 Tim 2:12-13
Father Leonard Nurre, O.F.M. was born on January 7, 1854. He joined the Franciscan Order in Cincinnati, Ohio, and was ordained as a member of that Order on December 8, 1876.

Because of the debt on the parish of Saint Francis de Sales, Lincoln, Bishop Bonacum asked the Franciscans to take charge of it. The first Franciscan pastor to succeed Father Bernard Sproll was Father Ignatius Wilkens. He was in charge for only one year, 1892-1893.

Father Leonard Nurre, O.F.M. was appointed to succeed Father Ignatius in 1893. Father Nurre found a debt of about $13,000. During his first year as pastor he succeeded in paying off more than $2,000 of that amount. Because of the financial crisis in 1893 and the failure of crops during subsequent years, Father Leonard succeeded in reducing the debt by only two or three hundred dollars annually. The parish did well to meet the current expenses and pay for necessary maintenance of the church property.

Father Leonard was pastor for six years before his provincial transferred him in 1899 to Cincinnati. He continued to serve the Church in Ohio until his death on April 5, 1919.

"Guide me in Your truth and teach me, for You are God my Savior, and for You I wait all the day."
(Psalm 25:5)
Mark Tasler, son of Norman and Norma Tasler, was born on April 25, 1954, in Lake City, Iowa. He had six siblings, one of whom became a member of the School Sisters of Christ the King, Sister Marie Jacqueline. In 1972, he graduated from Lohrville Community High School in Lohrville, Iowa. He worked for Frontier Airlines for several years and then entered Mount St. Mary Seminary in 1984. On May 26, 1990, he was ordained by Bishop Glennon Flavin for the Diocese of Lincoln.


On April 6, 2010, during the Easter Octave, Father Mark Tasler died in a car accident. The Most Reverend Fabian Bruskewitz was the main celebrant for the funeral Mass held on April 10, 2010, at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ. Father Tasler was buried in Calvary Cemetery, Lincoln. In the funeral homily, Monsignor David Hintz spoke of Father Tasler’s prayerful fidelity to the Lord and the care he took in ensuring the well being of his own soul and that of others.
Father A. Havestadt was a priest from the East Coast. He served in Buffalo, New York; and Toledo, Ohio; before he came to the Vicariate of Nebraska in 1884.

On October 22, 1884, Bishop O'Connor received him on a two-year trial basis and appointed him assistant in Crete for one month. On November of 1884, Father Havestadt was given charge of Tecumseh and six months later he was assigned to Beatrice. Because of his difficulty in managing a parish, he was appointed assistant to Father F. Uhing in Bow Valley on January 28, 1886.

On February 6, 1886, Father Havestadt withdrew from the Omaha Diocese and went to Wisconsin. There he served at Pine Hollow, Humbird, Waumandee, Big River and Prescott before retiring to Saint Joseph Hospital, Dodgeville, Wisconsin in 1920. He died there on April 8, 1928.

“...The time is sure to come when, far from being content with sound teaching, people will be avid for the latest novelty and collect for themselves a whole series of teachers according to their own tastes and then, instead of listening to the truth, they will turn to myths. Be careful always to choose the right course; be brave under trials; make the preaching of the Good News your life’s work, in thoroughgoing service.”

(2 Timothy 4:3-5)
“The bridal chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the dwelling places are prepared, the treasure houses of good things lie open. The Kingdom of Heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity.”

—From the Office of Readings for Holy Saturday
Father Stanley Schieffer was born to Mr. and Mrs. Peter J. Schieffer of Fordyce, Nebraska, on September 22, 1927. Father Schieffer had three brothers and two sisters. He attended Saint Boniface School in Menominee, Nebraska; Saints Philip and James School, Wynot, Nebraska; and Trinity High School, Sioux City, Iowa. Father Schieffer continued his studies at Saint Louis Preparatory Seminary, Saint Louis, Missouri, and then completed his priestly formation at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Conception, Missouri. He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Lincoln on May 10, 1956, by The Most Rev. John L. Paschang, Bishop of Grand Island.


The Most Rev. Fabian W. Bruskewitz celebrated the funeral Mass on April 11. The burial followed at Lincoln Memorial Park, Lincoln. Father Schieffer was remembered by Monsignor Adrian Herbek, homilist at the funeral, as "a good servant of the Lord, a good shepherd of his people, a man of simple piety and kindly manner who was an organizer, builder, pastor and friend."
"The task of forming yourselves into the strong, holy, and beautiful temple that is Christ’s Body, the Church here on earth, is an ongoing process... It is letting the Spirit come alive within you and His moving you to live in Christ-like love and concern. That is the stuff of which the real building grows... Saint John the Baptist expressed this point very well when... he said ‘He must increase, I must decrease’.”

(Father Stanley Schieffer, Homily for the Dedication of Saint John the Baptist Church, Prague, May 20, 1984)
Stanislaus Siegienski was born on September 24, 1905, in Thorp, Wisconsin. He studied at St. Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore, and Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan. He was ordained December 8, 1933, at St. Mary Cathedral in Lincoln.

His assignments included Grant and Imperial 1933-1947, Holdrege and Smithfield 1947-1952, Milligan and Tobias 1952-1959, and Loma 1959 until his death of cancer on April 8, 1965 at St. Joseph Hospital, Omaha. Funeral services were at St. Luke Church in Loma and burial in Thorp, Wisconsin.

An editorial in the Southern Nebraska Register described Father Siegienski. “He was a quiet and humble man who did his work in an unspectacular way. He accepted his assignments wherever he was sent — and some were not easy — and he did his best.” The article continued, “The thing that bothered Father most during his long illness was not so much the pain, which he accepted as he had accepted so many things, but the confinement, unable to be out in the fresh air, to breathe God’s goodness in the wonderful sunshine surrounded by the marvels of nature.” The author concluded, “Death makes us all realize again that life at its best is but a shadow. True life begins at death.”
John Flynn was born on May 25, 1914, at Fearglass, County Langford, Ireland. He began his studies for the priesthood at St. John's in Waterford and then came to the United States to complete his preparation at St. Paul Seminary in Minnesota. He was ordained on June 3, 1939, in St. Paul, Minnesota, for the Diocese of Lincoln.

Father Flynn's assignments were Beatrice and Crab Orchard 1939-1940, Falls City 1940-1944, Burchard and Table Rock from March to November of 1944, Dawson 1944-1955, and St. Mary Cathedral in Lincoln for the remainder of his priestly life.

On September 8, 1959, Father Flynn was appointed Parish Priest Consultor. He was honored with the title of Domestic Prelate and invested in St. Mary Cathedral on October 17, 1960. From 1969 to 1976 he was Director of Calvary Cemetery. On December 22, 1970 Monsignor Flynn was appointed Diocesan Consultor. On April 9, 1981, God called his faithful priest to his heavenly reward.

Father Tuchek paid this tribute to Monsignor Flynn: "Monsignor Flynn walked in solemn dignity among us. At the altar he was reverent, in the pulpit he was eloquent, to his people he was benevolent. Through his ministry many found their way back to the Church. Many others because of his example and instruction found their way to Christ."
Charles Leo Gergen, son of William and Marie (Grote) Gergen, was born on June 23, 1922, in Shickley, Nebraska. He began his studies for the priesthood at St. John Seminary in Little Rock in 1942. After one year, he transferred to Saint Francis Seminary in Milwaukee. The pastor of St. Mary Parish, Shickley, Father Ulenberg, took an active interest in this candidate for the priesthood. On January 13, 1948, Father Ulenberg requested Bishop Kucera ordain Rev. Mr. Gergen in his native parish since he was the first to be ordained from that congregation in over sixty years. Accordingly, Deacon Gergen was ordained by Bishop Kucera on April 14, 1948, in St. Mary Church, Shickley.

Father Gergen served as an assistant at St. Cecilia, Hastings; Assumption, Dwight; and Holy Family, Lincoln. He was pastor at St. Joseph, Paul; St. Mary, Lawson; St. Ann, Shubert; St. Germanus, Arapahoe; St. Michael, Oxford; St. John, Cambridge; Sacred Heart, Lawrence; St. Stephen, Lawrence; and Assumption, Deweese. He was also Dean of the Lawrence Deanery.

On June 19, 1995, Father Gergen was appointed as senior priest in residence at St. Joseph parish in York, Nebraska. In 1998, he resided at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital due to illness. In September, 2000, he moved to Mount Carmel Home, Kearney, Nebraska where he died during Holy Week on April 10, 2001. Bishop Bruskewitz celebrated the funeral Mass at St. Joseph, York and Father Gergen was then buried at St. Mary Cemetery, Shickley.

In his homily at the funeral Mass, Father Denis Hotovy recalled that Father Gergen's "love for his people was deep, genuine, and caring." "Even when he was sick, he still unselfishly opened his heart to those in need." This was exemplified in his many visits to the children at St. Patrick School in Lincoln during his stay at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. "(Father Gergen) was always giving and caring even when it was difficult" said Father Hotovy.

"So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven."

(Matthew 5:16)
“Happy the man who fears Yahweh
by joyfully keeping His commandments.
For the upright he shines like a lamp in the dark,
he is merciful, tenderhearted, virtuous. Quick to be
generous, he gives to the poor,
his righteousness can never change,
men such as this will always be honored.”

(Psalm 112: 1, 4, 9)
William E. Grace was born April 27, 1882, in County Clare, Ireland. After coming to the United States, he joined the Saint Joseph Society of the Sacred Heart. He was ordained on June 19, 1919, at The Catholic University of America by Bishop Thomas Joseph Shahan.

After receiving a decree of exclaustration, Father Grace served in the Diocese of Peoria. In 1933, Bishop Schlarman told him that although his apostolic labors were excellent, there was no position open for him.

On October 8, 1933, Father Grace came to Lincoln. His appointments were Cambridge 1933-1934, Superior and Nelson 1934-1935, St. Thomas Orphanage 1935-1938, and substitute at Roseland 1938-1939.

On May 19, 1939, Bishop Kucera told him that five men were being ordained and that was sufficient to meet the needs of the diocese. Just six years had passed since Father Grace experienced a similar dismissal. On May 19, 1939, Father Grace assumed his duties as chaplain of the Home for the Aged in Kearney. Demonstrating the esteem that Bishop Kucera had for Father Grace, he frequently sent Holy Mass stipends to him while he was in Kearney.

After a rather nomadic life, Father Grace was called to his permanent home on April 11, 1947.

April 11, 1947

Rev. William E. Grace
Victor Derwinski was born February 22, 1918 in Carbondale, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Michael and Mary (Budjack) Derwinski. After graduating from Fell High School in Simpson, Pennsylvania, he attended the University of Scranton. He attended St. Mary Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland, and then graduated from Sts. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, Orchard Lake, Michigan. Father Derwinski was ordained a priest on December 27, 1944, by His Excellency, Bishop Louis B. Kucera in the St. Thomas Orphanage Chapel, Lincoln.


Father Derwinski continued to reside in Aurora after retiring. Upon the celebration of his sixtieth jubilee as a priest, he commented, “I have enjoyed all the years I spent here in Nebraska.” On April 11, 2005, he passed away at the nursing home in Aurora. His parishioners remember him as a truly dedicated pastor who loved his people and served as an example of faithfulness to one’s vocation. A Diocesan Memorial Mass was celebrated by the Most Rev. Fabian Bruskewitz at St. Mary, Aurora on April 14. The Funeral Mass was held in St. Michael Church, Simpson, Pennsylvania, with burial in St. Michael Cemetery, Simpson.
Father Peter Alcantara was born on May 11, 1857, near Oldenburg, Indiana. He studied at St. Francis Gymnasium and received the habit of the Franciscan Order on September 8, 1879. He was ordained to the priesthood as a Franciscan Father on December 28, 1885, by Bishop William McCloskey in Louisville, Kentucky.

Father Peter served at various places in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan before being sent to St. Francis de Sales Parish in Lincoln on January 1, 1893. A few days later, he was named pastor of Havelock, Sullivan’s Settlement, Greenwood, and Steven’s Creek (Walton). He organized the parish in Havelock and directed the construction of the first St. Patrick Church in Havelock.

In 1895, Father Peter was transferred to Michigan. Later he served in Ohio, Kansas, and Missouri.

On December 28, 1935, when he celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood, the Provincial remarked: “If all the friars would cause as little trouble as Father Peter, the task of the Provincial would be relieved of most of its burdensome duties.”

A few months after that celebration, Father Peter was summoned to his eternal home on April 12, 1936. The Provincial Chronicle stated: “Father Peter was a man of prayer, a lover of poverty, humble, a good religious, a most worthy son of St. Francis, one of the saintly men of the Province.”
Father Peter Cops was born in Nijmegen, Netherlands, the home of St. Peter Canisius, on February 5, 1925. He was the second oldest of eleven children born to Edmond and Theodora (Gietman) Cops. After six years in minor seminary, he entered the novitiate of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Later he completed his priestly studies and was ordained on March 29, 1952, by the Most Reverend William Mutsaerts in Nijmegen, Netherlands.

Father Cops served as a missionary priest in northeast Brazil for nearly twenty years. He then came to the United States and visited many Dioceses in order to promote Eucharistic devotion and Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. From 1996 to 2001, Father Cops resided at Our Lady of Good Counsel Retreat House. He visited various parishes in the Diocese of Lincoln and preached on faith in and love of our Eucharistic Lord. Father Cops promoted Pope John Paul II’s teaching on the Eucharist as the source of all vocations and ministries in the Church. Upon retiring from work in the Diocese of Lincoln, Father Cops moved to LaCrosse, Wisconsin, where he resided with other retired priests.

The Eucharistic Lord summoned Father Cops to his eternal home on April 12, 2010. The Mass of Christian Burial was held at St. Paul Catholic Church in Combined Locks, Wisconsin. Father Peter Cops’ brother, Father Augustine Cops, O.F.M., concelebrated the Mass. The burial took place at Holy Name Cemetery.

"The Eucharist constitutes the culminating moment in which Jesus, in His Body given for us and in His Blood poured out for our salvation, reveals the mystery of His identity and indicates the sense of the vocation of every believer. In fact, the meaning of human life is totally contained in that Body and in that Blood, since from them life and salvation have come to us."
(Pope John Paul II—Message for the 37th World Day of Prayer for Vocations)
Albert Petrasch was born on December 16, 1861, in Ruethen, Westphalia, Germany. He began his studies for the priesthood in Germany and completed them at Saint Meinrad, Indiana. On November 30, 1889, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Thomas A. Bonacum in Saint Theresa Pro-Cathedral of Lincoln.

Father Petrasch directed the building programs in many parishes and missions of the diocese. The congregations he served included Assumption, Orleans, Hebron, Beatrice, Friend, Crete, David City, Odell, St. Elizabeth Hospital, St. Teresa, Lincoln, Dawson, Davey and Sutton.

On March 4, 1921, he was named a Domestic Prelate. Bishop Beckman appointed Monsignor Petrasch Vicar General on October 22, 1925. He was given the distinction of being named Protonotary Apostolic on October 15, 1929.

Monsignor Petrasch retired in 1932. After spending some time in Texas and California, he resided at St. Meinrad’s in Indiana. It was there that he celebrated his golden sacerdotal jubilee on November 30, 1939. Monsignor answered God’s summons to eternal life on April 15, 1941.

Demonstrating his interest in young men who wish to study for the priesthood, Monsignor Petrasch established three burses for the education of candidates. The one was at St. Meinrad’s, another at St. Francis Seminary in Wisconsin, and the third was at Kenrick Seminary in Webster Groves, Missouri.
Father Benignus was born on July 14, 1875 in Ireland. He joined the Capuchin Fathers of the Irish Province and was ordained as a member of that Order on January 8, 1899 in Cork, Ireland, by Bishop Thomas O'Callaghan, O.P.

Father Benignus was sent to Lincoln on March 22, 1921, and was assigned to Sacred Heart Church in Lincoln. He served there from 1921 to 1926 and again from 1932 to 1937.

During his years in Lincoln, Father Benignus gave many missions in the diocese and also substituted for the pastors in many parishes while they were on leave. In 1934, he delivered the festive sermon during the solemn procession observing the Feast of Corpus Christi on the grounds of St. Elizabeth Hospital.

Father Benignus was stationed at Sacred Heart Church when the rectory was destroyed by fire in January of 1933. He escaped injury by jumping from the roof of the front porch.

On September 5, 1937, Father Benignus was transferred to Wilmington, Delaware. He died in Saint Francis Hospital in Wilmington on April 15, 1950.

"God asks little, but he gives much."

Saint John of the Cross
Father Milton Thomas was born to Rudolph and Lauretta (Matteson) Thomas on July 5, 1931, in Brown’s Valley, Minnesota. After graduating from high school, he was a member of the U.S. Air Force stationed in San Antonio, Texas. He then entered the Crosier Minor Seminary. In 1958, he professed his first vows. On May 23, 1964, Father Milton Thomas was ordained to the sacred priesthood by Bishop Leo Pursley for the Crosier Fathers.

From 1964 to 1970, Father Thomas resided at the Crosier Monastery in Hastings, Nebraska. He was pastor of St. Ann, Doniphan and St. Patrick, Highland. From 1970 to 1982, Father Thomas had various assignments in Duluth, Minnesota. From 1982 to 1984, Father Thomas studied at St. Paul Pontifical University in Ottawa, Canada from which he received his Masters degree and a Licentiate in Canon Law. He later served in Michigan for 2 years before returning to the monastery in Hastings in 1986. Father Thomas remained in the Diocese of Lincoln for the rest of his active priestly ministry. From 1986 to 2006, his assignments included parish missions, retreat work, and serving as a member of the Lincoln Diocesan Tribunal. In 2000, Father Thomas was incardinated in the Diocese of Lincoln. Upon his retirement, he resided in the Grand Island Veteran’s Home. The Lord took Father Thomas to his eternal home on April 16, 2010, during the hour of Divine Mercy—a very Providential time given Father Thomas’ great devotion to Divine Mercy and St. Faustina.

Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz celebrated the Mass of Christian Burial at St. Michael, Hastings, on April 21, 2010. Father Thomas was buried in Calvary Cemetery in Lincoln. Monsignor Thorburn, homilist at the funeral Mass, said: “We cannot think of Father Milton Thomas without thinking of Divine Mercy. Jesus said to St. Faustina, ‘I desire that priests proclaim this great mercy of Mine towards the souls of sinners. Let sinners not be afraid to approach Me.’ Father Thomas took these words as his ‘marching orders’ and he was certainly faithful to them.”
"At that last hour, a soul has nothing with which to defend itself except My mercy. Happy is the soul that during its lifetime immersed itself in the Fountain of Mercy, because justice will have no hold on it."

—from St. Faustina's diary “Divine Mercy in My Soul”
April 16, 1984  Rev. Henry Denis

Henry Denis was born on December 31, 1909 in Poland. He was ordained on June 22, 1936 by Bishop Jan Kanty Lorek in Poland. While serving as chaplain in the Polish Army, he was captured by the Germans on September 19, 1939. He suffered in the concentration camps of Buchenwald and Dachau until he was liberated by the American troops in 1944.

Father Denis came to the Diocese of Lincoln on January 7, 1948, and was assigned to assist Father Lutz in Grafton. After the death of Father Lutz, he administered the parish for a few months before being transferred to Denton and Cheney.

On July 1, 1949, Father Denis was named pastor of Arapahoe. In order to fulfill a promise made to Our Blessed Mother while he was in the Nazi prison camps, Father Denis directed the construction of a shrine in honor of Our Lady of Fatima on the parish grounds. Since the site is adjacent to the highway, many travelers stop there to pray and rest. In Oxford, Father Denis supervised the renovation and enlargement of the church building which had been severely damaged by fire.

On October 25, 1961, Father Denis was transferred to Morse Bluff, where he served until his retirement on June 19, 1974. After spending so many years in promoting a love for Our Lady, she must have escorted him to her Son when Father Denis completed his earthly life on April 16, 1984.
Paul Brounts was born on August 3, 1860, in Holland. He began his studies for the priesthood at a Jesuit College in Holland and completed his preparation with the Jesuits in Woodstock, Maryland. On July 29, 1893, he was ordained a priest by Cardinal Gibbons at Woodstock.

Father Brounts did missionary work in Spokane, Washington, before coming to the Diocese of Lincoln in December of 1898. His first assignment was at Palmyra from December 7, 1898 to June 17, 1899, when he was transferred to Harvard. On May 1, 1901, Father Brounts returned to Palmyra and served the people of that area until October 18, 1909. Later he retired in Bennet, Nebraska and died there on April 17, 1926.

“The Shepherd and Bishop of our souls so constituted His Church that the people whom He chose and purchased by His blood would be due to have its priests always and to the end of time, lest Christians should ever be like sheep without a shepherd.” (Documents of Vatican II, Priests No. 11.)
Father Edmund was born on August 16, 1823, in Bavaria. He joined the Benedictine Order and was ordained on May 29, 1858, at Saint Vincent Abbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

Immediately after ordination, Father Edmund was sent to Doniphan, Kansas to help the Benedictines who were doing missionary work in the Midwest. From there Father Edmund visited Brownville, Rulo, Nebraska City, Plattsmouth and other settlements in Southern Nebraska.

It is said that during his entire priestly life Father Edmund never complained of being overworked. Frequently he had just started his meal after long hours in the confessional when a parishioner would come to the door asking him to visit a sick person. No matter how tired, how cold or fatigued he was, or how inclement the weather, Father Edmund would ride for miles to minister to the sick at any hour of the day or night.

One of his personal characteristics was a remarkably strong bass voice. It is said that while Father Edmund was celebrating a High Mass in one of the mission churches, a stray dog wandered into the building. Some of the men in the congregation were trying to coax the dog outside without undue disturbance. They were having no success. Then, Father Edmund turned around to sing the "Dominus vobiscum" with his powerful voice. The dog was so frightened that he jumped through an open window and disappeared from the neighborhood.

God called this dedicated missionary from this life on Saturday, April 18, 1885.

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"You know that your toil is not in vain when it is done in the Lord." 1 Cor. 15:58
John Hotovy was born on January 18, 1897, in Dwight, Nebraska. He studied at Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska; St. Procopius College, Lisle, Illinois; St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota; and St. Thomas Seminary, Denver, Colorado. On August 25, 1925, he was ordained by Bishop Francis J. Beckman in Assumption Church, Dwight, Nebraska.

Father Hotovy served at Wilber from September 1, 1925 to October, 1926; Appleton from November 13, 1927, to February 15, 1931; Bruno from February 15, 1931, to July 14, 1931, when he was sent to Milligan until August 23, 1931. At that time, for reasons of health, he was given a leave of absence to serve the Church in Scappoose, Oregon.

Although Father Hotovy had not been well for some time, his relatives and friends in Southern Nebraska did not know that his condition was serious. During the last week in March, 1940, his relatives were notified that he had entered the hospital for treatment. Plans were initiated immediately to have Father Hotovy return to Nebraska as soon as he was able to make the trip. Before these plans were finalized, God called Father Hotovy to his heavenly home on April 18, 1940.

“Be careful to choose the right course, be brave under trials, make the preaching of the Good News your life’s work in thoroughgoing service.” 2 Tim. 4:5.
Walter McDonald was born on April 17, 1872, in County Kilkenny, Ireland. He began his studies for the priesthood at Saint Kernan’s College in Kilkenny, Ireland. In 1886, he came to the United States and completed his preparation at St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee. He was ordained by Bishop Thomas A. Bonacum on June 25, 1896.

For the first six months after ordination, Father Walter McDonald substituted for his cousin, Father William McDonald, in Hastings. Then he was appointed assistant at Saint Mary’s in Nebraska City.

In 1898, Father McDonald was transferred to Exeter where he spent the remainder of his priestly life. He supervised the construction of the church, school, and rectory in Exeter. The church costing $20,000 was dedicated on May 27, 1903, the school costing $6000 was blessed on May 21, 1907, and the rectory was built in 1910. Father McDonald was also dean of the Exeter district.

In February of 1916, Father McDonald fell from a ladder while trying to repair the damage done to the roof by a storm. Although he thought that the injuries were minor, nevertheless, a few days later he had to undergo surgery. As a result of the injuries, Father McDonald died on April 19, 1916.
Leander Ketter was born on August 15, 1917 in Kelly, Kansas. He studied at Saint Benedict College in Atchison, Kansas and at Saint Paul Seminary in Saint Paul, Minnesota. On December 21, 1944, he was ordained by Bishop Louis B. Kucera in Saints Peter and Paul Church in Falls City.

Father Ketter's first appointment was as assistant at St. Cecilia Church, Hastings and assistant director of the Catholic Rural Life Conference. On April 15, 1948, he was named administrator of Holy Trinity, Blue Hill. From September 15, 1950 to January 1, 1955, Father Ketter served as Army Chaplain.


Father Ketter died at Saint Elizabeth Community Health Center on April 19, 1971. Funeral services were at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ and burial was in Falls City.

“I have full confidence that now as always Christ will be exalted through me, whether I live or die. Phil. 1:20.
James Fitzgerald was born in Java, New York. He was the older brother of Father Christopher Fitzgerald. He was educated at St. Joseph College, Bardstown, Kentucky and St. Thomas Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. On July 20, 1880, he was ordained to the priesthood in Louisville, Kentucky.

Immediately after ordination he came to the Vicariate of Nebraska and was appointed assistant to Father Cusson at St. Mary Church, Nebraska City. In June, 1881, Father Fitzgerald was appointed pastor of Calvert (South Auburn) with Glen Rock, Brownville, and Burke Settlement as missions. The Lincoln Land Company donated one-half block of land in 1881, as a site for a church. Father Fitzgerald directed the construction of the church in Calvert.

Father Fitzgerald had the distinction of being the first resident pastor of a Catholic church in Nemaha County. After working for almost seven years in Calvert, Father Fitzgerald was transferred to Fremont by Bishop James O’Connor in February of 1887. Since the Diocese of Lincoln was established in August of that year, Father Fitzgerald was north of the Platte River when the division was made. For that reason he spent the remainder of his priestly life in the Diocese of Omaha. He died at St. Joseph Hospital in Omaha on April 20, 1929.

“Accept the strength, my dear son, that comes from the grace of Christ Jesus. You have heard everything that I teach in public; hand it on to reliable people so that they in turn will be able to teach others.” 2 Tm. 2:1-2.
Aloys Reimbold was born February 24, 1884, in Keokuk, Iowa. He was ordained June 29, 1913 as a Redemptorist by Bishop Sebastian B. Messmer in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. He received an Indult of Exclaus- tration February 2, 1932, and was incardinated into the Diocese of Lincoln February 21, 1935.

Father Reimbold came to the Diocese of Lincoln in 1932. His assignments were: Blue Hill, 1932-1937; Roseland 1937-1938; Shubert 1938-1944, and Burchard 1944-1948. Father Reimbold was known in practically every parish of the Lincoln Diocese and also in some parishes of neighboring dioceses because of his zealous efforts in conducting missions.

On April 20, 1948, Father Reimbold died in Burchard. The parishioners said that their greatest consolation was knowing that he had gone, not to another parish but to his eternal home in Heaven. They had great admiration for him, especially for his expressions of gratitude for the smallest services.

Bishop Kucera stated that thousands of people had been sanctified by his words of absolution during the missions that he had conducted. The Bishop remarked that Father Reimbold's death removed from the ranks of the clergy, one of its most active members.
Hilary Maria Ly Tran was born to Mr. The Tran and his wife, Mrs. Nhieu Thi Vu, on November 18, 1927 in Tra Doai, Bui Chu, North Vietnam. He joined the Congregation of the Mother Coredemptrix on May 20, 1947. On September 15, 1957, he made his first profession of vows as a religious Brother of that congregation. Following his first profession, Brother Hilary served as a teacher at various grade levels.

In 1970, Brother Hilary began his studies for the priesthood. He was ordained by Bishop (now Cardinal) Bernard F. Law on May 28, 1977, at Saint Agnes Cathedral, Springfield, Missouri. After his ordination, Father Hilary served as a chaplain of the Vietnamese Catholic community in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Two years later, he was made third provincial councilor. In 1980, Father Hilary was assigned to be Pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Lincoln.

While pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, he worked with the Secular Franciscan Order to visit parishioners’ homes in order to encourage them to pray the rosary.

In 1983, Father Hilary moved to Fort Worth, Texas to serve as chaplain of the Vietnamese community there. Over the next several years, he ministered as Pastor of Immaculate Conception Formation House in New Orleans, Louisiana; chaplain (later pastor) of the Vietnamese Martyrs community in Arlington, Texas; and director of Immaculate Conception House in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Father Hilary Tran passed away in New Orleans on April 21, 2004.
Jerome Murray was born on April 7, 1924 in Atchison, Kansas. He attended college at Saint Benedict College, Atchison, Kansas, and Saint Thomas Seminary, Denver, Colorado. While in Denver, he also received his education in philosophy and theology. Father Murray was ordained on June 8, 1949 at Saints Peter and Paul Church in Falls City, Nebraska, for the Diocese of Lincoln.

Father Murray served in a number of parishes and institutions in the diocese during his years of active ministry. He retired in 1999, taking up residence at Bonacum House in Lincoln.

Because of infirmity, in 2015, he moved to Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. Father Murray died at Madonna on April 21, 2016. A rosary was prayed for Father Murray on April 25, 2016, at John XXIII Diocesan Center chapel in Lincoln. The funeral Mass was also at John XXIII Diocesan Center on April 25, 2016. Burial was in Calvary Cemetery, Lincoln, Nebraska.
Lawrence Strohofer was born on July 4, 1893, in Munich, Bavaria, of parents from the United States. He was educated at Saint Benedict College, in Atchison, Kansas, and at Saint Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. On June 17, 1917, he was ordained by Archbishop Sebastian G. Messmer for the Diocese of Lincoln.

Father Strohofer was assigned as assistant at Saint John Church in Minden. During the first year of his priestly career, he was incapacitated frequently because of illness. Therefore, on November 15, 1918, Father Strohofer requested a transfer to the Marquette Diocese where the climate would be more conducive to good health.

After some years, he changed the spelling of his name to “Strohfer”, and finally shortened it to “Strofer”. He died on April 21, 1958, in Saint Cecilia Parish, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.

“All the runners at the stadium are trying to win, but only one of them gets the prize. You must run in the same way, meaning to win. All the fighters at the games go into strict training; they do this just to win a wreath that will wither away, but we do it for a wreath that will never wither.” 1Cor. 9:24-25.
Father Paschal (Albert) Rollman was born on January 16, 1905 in Humphrey, Nebraska. He entered the Order of Friars Minor on July 2, 1925. Father Paschal's first assignment was at Saint Anthony Parish in Saint Louis, Missouri. He spent twenty-two years of his priestly ministry in his native State of Nebraska.

After serving the Church in Humphrey, Nebraska for eleven years, Father Paschal was transferred to the Lincoln Diocese. On July 23, 1951, he was appointed pastor of Saint Patrick Church, Lincoln. After completing a term of three years, Father Paschal was transferred to San Antonio, Texas.

In 1968, Father Paschal returned to the Lincoln Diocese and spent the last eight years of his life at Good Counsel Retreat House. Although a heart condition prevented him from being very active, he served by celebrating Holy Mass each day for the Brothers, kept the financial and attendance records and was librarian.

Two months before his 45th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood, Father Paschal was summoned to his heavenly home on April 22, 1976. Funeral services were held at Good Counsel Retreat House and burial was in Humphrey, Nebraska.

“Every heart to heaven aspires.”  
Jane Taylor
John Caraher was born on July 27, 1865, in County Armagh, Ireland. He studied at Saint Patrick College, Carlow. On May 31, 1890 he was ordained by Bishop Comerford in Saint Patrick Cathedral, Carlow, for the Diocese of Lincoln. Bishop James O'Connor had accepted him as a seminarian in 1885.

Father Caraher's first assignment was Hastings. There he was chaplain for the Visitation Sisters and had charge of the missions of Fairfield, Harvard, Highland, Superior, and Nelson.

On August 10, 1894, Father Caraher was appointed chancellor and secretary to Bishop Thomas A. Bonacum. From January to December of 1896, he took care of Tecumseh.

Father Caraher's other pastorates were Fairbury 1896-1902, David City 1902-1913, Friend 1913-1918, and Heartwell 1918-1934. Under his direction in Fairbury property with a house to be used as a rectory was purchased. He liquidated the debt and supervised the renovation of the church. During the eleven years of Father Caraher's administration in David City, the school was moved and renovated, and the church was completed.

On April 23, 1934, Father Caraher died in Heartwell. All who knew him were impressed with his loyalty to Bishop Bonacum. Each year he sent an offering to the chancery for a Holy Mass to be offered for the deceased prelate.
Francis Hovora was born on November 21, 1865, in Budweis, Bohemia, Austria. He studied at the Gymnasium at Budweis and completed his theological studies at Saint Meinrad’s in Indiana. He was ordained on February 5, 1889, by Bishop Thomas A. Bonacum for the Diocese of Lincoln.

For the first two months after ordination, Father Hovora was assistant at Wilber. From May 7, 1889 to September 27, 1889, he was pastor of Saint Stephen Church in Lawrence. For the next ten years, Father Hovora was pastor of Plasi and Cedar Hill.

When Saint Stephen Parish in Lawrence was divided, Father Hovora was appointed pastor of the new parish in Lawrence – Sacred Heart. He continued as pastor of that parish until 1904 when he returned to Europe for a short time and later was admitted to the Diocese of Pittsburgh. He served there until his death on April 23, 1928.

“Preaching the gospel is not the subject of a boast; I am under compulsion and have no choice. I am ruined if I do not preach it! If I do it willingly, I have my recompense; if unwillingly, I am nonetheless entrusted with a charge.” I Cor. 9:16-17.
William Quinn was born on August 17, 1885, in Sedalia, Missouri. He began his studies for the priesthood at the Vincentian house of studies in Denver. He continued his preparation at St. Mary's in Perryville, Missouri, and at Kenrick Seminary in Webster Groves, Missouri. He was ordained on September 28, 1914 at Saint Meinrad's in Indiana for the Lincoln Diocese.

After ordination, Father Quinn attended The Catholic University. While there Cardinal Gibbons appointed him to the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions. From 1917 to 1922 he was director general of the Marquette League.

After the reorganization of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith by Pope Pius XI, Father Quinn was appointed the first Secretary General on December 22, 1922. On October 29, 1924, he was honored with the title of Domestic Prelate. During the same year, Monsignor Quinn was chosen as the National Director of the Propagation of the Faith.

In recognition for his services as director of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith, Monsignor Quinn was named a Protonotary Apostolic in April of 1932.

After an illness of almost two years, Monsignor Quinn was relieved of the sufferings of this life on April 23, 1938. The funeral services and burial were in Sedalia, Missouri.
John Kozlik was born on May 17, 1908 in Chicago, Illinois. He studied at Saint Mary College in Orchard Lake, Michigan and at Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan. On April 20, 1935 he was ordained by Bishop Louis B. Kucera in Saint Mary Cathedral, Lincoln.


The fifteen years of Father Kozlik's retirement were accompanied by much suffering. God called him to eternal life on Saturday, April 23, 1983.

At the time of his death, Father Edward C. Tuchek wrote:

"The time of his greatest service
Was the acceptance of his suffering over the years.
In this he resembled the Great High Priest
Who offered himself in sacrifice.
May his prayer of suffering gain for him eternal joy,
And for all of us the grace of resignation
To what God permits to come our way.
May his memory be blessed and
May his stay with us remain an inspiration."
Joseph Plewa was born on December 15, 1910 in Chicago, Illinois. He studied at Saint Mary College in Orchard Lake, Michigan and at Saint Procopius Seminary in Lisle, Illinois. On April 16, 1938, he was ordained by Bishop Louis B. Kucera in Saint Mary Cathedral, Lincoln.

Father Plewa was administrator of Saint Patrick Parish in Manley from May to July in 1938, during the absence of the pastor, Father James P. Hennessy. He also served at Saint Francis in Center 1938-1949, and Roseland and Logan 1949-1953.

After visiting a few days in Colorado during the third week of April in 1953, Father Plewa suffered a heart attack on his return trip. He died at a farm home near Hill City, Kansas on April 23, 1953. He was just 42 years old and had served as a priest for 15 years.

Speaking at his funeral, Bishop Kucera said: “His kind, sympathetic and understanding nature was appreciated most by the people who knew him and who were blessed in his ministrations. He was just, he was humble, he was charitable, always a true priest.”

The Bishop closed with the words of the poet:

“Rabonni, when I am dying
How glad I shall be
That the lamp of my life
Burned out for Thee.”
Wenceslaus Beranek was born on March 31, 1910, in Prairieburg, Iowa. He studied at Columbia College in Dubuque, Iowa, and at Saint Procopius Seminary in Lisle, Illinois. On May 6, 1937, he was ordained in Saint Mary Cathedral, Lincoln, by Bishop Louis B. Kucera for the Lincoln Diocese.

Father Beranek was a native of Saint Joseph Parish in Prairieburg, Iowa. The pastor of the parish was Father Stephen J. Kucera, brother of Bishop Louis B. Kucera. It was Father Stephen Kucera who nurtured the vocation of Father Wenceslaus Beranek. He also participated in the first Holy Mass of Thanksgiving offered by Father Beranek.

Father Beranek’s assignments were: Saint Wenceslaus, Wahoo and St. James, Mead 1937-1938; St. Vitus, Touhy 1938-1956; Assumption, Dwight 1956-1960, and St. Wenceslaus, Wilber 1960-1979. Because of illness, Father Beranek retired April 21, 1979. Three days later, April 24, 1979, God relieved him of his sufferings and took him to his eternal home.

Father Tuchek described some of Father Beranek’s characteristics. "Father Beranek was always a country pastor and that was what he wanted to be. Being close to God’s earth kept him and his people close to Him from whom all bounty comes. Determined to be close to his people, he served in suffering until it was impossible for him to be on duty.”
April 25, 1911  Rev. Michael A. Kennedy

Michael Kennedy was born on September 25, 1844 in Bally Longford, County Kerry, Ireland. He was ordained on April 7, 1877, by Bishop John J. Cain of Wheeling, West Virginia.

Father Kennedy served in Detroit and Chicago before coming to the Vicariate of Nebraska. On December 13, 1880, he was appointed pastor of Saint Theresa Church in Lincoln. A year later, he suggested to Bishop O'Connor that they purchase the Silver residence for a rectory since it was adjacent to the church property. Father Kennedy thought that the old home could be moved so that the sisters would have more room and a school could be built adjacent to the church.

It was also in 1881, that the Land League sponsored a dance on St. Patrick's Day. John Fitzgerald was president of the league, Father Kennedy and General Vifquain were vice presidents, M. E. Cagney was treasurer and M. I. Clare was the secretary. Father Kennedy said he did not know that Bishop O'Connor had prohibited dancing. He offered the Bishop three reasons for sponsoring the dance: (a) it had been a custom for 11 years in Lincoln; (b) the goal was charity; and (c) he learned the Bishop's opposition too late.

After serving as pastor in Lincoln for eight years, Father Kennedy was transferred to Exeter, on September 1, 1888 by Bishop Bonacum. In May of 1889, Father Kennedy left the Lincoln Diocese and served in Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. He died in Cheyenne, Wyoming, on April 25, 1911.

"Heaven is not reached by a single bound." Josiah Gilbert Holland

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Albin Bauer was born on August 16, 1900, in Defiance, Ohio. He studied at St. Joseph College, Collegeville, Indiana and at St. Charles Seminary in Carthagena, Ohio. He was ordained as a Precious Blood Father on February 21, 1929. Father Bauer served in Ohio, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Kentucky before being sent to Nebraska.

On August 13, 1938, Father Bauer was appointed pastor of St. Mary Church in Nebraska City. There he directed the construction of a new church and rectory. The former church was converted into a parish hall. The cost of the building program was $72,000. The entire debt was liquidated by 1945.

Father Bauer's work in Nebraska City was so exceptional that Bishop Kucera wanted him to be named a Domestic Prelate. As a religious, Father Bauer could not accept that honor. Instead on October 5, 1945, he was given the medal, "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice".

For reasons of health, Father Bauer requested a change. Accordingly, he was sent to South Dakota on August 31, 1953.

On April 27, 1973, while Father Bauer was stationed at St. Charles Seminary in Carthagena, Ohio, this zealous priest was called to his heavenly reward.
Father Maciejewski was a priest of the Omaha Diocese. When illness forced Archbishop Harty,¹ Ordinary of the Diocese of Omaha, to reside in Arizona, Bishop Francis J. Beckman of Lincoln was appointed Administrator of the Omaha Diocese in addition to his duties as Bishop of Lincoln.

While Bishop Beckman was in charge of both dioceses, he needed a priest who could minister to the spiritual needs of the Polish-speaking people in Saint Mary, Nebraska. For that reason, on August 11, 1927, Bishop Beckman transferred Father John Maciejewski from Saint Francis Church in Omaha to Saint Mary Church in Saint Mary, Nebraska.

After serving the Polish people of Saint Mary’s for three years, Bishop Joseph F. Rummel of Omaha, recalled Father Maciejewski on April 29, 1930. He was assigned to Duncan, Nebraska. This appointment was made after Bishop Beckman was transferred to Dubuque and before the arrival of Bishop Kucera.

While serving as chaplain of Saint Catherine Hospital in Omaha, Father Maciejewski made his journey to eternity April 27, 1945.

¹Archbishop Harty was the Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Manila when he received his appointment to the Diocese of Omaha. He retained the title of Archbishop when he came to Omaha in 1916. He was officially known as the Archbishop-Bishop of Omaha, a title that was common in Europe.
A striking characteristic shared by many of the priests who came to the United States from Europe was a short life. The climatic change and the cultural change seem to have had an adverse affect on their health. Some of them, especially those priests and seminarians who came from Ireland, developed tuberculosis and died at a young age. Others suffered from various illnesses that seem to be related to a change in environment.

Father Cornelius McTeague is just one example of a priest who died before he reached the age of 40 years. He was born December 12, 1887, in County Donegal, Ireland. He studied at Saint Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland, and Saint Francis Seminary in Loretto, Pennsylvania. He was ordained June 29, 1916, by Bishop Eugene A. Garvey of Altoona, Pennsylvania, for the Diocese of Lincoln.

Father McTeague was assigned to Harvard with the mission of Giltner. In 1922, he began to suffer with neuritis and rheumatism. He sought treatment in Saint Elizabeth Hospital, Lincoln; Kneipp Sanitarium in Rome City, Indiana; and Misericordia Hospital in New York City. During his last years, Father McTeague needed both braces and crutches. He died at age 39, April 29, 1927.

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"Having become perfect in a short while
he reached the fullness of a long career;
for his soul was pleasing to the Lord,
therefore he sped out of the midst of wickedness."
Ws. 4:13-14.
Sharing the same death anniversary with Father McTeague is another priest who did not complete four decades of life. Although many of the priests who died at a young age were from Ireland, they had no monopoly on earning the reward of heaven in a short time.

Father Bernadine Holthaus was of German origin. On May 2, 1850, he was born in Osnabrück, Hanover, Germany. It is not known just when he came to the United States. He was ordained August 25, 1872, by Bishop Caspar H. Borgess in Detroit, Michigan.

Father Holthaus served the Church in Michigan for almost sixteen years before he transferred to the Diocese of Lincoln. On June 3, 1888, Bishop Thomas A. Bonacum appointed Father Holthaus as pastor of Saint Vincent de Paul Parish in Seward.

Less than one year later, April 29, 1889, God terminated his short pastorate in Seward. He died the week before his 39th birthday. The funeral services for Father Holthaus were in Seward. He was buried in Cincinnati.

"Happy the man who holds out to the end through trial! 
Once he has been proved he will receive the crown of life 
the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 1:12."
Joseph Kenney was born on July 10, 1894 in Keokuk, Iowa. He studied at St. Ambrose College, Davenport, Iowa; DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois; and Kenrick Seminary, Webster Groves, Missouri. He was ordained June 10, 1922, in St. Louis Cathedral by Archbishop John J. Glennon for the Diocese of Lincoln.

After serving as a substitute in Cambridge for a few weeks, Father Kenny was assistant at the Cathedral for ten years. During that time he was diocesan youth director. With the help of a committee, Father Kenney established the CYO Hall in Lincoln.

On June 2, 1932, Father Kenney was appointed to organize the parish of the Holy Family in Southeast Lincoln. His other appointments were Palmyra 1934-1935, St. Catharine Hospital, McCook 1935-1943; and Seward 1943-1949.

On December 22, 1949, he was named a Domestic Prelate. Monsignor Kenney was invested on February 1, 1950. A few months later, April 29, 1950, Monsignor Kenney completed his earthly apostolate.

In his sermon at the funeral services, Monsignor Riordan remarked that Monsignor Kenney would want to be remembered as a priest of God, because no other distinction can equal the glory and dignity of the priesthood. It is a gift to man by God Himself. Bishop Kucera added that Monsignor Kenney was a man of principle, not a reed shaken by the wind. No one could ever persuade him to go against what he knew to be the truth,