Stephen Kraus was born on May 4, 1912, in Saint Louis, Missouri. He studied at St. Louis Preparatory Seminary and at Kenrick Seminary in Webster Groves, Missouri. On April 16, 1938, he was ordained in Saint Mary Cathedral, Lincoln, by Bishop Louis B. Kucera for the Lincoln Diocese.

On the day of his ordination, Bishop Kucera told Father Kraus that since there was no opening in the Lincoln Diocese, for the present he would assist in the Grand Island Diocese. Father Kraus expressed the hope that he would be in Loup City, Nebraska, for only a short time, and that he would then be given an assignment in the diocese for which he had been ordained.

On September 30, 1938, Father Kraus reported to Bishop Kucera that although he was happy with his work in Loup City, he would like to know when he would be recalled to the Lincoln Diocese. In response, Bishop Kucera reminded Father Kraus that one of his classmates, Father Kane, was also working outside of the diocese in Denver for the same reason — there was no opening in the Lincoln Diocese.

After waiting two more years, Father Kraus applied to the Diocese of Belleville, Illinois. He was accepted there on June 26, 1940.

Father Kraus died on May 1, 1960, while pastor of St. Mary Magdalen Church in Todd’s Mill, Illinois.
Michael Kasprzyk was born on September 22, 1875 in Lowicz, Russian, Poland. He began his studies for the priesthood in Poland. After coming to the United States, he attended Saint Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan. He was ordained on June 2, 1917, by Bishop D. Kelly in Detroit for the Lincoln Diocese.

His first assignment was at Saint Mary’s Church, Pilzno, where he served from June 29, 1917 to April 1, 1923. On February 1, 1923, he became a citizen of the United States.

From 1923 to 1936, Father Kasprzyk was pastor of Saint Ann Church in Shubert and Saint Herman Church in Salem. He died at Saint Elizabeth Hospital in Lincoln on May 2, 1936. The funeral services and burial were in Shubert.

Father Patrick Harte delivered the sermon. He emphasized the priest’s part in the plan of salvation. Father Harte stated: “The priesthood is the highest office that can be bestowed on man. The priest is another Christ, whose mission it is to perpetuate the life of Christ on earth.”

“...The just man shall flourish like a palm tree.”

Ps. 92:13.
Joseph Kopczynski was born on March 19, 1871 in Olkusz, Poland. He studied in Turin, Italy. Joseph was ordained December 18, 1897 by John Cardinal Richelmy for the missionary society of the Salesian Fathers. Before coming to the United States, Father Kopczynski served for ten years in Brazil and two years in Poland.

After coming to the United States, Father Kopczynski was stationed in New York City 1911-1914, Jersey City, New Jersey 1914-1918, Cleveland, Ohio 1918-1921, LaSalle, Illinois 1921-1926, and in the Diocese of Davenport from 1926-1930.

When Father Kopczynski left Davenport for Lincoln, Bishop Rohlman wrote: "I regret exceedingly that you are leaving our Diocese. During the four years of your sojourn with us you have not only given very efficient service to the good people of Polishville, but you have also won the affection of the priests of our diocese by your exemplary conduct and your fraternal spirit."

On October 17, 1930, Bishop Kucera assigned Father Kopczynski to Saint Mary's Parish in Saint Marys. Because of the great depression, Bishop Kucera informed Father Kopczynski on March 16, 1935 that his term of service would expire on May 5, 1935.

On the morning of May 4, 1935, Father Kopczynski was on his way to the church to distribute Holy Communion when he had a heart attack. He died the same day.
Frederick Stock was born on August 7, 1901 in Saxton, Missouri. He studied at Saint Charles Seminary in Carthagena, Ohio. He was ordained as a Precious Blood Father on May 26, 1927, by Archbishop John T. McNicholas.

Father Stock was stationed in Detroit, Michigan, before being sent to the Diocese of Lincoln. On December 18, 1933, he was appointed an assistant at Saint Mary Parish in Nebraska City. Father Stock was given charge of the missions of Avoca and Dunbar.

While in Nebraska City, Father Stock manifested a special concern for the sick and elderly. One specific example was the care that he showed for two elderly people in his missions who could not leave their homes. One was crippled with rheumatism and the other had a serious heart ailment. These two people had a great appreciation for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and wished that Father Stock might celebrate the Holy Mass in their home.

At the request of these two elderly people, Father Stock sought this permission from Bishop Kucera. In the 1930s this was a rather unusual request. Nevertheless, Bishop Kucera gave Father Stock the permission to offer the Holy Sacrifice in their home once during the Lenten season of 1937.

On May 25, 1937, Father Stock was transferred to Ohio. While serving as pastor of the Most Precious Blood Parish in Chicasaw, Ohio, God called Father Stock to the mansion prepared for him on May 7, 1967.
May 6, 1997

Msgr. John Gerard Mattie

John Mattie was born in Detroit on October 19, 1908. After completing high school at Holy Redeemer in Detroit, John attended Mount Saint Mary College and Seminary in Emmitsburg, Maryland. On June 16, 1934, Bishop Kucera accepted him as a seminarian for the Diocese of Lincoln. He was ordained by the Most Reverend Moses Riley in Saint Mary Cathedral, Trenton, N.J. on March 26, 1936.

Father Mattie’s first assignment was as an assistant in Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Falls City. On November 29, 1936, he was transferred to Saint Cecilia Parish in Hastings. After serving as an assistant for two years, Father Mattie was named administrator of Saint Andrew Parish in Osceola on August 16, 1938.

On November 22, 1940, Bishop Kucera gave Father Mattie permission to transfer to the Diocese of Seattle. Among the parishes he served there were Immaculate Conception in Seattle, Our Lady of the Sea in Bremerton, Saint Brendan in Bothsell and Immaculate Conception in Everett.

Father Mattie was named a Domestic Prelate on January 23, 1963. In addition to his many pastoral duties, Monsignor Mattie was very active as spiritual advisor for the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. He retired in 1978.

After completing 61 years of priestly service, God called Monsignor Mattie from this life on May 6, 1997. The Most Reverend Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy offered the Mass of Christian Burial on May 12, in Immaculate Conception Church in Everett.

“Grow strong in the Lord, with the strength of his power. Put God’s armor on so as to be able to resist the devil’s tactics.”

Ephesians 6:10-11.

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“The ministerial priesthood differs in essence from the common priesthood of the faithful because it confers a sacred power for the service of the faithful. The ordained ministers exercise their service for the people of God by teaching (munus docendi), divine worship (munus liturgicum), and pastoral governance (munus regendi).”

Catechism of the Catholic Church

No. 1592
Philip Erlach was born on April 27, 1839, at Kovor in Slovenia. He came to the United States in 1864, and studied at St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. On June 27, 1865, he was ordained by Bishop James O’Gorman for the Vicariate of Nebraska.

After serving at Columbus, Jackson, and Cheyenne, Father Erlach was named pastor of Rulo in 1871. He succeeded the eccentric Father Theodore Majerus who tried to build a basilica in Rulo with walls six feet in width.

In his annual report, Father Erlach stated that the majority of the Catholics were not practical Christians. “They commenced a large brick church to improve their town and not to satisfy their spiritual wants....The present Church accommodation in the presbytery is large enough to accommodate the few that always attend.”

In 1880, Father Erlach was appointed the first resident pastor of Hebron. In addition to caring for the people of Hebron, he visited the missions in Jefferson and Thayer Counties. These missions included Alexandria, Carleton, Davenport, Hubbel, Fairbury, and Steele City.

According to oral tradition, Father Erlach was nearing complete exhaustion when he left Nebraska for California in January of 1885. Later, he served in the Marquette Diocese. He died on May 8, 1895, in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin.
John Hahn was born on March 7, 1877 in Easton, Pennsylvania. He studied at St. John's College in Brooklyn, New York, and at Saint Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland. He was ordained on June 21, 1904 by Cardinal Gibbons in Baltimore, Maryland.

Father Hahn's first appointment was St. Joseph Church, Paul, from 1904 to 1908. While there he reopened the parochial school in Paul. On September 6, 1908, he was appointed pastor of Orleans and served there until his death with the exception of a year and seven months.

On January 3, 1909, Bishop Bonacum asked Father Hahn to go to Nebraska City to establish the Bernadine Sisters Academy and to remain there until a religious order was found to take charge of both parishes in Nebraska City. After fulfilling that order, Father Hahn returned to Orleans on August 9, 1910.

On May 29, 1932, Father Hahn was invested as a Domestic Prelate. Monsignor Hahn celebrated the golden jubilee of his ordination on June 13, 1954. On that occasion, Father Walter F. Banach saluted him as the "Patriarch of the West". Monsignor was closely associated with the development of the Church in all of the western portion of the diocese. He served the Church under the first five bishops of the diocese.

After serving as pastor of Orleans for 48 years, and ministering to three generations of parishioners, Monsignor completed his pilgrimage on May 9, 1956.
Louis Kucera was born on August 24, 1888, in Wheatland, Rice County, Minnesota. He studied at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota; St. Thomas Military Academy, St. Paul, Minnesota; and St. Paul Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. He was ordained on June 8, 1915 by Archbishop Ireland for the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa.

While Louis was a seminarian, Archbishop J. J. Keane visited St. Paul's and said that he needed one of the five Czech theologians for his archdiocese. Louis volunteered to affiliate with the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

Father Kucera’s appointments were: Tama, Iowa 1915-1916, Loras Academy as dean of discipline and instructor in Latin 1916-1925, and pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Protivin, Iowa from 1925-1930.

In Protivin, Father Kucera supervised the construction of a new school for grades one through twelve. It was named the Rudolphinum in honor of the previous pastor of Holy Trinity. He was serving in Protivin when he was appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Lincoln.

On October 28, 1930, Father Kucera was ordained bishop and became the fifth Ordinary of the Lincoln Diocese. He guided the development of the Church in Southern Nebraska longer than any other bishop to date - almost 27 years. God relieved him of his weighty responsibilities, May 9, 1957.
Adam Szmydt was born on December 24, 1910, in Rajgrod, Poland. He studied at Quigley Preparatory Seminary in Chicago; St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois; and Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary, Orchard Lake, Michigan. He was ordained on December 8, 1936, by Bishop Kucera in Saint Mary Cathedral, Lincoln.

Father Szmydt's first assignment was chaplain of Saint Mary Hospital, Nebraska City and Saint Clara Mission in Peru. On July 2, 1939, he was transferred to the pastorate of Blue Hill with Minden as a mission. Through the efforts of Father Szmydt, the Sisters of the Resurrection agreed to staff the hospital in Minden. Under his direction a new rectory was built in Minden. When it was completed, Father Szmydt was named the resident pastor of Minden and chaplain of the hospital on May 23, 1948.

On April 3, 1952, Father Szmydt was transferred to Saint Mary Parish in Osceola with the mission of Saint Joseph in Bellwood. While there he received the honor of being named a papal chamberlain. Monsignor Szmydt was invested in Osceola on August 5, 1955.

Father Andrew Brunswick was born in 1895 and ordained as a Precious Blood Father in 1923.

In June of 1929, Father Brunswick was given charge of Holdrege and Smithfield. Since he was there during the depression, Father Brunswick remarked: “It takes hard times to make people more fervent and devout.”

Father Brunswick was transferred to Missouri in 1933. He died at Saint Charles Seminary, Carthagen, Ohio on May 10, 1974.

May 10, 1955  Rev. John Maurice Van de Walle

John Maurice Van de Walle was born on July 28, 1876 in Belgium. He was ordained on March 2, 1901 for the Diocese of Malines, Belgium.

Father Van de Walle came to the Diocese of Lincoln from Seattle on April 20, 1919. He substituted for a few months in Auburn before being appointed pastor of Cedar Bluffs from 1919-1921. Father Van de Walle was transferred to Campbell in 1919. He ministered to the people in Campbell until June 1, 1923, when he left the diocese.

Father Van de Walle spent the remainder of his priestly life in California and Oregon. He died at Ascension Parish in Portland, Oregon on May 10, 1955.

“*The virtuous live forever, their recompense lies with the Lord, the Most High takes care of them!*”

Ws. 5: 15-16.
Michael Walsh was born November 1, 1844 in County Tipperary, Ireland. He studied at Saint Vincent Seminary, Cape Girardeau, Missouri. He was ordained May 30, 1867, in Cape Girardeau by Archbishop Peter R. Kenrick for the Archdiocese of Saint Louis.

Father Walsh came to the Diocese of Lincoln on December 24, 1888. The same day he was appointed an assistant pastor at Saint Theresa Pro-Cathedral, Lincoln.

In 1891, Father Walsh left the Diocese of Lincoln and went to Peoria, Illinois. About 1900 he returned to the Archdiocese of Saint Louis. He was pastor in Glencoe, Missouri, from 1900 to the time of his death on May 10, 1909.

"Priests fulfill their chief duty in the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In it the work of our Redemption continues to be carried out." (Documents of Vatican II, Priests, No. 13.)
Ferdinand F. Suesser was born on February 8, 1867 in Krating, Czechoslovakia. He was ordained in Rome for the Diocese of Vienna.

Father Suesser was stationed in Brazil, South America and in Ord, Nebraska, before coming to the Diocese of Lincoln in 1919.

On October 15, 1919, Father Suesser was appointed to Holy Rosary Parish in Plattsmouth. He ministered to God’s people in Plattsmouth until August 7, 1924 when he was loaned to the Archdiocese of Dubuque and served in Chelsea, Iowa, until September 8, 1925.

In 1925, Father Suesser, who had mastered six languages, became the second resident pastor of Dwight. For some years he suffered from a heart ailment which claimed his life on May 11, 1929, in Dwight. Funeral services and burial were in Dwight.

“Through the ministry of priests, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect in union with the sacrifice of Christ, the sole Mediator.”

(Document of Vatican II, Priests, No. 2.)
Clement A. Green was born on June 4, 1913 in Center, Knox County, Nebraska. He studied at St. Stanislaus Seminary, Florissant, Missouri; St. Louis University, Saint Louis, Missouri; and Saint Mary's College, St. Mary, Kansas. He was ordained on June 22, 1943, as a member of the Jesuit Order by Bishop Paul Schulte.

Father Green came to the Diocese of Lincoln in 1946, and served at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Lincoln. On January 3, 1948, he began training in the Register System of newspapers in Denver, Colorado. On July 1, 1949, he was appointed associate editor of the Southern Nebraska Register and chaplain of the State Hospital.

On January 7, 1952, Father Green began an extensive flight around the world to take motion pictures of the missionaries of Saint Columban's Foreign Mission Society. The project took five months.


Because of failing health, Father Green retired in June of 1981. He died at his retirement home in Ogallala on May 13, 1983. Funeral services and burial were in Grant.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, on your own intelligence rely not.” Prv. 3:5.
Charles M. Browne was born on August 7, 1849 in Wicklow, Ireland. He was educated at Durham, England, and ordained there on December 23, 1887.

Father Browne came to Lincoln on April 14, 1888. On the same day he was given charge of Malloy Settlement, Sand Creek and Mead with residence at Colon.

This area around Colon had been attended by priests from Fremont from 1869 to 1888. When the Diocese of Lincoln was established in 1887, it became the responsibility of Bishop Bonacum to care for the Catholics in this territory. For that reason Father Browne was assigned to Colon. Since there was no rectory, he supervised the construction of a frame house west of the railroad tracks in Colon. He was the first resident priest in that area.

On January 3, 1889, Father Browne left the Lincoln Diocese. He died in Milpitas, California on May 13, 1901.

“What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?”
Matt. 8:27.
Ovila J. Cormier was born on September 21, 1910, in Gardner, Massachusetts. He began his seminary training at Nicolet Seminary in Nicolet, Canada. He then attended Bourget College, in Rigand, Province of Quebec, Canada, and completed his theological studies at Saint Paul Seminary in Saint Paul, Minnesota. He was ordained on April 16, 1938, by Bishop Kucera in Lincoln.

Father Cormier served in Campbell from 1938 to 1946, when he was granted a leave of absence because of illness. After his recovery he was pastor of Alma, Bloomington and Naponee from 1958 to 1961, when ill health again forced him to retirement.

On August 24, 1966, Father Cormier was appointed chaplain of St. Mary Hospital in Nebraska City and given charge of St. Paul Church in Dunbar. On December 18, 1967, he was given an indefinite sick leave.

Father Cormier made the transition from a life of faith to a life of vision May 13, 1978 in Via Coeli Monastery, Jemez Springs, New Mexico. He was buried in the monastery cemetery.

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“I believe that I shall see the bounty of the Lord
in the land of the living.”

Ps. 27:13
Rudy Oborny was born in Columbus, Nebraska on February 5, 1945. He attended Conception Seminary in Conception, Missouri and Saint Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. On May 29, 1971, he was ordained to the priesthood at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ in Lincoln by Bishop Glennon P. Flavin.

During Father Rudy’s active ministry, he served as assistant pastor at Saint Wenceslaus Church in Wahoo (1971-1973), Saint John Church in Lincoln (1973-1976), and Saint Mary Church in David City (1976-1979). His next assignment took him to the foreign mission at Barquisimeto, Venezuela, where he selflessly served until 1985. Upon returning to the Lincoln Diocese, Father Rudy was appointed pastor at Saint Mary Church in Davey, and teacher of Religion at Bishop Neumann High School in Wahoo (1985-1988). In 1988, he was made pastor of Saint Patrick Church in Lincoln, and put in charge of the Hispanic Catholic Community (1988-1990). He returned to Saint John Church in Lincoln as pastor (1990-1999). During this time at Saint John, Father Rudy also served as Faithful Friar to the Knights of Columbus, Chaplain and Spiritual Director of “Natural Family Planning of Nebraska”, and Confessor/Spiritual Director at Saint Gregory the Great Seminary in Seward, Nebraska.

In 1999, he returned to Saint Wenceslaus Church in Wahoo as pastor, remaining there until 2004. During this time he was also made Dean of the Wahoo Deanery. His next appointment took him to Sacred Heart Church in Hebron, where he served as Dean of the Fairbury Deanery (2004-2020). Throughout this time, Father Rudy also was made temporary administrator of Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Grant, administrator of Saint Michael Church in Fairbury and Saint Mary Church in Alexandria. He was relieved of all administrator duties in 2009.

After a long and fruitful ministry, Father Rudy retired on June 15, 2020, only to enjoy a brief stay at Bonacum House for Retired Priests in Lincoln. He was soon admitted to Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln where he died on May 14, 2021.

The Rosary was prayed for Father Oborny on May 17, 2021 at Saint John Church in Lincoln. The funeral Mass was also held at St. John Church in Lincoln on May 18, 2021, followed by the burial at Saint Peter Church in Bellwood, Nebraska.
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Father William J. Madden came to the Vicariate of Nebraska in 1884, after serving for seven years in the St. Louis Archdiocese. Previous to that he had ministered to the Catholics of Providence, Rhode Island; Chicago, and New York City.

Bishop James O’Connor sent Father Madden to Saint John the Baptist Parish in Plattsmouth on May 18, 1884. On June 10, 1884, Father Jordan Stutz was sent to assist Father Madden in Plattsmouth.

According to Father Madden’s report to Bishop O’Connor, “Father Stutz speaks not a single word of English so we hammer at each other in bad Latin.” He also reported to the Bishop that on June 15, Father Stutz had given a German sermon at the High Mass and in the afternoon had instructions in the Bohemian language.

During the summer of 1884, Father Madden tried to find Sisters to take charge of the school. He contacted the Holy Child Sisters and the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Milwaukee. Both attempts were unsuccessful.

Because of some misunderstanding with Bishop O’Connor, Father Madden left Plattsmouth and the Vicariate on October 9, 1884. He died in California on May 15, 1905.

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“He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, 
a reward from God his Savior.”

Ps. 24:5.
Thomas J. Corcoran was born on December 26, 1861 in Buckstown, County Kilkenny, Ireland. He was ordained on June 20, 1886, in Waterford, Ireland, for the Diocese of Omaha. Southern Nebraska was then a part of the Omaha Diocese.

Father Corcoran arrived in Nebraska in September of 1886. He served as assistant pastor at Nebraska City and Exeter from 1886 to 1888, before being appointed pastor of Grafton, January 16, 1888. He was then assigned to Tecumseh, but a faction in sympathy with the former pastor would not turn over the property to his charge. Hence, Father Corcoran was named pastor of Dawson. There, he supervised the construction of a church, which Bishop Bonacum dedicated on July 31, 1900.

In 1907, Father Corcoran was appointed pastor of Heartwell. Although he was only 46 years old at the time of his appointment, he was described as "an elderly Irish priest and very frail." It was evident that he was not well.

In 1909, Father Corcoran was given sick leave. He went to Corona, California, where he recovered his health. He continued his priestly apostolate in California in 1919, and served the Church for another quarter of a century. He died in La Mesa, California on May 16, 1945.

"Your presence, O Lord, I seek. 
Hide not your face from Me."

Ps. 27:9
May 16, 1990 Monsignor Heinz Herman Ingenhorst

Heinz H. Ingenhorst was born in Rees, Germany, June 7, 1913. Because of his religious beliefs, he refused to join the youth organizations of the Nazis. He began his preparation for the priesthood by studying philosophy at Munchen Gladbach and theology at Paderborn. As a seminarian, he was arrested three times by Hitler's forces.

When Heinz learned that Bishop Louis B. Kucera of Lincoln was willing to help German priests, he fled to the United States in 1938. He was crossing the English Channel by the time the Gestapo arrived at his mother's home trying to prevent his departure.

Heinz completed his studies for the priesthood at Saint Paul Seminary in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Bishop Kucera ordained him in Saint Francis Chapel of Saint Elizabeth Hospital, Lincoln, on September 17, 1939.

Father Ingenhorst served as assistant at Saint Mary Cathedral in Lincoln and Saint Joseph Church in Beatrice before being appointed pastor of Saint Joseph Church, Benkelman with the missions in Stratton and Haigler on May 21, 1944.

From 1946 to 1956, Father Ingenhorst was pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Paul. While there he was named a Domestic Prelate and invested on July 14, 1955.

On October 3, 1956, Monsignor Ingenhorst was named pastor of Saint Stephen Parish, Exeter, where he served until his retirement on July 5, 1989. After offering the daily Eucharistic Sacrifice for more than 50 years, God called Monsignor to his eternal home on May 16, 1990.

In the funeral sermon, Father Victor A. Stachowiak emphasized Monsignor's participation in the priesthood of Christ, the Good Shepherd. With the wisdom of a senior priest, Monsignor Ingenhorst was "a shepherd who knew his flock."
"You crowned
MARY QUEEN of HEAVEN,
may all the dead rejoice
in your kingdom
with the saints
for ever.”

(Intercession, Evening Prayer for the Feast of the Visitation, May 31, The Liturgy of the Hours.)
Msgr. Thomas Kealy

May 16, 1996

Thomas, son of John and Adeline (Mitchell) Kealy, was born on December 24, 1905 in Prosser, Nebraska. After graduating from Hastings College in 1927, he began his preparation for the priesthood at Saint Benedict College in Atchison, Kansas, and completed it at Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. He was ordained to the priesthood on March 31, 1934, in Saint Mary Cathedral in Lincoln, by Bishop Louis B. Kucera.

Father Kealy's first assignment was an assistant at the Cathedral. Three months after his ordination, he was named financial manager for the diocesan newspaper. Recognizing the efficiency and accuracy demonstrated in this position, each successive bishop gave Monsignor Kealy much of the responsibility for managing the diocesan finances.

In 1941, Monsignor Kealy completed the requirements for a doctoral degree in Canon Law at the Catholic University of America. He was then named Chancellor and Director of Insurance. On May 20, 1943, he was honored with the title of Papal Chamberlain. On February 14, 1945, he became a Domestic Prelate and he was named a Protonotary Apostolic on June 16, 1992.

Father Tuchek summarized Monsignor Kealy's positions as "a doctor of Canon Law, a theologian, a contractor, a realtor, a printer, a maintenance person, a trouble shooter, a secretary, an accountant and a counselor." His complete dedication to Christ was manifested in all these offices, but at no time was it quite so obvious as during the last 14 years of his apostolate of suffering. How appropriate that God called him to his reward on the Feast of the Ascension.

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"Think of what Christ suffered in this life and then arm yourselves with the same resolution He had; anyone who in this life has bodily suffering has broken with sin, because for the rest of his life he is not ruled by human passions, but only by the will of God." (1 Peter 4:1-3)
May 17, 2009

Rev. Lawrence Gyhra

Lawrence Gyhra, son of Leonard and Adelaide (Rucker) Gyhra, was born in Pawnee City in 1939. He grew up on a farm near Steinauer, Nebraska, with his nine siblings. Lawrence attended Saint Anthony Parochial Grade School in Steinauer, and Steinauer High School. As a seminarian, he studied at Saint Benedict College, Atchison, Kansas, and Saint Thomas Seminary in Denver, Colorado. Father Gyhra was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Lincoln on May 28, 1966, at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ by The Most Reverend James Casey.

In June of 1966, Father Gyhra began serving as parochial vicar at Saint Teresa Parish, Lincoln. In 1968, he was also named the Diocesan Director of Catholic Youth and Scouting. Father Gyhra was named assistant pastor of Saint Michael Parish, Hastings, and teacher at Saint Cecilia High School, Hastings, in 1970. He continued to teach and serve as a guidance counselor at Saint Cecilia while pastor of the following parishes: St. Joseph, Harvard (1976-1981), and Sacred Heart and Assumption Parishes, Roseland (1981-1985). While pastor of Saint Wenceslaus Parish, Wahoo (1985-1999), Father Gyhra also was assigned to be Dean of the Wahoo Deanery, Director of Guidance and Counseling at Bishop Neumann High School, and Diocesan Director of the Permanent Deacon Program. In 1999, Father Gyhra returned to Hastings as pastor of Saint Cecilia and Dean of the Hastings Deanery. He served as such until his retirement in July of 2008, after having been diagnosed with cancer.

The Lord called Father Gyhra to Himself on May 17, 2009. The funeral Mass was celebrated by The Most Reverend Fabian Bruskewitz at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ, Lincoln. Father Gyhra was buried in Steinauer. Father James Meysenburg recalled Father Gyhra’s example of gratitude and recognition of the many blessings God bestows on His children, which led him to live generously his priestly vocation and inspire others to serve selflessly.
Father Bernard Clery was born on November 6, 1889, in County Clark, Ireland. He was ordained as a Capuchin Father of the Irish Province on July 1, 1917.

Father Bernard came to the United States in 1921 and was sent to the Capuchin mission of Sacred Heart Parish in Lincoln. He served as assistant at Sacred Heart for two years.

In 1923, the Provincial named Father Bernard the pastor of Saint Joseph Church in Roseburg, Oregon. Six years later he was stricken with multiple sclerosis, but with great courage and determination, Father Bernard continued to perform his duties as pastor until 1931.

On May 18, 1952, at Mercy Home in North Bend, Oregon, God relieved Father Bernard of the sufferings that he had endured so patiently. Funeral services were in Saint Joseph Church, Roseburg, Oregon, where Father Bernard had been pastor.

He meditated on the WORD OF GOD.
Charles (Carl) Stapf was born on June 12, 1872 in Bretzingen, Baden, Germany. He began his preparation for the priesthood at Freiburg, Baden, Germany and completed them at the American College in Louvain, Belgium. He was ordained at Louvain on June 29, 1895, for the Diocese of Lincoln.

His appointments were Luxemburg Settlement 1895-1899, Lawrence 1899-1900, Rulo 1900-1901, Steinauer 1901-1908, Paul 1908-1913, and Cambridge 1913-1916.

Father Stapf was never blessed with robust health. In November of 1911, he requested Bishop Tihen to send a substitute to Paul in order that he might spend some time recovering in a warmer climate. He returned to Paul during the first week in February of 1912.

In 1913, when he was stationed in Cambridge, Father Stapf also had charge of Arapahoe and Oxford. On January 21, 1913, he reported that every Catholic had moved out of the town of Oxford. The people in that area had experienced seven successive crop failures. A fire in the church at Cambridge on December 27, 1915, caused a thousand dollars damage and added to the financial problems.

During the afternoon of May 2, 1916, Father Stapf was found unconscious in the rectory. Because of dizziness he had fallen down the steps about 7:30 a.m. and suffered a concussion. He died on May 18, 1916.
Henry Barge was born on June 13, 1909, in Chickasaw, Ohio. He studied at Saint Joseph College in Carthagena, Ohio, and at Saint Charles Seminary in the same city. He was ordained as a Precious Blood Father on May 10, 1936.

After serving at Saints Peter and Paul Church in Norwood, Indiana, for seven months and at Saint Joseph College in Collegeville, Indiana, for one year, Father Barge was appointed assistant pastor of Saint Mary Church in Nebraska City on September 5, 1938.

On August 25, 1939, Father Barge was transferred by his Provinical to Casper Wyoming. He continued to serve the Church as a priest and a religious until May 19, 1970, when God called him to the reward that he has promised to all those who serve him faithfully. At the time of his death he was pastor of Assumption Church in Reed, Ohio.

*Ps. 138:3*

“When I called, you answered me, you built up strength within me.”

Ps. 138:3
Charles J. Cwiklinski was born on January 28, 1877 in West Prussia, Poland. He studied at St. Canisius College in Buffalo, New York and at Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Detroit, Michigan. On July 1, 1900 he was ordained in Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in Detroit by Bishop John S. Foley for the Diocese of Lincoln.

Father Cwiklinski came to Lincoln on July 29, 1900. From August to December of 1900, he was stationed in Shelby. On December 4, 1900, he was named rector of Smartville (now St. Mary) and administrator of Tecumseh. Under his direction a brick school building was erected in 1908. Although there were only 48 families in the parish, the enrollment for the first year was 88 pupils.

In July of 1912, Father Cwiklinski’s doctor reported to Bishop Tihen that Father had “acute pulmonary tuberculosis”. Part of his treatment was to sleep in a tent in order to get more fresh air. On February 5, 1913, Father Cwiklinski told the Bishop that he was sleeping in the tent no matter how cold it was.

Father Cwiklinski’s efforts to get well and all the help of his doctor and friends were unsuccessful. He grew steadily weaker until tuberculosis claimed his life on May 22, 1915, at age 38. Bishop Tihen wrote: “He labored zealously, unselfishly, and successfully until his untimely end.”

“*If you have some share in the sufferings of Christ, be glad, you will enjoy a much greater gladness when his glory is revealed.*”

*1 P. 4:13.*

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James William Cooper was born on June 8, 1948 in Lincoln, NE. He was a convert to the Catholic faith during his college studies. His journey to the priesthood led him to Saint Pius X Seminary in Erlanger, KY for studies in Philosophy, and Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Overbrook, Philadelphia, PA for Theology. On May 31, 1980, Father Cooper was ordained to the priesthood at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ by Bishop Glennon P. Flavin.

Father Cooper served as assistant pastor at St. Cecilia Parish, and taught religion at St. Cecilia High School in Hastings (1980-1982), and assistant pastor at St. Mary Parish in Lincoln while teaching at Pius X High School (1982-1984).


In June of 2012, he retired from active ministry and took up residence at Bonacum House in Lincoln. The Cathedral of the Risen Christ was the church for both the vigil and the May 29, 2018 Mass of Christian Burial. Father Cooper was laid to rest at Calvary Cemetery in Lincoln.
Little information is available concerning the Reverend Fred Henn. He was ordained about 1893. After ordination, he was stationed in Hartford, Connecticut; Baltimore, Maryland, New York City and in Wisconsin.

In August of 1897, Bishop Thomas A. Bonacum gave him charge of Saint Ludmilla Parish in Crete. From that date until September 16, 1898, Father Henn recorded 34 baptisms in Saint Ludmilla Church.

In the fall of 1898, Father Henn was transferred to Saint Wenceslaus Church in Wilber where he served for a few months, when he left the diocese and went to North Dakota.

Later Father Henn joined the Benedictine Order and in 1901 he made his profession of vows as a Benedictine Father. He chose the name of Father Alphonsus.

Father Alphonsus Henn died at Assumption Abbey, Richardton, North Dakota, on May 22, 1929.

“Priests exercise the sacred function of Christ most of all in the Eucharistic Liturgy.” Documents of Vatican II, The Church, No. 28.
Pierre DeSmet was born January 30, 1801, in Belgium. He was ordained as a member of the Society of Jesus in 1841. His extensive travels, his money-raising projects, literary efforts, and his reputation as an arbitrator, constituted an innovation in the missionary apostolate.

Father DeSmet traveled through the present Diocese of Lincoln on his trips to the Northwest. Bishop James O'Gorman gave Father DeSmet the powers of Vicar General, at least twice, when he made his missionary journeys through the Vicariate of Nebraska. On September 25, 1851, Father DeSmet witnessed the marriage vows of Louis Vasquez and Narcissa, on the banks of the Platte River. It was probably the first certified Catholic marriage in Nebraska.

It was Father DeSmet who suggested that Father John B. Miége, S.J. be named the first bishop of the Indian Territory. History has demonstrated that his choice was a prudent one. It was just one example that manifested Father DeSmet’s ability to discern character. He read people as he read books. Father DeSmet was eager to have the best appointments in administrative positions in order that the Church might grow and develop.

After many years as the only priest to evangelize both the Native Americans and other settlers in the remotest areas, Father DeSmet completed his missionary life in 1873.
Martin Corbett was born in Boston on September 27, 1861. He studied at Boston College and at St. Meinrad Seminary. On February 5, 1889, he and Francis Hovora were the first two priests to be ordained by Bishop Thomas A. Bonacum.

After being an assistant for some months at St. Theresa Pro-Cathedral Parish, Father Corbett was given charge of Palmyra, Elmwood and Douglas in 1890. At that time the propaganda of the A.P.A. (American Protective Association) stressed the lack of freedom of Catholics who had to obey the Pope and his representatives. This prejudice had a subconscious influence on some Catholics including members of the clergy.

Boasting of his Bostonian background and showing his freedom, Father Corbett refused to accept a transfer to Rulo in 1891. Urged on by a few malcontents, he initiated court proceedings against Bishop Bonacum. Seemingly, his actions affected his heath. In February of 1894, several hearings had to be postponed because Father Corbett was seriously ill with a heart ailment.

To the chagrin of his few accomplices, Father Corbett left the diocese on August 27, 1894. Like Peter, Father Corbett regretted his actions. On September 8, 1894, he apologized to Bishop Bonacum for his disobedience and for taking him to court. He explained that under the circumstances, he thought he could do more good in another diocese.

Father Corbett served as pastor of St. James Church in Westfield, New York, from 1897 to the time of his death on May 24, 1915.
May 24, 1937  Rev. Julian Racette, O.M.I.

Julian Racette was born on June 13, 1880, in Lowell, Massachusetts. He studied at Holy Angels College in Buffalo and at the Scholasticate of the Oblate Fathers in Ottawa, Canada. He was ordained on December 18, 1904 in the Ottawa Cathedral.

Father Racette was sent to the Diocese of Lincoln in 1913 and assigned to Campbell. His Provincial transferred him to Lowell, Massachusetts on August 1, 1914.

On May 24, 1937, while he was stationed at St. Louis Church, Fond du Lac, Michigan, God called Father Racette from this life.

May 24, 1944  Rev. John Van der Hulst, O.S.C.

John Van der Hulst was born on June 23, 1884, in Oegstgeest, Holland. He was ordained on June 5, 1909 in Hertogenbosch, Holland.

In 1927, Father Van der Hulst became the Vicar General of the Crosier Order in the United States. It was during his administration that the Crosiers purchased the property in Hastings from the Dominican Sisters.

After two terms as prior, Father Van der Hulst was sent to Hastings as rector of the house of studies and master of novices. After much suffering from a spinal ailment, this heroic priest returned to his Creator on May 24, 1944.
Casey Porada was born on December 22, 1949 in Fairford, England. His family moved to Wisconsin, where he graduated from high school and college. He received his degrees in Philosophy and Theology from the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas.

Father Porada was ordained to the priesthood on May 28, 1989 in Rome by St. John Paul II for the Diocese of Ponce, Puerto Rico, and was a member of the Oblates of Wisdom. He was incardinated into the Diocese of Lincoln in 2001.

During his time of active priestly ministry in the diocese (1993-2018), Father Porada served as assistant pastor at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Lincoln (1993-1995), assistant pastor at St. Mary Parish in David City, as well as chaplain at St. Joseph Villa in David City (1995-2004), and assistant pastor at St. Joseph Parish in Beatrice (2004-2007). His last assignment was as chaplain at Bryan LGH West Hospital, with residence at Blessed Sacrament Rectory in Lincoln (2007-2018).

Father Porada died on May 25, 2018 after suffering a massive stroke. His vigil was held on May 30, 2018 at Blessed Sacrament Church in Lincoln. The funeral Mass was on May 31, 2018 at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ, with burial following at Calvary Cemetery in Lincoln.
Philippians 3:14

I press on toward the goal
to win the prize for which God
has called me heavenward in
Christ Jesus.
James M. K. Martin was born on March 17, 1849, in Ireland. He was ordained on July 19, 1876, by Bishop John Joseph Hogan of Saint Joseph, Missouri, for the Vicariate of Nebraska. The ceremonies took place in Omaha, Nebraska.

Father Martin was appointed assistant at the Cathedral in Omaha in 1876. He was stationed there until 1878 when he served in Forest City and Gretna before being appointed as assistant at Saint Theresa Church, Lincoln, in 1881.

On August 11, 1884, Bishop O’Connor transferred Father Martin to Exeter as an assistant to Father John English. He remained in Exeter until February 8, 1885.

While he was at Saint Joseph Hospital, Omaha, Father Martin finished his temporal apostolate on May 26, 1889.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he anointed me.”

Lk. 4:18.
May 27, 1890  Bishop James O'Connor

James O’Connor was born in Queenstown, Ireland, on September 10, 1823. He began his studies for the priesthood at Saint Charles Seminary in Philadelphia and completed them in Rome. He was ordained in Rome on March 23, 1848. About a week later he returned to the United States.


Father O’Connor was named the second apostolic vicar of Nebraska on June 30, 1876. He was ordained to the episcopate on August 20, 1876 in Philadelphia by Bishop Patrick Ryan of St. Louis.

Bishop O’Connor’s vicariate included the State of Nebraska, the Territories of Montana and Wyoming, and a portion of the Dakota Territory.

During his first year as administrator, Bishop O’Connor included practically all of the Catholic settlements in Southern Nebraska in his episcopal visits.

In 1885, the Vicariate of Nebraska was raised to the status of a diocese with Omaha as the See City. For two more years Bishop O’Connor guided the development of the Church in Southern Nebraska until the Lincoln Diocese was established in 1887.

After a protracted illness, the dedicated life of Bishop O’Connor came to an end on May 27, 1890.
May 27, 1941

Justin Welk was born on August 26, 1875 in Cincinnati, Ohio. He studied at Saint Francis College, Cincinnati, and at Oldenburg, Indiana. He was ordained August 10, 1898 as a member of Saint John’s Province of the Franciscan Friars.

After 22 years as a Franciscan Father, he asked for a dispensation from his religious vows and was incardinated into the Diocese of Lincoln on February 5, 1920.

Father Welk devoted 17 years of his priestly life to the Diocese of Lincoln. His appointments were: Steinauer, 1914-1919, Minden 1919-1934, and Center 1934-1937.

In 1937, Father Welk retired. He made the transition from a life of faith to a life of vision on May 27, 1941, while residing in David City.

“By reason of the fact that those in Heaven are more closely united with Christ, they establish the whole Church more firmly in holiness, lend nobility to the worship which the Church offers on earth to God, and in many ways contribute to its greater upbuilding.”

( Documents of Vatican II, The Church, No. 49 )
Father Joseph McGloin was born on Dec. 2, 1917 in Council Bluffs, Iowa. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1936 at Saint Stanislaus Seminary in Florissant, MO. Father McGloin made his First Vows in 1938, was ordained in 1949, and took his Final Vows as a Jesuit in 1953.

Father McGloin was a long-time member of the Creighton Jesuit Community in Omaha. He was a well-known writer and published more than 50 books.

His writing style included fiction such as murder mysteries, books for teens, handbooks for parents and teachers of teenagers, and non-fiction as well. His other writing credits include numerous articles, short stories, and plays. His more popular titles are: “I’ll Die Laughing”, “Bored Again Christian?” and “Getting A Kick Out Of Life.”

Father McGloin was also a popular speaker and religious retreat leader, and a founder and director of youth groups. He also enjoyed photography and was an avid handball player.

Throughout his religious life, the Lord led Father McGloin to many places, far and near. Some of those places were: North Dakota, California, Washington, Colorado, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Waverly, NE, where he assisted in retreat work at Our Lady of Good Counsel Retreat House from April of 1979 until February of 1981. He also worked as far away as Belize in Central America.

Father McGloin’s love for God shone through his writings and talks, and his sense of humor touched many souls. After his many years in the service of the Lord, he was called to make his last journey on May 27, 1993, where he died at Saint Joseph’s Hospital in Omaha, NE.
Anthony Kotz was born in Detroit, Michigan on January 17, 1915 to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Kotz. He was one of ten children. He studied at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit, Saint Mary College in Orchard Lake, and Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake, Michigan.

Father Anthony Kotz was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Lincoln on May 20, 1950, at Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Detroit by His Eminence, Edward Cardinal Mooney. Father Kotz’s forty-one years of service to the people of the Lincoln Diocese included assignments at Assumption, Dwight (1950-1951), Saint Cecilia, Hastings (1951-1952), Saint Mary, Alexandria (May and June 1952), and Saint Mary, Lincoln (1952-1953). From 1953 to 1958, Father Kotz served in varied capacities including Assistant Director of Saint Thomas Orphanage, Diocesan Vocation Director, a member of the Mission Band and an assistant at Holy Family Parish in Lincoln. In February 1958, he became pastor of Saint James in Curtis. Later, he was pastor of Rulo and Arago (1960-1969), Crete (1969-1983), and Osceola, Saint Vincent Ferrer (1983-1991). Father Kotz also served as Dean of the Crete Deanery.

In 1991, Father Kotz retired to Warren, Michigan where he finished his earthly pilgrimage on May 28, 2002. Those of his family who survived him included four sisters, one of which is a Religious Sister. The funeral Mass and burial took place in Warren, Michigan. A memorial Mass was offered at Saint Vincent Ferrer Church, Osceola on June 4, 2002. Father Peter Gadient remembers Father Kotz as one who “cherished his share in the priesthood of Jesus, by bringing the Gospel to his people with great zeal. (Father Kotz) conscientiously carried out his pastoral duties.”
Aloysius A. Alexander Antochowski was born on October 22, 1906 in Winona, Minnesota. He studied at Saint Mary’s College, Orchard Lake, Michigan and at Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary in Orchard Lake. He was ordained on April 20, 1935, in Saint Mary’s Cathedral in Lincoln by Bishop Louis B. Kucera.

Father Antochowski was the administrator of Saint Mary’s, Smartville from 1935 to 1936. Because of his special gift in music, he then taught chant and music at Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary for three years.

He was pastor in Superior 1939-1940 and in Exeter from 1940-1949. Very few of Father Antochowski’s contemporaries knew the heartaches that he endured throughout his life. They did not know that he was raised in an orphanage because his mother abandoned him after she left her husband and then remarried. Many people assumed that his parents were dead. In fact, the news report of his death stated that both parents had died before he was ordained. Both were living at the time. In fact, his mother was still living when Father Antochowski died of a heart attack on May 31, 1949.

When the mother heard of her son’s death, she requested a picture of him. She had not seen him since she abandoned him as a baby. The picture was sent, but before it was delivered, a heart attack ended her life, June 8, 1949, just a week after her son made his transition to eternal life.