Three years after the end of the Civil War, in September, 1868, Father Theodore Majerus was assigned to Rulo. From there he attended the missions of Arago and Brownville.

In Rulo, Father Majerus directed the construction of the first brick church in that settlement. The building was ready for the roof when a tornado leveled the structure. All that was left was a debt of eleven hundred dollars.

When Father Majerus was relieved of his duties in Rulo, he went to live at the Monastery of the Trappists in New Melleray, Iowa. Later he went to Maryland.

This pioneer priest completed his rugged frontier life when God called him from this world on October 1, 1886. He was pastor of Saint James Church, Baltimore, Maryland, at the time of his death.

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THE PRAYERS OF

GOD’S ANOINTED ONES

WERE LIKE INCENSE

RISING TO THE

THRONE OF GOD!
Daniel Bernard O'Connor was born on April 17, 1875, in Crete, Nebraska. He studied at the University of Nebraska and then entered Saint Mary's Seminary in Perryville, Missouri. He was ordained June 14, 1901 by Archbishop John Joseph Kain in St. Louis, Missouri, for the Vincentian Congregation.


In Havelock, Father O'Connor directed the completion of the church, the establishment of a school and the construction of the rectory and convent. He was named a Domestic Prelate on December 24, 1947.

Monsignor O'Connor served as a liaison between the State Department of Education and the parochial schools of Nebraska, during the difficult years from 1919 to 1926. Many new laws concerning the schools were introduced during that period. It was Monsignor O'Connor's efforts that made it possible for the parochial schools to continue.

After serving in Christ's priesthood for 48 years, Monsignor O'Connor died on October 1, 1949, in St. Francis Hospital, Osceola.
Father Hugh Cummiskey was ordained in December, 1877. He served at Saint Mary Church in Nebraska City from 1878 to 1879. After that, he was transferred to Laramie, Wyoming.

Father Cummiskey died in Laramie on October 3, 1920.

October 3, 1935  
Rev. Frank Roemer

Father Frank Roemer was born on May 7, 1864 in Lakowitz, Moravia, Austria. He was ordained in 1892 by Bishop Thomas A. Bonacum for the Diocese of Lincoln. Father Roemer had charge of Saint Anthony Church in Steinauer from 1892-1896.

In 1896, Father Roemer transferred to Saint Paul, Minnesota where he served for 40 years. He died on October 3, 1935.

October 3, 1895  
Rev. Philip Vogg, O.S.B.

Father Philip Vogg was born on October 2, 1827 in Obersaldbach, Diocese of Augsburg, Bavaria. He was ordained on March 17, 1860 by Bishop Miege.

Father Philip was sent to Nebraska City as the first resident pastor on April 29, 1860. He began the construction of Saint Benedict Church. On October 7, 1860, he returned to Kansas and attended the Nebraska missions from there. Father Philip died on October 3, 1895 in Saint Joseph Hospital, Milwaukee.
Richard J. Healy was born on June 9, 1856 in Savannah, Georgia. He studied at Saint Jarlad’s in Tuam, Ireland and at All Hallows Seminary in Dublin, Ireland. He was ordained on June 24, 1879 at All Hallows Seminary Chapel for the Archdiocese of Saint Louis.

Father Healy served in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, the Diocese of Kansas City / Saint Joseph and the Archdiocese of Chicago before coming to Lincoln in 1920.

On March 16, 1920, Bishop Charles J. O’Reilly assigned Father Healy to pastoral work in the parish of Alma with the mission of Stamford. This appointment was effective on March 24, 1920.

Father Healy ministered to the needs of these two parishes for more than eleven years. At the age of 65, God called Father Healy from this life on October 4, 1931.

"We do indeed live in the body but we do not wage war with human resources. The weapons of our warfare are not merely human, they possess God’s power for the destruction of strongholds. We demolish sophistries and every proud pretension that raises itself against the knowledge of God. We likewise bring every thought into captivity to make it obedient to Christ."

(2 Cor. 10:3-5)
John Francis Hennessy was born on November 10, 1875 in County Cork, Ireland. He studied at Saint Finbar Seminary in Cork, and at All Hallows College in Dublin. He was ordained June 25, 1899, at All Hallows College for the Diocese of Lincoln. He came to the United States in October of that year.

The parishes where Father Hennessy served included: Saint Patrick, Manley; Saint Francis, David City; Cathedral, Lincoln; Saint Mary, Wymore; Saint Leo, Palmyra; and Saint Mary, Sutton. Father Hennessy was pastor of Saint Mary Parish, Sutton from 1942 to 1958.

Father Hennessy retired on October 27, 1958. He resided in Grafton until illness made it necessary for him to enter Saint Mary Hospital, Nebraska City.

His wish to spend his last days in his native Ireland was fulfilled. Father Hennessy arrived at Saint Paul Convent in Clonakilty, September 23, 1962. Shortly after his arrival his illness became serious. On the Feast of the Holy Rosary in 1962, this missionary went to his eternal home. He was buried in Ireland.

The superior of the convent where Father Hennessy died wrote: "He had a peaceful and happy death. Four of our resident priests and his relatives were present." Father Hennessy served as a priest in God's vineyard for 63 years.
Ivo Weis was born on February 14, 1886, in Victoria, Mercer County, Ohio. He studied at St. Joseph College, Collegeville, Indiana, and at St. Charles Seminary, Carthagena, Ohio. He was ordained May 31, 1913, by Archbishop Henry Moeller at St. Charles Seminary as a member of the Society of the Precious Blood.

On December 3, 1913, Father Weis was appointed to Nebraska City. He lived at St. Mary’s rectory. In addition to assisting the pastor of St. Mary’s, he had charge of Dunbar and Syracuse. Then in 1920, Father Weis was given charge of Holdrege and Smithfield. He lived with a family until the rectory was completed in 1921. He was the first resident pastor of Holdrege.

On December 1, 1920, Father Weis reported to Bishop Charles J. O’Reilly that he was celebrating Holy Mass at Holdrege on the first, third and fifth Sundays of the month and at Smithfield on the second and fourth Sundays. As soon as he could get an automobile, he hoped to celebrate Holy Mass in both places on Sundays.

After serving the Church in Western Nebraska for 14 years, Father Weis was appointed pastor of Saint Benedict Church in Nebraska City. There he completed a six-year term before his Provincial transferred him to Ohio.

This zealous missionary was called to his eternal reward on October 7, 1959.
Father Donatus Ahern, O.F.M. Cap. was born in Ireland in 1897. He studied in Cork, Ireland, and was ordained there in 1919, as a member of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchins of Ireland.

Father Donatus served at Sacred Heart Parish, Lincoln from 1919 to 1932. On August 3, 1931, he was appointed Judge of the Diocesan Matrimonial Court.

In October of 1932, Father Donatus was transferred to San Francisco, California. His Provincial reappointed him to Sacred Heart Parish, Lincoln in September of 1934. Father Donatus continued his apostolate at Sacred Heart until September of 1939, when he was transferred to Blessed Sacrament Church, Elk, California.

After ten years as pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish, in Elk, California, this Irish missionary was summoned to his permanent home on October 7, 1949.

“He asked life of you: you gave him length of days forever and ever!”
Ps. 18:36.
Henry Wattelle was born on November 1, 1877, in the Diocese of Cambrai, France. He studied in Liege, Belgium, and was ordained in France by Archbishop Samois as a member of the Oblate Order.

After ordination, Father Wattelle was a teacher and later director of Holy Angels College, Buffalo, New York. In 1909, he was appointed pastor of St. Joseph Church, a national parish for French-speaking people in Lowell, Massachusetts. While there he asked for a decree of secularization in 1913.

After being dispensed from his religious vows as an Oblate, Father Wattelle came to the Diocese of Lincoln on July 31, 1914. He was incardinated by Bishop Charles J. O'Reilly on July 3, 1919.

His assignments were Campbell 1914-1927, Cedar Bluffs 1927-1928 and Manley 1928-1931. Under the direction of Father Wattelle, a grotto honoring the Immaculate Virgin Mary was erected in Manley.

After three years as pastor in Manley, Father Wattelle's temporal ministry was completed on October 8, 1931. Burial was in Lincoln.

“Those he predestined he likewise called, those he called he also justified; and those he justified he in turn glorified.”

Rm. 8:30.
Joseph Edward Stockinger was born on November 28, 1880, in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. He studied at Saint Francis Seminary, Wisconsin; St. Lawrence College, Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin; and Saint Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, Maryland. He was ordained on June 21, 1907 in the Baltimore Cathedral by Cardinal Gibbons for the Diocese of Lincoln.

Father Stockinger arrived in Lincoln on July 30, 1907. He served for short periods of time at Roseland, Exeter, and Beatrice before being appointed chaplain of the Ursuline Sisters at York on December 4, 1907.

On January 9, 1909, Father Stockinger was appointed pastor of Colon where he served for the remainder of his priestly life. From Colon he cared for the missions of Estina, Malloy's Settlement, and Mead.

There was a rectory in Colon but no church when Father Stockinger arrived in 1909. In 1918, Father Stockinger directed the construction of the first church in Colon. While he was helping with the building, he accidentally stepped on a nail; he developed tetanus and died on October 8, 1918.

Some accounts state that Father Stockinger was the first victim of the epidemic of influenza that raged during World War I. Possibly both factors contributed to his death at age 37.

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"The Lord will guard your coming and going, both now and forever."
Ps. 121:8.

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Leo Van Dyke was born July 31, 1906 in Uden, Holland. He entered the novitiate of the Crosier Fathers at Saint Agatha. After making his solemn profession of vows in 1928, he was sent to Rome for theological studies. One of his professors was Garrigou-Lagrange whom he admired. He was ordained July 18, 1930.

After completing his studies for the S.T.D. degree in 1932, he was sent to the United States. The following year, Father Van Dyke was sent to the Immaculate Conception Monastery in Hastings. He taught philosophy, theology and canon law. He also helped in the parishes on weekends.

As a member of the Order of the Cross, his teaching on the cross often surprised his students. He explained that small reverses and misfortunes are not crosses. The cross consists of the duties of one's state of life. All the reverses and handicaps of daily life are only splinters.

Father Van Dyke also warned his students that if people tell them that they gave a fine sermon, they can be certain that little good was accomplished. He emphasized: "When a sermon really hits home, people are silent."

For many years, Father Van Dyke suffered from poor health. In 1948, he went to Colorado thinking that the climate would improve his health, but it didn't. After a serious heart attack on July 19, 1955, Father Van Dyke died on October 8, 1955.
Eugenio Pacelli was born in Rome on March 2, 1876, the third of Filippo and Virginia (Graziosi) Pacelli's four children. At the age of eighteen, he entered the Capranica Seminary and enrolled at the Gregorian University. Later he studied at the Sapienza School of Philosophy and Letters, as well as at the Papal Athenaeum of St. Apollinaris for Theology.

Father Pacelli was ordained to the priesthood in 1899. During his first years as a priest, he served in a parish and earned doctorates in theology, philosophy, canon law and civil law. In 1904, he was named a Papal Chamberlain with the title Monsignor. A year later, he was made a Domestic Prelate. He helped in the process of codifying Canon Law and then was appointed Undersecretary (later Secretary) for Extraordinary Ecclesial Affairs. Pope Benedict XV assigned Monsignor Pacelli to be the papal nuncio to Bavaria and consecrated him a Bishop in 1917. In 1929, Bishop Pacelli was made a Cardinal. He then became Secretary of State in 1930.

Cardinal Pacelli was elected Pope on his birthday in 1939, and took the name Pius XII. He was the Servant of the Servants of God during the tumultuous days of World War II. Pope Pius XII called the world to work for a just peace as he helped the Jews in the midst of Nazi persecutions, and the needy who struggled in war-torn areas. Pope Pius XII's papacy also had a very Marian character. He declared the dogma of the Assumption, and established the feast of the Queenship of Mary. He also consecrated the human race and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Pius XII was a pope of great intellect. Much of his writing was used in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Cardinal Tardini said of Pope Pius XII: "Even if he had a very high awareness of the dignity to which he had been called ... his spirit, as could be seen in private life, remained as humble, kind, and thoughtful as ever." His Holiness, Pope Pius XII died on October 9, 1958.
Valery Vincent Durr was born on May 13, 1915, in Paul, Nebraska. He studied at St. Edward Seminary, Seattle, Washington; St. Benedict College, Atchison, Kansas; and St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He was ordained on May 15, 1947, in Saint Joseph Church, Paul, Nebraska, by Bishop Louis B. Kuecera.

During his priestly career, Father Durr served as administrator of the parishes in Exeter, Grant, Paul, Wallace and Wellfleet. He was assistant pastor in Saint Joseph's, Auburn; Sacred Heart, Lawrence; St. Mary's, David City; St. Joseph's, Beatrice; and Saints Peter and Paul, Falls City. He was a member of the faculty of Pius X High School and chaplain at the Lincoln State Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital, Nebraska City.

Father Durr's other pastorates included Manley, Elmwood, Alexandria, Gilead and Cheney.

While Father Durr was at Pius X High School, the superintendent, Father B.E. Kalin, stated that Father Durr was doing a tremendous job; that he was very interested in his teaching and his work in the classroom was excellent.

In April, 1964, Father Durr spoke at a clinic on juvenile delinquency in Omaha. He stated that clear lines must be drawn between what is morally right and what is morally wrong. The solution to restoring the delinquent was a program of positive moral habits to build moral fiber.

On October 9, 1972, Father Durr lost his life in an auto accident. Funeral services and burial were in Paul, Nebraska.
Father Conleth was born on December 27, 1895 in County Longford, Ireland. He was ordained for the Capuchin Order on June 29, 1923, at Holy Trinity Church, Cork, Ireland, by Bishop Coughlin.

Father Conleth was sent to the Diocese of Lincoln December 3, 1927, to serve as assistant pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Lincoln.

On August 3, 1931, Bishop Louis B. Kucera appointed him as advocate on the Matrimonial Court. Father Conleth was appointed chaplain of the Fitzgerald Council of the Knights of Columbus in Lincoln on August 15, 1933. He was also the director of the Third Order of Saint Francis while he was in Lincoln.

In September of 1934, Father Conleth was transferred to Burlingame, California. He died in Roseburg, Oregon, October 10, 1950.

J. A. Sirois was born in 1867, and ordained as a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1894.

On November 21, 1907, his Provincial sent him to the Diocese of Lincoln. He was given charge of Saint Ann Parish, Campbell. He was pastor when the church and rectory were destroyed by fire on January 18, 1909. The rebuilding of the church began immediately.

Father Sirois was transferred to Plattsburg, New York in 1911. He completed his earthly journey on October 10, 1959.

“May the Blessed Virgin Mary, the first of the redeemed, always be our guide and model.” Pope John Paul II, May 13, 1983, “To the International Assembly of Superiors General in Rome.”
October 11, 2012

Rev. Joseph Mroczkowski

Father Joseph Mroczkowski, son of John and Bernice (Cieslinski) Mroczkowski, was born in Erie, Pennsylvania on July 19, 1919. He had three brothers and a sister. One of his brothers, Father Leonard, was also called to the priesthood. Father Joseph attended Saint Charles College, Catonsville, Maryland, and St. Mary Seminary, Baltimore, Maryland.

The Most Rev. John K. Mussio, first Bishop of the Diocese of Stuebenville, ordained Father Mroczkowski to the priesthood for the Diocese of Stuebenville on December 16, 1945. From 1945 to 1953, Father Mroczkowski served parishes in Martins Ferry and Barton, Ohio. He was also director of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) and Catholic Womens’ Club (CWC). In 1953, Father Mroczkowski transferred to the Diocese of Lincoln. He was assigned to the following parishes: St. Mary, Alexandria and St. Joseph, Gilead (1953-1956); St. Ann, Campbell (1956-1963); Sacred Heart, Roseland and its missions (1963-1968); St. Wenceslaus, Wahoo (1968-1976); St. John the Apostle, Lincoln (1976-1990) and St. Patrick, Manley and its mission St. Mary, Elmwood (1990-1995). Father Mroczkowski also served as a member of the Diocesan Building Commission and a Chaplain for the Knights of Columbus.

Father Mroczkowski retired from active ministry in 1995. Father Michael Christensen, who spoke at Father Mroczkowski’s funeral Mass, recalled that one of the highlights of Father Mroczkowski’s priestly life was concelebrating Mass with Blessed John Paul II in the private papal chapel in Rome in 1996. He loved the gift of his priestly vocation and proved to be a true friend of his fellow priests. Father Mroczkowski was called from this earthly dwelling to his eternal home on October 11, 2012, the opening day of the Year of Faith. Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz celebrated the funeral Mass on October 18. Father Mroczkowski was buried in Erie, Pennsylvania.
October 11, 2023

Rev. John Keefe

John Keefe was born in David City, NE on September 2, 1941. His family moved to Lincoln where he graduated from Pius High School before earning a Bachelor’s degree from Creighton University in Omaha, and later receiving his Philosophy and Theology Degrees from St. Thomas Seminary in Denver, CO. Father Keefe was ordained on June 1, 1968 by Bishop Glennon P. Flavin for the Diocese of Lincoln.

His active ministry began as assistant pastor of St. John’s, Plattsmouth (1968-1970) and then the Cathedral of the Risen Christ, Lincoln (1970-1973). In July of 1970, Father Keefe was also assigned to be Moderator of the Pre-Cana Program. His final appointment as assistant pastor was to Blessed Sacrament, Lincoln (1973-1977). From June until September of 1977, he was pastor of Immaculate Conception, Rulo, and St. Mary’s, Arago. In September of 1977, the opportunity arose for him to serve the Lincoln Diocesan mission in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, South America, where he remained until 1984.

Upon Father Keefe’s return to the diocese, he was pastor of St. John’s, Prague, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, Plasi, and teacher of Religion at Bishop Neumann High School, Wahoo (1984-1990). Following this, he became pastor of St. Patrick’s, Lincoln (1990-1994), and Director of Hispanic Ministry (1990-1991).

In 1994, Father Keefe returned to the mission of Barquisimeto, Venezuela until 1997. Once again back in the Lincoln Diocese, he was assigned as pastor of St. Mary’s, Aurora and St. Joseph’s, Giltnor (1997-2001). He was appointed Director of the Apostolate to the Spanish Speaking in the Lincoln Diocese (2001-2002). In 2002, he became pastor of Cristo Rey, Lincoln, while also retaining Directorship of the Hispanic Ministry until 2011.

Father Keefe’s last assignment was as senior priest in residence at St. James / Sacred Heart, Crete, and confessor for the School Sisters of Christ the King. He retired and moved into Kealy Hall in 2013. Father Keefe died at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln on October 11, 2023. The Rosary was prayed for him at Buthers-Maser and Love Funeral Home in Lincoln on November 2, 2023. The funeral Mass at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ and burial in Calvary Cemetery, both in Lincoln, were on November 3, 2023.
Father T. Francis Kramer, C.PP.S. was pastor of Saint Benedict Church, Nebraska City from 1919 to 1925. During his administration a new roof was put on the church and a new furnace was installed. It was also through his efforts that the street was paved to the church. The parishioners were grateful when they no longer had to travel through the mud to get to the church.

Knowing that the appearance of the parish cemetery is a gauge of the congregation’s gratitude and appreciation of the sacrifices made by the pioneers, Father Kramer aroused interest in renovating the cemetery. He also arranged a system for its maintenance. With some sacrifices on the part of the lot owners, the cemetery was kept in good condition.

After having served a term of six years, Father Kramer was transferred to Vinita, Oklahoma.

God called Father Kramer from this earthly life on October 11, 1964.

“*I trust in the Lord; my soul trusts in his word.*” Ps. 130:5.
John Kean was born on February 15, 1901, in Dawson, Nebraska. He studied at Saint Benedict College, Atchison, Kansas, and Kenrick Seminary, Webster Groves, Missouri. He was ordained on June 2, 1928, at Atchison Kansas, by Bishop Francis Johannes for the Diocese of Lincoln.

Father Kean served for short periods of time at Friend, Fairbury, Dawson, Falls City, Luxemburg, Odell, Saint Mary Cathedral, Blessed Sacrament, and Hastings before being appointed pastor of Friend on May 9, 1930. Other pastorates included Burchard and Table Rock 1933-1937, Palmyra and Douglas 1937-1944, Shelby 1944-1965, and Odell from 1965 to the time of his death on October 12, 1975.

On April 5, 1955, he was named a Domestic Prelate and invested in Shelby on July 12, 1955. On September 8, 1959, Monsignor Kean was appointed a parish priest consultor.

When Monsignor Kean celebrated his silver jubilee on June 2, 1953, Bishop Kucera remarked how happy he was to see so many priests attending the jubilee celebration. “I have never seen priests in any diocese more friendly to one another. Because the priesthood is one, in honoring Father Kean, we honor all priests.”
Henry Bex was born June 22, 1849, at Lieshout, North Brabant, Holland. He completed his studies for the priesthood at the Diocesan Seminary of S-Hertogenbosch, Holland. He was ordained there July 22, 1877, by Bishop A. Godschalk for the Diocese of Hertogenbosch, Holland.

Father Bex served for seven years in Holland before he came to the Vicariate of Nebraska in 1884. The first assignment given to him by Bishop James O'Connor was to Cheyenne, Wyoming. After about six months he was transferred to Buffalo, Wyoming.

On May 1, 1886, Father Bex was appointed pastor of Saint Mary's in David City. After eight years, on September 1, 1894, he was transferred to Falls City. There he supervised the construction of an annex to the church which included a sanctuary, a sacristy and a bell tower.

After a short period of time, the church was again inadequate. Under the leadership of Father Bex, a fund was started for building new church. The cornerstone of this structure was blessed on May 2, 1909, despite the opposition of a few prominent members.

Because his health had been affected by the complaints of a vociferous minority, Father Bex resigned and was assigned to Burchard on May 17, 1910. Five months later, he died.

Among the valuable books Father Bex left to the Diocese of Lincoln is one on the Council of Trent, published in 1546. It is in the Diocesan Archives-Museum.
Patrick Joseph Colleran was born March 17, 1870, in Hollymount, County Mayo, Ireland. He studied at Saint Bonaventure Seminary, Allegheny, New York, and at a seminary in Baltimore, Maryland. He was ordained on June 1, 1901, by Archbishop James Edward Quigley for the Diocese of Concordia.

At the request of Bishop J. Henry Tihen, Father Colleran was loaned to the Diocese of Lincoln. He served for short periods of time at Saint Thomas Orphanage, Saint Mary Cathedral, Exeter, Cambridge and Beatrice before he was given charge of Saint Francis Parish, David City, in December of 1916.

On July 1, 1921, Bishop Charles J. O'Reilly informed Father Colleran that "in order to provide for the growing number of diocesan priests" Father Colleran would be free to return to the Diocese of Concordia after July 15, 1921. Bishop O'Reilly concluded: "In parting with you I take great pleasure in testifying to your excellent priestly character and faithful ministrations during your years of service in the Diocese of Lincoln."

Father Colleran continued his priestly apostolate in Esbon, Kansas. He died at Saint John’s Hospital, Salina, Kansas, on October 13, 1925.

"You have made him a little less than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor." Ps. 8:6.
Edward Aloysius, son of James O'Leary and Mary Gallagher was born on May 26, 1931, in Chicago, Illinois. He attended Parkman and St. Cecilia Elementary Schools, Quigley Preparatory Seminary and St. Procopius Seminary. He was ordained on May 3, 1956, in the Cathedral of St. Raymond in Joliet, Illinois by the Most Reverend Martin D. McNamara for the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska.

From 1956 to 1958, Father O'Leary served at Saint Andrew Parish in Tecumseh, from 1958 to 1960 at Sacred Heart Parish in Lawrence, from 1960 to 1962 at St. Michael Parish in Fairbury, and from 1962 to 1963 at Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Falls City.

After a short absence due to illness, Father O'Leary helped at St. Michael Parish in Fairbury, Sacred Heart Parish in Lawrence and at Mother of Sorrows Parish in Grant.

In 1965 Father O'Leary was named pastor of St. Mary Parish in Osceola with the mission of St. Andrew. He continued to serve in Osceola until he became ill in 1995. God called him from this life on October 13, 1995. The Holy Mass of Christian Burial was offered in Blessed Sacrament Church in Lincoln, Burial was in Hillside, Illinois.

Banish the fear of death and think of the eternal life that follows it. That will show that we live our faith. (St. Cyprian, "Sermon on Man's Mortality")
Francis Augustine O’Brien was born on April 30, 1879, in Watertown, Massachusetts. He studied at Boston College, Boston, Massachusetts, and Saint Meinrad Seminary, Saint Meinrad, Indiana. He was ordained on June 17, 1905, by Bishop Patrick James Donahue for the Diocese of Lincoln.


At the time of the death of Bishop Kucera, Monsignor O’Brien was elected Administrator of the diocese. He served in that office from May 9, 1957 to September 1, 1957.

At his golden jubilee in 1955, Monsignor O’Brien said: “The best thing I ever did as a priest was starting the high school at St. Cecilia’s in Hastings.” Monsignor resigned from pastoral work on March 1, 1956.

After serving the Church in Nebraska for 57 years, Monsignor O’Brien answered God’s summons to eternal life on October 13, 1962. At his funeral Monsignor John Flynn said: “For 20,000 times and more, Monsignor O’Brien went to the altar of God. For nearly 60 years he consoled souls with kindness, charity and sympathetic understanding. His love of the Church and the priesthood have shed luster on Holy Mother Church and have reflected dignity to the priesthood.”
William Crowe was born on November 27, 1861, in the parish of Killaloe, County Clare, Ireland. He studied at St. John's College, Waterford, Ireland. He was ordained on June 29, 1885, in Waterford, Ireland, by Cardinal Logue for the Vicariate of Nebraska.

Father Crowe arrived in Omaha on September 25, 1885, and was appointed assistant at the Cathedral. On January 26, 1886, he was transferred to Saint Mary Parish, Nebraska City.

On September 29, 1886, Father Crowe was named the pastor of Saint Ludgerus Church, Friend. He continued his pastorate there for the remainder of his life, 26 years. He served in Friend for a longer period of time than any other pastor.

During the administration of Father Crowe, a new church was built. When it was dedicated on July 1, 1903, the name was changed from St. Ludgerus to St. Joseph. Father Crowe also directed the construction of an addition to the rectory.

After being a priest for 27 years, and after ministering to the people of Friend for 26 years, Father Crowe concluded his earthly life on October 14, 1912. Bishop J. Henry Tihen pontificated at the Requiem Mass in Saint Joseph Church, Friend.

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"The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God,

no torment shall ever touch them. Ws. 3:1."
Walter Junk was born on December 14, 1909. He joined the Precious Blood Society and studied at St. Joseph College, Collegeville, Indiana and at St. Charles Seminary, Carthagena, Ohio. He was ordained as a Precious Blood Father on May 10, 1936, at St. Charles Seminary in Carthagena, Ohio.

Father Junk served in Brooklyn, New York; Sedalia, Missouri; Ottawa, Ohio; and Toronto, Canada, before being appointed to Saint Mary’s Parish in Nebraska City in February of 1940.

After serving in Nebraska City for two years, Father Junk was appointed chaplain of the Air Corps Gunnery School in Las Vegas, Nevada. He continued to serve as chaplain for the armed forces until 1946.

In 1979, Father Junk returned to Saint Mary’s in Nebraska City. By that time Parkinson’s disease had diminished his independence and his self assurance. Yet, he did not speak of his infirmity. His keen sense of humor, his smile and his encouraging words continued to attract people to him.

Christ liberated him from his sufferings on October 16, 1984. At that time, Father Tuchek wrote: “He celebrated Holy Mass with great devotion. He was a man of prayer. He sanctified suffering.”
Francis J. Beckman was born on October 25, 1875, in Cincinnati, Ohio. He studied at Mount Saint Mary Seminary and was ordained on June 20, 1902. After serving as assistant at St. Paul Church in Cincinnati, he was sent to study at the University of Munich, Germany and the University in Rome.

After earning a doctoral degree in theology, Father Beckman returned to the United States and became a professor at Mount St. Mary Seminary. He was rector of the seminary when he received his official document appointing him Bishop of Lincoln on March 23, 1924.

Monsignor Beckman was ordained to the episcopacy on May 1, 1924, and installed as the fourth Ordinary of the Diocese of Lincoln on May 15, 1924.

In 1926, when Archbishop Jeremiah J. Harty’s illness forced him to live in Arizona, Bishop Beckman was appointed Administrator of the Diocese of Omaha in addition to his duties in Lincoln.

On January 23, 1930, Bishop Beckman’s transfer to Dubuque was announced. He left Lincoln on May 5, 1930, and was installed as Archbishop of Dubuque on May 7, 1930. Archbishop Beckman retired on November 18, 1946 and returned to Cincinnati. He was called home to God on October 17, 1948.

Bishop Beckman continuously exhorted the people to act and think with the church.
Walter Banach was born on May 10, 1910 in Chicago, Illinois, to Frank and Mary Banach. He was one of four children. Walter attended Saint Florian Grade School. He received his high school education at both Saint Bonaventure in Sturtevant, Wisconsin, and Quigley Preparatory Seminary in Chicago. He also attended Saint Procopius Seminary, Lisle, Illinois.

Father Banach was ordained at Saint Procopius Seminary on May 28, 1939 for the Diocese of Lincoln. He served at David City, Saint Mary (1939-1941); Sacred Heart, Crete (1941); Saint Mary Hospital, Nebraska City (1941); Saint John, Cambridge (1941-1958); Holy Rosary, Plattsmouth (1958-1971); and Saint Joseph, Geneva (1971-1992). In 1992, Rev. Banach retired from active ministry and resided in Geneva until he was called to eternal rest on October 17, 2003.

Father Banach’s funeral Mass was celebrated at Saint Joseph Church, Geneva, on October 21, 2003. He was buried in Holy Cross Cemetery, Calumet City, Illinois. Monsignor Raymond Hain gave the homily at the funeral Mass. He recalled that when Father Banach reflected on his sixty-four years as a priest he said, “I loved my priesthood. I would not trade those years for anything in the world.” Father Banach will be remembered as a “faithful, Eucharistic priest, who worked perseveringly to make himself a worthy instrument of that ministry.”
John McGoldrich was a clerical student from the Diocese of Fort Wayne, Indiana, when he took charge of Holy Angels School in Omaha, Nebraska, in the fall of 1869. In a letter written by Father John Curtis to Bishop James O’Gorman, O.C.S.O. in February of 1870, Father Curtis mentioned that he was looking for someone to replace John McGoldrich in the classroom. Father Curtis wanted to send McGoldrich to Saint Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to complete his studies for the priesthood.

John McGoldrich did complete his preparation for the priesthood and was ordained in 1870. Immediately after ordination, Father McGoldrich was appointed as the first pastor of the newly-established parish of Saint Mary’s in Nebraska City. It was a parish for the English-speaking people of that city.

Under Father McGoldrich’s direction the first church was built. After serving there for some time, he made a trip to Ireland. Just when he left Nebraska City is not certain. At Bishop O’Connor’s installation September 24, 1876, his name is mentioned as being “formerly of Nebraska City”. Later that year when Bishop O’Connor went to Cheyenne for Confirmation, Father McGoldrich is listed as the pastor of that place.

Father McGoldrich died in Cheyenne on October 18, 1877. He had served the Church as a priest for just seven years.

“For the Lord is just, he loves just deed;
the upright shall see his face.”   Ps 11:7.
Edward F. Kolar was born on June 23, 1915, in Chicago, Illinois. He studied at Quigley Preparatory Seminary and Saint Procopius Seminary in Lisle, Illinois. He was ordained on May 28, 1939 at St. Procopius Seminary for the Diocese of Lincoln.


On May 28, 1962, Father Kolar was given a leave of absence because of illness. He died at Saint Elizabeth Hospital, Lincoln, on October 21, 1963. Funeral services were at Saint Mary’s Cathedral with burial in Chicago.

In his sermon, Msgr. Alphonse J. Lisko said: “All who have known him intimately know that Father Kolar was plagued with a painful physical affliction for the last 22 years. Through it all he strove to remain steadfast to the service of which we speak – one that relates a spiritual father to his children.” Monsignor concluded with the statement: “Let us maintain this relationship between priest and people even after death.”
October 22, 1999

John Jeremiah McCabe was born on April 17, 1931 in Omaha, Nebraska. When Jack was fifteen years old his mother died. At that time he decided to do something worthwhile with his life. Accordingly, he began his studies for the priesthood at St. Columban College in Silver Creek, N.Y. He transferred to St. Columban Seminary for courses in Philosophy. He was sent to St. Columban Seminary in Navan, Ireland for his studies in Theology. He completed the courses in Theology at Conception Seminary in Conception, Missouri.

On May 23, 1959, he was ordained by Bishop James V. Casey in St. Mary Cathedral in Lincoln, for the Diocese of Lincoln.

Father McCabe served as assistant pastor at St. Michael in Hastings, St. John in Lincoln and Saints Peter and Paul in Falls City. He was pastor in Julian, Peru, Paul, Dunbar, Prague, Plasi, Wahoo, Harvard and St. Cecilia in Hastings.

During his entire priestly career he was actively involved in the Catholic Schools. In 1962 he joined the faculty of Pius X High School. In 1965 he was named Director of Guidance at Sacred Heart High School in Falls City. Then Father McCabe began 26 years of being superintendent of schools. He was superintendent of Lourdes from 1968 to 1976, of Neumann from 1976 to 1986 and of Hastings Catholic Schools from 1986 to 1994.

Father McCabe was named a Prelate of Honor by Pope John Paul II on November 28, 1995. This honor was conferred on him in liturgical rite by Bishop Fabian W. Bruskewitz on February 10, 1996.

In his homily at the Funeral Mass, Father Michael McCabe expressed his uncle’s great appreciation for the priesthood and his extraordinary love for Our Blessed Mother.

"Mary by her maternal charity, cares for the brethren of her Son who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties until they are led to the happy homeland." - Pope John Paul II, Redemptoris Mater
Jaroslav Hancik was born on May 14, 1875, in Tabor, Bohemia. He began his preparation for the priesthood in Bohemia and completed it at Saint Paul Seminary in Saint Paul, Minnesota. He was ordained on November 29, 1901, in Omaha by Bishop Richard Scannell for the Diocese of Omaha.

On January 20, 1906, Father Hancik transferred to the Diocese of Lincoln from Omaha. He served at Holy Rosary Church, Plattsmouth from 1906 to 1908; Saint Ludmilla, Crete from 1908 to 1915; Saint Wenceslaus, Wahoo from 1915 to 1916; Saints Peter and Paul, Abie from 1916-1917; Assumption, Deweese from 1917 to 1923; Saint John, Prague from 1923 to 1924; and Holy Rosary, Plattsmouth from 1924 to 1931.

On April 11, 1931, Father Hancik was granted an indefinite leave of absence to visit his native land. He died in Tabor, Czechoslovakia on October 22, 1944. Because of the war and the disturbed political conditions in Czechoslovakia, news of his death did not reach Southern Nebraska until April of 1947.

"As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me!"

Jn. 15:4
William Kelly was born in 1818, in the parish of Tullyhern at Newry, County Armagh, Ireland. He began his studies for the priesthood in Dublin, Ireland. After he came to the United States he studied at the Vincentian College, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and at the Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas.

Father Kelly was ordained June 25, 1859 in St. Mary Church, Omaha. He was the first priest ordained in Nebraska.

After serving as pastor of St. Mary’s in Omaha and St. John’s in Dakota County, Father Kelly was sent to Rulo where he built the first small church in that area. In 1867, he was sent to Cheyenne. He had charge of all the territory that extended westward from Sydney to Wasatch Canyon in Utah.

From 1870 to 1879, Father Kelly had charge of Lincoln and its missions. From Lincoln he went as far west as Hastings and established missions at Crete, Exeter, and Sutton.

Father Kelly retired in 1880. On October 23, 1907, this zealous missionary answered God’s call to eternal life. He had worked for almost 50 years in Nebraska. In his sermon, Bishop Scannell said: “Where others might hesitate to speak a word of warning or reproof or wait for a more favorable opportunity, Father Kelly spoke boldly and was listened to with respect because no one questioned his motives.”
October 23, 1898    Rev. Thomas Quick

Thomas Quick was born on November 14, 1833, in Blackburn, Lancashire, England. He was ordained on June 21, 1863.

Father Quick arrived in Nebraska on April 13, 1886. Bishop O'Connor’s record states: “The Rev. T. Quick arrived today and if health permits him will do duty in Nebraska and may be adopted if he so wishes.” Dated April 13, 1886.

Father Quick was appointed to take charge of Beatrice and Cortland on April 29, 1886. On December 5, 1889, he was transferred to Indianola.

After serving in Southern Nebraska for five years, Father Quick left the diocese on June 29, 1891 to do missionary work in South Dakota. He died at Flandreau, South Dakota on October 23, 1898.

“Commit your fate to God.

trust in him and he will act:

making your virtue clear as the light,

your integrity as bright as noon.”

Ps. 37:5.
Denis G. Fitzgerald was born on March 3, 1858, in Fermoy, Ireland. He studied at St. Colman's College in Fermoy, Ireland and at St. Cuthbert College, Upshaw, England. He was ordained on August 12, 1883, by Bishop E. Knight at St. Lawrence Church, Birkenhead, England, for the Diocese of Shrewsbury.

After serving for six years in England, Father Fitzgerald came to Lincoln in May, 1890. His assignments were: St. Theresa Pro-Cathedral 1890-1891, Falls City 1891-1893, Auburn 1893-1897, Grafton 1897-1906, and Red Cloud 1906-1937.

Father Fitzgerald celebrated the golden jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood while he was pastor of Red Cloud. He selected the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady for the celebration, August 15, 1933.

Father Fitzgerald was one of the first to call attention to the fact that the Red Cloud area was rich in semi-precious stones. He assembled a large collection of jaspers, quartz, topaz, smoky quartz, moss agates, amazonites and other stones. He cut and polished them for display. In 1901, Father Fitzgerald wrote a book, *The Quest of Coronado*, in which he took the threads of tradition concerning Father Juan de Padilla and the ventures of Coronado and wove them into an historical romance based on records of the New Mexico Historical Society.

Father Fitzgerald retired on December 29, 1937 and died on October 23, 1943.
Charles A. Stricker was born on May 15, 1862 in Vincennes, Indiana. He studied at Saint Francis Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio and at Saint Meinrad Seminary in Saint Meinrad, Indiana. He was ordained on June 19, 1886, for the Diocese of Vincennes.

After ministering to God’s people in Indiana for twelve years, Father Stricker came to Lincoln in 1898. He was pastor of Colon and missions from 1898-1903, Beaver Crossing, Seward and Utica 1903-1910, and Indianola from 1910-1922. For ten years from 1900 to 1910, Father Stricker served on the Matrimonial Court.

In 1922, Father Stricker asked permission to become a member of the Benedictine Order. On March 14, 1923, he entered Saint Martin’s Novitiate in Lacey, Washington. As Father Norbert, O.S.B., he made his Solemn Vows on March 21, 1927. He served the Benedictine Order in various positions. He was subprior from 1932 to 1939.

During the summer of 1936, Father Norbert suffered a stroke from which he did not fully recover. This son of Saint Benedict was called to the mansion prepared for him on October 25, 1940.

“We do not fix our gaze on what is seen but on what is unseen. What is seen is transitory; what is unseen lasts forever.”

2 Cor. 4:18
Father Thomas Walsh was ordained June 20, 1886. It was during the two-year interim when Southern Nebraska was a part of the Diocese of Omaha.

Father Walsh’s first assignment was as an assistant pastor in Seward from 1886-1887. Then for a few weeks he was assigned as assistant at Saint Theresa Church in Lincoln. On February 3, 1887, Father Walsh was appointed pastor of Plum Creek (Lexington) in Dawson County.

From Plum Creek, Father Walsh visited the Catholics in Farnam, located in the southwestern corner of Dawson County. When the Diocese of Lincoln was established in 1887, Father Walsh happened to be a few miles north of the Platte River. For that reason he served the remainder of his priestly life in the Omaha Diocese.

On July 9, 1888, Father Walsh reported to Bishop Bonacum that he had been taking care of the spiritual needs of the Catholics in Farnam. He listed the names of those who had been present for Holy Mass. Bishop Bonacum then told the priests in Minden to begin caring for Farnam.

After being pastor in Battle Creek, Nebraska, for almost three decades, Father Walsh died on October 25, 1938.

“\You, O Lord, are my lamp, my God who lights my darkness. With you I can break through any barrier; With my God I can scale any wall.” Ps. 18:29-30.
October 29, 1997

Msgr. William J. Rezabek

William J. Rezabek was born on April 22, 1905, in Edwardsville, Illinois. Early in life, William knew he wanted to be a priest. The Pontifical College Josephium offered him a 12-year scholarship. After studying German for one year, he was admitted in 1920. Because of an urgent need for a priest, he was ordained on December 20, 1931, at Quigley Preparatory Seminary in Chicago instead of the spring of 1932.

On December 24, Father Rezabek received Bishop Kucera's letter telling him to be in Odell by December 31. A week later he was told that his assignment would include being administrator of Crab Orchard. Other assignments were Wilber and Cortland, 1932-1935; Valparaiso and Agnew, 1935-1950; Prague, 1950-1968; and Hebron, 1968 to the time of his retirement from the active ministry in 1989. He was invested as a Domestic Prelate on June 21, 1955.

Monsignor Rezabek began his priestly ministry in Southern Nebraska during those years when poverty and suffering were widespread. Yet, amidst all the difficulties, he was always “an ardent but gentle servant of the Gospel” as Father Christensen described him in his homily. His personal interest in each parishioner was unique. Even in his years of retirement he could immediately recall the names of his former parishioners.

Monsignor found his strength and encouragement from the Holy Mass and his great faith in Christ’s Eucharistic Presence. This deep faith was demonstrated by the fact that he regularly prayed the Divine Office in the parish church. He continued this practice after his retirement when he spent long hours in the chapel at Bonacum House.

God called His faithful servant from this life on October 29, 1997. Bishop Bruskewitz, together with more than 50 priests, celebrated Holy Mass for him on November 3, in the Cathedral of the Risen Christ. Burial was in Saint Mary Cemetery in Edwardsville, Illinois.

“I will give you shepherds after my own heart; they will nourish you with knowledge and sound teaching.”

(Evening Prayer I, Common of Pastors)