A NECROLOGY OF THE DIOCESAN PRIESTS AND DEACONS

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of SALINA



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2024

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A Necrology of the Diocesan Priests and Deacons of the Diocese of Salina

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the faithful departed, through the mercy of Cod, rest in peace.

Amen

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Amen

Originally researched and composed by Doug Weller, former editor of The Register, in 2023

Updated and redesigned by the Diocesan Communications Office in 2024 Biographies and index to be updated at the end of each calendar year.

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JANUARY 4, 1924

Rev. Charles L. Kearful



Rev. Kearful was born in Cumberland, Md., in 1845. He studied at Annapolis Seminary and Mount St. Clemens Seminary in Maryland. He was ordained in March 1872 by Bishop J.J. Hogan for the Diocese of St. loseph, Mo.

He was pastor in Brunswick, Mo., for three years, then rector of St. Joseph Cathedral and chaplain to the Convent of the Sacred Heart in St. Joseph, Mo., for two years.

His only service in what would be the Diocese of Concordia was as pastor of St. Mary of the Assumption Parish in Clifton and its missions in Clara, Clay Center, Cuba, Kimeo and Greenleaf in 1877 and 1878.

After that, he served in what was then the Diocese of Wichita. He was pastor in Humboldt from 1878 to 1886, Wellington in 1887 and Dodge City from 1888 to 1894, where he served missions in Kinsley, Coolidge, Scott City, Garden City, Ulysses, Lakin, Meade, Jetmore, Waterford, Ingalls, Fellsburg and rural Edwards County. His last Kansas assignment was in 1895 in Hutchinson and Nickerson.

He returned to St. Joseph Diocese, serving in a number of parishes from 1896 until his retirement in 1923.

He is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery in St. Joseph.

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JAN. 12, 1913

Rev. James M.J. Reade



Rev. Reade was born Sept. 15, 1853, in Fall River, Mass. He attended Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass., and schools in Montreal and Woodstock, Md. He was ordained in 1889 in Detroit as a Jesuit missionary.

He ministered in Wyoming and Washington, then conducted missions and retreats in the East before leaving the order and becoming a secular priest. He then served in Galveston and Alton, Texas, and Lincoln, Neb., before coming to the Diocese of Concordia in 1903. He served at Sacred Heart Parish in Niles (1903), Immaculate Conception Parish in Minneapolis (1904-07) and Seven Dolors Parish in Manhattan and its missions in Ogden and McDowell Creek (1907-13). He opened Sacred Heart Academy, the first Catholic high school in the diocese, in 1908 in Manhattan and built new churches in Ogden in 1909 and in McDowell Creek in 1910.

He is buried St. Patrick Cemetery in Ogden.

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He is buried St. Patrick Cemetery in Ogden.

JAN. 25, 1897

Rev. Valentine Sommereisen



Rev. Sommereisen was born May 28,1829, in Alsace, France, and came to Minnesota. He was ordained March 8,1856, and assigned to southern Minnesota parishes. He later served in Yankton, Dakota Territory, and met in Montana with Maj. Gen. George Custer during his Yellowstone Expedition of 1873. Father Sommereisen was ministering to Native Americans in the area after a dispute with Yankton parishioners over the construction of a new church and rectory. The priest then submitted his resignation to his bishop and applied to Leavenworth Bishop Louis Fink to serve in his diocese.

The German-speaking priest was sent to Hays, which was being settled by ethnic Germans emigrating from the Volga River region of Russia. Father Sommereisen took up residence in Hays City in 1876, where he was the first resident pastor. Bishop Fink invited the Capuchin Franciscans to take over the parishes in the region in 1878 and assigned Father Sommereisen to Cottonwood Falls, where he again was the first resident pastor. He resigned from active ministry in 1879 and retired to a farm he had purchased near Hays.

He is buried in St. Joseph Cemetery in Hays.

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He is buried in St. Joseph Cemetery in Hays.

JAN. 27, 1954

Rev. Joseph J. Conway



Rev. Conway was born Jan. 19, 1871, in County Waterford, Ireland. He studied for the priesthood at the Grand Seminary in Chambery, France, and finished at St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee in 1893. He was ordained to the priesthood on Dec. 8, 1893, by Archbishop Frederick Katzer in Milwaukee.

He came to the Diocese of Concordia in 1897 after having served in the Cincinnati and Wichita dioceses. He and Msgr. John Maher were recruited by the Diocese of Concordia to open and teach at a Catholic college in Belleville. The project was abandoned, but both remained as priests of the diocese.

Rev. Conway was appointed secretary to Bishop John Cunningham while serving mission parishes near Concordia and was an assistant pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cathedral in Concordia (1899). He was pastor of St. John the Baptist in Clyde (1902-03) and St. Andrew in Abilene (1904), assistant pastor at the cathedral (1905), pastor of St. Francis of Assisi in Norton (1906) and assistant pastor at St. Joseph in New Almelo and its missions in Logan and Densmore (1907-11). He was pastor of SS. Peter and Paul Clay Center (1917). He was pastor of St. Martin of Tours in Seguin (1917-18) and St. Isidore in Cuba (1919). He also served as chaplain at St. Joseph Orphanage in Abilene.

Two sisters were women religious: Sister Mary Calista, a Sister of Mercy in Cincinnati, and Sister Evangelist, a Notre Dame sister in London.

He became ill and was hospitalized in 1935. He remained in healthcare facilities operated by the Alexian Brothers until his death in Oshkosh, Wis.

He is buried in Mount St. Joseph Cemetery in Abilene.

JAN. 27, 1954

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FEB. 6, 2023

Dcn. Thomas A. Koerner



Deacon Koerner was born July 11, 1943 in Hays, KS to Joseph and Alberta (Miller) Koerner and grew up in Hays.

He married Judy K. Giebler on June 11, 1977 in Hays. He was a 1961 graduate of St. Joseph's Military Academy, joined the Air Force after graduation and was stationed in Korea and Okinowa during the Vietnam era. He was a City Commissioner 1975-79, received his degree in Criminal Justice and worked at Larned Correctional Mental Health Facility as Staff Development Specialist. He worked in Pest Control, Farmers State Bank Loan Officer and many different jobs.

His memberships included Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, St. Marys Third Degree Knights of Columbus Council #6984, and the Bishop Cunningham Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Assembly. His careers in law enforcement were: Sergeant with Staff Development at Larned Mental Health Correctional Facility, Police Officer with the Hays Police Dept., Sheriffs Deputy with Ellis County Sheriffs Dept.

On January 3, 2009, he was ordained a Permanent Deacon with the Salina Diocese under Bishop Paul Coakley. He served at Immaculate of Heart Mary Church in Hays, KS until his retirement.

He is buried in St. Joseph Cemetery in Hays.

FEB. 6, 2023

Dcn. Thomas A. Koerner



Deacon Koerner was born July 11, 1943 in Hays, KS to Joseph and Alberta (Miller) Koerner and grew up in Hays.

He married Judy K. Giebler on June 11, 1977 in Hays. He was a 1961 graduate of St. Joseph's Military Academy, joined the Air Force after graduation and was stationed in Korea and Okinowa during the Vietnam era. He was a City Commissioner 1975-79, received his degree in Criminal Justice and worked at Larned Correctional Mental Health Facility as Staff Development Specialist. He worked in Pest Control, Farmers State Bank Loan Officer and many different jobs.

His memberships included Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, St. Marys Third Degree Knights of Columbus Council #6984, and the Bishop Cunningham Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Assembly. His careers in law enforcement were: Sergeant with Staff Development at Larned Mental Health Correctional Facility, Police Officer with the Hays Police Dept., Sheriffs Deputy with Ellis County Sheriffs Dept.

On January 3, 2009, he was ordained a Permanent Deacon with the Salina Diocese under Bishop Paul Coakley. He served at Immaculate of Heart Mary Church in Hays, KS until his retirement.

He is buried in St. Joseph Cemetery in Hays.

FEB. 15, 2022

Rev. James Grennan



Rev. Grennan was born on December 28, 1924, in Jewell County, Kansas, the son of William J. and Mary Agnes (Doyle) Grennan. He grew up in Jewell County north of Beloit, Kansas and also lived in Cloud County west of Jamestown, Kansas. He attended high school for 2 years at Jamestown High School before going to the seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. As a young man he worked summers custom cutting wheat harvests for his brothers John and Michael, traveling from Texas to Montana.

He was ordained on May 13, 1951, and that same year took his first assignment as parochial vicar at St. Michael Parish in Collyer, Kansas. He served 70 years as a priest for the Catholic Diocese in Salina. He served in WaKeeney, Hill City, Delphos, Glasco, Esbon, Mankato, Smith Center, Oakley, Manhattan and Plainville. He was assigned to St. Mary's Catholic Church in Russell, Kansas from 1983 to 1993 and later served in Stockton and Logan. In 2001, he retired and moved back to Russell.

Even though he had officially retired, his great passion was to serve the Lord and the church. He continued to serve by helping at the St. Mary Queen of Angels Catholic Church in Russell. He ministered at nursing homes, hospitals as well as traveling the diocese helping serve other parishes as needed. He is buried in St. Mary Catholic Cemetery in Russell.

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Rev. Grennan was born on December 28, 1924, in Jewell County, Kansas, the son of William J. and Mary Agnes (Doyle) Grennan. He grew up in Jewell County north of Beloit, Kansas and also lived in Cloud County west of Jamestown, Kansas. He attended high school for 2 years at Jamestown High School before going to the seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. As a young man he worked summers custom cutting wheat harvests for his brothers John and Michael, traveling from Texas to Montana.

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FEB. 26, 2022

Rev. Beryl L. Gibson



Rev. Beryl Gibson was born Dec. 22, 1930 to Lester and Alma (Gaines) Gibson. He attended Phillipsburg Grade School and High School. He attended Miltonvale Wesleyan College and he received a bachelor's in chemistry from Fort Hays State University. He served in the military, with the Counter Intelligence Corps of the U.S. Army from 1954-1959. He received his bachelor's and master's in German and German History from the University of Heidelberg, Germany. He taught at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb. and high school at St. Mary Academy.

He attended seminary at Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners, Wisc. He was Ordained May 18, 1996 by Bishop George Fitzsimons at SS. Philip and James Church in Phillipsburg at age 65. He was parochial vicar at the following parishes; St. Francis Xavier in Junction City, St. Thomas More in Manhattan, Sacred Heart in Colby and Immaculate Heart of Mary in Hays. He was pastor of St. Francis Parish in St. Francis, St. Joseph Parish in Bird City and St. John Nepomucene Parish in Beardsley. He retired to Phillipsburg in 2005.

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Rev. Beryl L. Gibson



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MAY 29, 2004

Rev. Maurice Bruno Dion



Rev. Dion was born Jan. 17, 1917, in Manchester, N.H., to Cleophas and Clara (Mailhot) Dion. He attended Maryknoll Seminary in Maryknoll N.Y., and completed studies at Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis. He was ordained by St. Louis Archbishop John Glennon for the Diocese of Concordia on June 4, 1944, at Kenrick Seminary Chapel.

He was an assistant pastor at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Norton (1944-47) and St. Peter Parish in Aurora (1947-50).

He was pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Miltonvale and St. Peter Parish in Meredith (1950-60), St. John the Baptist Parish in Clyde (1960-66), Immaculate Conception Parish in Leoville (1966-70), St. Edward in Belleville and St. George in Munden (1970-76), St. John the Baptist in Hanover (1976-80) and SS. Peter and Paul Parish in Clay Center (1980-82).

He retired in 1982 to Hanover, where he died. He is buried in St. John Cemetery in Hanover.

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JUNE 17, 1931

Msgr. Adolphus Ennis



Msgr. Ennis was born Jan. 7, 1853, in Rome to an Irish father and Italian mother. He studied with the Jesuits in Rome, then answered a plea by Covington, Ky., Bishop Augustus Toebbe for priests to serve in the United States. He completed his theological studies in America and was ordained Nov. 4, 1875, at the age of 22, being granted special dispensation by the Holy See to be ordained before reaching the canonical age of 24.

He served five years in Newport, Ky., then was given permission to serve in the Diocese of Leavenworth at the invitation of Bishop Louis Fink.

He was pastor of Seven Dolors Parish in Manhattan (1882-86) and St. John the Evangelist Parish in Lawrence (1886-94.) After a visit to Italy, he stopped in Kentucky, where the bishop asked him to serve his diocese again. He was pastor in Maysville, Ky. (1894-1902), then served at St. Mary Cathedral and St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville, Tenn. (1902-05), at the invitation of the Nashville bishop.

After another trip to Europe, he returned to Kansas to serve in the Diocese of Concordia. He was secretary to Bishop John Cunningham and chaplain at Nazareth Motherhouse in Concordia (1907-12), pastor of St. John the Baptist Parish in Clyde (1915-16) and rector of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cathedral in Concordia (1917-23). He retired in 1923 and was named a monsignor in 1925. He returned to serve as chaplain of Nazareth Motherhouse until his death.

He was the author of two books, "Octavius" (1884) and "An Introduction to Dante's Inferno" (1904) and was fluent in several languages.

He is buried in St. Concordia Cemetery in Concordia.

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He is buried in St. Concordia Cemetery in Concordia.

JUNE 28, 1946

Msgr. Richard James Daly



Msgr. Daly was born March 31, 1878, in County Cavan, Ireland, to James and Annie (Smith) Daly. He attended Cullies College and All Hallows College and was ordained for the Diocese of Concordia on June 24, 1900, at All Hallows Chapel in Dublin.

He served as an assistant at St. Joseph Parish in St. Joseph, St. Michael Parish in Chapmanand St. Columba Parish in Elmo until November 1901, when he was appointed pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Norton, where he had responsibility for mis- sions in Colby, Goodland, Esbon, Formoso, Jewell City and Oberlin and attended to stations in Burr Oak, Mankato, Smith Center, Agra, Phillipsburg, Marvin, Long Island, Norcatur, Kanorado, Burlington, Colo., and Limon, Colo.

He was pastor of St. Michael in Chapman (1907-1939) and Sacred Heart Parish in Salina (1939-46). In 1939, he also was named vicar general of the diocese and was serving in that capacity when the see of the diocese was transferred from Concordia to Salina on March 12, 1945. At that time he became rector of the new cathedral. He was named a monsignor on May 23, 1943. Before his death, less than a year after the see was moved to Salina, he had raised \$100,000 to build a new cathedral. He died of a heart attack in the cathedral rectory and is buried at Mount Calvary Cemetery in Salina.

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SEPT. 22, 2024

Rev. Charles Lee Steier



Rev. Steier was born March 26, 1947, in Belleville, Kansas, to Melvin and Mildred (Kalivoda) Steier. Charlie grew up on a farm near Haddam, Kansas, as the oldest child, with five brothers and two sisters.

Fr. Steier studied at St. Mary College in St. Mary, Kentucky; Immaculate Conception Seminary in Conception, Missouri; and Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. He was ordained on June 8, 1973, by Bishop Cyril Vogel at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Concordia.

He began his first assignment as a parochial vicar from 1973 to 1977, at St. John the Baptist in Beloit and later at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Hays. Beginning in 1977, he went on to lead numerous parishes as a pastor, including St. Joseph in St. Joseph; St. Isidore in Cuba; Saints Philip and James in Phillipsburg; St. Mary in Smith Center; St. Francis in Claudell; St. Bernard in Ellsworth; St. Ignatius in Kanopolis; St. Mary in Holyrood; St. Mary Queen of Angels in Russell; and St. Mary Help of Christians in Gorham. His service as a pastor concluded in 2024 at Christ the King Parish in Wakeeney and St. Michael Parish in Collyer.

Fr. Charlie also served as the State Chaplain for the Kansas Knights of Columbus, Diocesan Moderator, Vicarate Moderator, and was a member of the Catholic Charities Board for many years. He was also elected to the Priests Council and the Personnel Board.

A Mass of Christian Burial took place at St. Mary Queen of Angels Catholic Church, Russell, on Friday, September 27, 2024, with interment at St. Bernard Catholic Cemetery, Clara (north of Clifton).

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OCT. 22, 2021

Rev. Roger Meitl



Born in Leoville April 9, 1933, near Leoville, he attended Leoville Grade School and Leoville High School. He attended Conception Seminary College, Conception, Missouri, and Kenrick Seminary, St. Louis. He was ordained on March 14, 1959, at Immaculate Conception Church, Leoville.

adjacent church cemetery next to his parents in Leoville, KS at the Immaculate of Tours, Seguin (oversight of international priests). 2002 - 2003 he was the 2002 Fr. Meitl was Canonical pastor at St. Frances Cabrini, Hoxie, and St. Martin in Concordia (1987-1993). He was then the Pastor at St. Joseph's, Oakley, Motherhouse in Concordia, St. Joseph's Hospital and Mount Joseph Senior Village St. Mary Church, Jamestown (until it closed in 1989), and chaplain at Nazareth he was Assistant at St. John the Baptist, Beloit, and pastor at the mission parish of Mary, Hays; also, pastor of the mission church, Our Lady, Help of Christians, the mission, St. Michael Parish, Kimeo. From 1973 – 1982 he was moved and was Mary the Assumption, Clifton, and St. Bernard's, Clara, as well as administrator of taught at Sacred Heart High School. 1961 – 1962 he moved and was assistant at Francis, and St. Joseph's, Bird City (2005 – 2006). He moved to assisted living in international priests). His final assignment was Pastor at St. Francis of Assisi, St. Oberlin, Sacred Heart, Selden, and Immaculate Conception, Leoville (oversight for on sabbatical). From 2003 – 2006 Fr. Meitl was Canonical pastor at Sacred Heart, Canonical pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Goodland (substituting for pastor Immaculate Conception, Grinnell, and St. Paul's, Angelus (1993 – 2005). From 2000 Antonino. After that he was Pastor at St. Mary's, Russell from 1984 – 1987. Next Esbon, and St. Mary's, Smith Center. 1967 – 1973 Fr. Meitl was administrator at St. Wenceslaus, Wilson. From 1963 – 1967 he was the administrator at Sacred Heart, Sacred Heart, Plainville. Then 1962 - 1963 was the administrator at St. Conception Church Cemetery. Wichita in 2006. Fr. Meitl celebrated his 50th Jubilee in 2009. He was buried in the pastor at Sacred Heart, Colby. In 1982 – 1984 he was pastor at Immaculate Heart From 1959 – 1961 he was assistant at St. Mary, Queen of the Universe, Salina, and

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DEC. 20, 2011

Dcn. John Rockne Bloomfield



Dcn. Bloomfield was born on March 31, 1931, in Wyandotte, Michigan, to Gregory Bloomfield and Hellen (Walsh) Bloomfield. He graduated from Saint Patrick High School in Wyandotte and entered the military. He married Darlene Schwalm on May 3, 1952 at Fort Riley. After twenty years in the United States Army, he retired as a Master Sergeant. He had served in Korea and Vietnam.

In 1991 John was ordained as a Deacon in the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Gallup, New Mexico by Bishop Donald Pelotte, SSS.

He began serving as Pastoral Minister to the Sick at Seven Dolors Parish in Manhattan in 1997. He was incardinated in the Diocese of Salina on Apr. 20, 2002 and was assigned to St. Patrick's in Ogden on Feb. 16, 2007.

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