

**April 25, 1942**

**Msgr. Godfrey Birrenbach**



Msgr. Birrenbach was born June 25, 1875, in Cologne, Germany. He completed his seminary studies at the American College in Louvain, Belgium, where he was ordained for the Wichita diocese on July 15, 1900.

He was appointed assistant pastor at St. Mary's Cathedral in Wichita for a short time before being named first resident pastor at St. Peter's, Willowdale. He served mission stations at Coldwater in Comanche County, and Ashland and Englewood in Clark County.

He contracted typhoid fever in 1901 and returned to Germany to be treated in Bonn. In 1906, he returned and was appointed pastor at St. Catherine, Dubuque. The parish was constructing a limestone church at the time. Tragedy struck the parish on March 17, 1907, when the frame church burned. Father Birrenbach was barely pulled to safety as he tried in vain to save the Blessed Sacrament. The new church was dedicated during his pastorate Nov. 12, 1907.

He was named pastor at Holy Name of Jesus, Bushton, in 1910 and started a school there in 1911. He was named pastor of Sacred Heart, Colwich, in 1923. There he also built a school and a rectory.

He served the Wichita diocese as director of the Propagation of Faith and spent his seemingly boundless energy in raising money for the missions and "pagan babies."

He was raised to the rank of monsignor (domestic prelate) and invested July 22, 1931. In 1941, he retired to a house in Colwich after serving the parish for 18 years.

Msgr. Birrenbach died April 25, 1942, at the age of 67. Bishop Winkelmann celebrated the funeral at Sacred Heart Church, in Colwich. Burial was in the parish cemetery.