

**June 3, 2003**

**Father Wenzel Birzer**



Father Birzer was born July 6, 1912, at Odin. He was ordained June 3, 1939, by Archbishop (later Cardinal) John Glennon at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis in St. Louis.

His pastoral assignments included: St. Mary's, Sitka, with the mission at St. Joseph, Ashland, (1939-40); St. Teresa's, Hutchinson, with the mission at Assumption, Turon, (1940-41); St. Joseph, Yates Center, with the mission at St. Mary's, Owl Creek (1941-43); St. Bernard, Belpre, (1943-48); St. Boniface, Sharon, (1948-60); St. Andrew's, Wright, (1960-62); a chaplaincy at Bob Wilson Memorial Hospital, Ulysses, (1963); St. John, Meade, (1963-64); St. Theresa, Dighton, (1964-69); St. Joan of Arc, Elkhart, (1960-70); St. Joseph, Liebenthal, and Mary, Help of Christians, Loretto, (1970-83).

During his pastorate at Sharon, the parish built a new church and school. The church was dedicated by Bishop Carroll on May 9, 1950; the school was dedicated by Bishop Franz on Sept. 17, 1958.

Father Birzer had a special devotion to the Rosary. St. Boniface Church is enhanced by stained glass windows depicting the Glorious and Joyful Mysteries. He was also influential in establishing the neighboring parish at Medicine Lodge and naming it Holy Rosary. Bishop Franz dedicated the church there on May 23, 1954.

Father Birzer retired to Ellinwood in 1983, and moved to Sterling House in Great Bend in 1998. He died June 3, 2003, the 64th anniversary of his ordination. Bishop Gilmore presided at the funeral Mass at Holy Family Church in Odin. Burial was in the parish cemetery.