

**January 24, 1973**

**Father Bernard Debef, OFM Cap**



Father Bernard (John Debef) was born Sept. 8, 1893, in the town of Jestobice in Moravia, which at the time was a protectorate of Austria. After graduating from St. Fidelis Seminary in Herman, Pa., he entered the Capuchin novitiate. He made simple vows on July 14, 1914 and was given the religious name Casimir. Among the confreres he was referred to as Father Casey, short for Casimir. He returned to his baptismal name several years before his death.

Father Bernard was ordained May 26, 1921, by the Most Rev. Owen Corrigan, auxiliary bishop of Baltimore, in St. Mary's Cathedral, Baltimore, Md. The next 50 years were devoted exclusively to parish work. He served rural parishes and mission outposts in the Kansas counties of Cheyenne, Crawford, Ellis, Ness and Rawlins.

His assignments in Ness County included: St. Aloysius, Ransom (1949-50); St. Ignatius, Nonchalanta, and St. John, Bazine (1951-52 and 1954-56). During the years 1952-54, he had a leave of absence from the Province and worked under the auspices of Bishop Franz as chaplain at Larned State Hospital and St. Joseph Memorial Hospital. At St. Joseph, Liebenthal, he was an assistant (1954). His remaining assignments were in the Salina diocese.

Father Bernard was in retirement at Victoria when he suffered a stroke of paralysis in November of 1972. He died Jan. 24, 1973, at St. Anthony Hospital in Hays, at the age of 80. Father Brendan Malloy, provincial, celebrated the funeral at St. Fidelis Church, Victoria. The Most Rev. Cyril Vogel, bishop of Salina, was in attendance. Burial was in the Capuchin plot of the parish cemetery.