

**May 23, 1951**

**Father Emil Kapaun, 'Servant of God'**



Father Kapaun was born April 20, 1916 in Pilsen. He was ordained June 9, 1940 by Bishop Winkelmann at Sacred Heart College, Wichita. His first assignment was at his home parish, St. John Nepomucene, Pilsen.

From 1944 to 1946 he served as a military chaplain for the U.S. Army in India and Burma.

He was appointed assistant pastor of St. Teresa, Hutchinson, in 1946. He served as temporary administrator at St. John the Baptist, Spearville, in August of that year, after the death of Father Francis Dombrowsky.

He was appointed pastor at Holy Trinity, Timken, in 1948, but served there only five months. At the suggestion of Bishop Carroll, he reenlisted as a chaplain in the U.S. Army.

On July 10, 1950, he was with an invasion force that landed in Korea. He was constantly serving on the front lines and twice had his pipe shot out of his mouth.

Father Kapaun was captured Nov. 1, 1950, after saving a trapped unit of 50 wounded soldiers. Surrounded by Chinese, he gathered a dozen men capable of walking and took them out and surrendered. He told the Chinese that there were only wounded in the command post and asked them to cease attacking.

He continued to minister to the soldiers as a prisoner. He was stricken with a blood clot in the leg, dysentery and pneumonia. Father Kapaun died in a camp hospital on May 23, 1951. He was buried in Prison Camp #5, North Korea. (AR Sept. 11, 1953)

The Wichita diocese and the Military Archdiocese have begun the process to have Father Kapaun canonized.