

**March 31, 1999**

**Father Elmer Klenke**



Father Klenke was born April 6, 1917 in Spearville. He was 48 years of age when he was ordained by Bishop Forst on May 30, 1965 at St. John the Baptist Church in Spearville.

In an attempt to quickly observe three different pastors, and the work of a hospital chaplain, he was appointed assistant at St. John the Baptist, Spearville; St. Joseph, Ashland, and St. Ann's, Olmitz, and chaplain at St. Anthony Hospital, Dodge City, in three successive months.

These assignments would foreshadow his future assignments. He was appointed assistant and associate pastor at St. Rose, Great Bend (1965-68); Sacred Heart, Larned (1968-70), and chaplain at St. Joseph Memorial Hospital and Larned State Hospital (1970).

His pastorates included: St. Joseph, Tribune, and St. Anthony of Padua, Leoti (1970-76); Mary, Queen of Peace, Ulysses, (1976-85), and St. Alphonsus, Satanta, and St. Joan of Arc, Elkhart (1985-91). He continued to serve the Satanta and Elkhart parishes and St. Helen, Hugoton, in team ministry with Father Pascal Klein and Deacon Erasmo Rodriquez until his retirement in 1992.

He was best known for his work as Spiritual Director of the Diocesan Cursillo Movement. He was active in this post from 1981 until the time of his death in 1999.

He also served the diocese on the ecumenical commission, liturgical commission, and as vicar forane of the Garden City Deanery.

Father Klenke died March 31, 1999 at the age of 81. Bishop Gilmore celebrated the funeral at St. John the Baptist Church. Burial was in the parish cemetery in Spearville.