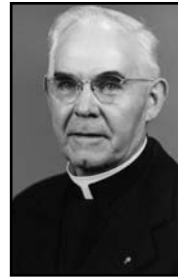


October 23, 1971

Father Cornelius Leunissen



Father Leunissen was born Oct. 31, 1899, in Geleen-Limburg, The Netherlands. He was ordained Aug. 15, 1925, by the Bishop Gulielmus Lemmers of Roermond, for the Order of Discalced Carmelites.

He arrived in America in 1927 and served at St. Florian's, Milwaukee, and later at the Carmelite Monastery at Holy Hill. He was recalled to Holland in 1938 and elected provincial of the Netherlands province.

In 1940, after the Nazis overran Holland, he was accused of being an American spy when attempting to be of assistance to Sister Teresa Benedicta (Edith Stein), a Carmelite nun of Jewish descent. After a friend told him that he was listed for arrest, he fled the country and made his way to the German Carmelites in Oklahoma City. He spoke out against the Nazis and at one point was told if he continued, he, the Carmelite Order and his relatives in Holland would be in danger. Father Leunissen wrote the Carmelite General in Rome to notify him of this threat. The General suggested that he resign as Carmelite provincial and seek a bishop in order to prevent the Carmelites from criticism. Bishop Winkelmann of Wichita accepted him for work in 1942. (personnel file, diocesan archives)

His pastorates in the Dodge City diocese were: St. John, Hoisington (1942); St. Andrew, Wright, and St. Lawrence, Jetmore (1943-49), where he built a new church; Holy Family, Odin (1949-61), and St. Aloysius, Ransom, with St. Ignatius, Nonchalanta (1961-66).

He retired in 1966 and resided in Ransom until his death on Oct. 23, 1971. The funeral was at St. Aloysius Church. Burial was at Calvary Cemetery in Great Bend.