

December 31, 1941

Father Francesco Lombardi



Father Lombardi was born Jan. 29, 1867, in Mileto, Italy. He was ordained June 16, 1891, and volunteered for missionary work in China where he suffered much during the Boxer Rebellion. Once, he and other priests recovered the bodies of three bishops and two priests who were impaled on posts.

Under the trying conditions of this mission life, his health failed. He returned to Italy to recover; then served two years as a chaplain with the Italian army in Africa.

He was archpriest at the Cathedral of his native Mileto in 1905 when an earthquake shook the city. Among the victims was his mother; the cathedral was destroyed.

He heard the call of the Propagation of the Faith and sailed for Washington, D.C. He spent several months learning English and renewing acquaintances, particularly that of Mother (now St.) Katherine Drexel, foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. In the fall of 1905, he was sent to Sacred Heart, Frontenac, to work among the Italian coal miners in southeast Kansas. The following year, Father Lombardi was assigned to St. Agnes School of the Choctaws in Antlers, Indian Territory (Oklahoma). Mother Katherine Drexel was a financial benefactor of the school.

When Father Lombardi returned to Kansas, he served as first resident pastor at St. Boniface, Sharon (1909-13).

He then left Kansas and served 30 years in the Diocese of Lincoln. He was pastor of St. Mary's, Sutton, Neb., at the time of his death on Dec. 31, 1941. He was 74 years old. Bishop Louis B. Kucera of Lincoln celebrated the Solemn Pontifical Mass of Requiem at St. Mary's Church. Burial was in Calvary Cemetery in Lincoln, Neb.