

July 17, 1948

Father Thomas O'Brien



Father O'Brien was born Jan. 1, 1895, in Ballykerogue, County Wexford, Ireland. He was ordained June 2, 1917, for the Wichita diocese in the seminary chapel at St. Peter's Seminary, Wexford. He was only 22 at the time, but Bishop Hennessy had obtained for him a dispensation from the age requirement of canon law.

His first year in the United States was spent at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., where he took graduate courses in philosophy.

After returning to the Wichita diocese, he spent two years as Bishop Hennessy's secretary before being appointed pastor of St. Mary's, McCracken in 1920.

At that time, St. Mary's Church was located in the country. When Father O'Brien was assigned to the parish, he was given the directive to "move that church to town."

A Romanesque brick and stone structure was constructed in the town of McCracken. Soon after Bishop Schwertner dedicated the church on May 4, 1926, Father O'Brien became ill and resigned. He was then assigned to the chaplaincy at Mercy Hospital, Fort Scott (1927).

After regaining his strength, he was assigned to Sacred Heart, Larned (1927-37). He opened the parish school there in 1936. His remaining assignments included: Sacred Heart, Arkansas City (1937-44); the chaplaincy at St. John's Hospital, Iola (1944-47) and St. Patrick, Walnut, with the mission St. Mary's, Hiatville (1947-8).

Father O'Brien died on July 17, 1948, while vacationing in Los Angeles. Bishop Carroll celebrated his funeral at St. Mary's Cathedral. Burial was in Calvary Cemetery in Wichita.