

August 7, 2002

Father Rory O'Neill



Father O'Neill was born Oct. 29, 1923, at Dublin, Ireland. He was ordained June 5, 1955 by the Most Rev. Patrick Collier, bishop of Ossory, in St. Mary's Cathedral at Kilkenny, Ireland. He, like many other Irish priests, was recruited by Msgr. John Cody during visits to Ireland.

Upon the establishment of the Dodge City diocese in 1951, Bishop Carroll of Wichita told the newly-installed Bishop Franz that he would divide the newly-ordained Irish priests between the two dioceses for a period of five years.

Each year, the day after they arrived in Wichita, Bishop Carroll called the young priests into the chancery. He wrote the names of the two dioceses on pieces of paper. Each priest drew a slip of paper from the chancellor's biretta and that showed the diocese in which he was to serve.

During his 40 years of service in the Dodge City diocese, Father O'Neill served in 11 parishes. He was an assistant at three parishes: St. Rose of Lima, Great Bend (1955-56); St. John's, Hoisington (1956); and St. Joseph's, Ellinwood (1956-60).

His pastorates included: St. Joseph, Tribune, with the mission St. Anthony of Padua at St. Theresa (1960-68); St. Bernard's, Belpre (1968-74); St. Mary's, McCracken (1975-80); Holy Rosary, Medicine Lodge, with St. John, Kiowa (1980-91); and St. Joseph, Offerle, with St. Mary, Hodgeman County (1991-95).

He retired in 1995 to the Priests' Retirement Center in Wichita. He died Aug. 7, 2002, at the age of 78. Bishop Gilmore celebrated the funeral at the Catholic Care Center chapel. Burial was in Ascension Cemetery in Wichita.