

**February 2, 1980**

## **Father Joseph Oenbrink**



Father Oenbrink was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, Feb. 6, 1893. He was ordained for the Diocese of Wichita by Bishop John Morris at St. Andrew Cathedral in Little Rock, Ark., May 29, 1924. In his first assignment, he served as an assistant at St. Mary's, Newton.

In 1927, he was appointed pastor of Sacred Heart, Cordia, with the mission St. Michael, La Crosse. He served in this assignment two years before being named chaplain at Mercy Hospital in Independence with the mission All Saints, Liberty.

Father Oenbrink was pastor of St. Mary, Sitka, with the mission St. Joseph, Ashland from 1930 to 1935. He experienced the "dirty thirties" with these Clark County parishes and wrote: "This great phantom of depression was so pronounced that the farmer with tears in his eyes requested of the pastor a petition to the Bishop requesting that they could not bear the expenses of continuation of the school." The Catholic school at Sitka closed in 1933.

His other pastorates included: St. Aloysius, Greenbush; St. John, Iola, and St. Joseph, Conway Springs. In 1948 he was appointed chaplain at Halstead Hospital where he remained until he retired to Colwich in 1966.

Father Oenbrink died Feb. 2, 1980. Bishop Maloney celebrated his funeral at Sacred Heart Church in Colwich. Burial was in Resurrection Cemetery in Wichita.

Father Oenbrink was at one time a professional baseball player. He was under contract to pitch with the New York Yankees under coach Miller Huggins when he chose to enter the seminary. When he was pastor at St. Mary, Sitka, he pitched for the local team.