

July 12, 1931

Father Rudolph Stollenwerk



Father Stollenwerk was born April 18, 1873 in Simmerath, Eifel, Germany. He attended Louvain, the American College in Belgium, and was ordained for the Wichita diocese June 29, 1898.

He served as an assistant at St. Aloysius Pro-Cathedral for a year before being assigned to his first and only pastorate. He was pastor of St. Joseph, Liebenthal, for 32 years, from 1899 until his death in 1931. He served the mission of Coronado in Wichita County only one year (1899-1900).

Father Stollenwerk led the parish in constructing its limestone church (1905), school (1910) and rectory (1917). When fire destroyed the church and rectory in 1917, he rallied the parish in the reconstruction efforts. The original stone walls of the church withstood a second devastating fire in 1959.

Following an operation, Father Stollenwerk was sick for five weeks. He died from the complications of pneumonia on July 12, 1931 at St. Anthony's Hospital in Hays. He was 58.

Bishop Schwertner celebrated his funeral at St. Joseph's Church in Liebenthal with an estimated 3,000 people present. Burial was in the parish cemetery.

The following appeared in the *Catholic Advance*: "The death of Father Stollenwerk is a serious loss to the diocese. He was an indefatigable worker. The Liebenthal parish is a monument to his zeal and ability." (July 18, 1931)

The parish erected a shrine to Christ the King on the rectory lawn as a monument to Father Stollenwerk in 1932.