

October 31, 1887

Father Felix Prosper Swembergh



Father Swembergh was born June 2, 1845, in Cassel, France. He graduated from the Colonial Seminary of the Holy Ghost in Paris and was not yet ordained when he was recruited for service in the Vicariate Apostolic of Kansas. Too young for ordination, Bishop Miege assigned him to the Seminary of the Assumption at Topeka. There, he taught, reviewed his theology studies and did parish work. He was ordained June 29, 1868.

His first pastorate was Annunciation, Prairie City (now Baldwin City), with its five mission stations (1869-73).

In 1873, he was appointed pastor of St. Aloysius, Wichita, with responsibility for 21 mission stations. The following year he was assigned to Emporia where he and Father Joseph Perrier cared for 26 mission stations.

From 1875 to 1877, Father Swembergh's official residence was Great Bend. Among his 23 stations were these in the Dodge City diocese: Ellinwood, Pawnee Rock, Fort Larned, Garfield, Fort Dodge, Dodge City, Pierceville, Lakin, Sargent (now Coolidge), and Kinsley.

When the Leavenworth diocese was established, he was named pastor of St. Mary, Newton (1877-84).

In 1884, Father Swembergh left Kansas and spent some time in Europe. He resumed his ministry in Florida where he was named first resident pastor at St. James, Orlando in 1885. When a yellow fever epidemic broke out in 1887, he went to Tampa to assist a priest who was attending those afflicted with the illness. Upon reaching Tampa, he learned that the priest died of the illness. Father Swembergh also died of yellow fever four days later on Oct. 31, 1887, at the age of 40. He is buried in St. Louis Cemetery, Tampa.