

December 23, 1923

Father Boniface Verheyen, OSB



Father Boniface was born May 22, 1844, at Qualburg, Borussia, near the boundary dividing Holland and Germany. He was ordained Aug. 26, 1869, by Bishop Miega at St. Benedict's College, Atchison.

From 1875 to 1876, Father Boniface was a chaplain to the soldiers and scouts at the border forts. This charge extended from Kansas down to Santa Fe. He accompanied three Brothers from the Abbey taking up a claim just north of present-day Ashland in Clark County. Here the monks established Monte Cassino Priory. From here, Father Boniface attended to miles of missions, and the military posts: Fort Zarah, Fort Dodge, Fort Elliot, and Camp Supply.

His only transportation was in the saddle. For weeks and months he was absent from home, camping with the Indians, at the forts, or out on the plains. The Indians revered him and sought his advice and counsel; the soldiers hailed him as a genial companion, and admired him as a scholar. So much so did he leave an impression that when he was recalled to take up his work in Atchison, the commandants felt that a big man had gone out of the West, and the Indians came to bid him adieu.

He served in two parishes: St. Benedict, Atchison (1877-78) and SS. Peter and Paul, Seneca (1895-98).

He taught botany and geology at St. Benedict's College and was a popular professor. He served as Prior at the Abbey for three terms (1877-83, 1888-92, 1901-08).

Father Boniface died Dec. 23, 1923 at St. Benedict's Abbey. He was 79. Bishop Tihen of Denver, a former student, was the celebrant of the pontifical requiem Mass at St. Benedict's Church. Burial was in the abbey cemetery.