

Fr. Joseph H. WEHNING 88 GERMANY NGA PR

* May 23, 1909 Muhlheim RL

April 17, 1998 Dorado PR

After receiving his secondary schooling at the juniorates of Broich and Knechtsteden, 1924-31, he made his first vows at Heimbach on April 12, 1932. In his final year of theology at Knechtsteden he was ordained a priest there on April 4, 1937.

His first assignment sent him to Nigeria in 1938. After becoming acquainted with the country at Umuahia in the Onitsha Vicariate, he was posted to the Benue Prefecture, where we find him first at Gbeke and then at Urualla.

The outbreak of World War Two led to his internment in 1940. The following year he and all the other Spiritan Fathers and Brothers of German nationality were shipped across the Atlantic to a barbed wire camp for prisoners of war in Jamaica in 1941. It took until early 1947 before he and sixteen others were unconditionally released and allowed to enter the U.S.A., thanks to the unremitting efforts of Fr. George Collins, then Provincial Superior in the U.S.A.

After a few months of rest, he and three other Fathers were assigned to Puerto Rico in May 1947. He would spend half a century there. Posted to Our Lady of Monserrat parish in Jayuya, he served as assistant until 1955. It was a parish of about 17,000, including its five missions, where much remained to be done, although 1,200 people fulfilled their Easter duties.

In 1955 he became its pastor. He continued as such until 1969 to look after the spiritual and material well-being of his flock. He carried out his ministry to the full satisfaction of the bishop and his religious superiors.

In 1969, after serving twenty-two years in Jayuya, he was posted to Arecibo's Cathedral parish, first as interim administrator and then as assistant.

At the age of seventy he began his retirement years at the District House of Dorado in 1979. Having celebrated the diamond jubilee of his priesthood in 1997, he went to his heavenly reward one year later. Interment took place at the local cemetery.