

Fr. Vincent George Kmiecinski 93 USA

\* Nov. 30, 1891 Danville, PA.

+ Nov. 8, 1985 Pittsburgh

His father was a Polish court interpreter, married to a German wife, and they always spoke English at home; thus Vincent never learned Polish. He grew up in his hometown before he entered Cornwells in 1907. For his novitiate and senior studies he went to Ferndale; it was there that he pronounced his vows on Jan. 12, 1913, and was ordained a priest Nov. 6, 1916.

His first assignment was to Cornwells, but he had to give it up because he contracted tuberculosis and spent three and a half years in Gabriel hospital in New York. Somehow he managed to get his physician's permission to visit the St. Joseph's Shrine in Montreal. After a long talk with the Blessed Brother Andre, he prayed to God to give him at least ten years in the priesthood. "I must have prayed too hard," he said later, for he would get 69 years. (It reminds us of a similar prayer by the future Archbishop Le Roy, who prayed to Father Laval for ten years and who got sixty.)

His health in good shape again in 1921, he became an asistant at Sacred Heart, Tarentum, PA, and four years later at St. Joseph's, Bay City, MI. In 1938, he was named its pastor, a function he held till 1958, giving him a total of thirty-three years there. By then he was 68 years old and ready for an easier pastorate at Sacred Heart, Emsworth, PA. Ten years later, he resigned but stayed on as pastor emeritus, still very active despite his age.

At the age of eighty, he retired to Bay City. When the winters became too hard on him, he went to the Sarasota, FL, community in 1980, still functioning as community bursar. Finally, needing regular care he

asked to be transferred in 1985 to the Bethel Park facility in Pa. He died a few months later in Mercy Hospital, Pittsburgh. Interment took place at the Sharpsburg community cemetery.

Throughout his long life his memory and mental faculties remained unimpaired. He gave himself unstintingly to the service of his parishioners, who reciprocated with a great veneration for their marvelous pastor. The bishop of Saginaw to whose diocese Bay City belonged was so enchanted with him and his confreres that he offered to entrust the parish to the Congregation in perpetuity. And when the Provincial wanted to transfer him at the end of his pastorate from Emsworth to Bay City, he feared such an outcry in Emsworth that he had to postpone his decision for some time lest there would be a tidal wave of indignation.