



Reverend Herman Schmitz, O.S.C.

b. January 3, 1904

d. October 21, 1976

Father Schmitz was born January 3, 1904, at Albany, Minnesota. The family left Minnesota shortly after this and settled in Festina, Iowa. He entered the Capuchin Minor Seminary at Mt. Calvary, in Wisconsin, but later transferred to St. John's Minor Seminary at Collegeville, Minnesota. While there he came into contact with the Crosier Fathers somehow, and he entered the Crosier novitiate at Onamia in the year 1928. Professed in 1929, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Joseph Busch at St. John's Abbey on June 5, 1933. The first four years of his priesthood were spent at the seminary at Onamia where he was instructor in German and Prefect of Discipline. In 1937 he moved out into the parish of St. Mathias, Fort Ripley, where he remained until 1940. In that year he became pastor of Moose Lake and Barnum, Minnesota, remaining there until his transfer to Wahkon, Minnesota, with a mission of McGrath attached. Father Schmitz remained as pastor here for the next 26 years, where he was to become a beloved and respected figure not only locally but also among the many transients who frequented the area.

In 1958 he observed his Silver Jubilee as Priest and in 1973 he was honored on the occasion of his 40th anniversary also. In mid-October he entered the Onamia Community Hospital suffering from gastric bleeding. In the midst of his treatment he contracted pneumonia, and from all these causes he died on October 21, 1976. Funeral Masses were held at Wahkon and in the Monastery chapel at Onamia, and he is buried with his confreres in the monastery cemetery at Onamia.

Father Schmitz was of the first generation of American Crosiers. His ordination in 1933 meant another badly needed priest for the struggling community. Actually, it also meant two other things, both of them ordination gifts and both much needed by the monastery: a new chalice and a new car. He was the first American Prefect of Discipline at the seminary and performed the job very well. Teaching, however, did not appeal to him nor did it seem to be his call. His real call came in 1937 with his first pastoral appointment. For the next 40 years he ministered Christ to people in several areas of central Minnesota. Kindly, encouraging and optimistic, his people always found him open and supportive. In the critical years following Vatican II he wisely avoided extremes and kept his people in peace amid the upsetting occurrences of the times. He was appreciative of things around him and was lavish in his praise of people and their work. A negative, critical spirit was entirely foreign to him. He was always eager to think and speak well of others. His long years of pastoral service were very fruitful for the many souls who came under his influence.