

CENTENNIAL SNAPSHOTS

6. Father Albert Delforge, CSSR

Born 29 October 1885 in Basse-Wavre, Belgium, of a Roman Catholic and French-speaking Walloon family, Albert Delforge made his religious profession of vows with the Redemptorists in Saint-Trond on 29 September 1905 and was ordained in Beauplateau on 29 September 1911. He worked first as a teacher in the Eschen minor seminary and then as a Belgian Army chaplain stationed at Loudun in the First World War. He was closely associated with the St. Raphael immigration society dealing with displaced people. He was assigned to Komarno, Saskatchewan on 16 October 1919, learned Ukrainian, and preached missions in Canada. In 1923, he was assigned to Yorkton for pastoral work. When the Ukrainian mission was taken over by the English Canadian Redemptorists, he was asked to be reassigned and was sent to the Ukrainians in Halychyna from 1928 to 1933. He served as the treasurer in the Zboiska monastery and as a teacher in the minor seminary.



When the English Canadians withdrew from Yorkton, he returned to Canada from October 1933 to March 1935. He served the Ukrainians in the Komarno, Manitoba and Yorkton, Saskatchewan areas, where he was also a teacher in the minor seminary and a master of novices. He took a great interest in the history of the Ukrainian people and sacrificed his country, his Roman Catholic rite, and his language to immerse himself completely in asceticism and the Ukrainian language. He strove constantly for his own salvation and the salvation of the souls entrusted to him. He died heroically in the front hallway of the monastery of Our Mother of Perpetual Help in Yorkton on 21 March 1935 from a gunshot to the head when he placed himself between Father Rector, John Bala, and a deranged man trying to kill Father John. Father Albert was buried in Yorkton. Crowds gathered from miles and it was almost physically impossible to move in the church during the funeral services. Father Delforge's burial in the snow was a solemn affair. His death inspired the Redemptorists around the world and more Ukrainian-speaking Redemptorists arrived from Europe to take Father Delforge's place in the work of the Ukrainian mission in North America. Sudden death, even martyrdom, for one's faith and on behalf of others brought them to think: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13) He was 49. Vichna Pamiat'!



Ukrainian Redemptorists 100 years

The year 2006 marks 100 years since the Redemptorists began formally working with eastern European immigrants in North America and eventually around the world in their own rite. This series of 'Bulletin Inserts' is dedicated to the pioneer Redemptorist Fathers and Brothers of the Yorkton Province. For more information about the Redemptorists, contact: the Redemptorist Vocation Office: 250 Jefferson Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2V 0M6, Canada or visit our website: www.yorktonredemptorists.com