

CENTENNIAL SNAPSHOTS

12. Jozef Ghekiere, CSSR



Born 10 April 1890 in Iseghem, in the Diocese of Bruges in Flanders, Belgium, Jozef Ghekiere was the son of a Flemish Roman Catholic butcher. The young Jozef made his profession of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience with the Redemptorists on 24 May 1908 in Saint-Trond and was ordained on 29 June 1916 in Beauplateau, Belgium. He spent the next two years teaching in the minor seminary in Essen. Enjoying sturdy health, he was judged apt for the rough Canadian climate. He arrived in Yorkton, Saskatchewan on 17 April 1919 and served among the Ukrainians of Yorkton (1919-20), Komarno, Manitoba (1920-23) and in the Yorkton district from 1923 to 1929. In Yorkton, he was a teacher in the minor seminary, and after 1927, superior and rector of the monastery. He was responsible for almost thirty parishes and the work was crushing, but he managed it to the wonder of many. With the

transfer of the Ukrainian Canadian mission field to the English Canadians, on 11 January 1929 he left for Halychyna, where he worked as the minister-treasurer, consultor, and as a teacher in the formation house of Holosko, near Lviv (1929-31). He became the founder and rector of Kovel' (1931-36), and after 1936, rector in Holosko, where he supervised an important addition to the building. He was a responsible, frank, and direct man who abhorred all flattery and sham. While seemingly a little rough in his speech and actions, he was sensitive, hardworking, and earned the respect and admiration of everyone. Expulsion from Ukraine by the Soviets to Poland, then under attack from the Germans, forced him to live on the streets of Peremysyl exposed to the winter elements for several days before he could obtain a train home to Belgium. This, combined with his weight and age, brought on death in Brussels on 21 January 1940. A pioneer missionary to Ukrainians on two continents had suddenly disappeared. Much of his family traveled from Western Flanders to attend his funeral and many of his former colleagues from Canada and Ukraine, now refugees in Belgium, also assisted at the beautiful funerals celebrated for him both at St. Joseph's and at St. Vladimir's Greek-Catholic Church in Brussels. His death inspired one of his nephews to join religious life. Father Jozef Ghekiere was 59. *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