

Very Rev. Francis Peter Leipzig

12th and 19th State Chaplain of Oregon 1931-33, 45-47



Francis Peter Leipzig was born June 29, 1895 in Chilton, WI, to Frank and Mary Cordy Leipzig. During grade school he attended a parochial school and only three years at St. Joseph parish, Oconto, WI. There were no Catholic schools where he lived.

The family moved to Oregon in 1911, settling first in Baker and later, in Portland. But by then, Francis had already begun studies for the priesthood at St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, WI. He completed two years there before transferring to Mt. Angel in 1913, from where he was graduated in 1917. After two years at St. Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park,



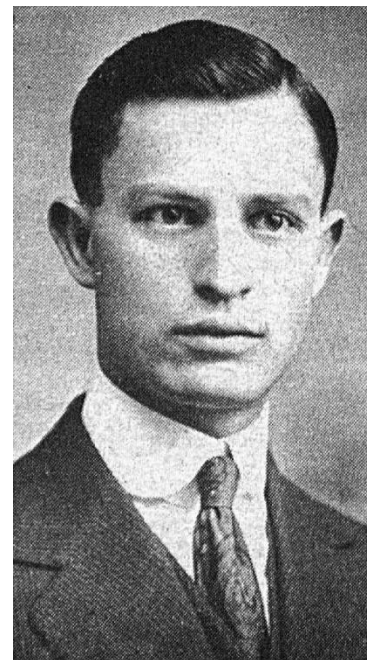
CA, Francis Leipzig was ordained in April, 1920, by Archbishop Alexander Christie.

Francis as a child in Chilton, WI

Parish assignments were first as assistant at St. James in McMinnville, where he remained but three months then as pastor of Good Shepherd in Sheridan and its two missions at Independence and Dallas nine months later, in 1921, he was appointed assistant at St. Mary's Cathedral, Portland, OR.

In March, 1922, Father Leipzig was appointed pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Corvallis. During his six years there, he launched a vacation religious school for children, one of the first for Catholic public school children in the state, and founded Oregon State College's Newman Club.

It was also in Corvallis that the future bishop developed what became a life-long attachment to fire fighters. A local fire station was situated across the street from the parish house and in his regular walks around town to meet members of the community, Father Leipzig frequently stopped to chat with the firemen. In 1928, he was elected chaplain of the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association and was reelected every year until his death. Wherever he traveled in the United States or Europe, fire departments would provide a private car and driver for his disposal.



Francis as a Seminary Student

He left Corvallis in 1929 to become pastor of St. Mary's in Eugene, while serving temporarily as a basketball coach at St. Mary's High School in Eugene.

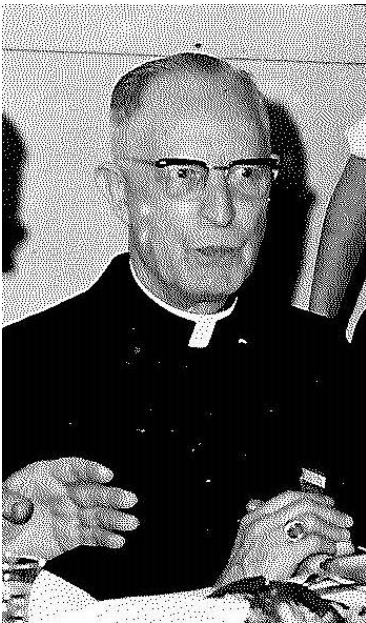
In 1945, he was named to a seven-member state advisory committee to study juvenile delinquency and the administration of state schools for delinquent children. And in 1949, because of his reputation as a mediator, Gov. McKay named him to the Oregon Labor Conciliation Board. He continued on the board until 1951.

Very Rev. Leipzig served as State Chaplain of the Knights of Columbus 1931–33 and again 1945-47.

Following the death of Bishop Joseph McGrath he was appointed Bishop of Baker July 18, 1950, and was ordained a bishop Sept. 12, 1950. Under his guidance several parishes were established and numerous churches, rectories, halls and classrooms were built.

Following his retirement as Bishop in 1971, Bishop Leipzig used his new-found time to pursue a lifelong interest in history as official historian of the Archdiocese of Portland and Historian of the Archdiocesan Historical Commission. Among his other accomplishments as a historian, Bishop Leipzig catalogued references on parishes, priests, laity and organizations of the Archdiocese from editions of The Catholic Sentinel dating back to 1870. He wrote more than 90 individual articles on archdiocesan history between 1972 and 1979.

Bishop Francis P. Leipzig died January 17, 1981 in Portland, OR of heart failure. He is buried at the Mount Calvary Cemetery in Portland, OR.



K of C State Convention, 1963
Tillamook, OR

"The mellowing of time adds but charm and dignity to this organization, which has contributed to the winning of souls in Oregon. It remains for us to dedicate and consecrate our lives to the high ideals given to us by those who have gone before us." Bishop Leipzig, K of C State Convention, May 1977, Portland, OR

