



† Aug. J. Schwertner.
Bishop of Wichita.

RT. REV. AUGUST J. SCHWERTNER, D. D., who is the ecclesiastical and executive head of the Wichita diocese of the Catholic Church, assumed this important and exacting charge on the 22d of June, 1921, and with all of consecrated zeal and devotion, as well as with marked executive ability, is he administering the spiritual and temporal affairs of his diocese. The diocese of Wichita was established August 2, 1887, and embraces the southern half of the state of Kansas—an area of 42,915 square miles. The diocesan jurisdiction of Bishop Schwertner thus covers fifty-three counties, with 150 parish and mission organizations, 138 priests, fifty-two parochial schools, eight high schools, and eleven hospitals. The population of the diocese is 54,604 and the seat of this diocesan see is St. Mary's Cathedral in the city of Wichita.

Bishop Schwertner was born in the city of Canton, judicial center of Stark County, Ohio, December 23, 1870, and is a son of Anton and Christina (Richart) Schwertner, whose marriage was solemnized after Anton Schwertner had come from his native Germany and established a prosperous business at Canton, Ohio. After having profited by the advantages of St. Peter's parochial school in his native city Bishop Schwertner continued his studies in turn at Canisius College, Buffalo, New York, and St. Mary's Seminary, Cleveland, Ohio. His ordination to the priesthood occurred June 12, 1897, in St. John's Cathedral, Cleveland, where Bishop Horstman officiated at the ceremony of ordination. For a portion of the ensuing year the future bishop and monsignor served as curate at St. Columba's Church, Youngstown, Ohio, and he was then assigned the pastorate of St. Anthony's Church at Milan, that state, where he remained until 1903. From that year until 1907 he was pastor of St. Mary's Church at Rockport, Ohio, and in the period of 1907-13 he was pastor of the parish of St. John's Church at Lima, Ohio. He next gave effective administration as chancellor of the diocese of Toledo, Ohio, an office of which he continued the incumbent until 1921, he having in the meanwhile, in 1916, been named domestic prelate by Pope Benedict XV. He was consecrated Bishop of Wichita June 8, 1921, at Toledo, Ohio, and on the 22d of the same month he assumed active charge of the diocese of Wichita, in which his labors have been graciously fruitful in the advancing of the spiritual and temporal prosperity of his important province of jurisdiction.

In his pastorate at Lima, Ohio, his parish increased from 230 to 500 families, and the admirable work that he there achieved led to his being chosen for the important office of chancellor of the diocese of Toledo, and in his official letter, dated October 1, 1913, Rt. Rev. Joseph Schrembs, bishop of that diocese, in conferring upon Father Schwertner appointment to the office of chancellor, wrote as follows: "The family of the Bishop, constituting the diocesan curia, should be composed of men

of tried ability and of prudence and loyalty. It behooves a bishop, therefore, to choose well when he selects the men whom he is to associate with himself in the government of the diocese committed to his care and responsibility by the Supreme Pontiff. I have studied men and conditions, and I have prayed for light and guidance from above. Now, on the second anniversary of my installation as bishop of the diocese, I have decided to establish in its completeness the diocesan curia. Accordingly, with confidence in your administrative ability, your prudence, your tact, crowned by your unblemished qualities as a man and your unblemished character as a priest, we hereby appoint you chancellor of the Diocese of Toledo."

Bishop Schwertner gave as chancellor an administration that in the fullest degree justified his appointment to the important post, the duties of which touch all phases and details of diocesan work and service. As chancellor of the diocese of Toledo Bishop Schwertner measured up to the full requirements of the office, and as counselor and chief deputy of the bishop of the Toledo diocese he gained from his superior the fullest measure of confidence, affection and appreciation—things that he has remembered well since he himself was elevated to his present episcopal see.

Pope Benedict XV made Bishop Schwertner a domestic prelate March 22, 1916, with the title of Monsignor.

In the period of the World war Bishop Schwertner gave the best of his powers—his loyalty, his energy, his oratory and his broad influence—to furthering the various patriotic activities of his native land, and the same spirit of intense loyalty and patriotism has marked his course in connection with readjustments since the close of the great world conflict.

The Catholic Advance, official paper of the Catholic Church in Kansas, issued June 17, 1922, a special edition in commemoration of the Silver Jubilee of the ordination of Bishop Schwertner to the priesthood and the thirty-

fifth anniversary of the establishing of the diocese of Wichita. On this occasion was read before the congregation of St. Mary's Cathedral at the jubilee services the following communication that the Bishop had received from the Holy City:

"Roma, June 11, 1922.

"Bishop Schwertner,
Wichita, Kansas.

"Occasion Silver Jubilee priesthood. Communicate Holy Father's blessing and hearty congratulations.

"Gasparrri, Cardinal Secretary of State."