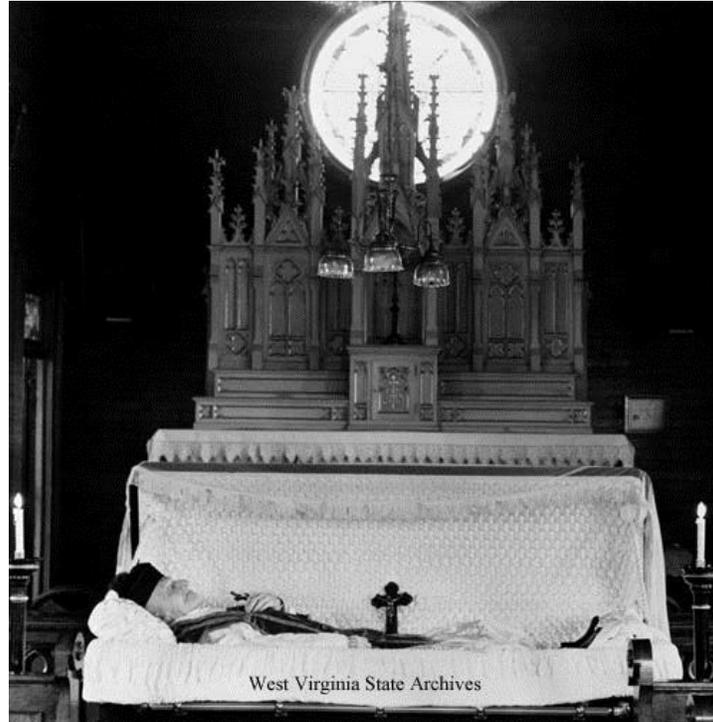


ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY SEPTEMBER 15



Monsignor Thomas Aquinas Quirk died in Lewis County on September 15, 1937.

CSO: SS.8.14, SS.8.20

Investigate the Document: (*West Democrat*, September 24, 1937)

1. In what county is the *Weston Democrat* circulated?
2. What subject of books did Father Quirk like to read?

Think Critically: Using what you know about early settlement and immigration in West Virginia, explain how religion became a staple of the state's history. What religious group became prominent in the region?

The Weston Democrat

WESTON, WEST VIRGINIA, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1937.

Friday, September 24, 1937.

Father Thomas A. Quirk

Though we are not as old in years as the actual time spent in Lewis county by Father Thomas Aquinas Quirk, we can well imagine something of the picture of this section when that reverend gentleman came to the mountain ridge he lived and labored on for more than half a century. In our mind's eye we can see the thick forests in every direction from which he looked. We can visualize, too, the hardships he must have undergone in the early days of his priesthood among people who had been hardened to nothing except difficult manual labor from the time of the rising of the sun in the early morning until long after dusk had settled around everything and every rustic home. Here was a man of extensive education, endowed with a determined mind of his own, an individual with all the advantages, so to speak, of worldliness. The thought has occurred to us often that he must have been lonely with no one of his own or near accomplishments to converse with or to discuss the many subjects pouring in upon an alert and active mind.

But from reading the full account of Father Quirk's life it is discerned that he learned all he could from books, especially histories, about the people of all parts of the world, and then determined that mankind was about the same in each succeeding century and that he would build a little kingdom and live in it forever away from competitive and jealous human beings. If he were to encounter envious people he would set an example for them to follow, he himself following the example of the Master. Thus he would teach greater lessons than could be taught by following any other creed. Search as one may, he cannot find that Father Quirk ever deviated from his great purpose in leading his people in the true path of brotherhood. It mattered not to Father Quirk if a neighbor was a Protestant, a Jew, a despiser of religion. He ministered to all alike, and in sickness or in health they were all on the same level. Money was the furthest thought of his open and pure mind. He knew so much that we sometimes wonder, as did Shakespeare, "that one small head could carry all he knew." Nothing excited Father Quirk. When disaster overtook families, he was always present with his kindness of heart. When illness and misfortune came upon his neighbors he was there by their side with his gentle touch of sympathy that endeared him forever in their lonely hearts. With his worldly goods he endowed all alike. When the boys and girls he had known as tiny infants progressed and succeeded in life he was happy and encouraged all to go on and climb to greater heights, but to remember that they were all servants of the Lord, no matter what station they might reach.

For three years more than half a century he lived high on his hillside and we are sure that he saw greater pictures than were shown to people in the great show places of the world. As he gazed about pure nature all round about him on his beautiful Loveberry mountainside we are sure he had an understanding that no casual visitor could see as he tarried for an hour or so. My, what that man saw in the rugged hills and valleys and forests surrounding him! Would that we could gaze with half his understanding into the crystal of knowledge planted in the beautiful scenery of nature thereabouts. His home was built above the church; the church was built above the school. From his porch he could see three sides of both structures. What delights and pleasures he must have got in the spring-time as he sat on his porch and watched with God-like eyes over his little workshops for the Lord's creatures. What satisfaction must have been his as the evenings shortened in the fall and he saw his children hasten to their homes as the day closed, and what wonderful happiness surely came to him as little tots rushed to his side early in the morning to offer homage to their Master before the day's work started. We say we can see this beloved man of God enfolded to his robes those made in the image of Him who died upon the cross.

He gave his whole life to God. He denied himself the so-called granduers of everyday life. His earthly days were happy and they were not lonely. Angels waited 'round only a short time for him when his time came to go to his Father's Mansion above. This noble Father smiles with kindness from above on all the children he left behind. Eternal joy to him as he loiters forever in his Master's heaven.