

The Bandera PROPHECY

May 4, 2022

Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1847, Pope Pius IX established the Catholic Diocese of Galveston and named Jean Marie Odin the new diocese's first bishop. Odin, born in France in 1800, had come to Texas in 1840 to revive Catholicism there in the wake of the secularization of the missions and the Texas Revolution.

The Diocese of Galveston initially encompassed an area of almost 360,000 square miles, including all of Texas as well as parts of present Oklahoma, New Mexico, Kansas, Colorado and Wyoming. Odin and 12 priests served the 20,000 widely scattered Catholics in this vast new see, which also included 10 established churches and a convent of Ursuline Sisters; understandably, the early clergy became known as "saddle priests" because of their extensive travel on horseback.

Odin's notable career in Texas ended in 1861, when the Vatican nominated him to become the second archbishop of New Orleans; he died in France in 1870. The Diocese of Galveston underwent the first of many divisions in 1874, when the Diocese of San Antonio and the Vicariate Apostolic of Brownsville were established.

The Diocese of Galveston became the Diocese of Galveston-Houston under Bishop Wendelin Joseph Nold in the mid-20th century.