

Father Louis Deuster

January 4th is the anniversary of the death of Father Louis Deuster. Herman Deuster was born in Fort Smith, Arkansas, on March 5, 1899. He came to Subiaco at the age of 14 and graduated from Subiaco Academy with the class of 1916.

Herman Deuster professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on September 8, 1918, receiving the name Louis. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John B. Morris at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on April 19, 1923.

Father Louis was in his element in pursuing his studies at Notre Dame University, in teaching the classics in the academy, and in presiding over the church wedding ceremony of Ernest Hemingway in Piggott, Arkansas, during his missionary and pastoral years.

Father Louis had a love for God and a love for life. He was a man of prayer, especially devoted to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Eucharist. He told his parishioners that the saddest words in Sacred Scripture were uttered when the people found Jesus' teaching about the Eucharist too difficult to accept:

"After this, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him" (John 6:67). Likewise, Father Louis would urge his flock not to procrastinate in meeting the needs of their neighbor and their church, quoting from English literature the poignant words of the poet John Greenleaf Whittier: "For of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: 'It might have been.'"

Father Louis served our community for over 30 years on the faculty of our school. In the 1930s he served as principal of the academy, and for over a full generation was the personification of the school as teacher, coach, and publicist of the school. Among other subjects, Father Louis taught English, Latin, Greek and Spanish.

Typical of his enthusiasm to tackle anything for the good of the school, he became Subiaco's first football coach, even though he had never seen a football game.

In the 1950s, Father Louis served our community in the parish ministry. Later he became chaplain at Holy Angels Convent in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Then he served as hospital chaplain in the same city until shortly before his death.

Throughout his time in Jonesboro and northeast Arkansas, Father Louis served as "road man" for Subiaco in contacting alumni and friends for help in paying for our construction projects. In 1968 his name was memorialized when the alumni named the newly constructed athletic complex as the "Father Louis Athletic Center."

He retired to the abbey in 1976, and the following months showed a gradual weakening of health.

Father Louis died in his room in the abbey infirmary early Wednesday morning, January 4, 1978. Abbot Raphael was celebrant of the Mass of Christian burial for Father Louis on Friday, January 6. Bishop Andrew J. McDonald performed the absolution and Abbot Raphael conducted the graveside rites.

At the time of his death, Father Louis was 78 years old and in the 59th year of his monastic profession, the 54th of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

