

## Father Luke Hess

January 2nd is the anniversary of the death of Father Luke Hess. Oswald Hess was born on August 5, 1867, in Oberwil bei Zug, Canton Zug, Switzerland. He is one of the "Eight Beatitudes" who came to the United States and to our monastery in 1887 with the "Great Expedition" from the abbey of Einsiedeln led by Father Gall D'Aujourd'hui.

The evening before the expedition left Einsiedeln, Abbot Basil Oberholzer christened the candidates as the "Eight Beatitudes," telling them that each must personify one of the beatitudes. This endearing name remained with these eight monks for a lifetime.

The next morning after Mass the abbot gave them his solemn blessing for those going on a journey. The travelers then departed for their port of embarkation, Le Havre, France, where they boarded the steamer, S. S. Rhaetia, bound for New York. On October 1, they disembarked at the port of New York to begin their land journey to Arkansas, arriving at their destination of St. Benedict's Priory late Sunday night, October 9, 1887.

In resources, number of candidates, and rate of perseverance of candidates, this expedition of 1887 was truly "great" because the future of the Arkansas foundation was now assured.

There were seven "Expeditions" from this abbey in Switzerland between the years 1880 and 1893 bringing needed monks, supplies, and candidates; our community grew slowly but surely.

Oswald Hess professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on October 24, 1888, receiving the name Luke. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Edward M. Fitzgerald at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on July 21, 1892.

Father Luke served our community for three decades as a teacher in our college. He also served as subprior of the community, and he was the first official historian of the community. In 1917, on the occasion of Abbot Ignatius' silver jubilee as abbot of Subiaco, he published *New Subiaco Abbey: A Retrospect*, a history of our monastery to that date.

In the spring of 1925, when doctors advised a change for health reasons, Father Luke was sent to St. Joseph Abbey, St. Benedict, Louisiana, where he was an instructor in their minor seminary for the next 15 years, teaching music and the classics.

Father Luke visited Subiaco annually and was constantly in touch with his community by letter even though he never returned to Subiaco as a faculty member. He celebrated his golden jubilee of monastic profession here at the abbey on October 24, 1938.

In the autumn of 1940, Father Luke was seriously ill due to a broken hip that he suffered in a fall. He was believed to be out of danger and on the way to recovery when a stroke and a sudden heart attack caused his death at 2:00 p. m. on Thursday, January 2, 1941, in the hospital Hôtel Dieu in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The body of Father Luke was brought from Louisiana to Subiaco Abbey where interment services were held on Sunday, January 5 – the eve of the Epiphany – with Abbot Paul as celebrant.

At the time of his death, Father Luke was 73 years old and in the 52nd year of his monastic profession, the 48th of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

