

## Father Christopher Paladino

January 22nd is the anniversary of the death of Father Christopher Paladino. Angelo Paladino was born on March 9, 1909, in Center Ridge, Arkansas. He received his primary education there. Several years later he came to Subiaco to complete his high school education. He graduated with the class of 1932. As a leader in school and athletic activities, he became a living legend among Subiaco's sports' heroes.

Angelo Paladino professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on September 16, 1934, receiving the name Christopher. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John B. Morris at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on June 3, 1939, one of seven monks, the largest group ever ordained for our abbey at one time.

Following his ordination, Father Christopher was appointed prefect in the academy, and later became head prefect, a position he held until 1953. During his years on the faculty he also founded Camp Subiaco. In 1953 he was sent to Sacred Heart Church in Muenster, Texas, as assistant pastor. In 1958, he became the pastor there.

Recalled to Subiaco in 1960, Father Christopher was appointed subprior and business manager of the abbey. He also became chairman of the alumni association's Building and Finance Committee. His responsibilities here bore fruit in tremendous improvements to the Subiaco physical plant with the erection of Coury House, Heard Hall, Rebsman Stadium, the fieldhouse, and the gymnasium.

In 1969 Father Christopher was assigned to St. Joseph's Church in Paris as pastor. There had been some hints of failing health, but no slacking of his interests and activities. Death came to him suddenly on Saturday, January 22, 1972, from a heart attack in the rectory. Father Christopher had retired to his room about 10:30 that evening taking his Mass books along to prepare for the next morning's Sunday liturgy.

A little before 11:00 p.m. he stumbled to the room of the rectory aide and asked him to call a doctor and a priest. Father Christopher returned to his bed and stopped breathing a few minutes later. Father Abbot Michael Lensing and Father Prior Raphael DeSalvo arrived a few moments later and administered the sacrament of the anointing.

A few days before his death, Father Christopher had taken the time to write to a student in the academy, Tony Garcia, congratulating him on breaking a basketball scoring record set by Father Christopher himself four decades before.

Throughout his religious life Father Christopher remained a deeply spiritual man, with almost remarkable fidelity to prayer. He had a willingness to face every new responsibility of his diversified life in a spirit of deep faith.

For Christmas 1971 Father Christopher had written to Sister Petronilla of St. Scholastica's, thanking her for her inspiration which helped him decide to enter religious life and expressing the joy that had been his in his vocation. He was proud to be a monk and a priest of Subiaco, and wanted the world to know it.

Abbot Michael was celebrant of the Mass of Christian burial on Tuesday, January 25. At the time of his death, Father Christopher was 62 years old and in the 37th year of his monastic profession, the 32nd of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

