

Father Ildephonse Kalt

February 9th is the anniversary of the death of Father Ildephonse Kalt. Joseph Kalt was born on January 10, 1868, in Laufenburg, Canton Aargau, Switzerland. He is one of the "Eight Beatitudes" who came to the United States and to our community in 1887 with the "Great Expedition" from the abbey of Einsiedeln led by Father Gall D'Aujourd'hui.

Joseph Kalt professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on October 24, 1888, receiving the name Ildephonse. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 24, 1892, by Bishop John J. Hogan, the first bishop of the episcopal City of St. Joseph, Missouri. In this cathedral, Father Ildephonse's ordination took place during the same Mass in which Father Ignatius Conrad received his abbatial blessing as first abbot of our monastery.

Father Ildephonse said his first Mass at St. Joseph's Church and then returned to St. John's Abbey in Minnesota to complete his studies before returning to our abbey to begin his priestly ministry.

Father Ildephonse had a very hard life as a monk of our community. After teaching for awhile in our seminary and college, and after serving as pastor in Morrison Bluff, Arkansas, he became a fugitive from the religious life.

He returned to the religious life about five years before his death. Even though he could have returned to Subiaco, he chose to go to Assumption Abbey in Richardton, North Dakota, where he taught and served as a missionary to the Indians in the surrounding countryside.

Realizing that it was time to move on, he petitioned Abbot Alcuin Deutsch of St. John's Abbey, Minnesota, to allow him to transfer his vows to that community. Abbot Alcuin, in August 1924, invited him to come to St. John's where he began teaching ethics and Latin in the university.

At the time of his death, Father Ildephonse had permission from Abbot Ignatius Conrad of Subiaco to be under the obedience of Father Edward Lippert, OSB, of Assumption Abbey, so as to be at the disposal of Father Edward's assigned tasks.

Father Ildephonse died on Monday, February 9, 1925. Although Father Ildephonse had lately complained of feeling somewhat tired, his sudden death came as a shock to the whole community.

At the time of his death, Father Ildephonse was 57 years old and in the 36th year of his monastic profession, the 32nd of his priesthood. He is buried in the cemetery of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota.

