

Father Eugene Knoff

April 15th is the anniversary of the death of Father Eugene Knoff. Berthold Knoff was born in Neuendorf, in the diocese of Ermland, Germany, on June 22, 1897. When he was four months old his parents came to the United States, arriving on October 25, 1897, and settling in the German Catholic community of Muenster, Texas.

He attended Sacred Heart School in Muenster before entering Subiaco Academy, graduating with the class of 1916, and distinguishing himself in music and in athletics.

In the fall of 1916, he entered the novitiate and professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on October 7, 1917, receiving the name Eugene.

Through his college and seminary years at Subiaco, he exhibited an amazing proficiency in languages, and his extraordinary and versatile musical talent enabled him to become an accomplished organist and a master at other musical instruments.

He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John B. Morris at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on May 28, 1922. Father Eugene served our community for several years as a teacher in the academy before his first assignment at St. Edward's in Little Rock, as assistant pastor for two years.

He was then assigned to St. Joseph's Abbey in Louisiana, where he was organist and professor in the seminary. He returned to Subiaco in 1929, to take up duties as prefect of discipline, duties he kept until 1938. In that year, Father Eugene was made pastor at Morrison Bluff, Arkansas.

In 1945, Father Eugene was recalled to Subiaco to be procurator of the monastery and to serve as a pastor of St. Benedict's parish. In his role as procurator, he reorganized the abbey farm, put in a lumber mill, and planned and carried out a project to insure the water supply of the institution by the construction of the lakes in the ridges south of the monastery.

By 1950, ill health forced Father Eugene to take lighter duties. He was assigned as chaplain of Bethania Hospital in Wichita Falls, Texas, where he died eight months later on Sunday, April 15, 1951, after a lingering illness with complications of heart disease and uremic poisoning.

At the time of his death, Father Eugene was 53 years old and in the 33rd year of his monastic profession, the 28th of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

