

Father Joseph Fuhrmann

December 23 is the anniversary of the death of Father Joseph Fuhrmann. Born at Pilot Point, Texas, on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, June 29, 1894, he was christened Peter Paul Fuhrmann. The tenth child in a family of 13, he moved with his family as a young boy to Lindsay, Texas, where he attended classes at Sts. Peter and Paul elementary school during the community's pioneer days.

He came to Subiaco to complete his elementary education in our preparatory department prior to his entry into our academy for his secondary studies. He graduated from our academy with the class of 1912, becoming a charter member of the newly formed Subiaco Alumni Association. He then returned to Texas where he did general farm work and was a carpenter's assistant. He continued to discern God's will in his life.

Desiring to pursue studies toward the priesthood, Peter Fuhrmann completed two years of study at St. Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, during 1916 and 1917. He then returned to Subiaco where he professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on March 9, 1919, receiving the name Joseph. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John B. Morris at Subiaco Abbey on May 28, 1922.

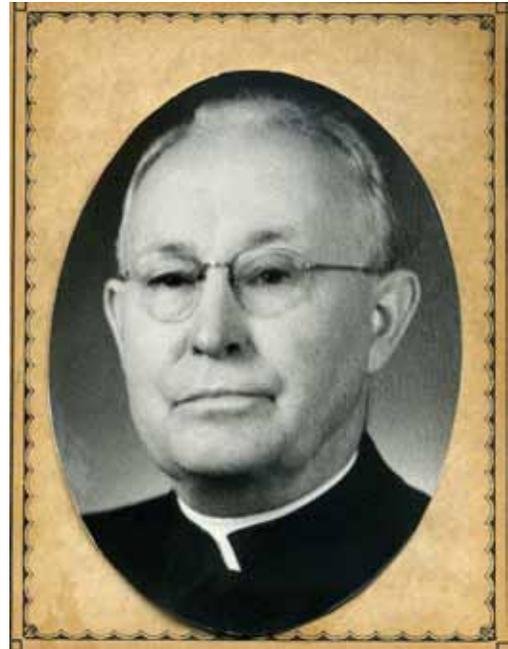
Following his ordination, he earned a master's degree in education and U. S. history in 1923. From there he went to the Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C., where in 1926 he earned a doctorate in medieval history. His dissertation was *Medieval Irish Monks on the Continent*. His dissertation won the praise of such notable Benedictine scholars as Abbot Cuthbert Butler of England who called Father Joseph a true Benedictine scholar, and said his work was a significant contribution to Benedictine scholarship.

But Father Joseph would have little time thereafter to devote to abstract scholarship, important as that would have been. He was appointed director of studies of our academy in 1926. But a tragic fire on December 20, 1927, virtually wiped out the institution. When the second semester began on February 1, 1928, only a few students were allowed to return to finish the school year in a smoke-charred remnant of the former institution.

In autumn of 1928, Father Joseph became one of the founding monks of what was to become Corpus Christi Abbey, in Corpus Christi College-Academy, he served as principal from 1928 to 1939; president of the school from 1939 to 1949, and business manager 1949 to 1954.

He was editor of *The Catholic Layman*, a Catholic journal in Texas, from 1938 to 1945. In addition he did other writing, including a history of Sacred Heart Parish, Muenster, Texas. He also worked with the National Council of Catholic Women, and he learned Spanish in order to be of better service to the many Spanish-speaking people of south Texas.

Father Joseph served for 26 years at Corpus Christi Priory; but when this foundation began to move toward independence, he expressed the hope of being able to remain a monk of Subiaco Abbey. Thus, he was appointed to the faculty of Laneri High School in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1954. For the next eight years he taught in the high school during weekends. During his tenure in Fort Worth, he assisted at every Catholic parish in the city. He also served as chaplain for the students and faculty of Our Lady of Victory High School in Fort Worth.



When Laneri High School was consolidated in 1962, Father Joseph returned to Arkansas where he was appointed pastor of Holy Redeemer Church in Clarksville and its mission in Hartman. He served in this capacity for one year before being appointed chaplain at Clarksville Municipal Hospital from 1963 to 1964. During the spring and summer of 1965, he was appointed administrator of Sacred Heart Parish in Charleston, Arkansas. He then spent time at the abbey serving as a traveling missionary.

In 1968, Father Joseph was appointed chaplain of Crawford County Memorial Hospital in Van Buren, Arkansas, where he also assisted at St. Michael Church in Van Buren and at its mission in Jenny Lind. He also assisted at Fort Chaffee in Barling, Arkansas, when military groups assembled there for summer teaching.

Throughout the years, Father Joseph combated eye problems, and twice had surgery for removal of cataracts. In the autumn of 1973, while serving as chaplain of the Van Buren hospital, Father Joseph suffered a heart attack. He was recuperating from this first attack when on Sunday evening, December 23, 1973, a nurse's aide brought his supper to his room. Shortly thereafter, one of the Sisters stopped by to greet him and discovered that he had died suddenly after suffering a second heart attack.

At the time of his death, Father Joseph was 79 years old. He had been a professed monk for 54 years and a priest for 51 years. He is buried in our cemetery.