

Father Sebastian Beshoner

November 19th is the anniversary of the death of Father Sebastian Beshoner. He was born in Paris, Arkansas, on October 7, 1930, the ninth child in a family of 12 children. He was christened Charles after his father.

During his childhood in Paris, he attended St. Joseph Church and its parochial grammar school. For his secondary education he enrolled at Subiaco Academy, Subiaco, Arkansas, graduating with the class of 1948.

Charles entered Subiaco Abbey, professing his vows as a Benedictine monk on September 16, 1950, receiving the name Sebastian. He said the Lord prepared him during childhood for his profession day as a cenobite because he was raised in a household of eleven siblings where he “learned humility, love, sharing, caring, service and all the virtues needed in community living.”

For four years he balanced a life of daily study for the priesthood with monastic assignments in the sacristy, kitchen, cafeteria, and Abbey farm.

On May 28, 1955, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Albert L. Fletcher at the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Little Rock.

For the next 15 years, Father Sebastian’s main duties were in the field of education. Beginning in 1956 he was a prefect and English teacher at Subiaco Academy.

Five years later he was named assistant director of the scholastics—academy students studying as minor seminarians. During the summer months of the late 1950s, he was in Missouri attending graduate classes at St. Louis University, and later at Benedictine Heights in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He did further study in Memphis, Tennessee.

In the autumn of 1962 he was assigned to the high school faculty of Our Lady of Victory in Fort Worth, Texas. On his return to Subiaco Academy the following year, Father Sebastian resumed his positions of teacher and assistant director in the scholasticate.

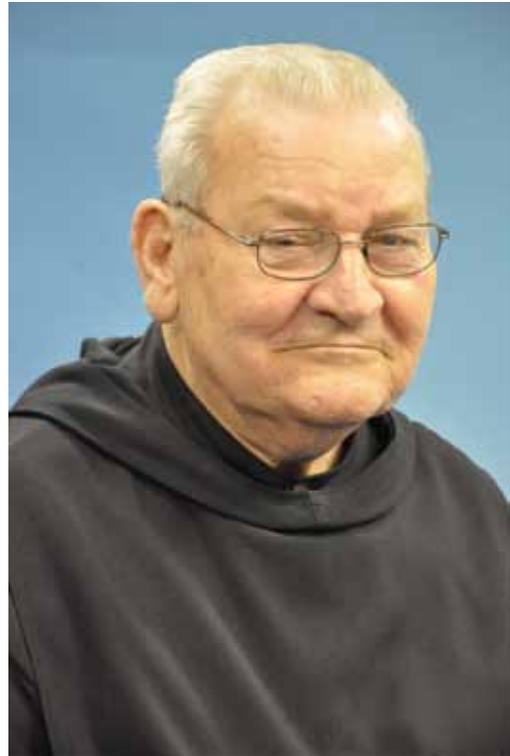
In 1968 he was one of the assistant deans and the director of the Academy cafeteria; he also helped in the Abbey laundry. Three years later he was named assistant formation director in the Abbey while retaining his custodianship of the Academy cafeteria.

By 1972 Father Sebastian’s duties were blossoming into a new apostolate as assistant pastor of Sacred Heart of Mary Church in Barling, Arkansas. He devoted weekdays to classroom teaching in the Academy, and ministered on weekends in Barling.

The following year he was assigned to full-time parochial ministry when he was appointed resident pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish in Clarksville, Arkansas. Two years later he was recalled to Subiaco as pastor of the local St. Benedict Parish. In 1983 he was once again pastor of Holy Redeemer Church in Clarksville.

His next appointment was in Texas as assistant pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Muenster from 1989-91. He was then recalled to Arkansas to become pastor of his home parish, St. Joseph in Paris.

Whether stationed in a parish or at the Abbey, Father Sebastian’s artistic talents were evident. His outdoor hobby was landscaping yards and flower gardens. For indoor leisure he crocheted exquisite doilies, tablecloths and other needlework masterpieces. He always enjoyed his annual vacation with family members, traveling to Louisiana for fishing expeditions.



St. Peter Church in Lindsey, Texas, was his last pastorate. During the second year of his tenure there, Father Sebastian suffered a stroke while saying Mass in the parish church. He returned to the Abbey on December 28, 2001.

As the months and years of recuperation passed, Father Sebastian regained much of his strength, and was able to partake in the monastic liturgy, concelebrating Mass, and later being celebrant of the Eucharist. When his health permitted him to do light work, he would lend a helping hand as needed, especially in the Abbey laundry. He also accepted the position of monastic bell-ringer, daily summoning the monks for the Liturgy of the Hours, Mass, and other liturgical functions. He took an active interest in all community affairs, enjoying recreational competition of cards and dominoes with colleagues.

A soft-spoken gentleman, Father Sebastian was respected by confreres, students, and parishioners. Above all he was a man of prayer, dedicated to the care of souls.

At the time of his death, Father Sebastian was 82 years old. He had been a professed monk for 62 years and a priest for 57 years. He is buried in our cemetery.