

## Father John Baptist Nigg

January 16th is the anniversary of the death of Father John Baptist Nigg. Marcel Nigg was born on June 14, 1872, in the village of Gersau, Canton Schwyz, Switzerland.

Wishing to enter monastic life, Marcel Nigg decided to join a group of young people assembling to come to the United States to join various monasteries in this country. At the age of 21, he came to the United States and to Subiaco with the "Expedition" of 1893 from the abbey of Einsiedeln.

More than 20 candidates for religious life were aboard the ship. Four of the candidates of this expedition were destined for Subiaco: three for the brotherhood and one, Marcel Nigg, was destined to be the last candidate for the priesthood to come to Subiaco from Europe with the "Expeditions."

The last "Expedition" from Einsiedeln left the shores of Europe in the autumn of 1893. Arriving in the United States on November 21, 1893, the four young men reached their destination of Subiaco Abbey on November 24.

There were seven "Expeditions" from this abbey in Switzerland between the years 1880 and 1893 bringing needed monks, supplies, and candidates; our community grew slowly but surely.

Marcel Nigg professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on January 21, 1895, receiving the name John Baptist. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Edward M. Fitzgerald at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on January 30, 1898.

To Father John goes the title of Father of the Subiaco College Band. Around 1896, he organized a new band at Subiaco and he soon brought his students to a high degree of proficiency. When the orchestra was enlarged by the addition of a double bass, and some clarinets and horns, it was he who, without instruction, learned to play the clarinet and, in the words of Father Luke Hess: "Enabled us to play pieces of a more pretentious character." Besides music he also taught Latin and religion.

Father John also served our community for many years in the pastoral ministry. On January 3, 1903, he was appointed assistant pastor at St. Peter's Church in Lindsay, Texas.

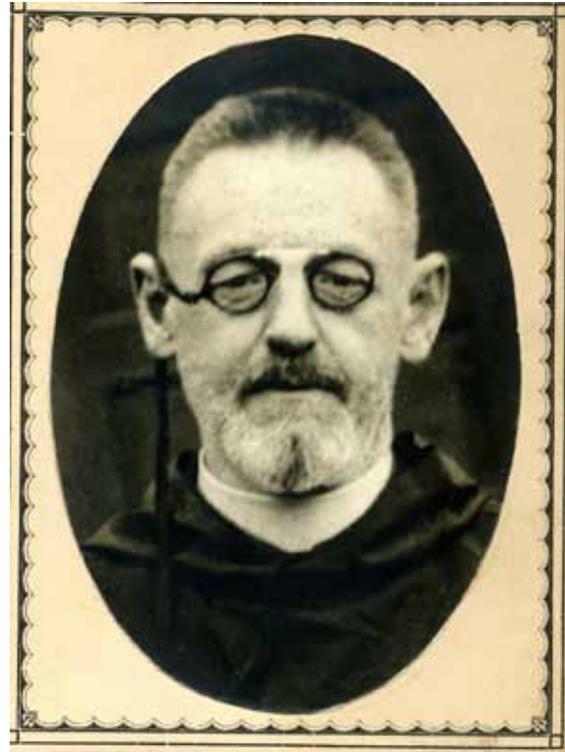
On May 19, 1904, he was appointed pastor of St. Mary's Church in Windthorst, Texas, where he served for two years.

His next pastoral assignment came in 1910 when he was appointed pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Rhineland, Texas, where he served until July, 1918.

He then returned to Windthorst where he served as pastor until September 9, 1923. His last appointment was to Lindsay, Texas, on January 1, 1926, where he served until 1938. During his final year at Lindsay, Father John suffered a severe breakdown in health, resulting in his return to his native Switzerland in June, 1938.

While in Switzerland, he spent his time at the Abbey of Einsiedeln as well as in his hometown of Gersau: "my village by the sea," as he affectionately referred to his hometown. It was his wish to be buried at the graveside of his mother in the cemetery of Gersau. However, at the time of his death on January 16, 1939, he was at Unteraegeri, Switzerland.

It was impossible to travel to Gersau because the mid-January snow and ice made the mountain roads from Einsiedeln impassable.



His funeral was held on Wednesday, January 18. At the time of his death he was 66 years old and in the 43rd year of his monastic profession, the 40th of his priesthood. He is buried at the Abbey of Maria Einsiedeln in Switzerland.