

## Father Stephen Heinkele

November 26th is the anniversary of the death of Father Stephen Heinkele. Joseph Heinkele was born on August 6, 1873, in Dattingen, Germany. Educated in Germany as a craftsman, he decided to put his talents to use in the service of God as a Benedictine Brother in the United States.

At the age of 23, he came to the United States, arriving on October 27, 1896. Immediately traveling to his destination of Subiaco Abbey, he arrived on October 31.

Upon his arrival, the superiors were of the opinion that he could better serve God and the community in the pursuit of priestly studies. Believing that God's direction in his vocation was voiced through his superiors, Joseph Heinkele professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on October 16, 1900, receiving the name Stephen. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Edward M. Fitzgerald at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on July 8, 1905.

During his four decades of service to the community, Father Stephen was able to fulfill a dual role of pastoral ministry in the parishes and manual labor at the abbey. A jovial, hospitable monk, Father Stephen was a pioneer pastor to the congregations in Scranton and Prairie View, Arkansas, having been the first priest to say Mass in the churches built in these two parishes.

During the early years of the twentieth century, he was also pastor at Coal Hill and Morrison Bluff, Arkansas. On occasion, he helped the pastor at St. Mary's Church in Fort Worth, Texas, for short periods of time.

In Arkansas, he served from February 1909, to September 1912, as pastor of St. Scholastica's Church in Shoal Creek. In early 1913, the pastor of St. Mary's Church in Altus was ill and had to undergo surgery. Father Stephen was sent to Altus to take care of the parish until October 1914, when he was appointed pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Charleston.

During his six-year pastorate in Charleston, Father Stephen set in motion the removal of the parish debts due to the previous building and renovation of the church, school, and rectory. Even though these were the lean years of World War I, he was able to make good progress toward this eventual goal.

As a youth in Europe, Father Stephen had learned the craft of wood turning. He made use of this knowledge to fashion the ornamental staircases and the wooden pillars in the original abbey and chapel. Also, while he was taking care of the parish in Altus, he did the wood turning on the staircase of the pulpit for the recently constructed church.

For seven years, Father Stephen was instructor of the brothers and manager of the abbey farm, serving from September 23, 1927, until March 25, 1935, when he received his second appointment as pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Morrison Bluff. For three years he was pastor until he suffered a paralytic stroke on Tuesday morning, November 22, 1938.

Father Stephen's death occurred as a result of apoplexy at 5:00 a. m. on Saturday, November 26, 1938, in the parish rectory at Morrison Bluff. A Mass for Father Stephen was said in the parish church at Morrison Bluff on Monday, November 28.

At the time of his death, Father Stephen was 65 years old and in the 38th year of his monastic profession, the 33rd of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

