

Abbot Fintan Mundwiler

February 14th is the anniversary of the death of Abbot Fintan Mundwiler. Abbot Fintan was born in Dietikon, Switzerland, on July 12, 1835. He professed his vows as a monk of the abbey of Einsiedeln on October 14, 1855. He was ordained to the priesthood on September 11, 1859.

When Father Martin Marty came to the United States in 1860, Father Fintan accompanied him. About 20 years later, when Abbot Martin Marty was consecrated a bishop, Father Fintan became the second abbot of St. Meinrad on February 3, 1880. He also became the superior of St. Benedict's Priory in Arkansas. During his time as abbot, our community became an independent monastery and was later raised to the rank of abbey.

In 1881, Abbot Fintan and Father Bonaventure Binzegger traveled to Switzerland to look for candidates. They returned that same year with the first "Expedition" from Einsiedeln to St. Benedict's Monastery. While in Arkansas, Abbot Fintan directed Father Wolfgang to return to St. Meinrad and placed Father Bonaventure in charge in Arkansas. In 1882, Abbot Fintan sent Father Wolfgang back to Arkansas and made Father Benedict Brunet prior there, a post he held from 1882 to 1885.

On April 5, 1881, Abbot Fintan was appointed first President of the Swiss-American Congregation which had just been established by Pope Leo XIII.

On July 18, 1891, Abbot Fintan sent to the Holy See in Rome his petition that St. Benedict's Priory in Arkansas be erected an abbey with the title of "Subiaco." The title change from St. Benedict's was motivated by the fact that there already existed a Benedictine monastery in the United States bearing that name: St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kansas.

By August 3, 1891, Pope Leo XIII accepted the petition and approved the erection of the Benedictine monastery to be known as Subiaco Abbey.

Abbot Fintan died on February 14, 1898. At the time of his death he was 62 years old and in the 42nd year of his monastic profession, the 38th of his priesthood. He had been abbot for 18 years. He is buried in the cemetery of St. Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana.

