

## Abbot Ignatius Conrad

March 13th is the anniversary of the death of Abbot Ignatius Conrad, the first abbot of our monastery. Nicholas Conrad was born on November 15, 1846, in the town of Au, Canton Aargau, Switzerland. In a family of 12, Nicholas had 10 brothers and one sister.

After completing his primary education in the schools of his canton, he continued his studies at Engelberg Abbey. Later, he studied philosophy at the Einsiedeln Abbey where he professed his vows as a monk of Einsiedeln on August 30, 1868, receiving the name Ignatius Loyola. Bishop Kaspar Willi of the Swiss Diocese of Chur ordained him a priest on September 1, 1871.

After his priestly ordination, Father Ignatius served the community of Einsiedeln as a teacher of Latin in the Abbey School from 1872 to 1875. Father Ignatius was one of five brothers who became priests, four of them joining the Benedictine Order. The eldest, Father Frowin Conrad, a monk of Engelberg Abbey, had been sent to the United States in 1872, in order to establish a Benedictine mission house in northwestern Missouri. Two other brothers, who became Fathers Pius and John, had associated themselves with him.

The abbot of Einsiedeln agreed to send Father Ignatius to the United States at the end of the 1875 school year, assigning him to St. Meinrad's Abbey in Indiana, with the understanding that he should be assigned from there to lend assistance to the monks at "New Engelberg" mission house in Missouri.

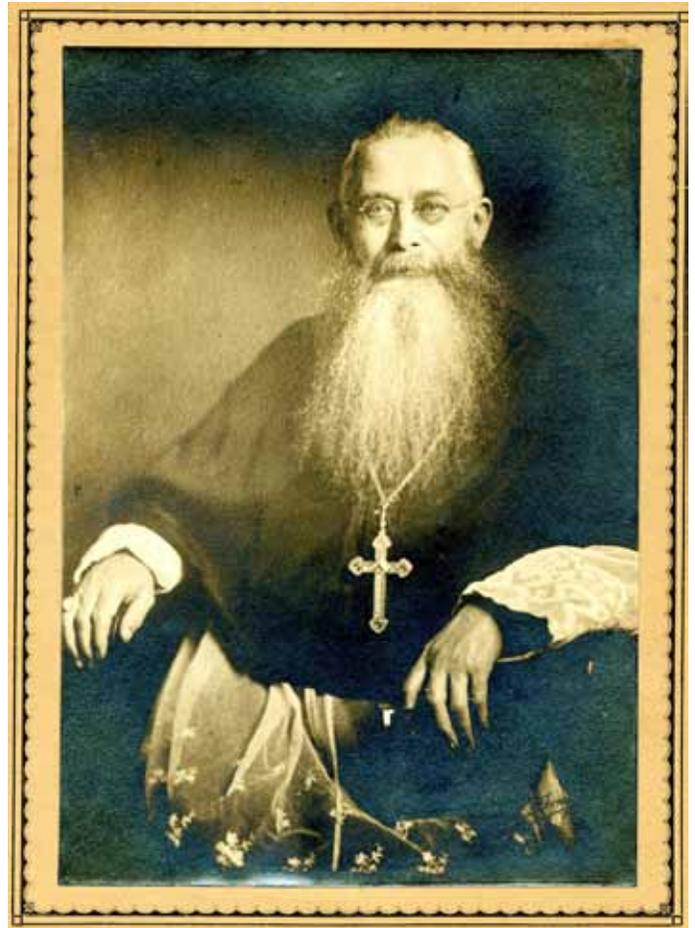
After gaining some proficiency in writing and speaking English, Father Ignatius began his missionary work in Nodaway, Worthy, Gentry, and other northwestern counties of Missouri.

On May 18, 1878, Father Ignatius was appointed as pastor of the Cathedral parish church in St. Joseph, Missouri. In this position, he worked faithfully under the leadership of the great pioneer missionary, Bishop John Joseph Hogan.

When Bishop Hogan was transferred to Kansas City, Missouri, in 1880, Father Ignatius was retained as administrator of the Cathedral parish of St. Joseph for the next 12 years. He held this position until his election as first abbot of Subiaco Abbey.

He journeyed to Switzerland in the summer of 1891, in the company of Father Gall D'Aujourd'hui of St. Benedict's Priory in Arkansas. During Father Gall's absence, the monks received notice that by a Papal Brief dated August 3, 1891, their priory had been raised to the rank of an abbey and was to be known as Subiaco Abbey.

The election of the first abbot was held on March 24, 1892. On that day, the Chapter of Subiaco Abbey convened under the chairmanship of Abbot Fintan Mundwiler, second abbot of St. Meinrad and president of the Swiss-American Congregation. The witnesses officially appointed were Father Ignatius Conrad, OSB, of St. Joseph, Missouri, and the Very Reverend Heizman, CSSp, Provincial of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers from their provincial house in Morrilton, Arkansas. The result of the balloting was a majority vote for Father Ignatius.



The Solemn Blessing of the new abbot took place on May 24, 1892, in the Cathedral of St. Joseph, Missouri. Bishop Hogan, with whom Father Ignatius had been closely associated for 14 years, performed the ceremony assisted by Abbots Fintan Mundwiler of St. Meinrad and Frowin Conrad of Conception.

On June 1, 1892, Abbot Ignatius was solemnly installed as the first abbot of Subiaco Abbey by Bishop Edward Fitzgerald.

As abbot, his main work for many years until after 1914, was the collection of funds. This he did through the tireless giving of retreats and missions, the number of which is staggering. He preached throughout the Dioceses of Little Rock, St. Joseph, St. Louis, and Kansas City, Missouri, Chicago, Omaha, Dallas, and in his native Switzerland.

In 1925, the Holy See granted Abbot Ignatius the right to wear a purple skull cap, rather than the usual black one. This privilege was obtained through the request and influence of Bishop Morris of Little Rock. Abbot Ignatius was greatly embarrassed by this privilege and rarely made use of it in the year before his death.

On December 1, 1925, his successor, Abbot Edward Burgert, was elected co-adjutor abbot with the right of succession. Abbot Ignatius then went to Switzerland to try to recover his health, which was hampered by the effects of a stroke on January 21, 1926. He entered the hospital in the town of Baldegg, where he was cared for by two nieces, who were Franciscan nursing sisters whose order operated the hospital. There he died on Saturday, March 13, 1926.

At the time of his death, Abbot Ignatius was 79 years old, and in the 57th year of his monastic profession, the 54th of his priesthood. He had been abbot for almost 34 years, from 1892 until 1926. A marker honors Abbot Ignatius here in our abbey cemetery. He is buried at the Abbey of Maria Einsiedeln in Switzerland.