

Father Martin Fischer

March 14th is the anniversary of the death of Father Martin Fischer. Father Martin was born in Pittstown, Pennsylvania, on October 31, 1902. At 14 he entered the minor seminary at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. He continued his studies there through the second year of theology.

Then, as he once described it, "at the prompting of the Holy Spirit" he came to Subiaco and entered the novitiate in 1927 and professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on March 21, 1928, despite the fact that the abbey had been nearly destroyed by fire in December of 1927 and the future looked grim. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John B. Morris at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on December 14, 1930.

Within a month of his ordination, he was assigned to the parochial ministry. From 1931 to 1937, Father Martin was assistant pastor of St. Edward's Church in Little Rock. From 1937 to 1940, he was pastor of St. Mary's in Windthorst, Texas, from where he went to St. Mary's in Fort Worth, Texas, as assistant pastor.

Since 1927, the monks of Subiaco had been operating Corpus Christi College-Academy in Corpus Christi, Texas. At the time of its inception, it was decided that it could begin to move toward becoming an independent monastery. In 1949, Father Martin was given the responsibility of being the first prior, guiding this foundling monastery in its first three years before he returned to parochial ministry.

Father Martin had never been physically strong, and the final 30 years in parishes and hospital chaplaincies were marked with ill health. However, he continued to serve the needs of others as best he could as evidenced in his latter assignments: assistant at St. Boniface in Fort Smith, 1953 to 1958; assistant at Sacred Heart, Muenster, Texas, 1958 to 1964; chaplain at Clarksville Hospital, 1964 to 1968; chaplain at the Memorial Hospital, Refugio, Texas, 1968 to 1974; and chaplain of Crawford County Memorial Hospital in Van Buren, 1974 to January 1982.

He then retired to the monastery. His final 14 months in the abbey infirmary were marked by declining health. Following a hernia operation, he never regained his strength, and he died peacefully on Monday, March 14, 1983, with confreres gathered in prayer at his bedside.

At the time of his death, Father Martin was 80 years old and in the 54th year of his monastic profession, the 52nd of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

