

Father Harold Heiman

April 18th is the anniversary of the death of Father Harold Heiman. He was born December 26, 1913, to John and Cecilia Huseman Heiman, in St. Bernard, Nebraska, and was baptized Urban John. Sometime later, his family moved to Nazareth, Texas, where he received his elementary education. He came to Subiaco Academy for his secondary education and graduated with the class of 1932.

Urban Heiman professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on September 16, 1934, receiving the name Harold. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John B. Morris at St. Andrew Cathedral in Little Rock on June 3, 1939, one of seven monks, the largest group ever ordained for our abbey at one time.

Father Harold holds the distinction in Subiaco's history of being the only monk to have served in the classroom for 52 consecutive years at Subiaco Academy, Corpus Christi College-Academy, Corpus Christi, Texas; Laneri High, Our Lady of Victory Academy, and Nolan High in Fort Worth, Texas.

Although he taught a variety of subjects through the years, Spanish and Latin were his specialties. He studied these languages at Texas Christian University, Georgetown University, the Linguistic Institute, and the Universidad de las Americas in Mexico City.

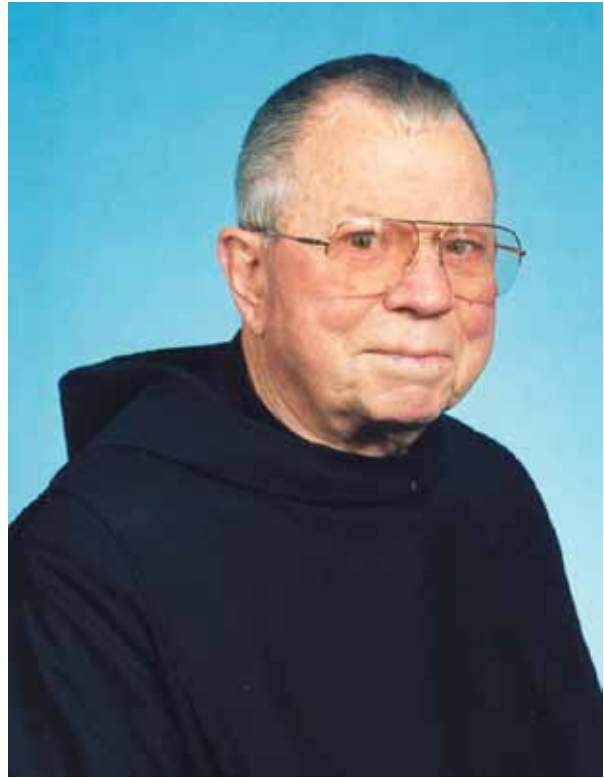
In 1940-41, he taught at Subiaco Academy; from 1941-53 he was a faculty member at Corpus Christi College-Academy and also assistant coach. From 1953-58, he was again on the faculty of Subiaco Academy, athletic director, and assistant prefect. In 1958, Father Harold was assigned to the faculty of Laneri High in Fort Worth, Texas. He also taught at Our Lady of Victory Academy in the same city. When these two institutions were phased out and replaced by Nolan High School, Father Harold was on the faculty.

When he returned to Subiaco Abbey in 1964, he took on the duties of director of the scholasticate as well as teaching at the academy. From 1967-72, Father Harold was groundskeeper for the abbey as well as academy faculty member. He was the scheduled retreatmaster at Coury House in 1972-73.

Father Harold served as Prior from 1974-82 in addition to his teaching and taking care of the grounds. Newly-elected Abbot Raphael DeSalvo appointed him "pro-tem" Prior of the abbey in 1974, but Father Harold retained this office until 1982, joking that this may have set a record for "pro-tem" appointments!

From 1982-91, he continued teaching and became commuter pastor for St. Anthony parish in Ratcliff, Arkansas. In 1989, he was also commuter pastor for Our Lady of Assumption parish in Booneville, Arkansas. In 1991, Father Harold retired from teaching and continued to serve as pastor of St. Anthony and caring for the parish grounds.

On his 93rd birthday, Father Harold decided to retire as a parish priest. Thus, until his retirement in December 2006, he was the oldest pastor in the diocese of Little Rock and the longest-serving pastor in one parish.



Father Harold was a gifted artist, working in stained glass and wood. Many of the etched and stained glass panels throughout the abbey and the diocese are his work. He had surgeries on his right shoulder, right knee and then left shoulder at the age of 86. He was assiduous in the physical therapy following the surgeries, wanting to continue at full tilt as pastor and active community member of the abbey.

This attitude typified his whole approach to life. He had thousands of friends, drawn to him especially because of his positive and hopeful outlook. When he was disabled and unable to play golf or to see well enough to pursue his stained glass and woodcrafts, his inevitable answer to the question "How are you doing?" was "I never had it so good." He was unyielding in his optimism about life and about people. As teacher, coach, pastor, monk and friend, Father Harold endeared himself to young and old alike; his vibrancy was contagious.

During the final months of his life, Father Harold's stamina steadily ebbed away and he died of apparent congestive heart failure and fluid on the lungs at 6:05 p.m. on Wednesday, April 18, 2007, in the monastic Health Center, strengthened by the sacraments and the prayers of the community.

On Friday, April 20, a Wake service was held at 7:00 p.m. with Deacon Bob Cowie presiding. Deacon Cowie had ministered for many years with Father Harold at St. Anthony parish in Ratcliff, Arkansas.

At the time of his death, Father Harold was 93 years old and the eldest member in the community. He had been a professed monk for 72 years and a priest for 67 years. He is buried in our cemetery.