

Oblate James Kuykendall

April 28th is the anniversary of the death of Oblate James Kuykendall. John Ray Kuykendall was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas, on September 18, 1903. He took his elementary schooling in the public schools of Fort Smith and Fayetteville, Arkansas. He attended two and a half years of college at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, in the department of civil engineering in the early 1920s.

On September 9, 1925, John Kuykendall married Virginia Merriman in Boerne, Texas. The Kuykendalls were parents of one daughter. Moving to Little Rock after his marriage, John Kuykendall helped his father in the business of the American Seating Company until 1947.

During the next ten years he was a salesman, and he worked as a hotel clerk and security guard. In various hotels he worked in the bookkeeping department, especially in auditing the books. He also served for a short period of time with the State Labor Department.

With the death of his wife on September 15, 1952, John Kuykendall sought consolation in God. He approached Monsignor Francis Allen, then pastor of Holy Souls Church in Little Rock, who received him into the Church on April 19, 1956. With the death of his mother in April 1958, John's family obligations permitted him to follow a religious vocation.

In October 1958, he entered our monastery as an oblate candidate and made his oblation on April 26, 1960, taking the name of his father, James. For a number of years, Brother James assisted in the business office. He also worked in the laundry, in custodial care of the church and academy, and as bookbinder. In his final years, he was porter of the monastery.

Steadily failing health in 1971 made it impossible for him to continue in any of his tasks. His life became a series of hospital stays with temporary returns to the monastery. He maintained a quiet spirit of cheerful acceptance of his condition.

Brother James died on Saturday, April 28, 1973, at St. Vincent's Infirmary in Little Rock, Arkansas, as the result of various ailments, including heart trouble and emphysema.

At the time of his death, Brother James was 69 years old and in 13th year of his claustral oblation. He is buried in our cemetery.

