

## Father Lawrence Miller

April 28th is the anniversary of the death of Father Lawrence Miller. Ralph Lawrence Miller was born in Barry County, Missouri, on October 24, 1921. After completing the elementary grades at St. Mary's School in Pierce City, Missouri, he worked on his father's farm in southern Missouri.

In 1941 he entered the military service and served three years as a telephone radio operator with the U.S. Army in Europe during World War II, participating in five major campaigns, including the Battle of Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge. After the war, Ralph worked in Monett, Missouri; Grand Rapids, Michigan; and Boulder, Montana.

At the age of 26, he came to Subiaco to begin his high school education, attending classes with boys half his age. It took courage and humility for this step; he was admired by both faculty and students, graduating with the class of 1951. After high school and one year of college, he entered the novitiate.

Ralph Miller professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on September 14, 1953, retaining his middle name, Lawrence, as his name in religious life. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Albert L. Fletcher at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on May 15, 1958. For five years Father Lawrence taught in the academy and served as freshman dean.

In 1963 Father Lawrence joined four other confreres of our monastery to establish St. Mukasa Priory, our mission in Eastern Nigeria in West Africa. He spent the next four years there as a teacher in Ascension High School and as a builder of the priory. In late 1967 he returned to the United States because of his health. During this time he served as assistant pastor of St. Mary's Church in Fort Worth, Texas, while receiving medical care in that city.

When his condition improved in August, 1968, Father Lawrence was appointed pastor of St. Mary's Church in Altus, Arkansas, a pastorate he held until a few months before his death. In March 1980, Father Lawrence returned to the abbey with terminal cancer.

His confreres were edified at his patient suffering, especially during his final days spent in the abbey infirmary, and his acceptance of God's will for him.

Father Lawrence died in the abbey infirmary on the afternoon of Monday, April 28, 1980, surrounded by confreres in prayer at his bedside.

A Mass for Father Lawrence was held in Altus on Thursday, May 1.

At the time of his death, Father Lawrence was 58 years old and in the 26th year of his monastic profession, the 21st of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

