

Father Felix Rumpf

April 24th is the anniversary of the death of Father Felix Rumpf. Joseph Rumpf was born on March 16, 1856, in Ottersweier, Baden, Germany. He professed his vows as a monk of St. Meinrad Abbey on December 24, 1874, receiving the name Felix. He was ordained to the priesthood on February 8, 1880.

After ordination, Father Felix was to begin missionary work among the Sioux Indians with Bishop Martin Marty in the Territory of the Dakotas. However, missionaries were also needed at the new foundation in Arkansas.

On August 23, 1880, Father Felix and Father Benedict Brunet arrived at St. Benedict's monastery in Logan County, Arkansas, to assist Father Prior Wolfgang Schlumpf who was the only priest at the monastery at the time. Father Felix was away from the monastery much of the time as he traveled about the Arkansas countryside on mission work.

He served the mission congregation in Paris until January 1882. It was at this time that an important step was taken: land was purchased west of the courthouse and a new church was built in the town of Paris itself.

For nine months he was resident pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Morrison Bluff. Because the parish had no rectory, Father Felix lived in the school.

Prior to the establishment of St. Edward's Parish in Little Rock, Father Felix was appointed assistant pastor at St. Andrew's Cathedral to minister to the needs of the German speaking members of the congregation, the Cathedral being the only Catholic parish in Little Rock at the time. The pastor's policy had been to deliver a sermon once a month in German. The increasing German Catholic population of Little Rock soon felt the need for their own House of Worship. In 1884, Bishop Edward M. Fitzgerald not only granted permission for the establishment of a second parish in the city, but he donated three lots on which to build the church.

The new church was dedicated under the title of St. Edward, King and Confessor, in honor of Bishop Edward M. Fitzgerald, with Father Felix serving as the first pastor from 1885 to 1887.

The abbot of St. Meinrad then assigned Father Felix to the new monastic project in Louisiana. There he helped manage the property and to look after the parish of St. Leo and its several missions.

His last assignment was as pastor in Amite, Louisiana, where he died on April 24, 1908, a victim of a hurricane ravaging the southern states.

While Father Felix was ringing the parish church bell for the angelus, the force of the storm caused the belfry of the church to collapse on top of him, killing him instantly. The church, rectory, and greater part of the town were destroyed by the hurricane.

At the time of his death, Father Felix was 52 years old and in the 33rd year of his monastic profession, the 28th of his priesthood. He served our community for seven years during its pioneer era. He is buried in the cemetery of St. Joseph Abbey in Louisiana.

No picture
available
of
Fr. Felix Rumpf.