

Father Benedict Borgerding

July 9th is the anniversary of the death of Father Benedict Borgerding. Joseph Borgerding was born on October 21, 1883, in the German Catholic colony of Spielerville, Arkansas, less than a mile from the site of the present monastery. Joseph began his elementary education at St. Benedict's parochial school and entered the abbey's scholasticate at the age of 9. At this young age he was noted for his fine alto voice for singing.

After completing his secondary education at Subiaco, Joseph entered our monastery where he professed his vows as a monk on the feast of St. Gall, October 16, 1900, receiving the name Benedict. It was in the abbey chapel on August 26, 1906, that Bishop John B. Morris of Little Rock ordained Father Benedict Borgerding and his classmate, Father Gregory Kehres. They were the first two priests to be ordained from St. Benedict's Parish in Subiaco, and they were the first native Arkansans to be ordained by Bishop Morris.

Father Benedict served our community as a professor in our school and seminary from 1909 to 1926, teaching Latin, mathematics and history. From 1926 to 1928 he was master of novices and instructor of clerics in the monastery. From 1928 to 1945 Father Benedict was principal and teacher at Laneri High School in Fort Worth, Texas. During this time he also taught at Our Lady of Victory Academy in Fort Worth and served as chaplain to the Sisters of O.L.V.

In 1945, Abbot Paul recalled him to Subiaco to fill the post of subprior, and two years later that of prior. During the last three years of his life, he spent much time doing research for a history of our monastery.

Father Benedict went to St. Anthony's Hospital in Morrilton, Arkansas, for a general check-up on June 21, 1948. Despite several light heart attacks, he was doing well and reports indicated satisfactory progress. However, Father Benedict died of a heart attack at St. Anthony's Hospital in Morrilton at 3:55 a. m. on Friday, July 9, 1948.

At the time of his death, Father Benedict was 64 years old and in the 47th year of his monastic profession, the 41st of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

