

## Brother Augustine Konitzer

June 16th is the anniversary of the death of Brother Augustine Konitzer. Brother Augustine was the son of John and Mary Graczick Konitzer. He was born October 23, 1926, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was baptized Richard.

He attended St. Anthony Elementary School in Milwaukee, and then went to a technical trade school for boys for a year before joining the U.S. Army at age 18. He served in the Army with the 6th Division. After his tour of duty ended, he was employed as a mail sorter for the post office. Here a remarkable twist of fate occurred that introduced Richard to Subiaco Abbey.

While doing mail sorting, he came across a copy of "The Abbey Message," Subiaco's newsletter, in the dead-letter file. He liked what he read and began a subscription a short time later. After learning more about the monastic life, he inquired about entering the monastery at Subiaco. Following a two-week visit to the Abbey, Richard decided to enter as a candidate in the summer of 1955. "My heart leaped for joy when my application was granted," he said. During his novitiate, he was assigned to work on the farm and in the dairy.

Richard Konitzer professed his vows as a monk of Subiaco Abbey on July 11, 1956, receiving the name of Augustine. For a time, he served as Abbey refectorian. In 1959, Brother Augustine was appointed tailor for the Abbey, a position he held for the rest of his life, making and mending the monks' habits and cucullas and making banners for the abbey church.

In addition to serving as tailor, he was also custodian and later supervisor of the academy dining room. In 1967, he was appointed custodian of the abbey church, a position he held for the next fifteen years with the exception of one year when he was porter of the monastery. In 1982, he became laundry manager and served in this capacity for 12 years.

Among his many interests, Brother Augustine was a candle-maker, an avid reader, and a good fisherman. He enjoyed taking very early morning walks, during which he prayed the rosary and enjoyed seeing the sunrise and hearing the birds chirp. He said, "It was awesome to see the stars and moon retire and daylight seep over the countryside."

Until two weeks before his death on June 16, 2011, Brother Augustine was regularly at the community conventual Mass and for several years led the Diving Office for those in the Health Center. At the time of his death, Brother Augustine was 84 years old and in the 54th year of his monastic profession. He is buried in our cemetery.

