

Father James Foley

September 29th is the anniversary of the death of Father James Foley. Patrick Foley was born in Lebanon, Missouri, on May 30, 1903. He received his elementary education at Washington-Township School in Laclede County, Missouri, and began his secondary education at Lebanon High School in Lebanon, Missouri. A few years later he came to Subiaco Academy to complete his high school education, graduating with the class of 1926.

Patrick Foley professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on October 5, 1927, receiving the name James. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John B. Morris at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on May 21, 1932.

Father James served our community on the academy staff for one year, followed by four decades in the parish missions. He was assistant pastor at St. Mary Church in Fort Worth, Texas, from 1933 to 1943.

He then served in Arkansas as assistant pastor and later pastor of St. Boniface Church in Fort Smith from 1943 to 1958, and then as pastor of St. Edward Church in Little Rock from 1958 to 1968. From 1968 until his retirement in 1975, Father James served as pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Charleston.

In 1975, the jovial Father James returned to the abbey from where he traveled from time to time on short-term parish assignments in various places. In fact, Father James had already been scheduled for parish help for the weekend which followed his death.

Blessed with a warm personality and dedicated to his priestly ministry, Father James was instrumental in receiving many people into the Church. He used the three "rules" that Bishop Fulton J. Sheen listed for bringing people to Christ: "kindness, kindness, and kindness."

Father James will long be remembered for his active interest in current social and political questions as well as his active part played in the campaigns supporting Dale Bumpers in his successful races for governor and the United States Senator from Arkansas for whom Father James was friend, spiritual counselor, and campaigner. At the death of Father James, Senator Dale Bumpers sent a telegram from Washington, D. C., to Abbot Raphael expressing his friendship for and his sympathy at the death of Father James.

But Father James' greatest campaign was for Christ. One of his unique methods of spreading the message of God's love, centered on the beauty of the Christmas mystery: God becoming man in the Babe of Bethlehem. He shared his Christian joy with hundreds and probably thousands of people to whom he sent Christmas cards every year with personal notes to each person.

Bouts with failing health throughout 1976 failed to daunt his spirits, rallying each time after several minor heart attacks. His final attack occurred at the abbey early Wednesday morning, September 29, 1976. Abbot Raphael administered the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and Viaticum to Father James before he was taken to Crawford County Memorial Hospital in Van Buren, Arkansas, where he died six hours later following the heart attack.

At the time of his death, Father James was 73 years old and in the 48th year of his monastic profession, the 44th of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

