

## Brother Eric Loran

February 25th is the anniversary of the death of Br. Eric Loran. Vincent Loran, the youngest in a family of 11 children, was born October 9, 1937, in Rhineland, Texas. His elementary education was at St. Joseph Parochial School taught by the Olivetan Benedictine Sisters. His secondary education was Rhineland High School where he graduated with the class of 1955.

Following high school, Vincent joined the United States Air Force where he was trained in Air Traffic Control serving at bases in San Antonio, Texas; Biloxi, Mississippi; and Rapid City, South Dakota. He was also stationed abroad in Madrid, Spain, and Casablanca, Morocco. In 1961 he was honorably discharged from the Air Force in Wichita Falls, Texas. He then spent the next year in Albuquerque, New Mexico, employed in the sales department of White Stores Incorporated.

From 1962-64 he attended the Aviation Academy of the Federal Aviation Administration in Oklahoma City, receiving a Pilot Weather Briefing Certificate, a weather observer license for the United States Weather bureau, and a diploma as a Federal Air Traffic Control Specialist.

Following his aviation training, Vincent Loran was employed in the civil service in Texas as an air traffic controller. He married in 1962 and had two children, a girl and a boy. He was divorced in 1971.

When he was 35 years old, and there was no impediment to his entry into monastic life, Vincent Loran considered a Benedictine vocation. Benedictine priests and sisters were stationed in his home parish so he was “Benedictine at heart” from early childhood. “I was influenced,” he said, “about Subiaco and religious life by my family, and having three sisters in the Benedictine Monastery of women in Fort Smith, Arkansas.”

“Determining your vocation in life, be it religious, married or single, should not be a crisis or ‘nail-biting’ event for you,” he said. “Just go on with life where you are, but make a conscious effort to listen to the ‘still voice within you.’ God will allow the events in your life to unfold and guide your decision. Then work at it,” he concluded.

Vincent Loran came to Subiaco Abbey in 1973 where he later professed his vows as a Benedictine monk on August 15, 1976, receiving the name Eric.

With his expertise in electrical and equipment repair, Brother Eric was involved in these areas of work most of his monastic life. And as a skilled groundskeeper, he also helped beautify the abbey’s lawns, flower gardens and shrubbery. Since 1977 he was a water plant operator licensee. In 1979 he spent six months doing general maintenance at Santa Familia Monastery in Belize, Central America.

In 1982-87 he was assistant dean of men in the academy and maintenance handyman. From 1987-89 he was assistant formation director, soccer coach, assistant procurator and purchasing agent for the abbey. The following year he coordinated the work schedule in the maintenance department. An avid Trojan fan and supporter of the academy athletic activities, he was a faithful bus driver for many years.

In 1990, Brother Eric was appointed subprior of the monastery, and held this position until he was named prior in November 1991. He had the distinction of being the first Brother-monk to be appointed prior of Subiaco Abbey since its founding in 1878, a position he held for seven years.

In addition to the daily duties of his office as prior, Brother Eric was chairman of the abbey’s infirmary renovation committee and was a member of the Subiaco Wellness Program. He was head of the maintenance department during 1998, followed by years of service alongside other departmental members, especially as service mechanic for all abbey and academy vehicles.



With the advent of the third millennium, many hopes, dreams and plans were being voiced in the community for building and renovation within the Subiaco Abbey complex, and Brother Eric was instrumental in helping bring about these needed improvements. He was a member of the abbey renovation committee from its inception, and he was the monastic liaison to the construction crew.

Brother Eric enjoyed spending his leisure time in walking, reading, and listening to music. Because he was a parent and grandparent, he was able to understand the needs of the students in the academy as well as the needs of community members. He was always a gentleman with a ready smile and a helping hand. Many considered him a personal friend and confidant.

In 2015 Br. Eric moved into the Abbey Health Center as he began to experience the early stages of dementia. He remained in every way an active member of our community until about one year ago when he suffered a fracture. He fought a very hard battle and was an inspiration to all who cared for him in his long struggle. Br. Eric died in the early hours of February 25, 2016, in the hospital in Ft. Smith, Arkansas.

At the time of his death, Brother Eric was 78 years old and in the 40th year of his monastic profession. He is buried in our cemetery.