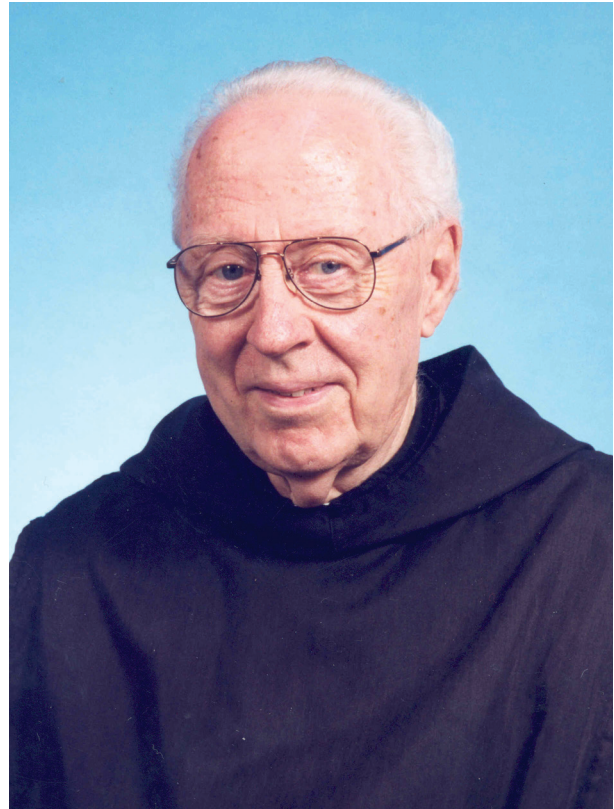


Father Hilary Filiatreau

December 20th is the anniversary of the death of Father Hilary Filiatreau. James Edward Filiatreau was born in Mechanicsburg, Indiana, on April 21, 1922.

James attended grades one through ten at Saint Joseph School in Elwood, Indiana. His junior and senior years of schooling were at Saint Meinrad Minor Seminary, Saint Meinrad, Indiana, where he graduated with the class of 1943.

From 1943-45 he attended Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. It was there that he received a package from a friend, which was partially wrapped in a copy of the jubilee issue of the Abbey Message dated March, 1941. The paper aroused his interest, which resulted in his coming to Subiaco Abbey on August 16, 1943. James Filiatreau professed his vows as a monk of Subiaco Abbey on September 21, 1943, receiving the name Hilary. He was ordained to the priesthood on May 24, 1949, at Subiaco Abbey by Bishop Albert L. Fletcher of the diocese of Little Rock.



Father Hilary's friendly disposition and ready wit won the affection of his fellow clerics. Following ordination, he was assigned as chaplain in Subiaco Academy from 1950-55. During this time he also began a lifelong pastoral ministry in the Subiaco deanery where he served in six Arkansas parishes.

Known as "an ambassador of the joy of the Lord," Father Hilary worked in various apostolates at the abbey including director of oblates and assistant director of Oblates and assistant director of hospitality.

From 1953-59, and again from 1989-90, he was pastor of Saint Benedict parish in Subiaco. From 1959-75 he was pastor of two parishes: Saint Ignatius and Saints Peter and Paul in Scranton and Morrison Bluff, respectively. A third parish, Saint Meinrad in Prairie View, was assigned to his pastorate from 1965-75.

From 1975-84 he was assigned as pastor of Saint Boniface parish in Fort Smith. Father Hilary was then recalled to the abbey to become guestmaster, director of retreats, and manager of Courty House. He served in this capacity from 1984-90.

It was in 1990 that he received his final pastorate, namely Saint Mary Church in Altus, Arkansas, where he spent 21 years before retiring to the abbey in June, 2011. During his time as pastor there the congregation undertook a gigantic renovation project restoring the church's interior to its pristine beauty of the early 1900s. From its priceless murals to its hand-done woodwork, the renovated church bespeaks a work of art created for the greater honor and glory of God and edification of the faithful.

He celebrated his golden jubilee of priesthood in 1999, and his diamond jubilee of monastic profession in 2004.

Father Hilary was well loved by the faithful in each of the parishes where he served. Always optimistic, humorous and smiling he ministered to the spiritual as well as the temporal needs of his parishioners.

During the final six months of his life, Fr. Hilary was an active member of the community, concelebrating at the daily conventual Mass and taking his meals in the monastic refectory.

At the time of his death, Father Hilary was 89 years old. He had been a professed monk for 68 years and a priest for 62 years. He is buried in our cemetery.