

## Father Eugene Knoff

April 15th is the anniversary of the death of Father Eugene Knoff. Berthold Knoff was born in Neuendorf, in the diocese of Ermland, Germany, on June 22, 1897. When he was four months old his parents came to the United States, arriving on October 25, 1897, and settling in the German Catholic community of Muenster, Texas.

He attended Sacred Heart School in Muenster before entering Subiaco Academy where he excelled in both music and athletics, graduating with the class of 1916.

In the autumn of 1916, he entered the novitiate, and on October 7, 1917, he professed his vows as a monk of our monastery, receiving the name Eugene. His younger brother Aloysius entered the monastery in 1930 and became Father Leonard Knoff.

Throughout his college and seminary years at Subiaco, Father Eugene exhibited an amazing proficiency in languages, and his extraordinary and versatile musical talent enabled him to become an accomplished organist and a master of other musical instruments.

He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John B. Morris at the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Little Rock on May 28, 1922. After teaching in the Academy for a year, Father Eugene was assigned as pastor at St. Edward in Little Rock for two years, then was recalled to the Academy in the fall of 1926. In the months after the fire of December, 1927, he was appointed by Abbot Edward to raise funds for the restoration effort in development trips to New York and other major U. S. cities.

Later in 1928 Father Eugene was assigned for a year to St. Joseph Abbey in Louisiana as organist and seminary professor. He returned to Subiaco in 1929 as prefect of discipline, a position he held as a mainstay in the Academy until his appointment as pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Morrison Bluff in 1939.

He was recalled to the abbey in 1945 to serve as procurator as well as pastor of St. Benedict parish. As procurator, Father Eugene reorganized the abbey farm, put in a lumber mill, and planned and carried out a project to insure the water supply of the institution. He was the main force behind the construction of the three reservoir lakes in the ridges south of the monastery in the late 1940s.

By 1950, ill health forced Father Eugene to take lighter duties. He was assigned as chaplain of Bethania Hospital in Wichita Falls, Texas, where he died eight months later on Sunday, April 15, 1951, from complications of heart disease and uremic poisoning.

At the time of his death, Father Eugene was 53 years old. He had been a professed monk for 33 years and a priest for 28 years. He is buried in our cemetery.

