

## Father Charles Poggeman

January 7th is the anniversary of the death of Father Charles Poggeman. John Joachim Poggeman was born on August 9, 1896, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he attended grade school and began studies at St. Francis Seminary. In 1915 he transferred to Subiaco Academy. After graduating from the academy with the class of 1917, he entered the novitiate of our monastery and professed his vows on September 8, 1918, receiving the name Charles. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John B. Morris at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on April 29, 1923.

A priest from Subiaco on a visit to Milwaukee's St. Francis Seminary some years later asked one of the faculty members whether young John Poggeman was remembered there. The reply was: "Yes, indeed – you have taken our best student."

In the opinion of one of his older confreres, Father Charles was considered "the most talented man that Subiaco ever had."

Although a combination of circumstances prevented him from getting much of a higher specialized education, still, all who knew him were in agreement that he had the makings of a profound scholar.

He was a linguist and he had a rare gift for analyzing a problem and situation. He taught in the academy, but his main contribution to the educational program here was made in the seminary department. The subjects in which he was best versed were Church history, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Canon law. He was noted for the thorough research that went into all his subjects.

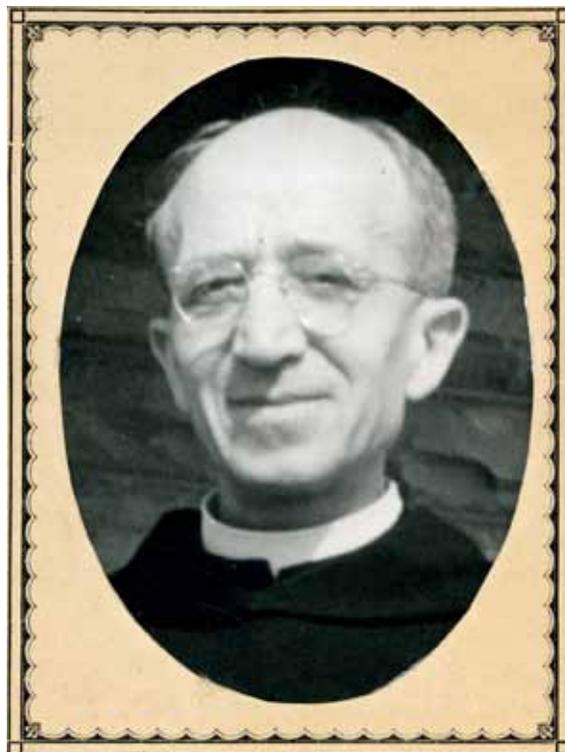
After the disastrous fire of 1927, Father Charles was given the task of rehabilitating the abbey library. It was a mammoth undertaking; many precious volumes had been destroyed in the fire, and many others were badly damaged. Countless painstaking hours were spent in salvaging through the remains.

Due to the financial setback suffered by the abbey as a result of the fire, Father Charles was not able to purchase many new books, but future librarians of the abbey will be forever grateful to him for the time and energy he devoted in labeling and cataloguing existing volumes.

The uncertain signs that showed up in his health now and then in his young manhood were confirmed shortly after his ordination to the priesthood; Father Charles was clinically diagnosed an epileptic.

For over 15 years Father Charles celebrated Mass, but around 1940 he no longer offered the sacrifice according to the order of Melchizedek, but offered up the next 15 years of his life in the loneliness and desolation of his vocation to suffering and sickness. Cheerfully and silently he carried this cross in obedience to God's will for the rest of his life.

In 1953, Father Charles suffered an additional setback to his always frail condition when he fell and broke his hip which left him incapacitated except for work in the library which he faithfully carried out until his death.



Always unobtrusive and retiring, Father Charles was known by his confreres as an exceedingly conscientious religious who was exact to the last detail in all of his work. He bore with great humility the limitations that his physical condition put upon him. A great tribute to his qualities as a wise counsellor was evident in the fact that throughout the years many of his confreres sought him out as a confessor and spiritual guide.

Father Charles died on the morning of Saturday, January 7, 1956, at Crawford County Memorial Hospital in Van Buren. He died of a brain tumor following years of suffering from epilepsy.

On Monday, January 9, Abbot Paul was celebrant of the funeral Mass for Father Charles.

At the time of his death, Father Charles was 59 years old and in the 37th year of his monastic profession, the 32nd of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.