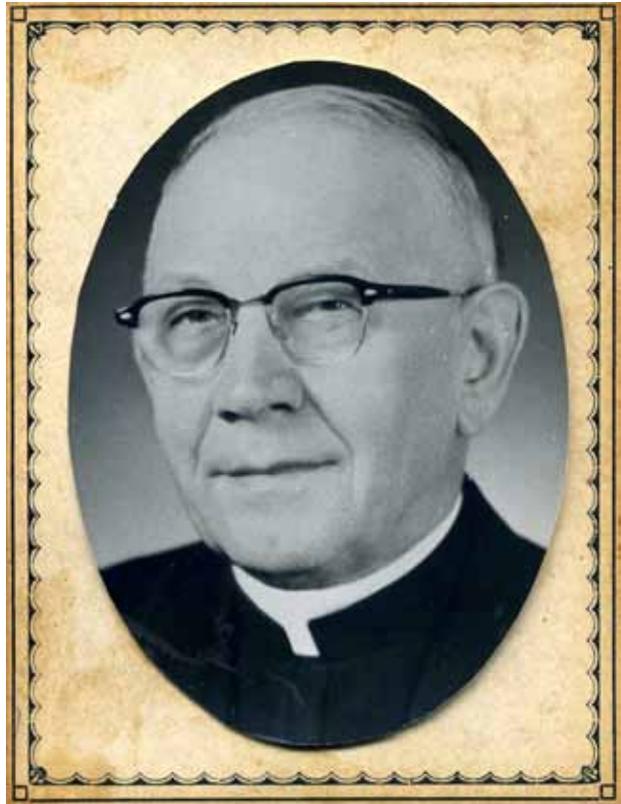


Father Conrad Herda

December 2nd is the anniversary of the death of Father Conrad Herda. Maximilian Herda was born on September 8, 1885, in the village of Striegelmuehle, Germany. He completed his elementary education in his hometown before going to work for six years with a construction company in his native Germany.

In 1906, he went to Penango, Italy, where he received three years of secondary education at Don Bosco Institute, a minor seminary for delayed vocations. In the autumn of 1909, he traveled to Switzerland to investigate Benedictine religious life at Einsiedeln. While he was there, he was informed about the Benedictine foundation of Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas, and he made immediate plans to join a group of young men who were planning to travel to the United States in order to enter religious communities.

At the age of 24, Maximilian Herda arrived in the United States on September 27, 1909. Later he traveled to Subiaco, reaching his destination in November of the same year. He professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on May 7, 1911, receiving the name Conrad. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John B. Morris at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on June 8, 1916.



In September of 1916, Father Conrad was assigned for four months to minister to the parishes in Scranton and Prairie View, Arkansas. During 1917, Father Conrad was on the faculty of our academy.

On February 6, 1918, Father Conrad was appointed pastor of Holy Family Church in Nazareth, Texas, where he served for five years. On June 6, 1923, he was appointed pastor of St. Peter's Church in Lindsay, Texas, where he served for five years before his appointment on January 1, 1926, as pastor of St. Mary's Church in Windthorst, Texas.

January 1, 1927, Father Conrad was appointed temporary assistant pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Muenster, Texas, for three months before being assigned for the rest of the year as administrator of St. Mary's Church in Sherman, Texas.

Father Conrad returned to Subiaco at Christmastide 1927 to take over his duties as pastor of St. Benedict's parish on January 1, 1928. He arrived shortly after the devastating fire which had destroyed the major part of the abbey and the church.

Through the darkest days in the history of the 50-year-old congregation, Father Conrad led his parishioners in aiding the work of building a place of worship to meet the needs of the abbey and the parish.

Father Conrad was principal of the parish school. He also worked very closely with the monks of the abbey. For over a half century the monastic community and the parish shared the same cemetery near the site of the original monastery.

After the monastery was moved from its original site in 1903, the location of the cemetery was now one mile away from the abbey. This distance made its continued use undesirable. Father Conrad drew the plans and supervised the construction of the new abbey cemetery when it was separated from that of the parish.

During his pastorate of Subiaco parish, Father Conrad was also a professor of pastoral theology, liturgy, and homiletics in our seminary.

Following his seven-year-pastorate in Subiaco, Father Conrad was appointed pastor of St. Mary's Church in Altus, Arkansas, on November 11, 1934. Completing four years as pastor in this Arkansas parish, Father Conrad was sent back to Texas on September 13, 1938, to again serve as pastor of St. Peter's Church in Lindsay. He faithfully served this parish for the next 20 years.

When age and sickness forced his retirement from the parish ministry in 1958, Father Conrad was appointed chaplain of the Municipal Hospital in Clarksville, Arkansas, where he served for the next four years.

In 1962 he returned to the abbey where he retired due to poor health suffering especially from an arterial disease that affected his memory. He died on Thursday, December 2, 1965, at Crawford County Memorial Hospital in Van Buren, Arkansas.

At the time of his death, Father Conrad was 80 years old and in the 54th year of his monastic profession, the 49th of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.