

Father Lawrence Hoyt

December 28th is the anniversary of the death of Father Lawrence Hoyt. Father Lawrence was born on April 1, 1877, in Marengo, Iowa. Because his father was a traveling carpenter, the family lived in various states until settling on a farm near Adona, Arkansas. Through the years he had attended public schools wherever the family lived. When he came to Arkansas, his previous education qualified him for teaching, and as a teenager he taught for two years in the rural public school system in Perry County, Arkansas.

He came to Subiaco in March of 1897, and professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on October 16, 1900, receiving the name Lawrence. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Edward M. Fitzgerald at St. Andrew Cathedral in Little Rock on June 25, 1904.

For almost five decades Father Lawrence served our community in the parish ministry. He began as a missionary-pastor in Oklahoma and Illinois. In 1905, he was appointed resident pastor of Holy Redeemer Church in Clarksville, Arkansas, where he served until 1923. During these years he also served as pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Hartman, Arkansas, and ministered to the missions in Coal Hill, Spadra, Montana, and Jamestown.

In 1923, Father Lawrence was sent to Texas where he was administrator of Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls for five years.

Returning to Arkansas, Father Lawrence was appointed pastor of St. Joseph Church in Paris from 1928 to 1933.

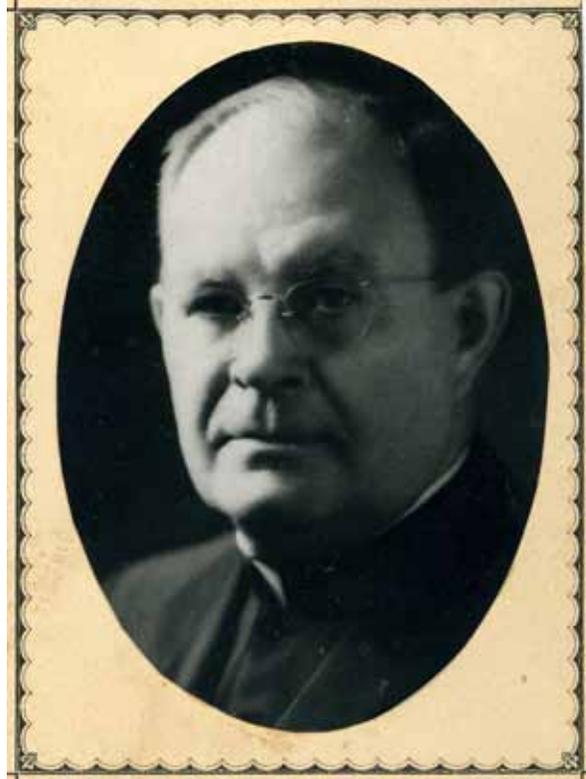
He was successful in reducing the debt on the recently completed new church in Paris even though funds were scarce due to the Great Depression which swept across the nation during this era. Father Lawrence was active in many civic groups in Paris, and during the first years of the national depression, he was a member of the Welfare Committee for Government Relief for Paris and the surrounding area.

From 1933 to 1950, Father Lawrence served as pastor of St. Edward Church in Little Rock, Arkansas. When he arrived, the parish was in debt and the gloom of the Great Depression made many parishioners believe that it was impossible to ever balance the budget. But, for the next 15 years, Father Lawrence worked with his parishioners with great success in liquidating the debt. And, during his final two years as pastor, he was able to assist the parishioners in accumulating a sizeable building fund for future needs.

While at St. Edward's, Father Lawrence composed a children's missal, together with a manual of everyday prayers, and published them in book form as *School Children's Prayerbook and Missal*. It was widely used in parochial schools across the nation. The prayer book went through five editions and it is estimated that over 100,000 copies were sold.

During 1949, Father Lawrence's health began to fail. Suffering a series of severe heart attacks, he was hospitalized for several months at St. Vincent Infirmary in Little Rock. On April 1, 1950, Father Lawrence resigned his pastorate at St. Edward's Church where he had served for 17 years, and returned to the abbey to live in semi-retirement.

Throughout his life, Father Lawrence had cultivated a scholarly and practical interest in social and economic progress. He possessed a deep interest in the development of agriculture and he felt that a Catholic farm publication edited by the monks of Subiaco would prove to be a beneficial apostolate in serving the needs of Arkansans.



Another project on which he did a prodigious amount of work during his lifetime was the compilation of anecdotes, jokes, and examples on religious subjects to be printed in book form for use as sermon stories and aids in teaching catechism. Five volumes with 3,000 examples of religious truths were planned. Hundreds of pages of manuscript were typed, but ill health in his waning years of life forced him to abandon the completion of this lifelong project.

In the summer of 1951, he accepted a temporary assignment in Rayne, Louisiana. While there he suffered a light stroke, and after several months of recuperation at St. Vincent Infirmary in Little Rock, he was brought back to the abbey where his condition kept him bedfast.

In early December of 1952, his condition grew worse. When he did not rally, he was moved to St. Anthony's Hospital in Morrilton, Arkansas, where he died about 10:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 28, 1952. Death resulted from complications of a heart condition from which he suffered for several years.

His remains were first taken to St. Edward's Church in Little Rock where a Mass was said for Father Lawrence, former pastor of the parish.

At the time of his death, Father Lawrence was 75 years old. He had been a professed monk for 52 years and a priest for 48 years. He is buried in our cemetery.