

Father Bede Mitchel

March 7th is the anniversary of the death of Father Bede Mitchel. Joseph Mitchel was born on January 7, 1899, in New Orleans, Louisiana, where his father was a civil engineer. Coming to Little Rock in 1912 with his family, he learned of Subiaco through his association with St. Edward's Parish. The young Joseph Mitchel came to Subiaco in 1913, beginning a passionate dedication to Subiaco that would endure for the next seven decades, making him one of the most well-known Subiaco men.

Joseph Mitchel graduated from our academy with the class of 1918. He made his monastic profession on September 8, 1919, receiving the name Bede. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop John B. Morris at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on May 21, 1925. During these years, Father Bede studied at Subiaco and at Notre Dame University, receiving a Master of Arts Degree in Philosophy in 1927. He then joined the faculty of the academy

and seminary and taught for nearly 20 years, particularly in the areas of philosophy and moral theology. An eloquent and enthusiastic speaker, Father Bede was popular as retreat master and speaker.

His ministry carried him to all the corners of the abbey's parish missions. He was stationed in eight different parishes at various times in his life, though he served in many more as a substitute pastor or on a temporary basis. Wherever he went, Father Bede brought with him many things; particularly, in his later years, he carried a hefty supply of pictures of the Sacred Heart and the Blessed Mother. His path was clearly marked by these pictures.

Father Bede was especially zealous in winning souls. He took a keen interest in Catholics who had left the Church as well as new converts to the Church. He was vigorous and tireless in his efforts. This caused one newspaper reporter to refer to him as "about the strongest minded man in all Christendom."

Father Bede kept a diary from the earliest days of his coming to Subiaco: a total of 34 volumes charting incidents – large and small – of his daily life.

Following a stroke in 1980, Father Bede spent the last two years of his life in the abbey infirmary where he died at 10:00 p. m. on Sunday, March 7, 1982, surrounded by Abbot Raphael and confreres.

At the time of his death, Father Bede was 83 years old and in the 62nd year of his monastic profession, the 56th of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

