

Brother Thomas Moster

February 7th is the anniversary of the death of Brother Thomas Moster. Robert Moster was born on February 5, 1936, in Wichita Falls, Texas, the son of Leo and Theresa (Streng) Moster. The Moster family moved to Muenster, Texas, shortly after his birth. There he received his elementary education. He began his secondary education at Subiaco Academy, but graduated from Sacred Heart High School in his hometown of Muenster in 1954. He became a Benedictine Oblate of Subiaco Abbey in 1953.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree at Cooke County Junior College, and then a Master's Degree in Speech and Drama at North Texas State University. During his college years, he began serving as sacristan in his home parish, a position he held for 22 years. In 1961 he began a teaching career at his Alma Mater, where he taught English, Speech and Drama while continuing his other parish duties. In both, he displayed a creative flair, with his memorable Christmas decorations in church, and his musical dramas becoming the stuff of legend.

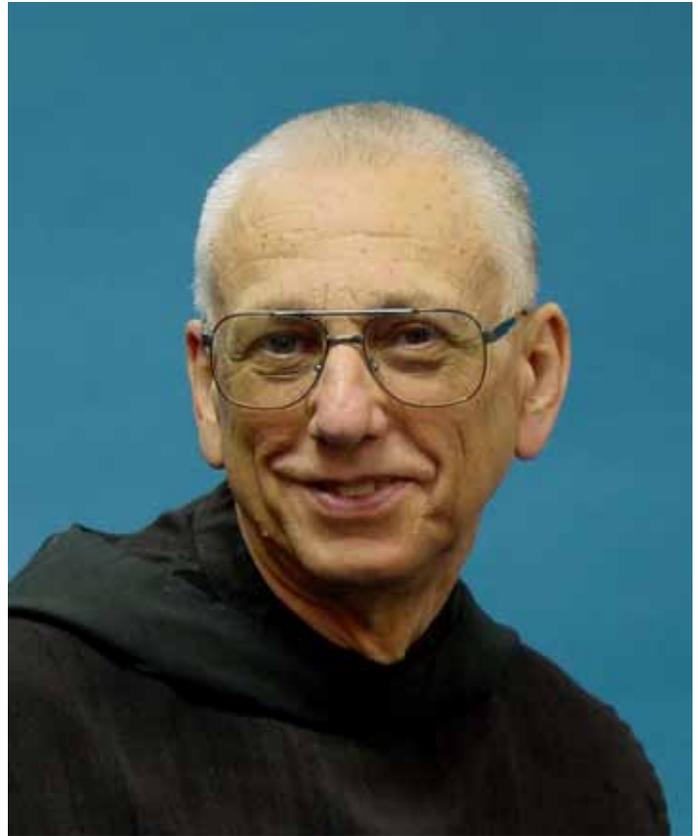
Coming to the Abbey in 1977, he made his novitiate and professed his first vows on February 10, 1979, receiving the name Brother Thomas Aquinas. Assigned to the Academy faculty, he soon became head of the Drama department, where once again, he staged impressive productions.

Brother Thomas began suffering with depression, and was unable to continue with his teaching duties. This was a cross which plagued him intermittently for the rest of his life.

Brother took up duties in the sacristy, and then became Director of Oblates and assistant librarian. In 1988 he volunteered for Subiaco's dependent priory in Belize, Central America. A new talent surfaced there, where he became the cook for the small community. Returning to Subiaco in 1990, he again became Oblate Director, and he supervised much of the Abbey janitorial duties. Somewhere along the line, he began giving haircuts, which he referred to as "un-locking monks' heads." A life-long lover of word play, a haircut always included several puns.

In the 1970s, Brother Thomas began the task of researching and writing the brief biographies of deceased monks which are read at table on the anniversary of their death. He labored mightily over these Necrology accounts, often revising them and adding new or corrected data. The reading of the Necrology provides a lasting legacy of Brother Thomas' skill and devotion.

Brother kept up his cooking skills by baking the Eucharistic breads and by serving as the chief cook of the Abbey Brittle project from its inception in 1996 until 2003. He substituted in the Abbey refectory for several years, and then became official refectorian in 2001, a position he held until 2005.



In November of 2005, at Sacred Heart Church in Muenster, he celebrated his “Golden Jubilee of Service,” counting from the beginning of his dedication to the service of his parish as sacristan in 1956. A book of tributes published for this event noted Brother Thomas’ qualities of self-effacement, and his ability to see and to elicit the best in others. A former student commented that Brother Thomas seemed shorter than she had remembered him, and she attributed this to the fact that “you have given so much of yourself away!”

Approaching 70, Brother Thomas gave up the refectory work and demoted himself to “helper” in the Abbey Brittle work. He continued working in the Abbey Library, in giving haircuts, and providing a steady presence at all community prayer.

Brother Thomas’ desire to serve his confreres, usually in “behind the scenes” service, the Spartan simplicity of his room, his love of puns, and his delight in giving small expressions or tokens of affection, were trademarks of the man and the monk.

About a year before his death Brother Thomas moved into the Abbey Health Center because of failing health. In the early morning hours of February 6 he suffered a stroke and died the following day. He is buried in our cemetery.