

Father Anselm Kaelin

March 22nd is the anniversary of the death of Father Anselm Kaelin. Adelrich Kaelin was born in the town of Einsiedeln, Canton Schwyz, Switzerland, on November 21, 1869. He attended the Abbey School, completing high school and college under the tutelage of the Benedictines, and had a strong desire to join them, especially in their missionary efforts.

He came to the United States and to our monastery with the "Expedition" of 1888 from the abbey of Einsiedeln led by Father Justin Huwylar.

In this "Expedition" there were four candidates for the priesthood, and one candidate for the brotherhood. Of the group, two persevered, one being Adelrich Kaelin who professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on November 1, 1889, receiving the name Anselm. He was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Edward M. Fitzgerald at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on November 6, 1892.

After ordination he was an instructor in our college; his talents and love of learning made him a very desirable addition to the staff. Interspersed with his teaching years were parochial assignments: for several years he made weekly visits from the abbey to the parish church in Charleston. Later he became resident pastor from 1893 to 1900.

Under Father Anselm's guidance the St. Michael's and Mothers' societies were founded, and he was the first to suggest building a stone church because the old wooden frame building was deteriorating. He ordered the first investigations and plans to be developed, and he began a house-to-house collection for funds as well as a monthly collection at church services.

In 1902, Father Anselm was appointed rector of Subiaco College, the first officially appointed to this office. This was the first school year in the new "stone" abbey building here on the hill.

Father Anselm was made assistant procurator of the abbey in 1905, and served in various capacities until he was appointed pastor of the seven-year-old parish of the Holy Family in Nazareth, Texas, in the spring of 1909.

After completing a pastorate of eight years in this Texas parish, Father Anselm was recalled to the abbey in February 1917, to teach in the seminary. While Father Luke Hess was writing the first history of our monastery at this time, Father Anselm taught Father Luke's classes: Latin, Greek, and Christian doctrine. During the 1919-1920 school year, because of the illness of Father Prior Augustine Stocker, Father Anselm taught sociology and dogmatic theology in the seminary.

In 1920 Father Anselm was sent to St. Edward's in Little Rock as assistant pastor. However, his health began to wane due to a diabetic condition.

He was assigned to the Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, Ohio, in the fall of 1920. In early February, 1925, he became seriously ill with diabetes, and died a few weeks later at St. Francis Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 22, 1925.

At the time of his death, Father Anselm was 55 years old and in the 35th year of his monastic profession, the 32nd of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

