

## Father Aloysius Walbe

July 19th is the anniversary of the death of Father Aloysius Walbe. John Walbe was born in Morrison Bluff, Arkansas, on October 9, 1919. His family lived on a farm in Morrison Bluff and he received his elementary education at Sts. Peter and Paul grade school in his home-town.

John came to Subiaco in 1933 to begin his secondary education in our academy, graduating with the class of 1937. He then entered our monastery.

His only brother, Benedict Walbe, had entered the academy in 1930 but he had to interrupt his education due to illness. Benedict later returned to the academy and graduated with the class of 1938. Benedict wished to join his younger brother in the abbey and sought permission of the abbot to allow him to enter the novitiate as a classmate with his brother. Permission was granted and the two Walbe brothers professed their vows together as monks of our monastery a year later on September 16, 1939, with John receiving the name of his father: Aloysius, and Benedict receiving the name John Evangelist.

Frater Aloys and Frater John were classmates throughout their years of seminary studies, and together they were ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Albert L. Fletcher at St. Andrew's Cathedral in Little Rock on Ascension Thursday, May 18, 1944.

Immediately after ordination Father Aloys began agricultural studies at Oklahoma A & M College for the school year 1944-45. He was then placed in charge of the abbey farm.

Father Aloys worked with Father Boniface Mandelartz who had developed a hybrid corn for dry areas known as St. Joseph Drought-Resistant Corn and the abbey farm was his laboratory for several years. This venture was a bold Christian attempt to help feed hungry people throughout the world.

Extremely interested in the Catholic Rural Life Movement of the 1940s, Father Aloys contributed articles on various phases of this movement to the Abbey Message. He also originated the "Brother Isidore" column in this same publication which kept readers informed about the abbey's agricultural apostolate.

In October 1945, Father Aloys went for a medical check-up at the Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Booneville, Arkansas, and he was diagnosed as having an advanced case of tuberculosis, with one lung and the throat severely affected.

Because of his throat condition, Father Aloys was ordered not to speak--a directive he faithfully observed for the next nine months. The struggle with the disease was long and hard, but Father Aloys did not give way to discouragement or depression. There was always the cheerful grin and the frequent joke or witticism scratched out on his writing pad for the visitor.

Death came very suddenly as a result of the collapse or constriction of the tubercular larynx which caused suffocation within minutes. Father Aloysius died at 10:00 p.m. on Friday, July 19, 1946, at the Booneville Tuberculosis Sanatorium. Abbot Paul and Father Bede Mitchel arrived a few minutes later and administered the Last Rites.

At the time of his death, Father Aloysius was 26 years old and in the 6th year of his monastic profession, the 2nd of his priesthood. He is buried in our cemetery.

