

Brother Raphael Steinberg

August 20th is the anniversary of the death of Brother Raphael Steinberg. Julius Steinberg was born on April 29, 1867, into the family of a Lutheran tailor from the Thuringia region of Germany, in the town of Wiehe. Julius had four brothers and one sister. After completing his primary education, he took up his father's trade.

Following four years of training under a master tailor, Julius qualified as an apprentice tailor and he spent the next five years traveling all over Germany working under expert craftsmen. At the age of 20, Julius went for further training to a master tailor in the town of St. Gall, Switzerland. This master tailor was a devout Catholic.

The faith and example of his employer made a deep impression on the apprentice so he began to take instructions in the Catholic faith. Some of the instructions were given at the abbey of Einsiedeln where he went to spend many weekends. On September 18, 1882, he was baptized in the Abbot's Chapel of Einsiedeln by Father Leopold Studerus.

Shortly after his baptism, he was drafted into the German army and was assigned to the Kaiser's own regiment. In the next three years he rose to the rank of corporal. Besides being the elite of the army, members of the Kaiser's own regiment were required to be six feet tall and in perfect physical condition.

Stationed during his army service only a short distance from the Swiss border and St. Gall, Julius managed to make a number of trips across Lake Constance to visit his Catholic friends and celebrate the great feast days of the Church at Einsiedeln.

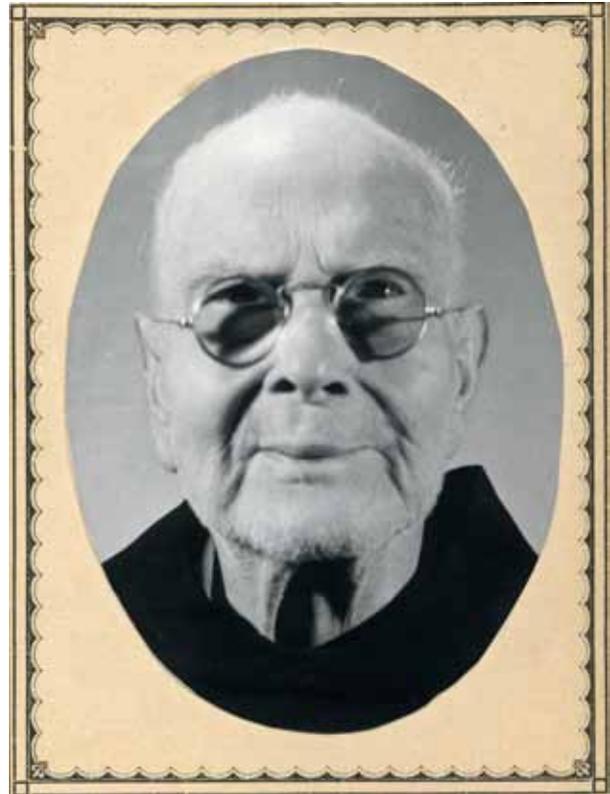
After his three years of army enlistment expired, Julius returned to St. Gall, Switzerland, and resumed his tailoring profession. However, two of his friends came to the United States and to our monastery and became Brother Thaddeus Eberle, and Brother Matthew Duffner. Their letters served to acquaint him with our monastery. On a visit to Einsiedeln, Julius met our first abbot, Ignatius Conrad. After a long talk with him, Julius decided to join his friends in Arkansas.

Julius Steinberg and companion, Joseph Riegert, who later became Brother Gabriel, sailed for the United States, arriving on October 27, 1894. Three days later, October 30, they reached their destination of Subiaco Abbey. Julius Steinberg professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on August 15, 1896, receiving the name Raphael.

During his 60 years of service to our community, Brother Raphael served as sacristan, porter, refectorian, and custodian in addition to being the official tailor.

In 1907, he and Brother Jerry built the old abbey laundry. The superiors told Brother Raphael that there was a laundry selling out in Paris, Arkansas; he was instructed to go to Paris and inspect the equipment, and if it was good, to buy it. Brother Raphael came back with the equipment and found himself in charge of the laundry. He worked in the laundry for almost a half century. The laundry workers did all the washing for the monks as well as the laundry for the boarding students of the academy.

Brother Raphael celebrated his golden jubilee of monastic profession in 1946. This golden jubilarian continued his faithful service for our community until 1955, when he fell and broke his hip. Confined to a wheelchair, he continued his apostolate by sorting stamps for the missions.



Five days before his death, Brother Raphael marked his diamond jubilee of monastic profession.

Gently and quietly Brother Raphael died at 3:00 a.m. in the abbey infirmary on Monday, August 20, 1956. At the time of his death, Brother Raphael was the oldest member of the community. Approaching his 90th birthday, he had been in declining health for months due to his age and lingering confinement after breaking his hip. Fortified by the rites of the Church, he remained conscious until the end, prayerfully preparing himself.

At the time of his death, Brother Raphael was 89 years old and in the 60th year of his monastic profession. He is buried in our cemetery.