

April 24

Br. Lazaro Effiner

Br. Lazaro was born in the village of Wepien (Namur, Belgium) on February 24th, 1916 in a Walloon French family that was very Christian. After studying humanities in Tournai he entered the Capuchin Order on September 15, 1934. He was ordained a priest on July 27, 1941. He was then assigned for several years as a professor at the College of Tournai. He then came to Canada where he taught French at St. Francis Minor Seminary in Blenheim Ontario. Since he was the only Walloon (French) Belgium among friars who were Flemish or Dutch, he at times got into heavy discussions on politics, history and faith issues that would end up in loud confrontations. He had a love for garlic and when he entered the classroom his Canadian students held their noses in disdain and eventually nicknamed him “Joe Garlic”. He was however well loved by the students and staff for being a good hard working teacher who was able to instill a love for the French language and culture.

In 1961, he was able to fulfill his dream of being a missionary when he arrived in Chile . He settled in Rahue Alto where he built and organized the parish of Jesus Obrero. He then worked in Riachuelo, Talcahuano and Chonchi and spent his later years in Quilacahuin and Paine. One of the characteristics and at the same time one of his gifts, was the catechises and the care with which he prepared his lessons and his preaching. A friend, Pedro Armand Jaminet wrote: “ We were at the beginning of the experiment of ‘Mom-catechist’. Convinced that it was the entire family that had to teach the children how to live in a Christian way, Br. Lazare demanded (except for rare occasions) that fathers and mothers be present at the meetings of the family catechises. Actually, the result of these weekly exchanges between 7 or 8 families, helped the children to get ready for the reception of their First Holy Communion and gave an opportunity to the parents to deepen their own faith and to create a more Christian climate in the home. Thus Lazare was one of the promoters of the family catechism. Because of his seriousness in his preparations, it made us consider him as fearless in his working spirit.”

In February 1992 he went back to Belgium where he died on April 24, 1992. In the afternoon of Sunday March 22, he was taken to the hospital due to a deep phlebitis. He quickly realized the seriousness of his condition and he asked for the anointing of the sick to be ministered. On Tuesday night, he slipped into a coma. On Wednesday the 8th, it became necessary to amputate his right leg. Despite this he died of acute kidney failure.



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The superior of the friary of Tournai in announcing his death to the Brothers said: "We were expecting that Br. Lazaro could have spent more numerous years in our community. This news will certainly cause great sorrow, because you were great friends. But think of this - if we believe in the eternal happiness that God provides us, Lazaro is certainly happier with God than with us, despite of what we had prepared to welcome him....To me, Br. Lazaro was a great friend and confidante, When he came to our house in Osomo it was a great joy. These long awaited visits were for the both of us an opportunity to share experiences and ideas as well as containing moments of high intensity and fraternity". A man of faith defines our Brother and Friend Lazaro Effiner who died on April 24, 1992. Faith is a gift from God and Lazaro was able to share it!

