

**Br. Aurele Prefontaine**

Bernard Prefontaine was born on March 10, 1926 in St. Pierre Jolys, Manitoba. He came from a family of eight; his parents being Amedee and Gertrude (Dandenault) Prefontaine. His studies started at the Juniorat des Peres Oblats in St. Boniface, Manitoba. He completed high school at the Jesuit College of St. Bonaventure in June 1943.

Br. Ladislaus Segers ofm Cap. accepted Bernard into the Belgian Canadian Custody on September 9, 1943 where he was given the religious name of Br. Aurele. His Novitiate was completed at Sacred Heart Friary, St. Boniface with first profession of vows on September 19, 1944. From then to 1947, Br. Aurele studied philosophy at La Reparation with the Quebec Capuchins. He made solemn vows in the hands of Br. Damas van Dycke, Custos Provincial at St. Francis Friary in Blenheim, Ontario. He studied theology at St. Bonaventure Friary in Izegem, Belgium. He was ordained a priest by Capuchin Missionary Bishop Hector Catry in Izegem.

After celebrating his first mass on September 2, 1951 in his home town of St. Pierre Jolys, he was assigned as Socius of the Novice Master in St. Boniface and Bursar and Preacher for Western Canada. Less than two years later, April 1, 1953 Br. Aurele was appointed Pastor of Notre Dame du Cap in St. Germain Manitoba and taught philosophy at the Seminary. Four months later he was to become teacher at the Capuchin Minor Seminary in Blenheim. One year later he returned to St. Boniface as Socius of the Novice Master. In 1956 he would return to the Seminary in Blenheim as teacher of the French language. He was seen as a soft touch by the seminarians as well as a jolly friar to be around. Br. Aurele was a big man who did not realize his strength. He loved hockey and one day joined the students on their home-made ice ring. Br. Aurele stood in front of the net with a hockey stick and puck. He invited one student to act as goalie while he took a few shots. Since the student did not have pads, he agreed to do so as long as Br. Aurele promised to keep the puck on the ice. Sure enough the first shot caught the student in the shins and the vocabulary that came forward is not repeatable but was probably heard as far as Cape Breton. Br. Aurele just belly laughed.

He then served as Pastor in Sacred Heart, St. Boniface, in Gimli, and St. Lazare in Manitoba. He was also sent to Venice for a year to learn Italian to be able to return to St. Philip Neri Parish in Downsview as Assistant Pastor. While in Venice he visited over three hundred churches because he had a great love for churches and the arts. Then he would serve in the parishes in Staples and Comber, Ontario as pastor. Finally he was sent to Newfoundland being assigned as Associate Pastor at Mary Queen of the World Parish, Mount Pearl. Br. Aurele was a serious diabetic and he did not always keep the strict regiment needed in eating. He loved to go to Tim Horton for doughnuts. His battle with diabetes and heart problems was finally won by Sister Death when he died at St. Clare's hospital in St. John's on January 24, 1992 at the age of 66.



**JANUARY 24**

**Br. Aurele Prefontaine**

Archbishop James MacDonald and Provincial Minister John Corriveau ofm Cap, along with a large number of clergy and his brother Capuchins presided at his mass of the Resurrection along with family members. He was buried at Sacred Heart Cemetery, St. Boniface, Manitoba close to some of his pre-deceased Capuchin brothers.

