

November 15, 2007

Death Notice No. 29 (To all Unit Administrations):



The Region of Austria-Germany recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **ALOIS PENZ**, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on October 18, 2007, in Freistadt in the 95th year of his age and the 74th year of his religious profession.

Bro. Alois Penz was born in St. Georgen am Wald, Upper Austria, on May 31, 1913. He lost his mother when he was five. After father had remarried, the family consisted of nine children. Since the parents were farmers, Alois, after completing primary school, worked mostly at his family's farm.

In January 1933 he entered the postulate at Freistadt. He made his novitiate at Greisinghof, and professed first vows on August 28, 1934. Later, he professed perpetual vows in Freistadt, on July 18, 1938, when the Nazi regime was already in power in (former) Austria.

After the novitiate, Bro. Alois worked at the farm at Greisinghof, until he was drafted by the German military on June 14, 1940, as a member of an infantry regiment. At first he served in Poland. Bro. Alois was there from the very beginning when Hitler started his war against Russia, in June 1941. He endured all the horrors of that war. Once, for 27 days, his unit was surrounded near Suchinitschi. All of this made a profound impact on him. Afterwards he was stationed in Upper Italy, in Hungary, and finally, in Germany, where he became prisoner of war of the British army.

After returning from the prison camp in Spring 1946, Bro. Alois worked again at the farm of Greisinghof. The years from 1958 to 1968 were marked by many transfers. From September 1958 to March 1960, he worked as gardener and maintenance man in Fritzlar (Germany); from April 1961 to January 1964 as a farmer at Middel (Switzerland); and from December 1966 to November 1968 again as gardener at St. Raphael in Fribourg (Switzerland). During the intervals, he worked at Greisinghof.

From November 1968 onward, Bro. Alois became "the gardener at Greisinghof", well known and liked by the people of the area. With great love he took care of the huge vegetable garden, but helped out wherever his help was needed. For many years, he was also the sacristan of the house. Until September 12, 2007, he did his job in the vegetable garden that now was reduced in size. Over the last years he had graciously accepted help from nurses. On that morning of our feast day, he suffered a sudden feeling of faintness that made hospitalization in Linz necessary. From October 9 until his death, he was hospitalized in Freistadt.

Bro. Alois was a model religious with a deep faith and rich interior life. Until his last moment he was attentive to his community, assiduous at common prayer and even attended conferences, although he was extremely hard of hearing. When Fr. George Cerniglia asked him whether he had grounds for complaint about the confreres, he almost grew indignant, replying: "How could I, they are my brothers!" He contributed greatly to the good spirit in the community. He personified our Founder's saying "The interior is essential" as well the motto of St. Benedict: "Pray and work". May he rest in Peace!