

Father, Robert James Matter
Ava, Missouri

Robert James Matter, died Friday morning at 3:45, when his brother monks were beginning Vigils, the night prayer of the Church. He was born August 20, 1925, the youngest of six children to Leo and Henrietta Matter in Lisle, Minnesota. He was 92 years, and passed away on November 10, 2017 at his home in the Assumption Abbey.

He served our country as a Pharmacist Mate with the U.S. Navy during WWII. Robert then attended college at St. John's University, Collegeville Minnesota. In 1949 he entered New Melleray Abbey at Dubuque, Iowa.

Following the monastic program of formation and studies, he professed his final vows in 1954, and was ordained a priest in 1956. Fr. Robert served as assistant Novice Master and did work on the plumbing crew. He was sent to Assumption Abbey in Ava, Missouri in 1964, where he worked at the concrete block plant and in the tailor shop here.

Fr. Robert felt called to the hermit life of greater solitude and prayer. He built a rustic cabin on a wooded hilltop with the help of friends, and lived there for three years. We asked him to become our superior, after we completed and moved into our permanent monastery in 1971. We elected him Abbot the next year.

Fr. Robert's primary role was to serve as spiritual father of our community. In addition he stacked concrete blocks at our factory, did laundry, worked in the tailor shop, and whatever other needs arose. He preserved a prayerful countenance and calm spirit in our monastic community with his life and conferences. His duties involved travel to Rome for General Chapters and to the Philippines to visit our monastery daughter house.

In 1988 Fr. Robert felt free to retire and return to the hermit life. This time his hermitage was a little less rustic and closer to the monastery. He still shared in our Sunday Masses and continued doing laundry work here. A number of persons came to him for confession and spiritual direction at his hermitage. He was the most flexible of men. Whatever duty or person came up Fr. Robert would respond and serve. He always returned to live his hermit life of solitude, reading and prayer when free to do so.

After the especially hard winter of 2014, he decided that it was time to move back to our monastery into the infirmary wing. This past year Fr. Robert declined rapidly, just wearing down and wearing out. Fr. Robert enjoyed several visits with nieces and nephews this past summer. He looked forward to “going home” and was attended with faithful care by his brother monks

Fr. Robert was preceded in death by his parents.
He is survived by numerous nieces, nephews, and his family at the Abbey.

The funeral Mass for Father, Robert will be Monday, Nov. 13, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. in the Assumption Abbey Church, Ava, MO. Burial will follow in the Assumption Abbey Cemetery. Officiating will be Fr. Alberic Maisog, Superior of Assumption Abbey. Funeral services are being provided by Clinkingbeard Funeral Home, Ava, MO. On line condolences may be made to www.clinkingbeardfuneralhome.com.