

Atchison, KS



Having received the sacraments and the apostolic pardon Fr. Denis Meade, OSB, died peacefully on June 18, 2019. James Thomas Meade was born to parents Joseph Patrick and Ella (Flannery) Meade on October 16, 1930, in Des Moines, Iowa. Raised in rural Madison County, he attended grade school in Cumming, Iowa. After beginning his high school studies at Dowling Catholic High School in West Des Moines, Iowa, he transferred to Maur Hill Prep School in Atchison, Kansas. After his graduation, he began history studies at St. Benedict's College. In 1949 he entered the Novitiate at St. Benedict's Abbey, receiving the monastic name Denis, so named for St. Denis of Paris.

After professing first vows, then *Frater* Denis completed his undergraduate studies and was sent to Rome for priesthood studies and to pursue a degree in Canon Law. During his years in Europe he professed solemn vows at the Abbey of Montecassino on May 26, 1953. He would go on to be ordained to the transitional diaconate at the Abbey of Saint-Paul de Wisques, France, on September 8, 1954. He was ordained to the priesthood at the Abbey of San Pietro in Assisi, Italy on June 28, 1955. Following the completion of his studies at Sant'Anselmo, he studied for five years at the Lateran University, obtaining license and doctoral degrees in Canon Law.

Upon returning to Atchison in 1961 Fr. Denis began his principal ministry as a professor of Theology at St. Benedict's College. For the next 26 years he would teach thousands of students, along with an eight-year stint as a dormitory prefect, overseeing one floor of student housing and living with the students.

From 1969-1981 Fr. Denis received his first assignment as a formator of young monks, being appointed novice master, charged with overseeing the Abbey's newest members for twelve years.

In 1987, Fr. Denis put his Canon Law degree to work in a new way, volunteering to serve the marriage tribunal for the diocese of Jataí in Goiás, Brazil, praying and working alongside his brother monks at the Abbey's mission house, St. Joseph Priory.

Returning to the United States in 1989, Fr. Denis resumed his work as a professor of theology at

Benedictine College. For the next twelve years he shaped the department, serving as its chair and making critical hires that set the department up for the success that it now enjoys.

In 2001, Fr. Denis returned to Brazil to once again serve St. Joseph Priory, this time putting his experience as a novice master to work, serving as both Novice Master and Director of Formation. He also assisted with parish ministry and with the local marriage tribunal until departing Brazil in 2005.

Once again returning to the Abbey from another continent, Fr. Denis was called upon to continue his service as a formator of new monks. He was also called upon to serve the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas Marriage Tribunal as a Canon Lawyer, adjudicating annulment cases. In recent years, Fr. Denis had been working on an addition to the 1957 publication *Kansas Monks: A History of St. Benedict's Abbey*; he was nearing completion of this work.

In retirement, Fr. Denis continued to serve the monastic community in a variety of ways, celebrating Masses for the infirm monks, serving as Abbey Archivist, celebrating Masses for Mount St. Scholastica's Dooley Center, serving as secretary for Abbot James Albers, and much more.

Father Denis was preceded in death by his parents, his siblings Sr. Miriam Meade, Kathryn Meade Cummings, John, Carmelita Blackman, Helena Meade Bell, Joseph, and Paula Boucher. He is survived by his brother monks at St. Benedict's Abbey, many nieces and nephews, and numerous friends, alumni, and current students whose lives he touched. Vigils for the Dead, followed by visitation, will be prayed on Sunday, June 23, at 7:00 p.m. in St. Benedict's Abbey Church. The Mass of Christian Burial for Father Denis will be celebrated in St. Benedict's Abbey Church on Monday, June 24, at 10:30 a.m., with interment following in the Abbey cemetery.

Memorials in honor of Father Denis may be sent to St. Benedict's Abbey, 1020 N. Second St., Atchison, KS 66002.