



Father Alfons Maria MERTENS
(1929 – 2013)

*Died 9 May 2013, in Dillingen/Saar (Germany)
aged 83, with 59 years of Religious Profession.*

Our confrere Father Alfons Maria Mertens died on the feast of the Ascension, 9 May 2013 in Dillingen/Saar.

Alfons was born on 8 August 1929 in Bütow (East Prussia). There he spent his childhood and youth, which were overshadowed by the outbreak of war. In the last weeks of the war, he was still called up for military service, and was seriously injured by an exploding mine. With his family he came after the war to Cologne. From there, he found his way to our community, and was from 1948 to 1952 in the mission school in Reydt. Then he entered the novitiate in Meersen (NL), where he made his first vows on 8 September 1953. From 1953 to 1959 he studied philosophy and theology in the scholasticate of the Congregation in Oirschot (NL). After his graduation, he was ordained a priest on 8 March 1959.

His first appointment took him to Bonn, where he gained pastoral experience with a year in the parish of St. Elizabeth, before he was sent to Iceland in 1960. He worked there until 1971, first as the Bishop's secretary, then as Pro-Vicar and Administrator (during *sede vacante*). From 1971 to 1974 he was entrusted with various tasks in Rome.

In 1974 he returned to Germany and took on the task of parish-priest in Welschbillig near Trier until, on 24 February 1976, he was elected as the first Provincial of the newly established German province. With much care and commitment, he built up the structure of the province. He held this office until 1986. Thereafter he devoted himself, up to the year 2000, to the support of the Missions in Fremersdorf. In the surrounding parishes of the Saarland, he was a much sought after and welcome supply priest.

In 1999, he decided to move into the abandoned monastery of Liebfrauenthal (Our Lady in the Valley) in Wied, where he served until 2007 as 'rector ecclesiae'. As a retired priest, he spent the years 2007-2011 in Rissenthal. His health became increasingly fragile, so that he had to move into our house in Fremersdorf after a period in hospital in the spring of 2011. More hospitalizations were necessary as his health and strength deteriorated and he became ever more dependent on aid. In April 2013, therefore, he had to move to Dillingen to the St. Francis Home.

In gratitude, we give him back into the hands of his Creator. May the Lord repay him for all that he did in His vineyard.

The requiem was celebrated on Thursday, May 16th, 2013 at 14.30 in the parish church of St. Mauritius in Fremersdorf on the Saar. Following the Mass we escorted him to his final resting place in the cemetery there. That evening at 6 o'clock we prayed the Rosary for him in the parish church.