

Brother Leo Huck, O. Carm.

1869-1938

From *The Sword*, April 1938

Brother Leo Huck, the second in seniority among the Brothers, died at St. John's Hospital, Leavenworth, on Sunday, February 20th. In his very painful illness he was cared for, first by the Franciscan Sisters of Emporia and later and to the end, by the Sisters of Charity. On Monday, February 21, the day after his death, the body was brought to St. Joseph's Church. Here it rested, visited by friends and BROTHER LEO acquaintances during the day and guarded at night by the members of St. Joseph's Society, until the following day. After a solemn funeral mass the remains were taken to Scipio, where another solemn mass took place and burial in the local cemetery. May his soul rest in peace.

Brother Leo was born of Protestant parents at Gebweiler, Alsace, then a part of the German Empire, on September 23, 1869. After attending the elementary schools he was apprenticed to a local blacksmith and at the end of three years' service passed his examination and became a journeyman. He then for a few years followed the custom of his day and country and traveled through many parts of France and Germany, exercising his trade and improving his art. During these years he met and befriended another young journeyman, Emil Sarry, a Catholic. They became intimate friends and when one decided to emigrate to the United States, the other accompanied him. They came to Pittsburgh, Pa., and made their home with a Catholic family of Holy Trinity parish. His Catholic associations had not been without influence on Brother Leo and, hence, within a few years after his arrival in America he asked for and received instructions from one of our Fathers and was admitted into the Church in the year 1892. Still inseparable Brother Leo and Emil Sarry entered the novitiate of New Baltimore, where the latter became Brother Herman and both were admitted to vows on December 30, 1898.

Brother Leo's forty-one years of religious life were nearly equally divided between Scipio, New Baltimore and Leavenworth, houses in which his usefulness to the community reached its best growth. Of unusual physical strength and endurance and ever willing to put them at the service of the community, Brother Leo worked as blacksmith, steam-fitter, plumber, painter, carpenter, in fact in every department of mechanical art. To these functions he added farming and gardening at Scipio and New Baltimore, where the Fathers looked to Brother Leo for fresh vegetables, and the horses and cattle for their fodder.

Before coming to America Brother Leo had served in the German army as artillerist. He rarely spoke of his army experiences and then only to an audience of one. Hence, it may well be that few heard him discuss the meaning and implication of the inscription on every German gun, "Ultima Ratio Regis," which he understood and analyzed with the skill of a moral theologian.

Under an unconventional exterior, Brother Leo possessed a tender and even sentimental soul, which took unawares and surprised those who did not know him well. A rough diamond may describe him, a diamond which required an occasion and cause to flash with pure light. He performed his spiritual duties in a simple, unostentatious manner, so that only an accident revealed to the eye of others his devotion to prescribed prayer. Omitting specific mention of his virtues, an example of loyalty deserves specially to be recorded for our edification and gratitude His loyalty was tested in a rare manner. He lived in a community where, because of financial conditions, unusual and painful personal sacrifices were needed. Without question, without complaint, without even the

request, much less the command of the superior, Brother Leo made these sacrifices. For years he went hungry, thirsty, ill clad and ill housed. And when the period of trial was over and normal life was restored, in his simplicity and humility, he did not know that he had done a great thing. May God reward him and may the Province remember him. (*This obituary was written by Father Peter Kramer.*)

Brother Leo

On Sunday, February 20, 1938, in St. John's Hospital in Leavenworth, Kansas, there passed from this life one of the oldest brothers in the Carmelite Order, Brother Leo Huck. The humble religious had been brought to the hospital about ten days previous and had been anointed by Father John Heuberger, the chaplain, on the morning preceding his death.

Two days later a Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated in St. Joseph's Church in Leavenworth, preceded by a vigil kept throughout the entire night by devoted friends. Father Frank Krause, O. Carm., was celebrant, Father Arthur Snaman, O. Carm., deacon, and Father Philip Irwin, O. Carm., subdeacon.

On the same day the remains were transferred to Scipio, Kansas, where, on Wednesday, a second Requiem Mass was celebrated. The celebrant was Father Urban Lager, O. Carm., who represented Very Reverend Matthew O'Neill, O. Carm., our Provincial, and the deacon and subdeacon, respectively, Father Brocard Koehler, O. Carm., and Father Arthur Snaman, O. Carm. Appropriate words were spoken by Father Edward Geringer, O. Carm.

In all the houses where Brother Leo was stationed he was well known for his fidelity to manual labor and his genuine and practical grasp of the importance of community life. Brother Leo would not want our praise. He would have us know and love however the spirit which he felt it was necessary for him to have if he were to be a worthy member of the Carmelite Order. Detachment from everything inconsistent with religious life, and wholehearted dedication of one's life to the service of God in the Order especially devoted to Mary—this is the ideal which Brother Leo taught us, in deed more than in word, to know and love.

Brother Leo would have our prayers. We, in offering up humble suffrage, but fulfill the wish—expressed more than once before death came—of the faithful lay brother. (*By Rev. Edward Geringer, Brother Leo's last Prior.*)