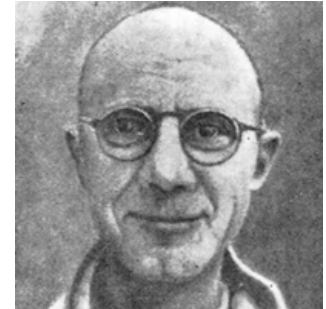


## Father Alphonsus (Albert) L'Heureux, O.C.S.O. (1894-1947)

One of the thirty-three Trappist monks of Notre-Dame-de-la-Consolation Abbey who died as martyrs in China in 1947, Father Albert L'Heureux had arrived eight or nine years before, after obtaining permission from his Jesuit superiors at the mission of Hsuehchow to retire from his preaching and teaching to take up the Trappist life of prayer. This sturdy French Canadian was then about 40 years old. At Yang Chia P'ing he receives the Trappist habit and the name of Father Alphonsus. He works in the fields and is known for being a hard worker. Whenever he returns from such work, he first stops at the chapel and spends some minutes in prayer. He goes to confession every day.



During the Japanese invasion, from March 17, 1943 to May 10, 1946, together with the other European priests of his community, he is interned in the concentration camp of Wei-Shien, then at the Domus Franciscana in Peking.

On July 22, 1947 all the monks are kidnapped by the Communists and, after being judged by popular trials, are led by foot and in terrible conditions on an everlasting and aimless march through the mountains, the so-called "Death March".

In his last weeks, Alphonsus suffers the agony of severe dysentery: he lies in a place apart from the other monks, without blankets, without medical care. On Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, the guards tell the monks to feed the sick man. A priest goes and gives Fr. Alphonsus absolution and the blessing of the dying: the patient says that he will die the next day, that he is glad to die, and that in heaven he will pray for the others. On Saturday morning he breathes his last. The day before, they had asked him if he wanted anything and, it seems, Fr Alphonsus had said, with gentle irony, that he wanted to thank his captors for all they had done to him. Fr. Sebastian who gave him absolution, confirms the story of how the guard said that Fr. Alphonsus died beautifully "like the Man nailed to the cross". Other Reds later expressed admiration for Fr. Alphonsus; they said they were sorry for having treated him so badly. He is buried in Teng Chia Yu, together with other seven monks of the abbey.

### LINKS:

[http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/2567/chinas\\_modern\\_martyrs\\_from\\_mao\\_to\\_now\\_part\\_2.aspx](http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Item/2567/chinas_modern_martyrs_from_mao_to_now_part_2.aspx)

<http://www.abbayevalnotredame.ca/>

<http://trappists.org/>