

On Wednesday, 29 May 2024, our dear confrere  
**Br. Bernhard-Maria (Ernst Dieter)  
Schmetgen OSB**



died in the infirmary after a long, serious illness.

Br. Bernhard came into the world on 23 March 1952 in Mainz-Bretzenheim. His father Ernst Otto was a city worker, his mother Margarete was a housewife. The primary school years of their child Dieter were from 1958 to 1966. Dieter then trained as a plumber, a trade which he abandoned for family reasons and for health reasons. He then went on to learn the baker's trade in the Becker family, Gonzenheim from 1967 to 1979. He completed his apprenticeship with the journeyman's exam in 1970.

On All Saint's Day 1973 Dieter entered the abbey. He began the novitiate on 30 August 1974 as Br. Bernhard-Maria. In 1974, he bequeathed his savings of DM 5,000 to his home community for a bell for the new parish church in Gonzenheim. On 30 August 1975 he made his temporary profession, solemn profession followed on 29 October 1978.

Br. Bernhard passed through in a wide variety of areas of work: procura, infirmary, bakery, and refectory, until he finally came into his own. From 22 November 1999, the day before our patronal feast of St. Felicity, until January 2023 he was the sacristan. Now his work was completely in line with his mentality and interests. Br. Bernhard was an altar boy from a young age and was very attached to the liturgical services. This care and love for vestments and liturgical vessels and furnishings, ecclesiastical clothing and customs was part of who he was. Consequently, Br. Bernhard also visited the most important places of pilgrimage with his faithful confrere Br. Theodor. A photo of a pilgrimage group in Lourdes in 1989, which shows him in the front row, stands for many others. The two can also be seen in the front row at a papal audience with John Paul II. Br. Bernhard was in contact with all the popes of his lifetime. The last letter from the Vatican, dated 4 February 2024, thanks him for his Christmas greetings to Pope Francis.

Naturally, political figures of his conviction and members of the nobility also received blessings and congratulations from Br. Bernhard.

And as is customary among good Catholics, carnival is also part of Catholicism, especially in Mainz. Br. Bernhard was able to dress up in all kinds of costumes and give his carnival speech. This ease in one area was part of his exactness in another.

Serious illness increasingly burdened him in recent years and finally demanded his complete dedication.

In the shadow of the Feast of Corpus Christi, he died quietly at 7:35 in the morning the day before. The great liturgy of heaven certainly lined him up and gave him his rightful place.

We will celebrate the Eucharist with him and in thanksgiving for his gifted life on Monday, 3 June 2024, at 2:00 p.m. and afterwards bury him in the monastery cemetery.

Münsterschwarzach, 31 May 2024

Abbot Michael and the community of Münsterschwarzach