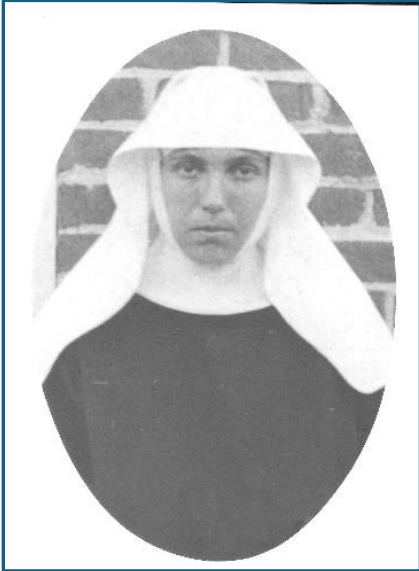


BISHOP JOSEPH E. RITTER

Oil on Canvas by Sr. Gregory Ems OSB, circa 1935



Sister Gregory Ems as a novice in 1892.

Sister Gregory painted our portrait of Joseph E. Ritter shortly after his 1933 ordination to the rank of Bishop. She was born in Bradford, Indiana, on Sept. 1, 1869, and entered the Benedictine monastery at Ferdinand, Indiana, in 1890. Her father was Prussian, and her mother was Bavarian. She died on April 16 at age 85 in 1954. Sister's art studies in Cincinnati lasted only 6 months. Sr. Rebecca Abel the current archivist at Ferdinand said, "The professors told her they could not help her more, as she knew as much as they did." Although she served several teaching



Sister Gregory Em, ca. 1935 was a great aunt of Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger.

assignments throughout her life as a nun, Sister settled into the role of the monastery artist, painting biblical scenes, secular subjects, and portraits of churchmen.

It is thought the painting was completed about 1935, but not framed until 1991 by the monastery carpenter, Joe Becker. The Order of St. Benedict archive records shows the painting spent many years in storage. Eventually the storeroom was overflowing. It was decided to give the many pictures away to places which would display them. Thus, the painting of Bishop Ritter was given to St. Meinrad.

In August 2021, Fr. Meinrad Brune, then-archivist at St. Meinrad Seminary, donated the painting to the Cardinal Ritter Birthplace. Following the addition of a gallery-quality frame, the painting proudly hangs in the Cardinal Ritter Birthplace Neighborhood Resource Center.

