



Rev. Fr. Joseph Junkes, S.J.



Rhineland, Germany, 28 Sep. 1900 - Munich, Germany, 28 Apr. 1984

Title Prefect, Astrophysical Laboratory, Vatican Observatory, Vatican City; Academician 'Perdurante Munere'

Nomination 31 Mar. 1953

Fr Junkes received his teacher's diploma in 1921 at Speyer. He did private studies in Latin and Greek and entered the Society of Jesus in 1922. Having completed his philosophical studies at Pullach and theology at Innsbruck, he was ordained a priest in 1931. He visited the Specola for several months in 1934 and the following year was assigned as Father Gatterer's assistant at the new Astrophysical Laboratory. At the beginning he divided his work between Castelgandolfo and the University of Innsbruck, where he received a degree in mathematics and physics in 1937.

In 1940 he was appointed Vice Director of the Specola and Superior of the Community. Upon the death of Father Gatterer in 1953 he assumed the direction of the Laboratory. He held this office until 1977.

Father Junkes' main work was the continuation with the help of Fr Salpeter, of the production of the spectral atlases begun by his predecessor. In the course of this research, which he carried out in a very professional way, he frequently had to encounter complex problems in optics, some of which gave him an opportunity to publish some original and interesting articles.

Although he was assigned to the Astrophysical Laboratory, he contributed quite a bit, beginning already in 1940 after the departure of Fr Tibor, to astronomical research, especially in the field of stellar spectroscopy. Specifically, he is responsible for the original idea of the twin telescopes on the Schmidt especially designed for guiding during exposures of stellar spectra.

In recognition of his scientific achievements the government of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1974 awarded him the First Class Cross of Merit, and the city of his family origins, Kirrberg in Saarland, made him an honorary citizen.

(Cfr. Sabino Maffeo S.J., *In the Service of Nine Popes, 100 Years of the Vatican Observatory*, 1991, Vatican Observatory Foundation and Pontificia Academia Scientiarum)