

**New England Jesuit
Oral History Program**



**Fr. Robert F. Regan, S.J.
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THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL HISTORY

Oral histories are the taped recordings of interviews with interesting and often important persons. They are not folklore, gossip, hearsay, or rumor. They are the voice of the person interviewed. These oral records are, in many instances, transcribed into printed documentary form. Though only so much can be done, of course, in an hour or sometimes two, they are an important historical record whose value increases with the inevitable march of time.

For whatever reason, New England Jesuits, among others around the world, have not made any significant number of oral histories of their members. Given the range of their achievements and their impact on the Church and society, this seems to many to be an important opportunity missed. They have all worked as best they could for the greater glory of God. Some have done extraordinary things. Some have done important things. All have made valuable contributions to spirituality, education, art, science, discovery, and many other fields. But living memories quickly fade. Valuable and inspiring stories slip away.

This need not be. Their stories can be retold, their achievements can be remembered, their adventures saved. Their inspiration can provide future generations with attractive models. That is what Jesuit oral history is all about.

Publications

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Fr. George W. Nolan | 61 Fr. Richard T. Cleary | 121 Fr. James M. Keegan |
| 2 Fr. John F. Broderick | 62 Fr. Gerard L. McLaughlin | |
| 3 Fr. Joseph S. Scannell | 63 Fr. Francis J. O'Neill | |
| 4 Fr. Joseph G. Fennell | 64 Fr. Neil P. Decker | |
| 5 Fr. James F. Morgon | 65 Fr. Joseph R. Laughlin | |
| 6 Fr. John V. Borgo | 66 Fr. John J. Karwin | |
| 7 Bro. William J. Spokesfield | 67 Fr. Paul T. Lucey | |
| 8 Fr. Lawrence E. Corcoran | 68 Bro. Edward P. Babinski | |
| 9 Fr. John J. Caskin | 69 Bro. Vincent M. Brennan | |
| 10 Fr. William F. Carr | 70 Fr. James J. Dressman | |
| 11 Fr. Alwyn C. Harry | 71 Fr. Lawrence J. O'Toole | |
| 12 Fr. John F. Foley | 72 Fr. William J. Cullen | |
| 13 Fr. Leo F. Quinlan | 73 Fr. Thomas Vallamattam | |
| 14 Fr. Patrick A. Sullivan | 74 Fr. Edward J. Hanrahan | |
| 15 Fr. John J. McGrath | 75 Fr. Donald L. Larkin | |
| 16 Fr. Victor F. Leeber | 76 Fr. Paul A. Schweitzer | |
| 17 Fr. Charles G. Crowley | 77 Archbp. Lawrence A. Burke | |
| 18 Fr. Wilfrid J. Vigeant | 78 Fr. William C. McInnes | |
| 19 Fr. James T. Sheehan | 79 Fr. Stanley J. Bezuska | |
| 20 Fr. Francis X. Sarjeant | 80 Fr. John B. Handrahan | |
| 21 Bro. Italo A. Parnoff | 81 Fr. Henry "Harry" J. Cain | |
| 22 Fr. Dudley R.C. Adams | 82 Fr. William D. Ibach | |
| 23 Fr. Martin P. MacDonnell | 83 Fr. Herbert J. Cleary | |
| 24 Fr. Robert E. Lindsay | 84 Fr. Martin F. McCarthy | |
| 25 Fr. Ernest F. Passero | 85 Fr. Francis A. Sullivan | |
| 26 Fr. Walter M. Abbott | 86 Fr. Robert J. Daly | |
| 27 Fr. James P. McCaffrey | 87 Bro. Cornelius C. Murphy | |
| 28 Fr. Aram J. Berard | 88 Fr. Robert D. Farrell | |
| 29 Fr. Joseph F. Brennan | 89 Fr. James F. Bresnahan | |
| 30 Fr. James W. Skehan | 90 Fr. Raymond G. Helmick | |
| 31 Fr. Joseph P. O'Neill | 91 Fr. William J. Hamilton | |
| 32 Bro. Calvin A. Clarke | 92 Fr. John J. Paris | |
| 33 Fr. Edward J. Murawski | 93 Fr. Donald J. Plocke | |
| 34 Fr. Paul T. McCarty | 94 Fr. Joseph F. X. Flanagan | |
| 35 Fr. Anthony R. Picariello | 95 Fr. James J. Hosie | |
| 36 Fr. Joseph H. Casey | 96 Fr. Robert R. Dorin | |
| 37 Fr. Joseph E. Mullen | 97 Fr. Michael A. Fahey | |
| 38 Fr. Joseph A. Paquet | 98 Fr. James W. O'Neil | |
| 39 Fr. William G. Devine | 99 Fr. George A. Gallarelli | |
| 40 Fr. Philip K. Harrigan | 100 Fr. Francis R. Allen | |
| 41 Fr. John J. Mullen | 101 Fr. Walter R. Pelletier | |
| 42 Fr. James B. Malley | 102 Bro. Paul J. Geysen | |
| 43 Fr. John F. Devane | 103 Fr. Joseph T. Bennett | |
| 44 Bro. H. Francis Cluff | 104 Fr. J. Thomas Hamel | |
| 45 Fr. William J. Raftery | 105 Fr. Joseph B. Pomeroy | |
| 46 Fr. John J. Mandile | 106 Fr. Simon E. Smith | |
| 47 Fr. John W. Keegan | 107 Fr. John E. Brooks | |
| 48 Fr. William A. Barry | 108 Fr. John P. Reboli | |
| 49 Fr. Robert G. Doherty | 109 Fr. Charles J. Dunn | |
| 50 Bro. Edward L. Niziolek | 110 Fr. James C. O'Brien | |
| 51 Fr. Albert A. Cardoni | 111 Fr. Robert F. Regan | |
| 52 Fr. David G. Boulton | 112 Fr. Edward J. Small | |
| 53 Fr. Alfred O. Winshman | 113 Fr. Vincent A. Lapomarda | |
| 54 Fr. Paul J. Nelligan | 114 Fr. Earle L. Markey | |
| 55 Fr. Edward F. Boyle | 115 Fr. Normand A. Pepin | |
| 56 Fr. John F. Mullin | 116 Fr. Gerard C. O'Brien | |
| 57 Fr. John J. Donohue | 117 Fr. George L. Drury | |
| 58 Fr. Richard W. Rousseau | 118 Fr. Clarence J. Burby | |
| 59 Fr. Francis J. Nicholson | 119 Fr. Denis R. Como | |
| 60 Fr. Arthus H. Paré | 120 Fr. Kevin G. O'Connell | |

Interview with Fr. Robert F. Regan, S.J.
by Fr. Richard W. Rousseau, S.J.
April 1, 2009

HOME AND FAMILY

RWR: Welcome to our conversation. Let's start at the very beginning. Tell us when you were born and where.

RFR: OK. I was born in 1927 in Boston, Massachusetts—in Brighton, to be precise.

RWR: Tell us something about your father and mother. Let's start with your father.

RFR: All right. My father was named Frank. He was a Boston fireman. He came originally from Charlestown, and served in one of the fire stations there in Brighton. I was pretty young when he retired from there, but he took me to the station and showed me where it was. It's still there, but it's not a fire station anymore.

RWR: Are there any other Jesuits whose fathers were firemen?

RFR: Yes, Frank Belcher's father was also one.

RWR: Interesting. What did your father do after he retired from the fire department?

RFR: After that he worked with Boston Edison, the power company here in Boston. He worked there for a number of years. I think work took a lot out of him. He'd come home tired, and he was happy with the newspaper and a cigar or a pipe—just being there.

RWR: What was your father like?

RFR: My father was a very quiet man. In the living room he had his chair, and he would look out and see the temperature and report on that and the weather vane. He would warn us, if it was a Northeaster, "Be ready! We're going to have a Nor'easter today." His life was quite simple. He had several sisters who were not married, and he was the youngest, so they would dote on him. I don't know how much he appreciated that, but their lives revolved around him a lot and accordingly around us.

HIS MOTHER

RWR: Good. How about your mother, then?

RFR: My mother, whose name was Mary, was called May to distinguish her from an aunt who was also called Mary. My mother came from Revere.

RWR: Did she work outside the home?

RFR: She was a telephone operator before she was married.

RWR: Did she continue to work after she was married?

RFR: Yes, after she had the children, she worked when she could. My mother was the life of the family. She was very outgoing. She played the piano and was a piano teacher. My father wouldn't let her drive, so all her friends had to come over. She had all sorts of friends, especially women friends.

RWR: Why wouldn't he let her drive?

RFR: I'm not sure. I think she didn't pass his test, but she took it very well. As I say, people just came to visit

her all the time. She had all sorts of friends.

RWR: So there were people in your house all the time?

RFR: Yes, a lot. Many women friends would come there, and she'd be on the telephone often with them. She'd say, "Someone called and was rather lonely. She wanted to talk to me." And she would always give them an ear. She would never hang up or say, "I have to go now."

HIS BROTHERS

RWR: Tell us about your siblings.

RFR: I have two younger brothers, who are twins. Their names are Frank and Richard.

RWR: So there were just the three boys?

RFR: There was another boy who died, Paul.

RWR: How are they doing, your twin brothers?

RFR: They're retired now.

RWR: Any nephews and nieces?

RFR: Yes, I have quite a few.

PARISH LIFE

RWR: Tell us something about your parish and the priests there.

RFR: Well, there was Mass every weekend. My father would have the car out in front, waiting for mom to put on her makeup and come out, and off we went. We went to St. Joseph's in Belmont, sort of the central parish.

There was one priest, Fr. McCall, who was in charge of the altar boys, and everybody took to him. I was not an altar boy myself, but at the time there were a hundred or more of them. My mother liked Fr. McCall a lot, because she asked him to preach at my first Mass—that was back when you didn't preach yourself.

I think he was kind of disappointed when I entered the Jesuits and not the diocesans. Fr. McCall was a very generous priest. Every year he used to take the altar boys for a trip up to a park in New Hampshire, and everything was on him.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

RWR: Tell us something about your early education.

RFR: Well, I went to the local public schools in Belmont, right up through Belmont High School.

RWR: What kind of schools were they? What were the teachers like?

RFR: The elementary school was brand new. All the teachers there were women, and I have wonderful remembrances of them. They were just great: they were like mothers. I never had a woman teacher I didn't like. When I got to junior high, which was at the other end of the city, I had the best teacher in my life—that was in seventh grade. After I finished high school I went to Boston College.

HIGH SCHOOL

RWR: Tell us a little bit about your high school experience.

RFR: They were keen on sports, even though it was a small town. I didn't get into them myself, but I was a close follower. Of course, I was in class with the football players, who always had the spotlight—and the attention of the girls.

But I had my own little clique. There were three or four of us that hung around together. One of the things we did was play ping-pong. What was interesting was that no one of us could beat all the others. I could beat one and he could beat the next one. So it was competitive, and a lot of fun. I also

played baseball in the Twilight League.

RWR: How did you do?

RFR: I think I was all right. We had one boy who was the backbone of the team. His father was the coach. He would pitch one game and play shortstop in another, and he was the best hitter. Without him we wouldn't have done too well. Sports are good for someone at that age, especially for the experience of being on a team. But my buddies weren't big for organized sports at all. They were more into studies and things like that, because they went to Harvard and MIT afterwards. That shows where their first love was.

RWR: Well, good for them. Did you feel satisfied at your high school?

RFR: Well, I didn't know anything else except that I felt at home there, and I could actually walk to the high school. The junior high was the only thing that was far away. And the playing fields were near us, too. All the schools had wonderful playing fields. We used to play pickup games.

BC AND THE CALL TO BE A JESUIT

RWR: What finally got you interested then in the Society?

RFR: I went to Boston College in 1945 with another fellow from Belmont High. It was during the war, so we were going to classes summers as well as winters.

RWR: Tell us a little bit about that BC experience.

RFR: Well, I had a wonderful introduction to the Jesuits. In fact, what was interesting was there were so few going into the order at that time, around 1945, that a Jesuit priest called Oswald Reinhalter used to sit on the steps and as you came along he would ask you one question: "Are you AB Greek or AB Math?" If you said, "AB Math," he told you to go ahead in;

if you said, “AB Greek,” he said, “Sit down, you’re my student.” [Laughter]

There at BC I had people like Fr. Henry Callahan for history. One of the best teachers I had was Fr. John A. McCarthy for philosophy—he was just a great teacher. Then I had a fellow named Fr. Jim Sullivan for senior ethics. Those are the ones that really stood out. They were wonderful.

RWR: Was there a good spirit in the whole school?

RFR: I’d say so, yes. As I look back, it wasn’t ideal to go summers, but that’s what they were doing. It was because of the war.

RWR: Right, they had to make the best of a difficult situation.

RFR: This other fellow from Belmont, Bill Elliott, was also actually thinking of the priesthood. Right after we graduated I got a call from him. He said, “I gave my name to the Jesuits.” I almost flopped. I said, “You did?” So I picked up the phone and I called the Jesuit provincial. There was a brother in charge, and he was just wonderful. He said, “OK, these are the documents we need.”

What’s interesting is that Bill Elliott ended up in the Maryland Province; New England refused him because he had no Greek. He’s teaching Spanish at Georgetown Prep right to this very day. I heard from him the other day for the first time in a long time. He comes to BC once in a while to visit family.

SHADOWBROOK AND WESTON

RWR: So your vocation was quite providential.

RFR: Yes, it really was God, I think, saying, “Hey, don’t postpone it any longer.”

RWR: When you called up the provincial’s office, they just

said, "OK, just come in and fill in the forms."

RFR: Well, I make it simpler than it really was, but they called again and said I could enter on August 14, if I had my baptismal certificate, so that's what happened. I went to Shadowbrook on August 14. My friend Bill entered the Maryland Province on July 30. Of course, we were a big group in those days. So that was the beginning of my three years at Shadowbrook.

RWR: How did that go for you? How did you do? [Laughter]

RFR: I did what I was supposed to do, like the others! [Laughter] As I look back at it, it was pretty routine. It was like a tunnel: you didn't know what it was going to look like at the end!

RWR: Right, you just did what you were told.

RFR: Exactly. Then I went to Weston after that for two years of philosophy.

RWR: Had you had some philosophy in college?

RFR: Yes, I had the regular four years of philosophy at BC. After the two years at Weston I went to Baghdad for regency.

REGENCY IN BAGHDAD

RWR: Fine, let's talk about that.

RFR: That year—1953—eight of us were assigned to Baghdad. For me it was quite a change going from Massachusetts to Baghdad.

RWR: Had you actually asked to go there?

RFR: As I recall, they asked me, "Would you be willing to go?" I said, "Yes, I would be willing."

RWR: They probably asked that of a lot of people.

RFR: I'm sure they did. But anyway eight of us, out of about thirty-five, were sent to Baghdad.

RWR: Were you surprised when you received that assignment?

RFR: Yes, I was happy when I found out I was going and who my companions would be. Two of them are still over there: Jack Carty is still in Alexandria, and Jack Donahue is in Lebanon.

RWR: Do you know what kind of work they're doing now?

RFR: I think Jack Carty is the minister for a small house where there are four Jesuits, each of a different nationality. And Jack Donahue does research on Arab culture and what they're saying about the world.

RWR: Yes, I've heard that.

RFR: He has a doctorate in Arabic from Harvard. Marty McDermott is still there also, but he wasn't in my class; he was a year or two behind me. But Donahue and Carty both went there the same time I did. The two of them and Joe O'Connor used to gang up on me, because I was the only BC grad, and the three of them were from Holy Cross. They wanted to let you know that you were from the inferior of the two schools. They were great, but sometimes the three of them were hard to handle.

RWR: What did you do while you were there in Baghdad?

RFR: I was assigned to a home room and taught second-year English and religion.

RWR: Doing pretty much the same thing for the time you were there at Baghdad College?

RFR: Yes, during those two years of regency.

RWR: How was that experience for you?

RFR: We were kept busy, of course, especially with sports. The Iraqis love sports, particularly soccer and track. They also liked basketball. We were afraid baseball might get out of hand, so we introduced softball. We had a faculty-student game. You'd think it was the World Series, because the priest in charge would pick the best kids—and they were good. That was quite an event.

RWR: How many years were you there for regency in Baghdad?

RFR: Three years: two years teaching and one year studying Arabic language. Then I went back again after ordination.

THEOLOGY AND ORDINATION

RWR: And in between you did your theology at Weston. How did you find that?

RFR: Not too exciting. [Laughter] There were some really bright lights and some interesting moments, but it was basically something we had to get through. Some guys really enjoyed it; but some of us, like myself, just wanted to get ordained.

RWR: So you finally came to ordination.

RFR: Right. Unfortunately, my father had died when I was in Baghdad. He was just sixty-five and recently retired when he died. It was very sudden—a heart attack. There was a telegram one day saying, “Your father is seriously ill,” and the next day another telegram arrived, saying he was gone, just like that. Fortunately my mother was there for the ordination.

RWR: And the ordination went well?

RFR: Yes. Cardinal Cushing met us in the rotunda before the ceremony. He said, “This is my Harvard crimson I’m wearing.” That relaxed the guys a lot. He was really something. You felt proud to have him as your consecrator, and he was glad to do it.

RWR: Yes, and he always stayed around afterwards talking to all the families. In your fourth year of theology, were you able to get out much to parishes and other ministries?

RFR: Yes, we left Weston fairly regularly, and that was very enjoyable. We were finally going out into the ministry that we had so long anticipated. After that I went to Pomfret for tertianship.

TERTIANSHIP

RWR: Who was the tertian master at the time?

RFR: Jimmy Coleran. We didn't get much ministry that year—there were so many of us, that there weren't many parish calls at all. So it was, I'm sorry to say, boring.

RWR: Oh, tertianship was boring for most people.

RFR: I think the way they do it now is better: the young priest waits a few years and then does his tertianship.

RWR: Yes, and they go off on long experiments for six months or so.

RFR: But that's not the way it was for us. It was interesting to find out later that Fr. General Peter Hans Kolvenbach also did his tertianship at Pomfret, because later he was our provincial over there in the Middle East.

RETURN TO BAGHDAD

RWR: Yes, right. That brings us back to Baghdad. Did you return there right after your tertianship?

RFR: Yes, I went back there.

RWR: Did you do anything different from what you were doing before?

RFR: There were no problems in the country at that time. I taught fifth year once or twice, and then back to fourth year. I think fifth year was the most enjoyable, because they were graduating, but we were really quite strict with them. The parents of the children used to say, "We can do nothing with our son. That's why we're sending him to you!"

I also spent one year teaching at the minor seminary. They had maybe ten seminarians boarding there, most of them from outside Baghdad. If they were serious about going on as priests, we would provide an education for them.

RWR: That was wonderful work.

RFR: One thing we're very proud of, naturally, is the reunion of alumni from Baghdad College and Al-Hikma University that takes place every couple of years.

RWR: Yes, in fact, I think there's one coming up now.

RFR: Yes, this year. At those reunions you can see what they've done with their lives, their jobs, and their ambitions. They have great loyalty, and their eyes are open.

RWR: I have often thought what things would be like today if that mission had been allowed to continue.

RFR: That's right. It would have made a difference.

RWR: If that work had been going on for another thirty or forty years, it might have made a difference in the country.

RFR: Sure. But I'm afraid it didn't work out that way.

RWR: So how many years were you there for the second time?

RFR: I was there for seven years after ordination, so that makes ten years all together. In 1969 we got the eviction order.

RWR: You were there at that time?

RFR: Yes. Al Hikma had a showdown with them months before that. They came and said, "We have the list of the priests at Al Hikma. We see these two are not teaching, so they are not needed. Why don't you send them home?" Then the Jesuits in charge of Al Hikma, Joe Ryan and John Banks, said, "Well, maybe a month from now you'll come and say, 'These two other guys only teach one class.'" So they decided to close up.

RWR: They saw the future coming.

RFR: We were expelled from Baghdad College at the end of the scholastic year, but you could see it coming

before that. Saddam Hussein was not the top one then, but he was the force behind it all.

WORKING IN EGYPT

RWR: Jesuits often mention the scene at the end when so many people went to the airport to see you all off. Do you remember that?

RFR: No, because I didn't go with the main group. Three of us decided to go to Egypt, so we went directly to Cairo. They were Leo Shea, myself, and a scholastic named James Mulcahy, who's no longer in the Society. Egypt is part of the Near East Province, which also included Lebanon and Syria.

RWR: So you were able to be transferred?

RFR: Yes. They had come over once to visit us; they told us we would be welcome there in Cairo to teach English. At the time we just shrugged it off, but as it turned out, I ended up teaching English. Leo mostly did pastoral ministry, and the scholastic taught English, too.

RWR: Where were you teaching?

RFR: At Holy Family College in Cairo, right in the heart of Cairo.

RWR: That worked out well, then?

RFR: It worked out well. I did some pastoral ministry in a church run by the Italian Verona Fathers; I used to say the English Mass on Sundays for them. For years I did that, and I also ministered to some Irish nuns. So that kept me fairly busy.

RWR: How many years did you do that?

RFR: I was there for fifteen years. I was home a couple of times for the summer.

RWR: Fifteen years above and beyond the years in Baghdad?

RFR: Yes. It was a different environment, very French.

Jack Carty and I were there together, but we couldn't speak French too well. We could never figure out the French mentality, but of course we had been invited there by them, and we did our job as well as we could. It would have been great if we had been fluent in French. Actually, we spent most of our time trying to learn Egyptian Arabic, because that was very useful in the school, whereas outside the school there were not that many who spoke French. More people spoke English than French.

RWR: Yes, the British influence in Egypt was strong. How well did you learn Arabic?

RFR: Not well enough to be really helpful. I could read it, and I could speak a bit, but it was difficult. It would have helped a lot to have learned it fluently, as some few did. It would have made a difference.

RWR: When you helped in parishes in Cairo, was it in English?

RFR: Yes, it was mostly English.

RETURNING TO THE STATES

RFR: Well, for me that Middle East experience ended in 1984. I came back that summer, and the provincial told me to stay in the States. They never said so explicitly, but I think it was because of my mother, and they were right. She was up there in years, and she would see me only every three years. She was dead in two years. But those years were very enjoyable because I was in Waltham with Fr. Dave Boulton then and could go home a lot.

RWR: That was nice for your mother, very thoughtful.

RFR: I think so, but I resisted. I said, "I want to go back," because I was quite happy there in Egypt

RWR: What were you doing during those two years in Waltham?

RFR: I did parish work at St. Charles Church, and ever since then I've been doing parish work. I spent a few years with Frank Mackin at St. Ignatius Church near Boston College. Then I relieved Fr. Jim O'Brien in Norwich, Connecticut. I was there for two years, at SS Peter and Paul Church.

RWR: Tell us something about what you did at each of those places.

RFR: I enjoyed those assignments. The people were very supportive. As you know, I like being active, so the more work the better. After Connecticut I came here to Portland, Maine. Fr. Art Paré was assigned here and asked the provincial for some help. The provincial asked me to come here, and it was a good decision, looking back. I've been here since 1996. I really love parish work, I really do. You wouldn't get much of that in Iraq, because there was only about one church to go to on Sunday, and we took turns doing that.

CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION

PAUL KENNEY: I recall you also did clinical pastoral education.

RFR: Yes, I did that in Springfield.

PK: When was that?

RFR: That was right after I came back from the Middle East in 1984. The program was for two days a week with Dave Boulton as director. Jack Mandile was also doing the course, so the two of us would drive up to Springfield on Sunday afternoon and come back Tuesday night. Things were never dull with Jack Mandile. He was at St. Patrick's Church in Natick at the time, and I'd drive over there to meet him.

PK: How did you find the CPE experience?

- RFR: It was wonderful, challenging, and very liberating.
- PK: I understand your director was Fr. Dave Boulton.
- RFR: Yes, we were always good friends. Dave entered in 1949, and I entered in 1948. During the CPE course I was always assigned somebody else as my immediate supervisor.
- PK: When I did the CPE, David Boulton was using the animal characters of Thornton Burgess. Had he begun doing that with you?
- RFR: Yes, he was using them by then.
- RWR: Dave used to have a great interest in children's stories, the ones with little animals in them, like the Uncle Remus stories.
- PK: He really liked them. He would encourage participants to understand their personalities in terms of one of the characters.
- RFR: For me he suggested the possum, a shy creature that doesn't come out during the daytime.
- PK: Did you notice any changes in yourself after the CPE program?
- RFR: My outlook changed a lot. I think I was kind of shy with people, especially women, but there were women in the group that helped me to get over that feeling. They said to me, "Hey, treat us as you would friends. Don't be shy like that, because half the people you're going to be dealing with in parishes are women." That whole process went on for a year, two days every week. So I think it helped me a lot.
- I remember once when I was visiting my mother, I overheard her telling some friends, "Bob has changed," and she didn't know what had happened! [Laughter] She wouldn't say anything more about it, but I heard that, and it was like a revelation.
- PK: How did this influence your ministry in the parishes?

RFR: I think I'm more open to people as a result. I have confidence that I have something to offer and that I can represent the Church in a very outgoing, friendly way—which is all to the good.

THE VALUE OF PASTORAL WORK

RWR: Well, we've been asking all the questions. Are there any topics that you want to elaborate on?

RFR: I have always enjoyed pastoral work. It's all like a blank check to do what you need to do in a given situation. I'm finding that people don't want to hear just about requirements to receive the sacraments. They are interested in many things, so I consult the chancellor and find out what's permitted. I try to help people out as much as I can. The more you go out to people, the more they respond to you and the church.

RWR: Yes, it's important to be sensitive to people.

RFR: Oftentimes things work out very well. Often when you do baptisms you have contact with people who hardly ever go to church. You say to God, "If you're going to do anything now, do it." It's an ideal time, really. We've got them praying, and they're happy about this baby being baptized. The same with a wedding or a funeral. They are always opportunities to reach people and get them to respond.

I mention this because it's like evangelizing, to use a big word. You just feel that you'd like to reach the people in any way you can, and sometimes you find ways that you hadn't thought of before, or people give you an unexpected opportunity. People will come and say, "I was a Catholic once, but..." You have to listen to their story.

RWR: Yes, that's very important.

RFR: I think the fact that they have to tell you their story

indicates that there's something still there, and maybe with help they would be back in the church.

RWR: Right, it's possible.

RFR: So you just listen and you shake your head and say, "It didn't have to be this way." Oftentimes they just didn't like a priest.

RWR: I was going to say, isn't that most of the time?

RFR: I can't believe how many times that happens.

RWR: Yes, in a sense it's hard to believe. If there's one thing that a priest has to do, it's to be kind.

RFR: Exactly, but I'm afraid sometimes kindness got overshadowed by all those rules we were taught: you should be a practicing Catholic; you should be this, and you should be that. Well, people are not going to respond to that.

RWR: Right.

RFR: And if you don't baptize their child, isn't it really an injustice to the child later on if it wasn't baptized? It's hard to say. You wish that you could see down the line ten years into the future, to see where they are and what's happening. But, as I say, you have to leave a lot to God's grace. We'll never know the results for a lot of these, but there are also some good stories about people coming back.

RWR: Yes, and that's encouraging.

RFR: It's very encouraging. I'm not discouraged, really. Sometimes with an individual I may shake my head and say, "It really doesn't have to be that way," especially if the individual is intelligent. You figure they'll work things out, and you determine that one person's disposition is not going to affect you unduly. Of course, religion is an area where you can't presume anything, really.

RWR: That's right.

RFR: Sometimes they open themselves to you, and then

you get a chance. But sometimes you don't know really what to say or what to do.

MINISTRY IN PORTLAND

RWR: There in Portland do you find yourself working with the diocesan priests much?

RFR: Not an awful lot, no. Just at something like the Chrism Mass in Holy Week, or once in a while when the bishop invites us all together. The Chrism Mass is coming up next Tuesday, and after the Mass we'll have supper with the diocesan priests. I have a few priest friends that I see quite often; they are retired but are still doing a lot of work in the diocese.

RWR: Do you do any work outside the parish?

RFR: I work very much here with nursing homes. I have several of them that keep me fairly busy with Mass and the other sacraments. Two of them are close by: you could throw a stone and almost hit them from here. Another one is just down the line, and still another is out of town, about a twenty-five-minute ride. I hesitated about that one, but then I found out that the priest there wasn't able to do it. I didn't want them to go without Mass, so I visit there twice a month. Sometimes the people there fall asleep, and they don't answer the prayers, but that's OK.

RWR: It still means something to them.

RFR: Recently the person who is in charge there told me, "We appreciate your coming here." That made all the difference. I also heard that a couple of times from non-Catholics, so I figure they must hear it from someplace.

RWR: They hear it afterwards. When you're going, people say, "Oh, Father was so good."

RFR: Yes, so I don't have any hesitation about that place any more. I also have the daily Masses in the two

parishes, and of course the sacraments. Sacramentally, for some reason or other, we're not as busy as St. Joseph's Parish, where the Capuchins are. I've only had two weddings a year since I've been here. It's really extraordinary: people are not marrying now. They're not going through the sacrament of matrimony as they were before. So weddings are way down. And we've been warned that when we go to St. Joseph's the same thing is going to happen. Right now Fr. Jack D'Anjou is in charge of working out a plan to get more applications for weddings.

We have funerals, because there are many elderly in the parish. We get our share of funerals, I would say. Baptisms go up and down. Recently they've been down.

RWR: How is the number of people coming to Mass?

RFR: Encouraging. Again elderly, but encouraging. It jumped during Lent, and then there was a little bit of falloff from that. We have a nucleus of people who are very good. Also I'm finding now there are more people volunteering. People are saying, "I don't think it's just enough to come on Sunday. What else can I do?" For example, one woman came in recently and offered to help.

RWR: With linens?

RFR: No, with the chalices and things like that. She cleans them. The linens are done by the nuns, God bless them. Then another one will come in and spell the secretary for an hour or two when she's unable to be there. Things like that we encourage. Then there's the parish dinner once a month: that's all volunteers. It's quite a workout: we serve a meal and clean up for about a hundred or more people.

AROUND THE PARISH

RWR: I would say so. How about younger people? Are you seeing their numbers increasing?

RFR: We've had a young priest for almost a year now. He's Matt Monnig, ordained last year. He's now doing biblical studies. That interest blossomed while he was here. He used to have "Theology in the Pub" sessions, and he went over and got involved in the school. He made quite an impression with the kids; he spent an awful lot of time with them. He had a group of young people from all over the city. He couldn't get that many from one parish. There are seven parishes in Portland, so he had a big youth group for the seven parishes. He had a prayer hour here for them once a week, and then there was the "Theology in the Pub." He was a ball of fire, but when he left, that activity fell off again. We don't have anybody vigorous enough to keep doing it.

RWR: Yes, it needs someone who's continually at it.

RFR: Yes, that's what the youth need. Unfortunately, I don't think we're attracting them, because we don't give them that much time and attention.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

RWR: Is there a Catholic school around anywhere?

RFR: Well, there was. St. Patrick's closed the year we took the parish, because they couldn't pay their bills. So we combined it with St. Joseph's and changed the name to St. Bridgid, and that's doing well now. In fact, the other day somebody said, "You know, they had open house, and the number of people who came was way up. The word around is, 'We're not too happy with the public schools.'"

RWR: That's interesting.

RFR: I think they're afraid that the teachers are going to

be laid off. Some of them in the public schools have already been laid off. People figure their sons or daughters might not have a teacher. That's in the future, but they're considering that possibility, and that would work to our good if more people enrolled in the school.

RWR: How about Cheverus High School? Is it doing well?

RFR: Cheverus is doing quite well. There are roughly 500 boys and girls enrolled, so that's good. When I first came here, there were only about 390.

RWR: That's quite an increase in enrolment. Are you involved with Cheverus at all now?

RFR: No, I'm not. I'm full-time with the parish.

RWR: There's plenty to keep you busy there, I'm sure.

RFR: Yes, plus I do two little side things here. I help at the hospital two days a week, when Fr. Joe Schad is off, and I like doing that. Also, as you saw in the picture on the wall, I'm the fire department chaplain, but that doesn't call for much work at all.

PK: What does that involve?

RFR: Once a year they have a very nice ceremony in the cemetery to commemorate all their fellow firemen who died in the line of duty. Then, when a new class of firemen comes through, they ask me to say a prayer at the graduation. They also ask me to go to any major fires, but there haven't been any recently, thank God. When I first came here, I was going out a bit. Nevertheless, I've got all the equipment: the suit, the helmet, the boots, and all the other gear. So I'm following the tradition of my father, who was a firefighter for so many years.

RWR: Wonderful. It's been delightful talking with you. Thank you for sharing with us.

RFR: The pleasure's been mine.

Fr. Robert F. Regan, S.J.

Born: June 6, 1927, Boston, Massachusetts
Entered: August 14, 1948, Lenox, Massachusetts: St.
Stanislaus Novitiate / Shadowbrook
Ordained: June 13, 1959, Weston, Massachusetts:
Weston College
Final Vows: August 15, 1962, Chestnut Hill,
Massachusetts, Boston College

1941 Belmont, Massachusetts: Belmont High School -
Student
1944-1948 Boston College - Student

1948 Lenox, Massachusetts: St. Stanislaus Novitiate /
Shadowbrook - Novitiate, juniorate

1951 Weston, Massachusetts: Weston College - Studied
philosophy

1953 Baghdad, Iraq: Baghdad College - Taught religion,
math, English
1955 St. Joseph's Residence - Studied Arabic

1956 Weston, Massachusetts: Weston College - Studied
theology

1960 Pomfret, Connecticut: St. Robert Hall - Tertianship

1961 Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: Boston College -
Studied English

1962 Baghdad, Iraq: Baghdad College - Taught religion,
math
1966-1967 Minister, St. Peter's Seminary

- 1969 Cairo, Egypt: College Ste Famille - Taught English,
prefect of church
- 1984 Waltham, Massachusetts: St. Charles Church -
Sabbatical, studied Clinical Pastoral Education,
Springfield, Massachusetts
- 1985 Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: St. Ignatius Church -
Assistant pastor
1987-1988 Boston College - Studied theology
1988-1989 Local apostolate
- 1989 Waltham, Massachusetts: St. Charles Church -
Assistant pastor
- 1994 Norwich, Connecticut: SS. Peter and Paul Church -
Associate pastor
- 1996 Portland, Maine: St. Pius X Church - Associate
pastor

Degrees

- 1948 Bachelor of Arts, Boston College
- 1953 Master of Arts, Philosophy, Weston College-
Boston College
- 1960 Licentiate in Sacred Theology, Weston College