

**New England Jesuit
Oral History Program**



**Bro. Vincent M. Brennan, S.J.
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AMDG

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 some times 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.

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Interview with Bro. Vincent M. Brennan, S.J.
by Fr. Richard W. Rousseau, S.J.
February 20, 2008

EARLY YEARS

RICHARD ROUSSEAU: Good morning. We're going to have a conversation, so you say what you want to say. So let's begin by your telling us where and when you were born.

VINCENT BRENNAN: I was born in Charlestown, Mass., July 20, 1927. My brother, Joe, was born November 1925, and my sister, Eileen, was born April 1929. We were born quite close to one another. At the time the family was living in Charlestown, just over the bridge from the City of Boston.

I was baptized in St. Mary's Church. Our family lived at 55 Park Street, close to the training field and under the shadow of the Bunker Hill Monument. I started school at St. Mary's and remained there until the family moved to Arlington Heights in June 1935. Our parish in Arlington was St. James, and the school that I attended there was the local grammar school, the Locke School, where I entered the third grade.

PARENTS

RR: Could you tell us something about your father and your mother?

VB: My father, Martin J. Brennan, worked for most of his life as a carpenter for the United States Post Office in the South Postal Annex, which was situated very close to Boston's South Station. My mother, Annemarie (Murphy) Brennan, had more than enough to do at home, bringing up our family and seeing about our needs. Those were difficult times with the Depression never very far away from our thoughts.

Both my mother and father had come from Ireland. If I can pin the dates down correctly, she came over from Crosshaven, County Cork about 1908, while my father came over from Killeslin, King's County shortly before the famous Chelsea fire, which I think, as he used to say, was on Palm Sunday, April 1912.

FATHER

RR: Tell us a bit more about your father.

VB: Dad was born in 1891 or 1894. Joe checked out the baptismal record of Dad and his brothers and sisters in Ireland, and assured the family that 1891 was his true date of birth, but Dad never admitted it. He used to tease Mom about her being three years older than he was, but in actual fact it seems that he was born the same year as she was.

During World War I he joined the Army and rose to the rank of sergeant. He drove an ambulance, among other things, but he never really told us about them. We do know he was gassed at the front in France. As a result of this he was a "disabled army veteran" and received a monthly check for the remainder of his life. I think he was described as a "Veteran with Twenty-five Percent Disability." The check was about twenty-five dollars a month, which was a lot of money at the

time; in fact it was an important part of the income on which the family had to depend.

RR: What kind of person was he?

VB: He was a great guy with a good sense of humor. We enjoyed talking sports a lot, especially baseball. He had played professional ball as a pitcher for the Veterans League in Chelsea, where he had settled with the rest of the family when they came over from Ireland. One of his sisters came first, and she arranged the transport for the rest of the family.

Sports, but mostly baseball, were very much on his mind, and he liked to talk to me about them. I can't remember the name of the team, but I do know that some of his brothers were on the same team, especially his brother, Joe, after whom my own brother was named. At one time they won the trophy as the best team in the league of about ten teams.

One of the other players wanted the trophy that had been presented to my father for himself, and made no bones about it. So my father finally said, "Here, take the damn thing and keep it!" I've never forgotten how he gave that trophy away. I guess he did not need any trophy to remind him of what he had accomplished as a pitcher for his Chelsea team.

MOTHER

RR: And how about your mother?

VB: My mother worked at home to make sure that the children had all they needed for church, school, and life. Dad provided the income, and she organized the home. She had a strong personality. The entire family revolved around her and were influenced by her energy and enthusiasm, particularly when times were tough, as they were then in the Depression.

Mom and Dad married in January 1925. Joe was born in November of that year. After he was born,

Mom arranged to buy a house in Medford, a two-decker, to get out of Charlestown and into the country.

I do not remember the house in Medford or when it was that we had to leave because of foreclosure. Like so many others in the Depression time, she lost the house, Dad was out of work, and there little money coming into the home.

She was very healthy and always busy. She did what she could to make ends meet and never lost heart when she had to abandon the home. Her first big step after her marriage, to buy her own home in what was then considered country, turned out to be a failure, and there was nothing that she could do about it.

The tenants were in the same plight, so they couldn't pay their rent. My mother felt sorry for them, because she was going through what they were going through. It was a hard time for everyone. She put up with it and never gave in to self-pity. I think that the three of us children learned much from her in the way she put up with failure and in the way that she found comfort in her church.

RR: You said she was from Ireland.

VB: Yes, Mom was born in Ireland. When she came to Boston, she joined her sister and entered into service as a housemaid in Boston's Beacon Hill area. It was hard work and it did not pay very much. She worked hard, and her life was her family and her church.

She was hard of hearing, and this made the work even more difficult. Despite her hearing problem, we could all talk with her during her life with no problem, and my brother and sister could talk to her right up to the end of her life. She was a great listener and interested in all that was happening in our lives.

Years later I was stationed at Campion Center at Weston. While I was doing the daily driving for the

community, I would pop into the house in Arlington to see that everything was going well with her. Joe was in Jamaica, Eileen was living in Arizona, but I was in the vicinity. My father had died in 1979 at the age of 88. She lived three weeks short of one hundred years of age. To the end of her life, she was able to live in her own home and, in 1991, die in her own bed.

SIBLINGS

RR: How about your brother and sister?

VB: My older brother Joe had entered the Society in 1943, a couple of years before I joined the U. S. Navy. After his ordination in 1956, he went off to Jamaica, where he remained for about forty years.

Eileen went to the local parish grammar school in Arlington, then to a private academy for girls. She did college work after high school in extension programs while working as a secretary during the day. For many years she was the personal secretary for Mr. Stephen Mugar, the founder of the Star Market chain of supermarkets in New England.

Eileen married and relocated to Arizona, where she remains to this day. She had one daughter, Annemarie, who in turn had three more daughters. So besides my mother and father, the six remaining are the entire Brennan family.

EDUCATION

RR: Where did you go to school yourself?

VB: I started at the Locke School in Arlington, beginning in the third grade; I had done my first and second grades at St. Mary's School in Charlestown. I then went to Junior High West in Arlington Heights, and finally to Arlington High, from which I graduated.

PARISH

RR: How were you influenced by St. James Parish and its priests?

VB: St. James was a home away from home. The pastor, Fr. O'Connor, had three curates, but there was a lot of turnover amongst them. I was also an altar boy, as Joe was. The altar boys used to do a lot of things together. Joe B. McHugh, later a Jesuit, used to be head altar boy when I was there near the end of my time.

In those days Arlington had four parishes. Today only St. Agnes exists. St. James today is the Church of St. Athanasius, a Greek Orthodox Church.

NAVY

RR: Let's talk about your time in the Navy. What led you to go into the Navy?

VB: I was seventeen and ready to leave home. Many of my friends had gone before me. I wanted the experience of a new life with new challenges. The war was winding down in Europe, the Battle of the Bulge was over, and, though we were still at war with Japan, it seemed to be just a matter of time. I was curious about what I could learn through my Navy training and some of the benefits I would get as a result of my joining up.

RR: So you had volunteered.

VB: Oh, yes. I made the decision on my own. I was seventeen and too young to be drafted. So after high school I joined the Navy at a time when the war seemed to be winding down.

I started my training in the States, in El Paso, Texas—the same city that I would one day return to as a tertian, and then I went to Camp Perry, Virginia, where I did most of my training. From there, I moved on to Hawthorne, Nevada in the ammunition corps. Then in time I moved on to Oakland, California, closer to the water, but never actually to a ship. After a year

and a month from when I had signed up, I was discharged from active service at Mayer Island, California—a day I'll never forget. I remained in the Naval Reserve for another five years.

JOINING THE JESUITS

RR: So where did you go from there?

VB: When I got home and rejoined the family, I started looking for a job. I had the energy and the drive, and I was now 21, a Navy veteran, and eager for full-time work. I tried a number of different jobs and noticed right away that what I preferred was to work outside. Summer or winter made no difference.

I was also looking around for what I wanted to do for life. I made a lot of friends and I tried a lot of different jobs. I thought of marriage as a not too distant future event. But also it was about this time while Joe was at Shadowbrook that I thought I would experiment with making a retreat under supervision, so I could ask some questions about the future. However, to make a long story a short story, in 1951 I decided to join the Jesuits at Shadowbrook as a Brother.

RR: What was in your mind?

VB: I knew what Joe was doing in the Jesuits as he was finishing his days in philosophy. I kept thinking about the possibility of a vocation with the Jesuits also, but with the idea that I frequently expressed to close friends: "I'm not going to be a priest. I do not have that vocation." However to be a Jesuit Brother had attractive possibilities. And I had thought about this, on and off, even before the Navy. Finally I said, "I'm going to give it a try." That's how I joined the Society.

RR: How long had your brother been there ahead of you?

VB: My brother was ahead of me in the Society by eight years. He entered in 1943 and I entered in 1951. Like him, I went to the old Shadowbrook.

I arrived there with a group in April 1951. Three other Brothers entered with me at the same time: Murphy, Noonan, and McCaffrey. We began with a six-month postulancy, then moved on to the novitiate in October, and finally took first vows two years later, in October 1953.

The older Brothers with vows used to guess who would stay and who would leave. The Brothers used to tell some of the other candidates, "That guy will never last, but he might." Or, "He'll never last." And so on. I was twenty-four and I was supposed to be one of the "leavers." Today, of the four, I am the only one left in the Society.

TOUGHER THAN THE NAVY

RR: How did you find Shadowbrook?

VB: Tougher than boot camp. I thought that the Navy was easier. I didn't mind the Navy; I liked it, and there were a lot of different people and a lot of variety. I fitted in well with people from all over and from many different ethnic groups, black and white. At Shadowbrook we were very much alike and all from similar backgrounds, but the discipline and the timetable and the order of the day made more demands than the Navy boot camp.

RR: Who was your master of novices?

VB: John Post was master and Joe Riel was his assistant. John Post was strict, but I got along fine with him. I would be in the back with the other Brothers at the conferences. At all the conferences for the novices, the three Brother candidates used to sit at the back of the lecture room and listen to the same talks for the scholastics.

Brother and scholastic candidates did a lot of other things together, not separated from one another as used to be the case before I got there. But John Post, for his

own reasons, wanted both groups to share in common with one another.

NEW JOB AT CRANWELL

RR: Did anything special happen to you in those Shadowbrook days?

VB: No, although at times I did raise a bit of hell and got hell in return. The rector at the time was Frank O. Corcoran, nicknamed "Zero" Corcoran. After vows one day he said to me, "Bro. Brennan, you're turning into a wise guy, and I'm going to get you out of here. At the first chance I get, I'm going to send you to another community."

Of course, I did not tell him, but I was dying to get out of there. I had heard that Cranwell had an opening. And suddenly one day he said to me, "I'm going to switch you with another Brother from Cranwell. He will come here and you will go there." He did: Bro. Walsh came to Shadowbrook and I went to Cranwell. The rector must have thought that he was making things difficult for me, but it was just the opposite. It was exactly where I wanted to go! And I said to myself, "This is terrific!"

While I was growing up in Arlington, Joe and I spent many years as caddies at the Belmont Country Club. While waiting for an assignment, we used to play a kind of miniature golf down in the caddies' area. I learned to be a golfer from a very young age. What I knew about Cranwell was that it had its own golf course.

GOLF AT CRANWELL

RR: Is it correct that at that time there were only six holes?

VB: Not when I got there. There were eighteen holes, although they were not kept up at the time; in fact some of them were let go. Years later when Jack Tucker be-

came minister at Cranwell, he restored the few remaining holes and increased the overall number to make it an eighteen-hole golf course. It was also a public golf course and catered to outsiders.

Although I was busy with assignments at Cranwell, because I was surrounded by the golf course and filled with energy, I took every opportunity to play as much as I could. At Cranwell there were teachers, workers, and students, who were happy to play along with me. It was great! Oh, yeah, I really liked Cranwell.

But don't misunderstand me. I had more than enough work to do taking care of the grounds, doing the driving for the community, running errands, driving the bus, accommodating the needs of the school staff and the Jesuit community, etc.

DEDICATION THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE

VB: I was doing all that kind of work for the Society and the students. All my life, I have worked for the Society. I like what I do and what I have been asked to do. I like to drive; I liked driving the kids around. I liked driving the household and maintenance staff workers home at the end of their day. I would sometimes take them home at lunchtime. I did this especially for the older workers, such as the women who worked in the dorms for four hours every school day. I drove the men who worked in maintenance. I'd also drive the students in the big van over to Miss Hall's School when the principal needed my services as well.

A LOT OF DRIVING

RR: Was it because Miss Hall's school was some distance away?

VB: No, it wasn't that far from Cranwell. I have stories about Cranwell and the students, because I drove the school bus to many places in the state and throughout

New England—all the time and all over the place. I went down to Cheshire, Connecticut with the basketball team. I drove for the hockey team to their games away from home.

I loved this kind of driving and the opportunity it gave me to be with the students, to be a friend of them and even a disciplinarian when I had to be. We had three buses, and the kids would board the buses along with their teachers.

I remember one time when the bus I was driving broke down because it lost a wheel. They had to send six cars from Cranwell to pick up all those students. As you can see, I did a lot of driving. I loved it then and I still do today.

RR: Would you go down to the nearby big city?

VB: Oh, yes. I did a lot of errands both for the school and the community. In Pittsfield and Lee there were various supply places, such as England Brothers and many others on Main Street and North Street. I was in Pittsfield more times I can remember. Of course, I had done this sort of thing at Shadowbrook. I loved that too because it got me out of the house, sometimes for a whole day.

At Shadowbrook I worked with Bro. Perry and Bro. Bourrie on the farm. At Cranwell I worked the lawn mowers. In fact I used to visit Tanglewood on request, which was near Shadowbrook, and cut their hay fields for them. I did the same for some of the neighbors and left it near their barns. If I were not driving, I was cutting lawns or hayfields, all the while enjoying the outside and the Berkshire weather.

RR: So how many years were you active in this way at Cranwell?

VB: I was there for twenty years from 1956 to 1975 when it closed. I might mention that I left Shadowbrook only three months before the Shadowbrook fire. The entire

building of the original estate was destroyed by fire in the middle of the night; four Jesuits died. I had gone to Cranwell in January and the fire was March 10, a difference of less than three months.

THE SHADOWBROOK FIRE

RR: So, of course, you must have a lot of memories about the fire?

VB: My daily routine was to go to the six o'clock Mass every morning. And the scholastics were also there with the students. The minister would check the Mass and the scholastics. In any case, that morning, I was with the others in the chapel and we smelled smoke. Of course, it was 6:30 AM, and all of a sudden one of the priests, Fr. Kelly, walks in and announces to the assembly, "Shadowbrook burned down last night"!

I really got a very strong smell of the smoke from the fire still on his clothes. I said, "Oh, my God! This is really true. Shadowbrook really burned"! It had all happened in the middle of the night, and at Cranwell we were not aware of anything. Bro. Kelly had gone over there in the middle of the night along with Larry Ryan, the minister. So they saw the whole fire at 2:00 AM, while I slept through it all.

CLOSING CRANWELL

RR: That's a very moving story. Could you also tell us a bit of why Cranwell closed its doors?

VB: As I understand it, Frank Mackin, the rector, built an extraordinary chapel, which cost over a million, a lot of money back then. At the same time, in the late '60s, several prep schools in the area were closing. People had stopped sending their children to these schools. So with shrinking enrolment along with the debt incurred from the building of the school chapel, we had to close. They tried everything they could to keep the

school open, but like all the others, it had to be closed. This was very sad for me as for many others. The school had achieved so much, but the times were difficult for many schools of this kind.

RR: So, as you say, it was part a general tragedy in that part of Massachusetts?

VB: Yes. Only schools like Philips Andover were able to stay open. They were as big as some universities and had the financial resources to continue. We had started in 1938 and one other school in Lenox, founded in 1900, also closed. Despite their years of service, financial constraints hit them as well. We even felt the hard times in our meals, which used to be excellent, but now we just didn't have the money anymore.

TO CAMPION HALL, NORTH ANDOVER

RR: Did any Jesuits stay there for a while after it closed? Did you do that?

VB: Yes, some did, but I didn't stay. I left Cranwell in 1975 when Dick Cleary, the provincial, phoned me to make a request: "Vin, how would you like to go to Campion Hall in Andover? I have a nice job for you. I think you'd love it. The province needs someone to help John D. [Dustin] Kelly to maintain the retreat house at North Andover open until the estate can be sold." I told Dick, "Oh! I'd love that."

So Dustin Kelly, Tommy Hennessy, and I became the new Campion Hall community during this transition. Tommy was seventy-five at that time and he could only do so much. We lived and worked there for two years and enjoyed one another; we had a great time together and did our own cooking. Dustin and I would cut the grass regularly, tend the trees, and clear out those that needed to be cut down. Finally in September 1975 the house was sold. I loved the house and was sorry to see it go.

TO CAMPION CENTER, WESTON

RR: When it closed where did you go?

VB: Here to Campion Center in Weston. I have been here ever since—for almost thirty plus years. Tommy Hennessy and Dustin Kelly also came to Campion Center. Back at Campion Hall in Andover, although we'd see each other at meals, it could be lonely at times. Dustin didn't mind being alone, and I didn't mind at first. However I was beginning to anticipate some change from living and working at North Andover.

We used to do things together. We played golf twice a week. The golf club could not have been kinder, in that the manager was a Catholic and he let us play for free. Our food was good and we'd dine out once a week, but, after a couple of months, this got boring. I was never much for restaurants.

REMEMBERING CRANWELL

RR: Did you still miss the Cranwell students?

VB: Very much so. I liked being busy at Cranwell. Among other things that I have already mentioned, I was in charge of the cafeteria, which gave me a lot of exposure to the students. I had some of them working alongside to help me at busy times. We were very busy there for an hour every day. Sometimes we'd be cleaned out of all the food cooked for the meal.

That's how I got to know them. I would hear them talking about some of their teachers—priests, scholastics, and lay teachers. They would ask, "Hey, Brother, do you know that guy? He's the worst teacher around." I would often tell them to take care and to be patient.

At Cranwell I really drove a lot; working in the cafeteria and the other tasks kept me busy. I also maintained the cars, so that any of the fathers was able to get around easily.

DRIVING AT CAMPION AS WELL

RR: When you got here to Campion, you were ready to be of service in much the same way?

VB: When I first came here, George Drury was the rector in his last year. At that time the house didn't have as many people as it does now. It seemed big enough at the time, but it is much bigger now. We ate in the same dining room we are using now. All the Jesuits would sit over on one side. And over the years, there have been a number of changes in the dining room and other areas of the house. They're still changing today. I have not minded.

My biggest job, especially early on, was plowing the snow. I was fifty years old, and I had few responsibilities in the beginning, but they increased as time went on, such as managing our fleet of cars.

RR: Right. When you got to Campion, you did a lot of driving, as at Cranwell?

VB: Yes. It started up as soon as I got here. As you know, this house had been the community that housed the philosophy and theology students of the New England Province preparing for the priesthood. But major changes had taken place with the theologians moving to Cambridge for their studies and the philosophers continuing their studies in other philosophates spread throughout the country. With this move the province was preparing to use this house as a province health center and retirement home. Half of the house was dedicated to that purpose, while the rest of the house became a retreat house for various kinds of retreats.

LIVING THROUGH MANY CHANGES

VB: Many people left the community at this time, and new people took their places. Some worked in the retreat house, others were available to the needs of the sick and the retired Jesuits. Many changes began immedi-

ately and continued for a long time, in fact, right up to the present, as both communities, the health community and the retreat community, worked to achieve their functions.

I was constantly on the move as a house driver. I worked along with Bro. Parnoff, who lived here when I came. Together we became a team and were constantly on the road to take people to doctors and to hospital visits. The two of us did all the driving then. Each year the number of people got bigger and bigger. After Fr. Drury left, Fr. Dick Cleary, the former provincial, came to oversee the changes taking place in both the retreat part of the house and in the health center.

In time Fr. Bill Raftery became rector, and it was under his supervision that the house was set up to be a state and federal nursing home facility. With Bill Raftery came Nancy Herrmann as the director of the project. She stayed with us during the terms of Bill Raftery and his successor, Fr. Amiot. She moved on midway in the term of Fr. Amiot's success, Fr. Holland.

MANY RESPONSIBILITIES

RR: What were some of the other things you did here at Campion Center?

VB: I did a lot snow plowing during the winter. At times that meant that I got up early in the mornings, well before dawn, to start the plowing before the snow got too deep and hard to manage. There were also two laymen who also did the shoveling. But I joined them and used the machines with which I had been familiar during all of my Jesuit life. Because of this, on many mornings I had to go to my room to warm up before going out again to deal with the heavily falling snow.

The cars took up a lot of time, because not only did I drive but I had to look after their condition, to make

sure that they would be ready to be driven, with the gasoline that they needed. At the time we had our own pump here outside the garage; recently we have done away with this pump and now use the local gas stations for refills. But there remained the periodic garage work as well as making sure that they were always ready for state licensing. I took care of any needed repairs to the cars. In this whole area I worked with either the ministers or the rectors in charge at the time.

CAMPION CENTER IN TRANSITION

RR: It was a time of difficult transition. It wasn't clear just what would be done with Weston College's large house and grounds. It took a while to discern the direction of the future. It was Dick Cleary who broke new ground and even changed the name to Campion Center.

VB: That's right. In fact it was Fr. Dick Cleary who chose the name Campion Center to preserve the memory of Campion Hall, which had been our retreat house in North Andover until it closed and was sold. A lot of the work of transforming Campion Center and the planning that went into it had been done before I came here. I missed all that planning. It was pretty well in place when I moved in. But one part of the renovations took place after I came. That was combining single rooms into double rooms on the first and second floors of what had been the theologate. I found that crazy or confusing; it lasted for what seemed then as a long time.

RR: Well, it's all a tribute to the New England Province in a sense that some other former theologate buildings in the US did not find a new use. Nancy Herman as the overseer of this Campion Health Center was the right person and the right time for a very difficult time of transition.

PLOWING, MOWING, CAR MAINTENANCE

RR: Besides snow plowing, were there other seasonal responsibilities you had to handle?

VB: Beside the snow plowing in the winter, I also liked to work the lawns in the summer. In the winter the snow did not always fall, but in the summer the grass was always growing. In the beginning I did almost all the lawn mower work, and I had the tools to do the job.

THE PERFECT TRACTOR

VB: I had been driving one day in Lunenburg when I saw this big tractor for sale. So I said, "I'm going to check that out." I spoke to the owner, and he said to me, "I just bought a new motor for this tractor, and it's in good condition." He added that he was willing to sell it for \$4,400. That was a great buy, really a steal. So I checked it out at home and got permission to go ahead and buy it. I did so without delay.

In those days, we had a worker who lived nearby, John Young, Jr., who owned a big flat truck, which he used to drive onto our grounds all the time. We were good friends. I asked him if we could use his truck to pick up the tractor and bring it back from Lunenburg. So said so done. That's how we got our great big tractor at Campion.

RR: Is it still working well?

VB: Unbelievably, it is. And when it gets about ninety degrees in the summer, that tractor just goes steadily along right up to today. Anyway, I'm proud of it. I just lucked out, including the fact that the original owner had put in a new motor just before I bought it.

THIRTY-ONE YEARS AT CAMPION

RR: Is there something interesting in your life that you would like to add?

VB: Only two men of the community have been here longer

than I have. [Fr.] Joe Casey has been here about ten years more than I have, and [Fr.] Joe [John] McGrath. I guess that's a sign of how many have come and gone over the years.

BREAKS

RR: Did you get away for a break at all?

VB: I have not gone away very often over the years. A few times I did go to visit my sister, Eileen, in Arizona, and her daughter's family. There were annual retreats, of course, and occasional golf holidays with my friends like Dick Cleary, Bill Raftery, and Frank Cluff.

Visiting Jamaica never appealed to me. As I often told my brother, who invited me both while I was at Cranwell and while I have been here, "I'll go when they put in a road from Miami to Kingston." He understood and did not mind.

Whenever he came up from Jamaica during the summer, no matter where I was, we would get together either here, at Cranwell, or at home with our parents. We both were blessed in having them there for us long after the dates of our final vows.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE

RR: Let me now conclude my questions with a final one. As you look back over the years of your life as a Jesuit, were you sometimes aware that things happened to you, which seemed to come from God's providence support and guidance?

VB: Yes, I did sense God was always working in my life. He has been very present to me for as long as I remember. Everything I did I liked. Some people have jobs, but never seem satisfied and happy, and are always on the lookout for something else. But all my life I was happy to do what I was doing. God's presence worked for me. It's been good! And its still happening.

RR: It's been an interesting and rewarding conversation.
Thank you for your openness. God bless you.
VB: Thank you, and God bless you, too.

Soul of Christ

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within Thy wounds hide me.
Permit me not to be separated from Thee.
From the wicked foe defend me.
At the hour of my death call me.
And bid me come to Thee.
That with Thy saints I may praise Thee
For ever and ever. Amen.

This is a favorite prayer of Bro Brennan.

Bro. Vincent M. Brennan, S.J.

Born: July 20, 1927, Charlestown, Massachusetts
Entered: October 4, 1951, Lenox, Massachusetts, St.
Stanislaus Novitiate / Shadowbrook
Final Vows: February 2, 1962, Lenox, Massachusetts,
Cranwell School

1941 Arlington, Massachusetts: Arlington High School -
Student

1945 United States Navy

1946 Arlington, Massachusetts: Various jobs, Naval
Reserve

1951 Lenox, Massachusetts: St. Stanislaus Novitiate /
Shadowbrook -
April 4, 1951 - October 4, 1951 Postulancy
October 4, 1951 - October 4 1953 Novice Brother
1953-1954 Refectorian
1954-1956 Manager of farm

1956 Lenox, Massachusetts: Cranwell Preparatory School
1956-1969 Sub-Minister, factotum, driver for
community and school, manager of
school cafeteria and community
refectory, groundskeeper, sacristan
1969-1975 Also minister

1960 El Paso, Texas: Colegio San Alonso - Tertianship
[September 15-January 15]

1975 North Andover, Massachusetts: Campion Hall -
Factotum, groundskeeper

1977 Weston, Massachusetts: Campion Health Center -

1977 Subminister

1981-1982 Buyer

1981- Groundskeeper

1982- Driver, factotum

AMDG