

**New England Jesuit
Oral History Program**



**Rev. Henry J. Cain, 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 Rev. Henry “Harry” J. Cain, S.J.
by Rev. Richard W. Rousseau, S.J.
September 29, 2008

FAMILY BACKGROUND

RICHARD ROUSSEAU: Hi. Welcome to our conversation. What we’d like to do is to go through your life chronologically. So tell us when you were born and where.

HARRY CAIN: Well, first of all, my name is Henry Cain, but my nickname is Harry, and people know me as Hurricane, because I’m a big wind from Boston. [Laughter]

I was born in 1929 in Waltham, Massachusetts, the “Watch City,” and I grew up in St. Mary’s Parish. I went to the first six grades of school in St. Mary’s Parish. Then we moved across the river to St. Charles Parish, and I did sixth grade through high school there. The grade school was with the Sisters of Notre Dame, and then the last six years were with the Sisters of St. Joseph.

RR: We can explore that a little bit more in a minute. Tell us more about your family. How about your father?

HC: My father had an Irish background. He was a butcher his whole life, a meat cutter, and I was too—I worked

for him. I used to cut up a half a cow now and then.

My mother was born in Cape Breton Island. She was an Acadian, and she spoke Acadian all her life. She learned English as a young girl, but must have been bright, because she had no accent. She was interesting, but I had a lot of ‘the relatives who talked with a haccent. Those guy—they were French peoples, they were Hacadiens,’ and I talked to them a lot that way myself.

RR: What was your father’s name?

HC: My father’s was the same as mine, Henry-Harry. My mother didn’t want that name for me, she wanted me to be something else, but my father ran down and registered his name before she had a chance to say anything. [Laughter]

RR: Your mother’s name?

HC: Florence was the English version, but it was Flavia in Acadian. Her last name was Aucoin. She was Acadian, of course, and a gifted storyteller. They were French-speaking, so when they had things to say between themselves, they talked in French so we couldn’t understand them.

SIBLINGS

RR: How about your brothers and sisters?

HC: I have the one brother, John, who was fourteen years older; he’s gone to God quite a while ago now. And my sister, Ellie, is living over here in Weston. She’s seven years older than I am. And there was a younger girl, Mary, who died of whooping cough way back, and there were a few miscarriages and so forth through the years. So there were three of us, three siblings, and my mother and father.

RR: And nieces and nephews?

HC: Yes, I have a bunch of them. I especially recall Roberta, my brother John’s wife. She was a blues singer for a

band, an incredible person, very gifted, a great blues singer. She'd get off those songs like Ella Fitzgerald. She was a character that I enjoyed very much. She died of cancer.

HIS FATHER

RR: Could you tell us a little bit more about what your father did?

HC: Well, in the old days way back, he had a store up in what they call Lakeview, on the north side of Waltham, over by Lexington. He was called the mayor of Lakeview, because there were only a few families living there. He used to come down to Waltham center to represent the people at the City Hall. In the crash of '29, not only was I born, but the store collapsed. He was giving people credit, because they had no money, and then they couldn't pay what they owed, so the whole thing collapsed.

He told me once he used to get in shipments of vanilla extract, which has about ninety percent alcohol, I guess. And there was a drinker up on the hill—my dad could never figure out why he would come down and buy a whole case of it and, of course, he'd get blotto on the alcohol in the vanilla extract. Those were different days.

Once the store went under in '29, my parents moved to the main part of Waltham and he started working for other people. That was difficult for him. What's interesting is around '49 he opened another little store, and the people who couldn't pay the bills back in '29 came - they bought from him. It was a dinky little store, but they would come in and buy their food. He said it was the best place for a little market like his—it was on Main Street in what they call Bank Square. It was right next door to a great big chain store, so he had plenty of free parking for his people.

They could go over to the big store and buy their canned goods and all that, and then they'd go over to him and buy their meat, because they could complain if it wasn't good. In the big store they didn't know who sold them the meat. My dad sold a very good brand of meat, and people liked that personal approach; they could talk to him about it.

I worked with him for a while in that little store. My brother worked for a great big store downtown. Joe Drapkin was the owner, and my brother was one of the leading people in that store. He ran the meat smoking business, but he was a major meat cutter, too.

He'd come down and see my dad, and he would set up things in the store. My dad was getting along in age then, so he got a lot of help from my brother John. It worked out fine. My mother worked in the store, too. We'd have a little ad in the Waltham newspaper: "Harry, Florence and Harry, Jr.—come in and see us!"

He told the story about when he used to put a sign out in the window saying, "Steak, good price," but he'd misconfigure the S of steak: he'd put it in backwards. So people would come in and tell him about it, and he'd say, "Oh, is that so?" And they'd end up buying some steak.

EARLY SCHOOLING

RR: That's pretty clever. Tell us about your grammar school.

HC: I had six grades of grammar school at St. Mary's in Waltham. I don't remember much about that.

RR: Were there nuns there?

HC: Yes, Sisters of Notre Dame.

RR: But you don't remember much?

HC: No. I was the perfect student, of course. I was an absolutely ideal student in class, and then out in the schoolyard I was an absolute hellion. I got it all out of

me in the schoolyard. From there I went to St. Charles, did seventh and eighth grade there, then four years of high school.

RR: Was that your parish church?

HC: At that time it was St. Charles. Prior to that it was St. Mary's. I graduated in '47.

RR: Tell us something about how you liked the schools.

HC: I didn't have much thought about that; I just went to school. I did a course in French with one of the nuns, and she said, "You know, you're very strange, you read French with a brogue." [Laughter] I thought that was how you were supposed to be talking foreign stuff. She got a big kick out of that.

I remember another time I read the Gettysburg Address on Lincoln's birthday in the Waltham Common. There were all these people around, and I remember that when I came to the word 'dedicated,' I said 'debticated.' I never lived that one down.

COLLEGE YEARS

RR: Where did you go after high school?

HC: I went to BC. I took the entrance exam, and I was going to study mathematics. And after I took the exam Fr. John P. Foley, who was the dean of freshman, called me in and said, "You're going to study math, it says here." I said, "Yes, I thought I would." He said—and I knew what he was thinking—he asked, "Have you ever thought about chemistry?" I said, "Why do you ask?" He said, "Well, you did quite well in the entrance exam in chemistry." I said, "Yes, I know I did." The reality was that, when I was getting ready for that exam, there were different examples of these cooperative tests that were handed around to the high schools. The students could take them to practice on. Well, by chance I got the same exact exam they gave at BC to practice on, so they thought they had a Louis Pasteur on their hands,

because I must have gotten 110 on it. So Fr. Foley thought I should be studying chemistry, and he told me, "Go home and talk it over with your folks."

Well, that meant go home and tell them I'm going to study chemistry, because I was a young, very pliable, plastic kind of personality. Whatever anybody told me to do, I did it. So I studied chemistry for my years in college. It's a damn good thing I didn't do math, because I didn't have any right to be in a math course.

RR: Did you like the chemistry?

HC: I did. It was okay. Except for the accident. I had an accident where I smashed my hand and I lost a year of school.

RR: Oh, what happened?

HC: I got blood poisoning five times in the middle of my sophomore year. So then I quit at the end of that first semester. I went to the BC-Holy Cross game with the injury, and then I stayed out of school that second semester. I went back and finished the second semester the following year, so I lost a year of college. Then I did my junior year, so I finished those three years of college. At the end of my junior year I entered the Jesuits - I had been out of high school four years.

JESUIT VOCATION

RR: What led you to the Jesuits?

HC: Somebody might say, I just got someone to take care of me, but I better not say that too loud! I met Jesuits, and I liked them. I was in the choir, the glee club, and I knew Fr. Henry Callahan. And then Fr. Dick Shea used to teach me Latin, because I had very little Latin in high school. I didn't do too well in it. I had no Greek—that was '51. Before that you had to have Greek, but after that you didn't. So Dick Shea used to teach me at night after school under the streetlights at

BC. He'd say, "Take the book to the toilet, study hard."
So I did all that.

RR: And you did.

HC: And then I came into the Society after junior year. It was only when I got into the philosophy years that I had enough credits to graduate. I think it was the end of my first year of philosophy that I had enough credits to get my BS.

RR: When you went to Shadowbrook, was there a rather large group with you?

HC: I think there were about twenty-five of us in our class. There were three entrance days then: July 30, August 14, and September 7. I entered in August. I should have entered on September 7, because my birthday is September 8, but it didn't fall right!

RR: How did Shadowbrook strike you when you first settled in there?

HC: Well, I found everything fine; I didn't have any trouble at all. I got through the two years of the novitiate fine.

RR: Who was the master?

HC: John Post. I got along all right with John, because I was a simple little guy. Whatever happened, I said, "Oh, that's good." It didn't bother me. In fact, I was the happiest novice that ever lived, I think. Everything was there—I didn't need to do a single thing! [Laughter]

Then I did a year of juniorate, and that was kind of interesting. I did some more Latin and then I started doing Greek. I did a little Greek in the novitiate with Algie [Fr. Alphonsus] Yumont: "You change the ending, you see, you change the meaning." [Laughter] Algie was a hot ticket. So I worked with Algie during that year of juniorate, and then the philosophy years started.

PHILOSOPHY STUDIES

RR: So you were only three years at Shadowbrook?

HC: Yes, and I came down in '54 for philosophy.

RR: Did you find that a big change?

HC: Yes, not too bad, though. I had no trouble getting along, adapting to anything and everything. The Protean man—you're looking at him! Very easy to adapt to whatever was needed. I did the philosophy, I studied classics with [Fr.] Carl Thayer at BC, and he used to come out here and teach a course. I took a couple of courses with him, and I read Greek with [Fr.] Walter Abbott. When I finished philosophy and got my MA in philosophy, it would have been in '57, I guess.

BC HIGH AND JOHNS HOPKINS

HC: Then I went to BC High, and they put me in junior year, teaching Latin and Greek—or as I called them: Laughin' and Grief. I did quite well, and the kids liked it; that was for two years. I guess I must have been doing OK, because they had their eye on me for the future. [Fr.] Jimmy Burke [Province Prefect of Studies] told me to go down to Hopkins, where I picked up a masters degree—that would be the year of '59-'60. I lived at Loyola College in Baltimore, and I enjoyed that. They were just wonderful, very gracious people—the land of pleasant living in Baltimore, Maryland!

RR: Yes.

HC: Yes, you've been there. You know what I'm talking about. I couldn't believe it—the night we scholastics arrived, they had a Manhattan by each supper dish, and they toasted us, which was a whole new experience for me as a scholastic. I lived regular life in that house, which was a great place. I did that degree work and got my MA in classics—Latin and Greek; that was quite an experience. And then after that I came back to theology in '60.

RR: For that degree work were you focusing especially on Latin or Greek?

HC: It was really some of each. It was interesting the way they did their degrees there. You just read a lot, went to see people, and attended some classes. I did courses in classical archaeology and a few other things. It was just kind of a generic review of the Latin and Greek authors.

RR: It would certainly have fitted in with the kind of teaching you did.

HC: Absolutely. It reinforced me. In the graduate school I had a course in, of all things, Latin grammar. Wow, I was a whiz in that, because I had been teaching that at BC High. The other students didn't know what to make of me.

The professor would come in—I think his name was Henry Rowell. He was in charge of the whole place. He used to talk five minutes of Latin before each class. The students didn't know what he was saying, but I got it right away, of course. This professor liked that. He had the Germanic accent. I remember one day I came in late—I was wearing my clerics, and when I came in late, he looked at me. Then he looked at the class and said, “Officiis suis confectis, venit Pater Cain.” [Having completed his official duties, Fr. Cain arrives.]

RR: They all looked blank, I suppose?

HC: Yes, that's right. They didn't know what “Officiis” was all about. That was a lot of fun. It was an amazing university, and they were good, but they were kind of laissez-faire there. Once they told me that I needed to take a modern language exam to get my degree. When they asked me which one I wanted to take, I said, “Well, what are the choices?” I think they said either French and German. I knew very little French, so if I was going to look bad, I wanted to look bad in German, because at least I could pronounce it! I had studied

German and some French, but mostly German.

The professor said, “Come in some day, we’ll read some German.” So when I went in, he took a book off a shelf and told me, “Read that.” So I read it, and he asked, “What does that say?” I was going along, and I said, “I don’t recognize that word.” He said, “You don’t? That means Catholic Church.” [Laughter] So he said, “Put the book up on the shelf, go read some German, and come back later on.”

So I did that, and a few months later we went through it again, and I did all right. I was using the language for the seminars, but I didn’t have a formal knowledge of it. It was a rather unusual master’s degree, believe me. So I came back with that and did my theology.

THEOLOGY STUDIES

RR: How did you like your theology?

HC: I enjoyed theology the best of all. I was more mature, and it was an area that I was very interested in. [Fr.] Phil Donnelly was an absolute delight. He was crazy as a hoot owl, but a wonderful teacher.

I remember one time when he came into class and we were doing the four last things. Bro. Jimmy Keeley rolled him on the mail cart, rolled him right into the class. Phil had a long black robe on; it was covering his face, and you couldn’t see anything, just his nose and his eyes. He came rolling in, he stood there like a Roman emperor on a chariot, and then he looked at us—there were about eighty of us in the big classroom there on the second floor. Then he said, “Hodie . . . hodie nos loquimur” — and he whipped out a fire axe — “de inferno!” [Today we talk about...hell.] [Laughter] And he went on to give a wonderful lecture on the four last things. He was clearer in Latin than he was in English. I never met anybody like him.

Another professor, [Fr.] Frank Lawlor, was extraordinarily gifted in the Latin language. He could go on and on, but Phil Donnelly was the one who could tell jokes in Latin. He was unbelievable. I never experienced that before, anybody quite like that, anyone that good. I guess he defended Cicero as a young student, and he read the whole corpus, I think. He had this “esse videatur,” with all these streaming sentences. And he’d have a faucet on his head and be laughing and screaming and touching the floor, and all the time speaking a beautiful, linguistic Latin. Those were good years.

ORDINATION

RR: And then ordination?

HC: Yes, I got ordained in ’63 and did all the usual things.

RR: At Weston?

HC: Yes, right here. Then I did my first Mass at St. Charles—all the usual things. And then I came back and did fourth year theology.

RR: Did you go out much?

HC: A little bit; we didn’t do much. I did as many weekends as I could, but as for going out and saying Masses, we didn’t do much. We had that amazing restriction on faculties. I never understood it. You only had faculties while you were in the parish where you went—you couldn’t hear confessions here. I don’t know whether that was a house rule or whether we did really have faculties – I never tested it.

TERTIANSHIP

HC: After that, I did tertianship at Pomfret.

RR: Who was the master there?

HC: William Kelleher, “Deus.” I think he got the nickname “Deus” from when he was teaching in the juniorate.

TEACHING AT XAVIER HIGH

RR: And then?

HC: After tertianship, in 1965 I was assigned to Xavier High school in nearby Concord. I was assigned to do Latin and Greek, and I was there till '69. I knew every student that ever went there. I didn't teach them all, but I knew them, because I arrived in '65 and taught the seniors—that was the first graduating class.

[Fr.] Mike McFarland [current present of The College of the Holy Cross] and [Fr.] Paul Holland [now rector at Campion Center] were in that class, and the man that died very young, Charlie Kelly. He was two or three years down the line. We got four vocations out of that school, which opened in '62 and closed in '70. So I was there from '65 to '69. Then I thought it was time for me to start working more with adults.

RR: Why did it close down so quickly?

HC: Don't ask me. You get as many reasons given to you as people you ask.

RR: Oh, I see. I just never heard much about just what happened.

HC: That's one for the ages, because it was an extraordinary school—400 students and a very intelligent student body. There was enthusiasm all over the place. One time I gave a talk before a basketball game. We were going to have a game that night, and all the students were in the auditorium.

When I got up on the stage, I gave some rally slogans in Latin, and they got it. I'd say something like, "Non venimus ad loquendum. Venimus ad victoriam!" "We don't come here to speak. We come here for victory." They really went nuts. They were yelling "Sieg Heil," and I think they would almost have elected me the new Hitler, if I let them. We destroyed the other team that night, just wiped them out. They were so enthusiastic. They were yelling, "Ad victoriam." They

had these lapel buttons, which read: “Ad victoriam, ad victoriam.”

So that was the atmosphere of the school, but there was conflict. The way I look at it, anything that opened in '62 was destined to close in 1970 because of the times, the conflict. “Conservative” and “liberal” — those were the two big words going around. There was kind of a split in the faculty—I mean different points of view, and the same with the parents. The tuition was rather high, and there had to be a lot of support. Some of the parents didn't know whether they wanted to do this. They weren't comfortable. So there was all that stuff. [Fr.] Jack Vigneau, the principal—he was a good man, but that's another story.

RR: That's right.

BETTER WORLD MOVEMENT

HC: I then thought I wanted to work more with adults. I was doing weekend retreats, and I thought I should do retreat work.

RR: Were you doing that while you were teaching at Xavier?

HC: Yes, I was going out. I talked to the then Provincial Fr. Bill Guindon about that, and he said, “Well, why don't you think about it?” Later on he asked me, “Have you come up with anything?” I said, “Look at this.” It was the first issue of *Studies in Jesuit Spirituality*, which came out in 1969. The issue was all about different kinds of retreat work going on in the Society. On the last page was news about this Movement for a Better World [Movimento pro Mundo Migliore], founded by Fr. Ricardo Lombardi S.J. in Rome; it was getting very popular. So I said to Bill, “This looks interesting; I think I'd like to try it.” They do preaching around the world, trying to introduce the world to the Church through Vatican II. That's really what it was all about.”

So I said, “I’d like to do that.” And he said, “Go to Rome.” There was a training course, so I went over to Rome from September through December. I took the course there to get ready for preaching and all that. I had joined the American team by that time; there were about forty on it. That summer before I went to Rome, I had to do that style of retreat before they could make some kind of a judgment on you.

I made something like three Better World retreats in a row. I was traveling with a team around the country. I was glowing in the dark by the time that thing finished. [Laughter] They said, “Well, yes, come and join us if you like.” So I went to Rome, took the course, came back around January and went to the Midwest. Then I started preaching with the team for a couple of years.

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

HG: After two years, there was an election for a new national director. We had a convention for that, and I was nominated, along with another person. So there were two of us, and the election was to be the next day.

I just knew from what I could tell about the situation that, if I put my name in and said, “Yes, I will,” I would be elected. But I wasn’t so sure I wanted to do that.

So I went to bed that night and woke up in the wee hours of the morning. My hand rolled over, and I hit a book on my bedside table. I said, “What’s that?” I put the light on. I opened the book, and it said—so help me God—it said, “If you are the Messiah, please tell us.” [Laughter] I said, “Well, you can be sure I won’t tell them that in the morning.” I kept it to myself and I was elected. When I told them later, they got a big kick. I was the director for two years, leading the

team of forty of us around the United States. And during that time I went once to Spain and once to Rome for international meetings.

RR: Tell us what one of these meetings might have looked like.

HC: Well, representatives of the Better World teams would come from all over the world.

RR: What would you do?

HC: We were trying to devise better ways of proceeding, something like our Jesuit congregations. We discussed how to proceed: the best things that we needed to preach about or how we needed to go about it. What are our strengths, what are our weaknesses? That type of thing. The meetings were good, they were fascinating.

RR: So you did that for a year or two?

HC: For two years I was the National Director for the US Promoting Group for the Movement for a Better World. So I was two years preaching, then two years directing and preaching too; I spent four years with the Better World. By that time, when you're middle-aged, you can take only so much of that. I was basically living out of a suitcase for four years. It just got to be too much after a while.

DIRECTING RETREATS

HC: So I came back to the province in 1974, and I lived at Bishop Connolly High School in Fall River. I was the minister there for one year.

RR: How did you like doing that?

HC: Oh, I loved being the minister. We used to put out some great meals, and I bought some nice wines, and people enjoyed that. Mo [Maurice] Lebel was the rector, and I was there with him for a year or two. Then I decided I felt confined there. I did a little bit of retreat work, but it was hard to get out of there, espe-

cially as minister. So I talked to Joe McHugh, who was one of the assistant provincials, and told him, "Joe, I'd like to move." He was wonderful and arranged immediately for me to go to live at 418 Beacon St. I lived there and did retreat work.

RR: You went out from there?

HC: Yes, I went out from there. It didn't matter where I lived, because I was in and out all the time. Then, in 1975, before the renovations started to take place here at Campion Center, they wanted to open up a renewal center. Ed Hallen, Bob Padberg, and I were asked to start the team. So for two years I worked with them at the renewal center here at Campion.

Then I went off and did a sabbatical at Weston School of Theology during the 1978 school year, and after that I was living at Loyola House on Newbury Street for a couple of years. Then I moved to St. Joseph Center at Sullivan Square in Charlestown, where I continued retreat work and was the assistant director, while I was also on the road.

RR: What kind of a residence was that?

HC: There were about four or five of us living there in the residence. Fred Bailey, the pastor at St. Mary's in the North End, was there along with George McCabe, John Surette, and two or three others. There was also a labor school in an old grade school building next door.

BACK TO CAMPION

HC: In the mid '80s one day I was talking with Ray Bertrand, who was the director of the renewal team here at Campion. He asked me, "Would you ever be interested?" He didn't know I would want to be staying in one place all the time. So I said, "Yes, I'd like that. Would I ever!" So he told me, "Join the team." Oh, he was very pleased. So in 1985 I came to Campion, and I've been living here ever since.

Joe Casey and I are the two people who have lived longest in this house, I think. Joe's been here 316 years—but don't tell him I told you. [Laughter] On and off I've been here about thirty years. And then I was also on the road, because they closed down the renewal center for a while, when they renovated the whole kitchen

RR: Where did you live?

HC: I was minister at Arrupe House, the novitiate in Jamaica Plain, while still doing retreats out of Campion Center.

THE ESSENCE OF RETREATS

RR: Let me ask you a general question. As you were saying, you've been involved with retreats one way or another for years and years. I think a lot of people would be interested in hearing your vision of what a Jesuit retreat is. I don't mean little details, but some of the spirit. What is different about it? What is good about it? Has it changed over the years? Give us a little bit of an overview of how you see retreats.

HC: I think it has changed. I think we're trying to catch up to Ignatius. The Exercises are all about beginning with the reality that we are saved sinners. You try to open up the possibilities for people to begin truly to believe in their heart through grace that God accepts them and loves them as they are, that they are saved sinners. And that moves them to gratitude.

Usually they have an awareness of their own sinfulness when that happens, which is interesting. You don't have to mention anything about sin. If a person gets to be grateful for all that's happened to them from God, then they begin to realize how ungrateful they are. They begin to get opened up to their experience of what it means to be a sinner and yet loved and saved, and the gratitude deepens.

And as that deepens, then you really have the gift and the grace of the First Week of the Exercises. That's what I try to inculcate most of the time in missions—that's about as much as you can get to. After accomplishing that, you've done a great thing.

HIS VISION

RR: Yes.

HC: I've been doing directed retreats and all kinds of thirty-day retreats—I've done five or six of them. You find after a little while that in that First Week experience of gratitude the retreatants begin to say, "What can I do about this?" And they want to express their gratitude, and that opens them up to the Second Week. They begin to respond to the suggestion, "Oh, would you like to follow Jesus in this?" They begin to see then that this would be a possibility. So that opens up the whole Second Week, coming to know this Jesus who loves and knows and accepts them.

Then it moves towards the passion and the resurrection, and then to the "Contemplatio ad Amorem." That's the general sweep that I think is always in my heart, always in my mind. Whether it's a preached mission, a one-on-one directed retreat, a thirty-day retreat, an eight-day retreat, a one-day retreat, a weekend retreat, it's always moving that way in me.

RR: You have a vision?

HC: Yes, that's how I see it. So it's a matter of trying to catch up to Ignatius, because Ignatius saw this so perfectly—it was so incredibly clear in his mind.

EVOLUTION IN THE RETREAT MOVEMENT

RR: Have you seen major changes in the kind of retreats?

HC: Oh, absolutely. In the early days, it was preached retreats, and very good preached retreats at that. They encouraged you to do personal prayer, but there was

no follow-up, no talking about it really. So there was no spiritual direction. I think that's the one thing that opened up around 1970, when people began to get direction for their life and for their prayer. There had always been direction in the past, of course, but now there was an emphasis on the value of direction and a spirit of life coming to the person.

People began being trained to really listen to what someone was saying. When directed retreats began, people didn't always really know what they were doing, I don't think. Because you'd come in and you'd say, "This is what's moving me," and they'd say, "That's wonderful." Then they would give you a sheet with scripture texts on it and say, "Well, let's try this today." Their advice had nothing to do with what the person said—that's not direction, well, it's not good direction. I always say, "There's no such thing as a directed retreat—they don't exist. It's a misnomer. There are co-discerning retreats, where the director and the directee are praying and reflecting and asking, 'What's being said here? What's going on in that person? What's going on in me?'"

IMPORTANCE OF SUPERVISION

HC: That's why you need supervision, someone looking on from the outside, so the director can talk about his or her own experience, what's going on in the director. Often enough I have found that what goes on in the director is also going on with directee or retreatant, although they don't even say it. They might be really angry as hell, and I'm feeling the anger, but they're talking about how they love peanut butter. They're just ripping angry, and I can feel it.

RR: How do you get to that?

HC: That's not an easy thing. You say, "Tell me a little bit more about that. How do you get your anger out?"

You just have to hope, wait, and pray. You say, “Why don’t you pray about that some more and see where it takes you?” It’s a very delicate situation. If you come in and tell them, “You’re very angry,” they’ll walk out the door very angry. [Laughter] But you never get to it. That’s an extreme example, but that happens.

DEVELOPMENT OF DIRECTED RETREATS

RR: I was out of the province during a lot of this time, but my impression is that the New England Province in many ways had a great deal of impact on retreats.

HC: Directed retreats.

RR: Yes, directed retreats in this country, at least on the East Coast.

HC: Well, it all began in Guelph with John English of the Canadian Jesuit Province. He’s the man who was really the driving force in directed retreats. His work influenced a number of our men in New England. I may not have this right, but in 1970, I’d say it was Brian Duffy, Bob Lindsay, Bob Doherty, Jack Begley—those were the four men I believe who were involved in the opening team at Gloucester.

Those guys said, “This is to be a house of prayer and quiet,” and they’ve maintained that atmosphere since 1970. It’s amazing. If you walk into a retreat at Gloucester and somebody’s talking, you ask, “What, did someone die? Why this extraordinary event?” Anyway, they really began a wonderful thrust.

There may have been others there too. I may not have all the names right, but the group there started this prayerful atmosphere, and people started to come. I was here at the time, on the Campion team, and then I got involved in showing people how to do directed retreats, how to go about it. So I was invited up to Gloucester to help out now and then. That was a good experience for me.

SPREAD OF DIRECTED RETREATS

HC: New England did have a strong influence on various places, you're right, certainly in the East Coast and in the West Coast at the beginning. But in the Midwest it continued to be men's weekend retreats in the parish missions and the retreat houses. A place like Whitehouse in St. Louis would have eighty men for a weekend, and they still do. They would preach some good stuff, but it wasn't directed. I may be misreading this, but I think I'm right: in the Midwest in general and down in the South and in the middle of the country, there wasn't that influence for quite a while. It's all there now, of course.

RR: What made them change it?

HC: Well, I think they began to see the need. People went off to make directed retreats, and they saw the value of it. They came and trained—that's when CRD [Centre for Religious Development] was a big influence, maybe that's what you're talking about. CRD was a major influence, training directors from around the whole world, very much so.

RR: How about the West Coast?

HC: On the West Coast you have Los Altos, a big retreat house, not far from San Jose, though I don't know too much about the West Coast. That retreat house is still going very strong. There are a lot of directed retreats, and for some time they also have had a training program [Pierre Favre Program].

PARISH MISSION WORK

RR: I've been asking questions, but there may be something that you think we're passing over. Is there some interesting point that you would like you to mention?

HC: Well, one thing would be on my own personal life. I do a lot of parish missions around the country for about ten years. Virginia Blass and I met one another about

twelve years ago. Going out on retreats together, we started talking a little bit and saying, “We work together pretty well.” So we’ve been working as a retreat team now for religious communities and other groups, and especially now in parish missions. We do that most all of Lent.

The coming Lent, for instance, is all filled with parish missions, and we have one in this month, October, in Rochester, New York. We’ll go there and give a parish mission. The parish mission is four days in length, Monday to Thursday, but the prior weekend Ginny and I both preach to promote the mission and invite people to come.

RR: And the reaction is pretty good?

HC: It’s been very good, yes. A lot of people come. We’ll be going down to Florida this coming Lent for a mission. We’ll also be in New York for two of them on Long Island, then in Utica. That’s been a major work for me in the last ten years.

RR: Do you work just with parish groups?

HC: Ginny and I also work with religious communities, sometimes with the older communities. We do pretty well with them. They get a big kick out of us. She’s a gifted preacher and a wonderful director. Her uncle is Vincent Youngberg, a Passionist. When he gives a mission, he stops traffic in town, so many people come. [Laughter] He is in his eighties now, but he just packs churches and is still going strong.

Ginny gave a couple of missions with him, and she did all right. They call him Vinny, and she’s Ginny, so they used to say, “Skinny Vinny and Ginny are the two doing the parish mission.” So Ginny and I have done a lot of work together, and I really feel that relationship has been a real blessing in my life. It’s been wonderful.

THE FUTURE OF JESUIT RETREATS

RR: This is an unfair question, perhaps, but what do you think of the future for Jesuit retreats as time goes on?

HC: Oh, I think it's just beginning. I think maybe our role now is to train more lay people to do retreats, but the Spiritual Exercises are more important than the Jesuits. That whole experience of knowing Ignatian spirituality, especially the area of discernment, is what we need so much in our days.

Take, for instance, the national elections. We need to help people to reflect on where God is leading us and what we can do to help. What is my role? So I think as long as there are Jesuits, there will always be retreats, and Ignatian spirituality will be alive. From what I've been able to read from the Thirty-fifth General Congregation, it's all about the Exercises. The role of the Exercises underlies everything in the Society, and as long as we're around, the Exercises will be around. Even if it sounds bizarre to say it, the Exercises don't need the Jesuits – Jesuits need the Exercises. The Exercises will always be around as long as people are open to Ignatian spirituality, I think.

DOING THE RIGHT THING

RR: All right. I'll ask you a last question, an overall, spiritual question. As you look back over your own life, seeing all these different things that have happened, the good things and the bad things, and the opportunities that have opened up in a variety of ways, do you ever feel that there's been a kind of providential guidance in your life? Has God been guiding you in all of these different things that have happened to you in a variety of ways?

HC: No, not at all! [Laughter] I used to shine shoes as a kid, and I also sold newspapers. I always felt as though I was pretty good at those things. When I look back at it

now, I see God kind of giving me little jobs here and there, and I find that there are areas in my life where there's an obvious gift from God.

For instance, I used to be absolutely and utterly petrified to speak in public. I could not read at table. Why? I thought I had a terrible voice, and I was just afraid of making big big mistakes and not able to really communicate at all. But during tertianship I read a book once at dinner, and people said, "You read well." I couldn't believe them, but since then people keep saying to me, "You have something like a stage voice. You have a voice that you cannot not listen to it when you start talking." "What?" [Laughter]

In a practical sense, that was for me one of the great gifts: my becoming aware of this—and it's true, I know it's true, because people tell me this all the time. I can't believe it when they say it, but I know it's true. I find that in a very strange way one of the great gifts that I've received and a confirmation from God that I'm doing the right thing.

RR: Thank you. Would you have a favorite prayer?

HC: Well, I think the Serenity Prayer is pretty nice. I have my own [see below].

RR: Beautiful.

HC: By the way the reason I say that part about Mary is I don't have much physical devotion to Mary. I don't do rosary beads and things, but at every talk I give, I say that and I say to Mary, "This is as much as I can do." [Laughter] Or that I'm going to do!

Gracious God,
we thank you
for the light of this day and
for the darkness of the night
that will soon come upon us,
for in some very real mysterious way
you find us and
we find you in both the light and the dark.
So give us hearts and minds and spirits
that remain open to your word.
And Mary, Mother of the Church,
we ask you to continue to pray for us
as we ponder what you pondered.

Amen.

Rev. Henry "Harry" J. Cain, S.J.

Born: September 8, 1929, Waltham, Massachusetts
Entered: August 14, 1951, Lenox, Massachusetts, St.
Stanislaus Novitiate/Shadowbrook
Ordained: June 15, 1963, Weston, Massachusetts,
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1944 Waltham, Massachusetts: St. Charles High School -
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1948 Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: Boston College -
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1951 Lenox, Massachusetts: St. Stanislaus Novitiate/
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1954 Weston, Massachusetts: Weston College - Studied
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1957 Boston, Massachusetts: Boston College High School
- Taught third year
1959 Baltimore, Maryland: Loyola College - Studied
classics at Johns Hopkins University
1960 Weston, Massachusetts: Weston College - Studied
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1964 Pomfret, Connecticut: St. Robert Hall -
Tertianship
1965 Concord, Massachusetts: Xavier High School -
Taught theology
1969-1970 Chairman of classics department
1970 Rome, Italy: Centro Internazionale Pio XII di
Spiritualita Postconciliare - Studies with the Better
World Movement

- 1971 Washington D.C.: [Various residences] - Retreat work with the Better World Movement
- 1972-1974 National Director, United States Promoting Group, Movement for a Better World
- 1974 Fall River, Massachusetts: Bishop Connolly High School - Minister, Director of JSG [=?] Society
- 1975 Boston, Massachusetts: 418 Beacon Street - Retreat work
- 1975 Weston, Massachusetts: Campion Renewal Center - Retreat work, assistant director
- 1978 Cambridge, Massachusetts: Weston School of Theology - Studied theology
- 1979 Boston, Massachusetts: Loyola House - Retreat work, spiritual direction
- 1981 Charlestown, Massachusetts: St. Joseph Spiritual and Social Center - Retreat work, assistant director
- 1985 Weston, Massachusetts: Campion Center - Retreat work
- 1989 Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts: Arrupe House / Novitiate - Minister, retreat work at Campion Center
- 1990- Weston, Massachusetts: Campion Center - Retreat work

Degrees

- 1956 Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy, Weston College-Boston College
- 1957 Master of Arts, Philosophy, Weston College-Boston College
- 1960 Master of Arts, Classics, Johns Hopkins University
- 1964 Licentiate in Sacred Theology, Weston College