

## Planned Giving

# A Conversation with Fr. William Doyle, SJ

by Grace Regan



On a beautiful day in September, my colleague Suzanne Heffernan and I set out for Campion Center to visit with a very special Jesuit, Fr. Bill Doyle, SJ. Fr. Doyle moved to Campion last December after 20 years of service as Chaplain of Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital. Fr. Doyle's sisters, Ann and Mary, both of whom have gone home to God, honored their brother by leaving bequests to the New England Province of Jesuits. We share his story as a way to thank the Doyle family for their philanthropy and fidelity to their brother and to the Society of Jesus.

Fr. Doyle has a wonderful story, but he insisted that this should not be about him, but about his family and his life as a Jesuit. The young Bill Doyle grew up in Woburn, MA, with his parents and seven brothers and sisters. His father died young leaving Mrs. Doyle with eight children under the age of thirteen. The smile widened when talking about his mother, "We don't know how she did it, but she did. We never asked how she managed, but we were fed, clothed, went to great schools, and were happy."

At Boston College High School, Bill met four young men, Tom Spillane, Leo McGovern, Stan Bowe and Joe Mahoney, lifelong friends and colleagues in the Society of Jesus. He reminisced about his high school studies in Greek and Latin with Fr. Fred Blatchford, SJ, and the Jesuits who influenced his decision to enter the Society. "I came to admire these men and the experience made me think I could do this; maybe this is my vocation." Bill Doyle graduated from B. C. High in 1940 with his four friends and together they entered the Society of Jesus that summer at Shadowbrook.

Fr. Doyle has many fond memories about his formation. "You were assigned a graduate field of study. I was given math and physics. If I had a choice, I might have chosen English or History, but I didn't and I enjoyed my many years of teaching math" both at B. C. High and Xavier High School in Concord. Two of the young men he taught at Xavier entered the Jesuits: Fr. Michael McFarland, SJ, now President at Holy Cross and Fr. Paul Holland, SJ, current rector of Campion Center.

Fr. McFarland reflects, "Fr. Doyle was a taskmaster, but he also knew how to inject just enough humor and warmth to keep us engaged. It was a great treat after I entered the Jesuits to get to know him better."

Fr. Doyle's room is full of remembrances. Two sets of vintage golf clubs stand in a corner. When pressed, Fr. Doyle began to share his love of coaching golf both at B. C. High and at Xavier. Paul Holland, SJ, remarked: "Bill's humility will keep us from ever knowing his talent and success as a golfer." John Mahoney, Chair of the Province Advancement Committee, was taught and coached by Fr. Doyle: "His quiet, steady teaching embodies the Jesuit tradition. He was intelligent, thoughtful and very effective in guiding young minds, in the classroom and on the golf course, to becoming men for others. Fr. Doyle was one of Jesuits who changed my life."

When asked about a family picture on his desk, Fr. Doyle's eyes danced and his smile grew, "Of the eight siblings, three of us entered religious life; I went to the Jesuits, Betty joined the Carmelites and Grace entered the Cenacle. Ann and Mary were so generous to remember me in their wills. I took a vow of poverty, but their philanthropy will take care of the men in formation and the men at Campion. I am so grateful."

Fr. Doyle celebrated his 85th birthday on October 12. He is sixty-six years a Jesuit and fifty-three years a priest. When asked how it feels, Fr. Doyle remarked, "So far, it has been a great round." ✦