

**New England Jesuit
Oral History Program**



**Fr. Joseph E. Mullen, 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 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 oral history is all about.

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May 2007

Interview with Fr. Joseph E. Mullen, S.J.
by Fr. Paul C. Kenney, S.J.
April 21, 2006

EARLY YEARS

PAUL KENNEY: Good morning, Joe. How are you today?

JOSEPH MULLEN: Doing fine. How are you?

PK: Great. As we usually, do I would like to invite you to tell us something about your early years and your family.

JM: I was born in old South Boston in 1919, the son of Brian Mullen and Margaret Manley Mullen. I was the eleventh of twelve children, of whom two boys died at birth and another died at sixteen after a sandlot football game, when his heart gave out.

PK: Of those, how many are alive today?

JM: I'm the only surviving member of the family. Altogether there were five girls and seven boys. I was the sixth son and the eleventh child.

PK: Would you like to say a little bit about your parents?

JM: My father was born in the Aran Islands, Ireland. The Aran Islands are about thirty miles from the town of Galway and about eleven miles off the Cliffs of Moher in Clare. Most of the men there were fishermen. They

caught twenty-foot basking sharks by spearing them with harpoons from fourteen-foot boats called currachs. My father went to sea one day when he was nine years old, since they were a man short in a four-man curragh. He was very proud of that day when they caught a twenty-foot basking shark. When they landed, one of the men said to his father, "You said you were going to bring a man today, and you did," even though he was only nine at the time.

PK: How about your mother?

JM: My mother was born in old South Boston in 1880. My father was born in 1875 in the Aran Islands. They were married at St. Peter and Paul's Church in old South Boston in 1900. My grandparents, Cormac Manley and Barbara Gorham, were married in the same church in 1875. Some of the Manley family landed in, of all places, Bath, Maine, when they first came to this country back in the 1850s or so. That particular side of the family had a very interesting background.

PK: How about your mother's and your father's occupations?

JM: My mother married young. She was 20. I'm not sure what particular type of work she had done as a young girl. My father, after being a fisherman until he was nineteen, came to the United States and landed in Waltham, Massachusetts, in order to become a stone monument cutter.

PK: For graveyards?

JM: Yes, grave monuments. But he found that Waltham [chuckles] was too quiet a place to live, so he moved into old South Boston. At first he worked for the railroads, then in the wool house selling wool from Australia. As far as I know he was called "a grader." His particular job was to present the wool to get a higher price. There was a time in the Boston wool

industry, as you perhaps know, when it was possible to become a millionaire or a pauper overnight. At that time it was a vibrant and exciting situation, but also a very, very touchy one. But he spent his life in that particular kind of work. He was a very interesting man. Though he had little formal education, he was extremely bright, especially in mathematics. For years he was known amongst his fellow workers as having a fantastic memory as well as the ability to clarify particularly confused situations. Years later, when I was a dean at Holy Cross College for a while, I often thought that he, despite his lack of education, should have been the acting dean and I the wool man. [Laughter]

HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS

PK: How about your brothers and sisters? Were any of them closer to you who had a formative influence on you?

JM: I would say it was my brother Jimmie, the youngest boy and seventh son. We were very close, because as the youngest in the family, we were extremely well taken care of. [Chuckles] Let me run quickly through my brothers and sisters: First, Peter, nineteen and a half years older than I, was a very sharp and driving business man, artist, and hunter with a good sense of humor. Then Barbara, a beautiful, sparkling, and fun-loving person. She would slip me the money for Saturday movies; in turn I reenacted them for her while she was ironing or cooking for her little family. Next Charles, who died as a baby. Mary, SND, artist, calligrapher, teacher, etc. Then, Sally, RN, who as a young nurse saved my life, when I had pneumonia as a child. Next, Ann, who taught me to dance for the junior and senior proms. Then, John who died at sixteen after a football game when his heart gave out.

My mother said that I was his mirror image. Next, Brian, four years older than I, handsome and the family comedian. Then, James I, who died as a baby. Finally, myself and Jimmie II, my sidekick.

PK: It must have been wonderful having all those older sisters and brothers.

JM: Everybody smoothed the way for the two of us. We enjoyed the helpful benefits of having a tremendous number of brothers and sisters, to say nothing of all their friends. Later on, Jimmie became a major in the Marine Corps and was an extremely interesting fellow. He was also a Massachusetts state representative in the Great and General Court, and a builder of homes in Milton, Massachusetts. As he used to say, "You can be a millionaire one day and a pauper the next, depending on the ups and downs of the building business." [Chuckles]

PK: So what was true of your dad with the wool business was true of your brother with the building business.

JM: Yes, that's right.

PK: How about your sisters? What were they like?

JM: If I may say so, my five sisters were extremely talented and very gracious. As my father used to say, "Even when they get up in the morning, they all look beautiful." [Laughter]

RELIGIOUS ATMOSPHERE

PK: Let's talk a little bit now about the religious atmosphere of your home and parish.

JM: As a Catholic I went to St. Augustine's Grammar School. I was never able to skip school and get away with it. I had so many brothers and sisters in the school that the nuns could always check up on us. I went from St. Augustine's Grammar School to Boston College High School. I graduated from there in 1937 and entered the Jesuits. When I first applied to

the Order, they turned me down because of my health. They thought I had a bad heart and weak lungs from having pneumonia several times. When I went a second time, I had the help of Fr. Freddie Blatchford, a wonderful priest, who spoke up for me.

VOCATION

JM: Actually, the priesthood was the last thing I wanted to do at the time. During my first three years at B.C. High, I had Fr. Mattie Donovan. He was a great old tiger who believed that knowledge should make a bloody entrance—and he saw to it that was what happened. One famous motto he adapted was written by a Civil War General: “We will fight until hell freezes over and then we’ll fight on the ice.” He changed it to: “We will study until hell freezes over and then we’ll study on the ice.” He was a good grammarian. We didn’t do quite as well in literature as we did in grammar, but he really taught us how to write. We did a tremendous amount of composition in Latin, Greek, and English. I was told by Fr. Bill Healy, our English professor in the juniorate, that since I had already developed a style of writing, I should now read Newman to learn how to think straight. [Laughter]

PARISH LIFE

PK: Would you say a bit about your parish and your parish priests?

JM: I was from St. Augustine’s Parish, and became an altar boy very, very young. My brothers were altar boys before me, so I became one. My brother Jimmie became master of ceremonies when he was only knee-high, because his big brothers made sure that he got the job. It was a wonderful parish with five priests. The pastor was old Msgr. Coppinger. His was the

first Mass I ever served. When I couldn't pick up the missal to move it from one side of the altar to the other because it was too heavy, he said to me after Mass, "Joe, why don't you go home and grow a year, then you can come back and lift the book." [Laughter] He allowed us "mighty mites" to decorate the altar in our Buster Brown collars and big bows.

PK: So you were close to him?

JM: Yes. I was an altar boy from the time I could not lift the book until forever. The priests were very close to the family. They were in and out of our house all the time, because they lived only a block away.

HEALTH ISSUES

PK: Were you interested in sports?

JM: Given that when I was very young, I had a serious operation on my right lung, I couldn't play football, but I played all other sports. I could play tag football but not tackle. Later on, when I tried to enter the Order, there were questions about my health. Then when, after two years, when the time came for my vows, I was told that, because they weren't sure of my health, they were going to give me a little longer before I could take my vows. For the next nine months I remained a novice while studying in the juniorate. One day, the Novice Master, Fr. Jack Smith (Captain Jack) called me in and said, "We're not sure whether you have the health that will sustain you through the years of study. That's why we are hesitant to give you your vows. What would you do if you had to leave?" I said, "If I get well, I would just join another group with no problem at all." The very next morning, he called me in again [chuckles] and said, "Last night we heard from old Fr. "Daddy" Williams about you. He said to us, 'Take him, even if he's confined to bed tomorrow. I'm 87 and still

going strong.’ So we decided to listen to him and let you stay and take your vows.” [Fr. Williams, a Jamaican missionary and noted ethnologist about Jamaica, was crippled.]

BOSTON COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

PK: [Laughter] So tell us a bit about how you ended up at B.C. High.

JM: My father believed that it was the place to go. All my friends went either to Boston Latin School or Boston English. Also, I had been reading old Fr. Finn’s books, such as *Tom Playfair*. Reading that Jesuit’s books made me want to go to a Jesuit school. As it turned out, I was the only boy in my family that did.

PK: Were you in any activities at B.C. High?

JM: Oh, yes. I was the prefect of the Sodality, president of the Debating Club, and secretary of senior year.

PK: What about sports?

JM: No. As I mentioned earlier, I couldn’t do much in the way of sports. But I had no problem with baseball and touch football.

PK: You seem to have been well prepared.

INFLUENTIAL TEACHERS

JM: As a matter of fact, I was very much opposed to becoming a priest, because I had a rough time with a homeroom teacher who was always driving us too hard, I thought. I remember I even tried to take German as my language so I could avoid being in his class. But he wouldn’t let us go. I remember what he said to my mother and father, “The boy should take French.” So the boy took French. [Chuckles]

PK: You couldn’t escape him.

JM: He got his way, and we had to stay in his class for three years! It was a good class, however. He was a

driver. Here is a possibly comical example. When I was a freshman and took the midyear exams, I made one Latin mistake. I got a 96 instead of a 100. So in class, when he was going through our exams, he asked me, "What mistake did you make?" It was because there was a great boy from East Boston in the class, who sat four seats in front of me and who had made the same mistake I did. So he confessed making the mistake; and, of course, I sat only four seats away from him. Our teacher came off his platform to give me a quick clip. [Chuckles] As he came closer, I jumped up and ran to the back of the classroom and out the door. [Laughter] I remember him calling out, "Come here. Come back here, young man. Come back!" I told him I'd come back if he wouldn't hit me. [Laughter] Years later, at Weston College, where I am now, he was also here in his nineties. When I went to visit him, the nurse was standing at the head of his bed. And, as I walked in the door, he said to her, "That is the young man who put me in this bed!" [Laughter]

PK: With that kind of treatment, how come you were still interested in becoming a priest?

JM: Well, the next year at B. C. High, I had Fr. Freddy Blatchford as a teacher. He was a remarkable man. His way of teaching was just the opposite. His motto was "Laugh and learn!" So the fourth year was a delightful year for me. The person who most influenced me to become a Jesuit, however, was a lay teacher named Mr. Denis Haggerty. He was a big, powerful man who taught French, mathematics, and Greek in my third year. All the boys admired him tremendously. He never wore a topcoat or an overcoat. He always came in a suit coat, even in the middle of the winter. But he didn't teach us in our fourth year because he fell sick; in September, he had a burst

appendix and died. I was the master of ceremonies at his funeral. His influence helped lead me to the Jesuits. I liked and admired Fr. Blatchford very much. But I also wanted to be a teacher like Mr. Haggerty. So the combination of Haggerty, Blatchford, and the other good Jesuits, even my son-of-a-gun homeroom teacher, led me to the priesthood. Fr. Blatchford was the one who more or less helped me decide between the Jesuits or the secular priesthood.

SCHOLASTIC YEARS

PK: But then you had some unexpected challenges later as a scholastic?

JM: Yes. In 1944 during the war, two days after I was given my minor orders, I went from studying philosophy here at Weston to Holy Cross College to teach mathematics to the Naval Corps. I did this for three years straight and then returned to Weston for theology.

PK: What was your overall reaction to both philosophy and theology?

JM: I did well in philosophy and theology, though I ran into some trouble in theology. I was the second-year beadle and Joe Hammond was my sub-beadle. When he left the Order, the Rector, Fr. Martin, never gave me a helper. So I was quite busy as both beadle and sub-beadle. In preparing for the exams at the end of my second year theology, I prepared forty-eight theses. The two theses I did not prepare [chuckles] were the ones I was questioned on. Therefore, I went into the short course. I remember Fr. Martin saying to me, "I made a mistake." I said to him, "Yes, you made the mistake, and I got the kick in the rear!" [Laughter]

PK: He admitted his mistake, though.

DEATH OF HIS FATHER

JM: Yes. I was ordained June 17, 1950, finished theology in 1951, and was ready for tertianship, when Fr. Ray McGuiness, the tertian master, died very suddenly. This led to a tremendous number of changes. I was having to get used to sudden changes. The summer before I had landed in Boston City Hospital as a chaplain two weeks after ordination. And my father couldn't come to my ordination because he was dying. The day I was ordained I went home and anointed him. The next day I said a Mass for him. About two weeks before I was ordained he had asked me, "How long, Joe?" I said, "Give me two weeks, Dad, and I'll be ordained." He waited three weeks. I said my first Mass the morning after ordination. The next Mass I said was in my own home for my father. The following Sunday I said my first solemn public Mass. The next Saturday I said his funeral Mass.

PK: You were there with him to the end.

CHAPLAIN AT BOSTON CITY HOSPITAL

JM: It was all very, very upsetting. So, only a couple of days after that I landed in the Boston City Hospital as a chaplain. Three of us were assigned there.

PK: Were you there for the whole summer?

JM: No, only for about two or three weeks. Let me say that no one should be sent immediately from Weston College to the middle of the Boston City Hospital all on your own, though I should add that it was wonderful but tough training.

PK: Would you call it a baptism of fire?

JM: Yes. A baptism of fire.

BACK TO HOLY CROSS

PK: And after fourth year to Ireland for tertianship?

JM: Yes, but not yet. After fourth year of theology I ini-

tially was supposed to go to tertianship at Auriesville, New York, after a summer assignment to Cranwell camp in the Berkshires. So sometime in the middle of the summer camp, my trunks and everything I had were sent to Auriesville for the beginning of my tertianship. Then I got a note saying, "Go to Port Kent," which was the summer villa of the New York Province, "and make your retreat. Then return to Holy Cross College to teach mathematics." I had already taught mathematics to Navy men at the Cross when I was a regent. So I was again back at Holy Cross teaching mathematics; I also worked in the physics lab. We and another scholastic had no summer vacation but went right into the classroom. I taught there for a year, 1951-1952.

PK: No vacation.

TERTIANSHIP IN IRELAND

JM: At the time, Fr. Forrest Donahue was the *socius* to the provincial. One day he met me in the corridor at Holy Cross and said, "Where would you like to go for tertianship?" I said, "I would like to go to Venice so I can learn to speak Italian." He said, "You can't go there, because you don't speak Italian now. What languages do you speak?" I said, "I speak English and profanity." [Laughter] He replied, "Well, that means you either go to England or Ireland." [Laughter] As it turned out, I was swapped for a Chinese Jesuit, a Fr. Chan, who had come over from Hong Kong to Harvard to get a degree in sinology. Frs. Ned [Edward] Stanton, John Donovan from Worcester, and Ray Swords had gone to Ireland before me. I was the last one in that particular group to go to Ireland for tertianship in 1952-1953.

PK: Who was your tertian master at the Rathfarnham Castle tertianship?

JM: We had two: Fr. O'Byrne, the former superior in Hong Kong, who gave us our long retreat; the regular tertian master was Fr. Neary.

VISIT TO THE ARAN ISLANDS

PK: Were you able to visit the Aran Islands?

JM: Yes. Seeing them was the thrill of my life. I was on the Big Island, as they call it. It's nine-and-a-half miles long by two-and-a-half miles wide. The ship that took us there was called Dunaonghasa after the 3,000-year-old fort on the island. On the way out, I fell into conversation with a *guarda*, an Irish policeman. When I stepped off the ship, he introduced me to the king of the island, Pat Mullen. I had been told, before I went over, that he was a rogue. [Laughter]

PK: So you were prepared to meet him.

JM: When I stepped off the boat, the *guarda* said to Pat Mullen, "This is one of the breed." The king looked at me and said, "If you were a small man, we wouldn't have been happy to see you at all." [Laughter]

PK: Yes, you stand at least six feet.

PK: Were you able to go to your father's home?

JM: Yes, I very much wanted to see where my father was born. It was in the village of the Seven Churches. There I found two sets of ruins: those of the churches and the remains of the monastery founded in the sixth century, it is believed, by St. Ende—very early in Irish history. St. Ende's monastery was one of the largest monasteries in Ireland in past centuries. Then along came the Roundheads of Cromwell. He used that island as a prison for Catholics because it was so remote.

PK: Hence all the ruins. But you managed to get to where your father grew up.

JM: Yes. But we had to travel on a jaunting car [a light, two-wheeled horse carriage], because in 1952 there

was only one automobile on the whole three islands.
[Chuckles]

PK: Did you travel alone?

JM: No, I traveled along the islands with an English movie director and his daughter. They had come to see the home of the famous John Synge, the playwright who wrote "The Riders to the Sea." A movie of the island's history and geography had been made; I saw the island's 300-foot cliffs on the seaward side.

PK: Sounds like very dramatic scenery. How about the people there?

JM: The director of English movies went up to the fort and I went on to the village where my father was born. The village of the Seven Churches was out toward the end of the island. I asked Pat, the driver, where my father was born, but he didn't seem too sure. Then he spoke to an old man in Gaelic for a while. I told them who my relatives were. The old man came back and looked closely at me and said, "Oh, my God! I didn't know you were such a close relation." He took me up close to the Seven Churches and showed me where my father's home had been and where he was born. Unfortunately, it was now in ruins right there beside the largest of the Seven Churches. It wasn't very big. Then I was shown the headstone where my ancestors were buried. Una was the first we were able to trace back. She had three sons, Brian, Peter and Andrew. I descended from Peter, and my father's name was Brian. Andrew's gravestone showed that he was a coast guardsman and died in 1732.

PK: So you found your family roots.

JM: It was all very interesting. The people on the Aran Islands are quite different from the mainlanders. I remember as a young priest in Boston going to a wake. When I stepped into the room, I went over to bless

the body, knelt at the bier, and said my prayer. There was a little old man sitting in the corner of the room, and, when I got up, the old man motioned to me to come over to him. When I went over and stood in front of him, he said, “Are you an Aranach?”—in other words—“Are you a man from Aran?” I said, “I am.” He replied, “I could tell the moment you stepped in that doorway.” [Laughter] They’re different from the mainlanders.

PK: Remarkable.

FROM MATH TEACHER TO ASSISTANT DEAN

PK: After tertianship, you returned to Holy Cross and taught math for a while. Later, you were made Assistant Dean. Is that correct?

JM: Yes. I taught mathematics, then I was Assistant Dean for six years. Then, when Fr. Jim Fitzgerald became President of Fairfield University, on two or three days’ notice, I took over both Associate Dean and Acting Dean from February to August until they named someone permanently. I worked under him for two years, and then went into retreat work at Gloucester in 1960.

DIRECTING RETREATS AT GLOUCESTER

PK: How did you like giving retreats?

JM: I liked it very much. Of course, it was brand-new for me, and I had to get used to it. Over time, I gave some sixty retreats and helped with ninety others.

PK: Were these retreats mainly for high school students?

JM: Yes. They were mainly for high school and college students. When we weren’t busy at Gloucester, I would give retreats in mid-western high schools. These were very interesting, and I made some very nice friends. I liked retreat work. It taught me an important lesson, which I passed on to the Provin-

cial. For example, that he should be very careful when naming retreat masters. They should be the type of retreat master who respects God's motion in the retreatant's soul, rather than require the retreatant to follow the director's own way of praying.

PK: What led you to that observation?

JM: Just hard-nosed experience.

PK: What happened next?

XAVIER HIGH SCHOOL YEARS

JM: I went from there to Xavier High School in Concord, where I taught math for six years.

PK: How did you enjoy that?

JM: It was probably one of the happiest times in my life. The only problem was wondering whether the school was going to survive.

RICHARD ROUSSEAU : Can I ask why Xavier closed, when it seemed to be so successful?

JM: I've always felt that one of the reasons was lack of support on the part of some faculty to keep the school open.

RR: What about the school administration?

JM: The principal was, as far as I was concerned, the best principal I ever had; I admired him tremendously.

RR: I see.

PK: Did you ever meet some of your students in later years?

JM: Oh, yes. The Rector here, Fr. Paul Holland, was a student. The students were very interesting, even amazing. I went there during the second year of its existence as a school. When they first opened, they just took everybody they could. Then a number of students withdrew, when they found out that a Jesuit school was not for them. The result was that Xavier offered a very good education, working with some of the best and brightest students I've ever met

in my teaching years. I had gotten a good education at B.C. High and later taught there as well, but the wonderful thing about Xavier was that it was brand-new. It started with the advantage of having both the Jesuit tradition and twenty-five hand-picked teachers. So when you wanted to try something out, you could call on your colleagues for support. No one said, "We've never done that." You were free to try something new.

PK: Did you have any other work?

JM: When I first went there, due to my general background and my mathematics and college teaching experience, I was able to provide administrative guidance along with my teaching. The school started with freshmen and then went up to senior year, a year at a time. I was also an assistant chaplain at the Concord State Prison.

"THIS IS THE SCHOOL FOR MY BOY!"

PK: Do you recall any particular incidents?

JM: I remember especially one open house. An elderly English gentleman came with a boy named Peter Counsel. His wife had died and he didn't remarry until around eighteen or twenty years later. He married his secretary, a younger woman; she was Peter's mother. The elderly English gentleman had gone to St. Edward School on the Isle of Man, founded in the 1600s in honor of King Edward. Over those hundreds of years, they had outstanding athletes. So when Peter was ready for high school, I showed him around along with his father, who was a remarkable man. That was the only time I saw Peter or his father until that summer just before school began. I was one of the Jesuits minding the place, while the rest had gone off to prepare for the opening of school. I was in my office, when the front door of Xavier opened and I

heard a young man's footsteps in the hall.

PK: Interesting!

JM: The young man walked on and had gone fifty feet or so when I stepped out of my office and recognized Peter, the boy I had met five months before, by the back of his head. All the while his father was behind me, and I hadn't seen him. So I said, "Peter Counsel, what are you doing here?" Suddenly I heard a voice behind me. It was the father, Mr. Counsel, who said, "If you can recognize a young boy after five months by the back of his head, then this is where he goes to school." [Laughter]

ON GUARD

PK: I recall you said something earlier about a burglary at Xavier.

JM: Yes. [Laughter] While I was at Xavier, I had a famous incident that happened on the night before our graduation. I forget exactly what year it was, but I had been there a year or two when it happened. About midnight I was in my room with my door closed and lying on the top of the bed reading, when someone turned my doorknob. I thought someone had accidentally gotten the wrong room. So after a moment or two, I got up, opened the door and looked down the corridor. I saw someone walk into a room and back out quickly, then walk into the next room and out again. It was a burglar at work. So I walked down the corridor quietly in back of him. When, luckily for me, he went into still another room, I grabbed that doorknob and held on tightly. His back was to me. I said, "What are you doing here?" Without a word he pivoted and swung at me with a Stillson wrench. Luckily for me, I had a good grip on the doorknob and pulled it closed just as the wrench slammed into the closed door. This locked him in a

fourth floor room of our residence. I started shouting, and Jesuits came running from all over the place in all kinds of attire. We called the police, who arrived quickly and arrested him. Later on I had to appear before a grand jury and identify him. In the course of the proceedings, it looked like the Assistant District Attorney was going to turn him loose with only probation. So I spoke up and told the judge that this man had gone after a nurse with a knife and had thrown an old man on Lower Street into a railroad cut. I added that he was a bad actor, and if he came down those stairs behind me on probation, I, Roman collar and all, would finish him then and there. [Laughter] The Assistant D. A. said, "Oh, God, no! God, no!" I said, "Either he goes to the hospital or he goes to jail." So he got a combination of both options. After that, when I passed a group of youngsters in the town, they would say, "Good morning, Fr. Marshal Dillon." [Laughter]

PK: So the story got around.

JM: Yes, the story was all over town.

PK: I imagine the students paid close attention to you when you were counseling them about their behavior! It sounds like you were in the tradition of B.C. High, with your own tough homeroom teacher.

EDUCATIONAL COUNSELOR

JM: Then I went to B. C. High in 1969 to help the new principal fill a couple of vacancies in counseling. I had been doing that work at B. C. High for three years when Marquette University asked for me; I worked there as Assistant Director of Admissions until 1974.

PK: How did Marquette know about you?

JM: I had done some business with them.

PK: In placing students there?

JM: That's what I did at Xavier and at B.C. High. I had worked with Fr. Ed Murray, a wonderful man, and Fr. Frank Belcher, who joined us from Portland. He was also a wonderful Jesuit. One day at B.C. High, when a student tried to do something very, very stupid, instead of being a very quiet and, shall we say, patient counselor, I asked questions, and he answered me back. I came out of my office and read him the riot act. Later, I said to Fr. Frank Belcher, who was a well-trained counselor, "Frank, I'm getting too old for this. I better quit." Frank said, "That was the best piece of directed guidance I ever heard. There was nothing indirect about that." So we began looking for a replacement. [Laughter]

PK: What did you do next?

JM: After working in Fall River at Bp. Connolly High School as Director of Development for a year, I received an offer from Marquette University to be Director of Admissions. However, they wanted me to give them a six-year commitment. But, at that point in my life, I wasn't promising anybody six years. [Chuckles] So when the Admissions Office at Wheeling College in Wheeling, West Virginia, collapsed, I went there instead to replace the previous director. The difficulty was that it was only two weeks before the start of school. But fortunately, I was able to get things straightened out in time.

WORK AMONG THE PASSAMAQUODDY

JM: After three years at Wheeling, I came back to Boston, and was assigned to Boston College. However, I had worked at B. C. only one single day when, suddenly, the Provincial called and asked me to come and see him. When I got there, he told me that the B. C. rector wanted the job at B. C. that I had just been given. So I said, "Fine." I told him that I had in

hand two nice offers, one from John Carroll University in Cleveland and the other from a retreat house in the Detroit Province. So I asked him if I could take one of these. But he said no, because he needed me for the Indian reservation where Fr. Stanley Bowe had just fallen ill. I told him that I had met an Indian once when I was a youngster, and he said, "That will do." [Laughter]

PK: That was in 1977?

JM: Yes. Off to live among and minister to the Indians! I was there for almost six years. [Chuckles]

PK: We've had a number of anecdotes from you about that time. Could you tell us just what kind of experience that was?

JM: I loved the Indians. I would have stayed with them forever! We got along very well and especially well with the pillars of both the Church and the Indian "Mafia." [Laughter] I left there only because I got sick from freezing during a blizzard.

PK: Let's go back a piece. I understand that you helped them create a small company.

JM: Around Christmas time Billy Boy, who was one of the Passamaquoddy tribe, used to run a Christmas wreath business so they could make money for their Christmas gifts, etc. Without that, they had nothing for Christmas. He was angry for some reason, and asked me if I would run it for them. I got money from my brothers, and we were able to buy the things they needed. Afterwards, I repaid my brothers and still had some \$200 for the parish. I was also able to give about ten families some Christmas salary. Then, later on, one of my nephews helped me to form the Passamaquoddy Electronics Company. By the time it ended it provided forty-six people with work.

PK: Were they assembling electrical components?

JM: Yes, digital things.

ALMOST FROZEN

PK: Tell us about the cold conclusion of your days at the reservation in 1982.

JM: During a storm everything electrical on the reservation was wiped out. I had no fire. I lived in a broken-down old trailer. I couldn't have a wood or coal fire or anything. I got the sisters who taught in the school settled in the priests' house in Eastport, and then I thought I could do what the Indians do in this kind of situation, and just tough it out. Unfortunately, I couldn't, and it finished me. The Indians had at least wood fires. I spent four days in fifteen degrees below zero weather with just my clothes—no fire and no heat. That literally crippled me. I had to leave the reservation and spent eleven days in the hospital. They couldn't figure out just what was wrong with me. So I returned to Boston for a second opinion. I was told that I had polymyalgia rheumatica, which is rheumatism, from the top of my head to the tip of my toes. A sharp doctor at the New England Medical Center discovered what my problem was. When I was able to do so, I went to the warmth of Jamaica to recuperate.

PK: You needed really warm weather?

JM: [Chuckles] Yes. So the provincial sent me to Jamaica. [Laughter] I was there until I had to come up for an operation in 1984. While in Jamaica I worked in the Montego Bay Diocese. I enjoyed it very much. I was pastor of three parishes: Falmouth on the north shore, Clarkstown in the middle of the island, and Refuge, a little place way up in the hills.

PK: What a change from freezing Maine!

JM: But I had to come up to the States for an operation. That ended my Jamaican interlude. I came home and stayed at the Loyola House for about six or seven months; I acted as minister there. Then it started

getting cold again in Boston. I had to get to a warm place, so I went to the Bahamas in 1984 and stayed with Bp. Larry Burke. I did pastoral ministry out of his residence in Nassau; I even said Mass on a few cruise ships while in port. But, once again, I had to come back to the hospital. Finally I asked myself, "Where can I be warm and also be near a good hospital?" That is why I spent the next nineteen years in San Diego, California, where there are very good hospitals. I enjoyed the parish life there for all those years.

MARRIAGE TRIBUNAL WORK IN CARLSBAD

PK: At St. Patrick Parish?

JM: Yes. St. Patrick's in Carlsbad. I solved 286 marriage cases there!

PK: That's a lot of cases! How did you get involved in handing marriage cases in the diocesan tribunal?

JM: I worked with a very bright sister in the Portland Maine Diocese to begin with. I had to deal with several marriage cases for the parishioners at Pleasant Point. Also Fr. John "Mabel" Crowley had given me a great canon law course at Weston.

TO CAMPION HEALTH CENTER

PK: It sounds as if you worked overtime. Next you came here to Campion Center?

JM: Yes, in 2004. I've been here about eighteen months.

PK: All right. As you look back over your rich life of ministry in parishes, schools, administration, in Maine, Jamaica, and California, could you give us some kind of overview?

JM: I was a general handyman!

PK: How did you experience the providential care of the Lord in all this?

JM: Well, as long as I was working, I was happy. Not

everything I did could be called pleasant. But, as I said, as long as I was working, I was happy.

PK: St. Ignatius urges us to be able to find God in all things and in all places.

JM: That's very true. My happiest times were in Xavier, the Indian Reservation, and in California. So basically, as I look back and think about it, I think it's correct for me to say that I was happiest when I was working.

PK: So being here in health care is not easy for you?

JM: I find it very difficult.

CONSOLING MEMORIES

PK: Do the memories that you have of these past experiences give you any consolation?

JM: Oh, yes. But I have come to the conclusion I entered the Order too young.

PK: How old were you?

JM: Seventeen, almost eighteen. So I always wonder if I could have been a better Jesuit if I had entered as a more mature person. I think it would have helped me see more clearly what God wanted of me, rather than just doing whatever superiors asked me to do. On the other hand, maybe that was my vocation. But I never really settled down and saw things clearly.

PK: But you have many gifts and helped many people.

JM: I was lucky. I found it easy to change from work to work as long as I was busy.

KEEPING BUSY

PK: Now that you're here and have a sense of Campion, do you think you might find something to do?

JM: Well, I have been working with medical records, such as they are, [laughter] and with our bookstore.

PK: Does that give you a chance to meet and help more people?

- JM: Yes. I've been a hand-shaker all my life.
- PK: You have also kept in contact with the people from Carlsbad.
- JM: Oh, yes. About twice a week I'm getting telephone calls from former Carlsbad parishioners now living in Dubai as well as a number of calls from California. A scholarship was set up at St. Patrick's in my name when I left the parish.

SUMMING UP

- PK: We've come to the end of our conversation. Thank you again for your help.
- JM: My thanks to you as well. Let me conclude by saying that, due to the limitations of time and space, we haven't had the opportunity to do justice to my stay in Gloucester, to all my Passamaquoddy friends, and to acknowledge the remarkable reception given to me by the parishioners of St. Pat's in Carlsbad, California, as I left there. It is amazing how they return the love and service we tried to give them. God bless them all!
- PK: Would you have a favorite prayer we could conclude with?
- JM: One I learned as a child and say a lot is:

Take my body, Jesus, eyes, and ears, and tongue.
Never let them, Jesus, help to do Thee wrong.
Take my heart and fill it full of love for Thee.
All I have I give Thee. Give Thyself to me.

Fr. Joseph E. Mullen, S.J.

Born: October 8, 1919, Boston, Massachusetts
Entered: September 7, 1937, Lenox, Massachusetts, St. Stanislaus Novitiate/Shadowbrook
Ordination: June 17, 1950, Weston, Massachusetts, Weston College
Final Vows: June 26, 1987, Boston, Massachusetts, Immaculate Conception Church

1933 Boston, Massachusetts: Boston College High School
- Student
1937 Lenox, Massachusetts: St. Stanislaus Novitiate / Shadowbrook - Novitiate, juniorate
1941 Weston, Massachusetts: Weston College - Studied philosophy
1944 Worcester, Massachusetts: College of the Holy Cross
- Taught mathematics and physics
1947 Weston, Massachusetts: Weston College - Studied theology
1951 Worcester, Massachusetts: College of the Holy Cross
- Taught mathematics, assisted in physics lab
1952 Rathfarnham, Ireland: Rathfarnham Castle - Tertianship
1953 Worcester, Massachusetts: College of the Holy Cross
- Taught mathematics [1953-1954], Assistant Dean [1954-1960], Acting Dean [February - August 1960]
1960 Gloucester, Massachusetts: Gonzaga/Eastern Point Retreat House - Retreat ministry, minister
1963 Concord, Massachusetts: Xavier High School - Taught mathematics, religion [1963-1969]
Director of Educational Counseling, Director of Admissions [1968-1969]
1969 Boston, Massachusetts: Boston College High School
- Director of Educational Counseling [1970-1972], taught religion

- 1972 Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Marquette University - Assistant Director of Admissions
- 1974 Fall River, Massachusetts: Bishop Connolly High School - Director of Development
- 1975 Wheeling, West Virginia: Wheeling College - Director of Admissions
- 1977 Pleasant Point, Maine: St. Ann Mission - Chaplain
- 1978 Eastport, Maine: St. Joseph Church - Pastor; also St. Ann Mission, St. John's, Pembroke, Maine
- 1982 Montego Bay, Jamaica, West Indies: Blessed Sacrament Cathedral - Local apostolate
- 1983 Falmouth, Jamaica: St. Joseph Church - President of Mission
- 1984 Boston, Massachusetts: Loyola House- Minister
- 1984 Nassau, Bahamas: Bishop's Residence - Pastoral ministry
- 1985 Carlsbad, California: St. Patrick Church - Assistant Pastor
- 2004 Weston, Massachusetts: Campion Health Center - Praying for the Church and the Society

Degrees

- 1943 Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy, Weston College-Boston College
- 1944 Master of Arts, Philosophy, Weston College-Boston College
- 1951 Licentiate in Sacred Theology, Weston College