



# Jesuit Formation

REFLECTIONS ON FORMATION AND MISSION  
FROM CHICAGO PROVINCE JESUITS

*by George Kearney*

## THE QUESTION

**I**n *Partners*, which is published three times a year by the Chicago Province Jesuits, we often assume readers understand what the Province is and how it works. A number of recent conversations and questions, however, show that many people don't know much about the Province. "Oh, the Chicago Jesuits? You guys run BC, right? The school with the football team that beats Notre Dame all the time; and Gonzaga University, the Jesuit school in Washington with the good basketball team?"

"No. BC's in the New England Province and Gonzaga's in the Oregon Province."

"You're in charge of all those high schools, right? St. Ignatius, and Brebeuf, and St. X, and Cristo Rey, and Loyola?"

"Well, yes, but not exactly. They're technically run by their boards of trustees, not by the Province."

"Aren't you in charge of the Jesuits in Peru, India, and Nepal?"

"In a way, yes, but technically those Jesuits answer to their superiors in those places even if they remain part of this Province. And in all those places there are far more native Jesuits serving than there are American missionaries. They answer to their local superiors as well."

"Well, then, what does the Province do?"

The Jesuits shown in football formation are also engaged in Jesuit formation. These members of the Chicago and Detroit Provinces gathered in January for the annual Jesuit Formation Conference at Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House in Barrington, IL. They are Peter Nguyen, SJ, James McLenaghan, nSJ, Michael Shawver, SJ, Trevor Meyer, nSJ, Paul O'Connor, SJ, John Mark, SJ, Chris Dierkes, SJ, Mike Conley, SJ, Patrick Gilday, nSJ, and Eric Sundrup, nSJ

## THE ANSWER

**O**n some ways that's not a particularly easy question to answer. The Chicago Province is comprised of 235 Jesuits who operate five high schools, two universities, two retreat houses, three parishes, and a not-for-profit publishing company, in addition to contributing their talents to the work of a variety of other ministries in Chicago, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Kentucky. The work of the Province, essentially, involves making the work of the 235 members possible.

But what does the Province actually do? The short answer is that it cares for the individual Jesuits and their shared ministries. Care for the individual means making sure each Jesuit's personal and spiritual needs are being met from the time they enter to the time they die. Care for the ministries means taking steps to ensure that various Jesuit works will continue and, more importantly, continue to offer valuable services to a variety of communities.

This "care for the apostolate" can take many forms—directing funds to a Jesuit ministry in India, Peru, or Nepal, dedicating a certain number of Jesuits to a new ministry, working to ensure that Jesuit schools remain rooted in their Ignatian character, fostering collaboration with the laity—but the most important component of "care for the apostolate" is the training of young Jesuits.

Since St. Ignatius founded the Jesuits 460 years ago, great care and attention has been paid to the education and formation of Jesuits. In fact, one entire section of the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, which were written by St. Ignatius, describes training for new members. While minor changes in this process have been implemented over the centuries, the continuity in Jesuit formation is undoubtedly responsible for the continuity and strength of Jesuit ministries throughout the Chicago Province, the United States, and the world.



See the next six pages for stories about how formation prepared these Jesuits for their current work.

Jesuit formation generally takes 10–12 years and comprises six main stages: the novitiate, first studies (an amalgam of segments of formation formerly called the juniorate and philosophate), regency, theology studies, tertianship, and special studies.

The novitiate is a two-year period of probation during which a new Jesuit and the Society mutually determine if he is truly called to religious life. During those years, he studies the history and traditions of the Society, completes two ministerial experiments, and makes the full 30-day Spiritual Exercises. At the conclusion of the novitiate, he pronounces his first vows in the Society of Jesus.

First Studies is a three-year period of graduate level philosophy and theology studies integrated around practical experiences of service to the poor. Regency is a three-year period during which the young Jesuit lives and works in a Jesuit apostolate. It's designed to test whether or not he can be effective in traditional Jesuit ministries. If so, he begins a three to four year program of rigorous theological training to prepare him for ordination and priestly ministry.

Following ordination, many Jesuits pursue professional studies in specialized areas such as law, medicine, administration, counseling, science, and the arts. The final stage of formation, tertianship, generally takes place some years after ordination. Almost like a second novitiate, tertianship is a year-long period devoted to deeper study of the Society of Jesus and its Constitutions and traditions.

Formation, more than anything, is the future of the Society of Jesus. In the following pages, six Jesuits explain how the formation provided for them by the Chicago Province prepared them for their ministries and for their lives as Jesuits, while a few of the Province's benefactors explain why they've chosen to use their contributions to educate and train young Jesuits. ➔

# NOVITIATE



**Fr. John P. Foley, SJ,** President of Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, above center as a novice, and at right in Cristo Rey's gymnasium/cafeteria/classroom complex, which was opened in November 2003.



“It’s been fifty years since I was in the novitiate,” says Fr. John P. Foley, SJ, president of Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Chicago, “but I’m grateful for the training I received as a novice. Still today it helps me to understand and discover what’s ‘Jesuit’ about our presence here in Pilsen and what we should and should not be doing as Jesuits.” His memories of the novitiate remain vivid: “Those years were totally filled with activities, from the time you arose before dawn until you went to bed in the early evening. We lived by the bell: times for praying, for reading, for studying. Life was filled with very healthy human experiences.”

Fr. Foley spent 35 years of his life as a Jesuit in Peru, where he served as a teacher of English, religion, and philosophy; as a counselor, a campus minister, and as president of two of the Peru Province’s high schools. He says his experience in the novitiate

led to his assignment to Peru. “In my class there were a good number who wanted to go to the missions and who expressed that desire to superiors from day one. I really was not one of them. But as it came time to receive my first assignment after seven years of formation, I wrote a letter—precisely because of those ideals I learned in the novitiate—saying I did not particularly want to go to the missions but if they needed someone to send I wanted to be available. I thought, and still think, that’s what a Jesuit is supposed to do. They took me up on my offer.”

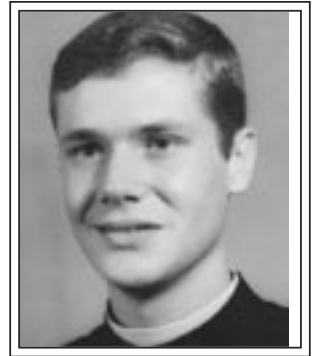
Thirty-five years later, when they “needed someone” again, Fr. Foley again made himself available. This time it was to come back to the United States to help open Cristo Rey. Fr. Foley helped develop the school’s

*I see the novitiate as the time to build a solid foundation for the rest of one’s Jesuit life.*

innovative Corporate Internship Program, now being replicated across the country. Under his direction, the school has grown from its initial enrollment of sixty students to its current enrollment of 470. It’s grown physically, too. In 1996 the school opened in a cramped elementary school building. In 2001 they opened a state-of-the-art 23 classroom building, and in 2003 they opened a new gymnasium, library, cafeteria, and classroom facility. Throughout the last eight years, Fr. Foley and the Cristo Rey

community have welcomed into the school many Jesuit novices completing their short or long experiments. Those novices are building the foundations for lives as Jesuits just as Fr. Foley did fifty years ago.

# FIRST STUDIES



**Fr. Walter C. Deye, SJ,** President of St. Xavier High School, above as a scholastic, and at left in what will eventually be the school's fine arts wing. The new St. Xavier stadium is in the background.

**W**hile offering a homily during the dedication of Ballaban Field and St. Xavier Stadium last summer, Fr. Walter Deye, SJ, St. X High School president, told the students of St. Xavier that they didn't deserve the new facilities. To reinforce the point, he asked the entire student body to sit in the visitors' bleachers. "[This stadium] isn't being given to the men of St. Xavier because you deserve it or because it's a nice thing to have... This has not been built because you are entitled."

"It is a gift for the students," Fr. Deye explained later. "A gift provided so they can be gifted and then use their gifts to make a difference in the world. This construction doesn't matter. Our focus and concern at St. X is on the construction of our community, the formation of our students." The new athletic complex is part of a larger initiative that's also responsible for new language labs, new science labs, new classrooms, and a new theater. The construction is only phase one. By 2010, Fr. Deye hopes to substantially increase the endowment for tuition assistance and staff development.

As president, Fr. Deye has overseen the construction, but that's not the focus of his job. "I want to be a pastoral presence at this place," he says. "My door is always open." By definition he's an administrator. By nature, he's a pastor. He says it's not a difficult balancing act. Rather, it's what it means to be a Jesuit, "The Society of Jesus has always been an experience not just of the mind, but the heart."

He says he first learned this balance when he was in the collegian program (now called the Jesuit First Studies Program) at University of Detroit, where he served as a university chaplain. "UD was searching, somewhat unsuccessfully, for a chaplain, so three of my classmates and I approached the rector of our community about taking the job." Soon they were directing retreats, organizing the campus Mass schedule, arranging music for Mass, and visiting dorms.

"That's where I got my footing for the work I'm doing now. Our formation program was real, not off in the woods, away from the real world. We were given the opportunity to grow up in very real ways." His formation has prepared him for the reality of running a high school, and, more importantly, the reality of caring for the people within it.

I want to let the donors know... that they've supported real people doing real things in this real world.

# REGENCY



**Fr. Richard L. Millbourn, SJ,** Assistant Principal of Brebeuf Jesuit High School, above during his regency at Brebeuf, and at right amongst the students at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory.



**F**rom 1993–1996, during the regency stage of his formation, Fr. Rick Millbourn, SJ, served as a teacher and campus minister at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis, IN. In addition to teaching two religion classes—Ignatian Spirituality and Interfaith Perspectives on Social Justice—he helped direct the school’s Kairos retreats. Looking back on the years he spent there, it’s the experiences with people he most remembers.

And people, he says, are at the center of the entire regency segment of formation. “Until regency, the focus in my life had been on me, my growth, my learning about spirituality, my growing in my relationship with God. As a regent, I focused not just on being a person of prayer, but on being a person of prayer who worked day in and day out. The focus was on providing ministry for and with others.” He also points out that Jesuits aren’t studying for the sake of studying. “During regency all the preparation, all the studies, all the retreats, the prayer—it suddenly becomes clear. And you say ‘oh yeah, that’s not for me. That’s for the sake of actually being able to help build the kingdom.’”

In June, 2001, after his ordination, Fr. Millbourn returned to Brebeuf, where he still serves today as assistant principal—school life. He’s currently overseeing a substantial addition to the front of the school, and each year he prepares the complex class schedules for the student body of 800. He’s also largely responsible for the formation of the school’s lay faculty and staff members. In Jesuit schools around the country, with the number of Jesuits decreasing steadily, this work is seen as a key element of keeping Jesuit schools Jesuit.

“We’re trying to help our faculty and staff understand the life of Ignatius and what it was he learned that brought him alive in this new way. What was it that he shared with people that caused them to rally around and say, ‘let’s undertake this work?’ Why were there suddenly cities writing and saying ‘we want a Jesuit school in our town?’ We’re trying to help them understand the charisma of the Society of Jesus. Why is this school different than a Cathedral High School? And what do those differences mean for a teacher’s classroom? Ultimately that’s the goal, to impact what’s going on in classrooms.”

Fr. Millbourn also spends time in the classroom, once again teaching Ignatian Spirituality. Through his work in the classroom and his work with the faculty and staff he’s using the gift of his formation to continue to form Brebeuf in the Jesuit tradition.

Working with people prepares you for life as a Jesuit, because ultimately our mission is about individual people.

# THEOLOGY

**A**s president of Marquette University, Fr. Bob Wild, SJ, says, “There are three things here at Marquette that we perennially have to work on. The ever-present task of increasing and strengthening what we’re doing academically, ensuring that we deliver on what we promise as a Catholic and Jesuit school, and ensuring the future, the financial well-being of the university.”

Sounds like perfect work for a hesitant theologian, right?

“I wasn’t sure I liked the idea of becoming a student again,” Fr. Wild says of his move in 1967 from teaching at St. Xavier High School during his regency to studying theology at the Jesuit School of Theology in North Aurora,

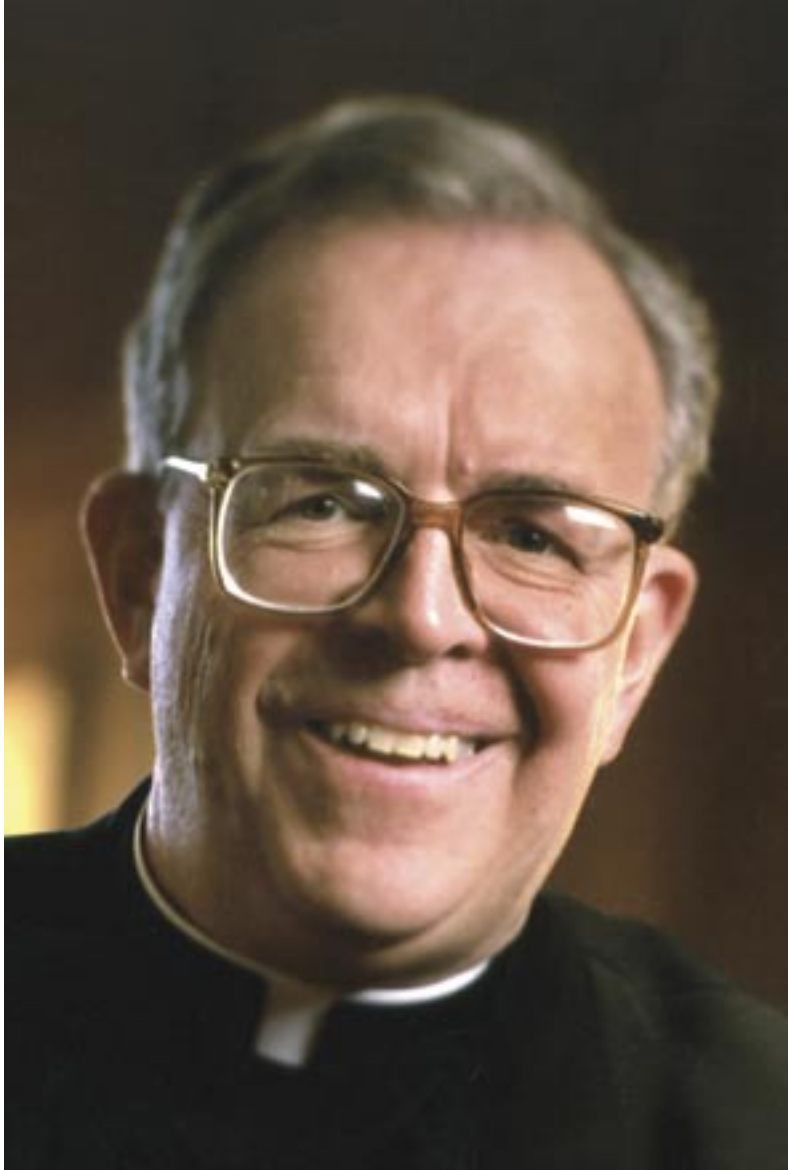
IL. “Increasingly, though, I started to realize ordination was something I did want, and I knew I needed a good knowledge of the basics of our faith in a professional way. As a priest, I knew I’d be dealing with a lot of people in a lot of situations.” He learned to study the Gospels from Fr. Bill Thompson, SJ, and later taught the Old and New Testament at Loyola University Chicago. He also studied under Fr. Vern Ruland, SJ. “He gave us so much

As president now and as provincial earlier, I know we’re dependent on the money that helps us support the education of our younger members.

work that we tried to have a student strike, but there was great value in the work. We focused on the Book of Revelation. He forced us to synthesize knowledge. He’d ask, ‘What is our understanding of these realities?’ He forced us to work in depth, in a very serious way. That experience helped me come out of theology studies with a sense of ‘here’s where I stand and why’ on a lot of basic issues. I think that’s what we’re doing in the theological endeavor. We can’t rely just on emotion. We need knowledge and understanding.”

The formal theology training Fr. Wild received has actually been a great asset to him in his work as Marquette’s president. Like Fr. Walter Deye, SJ, at St. X, Fr. Wild is more than just an administrator at a university. Marquette’s identity as a Catholic and Jesuit school requires more of him. “I’m not just a university president. I especially realize that when I deal with my colleagues at state universities,” he says. “As a Jesuit president, you become a pastor for the community as well. We’re saying, ‘we stand for certain values as an institution’. The president becomes the symbolic and real leader and forwarder of all that.”

“Working in a university,” Fr. Wild says, “knowledge is the coin of the realm. If we’re talking about catholicity, it’s certainly a value for me to have that knowledge.”



**Fr. Robert A. Wild, SJ,** President of Marquette University, above just before beginning his theology studies, has helped the school maintain its Jesuit Identity and has overseen the opening of a new School of Dentistry, and the Al McGuire Center.

# SPECIAL STUDIES



**Fr. Lester E. Love, SJ,**  
A third year resident at the University of California San Francisco, shown above during his special studies, and at right between visits with patients at the hospital.



**A**s a third year family practice resident at University of California San Francisco, Fr. Lester Love, SJ, has had the opportunity to work in labor and delivery, intensive care, an outpatient adult clinic, and a pediatric clinic. “The biggest value of my special studies to become a doctor,” he says, “is that they provide ‘credibility’ to my priesthood, broaden my perception of ministry, and allow many people who would never have had any substantial interaction with Catholicism or priesthood to meet both of them in the flesh.”

Armed with a stethoscope, making his way from room to room in a hospital, Dr. Love looks like any other doctor. But he’s not. His experience and identity as a Jesuit priest make his work more than just a profession. It is, like any Jesuit’s work, a ministry. “Thirteen plus years of trying to

live and to love as a Roman Catholic Jesuit priest, whether working in a hospice in Jamaica or doing molecular research in a pathology lab, have brought me, with sobering honesty, face-to-face with my own egotism, pettiness, despair, and practical atheism. I have learned that I, too, could have been a battering husband, an abusive parent, an IV drug user, a prostitute, or, in biblical language, a ‘tax-collector.’ My journey of faith daily brings me to my knees in humility and gratitude. True maturation on the spiritual path requires that we discover the depth of our wounds.” He explains further that “my calling to medicine is to bind wounds.” And when he speaks of wounds, he means both literal and figurative wounds, wounds to the human body and the human spirit.

“To be able to serve in the way

I have, as a doctor, is an honor and pleasure.” Fr. Love says. “I’m truly humbled, and awed by the supreme privilege of being able to be present at life’s beginnings, by delivering babies, and life’s endings, by pronouncing death.”

Fr. Love’s ministry of medicine almost didn’t happen. At one point he was studying for a Ph.D. in electrical engineering, a degree he hoped to use to educate minority students and convince them that math, science, and technology were within their grasp. But the calling to medicine was stronger. And had it not been for funding from generous donors supporting Jesuit formation, it would not have been possible. “It would’ve been impossible without friends and benefactors,” he says. “May I never take for granted what I’ve been given.”

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## TERTIANSHIP

**F**r. Jim Donnelly, SJ, began his year of tertianship in 1960, just a year before he was to leave the United States for his ministry in Nepal. It was a time, he recalls, of enormous consolation. “I felt conscious of being a priest, not just a man, but a ‘bridge-builder,’ full of happiness for having the plenitude of priestly powers.”

That summer, Fr. Donnelly and 26 other Jesuits from 15 different provinces around the world converged on St. Stanislaus Tertianship in Cleveland, OH. “The purpose of the year,” Fr. Donnelly said, “was to increase in ourselves the spirit of the Society of Jesus both in our interior life and our exterior, apostolic activities.”

Fr. Bob Willmes, SJ, was the tertian instructor. “Early on,” Fr. Donnelly says, “he reminded us to clear away all other interests, studies, hobbies, sports, family, friends—whatever could divert us from our main objective—and develop a clear, accurate, strong conviction about our supernatural life and its demands upon us, our Jesuit call and its demands upon us, and our love for Christ and its demands upon us.”

And for a year that’s exactly what Fr. Donnelly did. He spent a year in prayer and ministry, preparing for his departure to Nepal. He completed the 30-day Spiritual Exercises, and served as a chaplain at a nearby hospital. Then he left the United States for Nepal and began a career in education that’s spanned more than 40 years. He’s taught and served as principal at St. Xavier’s Godavari, on the outskirts of Kathmandu, and at St. Xavier’s Jawalakhel in Kathmandu. In his 40 years in Nepal, Fr. Donnelly has taught more than 3,000 students, among them Kanak Mani Dixit, editor of *Himal South Asia*, and Samrat Upadhyaya, professor of English and creative writing at Indiana University, whose collection of stories, *Arresting God in Kathmandu*, has won critical acclaim in the United States. Both credit their Jesuit teachers, Fr. Donnelly and Fr. Gene Watrin, SJ (see page 31), for their considerable writing skills.

Prayer and increasing in the spirit of prayer were the main aim of the year, to think of prayer as a loving with God.

But teaching skills isn’t the sole focus of Fr. Donnelly’s work. “Students learn by the example of the teachers they are under,” he says, underscoring the importance of his own formation in his work. “The school has done what it can to help create a positive environment in which each student can achieve a balance of mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and personality development, and to help each one become a responsible, independent person.”

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**Fr. James J. Donnelly, SJ,** Principal Emeritus and teacher at St. Xavier’s High School in Kathmandu, Nepal, shown above (right front) with his tertian class in 1961, has taught more than 3,000 Nepalese students over the last forty years.

## Why do you give to help educate young Jesuits?

// The prayers, support, and very generous financial contributions by so many of our partners have made it possible for the Province to prepare younger Jesuits to serve future generations as priests, brothers, teachers, and spiritual directors," says Tim Freeman, provincial assistant for development and public information. Tim also points out that each benefactor to Jesuit formation has their own story, and their own very unique reasons for giving to the Jesuits. Three of the Province's partners explain why they've chosen to support the formation of young Jesuits.

### *Joseph Kleinbrook, Northbrook, IL*



Joseph Kleinbrook has remembered his wife Mary through contributions to the Jesuit Seminary Association to help fund the education of his grandson, Andrew Wawrzyn, SJ.

**W**ell, there are many reasons. I go back to 1940 when I graduated from Marquette University. Since then I've felt very close to the Jesuits. My grandson, Andrew, is a Jesuit who's currently three years from ordination. And when my wife Mary passed away, I wanted to do something to remember her. I decided to make a contribution to Andrew's education in her name. An organization that's been operating continuously for over 400 years must be doing something right. The Jesuits are educating people of all religions and all beliefs all over the world. That's a good thing."

### *Carol Thaman, Cincinnati, OH*



Carol Thaman with former Provincial Richard J. Baumann, SJ

**T**he Jesuits are special to me. They have been for a long time," says Carol Thaman, whose brother, Fr. David Stagaman, SJ, entered the Chicago Province fifty years ago. "My parents always wanted to establish a scholarship fund, because of the tremendous expense to the Jesuits of educating my brother." Today Mrs. Thaman continues to support the scholarship fund created in memory of their parents. "I've always been very close to the order," she explains. And in many ways she still is. Her two sons attended St. Xavier High School, her daughter earned a BA and MBA from Xavier University, and her grandchildren are beginning high school at St. Ignatius College Prep in Chicago.

### *Joe and Elly Buron, St. Charles, IL*



Joe and Elly Buron with close friend Fr. John J. Foley, SJ

**W**e have about a thirty year history with the Jesuits," explains Joe Buron, who, with his wife Elly, sent four of their five children to Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School. Mrs. Buron also served for eight years on the board at Bellarmine Jesuit Retreat House in Barrington, IL. "When our children were students at Brebeuf we fell in love with the Jesuits and all they stand for and speak for. We think it's so important they continue on with their work in education. They provided a tremendous base for our children, and now, we just want to share that with others."