STUDIES

IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

Le style, c'est l'homme: Remembering John W. O'Malley, SJ (1927–2022)

EDITED BY WILLIAM McCORMICK, SJ

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY TIMOTHY W. O'BRIEN, SJ

55/2 SUMMER 2023

THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits is a publication of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States.

The Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality is composed of Jesuits appointed from their provinces. The seminar identifies and studies topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially US and Canadian Jesuits, and gathers current scholarly studies pertaining to the history and ministries of Jesuits throughout the world. It then disseminates the results through this journal.

The opinions expressed in Studies are those of the individual authors. The subjects treated in Studies may be of interest also to Jesuits of other regions and to other religious, clergy, and laity. All who find this journal helpful are welcome to access previous issues at: ejournals@bc.edu/jesuits.

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Introduction

Timothy W. O'Brien, SJ

John O'Malley's scholarly career was staggering in its breadth and depth. In history, where practitioners can spend decades researching one hundred years in a particular geographical region, John defied convention. He was as comfortable, it seemed, studying the sixteenth century as the twentieth. He moved effortlessly between them, and his research had a rare ability to break ground that was productive for multiple fields. For example, his work found just as lively a reception among theologians as historians. Indeed, as the many tributes that have emerged since John's death make clear, those in both "guilds" rightly considered him a fellow member.

In such a prolific and wide-ranging career, identifying a "through line"—a clear uniting theme—can be a challenge. Not, however, in John's case. Many of his historical insights turned on the notion of *style*, a theme that first explicitly emerged in his study of the rhetoric of Renaissance preaching in the Sistine Chapel. Looking back on a key moment of insight, John recalled, "Style, I realized, more deeply and experimentally, is not a mere ornament of thought but an expression of meaning. It both manifests deep value systems and helps form them."[1]

Not just *what* is said or done, but *how* it is said or done matters. This was the core of John's notion of style, and it permeated more than his work on Renaissance preaching. To take just a few examples, it

[1] John W. O'Malley, "My Life of Learning," *The Catholic Historical Review* 93, no. 3 (July 2007): 584.

proved foundational for his work on the early Society of Jesus and its ministries. Also, it was the key distinction between what John called the *Four Cultures of the West*. Likewise, John's work on Vatican II maintained that at the council, the Catholic Church adopted a different style than ever before in addressing the modern world. And perhaps unsurprisingly, "style" reappeared as a prominent category of analysis in his late essay, *When Bishops Meet*, a comparative approach to the Councils of Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II.

In 2020, John and I published in Studies an article entitled "The Twentieth-Century Construction of Ignatian Spirituality: A Sketch," in which we suggested that the emergence in the last century of what we call "Ignatian spirituality" marked a shift in the Society's spiritual culture. We tried to show how this development consisted in, among other things, shifts in style: significant pivots in how Jesuits thought about, spoke about, and practiced the spiritual life. Far from being ossified or static, therefore, the style of the Society is dynamic—it has changed in history. But perhaps just as importantly, this suggests that the style of Jesuit spirituality will continue to develop in response to changing circumstances and realities. And so, at a time when the challenges facing the Society in North America seem to indicate the need for new ways of imagining Jesuit mission and ministry, this insight seems as timely as ever.

John's passing in September 2022 permits us to say one thing more. In discussing the concept of style, John frequently quoted the French maxim, *le style, c'est l'homme même*; and what was true in his scholarship was true of his life as a whole. On this point, the present issue of Studies collects diverse reminiscences about the man and his contributions. These tributes all speak to elements of John's style, which was so distinctive and apparent but which bedevils those of us who have been asked to encapsulate it.

But in an effort to do so, we have assembled these texts, which reflect upon various dimensions of John's impact as a researcher, a writer, a teacher, a mentor, a priest, and a friend. They have been written by his Jesuit brothers as well as by lay collaborators, students, and friends. David Collins (uea) remembers him as a fellow Jesuit, one with a "disarming smile," while Mark Henninger (umi) sees even in his research a deep

"sense of God's mercy." Then, Kathleen Comerford, Nelson Minnich, and Brenna Moore offer voices from outside the Society, reminding us that John's impact beyond the Jesuit order was significant, as were his efforts to encourage and cultivate historical scholarship among non-Jesuits. As Moore puts it, John helped many to see Jesuit and Catholic history in a new way—one that put on full display "Catholicism's deep myths, its wonders, its artists, heroes and their yearnings for God, along with its blind spots, dullards, and stumblings, too."

The final piece in this issue, by John himself, is the homily he offered upon the death of his dear friend, collaborator, and fellow Jesuit historian John W. Padberg (1926–2021). Reading this homily gives the impression that, in many respects, O'Malley saw in Padberg a model to emulate. As such, John remembers his friend as being "utterly devoted to the Society of Jesus [. . .] and he tried as best he could to incorporate the Society's ideals into his own life." The very same, of course, could be said of John O'Malley.

A Jesuit friend and fellow admirer of John's recently put it as well as anybody could: "We were blessed to bask in the light of his genius and his humanity." To that, I can only add my own *amen*. As with any gift, the only adequate response is gratitude. Thank you, John. And thanks be to God for the gift of your life, your work, and your vocation to this least Society of Jesus.

1. Homily for the Funeral Liturgy of Fr. John W. O'Malley, SJ

Mark G. Henninger, SJ[2]

It may be that some of you are wondering why John O'Malley chose the parable of the prodigal son for his funeral; it must say something about John. Let's look first at the parable for some clues.

The younger son, he must have been rather young, sure of himself. "Give me what should come to me." And he departs.

Think of the father. What emotions welled up? Surprise, anger, certainly disappointment. Afterwards the father and mother probably talked together of their loss; I could imagine them trying to help one another deal with it, and maybe slowly change . . . from anger and disappointment, over the day and weeks . . . to longing. Longing for their lost son. And how many times they may have looked down the road their son had taken, remembering him young, rich . . . and foolish.

Think of the change in the son when he hit rock bottom. And on the long way back home what was he thinking, what was he feeling? Among many things, I imagine he would fear his father, how he would look at him, with judging hard eyes.

But Jesus says, "When the son was still a long way off his father caught sight of him and was filled with compassion." At the sight of his son, longing became compassion . . . and you know the rest.

I like to think of how the father changed as how God deals with us. The way we behave at times, I imagine with God there may be initial surprise ("Really?"), some anger, and certainly disappointment . . . but even more surely longing and finally compassion.

[2] Given on September 17, 2022, at Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Washington, DC.

The parable is like any great text: we do not judge it for adequacy, it judges us for our adequacy—that is, it challenges us to absorb its message. It challenges our humanity, our image of God.

Given all that, we ask again: why did John O'Malley choose the parable of the prodigal son for his funeral? Two clues from his life . . . not in his memoirs.

One day, I recall John attended the funeral of a fellow Jesuit, and the homilist praised the deceased in very glowing terms, his good character, his deeds, impeccable life, an example to us all. Afterwards, in the sacristy, John was removing his vestments and said, "Well, that's it. I'm not going to be buried in the Catholic Church. Everyone who is buried in it turns out to be a saint. What ever happened to the church of us poor sinners? When my time comes, wrap me in a sheet and throw me in a ditch!"

"What ever happened to the church of us poor sinners?" I don't think John was a notorious sinner. But he knew the immense difference between our outward appearance and inner reality. He knew our love is more self-serving than it appears, our woundedness deeper, our self-deception more insidious. He knew how massive our failures are to live up even to our own expectations and ideals. John knew that not always, but often enough, to God's offer of love we respond with endlessly inventive evasions. (And the smarter we are, the more inventive the evasions.)

A second clue. John once preached on this parable at a small, intimate Mass in the domestic chapel of Wolfington Hall of the Jesuit community at Georgetown University, and talking with him afterwards, he maintained that it should not be called the parable of the prodigal son, but the parable of the oblivious Father: "'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet!'" A celebration: "this son of mine was dead and has come back to life again; he was lost and has been found."

In his love and excitement, the Father is oblivious to, forgetful of, the son's past. According to Jesus, this is how God wants to be with us. I wonder how well we get it. But I think John *did* get it and felt it deeply.

When he told me this, he said it with some force, unusual for John who didn't often talk directly of the spiritual life.

John was a very knowledgeable historian. But knowledgeable as John was, I think he understood, with an almost childlike simplicity, what St. Ignatius of Loyola wrote at the start of his *Spiritual Exercises*: "For it is not much knowledge that fills and satisfies the soul, but the intimate understanding and savoring of the truth."

I loved hearing confessions because, no matter what people may have done, their basic goodness and decency shone through even if they could not see it themselves.

I think John had an intimate understanding and savored the truth behind the words *God's mercy*—words that often lose their salience by overuse. This was the large truth that he fell in love with. "When the son was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was filled with compassion." I think John didn't just get that reality—he positively enjoyed it. So, it's not surprising that he chose the parable of the oblivious Father for his funeral.

In his memoirs, *The Education of a Historian: A Strange and Wonderful Story*, he writes of what in his trade as a historian is called a *hermeneutic of suspicion*, which he adopted—a way of reading texts with skepticism to expose what's really going on, often enough some nefarious, low motivation. And as you in the academy know, certain academics get a *frisson*, a delicious shiver, in being slightly subversive. John was not like that (well, maybe a little). But he realized the need for another hermeneutic. He describes his experience as a newly-ordained priest. "I loved hearing confessions because, no matter what people may have done, their basic goodness and decency shone through even if they could not see it themselves. The hermeneutic of suspicion began to be tempered by a hermeneutic of compassion." In the experience of hearing confessions, God was teaching him, like a schoolboy, about the mystery of God's mercy. And John was an excellent pupil, whether in the classrooms of Harvard University or in the confessionals of Tiltonsville, Ohio.

I think this sense of God's mercy carried over into the rest of his life with his relations with others . . . and for this reason, he was

such good company. He knew me quite well, and I always felt supported by him, I'd say unconditionally. And perhaps you felt the same. His eyes were never hard, as the prodigal son feared in his father's gaze. If you recall John's eyes, they were always . . . *comprensivi*. In his beloved Italian, *comprensivo*—that is, understanding, welcoming, and, toward the end, often with a wise serenity and joy. *Molto, molto comprensivo*—you could relax and be yourself. Oh, John, how good it was for me to be with you! Each of us who knew you can also say, how good it was to be with you!

John liked St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the twelfth-century Cistercian, especially his sermons on the *Song of Songs*, a pagan love song that became a parable of the love between each of us and God, however dimly we're aware of that large reality. In sermon 31, entitled, "Christ adapts his graces to personal needs," Bernard gives four images for the ways that Christ comes to visit us, depending on our personal needs: as a physician, as a spouse, as a king, and as *viator*. I was familiar with Christ the king, spouse, physician, but *viator*? One translation has "travel companion": Christ coming to some of us as a travel companion. Bernard writes that sometimes, when we're tired, fatigued, "Christ joins up with us as a travel companion along the road and lightens the hardships of the journey for the whole company by his fascinating conversation."

John was a good travel companion, literally easy to travel with; but for all of us along our own road, John was there, lightening the hardships, the disappointments of the journey, by his fascinating conversation. And how wonderful that St. Bernard writes that a key trait of Christ as travel companion is being "affable"—in the Latin, *affabilis*; the root sense has to do with talking, as "can be easily spoken to, easy of access, courteous, kind, friendly." So was John; even his scholarly writing was affable—"easy of access."

To end. In the aftermath of the tragedy of 9/11, 2001, Queen Elizabeth II wrote, "Grief is the price we pay for love." And so, a week ago, (actually 9/11), when we heard of John's death, we grieved, because we loved and lost a good travel companion. Good most truly because the love that God showed John, he in turn showed us. What more can you ask of a poor Christian?

And now, his travel days over, John is meeting face to face his beloved oblivious Father, "a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet." A celebration—the heavenly banquet table. John enjoyed banquet tables—indeed any type of table with food and drink and good company.

What more can we say? *Buon appetito*, John . . . *buon appetito*.

2. R.I.P. John W. O'Malley, SJ: The Dean of Catholic Historians Who Helped Save Vatican II from "Oblivion"

James T. Keane[3]

John W. O'Malley, SJ, a renowned historian of the 20th-century church and a longtime professor, died yesterday, Sept. 11, after a brief battle with cancer. He was 95 years old. Father O'Malley is known for his scholarly works on the Catholic Church's last four ecumenical councils as well as his many writings interpreting the 20th-century history of the Society of Jesus; he was also a mentor both for many Jesuits and a generation of scholars of American Catholic history.

"John O'Malley was special. With great simplicity, he educated and supported generations of scholars," Dr. Emanuele Colombo, a professor of Catholic studies at DePaul University in Chicago who conducted a series of interviews with Father O'Malley that were published in 2020 in the *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, told *America* over email. "He perceived this as one of his tasks, and he did it with great ease and lightness—or, better, with joy."

Born in Tiltonsville, Ohio, in 1927, Father O'Malley entered the Society of Jesus in 1946 in what was then the Chicago Province. In his 2020 interview with Dr. Colombo, he noted that the Jesuits initially did not accept him because he had attended public school and had only two

[3] Originally published in *America*, September 12, 2022, https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2022/09/12/john-omalley-obituary-jesuit-history-243737.

years of Latin; after enrolling for a semester at John Carroll University for an intensive Latin course, he was accepted to the novitiate.

During his Jesuit formation, he taught history for three years at St. Ignatius High School in Chicago and studied theology in West Baden Springs, Ind. In 1957 he was ordained a priest and sent to Austria to finish his Jesuit formation and study German in preparation for a doctorate on the history of the church in Germany. He would later remember a weeklong trip to Italy at the end of his year there as a moment that changed his life. "I will never forget the moment my eye caught Giotto's polychrome marble bell [tower]," he wrote in his 2021 memoir *The Education of a Historian*. "It took my breath away."

Finding the trip as a whole "like a bolt of lightning out of the heavens," he decided to forgo German history and instead pursued doctoral studies in Renaissance History at Harvard University, during which time he studied at the American Academy in Rome; he also studied at I Tatti in Florence and was present in Rome during the Second Vatican Council.

After receiving his doctorate, he taught and served in administration at the University of Detroit, now the University of Detroit-Mercy, from 1965 to 1979. Father O'Malley served as a delegate at the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus in 1974–75, a monumental event in the order's history. He taught for many years at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology, now the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, and at Georgetown University, where until recently he served as university professor emeritus in the theology department.

Dr. Brenna Moore, a professor of theology at Fordham University, had Father O'Malley as a professor during her doctoral program at Harvard University. "John showed me it was possible to study something that sounds so serious ('church history') with warmth, vitality, love and humor. I was so lucky to take his classes back when Weston was in Harvard Square," she told *America* via email.

"John provided his students with a way into the big, deep theological questions: What is church? How can we capture that which is mysterious and transcendent in words and communities? He showed

me how to think about the things that are now central to my scholarly life," Dr. Moore wrote. "He was also generous outside of class, pointing me to articles and people who could help me make my way as a young scholar. He was so beloved by so many, including me."

Kevin Jackson, the studio production operator at *America*, had Father O'Malley as a professor in 2019. "A spry 91 years old when I met him, Father O'Malley was kind, first and foremost, and he taught his class without the sense of self-importance that would have been justified given his many intellectual accomplishments," Jackson said. "He took his students seriously and encouraged us to ask the question: 'So what? Why does this matter?'"

In a unique way, O'Malley helped rescue Vatican II from oblivion but also from subtle forms of abrogation and delegitimization.

"Father O'Malley had a gift, through his writing and lecturing, for immersing students into the riveting drama of history," Jackson said. "Who knew a book on Vatican II could read like an adventure novel? I am deeply grateful for the gift of his life and for his kindness to me as my teacher, mentor and friend."

Father O'Malley is the author of a dozen books, including *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform: A Study in Renaissance Thought* (1969), *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450–1521* (1979), *The First Jesuits* (1993), *Four Cultures of the West* (2006), *What Happened at Vatican II* (2008), *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (2012), *Saints or Devils Incarnate?: Studies in Jesuit History* (2013), *The Jesuits: A History from Ignatius to the Present* (2014), *The Jesuits and the Popes: A Historical Sketch of Their Relationship* (2016), and *Vatican I: The Council and the Making of the Ultramontane Church* (2018). In 2019, he published his last scholarly work, *When Bishops Meet*, at the age of 88. In 2021, he published his autobiography, *The Education of a Historian: A Strange and Wonderful Story.*

Dr. Massimo Faggioli, a professor of theology at Villanova University, stressed the importance of Father O'Malley's scholarship on current understandings of contemporary Catholic history. "In *What*

Happened at Vatican II, O'Malley's emphasis on Vatican II as a 'language event' revived the interest in the Council from a historical and cultural perspective in a deeply changed ecclesial and global situation," said Dr. Faggioli in an email to *America*.

"In a unique way, O'Malley helped rescue Vatican II from oblivion but also from subtle forms of abrogation and delegitimization," Dr. Faggioli continued. "He saw, before many of us, that there was a real need—if not an emergency—to make a new and different argument about Vatican II in the Catholic Church, where the memory of the conciliar event was often kept alive by those with a veteran's mentality. This mentality was well-meant but also incapable of reaching newer generations or the peripheries of the post-Vatican II ecclesial establishment."

Father O'Malley also served as editor of numerous academic volumes and published hundreds of articles in scholarly and popular journals in the fields of American Catholic history, Renaissance history, Jesuit history, and the history of the Catholic Church. He contributed to *America* for 50 years, with his last article, on the rising power of the papacy in the second millennium, being published just three months ago, in June 2022.

One of the principles he used to guide his own scholarship, Father O'Malley said in 2020, was "if I really understand what is going on, I can explain it to an intelligent ten-year-old child." Noting that this ran the risk of oversimplification, he said "this approach is a form of correction to myself: I have to be humble enough to acknowledge that, if the ten-year-old does not understand, it means that, deep down, I did not understand."

"John O'Malley was the dean of Catholic historians, who taught generations of Jesuits, priests, religious men and women and lay people how to understand church history," said James Martin, SJ, editor at large at *America*, who was a student of Father O'Malley's at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology. "His book *The First Jesuits* was a revelation to me. Until that time, I had read countless biographies of St. Ignatius Loyola, each of them duller than the one before. Then comes John's stunning book, deploying John's secret weapon: he was a tremendous writer: subtle, lucid, funny."

When Father O'Malley was honored by Harvard University with a Centennial Medal in 2016, Francis X. Clooney, SJ, his fellow Jesuit and the Parkman Professor of Divinity and Professor of Comparative Theology at Harvard Divinity School, described him in the citation as "a solid and respected historian whose research has shed new light on the Catholic Church as it has grown and changed over the past few hundred years."

Father O'Malley, wrote Father Clooney, "made that history accessible and relevant to new generations of students, scholars, and leaders. In all this, John integrates intellectual and professional excellence with the sincerity and simplicity of a priestly vocation lived out in 70 years of religious life. His impeccable scholarship has always been for the sake of helping others, not for his own reputation or advancement."

3. The Rev. John W. O'Malley, SJ (1927–2022)

David J. Collins SJ[4]

John W. O'Malley, SJ, died on September 11, 2022, in Baltimore, aged 95, after a brief illness. A scholar of Renaissance humanism, Fr. O'Malley numbers, internationally, among the most distinguished church historians of his generation. Reflecting both his scholarly accomplishment and his talented commitment to the *sodalitas litterarum*, he held the presidencies of this journal's sponsoring organization (1990) and of the Renaissance Society of America (1998–2000). He was an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1995), the American Philosophical Society (1997), and the Accademia di San Carlo (2001), and a corresponding fellow of the Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences (2012). Both societies of which he was president offered him their lifetime achievement awards (2012 and 2005, respectively), as did the Society for Italian Historical Studies (2002). In 2016, the graduate school of Harvard

[4] Originally published in the *Catholic Historical Review* 108, no. 4 (Autumn 2022: 838–41.

University awarded him its highest prize for scholarly achievement by a graduate, the Centennial Medal.

Fr. O'Malley was born in 1927 in Tiltonsville, Ohio, the only child of Charles O'Malley, a candy merchant, and his wife Elizabeth. His entrance into the Jesuit order in 1946 was delayed by a semester after his high school graduation so that he could remediate his deficient Latin, and he was ordained a priest in 1959. He earned his doctorate in 1965 at Harvard University under the direction of Myron P. Gilmore with a dissertation on church reform in the thought of the Augustinian churchman and Renaissance humanist Giles of Viterbo. Archival research into Giles's thought brought him to Rome while the Second Vatican Council was in session, and this exposure to the council shaped his life-long passion for church councils and reform, historical and contemporary. He participated in two of his order's General Congregations (1975, 1983), both of which he attended with Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the future Pope Francis, and the latter of which brought the papal intervention into the order's governance to an end. His principal faculty appointments were at the University of Detroit (1965–1979), Weston Jesuit School of Theology (1979–2006), and Georgetown University (2006–2020).

Fr. O'Malley's name appears as author on the covers of twelve monographs and five volumes of his own collected works. He edited or co-edited eleven additional volumes. He penned over 150 articles, both scholarly and popular, innumerable book reviews, and a memoir. His name graces the front matter of a book series he founded and a Festschrift dedicated to him. A full review of his scholarly contribution cannot be achieved in a single tribute; here it will be epitomized with reference to four major scholarly themes. First, built on the groundwork laid in his study of Giles, Fr. O'Malley's second monograph, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome* (1979), investigated sacred oratory at the papal court in the decades on either side of the year 1500 according to variations in style that he identified as thematic and panegyric. *Praise and Blame* underscored fundamental associations between reforming agenda and rhetorical style. The twenty pages of its second chapter, which elucidate the epideictic sermon according to six characteristics, exemplify hallmarks of Fr. O'Malley's own expository style, consistently incisive and lightsome such as is rarely found simultaneously in academic prose. *Praise and Blame* also planted seeds that came

to later fruition in *Four Cultures of the West* (2004) and constructed the barbican from which he assayed the three councils—Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II—in courses he taught for decades to Jesuit scholastics and other students at Weston and in the writing that occupied him especially in late career. Indeed, his last published article, appearing in the Jesuit periodical *America* this past June, was on the history of papal power in relation to these three councils.

Second, fourteen years separate *Praise and Blame* from his next monograph *The First Jesuits* (1993). This work situated the foundations of the Society of Jesus in the context of a developing Renaissance culture, which both shaped and was shaped by the burgeoning order. The work shattered old chestnuts about the order's inception in relation to the Counter-Reformation, a term whose usefulness to describe Catholicism in the sixteenth century, he later argued in *Trent and All That* (2002), was fundamentally inadequate. It further charted with new precision why, how, and in what form the Jesuits became involved in the schoolwork for which the order had not been founded but became so renowned. The American Philosophical Society awarded *The First Jesuits* its prestigious Jacques Barzun Prize in Cultural History. The monograph's successful reception inspired Fr. O'Malley, with colleagues, to organize two highly influential conferences at Boston College, which—with their subsequent volumes of papers, *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts* (1999, 2006)—demonstrated decisively that "Jesuit Studies" was a research field with interdisciplinary attraction and significant scholarly implications.

Third, Fr. O'Malley's returned again and again over his career to the history of the arts in Christianity. He broke into the field in 1983 with his supportive response to Leo Steinberg's then provocative interpretation of the *ostentatio genitalium Christi* in Renaissance art. One more recent, edited volume representative of his artistic interest is *Art, Controversy, and the Jesuits: The Imago primi saeculi (1640)* (2015). The *Imago* itself was produced by Flemish Jesuits to celebrate the centenary of the order's founding. Fr. O'Malley explained in his introduction its value to research was not only as "an 'image' of the first century of the Jesuit order," but also as "an image of baroque literary, artistic, and religious culture at its height." Fr. O'Malley was especially gratified

by his collaboration with the press at St. Joseph's University on the "Early Modern Catholicism and the Visual Arts Series," in which the *Imago* appeared and which includes to date seventeen other volumes.

Fourth, Fr. O'Malley retired from Weston in 2006 and agreed to a three-year transitional appointment at Georgetown. The transitional period lasted fourteen years and saw the publication of seven monographs and two edited volumes. These are all the works of a senior scholar, the harvest of decades of research, analysis, reflection, and teaching. They are all of course deeply learned, but also in each case he made his incisive points accessible to a broader readership with the clarity of his prose. What one newspaper reviewer enthused of one obtains of them all, "he tells a good story." Most deal with church councils and the papacy, two with the Jesuit order. He himself would name *What Happened at Vatican II?* (2008), the first of five books he published in his ninth decade of life, as the most important. Fr. O'Malley's answer to the question he posed in the title—put simply, that a lot happened—had two dimensions: one had to do with the content of its declarations; the other, with the way it expressed itself, that is, its style. In both respects, by Fr. O'Malley's reckoning, Vatican II did much that was historically distinctive, and the work can be taken as an expression of his professional sympathy with Giuseppe Alberigo's project, foregrounding as it does discontinuities between the council and its predecessors.

His infamous question to students and colleagues alike, So what? was always delivered with a disarming smile.

While his academic positions allowed his direction of only a few dissertations, Fr. O'Malley was much sought after as a committee member by dissertators across the country and as a director of many master's theses at Weston. He was so sought after not only because of his erudition but also because he was so encouraging. His infamous question to students and colleagues alike, So what? was always delivered with a disarming smile. That question, with the discerning conversation in which it was embedded, helped advance the projects of many junior and senior colleagues alike.

Fr. O'Malley's appeal to colleagues and students sprang from more than his unsurpassed scholarship and his cheerful collegiality. Quite simply he enjoyed life, he enjoyed people, and to be around him was enjoyable in all respects. Italophile to the core, he would surely approve its being said of him that he was *un uomo che sapeva apprezzare egualmente il raffinato e il triviale*. On the one side, his leisure time was arranged around the seasonal offerings of the ballet, the opera, and exhibitions of fine art in Boston, New York, and Washington. Puccini and Mozart were his personal favorites at their art. On the other, he had a weakness for vampire films; he was merciless to opponents at the poker table; and he impishly savored the coarse, comradely banter of the regulars—Chesapeake Bay watermen all—at his favorite barbershop in Annapolis. These touches of humanity, this enthusiasm for life, made him not only esteemed but also cherished by those who knew him.

In his final days, he consoled distressed friends, "It is time to move to the next chapter." Two art reproductions that hung on the walls of his rooms first in Cambridge, then in Washington, and finally in Baltimore, help us unpack those unfussy, closing remarks and teach us something still more about this self-described "archenemy of the superfluous word." The artworks were Hans Holbein the Younger's *Erasmus of Rotterdam* (*scribens* (1523)), which hung over his desk, and the detail of Christ's visage from Piero della Francesca's Resurrection (1460), which hung over his bed. The first—his favorite humanist, bar none, in profile—recalls so much of what Fr. O'Malley's life as author and teacher has been, and the second offers a sign of where he hoped his life was headed. As we regard Fr. O'Malley's passing, we may thus imagine that as Clio weeps, the angels surely rejoice.

4. In Memoriam: John W. O'Malley (1927–2022)

Kathleen M. Comerford[5]

On September 11, 2022, John W. O'Malley died. Readers of this journal are well aware of his tremendous legacy, and have no doubt noticed the outpouring of sentiment on social media and in the press; outlets as diverse as the *National Catholic Reporter*, *Commonweal*, and the *New York Times* ran obituaries, and Jesuit sites around the world posted tributes. These all highlighted a life of great achievements: award-winning and influential books, major academic grants, decades of teaching, and honors by scholarly societies. It would no doubt have amused John to see himself thus feted, particularly given the timing of his death (which I cannot help but consider far too soon, despite his ninety-five years): three days after that of the longest-reigning monarch in British history, on the twenty-first anniversary of the worst terrorist attack on US soil, and during a major shift in the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war. Though he was conscious of the legacy he worked so hard to create, I imagine that he would have assumed these events would overshadow any news about himself. He was ever a humble and gentle man, self-deprecating and generous with his humor, and always curious about the world.

I no longer remember exactly when or how I met John. I was still a graduate student, and I must have contacted him, along with a number of other specialists, at the behest of my mentor, Robert M. Kingdon (who assigned *Catholicism in Early Modern History: A Guide to Research* [St. Louis, MO: Center for Reformation Research, 1988], which John edited, as required reading for his graduate seminars). Though the two did not know each other well, I saw important similarities between them: both were endlessly interested in learning new things (and truly delighted by that learning), and both were willing to share their time with emerging scholars—and their students with their colleagues. They were living networks. Without Bob Kingdon, I would probably never have had the courage to introduce myself to John O'Malley, whose influence on my work and life has been as profound as that of my graduate advisor. Over

[5] Originally published in the *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 10 (2023): 10–14.

the years since the mid-1990s, John and I became friends and colleagues, maintaining a correspondence over email, meeting at conferences, and, once he moved to Georgetown University in 2006, seeing each other every summer for lunch or coffee, or while reading in the Woodstock Library. Our last lunch was in 2019, shortly after the death of my mother, for which he offered most sincere condolences, understanding the loss as a priest, colleague, and friend—exactly the kindness and consolation I needed. Covid protocols, and then his move to the assisted-living St. Claude de la Colombière Jesuit community in Baltimore, ended a tradition to which I looked forward all year.

We must have met by the time *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993) was published; I recall looking forward to the book with great eagerness, which was amply rewarded by the text itself. As many have remarked before me, the greatness of this book is not merely its scholarship, but its approachable prose and its frank and deft characterizations of the individuals and context at its heart. While the phrase "instant classic" is certainly overused, it applies here. John O'Malley is as important to understanding the history of the Jesuits as are the earliest of the Society's historians—and in some ways, more important. In addition to being an eyewitness to fifty-eight years of Jesuit life, he was an excellent historian, able to question, analyze, and synthesize difficult, and sometimes painful, events and trends, even if they had personal significance. He faced the negatives within the first sentence of the introduction to *The First Jesuits*, acknowledging that the order that he had joined at the tender age of eighteen had been the subject of both celebrated and contentious scholarship (and popular culture), but that it had, for the most part, not received the treatment designed to satisfy "sophisticated canons of scholarship." The book absolutely transformed the way that the history of the Society, and of early modern religion, is conceived.

The ambitious task he had set himself, of focusing on the Jesuits as they saw themselves, and placing them in the context of the religious and political controversies of the sixteenth century, was not one that a man faint of heart could have conceived or achieved. It required someone as talented in languages as in interpretation; someone with the patience to read thoroughly and the humility to write carefully and clearly. He certainly knew that *The First Jesuits* would be influential, though

I doubt that in the beginning he had any inkling at first of just how important it would be. Not all award-winning books are well-loved books, but this one certainly is. Perhaps in the years after its publication he knew how many times he had been cited (according to Google Scholar, the English-language original of that book alone has been cited over 1,400 times in print as of October 2, 2022, and it has been translated into a dozen languages, and published in Braille). He was aware that he had influenced generations of historians not only with that book, but with his others as well (for example, *What Happened at Vatican II* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008] has garnered close to seven hundred citations and *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009] more than 400); but he never showed any signs of being changed by his fame. The thoughtful gentleman who bought me coffee at conferences in the 1990s while I was still finding my feet was the same one who, looking out for me after I developed celiac disease, and not content to just have a coffee break in the 2010s, personally saw to it that the chef at Georgetown's Wolfington Hall dining room prepared fine, safe meals for me.

That, in turn, was the same man who witnessed the 1966 flood in Florence from the surrounding hills, went to visit his tutor with some basic foodstuffs, and then began to work on rescuing books and art from the damaging mud. I have never seen him credited as one of the so-called Mud Angels, so when I first learned this, in a conversation about what I had seen as the city marked the fiftieth anniversary of the flood in 2016, I was taken aback. Such important service, profoundly affecting Florence and its environs, as well as generations of historians, art historians, archivists, and librarians, should not go unnoticed. Characteristically, in his memoir-cum-methodology text, *The Education of a Historian: A Strange and Wonderful Story* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2021), this event occupies about two pages and serves as a path to an insight about seeing the big picture in one's research and writing. A lesser man would have noted his role in preserving global heritage, and waxed poetic about the lessons one learns about *writing* history while *saving* it. A lesser man would have sought to promote that experience to demonstrate his fitness for writing Italian history as an American, or to parlay the connections he developed into some sort of stardom. John was never the lesser man. Yes, he was proud of his accomplishments,

but for him, they reframed questions or contextualized problems differently; they did not make him a pompous celebrity.

And yet he was so famous! Each of his many books, along with his even more numerous articles, has been influential. The trademarks of deep research, clear and engaging writing, and wry humor draw in specialists and the general public alike, whether the subject be church councils, humanism, Jesuit saints, preaching, or the papacy. Throughout his life, he challenged himself to keep learning, and that joy of discovery proved irresistible to his audiences. From *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 1968) to *The Education of a Historian*, when John O'Malley wrote, people read; when he spoke, at conferences or in the classroom, people listened. In return, he listened. The curiosity he had about the world was genuine, and it always felt personal. In *Education of a Historian*, he referred to the importance of listening and to contextualizing what people said and did: he described being an official witness to an interracial marriage in Chicago in the early 1950s, an event which "helped me develop as a historian a sensitivity to the dark side that lurks underneath virtually every historical situation" (38). Several years later, while studying theology in West Baden Springs, Indiana, he began working in local parishes to aid the staff there by, among other things, hearing confessions. He loved this ministry, he said, "because, no matter what people may have done, their basic goodness and decency shone through even if they could not see it themselves. The hermeneutic of suspicion that the clandestine marriage in Chicago taught me was now tempered by a hermeneutic of compassion. The combination later stood me in good stead as a historian as well as a priest" (40). Both of these hermeneutics, which he continued to develop throughout his lengthy career as he gained experience in teaching, researching, and leading, also explain how someone so widely admired, so frequently sought out as a guest speaker, so often quoted, could also be so unpretentious, so generous, so willing to work at difficult questions, and so kind.

John O'Malley has now gone from our midst. What are we to do in his absence? I think that he would point us to Leopold von Ranke's famous question, "what really happened?" in order to go forward. What really happened when we met him, in print or in person, was something quite special, and something we should treasure. John's life is a series of lessons to us—a lesson in how much greatness can

be born in one person, one in how we need to listen to ourselves and others, one in patience and humility, one in taking on new challenges all throughout our lives and learning from both experience and happenstance, one in facing the difficult realities of the past responsibly, one in bearing both responsibilities and successes with good humor and composure, and perhaps most of all one in finding the goodness and joy in life. In other words, what happened when John was with us was extraordinary, in part because he wore his fascinating life so lightly, and in part because he welcomed us into it so sincerely. After ninety-five years, we have had to give him back to the God he loved so well, with sadness but also with profound gratitude for his work—and for the gift of himself. *Requiescas in pace*, John.

5. Father John W. O'Malley, SJ, Ambassador to Secular Academia

Nelson H. Minnich[6]

In the early 1970s, when I was a graduate student in the History Department at Harvard University, a senior faculty member confided to me that the only remaining prejudice in American academia was against Roman Catholics. They were considered intellectually inferior due to their supposed lacking a critical faculty because they were too deferential to authority. In the 1960s, as a graduate student in that same department, Father John O'Malley encountered that bias. By his stellar performances in course work and dissertation he proved beyond any doubt his intellectual independence and acumen, and went on to receive Harvard University's Graduate School of Arts and Science's highest honor, the Centennial Medal Award, for his outstanding achievements in historical scholarship.

John was not a prisoner of the "Catholic ghetto" mentality that afflicted many of his contemporaries. He grew up in a small town on

[6] Originally published in *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal* 11, no. 2 (December 2022): 11–12.

the banks of the Ohio River, attended the local public schools, and was popular with his classmates. A vocational call to the Jesuit order resulted in his training in classical languages, philosophy, and theology, and a spirituality that did not fear the world but embraced the good in secular culture. When it came time to do doctoral studies, he carefully investigated the best programs at leading universities and chose Harvard.

Any prejudices against Catholics for being supposedly intellectually inferior have been demolished by the career of Father John O'Malley, SJ.

His meticulous, original scholarship earned him a series of prestigious fellowships: Guggenheim, American Council of Learned Societies, National Endowment for the Humanities, and others. If there were any prejudices against him because he was a Jesuit priest, they soon vanished once people met the charming, witty, hard-working, and brilliant scholar who showed a sincere interest in their work and offered words of encouragement. He made numerous, lasting friendships with scholars in many fields. Research centers such as the American Academy in Rome and Villa I Tatti in Florence extended his fellowships to keep such a valuable scholar present. His many books were published by leading academic presses: Brill, Duke, Toronto, and Harvard, and these books won numerous awards. John was invited to join the leading learned societies such as the Accademia di San Carlo of the Ambrosian Library in Milan, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society, where he became a valued member of its standing committees and its Vice-President. He was elected President of the Renaissance Society of America and of the American Catholic Historical Association; and he was honored for his life-time achievements by the Society of Italian Historical Studies, by the Renaissance Society of America, and by the American Catholic Historical Association. At the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, he received a standing ovation. He was the recipient of some twenty honorary degrees.

Any prejudices against Catholics for being supposedly intellectually inferior have been demolished by the career of Father John O'Malley, SJ. In his many studies, he has challenged lingering historiographical orthodoxies. Renaissance Rome did not embrace ancient

paganism but a humanism that sought to harmonize classical culture with Christian truths in a new intellectual synthesis, and replaced didactic sermons with epideictic oratory. The Jesuits were not founded to combat Protestantism; their fourth vow is to go on any mission assigned to them by the pope and is not an oath of personal loyalty to the pope; their superior general is not similar to a military general, but is subject to the general congregation and rules collegially. The Jesuits' commitment to an apostolate of education evolved over time and altered their ethos, tying them to institutions, endowments, and secular culture. John has given in his studies due weight to the contributions of Protestant theologians while remaining faithful to Catholicism. He has distinguished the doctrinal and disciplinary decrees of the Council of Trent that called for preserving tradition from the rhetorical exhortations of the Second Vatican Council that urged adjusting to a changing world. He called for renaming his field, replacing the terms Catholic or Counter-Reformations with their European bias for the more global Early Modern Catholicism. He has discerned in Western culture four intellectual strains: prophetic/reform, academic/professional, literary/political, and artistic/performative. True to his Jesuit vocation to go anywhere in the world to work for the greater glory of God, John has engaged the world of academia and shown that faith and rigorous scholarship are indeed compatible. He was a highly respected and much beloved scholar, who brought Jesuits outside the walls of Jesuit higher education and into the secular sphere, a welcomed ambassador of the Society of Jesus and of the Church to the secular world of higher learning.

6. A Tribute to John W. O'Malley, SJ

Brenna Moore[7]

As a historian of Catholicism, John W. O'Malley is richly deserving of his many accolades, and these awards are only augmented by the quieter role he played as a champion of younger scholars. This support, for many of us, was life changing. There are many in the field of Catholic history today who had maybe once imagined church history as a rather dull narration of bishops writing decrees in Rome, and it was hard to feel points of connection. But John O'Malley showed us something else entirely. With him, church history felt thrillingly free. There were constraints, to be sure. He always pushed languages, insisted on reading original sources, and taught us never to go beyond the evidence. But there was a freedom in a sense that there was so much to uncover in the Catholic past, so many people who could be studied with heart and soul. He showed us a much broader and deeper history than I ever imagined, one that took me into Catholicism's deep myths, its wonders, its artists, heroes and their yearnings for God, along with its blind spots, dullards, and stumblings too.

It was a wonderful stroke of luck to have gotten my doctorate at Harvard Divinity School while John was still teaching at Weston Jesuit Seminary, then located just on the other side of Harvard Square. There were open enrollments and I could take as many classes at Weston as I wanted. Shuttling between these two campuses gave me an ideal intellectual in-betweenness that to this day remains important to me, one foot in a thoroughly Catholic seminary setting, and the other in a more secular approach where questions of diversity, critique, and inclusion took center stage. I took John's course on the *First Jesuits* in 2004 and another on Trent and Vatican II in 2005.

This was back when I had no real ideas about what kind of scholar I wanted to be. Studying at a Divinity School, I just had a swirling of inchoate feelings that I didn't quite belong in either traditional secular

[7] Originally published in *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal* 11, no. 2 (December 2022): 11–12.

history or in systematic theology. John pointed me to a path that took seriously "spirituality" not as an esoteric inner sanctum, but something to be studied in relationship to the world in its complexity and depth. He encouraged me when I told him I was interested in spirituality and history in modern Europe, and sent me to read things I never would have discovered on my own, like Lucien Febvre's classic book of essays, *A New Kind of History*. It described the history of emotions and the inner life as legitimate categories to analyze as we understand the past. It was fresh, exciting. When John learned I was becoming interested in the years just before Vatican II, he photocopied an article that the young Stephen Schloesser, a fellow Jesuit, had published, which would end up in Steve's award-winning book *Jazz Age Catholicism*. John's pointing me to Steve's work was critical, and Steve was just as generous as John was (and I would later learn, like me, influenced by John deeply). Steve served on my dissertation committee and he became an invaluable mentor and friend.

John pointed me to a path that took seriously "spirituality" not as an esoteric inner sanctum, but something to be studied in relationship to the world in its complexity and depth.

I remember the first paper I wrote for John where I let my thinking off the leash a bit, wrote on the early modern Jesuit Pierre Favre, and combined biography, history, spirituality, without worrying about much about disciplinary boundaries. I focused on Favre as a person, and had so much fun experimenting with a fuller and more human way of thinking about Catholicism. And I can still feel the thrill when he returned the paper with the word *BRAVISSIMA*!!! in all caps and exclamation points. This encouragement meant the world to an anxious graduate student. I forged ahead.

Some of John's encouragement was less direct, not even necessarily intended. For instance, one of the great lessons John imparted to us as students was that we fail to understand content at its deepest level if we fail to take style into account.

John's own style as a teacher was warm, funny, self-deprecating. It was a style I liked. It was a style that made me feel at home. He spoke like people I knew growing up in Michigan, in language that

was straightforward, concrete, warm, and sometimes made me laugh out loud. It was also style that often stood in stark contrast to his subject matter. I remember a lecture comparing the papacies of Pius XII and John XXIII. As he was describing the most elite realms of Catholic power, I studiously took notes. "First thing," John said, "is to take a look [at] them. Pius is skinny, reserved, shy, rarely smiling, somber. And John XXIII, you see, is fat, smiling, often joking around, looking happy and huge. Their theologies, their ecclesiologies just really kind of follow from there." That is how an intellectual talks and thinks? Hmm, I thought, maybe there's room for a Midwestern girl like me too. Of course, I wrote it all down, smiling from ear to ear.

I was sitting in one of his seminars on April 19, 2005, when Cardinal Ratzinger was elected pope. One of the Jesuit scholastics had turned the livestream of the conclave on his computer during class. When we heard "Habemus Papam" and then Joseph Ratzinger's name, there was an audible gasp, palpable disappointment and shock. We looked to John, and there were no pronouncements from on high, no screeds against conservatives. And this was just around the time when his *Four Cultures of the West* had come out. I remember thinking about that book as I saw John react in this moment, how clear it was that he was not the type for prophetic pronouncements, comfortable with conflict. His style was humanistic, artistic even, and he taught us about Catholicism by pointing out inspiring and beautiful alternatives to the ones who so often let us down. We got back to the work at hand in the seminar, work that pointed us to a different Catholicism that used poetics instead of legalism in its language, that inspired rather than condemned. It felt like a counter to the clouds gathering overhead in Rome in 2005, clouds that already had darkened over Catholic Boston since the sexual abuse case broke in 2002. Without ignoring all of this, John helped us hang in there by pointing out not the fantasy of another kind of church, but its reality, its history, its people. It was life-giving when many Catholics were desperate for signs of life in the church. I'm not sure I would have hung in there without the kind of Catholicism John was showing us.

And when it came time to do my own research project, I tried to remember John's style that was honest, relaxed, straightforward, neither conformist nor condemnatory, nor anxious or showy. When I began to do archival research, I started to have my own epiphanies and a sense of

liberty in being in the archives—touching letters and photographs—and started to write about the things that just honestly interested me, things I liked. In the spirit of my teacher, I tried at the outset, and still do, to study the authors and protagonists of Catholicism as people, and focus on their friendships, their aspirations, their anxieties, and look for some personal spark beneath the formal polish of their theological prose.

The year that John left Boston for Georgetown in 2007 I was finishing my dissertation on my own, a lonely and tough time, missing so many of the fuller days of conversations in graduate seminars at Harvard and Weston. So, I was thrilled in 2007 when Nelson Minnich published an essay of John's, "My Life of Learning," an intellectual biography of sorts, in the *Catholic Historical Review*. Reading it, I had my teacher's stories back in my life again. I laughed reading his words, reminding me why I loved him so. In describing his mother's family who lived along the Ohio River, "The whole clan lacked ambition and was intent simply on enjoying life as much as possible, as long as not too much exertion was required in doing so. . . . The Eastoms were as unpolitical as they were unchurched, except that they for good reason kept a wary eye on local elections to see who might be elected sheriff."[8] When he described how he made his way to Harvard for graduate school to a seminar with Myron Gilmore, "For three and a half months every Monday evening I pasted a knowing smile on my face to try to conceal that I had absolutely no idea what anyone was talking about."[9] The sorts of smiles and laughter that comes when reading John's work or listening to his lectures is the kind of laugh that also points to somewhere deeper, something bigger. He poked fun at himself, but still described, triumphantly, the feeling as he was finishing his first big project:

> I now knew what it was to know something that had taken me to the edge where nobody had been before. Ah, yes, a razor-thin little edge, but nonetheless I was alone there. What I said on that edge was not an act of faith in what others had said, but an affirmation of what I myself had discovered and now put out to the world as my stance. I felt that in a new way

[8] John W. O'Malley, SJ, "My Life of Learning," *The Catholic Historical Review* 93, no. 3 (2007): 577.

[9] O'Malley, "My Life of Learning," 577.

> I knew what it was to know. The process of getting there had tried my soul and, I think, purified it by making me constantly reexamine my assumptions, even my values, and putting me through the painful process of reassessing them. It had shaped me up by forcing me into a physical and psychological discipline I had never known before to such a degree.[10]

I read those words just as I was finishing my own massive project on Raïssa Maritain, a project he had inspired in so many ways in style, method, and what I might call mood. But I had to get to that edge, that affirmation of what I saw in her life, an affirmation that was mine alone. I had to get it done. It was just what I needed to hear. There was no one else to do it for me, it was me alone. Buoyed by his words, I pushed onward. I finished.

A few years ago, I found one of the last papers I wrote for John. In it, I quoted something from Michel Foucault. The exact line escapes me now, but it was something about how when we say "it has always been this way," that seals exits, closes doors. But the work of history can point to cracks, fissures, other possibilities that have been there all along. It is disruptive and transformative. "*YES!*" he wrote to me in the margins. *YES*. I can see his handwriting now. I was onto something. He showed me a clearing in the woods. The clearing was a path for me to go down, with *my own* scholarship. It was a way for me to handle the religious sources that I discover and deal with evidence, analyze it, think about the world through them, affirm my stance, say why it matters. I am still on that path today.

Remembering the teaching and influence of John O'Malley has been a *ressourcement* of sorts, that word I first learned from him so many years ago. It is to go back to the sources of my own intellectual and spiritual formation, the deepest sources of vitality and life. For so many of us working in Catholic history today, John was a "source" in the most wonderful and profoundly theological sense of that word. He completely changed my life. My gratitude is boundless.

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[10] O'Malley, "My Life of Learning," 586.

7. Homily for the Funeral of Rev. John W. Padberg, SJ

John W. O'Malley, SJ[11]

"Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the joy of the Lord": words taken from today's holy gospel. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

When John Padberg was a young boy, I'm sure that he studied Number One Baltimore Catechism, as we all did in those days. The first question in the Catechism was, "Who made you?" The answer: "God made me." The second question was, "Why did God make you?" The answer was, "God made me to know, love, and serve him in this world and be happy with him forever in the next." What wonderful lessons to learn and to take one through all the travails of one's later life. And I think that's exactly the point that Our Lord was trying to make in the parable we just heard. The master goes away, gives his servant some talents, comes back, and when the talents have been well used, the master says to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the joy of the Lord." Well done, good and faithful servant: I think we can take that as our *leitmotif* for the life of John Padberg, to whom today we're saying our final farewell.

I know that most of you know the basic curriculum of John's life, but on this occasion maybe it's not too out of place to review it for us all. John was born here in St. Louis in 1926 in a devout Catholic family, graduated from St. Louis University High School in 1944, immediately entered the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus, and, after Jesuit training and after his ordination, he in 1959 enrolled in the History Department at Harvard University to study French history, which was precisely what he did. He wrote his dissertation in Paris on Jesuit schools in France in the nineteenth century, an original and difficult but important subject. A good token of the importance of John's work is that, once the dissertation was finished and approved, Harvard University itself published it in its dissertation series. The title was *Colleges in Conflict*, and it

[11] Given on January 13, 2022, at St. Francis Xavier (College) Church, St. Louis, Missouri. Transcribed by Steven A. Schoenig, SJ.

remains today the basic study of that important subject. John returned to St. Louis to the History Department here, to the university, and soon was promoted to academic vice-president: it looked as if he were going to have a career here in the university.

But in 1975 instead he assumed the presidency of the Weston School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. That was one of the three theological schools the American Jesuits supported in those days. The school was not in very good shape. It had moved in from the countryside just a few years earlier, and any such uprooting, of course, is always difficult. Moreover, the energies and the confusion that Vatican II injected into Catholicism played its havoc on the discipline of the school and the faculty. John's predecessor as president had just left the presidency abruptly and left the Society of Jesus. Not a good point to begin your presidency! But John took hold, did a wonderful job, and, as I say, he basically saved the school. So for that reason alone, we owe him a lot of gratitude. While he was there, he became the founding president of the International Conference of Catholic Theological Schools.

He returned to St. Louis and, instead of continuing as an administrator, joined Father George Ganss at the Institute for Jesuit Sources. The Institute for Jesuit Sources is, in my opinion, one of the unsung heroes of the American Society of Jesus. It produced any number of important works dealing with the history of the Society, and did them in English, making them available to the English-reading population around the world. And John Padberg pitched in, and eventually succeeded Ganss as director of the Institute. Meanwhile, he became the first editor of the series *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits,* an important serial that is continuing today and having a big influence—again, worldwide.

John himself had, I think, defining experiences when, in 1974–75 and 1983, he was elected to two of the most crucial General Congregations of the Jesuits, and John played an important role in both of those. And those define his scholarship from that point forward. He did any number of studies of the General Congregations, beginning with the first in 1558. One of his most important books is called *Together in Companionship: A History of the 31st to the 33rd General Congregations of the Society of Jesus.* His scholarship got recognition. In 2001, a group of former students and colleagues published a book of essays in his honor, *Spirit,*

Style, and Story. In 2014, the American Catholic Historical Association conferred upon John its Lifetime Achievement Award. And in 2016, the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies at Boston College conferred upon him its George E. Ganss Award for Distinguished Service.

That's John Padberg, the career, the public man. What about John, the human being? I'll say this. He was not a brilliant man, but he was wondrously intelligent, hard-working, and had excellent judgment. He was utterly devoted to the Society of Jesus, as the focus of his scholarship betrays, and he tried as best he could to incorporate the Society's ideals into his own life. I think he did a marvelous job. I never heard from John an unkind word. He held some very important positions, but his holding those positions was not the result of personal ambition, but of his abilities to serve. And I think that's maybe the motif of John's life: a life of service. He was a warm and generous human being. He was unstintingly helpful to those who asked for his help. And I myself am one of the great beneficiaries of John's help: he helped me make the two most important decisions of my Jesuit life by persuading me that Harvard was the place to do my doctorate, and then, after considerable resistance from me, persuaded me to join the faculty at Weston. I really owe to those two decisions largely everything that I've been able to accomplish since then.

John was also fun to be with. He was an excellent raconteur and liked nothing better than to shock people by digging up some ecclesiastical scandal from the past to put them into disarray! He liked a good meal. He was a connoisseur of fine wines. And almost by instinct he seemed to know the best restaurants of any city in which he found himself. It was a great pleasure to be asked by John to join him for a meal. You knew the food would be good, and the wine exquisite; you were ensured that you would have a pleasant conversation. The only thing that you had to beware of was to make sure that it was John who picked up the tab at the end of the meal!

We say farewell to John, our dear friend, our brother in the Society of Jesus. As we do so, we say to him the words that I'm sure he heard from Our Lord when he died on Christmas afternoon: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the joy of the Lord."

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